

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 45 July 2015 No. 7



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

*Psalm 122:1*

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

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## THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER

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

Roger L. 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  
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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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# Guest Editorial

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,  
and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

### "COME UNTO ME"

This sacred call has gone out to millions throughout the course of time. Christ sees men and women laboring in sin, seeking to find peace, rest, and happiness. He yearns to help all who are in need. Wandering souls often turn to addictive habits such as alcohol, tobacco, or drugs to deaden that miserable yearning deep within. In some instances ones have encountered some traumatic experience that they simply cannot cope with. By turning to these resources, they find a temporary relief from the heartache they suffer, then as the effects of these things wear off, they find themselves back in distress again. Christ does not give temporary relief. He establishes a permanent solution to each person's problems.

Then there are those who run to the dance halls, the theaters, and other forms of worldly entertainment, trying to fill the void deep within their hearts. They foolishly spend time and money on things that cannot bring lasting satisfaction. Isaiah 55:2 asks the question, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." After a night of reveling in ungodly activities or some immoral relationship, many people pillow their heads with the

yearning for peace, hoping it still exists. However, these unfruitful deeds have now left them plagued with guilt and remorse.

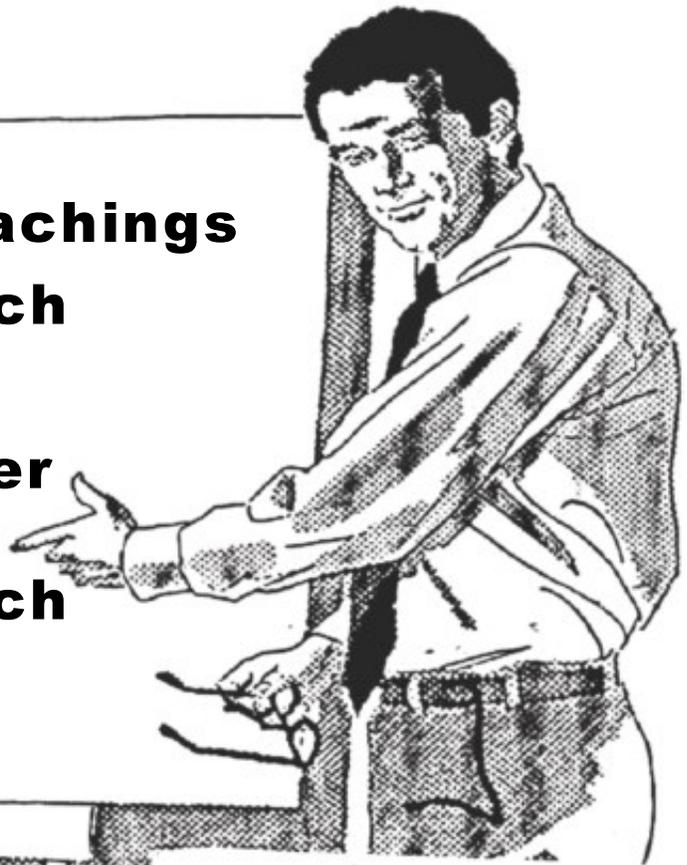
It is sad, but true, many go through life trying to find relief from their troubling conscience and never find it. However, one must be reminded that only Jesus can give rest to the weary soul. He alone is the One who brings satisfaction and fulfillment to the longing heart. It is amazing, but the majority of people simply refuse to turn to Him for the help and deliverance that is so needed. One can travel the whole world looking for peace of mind and yet never attain it. What the world needs is Jesus! He is here with outstretched arms, calling, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Also, we find people who are weighed down with the stress and cares of this life. They are cumbered about with burdens and problems that seemingly have no answer. Possibly they have lost employment; maybe they are suffering from a physical affliction or some other catastrophe has happened. When these things happen, they can have a devastating effect on people. Many times people will be left with the thought that there is no way out. Again, Jesus invites each one to come to Him for the help and restoration he or she needs.

[continued on page 20]

# The Cardinal Teachings of the Church

## The Founder of the Church



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

### The Final Authority Regarding Spiritual Matters

As we begin the study on the cardinal teachings of the church, I believe it is necessary, especially in this day and age, to keep the Truth concerning the church before people. As we begin this study, I want to emphasize the point that there is not another organization in this world that can stand on these doctrinal truths except the true Church of God. I use the word *true* because many Church of God congregations are not built on these truths. They are guilty of heresy and sectarianism.

The word *cardinal* simply means, "of prime importance; chief; principal; of cardinal importance." As we begin our study, we must accept the Word of God as the final authority on all matters concerning spiritual things. In no way

do I want to sound harsh or to upbraid another religion. My only intention is to put forth the Truth so the reader can compare the Truth to falsity.

Before I go any further, I want to say that every church but the Church of God was founded by a man or a woman or a group of people, and each one has a list of doctrines to teach certain beliefs. One example of this is the Pentecostal Church; it is a movement which believes that all its members must speak in tongues to be saved. Acts 2:1 talks about when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, not the Church of Pentecost. The Baptists believe that once you are saved, you are always saved. Then, there is the Church of Christ, which hinges their salvation on water baptism.

The Apostle Paul said in Galatians 1:8-9: "But though we, or

an angel from heaven [Paul was talking about an angel that is supposed to be a divine being from Heaven], preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

I could go on and on about the false teachings in the religious world, but my aim is to preach the Truth to you, as I go through the cardinal teachings laid out in the Word of God. Saint of God, it is getting very late in time to compromise and to become ecumenical in your stand. The Church of God must not sugarcoat the message just to tickle the ears of the hearers, but we must preach the Truth under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to all who will listen.

## Who Founded the Church of God?

As we start this series of messages, we want to first consider the founder of the church. When building, organizing, or starting something, one is the founder. Someone starts with an idea. If you are building a building, a shed, a barn, or a house, it had to start with an idea first. Again, every church but the Church of God was founded at a certain time in history by a man or a woman or a group of people. You can trace their beginnings back to those who are considered the founders. Let me name some examples of the founders of some religious groups. Mormonism was founded by Joseph Smith. Have you ever heard of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church? Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews, and James and Ellen White are the founders. The founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses is Charles Russell. The Christian Science founder is Mary Baker Eddy.

Both the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul warned that all of this that we are enduring today was going to take place. Peter said in 2 Peter 2:1, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

The Apostle Paul warned in Acts 20:29-31: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Those people about whom Paul was talking were never ordained of God. They were heretics seeking their own recognition and glory. The Jehovah's Witnesses, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and the Christian Science religion can go

back to a time when some men or women founded them and were at the head of their organizations.

Who founded the Church of God? The One who founded the Church of God is in the Bible. Those who founded the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Pentecostal movement, the Christian Science, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, and the Church of Christ are not in the Bible.

Let us read who the founder of the Church of God is. Matthew 16:13-18 states: "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock [Peter is not the rock; the rock is a divine revelation. That is how you see the church; it is divine.] I will build my church; [You do not read that about the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. There are no Scriptures in the Bible covering them, but Jesus said He would build His church.] and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

### Where Does Jesus Get His Building Materials?

When you build something, that means you put something together, construct, or assemble it. There is no prophet or Mosaic Law on the same level as Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the apex. He is the highest level there is.

Matthew 17:1-8 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 [the law], and one for Elias [the prophets].

"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. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only." That is the only tabernacle we should be concerned about—the one that Jesus builds.

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."

Since Jesus is the Founder, to build something He must have the materials. When builders are ready to build, they have to make sure the necessary materials are there so that they can start to build on time. Well, when Jesus builds His church, He has to have materials. Now, the materials that He needs are not brick and mortar. Jesus has to get materials from someplace to build a church, and the building is not completed yet, as far as having all the members.

Where does Jesus get His materials? Mark 2:15-17 tells us: "And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and

Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

The materials the Founder uses to build His church are ex-sinners. No matter how spiritual you are now, there was a time in your life when you were a sinner. When you became a saint, Jesus used you as material to build His church.

### **Is Your Experience Built Upon the Rock?**

First Corinthians 6:9-11 states: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived [you are deceived if you think the unrighteous will inherit this kingdom]: 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. And such were [To whom was Paul speaking? He was talking to the Church of God at Corinth, those who were washed, justified, and sanctified.] some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

How does Jesus wash the sinner? He washes him through faith in His blood. He removes the sin, gives him power over sin, and keeps him free from sin. He then places him in the body as it pleases Him. There are not several bodies; there is only one. First Corinthians 12:18 says, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

This building that Jesus is building has to be built upon the Rock. You have to dig deep in your experience. Many have built, but they have built on sinking sand.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-25: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

Many things have come against this house that Jesus spoke about. The rains, the floods, and the winds are metaphors for persecution, trials, and adversities that come upon the Christian. If you are not built on the Rock, Christ Jesus, doctrine itself can sweep you away. Now, Church of God doctrine is not the easiest to absorb. To be able to absorb Church of God doctrine, you have to dig deep and have a really good experience. The Church of God is the only church that I know of that preaches true holiness, or living free from sin. You are called to holiness.

Deuteronomy 32:2 says, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." There is no doctrine like the Church of God doctrine. It is based on the Bible. Doctrine almost as good is not good enough to get you to Heaven. You need to have the real thing to get your soul into Heaven. Doctrine can be upsetting and alarming, but it can also cause you to grow spiritually if you absorb it.

Many people who come in from false religion hear the Truth concerning the church and begin to crumble and fall away. Why? Their experience is not built upon the Rock. The enemy can come in upon you like a flood, a flood that will sweep your experience away if you are not settled, grounded, rooted, and built upon the Rock.

Isaiah 59:19 reads, "So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him." There are false doctrines that can upset you if you are not truly

grounded, settled, founded, and built on the Rock.

### **The Washing of Water by the Word**

Ephesians 4:14 states, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

The sinners that Jesus called to build His church have all been cleaned up, and their names are changed from sinner to saint. They do not have to wait for many years to be canonized to become saints; they become saints when they are born again. Their sins are gone, and they have been made clean.

The Founder of the Church of God did not come preaching, "Join the church of your choice." No, He did not say to make sure you shake the preacher's hand. What did Jesus say? He said to repent. What are you to repent of? You must repent of your sin. The Founder of the church has washed some of the vilest of sinners. He has saved drug addicts, alcoholics, and even murderers and blasphemers.

Paul said he was a blasphemer. Jesus got hold of some traitors and cleaned them up. Also, He got hold of some who were devil possessed and cast the devil out of them. He even got hold of adulterers and fornicators and cleansed them from every vile sin that they had. He has saved the hypocrite, the lukewarm professor, those who left their first love, those who allowed Jezebel in their lives, and those who allowed worldliness in their lives. The blood of Jesus can remove every sin. The blood can reach down to the deepest stain of the vilest sinner, to the one who is an offscouring even to the world. Jesus can turn him around.

How does God wash His people? The Bible tells us in Ephesians 5:26, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." This cleansing is

through faith in the Word. The Church of God is not an invisible church. No, the Church of God is very visible. It is made up of real people, and you can see the people in the stores, in the factories, and in the restaurants.

Hebrews 12:22-23 reads: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." In other words, you have come to where there is a visible church. You can see God's people just as others could see the Apostles, just as some could see Jesus, and just as many could see ones saved in the days of the Apostles.

Today you can see true saints doing real jobs living right amongst a world full of sin. They have feelings, they hurt, they get offended, they can cry, they can laugh, they can feel pain; however, there is one big difference in them: they have been cleaned up on the inside. God cleans up the inside first, and then after He cleans them up, you start seeing the cleanliness coming through to the outside. The next thing you know, the sisters let their hair grow, they get rid of their shorts and pantsuits and all that is immodest. Next, off come the earrings and other jewelry. They are very visible; they do not run and hide. This thing is not done in a corner. It is done right out in the open. They are right out there with worldly people. They are in nearly all walks of life. You can see them driving cars, walking down the streets, and shopping in the malls; they are seen wherever you want to look. What are they? They are a part of the visible Church of God.

### **One Foundation and One Church**

The Founder of the church is very particular. He does not take just anything into the church. He

requires each member to be saved. One has to be saved or God cannot fit him into the building. To be a member of this church, one has to be born again; he has to experience the new birth. If Jesus could not save a man or a woman from sin and keep him or her free from sin, then He could not have a church; but we know He has a church. All these doctrines that are out in the religious world cannot save a man or a woman from sin. There is catechism, baptism, speaking in tongues, religions of works, church joining, allegiance to creeds, putting forth the right hand of fellowship, being voted in, and observing different rites and rituals. However, none of these things can bring deliverance and keep a person from sin. On this foundation you can only build one church, there is only one foundation. How many literal buildings can you put on one foundation? You cannot put two or more upon it; only one building can go on one foundation. There is one body, one church, one Lord, and one baptism.

The church is still being built, and members will continue to be added to the body. Acts 2:47 says, "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." You may say, "I don't see people getting saved every day." The church is not just in one location. The church is universal; the church is worldwide. Wherever people are saved and living for God, the Lord adds to the church.

The Founder of the Church of God brings every one of us through a straightening process. When I worked at Rockwell, we had straighteners to straighten axles. We used a heat treatment. The axles came out really hot, so we cooled them and then put them on a straightener. Well, God has a "straightener" that He brings us through. You can read about it in Isaiah 40:4, which states, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made

straight, and the rough places plain."

Those who have low esteem, He exalts; those who have too much pride, He brings down. Those who have many rough places, He smooths out. What does He use? He uses the Gospel to take off all those rough edges. How does He do that? He does that by your sitting under the preaching of God's Word.

When I got saved, I surely had a lot of rough places in my life, but the Gospel kept knocking them off, cutting them back, purging them, and trimming them. Next, I got whittled down, and then I got whittled down some more, until there was nothing left but holiness to the Lord.

Jesus built the church to contain all saved people of common Spirit and to keep them separate from sinners. The church was built so that all men might hear the voice of God amidst all the voices of false religion. Also, it is to instruct men and women and to show the path that God has chosen for them to walk so they can travel safely to the other side. The Church of God was not started by a man or by a group of men. How was it started? The church was stated by divine revelation.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." I do not want in any other church. I want to stay in the church that Jesus built and is building. I trust that you can see who the Founder of the church is. He is the answer to all the other cardinal teachings. The Founder of the church is Jesus Christ, and if you are in anything else that does not have Jesus Christ as the founder, you are in the wrong one. What should you do? You should not stay there; you should get out of it. Why? The Bible lets you know that plagues are upon Babylon. You need to come out of it. The Founder of the Church of God is not Doctor So-and-So, but it is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

*(Compact Disc TR-1316E)*

*Romans 11:2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,*

*3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.*

*4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself*

*seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.*

*5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

# There Is a Remnant



*Brother Tim Wilson*

## **There Is Something We Can Do**

Even through those dark ages of time, God had a people, and He will always have a people. I am thankful that even in the trying times, we can trust God and know that He will see us through. I want you to see what God said to this prophet who was going through a discouraging time. He was passing through a hard place. I want you to focus your attention on verse 5 of our Scripture

text, which reads, "There is a remnant according to the election of grace."

God has a people who are what God wants them to be in every circumstance. We are living in trying times, when some people are letting down instead of being what God wants them to be. The Word of God calls it an apostasy. There are times when we, as saints of God, are going to be tried on every side. The enemy is going to work as never before, but

God has always had a people, even in the darkest hours of time, even in the hardest places, and even in the most difficult trials. God has always been true.

When it seemed that wickedness was winning, God had a people. God was faithful to His people, and for this reason, even in a time of apostasy, I would like to see a revival. We can read about Finney's day and some of the others when revival was present and souls were

searching for God. I would like to see such a time, but we must be honest, we are not living in that day. We are living in a time when the enemy is working in a greater way than ever before.

Today we see humanism, immorality, and ungodliness working as never before. The enemy of souls does not want to see people saved. We must stop and realize that, while we live in this time of apostasy, wickedness, and ungodliness, there is still something that we can do.

You may ask, "What are you talking about when you say we live in a time of apostasy?" We are living in a time when people who have been faithful to God for many years are caught up in a spirit of apostasy. They go the other way instead of being what God would have them to be. We live in a time when people are turning away from the Truth. They are turning away from the plain, old-fashioned way of living for God and being what God wants them to be. The enemy has sold them the idea that there is an easier way, but there is only one true way that the Bible teaches.

I am not a doomsday preacher, but we do need to face some facts. I realize there are times when it is good to tell of the goodness of God and the works of God, but there are other times when we have to face the facts. In the time in which we are living, as saints of God, we know what we need to do. I want us to look at not only the letting down but also the things that can work on us and make inroads into our lives. We must stay really close to God.

We must see that it is very easy to feel that the things we are doing for God are in vain. No matter who you are or what you are doing for God, the enemy is out to bring discouragement, whether you are a teacher, a preacher, a choir leader, a song leader, one who testifies to others, or a motivator, the enemy is out to get you. The enemy will work on you. It is easy to get discouraged if you are not careful.

After the enemy gets you down,

he never tells you it is your fault; it is always somebody else's fault. He will say, "If the preacher would have preached something different, or if the song director would have chosen different songs, I could have been further up the road." We must understand that is the way it is in the day and time in which we are living, and the enemy is working to discourage.

### **God Is in Control**

Elijah lived in a time of apostasy. If you will study 1 Kings, Chapters 16 and 17, you will find that it was a time when the leader did not have any backbone. He was afraid to take a stand. King Ahab was actually being ruled by his wife; Jezebel was running the show. Instead of Ahab bringing her to the truth, she brought false worship with her. She worked so hard to set up false worship that she tried to outlaw true worship and bring in Baal worship, yet the king did not do anything about it.

The Prophet Elijah was an unknown person at that time, but the Bible says he began to pray. He called on the One who could do something. You may think, "Oh, he prayed a terrible thing; he prayed for God to send judgment." People do not want to hear judgment preaching today. When you start laying out judgment, some people find fault and back away, but Elijah prayed, and it brought something that nothing else could bring.

The Bible tells us in 1 Kings 17:1 that Elijah had to take a message to the king. The message said, "There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." Well, there sat the king, and Mr. Nobody was talking to him. That is what we have today. When somebody stands and starts saying, "Thus saith the Lord," the first thing some people want to say is this: "Who does he think he is? What does he think he's doing?" In Elijah's day, no doubt some people thought, "There's Mr. Nobody trying to tell us there

will be no rain or dew." Elijah told them, but what the people did not realize was that he was not alone. Elijah had God with him.

If you study, you will find that those people were taught that Baal controlled the seasons, the weather, the crops, and everything else that happened. God knew where the falsity was, so He sent something to clear it up. Baal did not control anything; God was in control.

For three and a half years, it never rained, and the dew never fell. Then, in essence, God said, "All right, Elijah, it's time for you to go back." This time Elijah challenged King Ahab: "I'll tell you what I want you to do. I want your prophets of Baal to meet me on Mount Carmel." When Elijah made the challenge, they were ready. Why? Because they really thought they had something. When the prophets of Baal got there, the Scripture says they made ready their sacrifice. They prayed and talked and did other things, but nothing happened. The Bible lets us know they screamed and hollered, yet nothing happened. You may ask, "Why didn't something happen?" The reason was, Baal was not God.

Elijah was not afraid of Baal, because Baal was only a thought in the people's minds. He knew that Baal had no power or authority. He knew that Baal had no strength. The devil is the same way. He does not have any authority, power, or strength except what you give him. If you do not give place to him, he does not have any power to overcome you.

If the devil is a big dude with kingdoms and all, when Jesus came in contact with the man who was possessed with devils, how did they know what Jesus was going to do? They asked Jesus to send them into the pigs. Why did the devils have to ask for something? Why did they not go back to the devil's kingdom? The reason was that he does not have a kingdom, except what people give him. That is the reason Elijah trusted God and knew that God would see him through.

## God Has Reserved to Himself a People

The Scripture tells us that when Elijah called on God at Mount Carmel, God sent fire out of Heaven and consumed it all—the sacrifice, the altar, the stones, and the water. There was no doubt who was God and what God was able to do. When God was put on display, He showed what He could do. After that, Elijah went up in the mountain and prayed seven times, and God sent the rain. God performed just what He was able to do, and He reassured Elijah. Elijah prayed, and God moved.

The Bible says that in the evening, as they came down out of the mountain, Elijah ran past the king's chariot, and no doubt he was praising the Lord. God had just shown Himself strong. He won a great victory. He enjoyed a great time in Zion. Every time we enjoy a high time, every time we enjoy a blessing, we had better watch, because a trial could follow that. Elijah had no more than laid down that night when someone knocked on the door with a message from Queen Jezebel. First Kings 19:2 says, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them [What was she talking about? She was speaking of the prophets of Baal that Elijah had just destroyed.] by to morrow about this time."

Elijah had just enjoyed a great victory. God had shown what He was able to do. He did things that people said were impossible. The next thing we know, Elijah and his servant were running away. They went as far as the border together, and then the Scripture says the servant went one way and Elijah went on into the desert. He got so exhausted that he could not go any more. He was fleeing from the wrath of Jezebel after serving the Living God. He sat down under a juniper tree and wished he could die. Has the enemy ever had you there? "Ah, I wish I could just give up!" After a

great victory, and God showing what He could do, along came this woman Jezebel to threaten Elijah. We find the same person that was running, shouting, and praising God just hours before was ready to throw in the towel, so to speak.

The next verses tell of the despair, the discouragement, and the loneliness that Elijah was facing. That is the reason it says in Romans 11:3, "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." Would you say that Elijah was feeling very low? In essence, he was saying: "Lord, it seems as if they are going to accomplish their desires. It looks like they are going to have their way." Jezebel was trying to stamp out pure religion.

In so many words, Elijah was saying: "God, what is going to happen to Your work? You just did a marvelous thing, but what am I going to do? What is going to happen to Your cause, to true religion, and to righteous living?" Romans 11:4 says, "But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." I want you to notice that He said, "I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men," or to make it plain, He was saying: "I have a remnant. I have a group of people who are still standing for Truth and doing what is right."

We are living in a time of apostasy, a time when wickedness is growing every day and ungodliness seems to be reigning. Remember this: God has preserved the Truth in a remnant of people who will stay faithful and true to Him all the way. That is where God is working. You must realize that God has always had a people, and He will always have a people. There will always be people who will live for God.

### Dealing With Discouragement

How can a Christian become discouraged? We find that when we

live faithfully to God and tell the message to an apostate generation, to people who are letting down, to people who have rejected the Truth, we may experience times of discouragement.

As a pastor, there have been times when I have been discouraged. There were times when I had high hopes that some people were going to come along and be true to God, but they did not, and the human side of me became discouraged. James 5:17 tells us, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are." What he went through, we have to face and work through.

I have heard people say, "I am so holy; it doesn't bother me." Well, I am looking for that place, because sometimes things still hurt me and bother me. How do we work through those things? Every person who has been true to God should have hopes, dreams, and goals. We ought to have a purpose that we are working for, living for, and pushing for. We must have those goals to keep going for God.

You may say, "We do not need goals." Paul had them. We read in Philippians 3:13-14: "This one thing I do . . . I press." What was he really saying? "I have a goal. I want to be more like Him." We need to have goals. We will never reach them until we are ready to go home. If we have reached our goals, then God will take us home. While we are here, we must still keep pressing and reaching. We have goals, and we have a purpose.

You may ask, "Brother Wilson, do you have dreams?" The Bible says we should have them as Christians. We should dream of the lost being saved. We should dream of the family of God getting together. We ought to have those kinds of dreams, and we ought to purpose to do what God wants us to do.

We have goals, dreams, and purposes that are unaccomplished, and they can be shattered. We can become affected by circumstances. You may ask, "What do you mean?"

Well, let me put it this way. You may pray, you may preach, and you may do everything you can to win a soul. When you labor and work to do that, and suddenly that person rejects it, that can be discouraging. If you are not careful, it will do more to you than you think. You can be hurt on the inside. The Prophet Elijah was hurt on the inside. God had just done some marvelous things, but defeat was after him.

Discouragement does not have to spell defeat. Some people may think, "Well, I have become discouraged, and I am defeated." No, you do not have to be defeated just because you are discouraged. Sometimes God may allow you to become discouraged to get you to dig a little deeper, to get you to lean on Him a little stronger, and to get you to trust in Him in a greater way. God does not condemn a person for becoming discouraged. If that person does not turn away from Truth, does not turn away from God, and does not let God down in his living, God will do anything He can to try to help him, to encourage him, and to bring him along.

### **Keep Pressing Despite Discouragement**

If, in discouragement, you turn away from Truth, compromise what you know God has told you to do, and go another way, then I believe He will condemn you. Only when you put your heart, your soul, and your life into serving God will it work. The Bible lets us know there will be times of discouragement.

I believe Moses and Noah got discouraged. For more than a hundred years, Noah preached and built the ark, and the only converts he had were his wife and children. Do you think there were times that Noah got out of bed in the morning and said, "God, why do You want me to do this?" He kept going because he knew that was what God had told him to do. God let Noah know there was going to be a flood and people were going to be de-

stroyed. It was the Truth of God's Word that kept him going.

In this time of apostasy and wickedness, we cannot look around at all that has taken place, or look at the world's concept of success. Elijah was discouraged, and he felt all alone. In so many words, he said: "Lord, they have killed the other prophets, they have torn down the altars, and they are living like heathens, doing everything that You do not want them to do. Now it looks as if they are going to get to me." When he got down in earnest, God said: "I have reserved seven thousand. I have a people who are still true to Me. I have a people who are still living for Me." God's way of encouraging him still works for us today. It has not grown old. If you will look at it like God wants you to, it will be an encouragement to you today.

God was telling him, "I still have a faithful people." Because of that, many times, the enemy will make you feel as though you are all alone. The enemy wants to work on you and say: "Nobody wants to do right and live right anymore! Nobody wants the Gospel." What is the devil doing? He is trying to get you to lose sight of the great work that God has done all around you. I believe that what God had to say to Noah is still good for us. God still has a people.

What is a remnant? A remnant is a fragment or a scrap. For example, it is what is left over after a merchant has sold off most of the bolt of cloth or another textile. Today we have a remnant of God's people. This remnant is what is left after the enemy has bought the Truth from people. The devil has bought the Truth away from many through a tidal wave of ungodliness and iniquity on every side. He is working to try to deceive people by telling them that there is an easier way to get to Heaven. The Bible still lets you know that either you are going to meet the conditions or you are not going to make it.

You must realize that sometimes discouragement will work on you. It

worked on great men such as Elijah and Jeremiah. In essence, Jeremiah reported: "I am ready to quit! I am not going to preach any more." He was discouraged. Sometimes you may preach your heart out and spend all the strength you have, and then the enemy will still fight you fiercely. Those brethren seemed to be almost in despair. No doubt, they thought that no more good could be accomplished, but God still made a way.

### **A Testing Time**

In Romans 9:27-29 Paul quoted from Isaiah, Chapter 1, where Isaiah referred to the church as a "very small remnant." Also, Paul referred to a seed. What does it do? When a person plants seeds and gets a good crop, he keeps some of that seed for the next year. Why? He wants another good crop. Paul was saying, "God reserves seed for the next generation." The seed goes on, and the Truth is preserved. The Truth is preserved in people, in the Church of the Living God. It is preserved when it is passed on from one generation to another. That keeps it alive.

Truth needs to be preserved. We live in a discouraging time, and Truth needs to be passed on. Truth will encourage you, lift you, and give you strength to go on when you do not think you can. One big way it is preserved from one generation to another is by families. One family member tells another family member. One gets saved and tells another family member, and so on. If you study history, you will see that the Truth is preserved in a remnant of a man's own family. When he passes Truth on, Truth lives on in another generation. Our children are important.

I want you to realize that the enemy wants to discourage you from passing on the Truth to your children. The devil will say, "Your children don't want it." That is not what the Bible says. Everyone was born in cleanness and pureness. Seeing your children saved and

established in the Truth is of great importance. Seeing children born into the family of God is a very important part of the ministry.

We are living in a testing time. The Bible tells us we are going to be tested. When you stand and say, "I love Jesus, and I'm going all the way with God," you will be tested to see how far you will go. Words are cheap. Our choir sings the song, "I Love Him Too Much to Fail Him Now." I tell them, "You need to make sure that is more than a song; you are making a commitment." If you are not careful, the pastor might miss you in the services. Are you going to be able to survive the testing? This testing is going to get tough. The Bible says it is in the heated stages, and the enemy is doing everything he can to see if you are really saved and mean what you say.

Exodus 12:37 tells us that when the children of Israel departed from Egypt, there were about six hundred thousand of them. Numbers 26:65 says, "For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb . . . and Joshua. . . ." Every one of that great host died in the wilderness except Joshua and Caleb. What was it? A very small remnant, but they were faithful to God, and God saw them through.

### **Are You Willing to Pay the Price?**

If you are going to be a survivor and make it through, you have to do what Numbers 32:12 says: you must wholly follow the Lord. The reason Joshua and Caleb made it through was that they wholly followed the Lord! They did what He wanted them to do. When He sent them in to spy out the land, they came back and gave a good report. All the others had given false reports, but Joshua and Caleb stood up and told it like it was. They followed the Lord, and He took care of them.

In many cases today, too many

people are letting in worldliness. Many are cutting corners, trying to broaden the narrow way. Will you wholly follow the Lord in this time of compromise and apostasy? Will you surrender under pressure? The Bible lets us know that the closer we get to the end of time, the more the pressure will build. The heat is going to be turned up. The purpose of these thoughts is to challenge you to be faithful to God. We serve a faithful God. He has not let anyone down who has trusted Him. The enemy would like to discourage you and cause you to give up. There is strength in the Lord for everyone who will look to Him.

I want to pass the Truth on to my children in the right way. I want to see Truth preserved. If this old world lasts another fifty years, I want to see Truth go on and see others herald the Truth of God's Word.

We are in a time when the enemy would like to draw us back. I want to be part of that remnant in this day of apostasy. I want to be a part that passes the Truth on to the next generation. I want to be part of that seed that is faithful in producing what God wants us to produce. When you pass away, will Truth die with you? It could if you are not a faithful seed carrier. When your time comes to move on, will that be the end? I hope not.

Do not be overwhelmed by discouragement or by trials. Do not be overwhelmed by things the enemy tries to pull on you. Greater is He that is in you. The Bible teaches that God defeated the devil a long time ago, and he is still defeated. In God's eyes he has never been loosed. No, God bound him years ago, and he is still bound. Jesus said all power is given to Him in Heaven and in earth. He still has the authority.

You need to go on and be faithful no matter what it may cost you. Are you willing to pay the price? It will be worth it in the end. One of the main difficulties in this day is not that of passing the Truth on, but of practicing the Truth. Peo-

ple must see it working in you. It has to be practiced; it must be lived. Today many people are succumbing to peer pressure. The enemy wants to make them feel that they are standing all alone. You are not the only one who feels this way. No matter what feeling you get, somebody has already had it. You are not a first-timer. Many saints of God have gone on before you and had to go through the same things.

### **Power to Overcome**

When the enemy turns up the pressure, you must turn to God. Let Him give you the power to overcome the pressure and to become what He wants you to be.

We live in a time when the qualifications of seed bearers are high. Not just anybody can bear this seed. It may cost you a friend or a fellowship, but you have to be willing to keep the seed. Not only is the cost high, but the test is severe. You must take a stand and say, "I am going all the way with God." Mark it down, the enemy is going to test you. The test might become severe, and the cost could be great. Are you willing to pay the price? It will be worth it all one of these days. One songwriter penned, "*It will be worth it all when we see Jesus; Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ. One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, So bravely run the race till we see Christ.*"

Will Truth die with you? This battle is not over. As long as you are living and breathing, you are in a battle. This testing time is not easy. It tests every person right down to the very depths of his soul. Your love for God, for His cause, for His Truth, for other people, and for your own children ought to challenge you to want to be true and more faithful. Do not be overwhelmed by discouragement, but let God lift you above it.

Are you willing to come to the place where you love Truth and righteousness enough that you are willing to become a wholehearted

seed bearer for God? This is not something you just decide to do. God has to give you this ability. It is just like salt: too little salt is not good, and too much is not good. It has to be the right amount. You need the right amount of God in your life to carry this seed and to spread it out to a world that needs it. This comes about by starting out on your knees, saying: "God, I don't want Truth to die with me. I want to be a seed bearer. I want to see Truth go on, Lord. You are going to have to give me a vision of what I need to see. I need to see what You are able to do, not what the enemy or the world is saying."

Are you willing to pay the price to carry on the Gospel? My prayer is that God will help you in this trying time, in this time when the enemy would like to get the upper hand. I

pray that God will stir your heart with a strong desire. As long as I live, I want to spread the Truth. We live in a needy world. We live in homes that have needy children. Without God's divine direction and help they will be lost forever. When God calls you from this time world, what is going to happen to Truth? I pray that it lives on. The enemy is making great inroads, and if you are not careful, he can make inroads into your life. He will get you to lie to yourself and say, "They don't want to be saved" or "They don't want to be helped" or "They aren't looking for Truth." The Bible says every honest heart is searching. One songwriter wrote: *"I searched for Him and knew not what I searched for. I longed for Him, and knew not what I longed for. When I found Jesus, I knew that I would search no more. He filled a*

*longing down in my soul."* He made a new creature out of me. He caused old things to pass away and all things to become new, and He gave me a desire to become a genuine seed bearer in the Kingdom of God. As a saint of God, do you have that desire?

The enemy is right there to say, "What are you going to do?" Let me tell you what to do. You can start on your knees with Jesus: "Lord, make me a willing vessel. Make me a water pot in your kingdom, so that what people need will just pour out of me as I come in contact with them." If you want Truth to live on, then you must create a desire in your heart for God to help you to keep it alive.

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# A Noxious Tree

The black walnut tree has a peculiar quality that affects the soil about its roots with a poisonous substance very unfavorable to the growth of many kinds of vegetation. Grass may grow luxuriously under it, but many other things shrivel and die.

There is something in many lives that corresponds to the black walnut tree. In its baneful influence many of the good things of life cannot develop.

This tree is a noxious tree. It grows in the land of unbelief. It is the worry tree. Many lives are cursed with this tree. It is one of their most prominent characteristics. It spreads its shadow over everything. It shuts out the sunlight. It poisons the soil. It draws up into itself the resources of the soul as a natural tree draws water from the soil, leaving spiritual faculties and powers parched and impoverished; it prevents their proper development and fruition.

Worry is one of the worst things that comes into a life. Perhaps only sin is worse; worry may even become sinful. It is a form of fear. Fear, worry, anxiety, and foreboding are the same in effect and will all be treated together. The worry tree does not grow in the land of faith; but in the land of unbelief and questioning, it spreads its great roots of doubt deeply into the soil. The results of worry are too numerous to be recounted in full.

One result is that wherever worry is given place, it stops the song of joy. We cannot be glad when we worry. We cannot be free and happy. The moment we worry over a thing, peace, joy, satisfaction, and comfort all vanish. The sun goes behind a cloud. A chill wind blows upon us. Many people make themselves utterly wretched through worry. Its effects are not merely spiritual. The whole being is poi-

soned by it. Perhaps it would be well to consider some of the effects worry produces. If we know those effects, it may cause us to avoid that which produces these effects.

We note first the physical effects. Certain glands located in various portions of the body control the bodily functions. Some of these glands are excited to action by fear. They secrete a powerful substance that is poured into the bloodstream and produces immediate effects. It is this that causes one to run away from danger or to be able to expend much greater energy than at any other time. A good purpose is served by these glands, but when they are overstimulated by fear, worry, anxiety, or any other emotion, they produce too great an effect upon the nerves. This tends to make one nervous, and this in turn reacts to produce fear and worry. This action and reaction continued, repeated over and over, breaks down the nerves. A great many nervous people are what they are simply because they have given way to worry. It upsets the whole course of nature. Many physical disorders are the direct result of worry. A few quotations from medical authorities may help to make this plain.

Doctor McCoy said: "The mind can have a powerful stimulating effect toward either health or disease. When the mind is properly used and controlled, health may be maintained under many adverse conditions. However, when the mind is torn by conflicting, destructive emotions, it kills the very cells it is supposed to guard and control." Again, he said: "You must realize how important the mind is as a factor in the production of many chronic disorders. Sometimes this process is so insidious as to be unrecognized except by the closest attention of a skilled diagnostician. In my practice I have seen a number

of cases of paralysis which were induced by slight injury associated with fear. Although these patients had been to many different doctors and undergone many different kinds of treatments, they were not cured until this fear factor was recognized and then the cure took place almost instantly."

Doctor Copeland, a late health commissioner of New York City, said: "Worry has a pronounced effect upon the organisms. If your hair is inclined to be oily, you will observe that no matter how frequently you scrub it, it grows oily very quickly if you are worried." He says of the effect of worry, "The digestion is upset because the nerves controlling the circulation and muscular structures are 'jumpy' and disturbed in function. The intestinal action is disturbed. The brain and nervous system are upset. The glands operate irregularly. The whole system is deranged. Good teeth, as indeed good eyes and ears and heart and blood vessels and liver and kidneys, are dependent on lack of worry and plenty of restful sleep. Worry is deadly to vigor and usefulness."

A whole book of this sort of quotations could easily be selected. Doctor G. H. McIntosh said, "If men could wipe out all fear from their minds, nine tenths of them would be free from sickness." Henry Ward Beecher said, "It is not work that kills men; it is worry. Worry is rust upon the blade."

The mental effect of worry and fear is equally as great as the physical effect. Through worry people often work themselves up into a mental fever so that their nerves "go to pieces." When we worry, the mind cannot think clearly. The judgment is impaired. Things look out of proportion. They do not seem natural, but appear altogether different from what they do when the mind is in a normal condition. Sometimes it partly or entirely unfits one for work. Have you not heard people say, "I am so upset that I just cannot do anything"?

*[continued on page 25]*



Young men look about them and see a great measure of worldly success awarded to men without principle. They see the trickster crowned with public honors. They see the swindler rolling in wealth, they see the sharp man, the over-reaching man, the unprincipled man, the liar, the demagogue, the time server, the trimmer, the scoundrel who cunningly manages, though constantly disobeying moral law and trampling upon social courtesy to keep himself out of the clutches of the police, carrying off the prizes of wealth and place. All this is a demoralizing puzzle and a fearful temptation. Multitudes of young men are not strong enough to stand before it. They ought to understand that in this wicked world, there is a great deal of room where there is integrity.

Great trusts may be sought by scoundrels, but great trusts never seek them; perfect integrity is at a premium even among scoundrels. There are some trusts that they will never confer on each other. There are occasions where they need the services of true men, and they do not find them in shoals and in the mud, but alone and in pure water.

Integrity is the foundation of all that is high in character among mankind; other qualities may add to its splendor, but if this essential requisite be wanting, all their luster fades. Our integrity is never worth so

much to us as when we have lost everything to keep it. Integrity without knowledge is weak; knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful. Integrity, however rough, is better than smooth dissimulation. Let a man have the reputation of being fair and upright in his dealings, and he will possess the confidence of all who know him. Without these qualities every other merit will prove unavailing. Ask concerning a man, "Is he active and capable?" Yes. "Industrious, temperate, and regular in his habits?" O, yes. "Is he honest? Is he trustworthy?" Why, as to that, I am sorry to say that he is not to be trusted; he must be watched. He is a little tricky and will take an undue advantage, if he can. "Then I will have nothing to do with him" will be the invariable reply. Why, then, is honesty the best policy? Because without it you will get a bad name, and everybody will shun you.

The world is always asking for men who are not for sale; men who are honest, sound from center to circumference, true to the heart's core; men who will condemn wrong in friend or foe, and in themselves as well as others; men whose consciences are as steady as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right if the heavens totter and the earth reels; men who can tell the truth, and look the world and the devil right in the eye; men who neither brag nor run; men who neither

flag nor flinch; men who can have courage without shouting to it; men in whom the courage of everlasting life runs still, deep and strong; men who do not cause their voices to be heard on the streets; men who will not fail nor be discouraged till judgment be set in the earth; men who know their message and tell it; men who know their places and fill them; men who know their own business; men who will not lie; men who are not too lazy to work, not too proud to be poor; men who are willing to eat what they have earned and wear what they have paid for. It is always safe to trust those who can trust themselves, but when a man suspects his own integrity, it is time he was suspected by others. Moral degradation always begins at home. Honesty is never gained or lost suddenly or by accident. Moral strength or moral weakness takes possession of us by slow and imperceptible degrees.

Avoid—and young men especially—all base, servile, underhand, sneaking ways. Part with anything rather than your integrity and conscientious rectitude; flee from injustice as you would from a viper's fangs; avoid a lie as you would the gates of hell.

Some there are who, in stooping to mercantile dishonor and business—in driving the immortal bargain—think they have done a clever

*[continued on page 20]*

Hebrews 6:11 *And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:*

12 *That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

13 *For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,*

14 *Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.*

15 *And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.*

16 *For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is*

*to them an end of all strife.*

17 *Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:*

18 *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:*

19 *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;*

20 *Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

Hebrews 7:1 *For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;*

2 *To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;*

3 *Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.*



# Two Immutable Things

*Brother Allen Polston*

## **Be Diligent Concerning Your Salvation**

Reading this Scripture text, you will notice that the writer had a burden for the Hebrew people. He said in verse 11, "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." I believe that we must be reminded and encouraged from time to time to stay diligent in our Christian walk. We must not get

slothful or careless, lest we begin to overlook important things. We need to be diligent. Anyone who is going to be successful in anything must be diligent. If you are going to be a successful businessman, you cannot turn your business over to just anybody. You must keep a handle on that business. If you have a hobby, you have to be diligent if you are going to excel in it.

As a Christian, you must be diligent. The word *diligent* means

"persistent in doing anything; constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken." You must be diligent and serious about living for God. You need to be concerned about your salvation, not just when you come to the house of worship or in the presence of the saints, but at all times.

Peter said in 2 Peter 1:10, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure." If you are really going

to get rewarded and blessed, you have to be diligent. Do you think you can expect to half-heartedly be concerned about your relationship with God and receive the same kind of blessings as those who are diligent?

Something was working among the Hebrew people. In discovering how things were at work then, we can often see how they are still at work today. These Scriptures still have an application for us. Something was going on in the minds and the lives of these Hebrew people. When a person believes that there is a reward or a payday approaching, that is an incentive to go on.

One song says, "*I'm not giving up.*" Accompanied with a real attitude of not giving up is an understanding that there is a reason not to give up. A reward can be expected if you do not give up, and that can motivate you, but you must keep in mind that there is a reason to go on. It is no secret that Christian living is not always easy. Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:12, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

### **Do Not Lose Hope**

Sometimes you will hit some rough places as you travel along this Christian highway. It is often an ongoing conflict because you live in a robe of flesh. The Galatian writer wrote that the flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. This is something that you will deal with as long as you live in this time world. There is no experience, no work of grace, or no commitment that can change that. There is always going to be a conflict that occurs. Also, you have daily accusations from what the Bible calls the "accuser of the brethren."

There was a period of time when I did not have any work, and the devil repeatedly accused me of being lazy and slothful. When I got work and was really busy, the devil came back and accused me of not being diligent enough for the Lord.

He is always going to point his finger and make you feel that you are not saved. Nevertheless, you must not allow battles, setbacks, mistakes, or failures to rob you of hope.

The Hebrew people's hope was being taken away, according to Chapter 6 of our Scripture text. When hope is deferred, the Scripture says it makes the heart sick. In other words, you do not have much desire to go on. When you feel that something is a hopeless cause, you are not going to give much diligence to it. If you feel that something is not going to get any better, you will back away from it and become discouraged. You may not completely take down the banner, but your heart will not be in it. Proverbs 13:12 says, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life."

The writer of Hebrews was trying to convince the people that their effort for God was not in vain. We read in Hebrews 6:10, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." God will not forget what you do for Him.

The devil will say: "You do not need to pray. It won't do any good." God remembers everything you do for the Lord to spread the Gospel. It is recorded. We can see from the letter to the Hebrews that their hope was being deferred, and it was causing them to begin to back off. God does not want anyone to back away, and He does not want anyone to be lost.

You may say, "You don't know what I have done." It does not matter to God. He does not want you to die lost, and He does not want you to have a horrible life. There is still hope and opportunity. You might have made some terrible mistakes or you might have done some things that you really regret. Now is the time to change all of that, because there is hope in God. He is able to bring about that change. Certainly

there are consequences for doing wrong. There is always some reaping, but God can help you.

In the previous chapters of the Book of Hebrews, you can see that the people were backing off. Hebrews 5:12 tells us, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again." That is an indication of where these people were. In essence, the Hebrew writer was saying, "You should be at the point in your relationship with God where you can start to teach other people about the Lord, but instead you are having to be taught these things again." This tells us that they had backed off; they were not being diligent. They were not maintaining their experience, so they were not where they needed to be spiritually. They were not going strong, and they had become lax in their efforts; that can happen.

### **Hope Brings Motivation**

We read in Hebrews 6:6, "If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." What was the writer talking about? He was warning the Hebrew people about backing off, or about drifting. It is obvious in this text that the Hebrews were flirting with the notion of going back into sin instead of going forward for God.

The Bible says that when you have hope, it is an anchor. One brother explained being in a boat that they thought was anchored, but the next thing they knew, they were at the shoreline; they were not really anchored.

Someone was telling me about a similar experience. She and her husband were on a boat fishing one night. It was dark, and they thought they were in a safe location. Suddenly they began to hear running water and wandered what was going on. They got a light and discovered they were just a few yards from going over a waterfall. It would have been very devastating had they not checked their location.

When your hope has been taken

away and you do not feel there is any reason to go on, it will cause you to become negligent. Hope is an anchor to the soul, and that hope will hold you, just as an anchor holds a boat steady. When your hope is in place, it will cause you to keep up your prayer life and the reading of God's Word. It will help you to keep going to the house of God. Hope will give you motivation.

The Apostle Paul tried to remind the Hebrews of their need to show diligence, not slothfulness, and to be followers of those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. What was robbing them of their zeal? I do not believe their hearts were filled with evil or that they were involved in sin. I believe they lost hope. Over the years, lots of people have prayed for salvation. They went along fine for a while, but they turned back, not because they were evil, but simply because they lost hope. Losing hope took away their zeal. They questioned: "Why should I get up and go to church? I don't believe there is any reward or any blessing in it. I have tried to dress right, live right, talk right, and avoid certain worldly things, but I'm not going to make it." Dear one, Satan is behind those thoughts. God does not necessarily instantly reward you when you make a commitment to Him. There have been times when we have prayed for people, and God moved instantly, but many times we have prayed and it took some time before the hand of God moved.

A brother was telling me how God has helped him with his back pain. It reminded me of how God helped with my back problem. When I was about thirty-five I came down with a back problem. For about a month I could hardly move without suffering back pain. I could not work, and my wife had to tie my shoes. Finally, I got to where I could move about more freely, but every little bit, the same thing would happen again.

I dealt with that pain for several years. I was anointed and prayed for

several times, and many were praying for me. For a long time, I did not see the hand of God move; then in August 2013 God moved on my back, and I have not had a back problem since. I have been lifting heavy objects and working since God touched me and healed my back. I have not had to take any medication for it since August 2013, and I really appreciate God's goodness.

Often God does not work in the time frame that we think He should. God's ways are higher than our ways. He knows the proper time to move and to bring about a reward for faith, trust, and patience. Between the time when you begin to request help and the time that God moves, the devil likes to have a heyday.

I believe that was what the devil was doing to the Hebrews. Some people had accepted the message of Jesus Christ and had turned loose those Old Testament customs and practices that they and their ancestors had been connected with—the animal sacrifices, the ceremonies, and the ordinances. Some people had accepted the message of Jesus Christ, put their faith in Him, and had let go of the old customs. Because of that, they were in a testing time.

### **Living by Faith**

The devil will try you in the waiting period. Waiting is one of the most difficult things you will go through because you know you have obeyed the Word and the Spirit of God, but you have not seen the results. That is where these Hebrew people were, and they needed to be encouraged. When you are in a waiting period, you may not feel or see much happening, but you need to hold on, because God has not forgotten you. God has not forgotten your labor of love and when you prayed and did what was right. God is aware of every bit of it. The devil would like to make you think that God has forgotten.

When a message is preached and some are persuaded to come to God, they may kneel at an altar of prayer and say: "Lord, I want to serve You. I want to do what is right. I want to live the Christian life." That is a good thing. We encourage that, and it is the reason we have altar calls in our services. We invite people and make it known that there is liberty to pray. Thank God, where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty. Do not let the devil hinder you. When God speaks to you and stirs your heart, if you want to get closer to God, you can.

You need to make a commitment and say: "Lord, I really want to serve You. I am conscious of the need in my life, and I want to serve You. I want to be more diligent than I have been. I have been a little lax in my efforts and too involved with other things. I want that to change." Young person, you may say: "Lord, I don't want to go the way of the world. I don't want to be like some of my friends. I want to live a good, clean life." That is wonderful to make that commitment, but you need to understand that sometimes you may not feel excited and full of zeal. There will be testing times and some waiting. That is when the enemy will begin to take advantage of you. When you go to an altar of prayer, the devil may harass you and say: "You did not get anything. You are not any different. That did not do you any good." Dear one, he is trying to rob you of your hope and your anticipation.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. When you say: "Lord, I don't want to drift or give up. I want to go forward for You. I do not want to be carried away with the things of this world." You can make that move in anticipation of help, and you will be rewarded. If you go to an altar of prayer and really pray the prayer of faith, God will hear your prayer.

Oftentimes there will be a period of waiting before you really begin to experience the blessing of your

commitment. Very few people are able to declare that God has moved immediately. Most of the time when you make a commitment, you have to claim it and then go forth in anticipation that God has taken note of it. It is recorded, and God is going to reward you for it. During that time frame is often when the devil is going to target you. He is going to work against your zeal and your diligence. If you make that kind of commitment, then you ought to be diligent and serious about it.

When you make a commitment to God, whether it is asking Him to save you or getting deeper into the things of God, you need to put some effort behind that. The devil will fight your diligence and try to get you to feel that you were moved by emotion.

Some people run well for a while, and then they let the devil rob them of victory. Paul wrote to the Galatians in Galatians 5:7, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" In a lot of cases, people start thinking, "Oh, it's no use; it's never going to work out." That is just the enemy trying to rob you of your hope and keep you from being diligent. Waiting is very challenging because you do not know when God is going to move. In Galatians 3:11 Paul said, "The just shall live by faith," but it is during the waiting that some people give up and begin to conjure up all kinds of thoughts and plans.

### **Have Confidence in God**

We usually plant a garden, and I enjoy planting corn, beans, tomatoes, potatoes, and other vegetables. It would be foolish of me to plant a garden and then come back out the next day and say, "Where are the corn and beans?" and then replant the garden. That would be ridiculous. I have to put seeds in the ground and wait. It gets exciting when I look at the garden and see little sprouts begin to come up. However, it would be ridiculous if I just went out about a week later and

expected to get some potatoes out of the ground. There is a waiting period, and sometimes it is hard to wait for them, but we have to.

If you go to the altar and you plant a seed with God and say: "God, I want to be everything that You would have me to be. I want my life to be in order as You would have it. I want to live clean, do right, and be a useful vessel in Your work," that is a wonderful seed, but it will take time. I am not saying that you are going to go back into sin and keep sinning. I do not preach sinning more or less every day. However, when you make a commitment to God, you should be prepared to wait before you begin to receive the blessing. You may feel good about making a move, but you can be sure that the devil is going to try to make you feel badly.

During the waiting time, some people fall away. After they make a commitment and go back to their daily lives without seeing an immediate change, often the devil tries to make them feel that nothing will change and there is no use to go on. He is stealing their hope so they will not put any more zeal into it. Friend, if you are going through this, if you will be persistent and make a constant and earnest effort to accomplish what you have committed to God, victory will come through in due season.

God has promised two immutable things. The Hebrew writer used Abraham as an example because the Hebrew people had a lot of confidence in Abraham. They held him in high esteem. He is often called "the father of faith."

Hebrews 6:13-14 reads: "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." What was God telling Abraham? He was saying, "I am going to bless you, and I am going to multiply you." Did that happen overnight? No, not at all. It took years; it was a long, extended time. I am not saying that

everything you request is going to take years, but you must have confidence in God and not lose hope.

You must keep His promise before your eyes, and God will keep His end of the deal. In due season you shall reap if you faint not. You have to go through the waiting period with patience. He said in Hebrews 6:12, "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Some people have no problem praying for faith. You may pray, "Lord, increase my faith," but you must have patience for that faith to get anything accomplished.

Having faith does not mean something is going to come to pass overnight. Abraham had faith, and he is called the father of faith. Yet, if he had not had patience, it would not have worked for Him. You may say, "Well, if I pray for patience, I am afraid of getting plagued with problems." Romans 8:22 says, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." In Job 14:1 Job said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." My thinking is, if I am going to have trouble, at least patience will help me to go through it.

### **Exercising Faith and Patience**

Luke 11:11-13 says: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" God is not going to punish you for asking for something good. He does not sit on His throne and listen to your prayers and suddenly say: "Did you ask for patience? All right, I am going to give it to you. How dare you ask Me for patience! You are going to have tribulations, problems, and troubles."

If your son were to come and ask for bread because he was hungry, would you give him a stone and say: "You little rascal, how dare you ask me for a piece of bread! Let me get a rock. Put that in your mouth!" If he were to ask you for a fish sandwich, would you say, "Where is a scorpion?" Of course not! That is ridiculous. Likewise, God is not going to punish you for asking for something good.

Someone may say, "I prayed for patience, and six months later I had a severe trial." You were probably going to have that trial anyway. We all need both faith and patience.

Abraham had faith and patience to go through the thing that was between him and the blessings, and that was the waiting. The Hebrew people's hope of receiving the blessing and the confirmation that they were right was under attack. It was right that the old temple and the practices of the Old Testament Law were done away with. They were no longer under those Old Testament practices and animal sacrifices. All of that was past. Jesus came, and He is the only sacrifice needed since then. They were right in what they had done, just as it is right when a person comes to an altar of prayer and says: "God, I want to be a Christian. I want to serve You and do Your will. I want my life to be used in the Kingdom of God." That is a good desire.

### **God Has Promised Righteousness and Peace**

Sometimes it takes time for some things to become a reality, so you have to wait. God has promised some things that are unchanging. The word *immutable* means "unchanging." God has promised two unchangeable things to you and me.

Hebrews 7:1-2 states: "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpreta-

tion King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace."

God has promised righteousness to those who commit their lives to Him. It was the right thing to do when the Hebrew people took a stand for the message. To every person who yields his heart and life to God, that is right. To every person who prays: "God, I really want to serve You. I know that sin is not the way to go, and there are horrible consequences for those who live in sin. I want to live for You," that is the right choice. God has promised righteousness with that commitment to Him. You may say, "I made that commitment and blundered." You do not have to give in and quit because you have done something that you should not have done.

When a little child is beginning to walk, he will fall, walk a little, fall, and sometimes stagger around. God knows there are times when His child might have difficulty with a decision or a choice. Sometimes you will not choose the right way. I am not preaching a sin-you-will, sin-you-must doctrine, but you are human, and you may not always make the best decision. However, that is not an indication that you are not right with God.

Again, we read in Hebrews 7:2, "To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace." If you have made some blunders, perhaps you have tried and failed or gone back and forth, that is not God's will. He does not want you to start and stop and then start and stop again. He wants you to understand that He has promised you righteousness and peace, and those two things are immutable, or unchangeable.

The devil will tell you that you did not say the right thing, so you are not right with God. Certainly, you want to strive to give diligence to make the best choices. You should strive to be on time for the things that God would have you to do,

read your Bible, and pray. If the devil can get you in a position where you do not feel that you have confirmation, do not give up. That is where the Hebrews were. Paul was trying to remind them not to give up on their hope. It is an anchor to the soul. God will come through. You have made the right choice. You need to keep pressing on for God.

A song in the Evening Light Songs entitled "The Blood of Jesus" says:

*Must I in sinful bondage be,  
Deprived of peace and liberty,  
When in the promise I can see  
The blood of Jesus cleanseth?*

*Must I be doubting, full of fear,  
And gloom obscure my pathway  
here,  
Be up and down in life's career?  
The blood of Jesus cleanseth.*

*Must I be under guilt and sin,  
And have its blighting force within,  
Beset by wrong, no vict'ry win?  
The blood of Jesus cleanseth.*

*Must I suppose I'm right today,  
Tomorrow think I've gone astray,  
Let demons hold me in dismay?  
The blood of Jesus cleanseth.*

*Must I by Satan be accused,  
And with his galling yoke abused,  
Until at length from Heav'n  
refused?  
The blood of Jesus cleanseth.*

*The blood, the blood,  
The precious blood of Jesus;  
The blood will work a perfect cure,  
Will cleanse the heart and keep it  
pure;  
The blood, the blood,  
The precious blood of Jesus.*

If you make your commitment to God, whether you feel anything or not, in the days to come you must be diligent. You must keep your commitment and keep on pressing. The blessing will come. God will not forget you. He has promised some unchangeable things to His people.

Two of those things are righteousness and peace. Somebody may say: "I made that commitment, and then a couple of days later, I made a mistake. I did something that I really should not have done." You need to come right back to God and keep that right before Him. God has promised you righteousness and peace. You can go right on for God. You do not have to constantly be thinking: "I have done that," going up and down all the time, struggling and in bondage. You do not have to wonder all the time, "Am I saved or not?" You do not have to be in today

and out tomorrow. You can make a commitment to God and then be diligent. God takes note of it, and in due season He will begin to come through with the confirmation. After you have suffered for a while, He will establish you, settle you, and strengthen you.

Will you rise up from your altar of prayer and go out and be a giant for the Lord? Perhaps not, but in due season God will begin to strengthen your soul. Next, you will be saying, "I want to thank God for giving me the victory." God will send somebody along, and you will

begin to be used of God in some capacity. These are unchangeable things. First, however, you must make your commitment to God and be diligent and serve Him with all your heart. He is not looking for a reason to cast you away. He is looking for every reason to keep you pressing on. God loves you, and the church loves you. If you have made a mistake, had failures or set backs, do not let that hinder you from being everything for God from this point forward.

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[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

It has always been the Savior's desire to reach out to help any who are in trouble or distress. He especially calls to those who are in bondage to come to Him and to be saved from the terrible life of sin and degradation. As Jesus sat on the mount overlooking Jerusalem, He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children

and ye would not!" Unfortunately, so many still refuse His wonderful offer of mercy and forgiveness. He reaches out to bring salvation to souls, but many will not yield to Him or ask for His deliverance.

As the people of God, we need to also be careful that we do not refuse His help and guidance when troubles and burdens come our way. It is easy for Christians to try to

work out problems on their own. We sometimes neglect to cast our every burden and care on the Lord, Who stands ready to bring a solution. His call to "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" is for the saint as well as the sinner.

Selected

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[Especially for Young People—contin from p. 14] action. Things are often called by their wrong names; duplicity is called shrewdness, and wrong heartedness is called strong-headedness; evil is called good and good evil, darkness is put for light, and light for darkness. Well! be it so. You may be prosperous in your own eyes; you may have realized an envied fortune; but the shielding and the crust of bread with a good conscience is rather to be desired than the stately dwelling or palace without it. Rather than the marble mausoleum, which gilds and smothers tales of heartless villainy and fraud, far rather than lowly heap of grass we were wont often to gaze upon in

an old village churchyard, with the simple record of a cotter's virtues: "Here lies an honest man!" There is nothing more sad than to be carried like a vessel away from the straight course of principle, to be left a stranded outcast thing on the sands of dishonor: a man bolstering himself up in a position he is not entitled to.

"That is a man of *capital*," says the world, pointing to an unscrupulous and successful swindler. Capital! What is capital? Is it what a man *has*? Is it counted by pounds and pence, by stocks and shares, by houses and lands? No! Capital is not what a man *has*, but what a man *is*. Character is capital; honor is capital.

That is the most fearful of ruin when *character* is gone, when integrity is sold, when honor is bartered for a miserable mess of earthly pottage. God save you from ruin like this! Perish what may; perish gold, silver, houses, lands; let the winds of misfortune dash our vessel on the sunken rock, but let *integrity* be like the valued keepsake which the sailor boy lashed with the rope round his body, the only thing we care to save. Let one die; but let angels read, if friends cannot afford to erect the grave stone: "Here lies an honest man."

Selected

*Isaiah 35:1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.*

*5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.*

*6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.*

*7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.*

*8 And an highway shall be there,*

*and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*

*9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:*

*10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

*Isaiah 11:6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie*

*down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.*

*7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

*8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.*

*9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*

# The Peaceful Dwelling Together



*Brother Calvin Foster*

## People Characterized as Animals

Today many false doctrines are in the world in which we live. Ministers are telling people that in the future they can look forward to a golden age of peace and prosperity on the earth that will last a thousand years. They believe Christ is going to reign on the earth a thousand years, and they say there will be no crime,

no disease, and no war. They also teach that all the animals will be naturally tame. They say all of this will take place when Christ comes again. This doctrine is referred to as the millennial age.

The reason ministers put forth these two texts of Scripture as proof for their doctrine is that they take these Scriptures literally. They believe that Christ is going to come

back and reign on the earth for a thousand years. Dear one, the Bible teaches contrary to this. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is coming back with His holy angels and His feet will never touch this earth again. The saints of God are going to meet Christ in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17) and be changed from having a mortal body to having an immortal body in the twinkling of an

eye (1 Corinthians 15:52). So it would behoove you to be ready.

The people who interpret these Scriptures as literal have overlooked some things. First, let us look at our text of Scripture found in Isaiah 35:9. It says, "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast." If no lion shall be there, how can the lion eat straw like an ox, as found in Isaiah, Chapter 11? In Chapter 11, verses 6-9, we read that the wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the kid, and the cow and the bear will feed together. Also, we find in Isaiah 35:9 there will not be any ravenous beast there. Are not the leopard and the bear ravenous beasts? The answer is yes. We can see that the literal interpretation of these Scriptures can be confusing, so it is my desire to teach you the truth.

Let us look at some spiritual and true meanings of these Scriptures. First, we must understand that throughout the Bible, people are characterized as animals. We read in Genesis 49:9 of Jacob's son, which says, "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?"

In 1 Chronicles 12:8 we read that David's soldiers had faces like lions: "And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes [small deer-like animals] upon the mountains." I want to establish that throughout the Scriptures, people are characterized as animals. Jesus did not come to change the animals; He died to change you and me.

### Figurative Language

Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 7:15, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves." These are the wolves that were prophesied of in

Isaiah 11:6. In Acts 20:29 the Apostle Paul wrote to the elders, saying, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." He was not talking about literal wolves coming in and biting people. He was talking about false teachers and false preachers coming and devouring the people and dividing them.

We can see in another Scripture where men are characterized as animals. In Matthew 3:7, speaking of John the Baptist, it states: "But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" John called them poisonous snakes. Even Jesus Christ, in Matthew 23:33, said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Some people are characteristic of poisonous snakes. They are untrustworthy and unfaithful. They will smile in your face and then talk about you behind your back. Watching out for those with a snake-like spirit is wise. You may walk right up on them unaware, and they may bite you right away.

We read in Luke 13:31 that some Pharisees warned Jesus that Herod was going to try to kill Him. Jesus said in verse 32, "Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." Jesus knew that Herod was trying to fool people, just as a literal fox is sly and sneaky. Jesus knew what kind of character He was dealing with.

Another comparison can be found in Matthew 7:6. Jesus said, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." We can study in the Bible and find that pearls are likened to the Word of God. The Word of God is precious. Jesus said not to cast your pearls before swine. Why did He say that? They are going to trample the Word under their feet. These

type of people do not want to hear the Word of God. They are going to trample it under their feet, so to speak. In other words, they are not going to obey it, and they are going to turn right around and talk against the words that you spoke to them.

Jesus said the Word of God is for honest-hearted people, people who want to live right. God's ministers have great wisdom that God has given them. When a person wants to do right, he will listen to wisdom, hear God's Word, and not "trample" it under his feet.

Jesus spoke of not giving that which is holy to dogs. Why? They will just take it without any thought or consideration. When we eat something, we chew it and taste it. When you give a little puppy a treat or something to eat, it will not even look at it. A little puppy will just swallow it—gulp! That is how some people are. They do not really want the Truth. They hear it, and they go against what the man of God told them to do.

In Philippians 3:2 Paul said, "Beware of dogs [false preachers], beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." In Isaiah 56:10 God called them dumb dogs that cannot bark. Church of God preachers bark! Some ministers with much experience are like junkyard dogs. When a junkyard dog gets hold of you, you will know it! God's ministers bark and might have to do a little biting every now and then. Paul said to beware of these false preachers, comparing them to evil workers. He was saying that you need to watch those fellows who want to bring people back under the Law. You must beware of them.

In Psalm 23:1 the psalmist said, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." Christ is the great Shepherd of the sheep, and we who are saved are the sheep. God likened saved people to sheep. Throughout the Word of God, men and women are characterized as animals. This characterization in the Bible is called a "type," or "figurative language."

## Changing the Nature of Men Through Jesus Christ

Let us look at Matthew 11:2-6: "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

The message that Jesus sent back to John was to let him know that He was fulfilling the prophecy recorded in Isaiah 35:5-6. In other words, Jesus was saying, "Look, John, the blind see, the deaf hear, and the lame walk." This prophecy was being fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

The prophecy we find in Isaiah 11:6-9 is teaching the change in the nature of men by the power of God through Jesus Christ. Many of us had characteristics in our lives much like animals. Thank the Lord, when Christ comes into your heart, you are changed. Second Corinthians 5:17 tells us, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Isaiah 11:6 says, "A little child shall lead them." If you were once a mean person with a wolf spirit and you got saved, a little child could now lead you. What happened? God saved you and changed you. Some were so mean they might have thrown stuff at the dog and the cat. Friend, when you get saved, even the dog and the cat will know that you got saved. How? You will not throw things at them any more. It is God's desire to change the nature of people in such a way that even a little child could trust in them without having to fear. Sad to say, some people do not even like children, but

when God saves them, a little child can come around and play with them. Jesus said except you become as a little child, you will not make it into the Kingdom of Heaven.

### Comparing Animal Natures to Men

Let us look at the nature of some animals mentioned in our Scripture text. When studying the wolf, you will find that the wolf is a wild, flesh-eating, dog-like mammal. Wolves run in packs because they are a highly social animal and need the companionship of their own kind. Unlike dogs, they do not make pets. Man must act with caution and respect when dealing with a wolf. Rarely will a wolf look at you straight on. Its natural, social deference is to avoid eye contact. Because he avoids eye contact, it is interpreted by man as a sign of being sly, cunning, and untrustworthy. A person with a wolf-like nature would be considered fierce, cruel, or greedy.

A man who flirts aggressively with many women or has insincere love affairs is likened to a wolf. (If you have a daughter and she brings a boyfriend home, if he cannot look you in the eye, you had better watch out! He should look you in the eye and shake your hand.)

Wolves run in packs. When someone gets that wolf spirit in a congregation, he will not stay by himself. What does he do? A person like this will start talking to others. He may say: "I don't believe what the preacher preached, I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to follow the pastor's lead." Wolves want to get someone to agree with them. As the saying goes, "Misery loves company."

Next, we want to look at the lamb. A lamb is a young sheep. Exodus 12:5 tells us about sacrificial lambs: "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats." The gentleness of a lamb has caused it to become a sym-

bol of innocence and uncomplaining submissiveness. Christ is called "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). A lamb is used in comparison to a gentle or innocent person, particularly a child. In God's kingdom, the wolf dwells with the lamb; that wolf-like spirit has been changed.

Some people did not go as deep into sin as others and cannot really relate to their condition. On the other hand, some know what it means to be like a wolf and to have a wolf spirit. Through salvation, the wolf is able to dwell with the lamb. Friend, you need to be saved. No matter how deeply you have gone into sin, you still need to be saved. Everyone needs to be saved. You need salvation.

Let us look at the leopard. The leopard is a large, strong, ravenous, fierce, black-spotted cat of the southern Asian and African jungles. It is known to hide in trees and jump onto deer and other animals that pass beneath them in surprise attacks. The pastor may have confidence in someone and suddenly another spirit may come up in him: "Surprise! I am a leopard!" Nowadays, you cannot be surprised at anything that people do. You have to be ready.

Too many times people play around with the devil and do not get victory over these spirits. They will show up around the church as though they are still saved, but suddenly a leopard spirit will jump out at you in a surprise attack. Someone may say: "My, is that Brother So-and-So? I didn't know he would act that way."

A kid is a young goat, and it is a domestic animal. Have you ever heard the expression, "Did you get his goat?" That old expression means that you did something to make someone angry or to annoy him. Someone may step on another's foot, and that person may get really angry, so you would say that person got his goat, so to speak. Watch out that an angry spirit does not jump out of you if you are that person.

A young cow or bull is called a calf. This includes the elephant, the whale, the hippopotamus, and the seal. The fatling mentioned in our Scripture text could be a calf that is sitting with the lion. Do you realize a real lion would be sitting around lambs licking his teeth? *Jesus did not come to change animals; He came to change us.*

As we study the lion, we find a large, powerful mammal of the cat family found in Africa. A lion will hunt any animal except the elephant, the rhinoceros, or the hippopotamus. He has a little sense. The female lion does most of the hunting. A person with a lion-like nature would be of great courage or strength. In folklore or in a fable, the lion is considered the king of the beasts. The expression "a lion's share" means the largest portion. Someone likened to a lion could be a celebrated or prominent person.

### Manifesting Different Kinds of Spirits

Our text of Scripture is a picture of how God has done a wonderful thing in Mount Zion. In Mount Zion God has brought people in from many different walks of life who had different kinds of spirits. He has brought together those with different experiences and ways and enabled them to dwell in peace in His holy mountain. Why? Because their nature was changed when they were born again.

The bear is a large mammal with shaggy fur and a very short tail. It is about the size of a person and can stand on its hind legs like a human. The bear will eat just about anything it can get hold of. Bears are mostly plant eaters, but some eat small animals, dead carcasses, termites, ripe berries, and ears of corn.

A person who is like a bear would be considered ill-tempered, unfriendly, proud, unsociable, impolite, and discourteous. Have you ever been somewhere and suddenly someone walks in with a bear spirit and impolitely shouts, "What's going

on?" That bear spirit just busted up the party. Everybody had been so quiet, happy, and getting along, and here someone came in with a bear spirit and ruined everything.

Another trait of the bear is that it will do whatever it can to get food. Sometimes this means having no fear of humans. Some have been known to chase off campers. That is just like some people. They chase off friends. They have friends, but they start talking about them and mistreating them.

The asp is a small poisonous snake found in Africa, Arabia, and Europe. It is known to conceal itself in walls and holes. (The eight-foot Egyptian cobra is believed to be the deadly asp that killed Cleopatra.) Some snakes are camouflaged, which permits them to blend in with the leafy woodland. A person who exhibits characteristics like a snake knows how to dress as a saint does and acts as a saint acts. Such a person may even wave his hands just as the saints lift up holy hands. He also says amen. This person knows how to blend in with the saints. You can walk by the "snake" and not even realize what he is. He looks like any other saint. He can be camouflaged as a saint of God and yet have a snake spirit.

The ox is an adult, castrated male of the common domestic cattle. Musk oxen protect their young by forming a circle with their horns pointing out to protect them from predators. Saint of God, that is how we need to protect one another. Then when the wolves come around, they will not be so quick to attack. An ox can be difficult to deal with. Are you hard to deal with? How well do you take correction?

Our Scripture text also mentioned the cockatrice. The Hebrew word for this word is *tsepha*, which means "adder." This is a poisonous snake. A snake's eyes are non-blinking because it has no eyelids, but it does have a scale on each eye to protect its eyes. The fact that it does not blink reminds me of some people. Some individuals can look

another person right in the eye, and without blinking an eye, tell a big lie. Such a person can look at you and say, "I swear on a stack of Bibles that I am telling the truth," yet be lying. Some can even look their pastor in the eye and lie to him.

Thinking of snakes as people, some snakes have a deadly embrace. An example of this is 2 Samuel 20:9-10, which reads: "And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri."

A person who acts like a snake can ask someone how he is doing, give him an embrace as if he loves him, and then go out and tell lies about him. If you acted that way before you got saved, do not let that spirit come back in you.

### Has Your Nature Been Changed?

We used to visit Arkansas twenty years before we moved there. I had a brother-in-law who was a lumberjack. Being from Chicago, I had never seen anything like that in my life. He kept his chainsaws on the back of his truck and would go deep into the woods. I went with him one day, and we came upon a big snake. Because he had been in those woods before, he knew exactly what to do. He took a stick and beat that snake's head wide open.

After we had lunch, we went back to look at that snake, and it was still moving. What I did not realize until later when I studied about snakes was that even after death, some snakes have been known to inflict a dangerous bite by means of their prolonged reflex action. This aspect reminds me that people's influence goes on even after they die. People are going to give an account to God for how they have

lived. Preachers are going to give an account of how they led people, whether they led them astray or told them the truth, whether they caused people to backslide or helped them to remain faithful. Even though someone may die, his influence still remains. How many people are still being influenced by those who have passed on?

Some snakes have a low poison level, seeming to pose a lesser threat. Some people may say, "Well, I'm a snake, but I am not as bad as a big snake." However, in some cases, a snake with a low poison level can kill just the same as a snake with a high venom level. A little snake's

bite can be just as deadly.

You need to be careful of how you live and of how you influence people. I want to follow those who are going to influence me to do good on the earth. Some of our children and other relatives do not follow the Christian way, but while we are living, we are praying for them. I believe that when we are dead and gone, God may still answer our prayers concerning them. We may not be able to get them to come to church, but our influence will still be going on. Some day they may say: "Let me go see where my daddy hung out. He hung out where the saints are."

Some of my family may not follow me to church, but they do not have to go to a bar to look for me. They do not have to go to a dance hall or a poolroom to find me. They will remember that I hung out with the saints of God. Some of us were once snakes, and others were bears. We all were sinners, but what did God do? He saved us and changed us. My wife told me, "If I had met you before you got saved, I would have told you that you were not my type." What happened? God saved me and changed me.

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[A Noxious Tree—continued from page 13]

This mental condition reacts upon the body; the physical effects of worry react upon the mind; and we have a vicious set of actions and reactions set up, destructive alike to mind and body. An agitated state of the mind affects the brain tissues. The poisons created in the body through fear and worry react upon the brain tissues and the mind becomes still more troubled. These things are not imaginary. They are being suffered by thousands of individuals. People get up in the morning tired out. They have no energy. They have to drive themselves. This is one common effect of worry. Another common result of worry is lack of mental control so that the mind cannot concentrate on anything.

Worry also has a spiritual effect. It destroys faith. In fact, faith and worry are mutually destructive. Faith will destroy worry and worry will destroy faith. So whichever is given ascendancy will destroy the other.

Worry stimulates doubts. The more we worry, the more we doubt. We have heard people talk about blind faith. Faith is not nearly so blind as doubt. Doubt cannot see favorable things. It sees everything in an unfavorable light and magnifies it. There may be ever so many

favorable elements in a situation, but doubt sees none of them. Worry sees none of them.

Worry brings gloom and discouragement. It makes one moody, forgetful of God's goodness and mercy and helpfulness. In fact, worry shuts God out of the picture. It causes us to forget Him or makes us doubt Him, doubt ourselves, and doubt others. Under the influence of worry, we can draw the most gloomy mental picture. We clothe everything in somber tints.

Worry also leads us to self-condemnation. It makes us minimize the good there is in us and the good there is in life. It prevents us from exercising our powers. With worry there is a great troop of evils. They cluster around it and add to its damaging influence. Worry is always evil. It never serves any good purpose. It never aids us in accomplishing anything. It never makes anything easier. It has nothing to

recommend it.

More than that, *worry is never necessary*. Mark well that statement. It is a positive truth. Worry is *never* necessary. First, because it can never help us. It can never make things easier or better. It never did any good. It never cured any trouble. Second, we do not have to worry. There is always a better way.

Worry is altogether folly. It not only does us no good but also it always makes things worse. It weakens every good thing. It strengthens every bad thing. Worry is a noxious tree. It bears poisonous fruits. Reader, have you one of these poisonous worry trees? You must rid yourself of it before you can sing the glad songs of rejoicing that come from a free soul. One of the secrets of the singing heart is the remedy for worry.

C. W. Naylor

When the Bible speaks, discussion is useless; when the Bible is silent, discussion ends.

# Announcements

- Lansing, NC**  
July 3-5  
**Revival:** Peace Haven Community Church, 373 Piney Creek Road, Lansing, North Carolina 28643  
Evangelist: Bro. Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
For further information contact: Brother Joe Richardson. Telephone: 336-384-3457
- Canby, OR**  
July 6-12  
**Camp Meeting:** Church of God Camp Meeting, 522 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Canby, OR 97013  
First service Monday at 7:00 p.m. Two services daily: 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.  
Complimentary breakfast at motel. Meal after morning services; snack stand after evening services.  
For further information contact: Pastor David Stegmeier. Telephone: 503-266-9297
- Bladensburg, OH**  
July 8-12  
**Tent Revival:** Church of God, 4124 Kerr Road, Walhonding, Ohio 43843  
Evangelist July 9-10: Brother Allen Polston, New Castle, Indiana  
Service times: Wed.-Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 6:00 p.m.; Sunday school 9:00 a.m.;  
Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.  
For further information contact: Pastor Matt Swartz. Telephone: 740-504-4766
- Muncie, IN**  
July 15-19  
**Camp Meeting:** Ninth Street Church of God Camp Meeting will be held at the  
Central Friends' Campground, 5601 E County Road 650 S, Muncie, IN 47302  
Service times: Wed. 7:30 p.m.; Thurs.-Sat. 9:00 a.m. & 7:30 p.m.; Sun. 9:00 a.m. Three meals  
Thurs.-Sun., incl. continental breakfast; snack stand after evening services. Campers/tents welcome.  
*Please do not forget to bring your own bedding and towels.* Limited space availability.  
For reservations, please contact Sis. Michelle Gingerich @ 765-808-8705  
For further information contact: Pastor Allen Polston. Telephone: 765-521-8284
- Morehead, KY**  
July 20-26  
**Revival:** Blue Bank Church of God, 3200 Blue Bank Road, Morehead, Kentucky 40351  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
For further information contact: Brother Jeff Fannin. Telephone: 606-784-2856 or 606-776-2639
- Newark, OH**  
August 2-9  
**Camp Meeting:** Church of God, God's Acres. 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055  
Please see opposite page for further information.
- Summersville, WV**  
August 23-30  
**Revival:** The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road., Summersville, West Virginia 26651  
Preaching from the Book of Revelation nightly  
Service times: Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 6:00 p.m., and Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.  
For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047  
Visit our website: [www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com](http://www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com)
- Medina, OH**  
September 5  
**All-Day Fellowship Meeting:** The Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, Ohio  
Service times: 10:00 a.m. & 2:30 p.m. Meal will be served by the local congregation.  
For further information contact the church at 330-725-5993 or call 330-421-0187
- Chicago, IL**  
September 15-20  
**Revival:** Harding Street Church of God, 3924 W 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago, Illinois 60623  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
For further information contact: Brother Aurelius Reedy Raines  
Telephone: 708-751-1534
- Chicago, IL**  
September 21-23  
**Revival:** All Nations Church of God, Central Park & 3615 Cermak, Chicago, Illinois 60612  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
For further information contact: Brother Prince Michael Martin. Telephone: 773-292-0411
- Chicago, IL**  
September 28-30  
**Revival:** Central Church of God, 3015-17 West Flournoy Street, Chicago, Illinois 60612  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
For further information contact: Sister Young. Telephone: 312-509-3947



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