

God-Given Understanding in a Deceptive Age

In Matthew 24:45, God let us know whom He is going to count as a wise servant: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?" He was not talking about the kind of meat that is eaten on the plate, but He was talking about the sound teachings of God's Word. Over and over Jesus used that expression. Also, the apostles adopted the expression: "As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word." The expression "meat" was used to mean something a little stronger and deeper in God's Word. Therefore, Christ said that the faithful servant will be feeding God's people and giving them meat in due season.

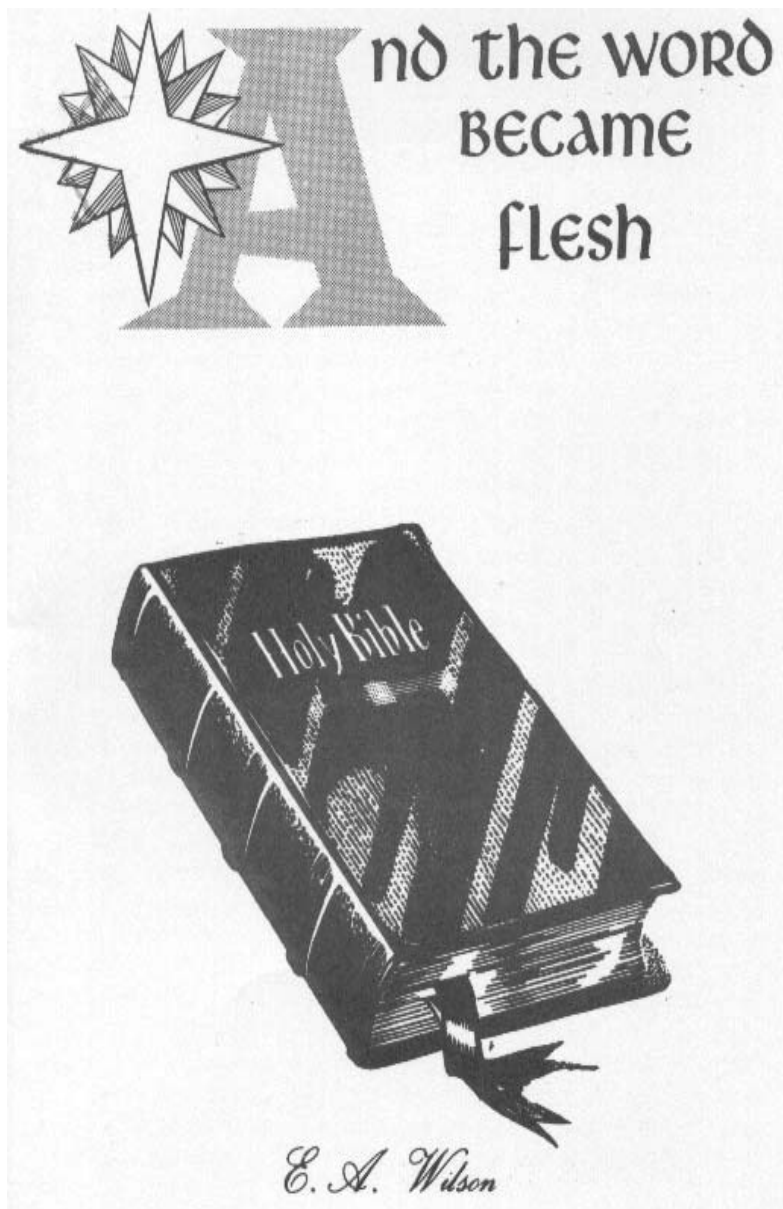
Now we want to look into a portion of Revelation, because it covers a period of time that we are living in right now. It is a very up-to-date message. I pray that God will help you and that the Spirit will unfold to you just what you stand in need of.

In Revelation 8:1 we read, "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." Because heaven is mentioned here, right away some people think it means God's Heaven, so it has nothing to do with us whatsoever. Furthermore, they think that this is something that takes place over in Heaven, so why should you and I worry about it? However, if we will look into God's eternal Word, for every dark saying, there is another Scripture that will put light on it. Therefore, we must not just take a dark saying and throw it aside.

There are parts of the Bible that man did not understand down through the annals of time; but that part that they failed to understand, God has kept in store for a later time. When the time came, He gave the understanding that was necessary.

We are facing circumstances today that the people of the church have never met before. For this reason, we will not be able to lean altogether on past teachings, because writers of the books wrote according to their understandings of that day. They wrote according to the enemy that they were facing at that particular time.

No doubt, you realize that the day in which we are living



is the most deceptive age according to the Bible. The devil knows that his time is short, and we all know that the time for this old world is short. The devil today is bringing together the many deceptions that he used on man down through the periods of time and bringing us into one of the greatest battles that the church has ever seen. My friend, this battle is not with outward carnal weapons, but a battle against our souls and our spiritual lives.

We must realize that the devil has one thing in mind—he is determined that you and I do not make Heaven our home. He does not come out in the open. If he did, it would not be so hard to fight him; but he works in the most deceptive ways and manner. I hate to say that the devil works through good people, but many times he would rather have a good person to work through than he would an evil one, because he can get a greater work done. Therefore, it behooves you and I as never before to open our hearts to God and ask for the understanding that is needed today that we might know where we stand, what we face today, and where our enemy really lies. Then, we need God to show us how we must conduct ourselves to be victorious.

The Book of Revelation Reveals Jesus Christ to His Servants

In our Scripture text, we read that when He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven. We want to understand by the Word of God what the "seal" means. Also, we want to consider what John was talking about when he said that He opened the seventh seal.

Let us go back to Revelation, Chapter 1, and understand a little bit about the Book of Revelation. It is so easy to say that this seventh seal is over in Heaven, but let us see what the Bible says about it. The Book of Revelation is not something, as man would tell you, that is obscure and cannot be understood. The very word *revelation* means "a revealing."

In Revelation 1:1 we read, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ. . . ." I want to stop right there; that is all that is in this book. I know that many preachers tell you about a lot of political moves—moves that are supposedly substantiated by

the Book of Revelation. However, the book is the revelation of Jesus.

Someone may say, "It tells about the church." Well, wherever you see the true church, it is the body of Christ. It is the carrying on of Jesus Christ and brings up the picture of the many spiritual enemies that raised up to stop the work of Christ—that is the whole revelation. We will find that it covers the period of time from the beginning of Christ's ministry here on the earth clear through to the Judgment and the final destruction of this heaven and this earth. It gives a little insight into eternity.

Therefore, the Book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to John to show unto His servants. There will be no one but His servants see it. The more the sinners try to read it, the more confused they become. The more these preachers out here fight holiness and do not believe in being born again and becoming a child of God, the more confused they become when they try to preach on Revelation, because it is just for *His* servants. You have to be His servant or you will never see it.

There are just some things that you cannot get into. There are just some things that you just cannot unlock. I know that man is doing many things in many ways. Many of them have been blessings, and we thank God for it. However, there are some things that are even as Jesus said of His disciples in Matthew 11:25: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Brethren, we just have to be born again. We just have to come God's way.

Someone may ask, "Why is the Revelation sealed to everyone but to His servants?" Friend, the Revelation is a picture of how the church overcomes and a picture of the enemies of the church rising up. Before the enemy ever rises up, God gives understanding to His people on how to overcome him. While God's servants are understanding Revelation, the enemy cannot understand. The more that he tries to understand it, the more confused he becomes. Therefore, the Revelation is that which God gave to John to show unto His servants.

Let us look at Revelation 1:1 again, "The Revelation of

Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." Now the fact that He signified it means that He showed it by signs, according to a Greek translation. This is why the Revelation is full of symbols. This is how God showed it to John.

John Was in the Spirit

Christ is God's angel, just as Malachi, the prophet, said. Malachi, Chapter 3, tells you that the One following John the Baptist is the Angel, the Messenger of the covenant—Jesus Christ. Jesus was the Angel that gave the Revelation to John. If you read right on in the first chapter, John said that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and he heard the voice of Jesus Christ behind him. Jesus gave John this revelation, and He signified it to him, or gave it to him in a vision with signs and figures in symbolic language for man to understand.

About A.D. 96 John was on the Isle of Patmos. Previously, they had tried to boil him in oil, but the oil would not boil. Therefore, they put him out all alone on the Isle of Patmos, a lonely island. Revelation 1:9 states that John was on the isle called Patmos for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Just as soon as John got the Revelation that God gave him on the island, he went right back to the church and wrote 1 and 2 and 3 John, some of the strongest writings that we have in the Bible.

Now in verse ten, we read, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. . . ." When Sunday morning came, John was in the Spirit. He was in the Spirit on Sunday because he was in the Spirit the day before. He did not just get in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Today, formal religion is the ruination of any nation. Formal religion is mankind living to please himself all week, but when Sunday comes, he gets in the Spirit. The Word of God teaches us that if we are going to be in the Spirit, we have to walk in the Spirit. We have to live in the Spirit.

My friend, real salvation is an experience whereby you and I can come in old-time repentance, be born of God's Spirit, and quit walking after the flesh. You start walking after the Spirit and living in the Spirit. When worship time comes,

it makes no difference whether it is Monday or Wednesday or Sunday; you are in the Spirit. You are ready to worship. When you are in the Spirit, it does not take five songs to get you pepped up so that you are ready to worship God. You are in the Spirit before you come, and you are in the Spirit when you get there; and you are ready to worship God and praise Him for His goodness.

John Got the Revelation Through a Vision

Revelation 1:11 will let you know that the voice that John heard behind him was Christ talking. You will get a picture of Christ right on through that first chapter. Now in the second and the third chapters, Jesus told John to take a letter to each of the seven churches in Asia. After John had finished the three chapters to the churches and the deep truths that are in them, he wrote in Revelation 4:1-2: "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet [Christ] talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne."

Now the next point that I want you to understand and consider in understanding the Revelation is that John was not caught up into the Heaven where God lives, but he was in the Spirit and caught up in the Spirit; and he received a vision of things that would take place hereon earth. Just to prove to you that this is a vision, John said in Revelation 9:17, "And thus I saw the horses in the vision.."

When John was caught up in the Spirit, he did not actually go up into God's Heaven. There are three heavens mentioned in the Bible. One is the Heaven that God always lived in. The second one is a created heaven. Genesis, Chapter 1, tells us that God created the heavens and the earth. That is the one that has the sun, moon, and stars in it. Also, there is a third heaven that Paul was caught up into. Paul never left the body; but he said, "I do not know whether I was in the body or out of the body." He was in the Spirit so much. However, Paul was still in the body when he was in the third heaven.

John was caught up in the Spirit, and he caught a vision. The rest of Revelation is a vision that God gave him of some things that had happened before John's day and some things that were happening in John's day and some things that would happen in the future. Jesus told John in Revelation 1:19, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." John had literally seen some of the things happen that he was going to see in the vision. Some of them were going on right then that he was going to see in the vision, and some of them were going to happen after his day. The Revelation covers the period of time just previous to A.D. 96, during A.D. 96, and following A.D. 96.

The Spirit of God Brings Life and Salvation

We have already read in Revelation 8:1 that He had opened the seventh seal. Now we are going to first find out what a seal is and what has been sealed. If we do not know what has been sealed, we will never know what was opened up. Let us look at Revelation 4:1-2 again: "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne."

Revelation 5:1-9 states: "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon [notice that man himself is shut out]. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the

midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth: And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue; and people, and nation."

You will remember that we read in Revelation 1:1 that God gave John the vision and signified it or gave it by sign. Therefore, when we begin to see Him that sat on the throne with a book in His right hand, we are getting a symbolic expression of something. That One with the book in His right hand sealed with seven seals that no man in heaven or on the earth or under the earth can open symbolizes something of the depth that God alone holds in His power.

With due respect to mankind in all his intellectual powers, this old-fashioned divine truth still needs to be laid before the minds of mankind when it comes to the Revelation of God's eternal Word and truth: God looked for a man, and there was not a man anywhere who was able to read it, open it, or bring it forth in its fullness.

Friend, one of the ways that the enemy works today to wreck and ruin the lives of many people is to switch them from the divine to their own human thinking and understanding. Brother, he has used this tool of human intellectual understanding to greatly hinder the cause of Christ. For example, when the man of God sends the Word forth, the devil will sit on a man's or a woman's shoulder and say, "That is just the way he sees it. Now you have a right to your thinking." No, there is no man who has that right.

Every one of us needs to come down in humility before God and see that it takes God to save us; it takes God to lead us; it takes God to feed us. He is all and all. It is in Him that we live and move and have our being.

What brought the apostasy on the morning-time church

was that they tried to finish by the flesh what God had started by the Spirit. It takes God to start it, and it takes God's Spirit day by day to keep it alive.

Brother, without God's Spirit burning in our souls, we are just as formal and dry as any other kind of religion. We may have the right name, and we may have the right book; and yet everything else may be just as dead as can be. We can be perfectly organized and be perfectly dead all the time. It is the Spirit of God that gives life. Man within himself never has been able to produce Christianity and never will be able to. Jesus Christ is the door to real salvation, and He is the door to the church. He said that if any man come by Him, he will be saved.

When real salvation strikes you, Paul told us in 2 Corinthians 5:17 what would happen, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." May God help us to never lose hold of the fact that old-time salvation is still a miracle.

Man Cannot Open the Book

Let us look at Revelation 5:1 again and get some understanding of what John saw in this vision: "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne. . . ." Someone may say, "That was God." That is right, but you know that this has to be symbolic language, because God in that sense has no hands to hold a book. He is not a man; He is a spirit.

Too many people do not have a real vision of God. All that they can see in God is a little old man with a long beard sitting on a throne over in Heaven with a stick in His hand, trying to catch them in something so that He can whip them for it. God is a spirit. Therefore, when John saw a vision of One sitting on a throne, he was getting a picture of the supremacy of God with a book in His right hand, and that book was sealed with seven seals.

After John saw the book sealed with seven seals, he looked for someone to open it. He looked all over the earth, and under the earth. However, they could not find a man. There was no man worthy.

Let us read Revelation, Chapter 5:3-4: "And no man in

heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy. . . ." John was just letting us know that no one in heaven or earth or who had lived on the earth was able to open the book. Whether they went to Heaven or hell makes no difference. There was no human wisdom great enough to open this book.

Someone may ask, "What is that book?" That book is God's plan of salvation to redeem mankind. Here it was all written and sealed, and no man could be found worthy to open it up.

God's Right Hand Is a Symbol of His Supreme Power

All through the Psalms, the rest of the Old Testament, and the New Testament, the hand of God is spoken of as the hand that reaches down and lifts you out of the quagmire of sin. When God reached down His hand, He did not reach down with a hand of a man. That book in His hand was the Word of truth, the Gospel.

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. It is the Gospel that reached down and got you and me. God did not reach down with a literal hand. That is just a symbolical expression that the power of God reached down and got me when I was lost down in the quagmire of sin, bound with the habits of life and the fetters of sin. He reached down His hand, and His hand was the power of God. Paul said in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

The book that no man could open, which was in God's hand, is a picture of a deep mystery hidden with God and God alone. The matter that it contained was so obscure and so difficult that it could not be known or performed by human wisdom or human power.

The plan of salvation was all written, sealed, and ready to go. John said, "I wept because no man could read it." No man could open it from there on. To make a long story short, no man could open up the plan of salvation to us because all had sinned and come short of the glory of God.

The Lamb Slain From the Foundation of the World

Going back to Revelation, Chapter 5, John said that he wept much. Verses 5-7 say: "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of the tribe of Juda, the root of David [Revelation 22:16 will tell you that the Lion of the tribe of Juda is Jesus Christ], hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and, seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."

Notice that as John was weeping, one of the elders came to him and told him to weep not, because the Lion of the tribe of Juda has prevailed to open the book and loose the seven seals thereof.

Now when we begin to see what the book is, we see that the book has the plan of salvation for mankind. Verse 7 tells us that He came and took the book, and verse 6 tells us how much it cost Him. This took some prevailing. There was something that had to be prevailed against. There was a reason why the book could not be opened; but the Lamb, Jesus Christ, the Root of David, prevailed to open the book and loose the seven seals.

Right in the next verse (verse 6), he said, "And I beheld . . . in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb. " It cost Christ His life to get the book out of the Father's right hand. He prevailed to open the book by giving His life. In verse 5 He is symbolized as the Lion of the tribe of Juda, but the following verse said that the Lion had become a Lamb. Christ gave Himself as a sacrifice.

God's plan of salvation was written before the world, according to Revelation 13:8, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. You do not understand John 3:16 right if you do not understand this.

In John 3:16, the golden text, we read, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

How much did God love the world? If you study Revelation, the Gospel, and prophecy, you will find that before God ever made man, He saw that man was going to sin. God so loved man and did not want him to live in sin that before He ever made man, He made a plan to redeem him. That is love!

God knows that you cannot free yourself from sin. God never put up with sin. He loves people, but He hates sin. God so loved mankind that He could not see them go on and perish in sin. Therefore, before He ever made the man, He made a plan to redeem him. That is why the Word of God tells us that Jesus Christ was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Salvation was already prefixed. John 1:29 lets us know that Jesus is the Lamb of God. John was there at Jordan baptizing; and when Jesus walked up, John said, "Behold the Lamb of God." That is the first time that He was recognized as the Lamb of God. To make sure that everybody knew that the Lamb of God was the Son of God, John had no more than addressed Him as the Lamb of God when God spoke out of heaven and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). God's beloved Son is the Lamb of God, glory be to God! He prevailed to open the book, but it cost Him something.

Jesus—The Living Word of God

Therefore, Jesus prevailed to open the book; and He did it at the cost of His own life. The Scripture states that He came and took the book, and he loosed the seven seals thereof. The same picture is presented in John, Chapter 1. There we get a picture of Him taking the book out of the right hand of God.

In John 1:1 we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (14) And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Notice that the Word was with God. Get the picture in Revelation now of Him that sat on the throne with the book in His right hand, sealed with seven seals, and Christ came and took the book. When He took the book out of the Father's hand, the Word became flesh. You might ask,

"What is the Bible talking about when it says that the Word became flesh?" When Jesus brought the Word to us., He did not bring it down in so much writing. He brought it in deed, in principle, in power, in life, and in statute. He came and lived the Word. He was the living Word of God. His words were that He came to reveal the Father.

In the sixth chapter of John, Jesus said, "I did not come to do my own will, but I came to do the will of him that sent me." Someone said, "How do you know that it is God's will to save you? How do you know whether it is God's will to heal?" Just follow Jesus around and you will know what the will of God is for all mankind.

Everywhere He went, He said, "I am not doing My own will. I have come to do the will of Him that sent me." What did He do? He came to save the lost one. He cast the devil out of this one, and He healed that one. He said, "I am doing the will of Him that sent me." It is not His will that any perish, but that all come to repentance.

The Word became flesh. It became the living Word. He took that book out of the Father's right hand and brought it down here to you and me in a life. His words were in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

He did not come to start a new society, another religious organization, a reformation, or a movement. He said that He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. Brother, the devil gets in when you think in terms of reformation and movements and organizations.

Jesus came to bring us something that is the greatest thing that man can enjoy this side of Heaven. Jesus did not come to lay a liability on you. He came to give you an asset. Glory be to God! He came to let you enjoy the best livelihood that you could enjoy and then have a home in heaven.

When Jesus took the book out of the right hand of the Father, He did not walk to a little old God sitting on a throne and say, "Give me that book." No, He prevailed to take it. John said that Lion whom he was watching changed into a Lamb—a slain Lamb. He prevailed to open the book or salvation would never have been opened up to anyone.

Jesus stood right in a large crowd where some wanted to

follow Moses and others wanted to follow this way and that; and He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). In other words, Jesus said that if any man gets to God or to Heaven, he is going to come by Him.

In John's Gospel we read that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and (if you could get this, it would inspire your faith so much) the Word was God. The reason people have so much trouble believing for healing and other things today is because they separate the Word from God.

Someone may say, "Jesus came with a new word." No, no, no! This is the same Word from the beginning. This is no new thing. I am preaching something that is older than all of us. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word *was* God. Do you see how the devil kills the effective working power of the Word? He gets us to separate the Word from God. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. That same Word became flesh and carried out the Father's will.

In Galatians 1:16 Paul did not say that the Gospel tells you about the power of God. The Gospel *is* the power of God. All you need is the Word. The enemy has played some bad tricks on us. God has already spoken His words. He has signed every one of them with Jesus' blood. Now the devil wants us to turn around and say, "Say it again, Lord, to me." God wants us to believe that what He has said in the Scriptures applies to us. It will work for those who believe.

Jesus Came to Reveal Man to Himself

There is only One who can open up salvation to you, and He is the only One who can give you understanding after you are saved. Right here is where the trouble is—too many people are trying to get understanding before they get salvation.

Look at what Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

The third chapter of Revelation lets us know that when

God opens something, no man can close it; and when He closes something, no man can open it. Oh, may God help us to see it! Men today are sincerely working through every other possible realm to gain understanding of themselves, their conditions, and their problems.

We need to consider the Lamb of God. When the Word became flesh and Jesus dwelt among us, He not only came to reveal God to man, but He came to reveal man to man. Do you know that we do not know ourselves except God reveals ourselves to us? Other than that, we can be deceived. We can only see ourselves truly as we look in the mirror—the Bible. The Word of God is the mirror that gives us a true picture of ourselves. This is why the devil wants to keep it away from you. He wants to keep you from reading it and the preacher from preaching it to you. Not one of you women would go to church without looking in the mirror, because you want to see that everything is just right. Well, the Word, of God shows you the picture of the inner man, so that you can see what he needs and what he really looks like.

The Gospel Will Get Personal

Now let us look at John 2:23-25: "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. ". . . man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Religious folks in Jesus' day were just exactly like the religious folks are today. Their motives were not pure. They acknowledged that Jesus had come from God, because no one else could do the miracles that He did. However, Jesus was looking right down inside of them, and He called them hypocrites.

Someone said, "I don't think that Jesus was that way. I think that Jesus was loving." I believe Jesus was loving, too. The one who loves you is the one who will tell you the truth. Many preachers today are patting people on the back when

they are wrong just because they have much influence or hand in a good paycheck. The one who really loves you is one who will tell you that you are wrong; and when he gets done telling you that you are wrong, he will say that he will pray with you so that you can get straightened out.

Now let us hold the thought that the Word was God and the Word became flesh. Let us not separate the Word from God and the Word from Jesus. Even though you may say that you really love Jesus, you do not love Jesus a bit more than you love His Word. In John, Chapter 14, Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." There is no other way to show your love.

Jesus got personal. He was the Word. Let us look over in Hebrews 4:12, which says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

When you get around where the Word of God is preached, do you know what will happen? The Word of God will tell the whole audience what you are. That is why people get stirred. They go to a church service, and the preacher gets right up and preaches on their sinful life. Then the unsaved husband gets outside and says to his wife, "What did you do? What did you tell him? You called him on the phone, didn't you? He got right up there, and he named me out, just named me right out!"

The Word of God will dig around you. It will get between soul and spirit. It will get down between the marrow and the bone. It will get down to tender places. It will expose bitterness. The Word of God is a discerner. He knows your very thoughts and the intents of the heart.

Let us go to John, Chapter 4, and look at the way that Jesus taught it. He was the Word and the Truth. In this fourth chapter, you will read where they arrived at Jacob's well at the noon hour. Jesus was tired, so He sat down then to rest, and His disciples went on into town to get something to eat. He had not sat down there very long when here came a Samaritan woman. She came up to the well and went to draw herself some water. Jesus said, "Give Me a drink."

The Necessity of Seeing Our Need of God

She came over to Him and said, "How come you, being a Jew, asked me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" She knew Jesus was a Jew by the clothes that He wore and by His dialect. The Jews dressed and talked differently.

Jesus told her, "If you had asked Me, I would have given you a drink; and you would never thirst again.

She set her waterpot down and said, "Well, if you will give me water, I will never carry this waterpot anymore." She was looking on the natural—being bound to the limitations of the natural. She said, "I can't understand. Are You greater than our father Jacob that gave us this well? This well is deep, and you have not anything to draw with. How are You going to give me water?" He said, "Look, the well I am talking about is deeper than Jacob's, and you have nothing to draw with." That is the shape that the world is in today. If we do not give them a drink, they are never doing to get one. Jesus went on to say, "Now this well that I am talking about is deeper than Jacob's. You have nothing to draw with. If you would ask Me, I would give you a drink, and if you will take a drink of this water that I would give you, it will be a well of water in you, springing up into everlasting life."

Jesus told her, "I will give you a drink, but go get your husband."

Now why in the world would He bring that up to a woman who had (been married five times and living 'with a man to whom she was not married)? He knew what was in her heart. He gets right where the deepest need is.

He gave her a drink, and if you read on down through verse 29, you will find that she went into the city and got the townspeople to come out. Do you know how she got them to come out? She said, "I have found the Messiah. I have really found the Christ."

The ones in the city asked her, "Well, how do you know that you have found Him?" She answered, "He told me everything that I have ever done." Now that is how you can tell where the truth is. It will read your life right out. Jesus knew about all five of her husbands, and He knew about the man that she was with then. He told her right out.

Now Jesus came to reveal man to himself right while He was revealing God to man. Brother, the first thing necessary is to see our need of God. The Word of God came that we might see ourselves. We are in a time where people are glossing over. They are just like someone throwing healing powders on cancers, healing them up on the outside, but down inside there are sores there, and their bloodstream is not clean. Jesus Christ came to go to the heart of the thing, and He cleans from the inside out. Thank God, He gets down under the corruption, lances the sores of corruption, and drains them. Then, He purifies, cleanses, and makes us clean from the inside out. Oh, may God help us to see what Jesus came to do!

Remember that we read earlier that the Word of God is quick and powerful, and it is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. We are dealing with getting the Word opened up; but when the Word gets opened up, your life and mine gets opened up.

People that are really sincere about going to Heaven want searching messages. Why? If we are sincere about going to Heaven, we want to know if there is anything wrong with us. A real Christian has a real desire to know anything that is wrong in his life.

I would be a fool to go along and say, "Preacher, don't get too close to me. Man, don't get on that line. Don't uncover that," and then die and have it uncovered at the Judgment and go to hell.

This experience of salvation that Jesus came to bring is a know-so experience. Now when you hear the Gospel, believe in Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and your sin, come in old-time repentance, and meet biblical conditions, you can step into an experience where you know. You do not have to believe anymore.

In 2 Timothy 1:12 Paul told Timothy, "I know whom I have believed." I believed in Him; and when I believed in Him, I got an experience; and now I know. I know in whom I have believed; and since I know, I am persuaded. Now that is beyond believing in an "I hope so" manner. I am persuaded;

and when you know, then you will be persuaded. I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.

Faithful Abraham

We can find out for sure just as Abraham did. Abraham is known as the father of the faithful. In Genesis, Chapter 12, you can read where God said, "Abraham, I want you to pull out. Leave your family, your relatives, your friends, your job, and your home." Someone might say, "Well, Abraham did not have anything to leave. He just lived in a tent. He did not have anything to give up." Well, you need to read. Abraham was richer than you will ever be. He lived in Ur of Chaldea and was a very wealthy man. No doubt, he had more riches than many of us put together.

Abraham went home that day after God had spoken to him. He said to Sarah, "Sarah, we are going to move." She said, "Fine, have you got another new house?" Abraham replied, "No, but we are to move." Sarah said, "Well, where are we going to move to?" "Out," Abraham answered. "Where is that?" Sarah asked. Abraham said, "I don't know, but we are going."

Now that is going by faith. Abraham walked right out. The more he walked with God and obeyed God, the more God blessed him. God told him that he would have children as numerous as stars in the sky. My, that was hard to swallow. Abraham had no children, and he was an old man. You can read about it in Genesis, Chapter 15, where God said, "Kill a heifer three years old, a ram three years old, and a goat three years old. Take a pigeon and a dove and kill them. Dissect the parts of those animals and lay them out separately." Abraham laid them out there, and he had to fight all the rest of the day to keep the fowls from carrying them away.

That is exactly what will happen when you get your sacrifice laid out. The fowls are thick. They will pick it up unless you hold it right there. Abraham kept that sacrifice there. The sun was going down. There was a burning lamp and a smoking furnace that came down and went between every piece and looked it over to see if it was clean and pure.

The burning lamp went through it and searched out, but no blemishes were found on that sacrifice. Then, thank God, God spoke to Abraham and made a tenant with him. Abraham had a witness. You can get it the same way. Lay your sacrifice out. Let God search it.

The Burning Lamp

What was that burning lamp and that smoking furnace? Hebrews 4:12-13 lets us know that it is the Word of God. It is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." Let us look at John 5:34-35. There Jesus rebuked them because they had killed John the Baptist and had turned against him. Jesus said that John was a burning lamp, and they rejoiced in his light for a season. The Scripture says that the whole countryside around Jerusalem emptied itself to come out and hear John.

Someone might ask, "Why did they rejoice in that light for just a season and quit?" Remember that the burning lamp went right down between the pieces of the sacrifice. The reason that they rejoiced in John for awhile was because they loved to hear him preach until he got right down with a "burning lamp" in among their lives. The Pharisees and Sadducees liked him so well that they even wanted John to baptize them until John called them a "generation of vipers." His message was a burning lamp, and just as the burning lamp went through Abraham's sacrifice, even so God's eternal Word goes through our lives to find the place that is contrary. Friend, if there is any contrary thing in our lives, God will not accept us.

False religion will give all kinds of tokens today—everything from a chain around your neck with a name on a card to speaking in some gibber-jabber. There is only one way that you can know for sure that you are living for God. That is when your life is pure and clean according to the teachings of God's eternal Word, anything contrary to that is a false hope. If it does not let you down before, it will let you down in the end.

Friend, we have been endeavoring to unfold just a little bit

of the Revelation. You can get the Revelation whether you read it in the Book of Revelation or in the Gospel. The Revelation is just covering the Gospel in a symbolic language.

My friend, the book that was sealed with seven seals is God's plan of salvation for mankind. Jesus opened the book by giving His life. When He opens up the book, there are two things we see. We see Christ; and if He reveals Christ to us, He reveals ourselves to us. Now as the burning lamp of God goes through our lives, how does it find us? Are we clear before God in every way? Has He delivered us from all sin? Is there any bitterness, unforgiveness, or ill will?

Friend, if there is, we will not get any witness from the Spirit of God. God will not give you an all-clear signal. God will not give you a green light, but He will give you a red light—a warning sign to stop.

We read in Psalm 139:23-24 the way the Psalmist prayed, and this ought to be our prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Search me, try me, and lead me. It is needful for God to search me and try me because the heart is deceitful. My heart will deceive me, and yours will deceive you, too, unless we yield them to God.

The Psalmist prayed, "Search me, Lord, with the light of your Word; and then, just to make sure, try me." Why? Well, it is very easy, my friend, for us to be deceived. The Bible speaks about people deceiving themselves—not being deceived by someone, but deceiving themselves. When you say that you love the Lord with everything that you have, you may find out differently if He should try you. Now we do not need to be tried for God to find out something. He knows us altogether. However, sometimes we need to be tried for us to find out.

For example, consider the Apostle Peter. Peter told Jesus one afternoon, "I am ready to go to jail with You. I am ready to die." Jesus said, "You don't know yourself. You are ready to fall." Peter declared, "No, I am ready to go to prison. I'll die for You." Jesus said, "Satan has been wanting you, and I wouldn't let him have you; but since I can't show you any other way, I am going to have to let you be tried." Therefore,

Jesus let Peter be tried; and Peter found out his true condition.

Now it is much better to take God's Word when He shows us and when He speaks. Even though we do not see what we need, if we know that it is the Word of God speaking, we had better obey Him and do what He said. If it takes a trial to show us that we did need help and failed to get it, we will fall in the trial; and we will have to start all over.

Therefore, the Psalmist said, "Search me, Lord, so you can know; then, try me so I can know; then, lead me."

When the Patriarchs Received Their Righteousness

Revelation 5:8-9 tells us that when He opened the book, those patriarchs and those who had died beforehand (John saw them in the vision over in heaven) began to praise God. Verse 9 says that they sang anew song.

Let us read Revelation 5:9, ". . . Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." This verse tells us that the four beasts and four and twenty elders are the redeemed of all ages. They are men and women who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Those patriarchs over in heaven were the ones who were praising God when Jesus perfected the plan of salvation down here.

Now we have to get some understanding here to be able to understand the New Testament in its right light. When Jesus Christ died on Calvary's Cross, He not only brought redemption for you and I, but He redeemed those who had lived by faith in the Old Testament. If you read Hebrews, Chapter 11, the Apostle Paul listed, beginning with Abel, those who lived by faith and died in the faith.

Notice what Paul said about them in Hebrews 11:39-40: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Let us see what kind of perfection Paul was talking about. I know that many people say that these verses mean that the patriarchs are not going to get their new bodies out in the

resurrection until we get ours. Paul was not talking about that kind of perfection. Paul was saying that they all died in the faith—they died believing; but they had never received salvation like you and I have it. They had not been made perfect.

In Hebrews 9:9 Paul talked about the old tabernacle. He said that all those offerings, gifts, and sacrifices that they brought could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience. This is the perfection that he was talking about. There was nothing about Old Testament righteousness that would deliver you from sin. All sacrifices that you brought merely brought forgiveness for that sin but left you in sin. There was no power in the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin or cleanse your conscience. You were conscious of sin all the time. Furthermore, the high priest once a year took a sin offering in; and everyone's sins were brought to remembrance again. Those in the Old Testament who died in the faith believed that Christ would come. Jesus said that "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it" (John 8:56).

Paul told us in Hebrews 9:14-15 how the blood of Jesus Christ purges our conscience. Thank God for the blood of Jesus Christ! "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

He is telling us that when Christ died on Calvary's Cross, He not only shed blood that can cleanse you and me from sin and give us a conscience void of offence toward God and man, but at the same time, He paid the debt for all those who lived under the Old Testament and died in the faith. We need to realize that Calvary changes the calendar date. Calvary affected all mankind.. Friend, unless we see this, we will not see the church as we ought to.

Therefore, Paul let us know that all those died in the faith having not received the promise; but they believed in it so much that they died believing. However, they did not receive the promise until Christ died on Calvary's Cross.

Those patriarchs who died in the faith went to Heaven, but they never received their righteousness until Christ died on the Cross. You can read about them in Revelation 6:9. There you will see these patriarchs who died without righteousness. Jesus' blood had not been shed yet, but they died in the faith. In other words, their salvation rested on a promissory note; and when Jesus died, He paid the note.

The Patriarchs Received Robes of White

Let us read Revelation 6:9, "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them [John was getting a vision here of the souls of them over in Heaven] that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." The word "testimony" here is better translated "testament." In the Bible there are two testaments—the Old Testament and the New Testament. We are living under the New Testament. The above verse speaks of ones who held on to the Old Testament.

Someone may say, "This is the people who were slain for the Word of God." Well, John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word. . . ." The Word of God is not something new that came with Jesus. The Word of God is something that has existed as long as God has existed, and that is back in eternity. Hebrews, Chapter 11, says that the patriarchs were sawn asunder, tortured, and killed for the Word of God.

Revelation 6:10-11 reads: "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them. . . ." Now there are people who got into Heaven without white robes. John saw them being given their white robes. Revelation 19:8 said that the white robes are the righteousness of saints. Now they died in the faith, but they never received their righteousness until Jesus shed His blood. Now if you understand this, then you will understand why the Bible speaks all through the New Testament of the church including people here and people over in heaven.

Notice that verse 10 said that they cried with a loud voice saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge

and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" This is another reason why we know that these ones had not obtained righteousness yet. People who have righteousness do not pray for vengeance. You cannot be a Christian and pray for God to send vengeance on anyone.

Someone may say, "I do." Well, do not be deceived. You are not a Christian. These were Old Testament saints who had not received the experience yet. John saw them over there praying, "How long will it be before you bring vengeance on those who killed us?" About that time, John saw an angel walk up and give them white robes. After they had received their white robes, you do not hear anything about vengeance. They went about praising God. They forgot all about vengeance. You will, too, if you get a white robe.

These patriarchs died in faith. Jesus said that all power in heaven and earth was given unto Him; and when He died on Calvary's Cross, He made Abraham and the other faithful ones righteous. Now when the Gospel is preached to people, Jesus will make them righteous right here.

Christian Sinners?

Let us take another look at Revelation 5:9, "And they sung a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." They were people who had been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. They could not sing that new song until after Christ died on the Cross and they had received the experience. That song is a song of experience. It is a song that only the redeemed can sing. Let us see if you can sing that song.

Psalms 40:1-3 reads: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

Verse 2 is a verse of Scripture that people overlook, or else read too fast. You could not be out of sin and still in it. One of the biggest and most crooked deals that the devil is

pulling today is to throw this doctrine in among religion—even into some of the holiness movements and many places called the Church of God. There is no such thing as a Christian sinner. You are either a saint or a sinner.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:15, "Beware of false prophets." False prophets try to teach you that you can gather grapes from thorns and figs from thistles, but any one of us has enough sense to know that you cannot gather grapes from thorns and figs from thistles. If you ever get grapes from thorns, that thornbush is going to have to have its nature changed and be made into a grapevine.

Jesus went on to say that when you go preaching, either make the tree good or make it bad. Get rid of this confusion where people think they are half good and half, bad. No, you are not half anything. You are either good, or you are bad. You are either in, or you are out. You are either up, or you are down. You are either right, or you are wrong. You are either a sinner, or you are a saint.

Jesus said to make the tree good or bad; every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and every corrupt tree bringeth forth bad fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, and a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. The devil is having a heyday with this business of mixing sin in religion. He is sitting back laughing while people play religion.

My friend, you need to see that Jesus Christ came to work a work of salvation whereby we are delivered out of the horrible pit of sin and out of the miry clay. Jesus set my feet on a rock, established my goings, and put a new song in my mouth. That is the song that they sung; and no one can sing it but the Christians. (The professors sing, "Sometimes I'm up, and sometimes I'm down. Sometimes I'm level with the ground.")

No one but the redeemed can sing the new song. Even if you went to all the music schools there are in the country, you could not learn this song. No, God has to put it into your heart. When He puts it into your heart, it will come out your mouth. He is the same God who picked you up out of a horrible pit of sin and out of the miry clay and set your feet on a solid rock. Does that sound like you are still in the mud? No!

It wounds my heart when I hear these mass evangelism

preachers telling people right over the radio that "I am a sinner and everybody is a sinner." Well, Jesus told you to watch those fellows. He let you know that if a man is in the ditch, there is no need for him to try to pull you out because he is in, too. If you ever get out of the ditch, you have to find someone who is on solid rock and hook on to him and he can help you out.

The Song of Praise

I went you to know what song they sang. This song was sung over in heaven. As Psalm 40:3 says, "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." It will not do you any good to sing if you are not living it. There are too many ventriloquists around the church. They are talking away up there and living away down here, and God wants you to talk where you are living and live where you are talking. When he said that many will see it, he meant that they will see that you are living just what you are singing. When you start living what you are singing, you will affect people. Many people will be saved.

Preachers are patting people on the back and "soft soaping" them right on into hell. We need to know the bare truth of God's eternal Word. When the Word of God stirs something up in us, there is something that we need to get rid of. It does not make any difference whether you are a preacher, a Sunday school teacher, a song leader, or who you are. If you cannot take the straight truth of God's Word without getting stirred up, you are going to be eternally lost when you die unless you get rid of the cause. He brought me up, He brought me out, and He gave me a new song to sing. I want to praise the Lord. You have never heard a Christian sing the blues yet. No, He gave me a new song to sing even praise unto our God. Saint, this is what the world is waiting to see. Just mark it down. You do not fool the world. You just think that you are fooling them. We are living epistles, known and read of all men. The world knows when you are genuinely saved.

Someone may ask, "How do they know?" Well, we forget

something: You and I cannot reach the heart of another man. Only the Holy Ghost can. Jesus said that when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will convince the world. When the Holy Ghost is in us, the world knows it because there is a convictive action that takes place on their hearts and minds. We could talk all we want, but only the Holy Spirit and only the living an up-to-date experience with God will cause it to be effective. When we speak the words and the Holy Ghost is living in our lives, it causes even the gainsayer to be convinced, as Paul said. Whether people will accept salvation or not, they are convinced of that which is right.

The True Church of God

Oh, the Gospel is so simple if people would just turn their hearts to God and leave the Word of God as it is. Real salvation that Jesus came to bring only produces one thing according to the Bible—the Church of God. Now when I say the Church of God, I am not talking about a little group of people gathered together in one place or about any certain building. This is some more of the cloudy thinking that people have today: All that they can see about the Church of God is a building, but that building is not the church.

I can read to you out of the Bible where the church met in a woman's front room. You would have a very difficult time getting a building in there. Real salvation, where you come in old-time repentance confessing your sins before God and pleading the shed blood of Jesus Christ, will produce the Church of God. Real salvation will not make you a member of any other.

All real salvation ever made out of anyone was a son of God. God has never made anyone a Baptist, a Methodist, or a Lutheran yet. You may have charged Him with that, but He has never made one. Hasn't the thought ever entered your mind that there must be some reason for the more than twelve hundred different denominations teaching multiple ideas, factions, and divisions? The spirit that is in them is manifesting itself in a worse way overseas than it is here. You can see what kind of spirit is in Protestantism and Catholicism when they are fighting and killing each other over in Ireland

and different places. That is the spirit that is dominating those organizations. That is a million miles from the Spirit of Christ.

When you come to Jesus Christ in old-time repentance and confess your sins to Him, He said that He would remove your sin as far as the east is from the west. We know how far it is from the north to the south because there is a North Pole and a South Pole, but there is no east pole and west pole. He removed our sins and transgressions as far as the east is from the west. No one knows how far that is.

He not only removes your sins as far as the east is from the west; but He takes the heart of stone out of you and puts a heart of flesh in you. Then, He will quicken you to a new life and let you actually be made a new creature by God's Spirit moving in. When that happens, you will be justified before the courts of Heaven. Your name will be written down in the Lamb's Book of Life, and you will be a member of God's church.

In Ephesians 3:14-15 we read: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the F a t h e r of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." The patriarchs died in the faith, but they never knew what it was to experience real salvation until Christ died on Calvary's Cross. When He died on Calvary's Cross, they were brought in the same as we are. They are sons of God over in Heaven just like we are sons of God down here.

God put an end to the old Law and tore the old tabernacle down and brought forth a new tabernacle when Jesus died on Calvary's Cross. The old tabernacle had two rooms in it, but the new one does not have separate rooms in it because God is against partitions.

The Family Name

People today think that everything from Roman Catholicism to false Pentecostalism is the Church of God. Let us get back to the simple teachings of God's Word. Let us read Ephesians 3:14-15 again: "For this cause I bow my knees, unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Who was the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Scripture?

The angel told Mary that the Holy thing which would be born of her shall be called the Son of God. He is God's Son.

We are going to find out what the family name is, or what the church's right name is. Paul said that the family is kept in the Father's name.

In John, Chapter 17, when Jesus prayed that high-priestly prayer, He began by thanking His Father for giving eternal life to everyone that God had given Him. He said that He had given them God's Word, and they had kept it. That is what it takes today in real salvation.

On down further in Chapter 17, Jesus said, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me that they may be one." There is no way that you can be one and have one-half dozen different names. Someone may ask, "Why are there so many names?" One reason that there are so many names is so they can be told apart, and that "apart" business is what God is against.

Someone said, "A name does not mean anything. Any name is all right." My earthly father died and left a valid will. Why weren't you there when it was read if a name does not mean anything? A name means everything when it comes to an inheritance.

Romans 8:16 says that God's Spirit bears witness with your spirit that you are the children of God; and if you are children of God, then you are heirs. The Bible does not say anything about having anything for any denomination.

Anyone who understands the New Testament knows that the church is the Bride of Christ. Christ purchased her with His own blood. Now when I took a bride, her name was Smith. My given name is Emerson, but my father's name and the family name is Wilson. Now when I took my bride, she did not become Mrs. Emerson. She became Mrs. Wilson. I kept her in my father's name.

Jesus was Christ's given name. The angel said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus." Jesus is His given name. He was the Son of God when He was born, so His full name was Jesus God. Christ was His office. The word Christ merely means "the anointed One." Therefore, when He brought forth His Bride, the church, He keeps her in the Father's name. She is the Church of God, and that is all that you can find written

in the Bible.

The blood of Jesus Christ purchased the Church of God. In fact, that is all He purchased. God never made us a member of anything else. I say this with all kindness, but I say it with firmness. There is not a person living who can testify and prove it by the Bible that the Spirit of God led him to go into a religious organization. If you ever joined a religious organization, some man influenced you. The Spirit of God never led you. The reason I can be so sure is that the Spirit of God just does not lead in the ways of division. The Spirit of God will lead us all on in the paths of righteousness and according to God's eternal truth.

The Serpent and the Woman

Before we go on to the opening of some of these seals, let me say that there are too many trying to understand the seventh seal that do not even understand the first one. Remember that the book in the right hand of God was merely God's plan of salvation, and the seven seals merely give us a symbolic picture of the progress of the church.

Back in the beginning, you will remember that God made the first Adam in the Garden of Eden; and He took a rib from Adam's side and made the woman. Then, the devil working through a serpent beguiled Eve. Notice that the devil did not work on Adam. The devil worked on Eve, and Eve worked on Adam.

Let us face facts now. Back there in the creation, there were only two people, according to the Bible; and both of them were holy. The devil always uses the most deceptive creature that he can get hold of, and I say this with all kindness. That man and woman were both holy, and the devil could not use them, so he used the most subtle creature that he could find the serpent.

Now to make a long story short, Paul said that Jesus Christ came as the second Adam. He purchased His Bride out of His side on Calvary's Cross. When they thrust the spear in His side, out flowed blood and water. With that blood and water, He purchased a New Testament Bride, the church of the living God. As soon as the Bride comes on the threshold,

the Revelation tells us that the devil is working in a spiritual sense through that old serpent, the dragon, to get at the second Adam's wife—the church.

The Militant Church

Now, when we open up the seals leading up to the seventh seal, we are merely opening up the understanding of the progress of the church, the enemy she came up against, and how she overcame it. In this message, we will not be able to go into all phases; but I want to deal with those enemies that are closest to us. I know that there are many enemies that the Revelation brings out, but the ones that we need, to fear are the ones closest to us.

The sixth chapter of Revelation describes the opening of the seals. We read in Revelation 6:1-2: "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer."

Here is a symbolic picture of the militant phase of the church. Notice that a man on a white horse has a bow in his hand and a crown on his head. That bow is just as God has made a bow; and I think that ought to drive all unbelief out of everyone's mind. Every time we get a little shower of rain and the sun is shining, God still hangs the bow in the sky. This still lets you know that He is not dead, and He has not forgotten His covenant. That rainbow in the sky is a symbol of a covenant that God made with mankind.

The above Scripture gives us a picture of the morning-time church going forth. She has a bow or a covenant (the new covenant or the New Testament) that God gave to her to preach to a lost and dying world: If you will turn from sin and give your hearts to God, He will save you and deliver you from sin.

The Crown—The Sign of Victory

She has a crown on her head, and a crown is always the sign of victory. The church has the victory and she is going

forth conquering and to conquer. She is conquering as she goes, and she is going out to conquer.

I cannot emphasize too much that the crown is a symbol of victory. Starting out right from the day of Pentecost when God sent her out to win the world for Christ, the Church had victory over sin, the flesh, and the devil. She went forth conquering and to conquer. If we have victory over all the inward foes, we can conquer every outward foe. There is nothing outside of you that cuts you off from God. It has to be something inside.

God has built a church, according to Matthew, Chapter 16, that the gates of hell cannot prevail against. None of the schemes of hell and none of the routes the devil can lay before you can ever throw you. If you have victory on the inside, you can have it on the outside no matter what you come up against. Oh, get this picture! She went forth to conquer. Stop right there. She was conqueror before she left home base. Not only was she a conqueror but more than a conqueror.

How the enemy has moved, and too many of the church have yielded to the power of sin; because of it, she is afraid to move forward. She is afraid to take her message to the world. Why? When you lay the Gospel strictly on the world, they will point a finger right back at you; unless you are a conqueror, you have to back off. The Scripture says that the church went forth to conquer; and thank God, she had the victory.

Here is the reason that preachers have backed off. Right here is why you do not see them bold enough to lay hands on people and cast out devils anymore. They are scared to death of the devil. The reason they are scared to death is that they have played around too much. They are more interested in making par on the golf course than having power in the pulpit. They have monkeyed around and come short of the glory of God. Because of that, they do not have the victory and are not overcomers. They know it and the devil knows it.

Going Forth to Conquer

In the Acts of the Apostles, we are told that God used Paul in a miraculous way, so miraculous that cloths sent from

his body were laid on the sick; and they were healed. He cast out all kinds of devils.

Some vagabond Jews followed him around. Vagabond Jews are traveling Jews who are not real saints. They are here one day and over there another. You cannot tell where they are. They do not stand for anything, but they will fall for anything. Those vagabond Jews had seen Paul cast out devils, so they walked up to a man who was devil possessed. They said, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth" (Acts 19:13). The devil talked back to them. He said inverse 15, ". . . Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" Then, the devil jumped on them and tore their clothes off. There is something to this message of going out to conquer. I want to say again that if every inward foe is conquered, we have victory over sin, the flesh, and the devil. Thank God, we are ready to go forth conquering for God.

God does not have anything but a conquering church. Whenever we become defeated and whenever we back off to the place where man can only see the Church of God as a church among churches, I say with all kindness that God refuses to own us. The Church of God is a conquering church. She is high on the mountain above all the hills of Babylon.

Jesus said that you cannot hide the church. He said in the Gospel of Matthew that she is like a city sitting on a hill, which cannot be hid. People say that they cannot see it, but Jesus said that you cannot hide it. The true church sticks out just like a sore thumb. It makes you different than anything else of any kind.

Thank God, when you get sold out to Jesus, you become as peculiar people. You are not peculiar on the thought of dress, even though the Bible has a dress standard, but you are peculiar because your trust is in God. You are peculiar because you love God above everything else. You are peculiar because you are devoted to the work of God. While the world is going after worldly pleasures, you are going after souls to win them for God.

I will not go into detail here, but the Old Testament tells us of that little gold-covered box in which God's presence dwelt. I want you to understand this so that you can see that if God be for you, who can be against you. You may run into many

enemies, just as Israel did. Many of Israel's enemies gave her hard battles and would have whipped her; but when the battle got the strongest, God told the priest to go get the ark. The minute that Israel would bring that box out, Israel's enemies laid down their weapons. They would say, "We can fight you, but we cannot fight that box." That was God's Spirit.

Now, we are living in the New Testament dispensation, where the blood of Jesus Christ cleans you up, and God can dwell right in your Heart. He is not in a box anymore. He is living in your heart.

We are living in such a day and time where we get so bound that we try to bring the church down to a human level. I talked to some people who saw the truth and took a stand from certain conditions which they were in. Some of them were a little fearful. One asked, "If we take a stand for that message, whom are we going to look to?"

I said, "Look to God, Brother." You see, we get so human that we just have to have somebody to lean on and somebody to look to. If we are not careful right there, my friend, we will lose our power and our force.

Paul says in Romans 8:31, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

More Than Conquerors

Let me digress from teaching on the church for just a minute to help you individually. If every day you will work toward keeping God foremost in your life and live your life by the grace of God where you can know that God is pleased with you, every other problem will come out all right.

I want you to see something in Romans, Chapter 8, and it will lead us right into the opening of the second seal. Verses 35-37 say: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Brethren, I want you to notice from verse 35 through 39, he mentioned anything that could happen to you and a little bit

more. He lets you know that you not only can be a conqueror, but more than a conqueror. Let me illustrate:

Suppose you go to work tomorrow, and you work at a very hard job. You look to the Lord and say, "Lord, you are going to have to help me." You just make it through. At the end of the day, you say, "I made it." You are a conqueror. However, if God helps you and blesses you to the place that you can say, "I made it through," and you can give a good shout too, you are more than a conqueror. Now, God gives you grace so that you not only get through by the sweat of your brow, but He gives you grace so that you can get through and rejoice.

Do not forget how the early church went forth conquering and to conquer. It was because they were in Christ. Their all and all was in Christ. Acts, Chapters 19 and 20, tell you how they reached all the then-known world in less than two years. The Book of Acts says that there was not a man, woman, or child in all Asia (that is all they understood as being the world then) who had not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If we would all die right now, I do not know what some people are going to tell Jesus with all the facilities that we have and yet getting so little done and reaping and reaching so few people with the greatest message of truth that God ever gave a people. You may feel that you cannot do it, but I am preaching on being *more* than conquerors through Jesus Christ.

Saint, as long as you stay in Christ, nothing can separate you from God's love. However, you can separate yourself from Christ. Therefore they went forth conquering and to conquer. When He opened the second seal, you can see in a greater way what happened.

Using the Sword to Kill Each Other

We read in Revelation 6:3-4: "When he had opened the second seal [now we are moving a little farther in the history of the church], I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red [just the opposite of white and of purity, holiness, and righteousness]; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there

was given unto him a great sword."

I know that anyone who has studied history and followed the teachings of the Revelation knows that he is bringing up the same picture of the great red drawn, a picture of paganism that raised up against the church. However, friend, if we get right down to the depth of the opening of the seals, we find that every one of them will show us a condition not only going on out in history, but a condition that got right in among God's people and clipped her power.

The first seal showed us some people sold out to God. They went forth conquering and to conquer; and they did it. However, the devil does not take this thing sitting down. He can work through all the outward foes that he wants; but if you do not allow any to get on the inside, you can be victorious.

We know from the color of the red horse that God is giving us a picture of something vastly different from the peace and purity of the white horse. There is no crown on his rider's head. In other words, there is no victory. Instead of using the sword by the Spirit of Christ to win a world, they started to use the sword to kill one another. They lost their love.

The letter to the church at Ephesus covers the same period of time. He wrote to the church at Ephesus, saying, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Revelation 2:4). Although this was a morning time condition, the same thing is existing today in an evening-light apostasy. What happened to the church as long as they held the love of God in their hearts and their hearts were pure? They went forth with one mission—to reach a world. However, the minute that they allowed things to get in their hearts, they took that great sword that was to reach the whole world and started to kill each other.

Go back and read Paul's writings to the church. He warned the Galatians. He warned the Corinthians. He said that if you fight and devour one another, you will be consumed of each other. One of the first moves that the devil makes among a people when God gets them started out is to get their eyes off Jesus and get them on each other. Then, they go picking at each other. You hear them say, "Why aren't you doing that? You ought to do that." Whenever that spirit gets in among a people, it will take peace away yet today.

Saint of God, I say this with all kindness, but we need to realize that Jesus is the Vine, you are the branches, and His Father is the Husbandman. Leave people with God. Let us everyone work for God. Set the right example. Manifest love. Be true to each other.

We are living in a day and time when people claim to be saints, but hypocrisy is knee deep. They will tell one thing to your face; and as soon as they get outside the door, they are saying something else to your back

Hypocrisy is the thing that started the apostasy. That was the first move that the devil made to bring about the falling away of the church. The devil did not only do it back there in the morning-time church, but he has done it time and time again. If we will keep the devil out of our midst, no outside force can defeat us.

Therefore, the spirit of that red horse got in among the church; and they started to kill one another. I want to say again that the dragon powers of Rome started the terrible martyrdom of the saints. All of that is true, but I told you that I wanted to deal with the enemies that are the closest to us.

We need some understanding of the spirit of that red horse. The reason why the Church of God is not doing a greater work over the land is that she cannot come to a place where she stands in unity. Now here is a group, and over there is a group. While religious folks are shooting at each other, the world is; dying and going to hell.

Do you think that the love of God is strong enough in me to get me to put up with that which is wrong? No, sir! The Bible says to come out from among that which is false, that which is corrupt, and that which is wrong. However, I am talking about having the love of God to get our hearts strong enough so that when God brings His body of people together, we can work together for God and go forth.

Earlier we read in Revelation, Chapter 2, what Jesus told John to write to the church at Ephesus, which covers this first period of time. He pointed out her many good traits; but He said, "I have somewhat against you. You have left your first love." That is the deceptive thing. Revelation 2:2 tells us why it is deceptive. He told them that they were able to make liars out of apostate ministers. In other words, they knew the truth

so much that they could back down a false preacher and prove that he was lying; but with all that, they could not see themselves. They left their first love. Because of that, they were killing each other.

The Church Goes Into Darkness

Revelation 6:5-6 reads: "And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and to a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." Notice that we have gone from a pure white condition to a black horse, which is going the opposite way. That black horse moving in is a symbol of spiritual darkness coming over a people that once had light.

In John 12:35, Jesus told the church to walk in the light while you have it, lest darkness come upon you. He was talking to a people who were in light. God only gives us light for one reason—to walk in it. He does not just give it to us for greater understanding. If you do not walk in it, you will lose it. If you do not walk in it, you will go into darkness.

The devil was working on the morning-time church, the same church that went forth in all her glory conquering and to conquer. First, they got to fighting among themselves. They moved right on into the next era of time, and this black horse symbolizes the beginning and the breaking in of a complete apostasy from God's Word. The Bible had been open, but it began to close up.

That apostasy that came on the morning-time church produced the people who are symbolized in the beasts of Revelation. Roman Catholicism was the first that came up out of the falling away. Right out of that came the second beast, Protestantism, and so forth. Therefore, all the many religions today that actually work against the truth had their beginning from people who once had the truth and fell away from it.

Now this black horse was a picture of darkness coming back. After the bright light came in, the morning time, the

Word of God tells us that because the people backed up off the truth and would not hear it, there were 1260 years of Dark Ages. All of us studied about it in school. This kind of darkness had nothing to do with the natural sun, but it was a time when the Bible was closed. Rome ruled the world. Roman Catholicism wants you to forget about this. They do not want anyone to ever bring it up, but Rome ruled the world. Church and state were one. You know as well as I do that they are moving toward that position again, and now the deceived people think that it is a wonderful thing. They need to go back and see what happened when church and state were one. When church and state were one and Rome ruled the world, 60 million Christians were martyred for the cause of Christ.

Rationing the Word of God

Now I am not going to go into a lot of history, but the thing that I want you to see is that we need to have a fear within us of this apostasy. That black horse shows forth a condition. Let us look at it again. "And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure [this is right in the midst of the church now] of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (Revelation 6:5-6).

Now stop and think just a little bit. First of all, there is a deception—a measure of wheat for a penny. If you will go to Matthew, Chapter 20, you will find that a penny was a man's wages for a day back there; and a measure of wheat was enough to eat for one meal. Now if it cost you a whole day's wages for just one meal, it is just a matter of time till you would be starved out. This is a picture of a starvation rate that is coming on the Word of God. This is the way that the devil has always worked his apostasy; and he is working the same thing today.

The devil knows that he could not walk into the church building, pick up your King James version of the Bible, and carry it out; but he has a smoother way of working. He gets hold of the preacher and has him let up on preaching the

Word until he gets down to a twenty- or thirty-minute essay. Furthermore, most of that is a little story of tales, a poem, and very little Bible. The devil, through these means, has taken the Bible out of worship.

The balance in his hand is a picture of an apostasy. The Word of God is spoken of in the Revelation as a sword, a mirror, a scale, and a judge. A balance or a scale in his hand still represents the Word of God, but it means that he is using the Word of God in a deceptive manner to give people a false measure. The Bible will prove this to be true.

Daniel, Chapter 5, tells us about Belshazzar, the king of Babylon. His father had carried the golden vessels back from the temple at Jerusalem. One night he was having a big party with his concubines, captains, and friends; and he was drinking heavily. He told them to go and bring in the golden vessels that had been brought from the temple, and they began to drink wine out of them. When he brought them in there, the hand of God began to write on the wall. It got hold of him, and his knees shook. The party was all over as far as he was concerned. His wife came to him and said, "Do not get excited. You will be all right."

Belshazzar said, "This thing is real to me." Therefore, he called his astrologers and the Chaldeans and the wise men and asked them to read the handwriting of God. None of them could read it. Finally, his mother said, "There is a young man in your kingdom in whom dwells the Spirit of the most holy God." Well, the king told her to get him. Daniel was brought in; and he read it to the king: "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN," which meant in part that he had been weighed in God's balance and found wanting.

Therefore, this lets us know that a man with a balance in his hand (Revelation 6:5) is one who is giving out a false measure of the Word of God and giving the people a false weight of themselves. This is going on today as much as it ever went on back there. The Bible even tells us that we have an evening-time apostasy. The Word of God is being rationed. How much Bible are you really getting in the church service anymore? My friend, not only are many people not getting much Bible, but they are getting a false conception of their true condition.

Remember that the Scripture in Revelation said that the balance was in the man's hand. The book was in Christ's hand; but it has gotten out of Christ's hand; and now a man has it in his hand. I have run into people all over the country who say, "We have decided that we are not going to preach that." They have the thing in their hands.

Eat the Word of God

Furthermore, they are selling the people the very staff of life at exorbitant prices. The preachers are giving you less every day and are asking for more money every year. Now, the deception of it all the time is that they are going to cut back on the meal, but think they are not going to hurt the oil and the wine (symbols of the Spirit). Isn't this just exactly how apostasy works?

You hear them say, "Now we are not going to teach the Bible like we did. We are not going to get up there and preach an hour and just teach Scripture, but we are not going to hurt the Spirit a bit. We are going to have a good Spirit in the service." Now right there is the deception. You cannot separate the Word and the Spirit, because the New Testament is in the Spirit. You do not have a bit more Spirit than you have Bible. The devil would have you feel that you can have a good Spirit without preaching the Bible.

Let us see what Jesus said in John 6:53: "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." The disciples could not understand that. Jesus said in so many words, "I am not talking about you eating My corporeal body. When you eat My Word, you are eating My flesh. When you drink of My Spirit, you are drinking My blood."

In verse 63 Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

"Look on Us"

Perhaps what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:1 will help make this deception plainer to you. "Do we begin again to

commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?" Preachers did not have to have letters of recommendation until they got crooked, and then somebody had to recommend them. Paul did not have to have any letter of recommendation. His preaching and his life let everybody know who he was.

Let us read verse 2. It says, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men." You can tell what a preacher preaches by looking at his people. For example, when I am driving along the highway, I do not have to go up the lane and ask that farmer how he feeds. All I have to do is look at his cows, and I can tell what kind of a farmer he is. Likewise, if someone claims to have a spiritual congregation, just take me over on a Sunday morning and let me look at the people. I may never have heard him or met him before, but I can tell what the preacher preaches by looking at the people.

We are right in the midst of apostasy. Let us face it. The same thing that happened back there is happening again. A deceptive spirit is working. The preacher is saying that we can still have a good spirit even if he just speaks fifteen minutes. The truth is that people are in a pitiful condition and very ignorant of truth.

Let us read the next verse in 2 Corinthians, Chapter 3: "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God. . . ." Also, the preachers are telling you, "Don't look at the people. Get your eyes on Jesus." This is the second deception. If the people cannot look at us, who can they look at?

For example, what if Peter and John, when they spoke to the crippled man, would have said, like the preachers do now, "Don't look at us"? They said just the opposite, "Look on us."

Where there is little or no Bible preached, the "saints" often look like Jezebels. Some poor sinner wanting to get saved attends the service; but he looks around and says, "I wonder where there is a saint. Who will I get to pray with me? That woman does not have it; I can tell by the way she looks. And that man has not got it." Therefore, the preacher who is not preaching the Bible standard has to cover his deception by saying, "Don't look at the people."

Well, that is exactly what you are here for—for the world to look at. You are their Bible, and they are getting just the amount of Bible that you are living and practicing. The above Scripture said that you are a living epistle known and read of all men. When you claim to be the Church of God, any sinner anywhere has the right to ask you why you do not do what the Book says. This thing of claiming to be the Church of God means something. If you are in a man's church, they can lower the standard anytime that they want because it belongs to man.

The Holy Spirit Gives Life to a People

One time, while visiting in a certain state, as the pastor and I drove down the street, he showed me a great, big, fine church building where they had just taken down the sign with the name "Church of God." It is a community church now. He said, "It just tears my heart out." I replied, "It does not tear my heart out. They should have changed the name a long time ago because it has been a community church for a long time. I thank God that they took the name 'Church of God' off, because it was not the Church of God. It was the people's church and God had nothing to do with it."

I have lived long enough to remember when there was no confusion in the minds of men. When you said, "Church of God," right away they knew who you belonged to. The devil has dissected and divided. Then, he just sits back, lets the world make mockery, and laughs while the heart of Jesus Christ is wounded.

We cannot separate the Word and the Spirit. Let us read 2 Corinthians 3:3-6 again: "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency, is of God; Who also hast made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

When he speaks of "the letter," he is talking about the old

Law. It killed, but the Spirit giveth life. The New Testament is in the Spirit. The Word was with God; the Word became flesh; and when Christ died on Calvary's Cross, the Word became Spirit. We only have it as we have it in the Spirit.

With all that glory the morning-time church had, she never had a New Testament to read. Let us get back to where the power of the church is. According to some records, the first New Testament epistle was 1 Thessalonians and was written around A. D. 60. The church had already taken the then-known world and had gone forth in all of her power and glory from A. D. 33 to A. D. 60, but she never had a New Testament to read. How could they have had unity? They trusted the Spirit.

Eternal Separation

In Revelation 6:7-8 we read: "And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. . . ." Death and hell follow an apostasy every time. A gray horse symbolizes a mixture of light and darkness, not being clean cut for God anymore. In other words, they are going to take a lot of truth, but they are going to get some darkness in with it. That is the outgrowth of apostasy.

He is telling us that death and hell follow an apostasy. What kind death is this? Well, it is not physical death. Many people have died and gone to Heaven because were true to God. It is just a spiritual death because the Bible that when you commit sin, you are under spiritual death; and you are separated from God, but there is an opportunity to get back. You can be resurrected if you hear the Gospel.

However, the truth that he is trying to put before us here is that when you let the power of apostasy really get hold of you, death and hell follow you. This kind of death is the second death—the kind that you never get out of. You end up in eternal separation from God. I can go back to prophecy and prove to you that when people went into an apostasy and really got under the power of it, they did not get out. You see very few get out of apostasy today. However, some people

are awakened to it before they get into it. If that is your situation, run to God; get your heart purified; and get out of it. Preachers and workers who really get into it, do not get out. Death and hell follow. This kind of death is the second death—eternal separation from God.

You see the first death is just separation from God for a time. Jesus came as a Resurrection; and if you will come to Jesus, He will quicken you from your dead state and bring you back. However, the second death is eternal separation from God.

John speaks of this death and warns you of it. In 1 John 5:16 he said that there is a sin that is not unto death. You pray for a man that has committed that sin, and God will give him life; but there is a sin that is unto death, and there is no need to pray for that one. Death and hell follow.

The prophet will let you know that when the apostasy moved on the church, they never came out of it. Dear friend, one reason that they do not come out of it is because of the deception that causes you to believe you are what you are not. You build your own deception around you.

Second Thessalonians, Chapter 2, points out this very thing. I will just highlight two points. He said there that because when they knew God and knew the truth, they did not love the truth and live the truth, God turned them over to a reprobate mind. He let them believe a lie and be damned. I know that there are preachers who will say that, this verse is speaking of Catholicism, but God would not be a just God if He turned people over who have never known the truth. This verse speaks of a people who had the truth; and when they knew the truth, they did not love it enough to live it, stand for it, and be true to it. The power of deception worked on them.

The Scripture said that He turned them over to a reprobate mind. He turned them over to it because they wanted it. Why did they want it? I will illustrate. You may have lost the vital experience that you once had; but every time that God gives you truth, you keep making yourself believe that you are all right. You tell yourself, "I am as good as others. I am still the Church of God." Perhaps in a revival meeting God tells you again that you need help; but you keep making yourself believe, "I am all right. I am all right. I am all right." Finally,

God gets tired of it, turns you over, and lets you believe that you are all right. When He does this, there is nothing but death and hell that will follow. There is no one who can get right unless he sees that he is wrong. God turns you over and lets you believe that you are right when you are wrong. The Bible states that you believe a lie and are damned.

The powers of apostasy move very deceptively and very lightly, but little by little they carry the people of God away from the standard of righteousness and holiness on which they once stood. All the time they feel, "We may drift a little, but we are not going too far." The Bible lets us know that when the black horse appears, the spirit of apostasy moves in. Death and hell is the thing that follows, friend, unless you flee it.

The Fourth Part of the Earth

Notice the last part of that verse in Revelation 6:8. He said that the second death was given power over the fourth part of the earth. Now he made it very plain that he is not talking about the literal earth where the grass is growing. In this verse when he talks about the earth, he is talking about people.

Read Jeremiah 22:29. There the prophet cried out, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." Now he was not preaching to a hillside. He was preaching to old Israel. They were living after the flesh. They had become so earthbound that they would not hear the Word of God anymore. Therefore, he addressed them, "O earth, earth, earth."

In Matthew 6:9-10 Jesus taught us to pray. He said to pray like this: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done *in* [not *on*] earth." Likewise, this verse speaks of the hearts of mankind. In 2 Corinthians 4:7 Paul said that we have this treasure in earthen vessels.

In Matthew, Chapter 13, Jesus broke all hearers of the Gospel into four groups: first, the hearers likened to the wayside; secondly, those likened to the stony ground; thirdly, those likened to the thorny ground; and fourthly, those likened

to food soil that brings forth fruit unto God. Over in John, Chapter 15, He broke it up in four parts again. Jesus said, "Without Me, you can do nothing." There He is referring to a person without Christ. Also, He said, "If you abide in Me." There He was speaking of a person who has been born again. He is abiding in Christ, and he will bring forth fruit. Furthermore, Jesus said that the Father will purge you; and you will bring forth more fruit. There is the third part. The fourth part is those who, because they abide not in Christ, are cast forth as a branch and put in the fire. Therefore, the fourth part is the ones who were abiding in Christ but refused to walk in the light.

Read Jude 12-13. There he tells us the same thing. He speaks of people who become spots in our feasts. They are wandering stars and clouds without water. They do not have the Spirit of God in their lives. He tells us that that kind of people will end up in the gloom and blackness of darkness which is reserved forever and ever to them. Death and hell will follow them.

The Revelation—History of the Church

I trust the Spirit of God will give you the understanding which you need as we read our text, Revelation 8:1. It states, "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." The mind, thinking on a natural level, begins right away to think about something that takes place over in Heaven where God dwells. However, let us see.

The sixth seal was the time of the evening-light reformation. This was the time when Brother Warner and other reformers brought the great message of the truth that called God's people from the divided condition in Babylon back to the unity that the morning-time church had. God poured out His blessing with mighty signs, wonders, and manifestations of His power.

Many people thought that the sixth seal reached up to the end of time. Therefore, because the seventh seal follows that right away people throw this thought of the seventh seal over in Heaven—God's Heaven. However, remember that the Book

of Revelation is a book of symbols. When you read "heaven" there, it does not mean a Heaven in just the thought of that which we think of as God's dwelling place.

Previously, in our study, we found that after Jesus had given John those seven letters to send to those seven churches of Asia, he heard a voice saying, "Come up hither," and a door was opened in heaven. John was caught up in the Spirit, and he received this great vision. John got a revelation of Jesus Christ or the work of Christ in redemption from the time He came down and gave His life on Calvary's Cross on through to the end of time when Jesus appears the second time.

Now, friend, just consider this and let the Spirit of God lead you. First of all, when you look at Revelation 8:1, you will see that when the seventh seal opens, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. Then, he goes right on after that and gives you many happenings to take place here on the earth.

Now anyone who knows how to rightly divide the Word of truth knows that according to the Apostle Peter, the Apostle Paul, and other New Testament writers, the heaven and the earth are going to be destroyed in a second of time when Jesus comes again. The very elements of the earth will melt with fervent heat. Yet, we see under the opening of the seventh seal that there is a work to be done right here on the earth. When we rightly divide the truth, we see that John is getting a picture in this vision of a work that is to be done by the church right here on the earth, not something that is going to take place over in God's Heaven.

Conditions in the Church

We have read in Revelation 6:1 where the Lamb opened one of the seals. There you saw a white horse, and he that sat upon him had a bow in his hand and a crown on his head. We showed you a symbol of the morning-time church going forth conquering and to conquer. When He opened the second seal, He showed you a condition that was existing in the church. They had lost that peace. They had left that love. They began to kill one another with the Word of God. When

He opened the third seal, we saw the black horse, a condition of apostasy existing right in the church. Also, when He opened the fourth, fifth, and sixth seals, a condition was existing right in the church.

Therefore, we have every right to believe that when He opened the seventh seal, He was once again showing us a condition that was existing in the church. We have already read that when He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. Remember that the Revelation is a book of symbols. Let us study the thought of silence in heaven. Heaven here is the same as in other places that it is mentioned in the Revelation. Heaven here is the symbolic expression of a high and lifted up or spiritual position brought about by real salvation. If you read in the twelfth chapter of Revelation, you will see the pure woman, which symbolizes the church, in heaven. She was not over in God's Heaven. Also, you will see the dragon, which symbolizes pagan Rome right in that same position; and a battle took place right here on the earth, not over in Heaven.

Some preachers will tell you that that dragon is the devil, and he was once in Heaven and got kicked out. However, the devil never was over in God's Heaven. If you rightly divide the Word of Truth, you will find out that he was the devil from the beginning.

Jesus said in John 8:44 that the devil is a liar and a murderer from the beginning. That is as far as we can go back because that is as far as the Bible goes back. When you go back any farther than the beginning, you are just theorizing because in the beginning was God and in the beginning was the devil. He was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, and he never abode in the truth. Do not say that he was a good angel once and he fell. He never was good. He always was the devil. Amen!

Someone may say, "Well, what about Revelation, Chapter 12?" He was speaking, my friend, of a system that the devil used, namely pagan Rome, to fight against the church. However, the point we want to get to you in that when He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven, a symbolic picture again of a condition that is existing in the church in our very day and time.

Anderson, Indiana, put out a book entitled *When the Trumpet Sounds* and gave you a picture of the sounding of the sixth trumpet or the opening of the sixth seal, when God showed Brother Warner and those reformers the light on the unity of God's people. They began to sound out the message putting judgment on Babylon and calling God's people to "come out of her" and come back to Zion to the unity that they had in the morning time.

Church, whether you want to believe it or not, many of God's people who have been in the truth for 25 or 35 years are in confusion today. They do not know what to do. They are worshiping in a place called "Church of God." Yet, my friend, in many cases, it is more dead, more formal, and lacking in spiritual life and power in a greater way than some of Babylon's organizations. Yet these people say, "What can we do? We are in the church and cannot come out of the church. What are we going to do?"

When God broke the seal, He gave the church understanding. When He broke this seventh seal, He is now giving the church understanding. He is letting us know exactly what to do beyond the shadow of a doubt.

A Heavenly Place

Someone said, "The thing that throws me is the fact the Bible says there was silence in heaven. That must be over where God lives." Well, remember that there are three heavens mentioned in the Bible. First, there is the Heaven that God dwells in. God had a dwelling place before He ever created the heavens and the earth. The heavens that He created were the heavens where the stars and the moon and the planets are. Paul said in the Ephesian letter that when Christ rose from the dead, He ascended up far above all heavens. God had a dwelling place before He created the heavens where the firmament is.

That makes two heavens. Paul said that he was caught up in the third heaven. He did not know if he was in the body or out of the body, but God soon let him know that he was in the body. He gave him a thorn in the flesh. Paul found out that he had never been out of the body. He was just caught up in the

Spirit. That third heaven is a high spiritual position.

Now let us look in the third chapter of John. When Nicodemus, a master of Israel, came to Jesus, he said, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Jesus just said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." You cannot see spiritual things until you are born again. The Kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom.

In John 3:12-13 Jesus said: "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." How do you like that for a twister? He was standing right on the ground in Galilee, but He said, "I'm in heaven, Nicodemus."

Now what kind of heaven was He in when He was standing right there? Brother, He was in a spiritual plane; and He was trying to get Nicodemus born again so that he could get there, too. Now, Jesus had taught Nicodemus a simple lesson—you must be born again. Nicodemus was bound to a human level. When Jesus said that you must be born again, Nicodemus said, "How can I, when I'm a man, enter into my mother's womb the second time?"

Jesus said, "I'm not talking about a natural birth. That which is born of the flesh is the outer man. I'm talking about the inner man that needs to be born of the Spirit." Then, He turned and said, "If I speak of earthly things to you and you cannot understand that, how are you going to understand heavenly things?"

Furthermore, Jesus said, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). Now what kind of heaven was He in when He was standing right there on the ground talking to Nicodemus? I will tell you quickly that He is in the same heaven every born-again person is in. Right here is where religion is hung up. This is why people fight holiness and righteousness. It is too high a plane for them. Thank God, Jesus came to lift us. When you get a real born-again experience, you do not walk on the same level you used to.

*I was out on the Broadway of sin and despair,
Crushed 'neath my burden of sorrow and care;
My constant companions were trouble and doubt,
Till Jesus reached down and lifted me out.
He lifted me out of the deep miry clay;
He settled my feet in the strait, narrow way.
He lifted me up to a heavenly place,
And floodeth my soul each day with His grace.*

Quickened

Notice in every chapter of the letter to the Ephesians that Paul was on his knees praying for the church, because Ephesus was leaving her first love. Paul was trying to head it off before she left it. (When Jesus wrote to Ephesus, she had already left it.) Paul was trying to get her to turn back, just as God is working with the church today trying to get her turned back before she leaves her first love altogether and gets sealed into eternal darkness.

We read Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:18-23: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Ephesians 2:1-6 states: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the

children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised *us* up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Now what was the heavenly place Paul was talking about? What heaven is the Revelation talking about? In the Revelation, every time that heaven is mentioned dealing with the church, it is talking about a high spiritual position that God has lifted us up to. Whatever you do, Church of God, do not let the power of Satan pull you down from the high level that God has exalted us to through real salvation. The church is in a high place far above all the hills of false religion. In Psalm 87:1 we read, "His foundation is in the holy mountains." The wise man said, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). As we stand in holiness and righteousness, God will lift us up to a heavenly place. Never let the world pull you down in anyway.

The Bread of Life

In John 6:53 Jesus told the disciples, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." In verse 58 Jesus said that He was that Bread that came down from heaven. I want to add that Jesus Christ is the Bread that cannot be baked in men's or devil's ovens.

In 1 Corinthians, Chapter 10, we read that when you eat that one Bread, you become one body. There he is speaking of the unity of the body of Christ—the church. The reason there is division is that people are eating too much besides this bread. When He is talking about bread, He is talking about His Word. People are eating too much besides the Word of God.

Anywhere the Word of God is preached under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, it will produce nothing but the body of Christ, the Church of God. To produce anything but the Church of God, you have to add to the Word of God or take away from it. This bread preached or this truth preached just as it is will produce only one name: "The church of the living God." The devil knows that. He is a believer.

Jesus says that the devil believes and trembles. He knows the power in that Word. He knows when you leave the Word as it is. If you will preach and live it as it is, there is not a thing that the devil can do but tremble and watch you move forward for God. That is why the devil moves on this angle and that, to bet you to take away from the Word and add to it. Why? When you change it, it is not God's Word anymore. When it is not God's Word, God will not back it up; and when God does not back it up, then you have to get men and organizations to back it up. You have to have a human source of some kind of strength to keep you going. Settle within your heart, friend, that whatever others do, you are going to sell out to God and be determined to be true to God's Word. God will bless you.

Christ Opens the Seals

Christ opened every one of the seals. If you will read Revelation, Chapter 5, very closely, it will tell you that He broke the seats while He was a Lamb. However, when Christ comes again, He is going to be a Lion. When He comes again, He is going to bring judgment. He is dealing in mercy now. He is your Lamb now: He is your sacrifice. He opens up now to give you understanding and gives you a way out. He tells you in His Word that now is the time of salvation; but when God says that it is enough and when Jesus splits the clouds, you are going to hear the Lion. Then, the same One who is your Lamb will be your Lion. He will lay God's eternal judgment down on people as they really are; every one of us will stand speechless before Him. Therefore, it is only the goodness of God, as we will find, that caused Him to break the seventh seal just as He did the rest.

The Church of the Firstborn

We have showed you what that heaven is which the Revelation talks about. It is that heavenly position that the church has been lifted up to. Let us look at one more Scripture on this. Paul let us know in Hebrews, Chapter 12, that they had not come to Mount Sinai where the old Law was given:

"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" (Hebrews 12:22).

If you study Hebrews, Chapter 5, you will find that the old Jerusalem that the Jews gathered to was an earthly Jerusalem; but the New Testament Church of God, the Church of the Firstborn, is called the heavenly Jerusalem. Yet men and women are members right here on earth. As we have already studied, the reason it is called the heavenly Jerusalem is that through the power of salvation, we are lifted up to a heavenly place—a place of holiness and righteousness—where men without the Spirit of God cannot live.

Let us go a little further in Hebrews, Chapter 12. Verses 22-23 say: "Ye are come unto mount Sion, [too many people do not know what mount Sion is] 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." Now, what is Mount Sion? What is the heavenly Jerusalem? The Church of the Firstborn is spoken of here as the heavenly Jerusalem or Mount Sion.

The Firstborn is Jesus Christ, and Paul spoke of His church in Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

The Church of the Firstborn is the Church of God. The Church of the Firstborn is Mount Sion. The Church of the Firstborn is the heavenly Jerusalem.

Spiritual Jew

Just as the old Jerusalem was the city of the literal Jews and the literal descendants of Abraham went to old Jerusalem to keep the Passover, now new Jerusalem is a place where new Jews come. Romans 2:28-29 tell us who a new Jew is: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew,

which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Therefore, the new Jerusalem is for the new Jews to go to keep the "Passover." Someone asked, "Do you believe that the Jews are going back to Jerusalem?" Yes, if you know who the Jews are. When Christ died on the Cross and Israel rejected Christ as their Savior and their King, they were no longer a nation in the light of God's Word. Judaism is just a religion today.

Many radio preachers tell you about Israel as a nation going back to Palestine. Let us not be ignorant. Palestine is just not big enough. Just measure Palestine, and you find out how foolish it is for preachers to say that the Jews are all going back there.

The Apostle Paul tells us that there is no difference now between Jew and Gentile. All have sinned. Whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, you are a sinner. There is only one door that you can come through for salvation. Whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, you come through the same door, Christ Jesus. When you do that, you are a New Testament Jew.

We have already found that He made a new Jerusalem, the Church of God, for New Testament Jews to go to. We go for the same reason that the Old Testament Jews went to the old Jerusalem—to keep the Passover. How do we keep the Passover? Chapter 5 of 1 Corinthians says that our Passover is Christ, and Christ is the truth, so we come to the new Jerusalem to keep the truth. Glory be to God!

A Commotion

Now let us see what the Bible is talking about in Revelation 8:1 when it says that there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour when He opened the seventh seal. We are getting down to where we are now. _You do not need any preacher to tell you that there is silence in the church.

Now remember that John was on the Isle of Patmos. This vision that he received here came just as if I would turn a movie on for you, and you were seeing all these happenings.

I have given you Scripture after Scripture to prove this was a vision that John had. Now he was going right along with this vision. Every seal was opened and he saw action. He heard things going on. When he got to the sixth seal, what a commotion went on.

Revelation, Chapter 6, will tell, you that when He broke the sixth seal, there was an earthquake. He saw the mighty sounding of God's Word. He saw a great commotion by many people fleeing Babylon and coming back to Zion. Oh, how much was going on! However, when He broke the seventh seal, there was nothing happening; and John could hear nothing. Someone said, "Well, that means the end." No, read the second verse. After the silence was broken, John saw some action.

God has let me see sights that I will never forget. I have seen the power of God move when the saints walked in the light of God's Word and hundreds flocked to the altars, and I am seeing it again. I saw that when I was a boy. I saw people get out of wheel chairs and blind eyes opened.

One little baby had been dead quite a while, but the mother would not give it up. She brought it right onto the campground. They prayed for it, and the baby cried. God brought it back to life.

Friends, we are cheating ourselves of the best things from God. Heaven will be just as great even if you or I never get there. God will get along just fine if none of us ever live for Him. We cheat ourselves when we cut the corners on God.

Someone said, "We are living in a better age. We know how to do it better. We found out you can preach a lot less Gospel and not be so strict and still get along all right." You take me up to that church where you are doing that, and I will guarantee you that the sick are not being healed. Cancer is not being cured. Blind eyes are not being opened. Devils are not being cast out. There is no God there. It is just dead formality. If God is there, He will manifest Himself. When God is there, you will know that He is here. When God is there, the sinner will tremble under conviction.

We have played around in forms of godliness till the sinner can come in, chew his gum, and not feel a bit of conviction. Sometimes they are so brazen that they even teach Sunday

school or sing a special, but they are sinners all the time. It is no wonder the mighty power of God is not there.

Silence in Heaven

I want you to see the picture. He said when he opened the seventh seal that there was silence. You may ask, "Silence on what?" There was silence on what he had been hearing. Now let us back up just a moment. When he opened the first seal, he heard one of the four beasts. He heard a ministry in the church crying, "Come and see." Come and see what? Come and see a church conquering and going forth to conquer.

How long has it been since you have heard an old-time preacher preach about a conquering church and say, "Come and see the church. She is the only one of her mother. There is nothing else like it, not even anything close to it. Come and see a church that has victory over sin, the flesh, and the devil. Come and see a church that is able to live seven days a week with victory"? There is a silence on that. You almost never hear that kind of preaching. Also, there is silence on the message of teaching people Sunday after Sunday that you had better live up close to God. You had better walk in the light of His Word. If you do not, you may lose out with God. You may apostatize and go straight to hell. No, you do not hear that. There is a silence on that.

Preachers are patting you on the back. They are "soft-soaping" you. They are telling you that everybody fails God a little, and God knows that no one can please Him. The devil never told a bigger lie than that. Jesus Christ came to change you so you can live pleasing to God every day of your life. There is silence on that.

There is too much silence in the pulpit. That is where the silence has to be broken first. If you get the silence broken in the pulpit, you will get the silence broken in the pew. Thirty-five years ago lots of shouting went on. It was nothing to see people shouting and walking the aisles when their cups overflowed with joy.

The silence needs to be broken in the pulpit. What people need to do is get down to business and call that preacher in

and have a little meeting with him and say, "If you do not start laying down the truths of God's Word, we are going to pray that God will send us someone who will feed our souls well."

That old spirit has so moved into some congregations that if a person felt like saying, "Amen," he could not get it out. He would choke to death before he would get it out. I have been in meetings when the preacher asked the congregation not to say, "Amen," because they might cause him to lose his thought. What kind of a preacher is that, that a good healthy amen knocks him clear off the track! If a good healthy amen from a saint who loves God knocks the preacher off the track, he needs to be knocked off the track, because he is on the wrong one.

There is silence in the pulpit because the ministry is not saying, "Come and see." I want to ask you, How long has it been since your pastor devoted a Sunday night to a good two-hour message on the church, setting her out in her "separateness"?

There is silence, my friend, on the message of overcoming. My, how people need that encouraging message today, with sadness and sorrow on every side! How the saints need to hear one of the four beasts say, "Come and hear a good, hot message on the overcoming power of Jesus Christ!" No matter what befalls you in this life, God is committed to you if you live a committed life to Him. He taught me that. a long time ago. He is duty bound to do what He promised in His Word. When I am committed to God, He is committed to me not only to be an overcomes but more than an overcomes and more than a conqueror. There is silence on that for sure. There are three earthquake spoken of in the Revelation. An earthquake in the Revelation is when earthly things shake a quake under the mighty power of God.

Remember John 1:1, which says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." When it is the Word of God, God is there. When God is there, hearts are enlightened, men and women's faith is inspired, their needs are supplied; and the judgments of God are laid right to the core. Friend, I am just trying to get you to see that we are in a time of a great silence.

In Revelation 11:13 we are told of an earthquake in A.D.

1880 when God sounded His trumpet calling His people back to Zion. Hebrews, Chapter 12, tells us that when God spoke, Mount Sinai shook, and Israel was scared to death. They were trembling because God was there. Hebrews 12:26 says, "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now, he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the each only, but also heaven." This time His voice is going to shake heaven, the church. He said that it will be the removing of things.

There are some things that have to go. The things that have to go are the things that are man-made.

Revelation 12

God's eternal truths are giving us a picture to let us see our true position. The enemy of our soul works so easily, so slyly, and so deceitfully that little by little it carries us far off from the place ought to be.

Let us go a little further. When John saw the vision in Chapter 12 he saw a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her, and the crown of twelve stars on her head. There is a picture of the morning-time church. She had the moon, the Old Testament, under her feet. She was clothed with the sun, the New Testament. The sun and the moon were used as is because they are the greatest avenues of light. The moon is the reflection of the sun. There would not be a moon if there were not any sun. Man has found that the moon is not a ball of fire but dirt and rocks which catch the reflection of the sun; and it gives us light at night.

Even as the moon is a natural reflection of the sun, the Hebrew letter teaches us that the old Law was just a shadow of the New Testament. When Jesus purchased the church, He rose above the moon or the old Law and clothed the church with the sun, the New Testament. She had a crown of twelve stars. Revelation 1:20 will tell you that the stars are the ministry. The crown of twelve stars on her head are the apostles. She brought forth a man child, symbolizing a host of converts, and a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns stood ready to devour her child. That great red dragon symbolizes pagan Rome. The devil was

working through the powers of pagan Rome. The seven heads are the seven forms of government and the ten horns are the ten kingdoms that the Roman empire was broken up into.

The church lay hold of that dragon, cast him down from his lofty position, and proved (by the truth) that paganism was earthly and devilish. There was no God in that religion whatsoever. When the dragon was cast down, he changed his clothes. He saw the power there was in the church so he came up as a church, Roman Catholicism, with a man of sin at the head of it. For over a thousand years, there was darkness because the Bible was closed. I say this with all kindness, but there is no truth in the teachings of Roman Catholicism. There is no Bible in their teaching. You ask any Roman Catholic, and he will tell you that he is guided by the teachings of the church. However; the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church are contrary to the Bible. No doubt, you recall studying in history about that period of time called the Dark Ages. During this thousand-year period when Rome ruled the world, the Christians hid in the catacombs and the dens.

God showed Martin Luther the truth, and made a reformer out of him. He came forth with that one truth the just shall live by faith. His followers turned right around and built the Lutheran Church. They came out protesting Roman Catholicism because it was a human religion with a man at the head of it. However, the Revelation says that they turned right around and built an image to the first beast.

You may ask, "What kind of an image did Protestantism build to the first beast?" They came out protesting what was a human religion with a man at the head and man-made rules, but every Protestant organization turned right around and put men at the head of their church. They set up their own rules. Revelation, Chapter 13, tells about this.

Judgment on Babylon

In Revelation, Chapter 14, we read where he looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Sion. It was not a lion that looked like a lamb. It was a Lamb that stood on Mount Sion, and with Him an hundred and forty-four thousand. If you read the

seventh chapter of Revelation, you will see that when the message of truth went forth, there were twelve thousand sealed out of each of the twelve tribes of Israel, symbolizing the completeness of God's church. God will gather all His people out.

When Jesus walked these mundane shores, He let us know in John 10:27 that every one of His sheep have two marks on them. He said that they hear My voice, and they follow Me.

There are three parts to a Church of God message. First, it has an everlasting gospel to preach to men and women who are unsaved. The second part of the message is to cry out that Babylon is fallen, and the third part is to tell people what Babylon is.

In Revelation 14:6-10 we read: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue; and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters And there followed another angel; saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

If you will notice in Revelation 14:7, it says that the hour (A.D. 1880) of His judgment is come. That sounds like the final Judgment, but keep on reading. Even though the hour of His judgment is come, yet He has loosed a ministry to preach the Gospel. The hour of His judgment is come—who is He putting judgment on? Well, He is not putting judgment on the lost sinner, because he has the everlasting Gospel preached to him. He is putting judgment on Babylon. Right here God was through with Babylon.

There might be good people mixed through Babylon who

are living for God and walking in all the light that they have; but as far as the system is concerned, God has not worked in the false system of Babylon from that time on. Now the hour of judgment came on Babylon (false religion). He poured out a cup without mixture. "Without mixture" means straight judgment with no mercy mixed with it whatsoever. I know some will get upset with me on this, but God has no mercy for false religion. He has mercy for all mankind, but the false system of false religion is sending more souls to hell than the saloon and night club ever could.

I want to say again that I am not speaking against people, but I am speaking against false religion that is damning the souls of men and women. How many are resting on the fact that they have joined a church or were catechized when they were a child! That did not do them any good. You cannot get rid of the devil by being baptized. He has been baptized millions of times. He has gone in with every sinner who went into the baptismal pool. It does not bother him. Joining a church or going into the church will not make a Christian out of you any more than going into a barn will make a horse out of you. You must be born again.

In Matthew, Chapter 7, before Jesus closed that great Sermon on the Mount, He said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father."

It is not enough to say that the Lord is your Lord. You have to *let* Him be Lord. If you do not let Him be Lord, you are not going to Heaven. Do not be deceived.

For several years a faithful ministry preached the Gospel and poured judgment out. Let us face facts. There never would have been a Church of God Reformation Movement if it would have had to have been built on the preaching that is being done today. If Brother Warner had preached like the ministry preaches today, no one would have come out of Babylon. People would have stayed where they were, and there would not have been a Reformation Movement.

Some of those ministers laid down judgment. They let people see the truth that God is not pleased with them worshiping in those places, and they were wasting their time, their money, and their efforts. The truth said, "Come out of

Babylon, come back to Sion, and be in the unity of the morning-time church." Now for twenty or twenty-five years that message went forth, but there was a letup. When they let up on the message, they lost their lofty position, their power, and their force. Then, they fell right down to the level of other religions and organizations, until now, people see the Church of God as a church among churches or as just another organization.

Slumbering and Sleeping

Now, what is the space of half an hour? For approximately a quarter of the hour of God's judgment (Revelation 14:7) the truth was laid down. In the last quarter part, God is once again inspiring the ministry to call God's people together. However, for the space of about half that hour, there was silence on the message.

Someone asked, "Why is the seventh seal necessary?" Well, if you read on, I believe the Word of God will show us. After the silence was over, he said, "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets" (Revelation 8:2). Everywhere in the Word of God, trumpets are given for an awakening.

Isaiah 58:1 says that God told the prophet to lift up his voice like a trumpet and tell the people of their sin. The trumpet, my friend, is blown to awaken mankind, to head them off, and to try to stir them.

In Joel 2:1 He said, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain. . . ." What is an alarm for? God has a clock that is not only a clock, but is an alarm clock; and it always goes off on time. An alarm is to tell you that it is time to wake up, get up, and go to work. We have been going through a time of slumbering while the silence has been going on. Saints have been slumbering and sleeping, but God said, "Sound the trumpet. Sound an alarm. Wake up the mighty men." He is talking about men who can be used in a mighty way for God, but they are earthbound. They are under slumber. They have just been going along. They have been listening too long to the message that we are in a different age, where Christians are not doing things like they

did. Brother, there are men who can be used, but they just have to be awakened.

In Matthew, Chapter 13, Jesus said that while men slept, the enemy sowed tares among the people. Tares are unregenerate people, and the enemy brought them right among the people. He has brought so many in that they have taken over. If there had not been a silence in the pulpit, the tares could not have gotten in among them. If the preacher had held up the standard, the tares could not have gotten in. However, while men slept, the tares have gotten in to such an extent that they have taken over. The saints weep and are crushed, and they say, "Pastor, let us have a prayer meeting. We feel we should pray." However, the tares raise up and say, "Prayer meeting! Let us have a bowling league. Let us have an ice cream social. Let's go roller skating."

I want you to see what this silence is. Now they all slumbered and slept. That is a terrible thing. This is on a national level as well as a religious level. All you have to do is listen to the news or read newspaper, and you are well of the fact that our nation is striking up a peaceful coexistence with Satanic forces and godless ions.

Light Has No Fellowship With Darkness

Second Corinthians 6:14 says that light cannot fellowship darkness. While that is happening on the national level, the same thing is happening on the religious level. The devil came up with this last beast made up of all seven of the others. There are four beasts spoken of in Daniel and three beasts spoken of in Revelation. According to Revelation 17:11, this beast is the eighth, and he is made of the seven. Almost every religion on the face of the globe but the people of God has either joined the World Council of churches or is paying into it or is supporting it. We are talking about the ecumenical council. That thing is the most deceptive thing. It is the church's last enemy. There are two spirits at work. One is either gathering you toward that thing, or the true Spirit of God is gathering you back to the old-fashioned Word of God. Everybody going to be gathered one way or other.

The devil is working deception after deception. The false

church is riding on the eighth beast, which is deception. If you think that this eighth beast is not deception, read Revelation, Chapter 17. The Apostle John was not moved by any of these previous beasts, but when this eighth beast came up, it looked so much like truth that John wondered after it with admiration. He admired it, and one of the angels said, "John, do not wonder after that thing. I'll tell you the truth about that beast and the woman who rides on it." If someone in your part of the country does not rise up and tell the people the truth about that council, the people of God are going right out after it. Most preachers in the pulpit are telling you to go and get involved.

The Bible does not say to go get involved. It says to come out of her and be separate and touch not the unclean thing, because if you are partakers of her evil, you will be partakers of her plagues. Therefore, friend, we need to awaken. This is a pitiful condition that is existing today, and it is very deceptive. To anyone who is not as spiritual as he ought to be, it looks like a good work.

Trim Your Lamp

In 1 Samuel, Chapter 3, we are told that when Samuel was a little boy, the priest's eyes had grown dim. God had said that the lamp in the temple must never go out. Eli was asleep on the job, and the lamp was going out. Samuel was only a little boy, seven years old. God called, "Samuel," and he had never had God call him before so he ran to Eli and woke him up. Eli said, "No son, I did not call you. Go and lie down." Samuel had just lain down when he heard again, "Samuel." He ran to Eli again and said, "Eli, did you call? Someone called my name." The third time Eli said, "No, I did not call, but you go back and lie down. If you hear the call again, say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'" Samuel got back on the bed, and he heard the voice again, "Samuel." He was only seven years old; but he said, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

In effect, the Lord told Samuel, "Son, I know you are only seven years old, but the lamp that I have ordained in the temple must never go out. It is out of oil and is flickering. It is

about to go out. Samuel, run and put some oil in it." Samuel, the little boy, took the vessel, put the oil in the lamp, and kept it burning.

Friend, the lamp of the true message of the Church of God is flickering. God has great men, educated men, and mighty men who could do a thousand times better than we are doing; but they are asleep. God is calling "Samuels" who do not know too much to put some oil in the lamp before the light of this great message goes out and leaves the world in complete darkness.

God in His mercy broke a seal at the eleventh hour, which is just one hour before midnight or the hour which His judgment began. A good part of that hour of judgment has been wasted. In the latter part of that hour, God is sending an awakening cry: He is doing His best to wake up the virgins, His people who have been at ease, so they can get their lamps trimmed before the midnight hour. We are way up in the eleventh hour. We are in the last hours of the last days. Every sign of Jesus' second coming has been fulfilled.

One of the saddest pictures I face as I travel the country working for God is seeing people who have lived for God and once rejoiced in the truth but are caught in this terrible silence. How pitiful it is to see them come to meetings and try to trim their lamps but find out their lamps have gone out.

Friend, I hope God will help you to see the need and make sure of three things. First, make sure you have a lamp. Secondly, make sure you have your vessel filled with oil. Thirdly, make sure you are awake and your lamp is trimmed to the light of this day.

God Is Merciful

In Matthew 12:20 are beautiful words, which state: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not, quench. . . ." These are some of the most precious words in the Bible. What is a bruised reed? If we would go out and pick a reed by a creek and twist it back and forth until it is just ready to break, we would have a picture of men's and women's lives twisted around by the powers of sin and evil. Many are even ready to commit suicide. They are a picture of

a bruised reed twisted around by the powers of evil and the problems of life until they cannot take it any longer, and they are ready to break. However, thank God, a bruised reed will not break. Bring that life to Jesus; and with the strength of His Spirit and His mighty power, He will make our life strong.

Also, the Scripture says that a smoking flax shall not be quenched. What is a smoking flax? The wicks of those lamps were made of woven flax. This is a picture of one of God's children who has gone through a form of religion with no real godliness. For example, the oil has gone out of your life. All the dampness has gone out of the wick. The only fire you have left is a little smoke in the flax. He said that He will not put it out. He means that if you come to Him, He will pour oil in the lamp with one hand and fan with the other; and you will have a bright lamp. A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoking flax He will not put out.

Now there is no reason for your lamp to go out. No, this eleventh hour is only the mercy of God. Without this opportunity, without this awakening, without this sounding forth of this trumpet, all you would have to do is nothing to go on to a lost eternity because you are already under the slumber.

I just pray that God will awaken you and touch you down in the secret recesses of your soul. I pray that you will make the decision before God that you do not care what others do; you are going to get right with God, live for God, and walk in the light of God's Word. Remember that when you commit yourself to God, He is committed to you.