

20 of My Best Sermons

As Preached From The Pulpit



By Cline Hancock

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PREFACE

Cline Hancock was born and raised near Washburn, Missouri, son of W. C. and Alice Gates Hancock. His father was a gospel preacher, as well as his grandfather, G. B. Hancock, who authored the book *Mormonism Exposed*. A nephew, Gene C. Hancock Jr., preaches in Abilene, Texas.

Cline married Pauline Sage, September 27, 1926 and he began preaching in March of 1951. Since that time he has preached extensively in Southwest Missouri, serving a number of congregations, conducting many meetings and baptizing some 300 people. Raising a family of four children, operating a farm, preaching the Word, Cline has had a busy life. Many complimentary things could be said of him, but the one trait that needs to grip the heart of every preacher of the gospel is his obvious care for the souls of men. This love for souls is a motivating force that reveals itself, not only in his earnest entreaty from the pulpit, but on a personal basis as well, in a sincere heart to heart talk about the need for salvation.

May the same love for things Divine that has made Cline Hancock so successful as a soul winning gospel preacher, fill the hearts of us all.

Eddie Bowman



The farm home of Mr. and Mrs. Cline Hancock, 1978



*Mr. and Mrs. Cline Hancock
Golden Wedding Anniversary - September 27, 1976*

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this book of sermons to my beloved wife Pauline, my faithful companion of 51 years and 7 months; and to our four children: Carl Leroy Hancock, Margaret Alene Hancock Montgomery, Marilyn Louise Hancock Burleson, and Charles Edwin Hancock; my 18 grandchildren—10 boys and 8 girls; and 7 great-grandchildren—5 boys and 2 girls.

I have written each sermon to be complete; that is so no one can read one sermon without knowing what to do to be saved from past sins.

If anyone wishes to copy any of these sermons in a leaflet or book to hand out endeavoring to teach the gospel to lost souls, you have my permission as long as you attach my name as author. No alterations please.

June 1, 1978
Cline Hancock
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CHAPTER I

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE

James 4:14

James 4:13 to 17 “Go to now, ye that say today or tomorrow we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanishes away. For we ought to say if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

John 8:32 says, “Ye shall know the **truth** and the truth shall make you free.” Truth here equals the gospel and the gospel is what saves. Rom. 1:16. It seems that one of the biggest **jobs** a preacher has is causing people to realize they are lost. Will you remember with me what Paul told the Galatians, 4:16, “Am I therefore become your enemy if I tell you the truth?” There are two ways we can go—the broad way or the narrow way. Which one are you on? Paul warns us in Eph. 4:14-15, “That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craft-ness whereby they lie in wait to deceive. But speaking the truth in love may grow up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ.”

It is interesting to study the lives of great men, and very profitable to us also—such men as Washington and Lincoln. Longfellow said, “Lives of great men all remind us we can make our lives sublime.” Biographies, Who is Who and encyclopedias are synopsis of lives.

Now question, What is your life?

Psalms 90:10 tells us, "The days of our years are three-score and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four-score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away."

The Brevity of Life, Job 7:6 has this to say, "My days are swifter than a weavers shuttle." How fast is that? Well, so fast you can hardly see the shuttle going back and forth. Also in Job 14:1, "Man that is born of woman is few in days and full of trouble." At the end of life, then what? II Cor. 5:10-11, "...for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men, where are the companies of childhood? They remain here for only a short time. Life separated from "the tree of life" is a tragedy indeed.

James' life is a vapor. On our farm we had a high bluff about a half-mile from our house with a valley between. Lots of mornings the valley would be covered with a vapor obscuring the bluff altogether. In a few hours the vapor would rise, then you could see the bluff again. Well, that's the way of life here. A few short years and then we are gone.

As we get older we appreciate the rapidity of life. The mile posts pass swiftly. It will be only a short time 'til we all stand in judgment before God. Heb. 9:27, "It is appointed unto men **once** to die and after that the judgment." Do we believe for one minute anyone will escape? If we do we are kidding ourselves.

Let us think for a moment.

I Cor. 15:22, "For in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

No, we don't have to die spiritually. We can live a new life in Christ. Please read Romans 6:3-4.

Even with all this we live to die, we die to live. This life is short yet very valuable. Jesus says in Matt. 16:26, "What doth it profit a man tho he gain the whole world and lose

his soul or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Gal. 6:7, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Therefore life is the seed time of eternity. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. When I used to help my mother wash clothes on the old-time washboard, I suppose I was complaining about it, as I remember rubbing lots of blisters on my hands. She would tell me this place is just a place to try us to see if we were fit to live in the next world. I now appreciate that teaching very much. What would the earth be without life? God made life. Again, the way we live in this life will determine where we spend eternity.

In Luke 16:19 (please read the rest of the chapter), here was a man that the only thing that seemed wrong was neglect. James 4:17 "...to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

I am convinced that more of my brethren sin the sin of omission than of commission. Let me call your attention to the rich man again. How much of his riches did he take with him? Matt. 6:19, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."

Life's Three Phrases

What is your life retrospectively? What has your life been? Are you satisfied with it?

I'm not. I wish I could have done more in the Master's vineyard. Take an invoice. Has the past been wasted? When I was in the fourth reader sometimes (kid-like) I thought I had a mean teacher. She seemed to have an all-seeing eye. She taught us the poem "Lost somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours - each set with 60 diamond minutes. No reward is offered for they are gone forever."

I've never forgotten that poem. It's been an inspiration to me all my life.

Now let's see a little more about our past life.

Have we kept the sacred vows to our wife or husband we took in marriage? How about Father, Mother, child and the great question, to Christ? I Peter 3:15, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

What is your life? Introspectively or the present? Stop and think - "What are we now? Are we what we pretend to be? Are we big enough to face ourselves in the looking glass of God's word?" Read James 1:21 to 27. Are you honest, truthful, just and good? You say "Yes," but have you obeyed the Gospel? What if we haven't? **Today is the day of salvation.**

What is your life prospectively? What is our hope for the future? Do we hope in money, fame or worldly pleasures?

I Tim. 6:17, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." We need to humble ourselves in the sight of God. Paul at the close of life said to the Philippian brethren (1:21) "...to live is Christ; to die is gain." What did he mean? For him to live was to win souls for Christ, but to die was personally better for him. He further said it was **far better** on the other side. How have we proposed to live in the future? What is your life? Remember God said it; I believe it; that settles it. Are we going to die in the Lord? Well, we can by being baptized into Christ which means the same as being born again. In Rev. 14:13, "I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' Yea sayeth the spirit, they shall rest from their labors and their works do follow them." And in Rev. 22:14, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Heb. 5:8-9. "Tho he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Notice this promise is not a temporal

salvation. Are we better than Christ? If He obeyed the Father, should not we obey Him and have life? Remember we live to die; we die to live. And remember, we cannot do wrong by doing right and we cannot do wrong by doing exactly what God says. We have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

Look at this with me a few minutes. People fuss and fume about water baptism, yet Peter in I Peter 3:21 says, "...baptism doth also now save us." Why do people deny such plain teaching? Remember God said it; I believe it; that settles it. Have we ever counted how many times God used water to destroy sin and people and delivered His people? The flood in Noah's time; the Red Sea; the Jordan River; Naaman with his leprosy (a type of sin). How long can we live in it or how long can we live without it?

Rev. 22:17, "The spirit and the bride says, 'Come and whosoever will let him come and take the Water of Life freely.'" The spirit is the Holy Spirit. The bride, the Church, and in Matt. 11:28 Jesus says, "Come."

Friends what else could we ask for? Won't you obey the Gospel today? Today is the day of salvation. Tomorrow may never come.

**Remember, God said it; I believe it; that settles it.
The Bible is right!**

CHAPTER II

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

The subject for our lesson is how to divide the word of truth.

It seems strange that people would take it lightly when we have a specific command from the Holy Spirit from the Apostle Paul to young Timothy to study, to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. There are many things set out in this particular command. The first one is the command to study. Study why? To show thyself, not someone else or our brothers meanness, but to show thyself approved unto God.

Now, how can we do that? Well, the verse continues to tell us how we can be approved unto God, by rightly dividing the word of truth. It seems terrible that we have a command like that—to rightly divide the word of truth—and yet we have over three-hundred different churches in the land. Revelation 20:13-15 has this to say “And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Now, I feel sure today that no one wants to be cast into the lake of fire.

The obligation rests upon us, squarely upon us, to rightly divide the word of truth, believe and obey it. Let us take an example from the Bible. Some people divide and thus construe by reading the Bible like this: “Judas went out and killed himself.” Then we find another statement on the next page, “Go out and do likewise.” Then we turn over to another page and see, “Whatsoever thou doest, do it quickly.” That would indicate to us that to read

and divide the word like that we'd have to go out and hang ourself like Judas did. Now, with a little common sense and reason we know better than that. In John 8:32 Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This truth in John 8:32 refers to the gospel, the system of faith—not the faith in Hebrews 11:6, but the faith of the gospel.

The faith Jude 3 uses is also the system of faith or the gospel. In John 1:17 it said, "For the law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." In I Corinthians we have this statement, "Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that you all speak the same thing, that there be no division among you, and that you all be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Now, here's a command for us to be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. In Mat. 26:39 we have this statement from Jesus himself when he prayed the noted prayer he was so earnestly praying to his Father, "Let this cup pass from me if it be possible." We find in this particular statement here, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had no sin, but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." So we see there the division Jesus predicted to us in his prayer when he prayed to his heavenly Father.

Now, when Paul gave this instruction to Timothy he was not a babe in Christ; he had been taught by his mother Eunice from his very youth. Then Paul told him in Timothy 4:16, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." So he was admonished to take heed unto himself and unto the doctrine and that means teaching. Sometimes we get all excited about doctrine. The doctrine simply means teaching. So Timothy was admonished to take heed unto himself and the doctrine, or the teachings of Christ. Continuing in them for in so doing thou shalt save thyself and all that hear thee. Now, for a gospel minister to preach any other thing than the doctrine of Christ is liable to get him into trouble. In this

sinful world that we live in today, we study back in the old testament and find that we have three dispensations of time this side of eternity. One is known as patriarchal, in Noah and Abraham's time. Jacob's name was changed to Israel because it meant "God among us." Now, they were guided until the time of the Jewish nation. The Jewish nation was taken from the tribe of Judah by the one named Judah. Jewish means Judah. Joseph was sold into Egypt and finally the people went down to Egypt and God sent Moses to deliver them out of Egypt. Then finally, after they had crossed the Red Sea on dry land, all Egyptians that pursued them were drowned in the water. Then on Mount Sinai God gave Moses the law—what we know as the Ten Commandment Law. That Ten Commandment Law lasted until the time of Christ and the apostles. There it ended at the cross, Col. 2:14. We are now under the Christian era from the day of Pentecost to Judgement Day, Acts 2. It was said in Hebrews 9:27, "...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:" In II Cor. 5:10 it says, "...we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." In the following statement Paul said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men." What do we try to persuade men to do? Accept the simple, plain teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are to be judged according to our work. In Matthew 16:27, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." So, again, whatever our works are, that's how we're going to be rewarded.

Then somebody said, "I thought we were saved by grace." Yes, we are saved by grace. Grace is the unmerited favor. The unmerited favor was what caused God to look down in tender mercy upon us and send his only begotten Son to die upon the cross the ignominious death that we might have life and have it more abundantly. Now, some are all messed up on this occasion. He said, "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourself it

is a gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast." I've heard that over and over and over. They say, "Well now there you have it, not a thing we can do." It's by faith that we're saved. We ought to know better than that. Paul was not speaking about the faith that is in Hebrews 11:6. He was speaking of the simple faith of the gospel that God gave us. It was by the grace of God, the unmerited favor, that his Son died and brought forth to us the gospel. And they contend—so many of them—there's nothing we can do. Well the next verse says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that God before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10. Now, in Mat. 20:1, He said, "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard." Now what is a laborer? Well, it's somebody that works. So we are selected to be a laborer in the Master's vineyard. We are to work in that vineyard and it's good work because God ordained it. Continuing the story in Matthew 20 we find that some were hired the third hour of the day through the eleventh hour, and the ones hired the first hour complained that they didn't receive any more money than the one hired at the 11th hour of the day. Well, that penny a day they received simply meant to us eternal salvation. So it makes no difference how long we work, if we have eternal salvation we will be well paid for it. We are judged by what is written in the book. Rev. 22:18. Question: Will we be judged by all that is in the Bible? No. How much of it then? By Noah and Moses? No, we're not going to be judged by Noah or Moses because their time has come and gone. And the Bible contains the Old and New Testaments: 66 books in the entire Bible; 39 books in the old, 27 in the new. Twenty-one in the new tell us how to live the Christian life, 4 tell us of the life of Christ and his personal ministry, one—Acts—tells us when the church was established and how to have our past sins forgiven, and one—the last—tells us about our eternal home.

Now, we don't live under the personal ministry that

Jesus lived under when he was here. But we live under what he gave the apostles. He told them, "Whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. Whatsoever you loose shall be loosed in heaven." The apostles and others were guided by the Holy Spirit and that's the law that we live under. Of course, there are some things in the law that Jesus kept that are applicable today. But a lot of them are not. They were taken out of the way and nailed to His cross. Col. 2:14. Now man has a right to know what he will have to meet at the judgment. Well another command parallel to II Tim. 2:15 is I Peter 3:15 to sanctify. That means to set apart the Lord God in your heart and be ready always to give an answer to everyone that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meakness and fear. So we are set apart by God's word, we are to live by God's word.

But again someone says, won't we be judged by the Ten Commandments? The answer is no. Want proof? Read Heb. 7:12. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." Please notice a change **of** the law not a change **in** the law. Rom. 6:14 says we are not under the law but under grace. The law here refers to the law of Moses.

Christ is our high priest. Heb. 3:1, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Christ took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. Col. 2:14. In Zech. 6:13 Christ was to be a priest on his throne. In Heb. 8:4, he was not a priest until after his ascension. Today he is our High Priest in heaven.

We are to be judged by the New Testament, or the law of Christ. There are two divisions of the law of Christ. One to the alien—Repent and be baptized for the remission of past sins. The other to the erring child of God—Repent and pray to God. An alien sinner has no business trying to pray to God. I Peter 3:12, John 9:31.

In II Cor. 4:7 Paul says the gospel was left in earthen vessels.

The spirit sent the apostle and other Jewish brethren to the household of Cornelius to tell him what to do. Christ

wouldn't tell Saul what to do when he was on the road to Damascus. He told him to go into the city and it would be told to him what he **must** do. What did Annias tell him? Keep on praying Saul? No, he said, "...arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22:16.

Friends, I don't know how anyone can misunderstand this. God said it; I believe it; that settles it!

Now friends on this second law of pardon, or the erring child of God, please read I John 1:6-10, I John 2:1-4, James 5:16-20.

Another law to the Christian (and remember a Christian is one who is willing and does follow Christ—otherwise we are not Christians but just erring children of God) is found in Titus 2:11-15. Please turn and read these scriptures.

Friends if anyone is lost Christ died in vain. He died for all. Jesus prayed for unity, John 17th chapter. The Bible says there is one Lord, one faith or one gospel, one baptism. That is a plain, simple command—be buried in water for the remission of our past sins.

No use arguing with God. What did Jesus say in John 3:5?, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Water, the element; spirit, the teacher. We cannot be born of the lesser—it has to be of the greater; hence a burial in water. If you doubt me, please turn and read some scriptures first: Acts 8:12, 8:36, 9:18, 10:48, 16:14,15, 16:31, 18:8. Many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized. There is no way to change God's law anymore than we can change day and night or winter and summer.

I beseech you to obey from the heart the plain gospel. Live by it; die by it; and go to heaven to bask in the sunshine of God's eternal love.

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER III

THE CHANGELESS CHURCH

God said it. I believe it. That settles it.

One time when I preached at West Union, Missouri, Church of Christ, I called a brother who had been out of service a long time, encouraging him to come back. You know what he said? "My hogs are out and the fences down." Well, they say a poor excuse is better than none. I suppose this would be it.

Daniel 2:44 says the church or kingdom will stand forever. Well, that settles it.

The changeless sun, the changeless moon and stars. The changeless God and the changeless Christ. Therefore, the changeless Church. The Church is bound by its constituency to be changeless. Change means inconstant, mutable, fickle and uncertain. A church that embraces any of these characteristics is not the Church that Christ built.

The Church in the new testament is changeless. Why? Conceived in the mind of God—His infinite wisdom.

Isaiah 1:1-2 says, "Hear oh heavens and give ear, oh earth. The Lord has spoken." What does it mean? It simply means when God spoke he meant for heaven and earth to listen and, I might say, obey Him.

In my 26 years of preaching, or endeavoring to preach, I've never preached a sermon that I didn't have that in mind. In other words: God said it, I believe it, that settles it! Why try to argue with God?

What was the Church for? The saving of mankind. It is a divine institution. II Peter 1:3-4 "...according to His divine power hath given unto us **all things** that pertain unto life and Godliness through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Meaning a pure life. When we obey the gospel, all our sins are forgiven. Then what?

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises - that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. There we have it! Whosoever will, let him or her come, whether we are black, white, red or yellow. We can come. Christ died for all. In Matthew 11:28 Jesus says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Rest for what? The next verse says for our souls.

But more about God. God is not inconstant - mutable - fickle. The Church is not founded on such a character.

God is infallible with respect to His wisdom and understanding.

He is forever the same. Want proof? Here it is. James 1:17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

In Mal. 3:6 God says, "I am the Lord. I change not."

What God designs and executes, He does not need to change. The Church today is no more subject to change than God. God does not do things by experimenting.

What man makes he has to change or at least does.

Let me give you an illustration. A few years ago the Ford people would come out with a new model with this announcement: "37 changes!" They tried to make you believe if you had a car one year old and was on a trip, if you didn't rush in and trade for a new model, you would never get home. Don't anyone get offended at me for using a Ford for illustration. That's the way they all did.

Some take exception to this by sighting the old law. Remember this was for a specific people in a specific climate. The Sabbath was made for man. Not man for the Sabbath. I remember in Jesus' personal ministry in John 6, after Jesus had fed the thousands with five barley loaves and two fishes, five thousand in number picked up the scraps, had twelve baskets full left over. What a miracle! What happened then when there was no more free food? The multitudes turned away. Jesus then turned to the twelve and asked, "Will you also go away?" Peter spoke up

and said, "Lord, to whom shall we go. Thou hast the words of eternal life and we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

This confession is the one we are going to have to make sooner or later. I hope it is sooner, because later might be too late. Please turn and read Phil. 2:8 through verse 11. Friends, today is a new week, a new day, the first day of the week. In Acts 20:7, the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Acts 11:26.

What's better than coming together on the first day to break bread, sing and pray. Remember we **must** put God first in our lives. Sometimes my brethren run off fishing on Sunday morning and fish all day, then want to come back to worship on Sunday night. Brethren, it won't work. I know of some having sickness. One stayed at home Sunday morning to attend the sick, the other mate went on to worship, then that night they reversed it and the other one went to worship at Night. That is a vast difference than going fishing all day, putting our Lord behind rather than first.

Now what is the Church? Eph. 2:20 "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." What is a cornerstone? The stone uniting two sides together. The Jews and Gentiles.

What set it up? I Cor. 12:28 - God set them in the Church. In Acts 2:47 it says the Lord added to the Church. So I know the Church was in existence 1900 years ago. How could you add to something that didn't exist? You can't!

The apostles were the nucleus of the Church—or the beginning. Surely we don't think God was unable to build or start the Church. Jesus promised to build. Read Matt. 16:18.

Now Jesus never said He would build a Hancock church or any other man-made church, but His own Church. What did it cost? The saviour's blood. Acts 20:28.

In I Cor. 1:2 Paul said it was the Church of God. God is the family name. Hence Acts 20:28 - the Church of God.

Who was it that died? It wasn't God the Father. It was God, the Son. One describes this as a child leaving high school to college.

We need to be thankful He changed it. The Law of Moses was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Gal. 3:24. Schoolmaster in this sense means a gathering up. Therefore our bus drivers today might be called the schoolmaster gathering up the children to be taught. So we are to be taught by Christ and the apostles.

Of course, there were some who helped write the Bible that were not apostles, but they were inspired. II Timothy 3:16.

Another reason the Church is changeless: Christ is its head. Col. 1:18, "...he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have **the** preeminence."

Therefore the Church cannot change unless Christ changes. In His official position, He is changeless. Heb. 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day and for ever."

He came to do a job. He went back to do a job. He is our mediator day and night. We have an open line to heaven. No taxes! No toll! Do you know of anything else that's free—no taxes? I don't. If they don't change their ways in Washington they will be trying to tax the air we breathe. I'm thankful to live in the Ozarks where I can breathe.

Everything that lives continued to live in the place ordained. Who can change it? Take the fish. Water holds the elements provided for it's life. On the other hand, we cannot live in the water. Acts 17:26, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." This verse proves that man is not going to live in outer space. That's God's domain.

Man lives his spiritual life in the Church. The spiritual things are in the Church for our spiritual benefit. Want proof? Eph. 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual

blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Now we can plainly see if they are all in Christ—and they are—then, there is no spiritual blessings outside of Christ. There is simply no way to live a spiritual life outside of Christ and the Church.

When I baptize people, I baptize them into Christ. Gal. 3:27. What happens then. The Lord, not man, adds the people that are baptized into Christ to the Church. What church? The one Christ died for. How many are there? For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body. I Cor. 12:13 What is the body? The body is the Church. Col. 1:18.

In the natural life we must have food, water, air—the same as Cain and Abel had to have. Will we debate about the necessities of life? How in the name of all that is High and Holy do we think we can live our spiritual life outside the Church. Friends, there is no way.

In Gen. 1:11-12, every thing to come after its kind and its seed, is in itself. If we look at the germ in the seed we can't tell whether its alive or dead. If its alive, it will grow after its kind and produce the same thing that we planted. Do you children that are here like popcorn? Oh yes, here is one that does. She is shaking her head yes. Now let me ask, sometime this winter when Mother is going to town, are you going to say, “Mother bring me home some watermelon seed, I want to grow some popcorn next summer?” Now question, how do we think we can change the spiritual laws. God cleansed the Church by the washing of water by the Word. Eph. 5:26. That equals John 3:5.

Jesus in John 6:53 says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”

Now we know we can't eat His literal flesh and drink His literal blood. But we have the Lord's supper. It belongs in the Church. It would do no good for a bunch of drunks to meet in a pool hall and pretend to have the Lord's supper. It belongs in the Church.

It's a privilege to surround the Lord's supper on the first day of the week. Luke 22:19. We live by the same law that the saints in Jerusalem did. We read in Acts 2:42 that the disciples continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine

in fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers.

The law of the Christian life has not changed. I Cor. 15:58, "Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

The name of the Church has not changed. Rom. 16:16 - The Churches of Christ salute you. The Church of God has not changed. I Cor. 1:2.

In Acts 20:28 it says, "...feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." So it was God the Son who died, not God the Father.

Individual members were called Christians first in Antioch. Acts 11:26. I Peter 4:16, "if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

Now you can't say Christian without saying Christ. A Christian means Christ-like or a follower of Christ. In all these parts concerning Christ they have not changed. Then the Church is changeless.

The Church of God—The Church of Christ on earth—is one and the same institution.

It was to be an everlasting kingdom. Dan. 2:44-45 (please read). Daniel said all these kingdoms shall be as chaff. Christ didn't come to bring religion, He came to bring Christianity. Col. 1:13 says God has translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. It is God that forgives us, adds us to the Church on earth—adds our name to the lamb's book of life in heaven—then starts watching over us. I Peter 3:12.

Someone says what about all these kingdoms today. Will you let the Bible answer? Matt. 15:13, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Someone says again, What about the hypocrites in the Church? Well the Bible tells us. Matt. 13:41 has this to say. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of **His kingdom** all things that offend, and them which do iniquity."

Man is mortal, but God is immortal. God is the life of

the Church. He cannot lie. Heb. & Titus. It is an everlasting kingdom. It has borne the onslaught of man for years.

Jer. 10:23 has this to say, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Now if we can't direct our steps, where can we go? Only to the Lord and his Word.

Luke 8:11 still says the Word is the seed. Seed of what? Seed of **the** kingdom. Plant the seed—God's Word—and it will bring forth a child of God. Nothing more, nothing less. Many kingdoms in the past were thought to be impregnable but are long since sleeping in the dust of the ages. There are many today bent on destroying the Church and would if they could, but God said it was an unmovable kingdom. John 12:48 says "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: **the** word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

Now according to prophecy, history, reason and plain New Testament teaching, **THE** Church Christ built is a changeless Church.

Let us look at it as Soloman did. Sol. 6:10, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." The sun comes up every morning, even Satan can't stop it. Eph. 6:17, "take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Take the sword of the spirit, the Word of God, and run Satan completely out of sight.

Friends do you want to be a member of that Changeless Church? Well you can. Hogs out and fences down won't keep you from obeying the Gospel. Christ is coming, to save the Church. Eph. 5:23, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." **The** body and church are the same.

Col. 1:18, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." If we are not willing and ready to let him have the preeminence, we are

not ready to let him be our Savior.

In Acts 16:31 the jailor asked what to do to be saved. What did they tell him? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. What brought all this about? Paul and Silas had been cast into jail, feet fast in the stocks, sang praises and prayed at midnight. The Lord sent an earthquake, the jail doors all opened. Did the prisoners leave? **NO!!** The jailer thought the prisoners were gone and he was going to kill himself. Paul told him "do thyself no harm: for we are all here." That's when he came trembling in and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Was believing on the Lord all they told him to do? No, the next verse they preached unto him the Word of the Lord. Does anyone think they just hollered Lord - Lord - Lord at him? Well they told him to be baptized. You can't preach Jesus without preaching baptism. So he was baptized the same hour of the night. He and all his straightway set meat before them and rejoiced. No. Faith only won't do. Faith gives us power to be saved. John 1:11-12, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Please read John 6:44-45.

I Cor. 12:13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Spirit the teacher, water the element. Over 300 different churches in the United States, yet in Eph. 4:5 it says one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

Friends, if you can harmonize this you are smarter than I am. God said it. I believe it. That settles it.

Friend, Jesus stands at the door of your heart knocking to come in. Rev. 3:20. Will you let him in? In compassion He says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye **shall** find rest unto your souls." Mat. 11:28-29.

Friends you say, what do I get for all this? First, the Lord will add you to the Church here on earth; add your name to the Lamb's book of life in heaven, then start watching over you. I Pet. 3:12. Then at death we won't

have to cross Jordan alone. Psalms 23:4. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Friends, you can't do wrong by doing right. You can't do wrong by doing exactly what God said. God said it. I believe it. That settles it.

Friends at your very earliest convenience obey the Gospel by being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins, live the Christian life. Live to die - die to live eternally in heaven, with Christ and all the redeemed. I pray you will. Let it be so. Amen.

The Bible is right!

Remember God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER IV

ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

Good morning America! This is a good morning.

The sermon today is one that I've preached many times from the pulpit. We are recording it and transcribing it into the book just as near as possible as I preach it from the pulpit.

The title of this lesson is "All Spiritual Blessings in Christ" (Eph. 1:3. Now, the temporal blessings may be enjoyed by all people, both saint and sinner—it rains on the just and on the unjust. Turning to I Tim. 4:7-10, "Refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." And he goes on to tell Timothy, "These things command and teach." So all the spiritual blessings can be had in Christ Jesus only. There is no way we can have any spiritual blessings outside of Christ. Do you know why? Eph. 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Now, if they're all in Christ Jesus, there's none out of Him.

Now, the temporal blessing can be had by all as I read to you in I Tim. 4:10, "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." The only way that He's the Saviour of all men is through the temporal blessings of life, saying that it will rain on the just

and on the unjust—and they can raise just as many crops and perhaps more cane than anyone else.

And now, then, first of all in this lesson we want to see what else we have in Christ. We have redemption and forgiveness of our sins. In Eph. 1:7, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” Our God did not have to offer us salvation but through His great love and the promise He had made to Abraham long ago that He would send His only begotten Son to die upon the cross in order that we might have remission of our sins, He provided the way that we can have remission of sins, if we worship Him according to His command.

In I Cor. 1:2 He says, “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus.” Sanctification again means to be set apart. So, God set us apart in Christ Jesus that we might worship Him according to His will. I Peter 3:15 says, “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” So we should set apart then the word of God in our hearts and be ready always to give an answer. Some people think when you approach them about salvation that it’s none of your business, but it’s their obligation if they have faith at all of any kind. If they lean toward the Heavenly Father they ought to be willing and ready to answer the question: “What is your faith?” And God provided, through fear (I Peter 3:15) that they were commanded to answer—give a reason—why they believed what they believed.

Now then, the Oddfellows lodge, the Masonic lodge, and many things that we have in this world may be good organizations and maybe they do a lot of good, but they are not the savior of man. The church is the only thing that God is going to save and Christ is the saviour of the church. Eph. 5:23, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”

Now because it says that God sanctified us and set us

apart doesn't mean that we can't sin any more. There are many passages and scriptures that teach us that we can sin and that we do sin. Even John said, "If we say we have no sin, we make Him a liar and the truth is not in us." So there is no use in us talking about not sinning, because any child of God sins. And again, as we pointed out in other sermons, we have a telephone line to heaven 24 hours a day, seven days a week—no toll and no taxes.

Now then, we not only have sanctification, we have eternal life promised to us in II Tim. 2:10, "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." I'm not talking to you today or writing this sermon in a manner of temporal things—it's eternal things that we are talking about. What's going to become of us after we leave this world? Well, the Bible says that the spirit goes back to God who gives it. Are we going to be faithful to God then, that He might take us and place us in the right place? Now, this should mean everything in the world to us—eternal life. Jesus said in the long ago, "What does it profit a man to have gained the whole world and lose his own soul?" But now somebody says, "Are there wages in sin?" There certainly is!

In Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." So there are wages in sin. What kind of sin? Well, we often say that the young have to sow wild oats for a while before they can settle down. Well, it's not always the young that want to sow the wild oats—sometimes it's the middleaged and even the elderly trying to sow wild oats. But that's not the way God intended for it to be and that's not what he wants us to do. In Heb. 5:8-9 He said, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

Well, I want to point out to you another thing about the wages of sin. Moses knew there were wages in sin and what did he do when God sent him into Egypt to deliver the people out of Egyptian bondage and bring them out across

the Red Sea? He knew that there were wages of sin, but what did the writer say about it? He said, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Would there have been wages of sin for Moses if he had stayed in Egypt? He could have been emperor of Egypt with all the high honor that could have been given to him? Certainly! But what did he do? He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than the pleasures of sin for a season.

What is a season? How much are the pleasures of sin? How long do they last? Well, do a little figuring up with me if you will, and how long does it last? We grow up to the years of accountability. Solomon said in the long ago, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shall say, I have no pleasure in them." So, we don't want to wait till we get old and our bodies are withered away with age and then say, "Lord here am I, take me," remembering in our youth that we might be able to work in the Master's vineyard. That's what He wants us to do. The Master's vineyard is a place to work, a place to labor. Mat. 20:1 says, "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard." That means early in life we should accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ and live a faithful, Christian life.

How long will it last? Life is very short indeed. Job said, "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble." David said, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

So, there are wages in sin! For how long? For a season. How long is a season? A very short time in our life; just a very few years. Eternity goes on and on and on.

Now another that we have promised is if "ye have

received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" God has given us the power to approach His great throne of mercy by prayer. For I Pet. 3:12 says, "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil." That's where we can call our heavenly Father "Abba," which means "Father" and simply means a noun. It means one and only one God, creator of this universe. In Gal. 4:6 it says, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." So there we have it again. Now these blessings are for the child of God.

There are two kingdoms in this world—the kingdom of right and the kingdom of wrong. And Moses again chose to suffer affliction with the people of God than the pleasures of sin for a season. It only lasts a short time. Some won't be a Christian. Why? They don't want to walk in the commandments of God! I Cor. 15:58 says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Now then, what else do we have in Christ Jesus? We have reconciliation. Let us read from II Cor. 5, beginning with the 17th verse, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." May I stop here long enough to call your attention to the fact that he has given us *the word* of reconciliation? Now, if the **word** reconciles us then nothing else can reconcile us. No use in looking for signs in one thing or another—just read God's **word** and be reconciled in Him.

Now then, we say that if we are in Christ we are reconciled to God. I've heard people stand and pray that God will send the Holy Spirit down and save them—reconcile them to God. Here he said that man has to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. For He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. That's

God's will—that's His eternal purpose, that we might come to Him through Jesus Christ His Son. Now here spiritual blessings of reconciliation in Christ take place no where else. Since reconciliation takes place in Christ, we need to know how to get into Christ. Well, of course we teach that from time to time and over and over. Is it not safe to do exactly what the Bible says? I commend you, I exhort you that you accept it, just as it is. And it's got to be right. You can't do wrong by doing right, and you can't do wrong by doing exactly what the Lord says.

In Gal. 3:26-27 again it says, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Now, faith only won't save. I'll prove it to you by John 1:11-12, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." To believe on the name of Jesus Christ simply gives us power. It doesn't make us a child of God, but it gives us power to become a child of God.

Now then, we need to turn over and read from the sixth chapter of the Roman letter and see which point we can find there concerning the salvation and how we get into Christ. I want to emphasize to you again that these things that we are recording, transcribing and writing into a book are not my ideas—they're simply the commandments of God and the very word of God. Not out of the word, but in the word. Reading to you from chapter six of the Roman book, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be

destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Now, after we have been forgiven our sins we shouldn't serve sin. We were crucified with Christ where our old body of sin was cut off and destroyed when we were planted in the likeness of Jesus Christ. Baptism is a picture of the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross, was buried in Joseph's new tomb, and raised up to walk a new life—never to die any more. The apostle Paul wrote to us in I Cor. 15:19, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." What in the world is he talking about? He is saying if there is no resurrection there will be no life but we look forward to the resurrection. The Bible teaches it over and over and over—there's going to be a resurrection of the just. In John 5:28-29 it says, "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." So we're **all** going to come forth. We're going to be resurrected to stand before the judgment seat and give an account of the things done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be bad.

Water baptism is preceded by faith. We must have faith in order to be saved. Repentance plus confession equal the only way we can get into Christ. So we might put it like this: Faith + Baptism = Salvation from our past sins; and baptism puts us into the church—into the one body. I Cor. 12:13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Now, that one body is also the kingdom. In Col. 1:13 we see God has translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. Now if God does the translation there isn't much we can do about it. We have no right to hold on to people trying to get them into the church because when they obey the Gospel, the Lord sets them in the church, translating them out of the kingdom of darkness; or in other words, out of Satan's kingdom into the kingdom of His Son. Now, he couldn't translate into something that doesn't exist. So I know that by this statement the kingdom exists and the kingdom and the church are one and the same thing.

Col. 1:18 says, "He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Unless we are willing to let Christ have the preeminence then we are not willing to be saved. According to his own truth, salvation is extended to us by his death on the cross.

Now all these things that we have been talking about are the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word. I read to you a moment ago in I Corinthians that God, through his Word, has given us reconciliation. So, it's through the Word that we're reconciled. No use looking for signs of one thing or another. Just turn to the Word of God and read it, believe it and obey it. So, this is all the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word. If someone says "That's two thousand years ago," well, I continually preach to my people that the seed is the Word and the Word is the seed of the kingdom. In Gen. 1:11-12 it says everything should come after its kind, whose seed is in itself. We don't go out and plant pumpkins and expect to raise corn. We want to raise some roasting ear corn, sweet corn so we plant sweet corn. Now, the same thing applies today no matter where we're at in the world or what we plant. We plant the word of God, the seed of the kingdom—it will bring forth a child of God. Nothing more, nothing less.

When we are raised up from the waters of baptism to walk a new life we are Christians. All our sins are forgiven and we are added to the church; then we can walk as children of God. What do we have in this? In Christ means to be in the church, in the one body. In the kingdom of Christ we will find the peace that passes all understanding, love that shall never die and joy unspeakable. The Holy Spirit by the Word baptizes us into Christ not into himself.

In I Cor. 12:20, "Now there are many members, yet but one body." Then verse 27 says, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." How pure we are, saved by the gospel.

Paul said in I Tim. 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the

world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." And Paul said in Rom. 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." Verse 17 continues, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." In other words, this is a **system of faith** He has given us—the gospel coupled with our faith. Then we can know we are a child of God because Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." In Heb. 11:6, it says we must believe in God "for without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." We not only have to believe in God, the Father, but we have to believe in God, the Son, Jesus Christ. John 8:24, "Jesus says, "for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." And again Romans 1:16 we have to believe in the Gospel. Paul said it was God's power to save; we just quoted it a moment ago.

In II Pet. 3:9 he says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Now this is a command, that we have to repent. Many people don't want to quit their meanness and do right. In Acts 17:30 Paul said that the "times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." These men were worshipping idols and all kinds of gods and everything else—they were heathens. This kind of ignorance God winked at but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Why? "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Here we have proof again of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and the command of God to repent. Repentance simply means to turn from our evil ways and do that which is right. We can't do wrong by

doing right and we can't do wrong by doing exactly what the Lord says.

Matthew 10:32 and 33 teaches us that we have to confess Jesus Christ after we have heard the Word and created faith in our hearts. Romans 10:17 says, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Then we go on down to our repentance that we have already talked about, already brought out. In Mat. 10:32-33 it says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Now, let us read Rom. 10:8-9: "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." In other words, the word of the Gospel, which we preach. Paul was saying to the Roman brethren that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Now, you notice everytime it says anything about this, it's in the direction of—towards—salvation. He said confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt believe with the heart God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." This does not put us into Christ. How do we get into Christ? We're all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. That's the **only** way!

Now then somebody asks the question, "Will everybody be saved?" or "Who will be saved or who won't be saved?" In Matthew 7:21 he says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Now, if we do the will of the Father it doesn't matter what color our hair is or skin—black, red, yellow, white or whatever, if we do the will of God we will be

saved. Of course, we have to find out what the will of the Lord is. He also said in Matthew 7 that "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" And then He will say unto them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Now this doesn't mean he didn't know they were down here, that he didn't hear their cries unto him—it simply means that they would not accept the plain gospel, the plain simple teachings of Jesus Christ and therefore they are going to be cast out. Now, we don't want to be cast out. God gave us two laws of pardon. We go back to the 8th chapter of Acts and find out about Simon, the sorcerer. After he had believed and was baptized and was following along with the other disciples and apostles, he wanted to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter told him his heart was not right in the sight of God. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." He asked Peter to pray for him.

Then we find we have a second law of pardon: confess our wrongs and pray to God. Now then, let us study this just a minute here. In the book of Jeremiah, the great prophet said "A horrible and terrible thing has happened in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their own means and my people love to have it so: But what will ye do in the end thereof?" Now, we had better think about this seriously and not be prophesying false teachings or preaching false doctrine. We are going to stay right on the line and do exactly what the Lord says. We have no business trying to add or take away from the word of God. Satan tried that on Eve but it didn't work. In Acts 16:31 Paul told the Philippian jailer to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. But was that all he told him? It was not! The very next verse he preached unto him the word of the Lord and took him that same hour of the night and baptized him and all his straightway. Now what did he do all that for? Because Jesus said in the great commission, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He

that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not is condemned already." So they had to get him to believe and have faith in his heart before they could tell him about Christ. He was a heathen before and perhaps knew nothing about Christ. So Paul and Silas told him about it. Then he wanted to be saved. Now, many preachers here today will tell you all you have to do is believe and you can be saved at that minute. If that is so, why did Paul tell him about Jesus and **then** he was baptized in the same hour of the night? Remember, that was at the midnight hour—in the middle of the night. Now, as a gospel preacher I have no business preaching anything I can't prove by God's word. In I Peter 4:11 he said, "If any man speak (that's me), let him speak as the oracles of God." Or in other words, speak what God said. Do we think today that there are not false preachers in the land the same as there were 1900 years ago? This letter is absolutely the way it was when Peter wrote it. But there were false prophets also among the people even as there shall be false teachers among you who shall bring in damnable heresies even denying the Lord who bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction, and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. Now, we don't want to speak evil of the truth, surely we don't want to do that.

In II Pet. 3:7 it says the heavens and the earth are reserved in store by the word of God. What do we have now? Let's sum it up like this: when we began we had redemption from our past sin, we have sanctification, we are set apart in Christ Jesus, we have the promise of eternal life. In II Cor. 5:18 we have reconciliation from Paul's writing to the Corinthian brethren. The fifth chapter and the sixth chapter, reconciliation in Christ.

So I beg you today to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, to be baptized for the remission of your sins, and let the Lord add you to the church, live a faithful Christian life, be faithful unto death and he'll give thee a crown of life. We don't want to hear him say to us, "Depart from me, you workers of iniquity, I never knew you" by rejecting his

counsel and his teachings. The only way we can be saved is by accepting the teaching and the counsel of the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved by the mercies he has extended to us, through the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord. We should do it at the first and earliest convenience. You could do this very thing. I beg that you do it. We may live together in the afterwhile.

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER V

THE ARTICLE OF FAITH I BELIEVE

This is one of the sermons I've preached on many occasions, and without any shadow of a doubt none can fail to understand what God would have us to do by hearing this sermon or by reading it. Again, I will try my best to present it just as it has been preached from the pulpit on many occasions. I believe in every thing that God has said. I believe God said it! I believe it and that settles it. I do not believe that God intended for us to be saved by faith only as many teach today in the land, because there are too many passages of scripture that tell us the things that he wants us to do. Of course, it is impossible to please God without faith. Hebrews 11:6.

In bringing this lesson—writing this, simple as 2 and 2—I want to be as the apostle Paul. He said, "I'm determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." There is no other way that we can have salvation except through the faith that Jesus was crucified, was buried, was raised again the third day. And our obedience to him in baptism is a picture of the death, burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now the 'Article of Faith I Believe' is what Peter said in First Peter 3:15 when he said, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to **give** an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

One time I went out deer hunting with a good friend of mine and along afternoon he killed a deer and it seemed as though we weren't going to get any for me so we started home. This man was so enthusiastic about his deer that he wanted to stop and show everybody the deer that he had

killed. As we were riding along, after he had stopped on many occasions to show the deer he had killed and talked about it, he said, "Cline, I'm so bethused I want to show my deer to everyone." Now I'd never heard the word bethused. He didn't use English the best and neither do I, but I took it for granted he meant he was over-enthused and he really wanted to show his deer. So in preaching the sermons that I preach, if I could get the people bethused or over-bethused, or just enthused as much as possible, that's the idea. Something to stir them to where they would want to save their own soul and that's why I preach you this as **'The Article of Faith I believe'** because I believe every word of it. I, too, believe God said it and I believe that I'm determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Now again, this is not by faith only, but by all the things that proceeds out of the mouth of God. In Hebrews 4:16 he said, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." So we all need that help, we need that grace of God, and we need to come boldly to the throne. That doesn't mean that we want to come boastfully, but humbly. Don't be afraid to come to the throne of grace because God wants his children to talk to him.

In other sermons in this book I've supplied you with the fact that God has sent us a telephone line from heaven to earth so that we can talk to Him 24 hours a day, 365 days out of the year. And we might ask the question, "What is the Gospel?" We turn to the 15th chapter of I Corinthians and this is what the apostle Paul has to say about it. First verse, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;" Now there are many things contained in that particular verse. He preached them the gospel. They received it, and they stood in it and he said not only that, verse two, "By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." But that's not what we want to do. We want to believe every word of it, believe it with all our heart, believe it and obey it.

Then he goes ahead and tells us in verses 3 through 8, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; (4) And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: (5) And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: (6) After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. (7) After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. (8) And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." Now Paul was not one of the twelve that Jesus selected in the beginning when he was in his personal ministry here, but he was selected after he went back to heaven and he came back and appeared to him on the road to Damascus that he might see him and qualify him for an apostle.

Now then in John 3:16-17 we have this statement: (16) "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." I think it an injustice to read this verse of scripture, as many do, and say all that you have to do is just believe. Now friends, that just isn't the way. God intended for us to believe and rightly divide his word of truth, for the next verse, 17, says, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." Now that's very specific—that we have to go through Christ to be saved and we'll find some more about that in just a little bit. But if we have to go through Christ, it would be a poor God that wouldn't tell us how to get into Christ. In I John 1:1-5 we read: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (2) For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, (that is Jesus Christ was manifested and he said it was the life of Christ that he was talking about, and they had seen Him and they had felt of Him—now continue verse 2) and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." In other

words, He came from heaven to live and die upon the earth that we might have a life or an alliance. So John was telling us all about what had happened at that particular time. (Verses 3-5) "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. (4) And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. (5) This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Now I don't know how we can misunderstand that. There's no darkness in light. Heaven is pictured to us as a place without any sun. We won't need the sun in heaven because God and the Son Himself, Jesus Christ, will give us light.

Now while Jesus was in his personal ministry here, he taught the saints many things. Matthew 17:5, "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." If you remember, in this particular incident, Jesus took Peter, James and John upon the mount of transfiguration; and that's what we call it—because he was transfigured before them on the mount; and they saw Moses and Elias talking with Jesus and Peter. And Peter had a great big idea (as some people must have today, because there are some three hundred churches in the land). Some must think the same thing that Peter did. Verse 4 says, "Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here." I think it's good for us to be here, but remember that we're not going to 'come into the presence of the Lord.' There's no way of hiding from the Lord. We'll have a verse to prove that directly. But any how, there was Peter, James and John; and Peter thought it is good Lord, for us to be here; and Peter said, "Lord let us build three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elias." Well, you know God wouldn't stand for that. Verse 5: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye

him." **Why?** Because this dispensation of Moses and Elias had already come and gone.

When Jesus died on the cross he took the Law of Moses out of the way and nailed it to His cross. And we now live under the dispensation we know as the Christian Era, or living under the Christ, the Law of Christ. The law of Moses is not binding unto us today. If it were, we'd have to keep the sabbath, which is the seventh day of the week. But God gave us the first day of the week, under this new dispensation, and it's a great thing to worship the Lord first in the week, and then God will let us make a living the rest of the week. The first day of the week we're to assemble ourselves together and worship Jesus Christ—that we might start out our lives right each week.

Now then, in his personal ministry Jesus had this to say to Thomas in John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." So Jesus was the water of life and in John 10:9, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Christ is food for us—spiritual food for us. We can go and find that pasture...day or night. We can approach the great throne of mercy day or night and know that God will hear because he doesn't have to go to sleep. They work 24 hours a day...365 days around the clock. Their telephone line is always open to heaven for a child of God. So he's offered us the water of life and he said I am the way and I am the door.

Now if Jesus is the door...the door to what? Well, he's the door to heaven. He's the door first to the church here on earth and if we live as faithful Christians we will have a home in heaven in the after while. So Jesus is the door to the church here on earth. He's the door to heaven. He said behold I stand at the door and knock. What door was he talking about? He's talking about the door of our hearts. He wants us to open our hearts and let him come in. So we have a door to open, too. Now remember, Jesus is not going to pry our heart open, but he stands at the door and knocks; if we'll open the door he will come in and sup with

us and us with him. (This is from Revelation chapter 3, verse 20.) And the great promise that he made to us when he was living on this old earth is found in John 14:1-3, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. (2) In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

In Hebrews chapter 5, verses 8 and 9, I believe what Paul said and I believe he meant what he said about the Son of God in these verses. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Hebrews chapter 4, verses 12 and 13, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged 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. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." That's what I mentioned a moment ago—that we find out that God has all-seeing eyes. There's no way that we can come unto the presence of the Lord. And sometimes my brethren make that mistake, saying "We now come into thy presence." We don't come unto the presence of the Lord, friends. We're always in His presence. Saint or sinner alike, there's no way to hide from the all-seeing eyes of God. But he says in this particular verse that "the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword..." It simply means that it is living and active and it cuts, going and coming.

And so, when we look into the looking glass of God's word we find where we stand. If we're big enough to look into that looking glass and then change to the way God has directed us to live, then we can have a hope of that after while. In John, chapter 16, verse 26, he promises us this. He promised this to the apostles—that we would send

them the Holy Spirit. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he (now notice that this is the personal pronoun—he is always referred to as a **he**) **he** shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

And you know again in Psalms 119, verse 172 He said **all** the commandments of God are righteous. There's not a single individual commandment of God that's not righteous. The Holy Spirit is the teacher and He came back to teach the apostles all truths and He told them he would send Him back and therefore we can rest assured that He did send Him back. Now if you think He didn't send Him back, just turn with me to the second chapter of Acts and see if this promise is not fulfilled that Jesus said unto them, "But the comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Now then, let's just see whether that happened or not. Remember that the Holy Spirit is a teacher. And here we have the time come to fulfillment after Jesus led his apostles out to the little town of Bethany and bid them good-by and went back to heaven, Luke 24:50. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come (I'm reading from the second chapter of Acts, verses 1 through 4) And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Now here was a promise that was fulfilled—that he would send the Holy Spirit to them and guide them into all truths, and here he said that it was the Holy Spirit speaking unto them and appearing to them in cloven tongues (that means forked tongues). He was preaching to 17 different nationalities. They heard the

word of God preached in their own language from twelve apostles. Now somehow or another, God divided that word and sent it out to these 17 nationalities and they all heard it. Just read the rest of the second chapter of the book of Acts. You'll find they all heard it. There were 17 different nationalities there and only 12 apostles.

In Romans chapter 1, verses 16 and 17 Paul said, "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. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Now friends, we've got to have faith in God—we've got to have enough faith to do what he told us to do and then we couple that with the system of faith. Remember that the gospel and the system of faith are one and the same thing. Jude said, "...it is needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith..." So the faith means simply the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Acts chapter 15, verse 9 after Peter had been to the household of Cornelius, he went up to Jerusalem and proclaimed to the apostles and the brethren there that God (verse 9) "...put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Now he didn't purify it by this Faith Only, but he was talking to us simply about the gospel. He could have used the word gospel instead of faith, or he could have used the word truth instead of gospel. John chapter 8, verse 32 says, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Now the truth, the gospel and the system of faith and the word faith used in that sense simply means the gospel; the power of God to save. Remember the gospel was God's power to save—to everyone that believed, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, and if we'll live by our faith coupled with his system of faith we'll have our sins forgiven.

I believe contained in the gospel are the following commandments: Faith plus baptism equal salvation. Again I want to quote Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must

believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (If we don’t believe God, if we don’t do what he said, if we don’t believe he will do what he said he would and if we don’t believe he is able to do what he said...we don’t have enough faith to be saved.) When we make up our mind that God cannot lie (which the Bible teaches that He can not), then we can rest assured that we have enough faith to be saved.

In John chapter 8, verse 21, Jesus plainly says if you die in your sins where I go, you cannot come. So I believe somewhere along the line if we’re going to heaven we’ve simply got to get rid of our sins. Rom. 14:23 says, “for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, Romans 10:17. So, when we sit down to read God’s word it creates faith in our hearts. If we can’t have faith in what we do, then it is sin, and we don’t want to make a hypocrite out of ourselves. I believe this faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

Now in II Peter 3:9, let’s hear the promises of God. It says, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Now here is God’s will: that we all should come to repentance. And the repentance simply means to quit doing wrong and do that which is right. So God is not slack. We don’t have to doubt Him. He is not slack concerning his promises. We can depend on what he says. I believe that with all my heart! If you want to know what I believe concerning the word of God—I believe with all my heart. I believe that every person on earth is going to have to stand before God sometime or another and confess his name. He wants us to do it here on earth and we have scriptures to prove that. Here’s what he says in Mat. 8:31: “So the devils besought him saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished

in the waters.” Now I believe that as well as I believe anything else. But that’s not all I want to read to you that I believe. I want to read to you about that confession that I was talking to you about a minute ago.

Matthew chapter 10, verse 32, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.” Now friend, if we are not willing to confess Him before men, maybe its because we wonder how we can confess Him. Well, there are various ways we can confess Him, and in order to get into Christ we have to confess Him by mouth. Romans chapter 10, verses 9 and 10 He said, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” No one within the sound of my voice or reading this book can fail to understand that confession is with our mouth. Now then, let’s see what else we might find. Philippians chapter 2, verses 9, 10, and 11, “Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” We turn to Romans 14:11-12: “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” We need not think that we can poke our meanness off on our brother or on our kinfolks or anything of the kind. Every one of us is going to have to give account of himself to God. And that’s exactly a parallel statement with Hebrews chapter 9, verse 27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” I believe that he said what he meant, and meant what he said in Acts chapter 2, verses 38, 39 and 40 when they cried out men and brethren what shall we do to be saved, what shall we do to get rid of these sins that we’ve committed (they had committed by crucifying the Lord of Glory). Verse 38, “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive

the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”

Now when we hear preachers today stand up before their audience or radio, television and what not, they tell people there's not a thing in the world for them to do but believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. **What** in the world did Peter say? - when he said with many other words exhort and testify saying save yourself. Some think there's nothing to do except sit down and say “Lord, Lord.” Friends, that just won't work. It simply means for us to save ourselves by accepting the gospel.

Suppose we were out in a river drowning and somebody came down the river in a boat and they were able to send us some communication so that we could be saved. They throw us out a rope. They say get hold of that rope and I'll bring you into the boat and save your life. Suppose we were out there and just about ready to go under the last time and we say, “Oh, No! No! No! I want to be saved by faith. I want to be saved by faith only. But if I took hold of the rope, I wouldn't be (being saved by faith only).” The only way that we can be saved by faith is by accepting the gospel. Take hold of the gospel chain as it is sent down from heaven and save ourselves.

Now let's ask a question: Suppose the man took hold of the rope and the men pulled him into the boat and he was saved. What are you going to say saved him? Was it the boat he got into? Was it the men that pulled him in? Was it the rope? Or was it by him getting hold of the rope? Now you understand as well as anybody understands that it was **all** of them. It took the men in the boat, it took the boat, it took the rope, it took him cooperating with them. And that's exactly what Peter meant in Acts 2:40 when he said, “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”

In Revelation chapter 2, verse 10, “...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” I believe

that with all my heart. I've preached enough to you about this sermon "The Article of Faith I Believe." I also believe we have to die in the Lord to be saved and I know how to get into the Lord. We've had it once and we'll probably have it again. In Revelation 14:13 John said, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from hence forth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Now, can we not depend upon that? Can we not believe that? Our works are going to follow us in that Great Day—in that judgment day—and we had better be sure that our works are satisfactory in the way we direct them.

I Thessalonians chapter 4, verse 13, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." Friend, the reason why we don't have to sorrow about one of our loved ones when we put them away is because they die in the Lord. And he doesn't want us to sorrow. Furthermore, He said blessed are they that die in the Lord—this is one verse that I've already quoted.

II Thessalonians chapter 1, verses 7, 8 and 9, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Now which do we want? Do we want him to cast us away or do we want to obey the gospel? Well we can obey the gospel. And we ought to do that this very hour.

II Timothy chapter 4, verses 7 and 8, as Paul came to the close of his life he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Do we really want the Lord to come back today? Will we be ready for Him to come back today? Have

we obeyed the gospel from the bottom of our hearts? Have we obeyed it and lived by it that we might die by it and die in the Lord? Do we love his appearing? Well David said the Lord takes pleasure in the death of his saints. If we're lost, Christ died in vain and we can't do wrong by doing right. We can't do wrong by doing what the Lord said. Just exactly as Jesus said, are you willing to accept Him today? This very hour? Don't you want to be reconciled to God?

In I Corinthians chapter 12, verse 13, we have this statement: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Verse 18 continues: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." But he states in verse 20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

No, friend, there's no use in praying God to come down and save us, to come down and convict the sinner to obedience or convict a sinner of his lost condition and save him. It's just not going to work that way at all! He said to "be ye reconciled unto God." And said he had committed unto us the word of reconciliation. The only way we can be reconciled to God is to accept his word, believe it and obey it. What else could we ask God to do when he loved us so much that he sent his only begotten Son to suffer on the cross and die the agonizing death that he died? There's just

no way that we could ask for anymore than that. And so, since he has done all that for us, then he has reconciled us to himself by the word. When we hear the word, it tells us what God has done for us and causes us to love; it creates love in our hearts for him and for his word; and if we believe and obey it we can expect God to save us, and he will! We don't have to worry about his part—the thing that we need to be concerned about is whether we're doing our part or not. Will you accept the gospel today?

God said it; I believe it; that settles it! The Bible is right.

CHAPTER VI

ROLL YE AWAY THE STONE

This is a good morning. This is November 11, 1977. I now endeavor to tape the sermon that I preached many years ago. The title is "Roll Ye Away the Stone," taken from John 11:39.

In Gal. 4:16, Paul asked the question, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" James 4:17 says "him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

So, I shall endeavor to try to show us, to the very best of my ability, the things that are necessary for us to have salvation.

Some time ago, there was a great manufacturing concern, and on the exit of that building there was a sign for every body that went out. It said: "Correct your mistakes before leaving this building." I think that's a great attitude, one that we should have. If we are not right with the Lord today—today is the day of salvation—we should correct our mistakes, become obedient to the gospel, become a member of the Lord's family, live a faithful life until death, and go home to heaven and bask in the sunshine of God's love.

What is your soul worth? We have brought it out in many of our lessons, and want to continue to bring it out. Mat. 16:26, "what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" It is worth more than the whole world. Can we imagine the value that God placed upon it? And that Jesus placed upon it? And, Jesus loved us so much that he gave...he came to this low ground, suffered and died, gave his life, that we might have eternal salvation. One thousand years of service in the master's vineyards would still not make a down payment. Seems

like, some how, some people think it's a painful duty to work in the master's vineyard. To me, it's the greatest pleasure that I have in this world...to have the privilege to sit down and talk to some lost one and point out to him or her the way of salvation and, if possible, persuade them to accept Christ and obey him, and have the privilege of baptizing them into Christ. It's certainly a great pleasure. We're all supposed to work within the master's vineyards, we being members of the church. Rev. 22:14, one of the most cherished verses of the Bible as far as I am concerned, says: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Now, let's go back for a little while to the beginning. But before we do that, I want to tell you a story of my older sister, who was past 80 years old. She knew that her time was at hand, her body was wracked with pain, and she knew that her time was close when she made this statement, which I think is a very great statement—one that we ought to be happy to make: **"Won't it be wonderful to trade this old body for a new one?"**

In I Cor. 15 Paul has promised to us a celestial body, a spiritual body, one that is not subject to decay, an immortal body, one that will not be subject to pain and sorrows or things that we have in this life. It's not good for us to live too long in this world because of the trials and tribulations we have to go through with, and we have the promise that on the other side there will be no tears, no sorrows, no crying, no pain, for the former things are passed away. The things that cause us to have pain and sorrows in this world will not be in the next one to those that live faithfully and die in the Lord.

Let's go back a little while to the beginning of time. God created man from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. In the world today that soul doesn't die. Because of man's transgression in the garden, God drove him out without physical death, and so the body must die. James says a body without the spirit is dead. So, when our spirit

leaves this body, our body is going to die. But, we can look forward to that new body that we mentioned a moment ago.

In the garden God walked and talked with them and told them all the things in the garden that they could have—that they could eat of all the trees, the fruit of the garden—except of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And he says that “he that eateth of that tree shall surely die.” But what happened? Here comes along Satan, and it says he was more subtle than all the other beasts of the field, and he appeared to Mother Eve and asked her the question. What were they supposed to do? And she knew just as well as she knew anything that they weren't to eat of that tree, and she told the devil so. And he added a word to the word of God. He didn't change it any, and I want us to remember that. We cannot change the word of God today no matter what we add to it or take from it. We cannot change one single thing that God said. We might make it appear that we have changed it, but we haven't. “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” John 12:48.

And he said to her “Thou shalt **not** surely die.” Well, what happened? Then came along her husband, Adam, and she gave him the fruit of the tree and he ate of it, and then God came down and he said, “Where art thou?” God asked them to give an account of themselves. What did they do? Well, of course, Mother Eve tried to poke it off on Satan, and Adam tried to poke it off on his wife. But, you know what happened? God drove them out of the garden and placed Cherubims and a flaming sword at the garden gate. After he, God, had driven them out they couldn't come back and eat of the tree of life and live forever. Gen. 3:24.

But in that particular time, Gen. 3:15, God promised a saviour. It might be well for me to read that verse too and let us get the full impact of it if we can, and I think that we can. “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” And unto the woman

he said, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Now, that doesn't mean that a husband shall rule over his wife with a rod of iron, but he is put at the head of the house, and this women's lib that we have today, where the women want to take the place of the man, was never intended that way by God. They have their place and they have a valuable place. They ought to cleave to the home and not undertake to rule over the man.

Now, I will tell you what happened to them. They just listened to the wrong source. It took 4,000 years for His promise to be fulfilled, and I want to say to you that God's ways are always right. We must obey to have the blessing. We must roll away the stone of unbelief, and that is the title of our lesson today—"Roll Ye Away the Stone."

You will remember this: Martha and Mary and Lazarus were brother and sisters and Jesus stayed in their homes. But Jesus had gone over to another place when Lazarus died, and when Jesus came back to the grave and saw the people weeping and crying over the fact that Lazarus had died, the record says, John 11:35, "Jesus wept."

So we see that Jesus had compassion on these people; he loved these people and was very fond of them. But they thought that if Jesus had been there Lazarus would never have died. But Jesus had compassion on them and he said to them, "Take ye away the stone." I wonder why he told them to take away the stone?" Well, of course, the fact that he told them to take away the stone was to let them have a part in the resurrection. So that proves to us that we are going to have a part in the resurrection.

In John 5:28 and 29 he said: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." So, we are going to have a part in that resurrection.

Now, then, let's see what happened. Jesus said, "Lazarus come forth" after he had them roll the stone away. Why not Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob?

It shows to us that its an individual matter and that each one of us will have to answer for ourselves, and we are going to have to obey the Lord for Jesus is coming back and will call us forth from the grave. What for? I have already given the verses, I am sure.

Now then, did the dead obey? He certainly did. It wasn't Abraham who came forth; it wasn't Jacob; but it was Lazarus. Now then, suppose they had refused to roll away the stone? Well, of course, no doubt in my mind that God resurrected Lazarus, but he wanted to let them have a part. They obeyed, and then Jesus did for them what they couldn't do for themselves.

So, likewise today, God only does for us what we can't do for ourselves. We can't make it rain; we can't stop it from raining. God is not going to come down and plant our gardens for us. But he is going to send us the rain. He furnishes the ground; he furnishes the sunshine and all of those things that are necessary for us to raise a crop and something to sustain our physical body. But he only does for us today what we cannot do for ourselves.

In Genesis 6 we find a great character. It says there that Noah found grace in God's eyes. What did he have to do? Well, remember that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Did the people pay any attention to him? They did not. Why did God tell Noah to build an ark? Well, because he was going to save him and his house. Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Suppose Noah had refused to build this ark? You talk about having a part in His resurrection and His deliverance from that wicked world to a new world—it took him many years to build that ark, and I know it must have been a big job. But, Noah didn't refuse.

And another thing we might learn about this is that we need to be specific about God's commands. God told Noah how to build it—to pitch it within and without. He told him exactly how high to build it, how long to build it, and how wide to build it. Noah didn't improve on that, and now I

wonder if he didn't go out to his people and say: "Well, God didn't say not to do this or not to do that, and because God didn't say it that way, we can do as we please."

For instance, one of them is instrumental music made by man in the worship of the church.

God didn't go down the line and say, "Noah, now don't you build that out of sassafras" or "don't you build that out of pin oak, don't you build it out of cedar, don't you build it out of shumake, don't you build it out of red oak, white oak..." or anything you want to name. He just said, "you need to build it out of gopher wood." and that excluded all the others. Now, I know you can understand that because I can understand it.

As far as we know, it had never rained on the earth at that time, and it had been a long time. But God said it was going to come a flood and he told them how to prepare for what was coming.

Now, it is necessary that I turn over here to I Peter 3:18 and read a few verses for us to show what Peter had to say about this. It says here: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

Now, I want us to notice he said "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison."

Now many people think that Jesus went back into the

anti diluvian world and preached to those people that they might have a second chance. That is just as wrong as can be. What he was telling us was that the same spirit that resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead was the same spirit that guided Noah to preach to those people in the days when the ark was being built, and God provided a way for Noah and Noah obeyed it. So we don't need to think that those people had a second chance back there in the anti diluvian world. The spirit guided Noah to preach to those people in his time—the time in which Noah lived—. He was a preacher of righteousness, and God guided him with the Holy Spirit as he guided all the other prophets and teachers in the olden times—just like he guided the apostles to lay down for us the gospel of Jesus Christ today.

Now, I want to tell you another story that is very interesting to us. There were 600,000 men that came out of Egypt, besides women, boys and girls. They had been trapped in Egypt—been under bondage down there—and God sent Moses down to bring them out of Egyptian bondage. So, they were trapped on the way out. Here was the Red Sea. The Red Sea is a raging sea, and there was no way for the people to cross. There was a mountain on one side and a mountain on the other and 600 chariots behind coming at the Israelites to capture them. They thought “we've got it made now, we've got them in a pen, we've got them in a hem.” Then, what did God tell Moses to do? He told him to “stretch forth thy rod,” and at first he told him to tell the people to stand still and see the salvation of God. In other words, stop, look and listen; just like the old signs that used to be at the railroad crossings. Stop, look and listen. Moses had to get their attention. Then he stretched forth his rod and parted the Red Sea, congealed it, froze it up to where it was a solid wall on either side, and across the Red Sea they went on dry land. They got across and God told him to stretch his rod back over the sea, and he did and the sea came forth and had its strength that drowned all the Egyptians.

So, therefore, God used water way back yonder to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage, the same as he

uses water today to deliver us from our sins.

So he stretched forth his rod. Suppose Moses had refused to do that. Well, of course, if he had disobeyed God then things wouldn't have worked out right. But Moses was obedient to God, and they crossed the Red Sea into the wilderness.

This is very typical of our earthly journey here today.

Where were they going? Well, they were going to the promised land, the land of Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey. Did God take care of them while they were in the wilderness? He certainly did. He fed them with manna from heaven, and this was a balanced diet and they had all they needed to eat. Their shoes didn't wear out, their clothing didn't wear out. But they were not satisfied. No, they murmured against God and said we loath this old light bread. They said, "Why is it like this? Why don't we go back to Egypt where we can have onions and garlic and all those things we had?" What did God do to them? He sent them fiery serpents.

Now this is a great lesson we need to learn. We need to roll away the stone of unbelief. Anything God tells us to do, we ought to pay attention to and do exactly what he says without any argument or murmuring like the Israelites did.

So they murmured against God and God sent them fiery serpents. Then what? Were they God's children? They certainly were. Well, what did he have Moses do? He told him to build a fiery serpent and put it upon a pole and to look at it and be healed. They had died by the thousands, they that were bitten by the fiery serpents, poisonous serpents. And their unbelief caused them not to enter the promised land. There weren't very many of that group that left out of Egypt that ever entered Canaan. The people that were above the age of 20 years before they left Egypt died in the wilderness—all except Joshua and Caleb.

Now what did that serpent represent that was hanging on a pole? It was a picture of the time that Christ would hang suspended on the cross between earth and heaven. As the Israelites had to look up to heal their serpent bites, so we have to look to the cross to find what will take away our

sins. It's none other than the shed blood of Christ. In I John 1:7 it says, "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Now these things are written beforehand for all of us that we will be sure not to make the same mistake. I Cor. 10:11.

You might say, "Well, Brother Hancock, this is all old testament." Well, what about the blind man? John 9:7—here was a blind man that wanted to be healed. And Jesus did something that would seem more or less nauseating to us. He spit on the ground, mixed his spittle with some clay and made an ointment and annointed the man with the spittle and clay. He told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam and he would be able to see. Was there anything for that man to do? Coundn't Jesus have saved him by just saying to the man "have thy sight?" Certainly, he could have. Why did he do this? He wanted him to roll away the stone of unbelief and go down and do as he had instructed him—he had to wash himself in the pool of Siloam. And when he did, he came seeing. He could have asked many questions and said to Jesus, "Why can't you save me without me going down to that old pool of Siloam? Can't you save me by just saying, 'Heal me?'"

And I say that's the way people are today. They say, "Lord, save me," and they want to be saved without doing anything in obedience to God's commands.

What we need to do today—and that is the lesson that we are trying to present—is to roll away the stone of unbelief. In I Corinthians we have this statement about baptism, and all three of these verses I read to you today that we might be saved from past sins: I Cor. 12:13, "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body." Then in I Cor. 10:1: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea."

Now, remember that God used water to deliver those people out of Egyptian bondage. He destroyed all the Egyptians with the water. And, remember that this was a

saving power then to those people that he brought out of Egyptian bondage. Well, it wasn't the water that saved them—it was the element that God used to destroy their enemies.

Now, then, let's see what he says further about that. I Cor. 12:3-6, "And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."

Continuing with these verses, "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them, as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand." Yes, twenty-three thousand people. Because they committed adultery in the wilderness, God destroyed them and killed them. So, this great redemption then of the Israelites using water was the type of our salvation. It plainly says so—that they were baptized in the cloud and the sea.

What does baptism mean? It means an overwhelming, a burial in water. That means we are overwhelmed all over. That's the reason today that we cannot use sprinkling or pouring a little water on some one and call it baptism. It will not satisfy God. It wouldn't have satisfied God in that day, and it still doesn't today. Remember that all these things that God used were used to point to the time that Christ would come and give us the plain simple plan of salvation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. And that baptism has to be a burial in water. Nothing else will please God. It doesn't make any difference how many people substitute the sprinkling or pouring of water for baptism, it will not work. God said it was a burial and that's the only way it can be. God said it and I believe it, and that settles it. The Bible is right!

What about today? Heb. 9:22, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of

blood is no remission.”

Now then, I'm not trying to tell you that water is our salvation, but it is the element that God used to bring us into the spiritual blood of Jesus Christ. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission. So Jesus died on the cross, shed his blood that we might have the remission of our sins. It took the blood of Christ—a sinless person. When you read the chapter concerning that in Romans 6 you will see it was a burial in water. That's where we come in contact with the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ and come into the spiritual blood of Jesus Christ. It was not the water that saved us, but the water was the **element** that God used for us to obey in. It was necessary for us to have faith in God, have faith in Christ, have faith in the gospel, and then confess his name after we have repented, and be buried with him in baptism and raised to walk a new life. Romans, chapter 6

It took the blood of Christ to save us. Rom. 5:6 has this to say, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Reading further, “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”

But today, my dear friends, we have a law. Mat. 7:21...The Will of God. So here we find that it is the blood of Jesus Christ that we have to come in contact with. The only place we can come in contact with that is the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let me read

you some now from the 6th chapter of Romans, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."

We can very well understand that crucified means to cut off. The old body of sin has been cut off when we are buried with him. That is just too plain to be misunderstood. Sprinkling and pouring will never satisfy God—no way, shape or form—any more than it would have satisfied God if Noah had put sassafras and various other woods in the ark. He told him to use gopher wood in it and that's what he did. He obeyed God and was safe, and when he entered the ark God shut the door and no man could open it. The old land was transformed into a new land, a new country, and all the old wicked people were destroyed, and it plainly says that when we were without strength in due time Christ died for all. So, after the time had come for God to fulfill that promise in Gen. 3:15 that through the seed of the woman he would bless all the nations of the earth, so we have it today—the full promise that was made to Abraham in the long ago that through the seed of the woman all nations of the earth would be blessed.

Then he selected the Jewish people for Christ to be born from that they might be his people until the time Christ came and died on the cross. Col. 2:14, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

We are not living under the old law, but we are living under the new law. John 3:16 says: "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." The 17th verse says, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Now, listen to this from Jeremiah 10:23. He said, "Oh, Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." There is no way that we can direct our steps. The only way we can be guided by God is to follow his teaching. Jeremiah said it is impossible that a man can guide his own way. I know that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. And, it would be a poor God when he said in John 3:17 that through him we should be saved if he didn't tell us how to get into Christ that we might be saved.

When Paul was writing to the Galatians, he said in Gal. 1:11 that it was a "certified gospel." In other words, we know what the word "certified" means today about our seed. It means they are pure seed—they are unadulterated with other things. And the gospel is a certified gospel—a pure gospel. Paul said he was not taught it by man, neither did he (Paul) receive it of man but by the revelation of Jesus Christ himself. So, Paul was preaching to us the very thing that Jesus revealed unto him, and I have that before us, and it is as simple today as it was in the day of Paul's time and the people that lived in his time.

John 14:2-3 says, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

That's the place that I am looking forward to—that mansion that God has prepared for all that are faithful to him, that mansion that he has prepared for us in the sky.

So we walk by faith today and not by sight. That's II Cor. 5:7.

But first of all, friends, we must roll away the stone of unbelief. There is no way to please God by trying to devise a way of our own and trying to make our own rules and regulations, as many do today. We've got to roll away the stone of unbelief, and we have to believe that when God said a thing he meant it, and he meant what he said when he said what he said.

You want to know how to be saved today? Now, I beg of you today, to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. Wherever you live or wherever you dwell, go and have yourself baptized into Christ that you might be saved from all your past sin. Live a faithful, christian life the rest of the time allotted to you.

And David said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." So we can have some comfort when we cross over the river of death.

Paul said at the close of life, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Are you, today, my friends, out of Christ? Are you ready for Jesus to come back? Would you be happy to see him coming in the sky? Well, he is coming back, and we had sure better be ready because it won't be good for us if we aren't.

Now, you want to know exactly how to get into Christ? Well, I'll give you the plan of salvation. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." We have to believe that God will do what he said he would do and is able to do what he said he would do, or we don't have enough faith to be saved.

But friends, I know that if we believe in God, we surely

believe that he is able to do what he said he would do and will do what he said he will do. In John 8:24, Jesus said, "if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." So, we have to believe in Jesus Christ. And Jesus talking again in Luke 13:5 says, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And Acts 17:30 says, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Why? "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

Now, reading to you again from Romans 10:9-10, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

Surely we are not ashamed of the Son of God who died on calvary's cross for us. Are we willing to do what he wants us to do? Then after we have done all those things we must confess his name before men with out mouths, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Then we are ready to be baptized into Christ for the remission of our past sins. That's Acts 2:38.

Whereas Peter stood up among the twelve and preached by the power of the Holy Spirit to the multitude present. From the 2nd chapter of Acts we will read the first verse we find in regard to the Holy Spirit. They spoke in tongues and every man heard him in their own language. Verse 36 says, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter told them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the

remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost...And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”

So, there will be something for us to do as well as to just say, “Lord, Lord, Lord.”

What does all that do? Well, it puts us into Christ where salvation is. Eph. 1:3 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” So, all the spiritual blessings are in Christ, and if all are in Christ there are none on the outside.

And what puts us into Christ? Gal. 3:26-27, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” That’s the only way we can get into Christ—we must be baptized into him. It doesn’t matter that the preachers of this day and time say that baptism is non-essential. Baptism is a command of God. It is commanded on many occasions. It is a command for us today just the same as it was 1900 years ago, and he says by one spirit are we all baptized into one body. I Cor. 12:13

The body is the church. Col. 1:18 says, “he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.”

If we are not willig today to let Christ have the preeminence in our lives, then we are not willing to be saved. We don’t want to be saved if we are not willing to do what he wants us to do.

The only way that we can be saved in the afterwhile, saved from our sins now, is to walk in the way that Jesus outlined for us to walk, and there is no way of thinking that anything on the outside of Christ is a spiritual life. We may have all the physical blessings in this life, but we don’t have the spiritual blessings unless we are in Christ Jesus.

I beg you today to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ as it is written in the word, without hesitation, and roll away all the stones of unbelief, all the man-made gospel, and

follow exactly what the Bible says. We have no worry that the Bible is right. It can't be wrong because God said it, and God can't lie. Won't you do it today as you have the opportunity?

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER VII

IS YOUR NAME WRITTEN IN HEAVEN?

Taken from Luke 10:17 and 20

If you will remember, there were two great commissions that Jesus gave. One was known as what we call the limited commission, when he sent the 70 out and gave them power over unclean spirits and various things of that kind and even to raise the dead and all those things, and after they had been gone quite a while they came back. Now oftentimes preachers are accused of the fact that they've got an ax to grind. Well, I've told many times from the pulpit that I certainly had an ax to grind; the ax that I had to grind was to help save as many souls as I possibly could; persuade them to accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ—believe it and obey it and live by it and die by it and go on to live eternally with God throughout the ceaseless ages to eternity. Let's just study what Jesus said to the 70.

Now here it is: Luke 10:17 on through the 20th verse: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

We find in studying the Bible some things that God has to do when we accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We might note them as we start out.

First of all, he is obligated to forgive us our sins, to add

our names to the Church here on earth and add our names to the Lamb's book of life, and in I Peter 3:12, which I use in many sermons, start watching over us. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." In Acts 4:11-12, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." So friends today if we are going to be saved, it has to be through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It doesn't mean by that, that we stand out on a street corner and holler Lord, Lord, Lord, because Jesus took care of that in Mat. 7:21 when he said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." So if we want to be saved we have got to learn what the will is, we have got to do what the will says, and live by it, and die by it, and then go home to heaven to live with all the saved.

Now what was the introduction to this? The seventy rejoiced because they had been able to cast out devils. But the Lord did not want them to let that be the chief reason for their joy. He wanted them to rejoice because their names were written in heaven. The text suggests that men are interested in having their names written somewhere. Let's use an illustration—the school annuals, we have them come out every year. We see the children in high school graduating or maybe the next year going to graduate and they put their name in this annual. They put it by somebody else. If we were able to go down to old Blockade Hollow, which is southeast of Washburn, Missouri, where I grew up, you would probably find my initials C.H. and P.S., the name of my wife that I have lived with for 51 years. Now then our own bluff on the farm down on Flat Creek, northeast of Cassville, Missouri, is known as the Marlow Bluff. When you go over there and look at that you will find many initials inscribed on that bluff of people that have gone up and looked at the bluff. In this we find the desire of

even the young to have their names recorded. Some are concerned about their names being on some prominent social register. Others want their names written in the political world. Many are anxious to have their names displayed in some hall of fame. What is the greatest? With all the ups and downs we have in this life, the text suggests to us the biggest and best blessings of man is to have his name recorded in heaven by God.

And here is a point, this is God's business when we accept the Gospel of Christ, God adds our names to the Lamb's book of life. It's his business to do that and I never have figured God would make any mistakes. He did a wonderful job when he created this old world and spoke it into existence and made man one of the greatest machines that is on earth, and we are actually a machine. When we figure out how the mechanics of our body works, we find that we really are a machine.

Now then, we find also in this discussion that there is a record kept in heaven. We have already mentioned; it is suggested in the word for our citizenship is in heaven. We turn over to the Philippian letter and we find this statement, reading to you from Phil. 4:3: "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life." So we see that the names of those that laboured with the Lord were in the book of life.

Then he gives us some great consolation in the rest of this chapter and I want to read it to us for our consideration. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure,

whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." So anyone can think of all those things Paul has outlined to us in the Philippian letter.

In the Hebrew letter, 12:23, we have this statement that should help us a whole lot. He said like this, "To the general assembly and the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." Now I can remember that Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again, John 3:5. Born of water and spirit, the simplest thing in the world that God could have devised for us as a plan of salvation. To be born again simply means to be baptized into Christ. To be baptized into Christ means to be born again. There is just no other way to form a conclusion that anything else would do. It is just that way. God fixed it that way and man cannot change it. He said our names were "written in heaven and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, (by the God almighty in heaven) And to Jesus (now notice this) the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Remember back under the old law they were always offering animal sacrifices. They sprinkled blood upon the tabernacle. Moses did. And all those things when we go back and study, but he is saying something that is superior, something that is much better.

And he warned us, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." (Heb. 12:25)

In other words, the message that we are trying to bring this morning is a message from heaven. It's the message from God the Father, handed down to Jesus Christ, to the apostles, and they revealed it in the word by writing it down for us. "Whose voice then shook the earth." Just think of it.

Do you remember when Moses was on Mt. Sinai? And God came down and spoke to him and he shook the whole earth and lightning and thunder and everything else, and you know what the people said? They said, Moses you talk

to God, we don't want to hear his voice anymore. You talk to him for us, lest we die. So I can imagine that is about the way we will feel on judgment day if we haven't prepared ourselves for that day. We will want somebody to talk to God for us. Those people did.

But now then, go on back. "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:28-29)

So we learn from those passages of scripture that God is a consuming fire and what does he mean by that?

When you turn to the book of Peter, Peter said that God was going to speak this old earth out of existence and was going to set it on fire, and it was going to melt with fervent heat.

Again I want to read to you for your consideration Phil. 4:3, "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life." So we see there was a plurality of names that were written in the book of life. And if their names was not written in the book of life, we just turn over here and see what's going to happen when Jesus comes back and speaks this old world out of existence and burns it up with fervent heat. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." It is plainly said, whosoever was not written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Now I don't want any part of that fire.

It is also referred to as the Lamb's book of life. We just read about it a moment ago in the Philippian letter, and

now let's repeat it in Rev. 21:27, "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Now I don't know how we can misunderstand that. If we want to go to heaven we are going to have to have our name written in the Lamb's book of life. And if we do not, we cannot go to heaven.

Now there are some things that **won't** get our names written in the Lamb's book of life, and I want to bring our attention to them at this time—the negative side of it.

Morality will not get your names written in heaven. God has a law and he expects us to obey that law.

Now when Cornelius had sent over to Joppa to get Peter to come over to his house and tell him what he must do. Cornelius was one of the most moral of men. But what did he tell him? He told him to hear the words whereby he could be saved, Acts 11:14. Does it make any difference what we hear? It certainly does! So he was commanded to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 10:43. He was told to repent, Acts 11:18. Notice it was a command. He was commanded to be baptized, Acts 10:48. What does it mean to be baptized? It simply means to be born again.

I have already mentioned it once in this sermon, but I need to mention it again for I want to impress the fact that we have to obey the commandments of God because there are none other. There is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved. And by the authority of Jesus Christ, this way we enter that kingdom on earth and get our names written in the Lamb's book of life. One has to be born again to enter the kingdom of God, John 3:5. "All commandments are righteous," David said in the long ago in the book of Psalms. Baptism is simply being born again. It means one and the same thing. When we say that a person has to be born of the water and the spirit, it means he has to be baptized. It doesn't make any difference how much people fuss and fume that baptism is not necessary and you can have salvation without it. That isn't what the Bible teaches.

I am writing this book of sermons to try to teach

people what the Bible says, not what man says. We are going to find out something about the doctrines of men in just a little bit.

Now only those who do the will of God can please him. That is what we read a while ago in Mat. 7:21. I John 12:48 Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." Now I might say a lot of things about the word of God, and I might say baptism is unnecessary and I might say to be born again is not necessary, and I might say a lot of things are not necessary. But after all, when we come to the judgment day we are going to be judged by exactly what Jesus said, not by what I might say about it or what some other preacher might say or not say about it. We are going to be judged by exactly what the Bible says, and obeying the doctrines of men will not enable us to have our name recorded in heaven. Jesus rebuked them for that in his ministry here. He said we are to rebuke men for obeying the doctrines of men. In Mat. 15:9 he said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

What kind of worship is it when we teach for doctrines the commandments of men? It is vain worship. Do you think God is going to accept vain worship when we've got the true worship? In John 8:32 he said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The question is, have we been born again? We must be born of the greater and not of the lesser. It makes no difference who it is. It doesn't make any difference about the color of the hair or anything like that.

Now, I want you to turn over to the Colossian letter and see what we might find there. I am reading to you from the second chapter and the 20th verse, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and dictines of men?" Now, do you believe it is safe to follow the doctrines

and commandments of men? Paul said they are all going to perish, whatever the doctrines are of men. We've got to follow the doctrines of Christ, which means the Gospel—the true teachings of Christ. That is why he said, "ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

Now notice what Jesus said about this through the apostle Paul. Which things (all these things that man does) have a great show of wisdom. Yes, it says, "Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, (they may be humble and they may have put their whole soul and body into it, but it is will worship when it is not according to Jesus Christ) and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh."

Now how many times have people turned away from the word of God and made their own plans, used their own ideas of how they want to worship God? And they think that God ought to listen to them. But the Bible says it is will worship. That means **They** willed it and **not God**.

Now in the next chapter, the third chapter and the first verses, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." That is, you are dead to sin and your life is hid with Christ. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory." How? After we have been dead to the rudiments of this world and decided to make up our mind to follow Jesus and his truths.

In Titus 1:13-14 he said, "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth." Can you imagine anyone turning from the truth and God's almighty word when they have it written here in the form that we can set down and read? Yet they will pick up the creeds and all the things that people make and all the things they go by and throw away the commandments of God. I hear it every day over radio and television, denying the very thing that God said we had to do in order to be saved from our past sins.

Now friends, we ought not to do that, we ought to follow the teachings of Christ, regardless of what man says.

And I have had people say to me concerning instrumental music in the worship of the Lord, that they like it, they want it, and they are going to have it. Now when we get an attitude like that, we are going to satisfy ourselves rather than follow what God said to do when he simply said for us to sing. And that means for us to use the instrument that God made. Oh yes, I believe in instruments of music, but I believe in the instrument that God made for us. It is the greatest instrument on earth. And the human voice, the vocal box that God put within us that we can sing, that great system that he put in our mind that we can direct that box to say the words that we want to say and sing praises unto him and that's why he cut out the man made instruments of music.

In Acts 17:25 it says, "Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything," so he wants us to worship from the heart, he wants us to use the instrument that he made for us, and it is the only instrument that he will accept. Now we may not want to accept that, you may not want to believe that, but that's exactly what the Bible says.

Now Satan is out to deceive us with whatever means he can. Paul warned the brethren in Eph. 5:6, "Let no man deceive you with vain words (remember now that Satan works through men): for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Now he is writing to children and you let man deceive you and draw you away from the truth. Of course, it ultimately means that you are going to lose your soul. What are we going to do?"

Well, in Eph. 4:14 (and morality is not enough), we have this statement, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined

together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." What are we going to do? We are going to turn to the word of God, so being conscientious is not enough.

We remember that Saul of Tarsus was conscientiously persecuting christians and had to be shown that he was a sinner, Acts 23:1 and Acts 22:6-16. And when he was down before the council, rehearsing the matter before one of the rulers, he said I verily thought within myself I ought to do many things contrary to the will of God and those things I did. He stood by and watched Stephen persecuted and stoned to death and held the coats of the ones who did it; thinking all the time he was in good standing with God, thinking he was doing that very thing. He felt he had acted in good conscience, Acts 26:9. But merely thinking that ones name is written in heaven is not sufficient evidence that it is recorded there.

Let's think about it this way as an illustration: In the midst of the critical days in our country, the record of some people who thought they were fully naturalized citizens was checked and once the government went to a man and said, "You have never complied fully with the laws of naturalization and therefore are not a citizen of this country." The man strongly asserted that he had confidently believed that he was a citizen and was astonished to find out that he was still an alien. So, you see, it is not enough to think we are right if we are to follow God's word. It is not bad if one can go ahead and qualify later, but what if we wait till the judgment day and then contend with God, "I thought I was a citizen and my name was in the Lamb's book of life," only to have him say, "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity."

James says faith without works is dead. There are many people who have obeyed the doctrines of men and believe that they are saved. Some have obeyed in part by be-

lieving but never have been baptized. Most of the people believe there is a God and most of the good moral people have repented of their sins; they are walking right up to the line. Many of my friends that I have baptized into Christ, I have walked up to and said now what's the matter, you're walking right up to the line, why don't you let me help you cross over the line? You wouldn't steal from me, you wouldn't lie to me, you wouldn't cheat me—all the wrong things that men do, you're not doing them. You're walking right up to the line. Let's get this thing on the right track and get you **across** that line. Let's get you on that highway to heaven, that way that Isaiah spoke of. And by doing that, I have been able to baptize many of them into Christ and they start walking in the straight and narrow way.

Now others have substituted sprinkling or pouring for immersion. You know what that is, that is the devil's tool. Sprinkling for baptism, or pouring water on someone for baptism is simply a mockery of God's word. Col. 2:12 says, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Now we don't need any other verses, but there are others to confirm that, but it simply says here that we are buried with our Lord in baptism. Romans the 6th chapter also says the same thing.

Many have thought they were saved at some altar, substituting prayer for the command "repent ye and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins." That means the remission of your past sins.

Many people have told me that it doesn't matter how hard you try to show them the truth they'll still put their hand on the left side of their chest and say, "I have it right here." Well my friends, that physical heart doesn't do anything but pump blood through the veins to keep our old physical body going. The heart that God is interested in is our mind, in our head, in the upper part. He's interested in the intelligence of a man. That is the one he wants us to think with, he wants us to believe with, he wants us to obey

with.

There are many who have become members of institutions unknown to the Bible and who wear the names of men who feel their names are written in heaven. God warns men of this danger in Mat. 7:23; and Mat. 15:13 says, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Now friends, where are you going to be when the rooting day comes? I don't want to be rooted up. I want to be in the straight and narrow way.

Of those people who declared that they had testified in his name, done many wonderful works in his name, and cast out devils in his name, Christ said in Mat. 7:23, "then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Now why? Simply because they refused to accept the simple commandments he had given them and were making up their own rules and regulations. Only by believing in Christ, the power of his blood to take away sins in humble obedience to his will can we have the assurance that our names are written in heaven. There is no other way! We must obey in the same way Cornelius and Paul did before God will count us righteous for Christ's sake. **Then** we have the assurance our names are written in heaven.

Also see Acts 2:36-39 (and that is a great verse to read), when those people were pricked in their hearts and they cried out, "Men and brethren what shall we do?" And Peter, standing up with the twelve, told them to repent and be baptized "everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" and the promise of eternal life. He had told them in the 36th verse to "let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Can one's name be blotted out of the book of life? It certainly can! The question is clearly answered in the affirmative by Christ in Rev. 3:3-5, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will

come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." In Rev. 2:4-5, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Lukewarmness will cause us to have our name taken out of the Lamb's book of life. I will read to you from Rev. 3:14, "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold or hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." Then he gives the great admonition in Rev. 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Primarily that was written to the church he was talking about, but nevertheless that door stands open to the ones who are out in the world today. He stands and begs to come in because he tells us in Mat. 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Now then we want to find out here just a little bit what condition God feels we are in when we go away from him. Now this writing strictly to children, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for

them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." Now that's the way God looks upon us as his children, if we turn back and go into the beggerly elements of the world. Its the same as the sow that has gone back to the wallowing in the mire and the dog that has vomited up his food and turned around to eat it again. Plumb sickening—plumb nauseating.

Now, only those names who are in the book of life can enter into heaven. In Rev. 21:27 we have this statement, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." So it plainly tells us that we must have our names written in the Lamb's book of life. Those whose names are not in the book will be cast into hell, Rev. 20:11-15.

Now this is a sad sight and I hate to even talk about it because it is so terrible to think about, but we have this statement in Rev. 20:11, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." Again I say unto you, I don't want any part of that fire!

He makes it plain here that the Old Testament and the New Testament are going to be there and then the book of life. If our name is not in the Lamb's book of life, we are not going to get into that celestial city in the afterwhile. And the sea gave up it's dead. Some people might think that if a man drowned in the sea and a large whale swallowed him

up and digested him out, that God couldn't find him. But God takes care of the spirit; when the body dies, the spirit goes back to God. God will resurrect that body and put it back together and we're all going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So we want to be careful what we do in this world, to be pleasing unto the Lord that we might have eternal life in the afterwhile.

Let's see what else we can find. Is your name written in heaven? This is the greatest question of all. And remember that we are creatures of choice. Every alien sinner should hasten to take advantage of God's grace, and the cleansing power of the blood of Christ that his name may be written in the book of life. Every wayward child of God should repent and pray to God that he may be forgiven and have his name restored in the book on that great day. I John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." So that's to children of God. Only God can write your name in heaven. How about letting God write your name on the Lamb's book of life—today, now, not tomorrow? Tomorrow may never come. How can you do wrong by doing right? You can't. You can't do wrong by doing what the Lord says.

Now Paul said in the book of Philippians, 4:1, you are "my joy and crown." Paul was writing to the Philippian brethren because they were living the life he wanted them to live.

Friends, don't despise and reject the Lord by rejecting his authority, his church, his name, his gospel. Christ purchased the church with his own blood. Love and obey him; he first loved us. Live a faithful life and go home to heaven to bask in the sunshine of God's eternal love, forever and forever. We can't do wrong by doing right and we can't do wrong by doing what God says.

Friends, don't be like some in Christ's time. People then were careless and didn't want to follow him. And Jesus stood upon the mount and looked over the city of Jerusalem saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto

thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Now friends, we don't want to turn away like they did. Many of them did do that—turned away; but with all that, Jesus said come unto me, the spirit and the bride say come. And every erring child should come.

If you want to know exactly how to get into Christ, let me read it to you again in Gal. 3:26-27, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." And Col. 2:12 says, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." I believe it; every bit of it!

Heb. 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." If we don't believe that God will operate upon the record of our lives, forgive us of our sins, and add us to the church, the Lamb's book of life, and save us in the end then we don't have enough faith to be saved. Let's not doubt God's word. Let's believe it, obey it from the heart and go home in the afterwhile to heaven's eternal home.

Friends, don't despise and reject the Lord by rejecting his authority, his church, his name, his gospel. Christ purchased the church with his own blood, his precious blood. Love and obey him. He first loved us. Live faithful and go home to heaven to bask in the sunshine of God's eternal love forever and ever. Again, we can't do wrong by doing right; we can't do wrong by doing what God says. Friends, don't be like some in Christ's time. Yes, I beg you not to be like they were in Christ's time. And again, remember when Jesus looked over Jerusalem with compassion and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Now why wouldn't they do that? Because they didn't

want to follow Jesus. You know that is exactly the picture of a lot of times today. Jesus said all the way through the New Testament come unto me, the spirit and the bride say come and every erring child should come back and repent and do the thing that God would have us to do.

I now repeat that the exact way to get into Christ is given to us in Gal. 3:26-27, when he said, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." And I Cor. 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." The Spirit is the teacher and the water is the element and we are baptized into the one body. The one body is the church—the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Col. 2:12 says we are "buried with him (buried with whom? With Christ) in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." If we don't believe God can do what he said he would do and will do what he said, then we don't have enough faith to be saved.

Heb. 11:6 sets that out very plainly to us, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Don't you believe today that God is able to do what he said he would do and will do what he said he would do? Well, I do for one. And I hope and pray that you do because it is impossible for God to lie and God has said he would do these things.

Now if your name is not on the Lamb's book of life, the great question is, will you do it at the earliest convenience you have? Thank you so much. **And remember God said it; I believe it; and that settles it! The Bible is right.**

P.S. Please don't condemn me for repeating some in this sermon—I intended it that way.—C.H.

CHAPTER VIII

NO MAN CARETH FOR MY SOUL

Good morning, America. This is a good morning. This is Nov. 11, 1977.

The title of this sermon is "No Man Careth For My Soul."

I want us to think about it like this—like the old song: "When in the better land, before the bar we stand, how deeply grieved our souls will be, if any lost one there should cry in deep despair 'you never mentioned him to me.'"

David, you will remember, was a young lad that God had selected to be king over Israel. He had killed the giant, Goliath, with the stone picked from the brook. And, remember this, when God is with us, one and God is a majority. David had God on his side and therefore he killed the giant with one stone from the brook. Then, as the time approached for him to be king over Israel, Saul was very jealous of him and sought to kill him. And when he had gone away, hiding in the cave from the wrath of Saul, he uttered these words, Psm. 142, "I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; **no man cared for my soul**. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal

bountifully with me.”

So, here was David, who felt that **no man cared for his soul** and poured out his heart to God, asking for God’s help. He took refuge hiding in a cave from the wrath of Saul when he uttered these words.

No doubt today many people feel the same way on the streets and the highways. And remember that God and one are a majority. People we do business with sometimes commit suicide because they can’t stand the pressures of their work. They feel as though no one cares for their soul.

One of the greatest things of the Christian life is to be a soul winner for Jesus Christ. There are many descriptions of a child of God by name in the Bible, such as “a disciple, a saint,” all meaning a child of God, a Christian. Remember now that a Christian means to follow Christ, and you can’t say the word Christian without saying Christ. To be a follower of Christ means that we must follow Christ, in his footsteps.

In Philippians 2: 9-12 it says, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Paul declared in Galatians, the 6th chapter, beginning with the 14th verse, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” So Paul felt that he was cut off from the world because he was crucified in Christ Jesus or, in other words, he had been cut off from the world by being in Christ and he said he would glory only in Christ Jesus our Lord, The Lord Jesus Christ. So, we need to learn to glorify the Lord of our salvation. We, as Christians, then should care for the souls of others, because Christ did.

In Romans, the 14th chapter, in the 11th verse, “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” That is a

plain statement from Paul the apostle to Jesus Christ on what's going to happen to us in the end. But, now, remember that somebody does care for our souls. Jesus died for that soul, and the soul involves a whole lot. A conviction of existence is necessary for us to save our soul.

I just talked to a friend of mine today over the phone. He lives in Rogers, Arkansas, and I have been trying for some time to get him to accept the gospel. He refused me again this day—said he wasn't ready yet. I'll warrant you that he has insurance on everything he owns, on everything he owns but his soul. He has no insurance on that, and no one has any insurance on their soul when they are out of Christ. The cheapest insurance that we can buy is the salvation of our soul, and it is all in Jesus Christ our Lord. And it means something for us to wear the name "Christian." Some times my brethren make a mistake by talking about erring Christians. There are no erring Christians. When we quit living the Christian life we are erring children of God. We are no longer worthy to wear the name Christian when we don't live the Christian life.

So, we need, again, to have a deep conviction for the soul in our walk of life, and this walk of life is because of faith. We look to things unseen. And so man is a soul. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Gen. 2:7

We have a soul and a body. We only see the body. We think a lot of our body. We do most everything to preserve this body and to feed it and care for it. What are we doing for our soul? We must have a deep conviction, as we mentioned before, of the value of the soul before we are going to save it. We should realize and think of what Jesus said, "What would it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul." We would have no trouble then making up our minds. Our soul is worth that—if we want to put an insurance on it. And we can have that insurance by simply obeying the gospel of Christ.

Now then, think about the value of the world. I preached this sermon one time in Wichita, Kansas and used

the illustration of Sedgwick County. That's where Wichita is. I said, "What is the value of Sedgwick County in the State of Kansas? What's the value of the counties that we live in today?" Whoever reads this book and wherever you are, what is the value of the county? Well, this county is just a speck in this world, and Jesus contended that our soul is worth more than the whole world and that Jesus died to save it. Satan realizes its value and he leaves no stones unturned to try to get us to live for him. We are constantly exposed to sin, but in Ezekiel it says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Ezk. 18:20. But in Mat. 4:3, after Jesus had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights and he was very hungry, it says that Satan came to him and said to him, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Now there he was lying to Jesus. He said "if thou be," tempting him to prove that he was the Son of God. Did Satan know that he was the son of God? Of course he did, but he was tempting him by telling him to **prove** that he was the Son of God.

And what did Jesus tell him? That man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that **proceedeth** out of the mouth of God. And after he had tempted him three times Jesus told him, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Then Satan went away and left him alone.

Do we really believe that death is a separation? What about physical death? Do we really believe that death is a spiritual separation from God and all redeemed of the earth? Well, if we don't we ought to. The soul doesn't die. We must believe. There are many signs along the way. The physical body dies. We need to view the soul as Burbank. He believed that every weed and flower was an edible plant. Every soul that we see on the street is a prospect. Our brain—our center of intelligence—guides our body. Our body is a real machine. It is a mechanical machine. It

works automatically. We can talk, we move our hands, we walk by the center of our intelligence, our brain guiding us and sending our nerve centers out. Do you realize that we have approximately six miles of blood veins and nerve centers in our body? When some of these nerve centers are cut off, our body doesn't function right. They have to guide our hands, our speech and everything from that center of intelligence. It has to send it out. People have thought they were awfully smart, but they found out lately that they don't know what makes the brain work. They know that the brain works, but they don't know what makes it work. Well, I believe that in this case I am a little smarter than they are, because God simply makes it work. If God hadn't made it to work, it wouldn't have worked. We don't know anything about it except what God has told us. So, I don't think I'm smart, but I believe I know that the reason it works is because God makes it to work, and what makes it work we do not know except that, and if that isn't the answer for it, we don't have any answers. God placed the center of our intelligence in our minds, in our brain. This obligation—and I want us to remember this—to take care of our body and our soul is laid upon whom? Has God given the work to the world? He has not! The gospel will change the sinner into a saint if he will believe in the gospel. The world couldn't if it wanted to. It doesn't have the necessary equipment—the gospel of Christ. The world doesn't care anything about the gospel of Christ until they are converted to Christ, but the gospel of Christ is the power of God to save.

Rom. 1:16 says, "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. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." So we walk not by sight but by faith. But the faith he is talking about here is the faith of the gospel of Jesus Christ, faith to faith—our faith coupled with a system of faith which is the gospel. We can know then, according to Rom. 8:16, that we are a child of God. So the gospel then is placed in earthen

vessels, II Cor. 4:7

In the church, where is the law that governs us today? Well, let's read over in Ephesians, the 3rd chapter, where Paul said, "I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." Now then, notice carefully, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Faither of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

Now that just settles it forever that it is the obligation of the church and it is the eternal purpose of God that the church would make known the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. So, it is laid squarely upon our shoulders as members of the body of God to preach the gospel to every soul that will listen. It's not just for preachers and the elders only. It is for everyone—every member of the church—to be willing to help and preach the gospel.

Now, then, we ask a question: Am I my brother's keeper? Who asked that question the first time? When Cain had slain his brother, Abel, and God came down and talked to him and asked him where he was and where Abel was, and so forth, Cain said to him, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Well, we are our brother's keeper. I am my brother's keeper because that is the way God intended for it to be. Yes, we are.

We need to consider the four-fold growth of Jesus. Luke 2:52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." And at the age of 12

when he had been lost among the crowds as he was on the way back home from Jerusalem where he had been to worship, his mother and father found him. They asked him why he had done this to them? He said, "wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" The mother and the father were very much concerned about him.

In II Pet. 3:18 it says for us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The only way that we can grow in the favor of God is to grow in the knowledge of God. We use the wisdom that God has given us to collect all the knowledge that we can. The only way that we can acquire that knowledge is to study God's word. It's a great evil among us for anyone to be careless about our souls, to be careless about our business affairs of this world. You see people driving on the road; they drive around a curve fast, and you know what happens. There is hardly a day goes by in the Ozarks that some one is not killed because they drove carelessly and drove around and paid no attention to the signs along the road. They drive too fast and run off into the hills and hollows and kill themselves. So this evil of carelessness is cruel. Gal. 6:7-8 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Now then, so many times people are more concerned about a dumb animal. But what about our friends? Are we concerned about them? Do we speak to them about their souls and invite them to the service of the Lord, invite them to sit down and study with us?

One time several years ago, one of the elders of the church at West Union, Missouri, his wife and my wife and I were out driving around Sarcoxie, Missouri, looking at the peony fields. Along by the side of the road—almost in the road—was a beautiful little dog. That little dog had been hit by a car. It was bleeding at the mouth. We stopped and laid the little fellow up on the bank to keep another car from coming along and smashing it into bits. Now, we cared for

that little dog. We felt sorry about it being hit and hurt. Now if we will stop and take time to take care of a little injured dog and lay it up where the cars won't smash it, why don't we care for the soul of somebody else? Now let me tell you something, someone along the line some where cared for our soul or we wouldn't be members of the body of Christ.

A few years ago, if you will allow me to give you a first hand experience, I was in Phoenix, Arizona. My wife's brother who runs a funeral home there made a statement to me like this, "Do you want to preach a funeral some of these days?" Well that seemed like an odd statement to me, and I replied, "What do you mean? Do you think for sure that someone is going to die?" And he said, "No, not that." He continued, "We have an Indian here that we have had around for several days. We couldn't find any one to claim him. We made a call to California and other places there and yonder, but we couldn't find anyone to claim his body. We want to have a funeral for him." Well, the Indian had lived up in Gila Bend, Arizona, in the mountains—had a mining claim up there. There were some people that ran a little store in the mountains, a man, his wife and a hired girl. Finally, they came down to Phoenix to have the funeral service for that man. So, my brother-in-law wanted me to preach the sermon. When I visited with the people, I said, "What do you want me to do? What kind of a funeral service do you want?" They said, "We want a complete funeral service for this man." Well, of all the sad things that I ever had to do in my life, it was to preach that funeral service. There he lay before me in the casket...a man and his wife and a hired girl and one funeral director to preach that sermon to. No man cared for his body, and no man cared for his soul. I guess that is the way David felt when he was hiding in the cave from Saul.

But someone does care for our souls. These people cared for his soul and cared for his body, and I cared for him, and God and Christ cared. It is criminal to be careless.

In Ezek. 33:7,8,11 it tells us that we should warn our friends and our neighbors that our souls will be recalled. If

we warn them and they don't heed, then we have delivered our souls from them. So, we should be careful. We should take every opportunity in the world to teach someone the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God might recall our souls, and it would sure be dangerous to be undone and out of relationship with God and Christ. We need to know what to do to be saved.

Now in Luke 12:16-21 we have the story about a rich man. At least God counted him to be rich. I do not know how much of this world's worth a man has to have to be considered rich in the eyes of God. Here is the story, and I will read it to you as nearly as I can directly as it is in the Bible, "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do (and I want you to know it is a personal pronoun..."I"...what he said he would do..."I" will do) because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods." He never took God into consideration at all. "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Jesus told us in Mat. 6:19, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." So it is necessary for us to lay up treasures in heaven. The only way that we can lay up treasures in heaven is to send them on. We can't take them with us when we die and leave this world. Anything we possess we are going to leave behind. Someone else will have charge of it from then on. We are only stewards here in this world. We are stewards of whatever we may possess in a worldly

nature, but we are stewards also of our soul and the souls of others. We cannot be like Christ if we don't care for our soul, because Christ cares. How much did he care? He cared enough to die on the cross for us. When you were saved, did you not want to see others saved? I am sure that we did. When we obey the gospel we are anxious to help someone else. Have we lost our zeal? Most people do. But that's wrong. We should keep our zeal until the end of time comes, until our end of time comes.

But what about the early church? He said they went everywhere preaching the word. That's what they did. They were scattered and persecuted, and they went everywhere preaching the word. Do we think that our labors are in vain in the Lord? I Cor. 15:58 says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." The work that God has given us to do—the labors he has given us to do—is something that's not going to be in vain. We are going to get paid for it at the end of the way. We are going to get paid for it in this world because we have many things, many blessings, spiritual blessings, here to enjoy. We have the fellowship of our brethren on the first day of the week and any other time that we might meet—any time that we meet and visit with our friends and neighbors and have dinner together with them. It is a great blessing to be with our loved ones and our friends.

In John 15:12 it says, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Rev. 3:14-20 says "And unto the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold or not: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art

wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me.”

So Jesus was right with his search of the Laodicean church. They ought to open their hearts and let him come back in. “Repent,” he says. Now who in the world likes lukewarm coffee or lukewarm water, or lukewarm anything? We either want it hot or we want it cold. If it’s anything we are going to drink, at least we want it that way. So God said because we were lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, he would spew us out of his mouth. Now the reason he doesn’t want us lukewarm is because lukewarm Christians are those that sit on the outside, and they are called hypocrites. And, generally, that’s about the way they act. They just act like they are serving the Lord. And it’s such a painful duty for them to do that and God will spew them out of his mouth. So we ought to be hot or we ought to be cold. We ought to do all that we can while the time and opportunity is presented to us so God will not spew us out of his mouth. It’s nauseating for us to be lukewarm. For those who act this way are just out. We ought to say we’re out. Then no one looks at us and calls us a hypocrite.

Paul said to those whom he had taught, “they are my crown and my joy.” I remember the song...“When in the better land, before the bar we stand, how deeply grieved our souls will be, if any lost one there should cry in deep despair, you never mentioned Him to me.”

Another thing I might point out to us is to care for others. If we care for others, they will care for us. At least that’s the general rule that they will. We should take an inventory every day. Have we done all that we can do? I remember a brother used to say when he laid down at

night, put his head on the pillow, he said, "Lord, have I done enough today?" Don't be afraid that we are going to do too much in the Master's vineyards, because somebody cares and we don't have to be like David. Somebody cares for our soul. We don't have to cry out, "No man careth for my soul." For Jesus cares, and God cares, and I care, and Paul cared, and many others cared.

You remember when Paul preached to Felix about the judgment to come, Felix said, "when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." And King Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," when Paul was preaching to him about the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. **Almost.** Do you remember the song "Almost Persuaded?" Almost, but not altogether.

Friends, we don't want to be *almost* persuaded. We want to be altogether persuaded and believe and have faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ that we might have all our past sins forgiven and live the Christian life and then try to save souls the very best we can.

Remember, if we are lost, Christ died in vain. Do we want to be a Christian and a Christian only? Well you can, even this very day, when you read this book. By faith in Christ, by confessing him with your mouth and being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for the remission of your sins. You just can't do any better than that.

Turn to Him in repentance and be baptized today. If you are an erring child of God come back and pray to God for your salvation.

Remember God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right—the doctrines of men won't satisfy God.

CHAPTER IX

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Good morning America. This is a good morning. This is November 12, 1977. This is another one of my favorite sermons that has been preached many times through the years: "The Second Coming of Christ."

Now at this time of year we return into a period that we call winter. Everything is preparing for winter. The leaves have gone off the trees and most of the plant life is dead. They'll have to lay dormant for a certain time, but we ask the question, "When spring comes will they come back?" They certainly will. If God permits time to go on until spring comes, these trees will bring forth their leaves; the flowers will bring forth their seeds and we can plant our crops and raise crops again. So we can have the same assurance that when we die and our bodies are placed in the Mother Earth, that some of these days Jesus is coming back and then we will be resurrected to have a new place in Christ. We have a new life in this world spiritually, but we'll have a new life and we'll never die again.

John 5:28-29 says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

It said, "Marvel not at this"—don't be concerned but what this will happen. There is an old song they sing "Glory For Me." I think that's a wonderful song "Glory For Me." There's a lot more to that, but I don't recall right now. But any how, it's a song that gives us a lot of satisfaction that there'll be glory for us when Jesus comes back provided we are prepared to meet him.

In I Cor. 15:51 Paul told the brethren, "Behold, I shew you a mystery....we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye..." And he goes on to tell us that "this corruptible (body) must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." And death will be swallowed up in victory. So we see then when Jesus comes back this will be the end of time as far as this world is concerned. He is going to speak this world out of existence and we are talking about the second coming of Christ.

Heb. 9:28 says, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

So Jesus is coming back unto salvation for us. That's eternal salvation we're talking about.

In II Tim. 2:10 Paul says, "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." So we are talking today about the eternal salvation we'll have when Jesus comes back.

Now how do we know that Jesus is coming back? Well of course we have to turn to the Bible to find out. It plainly and specifically on many occasions tells us he will. John 14:1,2,3 says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Now then that is a great consolation that after Jesus comes back there are going to be plenty of mansions in heaven for everyone. Heaven is large enough to hold everyone that wants to be saved. Just like the church here on earth is large enough to hold every sinner that wants to come into it. It was built for a universal church and heaven is built for all that want to go to heaven and prepare themselves here. This earth is just a school time of eternity, preparing us to go to heaven in the after while; live as God would have us to live; that we might be prepared. And heaven then is a prepared place for a pre-

pared people.

Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." And so it is a prepared place for a prepared people.

Now the angels of heaven said so and we turn to Acts, the first chapter, and we find the reading like this—reading to you from the first chapter of Acts, beginning at the 7th verse. "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." So we don't have to worry about the fact that Jesus is coming back because here the men in white apparel were sent down with messages from God to tell these disciples that were with him the fact that Jesus had gone to heaven and they were wondering what they were going to do. But anyhow, they told them he'll come back in like manner, so as he went up in the clouds, he'll come back in the clouds. Now this should be a comfort to all. Jesus is going to come back.

Sometimes we hear about the Jews going to Jerusalem, gathering over there for the great kingdom that God is going to set up on earth, which is just as far from the truth as the East is from the West. Of course, there will always be Jews going back and forth to Jerusalem just like people from Missouri go to California and back. And they will do that to the end of time. That's no indication whatever that Jesus is going to come back and set up any kingdom on earth because he simply is not going to do that. Now then the apostle said so in I Thes. 4:16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a

shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." Rise first from what? Well, he says we that remain and are alive shall be caught up in the air to meet him in the clouds.

Friends, we that are dead in Christ today will not prevent those when Jesus comes back. We'll be resurrected and we'll all be caught up in the air to meet the Lord. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." The dead in Christ shall rise first before Jesus takes every one back to heaven.

How will he come? You ask that question. The answer is simple. As the angel said, as he went away he will come again. He went up in the cloud; he'll come back in the cloud.

Will he come in glory? Mat. 16:27 says, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." So he's coming back then for a specific purpose—to reward every man according to his works. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." So that's what he's coming back to reward us for.

Have we made that confession today that we believe in our heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Are we ashamed of Him? Luke 9:26 "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." Now friends, we'd better not be ashamed of him here because if we are, he'll be ashamed of us when he comes back.

Will we know when he is coming? We will not. Then the question, will he come unexpectedly? He certainly will. Mat. 24:42 says, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Sometimes I think that he might come on the first day of the week, but that is just a matter of opinion. No one knows. I don't know. I don't claim to know. But I thought there are so many things that happen on the first day of the week, He might come on the first day of the week and find a lot of my brethren out somewhere fishing. That would just be awful bad if he did. I hope it won't come out that way but who knows, it may. Of

course, everybody is not going to be saved.

And now we return again to II Pet. 3:9-10 and we have this statement from the apostle Peter, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise,...but is longsuffering to us...not willing that any should perish, but...all...come to repentance." Why? "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." That's the one we want to look for. That's the one we want to be ready for.

Then will He come without sin? Heb. 9:28, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Of course he's going to come without sin. He never sinned in the first place!

Is he going to come with the angels? Well let's see if he is. II Thes. 1:7-9, Paul said, "...to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be... (separated)...from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." So we can find out what's going to happen. He's going to come with his holy angels; he's going to gather from the four winds of the world and then we find out in Mat. 24:31 that that is so. "...he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Now then elect means chosen. So he says he's going to come back and gather every one all over the world and of course the Revelation letter said he's

going to come and the dead in the sea are going to be gathered up. Everyone is going to be gathered up.

In I Pet. 1:22-23, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." So friends you can depend upon the word of God. It lives and abides for ever and there is no way in the world we can escape that conclusion. It is the word of God. He's going to come and gather out of his kingdom all those that offend and those that do iniquity. And he's going to come back to judge the world of righteousness for that person who is obeying. We're given the assurance that he'll raise all men from the dead.

Then will he come to resurrect? II Thes. 1:4 and 10 read like this, "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

Now here is some more of Paul's writing to the Thessalonian brethren: I Thes. 4, beginning with the 14th verse, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord

himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." I don't know how much more comfort we could give to one that has lost a loved one than to tell them that Jesus is going to come back and he'll bring that one with him if he happens to come back when we are living. And if we're all just and faithful, we'll be caught up in the air to meet the Lord.

Now then, coming back, because he's going to judge the world. Acts 17:31, "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." And again I'll read to you what I read awhile ago - to take "vengeance on them that know not God and...obey not the gospel..." Take vengeance on everyone? No. To reward everyone? Yes. Will he reward everyone? Mat. 16:27, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." So I want to suggest that we ought to be careful what our works are and the works of God are all righteous commandments. Whatever we do that God tells us to do, why then that's where we are.

Now some people claim that we are saved by faith only, but faith is a work. John 6:28-29 says they came to him asking, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" And Jesus said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." So if we think it is not a work of God to believe on Jesus, we don't believe the Bible because Jesus said himself and I just quoted to you, that it was the works of God. Well if it's the work of God to believe, then it's the work of God to repent; it's a work of God to confess; it's a work of God to be baptized.

Some people think that we as members of the church, of the body of Christ, are trying to work our way to heaven.

Friends, these things that God has commanded us to do are not our works—we didn't devise those ideas. God didn't ask me or anyone else what to do—what we wanted for a plan of salvation—or what we could do. He simply set it out to us and everything that he told us to do is the works of God. It is not our works. And then of course, Jesus is coming back to separate. In Mat. 25 we have this statement (when Jesus tells us about that great judgement day): verse 31, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

So friends, we don't want to be afraid to feed those that are in need and help those that are sick.

Continuing with verse 41, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison and did not minister

unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Friends, which are we going to be: a goat or a sheep? Well I want to be a sheep myself. I'll tell you that for sure.

So let's see what else we can find now. He's coming to separate. Mat. 25:31-35, and I've already read that to us. He's coming to separate the good from the bad. That's all there is to separate. Not only will he separate, he'll receive his people. John 14:3 says, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." So he's coming back to receive his people. Peter wrote us a lot of consolation on this. Christ is coming back not only to receive but to crown.

In I Pet. 5:4, "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Now that's the crown that I'm looking for—its the one that fadeth not away. Soon the time will come and we need to be qualified and ready to go. The end of the journey means a crown. Paul said at the close of life, "...I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

We're talking about Jesus coming back the second time. When Jesus comes back the second time there'll be no chance for us to get ready to meet him in the air, but we're going to have to meet him just as we are. So he's coming back then to give us a crown of righteousness that fadeth not away.

One time a good friend of mine said that he'd give me a new hat if I ever showed him where we could be saved—that all righteous people were going to heaven. That just 44,000 were going to heaven and if you read the Bible you would find out they were already redeemed from the earth. But then I turned to I Pet. 1:4 where it says

there is reserved for us "...an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

What shall we do until Jesus comes back? Well we can show our faith in him by being baptized into him (Gal. 3:27). We can put on Christ.

Then James tells us we can be patient. James 5:7-8, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain."

Verse 8 says, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Every day in this life of ours we are one day closer than we were the day before. So Jesus is coming without sin and he's coming to reward every one according to their works. And we need to be careful that we have been working in the Master's vineyard. Now, lets see about this work. Phil. 2:12, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Now here is a verse of scripture that a lot of people get mixed up; they mix this up with an alien sinner. They have him down praying for salvation. Now when Paul was writing to Christians, he said for the Christian to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." He wasn't talking to an alien sinner, he was talking to us as children of God. So Jesus' coming back to us is an individual matter.

In John 9:4, Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." Yes, God worked, Christ worked, the Holy Spirit works and they still work. They don't have to go to sleep. They are on the throne watching over this world and keeping it in store with the power of God's word. II Pet. 3:7

Keep his commandments, John 14:15 (so we can keep his commandments). It says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Now why does anyone say that they love the Lord Jesus Christ and then refuse to keep his com-

mandments? Well they just simply do not. They do not love the Lord. Do we keep his commandments when we fail to obey him? We do not. If we don't keep his commandments, will we be happy to see him? Friends, we will not. In Rev. 22:14 it says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." So we have the promise here that if we do his commandments we can enter into the gates, into the city. He's talking about that celestial city where there is no sun, no night. It's all light and God giveth it light. We don't need the sun nor the moon nor anything of that kind up there. God's going to give it light.

Will we welcome him back? Heb. 5:8-9 says, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

Can we avoid him today? Mat. 7:21 tells us, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

What do we get for all this while on earth? Well, we have all the spiritual blessings that are in Christ Jesus. We have the fellowship of all our brethren throughout the world—they're our household wherever they be, whether they're in Chicago or in Florida, California or wherever. But we have the promise then that after we have completed our life here on earth—and I am sure it won't be long till mine will be completed—then what am I looking forward to when I cross over that chilly waters of death? David says, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

So, like the old song we sing "I Won't Have to Cross Jordan Alone," we have the assurance that Jesus will be with us. I've stood by the bedside of many of my friends and I've held their hand and I've read the Bible to them and I've prayed for them, but I could not go with them across that great divide. It's up to Jesus to do that.

I never will forget one time a dear old sister was way up about 97 years old and I drove about 40 or 50 miles to go down and read the Bible to her and pray for her. She said, "Bro. Hancock, I've got a good home here, but I've got a better one on the other side." I don't know how much better we could die in the faith of the Lord than that—knowing that we'll have a better home on the other side. Regardless of what we have here on earth, we'll have a better one over there. Paul told the Philippian brethren it was far better on the other side.

Now I want to read about the great judgment scene again. Mat. 24:40 says there will be two in the field; one shall be taken and the other one shall be left. There'll be two at the mill; one shall be taken and the other one left. Which one are we going to be? Do we want to obey him and be ready to go with him? Well I certainly do.

In Mat. 11:28 Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Friend I don't see any rest for our souls outside of Christ. If I didn't believe with all of my heart that I was in Christ and living a Christian life, I couldn't lay down and sleep at all. I don't sleep very good any way. Friends come this very moment and give me your hand and God your heart. Obey him. Live the Christian life and go home to bask in the sunshine of God's eternal love. That's what we offer you and that's what's going to happen at the second coming of Christ. The thing about it is for us to be ready because Jesus is coming back. I have given you scripture after scripture here to show you that Jesus is coming back. We do not know the hour, but we do know he's coming back. So the thing for us to do is to be ready for him when he comes.

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER X

FOR WHAT SHOULD A SINNER PRAY?

This is a good morning.

Friends, this is November the 11th, 1977. This is a sermon that I preached many times through the years, "For What Should a Sinner Pray?"

This seems to be a badly misunderstood subject. They have sinners praying for salvation but it's not for the alien sinner to pray. Prayer is for a child of God.

There are two kinds of sinners. There's an alien sinner and an erring child of God. Paul said in the third chapter of Romans, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

So, we've all sinned. We have all come short of the glory of God, whether we are an alien sinner or an erring child of God.

What is sin? Sin is a transgression of the law. I John 3:4, "Whoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Now somebody says, "What law?" Well whatever law we live under. The laws of God. And if we lived under the Mosaical Age, we'd be accountable for that. If we live in today's era, which is the era we call the Christian dispensation—or under Christ—then it's the law of Christ.

In I Cor. 15:22 it says, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." So we see here that we all die because of the transgression of Adam almost 6,000 years ago. Death is still in the land and we must die sooner or later physically. But... "God so loved the world that he

gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." So God made provision for us to have salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

And the Word of God tells us something about how powerful the Word of God is. Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged 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." There is no way of escaping the word of God. It's living and active and sharper than anything. And when we listen to it—if we have any faith in the world—it'll cause us to be pricked in the heart as it was on the day of Pentecost, and we'll want to know further what to do to be saved.

Now then, what should a sinner pray for? Should he pray for God? No. He prays to God. Can he pray for reconciliation? No. To Christ? Do we pray for Christ? No. We pray to God through Christ. Col. 3:17 says, "...whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus (Christ), giving thanks to...the Father by him (Christ)."

Now we have this statement again that we've used in other sermons. It says, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." So there is no use of us praying to God to send reconciliation down. He's already sent his Son to die on the cross. He's already paid that great and supreme penalty. All we have to do is to

be reconciled to Him and He reconciles us through His Word. That's why the word is living and active and sharper than a two-edged sword.

John 9:31 is another scripture that's a bone of contention. The blind man had received his sight, and people questioned how it was and accused him of being a sinner. They also said the one who healed him was a sinner. He says, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." Some will say that this blind man wasn't inspired. No, he was not inspired, but John (who wrote the narrative for us) was inspired. And it is just as much the truth as if he was directly inspired like the apostles and some others that wrote the Bible. It was an inspired writing and all scriptures are given by the inspiration of God. So is John 9:31 where he says, "...we know that God heareth not sinners." That means a person out in the world has no business getting down on his knees and praying for God to come down and reconcile him or take his sins away when we have the gospel of Christ handed to us and the love of God handed to us and we can have that salvation by simple obedience through the plain, simple gospel—the plain teaching of God's Word. God won't hear a child in sin.

Now back in the long ago in Proverbs 28:9, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination." So the alien sinner's prayers are an abomination in the sight of God. And if a child of God turns away and won't hear the law and won't come back humbly and obey it and pray to God to forgive him, then he won't hear his prayer.

Then some come along and they pray for the Holy Spirit to come down and save them. The Holy Spirit is just as much a being as God and Christ. He's the third one in the God-head trinity. He's the one that brought the message to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. He guided the old prophets into the message that they were to speak and prophesy of the coming of Christ and he guided the Old Testament and the New. That was the part that he had to play in the God-head trinity. There are three—God, the

Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit.

Now then in Mark 16:15-16 he had Mark to say, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel," and that was what Jesus required but the Holy Spirit told them to tell it. He told them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Old Brother Keeble was a black man, and some people were so prejudiced against the blacks that they thought they didn't have any salvation—that they weren't even human beings. But Brother Keeble answered them this way, he said, "I am a creature anyway." So of course, he's just as much a soul and a spirit as any other man. Black, white, red, yellow—it makes no difference about the color in the eyes of God. Bro. Keeble answered well when he said, "I's a creature anyway." So each and every human being is a creature of God.

Now then, let's see some things that happened. You remember Cornelius in the 10th chapter of Acts was a very good man—a very religious man; one that feared God and had favor among all the people—the Jews and everyone else—and he prayed to God always. An angel appeared to him and said, "thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:...he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." Now if there is any direct operation of the Holy Spirit or direct operation of angels on people, this would have been a good place for it—this was after the gospel was preached on the day of Pentecost and we were under the new dispensation in which we live. It will last until the time that Jesus comes back. There will be no other dispensation that we can carry over into and be saved under—we can't reject this one and be saved under another. But what did the angel tell Cornelius? He told him to send over there and get a man to come. Why? Because God had placed the gospel in the earthen vessels. Simon came over and preached the gospel to Cornelius and he and his house accepted, believing.

One other thing that stands out in my mind about

Cornelius. When Peter came over there he said, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." Now whenever we have our disposition of mind like Cornelius and are willing to listen to the word of God—to listen to all things of God—then we're willing to be saved. And we can be saved by simply accepting the word of God and believing it, obeying it, and then living by it and die to go to heaven.

If there is any time on earth for God to lay away his law it would be when Christ appeared to Saul. Christ came back to Saul that Saul might look upon him, but the purpose of him looking upon him was so he could be an apostle. He could not be an apostle—could not qualify as an apostle—unless he had seen Christ; Paul saw Christ out of due season. He said so himself on other occasions. But Christ didn't tell him what to do and then somebody preaches the wrong interpretation of this and says that Christ came and knocked Saul down. Christ didn't knock Saul down—Saul fell down to the ground in humbleness. That's what the scripture says.

What did Christ tell Saul to do? He told him to go into Damascus, where it would be told him what he must do. Ananias came in and told Paul to arise and be baptized, to wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Now that's the only way we can get rid of our sins: by simple obedience, being baptized into Christ where salvation is. Then God will wash away our sins in the blood of Christ. That is how we come in contact with the blood of Christ and the death, burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ—baptism is the figure of that.

The spirit told Philip to go down and join himself to the chariot of the Ethiopian who had gone up to Jerusalem to worship. This man was the treasurer of the Queen of Ethiopia. On his way home he was reading Esaias, the prophet, about various things and the spirit told Philip to go and tell him. Why didn't the spirit tell him what to do to be saved? Because the gospel had been placed in the hands of earthen vessels. Philip was a minister of the gospel. The spirit told Philip to go down and meet this man—to get in

the chariot with him and tell him what to do. Philip asked the eunuch if he understood what he was reading and he asked how he could understand except some one guide him. Now here is a man preaching this gospel to the Ethiopian going on the way. And he preached unto him Jesus. The Bible says so. You can read it yourself if you want to—he preached unto him Jesus. And how did he preach unto him Jesus without telling him what to do to be saved? When he came to a certain water he said, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” And Philip said, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” They went down into the water and Philip baptized him and he came up out of the water (now that does away with sprinkling and pouring again—I have tried to point it out in all my sermons that God will not accept sprinkling and pouring for baptism. Baptism is a burial in water and it’s just as simple as A, B, C and no one can misunderstand it.)

We’re without excuse of any kind when we deny the very simple teachings of God. Here the Ethiopian went down into the water and Philip went down with him and baptized him and he came up out of the water and went on his way rejoicing. When did he rejoice? **After** he had been baptized.

The Ethiopian eunuch had been confused; he didn’t understand whether the prophet Esaias was talking about himself or some other man. Of course, the prophecy was about the coming of Christ, and Philip began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus. We can see and understand then that he told him what to do to be saved, otherwise he wouldn’t have known what to do. When he came to the water he said, “What doth hinder me to be baptized?” Like the eunuch, nothing will hinder us from being baptized today if we want to be baptized. Exactly like the Ethiopian, we can go down into the water to be buried with our Lord in Baptism, then raised up to walk the new life. If you don’t believe that, read the sixth chapter of Romans.

God wants all men to be saved. He wants every one to be saved. I'll prove it to you by II Peter 3:9. There are two classes of sinners in the world—the alien sinner and an erring child of God. To everyone: God “is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, (if we) all...come to repentance.” God doesn't want either class of sinners to be lost. He stands with outstretched arms and is long suffering.

Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke 19:10, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” I don't know how in the world you can make any scripture any plainer than that.

Behold the spirit revealed a message: how we are saved. In Luke 24, beginning with verse 44, “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” So any salvation that we try to be saved with today that comes before the day of Pentecost or after that is too early or too late.

In John 16:5 he starts off like this: “But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth, It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye

cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." So the Holy Spirit, without any doubt or argument in any way, shape or form, was to reveal unto them the message to bring to their memory. It was to be a comforter to them, and could guide them in all truth; bringing to their memory the things that Jesus taught them. I can well understand that they couldn't remember all that Jesus taught about the kingdom and the new law during the three and a half years he was with them.

Now if you doubt this came to pass, read the second chapter of Acts. You will find it all came together on the day of Pentecost—the Holy Spirit appeared unto them and sat on them like cloven tongues—appeared unto them all. And they all spake in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. They spoke in cloven tongues—that means forked tongues. In other words, it went out both ways. There were 12 people there speaking to 17 different nationalities and everyone heard them in their own language.

Now another thing that a sinner cannot pray for is for God to love him, because God has already loved us. John told us in John 3:16 that "God so loved the world." Now we have heard the verse over and over, we know what it says. And you know what the 17th verse says if you've read the sermon previous to this one.

Then, another thing that the sinner cannot pray for is grace. Titus 2:11-12, "For the grace of God (now just think about this—the grace of God and that grace means love) that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

Then we can't pray for light because the Psalm of David said in the long ago—119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." So we can't pray for light for the word of God is a lamp unto our feet and a

light unto our path. And another passage—Psalms 119:130—“The entrance of thy words giveth light.” Whenever we begin to open up an intelligent conversation within our mind or in other words our spiritual heart, and let the word of God come in, we don’t have any problem understanding. Because it is the light of the world, the word of God will save us if we’ll believe it and obey it.

I want you to go with me again to II Corinthians 5:17 and we’ll read some more verses. He has this to say, “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the **word** of reconciliation. Now then (after all that has happened) we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

No sense in us standing on the street corner and begging God to come down and be reconciled to us, for it plainly says that we are to be reconciled to God and he committed unto us the **word** of reconciliation.

Friend, no wonder we ought to turn to God’s word and throw all the doctrines and commandments of men out the window and study God’s word, believe it, obey it, live by it, and die by it. That way we can go to heaven to live with him throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

Now he says, “For he hath made him to be sin for us (that is Jesus Christ) who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. He’s manifested to us his Son, and he came and died on the cross because he loved us that much. Again he says, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” Now then let’s read a little farther. Can’t pray for understanding. Paul said in Eph. 3:4, “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the

sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.”

Now most of the people in America are Gentiles—a mixed race of people, but they are Gentiles and we are Gentiles in the eyes of God. At one time God selected the Jews as a special people, to keep the lineage for Christ to be born under—the tribe of Judah—and gave it the word “Jew.” So we have the Jews in the land today that reject Christ. But this is for everyone, as you read, “ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men.” They didn’t have that until the day of Pentecost was come, fully come; and in the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the twelve apostles stood up together and preached the gospel to those people there—thousands of them—on that day of Pentecost. And 3000 of them obeyed it that day and the Lord added them to the church. I can tell you for sure he didn’t make a mistake about what he added them to. There was no other church, just that one church that he had put in (set in order). He set the apostles in it and it took a miracle to do that to start. They had to have some way of starting it and God told him to set the apostles in the church and they were the nucleus of the church. Then the Lord went to adding to the church daily such as should be saved.

So then again we can’t pray for Christ to come because there is no use trying to get him to do that because he’s already come. And it’s silly to sit and pray for God to send Christ, the Holy Spirit or anyone else down to bring salvation to us. He’s already come and brought us salvation. So that’s things we can’t pray for—for Christ to come. He’s already come. Mat. 11:28 says, “Come unto me.” We can pray for people to accept the gospel and come unto Christ. That’s what he said. Revelation 3:20 says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.”

Whatever law we live under is the law that we’ll have to answer to. In Revelation it said that great day the books

were open—another book was open—and another was the Book of Life. And the books means the plurality of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Proverbs 28:9, Solomon said, “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” Now that’s an abomination in the eyes of God for alien sinners to get down and pray for God to send the Holy Spirit to come down and get hold of them by the hair of the head and shake them—some kind of something into them—and tell them that they are saved. It just doesn’t work that way. It’s a ridiculous idea.

One time we were talking to a man and he wanted to be real smart about it and he told a friend of mine and myself that he was saved at a possum hole. Can you imagine such stuff as that? Well, he just thought he was saved if he thought he was. I don’t think he ever believed he was saved—I think the only reason he wanted to say that was just that he wanted to have something smart to say. But that’s exactly what he said—he was saved down at the possum hole. When I saw him a few years later I asked him if he had been down to the possum hole anymore and he just laughed about it.

Now “the Spirit and the bride say come,” Rev. 22:17, “...whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” It’s all up to us. No use thinking that God’s going to do anything else for us. He’s done all he can do. He sent His Son to die for us. He died on the cross, went back to heaven to intercede for us, and he stands with outstretched arms and says, “Behold I stand at the door and knock.”

What is the spirit? What is the church? We can’t pray for conversion. Psalms 19:7 says, “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” Now James said (whosoever) “...looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

You can’t pray for faith because Romans 10:17 says, “...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” The only way we can have faith today in God and his word is to sit down and read it. We have the Bible, we

can go into almost any store we want to and buy it. We can't pray for salvation because the gospel brings us salvation. Paul said he wasn't ashamed of it in Romans 1:16, "...for it (the gospel) is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

So we can't pray for salvation because the gospel has been given to us and he tells us how to become a child of God. If you have faith you will obey the gospel and obtain salvation. If you **don't** have faith to obey, you can't have salvation.

I'd like to pose this question: How did we get into this world? We came into this world with a physical birth that God ordained: the reproduction of mankind, begotten of our father and mother and born of our mother, and we came forth from the greater. We didn't come forth from the lesser, and there is no exception. Everyone who is born into this world today is born into it exactly alike. Do you think you can change that? Oh I know some smart aleck says he might put the germs in a test tube and bring forth a man or a woman or a boy or girl, or baby, rather I should say. That's nonsense. It won't work. Well a new birth is just as firm as the way we got into the world. It's something that we do. John 3:5 says "Except a man be born again," that simply means one more time. We came forth (the word born means come forth), we came forth from our mother's womb. And therefore we grew up and now he says you must be born again "of water and of the Spirit."

Now what does it mean? It simply means that water is the element and the Spirit is the teacher. There's just no other way to figure it. It could not be any other way!

We can't pray for freedom from sin because in Romans 6:16 it says, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of

doctrine...Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

So we can't pray for freedom from sin because we've obeyed from the heart or can obey from the heart that form of doctrine—that form of teaching—and then being made free after we've been buried with our Lord in baptism and raised to walk a new life. People say they don't believe it but that doesn't change God's word one iota. It's going to stand at the judgment day. We're going to be judged by it. John 12:48. You have freedom from sin by purifying your souls in obeying the truth. I Peter 1:22, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

Now the word of God is living and active. It's going to live forever. We're going to be judged by it. And it's never going to go out of existence.

But how do we get into the body of Christ? Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth. Now Peter could have said “in obeying the gospel.” It would have meant exactly the same thing. He could have said, “obeying the system of faith.” It would have meant the same thing. The three words that are used are synonymous terms—the word truth, the word gospel and the word faith. Now in Acts 15:9, when Peter went up to Jerusalem to tell the people about the Gentiles, he said God put no difference between us and them, “purifying their hearts by faith.” He wasn't talking about the faith that's in Hebrews 11:6 where we are commanded to have faith in God. But “through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren.” Now then, “obeying the truth through the spirit (that is through the Spirit (that is through the teaching of the Spirit) unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.” I've always said if I could get my brethren to live and love one another with a pure heart fervently (that means sincerely, etc.) and if they'd do that we wouldn't have much bickering in the Church as we

have sometimes. But then he says, "being born again (and that simply means one more time), being born again (by the word of God) not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." We are going to have to be born of that if we're ever born again—by the Word of God. That's what the word of God tells us to do. There are no ifs, ands, buts, or maybes about it and no one can misunderstand it. If I can understand it, I know everybody else can. We can't help but understand there is something for us to do. There is no other way. On the other hand, we can't pray for religion. James 1:27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

One time Bro. Keeble was talking about people getting religion. He said that some Christian took a widow a lot of groceries and set them on the doorstep, then somebody slipped up and stole them. He said now they got religion, but they stole it. I think that's about as simple a way as we can explain it. We don't **get** religion, we **do** religion. And the only way we can get religion is to steal it, somebody else's. But that won't help us in our salvation. That just won't do us a bit of good in the world to come. Somebody asks, what about the Pharisees and the Sadducees? I want you to go with me over to Luke 18; let's see what we can find there.

"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Friends, I never have in my life time tried to exalt

myself one time. I've always said of my ability to preach the gospel: I had one talent and I was afraid to bury it. I do the very best I can and I'm doing the very best I can on this book.

But now there is another one of those bones of contention about the Pharisees that went up into the temple to pray. And somebody says, well now did not he go there and pray? Wasn't he a sinner? Of course he was a sinner. But you know what, these were children of God that were doing this (while the old law was in existence) and if they hadn't been children of God, they wouldn't have been allowed in the temple. Now one of them was humble and asked God to forgive him, a sinner. Of course he was a sinner, but God said he went down justified rather than the other. The Pharisee was self righteous (they were considered a self righteous people) and he stood and prayed thus with himself, telling God "I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." Now if we pray to God like that (telling him how good we are and trying to make Him conform His ways to our ways), we haven't humbled ourselves in His eyes and God will not hear that kind of a prayer. But if we humble ourselves and pray and let God do the exalting to us He will certainly do that.

Now back to John 9:31, "...we know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." Now who's he going to hear? The man that humbles himself and is willing to do God's will! This publican that went up, stood afar off, would not as much as lift up his eyes unto heaven. He was humble and smote upon his breast saying God be merciful to me a sinner. He admitted to God that he was a sinner and that's the only way we can get salvation—we get our salvation back in the favor of God by admitting that we are sinners. Do you want some more proof of that?

In I Peter 3:12 it says, "...the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." When we go away doing evil, God's eyes turn away from us.

Now there are definitely two classes of sinners: the one is an erring child of God and the other is an alien sinner that has never obeyed the gospel. Christ came into this world to bring us Christianity. He didn't come into the world to bring religion because the world was already full of religion, and you could just numerize any amount of religious people: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and whatever else you might find in the Bible.

James 5:19, talking about brethren, he says, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." So when we go to our brethren that are in sin and beg them to come back and they do come back, then their sins have been covered in the blood of Christ again. We've saved a soul from death and hidden a multitude of sins. Where? In the blood of Jesus Christ. In I John 2:1 it says, "My little children (I would)...that ye sin not. (But if any of you do sin you)...have an advocate with the Father (through) Jesus Christ the righteous." So here it is to children of God. "Let him know, that he (that)...converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death." Yes, let anyone know that.

Now then I want to turn over right quickly to what Paul says in the 4th chapter of Galatians, beginning with the 4th verse, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Friend, there is no other way that we can figure it. There it is just as plain as the nose on your face: we are an heir of God, through Christ, and he gives us the privilege of coming to him in prayer.

I think one of the highest exalted privileges that mankind could have is to go to the heavenly Father and

say, "Our Father which art in heaven." Remember, He can't be our Father unless we are his children. Then, if we are his children we are an heir according to the promise.

Romans 8:16 says "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

So we have the glorious liberty of being a child of God. There is just no other way that we can figure it. I know that's the gospel truth and I know when you read it you can't help but believe it. God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts and then he admonished us in Romans 12:1 "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Then it stands out to us in Matt. 7:13 where it says "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Now I want to tell you why people don't find it. They don't want to find it. They don't look for it. And do you know why they don't look for it? They are too busy in this world—cluttered up with everything. They could find the straight and narrow way if they wanted to, but they don't want to find it. They're just simply too busy in the world to take time to study God's word and find out what the

straight and narrow way is. And he said about the broad way: wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat. Now which gate are we going in? Are we going in the straight way and the narrow way that leadeth unto life, or are we going in at the broad way (going down with the world)? In the face of all this—His goodness—how can we turn Him down?

Aren't you willing to give up the doctrines and commandments of men today? Mat. 15:9 says, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Are you willing to give up the doctrines and commandments of men and turn to the Bible—read it, believe it and obey it? Jesus stands with outstretched arms and begs you to let Him in. If you'll open the door of your heart, he'll come in and sup with you and you with him.

Friends, we can be buried with the Lord in baptism. Remember the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and baptism is the picture of that. That's where we come in contact with the blood of Christ which saves us. Now I ask and beg of you today that you do that at the earliest convenience you have. Having faith in God, having faith in Christ, having faith in the gospel, turn to Him through repentance. Confess His name before men and be buried with Him in baptism, then raised to walk a new life. That is the new birth. That is being born again. No ifs, ands, maybes, or buts about it. There is no other way to be born again but to do that. We have to come forth from the greater—we can't come forth from the lesser. Born means to come forth, so we come forth from the waters of baptism—the watery grave—to walk a new life in Christ Jesus. It's just that simple and that plain. I beg of you today that you accept Him.

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER XI

INSURANCE ETERNAL

Revelation 22:14, Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Now, of course, John was writing to us about the eternal city, a city that God has prepared for us where there is no night, a place where we all want to go. Insurance plans in this world we are acquainted with, but there are too few who know of the eternal insurance plan.

Jesus asked a question in Mat. 16:26, "what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

In this life, we take out hospital insurance, crop insurance, insurance on our automobiles, on our homes, sometimes on our lives that leave an estate when we are gone, to clear ourselves and to bury us when we die. But what about taking out an insurance policy in an insurance company that never grows old? What about our souls? Now we are acquainted with all these insurance plans, but there are too few that know of the Eternal Insurance Plan.

The essential plan is that it is not a company—it is **the** company. Home office is in heaven.

Let me read to you from II Cor. 5. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." With this insurance policy if our tabernacle of this house were

dissolved, we have an insurance plan that will take us to heaven. It is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Now this is not something that is temporary—it is eternal.

Now let's consider this saying like we would a great insurance company in the United States. The branch offices of this eternal insurance plan are the local churches. John wrote to the seven churches of Asia. Now they weren't different kinds of churches, they were one and the same kind of church. They weren't all faithful to the Lord. Some of them had left, and gone with the teachings he had not given them. But there is no church that is **the** church unless it follows divine instruction.

Many churches are misrepresenting the truth of God's word. In Mat. 6:19 it says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." But many people lay up their treasures on earth depending upon that. We have the story of the rich man and Lazarus; and the man that was a good farmer that had lots of barns full and tore them down and built greater barns, or said he would.

Now this insurance company I'm talking to you about today is something that is not going broke. We don't have to worry about it going broke; its not like some of these insurance companies we have in America that go broke and we lose what we have put in them. In Eph. 3:10 it says, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

Now the authority of this church—this insurance company that we are talking about, this heavenly insurance—is of Jesus Christ. He is the head of it. There is no other head.

Mat. 28:18 says, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you

always, even unto the end of the world.” It’s been 1900 years since Jesus made that assertion and made that statement that he has all power. God has invested all the power in His Son, and told him to go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. That is the ceremony we use when we baptize people. That is the only time that God has commanded us to use the name of the trinity in anything that we do. Lots of times it says in the name of Christ, and somebody jumps off on the deep end of things and says it’s not necessary to use the Father and the Holy Spirit. But that is simply wrong. God didn’t have to say but one time how he wanted us to baptize people. He gave us the rules to go by and the ceremony that we use. I’ve read it to you just as it was: in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Now, since he had all the power on earth and in heaven he has the right to save his company or **the** church. In Mat. 16:18 he says “upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” If you want more about that, turn back and read Mat. 16:13-18.

Now, the date of the origin of this church was A.D. 33. In other words, that is when the insurance company was established. The church was established in A.D. 33, on the day of Pentecost; and you can read about it in the second chapter of Acts. Anytime before or after is too early or too late—that is when **the** church was established.

In Genesis it said everything would come after it’s kind and seed is within itself. So when we plant the word of God, the seed of the kingdom, it will bring forth a child of God. It will bring forth nothing more or nothing less. In Acts 2:1 the “place” was at Jerusalem; also this is verified in Luke 24:45-47. This is the ironclad proof of where the church started and what it was all about, reading to you from Luke 24:44:47, “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might

understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." So, this is a worldwide organization. Anywhere you take the gospel—it doesn't make any difference whether it's North America, South America, Asia or Africa—it has exactly the same effect on people and they can have the same salvation as when he preached it the first time. As the second chapter of Acts says, it was in the city of Jerusalem, that was the place it was to start. In Acts 2:16 he said, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." And the prophet Joel prophesied about what was going to come to pass in the last days, that their sons and daughters would prophesy, their young men would see visions, and their old men would dream dreams, and all things would come to pass. That has already come to pass now.

But in that same chapter we find after Peter preached among them all, he said the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved. If we go any farther than that, we've gone too far. How in the world could he add to something that didn't exist? He set the apostles in the church and some of the prophets in the beginning; it started with a miracle and he started adding people to it on the day of Pentecost. It's the Lord's business to add people to the church. It's not my business to vote on them, to tell them when they can come in or come out; I can't vote them out. They come into the church by obedience to the gospel and the Lord adds them to it.

Now with the company organized, we need some rules to govern it. We need a rule book, constitution or bylaws, and we have them. II Tim 3:16-17 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Now we are completely furnished unto good works, and all scripture is given by inspiration, therefore we need

nothing else. We need no creed, no books of any kind, just the Bible.

Just take the Bible and read it and follow it, and live by it and die by it. We can go to heaven on the promises contained in that book.

We have a complete rule book, the Bible, which has been handed down to us through the years. The church is to be governed by God's word, and the company's standing we need to know. First we need to know about the capital of this company.

The capital of the company is the unsearchable riches of Christ. All banks in the country are capitalized for so much; it may be capitalized for a million dollars. But we need no million in this church. It says unsearchable riches of Christ. Now let me read to you Eph. 3:8, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." So, that's the way it is capitalized; it's the unsearchable riches of Christ—it is capitalized in unsearchable riches.

It says in I Cor. 2:9, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," but these are revealed to us by the spirit. Now the Holy Spirit was a teacher on the day of Pentecost; it guided the apostles into the truth and it guided them to preach the word that God wanted preached. Read the second chapter of Acts if you doubt that in any way.

Again this capital is reserved in heaven. I'm reading to you from I Pet. 1:3-9, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith,

being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." God promised to save that soul for us and we need not worry about Him.

One time a man told me that only 44,000 were going to heaven and he would give me a new hat if I showed him where others were going to heaven. I turned and read him the very scriptures I've read to you. Do you know to this day that man is still alive, and that's probably been 20 years ago, but I never have gotten that new hat! Read above I Peter 1:4.

But Peter said it was a crown of life made up for us in heaven, and whosoever doeth the will of the Lord is going to be blessed with the inheritance in the afterwhile.

Now the liabilities of this company accepts all. It doesn't make any difference what the color of our hair is, whether we are black, red, yellow, or white; we're all one in the sight of God. Rev. 22:17 says, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." This company that we are talking about—the heavenly company—accepts all. John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." So we must believe in the Son of God. That's one of the first steps. Rom. 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Now we can have all these blessings we want. No other company will do that. We're always interested in surplus. In John 6:44-47, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." That's the only way we can come to the Father—by

learning. The only way we can have faith is by reading in God's word.

We are interested of course in the surplus of this company. It's all above asking. In Eph. 3:20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." I Pet. 1:22 says, "seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." That tells us that we have to be born again, that we are born again; and to be born again it means one more time. So all brethren that are born into the family of God are born in exactly the same way: by obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 3:5, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It simply means that the Spirit is the teacher and the water is the element. You can't come forth from the lesser, you have to come forth from the greater. The water's the element therefore we're buried in it. This burial is a type of the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Pouring a little water on somebody or sprinkling a little water on somebody and calling it baptism is just simply denying the word of God. And another thing while I'm at it, pouring water on babies is another thing that is denying the word of God. God plainly said, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. You have to be old enough to believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved.

Now I want to read to you again in Mark 10:28-38. We are always interested in the dividends that we have for this. Now: "Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospels, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands,

with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." So no one need think that they can live a Christian life without persecution. All that live godly in Jesus Christ let him glorify God on this behalf. We ought to glorify God when we are persecuted for being a Christian. In Mat. 11:28, Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Now what do we have in this land for obeying the gospel? We have brothers and sisters all over the world, for all are one in Christ Jesus. We're all born into the same family and we have all those spiritual blessings. But he says in the end we have eternal life. We have this fellowship with our brethren on earth: brethren and sisters and everyone that's a member of the body of Christ. In order to have this, we must have belief in Christ. John 8:24, Jesus says, "for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

In Acts 16:28 when the jailer was about to kill himself, Paul and Silas told him not to do himself any harm, "for we are all here." There had been an earthquake at midnight, and Paul and Silas had sung praises unto God in the middle of the night with their feet fast in the stocks. Can you imagine that? I remember one of our old gospel preachers saying that he could understand how they would pray, but he couldn't understand how they could be in that condition and sing praises unto God. This was at midnight. The jailer thought there was an earthquake and he thought that everything was lost so he was going to kill himself. But they told him, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." "What must I do to be saved?" he asked them. That is the greatest question to fall from the lips of mankind, the question: "What must I do to be saved?" They told him to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

How many times have I heard recently over the radio, or television, preachers preaching false doctrine, telling people that all they have to do is believe in the Lord Jesus

Christ and they can be saved there. One time one man told me that he was saved down in the woods at a possum hole. I never heard of such ridiculous things in my whole life! Rev. 22:17 says, "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

So, we have to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now let's continue with the reading Acts 16, verse 32 says, "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night (and remember that was the midnight hour), and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." Then they rejoiced in the Lord.

Now when do we find that rejoicing in the Lord in the Bible? We never find any rejoicing until people have obeyed the gospel; not until their sins have been washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ, and the Lord has then added them to the church. Remember then that this salvation takes place in the mind of God. It doesn't take place in our fields, or anything of that kind—it takes place in the mind of God. Luke 13:3 says, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." In Acts 17:30 it says, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Why? because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Now we have every assurance of Jesus Christ that he was raised from the dead. The same thing happens to us when we die to sin. We are baptized into his death. That's where he shed his blood and that's where we come in contact with his blood, then we are raised to walk in a new life.

So many times people discount baptism when it's a perfect picture of Christ's death, burial and resurrection from the dead. It's the only way we can get into Christ, Gal 3:27, I Cor. 12:13. Confessing Christ's name comes before our baptism, Rom. 10:9-10, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." I can't see anything

hard about such a simple and easy plan that God gave us.

You say, "Do you believe in heart-felt religion?" The answer is, "I certainly do." If we did not put our heart in it or believe from our heart or mind, we couldn't be saved, Heb. 11:6. It means to believe enough to obey Christ just as he obeyed the Father, Heb. 5:8-9.

Friends, this should be enough for this sermon. It just boils down to this: Jesus said, "He that believeth **and** is baptized shall be saved." Remember the conjunction "**And**" makes faith and baptism of equal rank. We can't be baptized unless we believe; we can't be saved without baptism.

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER XII

SEEING GOD THROUGH AN EYE OF FAITH

Good Morning America, good morning. This sermon was delivered September 26, 1976, Sunday morning, at Marionville, Mo., at the celebration of our 50th Wedding Anniversary. The title of this lesson is "Seeing God Through an Eye of Faith." In Isaiah 1:2 we have this statement, "Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath Spoken." I would like for us to take notice to who has spoken—the Lord has spoken. In all of the 26 years that I have endeavored to preach the gospel this has been the theme of every sermon I have ever preached: "**God has Spoken.**" It means for all of creation to listen. Let heaven listen.

I am not concerned today about what people say about what the Bible says; I am concerned about what God has spoken. Do you know why I am so concerned about what God has spoken? Well, let's read Timothy—Paul to Timothy—II Tim. 4:1-8. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a

crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

John 8:32, Jesus says that "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

In Rom. 1:16 Paul said, "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. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Now here we have our faith coupled with **the** faith; this equals salvation. Not only does truth equal the gospel but it equals the faith.

In Acts 15:9, Peter said to those people in Jerusalem after he had been down to the household of Cornelius, God "put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Now he wasn't talking about the faith that he records for us in Heb. 11:6, but he was talking about the system of faith. Therefore the system of faith, the gospel, the truth equal one and the same thing. It is the saving power of God to save those that believe.

Jude contends for the faith in Jude 3, saying, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Here Jude is talking to us about the system of faith—the same faith that Peter was using in Acts 15:9. God gave us the system of faith—the thing that will save our soul.

In Eph. 2:8-9 Paul said, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Now what was he talking about? He said we are saved through faith; in otherwords, a system of faith that God has given to us. Some people mistake this for the idea that this faith is the same as Heb. 11:6, but it is not. It is simply talking about the system of faith. God took the old law out of the way and Jesus nailed it to his cross and we have a new law and a

new system of faith. And that's what Paul was talking about; not the works of the old law. That is exactly what he meant.

Now if you think there is nothing for us to do, will you listen with me to the 10th verse of this same chapter. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Walk in what? In the commandments of God that are given to us under the new testament.

The old law had been taken out of the way and Paul was not talking about being saved by faith only; he was simply talking to us about the system of faith. We have to learn somewhere along the line to rightly divide the truth and not mix it up like a bunch of hash or something of that kind. We have to learn to rightly divide it.

If we don't learn to rightly divide it we're going to be in trouble at the judgment day. So when I have to stand before the judgment seat of God and when I stand before an audience, I have to contend for the one Lord, the one faith (or the one gospel), and the one baptism.

That one baptism is a burial in water. Nothing else will please God, so this idea of sprinkling with water or pouring some water on someone's head will not satisfy God.

That one baptism is for the remission of our past sins. It also puts us into Christ where we can put on Christ. Gal. 3:26-27 says "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Now we'll talk about that more later as we go on, but let's discuss here seeing God through an eye of faith. Why do I have to do this? John 12:48 says that "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

A few years ago the Russian's cosmonaut on return from outer space said he never saw any God and to him that was proof enough that there was no God. He didn't see God because God is not out there in outer space. I don't know where his home is and no one else knows. David said that only a fool has said in his heart that there is no

God.

Now the desire to see God is as old as man. We cannot see him with the naked eye. Why? John 4:24 says, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." In other words, God is a spiritual being. We are plainly told that no man has seen God.

John said that Jesus has seen the father, he came from the father, therefore he has seen the father. John 1:18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?" That same question is pertinent today to everyone that lives under the face of the sun. Who is Jesus Christ? I say that he is the Son of God. I believe sincerely with all of my heart. But again, we cannot see God in this world without seeing him through an eye of faith. II Cor. 5-7 says "we walk by faith, not by sight."

Acts 17:26 says God made all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. Now lets read it exactly: "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."

Now for us to think we can live in outer space is utterly nonsense. There is not a thing up there for us to live on. But the elements that are in the earth and on the earth and in the air that is surrounding the earth is where we have to live. That is where God ordained that our bounds would be. He has selected this and put our bounds and our habitation on the earth. Just read it in Acts 17:26.

So then we ask the questions: What is God like? How can we know what pleases God? How does God feel when his loved ones are seen going astray? Is he concerned or is he merciful about it? These and other questions have long been the concern of mankind.

Here is the one answer again: we walk by faith and not by sight.

"Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" John 14:5.

How can we see God?

“Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” John 14:8

How can we see God? Well, we can see God everywhere we look. Let me turn to the book of Romans, beginning with the first chapter and reading to you the 19th verse, “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”

What excuse have we for not seeing God when we look into the heavens and see the glory of Heaven? We see the trees around us and we see everything that God has made and everything that he has created before. How can we fail to see him? Now all of these should refute all of those who claim there is no God.

What if it didn't rain on the earth; what would become of us here? We look into the heavens. We see the solar system and the atoms in the atmosphere and we see the beauty of all creations. David declared, “the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. When you look at the stars and moon at night and the sun at mid-day that is God's handywork. Christ refers to his care of the sparrow and asked the disciples, are you not more than the sparrow? Jam. 1:17, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” It is impossible for God to lie. When we begin to realize all this we can really say that we walk by faith.

Now most everyone has a watch. I have a watch on my wrist. Does any one think for one moment that this watch fell together? No, it didn't. It was carefully placed together by skilled watch makers and it did not happen by accident. We think about how this little watch keeps time. This illustration is used many times but it is still one of the best: if this watch didn't fall together and somebody carefully

placed it together (as they did), then God carefully placed this earth together when he created the heavens and the earth.

Now listen to this: there are two groups of stars in the southwestern sky—the pleides and the orions. One time (if you'll allow me to paraphrase it a little in my own words) Job got a little bit too smart for his own britches. God came down and said Job gird up yourself like a man and answer me if thou hast wisdom. God decided to ask Job forty-six questions and not a single question could Job answer. He asked Job, "can you bind the pleides or loose the bands of the orions?" He asked him, "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" Where do you think we were when God laid the foundation of the earth? Not one single one of those forty-six questions can we answer.

Now sending a ship out into outer space is a great thing and they tell us that according to the ones that are able to calculate that some of the planets in the sky are 85 light years away. Now I have no conception of what all this means, how far it is, or how big this world is. When you talk about outer space all that I tell my audiences is that I know one thing for sure: there is a lot of it out there. Other than that I know very little. The secret things belong to God and God has revealed to us all the things that he wants us to know and all the things that are necessary for our well being and salvation.

Now I want to go back just a little bit to these two groups of stars that are in the southwestern sky. The pleides are loose and they roam around in the sky like the moon and God asked Job, "Can you bind pleides or loose the bands of orion?" They are fixed up in the sky like the sun (that is, the orions are fixed). He asked him, "Can you loose the bands of orion. Well do any of us think today that we can do that? Can we loose the bands of the orion from the group of stars? Can we bind the pleides in their great movement in the sky? You know that we can't do that. Now we see God in the Bible in his eternal love for man and his desire to save man. How? First by sending his son into the world to die.

After Jesus died upon the cross and went back to heaven to live with his Father and sit on his right hand to intercede for you and for me, he sent the apostles to preach to the whole world. Before his ascension he gave them the great commission, Mark 16:15-16, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Now I want you to turn back with me to Pauls letter to the Colossians, beginning with the first chapter and 13th verse, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."

So Jesus died for the church, he purchased it with his own precious blood and he was there when God created the heavens and the earth so he is the head of the body, the

church. Now remember that the body and the church and the kingdom are used on synonymous terms.

I read to you just a moment ago in Col. 1:13 where God has translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son. Now if he didn't have a kingdom here on earth, then how in the world could God translate us out of that kingdom of darkness (in other words, satan's kingdom) into the kingdom of his dear son? There would be no way. But the church is here and God is translating us. Remember that he sent the son of God to forgive us of our sins; forgiveness takes place in the mind of God, rather I should say. Now then, Jesus purchased the church with his own blood. It belongs to Jesus; I don't have any church. Now surely we can see God in all this; remember we are his highest creations. We were made to worship and to honor him.

God has revealed himself to us in every direction. Remember John 4:24, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Now then we get right down to the thing that stands out above everything else to us. If we want to read prophecy of the church concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, , "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Is. 35:8-10. That is one of the most beautiful pictures that we can think of; the prophecy of what is going to happen or has happened.

Now I want to talk to you about the great railroad trains that we live by. But rather maybe I had better read to you from Mat. 7:13-14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." So if we don't find it, we didn't look for it.

Many people don't want to find the way, they just don't want to. Do you know why? They are all wrapped up in worldly affairs. Then I want to ask you this question, does a narrow way mean a poor way? It certainly doesn't.

A few months ago my wife and I were coming back from Rogers, Arkansas, after visiting with one of my brothers who lives in Rogers. We passed a long freight train on the Frisco railroad track on the way home. I was born and raised beside the Frisco railroad track, and I said to my wife, "How many cars do you suppose they have on that train?" I suppose that train had a hundred cars, so when we came home I called a friend who is a conductor on the road from Monett to Fort Smith, Arkansas and asked him how many cars they were pulling out of Arkansas. He said one hundred cars or a train one mile long. You know how powerful that train is as long as it stays on the tracks? They have four units to pull that train. They are sometimes referred to as diesel engines. Of course they have a diesel engine in them, but that diesel engine only pulls the dynamo that makes electricity. That train is an electric train—every wheel has a motor on it. And the dynamo transfers that power to every wheel so instead of going forward and back like the old steam engine did, this engine's wheels are pulling constantly and it has great power. Well how many horse power do you think that each one of those units has? It has 250,000 horse power, so the four units make up one million horse power. Can you imagine how much power that train has? It has enough power, my friend tells me, that if three cars were off the track and were holding that train back, the engine would literally burn the wheels off the track. It would burn them up! Burn up the wheels and the rails!

Spiritually when we get off the track today—off that straight and narrow way that Isaiah was talking to us about—we are doomed unless we get back on the straight and narrow way.

Now lets talk a little more about these trains. When a mile-long train jumps the track, can the train continue on? It cannot. Even with one million horse power it can't move that train. The train cannot continue on till it is taken apart, what is on the track pulled away and a wrecker to pick up the cars and set them back on the track to be connected again. Then the train can proceed on its way. They cannot pull that train on the earth; it has to be on that narrow track. So you see, narrow doesn't mean a bad way—it means the best way in the world. They are pulling hundreds and hundreds of tons (I have no idea how many hundreds and hundreds of tons) on that track, and they are just as helpless as a baby in the woods. If the train or any part of it gets off the track they cannot proceed until they get back on the track.

Spiritually we are just as helpless as that train is when it is off the narrow-track way.

Now then I want to talk to you about that highway and the right-of-way. Isaiah said a "highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." In other words, the way is going to be so plain that with any reasonable sense at all we can understand that the straight and narrow way is the same narrow way that Isaiah was talking about and that Jesus was talking about in Mat. 7:13-14. The straight and the narrow way is the good way; it is the only way. But let's look at it again—lets look at the highways that we have in this country. We have a vast network of highways and in the center of that highway we have a narrow way. The road beds have a concrete slab or blacktop we have to travel on; we can't travel on the right-of-way.

Like the child of God, when he gets off the narrow way onto the right-of-way, there is no way for him to be pleasing to God. He can't get back on that narrow way with his sins even though he has one time been a child of God. He has to come back to God by repentance and prayer. That is the only way he can come back. He

got on that highway by being buried with the Lord in baptism and raised up to walk a new life with all of his sins forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ. Now I am not going to tell you that the water saved us by itself, but God used water for the element and that is where we came into the spiritual contact of Jesus' blood in his death, burial and resurrection. You can read the sixth chapter of Romans and find that to be the truth. Then if we don't find the straight and narrow way we just don't want to. It is because we are all cluttered up with worldly tings. So we ought to get on the straight and narrow way.

God has always begged his people to come back when they get off. And God is a spiritual being, John 4:24. We must go back to the narrow way. We must leave our sins behind.

But what brought this plan all about in the first place? Well, it was God's marvelous love for mankind. God created us. Man sinned in the garden of Eden and God promised a long time ago that he would send his Son into the world, the seed of the woman, Genesis 3:15. That would bring for us the way. In John 3:16-17 we have the statement sometimes called the golden text of the Bible. Well you can call it that if you want, but Rev. 22:14 is just as much the golden text of the Bible to me as John 3:16-17, and we'll have it later. But here it is, John 3:16-17, "God so loved (how much did he love?) the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." But most people stop at that and say that you are saved by faith only. But I assure you that you are not saved by faith only, because the next verse, the 17th, says that God "sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Now then, if we are to be saved through Christ and God cannot lie, he said that we are saved through Christ. Therefore we must be in Christ for us to be saved. God gives us the way and tells us that we have to be in Christ. If he didnt give us a way he would be a poor God. But he isn't that kind of a God; he told us exactly how we could get into Christ.

What is that love? How much is that love? Well, God's love is so great that he was willing to do something about it.

One time a little girl was asked what love was, and she said it was an itching heart that couldn't be scratched. We can't imagine the love that God has for his creations. He loved us so much he gave his son. When Jesus died upon the cross, God even turned away his face from seeing him die such a death. There was great darkness over the land for a few hours. Finally Paul, in the Ephesian letter, 4:4-6, writes, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Friends if we are off track we ought to get on. If we get on the track and then get off we ought to get back on; back on the only way. But how do we get into Christ? "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3:26-27. There is no other way. You can turn and read it if you doubt me in any way.

In John 3, Jesus says we must be born again. This means one more time. Born means to come forth. We can't be born of the lesser, we have to be born of the greater. Now we all came into this world exactly alike: begotten of our father and our mother, and born of our mother; born of the greater and not of the lesser. Now hence in John 3:5 he says we must be born of water and of the spirit. Now that is just as plain and simple as the ABC's. The spirit is the teacher and the water is the element.

Many times, over and over God used water to save the people in olden times. He saved Noah by water: by using water to destroy the world. He saved the Israelites with water at the Red Sea when he turned the Red Sea back loose and drowned all Egyptians. Their enemy did away with, got rid of them. How did he do it? He did it with water. And he does it with the same thing today: water is the element. And who said so? Well, Jesus said so.

Well, what is baptism? Baptism is a burial in water.

Col. 2:12 says "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." So we find the burial in water is the only thing that will satisfy God.

Again I want to emphasize the fact that to sprinkle water on somebody or pour water on somebody is no part of baptism. Why? Because it is without any faith or any substances of faith. Jesus said that it is a burial. He said it through the apostles. He said that we are to be baptised in water, **buried** with him in baptism. Please read Romans 6:3-4 again.

What does this all mean? Well again, I want to emphasize to you that pardon takes place in the mind of God. And this baptism makes a picture of the death and the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is just a perfect picture. Rom. 6:3-4 says we are buried with him in baptism. Col. 2:12, the one I quoted, says we are "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him."

Now then, if someone asks who is going to be saved in the end, I want to start with Rev. 22:14 that I mentioned a moment ago. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." I remember when I was a child my father had that verse marked around in his Bible—he believed it and he obeyed it. And I'm as sure as I live, when he died he died ready to meet the Lord.

In Heb. 5:8-9, speaking of Christ, the writer says, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Not to all of them that just say Lord, Lord. No, he doesn't say it that way at all. He says to "all them that obey him." That is in perfect harmony with Rev. 22:14, Heb. 5:8-9, and Mat. 7:21. Listen to what Mat. 7:21 says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Many times people ask me, "Who do you think will be saved?" Well, that is the verse that I always give them. If

they are critical about what we preach and teach, the gospel of Jesus Christ, I point them to that particular verse. Any one—no matter what the color of his or her hair or their skin is, whether they are red, yellow, black or white—that obeys the will of the Father is going to be saved. Now all of this is the work of God.

Some accuse us members of the church of the body of Christ of trying to work our way to heaven. In Paul's writings to the Philippian brethren he told them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. He wasn't writing to the world—he was writing to the Christians; he was writing to the ones that had already obeyed the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now faith is a work; so is repentance, so is confession, and so is baptism. Everyone of these are a commandment of God. Now listen if you doubt me in any way. Turn to John 6:28-29. "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." If it's a work of God to believe on God, then it is the work of God to repent, it is the work of God to confess, it is a work of God to be baptized. Just like he told us to in Ephesians 2:8-10 that we used a while ago. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Nothing that we could do under the old law would ever give us complete salvation—it just wasn't that way under the old law. They offered the animals as sacrifices daily and they offered them once a year, and at the end of the year all of their sins came up before God and God remembered them again. Then he would forget them for another year, and it went on that way until Jesus came to earth and shed his blood upon the cross. The blood reached back to the hinder sea and into the forward sea, and that forward sea is where we live today—1900 years this side of the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now the new testament starts with "come unto me" and closes with this saying, "come unto me." John 12:48

says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." And in Heb. 11:6 (now this is for the one that has never obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ) he says "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Now we wonder, "How do we get faith?" Rom. 10:17 tells us, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." There is no way under the shining canopies of heaven that we can have faith in God without reading it from his word. There is no other revelation from God to man, none whatsoever. In II Pet. 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Now what does he want us to do? He wants us to repent. Whether we are an erring child of God, or an alien sinner. In Mat. 10:32-33, for the one that has never obeyed the commandments of God and is still out in the world, Jesus said if you will confess him before men he will confess you before his Father in heaven, but if you deny him before men he will deny you before his Father in heaven. Rom. 10:10, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Now this doesn't say that we make this confession and we are saved by it—it says it is unto, or in the direction of, or towards salvation—unto salvation.

What about the following in Acts 2:38, that says, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." It goes on and says, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Here we are 1900 years this side of the statement that the apostle Peter made on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2, and the implication to us is just exactly the same. Repent and be baptized everyone of us in the name of Jesus Christ, or by

his authority, and that “by his authority” is being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

In Acts 10:48, Peter and the other Jewish brethren had gone down to preach the gospel to the household of Cornelius, and he preached to them the same thing that he preached on the day of Pentecost. He commanded them to be baptized, Acts 10:48. So baptism is the specific command.

In Acts 2:47 it says, “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Now it is the Lord’s business then to add us to the church; it is no business of ours to vote on anyone to see whether they can come into the church. If they want to be saved they have to confess the name of Jesus Christ before men and be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of their past sins. It buys them a ticket to heaven. We have to pay that ticket up from week to week and day to day; live a Christian life 7 days a week and worship the Lord on the first day of the week.

Now I want to go back to something that I have missed in my sermon, somewhere along the line I want to call our attention to. You remember that Jacob was leaving the Israelite people and going to get himself a wife in another country: going over to Laban’s country. And while he was on the way there he laid himself down and made himself a pillow of rock to lay his head on. Now that would be pretty rough for us today, wouldn’t it? But while Jacob was lying there during that night after the sun had gone down, he had a dream. He dreamed like this: he saw a ladder from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven, and descending on that ladder were angels coming down and going back. When you read a little farther in that particular chapter you will find it corresponds to Matthew and you’ll find he was talking about when Jesus Christ would descend from heaven, die for us and then go back to heaven. I want to tell you something that a child of God has right here while I’m thinking about it: that is today we have an open telephone line to heaven. We don’t have any toll, we don’t have any taxes, and it is open 24 hours a day. I can’t think of

anything else in this country that we live in that is not taxed. I can't think of anything that is free but the air we breathe and I think pretty soon if they don't change in Washington D. C. they will try to tax that.

Now then, what do we have? With all of these facts before us (and I know that they are facts because they are exactly what God said), I am not concerned again with what men say about what the Bible says. I am concerned about what it says. With all these thoughts in mind I want to bring this to you this way: If we are lost Christ died in vain. Jesus died for every one. Heaven is big enough for everyone that wants to be saved. God doesn't want us to be lost. He said that he wasn't slack concerning his promises, but was long suffering to usward, not willing that anyone should perish but that we all come to repentance. I suggest to you today, reading this sermon from this book, that you don't let Jesus die in vain for you. Today is the day of salvation, yesterday is gone, tomorrow may never come.

Don't worry about who baptizes you: just any Christian. Just be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for the remission of your past sins and God will forgive your sins. He will add your name on the Lamb's book of life; he will add you to the church on earth and as a child of God he will start watching over you. I Pet. 3:12, "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER XIII

GREAT DECISIONS OF THE BIBLE

Decisions of man have been since the beginning of time. Adam and Eve had to make a great decision. What did they do? They made the wrong decision and changed the whole course of mankind.

Life is filled with decisions. Good or bad, which are we going to make? Way back in Jeremiah's time, chapter 5, verses 30-31, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

Back to Adam and Eve...they knew God's commands perfectly. Eve told the serpent—the devil—just what God had commanded them. They decided to disobey God and follow the devil instead. Gen. chapter 3.

They knew God created them, so man since that time has chosen to obey satan rather than God. Not all, of course, have done that but the vast majority have. In otherwords they have selected the broad way rather than the narrow way, Mat. 7:13-14.

Adam and Eve's decision has influenced man from the beginning. Some way, some how, man desires to use his own wisdom. Friends, if we want to be saved we are going to be saved God's way or not at all.

Adam and Eve's decision is still with us. I Cor. 15:22 says, "For in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Which would you rather follow, a bad decision or a good one? It rests squarely upon our shoulders to make one or the other. Our decisions will affect many generations to follow.

Now lets talk about a great old Bible character that

made the right decisions: Abraham.

God's law was a law that said thou shall not kill. But he commanded Abraham to take his son, Isaac, upon the mount, Mt. Moriah, and offer him as a burnt offering on the altar. Gen. 22:1-12. Please read the story. It was a violent step contrary to God's other law. Did Abraham do it? He certainly did. But before he could slay him the angel of God stayed his hand. Abraham had told his son on the way up the mountain that God would provide a sacrifice and behold a ram was caught by his horns in a bush.

God today has provided us a lamb, Jesus Christ, his son; actually provided over 1900 years ago. Heb. 9:22 says, "without shedding of blood is no remission." Friends, today we have the cleansing blood of Christ, so Abraham made the right decision. What made him do it? It was faith in God. Please read Heb. 11:6.

When Abraham's nephew, Lot, was to make a decision over their cattle, Gen. 13:1-3, he chose the wellwatered plains of Jordan. Abraham gave Lot his choice. Was it the right decision? It was not. It cost him his wife, sons-in-law, and daughters and his home. He had to flee to another country. At first it looked like the right decision, but it turned out bad.

What is the lesson? We should never choose the wrong place to rear our families. In Eph. 6 Paul said to raise up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Lot let material things influence him too much. His decision was the wrong one.

Another servant of God made the right decision—the great man Moses. In Heb. 11:25 it says Moses choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than the pleasures of sin for a season. Did you notice what it said: the pleasures of sin were for how long? For a season? How long is a season? Friends, I'll tell you its very short compared to eternity. Jesus asked in Mat. 16:26, "what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Just think for a minute: one soul is worth more than the whole world.

Moses had an inward desire to serve God rather than

man. He was looking at the great reward. In Rom. 8:18 Paul had the same idea. Why? He said, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Moses and the apostle Paul both saw Christ as the invisible one. A glimpse of the unseen satisfied them. We have never had that experience, but again Paul says in II Cor. that we walk by faith and not by sight.

Another decision in the old testament is recorded in I Sam. 15. King Saul unwisely decided to spare the best of the herds and King Agag, king of Amalek. You know what Saul did then; he passed the buck or tried to by laying in onto the people. The nature of man hasn't changed. Ex. 23:2, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." What did it cost King Saul? It cost him his life and kingship.

Ask the question, does it pay? At the close of life Soloman said in Ecl. 12:13, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

In Mat. 10:28 Jesus said, "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Another Old Testament character is recorded in II Kings 5. Here we have a brave man, a captain in the Syrian army. He was a brave man but he was a leper. The Syrians had gone over into the land of Israel and captured a little maid who waited on Naaman's wife. She told them if her Lord were over in the land of Samaria the prophet of God would heal him. So the king of Syria fixed up a big deal for Naaman: 10 talents of silver, 6000 pieces of gold, ten changes of raiment and sent him to the king of Samaria.

First of all, I want us to notice the king sent him to the wrong person. The little maid never said anything about going to the king. She said the prophet of God. That's what happens today to many. They go to the wrong place and accept the laws and commandments of men rather than the Bible, the word of God. It just simply won't work.

Well the king over in Samaria did a lot of snorting around and said he didn't have any power to kill or make alive. Of course, he didn't. And neither does anyone have

such power today. Remember leprosy was a type of sin. Nothing but the blood of Jesus can take away our sins. Please read the story in II Kings 5.

But that's not all. When Naaman came to himself and went to the right person—the prophet of God—he went with a preconceived idea that the prophet of God would come out with a rod and say something in the name of God and he would be healed. But the prophet told him to go and dip himself 7 times in Jordan. Now, wouldn't that beat you. A man of valor told to do such a thing as dip himself 7 times in Jordan. Then he began to reason: the waters of his country were far better than the waters of Israel, wouldn't do it, started home, mad, frothing at the mouth. Finally one of his servants told him he had better obey and be healed. Doesn't that sound natural today? Fuss and fume, saying that water baptism won't save. Reckon the river Jordan was buttermilk? It was not—just plain water. What healed his leprosy anyway? Was it the water or the powers of God? If it was the water, why didn't one dip do it? Now friend, you know better than that. The apostle Peter says in I Pet. 3:21 that baptism in just plain water saves us. Now that is when we obey what God said and this is a command of God to be baptized in plain water for the remission of our past sins. Then God will forgive us and add us to the church on earth; add our name to the lambs book of life in heaven and then start watching over us. Please read I Pet. 3:12.

Did Naaman make the right decision after he obeyed the commands of God? I affirm to you that he did. There is no other way today for us. We must obey the gospel and it contains the command to be baptized in plain water. In other words, we have to roll away the stones of unbelief; get men out of the way so God can heal us or take away our past sins. We only have to be dipped once, not seven times. And remember this, there is no such a thing as rebaptism. We are baptized or we are not. There is one baptism, one Lord and one faith. If you have been sprinkled or had water poured or even immersed in water to get into some man-made church you had better do like Naaman when he came to himself by being baptised. You must be buried in water

to get into Christ. Gal 3:27, Rom 6:3, I Cor. 12:13. Naaman's future depended on his obedience and so does ours.

Now another right decision is recorded in Jos. 24:15 when he told his people in his day, "if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood (Noah flood) or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." What do you think?

His decision was right. It was based upon the fact that God is true. Likewise, today God is true. It's impossible for God to lie. See Titus and Hebrews. If God is true (and he is) that settles the matter.

All this should help us to make our decisions. There is no place for middle ground.

We come to the New Testament now, and Christ's decisions when he was tempted by Satan. Please read Mat. 4:1-7. Christ had fasted 40 days and 40 nights. Satan came along tempting him saying if he was the son of God to turn the stones into bread. Jesus says, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." But Satan wouldn't give up; he came up with another proposition. He took him upon the pinnacle of the temple and told him if he was the son of God to cast himself down. Satan took him to a high mountain in his next proposition and showed Christ all the kingdoms of the world, telling him he would give them to him. The old devil was lying—they already belonged to Christ. Three times Jesus was tempted. He told him, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Likewise the same applies to us today. There are over 300 churches in the United States today when the Bible says there is one Lord, one faith (the gospel; faith here equals gospel), one baptism.

Jesus said he would build his church; the church belongs to Christ. Why? He purchased it with his own blood, Acts 20:28. Remember that Christ had the scriptures in his heart; likewise we should have them in our

heart, I Pet. 3:15.

At the crucifixion of Christ Pilate had to decide whether Christ was the son of God. He asked in Mat. 27:22, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" What did he do? Well, he listened to the multitude, against his judgment. Ex. 23:2 says "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." That's what's wrong today: too many listen to man rather than God's word. I Pet 3:15, II Tim. 2:15; read these.

Pilate was influenced by the people. He jumped off in the broad way.

Mat. 7:13-14 speaks of the narrow way, but it doesn't mean the narrow way is not a good way. Look what a locomotive can pull on the railroad tracks on two narrow rails. If one car gets off the track onto the right-of-way, the engine is helpless.

Today Jesus invites us to come, Mat. 11:28, Rev. 3:20. But remember, he doesn't force us; he begs us to come. Why? He died for us. He doesn't want us to be lost. If we are lost then Christ died in vain. Friends, don't let him die in vain.

When Jesus invites us and satan is trying to hold us in his kingdom, we have to make a decision. Remember, we are in satan's. I beseech you to come out and enter Christ's kingdom by being baptized into him. Remember, there is no alternative. We will make a decision today and every day of our life.

In Acts 2:40 the apostle says "save yourselves." We save ourselves by accepting the gospel of Christ and obeying it, Heb. 5:8-9. Here we find Jesus obeyed his Father. Are we better than he that we think we can be saved without obeying him? Please read Mat. 7:21.

We have one example after another in the book of Acts telling us what the people did to obey him. The law has never changed. Acts 18:8. The Corinthians heard, believed, and were baptized. What for? For the remission of all their past sins. Baptism is for the believer.

The New Testament starts with the invitation to come

unto Jesus and closes with the same invitation in Rev. 27:17.

Friends, you can't do wrong by doing right; you can't do wrong by doing exactly what God said to do.

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER XIV

THE NEW BIRTH

Many talk about the new birth, which is fine. There are many ideas as to what it is. There is one thing for sure they all cannot be right. I don't claim myself above all others, but I want to prove to all that read this book just what the new birth really is according to the Bible—the word of God. In John 3:5 Jesus says: except a man. This means all of mankind must be born again of water and the spirit.

To prove to all first what the spirit is, we go to I John 5:7 and read: "For there are three that hear record in heaven: The Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost and these three are one." So the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit is one and the same person, so the Spirit is just as real as God and Christ; they are co-workers together. The Holy Spirit was promised by Christ to the apostles to guide them into all truth or to bring back to their remembrance the things that He had taught them. So, we see by this that the Spirit is a teacher; hence in John 3:5 the water, the element, the Spirit, the teacher.

It says in John 4:24 God is a Spirit or a spiritual being and they that worship him **must** worship him in spirit and truth.

Then we ask, what is truth? Truth is the Gospel. Jesus says in John 8:32, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Free from what? From our past sins when we are born again. To be born again means one more time. So that excludes babies being born again, for it says a man or one that is old enough to believe. Why? It says in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This forever settles that the so-called sprinkling or pouring water on babies is out.

To be born again means to come forth. So the water is the element, the Spirit, the teacher. We cannot be born of the lesser, it has to be greater than the one being born again. To be born again means just plain baptism in water—a burial (Col. 2:12, Rom. 6:3-4) and its for the believer.

Now everyone can surely understand this plain teaching for I can do that. In John, chapter 3, Nicodemus was a ruler. He was a fair-minded man who came to Jesus by night. Why at night? I plain don't know, but what I do know is that he wanted to know what to do to be saved. Hence, Jesus told him to be born again. Please read John, chapter 3. The 8th verse says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whether it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." They now say we have it, we cannot tell where it came from but now we have it. Friends, I beseech you in the name of Christ, don't depend on something like that for your salvation. In Rom. 8:16 it says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." In other words, the Spirit guided the apostles into all truth and then commanded water baptism for the remission of our past sins. You can depend on that. Does your spirit or mind say you have done what they said for all mankind to do? If you have your spirit in harmony with the word of God, you won't have to guess at whether you are saved from past sins and are a child of God. Yes, you can depend on what God says. God said it, I believe it, and that settles it!

Nicodemus recognized the miracles Jesus had done. He was a believer in God, but he wanted to know about the new law we were to come under. The new law came in fullness on the day of Pentecost (Acts, chapter 2). It was preached in fullness as far as our past sins were concerned.

But someone says, what about the Kingdom, was it the Church? It certainly was! In Matt. 16:18 Jesus says "upon this rock (or the confession Peter had made that he was the Christ, the Son of God) I will build my church." So the church and kingdom are used all through the Bible to mean

one and the same thing. If you doubt me read Col. 1:13 and Acts 2:47.

Is this birth we are talking about similar to physical birth? Certainly. Physical birth has a begettal, Father and Mother, born of our Mother. We are begotten by the Gospel (1 Cor. 4:15): no begettal—no birth.

In I Peter 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." In James 1:18 it says we are begotten by the word of truth. When Saul, the persecutor, was on the road to Damascus, Jesus appeared to him. Did he save him there? He did not! What did he tell him? He told him to go down to Damascus and it would be told him what to do. Why didn't Jesus tell him? Because by this time it was after the day of Pentecost and the Gospel had been placed in the hands of earthen vessels (II Cor. 4:7).

There is no use today for one to look for the Holy Spirit or Christ to come back and tell us we are saved separate and apart from the Gospel. If we are looking for something like that we will be left out in the cold. We all come into this world alike, begotten of our father and mother, born of our mother. There is no exception. Likewise, today if we want to be saved we **must** be born again one more time. Begotten by the word of God. Turn to him by repentance. Confess his name before men with your mouth (Rom. 10:9-10), then be buried with him in baptism unto death in plain water, then be raised up to walk a new life in Christ Jesus. Gal. 3:26-27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

This is the only way we can get into Christ. Remember we are creatures of choice. We will or we won't. I beg of you today to do exactly what God says and be safe.

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER XV

AUTHORITY IN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY

Please read Mat. 15:1-14.

In the Bible there are specific and generic commands. Like **go** into all the world and preach **the** gospel. "Go" is generic: like walk, ride a mule as some did in early America, and many other ways of travel. "Preach the gospel" is specific. There is only one gospel to preach, most of it is contained in I Cor. 15.

Today many choose the way of men, just as they did long before Christ in old testament times.

In Mat. 15:9 Jesus said, "in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

In Prov. 21:2, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts." Ponder means to weigh, consider or examine. What we need to do is ponder God's ways.

In Rom. 12:2 it says "And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

It's natural for man to want his ways and ideas. In Prov. 14:12 it says "There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." An example of this today is going to or joining the church of your choice. And the statement the church makes no difference.

Can you imagine Christ dying for a church that's no better than man's church? Maybe its hard for man to give up his wisdom for the wisdom of God. Friends, we will if we want to be saved. Jesus died for us all and you think it makes no difference. Have we ever really thought why?

Isaiah tells us why in Isa. 55:8-9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Also read verses 10 and 11.

The way of man is not in himself. Jer. 10:23, "Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

In I Cor. 1:21 Paul says, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that **believe**. His preaching was not foolish, but the gospel was so plain to the wise or the ones who thought they were wise that it seemed foolish. Friend, there is no foolishness about God—there never was.

In the first three chapters of I Cor. Paul tells of the conflict of man's wisdom against the wisdom of God. The two are contrary, the one to the other. There is no way to harmonize man's wisdom with God's wisdom.

The gospel is only for believers. What will break the barrier down? The answer is easy: **faith**. God said it; I believe it; that settles it. **The Bible is right**.

Many people are immersed and call it baptism for various reasons, but only people of faith (or believers in God's word) are baptized for the remission of past sins. Acts 2:38.

Sometimes people don't understand the Bible and try to be baptized for the dead; that is, the ones who have died and been buried in mother earth. All this is nonsense. We die to the old sinful life of sin; then we are buried with our saviour in baptism to have all past sins forgiven by God. And remember, pardon takes place in the mind of God. When we are baptized this way we are raised up to walk a **new life**.

Now a question: where do we get faith? By reading God's word. Rom. 10:17 makes it very plain. There is positively no other way. True faith compels us to accept everything God says on any subject. I am amazed at so many people teaching faith only for salvation. Why? Faith only gives us the power to become sons and daughters. If you

don't believe me read John 1:11-12.

Now let us notice another thing in Christ's personal ministry. The Pharisees and Scribes did not accuse the disciples of breaking God's law, they accused them of breaking the traditions of the fathers. What about today? Creeds of men, our father and mother's religion. Some think we should follow both men and God, but that won't work. We have got to give up all this kind of doctrine and follow the Bible—God's word. Remember, the Bible is right. There is no way to mix error and truth. Have you forgotten Mat. 15:9? If you have, please go back and read it.

There is positively no way to change God's word. Oh, we read into it something or take out something and make it sound different, but we have never changed it.

The children of Israel were under Moses; we are under Christ. Gal. 3:1-6 says, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

In Gal. 5:4 Paul says, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Now, they weren't going to fall from grace, they had already fallen.

The same applies today. That forever settles it. Some one is not teaching the truth when they say, "once saved always saved." Gal. 4:16 says, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" Am I now going to be your enemy? Shame on any one who will get angry at another for telling them the truth about salvation.

Remember what Jesus says your soul is worth? One soul is worth more than the whole world. Mat. 16:26. The

scriptures furnish us completely, II Tim. 3:16-17. I take it we can follow it and be safe. In John 8:31-32 Jesus says, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

II John 9, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." Verse 10 continues, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: (verse 11:) For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

II John 9 means a prescribed rule of conduct or action. We are taught by precept and example; command and inference. Please read II John verse 9.

Not every thing taught in the New Testament is binding on us today; especially in the first four books. Miraculous gifts, I am thoroughly convinced, passed away with the apostles, maybe before they were all gone. It teaches by inference they were gone before all the apostles were dead. The Lord's supper is different. Acts 20:7 explains we are to observe it on every first day of every week until Jesus comes back. It is a memorial to his death, burial and resurrection. The Lord's supper is a privilege, not a painful duty. We should look forward to the first day of every week so we can surround the table of the Lord. Luke 22:29-30 says, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." So you see it is a privilege, and Christ says do this till he returns.

We are also taught by necessary inference like Noah and the ark. He had to have some kind of tools like saw and hammer and ax. But gopher wood was specific—no other wood would do. If Noah had used other wood it would have never floated.

Another example by inference is found in Heb. 10:25. We are commanded to meet on the first day of the week. By inference this verse tells us we have to provide a place to assemble or meet.

Now, God said throughout the new testament for us to sing—this is specific. Some don't want to follow God on this so they gather up a lot of hand-made instruments and use them like David and try to prove by him this is scriptural. God never did sanction David's instruments but with all that they used them in the outer court of the tabernacle which represents the world to us today. They were never used in the inner court, which represents the church today. **Acts 17:25 forever settles it.** Friend, why don't we want to use the instrument God made for us: the human voice. Nothing compares to its beauty, but whether it was beautiful or not, God commanded it. David said in the long ago that all the commandments of God are righteous. Now that settles it. Can we sing by faith and be sure? I affirm we can. What if we try to go beyond? Remember II John 9 says, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

On the other hand we can try to walk so straight we can lean backwards like some who think we cannot put the children in classes apart from the adults. That's going farther back than Moses did. He divided the people in classes and had women teachers; even had a woman teach the priests of God and one went to battle with Barak.

Deborah was a prophetess and a judge. The people of Israel came to her for instructions. Did she sin?

Miriam, a sister of Moses, led the singing after they crossed the Red Sea. Was she silent? Did she sin? A thousand times **no**.

In Acts 21 Phillip had four daughters, virgins, that prophesied (that means teaching); they were in the church. Did they sin?

Shame on anyone who thinks they did.

Some today take the extreme position about a container from which we drink the fruit of the vine, which represents Christ's blood. They claim that each congregation can have only one container. They are acting without faith and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Christ positively cared nothing about what kind of a container we use or how

many. We can use a glass, teacup, gourd, thimble, quart cup or whatever is in use where we live. Some one is ready to say, "Bro. Hancock, why do you use the word positive' and are so sure?" Here is your answer: Christ never, in any way, shape or form, mentioned a container. If he had cared what kind of a container we used, wouldn't he have mentioned it once? I affirm that he would.

What about the ceremony he gave us to baptize with? Mat. 28:19 tells what to use. I'll specifically affirm to you that any one who contends over the container runs right back to Mat. 28:19 for the ceremony to baptize with. Now, if any of you who believe this kind of teaching will show me one time where Jesus mentioned a container and the kind I'll go along with you, but I'm positively not going to try to bind a specific command where there is none. It would be without faith and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Another place where some are wrong is I Cor. 14:34—it doesn't say **the** women—it says **your** women speaking of women who were the wives of inspired prophets.

I Corinthians, beginning with the 12th chapter and continuing to the finish of the 14th chapter, is about spiritual gifts and speaking in prophecy of which we have none today. Therefore the most of those three chapters are not binding on us today. It's high time we learned how to divide God's word and quit dividing the church over things that Christ and the apostles never commanded to apply to us today.

In I Cor. 16:3 the disciples sent their offering to Jerusalem by a personal messenger. Does that mean today we cannot send our contribution by check?

Let us adhere to the one right authority. Let us encourage one another to worship God, care for the needy, preach the gospel and do everything we are authorized to do. Let us also take care not to try to restrict the children of God to some particular method or to the mechanics of some particular arrangement for doing the things authorized when there is no Bible teaching that makes the restrictions necessary.

There was church cooperation in the early church; the church at Corinth cooperated with the Jerusalem church by sending whatever they had laid by in store—money or whatever they might have to send to the poor saints. That's church cooperation.

Friends, have you obeyed the gospel by believing in God the father, God the son; turn to him or both by repenting of your sins (and that means to quit doing wrong and start doing right) by confessing Christ with your mouth, and then be baptized in water (and that means a burial), then raised up to walk a new life with all past sins forgiven. Remember, forgiveness takes place in the mind of God, not in one's feelings. Of course, we will feel good after we have obeyed **all** the commandments of God. Every Bible example says they went on their way rejoicing.

If you haven't done these things that will make you a child of God, I beseech you to do it now, not some later date. It might be too late. Remember, today is the day of salvation. **Amen.**

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER XVI

WHY I AM A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

First, it is a blood-bought Church, 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 membership is the church, the highest scriptural calling. A member is a king and a priest unto God the Father, Rev. 1:6: "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

The greatest question from all of mankind today is: what **must** I do to be saved? This statement brings it to an individual matter. Each one of us stand on our own. This writer cannot answer to God for anyone but myself. This question suggests not what I may or what I should do, but what I **must** do. The word "I" is not what God, the Holy Spirit or Christ should do, but what **I** must do. God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit have already done their part. Now, God, Christ and the Holy Spirit all had a part in the divine plan. Therefore, if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature - II Cor. 5:17. Heb. 9:11-12 says "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

They have perfectly executed their divine plan - II Peter 1:3: "According to his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."

The **do** is not what I get, think, feel, or believe; but

what I must do. The word "do" suggests activity on the part of mankind. God saves by the gospel - Rom. 1:16-17.

Man also saves - Acts 2:40: "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." It says save yourself with many other words and he testified saying save yourselves.

Take the word "do" out of christianity and you destroy it. You have never heard of any inspired man telling an un-saved person there was nothing for him to do to be saved, and you never will either.

To be saved denotes the purpose of complying with the conditions set forth by the apostles. To be saved is the object sought. To be saved also suggests that saving is done by another. But how? Is there anything more dependable than the Bible? Surely we can depend on it. If this question was asked a hundred times, should we read all the answers? Certainly so. But it is asked only 4 times: one of them was under the law of Moses - Mat. 19:16-22: "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (verse 20:) The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? (21) Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."

It was under the law since Christ had not died on the cross yet. But did the young man do it? No. His love for riches were a stumbling block to him. For him to have done so would have fitted him better for the work later - "if thou wilt be perfect." He didn't answer the call after asking the question. He went away sorrowful. He would have obeyed

if the Lord had told him something that pleased him. Do we get the lesson?

Let us study this side of the cross—the day of Pentecost. There were all kinds of people there. They had crucified the Christ. Peter’s sermon pointed out their sin. Some people made fun of him, saying “these men are full of new wine.” The ones that listened were convicted of their sin. They cried out, “men and brethren, what shall we do?” Why did not Peter tell them to believe? They wanted to know what to do to be saved. They were already believers. It was time for them to do something; hence, repent and be baptized.

Is there any difference in repent and being baptized? They are coupled together with the conjunction “and,” both unto the remission of sins. Baptism puts us into Christ where remission of sins is. Salvation requires more than faith and a change of heart. Satan doesn’t care how much we believe; those Pentecostians had all these, that is faith and change of heart. But they wanted to know what they still lacked. First, they accused the apostles of being drunk. What would some preachers of today tell them? We know you are saved. But what did the Holy Spirit do? A few years later--Let’s take a look at Paul. Here is the third time. Saul, as he was first known, was mentioned in Acts 7:58-59, “And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” What a man.

Later in Phil. 3:6: “Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” Paul said his conscience was clear - Acts 26:9: “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” Here Paul was before Agrippa. All the time his conscience was clear, but was he right? A thousand times, no. Conscience is only safe as long as it is guided by truth.

But what about Paul’s conversion? The light was brighter than the noonday sun. Here was Christ. Note it

was noonday. Then the question. Why didn't Christ tell him what to do? This event was all a miracle. Acts 22:10: "And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." What did he tell him? What would modern preachers tell him? Did he obey? Certainly! He went to Damascus and prayed for three days, without food. What did Ananias tell him? Pray more, Paul. Only believe, don't you know you are saved? Can't you feel the presence of the Holy Spirit? No, he didn't do that. Then what did he do? He told him to arise and be baptized calling on the name of the Lord. Paul had already believed. He had a change of heart. He was ready to know what to do. Can we depend on this?

One more will complete our four questions. Paul and Silas were in the Philippian jail. They sang praises to God; at midnight there was an earthquake. The doors opened; everybody's bands loosened. The jailer roused out of sleep thinking the prisoners had fled, and was about to kill himself when Paul said, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." Here is the fourth time: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" What was the answer? Believe in the Lord.

We need to take first things first. The jailer was an unbeliever. What happened then? Acts 16:30-32 says, "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." Why all this? So he could believe. What happened then? The jailer washed their stripes and was baptized; he and all his. Paul had been told to be baptized and wash away his sins. What was the jailer's baptism for? Remember Paul was the preacher.

We have three answers to the same question:

1. The jailer was told to believe. Why?
2. The Pentecostians were told to repent and be baptized.
3. Paul was told to arise and be baptized, washing away his sins (he had already repented).

They were all on the same road. All did the same thing. Non-believers were told to believe. Believers were told to repent. One who believed and had repented was told to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins.

Everything is ready. We are without even an excuse. Friends, where is your name? What doth it profit? Mat. 16:26: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" If we are lost Christ died in vain. Heaven is a prepared place.

Rev. 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

Rev. 3:5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

Rev. 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Rev. 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

II Cor. 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."

Phil. 4:3: "And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life."

Rom. 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."

Heb. 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

II Pet. 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Mat. 10:32-22: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Gal. 3:26-27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

I Cor. 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Rev. 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

All of this is why I am a member of the Church of Christ. **The** church is big enough to hold the entire world of people. Jesus died for all. We that are living in this land of Bibles are without excuse. **Remember, God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!**

CHAPTER XVII

WHY THE CHURCH OF CHRIST DOES NOT USE INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

1. It isn't that we want to be different or peculiar although Peter said in I Pet. 2:9 "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

II John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." It is a matter of faith. There are four ways that the Bible teaches: by *inference*, *precept*, *example* and *command*.

2. There are four kinds of worship:

1. *Vain Worship* - Mat. 15:9: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

2. *Ignorant Worship* - Acts 17:23: "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions,...therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

3. *Will Worship* - Col. 2:23: "Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh."

4. *True Worship* - John 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

3. Mat. 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even

unto the end of the world. Amen.”

4. John 16:13: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

1. Did he or did he not? He certainly did.

5. II Tim. 3:16-17: “All scripture is given by **inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

The scriptures furnish us unto all good works. They are completely silent on instruments of music. Ask yourself the question: Can it be a good work? Not only that, but his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. Do instruments of music pertain unto life and godliness? I suggest that they do not. What is the divine power: The divine power is the gospel. Rom. 1:16-17: “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 the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” I ask, is it adding to God’s word? Is it by faith? What we do must be done in the name of the Lord.

6. Name means authority - Col. 3:17: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

7. II Pet. 1:3: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: (continuing with verse 4:) Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

8. II Tim. 2:2: “the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” Talk about a man’s individuality and responsibility. We are under oath.

Rom 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Does that mean to whip his wife - get drunk? The "all things" are of a certain class. That certain thing is what Christ demanded. II Pet. 1:3: "According to his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Acts 3:22: "For Moses truly said unto the father, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." Friends, that prophet was Christ. If there is a question, why not be on the safe side?

But what about the Old Testament worship? II Chron. 29:25-27: "And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets. And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel." It never was according to God's plan anymore than marriage and divorce. Moses permitted it because of the hardness of their hearts—it was not God's plan. Jer. 31:31 said the new covenant would be different. Paul said in Heb. 8:1-4: "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law." Heb. 8:9-10: "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not

in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

Why would we want to go back under the old law? In Acts 13:46, Paul and Silas were preaching to the Jews and said it was necessary that the word of God be preached to them but if they counted themselves unworthy they would turn to the Gentiles. Again, Jesus said in John 16:7 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Expediency must be necessary in carrying out the will. In carrying out the command he said *sing*. Eph. 5:19: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Col. 3:16-17: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." In these verses are generic and specific commands. Songs are generic. Heb. 13:15: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." I Cor. 14:15: "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

God made the voice and man made the instrument. What about Pat Boone and Ernie Ford? The voice was made by God to be in praise of Him. Man cannot play by singing and singing is not playing. James 5:13 says, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." Not a word is said about playing—playing is not mentioned in connection with the worship of the New Testament. It is no part of the will of God as revealed. It is without faith. Rom. 10:17: "So then faith cometh by

hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Paul plainly said (not me) in Rom. 14:23: "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Now, back to this thing of expediency. Nothing can be expedient that divides God's people. I Cor. 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Somebody not yet satisfied? We have it in the home - why not in the church? The husband is the head of the home; Christ is the head of the church. Eph. 1:22-23. Psm. 87:6-7: "The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there...as well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee."

Col. 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

Now friends, the Bible says there is one of two places we can spend eternity: heaven or hell. I don't believe anyone wants to spend eternity in hell, so we need to prepare ourselves to go to heaven. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.

I pose this question: what does it profit a man when he gains the whole world and loses his soul? Jesus asked that question in Mat. 16:26 when he said, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" So we find here one soul is worth more than the entire world.

Remember that God has a will: Mat. 7:21. But someone says, Brother Hancock, if I joined the Church of Christ that would condemn all my folks to hell. Whoever heard of men sending other men to hell? Only God can do that. In reality, we send ourselves by rejecting.

Friends, remember: man-made instruments of music were never mentioned in the new testament, and remember that the instrument that God made is what he commanded us to use. There is nothing as beautiful as the human voice.

Then someone says: what about David? Yes, David did invent instruments of music. II Chron. 29:25-27: "And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets. And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offerings upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David King of Israel." David also killed Uriah and took his wife; do we want to do that? David also offered animal sacrifices; do we want to bring them in the church? Remember, Jeremiah said we would have a new covenant.

Now what did God say about those instruments of music? Let's see Amos 6. Verse 1 begins, "woe to them... (then verse 5 says)...That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David." Amos 5:23 says: "Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols."

So we see God never permitted it, he just tolerated it.

God wills and commands and again no one can change the state of the dead or the ones who have gone on. I mean by this, we can no more change God's commands than we can change the state of the dead.

We are creatures of choice. We will or we won't. If we want eternal life we must choose to serve God in his appointed way. In the past some have gotten so mad at me for baptizing some of their folks into Christ. They refused to speak to me, but thank heaven they have gotten over it. I've never told anyone the Christian life is a bed of roses, but Jesus says take up my cross and follow me. We have a cross to bear any way so why not take up the cross for Christ. The apostle Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." - Phil. 4:13.

It matters not what people say, we are going to be judged by the word of God. John 12:48 says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that

judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." Heb. 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

I beseech you to obey him at your earliest opportunity by being baptized into him by faith in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit for the remission of past sins, then live the Christian life and go to heaven to bask in the sunshine of God's love forever. Remember we live to die and we die to live.

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST 1900 YEARS AGO

It was established on the first pentecost after Christ's death, burial and resurrection as recorded in Acts 2. The church does not consist of brick and mortar. The buildings we have today are just places where the church meets to worship God. Heb. 10:25 says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Acts 20:7 says the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread. The church consists of lively stones - I Pet. 2:5 - "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

We need to go back to Jerusalem: we need to go back to the fountainhead where the blood of Christ was shed.

When I was a boy I lived 1½ miles north of Washburn, Mo. and we hunted lots of squirrels in the woods and hollows northwest of our home. They contained lots of springs of water. When we wanted a drink we always went to where the water came out of the ground; we never thought of drinking down the stream. Why? We figured the water might be unsafe to drink. We went to the fountain head. That's what's the matter with the religious world today. They drink the doctrines and commandments of men, rather than going back to the fountain head—Jerusalem. Please read Mat. 15:9.

Nineteen hundred years ago was the first time people were added to the church by the Lord. There was no voting; they just obeyed what Peter and the rest of the apostles preached and **the Lord** added them to the church.

A point I need to make here is how could he, the Lord,

add to something that didn't exist? He couldn't. God and Christ set the apostles in the church; therefore, he (God) started to add to them. Please read Eph. 2:20.

In Luke 8:11 it says "the seed is the word of God." And God said in the beginning in Gen. 1:11-12 that every thing would come after its kind; in other words, if we want corn we plant corn seed, etc.

In Luke 8:11 it says "the seed is the word of God" and in the beginning (please read Gen. 1:11-12) that everything would come after itself." **God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right.** If this is not right God failed in his promises. Who is ready to believe that?

The books of Titus and Hebrews tell us it's impossible for God to lie. On the day of Pentecost, Acts 2, was the first time Jesus was declared both Lord and Christ. That was the first time that people were added to it. It was the church God planned: please read Eph. 3:10-21. He (God) had given her all the doctrine to preach. And it was a certified doctrine. Gal. 1:10-12 says, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." Now friends, that settles it.

II Pet. 1:3-4, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: (verse 4:) Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

So God has given the church all the doctrine to preach. We don't need help by man. Paul declared to Timothy to preach the word to be instant in season, out of season, or anytime we have the opportunity we should preach the gospel. That was part of the great commission.

The church was and is a divine institution. Can we argue with God? Titus 3:4 to 8 says "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness

and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us **by the washing of regeneration** (just plain baptism) and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

You know I have a name that's well known in history. Why couldn't I start me a church? Well, I could but what good would it do me? I couldn't save anyone's soul—it takes the blood of Christ to save. My blood would save no one even if I died on the cross. The church belongs to Christ. He purchased it with his own blood, not mine.

Eph. 5:23-27 tells us, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (washed with water, just plain baptism)."

Since Christ purchased the church, what name are we supposed to wear? Well the Bible tells us in Acts 11:26: "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." Not Hancock christians.

If we are worthy to wear the name Christian we must act like Christ for that's what the name means. If we profess to be like Christians and are not, then we are erring children of God and not worthy to wear the name Christian.

In the scripture above Christ promised to save the church. Eph. 5:25: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

Husbands, do you love your wives that much? You are commanded to.

Let's talk some more about the name. Acts 4:11-12 says, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." It says there is no other name given whereby we can be saved, so that excludes me and any other man or woman. You know we have women priests now. God will condemn all such. Our women are very, very important, but they have their place.

I pose this question: couldn't or shouldn't he save it, **the church**? Of course, he died for it. It was his bride. It was and is his house. It was the house of God. I Tim. 3:15-16 says, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

I Tim. 6:15 tells us he is King of kings and Lord of lords, so we could not have a king without a kingdom. But we do have a kingdom; Col. 1:13 tells us so, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" where all spiritual blessings are (Eph. 1-3).

Now membership in this kingdom of Christ is the highest office. Mat. 11:11: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Here Jesus was speaking of John the Baptist, or John the baptizer.

Furthermore, we are all one in Christ Jesus. I Cor. 12:13: "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." This is a fulfillment of Jesus in John 3:5 where it says "Except a

man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The Spirit is the teacher and water is the element. We can't be born of the lesser—it has to be the greater. Hence water is the element.

Of course, faith, repentance and confession precede baptism. In fact, unless the three steps precede baptism, it's not baptism: it would simply be immersion without salvation.

Why would anyone deny God's word? If we don't confess him in this world we will have to at the end of this world, but it will be too late then for salvation. Phil. 2:9-12 says, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." And in Rom. 14:11: "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." We must confess him.

Now, we ought to be honored to wear the name of Christ. In I Pet. 4:16 it says, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

Nineteen hundred years ago 3,000 souls were added to the church in one day. And the disciples went every where preaching the word - Acts 8:4.

If I offered a thousand dollars to every one I came across to let me baptize them, they would wear me out very soon. Of course, I can't do that. But Christ offers so much, much more—he offers eternal salvation.

As I said the disciples went everywhere preaching the word, **the** seed of the kingdom where Christ is king. Nineteen hundred years ago Christ blessed the members: called them his children. Do you believe for one minute that Christ has some out of his kingdom or church? Remember,

the church is his bride. The answer is no. Mat. 15:13: "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Nineteen hundred years ago it had one God for her father, one son for her savior, one spirit for her teacher, one church for her membership, one book for her standard. Do we need more today? We do not!

Again I call our attention to Mat. 15:13. Can we have the same today without addition or subtraction. If not, then why not? The bare facts are, we can and do have such a church. Christ built it, gave it a seed for every land and country. Dan. 2:44 says it will stand forever. Again I call your attention to Gen. 1:11-12.

Now, I am very fond of golden bantam sweet corn. Suppose I grow it for a few years in America, in Barry County; then I decide to move to Old Mexico. What am I going to do? That's simple. I'll just take the same sweet corn seed and plant it in Old Mexico. What will I get? Well you know. I'll get the same thing I got in Barry County. I could carry this to other countries and what would I have? I would have the same thing. And the word of God will do the same. You plant the unaltered word of God in an honest heart and it will bring forth the same thing **every time**: a child of God.

Now I warn us again, God is no polygamist and he doesn't intend for us to be either. Eph. 4-5 says one Lord, one faith, one baptism. And Rom. 8:16-18 says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Friends, I beg of you just like Paul did his Jewish brethren in Rom. 12:1 when he said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Why all this? II Cor. 5:10-11, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that

every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”

Jesus stands at the door of your heart, begging to come in. Won't you let him in today? Mat. 24:35 tells us “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (verse 36:) But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. (Continuing with verses 37-42:) But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”

Friends, which one will you be - the one taken or the one left?

Remember, you can't do wrong by doing right; you can't do wrong by doing just what God said.

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CLEANSING BLOOD OF CHRIST

Good morning America! This is November 14, 1977. The sermon that we want to talk about at this time is the Cleansing Blood of Christ. By way of introduction we think back to the old song, "There is Power in the Blood." People accuse us all the time of preaching water salvation. There is nothing in the world any more untrue than that. Anyone knows that there is no power in the water. It is the powers of God.

What about Naaman in the long ago when he had the leprosy? The little maiden told him to go over to the people of God and the prophet of God would tell him how to get rid of it. When the prophet told him to go down and dip himself seven times in the River Jordan Naaman fussed and he fumed. He didn't want to go. Finally he came to himself and went. Now if there is anything in the water, why did it take seven times for him to dip to cleanse his leprosy? Well it was only the powers of God that could cleanse that leprosy. If there was anything in the water he could have been cleansed the first time, the second time, third time, fourth time, surely undoubtedly the fifth or sixth time; but it took the seventh time. Why? Because God told him to dip himself seven times. That is, God told him through the prophet and it was the powers of God. Today it is only the powers of God that can take away sin. And so he has given a law for us to obey and we come in contact with the blood of Christ. So there is power in the blood of Jesus Christ. Much power!

Let me give you something about our physical body for just a minute. We have a little heart in our chest that pumps the blood through our veins 24 hours a day. You

may not think this is right but you look it up and you'll find out it is: this little heart pumps about 6,000 pounds of blood in one day. It's a powerful little pump, I'll tell you that for sure. We carry about one pint of reserve blood in our body. Now what if we lose the blood in our body? Do we live? We certainly don't. So the life is in the blood and the little heart keeps us going. Too many times people will put their hand up to their chest and say "I got something right here." Now friends that little blood pump has nothing to do with our salvation. It was made to keep this body going—this physical body. It pumps the blood 24 hours a day for us. We would soon die if we didn't have any blood. Or if that little pump stops, we die immediately. But now, is there power in the blood and God forbade people to eat blood—he has throughout the ages of time—he forbade them to eat

I want you to turn back with me to Deuteronomy and read a verse or two concerning this blood. Now there's life in the blood and God had forbid people to eat blood—he has throughout the ages of time—he had forbid them to eat blood and the reason why is that the blood is the life. Leviticus, the 17th chapter tells us that.

But now I am reading to you from Deut. 12:23: "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh. Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water." So back in the olden time, God forbade it. And he says in the next verse: "Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, **and with thy children after thee**, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord." So then we cannot eat blood. And somebody says, well now, is that binding on us today?

I've known of people today making blood pudding. Oh that's the wrong thing to talk about, isn't it? You will remember that they had a lot of trouble when the church was established 1900 years ago, wanting to keep the old law and go back and do the things that were under the old law. They thought they ought to mix that up with the new. Jesus taught us plainly that you couldn't put new wine in old bottles when he was here on earth in

his personal work. But what does he say about this in Acts, the 15th chapter, verse 20. Here it is: "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood."

Now the same command that was given back in Moses' time, Acts 15:21-29, "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. Then pleased it the apostles (which shows this dispensation in which we live) and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. (Now they're going to tell them the same things that he wrote to them about.) For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."

So there we have it. A specific command not to eat the blood of animals. So we cannot use it today. That's why we bleed our animals before we dress them and put the meat away. It just isn't the way God intended us to do; that is, eat blood.

Now then, let's read something in the 20th chapter. We'll find out what Paul told them at the time he was going

to depart. Reading to you from the 20th chapter of Acts, the 25th verse: "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 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.**" And he told them, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

So he completely forbid them to eat blood and he told them that the church was purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ. That's why it is not permissible for us to eat blood today.

Let's study a little bit back during the early times. Remember when Cain and Abel—the first two that we know anything about after Adam and Eve were created; the sons of Adam and Eve—were to offer a sacrifice to God? Well, of course, when we study the scripture we find it was to be an animal sacrifice. Abel brought a sacrifice, an excellent one that was acceptable unto God. Cain decided that he was a tiller of the ground and he wouldn't bring a blood sacrifice. Now let's just run over here and see what the writer of the Hebrew letter had to say about it. Reading to you from Heb. 11:4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."

Now there was Cain's sacrifice—a good sacrifice; but it was not a blood sacrifice. And he said that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice so we know by that statement that Cain's sacrifice was a good sacrifice, but it was the fruit of the ground. Why wouldn't God accept it? Because he told them to offer a blood sacrifice. Abel offered a blood sacrifice according to the commandments of God, but Cain thought that something else would do just as well and therefore he offered the fruit of the ground, but God

rejected it. Because of that he was angry and killed Abel. So we have the first death in the land, and we still have it going on.

Man seems to plan, working all the time, making some kind of machinery, some kind of gun or some kind of explosive to kill everybody that they can get to rather than trying to live as they ought to live.

We have a story in Gen. 22:1-19 of Abraham and Isaac. You remember what the story was. I would suggest that you turn to Genesis, the 22nd chapter, and read the entire chapter. You'll find the story of Abraham and Isaac. You'll remember previous to that God had told Abraham that through him and his seed all the nations should be blessed. Abraham and Sarah had no son. But through the miraculous powers of God, he gave them the son—Isaac. Here God commanded Abraham. The Bible says that he did test Abraham by telling him to take his son Isaac into the mountains and offer him as a sacrifice. You know as they went on their way they had the wood and they had the knife and they had all the things that were necessary. The son began to get a little suspicious, I suppose, and he said, "Father, here is all these materials to go, but where is the sacrifice?" And Abraham said, "God will provide." Now that's the lesson we should get out of this. If God said he would do a thing, he will do it.

God will provide the necessary things for us. He has provided the necessary things for us here on earth—for our well being here, our physical being, but he has also provided for us the spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Remember that he had promised Abraham that through him and his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Now he commanded him to take his son up to Mount Moriah and offer him as a sacrifice upon the altar. And Abraham went along to do that and when he bound Isaac and put him on the altar and drew his knife to take his life, the angel said for him not to do it. "And he said...for now I know that thou fearest God."

Now this was a blood sacrifice that Abraham was going to offer: his only son. Did God provide for him? Ab-

raham had told Isaac that God would provide! Well, he looked and there was a ram with his horns caught in the bushes. He went and took the ram and offered it upon the altar as a sacrifice to God.

The institution of the passover is further proof of the importance of the blood. You remember when the children of Israel were in bondage down in Egypt, God promised to bring them out. He told the people of Israel to go in the house and stay in the house. There is a great lesson in that. I can imagine it was hot in that country and somebody asked why they had to stay in that old house all night with the doors shut; they would smother to death. But God told them to go in the house and stay there that night. Well does that mean anything to us according to the time that we should become a child of God in the house of God in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ? We should stay in that church and live the Christian life throughout our entire lives.

God told them to stay in the house and he told them to put blood on the two side posts on the lintels; if they obeyed, God would pass over them. Now let's remember this was all according to God's divine plans. And you know what happened? What was going to happen that night? God was going to pass over the land and destroy all of the first born of the Egyptians: all of their animals and all of everything they possessed (that is the first born of all they possessed). But the ones that would go in the house and stay in the house and put the blood on the lintels, God would pass over them and save their first born. Now all this was a signification of the time that Jesus Christ would come and die upon the cross. And it's pointing to the time, to the very time, that God promised Abraham that he and all the nations of the earth would be blessed. It required a blood sacrifice. And so Jesus finally came to earth and died upon the cross and gave us a genuine blood sacrifice. He purchased the church with his own blood.

Now then in II Pet. 1:3 we have this statement concerning this thing of being a divine institution: "Ac-

ording as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

Then he starts out telling us how “...beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”

The only way that we can keep from falling then is to follow the simple commandments that God has given us of divine institution—divine calling—and the glory and the virtue that he has given us means simply the purity of life that he wants us to live.

Now back to the passover, the children of Israel obeyed. Not a single death was among them. In this we have a question: what if they had failed to put the blood on the lintels of the post? Or what if they had failed to go in the house and stay? Suppose we try to get by without blood being applied? There is no way!

Turn to II Thes. 1:7-9: “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel...”

What will happen to us? Well we’re going to be left out. We just leave off the blood when we fail to be baptized into Christ. When we’re baptized into Christ is when we come in contact with the spiritual blood of Jesus Christ. It

was the supreme sacrifice that God had promised throughout the years. And all through the years, from Abraham's time on when he offered his son and then put the ram on the altar instead of his son, there has been a blood sacrifice.

That is the only thing in the world that will be acceptable to God.

The sealing of the old covenants with blood bears out the importance of blood in God's plan. Ex. 24:7-8, "And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

So they had a blood covenant and it was ordained of God and that's the only way it could be then and the only way it can be today. We have to have the blood of Jesus Christ applied to us and there's no other way.

Paul spoke of this ceremony in Heb. 9:19-20: all the tabernacle and vessels of the ministry were sanctified and sealed with the blood of animals. All the Jewish system was surrounded by blood sacrifices, yet they could not take away sin.

In Heb. 10:1-4, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year."

So it takes nothing less than the blood of Jesus Christ today—the perfect sacrifice. He offered his body once for all, shed his blood upon the cross and purchased the church with his own blood; and he does not have to do that any more.

Here Paul was commenting on the old law. These sacrifices were offered year by year. All they offered could

never take away the sin. What was the purpose then? It just moved forward the weight of sin from year to year. At the end of the year they just started over. The ones that kept this faithful, did the blood of Christ apply? It certainly did. The first covenant was dedicated with blood. The high priest went in once a year. This priest was not perfect. But do we have one today? We certainly do. This high priest didn't offer the blood of animals for his sin. He had none. For the sin of the people, what did he offer? He offered his own blood and then ascended into heaven in the presence of God. What for? Well the conclusion is: without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Heb. 9:22. So Jesus went into heaven to intercede for you and for me. And Christ's blood was shed for human redemption.

Isaiah was prophesying to the time that Jesus would come into the world to cleanse the world of all unrighteousness. Isa. 53:1-9, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

So according to this, the way man counts beauty of people, our Lord was not a beautiful man. But he's definitely talking about the Lord.

Continuing with verse 3, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

“He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” Isa. 53:8-9

So here we have a picture of Isaiah prophesying the time that Jesus would die upon the cross and what was going to happen for us.

Zechariah tells us about the former sea and the hinder sea. Zech. 13:1, “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

Now then what about that day? The next chapter says, beginning with the 6th verse:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be **one Lord, and his name one.**”

Now friends all of this confusing religion in the world today was never intended by God. His name should be one and his blood goes to the hinder sea to all the people who lived under that dispensation of time—under Moses time and all other times up to the time of Christ. And it goes to the forward sea—that’s reaching up here 1900 years to us. We can still come in contact with the blood of Christ by our obedience to the gospel. And it was for sin and for uncleanness, the prophecy has been fulfilled. Hence the song:

“There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emanuel’s veins. And sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.”

Now that song is just as true as can be. Christ instituted the Lord’s supper. Mat. 26:28. He was at Jerusalem with the disciples and he took the cup and said “...this

is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Did that mean it had already been shed? It did not. The fundamental fact of the gospel is Christ died for our sins.

I Cor. 15:1-8, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, **unless ye have believed in vain.** For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time."

Remember that this was Paul writing the letter to the Corinthian brethren and he said, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, **unless ye have believed in vain.**"

So we must accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. We live in it. We stand in it. We are saved by it and there is no other way.

Now then, let's see what else we might find. In Rom. 5:8, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Is that not in perfect harmony with all the rest of it?

Reading to you now from Eph. 2:11-12, "**Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are**

made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

Now I don't know how to make it any plainer than that. That we're baptized into Christ where we come in contact with his blood. Jesus purchased the church with his own blood.

Now then, go with me to I Pet. 1:18-25, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

I wouldn't know how in the world we could misunderstand such statements as that. The gospel is preached by the word of God sent down from heaven.

Now then what do we have in this? In Eph. 1:7, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” Now for somebody to say you can be saved without the blood of Jesus Christ, there must be something wrong with their thinking.

Rev. 7:14 says, “And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

The only way in the world we can get rid of our sins is

to have them washed in the blood of the Lamb. Here was John's version of the blood of the Lamb. Every person that respects the Bible will readily admit that man is saved by the blood of Christ.

Now Christ shed his blood for all men. Heb. 2:9 says he tasted death for every man.

Mat. 7:13-14 tells us there is something for man to do. Jesus says to "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

The reason we don't find it: we don't look for it. The reason we don't look for it: we've got our mind cluttered up in all the worldly things of this world. We're doing everything we can think of, doing everything but getting our mind back to where we ought to have it and seeking out that strait and narrow way.

In John 19:34, the soldier pierced his side and what came out? Blood and water. God joined them together. It says whatsoever God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

There is no way today with all the technique and all the science and everything that we've got (and like a famous doctor told me a few years ago) that you can completely separate blood and water. God joined them together and when the soldier pierced Jesus' side, blood and water came out. You **cannot** separate them today.

If we think that we can go to heaven dry shod, we're just kidding ourselves. We're going to have to be buried with our Lord in baptism and that's just plain water. We come in contact with the spiritual blood of Jesus Christ and it's the blood that takes away our sins. What was it that took away the leprosy of Naaman that we talked about a short time ago? Was it the water in the River Jordan, the old muddy Jordan? Why he thought the other rivers were a lot better but it didn't do him any good. When he obeyed God—dipped himself seven times—he came up and his flesh was like a young child's. What was it that cleansed his

leprosy? It was the powers of God. It wasn't in the water of the River of Jordan or it would have cleansed the first time he dipped himself.

Man must come through Christ's death, the place where his blood was shed. And we only can do that by *being baptized into his death. It is necessary again for me to bring our attention to Rom. 6:3-4, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*

Now to further clinch the thing, he says "...if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."

The promises then if we're dead with Christ, that is we're dead to this old sinful world, we're buried with him where we can get rid of all our past sin and then we live a life that he would have us to live, we could die and go home to heaven and bask in the sunshine of God's eternal love. It is just as plain as that.

Baptism is to put us in contact with Christ's blood. There is no other way. God joined faith with baptism and all the stewing and crying of men today and preaching against it, it won't change it one iota. There's no way under the shining canopies of heaven to change the word of God. It doesn't make any difference what we make it appear like, it's been changed, added or taken from, it doesn't change it one bit.

John 12:48 says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." We just as well make up our minds that we're going to have to follow God's word if we want to be saved in the afterwhile.

Now on the day of pentecost when all the apostles had

been preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, they spoke in cloven or forked tongues (cloven tongues means forked tongues) they were speaking in 17 different nationalities. There were 12 apostles preaching all at the same time and every man heard them in his own language. Now they weren't talking in an unknown blabbering around, they were talking in an unknown language. In other words, different languages of the world. One didn't know the other language no more than I know German, Italian or any other kind you might name. But then finally Peter stood up with the 12 and he preached unto them the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ and he said the one you have crucified, God has resurrected from the dead and set him on his own right hand. Let's turn back and read Acts, the 2nd chapter and the 36th verse. I think it would be important to us at this time that we might read that and find out exactly what the apostle Peter said for fear I don't quote it as it should be quoted verbatim.

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

And when they heard this statement they realized that they had crucified the Lord of glory and God had raised him up; the one that they had crucified had been made both Lord and Christ, and they realized that they needed to do something about it.

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:37

That's the greatest question that ever fell from the lips of mankind: "**What must I do to be saved?**"

Now then, what did they do? "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:38-39

That promise extends to us 1900 years since Peter

spoke those words. And then he said (verse 40), "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."

And you tell me today there's nothing to do but just say, Lord, Lord? Friends we've got to take hold of the gospel chain that ascended from heaven to earth and believe it and obey it and come in with the promises that God has promised: "...the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And that baptism is simply for the remission of our past sins and God will add us to the church. Maybe it would be well if we read the word at this time.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

"And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

"And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Everyone then that would accept the gospel, believe it and obey it, God would forgive their sins and add them to the church. The Lord Jesus was sent to purchase the church (Acts 20:28, as we gave you awhile ago).

Ananias commanded Saul to be baptized to wash away his sins. Acts 22:16

There was Saul that persecuted the church and had authority from the priests and scribes of Jerusalem to go down and kill everyone, bind them, bring them back to

Jerusalem. The Lord appeared to him on the way to Damascus. Many people will tell you today he appeared to **him and knocked him down. He did no such thing.** He said that he fell down in humbleness as he cried out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

He realized there was something miraculous coming over him. It was the Lord Jesus Christ and he could see him and he went blind looking upon the face of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He went into Damascus blind and prayed for three days and three nights and Ananias came in and said Brother Saul arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord. And his sight was restored unto him, his sins were forgiven and he immediately went to preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified, the very one he had been trying to destroy.

Why did Paul do all that? Because he was a Pharisee, he was raised up in the Jewish religion, and he thought it was right. He didn't realize that the law had been changed, that there was a new gospel to preach. Paul became one of the greatest apostles of all of them, or at least he wrote more books than any of the rest of them for us.

Now then Ananias commanded Paul to be baptized and wash away his sins. Acts 22:16

The Lord's blood was shed to purchase the church. Acts 20:28

This puts something else together: the church and the blood.

What God has joined together, let no man put asunder. It took all of Christ's blood to purchase the church. Can we reason we can be saved out of the church? Separate and apart from the blood bought institution? Friends, there is no way.

Can we think for one minute that all the churches in the land, that were made by man, organized by man, named after man, would be any thing comparable to the church that Jesus died for? If God loved us so much, sent his only begotten Son to die upon the cross to purchase the church with his own blood, then is it an insignificant organization?

Listen to Paul writing to Timothy.

I Tim. 3:15, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

He purchased the church with his own blood, so how can we say that one church is just as good as another? It is not! The church and the body are one and the same thing. Col. 1:18 Jesus died for the church. He's going to come back and take it unto himself.

So we have the cleansing blood of Christ that puts us in Christ. The church was cleansed by the blood of Christ; it's a pure church and if we will live and obey the commandments that are contained in the gospel, believing in God with all our heart, believing in Christ with all our heart, believing in the gospel with all our heart, confessing his name before men, being buried with him in baptism (**sprinkling and pouring will not do**—we must be buried with him in baptism), then God will forgive us our sins, add us to the church here on earth, add our name to the Lamb's book of life and start watching over us. I Pet. 3:12. Will you obey the gospel today, is my prayer.

God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

CHAPTER XX

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD

Good morning America. This is a good morning. This is Monday morning, November 14, 1977. Our sermon today is "Blessed are the Dead," taken from Revelation 14:13. If it were not for this verse, life here on earth would certainly be miserable. Through this verse we have all the promises that anyone as a child of God could want.

Joshua says, "Choose you this day whom you will serve." So today is the day of salvation to everyone who wants to accept it. Pilate, when Jesus was before him before his crucifixion, said, "What shall we do with the Christ, the Son of the Living God?"

Now, what will we do with him today?

Pilate had to answer his own question by condemning him to death. But what are we going to do with him today? In the day man was driven from the garden, Gen. 2:17, death became a reality. Now let's read that and see what we can find.

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Now they understood and remembered that when they ate of that tree of knowledge of good and evil, they were going to die. What kind of a death was it? Well it was a separation from God—a spiritual death on that occasion. They didn't die physically but also he brought physical death into the world. Death became a reality on that very day that they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And God drove them from the garden and put great Cherubims at the garden eastward, that they could not return. There was a tree of life in that garden and that tree

of life is restored over in the heavenly kingdom. We can find that from the Revelation letter.

Now someone is ready to ask the question, how can we understand all this?. Lets look at Eph. 3:3, "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

So we have the word of God written so that we can read and understand, and it was guided forever by the Holy Spirit of God. The apostles and others were guided to write it and it is authentic so we can depend upon it because God cannot lie. God has told us all these things: about the things in the past and things that are to come.

But now lets read that verse in Rev. 14:13. It says, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

So we find there that if we want to have salvation we have to die in the Lord. Of course we've pointed out in many lessons that we must be in Christ where all of the spiritual blessings are and that we get into Christ by being baptized into him. There is no other way.

It doesn't matter what man tells you over the radio and television—that all you have to do is believe and touch the radio and you'll be saved—it doesn't say that. And the Bible doesn't teach it. That's man's idea.

We ought to ask ourselves the question, What shall I do to be saved? That was the greatest question that ever fell from the lips of man on the day of Pentecost or any other day. And many other days the same question was asked. The Philippian jailer asked the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" So we all want to know what to do to be saved.

But now there's a plurality of death in this world that man was condemned to when God drove them out of the

garden after he had told them “for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” They were separated from God in the garden. This was a spiritual death, so to speak. The temporal life was separated but their spirits were separated too. And death means a separation. There were three deaths that took place: they were separated from God; they were separated from the tree of life that they could have eaten of and lived forever; then later they were subject to physical death. Physical death only takes us to where we can live with God again or be cast away unto eternal punishment.

In I Cor. 15:22 it says, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

In Rom. 5:12 it says, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

Heb. 9:27 says, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (This **men** was plural, meaning all of mankind.)

There is no use trying to point out the miseries, the heartaches and the sorrow as the death angel passes over. So when death comes upon us and we have to give up our loved ones, of course, we’re sorry about it and there is no way of erasing that sorrow. We just can’t do it, but you know in that great beyond we won’t have that because it plainly tells us in Revelation that all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, that former things have passed away.

Now death also is spoken of as the grizzly monster. That which separates us from all that we love and hold so dear.

Who doesn’t dread death? But how grand are the words of Rev. 14, ...“Blessed are the dead...”

Now we remember the story of David and his son—the illicit son that he had by Uriah’s wife when he stole her and sent Uriah to the battlefield to have him killed, and he had a son. Because of this son that he had from this woman, God took the son and would not allow him to have him. So there were about eight days that David lay upon the ground while the boy was sick, stricken by the fever of God

that he prayed to God that he would spare him. But he would not spare him. He took the boy's life to punish David and other things I may not know, but anyway, when the son died, David got up and washed himself and took food. His servants asked him, How is it when the son was alive thou vexed thyself? And he said, He is dead and I can't bring him back, but I can go to him.

Now when we have loved ones that have gone on to the great beyond the only way in the world for us to be with them is to make our preparation to go and be with them because we cannot bring them back. There's no way that we can. Now some think that the Bible and this thing is just a fairy tale and a non-believer passes it over as a product of man's desire. But the child of God finds this passage to be an inspiration second to none. Everyone's desire is to go to heaven so far as I know. Surely, undoubtedly, it would be. But then there is only one way that we can go to heaven and we have the assurance that we can go to heaven if we do the will of the Lord.

John said, "And I heard a voice from heaven." I want to tell you right here that this voice was not of man; it was the voice from heaven that told John to write: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord...that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." Rest from what? Rest from our labors. How can we rest unless we've labored? We normally don't get tired unless we work here in this world or else we walk a long way. We get tired and then we can sit down and rest. But you know he's talking about the rest of life on the other side of this world—after we have passed on.

Blessed are the dead—now notice again he says: blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. The only way that we can hope to have that eternal rest and rest from our labors is the fact that we work in the vineyard of the Lord in this life as we live here on the earth.

In Mat. 20:1, it says, "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard." He was talking about the church of the Lord Jesus Christ when he

said the Master's vineyard. So we work in the Master's vineyard today. Somebody said, "Do you think, Brother Hancock, that you can earn your salvation—you can pay for it that way?" A thousand times no. We couldn't make a down payment on it. But the fact that God wants us to do that is all that is necessary. We do what he says and God will be pleased with us.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. When death strikes, how wonderful these words are. Blessed are the dead.

Then suppose that somebody dies that is not a Christian—is not in the Lord. It's a hard thing to stand before the body, over the one and try to give comfort to the ones that are left behind over someone that has never obeyed the gospel, never obeyed the commandments of God, that never lived a Christian life. But if he or she is a Christian, we have those blessed things that David said. We can't bring them back, but we can go to them.

Remember that before Gen. 2:17 became a reality, man was in the garden with God. He walked with him; he talked with him; he had communion and was a friend to God. Did they not know the commandments that God had commanded them? Well they certainly did. When Satan came along and questioned Mother Eve about it, she just openly and immediately told him what the Lord had told her: that they could eat of all the trees of the garden of Eden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but in that day they ate thereof they would surely die. What did Satan say? "Ye shall not surely die." Why did he do this? Well he knew better than that. He lied to them by appealing to her, by pointing out the trees with the fruit on them and how good it was and how it appealed to the eye and how it would be good for food; and so far as I know, it didn't make them the least bit sick.

There wasn't a thing wrong with the fruit, but it was displeasing to God. You tell me that she didn't understand the commandment. She certainly did. God had given her the commandment and she told Satan what they were. But Satan fooled her by adding a word or appearing to add a

word to God's Word. There is no way under the sun whatever that we can add or take away from God's word—it will not change it one iota. We cannot change it and God will not change it for us because his law is fixed. Whosoever turneth away from hearing the law, even his prayers shall be an abomination in the sight of God.

I Pet. 3:12 says, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

So God cannot, will not, walk and talk with sinners. But Adam and Eve were separated from God—they were spiritually dead from God. God could no longer walk in the garden and talk with them.

The day is coming when all will be separated from God unless we make the proper preparations in this world. The provisions of preparation are made that we might have that blessed hope, that blessed benediction to us: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." So we must obey the Lord in this life and serve him and worship him according to his will.

Now here is a scene of the great judgment day in the afterwhile from Revelation 20, beginning with the 11th verse.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

I'll tell you friends, I do not want any part of that fire

business.

Again in Rev. 14:13, he is talking of the physical dead in the Lord. Death is here a separation of body and spirit. The spirit does not die; the spirit goes back to God who gave it. The physical body dies and that simply means that we are separated from the spirit and the spirit goes back to God.

In Eccl. 12:7 we have this report: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

In Gen. 2:7, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Friends, our soul is never going to die. God never intended for it to die. In life here we are a combination of dust, earth and spirit. The spirit came from God. James makes it very complete and simple in Jam. 2:26, "...the body without the spirit is dead..." Our text then has to do with spiritual death.

But what does the word "blessed" mean? It means, Webster says, "to enjoy happiness, bliss, with blessings highly favored." So on that other side if we die in the Lord, we're going to have the highly favored blessings of God. It means we can enjoy it throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

When Paul wrote to the Philippian brethren he said it was better on the other side. Was that what he said? No. That's what he said all right, but he said it was **far** better on the other side. So we know today there is a far better place to go than this old world with all of its sorrows and sighs and disappointments, sickness, death and heartaches of all kinds.

John would have us to know the ones he was speaking of are enjoying Paradise. They are happy now. What about Lazarus? You remember the story of the rich man and Lazarus: that Lazarus died and was carried to Abraham's bosom by the angels. Lying at the rich man's gate, desiring to be fed from the crumbs of his table, full of sores, there was no one to comfort him. But the dog came and licked his

sores. That was all the doctor he had—some dog that came and licked his sores. But he died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom.

Then finally it says the rich man died and was buried. So no doubt they made great lamentation over him and put a great lot of flowers on him and everything else that they do today over a rich man—what they call a rich man in this world. But a man might have possessions of this world and be out of Christ and be the poorest man on earth. What we want to be is in Christ whether we have any of this world's goods or whether we haven't.

Here was the rich man who lifted up his eyes in hell. He looked afar off. He saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom and he said, Father Abraham, send Lazarus that he may dip his finger in water and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame. But what was the conversation back and forth? Well Abraham told him he couldn't come. There is a great gulf fixed. We can't go from here nor can you come up here. Well then he said, Father Abraham send Lazarus back that he might warn my five brothers. Abraham told him, Son, remember that they have Moses and the prophets—let them hear them. Then he said, Father Abraham, if one should rise from the dead, they would listen. But Abraham said, no, if they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they wouldn't hear one that rose from the dead.

So there was no way of escape. There was no way of getting out of that place and he or we cannot even be a missionary when we get over there. We'll be wanting them to send somebody to give us help or we will be wanting them to send somebody back to earth to tell them not to come to this place. But it will be exactly like it was in the time of the rich man and Lazarus. Does this mean that all that die will be happy? A thousand times no.

We can see by this that everyone who dies is not going to be happy because they are not going to heaven. They are going to the Hadean world, to the place that is suffering. But now Lazarus went to Abraham's bosom. In other words, we are not all going to be happy. There is going to

be a lot of people going the wrong way. In fact, Jesus said broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be that go in thereat. Please read Luke 16, the 19th verse and the rest of the chapter.

Question? Who are they that die in the Lord? Well it is very simple to find out who they are that die in the Lord. Paul gives us the answer to this in Romans 6:3 and 4. Now we'll turn here and read these verses of scripture telling exactly how we can get into the Lord.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

Now people fuss and fume about this. They won't believe it; they won't teach it on the radio and television and all of those places. They say you just have to believe, that all you do is touch the radio and you'll be saved. But that isn't what the Bible says. It says the ones that are going to be saved are the ones that are baptized into Christ.

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. 22:14 When we are baptized into Jesus Christ, we're baptized into his death. That's where we come in contact with the blood of Christ.

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Rom. 6:4

This is a new life—a new way to walk. Then be sure that we do not misunderstand what baptism is and what it requires. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. 6:5-6

Crucified means to cut off. So the old body of sin was cut off when we were buried with our Lord in baptism and raised to walk a new life. Now belittle that if you will. It won't do a bit of good in the world because it is going to judge us in the last day and we are going to be standing before the great judgment seat and if we haven't been

baptized into the Lord, we are going to be cast away.

Blessed are they that die in the Lord. That's the way we enter into the Lord. There is no other way to get into the Lord. Simple, straight-forward manner, in unmistakable terms: one is **baptized** into the Lord. He is buried into his death, raised to walk a new life.

Col. 2:12 says, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

We've got to have faith in God. But when we are raised up with him from the waters of baptism—after we've been buried with Christ—there is where we come in contact with the spiritual blood of Jesus Christ. No other place can we come in contact. It's not the water; but the water is the element that God uses for us to obey him with. It is the simplest plan in the world. Any one that can't understand that he that believeth **and** is baptized is bad off indeed. And if they can't understand that, God will never hold us responsible for our acts here on earth. He undoubtedly wouldn't hold a man or a woman or a boy or a girl responsible that wasn't able to understand that.

But again Paul says in I Cor. 4:15, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."

Now there is a difference in begotten and born. Jesus says in John 3:5, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now that simply means that water is the element and the Spirit is the teacher and they were born of that. But the begotten, Paul says, I have begotten you (what?) ...through the gospel. And that's the only way. When we begin to hear the gospel preached, begin to read the Bible for ourselves, we begin to say that we have to have faith in Christ. We have to have faith in God the Father and we have to have faith in the Holy Spirit as the revealer of the word. And then we have faith in what the word says for us to do. Then we are being begotten by the word of God. But being begotten is altogether different from being born.

We all came into this world exactly alike. We were begotten of our father and mother and, normally speaking, in about nine months we were born from our mother. There is no other way for us to get into this world. And there's no other way to get into Christ, except to be baptized into him. It doesn't make any difference what the preachers say on radio and television. They can just harp about it all the time, saying that you can believe in him, that baptism is non-essential. Yet it is a commandment of God, and David in the long ago said all of the commandments of God are righteous commandments. And so if they are the righteous commandments of God, then they're right. That's exactly what that means. Begotten does not mean to be born again.

Some say we are born from above and of course we are born from above. We couldn't be born from any other way. The message came from above and Jesus said except you be born of water and the spirit, you cannot enter into heaven—this means from above. The message came from above. It was revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit and they wrote it down for us. So with such being true, we are made to appreciate the great commission of Mat. 28:18 and 20 where Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Gost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Now here is the only place in the whole Bible where we find the ceremony that we are to use in baptizing people. It is the only command that I know of that says we have to do it all in the name of the three at the same time. When we go to baptize some people somebody comes along and jumps off the track and says just baptize in the name of Christ. Well of course the Bible says something about being baptized in the name of Christ and leaves off the Holy Spirit and the Father; but it simply means by the authority of Jesus Christ.

Here by the authority of Jesus Christ it says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

I wouldn't give a plug nickle for anyone that baptized any other way or for the fact that their baptism would be valid. It would not be valid. This is the way God said it. He only said it once, but how many times does he have to say anything to make it so?

Did that commission come from above? It certainly did. Again this is what Paul meant in Titus 3:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Washing of regeneration.

Now friends we came into the world when we were born into the world. I heard just yesterday morning a man saying on radio and television from Springfield, Missouri, that we were born in sin—that we were just naturally born in sin. There is not a word of truth in it. We are not born in sin. We go off in sin when we transgress God's law and we don't transgress God's law until we come to the years of accountability and then we go off into the world.

Ecclesiastes said to the young, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. Ecc. 12:1 The reason he wants us to do that when we are young is he doesn't want us to leave the mercies of God and go off in sin and wait until we get old and can't do anything and then come back.

Of course, he never put an age limit on when one could come back, because in Rev. 22:17 it says, "...whosoever will, let him (come and) take the water of life freely." I've baptized some people that were 80 years old and they lived to be 90 and then had the privilege and opportunity of preaching the funeral service for them when they passed away. But God took them just the same. But that isn't the way God really wants us to do. He wants the young to remember now—right here in the days of their youth when these evil days come not. In other words, if we go off in sin and live in sin all this time and then at the last say, "God, take me!" Although he will do it, he doesn't want us to do it that way—he wants us to begin young, at the age of accountability.

In Eph. 5:23 it has this to say, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. (Remember now that the church and the body are one and the same thing.) Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

Now sometimes the women think when we preach this that we're taking a pot shot at them. That isn't so. I hardly ever read that verse that I don't read the next one which says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." If you're a husband reading this sermon, do you love your wife enough to give your life for her? That's what Jesus did. The church is his bride and he loved it enough to give himself for it.

Now then, what else? "that he might sanctify (that means to set apart) and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." That doesn't mean a thing in the world but hearing the word of God as we already explained before, and it creates faith in our heart so we are being begotten by the word of God; and then he said we are washed.

Well, how are we washed? Washing by the water by the word. Now if that doesn't mean water it doesn't mean anything—it simply means water because there's no other way to make it. God used that to cleanse us and it is by the word. We hear the word, we believe it, we are washed by water. Now then what does that make us? What kind of a church has he got "that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" before him?

Now some say what about the hypocrites in the church? Well, their names have already been taken off the Lamb's book of life. Don't worry about the hypocrites. Worry about yourself.

Does this mean that because we are regenerated that we cannot fall—that if we've been born again we cannot fall? It does not. In I Cor. 9:27 Paul said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any

means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

Now there was Paul guided by the Holy Spirit and he said he had to buffet his body and bring it under subjection or it might be cast away. Now if Paul had danger of that, how in the world do we think that we do not have the same danger? In other words, we should walk in the straight and narrow way.

So we are buried, that the old man of sin might be destroyed. Our sins are forgiven; we start a new life. Rev. 2:10 says, “...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” That’s the answer to the thing—be thou faithful unto death.

But the scripture says “Blessed are the dead.” So being born again, we must accept the responsibility of this new life if we are to live the Christian life. And let us remember while it’s on my mind that we live to die and we die to live if we are a child of God. If we are to die in the Lord and make heaven we must listen to Paul in Titus 2:11-14. Then we may rest from all our labors.

Labor means more than service. It means toil and drudgery. The world has no toil for the Master. But the servant who is in Jesus Christ will have fought a good fight of faith. Then will he be invited to hang his battle-bent armor on the walls of faith; to stack his spiritual weapons in the corner of eternity and to rest with Christ in his kingdom; there to feast forevermore. What else could we want? The tree of life will be restored; the water of life will be restored.

In Titus 2:11-15: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”

So there is the will of God—the way he wants us to live. And the scripture teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. And then we can look for that blessed hope in the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. No wonder we have that great verse in Rev. 14:13, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.”

That tree of life, as I mentioned a moment ago, will be restored; the water of life will be restored; and as we read these words we read that their works do follow them. Yes, our works are going to follow us on to the other side, whatever they may be.

Eph. 2:10, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” If we think there is nothing to do in the master’s vineyard, why we’re sadly mistaken. He gave us commandments. He wants us to walk in them.

The righteous commandments of the Son Jesus Christ in Mat. 6:19 says, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Now have we got our heart and the treasures of our heart laid up to go to heaven? Are we looking forward to heaven? To go there? Are we going through this world without making any preparations to die and, my friend, the preparations for the great judgment day?

Remember, it is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment. Heb. 9:27. There is only one way we can lay our treasures up. We can’t take them with us if we had the whole world bottled down into a gallon bucket,

and then standing with them went up and said, Lord, here's the whole world, I want to buy my salvation. It wouldn't do us one bit of good. It wouldn't be worth a plug nickle.

The only way we can lay up treasures for ourselves in heaven is to send them on. The treasure we lay up in heaven will keep; we have no worry about that. So death may be beautiful and sublimely sweet: a paradise of happiness where we can be with God. The tree of life and the water of life are there at that particular place.

Then if this day you are not a child of God, and if death's grim and forbidding uncertainty has caused you needless grief, we bid you in the name of him who died that you might live to lay hold of eternal life. If you believe that Jesus is the son of God and godly sorrow for past sins has led you to repentance, **then** through baptism you may enter into the Lord Jesus. Then, and **only** then, can you rejoice with the saints of all ages and be sure and certain of the knowledge: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

Will you accept the gospel of Jesus Christ today by having faith in God? Heb. 11:6

Will you have faith in Christ? John 8:24, "if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

Are you willing to turn to him through repentance? Luke 13:3-5 and II Pet. 3:9, Acts 17:34. Repentance toward God and then confess his name before men and be buried with him in baptism for the remission of sins. Then you can say you've been regenerated—you've been washed by the word of God. I beg you to accept it today before it's everlastingly too late.

Remember, God said it; I believe it; that settles it. The Bible is right!

