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# I. The Existence of Angels

- A. Angels are mentioned in 34 books of the Bible for a total of some 273 times (108 times in the Old Testament and 165 in the New Testament).
  - 1. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands" (Psalm 68:17).
  - 2. "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels" (Hebrews 12:22).
  - 3. "Praise Him, all His angels, praise Him, all His hosts!" (Psalm 148:2).

# B. The Origin of Angels

Angels, like everything else in this universe, were made by God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the energy of the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1, 2; 2:1; Nehemiah 9:6; John 1:1-3; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16).

# C. The Method of Their Origin

Angels, like man, were created by a special act of God. They did not evolve into being. "Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts! . . . Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created" (Psalm 148:2, 5).

# D. The Time of Their Origin

"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said . . . Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:1, 4, 7).

# E. The Purpose of Their Origin

- 1. "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him" (Colossians 1:16).
- 2. "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (Hebrews 1:6, KJV).
- 3. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11, KJV).

# II. The Nature of Angels

- A. They are spirit beings (Psalm 104:4; Hebrews 1:7, 14).

  "There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another" (1 Corinthians 15:40).
- B. They are invisible beings.
  While on occasion they do manifest themselves, their normal practice is to remain invisible. Certainly one basic reason for this is to prevent both unsaved and saved men from worshiping them (Romans 1:18-32; Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10; 22:9).
- C. They are innumerable.

God, of course, knows their number, but they are presented to men as uncountable. There may be as many angels as there are stars in the heavens, for angels are associated with the stars (Job 38:7; Psalm 148:1; Revelation 9:1, 2; 12:3, 4, 7-9). If this be so, there would exist untold *trillions* of these heavenly beings.

- D. They possess separate and individual personalities, probably no two alike. They have the three necessary features required of personality:
  - 1. Intelligence (Daniel 9:21, 22; 10:14; Revelation 19:10; 22:8, 9)
  - 2. Will (Isaiah 14:12-15; Jude 6)
  - 3. Emotion—they display joy (Job 38:7; Luke 2:13) and desire (1 Peter 1:12).
- E. Because of Adam's fall, they are superior to men (Psalm 8:4, 5; Hebrews 2:6-11).
  - 1. They are stronger than men.
    - a. "Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word" (Psalm 103:20).
    - b. "Whereas angels, who are greater in power and might . . . " (2 Peter 2:11).
  - 2. They are smarter than men (Daniel 9:21, 22; 10:14).
  - 3. They are swifter than men. "Yes, while I was speaking in prayer . . . Gabriel . . . being caused to fly swiftly, reached me" (Daniel 9:21).
- F. They are, however, inferior to God.
  - 1. They are not omnipresent (Daniel 10:12). The angel here in Daniel 10 was in heaven at the time of Daniel's prayer and was sent by God to aid him.
  - 2. They are not omnipotent (Daniel 10:13; Jude 9). This same angel was experiencing satanic pressure, which hindered him for a full three weeks.
  - 3. They are not omniscient. "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24:36).
- III. The Moral Classification of Angels
  - A. Lucifer instigated a great revolt against Jehovah God (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19).
  - B. The Characteristics of the Faithful Angels
    - 1. Their rank

- 2. The archangel is Michael, whose name means "Who is like God?" This should be contrasted to Satan's evil desires to "be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:14). Michael is mentioned by name on four separate occasions in the Bible.
  - a. He helps a lesser-ranked angel get through to answer Daniel's prayer (Daniel 10:13, 21).
  - b. He will stand up for Israel during the tribulation (12:1).
  - c. He disputes with Satan concerning the dead body of Moses (Jude 9).
  - d. He fights against Satan in the heavenlies (Revelation 12:7).
- 3. Gabriel's name means "The mighty one of God."
  - a. He explains the vision of the ram and goat battle to Daniel (8:16).
  - b. He explains the 70 weeks to Daniel (9:21, ff).
  - c. He predicts the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias (Luke 1:19).
  - d. He predicts the birth of Jesus to Mary (1:26, ff).
  - e. He assures Joseph concerning the purity of Mary (Matthew 1:20).
  - f. He warns Joseph about the plot of Herod (2:13).
  - g. He tells Joseph about the death of Herod (2:19, 20).
  - h. He announces the birth of Christ to the shepherds (Luke 2:9-12).
  - i. He strengthens Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane (22:43).
  - j. He rolls the stone back at Christ's resurrection (Matthew 28:2).
  - k. Other references (Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:3; 12:7; 12:23; 27:23)
- 4. Description of the cherubim (Genesis 3:24; Exodus 25:18-20; Ezekiel 1:4-28; 10:1-22)
  - a. Each has four faces.
    - (1) The face in front is as a man.
    - (2) The face on the right is as a lion.
    - (3) The face on the left is as an ox.
    - (4) The face in back is as an eagle.
  - b. Each has two pairs of wings.
    - (1) One pair spreads out from the middle of the back.
    - (2) The other pair is used to cover the body.
    - (3) These wings make a noise like waves crashing upon the seashore.
  - c. They have the legs of men, but their feet are cloven like calves' feet and shine like burnished brass.
  - d. They have four human hands, with one located under each wing.
- 5. The duties of the cherubim
  - a. They kept Adam from the Tree of Life after the Fall, lest he eat of it and live forever in his sin (Genesis 3:24).
  - b. Prior to his fall, Satan (then known as Lucifer) was the chief cherub angel (Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:14).
- 6. The seraphim (Isaiah 6:1-7)
  - a. They have six wings: two are used to cover their faces, two to cover their feet and two to fly.
  - b. They proclaim in a great chorus the majesty of God, crying out: "Holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" (v. 3).
  - c. The awesome sound of their mighty praises shakes the foundation of the heavenly temple.

- d. Isaiah, the great prophet, views all this in a vision. He is immediately convicted concerning both his sin and the sin of the nation Israel.
- e. He is ministered to by one of the seraphim, who flew over to the heavenly altar and, with a pair of tongs, picked out a burning coal. He then touched Isaiah's lips with it and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged" (v. 7).
- 7. Living creatures (Revelation 4:6-9; 5:8; 6:1, 3, 5, 7)
  - a. John the apostle sees these four standing before the shining crystal sea in heaven surrounding God's throne.
  - b. They are covered with eyes, both in front and behind.
  - c. Each of the four has a different face.
    - (1) One has the face of a lion.
    - (2) One has the face of an ox.
    - (3) One has the face of a man.
    - (4) One has the face of an eagle.
- 8. Ruling angels (Ephesians 1:21; 3:10; Colossians 1:16; 2:10; 1 Peter 3:22). In these passages the following organizational features are mentioned: principalities, powers, thrones, authorities and dominions.
- 9. Guardian angels
  - a. "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10).
  - b. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14).

#### 10. Their appearance

- a. "And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted" (Mark 16:5, KJV).
- b. "His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow" (Matthew 28:3).
- c. "And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments" (Luke 24:4).
- d. "I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire" (Revelation 10:1).
- e. "And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles" (Revelation 15:6, KJV).
- f. "After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory" (Revelation 18:1, KJV).

#### IV. The Work and Ministry of Angels

#### A. Activities in Heaven

1. They worship the person of God (1 Kings 22:19; Psalm 29:1, 2; Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8; 19:4).

- 2. They observe the people of God (Luke 12:8, 9; 15:10; 1 Corinthians 4:9; 11:10; Ephesians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:21; 1 Peter 1:12).
- 3. They inquire into the prophetical plan of God (Daniel 12:5, 6).
- 4. They rejoice in the works of God.
  - a. His work of creation (Job 38:7; Revelation 4:11)
  - b. His work of redemption (1 Timothy 3:16; Revelation 5:11, 12)
- 5. They perform the will of God (Genesis 28:12; Psalm 103:20; 104:4; Daniel 7:10).
- 6. They witness the wrath of God (Revelation 14:10).

#### B. Activities on Earth

- 1. Concerning the saved (Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 22:16). They inform, instruct, and interpret concerning both the will and Word of God. Note the following individuals who received that kind of ministry from angels.
  - a. They protect: "The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them" (Psalm 34:7). "For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11).
  - b. They comfort: "For there stood by me [Paul] this night an angel of the God to whom I belong, and whom I serve, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul' " (Acts 27:23, 24).
  - c. They deliver: "But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them [the apostles] out" (Acts 5:19).
  - d. They minister to the believer at the moment of death: "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22).

### 2. Concerning the unsaved

- a. They judged the Egyptians (Exodus 12:13, 23), Sodomites (Genesis 19:13), Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35) and Herod (Acts 12:23).
- b. They will judge the earth during the Tribulation.
- 3. Concerning Israel
  - a. Angels fought for Israel (Judges 5:20).
  - b. They gave the Law to Israel (Deuteronomy 33:2; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2).
  - c. They seal the 144,000 Israelites (Revelation 7:1-3).
  - d. They will regather faithful Israel (Matthew 24:31).

#### C. Fallen Angels

- 1. Names for fallen angels
- 2. The devil's angels (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:9)
- 3. "The angels who did not keep their proper domain" (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4)
- 4. "Familiar spirits" (Deuteronomy 18:11; Isaiah 8:19; 19:3, KJV)
- 5. Unclean spirits (Matthew 10:1; Mark 1:27; 3:11; 5:13; Acts 5:16; 8:7; Revelation 16:13)
- 6. Evil spirits (Luke 7:21; Acts 19:12, 13)
- 7. Seducing spirits (1 Timothy 4:1)
- 8. Wicked spirits (Luke 11:26)
- 9. Demons. The word daimon is found more than 75 times in the Greek New Testament.

# D. Activities of Fallen Angels

- 1. They oppose God's purpose (Daniel 10:10-14; Ephesians 6:12).
- 2. They execute Satan's program (1 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 9; 16:12-14).
- 3. They disseminate false doctrine (2 Thessalonians 2:2; 1 Timothy 4:1).
- 4. They afflict human beings (Matthew 8:28; 9:33; 17:15, 18; Mark 5:15; Luke 8:27-29).

# E. The Destiny of Unsaved Angels

- 1. They will be judged by Christ and His church (1 Corinthians 6:3).
- 2. They will be cast into the lake of fire forever (Matthew 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

Multiple Scriptures

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- I. Introduction: The Theological Controversy
- II. There are three main views about the form of God's existence:
  - A. The Unitarian, or "Oneness," View. (Commonly referred to as the Jesus Only group.) The unitarian view of the Godhead believes that there is one God existing in three separate personalities or expressions. They believe that when Jesus died on the cross, the Father and Spirit were hanging there as well, embodied in the flesh of Jesus.
  - B. The Dichotomy View. The Dichotomic view of the Godhead breaks God into two parts: flesh and spirit. They hold to a belief that Jesus is the "begotten" Son of God, born in the flesh, and exalted to a God-state of existence. They tend to view the Holy Spirit as God's method of manifesting Himself on the earth.
  - C. The Trinitarian, or Trichotomy, View. The Trinitarians believe that there is one God, existing in three separate and distinct personages—namely the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

# III. The Theological Conclusion

- A. We run into problems with God when we try to think of Him as anything other than as Spirit. John 4:24 says, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."
- B. The description of God in Revelation 4: "Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald" (vv. 2, 3).
  - 1. All you could see were three colors of light: yellow, red and green.
  - 2. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17).
  - 3. "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life'" (John 8:12).

- 4. "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).
- 5. "The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light" (Revelation 21:23).
- C. Measurements of time and space hinder our view of God.
  - 1. We think linear and lunar based upon our tangible existence.
    - a. *Linear* thinking is how we analyze something from point A to point B. It is our concept of size and distance. In order to logically conceive an idea, we have to put it into a linear context.
    - b. Lunar thinking is how we perceive time. We base all time from the daily cycle of the rotation of the moon, otherwise known as a lunar cycle. That is why we can't comprehend the speed of light or the concept of eternity.
  - 2. In order to view God properly, we have to think of Him outside of these parameters and view Him as everywhere at all times.
- D. God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent.
  - 1. *Omnipresent* means "everywhere."
  - 2. Omniscient means "all-knowing."
  - 3. Omnipotent means "all-powerful."
  - 4. An ever-present, all-knowing, all-powerful God can manifest Himself in any form He chooses, in any place of His choice, and He can do this in multiple places at once. This is why it was possible for us to see all three entities of God at the baptism of Jesus.
  - 5. "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Matthew 3:16, 17).
  - 6. God even gave us an emotion to know what He feels like. He could have just as easily created us without love, but in His infinite wisdom, He wanted us to have a reference point to know when it is Him touching us. When we feel love, we feel God. When we consider that God is love, once again, we move outside the parameters of time and space and see God's infinite side. We can easily see how He can be omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. In the same way that love is everywhere, God is everywhere.

#### E. God is like the wind.

- 1. "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). The word *spirit* comes from the Greek word *pneuma* (*pnyoo'-mah*), which means "a current of air, breath or a breeze."
- 2. When we use the word *ghost*, once again we limit the composition of God to our idealistic view of a "Hollywood" concept of a ghost. We see it as a small white cloud that floats from place to place and is approximately the size of a man. The word *spirit* is more like a constant breeze or wind.

3. When you think of God as the wind, consider how easily the wind can go anywhere. Even if you go into a deep cave, there will be oxygen for you to breathe. There is even oxygen in the water, so if you are a fish, you can go to the deepest part of the ocean and the element of air (oxygen) is there also.

# F. How many Holy Spirits are there?

- 1. Obviously the answer is one. No one argues that point. However, doesn't the Holy Spirit dwell in every believer? If there are 40 people in a room and each of them are filled with the Holy Spirit, does that mean there are 40 Holy Spirits in that room? The answer is no. But in fact, the Holy Spirit can be in many places at one time.
- 2. In the same way, it is possible for God to manifest Himself in many places at once. We have to remember, God is everywhere. He can manifest Himself in any form He chooses. He can be a "rock in a weary land" in one place and be a "lighthouse" in another place at the same time. He can show up in the form of a "servant girl" and, on another continent, a "king" at the very same time.

#### G. The Triune Man

- 1. "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness . . .'" (Genesis 1:26).
- 2. This passage is not saying that God has fingers and toes, but instead the apostle Paul makes it clear that we are made in the triune image of God: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
- 3. We are a body, soul and spirit, yet only one entity. If we had a "spirit body" to go with our spirit and soul, we would in fact be able to understand the concept of God more clearly. That is exactly what has been promised to those who choose Christ.
- IV. **Conclusion:** When we view God as a Spirit, and not a limited solid form of any kind, we can easily understand how one God, made up of three personages, can be many places at the same time. There have been many suggested models to illustrate the Godhead. People have tried to use everything from a triangle to an egg to illustrate the three-in-one concept. Perhaps the greatest illustration lies in the concept of Revelation 4—three brightly colored lights overlapping, creating various facets and new colors as they interconnect.

John 8:32; Matthew 18:15-22; Ephesians 4:15

3

#### I. Introduction

- II. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).
  - A. Good relationships and good communication begin with you, not the other person
  - B. A good relationship begins with you taking responsibility for yourself instead of excusing your bad behavior because of what the other person has done.
  - C. The *truth* is the only thing that can make you free, and the truth begins with you being honest with yourself. The truth is that *you*, and no one else, are responsible for your actions.
- III. "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:15-22).
  - A. "Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone" (v. 15).
    - 1. The first stage of healing a hurting relationship is going and talking to the *right* person.
    - 2. Too many times, people vent their frustrations to everyone but the one who upset them.

- B. The reason most people don't speak up is because they are either afraid of hurting the other person, starting an argument or overreacting.
  - 1. What you need to understand is that if you don't talk with the person, this anger will turn into wrath and evil thinking.
  - 2. Ephesians 4:31, 32 says, "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you."
    - a. There is actually more harm done when you don't talk it out than when you do.
    - b. You drain anger by talking it out! Anger has to speak.
    - c. The "silent treatment" does not resolve anger—it only prolongs it and gives it time to grow.
    - d. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.
  - 3. The goal of confrontation is a better relationship.
- C. "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matthew 18:16).
  - 1. Take with you one or two people and try to resolve the conflict.
  - 2. Choose a person who will speak the truth to both of you, without taking sides.
  - 3. The purpose of this mediator is not to help you prove your point. The mediator is only helping both of you to say what you really mean and the other person to hear it properly.
  - 4. Don't pick a mediator who loves to give advice. Advice is not what you need at this point.
  - 5. Sometimes we make the mistake of always trying to fix things when people talk to us. Sometimes people don't want you to fix it; they only want you to listen while they talk it out.
- D. "And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector" (v. 17).
  - 1. Now if you have talked to the person, and have taken a mediator and it still is not resolved, there is a spiritual problem.
  - 2. The role of the church is not to mediate at this point, but to find out why it can't be worked out. The problem is probably not communication.
  - 3. It is more likely that you are dealing with gossip, unforgiveness, a stubborn or haughty spirit, a spirit of strife, and so forth.
- IV. "But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will" (2 Timothy 2:23-26).
  - A. "But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife" (v. 23).
    - 1. There are many things that will hinder your communication. But one of the worst traps we can fall into is quarreling with the people we love and allowing this to become a form of communication.

- 2. Everything that you agree or disagree with does not always merit a response. Sometimes the best thing to say is nothing at all. Pick your battles carefully.
- 3. The word *strife* in Greek is *mache*, meaning "a battle." It is also the root word of *machete*. In other words, talk without cutting down someone.
- B. "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel" (v. 24). Settling your differences is not the same as quarreling.
- C. "... but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition" (vv. 24, 25).
  - 1. The louder a person is, the weaker he or she is. They are hiding their fears and insecurities behind their volume and tones.
  - 2. Proverbs 20:3 says, "Any fool can start a quarrel." It takes no strength to be loud and scary. But it takes *great strength* to be gentle in your correcting.
  - 3. Gentleness is only strength under control.
- D. ". . . if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will" (vv. 25, 26).
  - 1. People who love to quarrel do more speaking on behalf of the devil than they do on behalf of God.
  - 2. Their minds are filled with evil thoughts, their mouths are out of control, and the only will they possess is a stubborn and rebellious one.
  - They don't consider that they are destroying innocent hearts and minds with their quarreling words. They don't seem to even notice that their children are afraid to speak up.
  - 4. They don't seem to notice that their mates can talk to everyone else but them.
  - 5. They don't seem to notice how people patronize them to keep them from getting out of hand.
  - 6. They don't seem to notice that there is no one in their lives who will tell them the truth.
  - 7. These people become manipulators, controllers of the mind and will of others. Mind control is what the Bible calls witchcraft.
  - 8. They are held captive by the devil to do his will. What is the devil's will? He has come to kill, steal and destroy.
- V. "But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ" (Ephesians 4:15).
  - A. "Speaking . . . "
    - 1. Before anything can be resolved, it first has to be spoken!
    - 2. Many times the silent party is doing as much damage as the one who is quarreling, simply because *no one* is speaking the truth.
    - 3. Do not feel proud of your silence when in fact the only reason you didn't speak up was because you were either too stubborn or too scared.

- B. "... the truth in love ... "
  - 1. If we want to improve our relationships, we have to learn how to speak the truth in love.
  - 2. Speaking the truth in love
    - a. One of the greatest tragedies in our families today is lack of models.
    - b. We can't start speaking the truth until we start living the truth.
- C. "... may grow up in all things into Him"
  - 1. Here is the reason most people don't speak the truth in love—immaturity.
  - 2. We are more concerned about being macho, or being right, or being the boss, or being in charge or having the last word. In other words, we are not spiritually mature yet.
- VI. Conclusion: The truth can set you free—if you know it!

Mark 4:26-29

4

#### l. Introduction

- II. "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).
  - A. Two principles in this verse:
    - 1. Faith comes by hearing.
    - 2. Hearing comes by the Word of God.
  - B. Many have quoted Romans 10:17 out of context. They say that faith comes by the Word of God. But Scripture doesn't say that. It says that faith comes by hearing. It is hearing that comes from the Word of God. Learning the Word of God is like learning the language of God.
- III. "And He said, 'The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come' " (Mark 4:26-29).
  - A. At first glance we can see that this is a lesson on agriculture. Most of us have seen this process before. You plant a seed and you watch it grow, even though you don't really know how it is growing. However, in the parable of the sower Jesus gave us some keys to understanding parables. One of the keys is understanding the meaning of the ground, the seed and the wheat.
  - B. He only interpreted two parables: the parable of the sower and the parable of the wheat and the tares.
    - 1. In the parable of the sower, He tells us the seed is the Word of God in the life of a believer (not just the word—see parable of wheat and tares, Matthew 13:24-30; 37-43).
    - 2. In the parable of the sower, He tells us the ground is the people of the world.
    - 3. In the parable of the wheat and the tares, He tells us that the wheat is the person who received the word and grew into a mature Christian.

- IV. "... and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how" (Mark 4:27).
  - A. Can you really teach a person to have great faith? I don't think so. Faith comes from God proving Himself to you over and over again.
  - B. All you know is that you are now anointed—you may not even know why, or how you got anointed. You may lay your hand on someone's head and see the person healed and you won't know how. You wake up one day stronger in God than the day before and you're not really sure how you got there. You can't write a book on it, or hold a seminar, because you're not really sure yourself. It was grace and mercy that got you there. You wake up one day and your old struggle is gone, just like an old pain or ache that you had the night before, but in the morning it is gone. That's growth!
- V. "For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come" (vv. 28, 29).
  - A. The KJV says "corn," but everybody knows you don't reap corn with a sickle. The Greek word here simply means "grain." When the KJV translators were transcribing the passage, they used "corn" in a generic sense, but not in a literal sense.
  - B. In keeping with the two previous parables that preceded this lesson, we will consider the grain to be wheat. As a matter of fact, verse 28 describes the exact way that wheat grows.
- VI. "For the earth yields crops by itself" (v. 28). This is in reference to the people of the earth and the righteous of the Kingdom. Don't be mistaken, God will always have a people. There will always be a remnant.
  - A. *First the blade*. The following lesson on wheat came from the Texas Agricultural Service and was written by Travis Miller.
    - 1. The first stage of wheat is called the *emergence stage*. (Photo of seedling emerging)
      - a. "The most significant event in achieving high yield of grain in wheat is stand establishment. A fertile well-prepared seedbed with proper water and sunlight is necessary to produce a uniform stand."
      - b. This is the first stage of a baby Christian who is learning the Word of God for the first time. Water and light are symbols of Christ and the Holy Spirit.
    - 2. The second stage of forming the blade is called *the tiller stage*. (Photo of tillers forming)
      - a. "This is a dangerous stage of growth as weeds compete for light, water and nutrients. Once the wheat has achieved a full canopy, little problem is experienced from weeds."
      - b. The parable of the sower tells us the weeds are the cares of life.

- B. *Then the head*. Before wheat produces the full head of grain, it will first form an embryo head. The embryo head is not at the top of the plant, but rather at the base, near the roots. (Photo of first node visible)
  - 1. There must be a season where new babes in Christ are allowed to grow in life, in the Word and in the church.
    - a. They will make mistakes. There will be zealousness. There will be zeal in the use of spiritual gifts.
    - b. There will be zeal in styles of worship. A new Christian's dance may appear to be something they learned from "Soul Train" instead of "First Church of the Fire-Baptized."
  - 2. But keep watching as you see them blossom into a person of great faith. (Photo of boot stage)
- C. *The full grain in the head* (Photo of beginning flowering). What is this stage of growth like? Remember, we are trying to get to faith. We can only walk by faith, by hearing.
  - 1. You will know that you are growing when you start using phrases like "God laid this on my heart" or "God gave me a thought" or "God woke me up to pray for someone."
  - 2. That just means you are now hearing.
- VII. "But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come" (v. 29). (Photo of mature wheat ready for harvest)
  - A. The person of faith is now ready to be fruitful for the kingdom of God.
  - B. Statistics show that new Christians win more souls than older Christians simply because they win their friends and family who are unsaved. But in the Kingdom, you are ready to do your best work when your faith comes into maturity.

Nehemiah 3; 4:7, 8, 13-18

5

#### I. Introduction

- A. Long before David became king, the city of Salem was overthrown by the Jebusites.
- B. The word Salem means "city of peace."
  - 1. The Jebusites made it their capital and added their name to it. Thus, it became *Jebus-Salem*, which through the years became one word known as *Jerusalem*.
  - 2. The word *Jebus* means "trodden-down." Therefore, the name *Jerusalem* means "the trodden-down city of peace."
- C. There is a spiritual lesson that needs to be learned from the story of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The first group to return to the city was under the leadership of Ezra and Zerubbabel. They built an altar, started rebuilding the Temple and started rebuilding the houses.
- D. The second group that returned under Nehemiah's leadership concentrated on two things: rebuilding the walls and the gates.
  - 1. Walls keep the wrong things out.
  - 2. Gates let the right things in.
- II. Rebuilding the Walls—the Ministry of Intercessory Prayer
  - A. Walls keep everything out, but gates are controlled.
  - B. They determine what goes in and what goes out.
  - C. If we want the church to be a refuge of peace, there are some things we need to keep out and some things we must bring in.
  - D. There are 10 gates mentioned that surrounded the city.
    - 1. The Sheep Gate (built by the priests, Nehemiah 3:1)
      - a. The gate was not just for any sheep, but literally for the sheep being sacrificed in the Temple. That is why this gate is being built by the priests.
      - b. The Sheep Gate represents prayer and praise.

- 2. The Fish Gate (v. 3)
  - a. This gate was for bringing in the fish. It represents the salvation of souls.
  - b. We are fishers of men.
- 3. The Old Gate (v. 6)
  - a. This gate got its name because it was the only original gate from the first city of Salem, under the leadership of King Melchizedek.
  - b. The Old Gate represents heritage and tradition. The old and the new together create the perfect balance. The old is tried and true while the new continues to reach new generations who know nothing about the old ways. We have to have both in order to be balanced. We need the "Old Gate."
- 4. The Valley Gate (v. 13)
  - a. The Valley Gate was the gate that led out of the valley and into the city.
  - b. This gate is a welcome sight for the "people of the valley."
- 5. The Refuse or Dung Gate (v. 14)
  - a. This gate is obviously there to let the waste out, not in.
  - b. There are some things that do not belong in the city of peace.
  - c. Waste is a product of our past that has gone through a separation process. The nutrients have been taken out and all that is left needs to be discarded.
  - d. These are the issues that we bring in with us, but we need to know when to let them go. We should all be given time to heal, but there comes a time when we have heard enough, been loved enough and prayed over enough that we need to *get over it* and take it to the "dung gate."
- 6. The Fountain Gate (v. 15)
  - a. This is the gate that led to the Pool of Siloam and was also the route to the king's chambers.
  - b. In the New Testament, this was the fountain of healing.
  - c. The Fountain Gate is for the sick. Come to the water!
- 7. The Water Gate (v. 26)
  - a. This gate was over a small stream that allowed water to overflow from the Temple reservoirs during the rainy season.
  - b. The Temple reservoirs were huge cisterns dug out to catch water from the rains. During the rains, they would overflow into the Kidron Valley. (Graphic from Israel slides)
- 8. The Horse Gate (v. 28)
  - a. This gate was for the army to exit and return through.
  - b. It was in the back of the palace. This gate was being repaired by the priests.
- 9. The East Gate (v. 29)
  - a. This is the gate of our hope and future. There is no mention of why it is there.
  - b. As a matter of fact it is closed up today in Jerusalem (see Ezekiel 44:1-3). (Graphic of Eastern Gate in Jerusalem)
- 10. The Miphkad Gate (v. 31)
  - a. The word *miphkad* means "appointment."
  - b. This gate represents the door that no man can shut when he has an appointment with God.

1 Corinthians 15:45-49; 1:26-31

6

- I. **Introduction**: Illustrate being chosen last—second place, or second fiddle. No one wants to be second. But God does things backward so that He can receive the glory. He chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.
- II. "And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual" (1 Corinthians 15:45, 46).
  - A. "The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven" (v. 47).
  - B. "As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man" (vv. 48, 49).
- III. God's Pattern of the Second Choice
  - A. Cain and Abel
  - B. Aaron and Moses
  - C. Ishmael and Isaac
  - D. Leah and Rebekah
  - E. Esau and Jacob
  - F. Ephraim and Manasseh
  - G. Older Brother and the Prodigal Son
  - H. Parable of the Wedding Feast

- I. Day of Pentecost is the beginning of the second harvest (barley and wheat).
- J. First Adam and Second Adam (Jesus)
- IV. "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the Lord'" (1 Corinthians 1:26-31).
- V. **Conclusion:** Sometimes God chooses to bless your failures instead of your successes.

Text: Multiple Scriptures

- I. **Introduction**: Song "The Lighthouse"
- II. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).
  - A. A light can't be seen until it is dark.
  - B. Could it be that God allows our lives to get dark in order to light the way for others who are in the dark?
  - C. What is a testimony?
    - 1. Testimony literally means "to be a witness." One who testifies is one who witnesses.
    - 2. A lawyer's best defense is an eyewitness.
  - D. Those who testify of the goodness of God are those who say, "He brought me out."
- III. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4).
  - A. There is always a lighthouse.
  - B. Relate personal testimonies of those who were healed in various ways.
- IV. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body" (2 Corinthians 4:7-10).

- V. "My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful" (James 5:10, 11).
  - A. Lou Gehrig played 2,130 consecutive games with the Yankees over a period of 13 years without missing a game.
  - B. On 17 different occasions he broke his hand. He also broke his foot and toe, and suffered from back spasms, but he played on.
  - C. Other testimonies.
- VI. "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1, 2).
  - A. There is always a lighthouse, or a witness, in the house of the compassion and mercies of God.
  - B. Who has been a lighthouse in your life?



1 Corinthians 4:17-19; 16:10, 11; Philippians 2:19-24; 2 Timothy 1:6, 7, 12

8

- I. Introduction: The apostle Paul had a boisterous personality. He was quick-tempered, opinionated and regimented. While difficult to work with, these traits were what God needed in order to spread the gospel in the early church. Like all great men, Paul was interested in reproducing himself and teaching what others had taught him. He took a young man under his wing named Mark (writer of the Gospel of Mark). But Mark's youthful folly irritated Paul. He felt that he was undisciplined and would not take the ministry seriously enough. He decided not to train him anymore. From that time on, Paul sought out other men like Luke and Titus. But one of the greatest accomplishments of Paul's mentoring process was the gold he found in a timid young man by the name of Timothy. Timothy's story is the focus of this sermon.
  - A. Personal Background: With the exception of his father, Timothy's family was converted to Christianity in Lystra through the ministry of Paul. Timothy's mother was Jewish and his father was Greek. His mixed racial background would be a challenge to him throughout his entire ministry. Timothy started in the ministry at a very young age. This, too, was a challenge.
  - B. 1 Corinthians 4:17-19; 16:10, 11
    - 1. Failure, fear and intimidation will cause you to either *stop* or *start*.
    - 2. Timothy's ministry did not start out the way he expected it to. He failed. Not only did he fail to accomplish his goal, but he also became intimidated by the challenge.
    - 3. Intimidation comes to everyone and creates a crossroads of decision—Do I run or do I grow?
- II. We have to learn how to fail forward. If you failed, are you a failure? No.
  - A. The Top 10 Reasons People Fail, by John Maxwell
    - 1. Poor People Skills
    - 2. Negative Attitude
    - 3. A Bad Fit
    - 4. Lack of Focus
    - 5. Weak Commitment
    - 6. Unwillingness to Change

- 7. A Shortcut Mind-set
- 8. Relying on Talent Alone
- 9. A Response to Poor Information
- 10. No Goals
- B. When growth is happening in an individual, it is evident. Most of what is considered growth is only expanding our comfort zone instead of our challenge zone (Philippians 2:19-24).
  - 1. Comfort-zone growth is focusing on things we already know to do.
  - 2. Comfort-zone growth is many times simply relearning something we already know but have forgotten.
  - 3. Challenge-zone growth is acquiring a new skill.
- III. People fall in love with the anointing of their gifts, but seldom the discipline of their gifts. The anointing is what the people see; the discipline is what God sees (see 2 Timothy 1:6, 7, 12).
  - A. To whom much is given (anointing), much is required (discipline).
  - B. Anointing without discipline is a disaster waiting to happen.
    - 1. Planting—discipline
    - 2. Watering—discipline
    - 3. God gives the increase—anointing.
  - C. It is easier to play with a gift than to become a wise steward over it.
  - D. You *flow* because of anointing; you *grow* because of discipline.
  - E. Most people want to grow in the fun part of their gift, but part of their gift may not be fun.
    - 1. True growth requires addressing things that are uncomfortable for you.
    - 2. True growth requires addressing your fears and taking a true look at your attitude skills and public-relation skills.
    - 3. It is easier to expect others to grow instead of growing yourself.
  - F. To whom are you accountable?
    - 1. Success and power often blind a leader to the need of accountability.
    - 2. Abraham Lincoln said, "Nearly all of mankind can handle adversity, but if you really want to test a man's character, give him power."

1 Corinthians 11—14

9

- I. Chapter 11—The first rule of order: Nothing done out of selfish ambition is in order.
  - A. Verse 2—Do not forsake traditions.
  - B. Verse 18—"I hear that there are divisions among you." (Paul illustrates the division with their conduct concerning the Lord's Supper.)
- II. Chapter 12—The second rule of order: Every gift must flow from God to profit the whole body. Beware of private prophecy parties and independent prophets who are not established and confirmed by the church body.
  - A. Verse 1—"Now concerning spiritual gifts, *I do not want you to be ignorant*" (emphasis added).
  - B. Verse 4—"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."
  - C. Verse 5—"There are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord."
  - D. Verse 6—"There are diversities of activities, but . . . the same God."
  - E. Verse 7—"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all" (emphasis added).
  - F. Verses 12-25—Explains that God made us like a body; that is, we are interdependent on each other, so that there would be no schism in the body.
    - 1. Then it speaks of other gifts God has put within the body of Christ.
    - 2. Desire the best gifts, and I will show you a more excellent way (see v. 30).
- III. Chapter 13—The third rule of order: Any gift operating outside the boundaries of LOVE is out of order.
  - A. Though I speak with tongues of *men and of angels*, but have not love, I am only a noise maker (see v. 1).

- B. And if I have the gift of prophecy, understand all mysteries, have all knowledge and the faith to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing (see v. 2).
- C. Even if I give to the poor and my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing (see v. 3).
- D. Verses 4-7—The gifts of the Spirit never do these things: Act out of envy, act rudely, does not parade itself, seek its own (self-centeredness), get easily provoked, think evil thoughts, rejoice in iniquity, but rather suffers long and is kind, rejoices in truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes in all things and endures all things.
- E. Verses 8-10—Some believe and teach that the gifts are not for the church today.
- IV. Chapter 14—The fourth rule of order: Spiritual gifts that do not edify and build up the body are out of order in a worship service.
  - A. Verse 2—"He who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries."
  - B. Verse 3—"He who prophesies speaks *edification* and *exhortation* and *comfort* to men" (emphasis added). Prophetic judgments ended with John the Baptist (Luke 16:16).
  - C. Verses 4, 5—Tongues-speaking edifies the believer, but prophecy edifies the church.
  - D. Verses 6-12—Tongues that do not edify the body should not interrupt the worship service.
  - E. Verses 13-15—Therefore I will pray and sing in the spirit (tongues) and in my own language.
  - F. Verse 18—"I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding . . . than ten thousand words in a tongue."
  - G. Verse 26—Things in the worship service must be in balance. Anything excessive is offensive.
  - H. Verses 27, 28—Instructions for giving out a message in tongues.
  - I. Verse 32—"The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."
  - J. Verse 33—"God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches."
  - K. Verse 39—"Do not forbid to speak with tongues."
  - L. Verse 40—"Let all things be done decently and in order."

# HE BENEFITS OF SERVING GOD Text:

Psalm 103

**Introduction**: Why do you want to be a Christian? Is it just to go to heaven and to miss hell, or have you discovered like so many others, that this is the GOOD LIFE?

- A. Verses 1, 2—David is talking to his own soul about how he is blessing God.
  - 1. With all that is within me.
  - 2. Then he talks to his soul again and says, "Do not forget the benefits."
- B. Verses 3-6
  - Who forgives all your iniquities
  - 2. Who heals all your diseases
  - 3. Who redeems your life from destruction
  - 4. Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies
  - 5. Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's
  - 6. Who executes righteousness and justice for the oppressed
- C. Verses 8, 10, 12
  - 1. He is merciful and gracious.
  - 2. He has not dealt with us according to our sins.
  - 3. He has removed our transgressions from us.
- D. Verse 17—His righteousness extends to my children's children.
- E. Verses 20, 21
  - 1. He sends His angels to do His work.
  - They are His ministering Spirits.
    - a. Psalm 91:11, 12
    - b. Psalm 34:7



- I. Introduction: The apostle Peter is one of the easiest of the disciples to identify with because he is real. He shows the true struggle of life in the flesh and in the spirit. His life is coupled with man's desire to do God's will and God's ability to work through man's struggles. It is with empathy that we hear the apostle near the closing of his life, share portions of his life with his understudy, John Mark, who served as recording secretary as he wrote 1 Peter to five churches in Asia Minor and 2 Peter to the church at large. Around A.D. 60 he dictated the letters of 1 and 2 Peter to young John Mark, using words, phrases and pictures that are direct flashbacks of the few short years he had with the Master more than 30 years before. In between, he had evangelized with his wife (see 1 Corinthians 9:5; Galatians 2:9). Traditional history records that Peter went to Rome to serve as the bishop there and eventually suffered martyrdom by crucifixion, upside down. The theme of 1 Peter is "endurance in persecution." The letter is written to five churches. In this letter are five hopes in five chapters. It is a picture of grace.
- II. The Hope of Salvation (1 Peter 1:3-5)
- III. The Hope of Grace (vv. 13-16)
- IV. The Hope of Redemption (vv. 18-21)
- V. The Hope of the Priesthood of the Believers (2:5, 9)
- VI. The Hope of God's Justice (3:13-17)

1 Corinthians 15:29

12

- I. **Introduction**: In 1 Corinthians 15:29, we read, "Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?"
  - A. The point in question in this passage is not the *baptism of the dead*, but rather an argument for the *resurrection of the dead*. Paul used many examples to prove that people do believe in the resurrection of the dead. Paul was not referencing the practice of one being baptized vicariously for another. History insinuates that this practice has pagan origins. There are no other such references in Scripture or history to indicate that this was being practiced during the time of Paul. The first historical accounting of this practice was approximately 100 years later. I believe Paul was referencing the hope of baptism that was buried with the Christians. If they do not rise again, their previous baptism was in vain.
  - B. Another way of saying this is, "Why are you baptized at all, if you are just going to die?" It seems that if this statement literally meant a vicarious baptism, there would be more references to it in history and in the Biblical record. One can only assume that this passage has been "read into," and perhaps the practice itself originated from misinterpretation of Paul's intent in this passage.
  - C. The practice of "baptism for the dead" does not correspond with other Scripture passages relating to man's need to be born again and praying for his own repentance. In short, no man can save the soul of another. That is something we must do for ourselves by accepting Jesus as our personal Savior.

### II. Wycliff Notes

- A. After outlining the positive issues of the Resurrection, the apostle addressed the negative side. *Baptized for the dead* is a difficult expression that has been given many interpretations—some bizarre and heretical.
- B. Some people claim that Paul was referring to the practice of vicarious baptism, such as is observed by the Mormons, although he did not approve of it. The practice, however, is known only as early as the second century, and then among heretics.

C. Others feel that the apostle was referring to those who were baptized on the basis of the testimony of some who had died.

#### III. Barnes Notes

- A. The apostle resumes the argument for the Resurrection, which was interrupted at 1 Corinthians 15:19. He goes on to state further consequences that must follow from the denial of this doctrine, and thence infers that the doctrine must be true.
- B. No passage in the New Testament has had a greater variety of interpretation than this; and the views of expositors now by no means harmonize in regard to its meaning.
- C. It is possible that Paul was referring to some practice or custom that existed in his time respecting baptism, the knowledge of which is now lost.
  - 1. Some believe that the term, *the dead* means the Messiah was put to death, the plural being used for the singular, meaning "the dead one."
  - 2. Others contend that the word *baptized* here was used in the sense of washing, cleansing and purifying (see Matthew 8:4; Hebrews 9:10), and meant that the dead were carefully washed and purified when buried, with the hope of the resurrection.
  - 3. By others, the phrase to be baptized for the dead means "to be baptized as dead, being baptized into Christ, and buried with Him in baptism, and that by their immersion they were regarded as dead" (see Romans 6).
  - 4. Still others thought the apostle was referring to a custom of vicarious baptism, or being baptized for those who were dead (the practice of having some person baptized in the place of one who had died without knowing Paul).
  - 5. The other opinion, therefore, is that the apostle was referring to baptism as administered to all believers.
    - a. This is a more correct opinion and best meets the design of the argument.
    - b. According to this, it means that they had been baptized with the hope and expectation of a resurrection of the dead—one of the leading doctrines of the gospel.
    - c. It was a part of their firm belief that the dead would rise.
    - d. Embracing a different doctrine, they struck a blow at the very nature of Christianity, and dashed all the hopes that had been cherished and expressed at their baptism.
    - e. According to this view, the phrase *for the dead* means "with reference to the dead; with direct allusion to the condition of the dead, and their hopes; with a belief that the dead will rise."

#### IV. Matthew Henry Commentary

A. Paul argues for resurrection, from the case of those who were baptized for the dead.

- B. Some understand "the dead" to refer to our Savior himself. Why are persons baptized in the name of a dead Savior—a Savior who remains among the dead—if the dead rise not?
- C. Some understand the passage to speak of the martyrs: Why do they suffer martyrdom for their religion?
  - 1. This is sometimes called the "baptism of blood" by the ancients.
  - 2. Some understand it as a custom that was observed, as some of the ancients tell us, among many who professed the Christian name in the first ages, of baptizing someone in the name instead of catechumens dying without baptism.

13

- I. **Introduction**: During the 16th century, the Protestant Reformation split Christendom in Western Europe. The Protestant Movement further fragmented during the following centuries.
  - A. At the present time, there are 1,000 Christian denominations in North America alone.
  - B. Protestantism gets its name from the word *protest*.
  - C. Martin Luther, a Catholic priest, challenged the church on 95 issues when he put his "Ninety-five Theses" on the door of the Wittenberg Castle on October 31, 1517.
    - 1. This document split the church, and those who followed Luther later became known as *Lutherans*; those who wished to be rebaptized into the new faith were refused, so they split from the Lutherans and became known as the *Anabaptists*, meaning "rebaptism."
    - 2. This began the Baptist churches we know today.
    - 3. Other groups splintered off over theological emphases, which began the birth of denominationalism.
  - D. Both sections of Christendom agree on some major theological matters—like the Trinity, angels, the virgin birth of Jesus, the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, bodily resurrection, the imminent return of Jesus to earth at the second coming, heaven and hell.
    - 1. They partly agree about baptism and the makeup of the Bible.
    - 2. But there exists a great gulf between the two groups on other matters of belief and church practice.
  - E. The Protestant denominations are those churches that protested against the Roman Catholic Church launched in the times of the Reformation.
    - 1. Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and others tried to "reform" the mother church, but their reforms were not received.
    - 2. They left Roman Catholicism and became known as Protestants.
      - a. Obviously, they rejected the idea that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true church.
      - b. They did not recognize the authority of the pope.

- c. To varying degrees, they rejected the idea that the bread and wine, used in the mass, became the literal body and blood of Christ to be sacrificed again at each celebration of the mass.
- F. Other areas did not step into the light.
  - 1. The practices of the Reformation were simply Catholicism reformed, rather than transformed by the Bible.
  - 2. Most Reformation churches still have infant baptism that makes you "safe," though not saved.
  - 3. They have a selective priestcraft that rejects the papacy; a church along with the state (a state church) instead of the church over the state as with Catholicism.

# II. A Key Difference—Justification

- A. Individuals are "justified" when they are brought into right standing and into a right relationship with God.
- B. Of all of the many points of disagreement between Roman Catholic and Evangelical Protestant belief, the mechanism by which a person becomes "justified" is perhaps the most important.
- C. Lutherans refer to *justification* as "the chief doctrine upon which the church stands or falls."
  - 1. The classical reformed view of Calvin and Luther teaches that there are two steps to salvation.
    - a. Regeneration or rebirth—The Holy Spirit must first intervene and change individuals' hearts, so that they can begin to understand the gospel message and develop a faith in Jesus.
    - b. Justified—when the individuals use their newly found faith to trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior and repent of past sins (commonly referred to as being "saved").
  - 2. The Roman Catholic position is more complex.
    - a. In the past, the church taught that infants were indwelt by demonic spirits and must first experience exorcism before being baptized, by spreading water over its face or by total immersion.
    - b. By this sacrament, regeneration and justification were automatically granted to the infant.
    - c. When they reach the age where they are responsible for their actions and commit their first mortal sin, then the justification they obtained at baptism is destroyed.
    - d. Through the sacrament of penance (confession), if they have faith, they can have justification restored. (Steps 3 and 4 are often repeated many times during their lifetime.)

#### D. Their Views of Grace

- 1. Protestants and Roman Catholics believe in grace, but Protestants view grace as a direct action by and from God; Catholics view grace as originating from God, but flowing through the conduit of the sacraments.
- 2. Protestants see salvation and justification as one-time events; Catholics believe they are repeatedly lost and potentially regained through the church's sacraments.

#### E. The True Church

- 1. Traditionally, the Roman Catholic Church has taught that she is the universal and true church that saves, and outside of that church, there is no salvation.
- 2. Yet the Bible clearly declares, "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

# F. Apostolic Succession

- The Roman Catholic Church teaches apostolic succession—that is, that Peter
  was the first pope and that each succeeding pope has inherited authority over the
  church.
- 2. The Bible is clear that authority over the church belongs to God alone.
- 3. The message of the gospel was given by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the men who later proclaimed that message received it by revelation, not from a man.
- 4. Most Protestants believe that James, not Peter, was leading the early church (see Acts 12:17; 15:13-22; 21:18-20; 1 Corinthians 15:7).

#### G. Communion and Mass

- 1. The Catholic Church teaches that the mass, a liturgical form of the Lord's Supper, is a literal sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ.
- 2. The Scriptures teach, however, that when Christ came into the world, He became the ultimate sacrifice so that no more sacrifices would ever be needed (see Hebrews 10:5, 6).
- 3. The Lord Jesus instructed His disciples regarding the Lord's Supper—"This do in remembrance [or for a memorial] of Me" (Luke 22:19).

#### H. The Bible

- 1. Catholics never added any books to their Bible; Protestants never subtracted any, but there are seven books that are in the Catholic Bible that are not in the Protestant Bible.
- 2. How did they get there? First, you have to know several terms.
  - a. Septuagint Bible—the version that became the Catholic Old Testament (Greek version) and was the one adopted and preferred by the early Christians.
  - b. *The Vulgate*—the Latin translation of the Septuagint, became the Old Testament for the Catholic Church.
  - c. Hebrew Bible—the version that became the Protestant Old Testament; preferred by the Hebrews of Judea and does not have seven of the books that can be found in the Septuagint.

- 3. There are 46 Old Testament books in the Catholic Bible and 39 in the Protestant Bible.
  - a. The books in the Catholic Bible (Old Testament) excluded from the Protestant Bible are the Books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Baruch, and some of Daniel and Esther.
  - b. There are 27 New Testament books in the Catholic Bible and the Protestant Bible.
  - c. This is how neither religion removed or added books: The Catholic Church used the Vulgate (at the time there was no Old Testament, there was the Vulgate and the New Testament). Catholics did not use the Hebrew Bible.
  - d. When Martin Luther broke away from the Catholic Church, instead of taking the Vulgate as the Protestant Old Testament, he and several scholars re-translated the Hebrew Bible and made it the Protestant Old Testament.
  - e. Several years later, the Catholics put the Vulgate and the New Testament together in one book and called the Vulgate an Old Testament.
  - f. Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, 1 and 2 Maccabees, and Baruch can or cannot be considered Spirit-inspired, depending on who you talk to.

# I. Mariology

- 1. Protestants claim that the doctrines of Divine Maternity (Mother of God), Perpetual Virginity, Immaculate Conception and Assumption contradict or add to Scripture and obscure the uniqueness of Christ.
- According to them, Scripture says nothing of her immaculate conception or assumption or mediation or of her being the mother of God. In fact, Scripture can be interpreted as denying all these privileges and titles.
- 3. Catholics claim not only that Mary was perfectly sinless from conception, even as Jesus was (doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary," proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1854—"Let all the children of the Catholic Church . . . continue to venerate, invoke, and pray to the most blessed Virgin Mary, mother of God, conceived without original sin"), but that the reason she never sinned at any time during her life was because she was unable to sin (cf. Luke 1:46, 47; Romans 3:10, 23; 5:12; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 1:8, 10).
- 4. Catholics also believe Mary was a perpetual virgin (cf. Psalm 69:8; Matthew 1:24, 25; 13:54-56; Mark 6:3; John 7:5), and that she was assumed, body and soul, into heaven shortly after her death (doctrine of the "Assumption of the Virgin Mary," declared by Pope Pius XII in 1950).
- 5. Finally, she was given the title "Mother of the Church" in 1965.
  - a. The consequence of all this worship of Mary, in effect, establishes her authority above Christ's!
  - b. Rome says, "He came to us through Mary and we must go to Him through her." All this is obviously idolatrous.
- 6. Some believe Mary united her sorrows to those of her Son.
  - a. The sorrowful and immaculate heart of Mary bled with her Son for all of mankind.
  - b. For this reason, they invoke her under the title of "Co-Redemptrix."
- 7. The Immaculate Conception means that Mary, whose conception was brought about the normal way, was conceived without original sin or its stain. When discussing the Immaculate Conception, an implicit reference can be found in the

- angel's greeting to Mary. The angel Gabriel said, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (see Luke 1:28).
- 8. The doctrine of the Assumption says that at the end of her life on earth Mary was assumed, body and soul, into heaven, just as Enoch, Elijah, and perhaps others had been before her. Some people think Catholics believe Mary "ascended" into heaven. That's not correct. Christ, by His own power, ascended into heaven. Mary was assumed or taken up into heaven by God.

#### III. Catholics and Judaism

- A. *Judaism* is the practice of the Jewish religion. When studying Catholicism, you will find that it is very close to the Old Testament priesthood under Moses. Many modernday practices of the Roman Catholic Church get their origins right out of the Old Testament era.
- B. Here are a few practices and passages that are exclusive to the Old Testament priesthood, but not found among the practices of the New Testament church.

1. Holy water Numbers 5:17

2. Incense burning Exodus 30

3. Wave offering Exodus 29; Leviticus 10; 14; 23

4. Priestly vesture Exodus 285. Papal vesture (high priest) Exodus 28

6. Blessings from a priest Numbers 6:22-26 (read)

7. Communal living Joshua 21 (cities of the Levites)

Theological Belief	Roman Catholic Church	<b>Conservative Protestants</b>
Apostolic Succession	Believe that papal authority and all ordinations are traceable back to St. Peter	Concept rejected as historically invalid; it simply didn't happen
Authority Within the Church	Vested in the hierarchy of the church	Within the believer (soul freedom)
Baptism/Significance	Sacrament which regenerates and justifies	Testimony of a prior regeneration
Baptism/Timing	Usually done in infancy	Usually done later in life after person is "born again"
Bible/Status of	Historically teaches that the original writings by Bible authors are inerrant. This is being debated.	The original writings of the authors of the Bible are inerrant.
Change of Beliefs, Practices	Debate sometimes forbidden	Free discussion allowed

Theological Belief	Roman Catholic Church	<b>Conservative Protestants</b>
Church/Structure	Hierarchical	Democratic/theocratic
Clergy/Selection of	Appointed; all male; almost all unmarried	Elected; mostly male, but not exclusive; single or married
Hell	More than a physical place, hell is a state of being, involving "the pain, frustration, and emptiness of life without God."	A real physical place of eternal torture
Immaculate Conception of Mary	Required belief Mary was born without sin	Denied
Infallibility of the Pope	Required belief in matters of religious doctrine and faith	Denied
Limbo	A place in hell for infants who die before being baptized and for Old Testament saints. Concept is not officially taught.	Does not exist
Lord's Supper/Eucharist	A sacrifice Christ's body and blood are physically present and are literally consumed by believers.	Memorial meal Christ's body and blood are symbolically present.
Mary's Status	Mary's status is below Jesus' but above that of the saints. Some believe Mary is co-redemptrix with Jesus; currently, this is not church teaching.	The Virgin Mary was God's instrument in giving birth to Messiah, but she should not be worshiped.
Non-Christian Religions (Pagan Religions)	Have some value for the truth that they contain	Many fundamentalists consider them dangerous and demon-led.
Prayer	To God. Also may ask Mary or a saint to intercede on their behalf.	To God only
Purgatory	A state of being in which souls are cleansed by purifying punishments before they can enter heaven.	Existed prior to Calvary but was abolished at the Resurrection. Called "Bosom of Abraham" in Scripture.

Theological Belief	Roman Catholic Church	<b>Conservative Protestants</b>
Sacraments	The means of grace	The symbols of grace
Salvation/Achieving	Dependent on faith, works and sacraments	Dependent on faith only
Salvation/Losing	Lost when a responsible person commits a mortal sin—can be regained through repentance and the sacrament of confession	Usually, once a person is saved, they cannot lose their salvation except by choice. Repentance is necessary for willful sins.
Statues/Venerating	Frequent veneration of statues and images as symbolic of the individual saints	Considered idolatry
Truth	Found in Scripture, as interpreted by the church—also found in church tradition	Found in Scripture

**Multiple Scriptures** 

14

I. **Introduction**: Mormons are easy to spot. They travel in twos, are clean-cut with black suits and white shirts, and bear the title "Elder." For two years they become a missionary and zealously carry their message to the world. Mormonism is one of the world's richest and fastest-growing religious movements. In its 170-year history, it has grown to more than 11 million members. (One-half is outside the U.S.) There are 100 Mormon temples and over 12,000 local churches or meetinghouses throughout the world. Their corporate assets are estimated at around \$30 billion.

# II. History of Mormonism

- A. Joseph Smith Jr. is the founder of the Mormon movement. As a boy of 15, in Manchester, New York, he claimed to have his first "heavenly visitation." It marked the first of a series of visitations that became the foundation of Mormonism. He is called the first prophet, apostle and restorer.
- B. Most of Joseph Smith's revelations are recorded in the book *Doctrines and Covenants* (1830-1836). This book is one of several other Mormon addendums to the Bible. Almost all 136 sections begin with the words "Revelation given to Joseph Smith . . . " His teachings, however, are marked with serious theological error, fictional history and erroneous prophecies. In an effort to explain the contradictory statements and false prophecies given by Smith, a Mormon leader by the name of LeGrand Richards wrote a book called *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, whereby he writes, "This glorious principle did not come to the prophet Joseph Smith by reading the Bible, but through the revelation of the Lord." This belief in additional revelation is the first tenet that leads Mormonism away from solid Christian beliefs based on Scripture.
- C. Joseph Smith was murdered by an angry mob in 1844. He was succeeded by Brigham Young, who was elected to be the new leader. After a church split, Young led his followers to Utah. He encouraged polygamy and had taken 25 wives for himself by the time he died in 1877. Utah was denied statehood until the church officially abandoned its practice of polygamy in 1890. The other group that split formed the Reorganized Church.

# III. Why is Mormonism considered a cult?

A. Mormons consider themselves a part of mainstream Christianity, but their theology has been rejected by most Christians as not fitting within the boundaries of the Christian faith. For example, Mormons revere the teachings of Joseph Smith over those of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. According to Mormonism, Gentiles were misguided by an inadequate gospel and an inferior body of Scripture until Joseph Smith received his revelation from the angel, Moroni, and from Jesus' personal appearance to him.

#### B. The Book of Mormon

- 1. Joseph Smith Jr. claimed that an angel named Moroni, came to him, claiming to be the son of Mormon.
- 2. Mormon was a deceased leader of an ancient American race known as the Nephites. He told him about seven golden plates that contained the fullness of the everlasting gospel.
- 3. Four years later, near Palmyra, New York, Smith claimed to have unearthed the plates, along with a pair of supernatural glasses that allowed him to read the ancient language.
- 4. After translating the plates, Smith allegedly returned the plates to the angel Moroni.
- 5. His transcription and other revelations from the angel Moroni were compiled into the *Book of Mormon*.
- 6. The *Book of Mormon* is the story of two fabled Middle Eastern groups that migrated to the Americas between 600 B.C. and A.D. 400.
- 7. The Jaredites supposedly came from the Tower of Babel to Central America, and later perished for their immorality.
- 8. The later group of Jews, led by a man named Nephi, fled Jerusalem from the Babylonian Captivity and ended up in South America.
  - a. They divided into two warring factions, the Nephites and the Lamanites.
  - b. The Lamanites destroyed the Nephites in a fierce battle near Palmyra, New York, in A.D. 428.
  - c. They were cursed with dark skin for defeating the "righteous" group, and according to the Mormon myth, they became the first American Indians.
- 9. Before his death, Mormon, the leader of the Nephites, recorded this history on the golden plates, which Smith allegedly discovered.
- 10. The Smithsonian Institute denies the historical claims of the Mormon church and declares the *Book of Mormon* a fictitious story.
- 11. Joseph Smith, a former Mason, drew heavily upon the Masonic rituals when he instituted the Mormon temple rites.

# IV. Who is God?

Galatians 1:8 says, "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed."

A. Mormons teach that God is a physical being—a procreating father with a divine wife. Humans are preexisting spirits begotten by this couple. The God of Mormonism is

an exalted man. Lorenzo Snow, a successor of Joseph Smith, writes, "As man is, God once was, and as God is, man can become." Brigham Young taught that Adam was God who assumed a body and came to the Garden of Eden, which is located in Missouri. Eve was one of his heavenly wives. He believed that God also appeared in the person of Michael, the Archangel, and had sexual relations with the Virgin Mary, which resulted in the birth of Jesus Christ. Young emphatically writes, "He [Jesus] was not begotten by the Holy Ghost."

- B. Furthermore, Young asserts that humans can become gods in the next life through baptism, good works and eternal marriage. They will be able to create their own universe on another planet and populate it through procreation. This is polytheism (the belief in many gods) in its purest form. Mormons enter into marriage using Mason-like rituals, which seal their marriages for eternity. Young claimed that only those who enter into polygamy can become gods. Joseph Smith taught that they would be kept out of the third heaven unless they observed the covenant of polygamy.
- C. According to Mormons, God himself was once procreated in another world by human parents, and that one day good Mormons will have their own planet to rule as father and mother gods.
- D. Finally, Mormon theology is also subject to change by the "living prophet." The living prophet is the present president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

# V. The Afterlife

- A. The Mormons' belief in the afterlife is one of their most attractive features. Mormons are universalists who believe that every person will eventually have eternal life, but only baptized Mormons will become gods. The only exceptions are the "sons of perdition," who are Mormons that depart from the faith. They are the only ones who will suffer eternal punishment.
- B. According to Mormon belief, there are three levels of heaven.
  - 1. The first level is the "telestial kingdom" reserved for pagans.
  - 2. The second level is for Christians who did not become Mormon.
  - 3. The third level is the "celestial kingdom" where only baptized Mormons go. They are the ones who have direct access to God.
    - a. If a family undergoes a "sealing" ritual, they believe that the family will be bound together for all eternity.
    - b. Part of that ritual is a commitment to a "family home evening" once a week for parents and children to play, pray and study the Scriptures together.
    - c. They also put great emphasis on baptismal for the dead and go to great lengths to trace their genealogy.
    - d. They will be baptized for any person in that genealogy who was not a Mormon.

#### VI. Who is Jesus?

- A. The greatest doctrinal error of Mormonism is the distortion of the person of Jesus.
- B. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 11:4, clearly warns against those who preach any other Jesus.
- C. The Mormons claim that even though Jesus was the firstborn son of Elohim, Lucifer is His brother.
- D. Mormonism not only denies the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, but it also denies the virgin birth of Jesus.
- E. They believe that Jesus was married to Mary and Martha and that He saw His children before His crucifixion.
- F. Mormons have undergone severe persecution in times past for their erroneous beliefs. However, in latter years they have tried to redeem themselves by promoting themselves as a group with a strong emphasis on family and moral ethics.

#### VII. How to Witness to Mormons

- A. It is impossible to convert every Mormon who comes to your door. However, it is a great opportunity to share your own faith.
- B. The first rule is to relax and just share your faith with them. Most of the people who come to your door have been preparing for that moment for years. They are propelled by the hope that this missionary journey will get them into the third heaven, whereby they can have an eternal wife and family and perhaps become a god. Short talk on the part of a Christian will not detour their efforts.
- C. The best thing you can do is show them the fruit of Christianity, plant a seed of the Word within them, and perhaps ask a question that will cause them to doubt their own beliefs. Colossians 4:6 says, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."
- D. Most of the people who come to your door have memorized answers to the questions they think you may ask. The questions they are prepared to answer have come from millions of experiences of other Mormons. However, most of them are not as well versed as you think, if you steer outside their trained format. So, instead of letting them ask you questions, take the lead in the conversation and act as though you have knocked on *their* door to share your faith. Just witness!

# VIII. Method for Witnessing to Mormons

- A. Ask the Mormon: "Do you believe the teaching in the Book of Mormon that says . . .
  - 1. God is flesh and bone instead of spirit?
    (Book of Mormon—see Alma 18:28; 22:9, 10; 31:15)
    (Bible—see John 4:24; 2 Corinthians 3:17)

There are many gods (polytheism)?
 (Book of Mormon—see Alma 11:28, 29; Mormon 7:7)
 (Bible—see 1 John 5:7; 1 Timothy 2:5)

3. God is an exalted man?

(Book of Mormon—see Mosiah 8:16)

(Bible—see Numbers 23:19; Romans 1:22, 23; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4)

4. God is married and is a polygamist?

(Book of Mormon—see Jacob 1:15; 2:24, 27)

(Bible—see Luke 20:34, 35)

5. Jesus was not conceived by the Holy Ghost?

(Book of Mormon—see Alma 7:10)

(Bible—see Matthew 1:20)

- B. Ask your new Mormon friend to show you his doctrines in the Book of Mormon. This is something he or she cannot do, because not one of their major doctrines is found in the *Book of Mormon*.
- C. Ask your new Mormon friend if he or she believes black people can be saved. According to Joseph Smith, all black people are descendants of Cain and bear the curse of Cain in the pigment of their flesh.
- D. Ask your new Mormon friend if he or she has been born again according to Alma 5:14 or Mosiah 27:24. Take them to John 3:3-6.
- E. If you can get a cultist to question and investigate his own teachings, then it is possible that you can win them to the Lord. Each time he or she poses a new question, keep quoting the Bible, for if you know the truth, the truth will make you free (John 8:32).

Text: John 14:1-18

- I. **Introduction**: This sermon is a comparison of religion of Islam and Christianity, in an attempt to better understand the search for truth. Only the truth can make us free.
- II. An Introduction to the Faith of Islam
  - A. Islam is an Arabic word that means "submission and peace."
  - B. The word *Muslim* means "those who submit to God."
  - C. Therefore, Islam is a religion, and a Muslim is one who follows the religion.
  - D. Muslims believe in one God whose name is Allah.
  - E. Their religion began with a man named *Ubul-Kassim*, who would later be called Muhammad, which means "one highly praised."
  - F. They believe that Allah has revealed himself through his sacred writings, teachings and commandments that came through his angels, messengers and prophets.
  - G. Islam claims to be of the same faith as all the children of Abraham. Islam claims that Allah used the prophet Moses to write the Torah; the prophet Jesus to reveal the scriptures known as Gospels; and the prophet Muhammad, the last of the prophets, to recite the Holy Koran.
  - H. Islam also gives validity to the other writers of the Bible; however, it does not claim the Bible to be inerrant, as it does the Koran.
  - I. Islam claims that the last prophet to come was Muhammad and he sealed all prophecies.
  - J. Islam is still looking for a Messiah to come, a final judgment and a paradise.

# III. Main Beliefs of Islam and Christianity

Islam	Christianity
One God—Allah	One God—Jehovah
Allah has no begotten children.	God has one begotten Son—Jesus.
Allah has many sacred writings.	Jehovah has one sacred text, the Bible.
Allah is the creator of all.	Jehovah created all through Jesus.
The last prophet was Muhammad.	The last prophet was John the Baptist.
There is a Messiah, yet to come.	Jesus, the Messiah, has already come.
There will be a final judgment.	There will be a final judgment.
There is a paradise and a hell.	There is a heaven and a hell.

#### IV. Allah and Jehovah God

- A. Both groups claim to serve the one true God. Islam claims that *Allah* (an Arabic word) and *Elohim* (a Hebrew word) are one and the same.
- B. A writer by the name of Robert Morey published a book in 1992 called *The Islamic Invasion*. He claims that Allah was actually the name of the moon god in the city of Mecca, where Muhammad was born. He claims that he proclaimed a monotheistic religion, but chose the moon god as the only God. Islam however, refutes this claim in their publication called *Allah*, the *Creator and Lord of the Universe*. They claim that Allah is the same as Elohim to the Jewish people.
- C. It makes more sense for them to incorporate the God of the Jews and stake claim to all the Abrahamic faiths, in order to achieve their primary objective, which is to bring all religions together under one world religion. Morey might have found a god among the 360 gods in Mecca named Allah, but modern-day Muslims do not think they are worshiping a moon god, but rather the Creator God.

#### V. The Bible and the Koran

#### A. The Bible

- 1. The prophesies of the Bible
- 2. The power of the Bible
- 3. The product of the Bible—changed lives

#### B. The Koran

- 1. Parts of the Old Testament and Psalms
- 2. Parts of the Gospels
- 3. The revelations of Muhammad
- 4. Muslims claim that the Koran was written in perfect Arabic in every respect, and that Allah wrote it in heaven. However, those who study the Koran know differently. It contains many words and phrases that are not Arabic.

- 5. The Koran gives four conflicting accounts of the call of Muhammad to be a prophet.
  - a. Sura 53:2-18 claims Allah appeared to him.
  - b. Sura 26:192-194 claims that the Holy Spirit called him.
  - c. Sura 15:8 claims that angels came down and told him.
  - d. Sura 2:97 claims that the angel Gabriel came to him and called him while handing him the Koran.
- 6. There is a section referred to as the "Satanic Verses" in which Muhammad, in a moment of weakness and temptation, gave in to a pressing crowd and gave them permission to worship the three daughters of Allah—Al-Lat, Al-Uzza and Manat. Islam claims that monotheism is their greatest doctrine, while Muhammad allowed the worship of other gods in his moment of weakness (Sura 53:19).
  - a. Muhammad later claims that Gabriel came down and rebuked him for this.
  - b. After Muhammad's death, the Satanic Verses were omitted from the Koran; however, this is well documented in their religion.
- 7. Either the Koran or the Bible has to be in error because each has many conflicting historical accounts.
  - a. The Koran gives the name of Abraham's father as *Azar*, while the Bible says his name is *Terah*.
  - b. The Koran claims that Abraham rebuilt a temple in Mecca that Adam had originally built. The Bible gives an actual, physical map of Abraham's life and never says he went to Mecca.
  - c. The Koran claims that Abraham went to sacrifice his son Ishmael on the altar, while the Bible claims it was Isaac.
  - d. The Koran claims that Abraham had only two sons, but the Bible gives the names of eight sons born to him.
  - e. The Koran says that Abraham was thrown into a fire by King Nimrod, who built the Tower of Babel. This is the most costly mistake of all to their text, because the Bible and history place the story of King Nimrod centuries before Abraham. Nimrod had been dead for many years before Abraham was even born.
  - f. The Koran says that Pharaoh's wife adopted Moses, while the Bible says it was Pharaoh's daughter.
  - g. The Koran places the flood of Noah in Moses' day, while the Bible places it centuries before the birth of Moses.
  - h. Another costly mistake in the Koran is that it states that Haman lived in Egypt during the time of Moses and worked for Pharaoh on the Tower of Babel. Haman, however, lived in Persia and worked for King Ahasuerus of Persia. His story is in the Book of Esther. The misplacement of this historical account is easy to trace.
  - i. The Koran claims that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, could not speak for three days. The Bible says he was mute for nine months.
  - j. There is only one solution to this serious conflict: *Both cannot be right. One has to be fabricated.* I choose the one that lines us correctly with history.

#### VI. Jesus and Muhammad

A. The Koran claims that Jesus was a prophet sent from God to reveal divine truths; however, Muhammad was the last and final prophet of God. Let's compare the lives of Jesus and Muhammad.

# B. Prophecies Concerning Their Births

- 1. The birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus were all prophesied. The Old Testament prophets told us the city where He would be born. They told us His family lineage and that He would die. We were given prophecies to look for to make sure He was, indeed, the Messiah. We were told that He would ride through Jerusalem on a donkey and that they would beat Him, scourge Him and hang Him on a cross. We were told that His own people would reject Him, but that was God's plan in order to save the Gentiles. His virgin birth was prophesied. God sent a forerunner to herald His coming. Simeon was a living prophet, who was told that he would not see death until he saw the Messiah. At the age of 12, Jesus was teaching the rabbis. His death was prophesied, and even the fact that He would be laid in a borrowed tomb.
- 2. There are no prophecies concerning the coming or birth of Muhammad. The only holy writ about Muhammad was written by him in his own lifetime. As a matter of fact, he did not even know he was a prophet until he was 40 years old. Jesus was born of a supernatural birth from a virgin who was conceived of the Holy Spirit. Muhammad was born to Abdullah and Aminah. His father died before he was born. His mother died while he was young. He then went to live with his grandparents and later was raised by his uncle.

#### C. Their Genealogies

- 1. In America, Islam is being promoted as a "black man's religion." There will be no peace on earth with a black man's religion or a white man's religion. There must only be the worship of God. Islam claims that Allah is black. If God is black, that is just fine with me, because I thought He was green and red. That is the only color description of God in the whole Bible. Revelation 4:2, 3 says, to look upon the One who sits on the throne is like looking on a jasper and sardius stone.
- 2. Many black believers say that Muslims stand outside their churches on Sunday and ask, "Why do you want to worship a white Jesus, who is a white man's God?"
- 3. There are a few things we need to clarify.
  - a. Number one: Jesus was a Jew; He was not white.
  - b. Number two: Muhammad was an Arab; he was not black. One of the sacred writings of Islam called the *Hadith* states in Volume 1, Number 63: "While we were sitting with the prophet in the Mosque, a man came riding on a camel. He made the camel kneel down at the Mosque, tied his foreleg and then said, 'Who amongst you is Muhammad?' At that time, the prophet was sitting amongst us, leaning on his arm. We replied, 'This white man leaning on his arm.' Then the man addressed him."
  - c. All Arabs are not black, and evidently this one was white.

#### D. Divine Natures

- 1. According to the Bible, Jesus lived a sinless life. He was fully human, yet at the same time, fully God. Even at His death, He declared that no man had the power to take His life, but that He gave it as a ransom for all. Even the elements reacted to His death. The sun was darkened in the middle of the day. The veil in the Temple, separating man from the Holy of Holies, was rent in two. Some of the dead were raised from their graves. Three days later, He rose again and was seen by many during a period of 40 days. Then He ascended into heaven on a cloud; a scene witnessed by many.
- 2. Muhammad, on the other hand, did not live a sinless life. No one even claims that he did. While Jesus never married, Muhammad had many wives. One of his brides was only 6 years old when he married her. He did wait until she was 9 to consummate the marriage. The Koran records the prayers of repentance for Muhammad. Yes, all of the prophets of old sinned and repented, except for one—Jesus—who was more than a prophet. He was the Son of God. The Bible records many miracles of Jesus, yet the Koran does not record a single miracle of Muhammad. Muhammad did not die for any man's sins but his own. No one was resurrected at his death, and the elements of the earth did not mourn. No veil was rent in any temple, the sun kept on shining, and even the cause of his death is not fully known and is still argued among his own followers.

3.

Jesus	Muhammad
Held children on His lap, praying for their needs.	Had a 9-year-old in his bed, for his own pleasure.
Died for the sins and purification of mankind.	Asked others to die, to purify their religion.
Died, but was resurrected. He is no longer dead, but still alive.	Died and is still dead.
Is now our heavenly intercessor before God for His people.	The Koran does not say that Muhammad ascended into heaven, but does say that there is no intercessor.
The Bible says that Jesus will return one day for His people and will judge the people on the earth for their sins.	The Koran does not say that Muhammad will return or be resurrected or that he will judge anyone.
The Bible promises a heaven that is pure and filled with worship—a place of glorified bodies and total peace.	The Koran promises a carnal heaven that is geared toward appeasing the natural appetite of man—a place where women are constrained for sexual pleasures and the appetites of sinful man are appeased.

# VII. The Coming Kingdom

- A. I must admit that until a few months ago, I knew nothing about the Islamic religion. After studying their beliefs for a while, I am more convinced than ever that they will succeed in reaching their goals. I would like to explain why I believe this.
- B. The Muslims claim to be of the Abrahamic faiths. That sounds good up front. The term *Abrahamic faiths* includes Jews, Muslims and Christians. I heard Louis Farrakhan give a speech last week. He was promoting an alliance with all American Christians and Muslims who believe in the same God. While it may be true that everyone is seeking the presence of the one true God, we believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to get to God.
- C. The Bible prophesies about a kingdom that will arise in the last days called the Antichrist kingdom. It is a kingdom that is looking for a "messiah"—a messiah who will unite Jews and Arabs for the first time. The Bible is clear that this kingdom will only last for seven years under the headship of the false messiah. Anyone who rejects Jesus as the true Messiah, who came to take away the sins of man and promised to come again and judge the earth and set up a divine Kingdom on this earth, will be looking for this false messiah. Of all the literature I have read about Islam, the most shocking comes from their own organization in St. Louis—The Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis. The following 12 points are from their brochure called "Who Is the Promised Messiah?" These are "prophecies" they are looking for in the Messiah:
  - 1. He will be the son of Mary.
  - 2. He will descend from the sky in two yellow sheets.
  - 3. He will ascend in Damascus on the white minaret of a mosque.
  - 4. He will break the cross (no more Christianity).
  - 5. He will kill the "pig" (Abomination of Desolation).
  - 6. He shall be a just ruler.
  - 7. He will bring all of humanity under one religion, namely Islam.
  - 8. He shall kill the Dajjal, the Deceiver at Jerusalem (False Prophet). (No concept of Antichrist in Islam—Dajjal is false religious leader)
  - 9. He will promise to bring peace on earth.
  - 10. He will promise to perform hajj or umra or both.
  - 11. He shall die at the age of 45.
  - 12. He will be buried in the grave of Muhammad.

They are actually looking for the Antichrist of the Bible, as are the Jews, and will embrace his kingdom wholeheartedly.

- VIII. Why Christianity and Islam will never come together!
  - A. Allah has no begotten son. A quote from the Koran says: "God has not taken to Himself any son, nor is there any god with Him" (Sura 23:91). John 3:16 says, "For

- God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."
- B. We will never come together unless we reject either the Bible or the Koran, because they conflict with each other. One is truth and the other is a lie. One is a true historical account, while the other is man's version of history. One is divinely inspired and the other is a decoy.
- C. We believe that Jesus is more than a prophet—He is God's only begotten Son.
  - 1. You cannot believe that Jesus was merely a good man or a prophet. He claimed to be the Son of God.
  - 2. He was either Lord or a lunatic.
  - 3. He was either the Son of God or the son of Satan: He can't be both.
  - 4. Either He was the Blessed Redeemer or He was a blasphemer.
  - 5. He either talked to the Father, or He was a madman, talking to Himself.
- D. Everything we believe hinges upon one solitary truth—Jesus is Lord.
- E. Read John 14:1-18.

Matthew 12:25; Acts 12:5-16

- Introduction: There are four levels revealed in these passages that lead to the kingdom of God becoming all that it needs to be. The problem in the passage of Matthew 12:25 is that the Pharisees are questioning the character of Jesus. Jesus answers their accusations in verses 28 and 29.
- II. The first level is the *individual level* (family level).
  - A. The first rule for taking the Kingdom to the world is taking care of things at home first.
  - B. There are too many people trying to give away things they do not have.
  - C. God must be first in your life, but remember that ministry does not come before family. The first institution God ever created was the family.
    - 1. God raised up nations through families.
    - 2. God set up the government of Israel by using family groups.
    - 3. There were prophets and priests, but there were no ministers until the human race was in existence for 4,000 years.
  - D. There are times that God will call you to leave your family to minister in another place, but you will not find any scriptures that tell you to neglect your family.
- III. The second level is the *house level* (church level).
  - A. Unless there is unity in the church, there will never be unity in the world.
  - B. If Spirit-filled brothers and sisters in Christ can't agree, how will the world ever be reached for the Kingdom?
    - 1. Bring back the respect of the ministry.
    - 2. Bring back the respect for the sanctuary and the "holy things."
    - 3. Unified by the Holy Spirit

- IV. The third level is the city level.
  - A. Acts 12:5-11
  - B. The Three Gates
    - 1. The first gate represents the cell where Peter was held. This is the individual level.
    - 2. The second gate represents the house level. The key to unity in the house is to move beyond the expectations of the people and fulfill the expectations of God. We must get our eyes off man.
    - 3. The third gate represents the city. When you get the sin out of the individual and the church is walking together as one—not competing with one another, but as allies in *one army*—the gate to the city will open on its own.
- V. The fourth level is the Kingdom level.
  - A. "So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. But they said to her, 'You are beside yourself!' Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, 'It is his angel.' Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished" (Acts 12:12-16).
    - 1. God had given them exactly what they prayed for, and they were amazed.
    - 2. The Kingdom will not advance without an army of intercessors!
  - B. We have got to pray until we see the manifestations of God.
  - C. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:12, 13).
    - 1. Every devil you rebuke does not have to leave. There are different ranks of authority in the demonic world and in the Kingdom world.
    - 2. We need some generals in spiritual authority. We need people who operate on a different spiritual level.
      - a. You can cast demons out, but they may say, "Paul we know, and Jesus we know, but who are you?" (see Acts 19:15).
      - b. When demons know who you are, it means you have advanced in spiritual rank.

Psalms 31:20; 91; 139:13-15

17

I. Introduction: Every country has a secret training camp for its special forces. These hidden places are top secret, because no country wants its enemy to know about its training and equipment. The regular army doesn't go to these secret places. It is reserved for special forces.

#### II. Psalm 31:20

- A. The secret place is where God hides you from the plots of man.
- B. It is a safe place, but it doesn't always feel safe, because it is a training ground where God has to bring things out of you. Sometimes you aren't even allowed to see, because it's not really about you. Moses didn't even know he was training in a desert to lead a nation through another desert.
- C. The pavilion is a place where you are safe from the words of men. However, the only way God can keep you from being affected by the words of men is to pull you away from all men. What you perceive as loneliness is the beginning of godliness.

# III. Psalm 91

- A. Verse 1—The first thing you need to know about the secret place is that God chose it for you.
  - 1. It is "the secret place of the Most High."
  - 2. Maybe He chose to train you in a valley, a cave, a prison, a desert or even in a hospital waiting room.
- B. Verse 2—"I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.'" That's what this room is all about. You can't leave until you can say this: God is my strength and my salvation.
- C. Verse 3—"Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence."
  - 1. "Snare of the fowler" is something that catches a small bird. It's a hidden trap.

- 2. "From the perilous pestilence." The KJV says "noisome." Either is appropriate. The word for *pestilence* in Hebrew literally means "to destroy with words.
- 3. That is part of your training. If you can't handle what people say to you, how are you ever going to combat the lies of the devil?
- D. Verse 4a—"He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge." Why would anyone need a refuge in God's secret hiding place? The secret place is not a vacation, it is a training camp—the ultimate game of "hide and seek." God is hiding you to teach you how to seek Him.
- E. Verse 4b—"His truth shall be your shield and buckler." Until you are in the "seat belt" of truth, you are always in turbulence. There is only one reason to wear a seat belt, and that is to hold you in. You may want to bail out, but truth won't let you.
- F. Verses 5, 6—"You shall not be afraid. . . ." In the secret place you will get tired of being afraid. You will make a choice to be courageous—night, day, noonday . . . it doesn't matter.
- G. Verses 7-9—"A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. . . ."
  - 1. You are going to survive what is killing others. The Enemy is taking spoils all around you. But he has to stop when he gets to you—not because you are so powerful, but because he doesn't even know you are there.
    - a. You are going to look like every other struggler. You are going to sound like them, cry like them and doubt like them. But the difference is, *you are not going to stay that way.*
    - b. You are going to get angry at what you see the devil doing, and you are going to decide to fight instead of give up.
  - 2. "Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place . . ." (v. 9).
- H. Verses 10-12—"No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. . . ."
- I. Verse 13—"You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot."

#### IV. Psalm 139:13-15

- A. Verse 13—"For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb."
- B. Verse 14—"Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well."
- C. Verse 15—"My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret [You knew my frame and yet You made me anyway]."

- D. God is about to release a well-kept secret, and hell is about to go into chaos.
  - 1. While you thought you were losing it, you were really finding it.
  - 2. God was raising up a worshiper. (Desperate worshipers are different.)
  - 3. God was raising up a prayer warrior who could pull down strongholds.
  - 4. Disease has a new enemy. Depression has a new enemy. Rejection has a new enemy. God is getting ready to turn you loose on the world and there is nothing Satan can do to stop it, because he doesn't even know it is happening.
  - 5. God is raising up ministers from small places—obscure valleys, holes in the wall. These will be His revolutionaries.

# **COD-TEMPTERS**

Text:

Matthew 4:5-7; Numbers 14

- I. **Introduction**: Matthew 4:5-7—"Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: "He shall give His angels charge over you," and, "In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone." Jesus said to him, 'It is written again, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God." '"
  - A. Jesus said, "It is written." Where is it written?
    - 1. Deuteronomy 6:16: "You shall not tempt the Lord your God as you tempted Him in Massah."
    - 2. Massah means "to tempt God" (see Exodus 17:7).
    - 3. Numbers 14:22, 23
  - B. There are three sins that are repeated 10 times, which cause God to take away their inheritance. These three sins cause division, strife and confusion in people's lives. To harbor these in your heart is to tempt God.
- II. The first sin is a spirit of complaining (Numbers 14:2-5).
  - A. There is a difference between a complaint and a spirit of complaining.
  - B. There are many complaints that are legitimate, but a spirit of complaining will cause you to complain every day.
  - C. This spirit will cause you to think negative thoughts on a continual basis and impart that negative spirit to others.
  - D. The spirit of complaining is used by Satan to bring down leaders.
  - E. Spirits of complaining prey on self-centered and selfish people. The heart of the complaint is always about their own discomfort.
    - 1. Complaining people use the words *I* and *you* a lot.

- 2. They view themselves as giving people, but deep in their hearts they resent what they give.
- III. The second sin is the sin of rebellion (Numbers 14:9-12).
  - A. God will not bless rebellion in any form.
  - B. If you cannot submit to authority, others will not submit to you.
  - C. Rebels are people who oppose authority. They gloat in their own opinions and independent ways. Another spirit that runs with this one is *jealousy*.
  - D. They are the first to oppose, and in some ways they feel it is even their duty.
  - E. The rebel spirit is always in opposition of authorities—parents, school, boss, spiritual authority, spouse, government, and so forth.
- IV. The third sin is victimizing the next generation (Numbers 14:26-31).
  - A. The first two sins create the last sin.
  - B. God's plan is for each godly generation to pass on the heritage to the next. This includes God's plan for the family, for marriage, for the work ethic. It was the sins of complaining and rebellion that were victimizing the next generation.
- V. Conclusion: Complaining and rebellion are not just bad habits—they are "God tempters." To harbor these in your life is no different than a "snake handler." A complainer or rebel angers God more than anyone who is trying to serve God while allowing these demons to control their mind.

Matthew 7:21-23; Acts 2:40-47; Hebrews 10:25

19

- I. **Introduction**: There are some people who feel they are better off being a church of one. While they claim to be a Christian, they also claim "Jesus is all I need."
  - A. No man is an island.
  - B. Some people decide to quit going to church and just get their religion from a TV preacher.
  - C. Beware of this type of rebellious spirit. For anyone who has an independent spirit and cannot submit to spiritual authority may also be deceived. (Lawlessness—one who will not submit to the law.)
  - D. The Bible says, "Not everyone who says 'Lord, Lord' will enter in" (see Matthew 7:21-23).
    - 1. Many people who act independently do so because of a stubborn and rebellious spirit. The only way they can get what they want is to have a church of one.
    - 2. They say, "But I do good deeds." Do not mistake good deeds for obedience. There are many sinners who do good deeds.
    - 3. A stubborn and rebellious spirit cannot be taught. This kind of spirit neglects their own families, priorities, and solely operates self-centeredly.

#### II. Acts 2:40-47

- A. "And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation'" (v. 40). The first problem in being without a covering is you have to rely upon personal revelation.
  - 1. You never get instructed by those whom God has gifted to teach and preach.
  - 2. Read Ephesians 4:11, 12.
  - 3. How can you have a five-fold ministry in a church of one?
  - 4. There is a reason for needing each other.

- B. "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41).
  - 1. How can a "church of one" be obedient in the sacraments, such as baptism or Communion?
  - 2. Where does a church of one go for weddings, funerals and revival?
  - 3. In this passage, there were 3,000 added to the church. That is the difference in a church of one and a church that is connected to a network of believers.
- C. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (v. 42).
- D. "Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles" (v. 43).
- E. "Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need" (vv. 44, 45).
- F. "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (vv. 46, 47).
- III. Hebrews 10:25—"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

1 Samuel 16; 17

20

Introduction: How does God achieve what He planted in you at your birth? How does He bring you into something you would never attempt because of what you must overcome to get there? How does God make you to see that you stopped short of your blessing? I know you are blessed, but you are not living where He intended for you to live. How does God get you to see that He arrived at your destination before your mother, father, genetics, environmental influences or culture were factors in your life? In the womb He knew you. Why do you think the devil is trying to stop you? He doesn't want what you have; he just doesn't want you to fulfill your destiny.

#### II. God's Plan

- A. Could it be that sometimes God has to pull you out of your current situation to direct you toward what He has for you?
- B. Could it be that what you think is an attack is really a promotion?
- C. Could it be that what you think the devil is robbing you of is God sanctifying you and setting you apart?
  - 1. Why is it that Adam was lonely before he was the ruler of earth?
  - 2. Elijah went to the wilderness.
  - 3. Joseph went to prison.
  - 4. Daniel became a slave at age 15.
  - 5. John the Baptist lived in the wilderness.
  - 6. John was exiled on the isle of Patmos.
  - 7. The apostle Paul didn't even meet the disciples until after he had been preaching for years.
- III. God's process is about teaching us certain disciplines and skills and picking up weapons that will bring us into our destiny.
  - A. David's process from a shepherd boy to a king (1 Samuel 16)
    - 1. The first thing you need to know about coming into divine destiny is the kind of people God promotes. He promotes God-chasers. People who worship

- desperately are usually people who are going through something or who have been so far down they are afraid to let go of His hand. Don't discount the desperate. They may just be in training (v. 1).
- 2. Secondly, you need to see that others may not see it in you yet. Even when God chooses you, your own father may not even let you line up. It won't stop there. Lots of people don't want to know you until after your blessing is recognized. When it's official, everybody wants to be your friend. But in the process, you may have to go alone (v. 10).
- 3. The discipline stage is portrayed when David became an armorbearer to a man who didn't even know his name. Serving is not about recognition when the only person you really care about impressing is God (vv. 21, 23).
  - a. You have to learn how to serve before you can lead.
  - b. Discipline is about developing skills.

# B. David faces Goliath (1 Samuel 17).

- 1. David faced Goliath at Sochoh in Judah. Sochoh means "Look for a man for me." *Judah* means "praise." Saul was looking for a warrior, but God was raising up a worshiper (v. 1).
- 2. A spirit of intimidation and fear went out (v. 4).
- 3. We are sent first to serve others before being served. Don't overlook the bread boy because he may be your next boss. This may just be his training ground (v. 17).
- 4. Eliab scolds David (v. 28). You have to decide what you think about yourself, regardless of what others are telling you. What makes you think you are a champion?
- 5. David volunteered, but the king said, "You are not able to go" (vv. 32, 33). Whose approval do you need when God has called you? What are you waiting to hear before you believe?
- 6. David got his confidence when he was alone, fighting a lion and a bear. No one saw him, but that was when he started believing in his anointing (vv. 34, 35).
- 7. David had to make a choice: Have I gone through this for nothing? Do I need men's approval?
  - a. The weapon that released David's destiny was in a valley (v. 40).
  - b. He had to go to the brook to get five smooth stones (grace). *Five* is a significant number in Scripture—five animals of the covenant, five priests, five days of Creation, five porches, five Books of the Law, fivefold ministry, five posts to the door of the Tabernacle.
- 8. "In the fire, don't worry about me, I'm just going to get my grace" (see Mark 9:49, 50). My grace will kill my enemy. My grace will bring me into promise (see Colossians 4:5, 6).
- 9. What's in your shepherd's bag and where did you have to go to get it? (1 Samuel 17:40).
- 10. Don't worry—it's in the bag. While I was alone in the valley, I was collecting things. *My grace* is different from *your grace* (see v. 49). What's happening *in* you is greater than what's happening *to* you.

Song of Solomon 1

- I. Introduction: If God showed up in all of His glory, we could not look upon Him and live. So God has a dilemma. How would He introduce Himself to us? He has given us mountains, fragrant flowers, the beauty of snow, cascading waterfalls, and the wonder of the solar system. He sends us love letters in the sunrises and sunsets. He sings to us in the song of the robin and calls to us in the crashing of the waves. Even the mountains and the little hills skip like rams at His presence. The trees lift their hands, the waves applaud, the earth shakes before Him; yet, we who are made in His image question His very existence at the first sign of trouble. So how does God get us to love Him and have a relationship with Him, just because of who He is? He wants to be more than our holiday God or our gift-giver. He wants to be more than a problem-solver or troubleshooter. He flexes His muscles in the wind, like a young boy trying to capture the eye of a young girl. He wants us to know Him.
- II. Read Song of Solomon 1:1—2:1.
  - A. Tell the story of King Solomon and the Shulamite woman. Solomon was a king who could have any woman in his kingdom. All of the women loved him because he was the king. So, in search for pure love, King Solomon disguised himself as a shepherd in search of a woman who would love him for himself, instead of what he could give her. This love story is unique. He dated her as a shepherd and married her as a shepherd. They went to the place of her family to consummate the marriage. But after they got there and lived together for a while, he came in one day and said, "By the way, I am not really a poor shepherd. I am really the king. Come away with me to my palace and share my treasures."
  - B. Other Times God Disguised Himself
    - 1. To Jacob, God appeared as a wrestler so that He could change Jacob's name and destiny.
    - 2. To the children of Israel, He appeared as a rock in the weary land.
    - 3. To the three Hebrew boys, He appeared as a fourth man in the fiery furnace.
    - 4. To Abraham, He appeared as King Melchizedek, a king who ruled the city of Salem, which means "City of Peace."

- C. In Luke 24, two men were walking to a village called Emmaus, and He appeared to them as a traveler. As soon as they recognized Him, He vanished before their eyes. They exclaimed, "Oh, how our hearts did burn within us while we talked with Him" (see v. 32).
- III. The Ultimate Disguise—When God Clothed Himself in Human Flesh
  - A. Read Luke 1:26-35.
  - B. He was the First and the Last. He was a King who became a man. He left His glory in heaven to become the disgrace of men. He was from glory to glory.
  - C. The King decided to disguise Himself as the month of April. How can God disguise Himself as April? In Exodus 12, God began a new thing and picked the day for it all to begin.
    - 1. Read Exodus 12:1-7.
    - 2. God comes to us disguised as "April." This represents the end of the winter of life and a newness of life. God wants to bring someone out of winter today and bring new life into a life that is in a winter season.
  - D. Jesus was God's Lamb to fulfill this passage.
    - 1. At the hour they were choosing their lamb, He rode upon a donkey through Jerusalem and they cried out, "Hosanna."
    - 2. At the very hour of the Passover Supper, Jesus ate a meal with His disciples and said, "This is My body and My blood" (see Matthew 26:26-28).
    - 3. At the very hour they cut the lamb's throat, He cried, "It is finished!" (John 19:30).
    - 4. Part of the Jewish celebration was called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. During this feast, you take matzah bread and stripe it. Next, you take a folded napkin and fold it into three compartments. You put the striped matzah into the middle compartment and hide it. It stays hidden for three days and then the children try to find where it was hidden. This children's game in the festival is called "Resurrecting the Matzah." But I want you to know that it is more than a game. That unleavened bread was the King who disquised Himself.
    - 5. He declared to the disciples at the Lord's Supper, "This bread is My body." The stripes on the matzah are the 39 stripes for our healing. The middle compartment is representative of the Holy Trinity. He is the One in the middle. And wouldn't you know that at the very hour Jewish children were "resurrecting" the matzah, the King who disguised Himself as bread was also being resurrected so the children of God could be saved!
    - 6. That bloody, beaten Savior was the Lord of Glory.
    - 7. You can kill a man, but you can't kill God. Any man can die, but only the Lord of Glory can resurrect Himself.
  - E. If He would have come as the King of Glory, the world would have accepted Him out of fear and only embraced Him for His power. But would they have loved Him? Only the elite, wealthy and powerful would have been able to get to Him. But just like

Solomon and the Shulamite, He clothed Himself as a shepherd. He clothed Himself in human flesh and walked among us, so we might love Him for who He is (see John 1:14; 3:16).

- F. He is the King of Glory, but He wants to be your friend. He is the King of Glory, but He wants to have a personal relationship with you.
- G. That is why He made salvation so easy. It is as easy as ABC.
  - A—Admit that you've sinned against God
  - **B**—Believe that Jesus Christ died for you to be forgiven of your sins
  - C—Confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Son of God and Lord of your life
- IV. Conclusion—Song: "Oh, How He Loves You and Me"

# A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME

Text:

2 Chronicles 1:3, 4; Song of Solomon 3:1, 4; 1 Samuel 14:35; 2 Kings 18:4

- I. Introduction: Is the house enough all by itself?
  - A. 2 Chronicles 1:3, 4
    - 1. The Tabernacle without the ark
    - 2. The Tent without the presence of God
    - 3. Religion without relationship
  - B. Song of Solomon 3:1, 4—She has the house, but without him, the house is not enough.
  - C. 1 Samuel 14:35; 13:1, 2—Two years without an altar
  - D. 2 Kings 18:4
    - 1. Nehushtan means "it's just brass."
    - 2. Sons and daughters have been driven from their homes because of a person who values carpet and furniture more than memories and relationship.
- II. What is the difference between a house and a home?
  - A. In each of these examples, religion is present without relationship—coming to the house and going through ceremonies without ever experiencing the presence of God.
  - B. This is the same principle that separates a house from a home.
    - 1. In a house everyone can eat, sleep and rest, but there are no relationships.
    - 2. The house has nice things, just no presence.
    - 3. A house is where people go through routines but never get to know each other.
    - 4. A house is where people grow distant each day, trying to buy more things instead of making memories. One day, you reach the point where you would be willing to give up all of the stuff just to have a relationship with someone who actually knows you and cares about you.
      - a. The house values presents, over presence; the home values presence, over presents.
      - b. Many people are trying to buy love instead of taking time to give a person what he or she really wants—time and relationship.
      - c. Go to a funeral home and listen to the conversation. When it is all over, people talk about memories—not money. They talk about good times—not good things. They bring pictures—not presents. Perhaps this is what the writer Harry Chapin was trying to say when he wrote the song "The Cat's in the Cradle."

Psalms 26:7; 95:2; 100:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:18

- I. **Introduction**: "That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Your wondrous works" (Psalm 26:7).
  - A. Thankfulness is not just an annual practice that we observe with our families, gorging on turkey and delicacies and then sitting down for an afternoon of parades and football.
  - B. Thankful means "to show that one is grateful for an act of kindness."
- II. Thankfulness is the cure for many soulish diseases.
  - A. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."
  - B. "... and the God of peace will be with you" (v. 9).
    - 1. Thankfulness is the only known cure for self-pity.
    - 2. It brings hope to the depressed.
    - 3. It is the emotion that softens a heart of anger.
    - 4. It is a balm to bitterness.
    - It builds self-esteem.
  - C. Thankfulness is a guide in setting priorities.
    - 1. 1 Thessalonians 5:18—"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
    - 2. Show the difference in a sadist, masochist, brat.
    - 3. A person who is not taught to appreciate life will soon take life for granted.
  - D. Thankfulness is a part of the whole worship experience.
    - 1. Psalm 147:7—"Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise on the harp to our God."
    - 2. 1 Chronicles 16:4—"And he appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, to commemorate, to thank, and to praise the Lord God of Israel."

- 3. 1 Chronicles 23:30—"... to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at evening."
  - a. The whole essence of worship is to see God and esteem Him as He really is.
  - b. What better way to see God than to begin by showing appreciation for what He has done?
- E. Thankfulness is part of the attitude of giving to God.
  - 1. Leviticus 22:29—"And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord, offer it of your own will."
  - 2. Being thankful for the whole harvest made you want to give to the Lord.
- F. Thankfulness is a doorway into God's presence.
  - 1. Psalm 95:2—"Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms."
  - 2. Psalm 100:4—"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name."
- G. Thanksgiving must precede praise and worship.
  - 1. Thanksgiving leads to praise.
  - 2. Praise is thanking God for what He has done.
  - 3. Worship is placing value on God for who He is.
- H. Thankfulness is one of God's motives for blessing us.
  - 1. 2 Corinthians 9:11—"Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God" (KJV).
  - 2. God will always bless a thankful heart.
- I. Thankfulness is a part of prayer.
  - 1. Philippians 4:6—"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."
  - 2. Thanksgiving stirs up our faith when we pray.
  - 3. When we remember what He has already done, it is easier to trust Him for what we are believing He is going to do.
- J. Thankfulness is the reason we pray before meals.
  - 1. 1 Timothy 4:4—"For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving."
  - 2. We say we are blessing the food, but we can't bless food—only God can bless it. We are merely giving thanks.
- K. Thankfulness is a part of our testimony.
  - 1. 2 Samuel 22:50—"Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to Your name."
  - 2. What greater testimony than to stand and say, "Let me tell you what God has done for me."

Matthew 16:13-23; Luke 22:31-38, 54-62

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#### I. Introduction

- A. Our story begins with Simon Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ (Matthew 16:13-20).
  - 1. One thing we need to face up to in the body of Christ is that just because a person is born again does not mean they don't have issues to work out.
  - 2. Don't hide behind your salvation in a state of denial and refuse to deal with your stuff!
  - 3. No one can change unless they see the need to change and become willing to submit to the process of change.
- B. Simon had a great spiritual moment. He confessed that Jesus is the Son of God.
  - 1. Jesus commended him for this spiritual breakthrough by telling him that flesh and blood did not reveal it to him, but the Father in heaven. Jesus affirmed Simon's spirituality before his peers.
  - 2. To increase the excitement, Jesus blessed Simon and gave him a new name to commemorate the moment.
- C. Now notice the language in verses 21 and 22.
  - 1. Jesus is trying to prepare His disciples for the moment of His death.
  - 2. Because of Peter's relationship with Christ, his new affirmation goes to his head.
  - 3. He begins to think that he knows more than Christ. So he takes Jesus to the side and rebukes Him for what He has just told them.
  - 4. This is what happens when we get exalted without working out our emotional issues.
- II. "But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (v. 23).
  - A. This is the beginning of Peter's healing. Look at how Jesus handles this situation:
    - 1. The same voice that just exalted Peter is now the same voice that confronts him.
    - 2. "Get behind Me. . . . You are an offense to Me . . . you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

- B. Notice these two things:
  - 1. Jesus has earned the right to confront. If you confront people that you have not first proven your love to, you will only injure them more. If you are going to tell the truth, then you have to tell the truth in love.
  - 2. Secondly, Jesus revealed Peter's problem. He says, "Your problem is not that you can't hear from God, but that you have too many words from people still in your head."
    - a. It's what people have told you that still has you bound.
    - b. You have too many thoughts of people in your mind.
    - c. Peter, you have a problem, and your problem is offending other people!
- III. "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' But he said to Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.' Then He said, 'I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me'" (Luke 22:31-34).
  - A. From the time Jesus changed Peter's name, He no longer called him Simon. He always called him Peter, as did everyone else.
  - B. Simon's issues are back. He is talking too much again. He is bragging again. He is doing the same things again. Jesus has just told the disciples that He is going to be killed and that one of the disciples will betray Him. Peter jumps up and says, "I'll not let them take You; I will protect You with my own life and even go to my death with You."
    - 1. Feel the emotion of Jesus' response: "Simon, Simon!"
    - 2. Jesus doesn't use Peter's spiritual name, He uses his natural name.
    - 3. Jesus doesn't speak meanly to him. I can see Jesus shaking His head and putting His arm around Peter and saying, "Simon, Simon."
- IV. "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren' " (Luke 22:31).
  - A. Simon, Satan has asked for you, and I said yes. I am going to allow him to tempt you to see how you will choose.
  - B. Will you do it God's way or will you do it man's way? I am only allowing this to happen so you can see yourself!
  - C. "But he said to Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.' Then He said, 'I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me'" (vv. 33, 34).
- V. "And He said to them, 'When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?' So they said, 'Nothing.' Then He said to them, 'But now, he who

has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: "And He was numbered with the transgressors." For the things concerning Me have an end.' So they said, 'Lord, look, here are two swords.' And He said to them, 'It is enough'" (Luke 22:35-38).

- A. This is a passage that is often overlooked or misunderstood. Jesus had sent His disciples out and told them not to take anything with them. No money bag, no sleeping bag, no shoes. He wanted to teach them to walk by faith. Even though they took nothing with them, they returned with material goods that had been given to them. Now they have money bags and sleeping bags. He tells them to go and sell them to buy swords.
- B. On every occasion that Peter rebukes Jesus, it is when He is telling the disciples that He is going to be arrested and killed. Peter refuses to hear this, even though his name, *Simon*, means "to hear intelligently." Peter is trying to solve his problems using human intellect.
- C. Jesus asked for the swords because He knew this was Peter's test.
- D. Peter was living in denial. (Read Luke 22:54-60.) His denial was indicative of his true problem.
- VI. "And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So Peter went out and wept bitterly" (vv. 61, 62).
  - A. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Jesus did not forget Peter's pain, even in His own pain. The look was not "I told you so." The look reminded Peter of a conversation he had with Christ (read vv. 31-34).
  - B. Peter went out and wept. He saw himself and didn't like what he saw. It's easy to see other people's faults and overlook our own. We will only change when we are willing to turn and look at the problem!
- VII. **Conclusion**: Symptoms of Living in Denial
  - A. A list of "oughts"—It ought to be this way; I ought to be better; they ought to do this.
  - B. Self-centeredness—The first question is always, "How is this going to affect me?"
  - C. Self-deprecation—"No one likes me because . . . therefore, I must try harder and do more."
  - D. Walls of protection—"I will never allow anyone to hurt me again, I must protect myself."

- E. A different set of rules for others than for yourself.
- F. Anger—Anger in the introvert implodes from feelings of low self-esteem, while anger in the extrovert explodes on others. Most often the anger is denied, creating incredible mood swings from moment to moment.
- G. Even a simple demand from another person is considered irrational and is often met with suspicion.
- H. Primary struggle is trusting others.
- I. Twist words to make others look bad. Dysfunctional people often make others look dysfunctional to justify their own behavior. They tell themselves, "Look at them, I'm not as bad as they are." They think the wrong behavior of others makes them look better. (This is all part of their self-centered fixation.)
- J. They are often highly offensive in their people skills, but fail to see it since they are such committed givers and often sacrifice to serve others. This is also why people seldom confront their offensiveness.

- I. **Introduction**: This story is about something that affects everyone throughout their lifetime. Perhaps you are there now. It deals with the subject of transitional change. Ask: "How do I deal with change when I was perfectly satisfied with the way things were?"
- II. Moses is dead.
  - A. There is a new leader—a young leader. He learned the old ways, but God has given him a new assignment. Even the leader is caught in the transition. He is caught between doing things God's way or Moses' way.
  - B. "After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 'Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel'" (vv. 1, 2).
- III. Joshua had to separate his faith from the faith of Moses.
  - A. There is a danger in second- and third-generation Christians. The first generation knew God; the second generation knows about God; the third generation knows a man who knows about God.
  - B. He has to become "your God," not just the God of your fathers.
  - C. The Lord spoke to Joshua; You must have your own relationship with God.
  - D. "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you" (v. 5).
- IV. Disconnect from the FEAR OF MEN.
  - A. No man shall be able to stand before you. It may be a man that stands before you, but don't forget that *intimidation is a spirit*.

- B. When you stand before God long enough, you can stand before any man.
- C. "As I was with Moses, I will be with you." There is a new leader, but the same God.
- D. God changed the way He manifested Himself. No more pillar of fire, cloud, manna, or water from the Rock.
- E. Our mandate is not to tell God how to do it. But before we jump off on a tangent, we are to *try the spirit* to see if God is the One doing it. The Pharisees rejected Jesus for one reason: He didn't do things the "old way."
- F. Some people settle for holding on to the ashes of yesterday instead of allowing the winds and fire of God to blow and blaze. Don't put God in an urn. He doesn't belong in an ash vase.
- G. "Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go" (vv. 6, 7).

#### V. Reconnect to the PEOPLE OF GOD.

- A. Memories are important, but at some point we must move beyond the memories to the mission.
- B. We need to remember what God did then, but not at the expense of overlooking what God is doing now.
- C. In order to stay focused, we have to stay connected with whomever God is using now, not just whom He used in the past.
- D. The "glory days" are wherever we see the glory of God. Today can be a glory day if we see His glory!
- E. Don't allow change to disconnect you from the people of God.
- F. "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory" (vv. 3, 4).

#### VI. Reconnect to the VISION OF GOD.

A. "Remember what I said to Moses."

- B. The responsibility of every generation is to convey the promises of God to the next generation.
- C. We have to be careful not to hold back the next generation because of sentiment.
- D. We must reconnect to the vision of God, not to the sentiment of Moses.
- E. "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (v. 8).

#### VII. Reconnect to the WORD OF GOD.

- A. I am amazed at how many generations go on this long journey to try to find God in their own way, but He just keeps bringing them back to the basics.
- B. One of the things God tells every generation is to GO BACK TO THE BOOK!
- C. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (v. 9).

# VIII. Reconnect to YOUR COURAGE.

- A. Where is that strong courage you used to have?
  - 1. When did you start running with the fear crowd?
  - 2. Where is that faith you used to have to believe God for anything?
  - 3. When did you change from being a conqueror to a complainer?
  - 4. When did you lose your passion for ministry, for the lost and for God's power?
- B. Courage doesn't mean you are not afraid. Courage means you are willing to fight the good fight—in spite of your fear.
  - 1. Courage is not the absence of fear.
  - 2. Courage is faith in the presence of fear.
- C. Be strong: This is still the work of God. Hook onto the vision of Joshua and march on.
  - 1. Get off the sidelines.
  - 2. Dust yourself off.
  - 3. Present yourself.
  - 4. Take up your arms.
  - 5. Restake your claim.
  - 6. Tell the devil you're back.
  - 7. Go to the Enemy's camp and take back what was stolen from you.
  - 8. Take up your shield and sword.
  - 9. Put a praise in your mouth.
  - 10. Put on the whole armor.

- 11. Show up.
- 12. Put one more demon under your foot.
- 13. Realize the battle is not over yet.
- 14. Check yourself out of "Sideline Hospital for the Wounded."
- 15. Put your boots back on.
- 16. Report for duty!
- 17. Give God your credentials, your time and your commitment.
- 18. Be strong!
- 19. Be courageous!
- 20. The anchor holds in spite of the storm. Report for duty!