

# Hear The Shepherd's Voice

AUGUST 2013

FREE

## THE DAWNING OF A NEW DAY FOR THE CHURCH

Volume 17 Issue 8 "A Christian Newspaper"

### "I Will Heal Thy Land" Part 2

Part II of a prophetic message

By Leroy Surface

#### Christ; Our Hope

It is the prophet Joel that introduces us to the "great and terrible day of the Lord." In Joel 2:31-32, he says, "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered...." In Joel 3:15-16, the prophet recaps the same event, saying, "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be THE HOPE of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." The Hebrew word "machaseh machseh," which is translated "hope" in this verse, is the same word that is translated "refuge" in Psalms 91:2, and means "a shelter." The psalmist said, "I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust" (Psalms 91:2). He is "the hope of His people," a "refuge" from the storm (Isaiah 4:6), and a "fortress" from the adversary.

**Isaiah 26:20-21:** "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

There is a "secret place" for the children of God. In Isaiah 26:20, He calls "His people" to enter into "thy chambers," and "shut thy doors about thee." It is a "hiding place" for the children of God, which the psalmist calls "the secret place of the most high" (Psalms 91:1). We who

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### How Little of God Can We Get?

(and still be saved)

Message 11 - By Keith Surface

What we are about to say will shock many, especially if you've not heard it before; but if you honestly consider what is said, the truth becomes apparent. What are we speaking of? It is this: To multitudes in the church, the term "saved" simply means, "the minimum experience, and/or the minimum amount of God a person must have, in order to be saved." Some will say, "Not me." Well, maybe not, but don't be too quick to answer. Do you have a child or other loved one who had a religious experience sometimes in the past, but, is not presently living for God? How do you think they really stand with God? If you are honest, you will probably answer something like this; "I know they are not where they ought to be with God, but I believe they are saved." Translation: "I believe they have at least, the minimum experience, or minimum amount of God it takes to get to Heaven." Even believers whose walk has degenerated into a dead form, often tell themselves; "Well, at least I'm saved." In almost every group in Christianity today, the word "saved" has come to speak of the minimal Christian experience, and/or the minimal amount of God, it takes to get to heaven.

#### Salvation without a Savior

There seems to be a disconnect, in the minds of most, between salvation and the Savior. Salvation is viewed as a possession, a privilege, or a prize that God will only let us have if we come to Jesus. Now that we have received this possession, what further need do we have for the Savior? So then, many live their

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enter now will be "hidden" in our "secret place" while God "punishes the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." I will seek, for the remainder of this message, to show God's provision for His people who "humble themselves, and pray, and seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways" (II Chronicles 7:14). God says He will "heal **their** land." The apostle Paul tells us to "put on the whole armor of God;" if we do, we will not only "stand," but we will "withstand in the evil day" (Ephesians 6:13). We will go into the very strongholds of the adversary to deliver souls from the power of darkness, and we will not be afraid if we are clothed with the "whole armor of God." We will not be "hiding in a cave" or in "the dens of the earth." Those are places that are prepared for "...kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men..." (Revelation 6:15-16), but to no avail, for they will find no hiding place from the anger of God almighty. Our "hiding place" is in Christ, and it is for those who have "set their love upon Him" (Psalms 91:14).

### The "Secret Place of the Most High"

**Psalms 91:1-2:** "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, **He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.**"

The "secret place of the most High" is not a physical place; it is instead a "place" in God Himself. It was prepared at Calvary through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus promised, "I go to prepare a place for you;" not just "a place in heaven," but "a place in Christ," who is our "refuge and fortress."

**Psalms 91:3-4:** "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: **HIS TRUTH shall be thy shield and buckler.**"

Jesus referred to Himself as the "secret place" in His message to the scribes and Pharisees shortly before they delivered Him up to die on the cross: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37).

**Psalms 91:5-8:** "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but **it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.**"

"Thou shalt not be afraid...it shall not come nigh thee," because "under His wings shalt thou trust." It is obvious that this text is a promise to the children of God for those "extraordinary times" when God rises up to punish the wicked. It should also be understood that it is a promise to an "extraordinary people," that is, those who "abide in Christ." These have found "His truth" to be their "shield and buckler." Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (from sin)" (John 8:32). There are many "extraordinary things" that are spoken about those who "know the truth." The apostle John says, "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. **Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not**" (I John 3:5-6). That is truly "extraordinary." They do not sin because they "abide in Him." The last phrase of verse six says, "whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." Only four verses previous, the apostle tells us, "We shall be like Him for (because) we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2). In the "seventy weeks prophecy" in Daniel 9:24-27, verse twenty four reveals the purpose of Christ, the Messiah's, coming into the world; He would "finish the transgression...make an end of sins...make reconciliation for iniquity...and bring in everlasting righteousness." The prophecy reveals that He would accomplish all these things when He would be "cut off, but not for Himself" (verse twenty six), which speaks of His death on the cross.

This incredible prophecy even reveals the exact year of His appearing in earthly ministry, and the exact time of His crucifixion three and a half years later. When Jesus cried with a loud voice from the cross, "It is finished," He was referring to this same prophecy, and declaring that He had accomplished everything He came into the world to do. He had "finished the transgression and made an end of sins" for all who would trust in Him, and He did it through His sufferings and death on the cross. Those who say they believe and yet continue in sin have never "seen Him as He is," because they have been blinded by the traditions of religion, which describe "another Jesus" (II Corinthians 11:4).

Living a life that is free from sin is not the result of our human abilities, will power, or even a special endowment of power from God to overcome sin. It is instead the result of trusting in Christ, who came into the world to "take away our sin." It is He who has made us free from sin (Romans 6:7, 18, 22), and we continue in that glorious freedom only as we "abide (continue) in Him." If it seems extraordinary that Christ makes His people free from sin, consider that He will also "keep us from falling (Greek; 'from sinning'), and present us faultless" when we stand before God "with exceeding joy" (Jude 1:24). Christ, who has "delivered us from sin and Satan," and "keeps us from falling," will have no problem keeping us in the day that He punishes the nations for their iniquities. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, **I also will KEEP THEE** (Greek; 'guard from loss or injury') **from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth**" (Revelation 3:10).

### "Thou Shalt Not Be Afraid..."

The Psalmist lists four things we will not be afraid for during the "great and terrible day of the LORD:"

#### 1. "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night;"

The children of God who turn from their own ways to "seek the face of the Lord" need not fear the things that are coming upon America and the world. It is God who "commands the locusts" (II Chronicles 7:13). He has "commanded them" to hurt "...only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (Revelation 9:4). Terrorism has come to America, and terror will soon follow. God has promised His people, those whom He will seal, however, "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night" (Psalms 91:5).

#### 2. "Thou shalt not be afraid...for the arrow that flieth by day;"

The "arrows" of ancient warfare were replaced by "bullets" several hundred years ago. When bullets are flying, "thou shalt not be afraid."

#### 3. "Thou shalt not be afraid...for the pestilence that walketh in darkness;"

The definition of "pestilence" in English dictionaries says "specifically, the bubonic plague," which killed over one third of the population of Europe in the fourteenth century. One of the favorite weapons of modern terrorism is germ warfare and chemical weapons, such as Saddam Hussein used to kill 180,000 Kurds in 1988, and used more recently by Syria against the rebels. God has promised those who abide in His secret place, "thou shalt not be afraid."

#### 4. "Thou shalt not be afraid...for the destruction that wasteth at noonday;"

What better description of modern warfare could be given than this which

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Hear The Shepherd's Voice  
P.O. BOX 307  
Colmesneil, TX.  
75938  
Cell: 832-401-5773

#### Message By:

Keith Surface  
How Little of God Can We  
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was given thousands of years ago? When the “iron curtain” of Soviet Communism fell in 1989, it seemed that “peace” was breaking out all over. Many people actually believed that the “dawning” of the seventh millennium would usher in “a thousand years of peace” without the necessity of the second coming of Christ. There was, of course, the continuing problem over who should control Jerusalem, but that seemed to be the only “hot spot” on the planet at the time. Then came the attack on the twin towers on “9-11,” less than one year into the new millennium. This single event signaled the sounding of the fifth trumpet and we saw the “swarming of the locusts” as radical jihadist worldwide rejoiced in their “victory” over America, whom they called “the great Satan.” Radical Islamist is the enemy which our God has raised up against America because of our sins as a people and as a nation. Instead of repenting of our five national sins, which I have delineated earlier in this message, America has greatly increased her rebellion against God. If America would have repented of her sins and turned to Jesus Christ after “9-11,” we would not be faced with worldwide terrorism today. God made a promise to Israel in the second chapter of Joel that if they would repent and turn to Him with all their heart, He would destroy their enemies, even in the day that their annihilation seems certain.

**Joel 2:15-20:** “*Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen: But I will remove far off from you the northern army (the locust army), and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.*”

America has reached the point of no return. The Spirit of the Lord spoke to me in January of 2001 that the administration of George W. Bush was a “space for repentance” for America. I was encouraged by Franklin Graham’s inaugural prayer of national repentance. The new president chose a “Spirit filled” Christian to be his attorney General, which also greatly encouraged me. Regular prayer services were held in the White House, as well as Sunday worship services. I heard the President speak of Jesus many times in the early days of his presidency, but after “9-11” it seemed that Jesus was the only one banned from national conversation. The Spirit of the Lord had told me that if there was not true repentance and turning back to Him during the Bush presidency, “The things that will come upon America will be too horrible to speak of.” II Chronicles 36:15-16 records the events that led to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar’s army; “The LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised HIS words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, TILL THERE WAS NO REMEDY.” That is where America stands today, and “there is no remedy.” Over fifty percent of Americans, according to the polls, approve of homosexual marriage. Almost fifty percent of all babies born in America are born outside of marriage. We are still murdering a million babies a year in their mother’s womb. Only last week, at this writing, our “Supreme Court” gave a ruling that opens the door to redefine marriage to include homosexual marriage. In six thousand years of human history, every culture that has embraced sodomy has been utterly destroyed and ceased to exist. That includes Sodom and Gomorrah, the inhabitants of Judah before the first destruction of Jerusalem (I Kings 14:24), and the Great Roman Empire. America will be no different. We are facing the

anger of God against our nation and culture.

There is always a “remedy” for sin and rebellion. God says, “Turn to me with all your heart” (Joel 2:12). Jesus says, “Repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). It is when men do not repent that the anger of God rises against them until there is no remedy but to pour out His fury. The ancient scribe recorded what God did to Jerusalem and the inhabitants of Judea when there was no other remedy; “Therefore **HE brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand**” (II Chronicles 36:17).

When the towers fell on “9-11,” it was “only” a “trumpet” (the fifth trumpet; Revelation 9:1-4), sounding a warning of “wrath to come.” America could have repented, but she did not. The national sins of America have increased five-fold in the years that have followed. Sadly, the “church” in America has embraced a “gospel” that tells us that sin no longer matters if you “believe in Jesus,” because He has “taken the penalty for our sin,” and has “forgiven every sin we will ever commit, before we commit them.” Can anyone who has any understanding whatsoever question the wisdom of Peter when he says, “...the time is come (is coming) that judgment must begin at the house of God...” (I Peter 4:17).

### Abominations Bring Desolation

**Matthew 24:15-16:** “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.”

Jesus referred to a prophecy in Daniel 11:31, which says, “...and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.” Daniel 12:11 says, “...from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.” Jesus gave this as a sign to His disciples concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. “Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains” (Matthew 24:16). In Luke 21:20-23, Jesus told his disciples, “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains.” It was three and a half years after the armies first surrounded Jerusalem that the city and temple were destroyed. Those Jews in Jerusalem who trusted in Jesus and believed His words had ample time to leave the city before it was destroyed by Nero’s army. Jesus, when foretelling that destruction forty years before it happened, said, “For these be **the days of vengeance** (Isaiah 61:2), that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and **wrath upon this people**” (Luke 21:22). This was the second time that Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the wrath of God.

### The First Destruction

**Ezekiel 8:6:** “He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.”

The presence of God had departed from the temple in Jerusalem long before God commanded the armies of Babylon to destroy it. When the presence of God departs from a people, a church, or a nation, that is what Jesus called desolation, which will be followed by destruction. Jesus told the Jews in Matthew 23:38-39, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” With those words, He spoke about the departure of the presence of God from that nation which has lasted unto this day, and will continue until the day a small “remnant” of one third of the population will turn to Jesus, saying, “Blessed is He (Jesus) that cometh (who came) in the name of the Lord (Christ).” In

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Luke 19:43-44, Jesus, while weeping over them, spoke of their destruction, saying, “...the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”

The Spirit of God took the prophet Ezekiel into the temple at Jerusalem to show him why it must be destroyed. In the temple, he found an “image of jealousy (an idol)” standing at the entry to the altar of God (Ezekiel 8:5). He found a secret room, where the seventy elders burned incense to images of every manner of creeping thing and abominable beast (Ezekiel 8:8-11). He found the women of Israel sitting at the entry to the temple, weeping and worshiping Tammuz (the god of flocks). Finally, Ezekiel says, “He brought me into the inner court of the LORD’S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, **between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east**” (Ezekiel 8:16).

**Ezekiel 8:17-18:** “Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. **Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.**”

God’s anger had turned into wrath against His chosen people, and there was no other remedy but to destroy their city and temple. It should be noticed that they were His “chosen people,” but that was not enough to quell His great wrath against them. There were, however, those among them whom God would protect “as the apple of His eye” (Deuteronomy 32:10, Zechariah 2:8). Ezekiel gives that account beginning in the next chapter.

**Ezekiel 9:1-6:** “He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, **Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer’s inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer’s inkhorn by his side; And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: BUT COME NOT NEAR ANY MAN UPON WHOM IS THE MARK; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.**”

How many there were in Jerusalem that God protected during the time of His wrath, we do not know. We do know, however, that among them was a young man named Daniel, and the “three Hebrew children,” Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. There was also a young virgin girl named Esther, and her older cousin, who was named Mordecai. All of these were spared in the day of God’s wrath against Jerusalem, and each of them became very great in the kingdom of Babylon, where God sent them for the seventy years of the captivity.

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lives as though they can ignore Him, have no love for Him, and have no necessity to serve Him. The prevailing attitude seems to be, now that we have salvation, we no longer have a present need for Jesus in our lives.

To illustrate this point, all I must do is to ask how many have ever been to the funeral of someone, who, almost certainly went to Hell? The truthful answer is, we all have. It’s just that, at their time of departure, we lay hold of some minimal standard to announce their arrival at the pearly gates. They may have lived their lives scoffing, or avoiding a real relationship with Jesus Christ; but surely that is not what matters now. We remember when they were baptized. They confessed Jesus as Lord many years ago. Occasionally they referred to Him; but only, as the man upstairs, or some other irreverent, disrespectful term. They even allowed someone to pray for them on their death bed. So then, somehow, somehow, we “know” they must have been saved; and are now in a much better place. We know they didn’t have much, but surely they had the minimum that God requires. Will such a person have boldness in the Day of Judgment to say, “O Mighty God, I know I don’t have much of you, but I just did not want more than I actually needed?”

## So Great a Salvation

I am writing this as one who believes, there is a “minimum” for entrance into salvation. Paul’s words in **II Corinthians 5:17** seem very well, to be such a basis: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Anything short of a new creature is not a child of God; and anything that comes short of producing a new creature is not salvation. To the Galatians Paul says, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (**Galatians 6:15**). You may go through any form, or formula, make any confession, and/or endure any ritual, believing that you are fulfilling scripture; but, if any one, or all, of these have not produced a new creature, it has not brought salvation to the believer thereof. The words “saved” and “salvation” both speak of rescue or deliverance. The apostle calls it “so great (a) salvation” (**Hebrews 2:3**). In this great salvation, we are rescued and delivered **from** sin, **from** the power of darkness, **from** this present evil world, **from** carnality, etc., and lifted up in victory from every enemy; all, defeated through Christ Jesus. It is to our shame, that instead of embracing such a full salvation, we seek to find “what the minimum is we can receive,” and/or, “experience from God,” and still get to Heaven. When did God become the God of the minimum?

## Stopping Points

I am a preacher of the cross. I fully believe and preach that Jesus went to the cross to crucify our old man; and in doing so, destroy the body of sin so that we would never again be slaves to sin. Nowhere, do the scriptures teach that a child of God is also a sinner. Nevertheless, there have always been sinners in

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the church; but never in Christ. John says, "*Whosoever abideth in him (Christ) sinneth not: (and) whosoever sinneth hath not seen him (Christ), neither known him*" (I John 3:6). I believe in being "**made free**" from sin! (John 8:31-36). These things I believe, and these things I preach. Sometime back however, I began to be troubled about something I was seeing in some of those who also believed in this wonderful freedom through Christ Jesus. They were not sinful. They were not unclean. But I began to perceive that for some, the cross had become a stopping point. I had always preached that the cross and the freedom it brought was the starting point in Christ, so I was confused by what I saw. It shocked me to realize that everything I preached as "*the minimum,*" had also, for many, become "*the end.*"

Many years ago I noticed that some ministries were built totally around repentance. These, for the most part, were good ministries, ever urging the people to repent. I noticed, however, that repentance seemed to be the goal of these ministries. As long as the ministry preached repentance, the people seemed to do well, but there never was an answer for sin other than to repent if you sin; repent because you might sin; and repent because you probably had not repented enough. I saw the fallacy in all this, knowing that Paul preached both repentance and faith. Repentance without believing a gospel that lifts the believer out of sin, is just an endless religious exercise. To another group, holiness is the heavenly calling. Their battle cry is "*Holiness, without which no man shall see God.*" In this group we also find some very wonderful and dedicated people. But multitudes spend their entire experience striving for holiness, and many of them never see God. To them holiness becomes the end, the goal; even the prize. Maybe I thought myself wiser than these. I had seen the power of the cross. It gave deliverance and freedom to the penitent. It gave holiness, which was a natural fruit of being freed from sin, and joined to Christ. Paul confirms this, saying, "*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*" Yet, even in the glory of the cross, I saw that people found a stopping point. They had reached their "*minimum,*" and their minimum became a place to stop and go no farther.

I could speak of many other things that have become an end for many. In the full gospel movements, even among those who still preach the true baptism with the Holy Ghost, this baptism often becomes a stopping point. We seek, and seek, and seek, until the baptism with the Holy Ghost comes; and then we sit down, thinking we have reached the goal. So often we do not know that what we received was not an end, but a beginning; an entrance; a pledge sent from God to lift us up into the riches of Christ. Too often the shout, the dance, and the emotion of a Pentecostal service become the stopping point for those who have received the Spirit of God, and of others who haven't received. We must understand that everything, pertaining to God, is a beginning. Nothing, which He has prepared for His people, is an end. We are the ones who turn His beginnings into an end. It does not matter where the stopping point is, or if it is

mine or yours, any stopping point in Christ is also a dying point.

**Call to Glory**

**But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit (our spirit) and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**II Thessalonians 2:13-14**

It is from the verse above that God reminded me that He has no stopping point. Paul wrote, "*Whereunto **He called you** by our gospel, **to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.***" God has never been the God of the minimum. He has never called a sinner, just, to repentance. From the moment a sinner first hears the gospel, or feels the touch of God, they are being called to sit with Christ in heavenly places and partake of His glory. God is calling that person to a life of miracles. He wants them to experience the riches of His grace. He wants them to manifest Him, through them, unto the world. I have heard all my life that God is calling people *to* repentance, but the truth is, God is calling people **through** repentance. He is calling them **through** faith. He is calling them **through** the cross. He is calling them **through** the baptism with the Holy Ghost. He is ever calling men and women to come and partake of the glory of His Son, Jesus Christ. The call is the same for sinner and saint alike. I can tell the vilest of sinners, that God is calling them to glory. Yes, there are many things He calls them **through**, but there is just one "*hope of the calling.*" It is the invitation to sit with Jesus in heavenly places and partake of His glory. There will be repentance and faith. There will be the death of the cross in union with Christ. There will be deliverance and holiness. And there will most certainly be the baptism with the Holy Ghost. None of these, however, are an end, for God has no stopping points.

As both a dad and a pastor, I have observed that some parents think the best way to never be disappointed in their children is to never expect anything of them. "*Expect nothing and you will never be disappointed in what you get.*" The truth is that if a parent expects nothing of their children, they will always be disappointed. I have seen this same thinking take hold in the houses of worship. Our preachers today, spend much effort to assure us that God expects nothing from His children. Decades

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Read The "**Shepherds Voice**" on our church web-site,



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## How Little of God Can We Get?

(and still be saved)

ago when I first came to the Lord, I would hear a teacher on the radio who could teach gospel truths in a way that would make you want to shout with joy. I was always saddened though, that he would end his messages by reassuring the people that these things had nothing to do with their salvation. They had confessed Jesus. They could never lose their salvation. They were alright. I called this his "disclaimer." I knew even as a young believer, that most of those who followed that ministry would never go on to anything more than his "minimum." He could preach glory, but as long as he reinforced the minimum, that was where the people would stay...and die (if they were ever alive). Almost thirty years later I see the same thing everywhere I turn. Every glory of Christ is preached with a disclaimer. "This is what God has set before you, but it is OK if you never possess it." Some proclaim the reality of "Christ in you," but if that is not your experience, then your dry confession of faith will do just fine. A large ministry prides itself in the message of freedom by the cross, but never fails to reassure the people that everyone struggles with sin; even (they say) the Apostle Paul. Others preach the great need for the baptism with the Holy Ghost, but always make sure the people know that it is "optional." The glory is preached to get the people to shout, and the minimum is preached to keep them in the building. So then, why should we be surprised that multitudes in the church are "camping out" as far from God as they think they can safely be and still make Heaven?

We must once again hear the call of the Savior; the one who sits in the heavens, inviting whosoever will to come and sit with Him in glory. We must tear down our "ends," our "stopping points," and throw away our disclaimers. We are called to a walk in freedom, holiness, victory, and glory. We must abandon our search for the "minimum amount of God that is needed," and begin to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1-4). We will never see a glorious church, if we never see a church that hears the call to glory. Nevertheless, we are called by the gospel, "...to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

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## THE STRAIT GATE

(and the narrow way)

*Reprinted from October 2010*

By: Bro. K.L. Cowart

This past Wednesday I had a dream "I was in a church building standing behind the pulpit with my arms reaching up toward heaven tell the people that the rapture was about to take, couldn't they feel it. My whole body was trembling as I looked down to see if the people were feeling the same thing, I was surprised to see all of them were gone but one woman. I asked her "Where is all the people?" She said "they didn't want to hear it anymore, and got up and walked out." That's when I woke up and these words came to me. "Few there be that find it."

**Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: [14] Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.**

Matthew 7:13-14

**Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. [16] Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? [17] Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. [18] A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. [19] Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. [20] Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. [21] Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**

Matthew 7:15-23

**Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.**

Luke 13:24

**And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. [23] Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, [24] Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. [25] When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: [26] Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. [27] But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. [28] There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. [29] And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. [30] And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.**

Luke 13:22-30

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## THE STRAIT GATE

(and the narrow way)

**But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**

**Hebrews 11:6**

The Assembly of God says they have over 60 million members. Question (how many of that 60 million + will go into the rapture?) If 60 million+ people go missing from this planet, this world will not be the same.

Some 700 years before Christ, Isaiah prophesied about this "way," saying, **"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isa. 35:8).**

There is no hint in Jesus' words that the strait gate and the narrow way may vary slightly from one another in their width. Jesus said, **"I am the door"** (John 10:7), and He also said, **"I am the way"** (John 14:6). There is no variance between Christ the Door and Christ the Way. The passage through the door, or gate, is so strait that there is no room for the flesh to pass through. Once having entered through the strait gate, the road beyond retains the same dimension. Having come in through the strait gate, it will not be grievous to walk the narrow way.

**John 10:7** Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

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!! BUT!!

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**Matthew 5:16**

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**John 14:6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

As Christ laid down His life, so must the seekers and knockers at the gate forfeit their lives (Matt. 16:25) to enter the kingdom. As one stands before the strait gate he surrenders everything to the Lord that he might gain entrance. Having become penitent and broken by Holy Ghost conviction, there is no plea-bargaining and no reservations stipulated. With a broken heart and contrite spirit (Ps. 34:18) one divests himself of his fleshly baggage on the world side of the strait gate. He does this willingly because his heart is being made new. He now knows that there is no other way unto salvation. He resolves to forsake the world and all its lusts, deny self, take up his cross, and follow the Lord Jesus. This he promises to do until his dying breath. This latter promise pertains to walking the narrow way.

**But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. [2] For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. [3] For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. [4] But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. [5] Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. [6] Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.**

**1 Thes. 5:1-6**

**But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. [14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. [15] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. [16] For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: [17] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

**1 Thes. 4:13-17**

### Homecoming Campmeeting

"What," a great Homecoming Campmeeting we had. Our people said they will never be the same. The did not want it to end. I would like to thank all of your friends that came out to supported it. I would like to thank all our workers that did a great job cooking, cleaning, coming out and supporting the work of the Lord.

I think, I can say for our people that everyone is looking forward for next years Homecoming Campmeeting.

THANK YOU JESUS FOR THE WORK YOU DID IN THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE!!!

Psalm 122:1

A Song of degrees of David.

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

Psalm 126:5-6

**They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. [6] He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.**





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