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### Biola Hour Highlights, 1974 - 07

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**Authors**

Paul Harvey, Red Skelton, Al Sanders, Lloyd T. Anderson, J. Richard Chase, Charles Lee Feinberg, and Samuel H. Sutherland

## *If I Were The Devil*

By: Paul Harvey

If I were the Prince of Darkness I would want to engulf the whole Earth in darkness.

I'd have a third of its real estate and four-fifths of its population, but I would not be happy until I had seized the ripest apple on the tree.

So, I should set about, however necessary, to take over the United States.

I WOULD BEGIN with a campaign of whispers. With the wisdom of a serpent I would whisper to you as I whispered to Eve: "Do as you please." To the young man I would whisper, "The Bible is a myth." I would convince them that "man created God," instead of the other way around; I'd confide that "what is bad is good and what is good is square."

In the ears of the young married I would whisper that work is debasing, that cocktail parties are good for you. I would caution them not to be "extreme" in religion, in patriotism, in moral conduct.

And the old I would teach to pray--to say after me--"Our father which art in Washington. . ."

THEN I'D GET ORGANIZED, I'd educate authors in how to make lurid literature exciting so that anything else would appear dull, uninteresting. I'd threaten TV with dirtier movies and vice-versa. I'd infiltrate unions and urge more loafing, less work. Idle hands usually work for me. I'd peddle narcotics to whom I could; I'd sell alcohol to ladies and gentlemen of distinction; I'd tranquilize the rest with pills.

If I were the devil I would encourage schools to refine young intellects, but neglect to discipline emotions; let those run wild. I'd designate an atheist to front for me before the highest courts and I'd get preachers to say, "She's right!"

With flattery and promises of power I would get the courts to rule what I construe as against God and in favor of pornography. Thus I would evict God from the courthouse, then from the schoolhouse, then from the houses of Congress. Then in His own churches I'd substitute psychology for religion and deity science. That way men would become smart enough to create super weapons but not wise enough to control them.

If I were Satan I'd make the symbol of Easter an egg, and the symbol of Christmas a bottle. If I were the devil I'd take from those who have and give to those who wanted until I had killed the incentive of the ambitious. Then my police state would force everybody back to work. Then I would separate families, putting children in uniform, women in coal mines, and objectors in slavelabor camps.

If I were Satan I'd just keep on doing what he's doing.

BIOLA HOUR HIGHLIGHTS

ISSUE NO. 8

FEATURING JULY MESSAGES

# *I Pledge Allegiance*

By: Red Skelton

I remember this one teacher. Mr. Lasswell was his name. To me, he was the greatest teacher, a real sage of my time. He had such wisdom. We were all reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and he walked over. He said:

"I've been listening to you boys and girls recite the Pledge of Allegiance all semester and it seems as though it is becoming monotonous to you. If I may, may I recite it and try to explain to you the meaning of each word:

*I--me*, an individual, a committee of one.

*Pledge--*dedicate all of my worldly goods to give without self-pity.

*Allegiance--*my love and my devotion.

*To the Flag--*our standard, Old Glory, a symbol of freedom. Wherever she waves, there is respect because your loyalty has given her a dignity that shouts freedom is everybody's job.

*Of the United--*that means that we have all come together.

*States--*individual communities that have united into 48 great states. 48 individual communities with pride and dignity and purpose, all divided with imaginary boundaries, yet united to a common purpose, and that's love for country.

*Of America.*

*And to the Republic--*a state in which sovereign power is invested in representatives chosen by the people to govern. And government is the people and it's from the people to the leaders, not from the leaders to the people.

*For which it stands.*

*One nation--*meaning, so blessed by God.

*Indivisible--*incapable of being divided.

*With liberty--*which is freedom and the right of power to live one's own life without threats or fear or some sort of retaliation.

*And justice--*the principle or quality of dealing fairly with others.

*For all--*which means it's as much your country as it is mine.

Since I was a small boy, two states have been added to our country and two words have been added to the Pledge of Allegiance--"*under God.*" Wouldn't it be a pity if someone said, "That's a prayer" and that would be eliminated from schools, too?

BIOLA HOUR HIGHLIGHTS

ISSUE NO. 8

FEATURING JULY MESSAGES

# *Communicating the Gospel*

By: Dr. Al Sanders

There are many tremendous opportunities presented to us today in the area of communicating Jesus Christ to others. I'm convinced that one of the most effective and efficient means from a "mass" standpoint is Christian radio stations such as many of the ones we're privileged to use for "The Biola Hour." How can each of us be more effective in communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

The problem the world faces is somehow capsulized in one of the current bits of humor. It runs along the theme of the "good news" and "bad news" vein. In this doubtless apocryphal story, an airline pilot comes to the realization that he's lost the way. Sensing the futility and frustration of the moment, he gets on the intercom to announce to his passengers, "Folks, we have some good news and some bad news. First of all, the bad news. It seems we've lost our course. Now, the good news. Our speed indicates that we're making excellent time!"

This picture is typical not only of the world itself, but also, in many instances, the organization of a number of church related institutions. They are extremely busy, but as far as proper direction is concerned, no one knows just where they are heading.

In I Corinthians 15:33, 34 the apostle tells us, "Be not deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame." These important verses come to us in one of the great towers or pinnacles of faith found in God's Word. The Lord warns us about the very real dangers of deception. In fact, in Revelation 20:10 we read about the final doom of our arch enemy, the great destructor. This passage tells us that the devil, who has always deceived men, will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Deception is a terrible thing. Sir Walter Scott penned the words, "Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when at first we practice to deceive." Whenever God warns us about deception we should be very, very careful to listen and to take heed.

Being deceived isn't fun. But there's something far worse than being deceived and that is when we deceive ourselves. When we consider the condition of today's world we deceive ourselves if we fail to realize what God's Word teaches about man's lost condition. Without Jesus Christ as Saviour, every person is destined for an eternity in hell, forever separated from God.

Don't fool yourself on this most significant point: "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Have you ever stopped to realize that there are only two kinds of communication in this world? Everything is either evil or good. In Scripture, God delineates things straightforwardly. There's no gradation or coloration. Things

are never on a scale of one to ten. It's life or death. It's heaven or hell. It's flesh or Spirit. And in this verse our communications are either evil or good.

Webster defines evil as that which is morally corrupt and that which produces sorrow. As you think of what's going on in this world today, especially in the area of morality, (or immorality as the case may be), we are spiritually bankrupt. Studies have been made by established committees concerning such things as the very real danger pornography has on people. To declare that such lurid literature doesn't adversely affect an individual's mind is complete folly!

In Proverbs, the Holy Spirit caused Solomon to pen, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." And the Psalmist similarly declares, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance" (33:12). I'm interested in communicating. There is a difference, however, between information and communication. Information is simply telling out, while communication is getting through. It is a one-on-one basis.

One of the measuring gauges to determine a person's spirituality can be determined largely by the kind of friends he has. One's spirituality can also be determined by what kind of television programs he sees, or what kind of books and magazines he reads, or how he uses his spare time. Mark down this warning and remember it well, "Evil communications, or evil companions, corrupt good morals." This is why David wrote in the very first Psalm those wonderful words, "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." And Paul similarly cautioned the Corinthians, "Be not unequally yoked together."

Remember, for good or for ill, your conversation, your communication, is your advertisement. Every time you open your mouth you let men look into your mind. Unfortunately there are some very tell-tale signs of corruptness which can be seen in the lives of certain believers. For instance, have you lost your interest in praying? Is there no time? Are you too tired? What about witnessing? How long has it been since you really took an opportunity to share with someone else the reality of Jesus Christ in your life? And how is it as far as stewardship is concerned? Has the energy crisis, the rise in the cost of living, and the spiraling aspect of taxation made it impossible for you to do anything for God?

One of the most pronounced signs of this aspect of being corrupt is a critical, censorious spirit. Nothing can be enjoyed any more. Life is sour and has turned you aside. Have you become bitter, cynical and cold?

We know that we are surrounded by strangers to God. Suzannah Wesley reminded her sons, in fact all of her children - not just John and Charles - about the subject of worldliness. Here's how she put it, and it's beautiful, "Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God or removes your relish for spiritual things, that to you my son, is sin." So these are the dangers which we face.

Now, what about the decision which must be taken? Verse 34 begins with a challenge. Indeed, it's an exhortation and a command. We're told, "Awake to righteousness." Americans awoke to the energy crisis and the gasoline shortage, relatively speaking, less than a year ago. Why? Apparently there were studies that had been made more than ten years ago which pointed out what was going to happen down the line. But we were asleep. We couldn't hear. We really didn't want to listen.

Paul wrote to the Roman Christians, "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep. For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no

provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." You can't get up to serve God if you've been staying up all hours satisfying the flesh and serving the devil.

One spiritual giant from the last century rightly pointed out that the first hour, when you get up in the morning, is really "the rudder of the day." How do you use that time? Is it only on yourself, or is it in communion with the Lord?

One of the free translations of this portion of Scripture, I Corinthians 15:33, 34 puts it so forcefully, "Arouse from stupidity about the world's ultimate lost condition." And the word that's given for "awake" here doesn't mean so much stirring after a night of slumber, but rather sobering up after being on a drunken spree. What a picture this is of the United States. In the years of our history we have been literally on a drunken spree, trying to satisfy our own selves and throwing a bone or a crumb to others. There will have to be an accounting. That day is fast coming, we believe.

We must now awake to an understanding of what the world needs. This represents not just the millions of population but our own neighborhood, and more importantly, in fact most significantly, the people in our own home. What are we doing to instill spiritual growth in the lives of those whom we love?

Righteousness is the faith concept of God. It is right thinking about His Word, the Bible. It's not simply believing in some great moral force, as would a deist. Rather, it's believing that God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for your sins, and in your stead. This is the righteousness to which we are to awake.

We transgress God's will when we are complacent. This is exactly what this verse teaches. That's why we are to awake, because when we sleep at an hour such as this, then we are not redeeming the time. We are indeed sinning in the sight of the Lord. We can see anarchy in the world today. We certainly observe apostacy in many of the churches. The saddest thing is that there is so much apathy among believers. It's like the man who bemoaned that there was so much apathy in the world concluding, "But then, who cares?" I'm afraid that could be a characterization of the church of Jesus Christ today. It may run smoothly and beautifully, but it doesn't do anything. It doesn't go anywhere. It has to have some impetus. It has to have some fulfillment.

"Awake to righteousness. . . because some have not the knowledge of God." What is the knowledge of God? Hebrews 11:6 warns us that without faith it is impossible to please the Lord. This isn't just faith that another tomorrow will come. It isn't faith that you're going to have a job and your health tomorrow. What the writer of Hebrews is saying is that we must have a personal, vibrant, intimate faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross. It is the realization that you as an individual, as well as all of us, are sinners in the sight of God.

Martin Luther pointed out that the "Ultimate proof of the sinner is that he doesn't recognize his own sin." And the paramount thing that we must do in our lives is to realize that we are definitely sinners in the sight of God. We need that impelling motivation that can come only through the power of God's Holy Spirit.

I am particularly concerned about the opportunity of broadcasting as a means of communicating this message of hope and heaven. We have the privilege of releasing "The Biola Hour" over many fine stations. Certainly you, as a dedicated Christian, should accept the challenge to pray for the management of your local facility. Pray daily, too. You've no idea how hard the pressures are which come from federal as well as local and state sources. I don't think I would want to run a radio station today in the light of some of the more recent requirements. For instance, there is

a great deal of discussion today on the subject of what kind of an employee a Christian radio station can hire. Does he have to be born again? This is a matter now under discussion in Washington, D. C.

You can help your Christian radio station by supporting it with your gifts, if it is that type of a ministry, or by writing to the sponsors or the producers of the programs which the stations carry. Don't let this golden opportunity slip through your fingers. Don't let this channel be lost for Christ.

You can help the Christian radio station in your area by encouraging others to listen. If you can't witness yourself, if you don't seem to be able to get the words together which would carry the message of Jesus Christ to others, then use this radio station as a tool. Encourage your friends to tune in to the programs. Most of these stations have listener guides, bumper stickers or other forms of advertising. Give out the literature freely. Use it with a word of encouragement and follow it up with prayer.

We talk about everything else: the energy crisis, the gasoline shortage, the price of food, taxes, weather, sports, and all the rest. Why not get involved as far as Christian things are concerned? Our problem is that we're afraid of becoming a part of something. If this station is ordained of God, if it is broadcasting the Gospel message by way of different programs such as these, then you help the management of the station in every way you possibly can. Encourage them with your prayers and with your letters as well. You have no idea what correspondence from a local listener means. They want to know, sincerely so, when you like something, as well as when you dislike something.

I'm sure you have read the cartoon feature "Peanuts" at some time or other. It's an extremely clever series. I recall seeing one where little Lucy enters the room, demanding that Linus change TV channels to something that she wants to see. In fact, she's so insistent that she threatens him with her fist. Linus gets his dander up and tells her, "What makes you think you can walk right in here and take over?" Lucy, without hesitation, proudly responds by showing him her hand. "Do you see these five fingers?" she angrily insists. "Individually, they're nothing. But when I curl them up together like this into a single unit as a fist, then they form a weapon that's terrible to behold." Linus, considering this ominous pronouncement, finally agrees, "Okay, which channel do you want?" With that he turns away from Lucy and for a moment looks at his own fingers. Then he commiserates to them, "Why can't you guys get organized like that?"

You know, my friend, as believers we may be few in numbers, but there's an awesome power in unity and dedication of purpose. Again, let me underscore the fact that God has given us the tools, the ability, the opportunity in so many ample ways. He has entrusted this message to our hands. Now, will we take it and use it, responding for His glory? God grant that we may.

*Dr. Sanders is Host and Executive  
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BIOLA HOUR HIGHLIGHTS

ISSUE NO. 8

FEATURING JULY MESSAGES

# Last Days: Perilous Times

## II TIMOTHY 3:1-5

By: Dr. Al Sanders

Doubtless you've heard about the old farmer who decided it was time to repair the family clock. It hadn't been working properly for a long time. So, one rainy Saturday he spent the entire day taking it apart trying to get the mechanism fixed. It was getting late and when he went to put it back together he got a little confused. By bedtime it was ticking alright, but there were a few pieces left over. Exhausted from the exacting experience, he retired for the evening. Somewhere around midnight he heard the clock ring out. He counted the bells, but was alarmed when it kept striking thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen. Finally, he shook his wife awake and urged her, "Maw, Maw, get up! It's later than I ever heard before."

As we look at some of the clear-cut signs in the world about us, from so many different areas of life, politically, morally, financially, and spiritually, we too can certainly say, "It's later than I ever heard before." Nowhere in Scripture do we have such an adequate digest of conditions which are to prevail before the return of the Lord than in Paul's second letter to Timothy. In the third chapter, verses one through five, there is an amazing confluence listing 19 moral signs indicative of Christ's coming back.

Let's take a look at just a few of the brief excerpts or comments by other writers of the New Testament relative to this next great event to which every believer looks forward. Peter was frank to say, "The end of all things is at hand." Jude, in his succinct but savory message of one chapter, 25 verses, declares, "The Lord cometh with ten thousand (myriads) of his saints." James, in his ever practical epistle, points out, "Behold the judge standeth already at the door." And when the elderly apostle John wrote to believers, he urged them with the words, "Little children, it is the last time." Although these statements were penned many years ago, they are as up to date as tomorrow morning's newspaper.

One contemporary translation appropriately opens this passage, "In the last days it is going to be very difficult to be a Christian." There are pressures from within and without which show us very clearly how true these words are. As an example, the first thing we see is that "Men shall be lovers of their own selves." Because of a love for self, people indulge every desire of their hearts. I think of that prayer the hypocrite offered, "Lord, bless me, my wife, my son John, his wife, us four, no more. Amen." How sad that so many are only interested in seeing what they can achieve for themselves rather than being concerned about others. The Lord Jesus reported that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth. Too often, I'm afraid, life for most people is conducted on the cafeteria plan, that is, self-service only. A very clear indication of the nearness of the Lord's return is that time when people seem to be looking out after only number one, for themselves. They want to know, "If I do it, what's in it for me?" Do you realize that man's love for himself caused the first sin? It was jealousy and

selfish pride. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). The greatest curse of the human race is selfishness. When a person is all wrapped up in himself he makes an exceedingly small package.

The second thing we find in this list of the moral signs is the word "covetous" which is indicative of those who are lovers of money. It is translated "mercenary" and appears as the last of the Ten Commandments. Webster defines it as "to want something belonging to another." How tragic it is that we allow the monster of covetousness to sweep over our souls. In the temptation of the Lord Jesus, recorded for us in the fourth of Matthew and also in the fourth of Luke, the devil tried to seduce the Saviour by pointing out, "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." The Lord rightly turned back the evil one by quoting, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt Thou serve." The fact is, the devil doesn't own so much as one grain of sand, as far as this world is concerned. The earth is really the Lord's, it is His possession, and the fulness thereof. Satan will offer anything to bring spiritual defeat to our lives.

It is amazing that this last half century, prophetically speaking, has made possible new sources of wealth with inventions, electronic discoveries, transportation, communication, and commerce. Paul warned Timothy in his earlier epistle that "the love of money is the root of all evil." I think one of the greatest curses we possibly face is the desire for more money, as well as the possibility of misusing it for selfish purposes and goals. Don't be covetous.

God cannot countenance boasters. Paul wrote to the church of Corinth, "For who maketh thee to differ from another and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hast not received it?" In the Gospel account we read of the Pharisee who thought he was so much better than the Publican. Five times the Pharisee got up to talk about how great he was. He had his good points. He would fast two times during the week and that was something because he was only required to do it once a year, that being on the day of atonement. He tithed of everything he possessed, and, of course, the law only required certain areas of tithing. But the downfall of the Pharisee was a result of foolish boasting. On a national scale, I'm afraid we, in our own country, have boasted about how great we are, when in actuality we're now experiencing spiritual and moral bankruptcy.

The fourth term indicating the nearness of the Lord's return is "proud." This represents the haughtiness of a man's spirit when he seeks to glorify himself. We become so proud we're not able to say, "I'm sorry. I was wrong." And, again, as far as our nation is concerned, we're practical atheists; we say we believe in God, but we live as though He didn't exist. Who needs the Lord? Listen, the Almighty owes the United States not one thing. We have become a country of practical atheists. Oftentimes we have perhaps imagined ourselves to be greater in this nation than we really are. And the haughtiness of spirit that has plagued us as individuals as well as a race of man could certainly some day bring our downfall.

The fifth indication of the nearness of the Lord's return is the word "blasphemers." Bishop Moule translates this "foul mouthed and abusive." I'm absolutely appalled by some of the things I see and hear on television. I don't know, quite frankly, any television broadcast, apart from the news and some of the public service programs, which aren't replete with jokes and inuendos having an off color meaning, or stories with a suggestive background. God's Word cannot be mocked. It specifically reminds us, "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

Maybe you've heard about the mother who was disturbed at her son's experience in school. She wrote a letter to the teacher threatening, "If all Johnny learns there in your classroom is swearing, then we'll just keep him at home and teach him

ourselves." I'm afraid, all too often, children have learned from their parents those things which would lead them along a pathway of disturbance and moral degeneracy, rather than serving as examples to their family in the faith.

The sixth sign is the phrase, "disobedient to parents." The more we study this passage the more it sounds like we are reading not necessarily from the Bible, but from the daily newspaper. Juvenile delinquency has been seen as a growing problem with the realization that it is more parental delinquency which has its root causes. Perhaps you read recently how the man who was a strong advocate for the permissive society has now asked for the forgiveness for the unfortunate things he has said encouraging permissiveness. Apparently he realizes now that this was the wrong route to take.

Our good friend, Vance Havner, pointed out correctly, "A child can sometimes be best straightened up by being bent over." Stuart Briscoe says that his definition of a brat is a child who acts like yours but belongs to the neighbor. It is strange, isn't it, that we spend so much time and energy in training our dogs and we let our children go to the dogs. And then we wonder why our dogs are more obedient to us than our children. Because of divorce, and so many homes being shattered, there is no strong foundational roots on which our young people can build their lives. About 50 years ago, one out of every twenty marriages ended in divorce. Today the average is about one out of every one and a half. And the predominant feeling among some young people is that they just don't want to even bother getting married. It doesn't seem to be necessary. A real estate man told me not too long ago that 80% of the sales his firm has are really based upon broken homes through divorce, making all these properties available.

Judge Samuel H. Sturms of the Ninth Judicial District in Kansas has observed, "Adults are responsible for writing and producing programs of violence on TV, for furnishing automobiles to unchaperoned young people, for writing, producing and selling all types of lewd and obscene publications, and motion pictures. We live in a society that has been willing to substitute indulgence for discipline, pleasure for beauty, and money for morals. We seek sexual excitement in 100 forms and in ten thousand places. We shower rewards on those who provide this questionable entertainment. Those who have shown the least regard for stability of family life seem to get the job. The broken home is the real cause of juvenile delinquency." We believe that the foundation stone of the nation is the hearthstone. The Psalmist rightly asked the question, "And if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Cornell University Psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner said, "In the old days there were more people who cared and told you so. Now little time is spent with children. We're experiencing a breakdown in the process of making human beings human."

The seventh sign of the nearness of the Lord's return is the word "unthankful." It really means having no gratitude or being ungrateful. It is true, we live in a dog-eat-dog society. The philosophy is creeping socialism where the people act as though the government owes everyone a living. You consider the national debt and what the interest is on that alone. Considering what it owes even at birth, no wonder the first thing a baby does is cry when coming into the world. By what reason so much is taken for granted. Some of the goals include getting paid for 40 hours of work when one only actually puts in 25 hours of service.

Paul Harvey declared, "If Uncle Sam is ever destroyed it won't be because of the Russians or the Chinese. It will be because he was lured away by a low-necked, short skirted, rose-scented, diamond-adorned hussy named 'Something for Nothing.'" Never being able to be satisfied, that's what this word "unthankful" represents.

There are so many people in our country who are constantly looking for something, but they don't really know what it is they are searching for. And even when they find it, they are still not happy or contented. When we think of all God has heaped upon us here in this nation, all of the blessings that are so evident on every hand, how foolish we are to show a lack of gratitude for His many bestowals of love upon us.

The eighth indication of the nearness of the Lord's return is the very descriptive word showing the moral condition, "unholy." It means "irreverent." Nothing today seems to be held sacred. Men's colognes and women's perfumes would offer the wildest types of sexual encounters if only the product is used. And no one is even the slightest bit embarrassed.

Whether we like to admit it or not, the fact remains that we are living in a very unholy society. With attempts now being made to legalize marijuana, and with an effort to continue eliminating prayer from the classroom, one young person wisely observed, "It seems now, at our school at least, that it will be alright if you smoke marijuana. . . just as long as no one prays for you!"

Novelist John Steinbeck grasped the situation very adequately when he said, "There is a creeping, all-pervading nerve gas of immorality which starts in the nursery and doesn't stop until it reaches the highest offices of the land, both corporate and governmental. There's a nervous restlessness, a hunger, a thirst, a yearning for something which is unknown."

The ninth indication of the nearness of our Lord's return are the three words, "without natural affections." There is a growing concern by our social workers over child beatings and molestations. Such are odious, even to mention.

When our Lord Jesus spoke here on earth, He gave two interesting moral signs of His coming again. The first was that of Noah, recorded in Luke 17:27. There He states that the people married wives and were given in marriage. This could very well indicate a plurality of experience in the field of marriage. Dr. Robert Elliott Fitch calls it "progressive monogamy," taking one wife after another. And then he speaks of our society following such practice as "sinking into the slime."

Perhaps the most pronounced problem without natural affection is categorized under the aspect of perversion or homosexuality. The first sign the Lord gave from a moral standpoint of His return was the sign of Noah. The second was the sign of Lot, or sodomy, which according to Webster is simply an unnatural act. As a result, we read in Romans 1 some very dark and dire words, where Scripture tells us that God gave up these individuals who had become so involved in unnatural acts.

The tenth moral sign of the nearness of the Lord's return is the interesting term, "truce breakers." This compound word reminds us that every treaty man has ever drafted has really been made to be broken; that's what has eventually taken place. In the Hague there is the Palace of Peace. It is the lavish building to which the various nations of the world have contributed materials. England sent stained glass windows. Germany provided gates of iron; Italy, marble; Japan, silk tapestries; China, precious porcelain; Turkey, rich carpets. The United States furnished handsomely carved busts of the world's great statesmen. A 75,000 volume library, books all on the subject of peace, was established. But these thirty years later the world is in worse shape than it was then.

General Douglas MacArthur wisely observed, "Men, since the beginning of time, have sought peace. Military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations have all failed, leaving the only path by way of the crucible of war." The utter destructiveness of such conflagrations blots out any other alternative. And why? Well,

one reason is that in the long ago the Prince of Peace was nailed to a cross.

The eleventh indication of the nearness of the Lord's return are the words, "false accusers." The New American Standard Version translates this "malicious gossips." It signifies those who are scandal mongers. I'm sure you know those who just can't wait to tell something about someone else. Dr. Walter L. Wilson wisely observed, "When you get right down to it, gossip is the only thing that has to be bad in order to be good." Keep in mind that gossip will always travel faster over grapevines that are slightly sour and if you're cynical and down on something, or someone, you can be sure that the devil is using you to spread false accusations.

At first blush we might feel that Paul had made a mistake in putting "false accusers" or gossips in with a list that includes covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, etc. This term "gossips" sticks out like a sore thumb. Yet we find in the Word of God that the Lord cautions us more about the improper use of the tongue than perhaps about any other aspect of our lives. In Proverbs 6:16-19 we read of the seven things that the Lord hates, which are an abomination to Him. Interestingly, that list basically deals with those who spread tales and reports about others. One of the commandments clearly tells us, "Thou shalt not bear false witness."

The twelfth indication of the nearness of the Lord's return and that these are indeed the last days accompanied by perilous times, is a word not often used in our modern vocabulary, "incontinent." It really means intemperate or to bring it down to our modern day living, "loose morals." What a picture of our times! Jenkin Lloyd-Jones, Editor of the Tulsa Tribune comments, "Can anyone deny that movies are dirtier than ever? Only they don't call it dirt, they call it realism. Why do we let them fool us? May God help us." Webster uses the word "incontinent" as a definition for "not refraining from sexual appetites."

The thirteenth sign of the nearness of the Lord's return goes right along with the twelfth. It's the word "fierce," and it means brutal or savage. Perhaps you saw the recent cartoon which shows the TV repairman standing in front of a family's set, coming in to make a call. A rather frazzled mother with two little youngsters about three or four years of age at her side, beseeches the repairmen, "Can you fix the set? The children complain about the color depth. They say the blood looks too watery." The average American preschooler spends 64% of his time watching television. Harvard University research has discovered that by the age of 14 an average child will have seen 15,000 murders or homicides on TV.

In the course of an average person's life, TV will have consumed ten years of his time. These facts were compiled by Dr. Jerald Looney of the University of Arizona. He calls television "the electric intruder," saying that it has replaced both parent and teacher as the primary educator of children. He further states that the American preschool child during his critical years of growth spends more time watching TV than he would in the classroom during four years of college. And we can well ask the question, "What will he learn?"

The fourteenth indication of the nearness of Christ's return, at least from a moral standpoint, is this phrase, "despisers of those that are good." The Lord Jesus told His disciples, "Beware when all men speak well of you" (Luke 6:26). Make no mistake, the world hates you, it hates the cross, it hates Christ. One of the reasons why Christian television programs are on early Sunday morning rather than some of the prime times that are afforded to TV violence and sex shows is simply because of the offense of the cross. The world doesn't want to be reminded that apart from God's free salvation, they are sinners bound for hell!

Newspapers told the story of the theater which had been robbed so often that they

installed a special line to the police department. All that was necessary was for the girl in the ticket booth to step on a little button. This automatically rang down at police headquarters if some trouble came. Unfortunately, because of its position, frequently the ticket cashiers would step on the button by mistake. One time, when the theater was actually being robbed, the woman instantly stepped on the button signaling for help. When nothing happened, she kept stepping on it insistently. Finally, the phone rang and an officer complained, "Please ma'am, would you take your foot off the buzzer? It bothers us down here at police headquarters." The world doesn't want to be told about its precarious spiritual condition. They don't want to hear the alarm. They despise those things that are good. They love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

Did you ever turn over a stone and see the little bugs, worms, and vermin trying to run for cover? This is why D. L. Moody testified, "I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. It's ruin is getting nearer and nearer. One day God said, 'Moody, you're a lifeboat. Go out and rescue as many as you can before the crash comes.'"

Servant of Christ, stand fast amid the scorn  
Of men who little know or love the Lord;  
Turn not aside from toil;  
Cease not to warn,  
Comfort and teach. Trust Him for thy reward.  
A few more moments suffering, and then  
Cometh sweet rest from all thy heart's deep pain!

The fifteenth indication of the nearness of the Lord's return is the word "traitors." This means someone who is a betrayer or a treacherous person; one who is two-faced and undependable. Judas would fit into this category. They say that men are reliable. Dr. Charles L. Feinberg pointed out that he feels this is most certainly true because man lied once, and he lies again, so therefore he is definitely reliable.

A traitor is one whose word cannot be depended upon. Too many of us, I'm afraid, are willing to serve the Lord so as not to offend the devil, but it doesn't work that way. How often we can see that our day is categorized by those who have no sense of loyalty to any cause, but to themselves. They are betrayers. Perhaps it is because individuals are seeking peace. They can't find it in their homes; they can't find it in their hearts; and certainly they will not find it in the hereafter if they haven't turned to Jesus Christ as Saviour.

The primary root of the word "peace" means a perfect joining. It's not a stillness, but rather perfect noiseless harmony. This actually represents movement without friction. But unfortunately in our country it seems that the only way people can find peace is through barbiturates or tranquilizers.

The sixteenth indication of the nearness of the Lord's return is the word "heady." This can also be characterized with the similar terms "reckless, headstrong, rash, uncontrollable." A classic story is told about the woman who came to Gypsy Smith, the evangelist, to confess, "I have a terrible temper. But then it all blows over and is done." The wise man of God pointed out to her, "Yes, but so does a shotgun blast, and when it's over there's nothing left but the pieces." There is no peace with an explosive temper, only the pieces left after the blast is over.

I read the other day that there's been developed what is known as an anti-hostility pill. It apparently is something which has been tested for five or six years. But you know, when it comes to this word "heady," which represents a rash and mean disposition, where tempers flair, the world needs far more than some modern-day pill. They need the peace which Jesus Christ alone can give.

The seventeenth sign is the term "high minded." This indicates a picture of someone who has an unwarranted impression of self-importance. In a word, we'd call it "conceit." I like what Henry Ford declared on this point. He observed, "The bigger a man's head gets, the easier it is to fill his shoes." Certainly no one who is emulating Jesus Christ will have such an unwarranted estimation of himself. The Saviour declared, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me." And in writing to the Philippian church, Paul says of our Saviour, "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God." If you want a perfect picture of true humility, don't look to someone else here on earth, but fix your gaze on the peerless Saviour.

Isn't it strange that we know more bad things about ourselves than does anyone else, and yet no one thinks so highly of us as we do! In this day and age of recession or possibly depression, one type of inflation that's the most dangerous of all is the inflated ego. It is a fact that the head never begins to swell until the mind stops growing.

The eighteenth sign of the nearness of the Lord's return is one on which we could probably spend many broadcasts. Read the phrase, "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." This is the saddest declaration of all. With all with which we have to live in this country we have still decided that our love affair should be centered upon ourselves and our own pleasures rather than upon our God who has given all things to us. You look at any neighborhood, any golf course, or any highway at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, even with the energy crisis, and see how much men love God.

Paul talking here about "lovers of pleasure" really has reference to sensual pleasure. Take a look at the entertainment media, especially television and motion pictures, which are constantly vying with each other to see how base and low in morals they can go. One of the key tests is that which can easily be seen in who or what has control in your life. Either your body rules your soul or your soul rules your body. It's either the Spirit or the flesh. There is no more miserable person in all the world than a Christian who is living out of fellowship with God in sin. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. The two are contrary one to the other. It's not a case of making up a list of things from which we should refrain or abstain, but it is putting on the Lord Jesus Christ and making no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust of it. Sinners were never commanded to attend church, but the church has been commanded to go out and win sinners. We're not to be isolated from the world but rather, by the Spirit of God, insulated from it and its appeal to the flesh. The church has never had such an effect on the world as in those days when it would have nothing to do with the world. That's the problem just now. Attachment to Christ is really the only secret of detachment from the world. A Christian isn't ruined by living in the world, but he certainly is ruined by the world living in him. A very clear indication of the nearness of Christ's return is that men are lovers of sensual pleasures, more than lovers of God.

The nineteenth sign is "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." This is the profession without a possession. It is a creed without Christ. It's just a shell of religion. The most dangerous thing in all the world isn't communism--it's religion! Keep in mind that Christianity isn't a religion, it's a Person, Jesus Christ! Religion has been typified, as Dr. Samuel H. Sutherland has often said on "The Biola Hour," as man reaching out to God. But Christianity is rather God reaching out to man in the person of His only begotten Son.

We here at Biola hold to the infallibility of Scriptures, to the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the miracles which He performed, to the Saviour's sinless life, to His substitutionary atonement, to the bodily resurrection of our Lord and certainly, to His coming again. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power

thereof." This means no time for God. What fools we are to clutter up our lives with common things and leave without heart's gate the Lord of life, and life itself, our God.

How can we view these nineteen moral signs, indicative of the Lord's return? First of all, we can be positive. We have no cause for pessimism. It's really thrilling to live in these times. Just think of it. We may not see physical death. It's certainly the time to lift up our heads; to know that our redemption draweth nigh.

For every verse in the Word of God that speaks of the first coming of Jesus Christ there are eight that positively tell us about His second. He pointed out, "If I go away I will come again." And He will.

Blind poetess Fanny Crosby teamed with gospel song writer James McGranahan to pen these truths,

"Why say ye not a word of bringing back the King,  
Why speak ye not of Jesus and His reign?  
Why tell ye of His kingdom and its glories sing,  
But nothing of His coming back again!"

The Saviour is coming again. In these dark days we need to keep our light shining brightly. "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." The darker the night, the blacker the circumstances about us, the brighter the light that we find. It's why Paul wrote later in this same book that we are to be "instant in season, out of season." Even when it doesn't seem to be the time we are to be ready for the Lord's return. One translation has it, "Keep your sense of urgency and awareness of the Saviour's return."

#### CHRIST RETURNETH

It may be at morn, when the day is awaking,  
When sunlight through darkness and shadow is breaking,  
That Jesus will come in the fullness of glory,  
To receive from the world "His own."

It may be at midday, it may be at twilight,  
It may be perchance, that the blackness of midnight  
Will burst into light in the blaze of His glory,  
When Jesus receives "His own."

O joy; O delight! Should we go without dying,  
No sickness, no sadness, no dread and no crying;  
Caught up through the clouds with our Lord into glory,  
When Jesus receives "His own!"

O Lord Jesus, how long, how long  
Ere we shout the glad song,  
Christ returneth! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen,  
Hallelujah! Amen.

Biola College  
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BIOLA HOUR HIGHLIGHTS

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FEATURING JULY MESSAGES

# *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*

By: Dr. Lloyd T. Anderson

We read in Revelation 1:19, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." Here we see three all-important divisions. The things which had been seen by John are recorded in the first chapter as he views Christ walking in the midst of the lampstands. The things which are deal with the seven district churches. After the completion of chapter three he concentrates on future prophecies and development. This will be after God's people have all been taken out of the world.

As a matter of fact, the fourth chapter of the book begins with the words, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be." The church is never as such mentioned again. It is not on the earth. The next time a church is seen is at the end of the book of Revelation with the marriage supper of the Lamb in glory.

The second part of verse 19 deals with the things which are. This is in the present age of grace. We see "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand and 'the mystery of' the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which thou sawest are the seven churches." The mystery which is mentioned has a profound and significant meaning. First of all, seven is a number which is sacred and symbolic--a holy arithmetic. The number seven represents completeness and fullness. It is like the seven spirits which are before the throne of God, representing the fullness of the one Holy Spirit. While there is only one Holy Spirit, the number seven represents His plenitude. So, these seven churches represent all the churches through all of the ages since the day at Pentecost up to this present hour and until the rapture. These churches were actual local congregations in the day of John. If we would know the course of God's work in the world, its destiny and consummation, we can find it written here by Him who can see the end from the beginning.

The word translated the "church" is a compound Greek word. In his word studies, Dr. Vincent suggests that the first part is "ek" which means "out of" or "from out from among." A true church is a group of people who are called out from among. The basic meaning of the Greek word has never been changed. Three times in the New Testament the word is properly translated assembly (Acts 19:32, 39, 41).

The author of Hebrews uses this same word to refer to all of God's called out people who are now in glory (12:18, 22). This deals with all of God's people who have been called out of this unbelieving world and physical death. They are in heaven, every one of them without a loss. There is a calling and there is an election in the Bible that is woven into the very warp and woof of the whole fabric of God. The term "ekklesia" is an exact and true delineation of the Church. It is a demonstration of the grace of God which has reached down for you and me. These congregations all over the earth are referred to as assemblies.

Almost always the word ekklesia is used to refer to a local congregation. It is a called out company of believers who love God and believe in Christ, and are separated from the world. They are elected by the grace and loving mercy of the Saviour. Our Lord Jesus Christ addresses these letters to seven specific churches. They were actual, historical, congregations existing in the days of the apostle John. The first of these is the church of Ephesus.

Apostasy is always defection from truth, abandonment from what one has voluntarily professed, or a total departure and desertion from one's faith. We can see the gradual deterioration beginning with the church of Ephesus on down through the church at Laodicea. This decline in faith can be traced through those seven churches until the climax is reached with the apostate church of Revelation 17. This is, of course, after the true church is already taken home to be with the Lord. Those who became apostates were on the inside of the church, yet they were never saved. Salvation is not obtained by joining the church but rather is a matter of inner spiritual faith. The Lord never intended that any local church, regardless of denomination, should ever be composed of people who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their own Saviour. Yet, such is unfortunately true. Down through the years many people have professed Jesus Christ as Lord who never really professed Jesus Christ at all. By studying the gradual declination and decay of the church throughout the ages, we can see how generation after generation gradually increased in apostasy, producing an alarming situation which confronts the church in the present day. There are many Bible teachers who believe we today are living in the Laodicean age of the New Testament.

Chapters two and three of Revelation were prophetic in the day of John. Today, of course, they are almost entirely history. Why seven churches? From the first chapter of Genesis on through the whole Bible, God's work seems to run in cycles of seven. Each letter to a specific church describes dominant characteristics of a particular period of church history. What an advantage to be able to look back over these things to gain much insight and guidance.

It is significant that each of the last four letters suggest the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. None of them end with the period they depict. They continue on until the day of Jesus Christ. This reveals that the corrupt world church is spiritually dead. Apostate modernism and genuine Bible-believing Christianity will continue simultaneously side by side until the real true Church is taken home to be with the Lord.

The first church we want to study is the one which was located at Ephesus, the flourishing commercial city on the western side of Asia minor. It is opposite the Greek Island of Samos. Ephesus today has been called the greatest single ruin in the world. To see this site where Paul once lived and preached is an overwhelming experience.

Ephesus originally had a large artificial harbor which could accommodate the largest ships of the day. The great trade routes from the east poured into this bustling area. Because of this it readily grew to be one of the richest cities in the Roman Empire. It had a history that went back into dim antiquity. The Amazons, a tribe of people who were ruled by vigorous and capable women, believed that the mother goddess of the world was born in Ephesus. They built a temple in which to worship her. Then the Greeks conquered the city and dedicated the temple to their goddess Diana. They built her the greatest Greek temple in that era. It was looked upon as one of the seven wonders of the world. People poured into the city of Ephesus in John's day from all ends of the Roman Empire so that they might share in the worship, full of pageantry and ceremony, bowing down before the Ephesian Diana.

Interestingly enough, the city also had a marvelous Christian history. Paul, in

his ministry spent two full years at Ephesus. There he wrought wonderful miracles in the name of Christ. Even handkerchiefs Paul would touch, when taken to sick people, would bring healing. There it was that Paul wrote the first letter to the Corinthians. It was in Ephesus that the most brilliant pulpiteer who ever preached the Gospel could be heard. His name was Apollos, and he was converted to the Christian faith. He was taken to one side by Aquilla and Priscilla to be taught a little more deeply the truth of the Word of God.

It was also in Ephesus that Timothy was the pastor. In fact, the epistle to him was written when he served as the minister of that congregation. Additionally, John, the human author of the book of Revelation, the fourth gospel and the three epistles which bear his name, was also a pastor. He came to live there about 69 A.D. Perhaps he had fled the terrible war in Judea which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus in A.D. 70. For about 30 or 40 years this great apostle guided the church at Ephesus. It was there, under the reign of Caesar Domitian, that he was exiled to the Isle of Patmos, located about 25 miles from Ephesus in the Mediterranean.

Over the years Ephesus declined until today it is nothing more than the scene of endless desolation with its marvelous empty ruins. The great harbor has been filled with silt and dirt so that the site of the present city is now located several miles from the ocean. When it is visited by tourists or archeologists, startled giant lizards, amazed at the presence of man, dart over huge stones once forming the city foundations. The complete emptiness of Ephesus shows what can easily transpire when an individual or a community continues to turn away from God and His eternal truth.

The second of the seven churches mentioned in the second and third chapters of Revelation is the one located at Smyrna. Smyrna geographically is located in the area of the modern Turkish city of Izmir. It is at the end of the beautiful bay of the Aegean Sea. It was founded by the Greeks after the destruction of the city of Troy. It has always been one of the most magnificent cities in the Middle East. For their day, the streets were wide and straight, the most famous being the Golden Street which ran from the sea to where a large temple to the goddess of nature was constructed. It continued straight through the entire length of the city to the summit of the nearby mountain on which was built the temple to Zeus. On that street one of the famous monuments was dedicated to Homer. He was supposedly born in Smyrna.

The Romans looked upon Smyrna as being the queen and the glory of the Middle East. It must have been an unusually impressive city in John's day. It has a population today of about 250,000 people. It is still the headquarters of the fanning complex of railroads which go out to all of Turkey.

The third of these great cities in Revelation is Pergamos. It is about 50 miles north and 15 miles inland from the sea. For 300 years it was the capital of all that part of the world. It was a pagan cathedral community, a university town, and an area on which the chiefs and kings of succeeding kingdoms lavished their untold wealth. When the Romans took it over from Alexander it was made the capital of the newly created province called Asia. Pergamos was famous for its wonderful library of well over 200,000 volumes. In fact, the word parchment comes from "Pergamos." The first time writing was ever done on skins was in this city. Ptolemy in Egypt became angry with the king of Pergamos, refusing to sell him any more paper on which to pen his books. In a resourceful manner the writers of Pergamos invented the use of skins. The collection which was established was one of the great wonders of the world. Pergamos held the leading medical schools of its day. Students came from all of the Mediterranean countries to study the science of healing. In Revelation 2:13 we are reminded that Pergamos was the throne of Satan.

It was predominately a city of pagan worship with heathenism and the adoration of many different kinds of gods rampant. Pergamos later fell into ruin and is now a vast scene of desolation and destruction. There is a small Turkish village nearby with about 10,000 people.

About 30 miles to the south was the ancient city of Thyatira. Nothing much is known about its history. It was a flourishing mercantile community, situated at the confluence of two valleys where the ancient roads came together. It was noted for its manufacture of purple and for mining of copper and silver. The entire city was organized into trade guilds, much like our modern labor unions. Lydia, the early believer who sold her goods at Philippi, was from Thyatira. The area has also fallen into ruin and decay. It is hardly recognizable today.

The next city of the seven churches is Sardis, 30 miles south from Thyatira. It was the ancient and glorious capital of the kings with its history going back to dim antiquity. Sardis maintained an impregnable, unassailable military position. It was located on the north wing of a mountain with a river acting as a moat around the base. No army was able to conquer Sardis, a wealthy repository of ancient imperial plunders. It is believed that the first gold and silver coins ever minted were from this area. The Persians captured Sardis and across the years it also fell into deep ruin and decay.

The sixth of the seven churches was in the city of Philadelphia. This was 30 miles south of Sardis. It was built by Tallus Philadelphus who was a king of Pergamos. While a busy market place, it never grew to great proportions because of frequent earthquakes in the area. It had no Roman law courts since these were located at Sardis. Philadelphia has also fallen into ruin and decay.

The last of the seven churches is Laodicea. It is about 40 miles to the southeast. Laodicea was a mercantile town on the great trade route from East to West. As a flourishing city, the people were so wealthy and affluent that when it was destroyed by an earthquake in 60 A.D. the citizens refused any financial aid from the Roman Empire. They wanted to do the work themselves. Laodicea has also fallen into great ruin. There is nothing there now except desolation.

This is a simple introduction from a geographical and historical standpoint. In the following study we will consider these churches from a spiritual standpoint as recorded in the book of Revelation.

Ephesus was the first of the seven churches mentioned in the second and third chapters of Revelation. It is interesting to notice that in each of these letters Christ in His glory is always emphasized. He is seen as being in the midst of the churches holding the leaders in His own hand. He can easily see what is both right and wrong with the congregations. This is all "firsthand" information. None of it is "hearsay." The Lord Himself is speaking. The Saviour usually started out commending the people for whatever they had worth pointing out. Nothing could escape His penetrating gaze. He evaluates properly.

Notice that the Holy Spirit uses the word "labor." This is very significant since it means strenuous toil and exhausting effort. The Lord told the church at Ephesus, "You really put forth a lot of energy. You have worn yourselves out doing my work." Ephesus must have been a wonderful church. This all certainly cost them something.

The church at Ephesus was also known for their patience which was enduring. They retained a constant forward drive. In our day many people can think only of "peace at any price." Some are more interested in this than in purity of life and doctrine. They are ever ready to compromise.

The Lord also told the Ephesians, "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them to be liars." We are admonished in the Word of God to check all teachers for what they proclaim and how they live. John, in his first general epistle, reminds us that we are to reject those who deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. The apostles were very careful to lay a solid groundwork for true doctrine in guiding the early Christians (1 Cor. 2:4, 5). We are not to be like "children, tossed to and fro carried about with every wind of doctrine." There are outright apostates who deny the deity of Christ. The church at Ephesus repudiated false teachers. An apostle was a messenger authorized to act or speak for someone who sent him. Before Christ ascended back to heaven, He declared, "As My Father has sent Me, even so send I you." When He had said this He breathed on them and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This action clearly indicated that when the Holy Spirit came He would empower the messengers of the gospel for their own ministry. Unfortunately, there were certain evil men who sought this position. They pretended to have the same kind of power. They falsely claimed to have a message inspired of God. They had to be tested by the churches. Ephesus was faithful in doing what they were supposed to in this regard. Paul warned the Corinthian Christians of their grave danger with apostates (11 Cor. 11:13-15). The Ephesians didn't hesitate to put to the test all those who claimed to be messengers of the Lord. Creeds can sometimes be wrong. The true test of the biblical teacher must be on the basis of what the Word of God teaches. This can only be the final authority. Those who had come to Ephesus under false pretenses were absolutely deceitful. Those who say that they are not sinful enough to be lost are characterized as being liars. Anybody who says that Jesus is not virgin born cannot possibly be from God.

Some of the other tests are based on how we live. John points this out in 1 John 4:20. You can't say you love God and still hate your brother. While these are not complicated tests, yet they go to the very heart of the Christian faith (1 John 5:10, 11). When teachers deny that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who came to die for your sins and mine, they are liars. The Bible verifies this in no uncertain words. We do well to make the excellent discipline the church at Ephesus maintained.

In studying the seven churches we cannot help but notice the composition and certain structure which is followed, providing an identical pattern in each. First of all, they are addressed to the messenger of the individual congregation. Then the title of the writer is given. Each title is one of the descriptive elements of the vision of the risen Christ as found in the first chapter. Each message begins, "I know thy works." The heart of the message contains a joyful word of praise, a searching word of blame or a combination of the two. Then, the message closes with an allusion to Christ's coming. Lastly, there is a final word of admonition to the individual. The world really didn't know these churches. Their members were despised in the cities in which they lived.

It should be noted that our Lord holds both the churches in His hand as well as walking amidst them. These phrases speak of His double attitude toward believers. We have in Him our standing and position, while in ourselves we have a state or a condition. You and I, in Christ, are spiritually secure. Ephesus was a church that was laboring, toiling and persevering. This use of words, all synonymous, expresses a new shade of meaning. They emphasize the truth of the strong witness of these believers. The biblical account of Paul's farewell to these Ephesian elders is clearly told in Acts 20. Note the prophecy the apostle made about the city. He forcefully predicted, "After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, and they will not spare the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples unto themselves." What a tremendous picture of future events, which eventually came to pass. The difficulties of the Ephesian church didn't arise from the persecutions of the world,

but rather evil came from within. So many Christian people today find it easy to bear with the real enemies of Christ who are within the church. We absolutely are not to allow false teachers to come into the congregation. The church at Ephesus wasn't tolerant toward the evil people who sought to come in. Such testing and judgment are in obedience to God's Word. (The commandment Christ gave to abstain from judgment refers to all matters having to do with character, actions, and works.) "Try the spirit," said the Holy Spirit to the apostle John (1 John 4:1). There are many false prophets in the world. It follows logically that there must be a standard by which men are to be tested. Our final authority can only be the Bible. It will endure forever. The question is simply to note whether or not a man is preaching in accordance with the Word of God (11 John 9, 10). This is not intolerance but rather obedience to the Lord's command. Although we admit the right of any man to believe what he pleases, we deny him that right as a worker in the congregation of faith.

In spite of the approbation of Christ on the Ephesian church, there was nevertheless something lacking. It had unfortunately left its first love. Let's be very careful not to mistake this for "brotherly love." What the passage refers to is love for Christ. (Notice, it is not "lost" but rather "left.") Do you love Jesus Christ today as much as you did when you were first saved? Have we slipped back into a drab taking things for granted attitude? In Psalm 51:12 we find that David knew exactly what this meant. This is why he petitions, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation." Are we neglecting our prayer life, and the study of the Word of God? Are we a little less faithful and zealous when it comes to church attendance, as well as loyalty in giving and in our prayer life? Spiritual growth is never static! We may need desperately to return to our first love. This was the unheeded exhortation to the Ephesian church. The fellowship of which John is speaking is vertical and not horizontal. It is the relationship of the individual to Jesus Christ. Fellowship among Christians may exist without all of the parties concerned being pure in fellowship with Christ. Our hearts are not holy enough to discern the spiritual relationship of another soul to Christ. Our fellowship with the Lord is dependent upon the working of His holiness in our lives. If the "first love" is not glowing in our moment-by-moment thoughts toward Him, we have fallen from the highest place of spiritual privilege. For our fellowship with Christ to be broken means that the believer has fallen all the way from his spiritual position in the sense of every day living on the plane of his life. "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen."

In commending the Ephesian church, the Lord points out, "I know thy works." This was an active and very energetic congregation. They were in business for the Saviour. There was no question about their labor. They not only worked for the Lord, but they also did so at a price! They would not exercise patience toward those who were false and liars. They had a triumphant fortitude when it came to proper discipline. They may have been down but they were not discouraged. They couldn't bear those who were evil. Did you know that it is possible to get so accustomed to evil that a person hardly notices it? That's where the danger comes in.

The Ephesian church was certainly very orthodox. They tested those who said they were apostles of the Lord Jesus. If they found them to be liars they were sent out immediately. Today for some reason, the more rank a heretic or agnostic is, the more he is received as a great liberal man of scholarship by foolish people. The paradox seems to be that the less a person believes, the more wonderful he becomes to those who do not revere the Word of God. The Ephesians couldn't bear evil men or false doctrines. In everything they did it was their purpose to labor for the name of the Lord, never fainting or flagging, no matter the task. They weren't quitters. Too many Christians today have quit running the heavenly race and have now been reduced to walking or have stopped altogether. Be careful that you don't fall away. These are days close to the second coming of Christ. We need to

recover the zeal that comes with the joy of our salvation experienced when we were first saved.

What an astonishing thing that the Lord should find anything wrong with such a church. Christ walked among the churches with eyes as a flame of fire, penetrating with divine accuracy. He sees everything among His people. Our eyes are covered with the smoke and smog of this world! The problem was that in all their zeal they had left their first love. The old enthusiasm had been altered and was beginning to wain. Their service was now mechanical even though they were still orthodox and true to the Word. Their devotion was merely routine. What a picture of so many churches today! In many of our congregations emotion is discounted and enthusiasm represents an intellectual weakness. The enemy of the church is dead formalism.

Then our Lord speaks wonderful words of counsel. He says, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works." Underscore the words "remember" and "repent." We need to have the Lord come and trim the wicks of our lamps of living. So much of our labor for the Lord can become mechanical. May God teach us to examine our own hearts for His glory.

How sad it is to see once zealous believers in Christ who have somehow departed from their original first love of the Saviour. Such was just the situation involving those who were in the Ephesian church. It is possible to have orthodox and fundamental views while still being spiritually cold. You may be certain that the devil is at work. He likes nothing better than to see us lukewarm in our testimony.

We also find from Revelation 2:6 that the Ephesian church had been experiencing problems with the Nicolaitans. The people hated what these folks stood for. Remember, the word "Ephesus" means "desirable." In a very real sense this was a most desirable congregation despite its one condemnation. Various identifications have been given to the Nicolaitans. One of the best explanations comes from the two words which make up the name - "people." If this word is used symbolically in this passage then it has reference to the earliest form of what might be called a priestly order or a clergy. The Ephesians obviously hated false division between brethren in Christ. It is not wrong for especially gifted men to be pastors, Bible teachers and missionaries. God has placed them there as a gift to the church. There is a danger when supposed spiritual leaders ask for all the benefits and leave all of the debits to the laymen. The reverse can happen. As an example, today many Christian people, members of fine churches, relegate the winning of souls to their pastor. They seldom lift a finger to do much more than attend services. This is certainly not the biblical order at all. Scripture says that the pastor is to teach the truth of God for the perfecting of the saints. The original Greek has the idea of a fishing net which needs to be sewn up, of a broken arm needing to be set. This, in essence, is the work of the ministry. The pastor is to give his time to prayer, visitation, and to doing the work of the ministry. The people at Ephesus had a proper perspective on this whole thing. God hates false divisions among His people. There is nothing wrong in having an inward spiritual indignation against wrong.

There is a proper position for the pastor of the church. He is to give spiritual leadership, while having some amount of authority, because otherwise he would not be able to do his work. He should be a man who can work with people, not despising the advice of the laymen who pay the bills. He should take them into counsel and work together rather than against one another. There is a great danger in a clergy class that lords it over members. All of us have been called to do the spiritual.

The first century church didn't listen to Christ's first love warning. God permitted chastening in the second and third centuries through persecution and martyrdom. Still the church did not repent of their sin. Finally the church was dominated completely by the clergy. Through the middle and dark ages laymen had almost nothing to do with religious things. This isn't the way the Lord intended.

Let us consider for a moment the church at Smyrna. We find this beginning with verse eight of Revelation chapter two. To this congregation was given one of the most significantly meaningful messages in all of the Word of God. Three times we find the word Smyrna in the New Testament. In the second chapter of Matthew the evangelist tells us that the wise men coming from the east presented gifts of gold, frankincense and myrry (or "Smyrna"). In Mark 15 we read the description of the crucifixion of our Lord. Those who stood by offered Christ wine mixed with myrrh (Smyrna) in order to alleviate His sufferings. Then, the third place is in John 19. John tells us that when Jesus died Nicodemus came with Joseph of Arimathaea. The two men, after carefully taking down the body of our Lord from the cross, wrapped it in the long linen cloth. In the folds of the material they placed an hundred pound weight of aloes and myrrh (Smyrna). In each of these instances the word is translated the same way. It has a significant meaning for our hearts.

The suffering church of the New Testament was Smyrna. The city, a great port, received its name from transporting the very wonderful balsam herb. This distinctive fragrance and perfume is known as myrrh. In Scripture, as well as in church history, this symbolizes severe persecution. It is the substance used in embalming the dead.

The wise men brought the infant Jesus myrrh, along with gold and frankincense. Gold is a picture of Christ's deity. Frankincense represents His great mediatorial office, interceding for us in heaven. Myrrh typified His suffering for our sins. Thus, our minds are filled with the figure of persecution and tribulation when we consider the church at Smyrna. Incidentally, this is the only church to which the Lord has no other word but commendation and encouragement. He finds no complaint and voices no criticism.

The city of Smyrna is one of the truly great ancient communities of the world. Today it is by far the largest metropolis in Asia minor, or what we know now as Turkey. The present population is about a quarter of a million. It's name today is Ismir which is the Turkish corruption in speech for the word Smyrna. The area has had a continuous history from the earliest dawn until this very hour. Other cities contemporary with it, such as Ephesus and Philippi, have ceased to exist. The harbor is one of the finest in the world. It is both beautiful and spacious. The inner harbor could be entirely closed off in times of war. Traffic between the sea and the interior regions made for the building of a great flourishing city.

Smyrna was also a great political center. It had the unusual fortune in the civil wars of the Roman Empire of always being on the side of the winner. It never lost a cause but was always right. The triumphant conquering Romans didn't forget that. They made the town a free city having its own government, not under tribute or tax to the Empire. Roman courts were built making it the proudest of all cities in Asia minor. This was the center of Caesar worship and the birthplace of the great unconquerable Greek poet, Homer.

To the majority of the inhabitants Smyrna was where worldly things came first. God was not at all supreme. When the Lord Jesus introduced Himself here, being the first and the last, the glories of Greek culture had been worshipped.

The church at Smyrna, in its suffering and tribulation, stands for the story in prophecy of that era in church history when the fiery furnace of persecution and untold suffering would be experienced. Bitter privation and hardship was the daily life of the poor and humble church in Smyrna. One reason was that the Christian church stood in the sight of a continuous and spectacular display of paganism. How poor and insignificant did the believers seem on the surface. The humble places where the church met could never begin to compare with the glory of those magnificent temples. The citizens of Smyrna would have been very happy to have received the Lord if they could have made Him just another one to worship. After all, they had gods



with elaborate temples galore. What was it to receive just one more god to worship? But those early believers were not willing to let the Lord be relegated to such an unfortunate position. They would never put Him alongside Apollo or Aphrodite. The offense of the cross would continue to remain. They would not compromise. All those pagan gods weren't true gods at all. We certainly can commend the church at Smyrna for this. Would that in our own churches such firm and resolute stands might be taken.

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BIOLA HOUR HIGHLIGHTS

ISSUE NO. 8

FEATURING JULY MESSAGES

# *Panel Discussions*

*Panel: Dr. Chase, Dr. Feinberg and Dr. Sutherland*

Q. "Will Christians go through physical persecution for their faith before the removal of the church at the rapture?"

A. Those who hold to the post-tribulation return of the Lord believe that the last generation of Christians will experience unprecedented trials and testings. We believe the Bible teaches that all those who believe in Jesus Christ will be removed from this earth before the tribulation takes place. Scripture doesn't indicate that the tribulation is designed to be a period of time of persecution for the church. As a matter of fact, we are not appointed unto wrath. It is rather a time of God's judgment upon a world which has rejected the Saviour. In John 16:33 Christ predicted, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." This word "tribulation" simply refers to a general condition which Christians have had to suffer in every generation. The definite article in the Greek is not found in this particular passage. We could wonder why the last generation of Christians should have to go through the tribulation when there have been many generations of Christians who have escaped trials and testings. This is not God's plan at all.

Q. "During the tribulation we read about the plagues which come upon people. Yet, instead of repenting they curse God. Aren't they really cursing the anti-Christ since he sets himself up as God?"

A. You are correct in your evaluation about the plagues not calling some people to react in repentance. The "gnashing of teeth" indicates defiance. The anti-Christ wants people to treat him as though he is God. Unfortunately, those who reject the compassionate message of mercy and grace will still blaspheme almighty God. Man's mouth was created to glorify God but even in his direst trials he refuses to uphold the Creator.

Q. "There seems to be a variety of scriptural passages which refer to the Christians as "salt" (Matthew 5:13; Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34-35). If we lose our saltiness why does this make us good for nothing?"

A. In the first place, salt flavors food. So a Christian should give a good flavor to all with whom he comes in contact. Wherever he goes he can be a positive testimony to the saving and keeping power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salt also preserves. A Christian should give the message so that souls may be saved. Salt creates thirst. This, too, is exactly the function of a Christian. We should, by our lives, create a thirst in the minds and hearts of those who don't have a knowledge of Christ. So if a Christian doesn't present a proper flavor to those with whom he comes in contact, he has lost his saltiness and has no real value from a spiritual standpoint. His testimony has been absolutely ruined. (This doesn't have anything to do with salvation.)

Q. "I have been confused by Ephesians 4:8-10. Does this mean that Christ went to hell and preached to the wicked there so that they, too, might have a chance to be saved?"

A. You can compare this passage with I Peter 3:19. Christ actually went to hades, the abode of the dead. Before His ascension hades had two compartments. One was the prison house of those who were evil and rejected God's love during life. The place to which our Saviour went in hades was the abode of the righteous dead, called both Paradise and Abraham's bosom. Jesus went to tell the people in Paradise that their time would not be long before they would be taken to glory with Him. When Christ ascended up on high and went to the Father, He led those captive in Paradise up to be with Him forevermore. No one who has died and is now in the abode of the unrighteous dead, or hades, has ever had another opportunity to change his soul's eternal destiny. The day of privilege has already passed. There is only doom and judgment awaiting.

Q. "In Luke 11:13, particularly the last portion, there is something I've wondered about. Is this applicable today? Just what should we ask of the Holy Spirit?"

A. Here Christ is discussing prayer. We learn from Scripture that there must first be persistence in prayer. God wants us to realize that we have an urgent need of Him. The Lord isn't sitting in heaven trying to keep as many good things from us as He can. The fact is, just the opposite is true. His heart overflows in a desire to give us His very best. If we as parents can react in such a warm and acceptable manner to our earthly offspring, just think of that attitude of our heavenly Father. Remember, this truth was given while the Lord was still here on earth. Since the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit is automatically given to all who truly receive Jesus Christ as Saviour by faith. For this reason Luke 11:13 is not applicable today. It has already been fulfilled beautifully and above all expectation at Pentecost.

Q. "Are there actually degrees of sin in God's eyes? Are there some things worse than others?"

A. We do not believe that there are degrees of sin in God's sight. There are some sinners who will be beaten with many stripes because they have been given many more privileges than others. The works of the flesh are carefully listed for us in Scripture (Galatians 5:19, 20). There is no indication that there are degrees of sin in this list. One is just as wicked as the other. God is absolutely holy and perfect. Anything less than that is sin.

Q. "Please explain Philipians 3:11."

A. This third chapter is one of the autobiographical portions of Paul's letters. He indicates what he was before his salvation, what transpired when he found the Lord, and also his personal goal (3:14). The apostle realized that what things he felt were of value to him in his former religious existence were absolutely nothing compared to gaining Christ. His motivation in life was now to know the Saviour more intimately by faith, experiencing the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. He was willing to agonize and travail for souls that they might come to know Christ. What he desired was to attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Paul knew from Old Testament theology how there would be a resurrection. In Daniel 12 we read of this very clearly, both for the righteous as well as the unrighteous. This wasn't just a general experience of all men, but rather the "out of the resurrection" from among the dead. This means that in a coming hour some will still be unresurrected. His reference is to believers who have trusted Christ. This takes place at least a thousand years before the resurrection of the wicked dead. Make no mistake, as the passage readily indicates, the resurrection of the righteous is the one Paul wanted.

Q. "As a college student, do you think it is wrong for boys and girls to live together? My friends insist that it isn't adultery."

A. Remember this simple truth. Wrong is still wrong even if everyone does it. God's moral laws have not changed and cannot be legislated out of existence. The first testimony is given in Genesis 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." This situation is to exist as long as they both are living. This is confirmed in the New Testament in Matthew 19:5, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more two but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder." It was because of the obstinacy of the people's hearts that Moses wrote bills of divorcement. Such were never God's perfect will. A man and a woman are not to live together as a convenience. The marriage vows should be very serious and solemn. The writer of Hebrews points out, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (13:4). Temporary affairs, no matter what they are called, are wrong in the sight of God. We are not to become involved in any such activities whether on a college campus or wherever such unfortunate, sinful situations prevail.

Q. "What is meant by the waters which were above the firmament, spoken of in Genesis 1:7?"

A. In English, the word firmament carries the idea of something solid such as a platform. In the original, however, it meant expanse. In Genesis 1:2 we read, "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." The term "deep" refers to a watery mass. This was an original chaotic condition which prevailed. Apparently there was vapor all over the earth. God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters" (1:6). The purpose of this expanse was to keep waters that were below from waters that were above. The Lord divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. God's redemptive plan was to be worked out not on some watery mass, but rather on dry land. This expanse, keeping water above from waters below, is seen again in the matter of the flood (Genesis 7:11). At that historic occasion, all the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened. There are subterranean waters because land appeared out of the water. Psalm 24 indicates that God founded the earth upon the waters. Waters which are above the firmament today are the clouds.

Q. "If a person accepts Christ as Saviour but fails to be baptized, will he be excluded from the group of believers known as 'the bride of Christ'?"

A. We respect the convictions of all who hold to the various modes of baptism. One group believes in baptismal regeneration which means that the act is necessary for salvation. We do not believe the Bible teaches this. Eternal life is based wholly and solely upon one's acceptance by faith of Jesus Christ as Saviour. Salvation is achieved apart from any good works a man may seek to render. We do believe that it is scriptural, while not essential, for a person to be baptized. Baptism is simply an outward sign to the world of an inward change of heart. If you have completed this most important of all life's transactions, receiving Christ as your personal Saviour, you automatically will be a part of "the bride of Christ." This speaks of the intimacy of the Lord's love for His church and what our love should be towards Him in return.

Q. "What does the Bible mean when it refers to the body of Christ and His church in reference to the concept of being invisible and mystical?"

A. The expression "body of Christ" is in the Bible (Ephesians 1:23). God has put

all things under Christ's feet and given Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body. The word "invisible" is not related to or found with reference to the body of Christ. The thought is that it is an invisible church in the sense that the work of God done in human hearts isn't of character like a structure or a building. Mark it well that a person who has been saved has an opportunity to be out active for Christ. When we use the expression "the body of Christ," we are not speaking of a physical thing. It is a spiritual reality that we are one with Him. We don't look for specific hands and arms. This is an expression similar to the bride of Christ. The mystical aspect is that we are not an actual physical bride of Christ. We are a spiritual bride of Christ. Keep in mind that a thing can be figurative as well as mystical and yet, nevertheless, very real. This doesn't mean there is any ground whatsoever for any unstructured church. What is meant by the term "invisible church" is that those who truly belong to Christ have the evidence in their heart where it may be unseen by the world.

Q. "When the redeemed come back with Christ to the earth for the Millennium, will they be as humanity is now? Will there be marriage, families, and so forth? Also, we read that at the end of the Millennium many will turn against God. Does this include any of the redeemed? Will children be born of them, and then they turn against the Lord?"

A. There are a number of rather involved questions here which would be difficult to answer in a limited space. The redeemed, when the end of this age of grace occurs, will be the dead in Christ who will be raised first, along with those living who have accepted the Lord as their Saviour (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The type of body we shall be given is described in Philippians 3:20, 21. We shall have eternal bodies which, like Christ, will be immortal and incorruptible. These will be what is referred to as our resurrection bodies. Such tabernacles will not be subject to the laws of time, space, or the physical laws governing humanity. We come back with the Lord at the millennium in these new bodies. You are correct in the scriptural truth that at the end of the thousand years many will turn against God. During this period of unprecedented peace there will be two groups of people on the earth: the redeemed with their resurrection bodies and those who are still in bodies of the flesh. The latter will have their hearts turned to the Lord. Children will be born to those living in the flesh but not to the redeemed with their resurrection bodies. Without question, to this offspring there will be many who will apparently turn against God at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20). The devil is loosed for a time to tempt all such. No one will be in heaven who has not had the privilege of choosing between God and Satan, between right and wrong, between heaven and hell. It is difficult for us, at this point in time, to understand why anyone living during the magnificent reign of Christ for a thousand years would ever choose to follow Satan. God's Word tells us, however, that this is the case. To these who rebel, fire comes down out of heaven and devours them.

Q. "Does Isaiah 66:23 mean that during the millennium people will worship on the Sabbath day as Saturday? Was it the Catholic church that changed the day of worship from the Sabbath?"

A. The answer to the last part of your question is no. The final answer can be found by reading the book of Acts. We believe it was the Lord Himself who ordained Christian worship on the first day of the week, Sunday. God was interested in directing our attention to what Christ had accomplished in our redemption and His resurrection. The Sabbath day itself has, of course, not been changed. Since believers in the Lord don't worship on the Sabbath now, there would be no purpose for them to do so during the one thousand year kingdom age. When the Saviour was here on earth He kept the law perfectly. In addition, He was covered by a much higher law beyond that which was given to man. He always works with loving kindness and tender compassion.

Keep in mind that during the millennium God will have an earthly people, Israel, just as He has a heavenly people, the redeemed church. Just as we did not keep the Sabbath on earth, we will not need to keep it in heaven or wherever we may be during the kingdom age. The verse to which you have referred in Isaiah tells about those who are on earth inhabiting the new earth.

Q. "In Romans 9:13, why does the word 'hate' appear?"

A. This interesting passage reads, "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." The term about which you have asked has a number of meanings in Scripture. In essence it would represent "to love less." The Lord never hates in the sense that we as sinners do. Our hatred is often in anger and wrath. God abhors all evil, although His love is everlastingly reaching out to the sinner. It isn't that God rejected Esau particularly, but that He bestowed special favor, out of His own sovereign will, upon Jacob. In Luke 14:26 we find the statement, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Here again "hate" is not to be considered in the same sense as we may apply it. The Lord Jesus demands our greatest, our highest, our noblest love. All earthly relationships are to be considered of secondary significance and importance to our love for Christ. Remember always that God is not willing that any should perish. One who goes to hell does so because of his own willful desire and conduct. Yes, never forget, God hates sin but He loves the sinner.

Q. "If one who is married is sent to an institution and declared legally dead, is the remaining partner allowed to marry?"

A. The whole question would rest on those unfortunate words "declared legally dead." Such a term is not to be found in the Bible. Three types of death are mentioned in Scripture. There is physical, spiritual and eternal death. We can appreciate that there must be a great deal of agony and heartache behind this question. In Romans 7:2 we find the explanation, "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." This is dwelling on the concept of physical death. Declaring someone legally dead should bring cause for extreme carefulness. How do we know what answers medical science may develop? Many diseases once thought incurable are no longer hopeless. We thank God for practical research and the ability the Lord has given man to seek out these important answers. This also applies to the question of euthenasia, or what is commonly called "mercy killings." It is never ours to make the final decision. While we don't know the facts of the case, or the nature of the specific illness, we would caution about the difference between actual death and declaring someone living to be dead.

Q. "Is there anything in the Bible that indicates accomplishments of God, and what He can do which are beyond our ability to comprehend?"

A. What an interesting question. One fascinating passage would be Job 38 which gives us the classical examples of God's wisdom and man's ignorance. (Read on through the 41st chapter. Listen to a few of them.) "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" "Who can measure the boundaries of creation?" "Who shut up the sea with doors when it broke forth?" "Have you ever commanded the morning to come since you were born?" "Where does light dwell?" "Where is the place of darkness?" "Can you understand anything about the miracle of snow and hail?" Job was reputed to be one of the wisest men who ever lived. How ignorant even the wisest man really is. We do not understand anything in the final analysis. We may sit in a room flooded with electricity. Yet, no man has been able to define what electricity actually is, even though we know what it does. No man knows what a wave upon the sea is. Out in the depths of the ocean the wave is in motion, although the water through which that

wave moves is not in motion. Nobody knows the very elements of life. No, we don't understand the very elements of nature. There is plenty of evidence in Scripture clearly revealing that the accomplishments of God are far beyond our ability to comprehend. This is why we need to stay close to the Lord. He knows what He is doing while we do not. We are finite in every respect, while He is infinite.



# *Abiding in Christ*

A recent book by a Talbot Seminary professor, which deals with the heart of the Christian life, is Abiding in Christ. Written by James Rosscup, Professor of Bible, the book is the most thorough discussion yet of the vine and the branches in John 15. Among its chief topics are: Why Christ Calls Himself the True Vine; What is so Important About Fruit?; Things that Sometimes Pass for Fruit; Things Involved in Abiding; and Abiding--With or Without Effort. The full-length book, published by Zondervan Publishing House, is available at the Biola Bookstore. Pastor John MacArthur of the Grace Community Church in Panorama City said of the book: "Dr. Rosscup's thorough explanation and broad practical application of John 15 is the very best--and a must!" Bob Thune, former Biola student body president and now pastor of the Evangelical Free Church, Huntington Beach, said: "It is a masterful and exhaustive and scholarly treatment and was of great help to me."

