



A "Behold the Lamb" publication
Calvary Outreach Ministries

“I Sought For a Man...”

(to save the church)

Message by: **Leroy Surface**

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me...”

Ezekiel 22:30

When God “swore by Himself” to bless Abraham, He said, “...and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” In that day, there was no Jew and there was no nation of Israel. The promise of salvation through Jesus Christ was to “all the nations of the earth.” Almost two thousand years later, Christ came to suffer and die to take away the sin of the world. He arose again and told His apostles to “go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature (person).” He ascended to the Father and sent the Holy Ghost to fill His disciples. The greatest revival in the history of the world broke out among the Jews in Jerusalem, but there was not one among them who was willing to preach Jesus to the Gentiles. They were bound to their Old Covenant tradition that salvation was for the Jews only. God “sought for a man” to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, and found... “Saul of Tarsus.”

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And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey:

and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor:

Isaiah 59:14-16

And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land...

Ezekiel 22:30

In **Ezekiel 22:25-30**, God explains to His prophet why He brought King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon against Jerusalem to destroy it. He describes in detail the depraved condition of the children of Israel in that day, beginning with their prophets, priests, princes, and throughout the population in general. They were all motivated by greed and selfish gain. The following is a diagnosis of the problem given to Ezekiel by God Himself:

*“There is a **conspiracy of her prophets** in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. **Her priests** have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. **Her princes** in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And **her***

prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. **The people of the land** have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And **I sought for a man among them**, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: **but I found none.**”

What words could better describe the world around us today? It would be very easy to begin at this text and bring yet another indictment against the religious and political climate in America as we see our nation failing before our eyes, and seemingly there is nothing anyone can do to stop it. America has been judged for her sins just as we have warned for many years that she would be. The reality is that I have had very little inclination to “warn” America since 2008 which brought the end of what God had said was America’s “*space for repentance.*” We, as a nation, are “*eating the fruit of our own ways,*” and no one can stop the free fall unless there is a mass turning to God through His Son Jesus Christ, just as God says in **Joel 2:12-13**; “...*turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.*”

Notice that God says in our text, **Ezekiel 22:30**, “...*I sought for a man among them....*” God had Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, each of whom were faithful prophets. He had Daniel and the three Hebrew children, along with Mordecai and Esther, all of which were faithful to God even when threatened with certain death. There are a few faithful prophets and pastors in America. There are those faithful saints who weep and mourn for the loss of our nation, and I know that it is due to their intercession at the altar of God that we will yet see a harvest of souls even in sin filled America. It may seem strange, or hard to accept, but those of us who have been faithful to warn our nation have had no better response from the people than Jeremiah, who was cast into a

dungeon by the congregation of Israel, and actually released by one of their princes. God said, “*I sought for a man among them.*” If the condition of the nation becomes grave enough that greedy prophets and pastors publicly repent, and politicians begin, at the risk of political suicide, to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the only hope for our nation, then there is hope. When pastors who, in the past, may have been deceived by the “*prosperity message*” repent, forget about money, and call their congregations to “*weep*” with them “*between the porch and the altar*” to spare the people, God will hear and answer.

I have been heartened by several candidates for the presidency who are outspoken about their faith in Jesus, and at least some of them seem to have the fruit to confirm their faith. I was amazed when the governor of my state called for a day of fasting and prayer on August sixth. I was even more amazed when I heard him say it was a day to call upon Jesus Christ to save our nation. Again, I was surprised when he said there would be no t-shirts or other memorabilia sold, and no food or drinks, but only water served in the stadium that will seat fifty thousand people. The governor said that he had felt the call to preach the gospel as a young man, but took a different course. Now, he says, it is time for him to stand up for Jesus and do all to save America. Can God use just one man that will turn to Jesus from his own ways, to change the course of the nation? Of course he can. If it is not the governor of Texas, or a congresswoman from Minnesota, God will still be looking for that man (or woman) “*among them.*”

The Promise to “All Nations”

By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Genesis 22:16-18

Pay particular attention to the words I have placed in italics: “...*in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*” These are the words of the immutable promise that God gave to Abraham. This was not a conditional promise, but a covenant promise that would be fulfilled in, and confirmed by, the Son of God when He came. This promise came on the day that Abraham obeyed God and offered his son Isaac on the altar to God. It was there that God gave a preview of Calvary when He provided a substitute sacrifice to die instead of Isaac. The fact remains, however, that Abraham did offer Isaac, and though it is not clearly spoken in the promise, God’s response is, “*because thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, I will not withhold my only begotten Son. I will offer Him, and in Him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*” God added, “...*because thou hast obeyed my voice.*”

The promise of salvation that would come through the offering of the Son of God was given to Abraham for “*all the nations of the earth.*” God purposed from the beginning that redemption and salvation would come to every nation through His Son, Jesus Christ. When God gave this promise to Abraham, the nation of Israel did not exist, and Abraham stood alone before God with his beloved son, Isaac, who was the “*son of promise.*” The children of Israel were the natural “*seed of Abraham*” that came through Isaac. They were chosen by God to bring forth the spiritual “*seed*” who Paul tells us “*is Christ*” (**Galatians 3:16**), and all who are in Him (**Galatians 3:28-29**).

In **Revelation 5:9**, when the redeemed sing the “*new song,*” they sing to the Lamb of God, “...*for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*” In the day that Jesus ascended to the Father He instructed His disciples, in Mark 16:15, to “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature* (all peoples).” Again, in **Matthew 28:18-19**, Jesus said in that last day with His disciples, “*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations....*”

Revival in Jerusalem

On the Day of Pentecost it was a hundred and twenty Jews who had followed Jesus for the past three years that were baptized with the Holy Ghost. On the same day, three thousand Jews from over a dozen different nations repented at the preaching of Peter and were added to the church. Shortly thereafter, on the occasion of miracle at the gate beautiful of the Temple, a great multitude believed and were added to the church, a multitude we cannot number, because the scripture says in **Acts 4:4**, “...and the number of the men was about five thousand.” The number including women and children may have exceeded ten thousand. The magnitude of the revival only increased after the sudden deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, when they lied to the Holy Ghost. **Acts 5:12, 15-16** says, “*And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; in-somuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.*” The **fourteenth verse** says, “*And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.*”

A serious problem was developing in the church even while they were experiencing the greatest move of the Spirit of God the world had ever seen. Almost six years had passed and the apostles were still in Jerusalem. They had not obeyed the commission that Jesus had given them to “...go into all the world...” and to “...teach all nations.” The church of Jesus Christ was still a sect of Judaism, considered heretical by the chief priests and elders of Israel, but a sect of Judaism nevertheless. They did not believe that a Gentile could be saved unless he would be circumcised and obey the Law of Moses.

Making Havock

And Saul was consenting unto his (Stephen’s) death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church

which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except for the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. *As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.*

Acts 8:1-4

It is amazing how God works His will, even in the things that unbelieving man will do to fight against the truth. Paul expresses this sentiment in **II Corinthians 13:8**, saying, "*For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.*" When Saul of Tarsus set out to destroy the church, he only scattered it into places that God had already predetermined they should carry the gospel to. Phillip went to Samaria to preach Christ among those who were the most hated of all peoples by the Jews. The reason for the Jews hatred of the Samaritans stemmed from the fact that the Samaritans were Jews that had intermarried with the heathen, but yet held to a perverted form of Judaism. Even the name "*Samaria*" or "*Samaritan*" is derived from the Hebrew word Shamerim , which means "*keepers of the Law.*" While being "*outcasts*" to the Jew, the Samaritans were not "*uncircumcised*" as the Gentile nations beyond them were, and thus an acceptable people for a believing Jew to preach Christ to. The scripture says, "*And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city*" (**Act 8:6-8**). When Phillip left Samaria, he was sent by the Spirit to an Ethiopian Eunuch who had come to Jerusalem to worship. Phillip preached Jesus from the **fifty-third chapter of Isaiah** to the Eunuch, who believed and was converted to Christ. This same man, however, as a Jewish proselyte, was also circumcised and kept the Law of Moses.

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

Act 9:1-2

Envision the bitterness and hatred that possessed Saul of Tarsus as he “*breathed out threatenings and slaughter*” against those Jews who trusted in Christ. He could not speak of anything else, so obsessed was he with the idea of eradicating the name of Jesus from the world of Judaism, wherever it might be found. He received the authority from the high priest to go into synagogues in Damascus to destroy any seed of Christ that may have been planted there. He later testified that he profited in the Jew’s religion above his equals in Israel, “...*being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my father’s*” (**Galatians 1:14**). In **Philippians 3:6** he said, “*Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*” There was nothing in the Law of Moses that condemned him for persecuting the church. In fact, his hatred for Jesus and the church was to his advantage under the Law. It was for this cause that he “*profited above many of his equals*” in the Jew’s religion.

Cornelius

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.

Act 10:44-46

The Law of Moses was so ingrained in the Jews that even those who trusted in Jesus found it almost impossible to believe that anyone could be saved who was not first circumcised and keeping the Law. In fact, if Jesus had not intervened directly with Peter through several visions, he would never have gone to the

house of Cornelius under any circumstances. When Peter came to Cornelius, he told him, “*Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean*” (**Acts 10:28**). So ready was the heart of Cornelius and his household that minutes later, as Peter told them of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and “*...that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins*” (**Acts 10:43**), that the scripture says “*while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word*” (**Acts 10:44**). Both Peter and the Jews that were with him were amazed to see the Holy Ghost fall upon these Gentiles when they believed his words.

When Peter returned to Jerusalem he had to answer to those “*of the circumcision*” who made charges against him, saying, “*Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them*” (**Acts 11:3**). After Peter told of the direct intervention of God to bring him together with Cornelius, and how the Holy Ghost fell upon all who were in the house, all the Jews who heard the report glorified God, and said, “*Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life*” (**Acts 11:18**). It is a fact, however, that after such a great intervention by the Lord Himself to confirm that repentance and remission of sin is for the Gentiles also, not one of the apostles or ministers from the church at Jerusalem made any move to preach the gospel to the nations of the Gentiles. The very next verse, **Acts 11:19**, says, “*Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, **preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.***” The immutable promise of God to Abraham that “*all the nations of the earth*” would be blessed in Christ was being ignored by the very apostles that Jesus had commissioned to reach them. It was in such a time as this that God “*sought for a man*” who would “*stand in the gap, and make up the hedge* (**Ezekiel 22:30**)” for the Gentiles. He found that man and raised him up, an apostle “*after God’s own heart*” that would do “*all His will* (**Acts 13:22**).” That man was Saul of Tarsus.

A Chosen Vessel

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

Acts 9:1-6

I do not know whether the events in the book of Acts are all in chronological order. If so, Saul of Tarsus was converted several months before Peter went to the house of Cornelius. The record of Saul's conversion, which is given in the **ninth chapter of Acts**, reveals that he was instantly transformed from a Jesus hater and a church persecutor into one who would lay down his life for Jesus, and do it all "*with joy (Acts 20:24).*" He would also lay down his life day by day to carry the message of remission of sins, through faith in Jesus Christ, to the ends of the earth.

Saul of Tarsus was blind for three days after the light from heaven shined upon him, and had to be led by the hand to the place in Damascus that Jesus sent him. During those three days in which he did not eat or drink, he received a vision from the Lord of a man named Ananias coming to him and laying his hands on him to receive his sight. The Lord also spoke to Ananias in a vision, telling him to "*Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth*" (**Acts 9:11**). Ananias had heard of Saul of Tarsus and the great persecution

he had made against the church. He questioned the Lord about this, but Jesus told him, “*Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel*” (Acts 9:15).

Saul of Tarsus, the greatest enemy of the church in that generation, was chosen by God to carry the name of Jesus to the Gentiles, and thus “*save*” the church. Saved about six years after Calvary, he was chosen to fulfill the immutable promise of God to the Gentiles. He later said that he was as “*one born out of due time*” (I Corinthians 15:8). In Galatians 1:1, Paul begins his letter by saying, “*Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.)*” In almost every other epistle he calls himself “*...an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.*” It is obvious that within six years after the birth of the church, it became necessary for God to “*birth*” one “*out of due time,*” to raise up another apostle to do what all the others had failed to do.

A Jewish Church

The church in Jerusalem was birthed on the Day of Pentecost. There is no question that they experienced the greatest move of the Holy Ghost the world has ever seen. They also suffered great persecution from the unbelieving Jews for as long as the great revival continued. Within a dozen or so years, however, the revival began to wane, and the church in Jerusalem became little more than a sect of Judaism. They continued to circumcise their children, worship in the temple, offer sacrifices according to the Law of Moses and, in reality, the only difference between them and the rest of the Jews is that they trusted in Jesus as their Messiah. Peter and John moved on to other places at some point to continue the work God had given them, but the church in Jerusalem, led by James (the brother of Jesus), was strictly a Jewish church. When Paul returned to Jerusalem in the **twenty first chapter of Acts**, James confronted him with a proposal that ultimately resulted in Paul’s being captured and spending several years in prison before suffering a martyr’s death. Paul went to Jerusalem knowing by the Holy Ghost that “*bonds and afflic-*

tion” awaited him (Acts 20:22-24). Even this could not detour this man of God from the course that Jesus had given him to run.

Thou seest, brother, how many *thousands of Jews there are which believe*; and *they are all zealous of the law*: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? *the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come*. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

Acts 21:20-24

It is amazing that the spiritual condition of the church in Jerusalem at this time had deteriorated to the point that James, the earthly head, was afraid of what the congregation of “*believers*” might do to Paul when they found him. James devised a plan to give Paul the appearance of obeying the Law of Moses, so the congregation would be appeased. Notice what actually happens when Paul agreed to James’ plan:

Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, *until that an offering should be offered for every one of them*. And when the seven days were almost ended, the *Jews which were of Asia*, when they saw him in the temple, *stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him*, crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all *men* every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus, an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) And all the city was moved, and the people ran to-

gether: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

Act 21:26-31

Certainly it was the unbelieving Jews that went about to kill Paul, but it was the congregation of Jewish believers that James had tried to appease. It is the opinion of this writer that this compromise of the gospel with James was the single great error of Paul's ministry. God, however, as He does with His chosen vessels, turned even this to good (**Romans 8:28**) and used it as a vehicle to bring Paul to witness Christ before Kings and to preach the gospel at Rome, even reaching those of the household of Caesar (**Philippians 4:22**).

Paul's Mission

The conversion Saul of Tarsus did not come about through the ministry of Peter, John, or any of the other apostles. The only contact he had with the ministry of any believer was Stephen, and that was on the day that Saul "*consented unto his death*" (**Acts 8:1**). Certainly God used the message and manner of Stephen to "*prick*" Saul's heart until the day of his conversion, but he "*kicked against the pricks*" (**Acts 9:5**) as he sought to utterly destroy the church and the name of Jesus from the face of the earth. It is amazing that such a one would be a "*chosen vessel*" to do what none of the other apostles had been able to do, but that is the way of our "*amazing*" Lord. Saul of Tarsus, the man who tried to "*destroy*" the church almost single handed, was the one Jesus chose to "*save*" His church. If the gospel had never reached the Gentiles, the church of Jesus Christ would not have existed beyond the first century for several reasons. The key element of the promise that was given to Abraham was, "*...and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*" Israel did not exist in Abraham's day, nor did the Jew. They were chosen "*in Abraham*" to bring forth the promised redeemer, who would be the savior to "*everyone that believeth*" (**Romans 1:16**), whether they were Jew or Gentile. Jesus commanded that

the gospel should go “*into all the world, to every creature*” (Mark 16:15). He commanded His apostles to “*teach all nations*” (Matthew 28:19). Jesus said to them the day He ascended to the Father that they should be “*...witnesses unto... (Him) both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*” (Acts 1:8). They obeyed this “*commission*” as far as Samaria, but they could not go into “*the uttermost part of the earth*” until they understood that circumcision and the Law of Moses has **no part** in the gospel of Jesus Christ. They finally came to understand that the “*gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16)*” is a “*New Covenant,*” and that the “*Old Covenant*” had passed away on the cross of Christ (Hebrews 7:18-19, 8:13, Colossians 2:14, Ephesians 2:15, etc.). Jesus chose to give this “*revelation*” of Himself and of the gospel to Saul of Tarsus. It was Saul (it was several years before he was known as Paul) who first preached the gospel to the nations of the Gentiles, and it was Paul who later contended with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for the truth of that gospel.

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

Galatians 1:11

Paul uses the entire **first chapter of Galatians** to establish the fact that he had almost no contact with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for the **first seventeen years** of his ministry. In fact, he had come to Jerusalem shortly after he was converted when he fled from those who sought to kill him in Damascus. At Jerusalem the disciples wanted nothing to do with him until Barnabas confirmed his conversion to the apostles, after which it was said that he “*was with them coming in and going out in Jerusalem*” (Acts 9:28). This continued for a short time until he “*...disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him*” (Acts 9:29). At this time, the “*brethren*” sent him away to Tarsus.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in

me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

Galatians 1:15-16

It is very important that we understand the “*timeline*” of what Paul says in these two verses. He speaks of three different things that God did for him. **First**, He “*separated me from my mother’s womb,*” which had happened over thirty years before. Paul included this phrase to show that it is the same God that his father and mother had served under the Law that he now serves under grace. **Second**, “*...and called me by His grace...*,” which speaks of his conversion to Jesus on the Damascus road. Immediately after his conversion, he preached Jesus in the synagogues of Damascus, and was forced to flee to Jerusalem. These first two incidents, however, are not the subject of these verses. The thing that it “*pleased God*” to do, was to “*...reveal His Son in me, that (in order that) I might preach Him among the heathen.*”

Saul of Tarsus was both saved and filled with the Holy Ghost when he preached Christ in the synagogues of Damascus and had to flee for his life. It was the same when he preached Christ to the Grecians in Jerusalem, and had to flee once again, this time to Tarsus. Separated from the apostles at Jerusalem, whom he had met only briefly, it was at Tarsus that God began a “*greater work*” in Saul. It was on the Damascus road, perhaps a year before, that Jesus had been revealed “*to*” Saul that He was (and is) the Christ. He soon found, however, that it is not enough to be able to tell people that Jesus is “*the Christ, the Son of God.*” Such a “*profession of faith*” is held today by millions who are yet held in bondage to sin and Satan. After failing in his efforts in both Damascus and Jerusalem, and being “*sent away*” by the brethren in Jerusalem, Saul of Tarsus could have ended as one who “*tried and failed*” but for one thing; “*it pleased God to reveal His Son in him.*” It is certainly worth noting that Paul says, “*...immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*” He did not receive his revelation from man.

Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto

Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Galatians 1:17-19

This “*three year*” time period did not begin at the conversion of Saul; instead, it began when Christ was “*revealed in Him,*” probably at Tarsus. He tells of going into Arabia, returning again to Damascus, no doubt preaching his “*revelation of Jesus Christ*” in these places, but ultimately returning home to Tarsus where Barnabas found him and brought him to Antioch to teach the church (**Acts 11:25-26**). After teaching at Antioch for a full year, Barnabas and Saul made a trip to Jerusalem to bring food to the poor saints at Jerusalem because of a great drought that was in the land of Judaea. During this trip to Jerusalem Saul did not see any of the apostles except Peter, with whom he stayed for fifteen days. Shortly after returning to Antioch, the Holy Ghost spoke, saying, “*Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them*” (**Acts 13:2**). After the church at Antioch had fasted and prayed, they laid hands on them and sent them away to preach the gospel to the nations beyond. It was fourteen years later before Paul returned to Jerusalem, this time to defend the gospel he preached against the Judaizers who had come from the Jerusalem church to preach the Law of Moses to the Gentile believers at Antioch. During this fourteen year time period, Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel in over a dozen different cities and provinces, including Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Pamphylia, and Attalia. They also established churches in most of these places, even as they were driven from place to place by the Jews who continually sought to stone them. It was in Lystra that they finally succeeded in stoning Paul where they left him for dead outside the city. When the disciples of Lystra gathered around his body, he rose up and went on to preach the gospel in yet another city. All of this was accomplished in the ministry of Paul during the fourteen years before he saw the apostles for the second time in his life, and met with Peter for the third time. Consider this also, that Paul had been saved and Spirit filled for well over seventeen years,

and establishing churches in the Gentile nations for over fourteen years, before he received “*the right hand of fellowship*” from James, Peter, and John (**Galatians 2:9**) to “do” what Jesus had chosen him to do.

Paul, the Master Builder

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 3:10-11

It is truly incredible that one who was not saved until six years after the Day of Pentecost would be able to say, “*I have laid the foundation.*” It is equally incredible that the same one would be able to say “*If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received (from us), let him be accursed*” (**Galatians 1:9**). Consider that the apostles in Jerusalem had not received the gospel of Jesus Christ by “*revelation of Jesus Christ*” as Saul of Tarsus received it. Peter, that greatest of the original apostles, was mightily anointed of God to preach the resurrection of Jesus Christ to the Jews, which was sufficient to reach the multitudes in Jerusalem. In a nutshell, Peter’s message to the Jew was, “*You killed him, but God raised Him from the dead.*” Notice in **Acts 2:36**, Peter’s message to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost, “*...God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ:*” in **Acts 3:14-15** when explaining the ‘*miracle*’ at the ‘*gate beautiful*’ of the temple, “*But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses:*” and in **Acts 4:10** when brought before the high priest and the elders to give account; “*Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.*” Such a message was extremely effective among the Jews in the early

days of the revival in Jerusalem, but it would never reach the Gentiles. In fact, and this is a sad commentary to bring, those Jews who first went out from Jerusalem and Judaea with a message for the Gentiles came preaching Moses and the Law instead of Jesus Christ, the savior of the whole world (**Acts 15:1**).

Peter, speaking of the epistles of Paul in **II Peter 3:16** says, “...in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” It is no wonder that God had to raise up another apostle to “lay the gospel foundation” of the church. Peter could tell us that Jesus “died on the cross, and God raised Him again the third day.” Peter was eye witness of these things. If the church was to endure throughout the centuries of time, however, there must be a gospel foundation, and this is what Paul gave us. Peter knew Christ “after the flesh;” but Paul knew Him “after the Spirit.” We all could know that Jesus died on a cross; but it was Paul who tells us “our old man is crucified with Him (**Romans 6:6**),” and that we are “freed from sin” (**Romans 6:7**). We know by the record of the apostles that He was “buried in a tomb.” Paul tells us that we who believe are “buried with Christ.” The eyewitness apostles confirm to us that Jesus was raised again the third day, but it remained for Paul to tell us that “...we are quickened together with Christ” (**Ephesians 2:5**), and that we are “new creations in Christ” (**II Corinthians 5:17**). Peter tells us the wonderful good news of a “new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness,” which he tells us to “look” for. It is Paul, however, who tells us that God, through the working of the Holy Ghost, “...hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (**Ephesians 2:6**).

Two Days That Saved the Church

There are two days recorded in the scriptures that if the apostle Paul had not been present and willing to stand alone in defense of the truth, it might well have meant the demise of the church within the first century. I have already shown that the church in Jerusalem and Judaea was a “Jewish” church that did not allow

Gentiles into their number. It was not that they were racist, but they were still Jews in every sense of the word. The apostles had utterly failed to bring the Jewish believers out of Judaism, and probably saw no reason to do so. When the Jewish believers came to understand that Gentiles, such as Cornelius, could be saved, there was a strong segment of the congregation (the Pharisees who believed; **Acts 15:5**) that yet believed they had to be circumcised and obey the Law of Moses. It was because of these that Paul and Barnabas came to Jerusalem in the **fifteenth chapter of Acts**. The scripture says, “*And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved*” (**Acts 15:1**). After Paul and Barnabas had met with the apostles and elders, the scripture says “*...there rose up certain of the sect of the **Pharisees which believed**, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses*” (**Acts 15:5**). Paul had brought a young Gentile named Titus to Jerusalem with him. According to the record Paul gives in the **second chapter of Galatians**, they tried to force circumcision upon Titus, but Paul says, “*To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; **that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.***” If Paul had relented and allowed Titus to be circumcised, the “*truth of the gospel*” would have been lost that day, and the Gentile churches in every place would have been forced into the Law of Moses to become another “*sect*” of Judaism. Due to Paul’s strong resistance, the apostles and James were forced to consider the matter of circumcision, and of the Gentiles. It was Peter who first stood with Paul in the matter:

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we

were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ *we shall be saved, even as they.*

Acts 15:7-11

If the church could have heard and received what Peter spoke in these verses, the church would have continued to flourish among the Jews just as it did among the Gentiles. Please notice the last words of Peter's statement which I have italicized; "...*we shall be saved, even as they.*" It was a revolutionary thought among the believing Jews at Jerusalem, one they were not ready to take hold of, that a Jew could be saved without circumcision and the Law of Moses, but that is exactly what Peter said. He had seen the miracle of salvation at the house of Cornelius where an entire house of the family and friends of Cornelius were saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost in a moment of time. Peter testified that God had "*purified their hearts by faith,*" and He did it in a moment of time. They had not been circumcised and they had not been baptized in water when God baptized them with the Holy Ghost, breaking traditions of both Judaism and the church, for the scriptures say that "*the Holy Ghost fell upon all them which heard the word.*" Oh what a joyful thought; "*We shall be saved, even as they!*"

The second day was perhaps even more critical than the first. Shortly after the conference in Jerusalem, Peter made his first trip to the church in Antioch. Enjoying the "*liberty*" which had been accorded the Gentiles by James and the elders, Peter ate with the Gentiles and accepted their fellowship as brothers in Christ. This all ended when certain Jews who were "*of the circumcision*" came from James to Antioch. Paul relates this incident in the **second chapter of Galatians**:

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the

gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Galatians 2:11-14

At the counsel in Jerusalem, the “*liberty*” of the Gentiles had been confirmed, but it had not been extended to the Jews. When Peter saw the Jews that came from James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, he withdrew from the Gentile believers because he feared “*them which were of the circumcision.*” Can you imagine Peter, the greatest of the eyewitness apostles, experiencing fear at the sight of these Jews from the church in Jerusalem? It seems likely that some of them must have believed upon Jesus through the mighty works that God had done through Peter, but something has happened in Jerusalem. The mighty working of the Holy Ghost must have ended as that great church degenerated into nothing more than another sect of Judaism, circumcising their children, obeying Moses, and preaching the Law. It hurts to tell this story, but it is true. What happens next will literally be the end of the church of Jesus Christ if Paul does not, once again, stand for the truth as Jesus gave it to him.

At Antioch, the Jews and the Gentiles had been worshipping together for several years as brothers in Christ. When Peter separated himself from the Gentiles out of fear (as a Jew, Moses commanded that he should be stoned), the other Jews at Antioch followed him. Even Barnabas was “*carried away with their dissimulation.*” Surely Barnabas and the Jews must have been influenced by the great regard they had for Peter as one of the greatest among the original apostles. They must have believed that Peter would be correct in his actions that day, but what he did threatened to undermine the gospel truth, and destroy the work of God among the Gentiles. It was one thing to contend for the liberty of the Gentiles during the conference at Jerusalem; it was something else entirely for a Jew to cast off the “*yoke of bondage*” to the Law of Moses and enjoy the liberty that was given to the Gentile believers. It remained once again for Paul to stand for the truth, and this time he stood alone. Oh

how it must have pained him to do what had to be done, but the future of the church of Jesus Christ hung in the balance that day. Paul had thought that Peter was a “*pillar*” (**Galatians 2:9**); that he would stand for the truth and not be moved. He expected Peter to stand for the truth, and Paul would stand with him, but it did not happen that way. Will Paul stand by quietly as everything he knows of Christ and the gospel is trampled underfoot, or will he stand with the truth even if he stands alone? He knows that he must stand firm and that he must speak out. He had been raised up for this day, and he must not fail. In defense of the truth of the gospel he “*withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed*” (**Galatians 2:11**). He embarrassed Peter and exposed him before those he feared, saying, “*If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews (Galatians 2:14)?*” It was something that had to be done, and only Paul remained to do it. If Paul had compromised, “*went along to get along,*” the Jews at Antioch would have segregated the Gentiles from among them. No longer could any Jew have fellowship with Gentiles, and the churches both in Jerusalem and among the Gentiles would languish and die. According to Paul’s revelation of the gospel, Jesus had died to redeem the Jews from the Law of Moses (**Galatians 4:4-5**) just as he had died to redeem the Gentiles from sin. Now, it was not the Gentile church, but the Law of Moses that must be abolished.

Of Twain, One

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

Ephesians 2:14-15

Notice that Jesus Christ did abolish “*in His flesh the enmity*” that separated the believing Jews from the believing Gentiles. It was “*the Law of commandments contained in ordinances,*” which speaks of the “*Law of Moses.*” The Law was a partition

between the Jew and the Gentile that had to be torn down before the promise to Abraham could be fulfilled, “...in thy seed (Christ) shall all the nations of earth be blessed.” Notice that Jesus “hath made both one;” He abolished the Law of Moses “...to make in Himself of twain (of two), one new man.”

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

Ephesians 3:1-8

Again, notice that Paul says, “...He made known unto me the mystery.” What was the mystery? “That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” Why was it called a mystery? Because the Jews, in all of their fifteen hundred year history since Moses, had never understood that the promise of blessings to Abraham and his seed was not just to the Jew, but to every nation on earth through Jesus Christ. “In thy seed shall all the nations of earth be blessed” (**Genesis 22:18**).

Editor’s note: Today, there is so much of the gospel of Jesus Christ that the church has been blinded to by the traditions of men. Once more, God is “**searching**” for men and women that He can “**reveal His Son in.**” They will carry the gospel to every nation. They will also, as no generation has, lay down their lives to preach Jesus Christ in and to the nation of Israel, where the greatest revival ever will come before the end. **Will He find you?**

Sound the Alarm, All is Not Well!

By Randall Outland

As I listen to minister after minister on the television and across the radio dial, it seems their message is the same: “*All is well!*” The Bible declares, however, in I Thessalonians 5:3, “*For when they shall say Peace and safety; then sudden destruction comes upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*”

The American pulpit is singing one thing, but in reality, the opposite is happening all around us:

The weather is destroying all in its path

The national economy is being destroyed

The family is being destroyed

Marriage is being destroyed

Life itself is being destroyed through abortion

The justice system is falsely destroying people

Churches are leaving their scriptural foundations

Why are these things coming to pass? It is because that those we call the people of God have forsaken the One True God and gone after strange gods. Even the Jesus they proclaim is another Jesus. The same call that Hosea prophesied for the last days of Israel is going forth now for those who claim this other Jesus. “*Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for He has torn and He will heal us; He has smitten, and He will bind us up*” (Hosea 6:1). As this call goes out, you would think multitudes would be falling on their knees to repent, but unfortunately this is not the case. Some are doing this, but for the most part, it is not happening. And as I seek the Lord and His Spirit speaks I believe the reason for this is that they believe the lie they are being told: “*All is well.*”

We must understand that if a man or woman speaking from the pulpit says, “*All sin and fall short of the glory...*” they are perverting the word and it is time to get up and leave. Yet people continue to sit there Sunday after Sunday, saying “*Amen!*” because this gives them the idea that the sin in their life is okay. This is the doctrine of “*Peace and Safety*” and it is a doctrine from hell that has invaded every branch and denomination there is.

Many ministers out there preach that our sins are forgiven; past, present and future: this being what Christ died on the cross for, but again this is a doctrine of “*Peace and Safety.*” Romans 3:25 clearly says “*Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God.*” These types of messages give the false sense that everything is alright even when destruction is all around us. How can everything be alright with destruction taking place even in the church? Truly the real truth of the Word of God is taking place before our eyes just as I Thessalonians 5:3 proclaims. The gist of it is that this other gospel and this other Jesus that is being preached has no power to save you in the least.

The time has come for us to wake up and realize that things are not “*alright.*” In the last year I have yet to hear even one message that truly and openly addresses the root of the problem. No one wants to step on any toes and say that you cannot have Christ and continue to do the things the world does. They want you to believe that even the Apostle Paul had a sin problem. This is nothing but foolishness: “*Peace and Safety!*”

So many people are blinded to the truth and cannot tell the difference between the truth and a lie. Here is an example of what I mean: The Bible openly proclaims “*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust does corrupt and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal: for where your treasure is there will be your heart also*” (Matthew 6:19-2). For more than thirty years the church has been preaching a “*materi-*

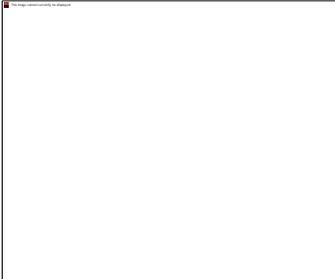
al prosperity” that has turned people from the “*glory of the incorruptible God*” to “*corruptible*” things. Instead of seeking God we seek corruptible things or we seek God in pretense, in hope of receiving corruptible things. We have taken Matthew 6:33 “*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added you*” and we have taken the phrase “*all these things will be added unto you*” and made it to mean something entirely different. Two verses earlier in Matthew 6:31 it tells us what “*these things*” are. “*Therefore take no thought saying what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or wherewithal shall we be clothed?*” “*These things*” are food, drink and clothes. But yet we erroneously push it to limits unknown saying it is all “*material things.*” By doing this, scripture is being perverted and a lie is going forth.

Satan has been standing in the pulpit doing this for years, appealing, just as he did to Eve, to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, and just like Eve, the church has given in and partaken of the forbidden fruit. These areas are exactly what the “*Peace and Safety*” doctrine appeals to and the Word of God declares: “*...For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world: and the world passes away and the lust thereof: but he who doeth the will of God abides forever*” (1 John 2:16-17).

Things are not as they seem, but the President (our government), and the church want you to believe they are. Again, it is the “*Peace and Safety*” sham. Now is the time to “*Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound the alarm on His holy mountain*” so that the church would arise and return unto the Lord in repentance for His coming is at hand.

WHEN THE WIND BLOWS

By Betty Jean Robinson



**BE WATCHING for
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Many times my heart ponders the blessed simplicity of my Native-American and Kentucky mountain heritage. My heart yearns for the fullness of my holiness heritage. I want to be described by that old mountain saying, “I’m a woman who chose the good way,” and, at the end of my journey folks could say, “You couldn’t spot her life.”

My Grandpa Gray was a Pentecostal Holiness preacher. He played a guitar and sang. My mammy Rhodes received the Holy Ghost when the wind of the Holy Ghost and fire blew across the mountains of Eastern Kentucky in the early 1900’s.

There is not enough room for me to share it all. But, as a 13 year old mountain child, I walked the railroad track to Sister Rice’s house, and as they sang and prayed, Jesus saved me, and I was baptized in the cold, Straight Creek water.

The outstanding virtue of these simple people, I remember so well – oh how they loved Jesus and wanted to please Him. We had no desire for material things. We were poor, but rich in Jesus.

When the Holy Ghost wind blows, men lay down their plows and shovels and run to the house of God with a hunger to be in His presence. You could hear men

praying in the mountains, singing as they plowed the land; women sang His praises as they washed clothes and worked in the fields, looking forward to the next meeting to be in His presence and see Him perform miracles.

Persecution seemed to follow the Pentecostal baptism, but they kept loving their enemies through it all.

I remember when old Brother Lankford lifted a little sick baby up to Jesus and said, “Here it is Jesus, heal it” and the little baby would be healed.

Please don’t misunderstand me, but there will always be something missing until I see that again.

I came from an obscure place deep in the Kentucky mountains, and from little known people. But God knew my name even in my mother’s womb, and He called me. And, as my Sister Martha testifies, “I have failed Him, but He has never failed me.” Praise the Lord!

It has been requested that I share more of my childhood, and I plan to do so. I have written my life story in book form, “Up On Melody Mountain,” and you may order it on my web site at

www.bettyjeanrobinson.org.

May the Lord bless you is my prayer.

His Handmaiden,
Sister Betty Jean Robinson

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