

Guyana Massacre . . .

1.95

# The Bible Said It Would Happen

by Paul R. Olson

STAR

Cult leader led 404 to mass death  
Suicide-murder victims poisoned with cyanide, head of sect shot

TIME  
Cult of Death



DB34597872

foreword by Jim Bakker, PTL Club Host

Guyana death toll rises to 900  
doubt cult

**THE BIBLE SAID IT  
WOULD HAPPEN**

by  
Paul R. Olson

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## Dedicated

to all those who have been deceived by a false prophet, that they will come to know the reality of Jesus Christ.

. . . and to my Christian brothers and sisters in Guyana who under great difficulty are bravely serving Christ.

. . . and to Dee, my loving helpmate.

## Acknowledgments

I wish to express my deep and sincere appreciation to Tom Reed of Buffalo, New York, who inspired me to research this subject and encouraged me to speak out on it. Mr. Reed is the host of a daily, hour-long television talk show on which I have appeared.

... and to Robert Allen Hill\* of Minneapolis, Minnesota, who transcribed my tapes and spent many hours in the laborious process of sorting, sifting and assembling the material herein. He is also the photographer of the cover picture.

P.R.O.

\*Author of *Your Children: the Victims of Public Education* (Bible Voice) co-author with Jim and Cyndy Hunt of *How to Live with an Alcoholic and Win* (Ark Books)

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## FOREWORD

There is no man I know more qualified to write this book than Reverend Paul Olson. And there is no message more important to the body of Christ today than the message of this book.

I have known and appreciated Paul's ministry since I was a teenager. His dad performed the ceremony when Tammy and I were married and was instrumental in getting us started in ministry. It was my privilege to sit under the ministry of Paul Olson for several years. Outside of God, no force has had a greater influence on my ministry than the Olson family has had.

I have seen Paul's evangelistic ministry reach literally around the world. Whole nations have been influenced for Christ through his crusades.

The disaster in Guyana has raised questions in all of us. Questions like: "How could a

loving, merciful God allow this to happen? How can a person know who is really a man of God and who is a false prophet? How can I be sure of God's voice?" Paul Olson offers some straightforward answers directly from God's Word and his personal ministry in Guyana gives highest credibility and perspective to this account.

You will find this book immensely helpful in your Christian walk.

JIM BAKKER

*Mr. Bakker is President of P.T.L. Club and host of the internationally known PTL CLUB television show.*



## CHAPTER ONE

# When Prophecy Becomes Proof

“For before these days Theu’das arose, giving himself out to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him; but he was slain and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.”

Acts 5:36

The culmination of events surrounding Jim Jones—the social-spiritual cult leader of the People’s Temple whose 900 followers in Guyana committed murder-suicide in November 1978—is one of the most significant fulfillments of Bible prophecy in the last one hundred years.

When looking at the morbid results of the “ministry” of the Reverend Jim Jones, everyone must ask themselves *how*?

How could those people kill themselves?

How could a madman lead people to the point of murder-suicide?

How could a man call himself Lennin, Christ, God?

How could people believe a man who was obviously insane?

When we ask ourselves *how*, we must also ask *why*?

Why would parents poison their children on the command of Jim Jones?

Why were so many people deceived?

Why would so many people submit themselves to physical and mental torture and deprive themselves of all their possessions?

Why?

The Bible said it would happen!

One of the first questions which comes to the minds of Christians and non-Christians alike is, "How could God allow such a terrible thing to happen?"

We hear so many people saying that God is a good God. He is a God of infinite mercy. He is a God who is vitally concerned about the needs of every human being.

We hear preachers giving grand sermons telling us that our God is a God who keeps His eye upon the sparrow and not one little bird falls to the ground that our Heavenly Father does not know about.

Jesus tells us that our God is so concerned about us, even the hairs on our head are numbered. He has concern not only for the major problems and struggles that come into our lives, but also for those minute and insignificant details which we ourselves don't even worry about.

If there is a God who is so personally concerned about the suffering of mankind, how could He stand by and allow such a madman as Jim Jones to take the lives of over nine hundred people in Guyana? For that matter, if God is so good, how can He let thousands of Indian children starve to death on the streets of Calcutta or permit the little black children in Biafra to suffer?

How can God, a supposedly infinitely good God, who is so vitally concerned about every aspect of human life, stand by and fold His arms with such remote concern, and allow a monomaniac named Hitler to annihilate six million Jews? How can He allow six million Christians to die in the Ukraine? Twenty million in China? Two million in Cambodia?

Where is this good God when all of these people are suffering and dying? Why does He stand by and let those things take place?

As recorded in Matthew, Chapter 23, Jesus Christ gathered His followers on the beautiful Mount of Olives and vividly described for them the destruction of Jerusalem (a prophecy which came true in 70 A.D. during the Roman conquest of Jerusalem). The disciples were aghast and horrified to hear the unbelievable prediction that God's Holy Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed.

After Jesus made that prophecy and when most of the crowd had walked away, His closest disciples came to Him and asked, "Lord, what shall be the sign of thy coming and what is the sign of the end of the world?"

Jesus answered, "Take heed that no one leads

you astray. For many will come in my name saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead you astray.

"And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet.

"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

"There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

"All this is but the beginning of the sufferings."

Again Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24:24: "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so to lead you astray, if possible even the elect."

It is interesting to note that the word *elect* means an exclusive group of people specifically chosen by God. The implications of this prophecy are astounding. Christ is telling us that so deceitful will be the false prophets in the last days that even His own chosen people will be deceived!

These false prophets will not only be deceitful, but will also possess unbelievable charismatic powers. The word *charismatic* is probably the most misunderstood word in the church world today because it is used to cover a variety of areas. One such area included in the church's definition is the evidencing of some form of spiritual phenomenon in the individual who has been anointed by the Holy Spirit.

The word *charismatic* comes from the word *charisma* which means that a person possessing it is endowed with special powers to sway the masses and influence people.

What better word to use to describe Jim Jones?

Jesus warns that in the last days there will arise false prophets who will possess this kind of charisma, the uncanny power to sway masses, to wield influence and to bring people under a satanic influence which will cause them to commit unnatural acts, as did the people who followed Jim Jones. He also says these people will be able to perform miracles.

Reflecting upon the charisma of Jim Jones, the man who wielded so much influence and power over the minds of the people who followed him, one of his former Temple members, Robert Potts, said, "It was as if he plugged into us and sucked away our will. And the funny thing was that each Sunday we couldn't wait to go back for more. We were addicted. We were religious junkies. And you know what happens to a junkie. He eventually overdoses, as did the people in Guyana."

*The Chicago Tribune*<sup>1</sup> reported that Jim Jones told his followers he was Jesus Christ reincarnated and was calling himself a prophet of God and eventually called himself God. In addition to this insidious declaration it is not only incredible but inconceivable that over 20,000 people believed him and left their jobs, homes, and families to follow him. Many of them deeded their homes to him and over nine hundred of them followed him into a secluded South American country called Guyana where, at Jones' command, they poured cyanide into the nostrils of their children and then drank it themselves. Many of them drank the cyanide willfully; others were forced. And then, in what must have been a

ghastly and terrorizing scene, they gathered into small groups and hugged their families as they lay down to die.

As the world stands by aghast at this horrible atrocity, people everywhere are looking toward their religious leaders and are asking themselves many questions.

Obviously, the people who followed Jim Jones were not only brainwashed and manipulated through mind control, but most of them honestly believed that Jim Jones was a mighty man of God. He was their Messiah. We all have to ask ourselves the question, "How do we know that the man we are following is *really* a man of God?"

People are doubting their faith and are hesitant to believe or follow anyone who stands up to lead them spiritually. They want to know why so many people would follow a madman and kill their children and themselves on his command. They want to know how a man could influence people to the point of murder-suicide. They want to *know* that the man they're following is not a madman who will lead them to death, but is rather a man of God who will lead them to heaven.

Psychologists will have to provide many of the answers to the questions as they pertain to the psychological make-up of the people involved, brainwashing techniques and human motivation. However, there are many questions which can be answered without any psychological references. Not only will these questions be posed in the following chapters, but the answers as they are found in the Scriptures will be provided.

How do we know the man we are following is a man of God? Billy Graham is recognized in many religious and political circles as one of God's voices to our 20th century generation. He is esteemed, respected, and followed by millions of people around the world. Among his followers are people of the Baptist faith, of which he is a minister, the Catholic faith, the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran faiths; and these people hail him as a mighty man of God. How do we know that Billy Graham is really a man of God?

I am sure that many people will be shaken, even angry, by my brazenness to even question the man Billy Graham. I think it is interesting to note, however, that there are many Baptist ministers who openly believe that Billy Graham is a tool of the devil and won't accept him as a man of God or a prophet of God at all. They are, of course, a minority, but there are both views being openly expressed about him.

How does the little grandmother in Iowa Falls, who sends a dollar every month to help support the world-wide ministries of the Billy Graham Association, know that Billy Graham is a true man of God? How do *we know*?

Another outstanding American evangelist is Oral Roberts, a one-time Pentecostal turned United Methodist, whose followers include millions of people around the globe ranging from Pentecostals, Lutherans, Methodists, and Catholics to Jews.

While Billy Graham is constantly warning our generation that the judgment of God is at hand unless we repent, Oral Roberts is preaching that God

is a good God and that we should all be happy. Their messages are as different as night and day.

Without question there are thousands of people who would lay down their lives and say, "Oral Roberts is a man of God. I believe him."

And yet, isn't it interesting that his own peers, the traditional Pentecostal denominations, will have nothing to do with him?

Pictures, articles, and stories about Oral Roberts have never appeared in the major Pentecostal magazine, *The Pentecostal Evangel*. There are many traditional Pentecostal people who believe that he is not a man of God at all, but a charlatan, fooling the people with tricks of mass psychology. How are we to *know* that Oral Roberts is truly a man of God?

The Catholic world waited breathlessly before the election of the last Pope who eventually became Pope John Paul II. While many charismatic Catholic people hailed the election of Cardinal Wojtyla from Poland as a tremendous breakthrough in opening the Catholic church, others were expressing concern about having a Pope from a communist block nation.

Thousands of people rejoiced at the election of a man they believed was a very spiritual man whose fundamental beliefs would bring openness and stability to the Catholic church. And yet others such as Malachi Martin, author of *The Final Conclave*, believes that the Roman Catholic Church has given up on Western style democracy and is deliberately aligning itself with the Marxist Nations.



As a matter of fact, during his reign, Pope Paul VI denounced American democracy as an institution of the past. He claimed the only chance of survival the Roman Catholic Church had was in their alliance with the Marxist nations.

Martin raises the question that if the policy of the Roman Catholic Church is to guarantee its survival through an alliance with the Marxist countries, isn't it logical that their Pope be from a Communist nation? As one reads *The Final Conclave*, he cannot help getting the feeling that the author believes the Catholic Church and the last Pope, whether that be Pope John Paul II or a Pope down the line, will be nothing but a tool in the hands of the Anti-Christ during the last days of time.

With all these varied ideas, how does the Catholic man on the street know, or how do any of us *know* that Pope John Paul II is a mighty man of God?

How do we know that the pastors we listen to every Sunday are men of God? How do we know that the church we attend is a church of God? How do we *know* that our beliefs are true to God?

If the Guyana massacre accomplished nothing else it should cause people everywhere to contemplate quite seriously on the questions, "Who am I following?" and "How do I know for *certain* that the man I am following will lead me to God?"

Another question which must be raised is why the government of Guyana would allow over one thousand Americans to enter their country when it is anti-American in its beliefs.

Over the last ten years, American business and religious organizations have had their activities seriously curtailed, if not completely stopped, by the government of Guyana. Religious material cannot be exported to Guyana because the government is politically opposed to religious activities. As an American evangelist who has conducted crusades in Guyana, I could never go back and do it again. Yet, inconceivable as it may seem, a man, Jim Jones, a so-called religious leader, was allowed to enter the country of Guyana with his followers and was leased 27,000 acres of land by the Guyanese government. How could this happen?

Did Jim Jones in fact produce miracles? Timothy O. Stone, former Assistant Prosecuting Attorney of McDaniel County, California, believes that Jim Jones actually raised the dead. He claims he saw over forty people, whose bodies evidenced every sign of physical death, raised from the dead as Jim Jones touched them. Did Jim Jones produce miracles?

Many evangelists and preachers as well as laymen around the world claim to have healing powers. People flock to these men, some to obtain a miraculous healing for themselves, others merely wanting to see a miracle. People are looking for miracles. Why?

There are many people who actually believe they saw Jim Jones produce miracles even though the people who were close to him claim the miracles were staged. Why were these people searching for miracles?

Jesus answered this question in his response to a request by the Scribes and Pharisees who asked for a miracle: "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign . . ." (Matthew 12:38)

Why must people search for miracles? What do miracles prove?

I have raised many questions. Questions which people are asking themselves around the world—Catholics and Jews, Methodists and Pentecostals, Americans and Japanese, Russians and Germans. What are the answers?

The questions are disturbing, but they must be asked and answered if we are to survive. Saint Paul said, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8).

It is my sincere desire that upon reading this book you will not lose your faith in God's men or in God's power, but that you will use discretion in the man you follow and be at peace with your faith. The events in Guyana and the prophecy of Jesus Christ must serve as a warning to you as Christians, as followers of God, to be extremely careful in your faith and in your daily lives because prophecy has indeed become reality!

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<sup>1</sup>November 26, 1978.

## CHAPTER TWO

# A Distressed Nation Welcomes (Rev.) Jim Jones

“ . . . and there shall be signs in the sun and the moon and the stars and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity . . . ”

Luke 21:25

Theologians define the word *perplexity* as “insolvable problems.” “ . . . distress of nations with *insolvable problems*.” This state of perplexity does indeed exist in the world today. Another prophecy has become reality.

A once insignificant and unknown country called Guyana, a nation which has been torn with political distress for the past twenty years, has gained a place in history as a nation where a great prophecy has been fulfilled. Perhaps it is fitting that one prophecy, “For false prophets and Christs

will arise . . .", occurred in a country where another prophecy, "... distress of nations with perplexity" was unfolding.

The political turmoil which has left Guyana in a state of chaos for a number of years has prompted potential visitors to avoid the country. The word among South American travelers is: "Don't go to Guyana unless you have to."

Violence in the streets of Guyana is an everyday occurrence. This in itself is tangible evidence of the political stress felt within the country. How could the once quiet colony of Great Britain degenerate to the point of being enthralled by Marxism and Communism and become the site of one of the century's worst massacres?

During the 1960's, as Guyana was moving toward independence, American and British officials helped to install the current Prime Minister, Dr. Forbes Burnham, in an attempt to prevent a Communist regime from taking power. Burnham, at the time, was considered to be an ally of the Western powers. However, under Burnham's guiding hand and against American and British desires, Guyana developed the only socialist government on the South American Continent.

Today Dr. Forbes Burnham is purported to be one of the wealthiest black men in the world. Burnham has amassed his great wealth through the generosity of the Russian and Chinese governments which possess no morality whatsoever in the disbursement of their foreign aid monies and materiel. While the United States has a lot of room for im-

provement in regulating their foreign aid expenditures, at least the government makes a concerted effort to regulate the use of funds so the people of the country receiving the aid will realize some benefit. The Russians and Chinese, however, give their foreign aid to a man in order to obtain concessions from him. This is precisely what has happened in Guyana. The Russians and Chinese have given millions of dollars to Burnham in exchange for control of the country. When Forbes Burnham leaves Guyana, he will have sold his country to the highest bidder.

As a missionary evangelist, I first went to Guyana in the mid-1950's to conduct a nation-wide crusade. My introduction to the country was an experience I will never forget.

My evangelism office had sent the pastors and missionaries in Guyana the normal publicity and advertising materials necessary to promote a nation-wide crusade. From the little country of Trinidad off the coast of South America, I flew into Guyana along with an associate of mine, Nelson Sammy, a national worker from Trinidad.

Upon our arrival at the airport in Georgetown, and to our dismay, no one had come to welcome us to the country. During our hour-long ride into the city our taxi had a head-on collision. The car was completely demolished and we ended up hitchhiking into town in the middle of the night. When we arrived at our hotel—a dilapidated, wooden-frame building—we were exasperated as well as downright disappointed over the apparent lack of

interest surrounding our arrival.

After a sleepless night we made contact with the local missionaries and national pastors in an effort to proceed with the crusade. To our further displeasure we discovered that not one thing had been done to promote our upcoming crusade. We had to personally take over and supervise our promotion and publicity.

We went to the printshop and worked all day and all night preparing our tracts and advertising posters. It was quite fun organizing one hundred of the local boys, giving them each a pail filled with a water and flour solution and a handful of posters with the instructions, "Go post them up."

I was pleased to discover they hadn't missed one window, one telephone pole or one bus in their efforts. As a matter of fact, I wouldn't have been a bit surprised to see one or two dogs which had been standing still too long, running around with posters on their backs.

The next morning the entire city awoke to discover there would be a time of spiritual awakening in Georgetown. We ran our crusade in a large stadium and on the first night, well over ten thousand people were in attendance. It was during this crusade I saw God perform one of the greatest miracles I have ever seen in my life.

There was a little Indian girl who, because she could not walk, was carried to the platform by her family. Calling upon the authority of God's Word, we laid our hands upon this little life and asked for the healing virtue of Jesus Christ.

When miracles happen it catches most of us in a state of disbelief. It's had that effect on me many times. I felt that way as I watched God manifest His healing power upon this little girl.

After we laid our hands on her, the people who had carried her to the platform said, "The Reverend says you can stand. Go ahead and stand up."

She stood by herself. We didn't do anything to help her. We just stood there and watched as Jesus of Nazareth manifested Himself to this little Indian girl who was not even a Christian. In full view of over ten thousand spectators, a little girl who could not walk began walking across the platform all by herself.

A newspaper reporter from a local paper attended the crusade and witnessed God's miracle upon this little girl. He decided it was his business to discover whether or not the healing was a fraud. He began to research the story, interviewing the family, friends and the family doctors. The following Sunday a lengthy article appeared on the front page of the Guyana paper, an article which told the story of the Guyana miracle. The headline: THOUSANDS WITNESS MIRACLE IN GUYANA, SOUTH AMERICA.

The reason I am sharing this with you is that in our discussions of phoniness, staged miracles, false prophets and false Christs, it is important for us to keep a proper perspective. The fact that we are living during a time when there is a great deal of phoniness does not alter the fact that Jesus Christ is real. He is a performer of great miracles. Miracles



are not a thing of the past; they are happening every day. God is not dead. He is still on the throne.

Whenever I go into a strange country such as Guyana, I always make it my business to get around and see the country, meet as many people as possible and try to sense the heartbeat of the nation. You cannot do this without touching the people.

As I began my investigative tour of Guyana, I became greatly disturbed at what I found. During the 1950's, I discovered this little nation was in the midst of grievous political turmoil. Years before, Guyana had been controlled by the Dutch; and in those early years the Dutch did in Guyana as they had done in Holland: reclaim much of the land from the sea by building dykes. There were canals and dykes everywhere in Georgetown.

As I traveled down the streets, up and down the roads and out into the country, I found anti-American slogans written on the dykes and on the sides of the buildings wherever I looked. A sign of the political unrest, the slogans read, "Yankee go home!" "Down with American imperialism!" "Power to the People!" and "Capitalist pigs will be defeated!"

One of the most aggressive political activists in Georgetown during the 1950's was a young dentist by the name of Dr. Cheddi Jagan. His wife was a cousin to the Rosenbergs who were executed as Communist spies during the McCarthy era in the United States. Dr. and Mrs. Jagan were valid and thoroughly dedicated Marxists. As Prime Minister

of Guyana before he was defeated by Dr. Burnham, Jagan led the attack against American imperialism and gave the Russians and Communist Chinese full and complete freedom to come into the country. Everywhere a person looked there were military vehicles with soldiers, tanks and jeeps patrolling the streets. As I walked through the country I felt as if I were in a nation under seige.

I look back on it now and marvel that we were able to have such an open-air crusade in spite of the political unrest in the country. It was one of the last crusades of its kind for several years because shortly after we left, all public meetings were completely outlawed.

If there is one person in a country who exemplifies the attitudes of a society, it is usually the local barber. Perhaps the political and social chaos which was taking place in Guyana can best be understood by the conversation I had with him.

Having been told there was a barber located in my hotel, I made my way to the basement to pay him a visit. To my surprise, he was an American university student. As he put the towel around my neck and began to give me my haircut and shave, he told me a story to which I listened with growing horror.

After exchanging comments about the weather and other such incidentals, I asked him why he had come to Guyana. I was, of course, somewhat curious to know the answer, but I wasn't prepared for what I was about to hear.

"Paul," he replied, "I'm a dedicated Marxist. I

believe the only hope for this world is a socialistic revolution. I've given up my American citizenship and come to Guyana to help Dr. and Mrs. Jagan spread the Marxist revolution throughout this country and, hopefully, throughout all the Caribbean."

Well! *That* came as a surprise. And I had naively assumed he was there to study the culture—perhaps to do a bit of research for a political science course, or some other such endeavor born of the intellectual curiosity which characterizes so many ambitious university scholars. I felt my muscles tense a bit in anticipation of what he would say next. I sensed I wouldn't have to draw him out. It was obvious he had a subject to expound on and he was going to expound on it whether I wanted to hear it or not.

"I've been out to Queen's Park listening to you preach," he continued, seeming to change the subject. "You have a great gift of oratory."

Well now, *that* sounded much better. Tension draining, I eased back into my chair. I could do for more of this kind of talk. I think I even smiled slightly at the thought of it. At least I know a small bubble of pride began to form in the simplistic part of my brain, and I wanted my observant young reporter to elaborate on that last point—perhaps touching a bit on the profundity of content in my oratory. I put my head back and closed my eyes, my face glowing, I'm sure, in pleasant anticipation of some right palpable, if not downright delicious flattery.

The bubble was short-lived.

"Why are you such a fool?" he asked rhetorically, his voice suggesting a restraint of the anger with which I now realized he was consumed.

Nevertheless, I was quite taken aback and could only utter, "*I beg your pardon.*"

"Don't you realize this cross you're preaching has failed?" he went on. "Jesus Christ came as a prophet two thousand years ago and He hasn't conquered the world yet. Christianity is still a minority religion in the world. Karl Marx and Engels gave the world the hope of Utopia. In the past fifty years, the Socialists have conquered more than *half* the world! Don't you realize you're fighting a lost cause?"

The anger in my attendant's voice was no longer restrained—a truth which was consolidated by the fact that he was scraping the blade of his straight-edged razor—far too deliberately and much too close for comfort—across the whiskers on my chin, working on down toward my neck with too much urgency to suit *me*.

My heart pumped wildly and a chill emanating from my solar plexus sent icy fingers to push up goose bumps all over my skin and make my blood run cold. My palms and forehead broke out in clammy sweat.

Now, I'm a husky man—some people even call me burly; and this barber, this knife-wielding University student (hardly dry behind the ears, mind you) is scarcely more than a runt of a man. I mean, he was of very slight build. If anyone should

have had the fear of God in him, it should have been this guy; but *he* was holding the razor, not I. And I was afraid I'll tell you.

Now I know, and I knew then, that our God is not the author of *fear*, but I forgot that truth in this situation and I was *full* of fear. I rolled my eyes back in an attempt to catch a furtive glimpse of my captor's face as he hovered over me from behind. (Was I imagining things, or was there a demonic glint in his eyes?)

"As I was listening to you last night," he said (and here I swear that razor took on the shape of a pitchfork), "I couldn't help noticing that you have a marvelous ability to sway the masses." (I'm no longer impressed by this kind of talk, you realize.) "Think of what you could do to spread the Communist revolution. You're wasting your time with this cross and this Jesus," he said . . . by now the blade is moving from the base of my neck upward . . . slowly . . . slowly . . .

"It's people like you who are hindering the socialistic revolution," he said, his voice growling in measured cadence to the rhythm of his blade which is now at the base of my Adam's apple, mind you.

"You don't know what an enemy you *are* of mine," he continued, his words now being forced through glistening, clenched teeth and with a rising inflection that gave hint of frenzied madness.

The blade stopped in a horizontal position across the very center of my Adam's apple! I shook from stem to stern.

Pushing the razor's edge slowly but firmly

against my throat—depressing the skin but not cutting it . . . not quite yet—he was raging now. “You don’t know how intense my hatred *is* for you,” he screeched (not realizing I already had the full picture and then some).

I grabbed his arm and forced his hand away—not far, his muscles were braced against mine—but far enough to release the pressure on my neck. Enough is enough, I reasoned, regaining my composure and remembering the mighty Power to which I had access. “A close shave is a close shave, but this is ridiculous,” I said to myself as I kept pushing against his arm, my strength gradually overpowering his until I had pinned his arm straight against his side. But I didn’t stop there. Still maintaining my vice-grip on him, I slowly lumbered out of my chair and with menacing steps, backed him into a corner.

“I’m going to tell *you* something,” I said with the commanding authority of the Holy Spirit within me, “I’m not the one who’s fighting a lost cause. *You* are! You’re following a phony. Karl Marx promised Utopia when the socialistic revolution conquers the world, but he wasn’t the first one to come up with a plan for a thousand years of peace. Utopia is simply a copy of what another man promised the world—a man named Jesus. Only He didn’t call it Utopia. He called it the Millennium—a thousand years of peace. And *He’ll* conquer the world, not Karl Marx or any or all of his followers!

(I have to interject here that this was one of the

most inspired sermons I've ever preached, in certainly the most agitated rhetoric, and more certainly to the smallest congregation!)

"When that time comes," I told him further, "the lion will lie down by the lamb and there'll be peace in the valley. My cause is *not* a lost cause. Jesus Christ will ultimately win in this struggle between good and evil. *He* will rule the world!"

End of sermon and end of case in point.

Unfortunately, that barber reflected the attitudes of the people involved in the government of Guyana. As I left the country, I couldn't help feeling remorse for the new Christians we were leaving behind. I knew they were going to have a difficult time in their Christian growth because they would be restricted by their government.

Sometime after I had left Guyana, Dr. Jagan was defeated in a national election and a black man, Forbes Burnham, became the Prime Minister. Most of us who were acquainted with Guyana, were relieved because Burnham seemed to be a friend of America and a man who, we felt, would help restore political order to the country. Burnham appeared to be successful. There were fewer soldiers in the streets, less evidence of martial law, and American business men were given a freer hand to go into the country and help develop its natural resources. The country looked good.

All this was lost when Dr. Burnham made a complete turnaround. It wasn't long before the Russians were invited back into Guyana and given a free rein. The American information service

which for so many years had been operating in Guyana, was bombed, burned and closed down. The dream that Dr. Cheddi Jagan had had of spreading Marxist socialism from Guyana throughout all of the Caribbean islands became a reality through Dr. Forbes Burnham.

Out of Guyana have come political activists, money, propaganda, literature and rumors of arms that have been exported from Guyana to many of the West Indies Islands such as Trinidad, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Barbados, St. Vincent and Grenada. Today the Marxist influence has gained tremendous ground in all of the West Indies Islands, and most of that influence has been exported from *Guyana*.

As is the case in most Marxist-dominated countries, the crux of the attack is made upon American imperialism. Guyana is no different. I have a daily radio program which is aired on a station outside Guyana and is beamed into the country. I receive mail from pastors and people in that country on a regular basis. Needless to say, it was heartbreaking to hear stories of how the government had stopped the importing of any American-made church materials or Sunday school materials simply because they were printed in America. Pastors were and still are begging us to help them get materials from England and from Europe to help replace the materials shut off from America.

Upon her recovery, a young lady who had come to America from Guyana for surgery, returned there to her government teaching job in the schools.



One day she was called into the superintendent's office and given an ultimatum. "If you are going to keep your job you are going to have to make a decision as to what your political beliefs are. Do you embrace the teaching and the ideology of Marxism or do you embrace the ideologies of American imperialism? If you choose not to embrace the ideologies of Marxist socialism, you will then not be permitted to teach in the schools."

I will never forget the heartbreaking letter I received from this young lady saying, "Brother Paul, I am so broken because there is no other work in this country, and I must, in order to keep my job, say to my leaders, 'I reject all political ideologies of the United States, of imperialism, western style democracy, and I fully embrace the teaching of Marxism and socialism.' "

She continued. "I know that to be a true Marxist you cannot believe in God. I find myself in a compromising position of having to say, 'I don't believe in God' when in my heart I do. Please pray for me. I don't know what to do."

The political situation in Guyana today is such that I, as an American evangelist, could not possibly go into the country and conduct the same kind of open-air crusade as I conducted in the past. In fact, just to get into the country I would have to go as a tourist where my activities would be extremely curtailed. I could not hold public meetings. I would not even be permitted to stand up in any church and give a testimony without having written permission from the government, which would be ex-

tremely difficult, if not impossible to secure. Religious freedom in this regard, is finished in this small Marxist nation.

In reference to the Guyana massacre it seems almost inconceivable to me that while Americans, the American way of life, the American dream, and American political ideologies are so rejected and hated in Guyana, a man who has been quite involved in American politics can be allowed to come into that country, lease 27,000 acres for his farm, and then bring in almost one thousand American citizens to live and work on that farm.

It is inconceivable to me, first of all, because in these small West Indies islands and Latin American countries there is such a strong spirit of nationalism. For instance, in the government of most West Indies islands there is now a movement to prohibit any other West Indian from coming to work on an island where he is not a citizen. For example, Barbadian people (people from Barbados) are not permitted to go into places like Grenada or St. Lucia or St. Vincent for work, if there are local people who need that same job.

The same spirit of nationalism exists in Guyana and yet one thousand Americans were allowed to come in and work the land. The question is, "How did Jim Jones persuade the Guyanese government to let him into the country with all those people?" One answer is quite simple. Jim Jones, as reported in *Time*, *Newsweek* and other major American magazines, was a Marxist. One of his fantasies was that he was not only the reincarnation of Jesus

Christ but the reincarnation of Lenin. He denounced American politics and the American way of life. In fact, he went to Guyana to get away from America. It seems that it was great political expediency for the Guyanese government to allow this kind of man to come into their country. They obviously believed an embarrassment of this sort could further their cause of Marxism.

The Guyanese government, as reported in the *Chicago Tribune*,<sup>1</sup> was quite impressed with the letters of recommendation that Jim Jones brought with him. Evidently he impressed the Democratic party because of his political activities in California and his being able to bus in some six hundred people to a rally at which Mrs. Rosalyn Carter, our President's wife, spoke. I am sure that the local Democrats in California knew of the great controversy that surrounded Jim Jones and yet, for their own political expediency, they allowed him to become a part of their political campaigns.

It seems strange to me that following the political rally, Jim Jones personally escorted Mrs. Carter back to her hotel and then later dined with her. He received a letter from her thanking him for all his efforts in making the rally a success. He showed this and other letters (from other important party members, including Walter Mondale) to the leaders of the Guyanese government, thereby embarrassing the Democratic Party. The Guyana leaders took great pleasure in allowing this man to come into their country, knowing his Marxist tendencies and knowing how he would embarrass the United States.

I'll say it again: I know personally how difficult it is for Americans to get into Guyana. Needless to say, I was shocked and amazed at how easily Jim Jones got into the country. I wouldn't doubt in the least that there were enormous bribes paid to high officials in Guyana considering the unbelievable financial resources of Jim Jones.

I believe the government of Guyana allowed Jim Jones to come into their country, recognizing the fanatical political views which certainly aligned with their own political views, as a means to embarrass the United States government. As we look back on the Guyana massacre we see that Jim Jones not only embarrassed the United States government, but also shamed our nation throughout the entire free world. The ridicule which has appeared on the front pages of newspapers in Tokyo, Paris and Stockholm has caused many people to contemplate quite deeply the religious freedoms enjoyed in this country. We don't want to lose these freedoms and yet events like the Guyana massacre pose a great threat.

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<sup>1</sup>November 26, 1978

## CHAPTER THREE

# Just What Are False Prophets?

“... There shall be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them . . .”

II Peter 2:1

In my travels around the world, even during the early years of my ministry, I was surprised to discover that men proclaiming to be Jesus Christ was not a new occurrence. In India, for example, it is not uncommon for men to stand up and claim to be Christ. However, these occurrences are not restricted to the Far East because they happen in the United States as well.

It's not difficult to dismiss these people by calling them mentally deranged. However, when a man like Jim Jones comes on the scene, claiming he is Jesus Christ reincarnated and then amasses himself followers in excess of twenty thousand people,

has complete control of their lives and leads them to commit suicide, we must stop to take a serious look at the situation. We cannot simply dismiss Jim Jones as a man with a deranged mind.

Jesus said that in the last days as a sign of His coming, many false Christs and many false prophets would rise up and lead people astray. This is an area of the scriptures we must deal with quite seriously. Christ tells us: "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before." (Matthew 24:22-25)

What is He telling us? He is saying, "Don't think it uncommon—don't think it strange—that men will rise up in the last days saying, 'I am Christ.' "

Don't be surprised to hear people saying, "Go out into the desert and meet Christ. Go to Jonestown in Guyana to meet Him. Go into the secret chambers and find Him."

Jesus has told us that He will not come in this manner. He says His coming will be so spectacular no one will doubt He is truly Christ: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth out on to the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

The Apostle Peter gives a very detailed account of the character and teachings of false prophets in the second chapter of II Peter. This account is extremely helpful to Christians today because it gives us the tools to judge any man who rises up and claims he is a great prophet. It is important that we study the Word of God to know exactly how to recognize a false prophet.

In order to have a clearer understanding of Peter's description of false prophets, let's go to God's Word which shows us Jim Jones as he was reported to be. This will enable you to make a comparison between what was prophesied and what has become reality.

“. . . there shall be *false teachers* among you, who shall bring in *damnable heresies*, even denying the Lord that bought them . . .” (II Peter 2:1)

Jim Jones preached a strange combination of political and religious ideologies. His sermons were a combination of Leninism, Christianity, Buddhism and faith healing. One of Jones' typical sermons included a warning for his followers: “A race war is coming my friends. A terrible, fascist-inspired war between the black and white races, a war that will end with the destruction of the United States.”

He would then launch into lengthy discussions of Lenin, Marx and the communal way of living. He was adept at combining the atheistic beliefs of Lenin with the teachings of Christ. “We must draw close, avoid old ties to our families, even avoid our

wives, husbands, and children if they are non-believers.”

Jones who claimed to be Jesus Christ, Lenin and Mao reincarnated would tell his followers, “You must be willing to die for *me*.” He had all the answers for sex, punishment, wisdom, knowledge and illness, and he used them to keep his flock in line.

According to a former People’s Temple follower, as reported in the aforementioned issue of the *Chicago Tribune*, “Jones would frequently bed young women members of the church in an effort to sire new messiahs. On some occasions he would forbid women followers to have sex with their spouses so he could be sure it was his child that the woman would bear.”

Jones denounced the Bible, disproved it in the minds of his followers, and called it a paper idol. He stopped calling himself Jesus Christ and started calling himself God. He was a false teacher who brought forth *damnable heresies*.

“... and many shall follow their pernicious [injurious, destructive and deadly] ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” (II Peter 2:2)

“When we first joined, it was beautiful, interracial humanitarianism,” remarked a one-time member of the Temple. “When you walked into the church everybody greeted you with hugs. I had never experienced that kind of love before.”

Even though Jones was accepted socially and in the political arena, few people attended his church



until 1968 when Timothy Stoen, a Stanford University Law School graduate and deputy district attorney in San Francisco, began attending services at the Temple. Stoen is quoted as saying, "I was impressed because of the emphasis on helping the poor."

A year after Stoen started attending the Temple, he sold all his possessions to become a church member and an aide to Jones. "I was," he said, "influenced by the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I told myself *somebody* had to be building a community based on trust in the world."

Thomas Martin, a Mendocino County probation officer, said Stoen's enrollment was a turning point. "He was highly respected in the community and gave the church instant credence."

At its peak in the early 1970's, the People's Temple amassed a membership of over twenty thousand, all from California. Claire Janaro, 39, of Philadelphia, a dedicated follower of Jones, said, "We were outcasts of society, and the closeness and the caring at Jonestown held us together. He was the kind of father you always wanted and never had."

As reported by Ronald Yates (again quoting from the *Tribune* article), "... Jones used religion to control sadistic tendencies in people by directing them inward and making his followers masochistic. 'Some people enjoyed being punished,' recalled Temple member Lena McCavin, 'and Jim Jones enjoyed punishing them.'"

Many followed Jim Jones and were destroyed

by his deadly ways because the truth was not spoken.

“... and through covetousness shall they with feigned words [sheer fabrications, cunning and false arguments] *make merchandise of you . . .*” (II Peter 2:3)

Jones was driven by a thirst for power and wealth which he quenched at his followers' expense. As he grew in his political power the wealth of his church increased. The money was collected by members through a variety of methods. Among these were levies ranging from twenty-five to forty per cent of a member's gross income and through the sale of their homes and other property. Many times people were forced to give money out of fear of reprisal from Jones.

The People's Temple amassed a wealth which has been reported to exceed fifteen million dollars which was deposited in foreign banks. Searchers in Jonestown discovered \$500,000 in cash, U.S. Treasury checks from the Social Security Administration and an undetermined amount of gold. Jim Jones used his followers to feed his hunger for power and wealth.

“But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and *despise government*. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are *not afraid to speak of evil dignities*.” (II Peter 2:10)

“We swore we would do anything to further the cause of socialism and to make Jones a worldwide ruler,” reported Wanda Johnson, a member of the elite group of followers surrounding Jones. “All of

us signed pacts that on Jones' command, when something went wrong, we would first kill our children and then ourselves."

When Jim Jones climbed into his pulpit to preach he became a man with all the answers. He felt contempt for organized religion. This contempt can be seen clearly in his actions during one of his early services. Jones angrily picked up the Bible, spat on it and yelled to the congregation, "Too many people are looking at this book instead of me!"

Even though Jones was active in the political arena, he detested government. He spoke often against the ideologies of the United States. He became involved in politics only to further his own power. Jones would often spend hours alone convincing himself that he was the target of an organized national conspiracy of the government to assassinate him. He carried this delusion to the point of surrounding himself behind a veil of body guards.

His long-time contempt for government and religion led Jones to align himself with Socialism and Marxism. Before leaving for Guyana, Jones told his followers that Jonestown would be a Socialist utopia where all races could mix in peace and work for the common good.

In one of his communiqués Jones retorted to an accusation of violating human rights, "I can say without hesitation that we are devoted to a decision that it is better even to die than be constantly harassed from one continent to the next . . . we will

not submit quietly to the interminable plotting and persecution of this politically motivated conspiracy; we will resist actively, putting our lives on the line . . .”

Jones was self-willed and filled with lust. He despised government and he led others to despise it also. He was an effective “teacher” as was proved by the number of people who followed him . . . even into hell.

“But these, as *natural brute beasts*, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.” (II Peter 2:12)

Jim Jones was a beast. He took great pleasure, and considered it his duty as God, to deal out unspeakable punishments in whatsoever manner would serve his purpose.

“To build a just society,” Jones preached, “you need a living God rather than a scriptural one.” He used this as his basis for the torture he inflicted upon those he considered to be disobedient.

The group of people closest to him were called “angels” and it was this group he called upon to mete out his vengeance and punishment. Temple members who were considered to be guilty of minor infractions were called before the “throne,” Jones’ chair, and were harassed, threatened and beaten by the “angels” until they broke down, wept and pleaded for forgiveness from the “Father.”

Most severe crimes against Jones, such as a refusal to turn over personal possessions, or direct criticism, were punished by cruel public beatings.

On one occasion, he ordered a group of elderly to beat a woman with their canes, explaining, as one witness recalled, "It will be good for your hypertension."

There were special punishments reserved for misbehaving children. Sometimes they were taken into a darkened room where electrodes were attached to their bodies. After being administered electric shocks, they were told what happened to little children who failed to smile at Jim Jones or forgot to call him "Dad."

When Jones wanted to punish the children especially harshly he threatened them with "big foot." After dark a child would be tied up and taken to a well (big foot) where he would be dunked, again and again. As one commune member recalled,<sup>1</sup> "You could hear the children screaming all the way there and back, 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry, Father, I'm sorry.' If a child didn't scream loud enough how sorry he was they would hold him down until he almost drowned."

Was Jones a brute beast? What besides a beast would torture young children to the point of death?

"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much wantonness [lewd and lustful self-indulgence]*, those that were clean escaped from them who live in terror." (II Peter 2:18)

Among the theologies Jones preached were his warped ideals about sex. On his organizational charts he listed himself as the "main body." Every one of his followers was expected to recognize

“Father” as the only source of guidance, discipline, truth, wisdom, and sex.

He took great pleasure in rising above his own rules. While his followers were severely beaten for homosexual acts, he would flaunt his own homosexual behavior from the pulpit. He would rant on for hours boasting, “I am cursed with the largest penis of any man on earth; therefore, I must love both men and women equally.”

The sexual theme was central to the survival of the Temple. In order to make the “gospel” of his large penis become a reality, Jones required every woman who was close to him to have sex with him regularly. He often passed out a questionnaire to his followers. Among the questions posed were: “Do you fantasize about the Father sexually?” Jones once told his attorney Charles Garry that he had had sex sixteen times in one day, with fourteen women and two men.

Interracial “partnerships” were encouraged by Jones; promiscuity, however, was not. Members who were apprehended for violating the moral code were subjected to public beatings and humiliation. One woman who had sex with a male member without Jones’ permission, was forced to have sex with another man while the entire congregation watched.

Young and old, the members of the People’s Temple all submitted their bodies to a man who called himself Christ and Lenin. All were subject to Jones’ lustful desires and public humiliation. Every minute of every day was lived through the

lusts of the flesh and every conscious moment was spent in fear: fear of punishment, fear of humiliation and fear of death. They were unclean and lived in terror.

“While they promise them liberty, *they themselves* are the *servants of corruption* . . .” (II Peter 2:19)

The color movies and glossy advertising literature promoting Jonestown painted the picture of an ideal tropical paradise, a love-filled commune which was dedicated to good works and racial harmony. Jonestown was billed as a “sharing community with lush fields, a school, a medical clinic and even the beginnings of industry.”

The promotional pamphlets read, “The laughter of children rings through the air. Our children are our greatest treasure.”

Life at Jonestown was *not* a paradise. Children did not laugh, they cried. The lush fields wouldn’t grow any crops. There was no school and only one doctor. The industry was non-existent.

Meat, which was served twice a day in the beginning, was not served at all thereafter. The workday was eleven hours. People were subject to harsh discipline, marathon sermons (rantings of Jim Jones) and mental and physical torture.

The utopia and paradise Jim Jones promised was filled with corruption, sickness and death.

“I am the alpha and the omega,” yelled Jones from his pulpit. From that point on, the paradise of Jonestown turned into a cruel concentration camp.

*"These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever."* (II Peter 2:17)

*"... God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them unto chains of darkness..."* (II Peter 2:4)

*"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."* (II Peter 2:9)

*"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."*

*"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them."* (II Peter 2:20-21)

Jones preached that God's Word was an unreliable document. He denounced the moral standards of the Bible, often throwing it to the floor to spit and stomp upon it. Before a congregation of three thousand members Jones called Jesus a bastard and Mary a whore. Jones' name was substituted for Jesus in hymns. His followers believed that Jones was the "living word" and worshipped and glorified his powers and being.

"Alert!! Alert!! Alert!! Everyone to the pavilion!" Jones summoned his followers to their last communion. "Everyone has to die. If you love me as I love you, we must die or be destroyed from the outside."

His followers obeyed and willingly drank cya-



nide poisoning. "We'll fall tonight," said one, earnestly believing in Jim Jones, "but he'll raise us tomorrow."

"It is time to die with dignity," said Jones as he watched those who resisted being forced to drink the solution.

After consuming their potions his followers were led away to die. Within minutes they were gasping and retching. Blood flowed from their mouths.

On his "throne" Jones kept saying, "I tried. I tried. I tried."

As he cried, "Mother . . . Mother . . . Mother," a shot rang out and Reverend Jim Jones was dead.

He began as a preacher of the gospel. He did not die as one. A false prophet who was filled with damnable heresies and who led nine hundred people to death and hell, Jim Jones was consumed by his own corruption.

" . . . the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (II Peter 2:22)

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<sup>1</sup>*Newsweek*, December 4, 1978

## CHAPTER FOUR

# How to Spot a Phony

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.”

I Timothy 4:1

While engaged in missionary service in an area of primitive West Africa several years ago, I visited the city of Monrovia and noticed a very beautiful church with a large number of people attending services every Sunday morning. I inquired as to its denomination and was informed that it was a locally run church whose pastor had originally gone to a Christian Bible school. I was pleased to hear that until I learned he had decided to write his own bible and create his own religion. Today he preaches a gospel that is mixed with Christian truth, primitive traditions, witchcraft, cultism and sorcery.

I became acquainted with an individual who

was a member of the church. While in attendance at one particular service, she became extremely ill. The pastor encouraged her to bring a chicken to church for a healing ceremony. On a Sunday morning in front of the entire congregation, the pastor cut the head off the chicken, drained the blood on the altar, mixed up a concoction of traditional African herbs, and poured it all over the woman's body declaring, "In the name of Jesus, be healed."

Many sophisticated Christians in our so-called civilized countries would not believe this story, but it does raise that same question which keeps surfacing these days: How do you know for certain that the man you're following is a man of God?

We are living during a time when we have many so-called Christian preachers expounding on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sun Myung Moon from Korea, who is amassing millions of followers in that country by claiming to be God's prophet, is one of the foremost. Most of the Christian church stands back aghast at the brainwashing and the evident excesses of heresy coming out of the American Unification Church.

However, even the more traditional evangelistic ministries, such as Billy Graham's which is hailed as a legitimate and marvelous soul-winning ministry, receives criticism. A lot of people in the business community think that when Billy Graham's choir sings "Bringing in the Sheaves," they are referring to the sheaves of money that come into the multi-million dollar corporation. While many are convinced that Billy Graham is truly a great man of

God, there are many Americans who believe he is a phony.

It is the awesome responsibility of every Christian to *know*. We must know for sure whether the man we are following is a true man of God or a false prophet. Our duty, as Christians, is to make a judgment on the man to whom we are listening.

In the teachings of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians, Paul the Apostle says that one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit given to the church in the last days is the gift of the discerning of spirits. This simply means we receive from God the divine and supernatural ability to discern whether the spirit in another man is really the Spirit of God, the spirit of the devil or simply the spirit of the man.

The Bible warns us that we must try the spirits. In I John 4:1-2, the Apostle John says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God because many false prophets are gone out into the world . . . Hereby know ye the Spirit of God."

It is the obligation and the duty of every Christian to recognize God's Spirit. It is not good enough for a man just to stand up and say, "I am a man of God; now hear what I've got to say," or "I've been called of God." Recognizing that the ministry of the gospel of Christ is not a profession but a calling, it is simply no longer acceptable for a man to say, "I am a man of God."

Men will stand up and say, "I have heard God's voice and this is what God says." Others will stand up and say, "I've seen an angel and this is what the

angel told me." Still others will stand up and say, "I've had a vision and because I've had a vision you must hear what I've got to say." Tragically, too many are acting upon dreams which have not come from God but rather from having eaten too much pizza the night before.

There has always been something within the human nature which looks for signs. The scripture says, "The Greeks seek after wisdom and the Jews demand signs."

This same element is evident in human nature today. People want signs and they are constantly looking for someone who can provide them. The reason for this is that we are, as the Bible says, like sheep. In Isaiah 53:6, we are told, "All we like sheep have gone astray and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all."

It has been theorized there are two kinds of people in the world: followers and leaders. According to this theory ninety per cent of the people are followers, and ten per cent are leaders. The nation's freeway system provides an excellent opportunity to prove this theory. Upon observation you will discover a group of people who will always follow in a line of traffic. If the traffic slows down, they'll slow down.

If the traffic speeds up, they'll speed up. People in the other group are not content to follow; they'll pass everybody. This illustrates a characteristic which is inherent in human nature.

The Bible spends a lot of time speaking about sheep. The 23rd Psalm, for example, speaks of the

shepherd and his sheep. I grasped the meaning of those Biblical references during our annual Christmas program, "Live Nativity."

We brought live sheep into our church. The farmer who permitted us to use them said, "You'll have to be very careful of these sheep because they're a little wild."

We brought them into the church the day before our Christmas pageant so that we could "rehearse" with them (or vice-versa). We selected three boys to dress up like shepherds and had them practice leading the sheep down the aisles, up the steps to the stage and to the site of the manger. The problem was getting the sheep to go down that aisle. They wouldn't budge. So we took one of the sheep which seemed to be a leader, picked him up by the wool on his tail and forced him down that aisle, his hind legs straight up in mid-air. Getting that one sheep down the aisle solved the problem. The other sheep followed. There was no need to lead them. Wherever we took that one sheep, the remainder dutifully fell into line behind him.

Now when you stop to consider it, the implications of being called *sheep* should provide food for mighty sober and solemn thought. A sheep is a dumb animal. In fact, it is considered to be one of the dumbest animals in existence. Sheep will go *anywhere*, and generally they will follow *any* leader. And the Bible says we are like *sheep*. The modern cliché—to separate the sheep from the goats—is not a complimentary endorsement of sheep, lest you have thought otherwise. It means separating

the dull people (the sheep) from the clever ones (the goats).

Why, then, does God call us sheep? Is it because He considers us dull-witted creatures without the capacity to think for ourselves? Is He pointing a finger at us, making a railing accusation that we're stupid? Is He being sarcastic? Uncomplimentary? Of course not! He is stating a fact!

No, God didn't "do us in" or "pull a fast one" when He created us with a following instinct. He did us a great favor. He gave us invincible protection against the enemy. He bestowed us with great honor. He created us in *His* image and, as such creations, we are meant to follow our Creator! *That* is the intended inherent nature of man. That following instinct was placed within us for good reason, but we have abused it. We have failed to look up . . . we have failed to consider just *who* it is we're supposed to follow; and when we lose sight of that, we can get ourselves into serious trouble because we're born followers and we're going to follow *somebody* or *something*. That's inherent in us. That's the fact of our natures. And that's why so many people will follow the wrong leaders—even to their deaths.

We are meant to follow Jesus Christ. Even Christ, who is referred to as the *lamb* of God, followed His leader. He followed His Father.

It's high time we as sheep recognize and accept the fact of our inherent natures. It's time we dumb sheep stand up and start thinking for ourselves. . . that we start using the brains God gave us to think

with. It's time we stop giving a *carte blanche* endorsement of "righteousness" to the leaders we follow and start looking to the author and finisher of our faith.

Jesus Christ is the *true* shepherd, the *only* shepherd. We are to follow Him and only Him. It doesn't matter how great other leaders are, it doesn't matter how charismatic they may be, it doesn't matter how many "miracles" they "work"—we are to follow the *Maker* of miracles, The Creator of the universe and all that's in it, the One and Only Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

He gave us a solemn warning that there would come false shepherds, false leaders, false prophets, and men who would even claim to be Christ Himself. We have got to judge our shepherds. We must ask ourselves, "How can I know that the voice of my pastor, the voice of my prayer group leader, the voice of my charismatic leader, the voice of my spiritual hero, is really the voice of Jesus Christ? How do I know the message I'm listening to is the *right* message?"

We must ask ourselves these questions if we want to survive the last days. Don't believe everything Paul Olson tells you. Don't believe what you're reading in this book. The Bible says, "Prove the spirits." Is there some means, some way, some method to test the person to whom we are listening, the preaching to which we're listening, to determine if we are hearing God's voice? Yes, God has given us a means.

The Bible clearly outlines three distinct meth-



ods to use in judging the ministry, the preacher, and the leader. The first method the Bible talks about is *truth*. Paul the Apostle said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. But I certify you, brother, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man for I neither received it of man neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:8, 12)

The world is looking for truth and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find. We are living in an age today when everything seems to be relative. The theories of relativity are being taught not only in the areas of science and medicine, but also in the areas of religion. We are told everything is relative to something and therefore you don't know for certain what is true. We are told all truth is based on its relativity to your present circumstances; therefore, even the Bible can change.

While everything around us in the world today is changing God says in the Book of Malachi, "I am God, I change not." The Bible, God's law, God's Word, is not relative. It is *absolute*! Laws of science may change through revelation of more truth. Laws of medicine may change through revelation of more truth but the laws of God do not change. They have not changed and they will not change in the future. God says, "I am God, I change not, "and Paul the Apostle said, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."

We are living in an age when truth is changing

constantly and young people today are asking, "What is truth? How do I know the truth?" Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) Isn't it a pity that the people who followed Jim Jones to Guyana did not know the truth? They would be alive today had they known.

*Who* is the truth, and *what* is the truth? It was Christ himself who answered those questions. He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by *me*." (John 14:6) The most important rule in determining whether or not a man is a man of God is that he presents the truth.

How do you know if he's speaking the truth? First of all, a very simple rule is that the man who speaks truth when it comes to spiritual matters will point men to the truth, Jesus Christ.

Richard Wurmbrand, who spent so much time in Siberian prison camps in Northern Russia, tells of the spiritual hunger of the Russian Christians. When they were brought into the camps they were forbidden to bring any scripture with them. Many tried to smuggle scripture into camp by tearing off partial pages from their Bibles, wadding them into tiny bits and stuffing the wads into various parts of their bodies. During the physical examinations which were given prior to sending these people off to camp, the doctors would find these pieces of paper, open them up and, discovering they were Holy Scripture, destroy them.

Wurmbrand relates his experiences of how,

after working hard all day, the prisoners, hungry to know the Word of God, would sit up night after night sharing the scriptures each of them could remember. After the group had memorized all of the scriptures they could recall to mind, they would fall on their knees before God and pray, "God please help us to remember more of your truth."

Wurmbrand recalls one miraculous evening when a bright light shone against the prison wall and the hand of a man began to write scriptures on the wall. The verses stayed there until the people were able to commit them to memory, then disappeared. Then more verses would appear. The Holy Spirit revealed scriptural truth to the prisoners in Northern Russia when they were hungry to know the truth. Could there be any doubt that that truth came from the one and only Almighty God?

The people who are involved in cults, and too many times Christians themselves, wander away from the truth. They will lift up their Bibles and say, "Here is the truth." But they're wrong. The Bible is not the truth. Jesus Christ is the truth. The Bible is the truth about the truth. It's the truth about Christ. Christ says, "*I am the way, the truth and the life.*"

Unfortunately, there are many organizations who spend very little time studying the Bible. As a matter of fact, there is one major religious Christian organization which for many years forbade its people to read the Bible because the pastors felt the congregation was not qualified to interpret the scriptures.

As Christians we need to study the Word of God in order to discover true Biblical doctrine. Biblical doctrine is the truth about the truth about the truth, Jesus Christ.

It is startling to find out that many Christians when asked, "What are a few of the basic doctrines taught in the Bible?" are unable to answer. When asked why they are Christians, they say they're Christians because "it feels good." They had better have some other reason because "feeling good" is not enough. They had better *know* that without Jesus Christ they are absolutely lost.

Many churches have their own theology or interpretations of the Bible. Theology is the truth about the truth (doctrine), about the truth (the Bible), about the truth, Jesus Christ. Already we are getting away from the truth. But, we go further.

Every church has its own church tradition which is the truth about the truth, about the truth, about the truth, about the truth, Jesus Christ. To some people church tradition is gospel. There are even some church traditions which haven't any foundation in the Word of God at all. And yet these traditions have become *holy* to some people.

Many Christians are so far away from the central truth, Jesus Christ, it's no wonder they are unable to answer the question, "Why are you a Christian?"

It is so important that we know Jesus Christ. Whomever we hear preaching or whoever our spiritual hero is, if he doesn't lead us to Jesus Christ, we must walk away from him.

Christ told us, "If *I* will be lifted up, *I* will draw men unto myself." Jim Jones drew men unto himself, not to Christ. If a man is a true prophet of God, those who come and sit at his feet will be drawn to the person of Jesus Christ.

The second rule we must apply in determining whether or not a man is a man of God is that we must listen to the doctrine he preaches.

In II Timothy 4:3, Paul the Apostle writes to Timothy and says, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but after their own lust shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned into fables."

What the Apostle Paul said is as important today as it was in the days of the early church. He was an intellectual, a man who was schooled in the finest universities in the Mideast and God chose Paul for a very specific purpose. It was Jesus Christ who came to this world and brought us His glorious gospel of redemption. But, it was Paul the Apostle who formulated, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of the Christian Church; and he recorded those doctrines in the letters he wrote to the various churches in Asia—letters we know as epistles.

What does the word *doctrine* mean? The word *doctrine* refers to the fundamental truth of the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is Paul who said again to young Timothy in II Timothy 2:15, "Timothy, study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth."

“Study to show thyself approved.” This is something that Christians do not do today. If you ask most Christians, “What do you believe in?” they can’t tell you. If you ask, “What are the cardinal doctrines of the Christian church?” they can’t tell you that either.

I was brought up in a holiness-type of church that had very strong regulations concerning the outward aspects of holiness. For instance, our girls were not allowed to wear makeup, we could not go to picture shows, we could not go to bowling alleys, and we could not go to dances. Up until the time I got into high school, if someone asked me, “What do you believe in?” I couldn’t tell them. I would simply say, “Our church doesn’t believe in going to bowling alleys, we don’t go to dances, we don’t even go to shows.” I knew a lot of things I *didn’t* believe in, but I didn’t know for sure what I *did* believe.

Try it some time. Ask yourself, “What are the cardinal truths of the doctrine of the church of Jesus Christ? What are the basic doctrines of the Christian Church?”

There is the doctrine of the Bible, the Word of God. There is the doctrine of God, the doctrine of the fall and redemption of man, the doctrine of Christ, the saviour of fallen men, the doctrine of salvation, the doctrine of heaven and hell, and the doctrine of the second coming. We must know these if we are to know the truth of Jesus Christ.

Had the nine hundred followers of Reverend Jim Jones known what the Bible teaches and the doctrines of God’s Word; and had they understood the teachings of Jesus Christ concerning the doc-

trine of God, they would never have believed Jim Jones when he said, "I am the reincarnation of Jesus Christ." They would have done as I did: laughed. They would have recognized that the man was not truly a prophet of God but rather an insane madman. It is when people do not know what the Bible teaches that they become susceptible to the manipulation of madmen such as Jim Jones. The next time you listen to Reverend Oral Roberts, Robert Schuller, Rex Humbard, Billy Graham, your pastor or whomever you are following, it is your obligation to sit and judge his ministry and answer the question, "Is he really a true prophet?"

The third method we can use to judge whether a man is a man of God is to see if he lives what he preaches. It is possible for a man to exalt Jesus Christ in his preaching, preach a pure doctrine and at the same time, not live what he preaches.

For many years, I have been involved with the Gospel Music Association which represents various religious singing groups, gospel quartets, and contemporary music groups which are sweeping across America and around the world, singing the gospel of Jesus Christ. For several years we had many of these gospel singing groups come into our church to entertain and minister to the congregation. One of the most beautiful experiences of our times is to hear beautiful music as it exalts the name of Jesus.

Unfortunately, among the gospel music crowd there are charlatans and false prophets, also. We had one group from Nashville visit our church; these people were world famous for their musical

talents and abilities. During the offertory, the music group left the platform and went back stage to the fellowship hall. My wife, a very good looking pastor's wife, was sitting in the hall when one of these musicians sat down and began to talk with her. She was being as cordial as she possibly could, trying to be every bit the hostess that a pastor's wife should be to a guest in the church, and evidently this musician misunderstood her kindness. Out of the clear blue sky he propositioned her. "After the concert let's you and I run up to the Holiday Inn and have a quickie," he said.

Needless to say he was not aware of the fact that he was talking to the pastor's wife and obviously got caught red-handed. I perhaps over-reacted since I saw to it that the next day he was fired from his job. I decided to myself that from that time on, there would be fewer and fewer gospel music groups coming into my church, because so many of them simply did not live the life they sang about in their songs.

I reject the merchandising of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the people of God. If people cannot live the lives they sing about, cannot live the life they preach about, cannot live the life they testify about, then Christians should not sit down and listen to them. Rather, they should turn their backs and walk away.

These people are another fulfillment of what Jesus warned us of concerning the last days. The treachery of the last days will be filled with false prophets who profess to be one thing and live differ-



ently. Paul warned Timothy, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own self, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truth-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." (II Timothy 3:1)

How do you spot a phony? Ask yourself, "Does he draw you to himself or does he draw you to Jesus Christ? Does he preach a pure doctrine or is it a perverted truth he preaches? Does he live the life that he preaches?" If you can answer these questions affirmatively, then the individual you are following is a man of God.

There is yet another rule we can apply to the task of discerning whether or not a man is a prophet of God. Jesus said, "By their fruit ye shall know them . . ."

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Miracle Workers or Miracle Makers

“Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruit ye shall know them.”

Matthew 7:19-20

THE MOST MIRACULOUS SPIRITUAL HEALING MINISTRY IN THE LAND TODAY! ALL NINE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT MANIFESTED IN REVEREND JIM JONES. SEE A MODERN DAY APOSTLE . . . HEAR HIS URGENT MESSAGE FOR THESE TROUBLED TIMES . . .

Jim Jones sent out a flyer with this message to promote one of his public appearances in Chicago during May 1976. Thousands of people believed Jim Jones was a man of God and followed him because they saw evidences of miracle power take

place during his meetings. But, Jesus said, "Some will cast out devils in my name and I will say depart from me ye worker of iniquity. I don't even know you."

Miracles do not prove that a man is a man of God. They prove that God is real. How can we know that the people we witness performing miracles are people of God? There's only one way and Jesus is the way. He said, "By their fruits ye shall know them. Not by their gifts. The gifts prove Me, the fruits prove a man."

In preparation for another crusade in Guyana I decided it would be economically better for me to drive from Minneapolis, Minnesota to Miami and then fly from there. While driving through Atlanta, Georgia, I noticed a large gospel tent along the freeway. It was one of the largest I had ever seen. Being an evangelist who held tent crusades throughout the Midwest during those years, I couldn't resist returning to an old-fashioned tent gospel meeting.

Upon closer observation I discovered the evangelist leading the meeting was a dear friend of mine whom I considered to be one of the mightiest men of God I had ever known. This individual had conducted crusades in Minneapolis where I witnessed many, many people come to Christ. I thought of him so highly I was often kidded that I had four people in my Holy Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Ghost and this particular evangelist.

I had had a tremendous personal and spiritual experience under this man's ministry. There is something in our human nature that allows us to

grow into a deep relationship with an individual who is God's tool for giving us a greater spiritual understanding. Some psychologists call it hero worship and it may very well be; however, it is a beautiful relationship which people treasure. The Bible says, "Precious are the feet of those who bring the gospel." In this sense the feet of this evangelist were very special to me.

As I walked into the service I could sense the electric atmosphere. The tent was overflowing with people eager to hear the Word of God and to witness His miracles. I gazed around the tent and saw a banner hanging behind the podium. It said, "NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES EXCEPT GOD BE WITH HIM."

As I stood in the back of the tent, taking in the excitement of the meeting, the banner really caught my attention. At that particular point in time, its message meant a lot to me because there were many scandalous rumors crossing the nation about my friend. I had heard he was an alcoholic. I had heard his morality was not according to the morality of a man of God. People were saying he was not a man of God but a perverted instrument of the devil. I had questions in my mind; nevertheless, I sat through his service and listened to him preach.

This evangelist was a man whose ministry had been surrounded by miracles and who was well known in the United States. He preached dynamic messages on the subject of healing, deliverance from Satanic habits and faith. I personally witnessed many people's lives dramatically revolu-

tionized through this man's ministry. He possessed a tremendous gift of oratory and his gift of charisma had swayed people to God and Jesus Christ for many years. As he preached he stood beneath the banner, "NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES EXCEPT GOD BE WITH HIM."

During the closing moments of his meeting, he prayed for the sick and asked if anyone wanted to experience the healing powers of Jesus Christ.

As he was praying the ushers brought a lady in a wheel chair to the stage. He looked at her and asked, "Do I know who you are?"

"No."

"Do you know me?"

"Only your name," she replied.

Still questioning her before praying over her, he continued, "Have I ever met you before?"

"No."

"I want to establish for the people here tonight that we've never met. Is that true?"

"Yes."

He went on to state her name, describe the type of car accident in which she was crippled, the people who were with her in the car, and how long she had been crippled. He described her to the audience and to their amazement, she replied, "You're right!"

The entire process of his questioning and his knowing about the lady could have been called a demonstration of the Gift of Knowledge—God talking to a man and giving him knowledge he would have no way of knowing.

The evangelist continued in his healing ceremony and addressed the lady. "God has revealed this knowledge to me because He wants you to realize He loves you and He wants to heal you."

He grasped her by the right hand and began to pray over her. At the end of the prayer he yanked her out of the chair and, filled with emotion, told her, "In the name of Jesus Christ rise up out of your chair and walk!"

As he finished, she bounded out of her wheel chair, stood erect, walked and then ran all over the stage crying, "Praise Jesus! Praise Jesus!"

The crowd went into a frenzy. Miracles started happening all over the tent. People's faces were exploding with joy and amazement as they witnessed the sick being healed, the crippled walking and the down-trodden being raised up. Fever pitched with emotion, people were praising God with tears of joy running down their cheeks.

As the crowd began to disperse following the service, I made my way to a huge semi-trailer which had been turned into a portable office. Since the evangelist was a personal friend of the family and at one time had invited me to travel with him, I felt I had to see him before I left. I knocked on the office door and one of his assistants answered. "Yes?"

"I would like to speak to the evangelist."

"I'm sorry; he can't be disturbed."

"Just do me one favor. Tell him Paul Olson from Minneapolis is here. If he doesn't want to see me, that's fine; but please tell him I'm here."

A moment later my friend appeared at the door, elated at my coming to see him. "Paul, how are you? Please come up to my office."

As I sat down, he asked me about my father, my step-mother and how I liked his service.

"Paul," he said, "when you return to Minneapolis you must tell everyone that the Power of God is still with me. I know there are people around the country spreading terrible rumors about me, but you can tell them you have seen the Power of God in me."

While we were discussing his service and exchanging small talk, there was a knock at the door. The lady whom he had raised out of the wheelchair came into his office and asked, "Are you ready to eat?"

"Not yet. I've got my good friend Paul Olson from Minneapolis here and we've got a lot of catching up to do. You go ahead to the restaurant and I'll catch up."

After the lady left I asked, "Isn't that the woman you raised out of the wheelchair?"

"Yes," he answered.

"You told the crowd you'd never seen her before and now she's calling you by your first name and you're going out to eat with her. You know her."

"That's right," he replied, "She's my cousin."

A wave of anger surged within me. "You staged that whole miracle," I said.

"Of course I did," he responded without emotion.

"That's immoral. How could you do such a thing?"

He laughed as he told me, "Oh, Paul, when are you going to grow up? The end justifies the means. Look what happened. So many people were healed. Miracles took place. It inspired the faith of others."

"It's still immoral," I said. "It's a lie. You acted out a lie in front of the crowd tonight."

"Come on, Paul. Grow up."

I immediately wanted to vomit. I said a quick good-bye and left. As I was leaving he called to me, "Paul, be sure you tell your father and mother the Power of God is still with me."

I walked out of the trailer and back into the tent. It was dark except for one weak light still shining on stage. The crowd was gone. The organ was no longer playing.

With tears streaming down my face, I stood in front of the platform where I thought I had witnessed a great miracle. I looked up at the banner, "NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES EXCEPT GOD BE WITH HIM," and I asked myself, "So what do miracles prove anyway?"

So what *do* miracles prove? This is a question that we as Christians following leaders, must ask ourselves. The story I've just related to you may have some of you doubting the realities of miracles. Miracles still happen, however. The God we serve is the God who parted the waters of the Red Sea and led a million Jews through the river on dry ground. The God we serve is the God who walked with three Hebrew children through a fiery furnace and brought them out without the smell of smoke upon their bodies. Our God is the God who walked with David down into the camp of the Philistines



and slew a giant. Our God is the God who walked with Daniel into the lion's den and closed the mouths of the lions so they could not devour a servant of God.

Do miracles still happen? Yes, they do. Anything the Holy Spirit could do two thousand years ago, He can still do today and we shouldn't try to tell Him He can't. Manifestations of the Holy Spirit and miracles are happening all around us every day.

In remote villages deep in the interior of West Africa I have watched Jesus Christ walk among the primitive black tribes, many of them illiterate, and lay His healing hand upon them. I've stood by and watched a tribal chief who had not walked for eighteen years respond to the preaching of the Word of God and, after other pastors and I laid hands upon him, we saw him rise up and walk. After being healed, the tribal chief renounced witchcraft and witch doctors, came into the church and was baptized. A revival broke loose in that village and the church was packed to capacity for the first time in over five years. I've seen God perform fantastic miracles.

Now that we have established the fact that miracles indeed do happen, we must again ask ourselves, "What do miracles prove?"

In Revelation 13:13-14, referring to false prophets and the leader of the last world religion, the Bible says:

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in

sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had the power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."

The Bible tells us that during the last days an anti-christ will be revealed. This false prophet and religious leader will be endowed with Satanic power to perform real miracles. He will do this in the sight of men and deceive those that dwell on the earth by the means of his miracles. Jesus Christ performed miracles, true, but anti-christ and his false prophets will perform the same miracles and deceive many. Whom will they deceive? They will deceive people who are impressed by miracles. Isn't that all of us? We all seem to be impressed by miracles. Should we be?

My evangelist friend had written over his platform, "NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES EXCEPT GOD BE WITH HIM." This verse is a reference to Jesus Christ and his miraculous ministry. It seems to say that if you see a man performing a miracle it proves he is a man of God. But, Jesus said quite the opposite. In Matthew, 7:20-23, Jesus said:

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day [the words, "That day" is prophetic language which

refers to the day of judgment], Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity."

This is a strange paradox. Here are people who have done many wonderful works: cast out devils in the name of Jesus, prophesied in the name of Jesus and yet Jesus denies any knowledge of them. It is possible to do miracles in the name of Jesus and not be a child of God. That's exactly what the Bible says.

God does not honor the man, he honors His Word. A lot of Christians fail to realize that God is bound to honor His Word. It does not matter who preaches it. If a communist preaches the Word of God, God will honor His Word. An atheist can get up and preach the Bible and sinners will be saved. Why? Is God honoring the atheist? No, He is honoring His Word. God cannot deny His Word. This is one of the doctrines of the Bible, the doctrine of the Word of God.

What do miracles prove? Do miracles prove the man? Absolutely not. Miracles prove nothing about a man. We see in scripture that men cast out devils and did many wonderful works and prophesied in the name of Jesus. They were not Christians. They were not soldiers of the cross. They were not anointed servants of the Lord. They were not holy prophets from heaven. They were workers of iniquity.

Jesus will tell these people on the judgment day, "Depart from Me, I know you not."

What do miracles prove? Miracles prove God. The gift of "the working of miracles" is one of the nine gifts of The Spirit outlined in I Corinthians, chapter thirteen. The "working of miracles" is a gift of God and when there is a manifestation of real miracle power, not fakery or trickery, this gift proves there is a God who is in existence and is able to do above which we are able to comprehend. Miracles prove that there is a God.

If miracles prove God, then what proves that a man is a man of God? Before Jesus denounces His workers of iniquity who have power to perform miracles in His name, He says in Matthew 7:20, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

Going back a few verses in Matthew 7:15-20, Jesus speaks specifically about false prophets:

"Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are raving wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bringeth forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth forth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Therefore, by their fruit ye shall know them."

How do you know the man you are following is a man of God? You will know by the fruit he produces, not by his miracles and not by his wonderful works. Christians so many times are impressed by

manifestations of the Holy Spirit that they worship the people who possess God's gifts instead of God. A man can speak in tongues, have the gift of prophecy, perform miracles and *not* be a man of God.

It is extremely dangerous to run after gifts and people who evidence gifts. It is something that is born innate within man to seek after miracles. This is not new for us today because this innate quality was also evidenced during Biblical times. Jesus said that because the blind can see, the deaf can hear and the lame can walk, people will come by the thousands. And they did because of the evidence of the supernatural.

However, as we approach the last days of time we must be aware of the fact that there will arise false prophets and false teachers who will perform miracles. If we follow these men and their miracles we will be led far astray. It is time for Christians to start thinking for themselves. We must judge the man, not his gifts.

The best method we can utilize to judge a man is by using the guidance Jesus gave us, "... by their fruits ye shall know them." The fruit of the Spirit-filled man of God will be the fruit of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit speaking through Paul the Apostle in Galatians 5:22-23 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance, against such there is no law." If a man is a man of God, he will possess these nine fruits of The Spirit.

These fruits of the Spirit can be categorized into three different groups. The first group includes

love, joy and peace, all of which reveal the character of the inner man, a man whose life is surrendered to and dominated by the Holy Spirit.

Any man who is truly a man of God will evidence love, joy and peace. These three commodities are the most needed in the human race today. Men are seeking love, joy and peace more than anything else. Songs on the radio, movies in the cinemas, and books ground out by the millions deal with the subject of love. The world today is starved for love. The world has sex, and the world has passion. The world enjoys an overdose of physical love, but is starving for *genuine* love.

Marriages are breaking up across the land, divorce is hitting not only the ungodly, but the church as well, and at an unprecedented rate. Something is missing. What is it? Love. In the constant search for love, pleasure, happiness and good times, the world is drowning its sorrows in alcohol, drugs, materialism, success, fame and fortune. Why? Because they do not have true happiness and joy.

The world is falling apart at the seams for a lack of peace. Nations are rising against nations, families are breaking up, and people are fighting against people. Mental institutions are filled to capacity, and Americans are downing tranquilizer pills by the millions. Why? Because they have no peace.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy and peace. In every man or woman who stands up and says, "I am of God," look for these qualities. If you do not see them, walk away.

The second three fruits of the Spirit—long-

suffering, gentleness and goodness—reveal our attitudes toward our fellow man. When a person is filled with the Spirit of God, the fruit of longsuffering will appear in his life. The word *longsuffering* means being able to endure trouble, pain and injury, long and patiently. So many Christians today evidence just the opposite. Men who are short-tempered, short-fused, and who possess no patience with people, stand up in our midst and claim to be prophets of God.

Not only should our men of God be filled with longsuffering, but they should also be filled with gentleness and goodness. *Gentleness* means not severe, rough or violent, but mild. A Spirit-filled believer is required to treat his fellow man with gentleness at all times. Goodness refers to the inner quality which makes a person kind, generous, fair, sympathetic and genuinely good. When you consider these qualities—longsuffering, gentleness and goodness—the world would be a marvelous place to live and the church would be a glorious church, if all Christians allowed the Holy Spirit to produce these fruits in their lives.

The last three fruits of the Spirit—faith, meekness and temperance—reveal our attitudes toward our God. Faith is a God-given supernatural ability to believe and trust, and is the willful act of allegiance, loyalty, fidelity, and obedience to God. Faith is what God expects from His servants who are spiritual believers.

The second quality, *meekness*, means being humble and afraid to be otherwise. The word *meek-*

ness denotes lowliness, being submissive, and enduring hurt without resentment. The Bible says God resisted the proud but gave grace or unmerited favor to the humble.

In the case of Reverend Jim Jones, if there is anything which can characterize his personality it would be arrogance and pride. If his followers had understood the fruits of The Spirit and the demands that God places upon His servants who call themselves great prophets, they would have seen Jones' pride and arrogance and realized he was not a man of God.

Any pastor, any evangelist, any lay person who stands up in the midst of people and declares himself to be a great servant of God, must evidence the fruits of humility and meekness in his life. If we do not see these qualities in the life of the individual we're following, we are obligated to leave him. Some will say, "But, look at the wonderful things that have happened in his life. Look at his wonderful works." We must remember, however, that miracles do *not* prove the man, they prove the God. It's the fruit of The Spirit which proves whether or not a man is one of God's servants.

The last fruit of The Spirit is temperance. The word *temperance* simply means moderation, self-control or sobriety. Again, in the case of Reverend Jim Jones, no one could know anything about the man and say that he was a man of temperance. He was a man of excessiveness in so many areas of his life that this should have been a sign to those who were following him that something was wrong.



As sheep who follow great spiritual leaders, we do have a very clear indication in God's Word as to how we can judge our leaders to determine, in fact, if they are of God. The obligation rests upon the shoulders of each one of us. Many of these spiritual leaders will say that we do not have the right to judge them. They are wrong. We not only have the right, but we have the responsibility before God to look at their lives and determine if the fruits of The Spirit are evidenced in them. If we do not see them, for our own soul's sake, we must pack our Bibles, gather our children, and walk out and never return to their following.

The men who stand up before the people and declare they are of God are burdened with the responsibility of living the life they teach about in their sermons. If we cannot or do not make the effort to recognize them as true men of God and blindly follow them, *we* are sowing the seeds for another Guyana. Who will carry that burden?

## CHAPTER SIX

# How To Know God's Voice Today

"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."

John 10:4

Some time ago, a young couple in my church said to me, "God has told us we're supposed to sing in the choir." Since they were both excellent singers, I rejoiced that the Lord had spoken to them about our ministry of music. The following Wednesday night they attended rehearsal and the next Sunday they donned robes and sang with such a zeal I felt the choir had never sounded better. To my surprise, however, the next Sunday I found them sitting, not in the choir loft, but rather in the middle of the congregation.

At the close of the service I asked them why they hadn't sung with the choir. They said the Lord

had spoken to them again and told them they *shouldn't* be singing in the choir. "How is it the Bible says 'I am God, I change not,' and yet *you* say He can change His mind in the course of one week?" I asked them. "To me this is confusion. Are you sure what you heard was God's voice?"

While preaching in Canada several years ago, I came across a very bitter, back-slidden and angry young couple. They told me that some years before, they had attended a prayer service during which a well-meaning Christian laid his hands upon them and prophesied, "Behold, I the Lord your God am sending you forth as missionaries to China. Do not trouble thyself to learn the language for I will give it to thee. Sell all that thou has and go before me for I will guide thee. Thus saith the Lord."

Upon hearing that voice, the couple sold their farm and automobile, packed their bags, got their visas and went to Hong Kong. Upon arriving in China they discovered they did *not* know the language as had been prophesied. They found no open doors, soon ran out of money, and came home embittered and angry. Disillusioned by their experience, they gave up on the church and refused to associate with Christians. The voice they had thought was God's voice, was not.

In the many news articles concerning Guyana, Reverend Jim Jones and his followers, I was impressed by the number of times people were quoted as saying, "He heard a voice." Many of Jones' followers confessed that they felt Jim Jones was, in fact, God's voice to them. How were they sure?

Wherever I go as a pastor, as an evangelist, and as a teacher, I am constantly amazed by the vast numbers of people I meet who so easily say to me, "God spoke to me." I didn't notice this thought expressed among the Christian community ten or fifteen years ago as frequently as I notice it now.

Among the first people I heard say publicly, "God told me to do . . ." was Oral Roberts who told how an angel had visited him and asked him to take God's healing power to his generation. At the time I thought to myself, "God has really spoken to Oral Roberts." But today, everybody says this sort of thing. I hear it every Sunday: "God told me to do this," "God told me to do that." The question which keeps popping into my mind is, How is it that Christians today so easily decipher God's voice, when a study of the Old Testament shows how difficult it was even for the great prophets to know for certain God was speaking to them? This brings up the most important question of all: How does God speak to people?

I've read many books by great men of God who, in my estimation, unquestionably have heard God's voice speak to them. I have listened to their stories and through my own personal experience have made an interesting discovery: God speaks to people in many different ways.

God speaks to people through His Word. Many Christians have had the experience of reading certain passages of scripture over and over when suddenly, while they were rereading the passage, the Holy Spirit illuminated the words and they ac-

quired a deeper meaning of the scripture. In such instances, God used His Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of His Word, truth which simply was not revealed when the passages were read nonchalantly. To be fully understood, then, the Bible must be illuminated to the reader by the Holy Spirit.

Several people have related to me times of indecision when, while reading God's Word, God revealed His plans for them through a certain passage of scripture. That small inner voice said, "This is what I want you to do . . . ."

There are two basic ways God uses His voice to speak to us. The first is through an audible voice, clear and distinct, similar to any human voice. The second is through the prompting of the Holy Spirit which speaks to us through our thoughts.

Not very many Christians have experienced hearing God's audible voice. I had the experience when I was a young teenager attending an old-fashioned camp meeting in Sylvan Lake, Alberta, Canada. My father was the afternoon camp meeting preacher and I had been outside playing with the kids. At the close of the afternoon service, I walked into the tabernacle looking for my father and for some strange reason, felt that I should pray.

As a young man I loved the Lord with all my heart. I was accustomed to praying. As I knelt at the altar I heard a deep, audible, and distinct voice speak my name, "Paul."

I was petrified. I had never heard a voice like that before. The room was empty, not a soul was present, except for a handful of people on the other

side of the auditorium. I looked at them, thinking surely they had heard the voice too, and yet they continued praying as if they'd heard nothing. I bowed my head fearfully and began to pray some more. Suddenly I heard the voice again. This time it was booming. "PAUL!"

Shivers ran up and down my spine. I literally trembled. I looked around again. In fact I stood up and looked behind me. There was no one there. God then brought to my remembrance the story of Samuel and I thought to myself, "Is it possible that God is speaking to *me*?" I fell upon my knees and I said this prayer: "Lord, if this is you, please speak to me again."

I immediately heard the voice again—clear, distinct and loud. "Paul, you are going to be a preacher."

And I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I had heard the voice of God. I burst into tears and cried, "Thank you, Jesus." My father was a preacher and I loved and admired him so much I was elated that God had chosen me to be a preacher just like my dad.

I ran out of the chapel, back to the cabin where my mother and father were staying and told them what had happened. To this day I remember my mother's reaction. She walked over to me, put her arms around me and cried as she hugged me to her bosom. I heard her pray, "Thank you, Jesus, for answering my prayer."

Before I was born in an old Baptist parsonage in Minneapolis, my mother had also heard the voice

of God. On one hot August afternoon He told her that the child she was expecting was to be a boy and He was going to use the child during the last days to win many souls. My mother, believing the voice she had heard, laid her hands upon her stomach and said, "Lord, I give you this boy."

Our family knows what it is to hear the voice of God and I can assure you that out of the hundreds of times God has spoken to me, I have heard His audible voice on only three occasions. I realize how fortunate I am because I know many dedicated Christians who love God as much as I do, and yet they have never heard His audible voice. They have heard the voice of God as it has come to them in other ways, however.

How do you hear God's voice if it is not an audible voice? When people say, "I heard an inner voice," or "God impressed me with this thought," or "I felt deep within my spirit that God wanted me to do . . ." they are in fact saying, "A thought pattern has come into my mind—a pattern of thought I interpret to be God speaking to me."

In my estimation, ninety-eight per cent of all people who say they hear God's voice are experiencing a thought pattern in their intellect, a thought pattern which they interpret to be God's voice. If this premise is true, then it raises a serious question: How do you know for certain that the thought pattern which has come into your mind *is* God's voice and not your own?

We can expand this question and ask ourselves: How do we know the voice we are hearing is God's

Spirit and not Satan's? We must remember there are three basic spirits in the world: God's Spirit, the spirit of man and the spirit of the devil. Often it is the Spirit of God influencing us with a pattern of thought. Sometimes, however, it is our own desire which comes into the mind and this is where many Christians get off course. We misinterpret our thought pattern to be God's voice when in reality it is either our own spirit or Satan's spirit which is influencing us.

As we continue with this discourse it is clear that much caution must be used in the thought process lest it become dangerous. Being able to know God's voice is a delicate matter. I am sure every Christian, every great man of God, has erred in this area. Many have declared either to themselves or to others, "God has told me to do . . ." only to discover there follows no verification of it from God. When this occurs they can only hang their heads in shame.

The Word of God gives us a tremendous amount of help in the search for God's voice. As recorded in the Book of Acts, chapter ten, the Apostle Peter had an experience concerning God's voice speaking to him. God led Paul to bring to the Gentile nations, a gospel message which would cause confusion among the brethren of Jerusalem. In order to understand what a grave problem this was for Peter, it is first necessary to understand some background information.

Peter had been a devout Jew all of his life; he had followed all the manners, customs and teach-



ings of his Jewish religion. When Peter acknowledged Jesus Christ as his Messiah, he did not forsake his Jewish religion; he simply accepted Christ as his Messiah. He continued in his Jewish customs, continued to go to the temple, and continued in the manners of tradition.

All of a sudden Peter not only heard a voice but saw a vision which told him to do two things his Jewish religion had forbidden him to do all of his life. First of all, he was told to go into the home of a Gentile. Even to this day, Orthodox Jews are not permitted to go into the home of a Gentile. Neither are they to eat at the table of a Gentile. Such acts are forbidden.

The second thing Peter was told to do was to bring the message of his Messiah to the Gentiles. Peter was of the opinion Christ had come only to save the Jews and that He was the Messiah for only the Jewish people.

It is interesting to note that during the time of Christ Orthodox Jews believed, and still believe today, that Gentiles do not have a soul, that they are no better than dogs. In fact that's what the Jews called the Gentiles who lived among them: dogs. When Orthodox Jews from Nazareth and Cana traveled to Jerusalem to worship, they always walked around the area called Samaria because the Samaritans were half-breed Jews. It was many miles out of their way, but because of their prejudices against Samaritans, whom they considered dogs, they were willing to walk the extra distance. Even Jesus called a Samaritan woman a dog to her face.

The woman had come seeking healing for her child. "Do you think it is right to give the children's bread, the bread of the Jewish children, to the dogs?" Jesus said to her.

Undaunted by this insult, the woman looked up at him with tears in her eyes and said, "Yes, but master, even the dogs eat the crumbs from the master's table."

Moved with great compassion, Jesus said, "I have not seen such great faith in all of Israel."

Jesus didn't intentionally call her a dog; He was testing her by saying what everyone was saying in those days. This is exactly how Peter viewed the Gentiles. He believed they were nothing more than dogs, had no souls and could not be saved. Peter sincerely believed Christ had come only as a Messiah to the Jews and not to the Gentile world. When he heard God's voice and saw God's vision, which directed him to do the opposite, he actually felt he was being asked to commit a sin.

I want to emphasize that it was not enough for Peter just to see a vision. It was not enough for Peter just to hear a voice. Peter did not obey God simply because he heard one voice. Rather, he waited until God had given him more than sixteen verifications concerning His direction!

We must learn from Peter's experience and be able to determine God's will for us through the various ways by which He will verify it. It is important that we do not change our lives because of one vision or one thought pattern we believe to be God's will. God provided *sixteen* verifications of His will for Peter and will provide the same for us. These

will become clear as we study Peter's experiences as they are outlined in Acts, chapter ten.

*Direction by Prayer* (Acts 10:9) The Bible says that shortly before he heard God's voice and saw God's vision, "Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour."

One of the most important ways by which to hear and understand God's voice is to listen to His voice in the quietness of prayer. There are so many voices in the world screaming at Christians today, so many opinions, so many teachings, so many doctrines, that it seems every wind that blows brings with it a new doctrine. However, it is during the quietness of prayer, when we are shutting out the noises of the world, that we can hear the voice of God.

Proverbs 3:5-6 provides excellent guidance for knowing God's direction, His will and His voice:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and He shall direct thy paths."

There are four basic rules contained in these two passages. The first, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart," tells us we must not trust *our* knowledge, *our* wisdom, or *our* circumstances, but we must trust only in the Lord and with our hearts.

The second rule, "and lean not unto your own understanding," tells us that we have to learn that God moves in mysterious ways. Peter had to learn this. Initially, God's ways didn't make sense to

Peter. According to his human way of looking at things, God's ways ran counter to everything he had been taught.

We, too, must realize that sometimes God's ways will not be in accord with our own understanding, so we cannot lean to the latter. We cannot trust ourselves. We must trust *Him*.

The third rule, "In all thy ways acknowledge him," is a matter which affects the human will and heart. We must acknowledge God's will as having priority over our own will.

The last rule, "He shall direct thy paths," tells us if we trust in God He will direct our lives. Anything we receive from God we must receive through faith. Salvation comes through faith. Healing comes through faith. The answer to our prayers must come through faith, and finding God's will must also come through the channel of faith.

We must lay our lives before God, acknowledging He is our Lord, and accepting His will over ours. We cannot lean upon our own understanding, our own reasoning, or our own wisdom but we must trust in God with all our hearts. This is what Peter believed; and when he received a vision from God, he was on his knees praying.

*Direction by Vision* (Acts 10:11-12) While Peter was praying he felt hunger, and then he fell into a deep sleep or trance. The Bible tells that he "... saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to earth: wherein

were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.”

Peter was in a deep sleep or a trance. He was hungry. There before him were all manner of unclean animals. And a voice came to him and said, “. . . rise, Peter, kill and eat.”

But Jews were *forbidden* to eat *any* of the animals which appeared before Peter in that vision. Surely the command to kill and eat must have come as a great surprise to this man. Thus to him, that vision had great significance because it was a sign that he had heard from God—it was one of many verifications indicating the direction God was leading him.

*Direction by a Voice* (Acts 10:13) “And there came a voice to him saying, ‘Rise, Peter, kill and eat.’ ” Peter not only saw a vision, he heard a voice. As to what kind of a voice Peter heard, whether it was an audible voice or “inner” voice, the Bible does not really tell us. It simply says, “he heard a voice.” But even after seeing a vision and hearing a voice, Peter was still not convinced. He did, however, accept the voice as another verification indicating God’s direction for him.

*Direction by Questioning* (Acts 10:14) God’s voice told Peter to do something he had been taught all his life not to do and he cried out, “Not so, Lord,” which of course, is a great contradiction in the New Testament. How can any follower of

Christ call Him Lord and then in the same breath say, "Not so"?

Tragically, too many people are not "testing" their voices today. Peter questioned the voice he had heard. He talked back to the voice. This is important because there are Christians today who are willing, upon hearing one voice, to pick up everything and change the courses of their lives. We cannot afford to be reckless. We must be careful to know that the voice we are listening to is, in fact, God's voice.

We can question God's voice. Is God only capable of speaking *once*? Is God unable to understand our difficulty in knowing for certain it is *He* who is speaking to us? Of course not. God will verify His will for us because He can and does speak more than once and He does understand our difficulties.

It is important to remember that if we receive a sign—that is, if we hear a voice, see a vision or receive a spoken word or prophecy from someone—we shouldn't change our lives on the basis of just one signpost. God will lead us. He will give us other verifications of His will. Perhaps it will be by a vision, a voice, or a prophecy, or some other means, but of one fact we can be sure: He *will* lead us.

*Direction by a Second Voice* (Acts 10:15) Peter not only heard the voice once and questioned it, but he heard the voice a second time. The voice said again, "What God hath cleansed, Peter, do not call it common." God wasn't speaking about beasts here; He was referring to the Samaritan, the Ital-

ian, and the Centurion soldier who also appeared in the vision.

God spoke twice, Our conversations with God are not monologues with our doing all the talking. God is capable of carrying on a conversation with us and will do so if He chooses to direct us in such a manner.

*Direction by a Third Voice* (Acts 10:16) "This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven."

A third time the voice of the Lord spoke to Peter. At this point you can see that Peter was getting many verifications of God's direction. As he received many, so can we receive many if we will seek them.

*Direction by Honest Doubting* (Acts 10:17) "Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision he had seen should mean . . ." This is honest doubting. There are some preachers who try to convince us that if we doubt, we're committing a grievous sin. And yet, doubting didn't hinder Peter or deter him from finding God's perfect will and direction for his life.

It is amusing, but sad, to note how tough many preachers are on this disciple of Christ, Peter. They call him the doubting Thomas who said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Let's look at the attributes of honest doubting

as they were evidenced in this man Thomas to whom Peter is often compared.

Thomas was a tough man to convince and for two thousand years people have denounced him for it. To this I have to raise one question: If doubting were so bad, why did Christ put a chronic doubter on His team? Why would He make a man who found it difficult, if not impossible, to believe His words without tangible proof to support them—why would He make such a man one of the twelve apostles?

To me the answer is obvious. Christ saw in Thomas a quality which He respected, a quality He needed for the spreading of the gospel message. Because *Thomas* believed, others believed. They came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ because they felt that if *this* man believed it, it had to be true. It *had* to be true because they knew Thomas didn't believe *anything* unless he could back it up with facts.

There are lots of doubting Thomases in the world today. Jesus is well aware of that and He knows these people have a great need. Thomas helped meet that need because Thomas had a special need too. He wanted to believe but he just couldn't. Christ met that need for Thomas when He made His spectacular appearance in the Upper Room. Imagine it! Jesus Christ displaced His molecules and walked *through* the door, and the *first* person He spoke to was Thomas. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands," Jesus said, "and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my



side . . . ” What an act of love that was on the part of Jesus!

Thomas must have gasped, he must have trembled. And he must have seen the wounds on Jesus' hands and side. But to him, seeing was not enough. He had said he would have to *feel* those wounds, and so he placed his finger on the nail prints, he placed his hand in the wound on Jesus' side. And I imagine he must have done those things slowly . . . he must have rubbed that finger back and forth across the hands of Jesus two or three times . . . and he must have placed his entire hand deep within the wound on Jesus' side and carefully felt all around the jagged edges there. And the tears came into his eyes. And the Bible says he fell to his knees and exclaimed, in what must have been a voice choked with emotion, “My Lord and my God.”

What a powerful testimony Thomas had after that experience!

A lot of Christians don't know what happened to Thomas following the resurrection. This man—this doubter—traveled into Southern India and brought the Word of Christ to the Hindus. The church he formed still exists in India, and today that church is filled with many vibrant, Spirit-filled Christians!

Honest doubting is a healthy thing because it opens our minds and allows God to verify His will for us. Doubting helped Thomas receive the message of Jesus Christ and fortify his faith. Doubting helped Peter realize God's will for him. Honest doubting is not a sin. And those who honestly

doubt cannot be equated with those who, after hearing the Word and seeing the verifications of it, turn away, still not believing. *Honest* doubting makes believers!

*Direction by Providential Circumstance* (Acts 10:17) While Peter doubted, God sent three men to seek him: Cornelius, a Roman centurion; a Samaritan and a Gentile. God had referred to these men in His vision to Peter; and the moment Peter awakened from his astounding dream, the three men were at the door of the house where he was staying. A coincidence? No, providential circumstance. A coincidence is an event that just happens. Providential circumstance is an event purposefully made to happen by God.

The experience of Peter illustrates that God's timing is perfect. We can recognize God's direction by His timing. When God puts something together it fits like a glove. The entire picture is complete when God is finished.

When we are able to recognize God's direction by His timing, by the providential circumstance He sets before us, we will have yet another means to verify His will for our lives.

*Direction by Confirmation* (Acts 10:18) When the strangers arrived in the house of Simon, the tanner who lived in the ancient village of Joppa, they knew Peter's name. The Bible says, "And [they] called and asked whether Simon which was surnamed Peter, was lodged there."

How did they know Peter's name? They knew Peter's name because they had also seen visions and heard God's voice. This is direction by confirmation. Through these three men, God confirmed to Peter that it was really He who was dealing with him because He had revealed Peter's name, even his surname, to the unexpected visitors.

*Direction by Thoughtfulness* (Acts 10:19) " . . . Peter thought on this vision." Being impatient, not taking time to think, is a malady which affects far too many people today. Obviously that shortcoming is not only serious, it's dangerous! We're living in the NOW generation where everything is automated and instant. People today haven't got time to pray, to contemplate, or to wait on God. Peter took time. He wasn't in a hurry. He sat down and thought. He reviewed his vision in his mind, point by point, verification by verification.

When we are contemplating God's voice, God's will and God's direction, we need to take time to consider the signs we have received, the voices we have heard and the visions we have seen. We must take time to ponder these things in our hearts, so we will *know* God's will for us. We need to break away from our instant, automated society and take our time so we will not err in discerning God's will.

*Direction by Believing* (Acts 10:20) God said to Peter, "Arise therefore, get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." God required Peter to believe what he had heard

and what he had seen. We must never forget that if we're going to receive anything from God it's going to have to come by faith. God's will and God's direction can only be released in our lives through faith, and God requires that we believe through faith.

*Direction by Waiting* (Acts 10:23) "Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them." Peter could have traveled the same evening but again he showed caution and he waited. It is amazing how many passages of scripture tell us to *wait on the Lord*. "*Wait on the Lord*, be of good courage and he shall strengthen thy heart. *Wait* I say on the Lord." (Psalm 27:14)

Our impatience is always getting us into trouble. We cannot have God's will *now*. We must wait on the Lord and He will provide us with His direction and will. Too many times we go scurrying about on one sign of God's will because we are impatient. Sad to say this impatience has led many to the very door of Satan himself.

*Direction by a Company of Witnesses* (Acts 10:23) " . . . and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him." Note that Peter did not go alone. The Bible tells us there is safety in the wisdom of many. So often people become involved in fanaticism, and go off on tangents alone. They rely on their own wisdom and knowledge instead of on God's.

Peter did not go alone. God provided brethren who went with him, who believed with him, and Peter found safety and verification of God's will with them. We would be wise to do as Peter did and consult with others as to God's will for our lives. Often we can greatly benefit from listening to the wisdom of others.

*Direction by Other Visions* (Acts 10:29) When Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, he said to Cornelius, "I ask therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?" Cornelius then told Peter of the vision that he had seen, how God had told him to send for one who is called Simon whose surname is Peter and to listen to the words this man would have to say. The vision and voice Cornelius had seen and heard thus became a verification to Peter concerning the direction that God was leading him.

Tragically, there are many Christians today who leave their homes, families, friends, jobs, and change the course of their lives, simply because someone else says he's had a vision. This is not good enough. If God speaks to someone else, then He is quite capable of speaking to us as well. As sheep, we have got to stop blindly following others just because they say, "I've had a vision" or "I've heard a voice." God will speak to us directly. Think about that for a moment. It makes sense.

Supposing you had a matter to tell someone you love—a matter of grave importance, a matter which directly concerned the entire course of that person's life. And supposing you were the only one

who knew all the details of that matter. If it were within your power to tell that person yourself, would you leave it to someone else? And wouldn't you—if that matter were of urgent concern—keep reiterating it until that person got the message? Of course you would! And so will God.

*Direction by Perceiving* (Acts 10:34) “Then Peter opened his mouth and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.”

After Peter heard Cornelius' story, he compared it to his experiences and the providential circumstances which surrounded the entire event. Peter then perceived. What does *perceive* mean? It means that he understood; the light came on; the dawn of day appeared.

Perceiving is simply another means of verification, another signpost along the road of God's will. To say, “I perceive,” is the same as saying, “I understand with my intellect God's will for me.”

*Direction by the Word* (Acts 10:36) “The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all.)” No matter how spectacular Peter's dreams and voices were, they still had to be verified by the Word of God. The voice Peter heard had told him to do something he had been taught by Jewish tradition never to do. So he went to the Word, remembering that Jesus had said, “He was Lord of all,” and that included not only the Jews but the Gentile dogs as well.

Christians need to wake up and realize that the Bible is the source book. The Bible is the rule book. It is God's revealed will for mankind. If we ever hear someone call us to do something which we cannot find in the Bible, we must walk away from him and never listen to his voice again. If it's not in the Word, it's *not* of God.

*Direction by Vindication* (Acts 10:44) While Peter opened up his heart and began to teach the Gentiles the glorious news of the gospel and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Bible says God vindicated the message Peter preached by sending the Holy Spirit. The Spirit fell upon the Gentiles and they were filled with God's Spirit. To Peter, this was tangible proof that he had obeyed God's will.

If we are following God's will we will be able to see tangible evidence. If we do not receive this evidence, we have been too hasty in our movements and should wait for further verification.

How do we know God's voice today? God will let us know His voice and His will through many verifications just as He let Peter know. What we must remember, especially during these times when false prophets are rising, is that we cannot afford to listen to just one voice or change the course of our lives because of one vision. We need to wait. We need to be patient. We need to be careful and look for God's verifications. God will make His voice unmistakably clear and His message plain if we trust in Him.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# Other Spectacular Prophecies Fulfilled

“And when these things *begin* to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”

Luke 21:28

Our redemption is close at hand. The signs *are* in the times. Jesus said, “. . . when these things *begin* to come to pass . . .” He didn’t say *when* they are fulfilled but when they *begin*. They have *begun*. Can’t we see it? We’d better see it because our redemption “draweth nigh.”

When the Pharisees, arrogant and disbelieving, approached Jesus for a sign from heaven, Jesus replied:

“When it is evening, ye say, it will be fair weather: for the sky is red.

“And in the morning, it will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypo-



crites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the time?

“A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet . . .” (Matthew 16:2-4)

Through His prophets—Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and John—God gave us many amazing prophecies. Many of these prophecies were stated in such a language as not to be understood for generations. Why? Because, as He told the prophet Daniel, in Daniel 12:4, God specifically coded these prophecies for the “last generation.”

We are understanding the prophecies today and are witnessing their fulfillment because we are living during the last days of time.

I want to share with you a few prophecies which were made thousands of years ago, prophecies which are either in the process of fulfillment or have already been fulfilled. One thought must be kept foremost in your mind while reading this chapter: “. . . your redemption draweth nigh.”

## **THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES ARE OVER**

It was Jeremiah, the Old Testament prophet, who first brought bad news from God to the people. God spoke to Jeremiah when Israel, instead of obeying God’s commandments, chose to follow graven images and strange idols. “Because you have not heard my words I will send Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, into your land and I will take this whole nation and bring them into desolation,

this entire nation shall serve the King of Babylon for seventy years."

According to the historian Ussher, this tragic event took place in the year 606 B.C. and since that time, up until the 20th century, Jerusalem has been trodden down by the Gentiles. In terms of church history, this period of time is known as the dispensation of the Gentiles.

By the time Christ came on the scene, some six hundred years later, the Jews were still demonstrating only a form of Godliness. Even unto God they gave only lip service, and it was Jesus who once again prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and the leading away of the Jewish people into captivity. In Luke 21:24, Jesus prophesied, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

In fulfillment of this prophecy by Christ the Romans came into Jerusalem in 70 A.D., ransacked the city, left no stone standing, burned the residue and utterly destroyed the city of Jerusalem from the face of the earth. The Jews once again were led away into captivity. It is absolutely astounding to realize that for the past 2500 years the Jewish people have lived as a dispersed nation. They have not been masters over their own city. They have again and again been led away into captivity and all because of their rebellion against God so long ago.

It has been said that the Jews are God's time clock. If you want to know where we stand in the

light of Biblical prophecy, look at the nation of Israel and see how God is dealing with them.

A significant fulfillment of Bible prophecy took place in 1967 when Moshe Dayan, the illustrious Israeli general, led his forces through no-man's land into the traditional Arab sector of the old city of Jerusalem. Dayan and his troops had to travel down a narrow alley to the western wall, which is commonly known as the Wailing Wall. Moshe Dayan is reported to have stood before that wall and said the following prayer: "I look for the coming of the Messiah daily and even though His coming may be delayed I shall not cease daily to look for His coming."

I am sure he trembled as he stood before his troops at that wall because they were fully aware of the momentous meaning of that moment, the dispensation of the Gentiles was about to be completed, bringing an end to a given age.

It was Christ who said, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled." And, *now*, at this moment, the times of the Gentiles have come into fulfillment. A new era in terms of Biblical prophecy is dawning. The Jews have returned to their city. Christ prophesied that it would happen nearly 2000 years ago and now, in our 20th century, the prophecy has been fulfilled.

This prophecy brings to light an astounding fact. In His discourse concerning the signs of the last days (Matthew, Mark and Luke), Jesus said to his disciples, "Behold the fig tree and all the trees;

when they now shoot forth, ye see and know your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand." (Luke 21:29)

It is important to note here that the fig tree is the national symbol of Israel. Israel has been dispersed among the nations of the world for the past 2500 years and now she once again is revived as a nation. As Jesus continued his discourse in Luke 21:30, "... So likewise when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you this generation shall not pass away until all be fulfilled."

What is Christ saying? The generation which sees the birth of the nation of Israel, which sees the Jews come back to their ancient city, will not pass until all these end-time prophecies are fulfilled. It is quite possible that Christ is telling us that the stop watch has been started; the time clock is now moving.

There will follow the revelation of anti-christ, the great tribulation period, the battle of Armageddon, the last world conflict, the return of Christ with His glorious church and the setting up of the millennial reign of Christ for one thousand years. *All of this* will take place within the span of *one* generation, and the time clock started with the re-birth of modern Israel. Within *our* generation we will see the fulfillment of all of these end-time prophecies and the return of Christ.

And remember, Jesus said, "When these things begin to come to pass, look up, lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh."

## THE INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE

It was the Old Testament prophet Daniel, writing from the land of Babylonian captivity, who prophesied, "But thou Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." (Daniel 12:4)

First of all, it's interesting to note that God said to Daniel to shut up the words and seal them to the time of the last days. Isn't that strange? First He gives Daniel a fantastic prophecy and then instructs him not to use it.

What is God doing? "Daniel," He says, "your peers won't understand any of this because what I'm giving you is a coded message to a specific generation . . . more specifically, the generation of the last days. It's the generation which will run to and fro and will experience an explosion of knowledge. I will take over. I will take the blinders off their understanding and their knowledge will be increased."

Today scientists, politicians and educators agree that there has never been a period in all of our world's history that is as momentous as the period in which we live today. There has come to us such a vast accumulation of knowledge that one human mind is not capable of containing it. This is especially interesting when you consider that human progress, which for millennia has advanced like a slow-moving glacier, is now rapidly increasing. Scientific knowledge, medical knowledge, and political knowledge have moved through the centuries

at a comparatively low level. Yet, in the last fifty years, there has come a sudden thaw of the slow-moving glacier of knowledge. It has burst forth into a million torrents of intense activity and revelation, plunging the entire world toward a frightening tomorrow.

"The last half century has witnessed changes unprecedented both in their nature and their extent," says Cyril Garbett, Archbishop of New York. "It is possible that within this brief period of time, greater changes have taken place than in all the centuries between the coming of Christ and the middle of this last century."<sup>1</sup>

What our generation has seen is absolutely unparalleled in history. We have moved from the steam age into the electric age, into the atomic age and now into the space age. We have conquered the last frontiers of our earth and we are reaching for the stars. The harnessing of the atom has put more power in man's reach than he has possessed since the dawn of time. The sources of power and energy which are available to man today are of such magnitude they could turn our world into a paradise or into shambles. Sadly, the primary use for our vast storehouse of knowledge has been for the destruction of our world. We have built weapons today that could destroy an entire city or half a nation with one bomb. A few dozen bombs from Russia could destroy every city in the United States of America. Today the arsenals of nations around the world, even from the third world block, are stocked with hydrogen bombs. We are capable of destroying

the entire world in the space of a few moments!

David Sarnoff, a Brigadier General in the United States Army and former Chairman of the Radio Corporation of America, has predicted that before the turn of the century, we will learn to extract atomic fuel from relatively inexpensive materials, making this power both plentiful and economical. "Jet propulsion and rocket type vehicles using nuclear fuels will travel at speeds as high as five thousand miles per hour with greater safety and comfort than today's aircraft. The world's leading cities will be only hours apart: many virtually within commuting distance. Some day we will have machines which will instantly and accurately translate one written language into another. Further ahead lies the possibility of translating human speech from one language to another. Some day, for example, a Korean may be able to telephone New York in his own language and be heard in Idiomatic English while New Yorker's English will be converted in transit into Korean. Our laboratories are bursting with half-realized dreams that sound as fantastic as radio and television did when I was a boy. As Isaac Newton said, "We are merely picking up pebbles on the beach while the great ocean of truth lies undiscovered before us." <sup>2</sup>

One needs only to consider the stagnant level of scientific discovery throughout the centuries and the virtual explosion of scientific knowledge in the last fifty years to realize the tremendous implications of Daniel's prophecy. Consider, if you will, the knowledge in the world today—at the forefront of

which loom the fearful prospects of a near future in which scientists project they will be able to disperse man's molecules and transport them to other planets! A future in which human fertility will take place in test tubes . . . when one-day old human embryos are freeze-dried, then packaged and sold in super market fashion (fully labeled so that prospective parents can decide which "type" to choose), and even more horrible, the cloning of the human body which is no longer a laughing matter!

### SIN ON THE INCREASE

In further prophecy concerning the last days, Jesus said, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matthew 24:12) Quite simply, this is a prophecy which says the rise of the level of sin during the last days is a sign of His coming.

Our nation has progressed from a standard of victorian morality to the point where we're living in a cesspool of sin. I look at the city where I live—Minneapolis, Minnesota—and I am bewildered by the blatant promotion and recruitment of filthiness and the moral decadence of the ungodly. I know that my city is not unique and that this same trend is occurring in every city of America and in every country of the free world.

Homosexuality, without question, is called a sin in God's Word. The increase of homosexuality, God's Word declares, is the result of a generation which refuses to retain God in its reservoir of knowledge. He therefore gives them up to reprobate



minds and to acts which are unnatural.

Minneapolis has become a haven for Miami gays. Following the rejection of gay rights by the Miami voters, the gay community of Minneapolis ran full page ads in the *Miami Herald* inviting the gays to Minneapolis where they declared, "We have an open city and you'll find a welcome in Minneapolis." Minneapolis is a city whose mayor declared a national Gay Pride Day in which he stood with the gays following their parade through our streets and publicly declared his stand for their rights!

Our city government has declared equal rights for the gay community and many businesses such as Northwestern Bell Telephone, are now openly recruiting gays for their working force. In the very center of beautiful downtown Minneapolis is a lovely recreational area called Loring Park where one can sit next to a beautiful garden of flowers and watch the swans swim in the lazy lake. In this same park many years ago, my father took my mother's hands in his and asked her to be his wife. Today, no one in his right mind would even *walk* through the park, especially at dark. On any given summer night, one can drive by Loring Park and view as many as fifty homosexual male prostitutes hooking on the sidewalks, running up to cars and recruiting men to share in their lustful perversions.

Minneapolis is a city which boasts gay night clubs where homosexual men can go in, eat dinner, and watch other men strip tease. If my mother, who passed away only a few years ago, could see what's

happening in this city, and in our nation, she wouldn't believe her eyes. Little by little the moral fibre of our nation has been eroded away, and Christians today can look at all the sin and corruption and not realize how terrible it really is or what it means in terms of Biblical prophecy.

Several years ago a group of homosexuals in San Francisco made a statement which said if the homosexual community of America continues to grow and expand at the current rate, within the next twenty-five years there will be more gay people in America than straight. Some say this is already true in San Francisco, a city which is known as the homosexual capital of America.

David Wilkerson has said Amsterdam is perhaps the most wicked city on the face of the earth. Even Pan American World Airlines says in promotional material, "No visit to Amsterdam is complete without a walk through the red-light district." This large area of Amsterdam is only a block or so from the central railroad station in the heart of the city. Block after block, window after window, one may find girls and boys who sell their bodies in sin. Sex night clubs where people can watch every conceivable act of sexuality take place live on stage abound. Whatever a person delights in, whether it be heterosexual, homosexual, or animal sex, he can find it in the city of Amsterdam. Billy Graham has said if God does not judge this present generation, He is going to have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah for His swift judgment upon that city of lust.

Consider the standard of rating motion pictures in our country today. A PG rating indicates that parental guidance is suggested. And yet, in this family rated motion picture, frontal nudity is quite normal. Perversion, homosexuality, violence, murder, and rape are the only qualities which will guarantee Hollywood a boxoffice sellout. Even in neighborhood theatres around the country one can see X-rated and R-rated pictures in which every conceivable act of immorality is explicitly displayed before the viewer. In fact, one can go into theatres in the city and sit for hours watching uninterrupted acts of sexual intercourse as well as any kind of perverted sex activity imaginable. And each year the standard goes lower.

Standards are not only lowering in the movies and theatres, but also on the network television. Each year network executives allow more and more vile programs to appear before the public. Where will it end?

In almost every newsstand across the nation, whether it be in supermarkets, drugstores or hotel lobbies, sex magazines for men and women are blatantly displayed in full view of every person passing by. *Playboy Magazine*, the most "refined" of them all, along with the Playboy philosophy, has had greater effect in lowering the moral standards of our communities than has any other magazine. The philosophy of Playboy has affected the thought life and moral attitudes of even the members within the church of Jesus Christ.

We are living in an age when the church is

standing idly by and refusing to lift its voice against the sin of our time. Weak-willed pastors are condoning many of the new standards of today's low morality.

Within many of our churches the humanistic philosophy of situation ethics is being taught. The philosophy of situation ethics simply stated is that absolutes change with times and society. Young David Eisenhower recently claimed we have a disappearance of absolutes. People are reflecting in a more intellectual light and are not accepting anything as absolute. There is no right and no wrong.

As one progresses in the philosophy of situation ethics a stage is reached where even right and wrong are determined by the "norm" of any given age, thus subject to change. This leads many people to ask themselves, "Am I only a product of this age in time?"

At that point there is no longer any respect for authority. The evidence is all around us—in our schools, in our churches, in our governments and, sadly, in our homes. We allow our standards to fall into line with the morals of the current generation and then glibly dismiss our backsliding with philosophies like situation ethics.

Where will it all end? One of the signs of the last days will be the increase in sin. ". . . when you see these things begin to come to pass, look up, lift up your head, for your redemption is *at hand*."

## TWO VISITORS FROM OUTER SPACE

In Revelation, chapter eleven, we find a fasci-

nating Bible prophecy concerning the invasion of the earth by two creatures which are called witnesses. Their main function will be to stand on the streets of Jerusalem and prophesy against the anti-Christ for a period of three and one half years. Anti-christ will not have complete freedom to rule during the tribulation without interference from God because His witnesses will speak out against the signs and the sins of his generation.

“And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days [3 1/2 years], clothed in sackcloth.

“These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord on the earth.

“And if any one desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies; and if any one would desire to harm them, in this manner he must be killed.

“These have the power to shut up the sky in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

“And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.

“And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

“And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three days and a half, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.

“And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice

over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

“And after three days and a half the breath of life from God came into them and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were beholding them.

“And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here.’ and they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies behold them.” (Revelation 11:3-12)

These two witnesses will possess unbelievable powers. They will bring upon the earth unparalleled famine, and will be able to turn water into blood. They will send out upon the world the plagues which came upon the earth during the time God was delivering the children of Israel. These miracles and plagues will be repeated during the last days.

The witnesses will remain untouched for three and a half years. However, when they have completed their prophecy anti-christ will have the power to rise up and kill them.

The Bible says that following their deaths, “And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies. . .” This prophecy has been perplexing to Biblical authorities for generations because the possibility of the entire world seeing the witnesses’ bodies has been thus far, inconceivable.

Again, God coded that prophecy for the last

generation. We are now able to decode His message and see how this prophecy could come to pass. Through our network of telestar communication satellites it would be a simple matter for every nation, every kindred and every tongue to see the bodies of the two witnesses lying on the streets of Jerusalem.

The fulfillment of this prophecy will be an important international event. The Bible says, "... those who dwell upon the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another . . ." For three and a half years these prophets will have brought suffering upon the earth; and when they are killed, the earth will rejoice. During the reign of anti-christ, Christmas celebrations will stop, and the rejoicing over the death of the two prophets will become a substitute celebration.

While the world rejoices, another spectacular event will take place. "... the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet . . ." The entire world will witness the raising from the dead of these two creatures. You can bet that all the major news media of the world will be on the streets of Jerusalem to report the events.

I can see it all now as I watch my imaginary television set of the future. I can hear Walter Cronkite:

As you can see, there is bedlam in the streets of this ancient city where hundreds of thousands of people are assembling. All the major leaders and dignitaries in the entire world are gathered

here, ladies and gentlemen, but their presence goes unnoticed as people focus their attentions on the two prostrate figures which lie in the street here to my left, and just to the right on your television screen. These are the creatures whose strange proclamations have pre-empted our news broadcasts for the past three and one half years and who, it would appear, have been responsible for turning our water into blood, bringing about the famine, unparalleled in human history, and sending the plagues which we now have reason to hope there will be an end to. These creatures are dead. The gentleman you see on my right is Dr. Henry Standforth who is, as you may know, the world's foremost authority on the subject of death and dying. We're going to ask him some questions.

Dr. Standforth, were these creatures ever actually alive as we understand the term *alive*?

Absolutely. They were flesh and blood. They were in every sense of the word *alive*.

And what is their present state? It certainly appears they are dead.

They *are* dead, clinically dead. There is no brain activity, no heart beat, no breathing, no response to any kind of stimuli . . . and there hasn't been for three and a half days.

Doctor Standforth, we've all heard that a condition known as *rigor mortis* occurs when a person dies. Exactly what is *rigor mortis* and did it occur in the cases of these two *men*?

*Rigor mortis* is a state of rigidity . . . the mus-



cles convulse, become rigid. It happens at the point of death. To answer your question, yes, it *did* occur in these cases.

Do you believe they will rise from the dead as everybody is saying they will?

Absolutely not. That's impossible!

Some people are saying there's a doubt in your mind about that, Doctor. They're saying you wouldn't *be* here if you didn't think they were going to come to life. What do you say to that?

I guess I'd have to say what everybody else is saying. Some mighty strange things have been happening these past few years.

Thank you, Doctor. Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to try to get an interview with the man who has been labeled by these dead men as the anti-christ, Mr. . . . . .

And now the camera pans to David Brinkley as he is interviewing a man who appears to be a minister of some sort.

Reverend, just what *is* this prophecy you claim is going to be fulfilled here today and where did you hear about it?

It's in the Bible and the prophecy is that those two dead witnesses over there will rise from the dead and be taken up to heaven by God.

Do you believe that will happen?

*I know* it will happen.

Why do you say that? Isn't that a literal translation of the Bible? I've heard you used to preach *against* such literal translations.

I used to, but the events of these past few years have made a believer out of *me*, I'll tell you!

And now the camera zeroes in on the prostrate figures. Cronkite again.

They have begun to move! The entire crowd is gasping at the sight of it, ladies and gentlemen. The dead men are lifting their heads, their bodies jerk . . . they're flexing their muscles . . . they're standing up! Do you hear the voice? There's a voice coming from heaven it would seem and it's saying, "Come up here!" This is incredible. This can't be happening. The creatures are rising now as in a cloud . . . up . . . higher . . . higher . . . They've disappeared from the camera now . . . every eye is riveted on the heavens! . . . . .

Beloved reader, you can expect that *that's* the way it will be in that day. The names may change, but the events will be the same. How do I know? The Bible says so!

Remember, Jesus said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your head, for your redemption draweth nigh."

## WHEN THE PLANETS ALIGN

Jesus gave us another solemn warning as a sign of His coming:

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke 21:25-26)

During the late 1960's, John Gribben, Physical

Science Editor of the British magazine, *Nature*, and Stephen Plagemann, researcher for NASA's Goddard Space Center in Maryland, began to study the possible effect of the planetary alignment which is predicted to occur in 1982. In a book which they co-authored, *The Jupiter Effect*, they published their scientific conclusions.

As *Newsweek*<sup>3</sup> reported it, these men predict that there will be a great increase in the magnetic activity of the sun in which huge storms, sun spots and solar flares will occur.

According to Gribbin and Plagemann the inner-sphere of the earth may be seriously affected by the planetary alignment, causing great changes in the atmosphere. Radio and television communications will be disrupted. Wierd lighting effects from the Northern Lights will burst through the skies. Wind directions will change and rainfall and temperature patterns will be greatly altered.

The two scientists warn that the earth's rotation will be affected, causing the days to be longer. Solar activity in the late 1930's, 1960's, and in 1972 has already slowed down the earth's rotation and increased the number of earthquakes.

According to their scientific data there will be many earthquakes, large and small, in 1982. One region which they predict will be hit by a large number of earthquakes is the west coast of California. This area has one of the largest fault systems known and is under great strain. A giant leap into the Pacific Ocean is long overdue for this part of our country.

The main planets in the earth's solar system ap-

pear on the same side of the sun every 179 years. The astronomical effect upon the earth's environmental conditions and solar activity has always depended upon the degree of their alignment. From what Gribbin and Plagemann are projecting for 1982, it appears all nine planets will be in nearly perfect alignment and that the powers of heaven shall truly be shaken.

Jesus told us that there will be perplexity and the sea and waves will be roaring. J. B. Phillips, one of the translators of the New Testament, translates this to mean that the nations will be bewildered at the roar of the surging sea. The *Living Bible* states, "... the nations will be perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides." Where Jesus says, "... the powers of heaven will be shaken," the *Living Bible* translates it, "... for the stability of the very heavens will be opened up."

Let's compare the Bible with the scientific predictions by Gribbin and Plagemann. In Isaiah 30:26 the Bible says, "... the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days." Revelation 16:8-9 says, "... the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; ... and men were scorched with great heat ..."

In Matthew 24:29 the prediction is, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken." And in Joel 2:31 we find, "The sun shall be turned into darkness ..."

What are the scriptures telling us? They are

saying the sun *will* become bright, hotter and then turn dark. For many years astronomers and scientists have concluded that our sun could maintain its present heat energy output for at least another eight million years because its hydrogen supply is only half exhausted. However, more recently astronomers have reappraised this theory and now believe that once a star [our sun is a medium-sized star] has expended half its hydrogen, it is in danger of experiencing a nova or a blow up.

Larger stars nova and smaller stars, such as our own sun, nova. They become brighter and hotter for a period of seven to fourteen days and then become darker. There are about fourteen visible novas in the universe each year.

Some astronomers now believe that the increased sun spot activity, which has been documented with scientific evidence, is an indication that our sun is about to nova. The increased solar storm activity predicted for 1982 could be the trigger which would set off an atomic collapse of our sun.

The nova of our sun would assuredly cause it to become unusually bright, as Isaiah prophesied, become seven times hotter as John prophesied, and become dark as Joel and Jesus prophesied.

Let us note also that the moon, the light of which is the reflection of the sun, is also in these prophecies, “. . . the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun.” (Isaiah 30:26) “. . . the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood.” (Joel 2:31) “. . . the sun shall be darkened

and the moon shall not give her light.”

The Bible prophesied it thousands of years ago and the scientists today are declaring that it is beginning to happen.

Jesus said, “. . . when these things *begin* to come to pass, then look up, lift your head for your redemption draweth nigh.”

### MEN USELESSLY CRY FOR PEACE

Paul the Apostle has not been recognized as one of the great prophets of the Bible, yet, he also prophesies concerning the last days.

“But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape it.” (I Thessalonians 5:1-3)

“As travail upon a woman with child.” These words were never more emphatic for me than at the birth of my son. I had the joy of taking lessons and helping my wife through her labor and then being present during delivery.

When Dee was half-way through her labor and when the contraction pains became quite intense, she looked at me and said, ever so hopelessly, “Paul. I want to go home.”

I looked at her and said, “Honey, I’m sorry, but you’re beyond the point of no return. You can’t go home. You’ve got to see this through.”

Isn't it interesting that Paul should compare the last days when men shall begin to cry, "Let us have peace," to a woman experiencing childbirth? Paul tells us that even though men shall cry for peace, there will be no peace. As a woman in travail for child, men will be unable to escape the war, violence, and destruction that God said would fall upon this sinful and Christ-rejecting generation.

One of the priority concerns of the President of the United States and the majority of the world leaders is world peace. The thought of World War III is a thought of genocide to the world leaders and they want to prevent it. Therefore, they are extremely industrious in their efforts to promote world peace. And yet, the world today is more without peace than ever before. Nation rises against nation . . . Kingdom rises against kingdom . . . Man rises against man.

In the very cradle of our human civilization, the Mideast, world peace has become the cry of every inhabitant. But, peace seems to be just an illusion. Go into Israel today and the first word you will hear is "Shalom." It is the Israel greeting for peace. They will say it to you when they meet you, while they are talking to you and when you leave.

Go across the border into the Arab nations and they will greet you with "Salom," which is Arabic for peace. They will say it to you when they meet you, while they're talking to you and when you leave. The Jew, the Arab and the entire world are screaming for peace.

It has been my privilege to visit Israel over

thirty times during the past ten years. I know every back road like I know the back of my hand. I understand the thinking, the mentality and the temperament of the Israeli. I understand the longings for peace that are in the heart of every Jew and Arab. I also, unfortunately, understand the absolute impossibilities of peace.

It is interesting to notice that the conflict between the Arabs and the Jews has continued for centuries and is beyond question a fulfillment of prophecy. The fighting between the Jews and Arabs is occurring because God said they would fight.

Today peace is threatened everywhere, between China and Russia, between the Island of Taiwan and the Republic of China, between the People's Republic of South Africa and her black neighbors to the North, between the Greeks and Turks, and between the Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. However, the attention of the world is focused back to the cradle of civilization in the never-ending conflict between the Jews and the Arabs.

That particular area of the world has become a virtual powder keg, ready at any moment to blow up, teetering between the animosities held for centuries. The voices of the world are screaming at them, "Make Peace! There Must Be Peace!"

We believe we must have peace and yet the Bible says, "... when they will cry for peace their destruction will come, as a woman in travail over her child."

We will have peace during the one thousand



years of the millennium which will grow out of the unprecedented war and destruction during the last days.

And Jesus said, “. . . when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, lift up your head, your redemption draweth nigh.”

### AND . . . A HAPPY SIGN

The clouds hung heavy over Jerusalem. Though it was day, yet it appeared to be the middle of the night. A crowd was gathered on a little hill called Golgotha where there were three crosses, two which bore thieves and one which carried God's manifestation in the flesh, Jesus Christ.

While He was breathing His last breaths, the lightning began to flash, the thunder began to roll, the earth began to shake. Then the heavens trembled during the awesome moment when Christ, God in the flesh, said, “It is finished,” and died on the cross.

IT IS FINISHED! *What* is finished? God's glorious plan of redemption for the human race.

The Bible records that while Jesus was speaking, “It is finished,” the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. This is awesome when one considers the fact that under Old Testament worship only one man in all Israel, the High Priest, was allowed to walk into the Holy Temple, the inner sanctuary where the presence of God dwelled amidst the Ark of the Covenant.

Even before the priest was allowed to walk into the temple area it was required that he be purified.

He would walk to the temple area via a series of tunnels taking care not to come in contact with any other mortal lest he be defiled by their presence.

With little tinkling bells sewn on the bottom of his robe, and with a rope tied around one of his legs, he would walk into the inner sanctum of the temple, the Holy of Holies. The rope was there as a precaution in the event he had not purified himself sufficiently before standing in the presence of God. You see, someone, knowing God would strike an unclean priest dead, was on the other end of that rope; and he was prepared to yank that priest out in a hurry should the bells stop tinkling.

God's presence was so awesome when Jesus Christ was crucified that God, through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, tore the veil which has been recorded by some theologians to have been three inches thick, twenty feet tall, and weighing nearly two thousand pounds. It took thirty priests to hang the veil and one man could not have torn it. If any man could have torn it he would have had to tear it from bottom to top. However, the veil was torn from top to bottom.

When Jesus cried, "It is finished," and God tore the veil, God opened Himself up to all men everywhere. By tearing the veil He told the world, "Come in. I invite you to come in and enjoy My presence."

This is what God meant when He prophesied to Joel, as recorded in Acts 2:17, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh . . . "

Most of the prophecies concerning the end times are terrible, filled with visions of destruction, suffering, bloodshed, violence, war and the impending judgment of God. As we see these prophecies being fulfilled during our generation it seems as though they have clouded the sunshine and covered the entire earth in darkness.

One senses a terrible eeriness. It's dark everywhere and there is a feeling of hopelessness surrounding us. Yet, amidst all the darkness and gloom, there is a brilliant ray of sunshine, one happy prophecy, one joyous sound for the last days.

It was given to us by the prophet Joel and reiterated to the church on the Day of Pentecost by the Apostle Peter. Peter stood in the midst of the disciples who had just experienced their first charismatic outpouring of the Holy Spirit and told them:

“ . . . this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, and it shall come to pass in the last days saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy . . . ” (Acts 2:16-18)

Perhaps Peter was mistaken about Joel's prophecy. He understood that the prophecy made by Joel hundreds of years would be fulfilled in his time. But, the prophecy says, “ . . . and it shall come to pass in the last days . . . ”

Obviously, when Peter witnessed the first outpouring of God's charismatic power upon His peo-

ple, he believed he'd seen a sign of the last days. He hadn't. It was only the beginning. Peter was not living during the last days, but we are.

During the past fifty years there has been a rather small and insignificant sect within the Protestant church called the Pentecostals. Ridiculed and laughed at by most of the Protestant church as being fanatical holy rollers and tongue speakers, these people have bravely stood firm in their determination to know more of the moving of God's Spirit.

"Like Peter in the early church," they declare, "we have experienced the gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our midst."

They no longer stand alone; they are no longer being ridiculed. They have been joined by a phenomenal outgrowth of charismatics from the main-line churches. So mighty is this movement within the Protestant and Catholic churches that when they get together for their conferences, they come by the thousands. As many as thirty thousand Roman Catholic charismatics have chartered jets from remote places to attend a conference at Notre Dame.

In many ways they put the traditional Pentecostals to shame with their enthusiasm and exuberance in worshipping God. They worship with joyous praises, tongue speaking and uninhibited prophecies. It boggles the mind.

I have heard a Roman Catholic priest declare in front of twenty thousand cheering Roman Catholics, "I've been a priest for twenty years, but I've

known Jesus for only the last year. Praise God I've been saved and am now filled with the Holy Spirit."

It is spine-tingling to hear twenty thousand Roman Catholics clap their hands, shout praises to the Lord, and sing halleluia for Jesus. It is happening everywhere.

Many traditional Pentecostals have visited the Minneapolis Civic Auditorium and stood with their mouths open in disbelief to witness ten thousand Lutherans, usually known for being sedate, raise their hands and praise God. In front of the auditorium in a section especially designed for prophets, some of the most respected men and women from Lutheran prayer groups around the country walk up to a microphone and speak in tongues, interpret tongues and prophesy as the Spirit leads them.

It's happening all over the world. Wherever one goes there will be charismatics representing tens of thousands of people from all of the mainline denominations.

We need to look around us. The Bible prophesied, "... I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh ..." It's happening throughout the entire world. No one can deny its reality.

So what does the existence of the charismatics prove? "... look up, lift up your head, your redemption draweth nigh."

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<sup>1</sup>Cyril Garbett, *An Age Of Revolution*, Musson, Toronto, Canada, 1952, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>David Sarnoff, "What I See Ahead," *Reader's Digest*, April 1957.

<sup>3</sup>September 16, 1974.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# What Kind of a God Allows a Guyana Massacre?

“And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; I hid myself.

“And He said, who told thee that thou was naked? Hath thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?”

Genesis 3:9-11

I was conducting an evangelistic crusade on the west coast several years ago when I met a young mother who wanted to know if God is a good God.

At the close of the service one evening, after I had delivered a provocative message on the subject of faith and divine healing and had prayed over the sick, this woman came up to me. As I looked into her eyes I could see anger, deep hurt and resentment.

“Reverend Olson,” she said, “tonight you told

us God is a good God. A God filled with infinite mercy and love. I want to ask you a question.”

She paused for a moment to remove the baby blanket from the child she was holding. She took the baby’s jacket off and I noticed, to my horror, why there was so much hurt and bitterness in this mother’s eyes.

The baby she was holding had no arms, just five little webbed fingers coming out from the shoulder blades.

With tears streaming down her cheeks she looked at me and asked, “How in heaven’s name could a good God, the God you call loving and merciful, do this to my baby? My innocent baby. Why Pastor Olson? Why? Tell me why!”

I choked for the words and struggled to give her an explanation, but realized how difficult it is to explain such a tragedy.

The mother had taken the treacherous drug, thalidomide, during her pregnancy and her child was a victim of that drug. The sight of her sad, crying eyes and her sincere question of why, have haunted me ever since. She had a right to ask me how a good God could allow such a tragedy to afflict an innocent child.

The bereaved of the Guyana massacre also have the right to ask, “How could a good God allow such a violent tragedy to take place and seemingly stand idly by and allow a madman to lead nine hundred people to their destruction?”

We all have the right to ask questions. How could a good God allow millions of Chinese to live,

grow up and die in a pagan land and never hear the name of Jesus Christ? How could a good God allow one man in Chicago to kill over thirty young boys?

Where is God when all of these tragedies are happening? Why does He allow them to take place?

The truth of the matter is, God doesn't allow these things to happen. It's not God's fault there are children born deformed. It's not God's fault men die like flies around the world with the dreaded plague of cancer. It's not God's fault innocent people die at the hands of others.

In order to have a complete understanding of why these dreadful things happen and why it isn't God's fault, it is necessary to go back to the very beginning of time. "In the beginning," according to Genesis 1:1, "God created the heaven and the earth."

As one continues to read the beautiful story of the creation and how God not only created the heavens and the earth, but also filled the heavens with a galaxy of stars; caused the sun to shine upon the earth; the moon to give the light of night; created the flowers; the fields; the vegetation; the magnificent array of animals; the beautiful foliage on His flowers; the birds of the air and the fishes of the sea, he must be filled with awe. When God finished this magnificent creation He then formed man, Adam, from the dust of the earth and from Adam's rib formed a mate, Eve, and called her *woman*.

As God rested from His creation of His marvelous work, He stood back and said, "It is good." More properly translated, God said, "My creation



is perfect.” The planets and the stars moved in God’s perfect order across the heavens. There was no unbalance of nature on earth. There were no weeds in the garden, no freak storms of nature, no disorder of any kind in His creation. It was perfect.

Then a tragic thing happened in the Garden of Eden. One morning as our beautiful heroine Eve was tiptoeing nonchalantly through the tulips—the likes of which would probably make ours look pale—she heard a commotion in the bushes. And the devil, in the form of a serpent, reared his ugly head just as Eve turned her pretty one to see who or what was there. Licking his lecherous lips, he rolled out a genuine and most impressive forked tongue (an attachment which enabled him to master the art of double talk, no doubt) and made the first loaded statement to that date: “Good morning, Eve.”

Now our heroine was surprised to say the least. Not because the serpent was standing on the tip of his tail I hasten to add. That’s what snakes *did* in those days. In fact, many people don’t know that there are snakes today which do the same thing. The Bushmaster to be specific. I’ve seen these snakes in Trinidad and they’re something to behold, believe me. Back in the days of Adam, snakes didn’t slither until they were cursed by God. It would seem the Bushmaster escaped this particular curse, however—a fact which gave me mighty due cause for reverence when I once encountered one of them face to face. I believe I set the world’s fastest record in backing up. But getting back to what happened. . .

What surprised Eve was that this serpent *spoke* to her. But surprised or no, and since there was as yet no such thing as bad manners, Eve returned his greeting. "Good morning," she said sweetly, "and who, might I ask, are you?"

"I'm your friend," the Devil replied. "Cast your lovely eyes on that beautiful tree over there."

As Eve looked at the tree, which is referred to as a tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Satan said, "I know that you eat of the fruit of all the trees in this garden, but you won't touch the fruit on that one. May I ask why not?"

"God said the day we eat that fruit we'll surely die, *that's* why not," Eve said.

"Surely you don't believe that," Satan went on. "God is a good God, isn't He?"

"The best," Eve agreed.

"He created you in His image," Satan went on to explain. "He's not going to destroy you. Take my word for it. He loves you too much."

Now that sounded reasonable to Eve and so she *took* his word for it; she disobeyed God's commandment. You know the rest.

Now, I don't mean to make light of Scripture. What Eve did was serious. Mankind was not created to know evil . . . not intended to partake of it, but Eve listened to the tempter and partook of it anyway; and in so doing, she and Adam, who partook of it also, began immediately to realize just what the results of sin are. And every man, woman and child since that day has had the mark of sin upon him.

The subtle voice of the tempter is as prevalent

in the world today as it was in the days of Adam and Eve. Haven't you heard it? How often do you hear people say, "God is a God of love. He knows our human weaknesses, and there's no way He's going to permit His people to perish"?

Satan's voice hasn't changed through the centuries. He's still the Father of Lies.

The Bible says Adam and Eve, because they disobeyed God, were cursed; and that curse remains in effect until the day of judgment. Don't take *my* word for it. Read the account.

"And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou has done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

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

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

"thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field:

"in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast

thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Genesis 3:14-19)

In her book, *Science and Health*, cult leader Mary Baker Eddy reasons the same way Satan reasons. She says a good God is incapable of sending a soul to hell and tormenting that soul for eternity. Therefore, she theorizes, because God is a good God, there can *be* no Hell.

She supports that theory further with more twisted logic: Since a good human being wouldn't whip or beat a helpless animal, let *alone* a human being, certainly a good God wouldn't punish a man or a woman for eternity, she says.

Many people are too willing to believe Satan's lies, as was Eve. Adam and that woman of his committed the first recorded sin in the Bible, and the world has been paying for their gullibility ever since. Their sin, as are all sins, was rebellion against God.

And because of that sin, a curse fell upon all humanity and upon all nature. Think of it for a moment. It is absolutely awesome. Had man not sinned, he would never have to die. Sin brought death. I hear many Christians say, “I'm not afraid to die.” If they mean that, they stand alone.

I'm a Christian and *I'm* afraid to die. I don't *want* to die.

Some say, “Bless God, I'm ready to die for Jesus.”

Not I. I want to *live* for Him. The people who say they're ready to die for Jesus don't really want

to. They want to live as much as I do. Do you know how I know? The moment they get sick they'll run like wildfire to the nearest doctor or drug store in hopes of finding some miraculous cure so they can keep on living. Nobody wants to die. Everybody wants to live. The idea that death is beautiful for Christians is a lie. Death is ugly. It's ugly for everyone.

I've gone into too many nursing homes and watched too many old people die to believe that death is beautiful—even for Christians, as many of these people were. They died alone because their children had forsaken them. They died in pain because their bodies were diseased. They died senile because their minds had stopped working.

Is that beautiful? When God created us He did not intend for us to die. He created us to live. It was sin that brought death into this world. Had there not been sin, we would not have death. Had there not been sin, we would not have sickness. Had there not been sin, we would not have suffering. Had there not been sin, there would be no murder, no cancer, no hospitals, no prisons, no thieves, no freak storms of nature, no tidal waves with all their destructive force, no tornadoes. Had there not been sin, the child who was born without arms and hands would have been born perfect. The world would be in perfect order: sinless. We would be enjoying the rich blessings of God in a state much as is described in the Garden of Eden.

Had there not been sin, it's possible you could come to my church on a given Sunday morning and

find me introducing two special people as guest speakers. I can envision the newspaper blurb announcing the service:

APPEARING IN THE FLESH at the 11 o'clock services of Evangel Temple will be Adam and Eve, the world's first man and woman. Their subject: "Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Gardening But Didn't Know Whom To Ask."

Maybe the subject doesn't grip you all that much; but had there not been sin, that's about as weighty a subject as you could come up with in a world like that. There wouldn't be any *problems* to expound on, that's for sure.

Stretch your imagination further and take a good look at this incredible couple if you will . . . this perfect couple. You can see they were made for each other. Six thousand years of wedded bliss and they look as young and as beautiful as they looked the day they were created. Not one strand of gray hair, not one wrinkle to mar their lovely faces, not one burgeoning leg vein to map the road to aches and pains and morning stiffness. Ask them their secret and they'll probably say, "We don't eat apples."

Yes, that's the way the world could have been. But man sinned and changed all that. And God will exact a penalty for the sins of all men who reject his plan for redemption.

Sin made the difference. *Sin* changed all that.

We can't blame God when there is death and sorrow in our families. We can't blame God when

there are abnormal births in the hospital maternity wards. Had it not been for man's rebellion in the Garden of Eden, a man like Adolf Hitler would have never existed and a madman like Reverend Jim Jones would have never led nine hundred people to mass suicide. We can't blame God for our troubles and sorrows today. Man has to turn around and blame himself. We are responsible.

In Psalm 51:5, David, the King of Israel said, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." What is David saying? He is saying he was born with the curse of sin upon him because of the first sin of Adam and Eve.

This is difficult for a lot of people to accept because too many of them are comfortable going through the rituals of Christianity, going to church on Sunday, singing halleluia and praying the Lord's Prayer once a week. When a preacher comes along and calls them sinners they stand back aghast and claim, "I'm no sinner. Not I. I was born and raised in a Christian home. I've attended a Christian church all my life. I was baptized. I've been confirmed. I take communion. I've *never* been a sinner."

The Bible says the people who say these things are wrong. Dead wrong. We are *all* sinners. We were born into this world as sinners. The curse of sin rests upon us. It has been passed down from one generation to another since Adam and Eve.

Not only were we born into this world with sinful natures we come short of deserving the glory of God. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

Regardless of who we are and how good we've been, the Bible says we are sinners. We are all guilty of sin. A lot of us have a problem in this area because we tend to categorize sin. We try to make one sin of less consequence than another, one sin worse than another. God does not see it that way. He simply says, "You have sinned."

What is sin? Sin is rebellion against God. There are no grey sins or black sins or white sins. There are no big sins, small sins or medium-sized sins. Sin is sin.

God puts us all into one big bushel basket and says, "... for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. . ." *All have sinned!* Among God's children are prostitutes, pimps, drug addicts, drug pushers, thieves, murderers and atheists. Where are we? In the middle? If so, we're no better or worse than any of God's children because we have all sinned.

In Isaiah 64:6 the prophet said, "... we are all as an unclean thing. . ." A more popular translation of "an unclean thing" is "our righteousness is as filthy rags."

How does God view man's effort to become righteous in His eyes? It's impossible because of the curse of sin. This is what makes Isaiah's prophecy in chapter 53 so beautiful.

As God looked down from His throne in heaven at the filthiness which man had made for himself, He turned to His son Jesus and said, "They are lost. They are hopelessly and helplessly lost in their sin. But, I love them. They are My creation. I created them for the express purpose that they might



live, enjoy life and inherit eternal life. I have a plan. I'm going to redeem them from the curse of sin."

Jesus turned to His Father and said, "Father, what are you going to do?"

And God said, "I am going to save them. I am going to reveal My loving grace to all mankind. I am going to send you to live, breathe and walk among them so they might know the revelation of my love. I am going to send you to a cross and sacrifice you, My own beloved son. By shedding your blood, I will redeem man from the curse of sin. Will you go, My son?"

"Yes, My Father," Jesus said and he took off His royal robe of splendor and laid it upon His throne. He took on the form of flesh and God became man to live among us.

Jesus himself described the purpose of His coming when He said, "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

No wonder Jesus cried out as he hung upon the cross, "It is finished!" He had succeeded in redeeming man from the curse of sin by shedding His blood.

Isaiah the prophet said, "... he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)

Note four things: transgressions, iniquities,

peace and healing. He was wounded for our transgressions. If man had not transgressed God's law, the world would have never known any state but perfection. But man in rebellion has said, "I choose to break the law. I am a transgressor."

There are two ways to transgress the law. One, by the sin of commission and two, by the sin of omission. We can willfully commit a sin by deliberately and rebelliously breaking a commandment. We can also sin when we omit doing that which is required of us. I transgress the law when I take the name of our Lord God in vain or when I steal from my neighbor or when I commit adultery. I also transgress the law when I fail to love my neighbor as myself. We are guilty of transgression or sin, but the Bible says He was wounded for our transgressions.

He was bruised for our iniquities. The word *iniquity* is different from the word *transgression*. The word *iniquity* denotes the sense of guilt which fastens itself to the soul that has sinned. It deals with a very important part of our sinful lives because when we break the law we feel guilt. Guilt is automatic. It is natural. It's something every sinner feels. I have met so many people within the church of Jesus Christ who have laid claim to the promise of God's forgiveness, have asked God for forgiveness and yet have never experienced freedom from their guilt. They are constantly tormented by the sins of their past. This is tragic because part of God's provision for redeeming man from the curse of sin was the cleansing of our guilt.

The Bible says He was bruised for our iniquities. When Christ made the ultimate sacrifice upon the cross, He not only shed enough blood to grant us forgiveness from sin, but enough to cleanse us from the pangs of our guilt. Too many Christians have gone to Calvary's Hill for forgiveness, but have not stayed there long enough to receive that cleansing from guilt.

When the woman who was taken in the very act of adultery was brought before Jesus, her husband and the rulers of the city had stones in their hands and were on their way to the edge of the city to stone her. On the road, they happened to meet Jesus just by "chance" and the Pharisees decided they would try to trick Him. They said, "Master, our law says we should stone such a woman, what do you say?"

Jesus didn't say anything. He just bent down and began to write something in the sand. The Bible doesn't say what He wrote but I imagine He wrote down the sins of the Pharisees or perhaps the names of the ladies with whom they had been sleeping. When He finished He looked at the crowd and said, "The one of you who is without sin cast the first stone." They all fled in terror, leaving the woman standing alone with Jesus. "Where are thine accusers?" He asked.

"They have all gone, Lord."

Jesus looked at her and said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."

The Bible is telling us that the woman walked into Jesus' presence a convicted harlot, and walked

away as though she were a virgin. Her sin not only had been forgiven but forgotten.

God can forget our sins and wants us to forget them also. The moment God forgets our sins is the moment we are meant to forget our own sins. Jesus was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

“The chastisement of our peace was upon him.” When man sins in rebellion against God his peace is shattered. He no longer enjoys peace between himself and his maker. Peace of heart, peace of soul, peace of spirit, and peace of mind are no longer his. That’s why peace is one of the most needed commodities in our generation today.

Men’s hearts, as the scripture prophesied, are failing them for fear because they have no peace. Americans are downing tranquilizer pills by the millions. Why? They have no peace. People are experiencing ulcers and nervous breakdowns. Why? Their peace has been shattered. Jesus said, “. . . my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27) Part of God’s glorious plan of redemption is to restore peace to the hearts and minds of men.

“With his stripes we are healed.” Many Christians interpret this as a healing promise for their physical ailments, when really this passage does not refer to physical ailments. The subject of the scripture is the soul which has sinned. When a man sins against God, when a man breaks the commandments of God, his sin leaves scars and

wounds, not only on his soul, spirit and mind but on his body as well. A lot of us have had the experience of meeting someone whose life has been tragically scarred by past sins. So complete is God's plan of redemption that there is a provision for healing the scars of sin. So beautiful and so complete is God's plan that there isn't a trace of a scar. In fact God looks upon the forgiven person as though he had never sinned.

The Bible is telling us victims of the curse of sin, that even though we are scarred, broken, and our lives have been shattered, there is good news. As recorded in John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly." Jesus declared, "I am come." That's the happy story of Christmas. "That they might have life." That's the message of Easter. "And have it more abundantly." That's the story of Pentecost. God's plan of redemption is absolutely complete. When we have been redeemed from the curse of sin and all of its effects, our lives will be transformed from sickness, sorrow, suffering, agony and heartache to abundant living in Jesus Christ.

In I Peter 1:18-19, we are told, "Forasmuch as ye know that you are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold. . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot. . ." Christ came for that purpose: to redeem us from the curse of sin.

"But," you say, "if that is true what must I do to be saved?"

A Philippian jailer also cried out that question to Paul the Apostle: "What must I do to be saved?"

There are literally thousands of people around the world who are asking the same question, if not out loud, to themselves. There is only *one* way to be rescued from the curse of sin and He is the *only* way, the truth and the light.

While visiting a remote Indian village I came upon a quaint little Hindu temple. I walked in and became acquainted with the priest. I have kept up a relationship with him over the years and each time I visit his country I always stop in to see him.

Time and again he has told me, "Reverend Olson, you are a Christian minister and I am a Hindu Priest. We both realize there is only one God, but there are many paths to Him. You go through Jesus and I go through Krishna."

Of course Krishna is only one of perhaps three million different sources the Hindu Priest could pray to because he believes there are many saviors. But, what that man said to me made Jesus alive because Jesus said, "For God so loved the world He gave His *only* begotten son."

God doesn't have many sons, only one. There are not many saviors, only one. The first step a person must take toward salvation is to realize Jesus Christ is the only way.

This is why our contemporary young Christians run around in blue jeans with patches on their back pockets which say, "JESUS." They are constantly lifting up their forefingers one to another indicating *One Way*. That signal means they have found one way because they have found Jesus.

In his book to the Roman Church, the Apostle Paul outlines quite simply a four point plan which sinners need to follow to know Jesus Christ. I call it *Roman's Road to Jesus*.

**EVERYBODY'S A SINNER** (Romans 3:23) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

We must all recognize we are sinners and that we need a savior.

**THE PENALTY OF SIN IS DEATH** (Romans 6:23) "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ."

We must recognize the utter hopelessness of our sinful state and the tragic reality that unless we find salvation we'll be eternally lost. We will be separated from God and doomed to an eternal hell which Jesus described as a place called a lake of fire where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth forever.

**JESUS OUR ONLY HOPE** (Romans 5:8) "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

We must acknowledge Jesus Christ as the one who paid the penalty for our sin; therefore, salvation can only come by Him. This scriptural instruction simply tells us that before we can know salvation we must first accept Jesus Christ as our only savior.

**NOW CONFESS JESUS** (Romans 10:9-10) "... if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

God requires something on our part and in order to accomplish it we must have faith. We must have faith and confess, to ourselves, to God and to others that Jesus Christ is our savior. There is no such thing as a secret Christian; we either are or are not and we must be a Christian openly. Before salvation can become complete God requires an open confession on our part.

If you’ve read this entire book and have not yet surrendered your life to the claims of Jesus Christ and down in your heart you feel a strange sensation—a drawing to God—the Bible has an explanation for that as well. In Revelation 3:20 the Word says, “Behold, I stand at the door [the door of your heart] and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in. . .” Remember, God does not dwell in gigantic cathedrals with stained glass windows and golden altars, but desires to take up His dwelling within the hearts of men. This is why He stands at the door of *your* heart knocking. That sensation you feel is Jesus at the door.

If you have never accepted Christ as your personal savior, you can do it right now as you finish reading this book. It’s really quite simple. It requires only a small prayer from the bottom of your heart, acknowledging your need of Jesus Christ and asking Him to save you. Jesus said, “Call upon me, and I will answer thee.”

I encourage you to call upon Him now. May I



help you? If you feel as if you don't know how to pray a prayer of confession, a prayer of repentance, a prayer of salvation, why don't you simply read the following prayer that I pray for you. If you'll mean it, if you'll let it become your prayer from the bottom of your heart, the miracle of salvation will take place in your heart right now. Let's pray together.

Dear Father in heaven, I acknowledge that I am a sinner. I acknowledge that I am totally, hopelessly and helplessly lost in my sin, but, oh God, I am sorry for my sins. I open the door of my heart, by faith, and accept you as my personal savior. I receive your gift of forgiveness. I will not allow my guilt to prevent me from believing that you love me and that you came to die on the cross to save me from my sins. I accept your forgiveness. I accept your mercy. I accept your grace.

Oh, Lord, by your help, I will turn my back on my sins. Given your strength and your grace, I will now pick up my cross and follow you. I thank you, Lord, for hearing my humble prayer. I accept the promise of your Word and I believe that you are now living in my heart. I acknowledge that I am your child. I acknowledge that my life belongs to you and from this moment on, by your grace, I will serve you. I pray this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you prayed this simple prayer and really meant it from your heart, I have something I want to say to you. HELLO, NEW CREATURE! That's what the Bible calls you. In II Corinthians 5:17 the Bible says, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; and behold all things have become new."

Praise the Lord! God says that a miraculous change has begun within your heart. The stain of sin is gone. The curse has been broken in your life. Today you begin a new path of abundant living in Jesus Christ. You *are* a new creature.

What more could you wish for? God says "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (III John 1:2)

And that, beloved reader, is what I wish for you also.

## WELL, WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?

*Go tell somebody.* I'm not going to tell you what the scripture says. Get out your Bible and read it for yourself. Matthew 5:16 and Matthew 10:32-33.

*You need to go get some spiritual food.* Read I Peter 2:2.

*You need to go to church.* Read Hebrews 10:25.

Last of all, I cordially invite you to write to me. If you have accepted Christ, share your testimony with me. If you like, I will be happy to send you one of my Bible correspondence courses entitled "New Life in Christ." I also have other Bible courses available on Bible doctrines, the Holy Spirit and Bible prophecy. These courses are free for the asking.

I consider the course in Biblical doctrine to be especially important since it relates to the subject of this book. As you have learned throughout these chapters, it is imperative that we be fully aware of the Bible and its doctrines. The people who are not

aware can be led astray and become ensnared in the teachings of false prophets such as Jim Jones.

Should any of you still have any doubts whatsoever that THE BIBLE SAID IT WOULD HAPPEN, I recommend that you go to the Word, that you diligently and prayerfully search the scriptures; for in them you will find the truth and the "truth shall set you free." And that means free from the curse of sin and free from all God's wrath to come.

That search is worth undertaking. Won't you begin it today?

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Readers who are interested in the correspondence courses mentioned may write to Evangelist Paul Olson in care of New Day Ministries, P. O. Box 9867, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440, USA. Rev. Olson also has more than 200 cassette sermon tapes on such subjects as *Discipleship*, *Faith and Healing*, *Salvation*, *The Occult*, *Bible Prophecy*, *The Christian Family* and *The Holy Spirit*. Those who are interested are invited to send for his catalog.

Paul R. Olson is a man well qualified to speak on the subject of the Last Days. Bible scholar; evangelist; head of an international radio ministry; founder of an International Bible Correspondence School; and pastor of Evangel Temple, a large inner-city church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Rev. Olson is a world traveler who has logged more than a million air miles



through 60 different countries in the interest of missionary evangelism. From Cuba to South America, to Africa, to Asia and Eastern Europe, thousands flock to hear this dynamic man as he relates "that old time religion" to the most topical and burning issues of our day.

According to Olson, the shocking rise of cultism and the mass murders/suicides of those who blindly follow false teaching clearly indicate that Bible prophecy is being fulfilled. Having conducted crusades in Guyana, the author sheds startling new light on what happened there and why. You'll want to read for yourself and see that THE BIBLE SAID IT WOULD HAPPEN.



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