



The Amish Voice

MAP ♦ P.O. Box 128 ♦ 575 U.S. Highway 250 ♦ Savannah, OH 44874 ♦ (419) 962-1515 ♦ May 2015

Born of the Spirit

—Joe Keim

The Word of God is clear and leaves no room for doubt; if one desires to see or enter the kingdom of God he/she MUST be born again.

John 3:3 and 3:5

Jesus answered and said unto him [Nicodemus], Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

These statements, made by the Lord Himself, are black and white, sure, and to the point; one must be born again or he/she will never see nor enter God's kingdom.

With that in mind, let's ask ourselves some questions and then dig into God's Word for those answers.

1. **Are all people born again in the same way?**
2. **Do different groups become born again in different ways depending on the structure of their church**

and family beliefs?

3. **Does the second birth happen gradually and over a lifetime, or does it happen instantly?**
4. **Can a person be born again by simply belonging to and following a certain church or religion?**
5. **Can those who leave the church ever be born again, or must they return and re-join before the new birth takes effect?**
6. **How is a person born again?**

Several years ago, while having a conversation with my friend, Albert, we discussed some of these same questions at length. We went into great detail on how Jesus, in John chapter 3, told Nicodemus, "*You must be born again if you want to see the kingdom of God.*"

At one point, Albert looked at me and

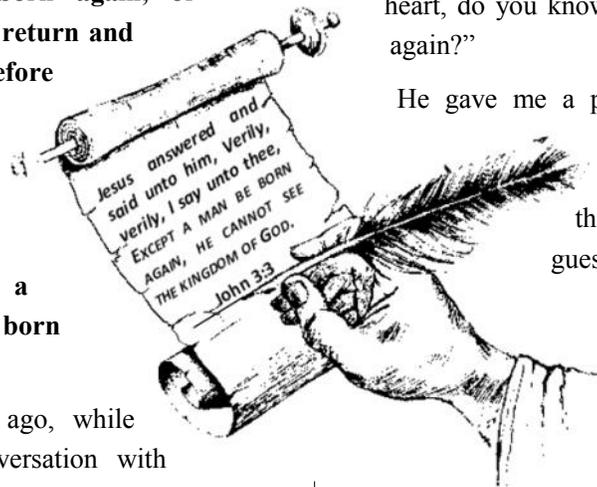
said, "Joe, you may be surprised to know that I have memorized every single verse in John chapter 3."

I responded by saying, "Albert, I cannot recall ever hearing of anyone being able to quote the entire chapter by heart. That is just absolutely phenomenal!" But then I asked him, "Albert, now that you are able to quote the whole chapter by heart, do you know how to be born again?"

He gave me a puzzled look and said, "Well, Joe, I'm not sure that I know, but my guess is that since I got baptized, joined the church, and am doing the best I can in following

the commandments of God and the church, I will probably be considered born again in God's eyes."

"Oh my, Albert," I said. "I have to ask you a very important question. If Jesus told us in John 3:7, "Ye must be born



again,' don't you think he would also have allowed us the benefit of knowing that we are born again? Think about it for a moment. Why would Jesus be so clear about the need to be born again but then keep us in the dark when it comes to knowing *how* and *if* we are born again?

Let me illustrate: Suppose I said to you, if you want to live another year, you must go to Africa and get a heart transplant, but I stopped short of telling you where Africa is located and how to get there. I would be leaving you completely on your own to figure out how to accomplish the goal.

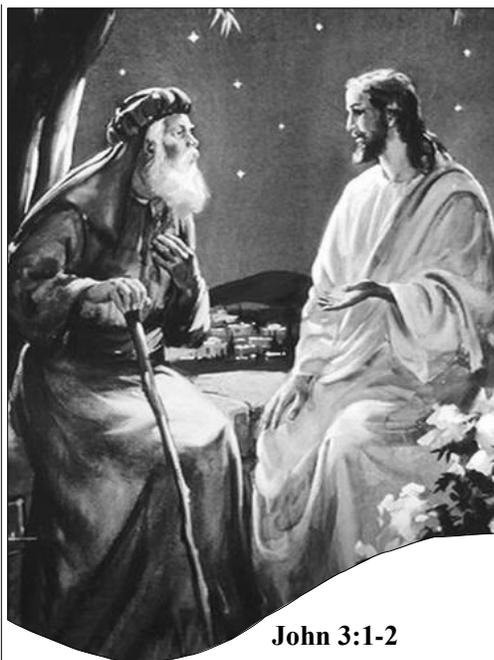
We would never do that to each other. Neither would our Lord, who loved us with such passion that He gave up His home in heaven, came to a sin-stained world, and gave His very life and blood so that we might be born again.

The truth is, not only does the Bible tell us we must be born again, it tells us...

1. *How* to be born again
2. We can *know* that we are born again

With that in mind, let us dig into God's Word and find the answers to these important questions. Our eternal state depends on it!

During our study, we are going to join a conversation that is going on between Jesus and Nicodemus, a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews. Shhhh! Be quiet as we make our way over to where they are sitting. Now listen in as Jesus tells Nicodemus how to get to heaven.



John 3:1-2

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Think with me. We have a man here who serves in a leadership position within the Jewish culture. He is a Pharisee and a ruler. In other words, he was not your average church member, far from it.

Pharisees were highly educated and respected by those who followed them. The POSB Commentary tells us some things about the Pharisees. In summary:

The word Pharisee means the separated ones. The Pharisees were strict religionists. Their religious sect arose about B.C. 175. A Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes, tried to stamp

out the Jewish religion and replace it with Greek customs and practices. A number of Jewish men opposed this threat and determined among themselves to save the Jewish religion. They refused to practice Greek customs and dedicated themselves to practicing the Jewish law in the strictest sense.

They felt that by carrying out every little detail of the Jewish law and by teaching others to do the same, they could save the Jewish religion and nation and keep it from dying out.

Several things should be noted:

1. The Pharisees represented a sect or school of religious thought. They were organized solely for preserving the law and the Jewish religion. Thereby, they sought to save the Jewish nation.
2. The Pharisees were strict literalists. The Jewish law was expanded into thousands and thousands of little rules and regulations by the Scribes. These rules and regulations were known as the Scribal or Oral Law. More than fifty volumes or books were eventually needed to hold the regulations.
3. The Pharisees were a body of the most zealous religionists.
4. Pharisees were few in number—never more than 6,000. The strictness and demands of the sect were too hard for the common people.

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5. Pharisees were dedicated, zealous, self-denying, and moral. No man could give his life to so desperate and restrictive a task unless he was totally genuine.

—POSB Commentary



Did you know that the Apostle Paul, before his conversion on the road to Damascus, was also a Pharisee? Look how he described himself and his behavior to the Church at Philippi:

Philippians 3:4-6 *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

Like all other Pharisees, the Apostle Paul was a devoted and highly educated religious leader. His very presence demanded respect from all. As far as he and other Pharisees were concerned, if a man or woman wanted to be right with God, they had to separate themselves from all other cultures, follow only the teachings of the Pharisees, and go to no one else's church except theirs. Their very name meant "separated ones".

However, after the light from heaven and Jesus' voice got Paul's attention, his whole thought pattern changed. Paul writes:

Philippians 3:7-9 *But what things [rules, traditions, good works, education, culture] were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ...and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*

In other words, Paul is saying, "those things that were of such importance and value in my man-made religion, were all of a sudden nothing more than dung (manure) to me." It had done nothing for him as far as his righteousness with God was concerned. It was purely man-made and led nowhere but down a dead end street.

This is the description of a Pharisee, and this is the kind of man Nicodemus was. And now that we have a better understanding of his position and lifestyle, let's go back and rejoin the conversation that was taking place between him and Jesus.

Nicodemus had been following Jesus around for days watching him do miracles that were totally out of the ordinary. At some point, he couldn't stand it any longer; he had to sit down with Jesus and have a heart to heart talk with Him.

Because of fear and worry about what others might think, he waited until it was dark and then he pulled Jesus aside and said, "Rabbi [Master], we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him"

In a sense, Nicodemus was asking, "Who are you? The miracles show that God is with you, but you are claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of God. Are you truly the promised Son of God?"

Notice in the next verse, Jesus did not answer Nicodemus directly. He looked into the empty, searching heart of Nicodemus and saw the honesty of his question. So Jesus went right to the heart of the matter. Miracles and signs were not the important issues. What was important was for Nicodemus to be changed: changed spiritually, changed within, and changed completely—such a spiritual change could only be described as being a new birth.

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Jesus looked His creation right in the eye and said, "Nicodemus, if you have plans on being where God is and dwelling in His kingdom, you must experience a completely new birth. You will have to be born all over again!"

Nicodemus was caught off guard and unprepared for such a statement. He immediately interrupted Jesus, asking:

John 3:4 *...How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

Nicodemus believed Jesus' challenge was impossible. What do you mean Jesus? Are you trying to tell me that I have to crawl back into my mother's womb and go through the whole birthing process a second time?"

Later on, when discussing salvation with His disciples, Jesus said this about the new birth...

Mark 10:27 ...With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

The New Birth Explained

First, understand that *Birth* and *life* go hand in hand. Not only is this true in physical life, it's true in spiritual life.

Romans 6:23 ...the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

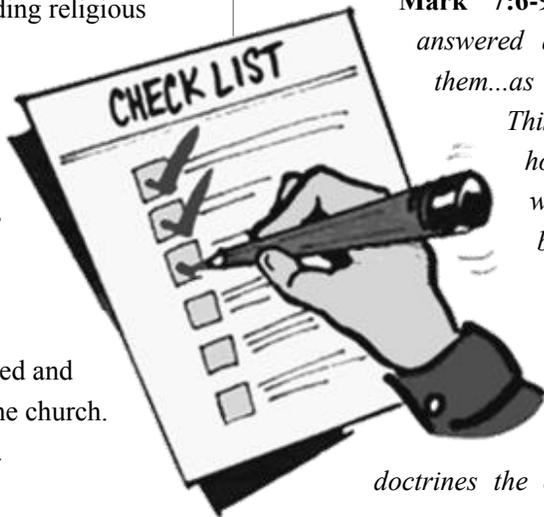
Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved [born again] through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Many years before, the prophet Ezekiel had spoken of this second birth:

Ezekiel 36:25-27 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you....

My dear friend, there are many people who walk this earth and call themselves Christians. Their reasons are:

- I have a long standing religious heritage.
- I belong to a church that doesn't have divorces, murders, prisons, etc.
- I live a plain and simple lifestyle.
- I have been baptized and am a member of the church.
- I obey my parents.



- I keep the traditions and follow the church rules.
- I have separated myself from the worldly churches.
- I am honest, work hard, and help the poor and needy.
- I do not allow myself to watch TV, listen to radio, or go on the Internet.
- I do not allow electricity to be brought into my house, or own a car, or go to the county fair.

I don't do any of these things, Lord. I am not like all those other church people out in the world. Oh Lord, if only other church people could be more like me, then You would never have to return and end the world.

Oh friend, if this is a description of your thoughts and way of life, you are to be congratulated for your hard and dedicated work. If eternal life (new birth) came about from living that kind of lifestyle, surely, you would be on the front line of entering God's kingdom. However, as Jesus plainly teaches, this kind of belief is much like that of the Pharisees. They had it all together, as far as outward appearances went, but the following Scripture points out that God is far more concerned about our heart condition than He is about outward appearances.

Mark 7:6-9 He [Jesus] answered and said unto them...as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments

of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men...And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Many generations before, in the Old Testament, God spoke to the prophet Samuel and said:

1 Samuel 16:7 ...for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

The Lord judges a person by his heart and his heart alone.

What does your heart look like? Have you allowed God to replace the old sin stained heart with a new heart, as explained in Ezekiel 36?

Ezekiel 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you...

The second birth is not something we do.

The new birth is not something you and I do. Even if God gave us one thousand years to get it right, we couldn't do it.

If you haven't already, will you give up! Let go! Quit trying! STOP!

This new birth is entirely a work of God. Jesus tells us that we are not even capable of coming to Him on our own. The Father has to draw us to Himself.

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him...

John 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Do you see and understand what we just

read? We cannot even go to God unless He decides to draw us to Himself. We are helpless! We are at His mercy!

Titus 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us...*

Before the new birth takes place in a person's life, that person is a dead spirit; therefore, he can do nothing spiritually, just as a dead body can do nothing physically.

The apostle Paul writes:

Romans 3:11-12 *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

There is not a single human being on the face of the earth that seeks after God. No, not even one in the 7 billion people alive on this earth right now! Unless the Father draws us to Himself, we will never in a thousand years go to Him on our own.

The Father has to draw us to Himself, convict us of our sin, and show us that we are in desperate need of a new birth experience. See John 16:8-11.

John 3:5-6 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

To enter and experience the physical world, we had to first be born in the flesh.

To enter and experience the spiritual world, God's kingdom, we have to be born in the spirit.

Here are a few things we know about the first birth:

1. I am flesh that can be seen with eyes

and felt with fingers.

2. I did not pull myself together one day and give myself legs, arms, nose, brains, ears, eyes, kidneys, blood, etc.

3. I became flesh, just like my father.

4. I inherited the family name.

5. My father will always be my father. I will always be his son.

6. Our fellowship may at times be hindered, but the father/son relationship can never be severed, cut off, or given away.

At birth, my parents wrote out a birth certificate that reads: On February 1, 1967, at 5:02 am, Joe was born into the Keim family.

Please note: My birth certificate does not read, "Between February 1st and March 8th, 1967, Joe was born into the Keim family."

7. I can never be unborn or re-born in the flesh. It was a onetime physical birth that allowed me entrance to the physical world.

Most of us would agree thus far, but you ask, how does the second birth work? In a nut shell, the second birth works in many of the same ways that the first birth does. It happens on a certain date and at an exact time.

Everyone who is born again should have two birth certificates.

1. Just like you celebrate your physical birth every year, so you should

celebrate your spiritual birth every year.

2. When you were born into your earthly family and took on the family name, so it is when you are born into God's family; you take on the family name—CHRISTian.

3. The Bible does not talk about a third and fourth birth. There are only two. The first one is physical and allows entrance into the physical world; the second one is spiritual and allows entrance into the spiritual world.

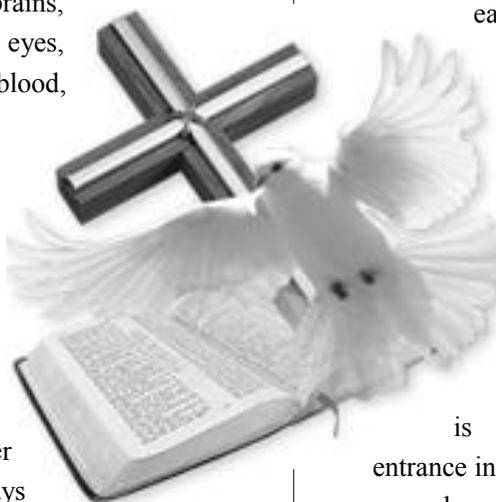
4. Just like your earthly father corrected and disciplined you, so your heavenly Father will also correct and discipline you. That is, if you have been born into His family. Look what the Bible says:

Hebrews 12:7-9 *...God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected [us], and we gave [them] reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

There is one big difference between the first birth and the second birth; our earthly father does not have any part in the second birth. Neither do you, the church, or the Bishop. No, the second birth is a work of God and God alone.

But you say, wait a minute, I have to do something. Yes, you are right. You have to believe, which we will get into later; however, beyond that you can do nothing.



Let me explain what I mean.

Suppose you came along one day and said, “Joe, I am right in the middle of getting born again, and this is how I’m doing it...”

1. I changed a few areas of my life and went from sinning nine times a day, down to only three times a day.
2. I am training my mind to think more about God and heaven rather than earthly things. Compared to a year ago, I have come a long way.
3. The last few times the deacon came around and asked for money, I gave twice as much to the needs of the church.
4. The Lord knows I have been doing a lot better with my anger and bitterness problem. I don't argue near as much with my spouse and family.
5. I got rid of all the things the church doesn't want me to have.
6. I have joined the church, got baptized, and, for the most part, I have been a member in good standing.
7. When I reflect back over my life, I have to say, “I am not the same person I used to be. Give me some more time, and I will even get better at this whole process of becoming born again.”

Do you see how unreasonable these answers really are? The truth is, God requires much more than that. He requires 100% perfection before He allows us into His kingdom. Yes! 100% perfection. Jesus said so Himself.

Matthew 5:48 *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

That is why an extra thousand years of physical life will never be enough time for us to get it right. However, through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, those who have been born again have already been made perfect.

Hebrews 10:14 *For by one offering He [Jesus] hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.*

Sinners less than last year makes us better but not perfect. Going to church, giving more money, arguing less with my spouse, being more friendly, reading more Bible, being in a religious community, or living a more simple and humble lifestyle makes us better but not perfect.

There is only one way to be perfect and that is to experience the second birth that Jesus talked to Nicodemus about. It must take place before we die and go into eternity. The Bible is clear: After death comes the judgment.

Hebrews 9:27 *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

The second birth is something God does.

John 1:13 *Which were born [again], not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

It is not by blood: The idea is that heritage—being born of a particular family, race, nation or people—is of no value in becoming a child of God. Blood is not what causes the second birth.

It is not by the will of the flesh: The idea is that a person is not spiritually born again by wanting and willing to become a child of God just like a person wills to have an earthly child.

It is not by the will of man: No man, no matter who he is—husband or world leader—can cause or make a person a child of God. It is strictly a gift of God.

—POSB Commentary

The second birth is of God and God alone!

The second birth is an act of God whereby eternal life is given to the person who believes.

This eternal *life* is needed because when we sinned we *died* spiritually, meaning we became separated from God.

Romans 6:23 *For the wages [payment] of sin is [spiritual] death...*

James 1:15 *...sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth [spiritual] death.*

As discussed earlier in our lesson, spiritually dead people are just like physically dead people. They can't hear. They can't see. They are dead! And, unless God gives (eternal) life to the spiritually dead person through a second birth experience, he/she will pass into eternity lost and forever separated from God and His kingdom.

The apostle Paul tells us in Romans that while we were dead, blind, lost, and wondering in a wilderness of sin and separated from God, Jesus Christ came to earth and paid the price that God required for your sin.

Romans 5:8-9 *But God commendeth [proved] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from [God's] wrath through him.*

Jesus, when explaining the new birth to Nicodemus, went back to the Old

Testament and pointed out a very familiar story of how Moses lifted up a bronze serpent in the wilderness. Those who had been bit by fiery snakes (sin) were dying; however, anyone who looked upon the lifted serpent and believed was instantly healed and lived.

John 3:14-16 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 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.*

Some time ago, I was talking to a friend who was already in her 50's. She said, "Joe, just yesterday, I was reading some Bible verses, and, all of a sudden it dawned on me; there is only one thing a person can do to receive the gift of eternal life and that is believe in Jesus." She went on to say, "At that very moment, it became very clear. It does not say anything about a person's hair being cut a certain way; it just says believe."

I looked at Lena and said, "You are right. It does not say, if you get baptized, become a church member, do good works and believe in Jesus, you will receive the gift of eternal life." It simply says, "...that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

When the prison keeper in Acts 16:30-31 fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas, he cried out...

...Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved...

My dear friend, it does not matter if you are 8 years old or 80 years old, if you have never been born the second time,

you can be. All you have to do is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said plainly, the moment you believe, you receive everlasting life and pass from death to life.

John 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

Some people will read this entire article, reject the truth, die and go into eternity lost. They will tell themselves, "Surely there's something I have to do, beyond just believe". If that is what you still think, then please look at the words of the Apostle Paul:

Romans 10:3-4 *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

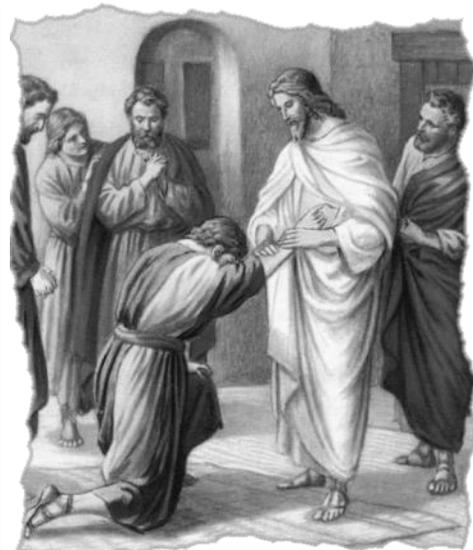
At some point, a decision has to be made; am I going to base my righteousness on how well I follow the law, or am I going to simply believe that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth?"

It is your choice!

The Bible verses that follow are ever so clear. All that mankind desires—God's righteousness and salvation—is found within a person's mouth and heart.

Romans 10:8-13 *But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;*

That 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.

For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved [born again].

The word "whosoever" means anyone and everyone, no matter who they are. It means any person, any race, any color, any environment, background, country or family.

It does not make any difference if the person is moral or immoral, just or unjust, poor or wealthy, popular or unpopular, diseased or healthy.

"Whosoever" means that any person can be saved, no matter who he is. S/he may be in the depths of the inner city or in the depths of the jungle, and s/he may be enslaved by the most terrible spirit of sin and evil imaginable—God will still save any person who calls on His name for salvation.

Will you set all your own ideas aside and believe in Jesus alone for your salvation? Right now? If so, why don't you talk to God about it? You could just say, ***“Lord, I have sinned against You many times in my life and deserve to go to hell for my sin. But right now, the best I know how, I cast all my sins upon you, Jesus; believing with all my heart that You paid for them in full when You died on the cross. Jesus, I open my heart and ask You to come in and be my Savior forever. Amen.”***

John 20:27-31 Then saith he [Jesus] to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou

hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have [eternal] life through his name.

—Joe Keim

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END

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TALENTS AND GIFTS

TALENTS	GIFTS
Talents are natural	Gifts are supernatural
Talents are inherited from one's parents, ultimately from Adam	Gifts are received from God
Talents are received at birth; they are natural endowments.	Gifts are received at the time of the new birth
Talents are possessed both by saved people and by unsaved people. There are many unsaved people who are very talented (musical ability, artistic ability, athletic ability, mathematical ability, etc.).	Gifts are possessed only by saved people, those who are members of the church which is His Body. An unsaved person might mimic a spiritual gift, but it is counterfeit and limited to self-activity (e.g.-a false prophet, a false teacher, etc.).
A man may be very talented as a TEACHER in the public school system or at a prestigious university. He may be recognized as an outstanding teacher by all of his co-workers. He may be very talented when it comes to communication skills and oratory. He may even win the "Teacher of the Year" Award.	This same man, upon believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, may not receive the gift of teaching. Spiritual gifts are determined by God not by any natural talents which a man may possess. If this same man should receive the gift of teaching it is above and beyond and distinct from any natural teaching talent which he had. It is something that he did not have prior to the new birth.
For full effectiveness talents need to be developed. A person who is naturally skilled musically must still learn to play an instrument, often demanding years of practice. Most professional athletes not only have natural talent but they have developed this talent through years of practice and hard work.	Gifts need to be exercised and this can only happen as the believer stays spiritually healthy and grows "in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). The proper exercise of spiritual gifts requires spiritual growth and maturity (Ephesians 4:13-16).
Talents possessed by believers ought to be surrendered and consecrated to the Lord and used for His honor and glory. Example: A skilled organist playing for a worship service "as unto the Lord."	Gifts are given by God for the outworking of God's LIFE as expressed by the Body of Christ. When the Body is healthy the LIFE of God is manifested and God is glorified (compare 1 Corinthians 14:24-25).

Three Sisters Getting Older



Three sisters age 92, 94, and 96 live in a house together. One night the 96-year old draws a bath, puts her foot in and pauses. She yells down the stairs, "Was I getting in or out of the bath?"

The 94-year old yells back, "I don't know, I'll come up and see." She starts up the stairs and pauses, then she yells, "Was I going up the stairs or coming down?"

The 92-year old was sitting at the kitchen table having tea, listening to her sisters. She shakes her head and says, "I sure hope I never get that forgetful." She knocks on wood for good measure. She then yells, "I'll come up and help both of you as soon as I see who's at the door."

God's Remedy, Continued (from Back Page)

people. We are laborers together with God (1 Cor. 3:9). We are ambassadors (representatives) for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20).

The Word of God says, "...greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Let us, therefore, take God at His Word, and rise up and defeat the enemy, using the delegated authority which God has given us, in effective wrestling against the powers of darkness (Eph. 6:10-20). "Behold," Jesus says, "I give unto you power [authority] ...over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:19). This is a true Word, but it must be put into execution by God's people.

It is the wicked spirits behind the scenes, the "rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:12), that are causing the confusion today, and we, taking the whole armor of God, are set to wrestle effectively against these evil spirits by using the delegated authority which Christ has given us over all their power, "praying always" (Eph. 6:18).

Oh, to focus, to concentrate, to unite in calling on God, in faith, to revive us again! (Psa. 85:6). Let us unitedly, in Jesus' name, resist the devil till he flees from us (Jas. 4:7). Fritter not away your time in self-indulgence, in useless chatter and gossip, in non-essentials, but rather "seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isa. 55:6). Start now! Cry unto God! Press on in the battle of prayer. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

END

Delightful Obedience

—By Norma Miller

Read Psalm 119:1-8, 20-24

God wants us to experience His pleasure in us and His smile on us. He is not a God who is sitting there with a stick, waiting for us to mess up, but is rather a loving Father who finds great pleasure in His children turning to Him.

He has certain precepts or principles in place, that when followed, bring blessing into our lives. When we function outside of those precepts, we often experience shame.

He tells us in Psalm 119 that those whose ways are blameless are blessed. He tells us that if we keep His statutes and seek Him with all our hearts we will be blessed. If we walk in His ways He will

bless us. God WANTS to bless His children, but so often, our ways prevent Him from being able to do all He would like to do in our lives.

In verse 5, the Psalmist expresses regret in that his ways are not always conducive to God's blessing and that he had experienced shame when he did not consider all of the Lord's commands. This does not mean that we will come to shame every time we mess up. God is not that kind of parent, but one who sees our hearts;

but as we look to Him with a desire to learn His ways, and as we obey His commands, our hearts are upright, and He delights in us.

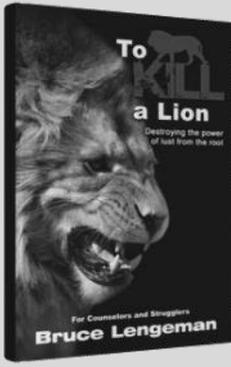
As our hearts are consumed with desire for our Maker and His desires for us, as our hearts delight in obeying our Father, as He desires for us, His laws for us

become our delight to obey, and God redeems us from the curse of the enemy. It is when we are too proud to consider His ways for us that we run into trouble. When we are arrogant, we stray from His commands and attract curses instead of blessings.

As we delight in the Lord and what He wants for us, we can find security in that and do not need to worry about what others may say about us or what plans are made for our demise. If we know our hearts are right, what others think or say should not matter. We have peace in our position with the Father.

I am far from perfect in both obedience and in not worrying about the opinions of others, but I find peace in seeking refuge in my Father's heart, His laws for me, and the refuge He offers.

END



Do you struggle with lust or other sins and addictions?

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their own sexuality and what makes it operate "out of alignment" with God's design. You'll learn why it is healthy to be sexual as a man, but in a pure and Godly way. Though this book was not written for women, many are reading it and getting understanding of things they never knew about sexuality.

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Precious Children

—By Paul Miller

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Matthew 18:6-7

The Bible tells us that children are very precious to Jesus. We must be certain to raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to be an example for them of our loving, gentle,

and patient Heavenly Father.

In our humanness, we will sometimes lose our tempers. We will sometimes get angry. Let us never, though, hurt our children in anger. Let us never abuse our children (or our spouse) in any way. Let us encourage and love our children, being as gentle and patient with them as we want God to be with us.

Loving discipline may at times be necessary, but may we never, ever be guilty of physically, sexually, or emotionally abusing our children.

Do you tell your children that you love

them? If not, why not? God tells His children that He loves them! Do you tell your children that you are proud of them when they try to please you? Why not?

Is lust or sexual addiction destroying you and as a result, destroying your family? Lust, addiction, anger, and all sin can be overcome through Jesus.

If you struggle with lust or sexual addiction, consider getting the book, *To Kill a Lion*, (advertised above). May we repent of sin, seek help, and turn fully to Jesus. Contact us if we can be of any help.

END

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- ◆ Do We Need to Pray Once or Many Times for the Same Thing?
- ◆ Does God Speak to Us Audibly?

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- ◆ The End Times
- ◆ The Importance of Time Alone With God

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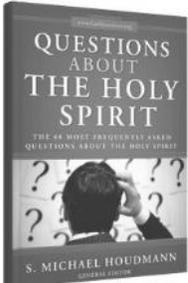
Everyone Has Questions...

Young children ask "Why?" Teenagers ask "Why not?" Adults sometimes lament "What if?"

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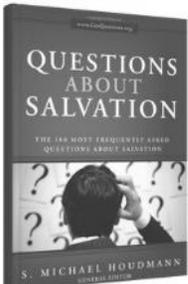
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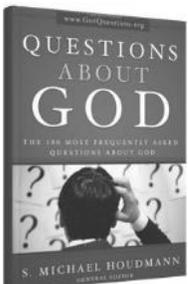
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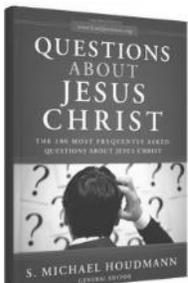
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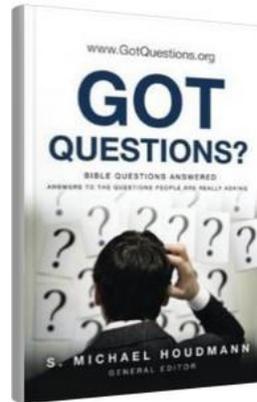
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As the world continues to turn its back on God, we want to take a look at what the future holds according to the One who is the Beginning and the End—God! We hope you

enjoy and benefit from this series, courtesy of Middletown Bible Church. Follow along, fill in the blanks, and look up! May we all be ready for the return of Jesus Christ!

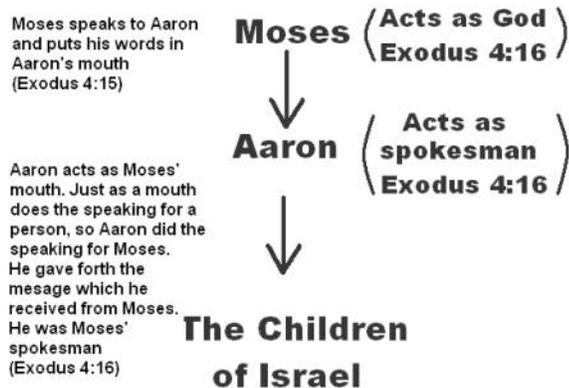
What Is A Prophet?

Note: You will need a Bible for this lesson.

Can you name some of God's prophets? [Hint: Jeremiah was one of God's prophets]

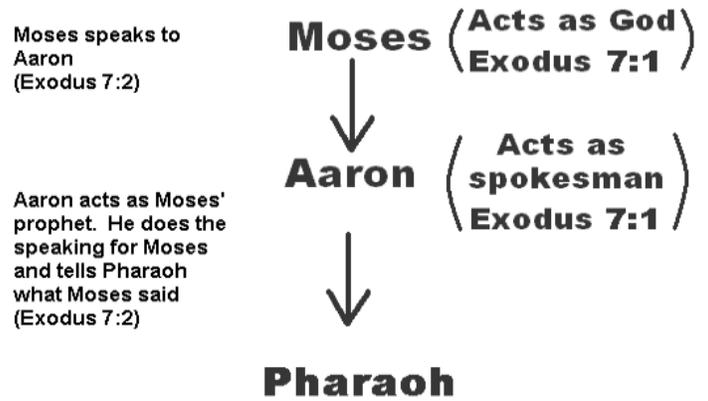
We can name some of the prophets, but what is a prophet? To find out, let's read Exodus 4:10-14. God wanted Moses to speak to the children of Israel. Did Moses want to do this (Exodus 4:10)? Was God pleased or angry (Exodus 4:14)? Who did God choose to do the speaking (Exodus 4:14)?

Now read Exodus 4:15-16 carefully and look at the following diagram:



We find the same thing in Exodus chapter 7:1-2. In these two verses we see that God had a message for Pharaoh, the King of Egypt. When we say that Aaron was Moses' prophet, what do we mean? We mean that Aaron did the talking for Moses. Aaron was Moses' spokesman or mouthpiece. He spoke the words of Moses.

Look again at the diagram:



Every person who is a true prophet of God acts as God's mouth. A prophet speaks God's message:



—Continued on next page—

Prophecy, continued from previous page

In Deuteronomy 18:18 God is speaking about His Prophet. Whose words are in a prophet's mouth? _____

What does a prophet speak? _____
 _____ A true prophet cannot say

whatever he wants to say and cannot make up his own message. Every true prophet should be able to say what David said in 2 Samuel 23:2: "The Spirit of the LORD _____ and His _____ was in my _____." God does the speaking. The prophet is just God's mouth. The prophet must give God's message. He must not give his own message. Just as our mouth only says what we want it to say, so also God's prophet only says what God wants him to say.

Look up the following verses and write down the first four words found in each verse: Isaiah 45:1; Jeremiah 19: 1; Ezekiel 38:10; Zechariah 8: 2. _____

Did Isaiah say: "THUS SAITH ME"? It was not Isaiah's message. It was God's message. This is why we call the Bible GOD'S WORD, and not MAN'S WORD!

What Was The Prophet's Message?

Sometimes we think of a prophet as someone who predicts what is going to happen in the future. God's prophets certainly

did this, but they also did more than this. Their main job was to speak God's message to the people. Sometimes God wanted the people to know about the future but sometimes God just wanted to teach the people His truth. The prophets would not only FORETELL (tell what would happen in the future) but they would also FORTHTELL (speak forth God's message and speak forth God's truth, even if it did not have anything to do with the future). We can see this by looking up the following verses. Read each passage and if the passage is telling about the future, write FUTURE. If the passage is not telling about the future, just leave the space blank.

1. The Prophet Isaiah	Isaiah 1:16-20 Isaiah 2:2-4	_____
2. The Prophet Jeremiah	Jeremiah 17:5-9 Jeremiah 23:5-6	_____
3. The Prophet Zechariah	Zechariah 1:3 Zechariah 14:1-4	_____
4. The Prophet Jesus	Matthew 23:25-28 Matthew 24:5-14 John 14:3	_____

In the next issue of *The Amish Voice*, in part three of this study, we will look at the tests to determine a true prophet of God.

END



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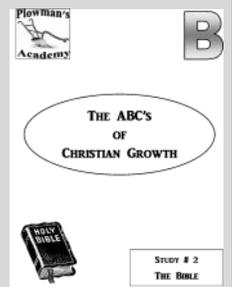
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At the turn of the Twentieth Century (over 100 years ago), one of America's leading newspapers addressed the following question to many notable people of that time: "What in your opinion is the chief danger, social or political, that confronts the coming century?" Salvation Army Leader William Booth, who was invited to reply to this question, sent the following:

I consider that the chief dangers which confront the coming century will be:

1. Religion without the Holy Spirit
2. Christianity without Christ
3. Forgiveness without repentance
4. Salvation without regeneration
5. Politics without God
6. Heaven without Hell

I think most religious people of the 21st Century would have a difficult time saying that these predictions have not been fulfilled to some degree. Let's look at each of these predictions, one at a time.

Religion Without the Holy Spirit

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. Acts 1:8

I have to admit that this one may be the hardest for me to discuss. Why? Because for most of my life I have participated in religion without the Holy Spirit. I still struggle with this – and I don't think I am alone.

Sadly, many so-called Christians and churches are nearly void of God's Holy Spirit. How can that be? We have grieved the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19). We refuse to allow the Holy Spirit to fill us and control us because we refuse to give up any control. It is impossible for God to be the driver of our life if we won't let Him have the reins. We know that God can take us farther and higher than we could ever hope to get without him, and yet we still refuse to turn our entire being over to him.

Many times when I have attempted to turn everything over to God, I became

frightened because I felt like I was out of control. That causes me to fight to regain control. I forget that God can't be in control until I am completely out of control.

Over the past 2,000 years, our religion has become much more political, social and institutional in nature – and much less spiritual. We are so busy "playing church" that we have squeezed the Holy Spirit out of church.

Most Christian societies have been involved with institutional and/or denominational religion for so long that they don't know any different. They don't know how to turn control over to Jesus and the Holy Spirit. They do everything by the book – but they are often using the wrong book. They adhere to many man-made doctrines and traditions that cannot be supported by the Holy Scriptures.

The church (group of Christians) that I meet with and have fellowship with on a

—Continued on next page—



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Dangers—Continued

weekly basis claims to be a Bible-based, New Testament church. Unfortunately, much of what we do (and the way we do it) doesn't even come close to emulating the church we read about in the New Testament. We may be better than some, but we are just as "institutional" as all the other non-organic churches. The Holy Spirit is seldom in complete control of our church and church happenings.

what might happen in your life and in your church if the Holy Spirit was in complete control? Most of us are afraid of anything that is unfamiliar.

If we were filled with God's Holy Spirit, we wouldn't spend much time worrying about church buildings, church finances and church programs. We wouldn't have to because the Holy Spirit would be in control.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:38

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Romans 8:9

DON'T GO TO CHURCH,

BE THE CHURCH.

In his book *Reimagining Church*, Frank Viola said, "*In the typical institutional church, the religious machinery of the church program is the force that fuels and propels the church service. Consequently, if the Spirit of God were ever to leave a typical institutional church, His absence would go unnoticed. The 'business-as-usual' program would forge ahead. The worship would be unaffected. The sermon would be preached, and the doxology would be sung. The congregation would go right along with the religious program – not knowing that the Lord had departed.*"

Who is in control of your life and your church? Is the Holy Spirit in control – or are you in control? Are you afraid of

If we were filled with the Holy Spirit, we would KNOW God – instead of just knowing about God.

The Holy Spirit is real and God wants us to be constantly filled with Him, but there won't be any room for the Holy Spirit until we make room. We need to get back to the fundamental teachings and practices of the New Testament church. We need to put God's Holy Spirit in charge of our individual lives, as well as the church we are part of.

I get goose bumps just thinking about what might happen if I allowed myself to become totally filled and controlled by God's Holy Spirit. I get even more goose bumps thinking about what might happen if all of God's people became filled with his Holy Spirit.

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30

I encourage you to read through the book of Acts and see all the *extraordinary* things that took place when just a few *ordinary* men and women became filled with God's Holy Spirit. God wants to do the same things today. He is just waiting on us.

Don't just **GO** to church;
BE the church

In the next issues, we will be looking at the rest of these chief dangers. In the meantime, let us look at ourselves and cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh (2 Cor. 7:1).

END

The Amish Voice

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Comments and Prayers Welcome!

1. If you have any comments, ideas, suggestions, questions, prayer requests, or might want to contribute a possible article for the *Amish Voice*, please let us know.
2. If you enjoy the *Amish Voice* and would like to help us with the cost of printing and postage or if you know of others who might benefit from the *Amish Voice*, please contact us.
3. Please pray for us and with us that we would all grow nearer to God.

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**The Amish Voice
Conference Call Schedule
is listed on page 10!**

God's Remedy For Today's Emergency

—W. C. Moore

A revival of righteousness is God's remedy! God has not made unsaved statesmen responsible for averting national disaster. He has placed this responsibility upon His own people. *"If my people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"* (2 Chr. 7:14).

Time is hastening on! The meeting with the Lord approaches! The time of reckoning draws nigh, when every one of us shall give account of himself to God (Rom. 14:12). Shall we not, therefore, pitch in now and get revival fires burning and blazing in our own hearts, in our homes, in our churches, in our city, in our nation, and around the world – without delay?

Christians, we are in an emergency. We cannot afford to be giving our time, our strength, our money to anything but to the one unutterable need of getting God on the scene in the power of a mighty, Holy Ghost awakening! Away with idleness, contentions, wasting precious

moments and priceless dollars on useless things. God help us! The hour has struck. The times are desperate but the saints are not! Let's agree (Matt. 18:19) from this very moment to call upon God, to stir up ourselves and take hold of God (Isa. 64:7) for a heaven-sent revival to meet today's needs.

How can we drift listlessly along, idly chatting with anyone we chance to meet, wasting, squandering the precious moments God has given us in which to battle through in real prayer for revival! Oh, to realize, once and for all, that if we do not shake ourselves from the deadening dust of our shameful lukewarmness, the Lord will spew us out of His mouth! (Rev. 3:16).

The Travailing Burden

"...As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isa. 66:8). We must have a revival of righteousness! We must have God on the scene in the manifested power of His might – in revival outpourings of His Spirit to meet this present day's needs. Wherever you are, never let the devil steal away your burden for revival until you have prayed

through and the burden is thus lifted.

It is in travail that children are born into the world, and it is in soul travail that people are born again into the kingdom of God.

Be true to the burden for revival that is upon your heart, put there by the Spirit of God. God would not put that cry upon His people for revival if He did not intend abundantly to answer as we steadfastly press on. "...I [the Lord] said not...Seek ye Me in vain" (Isa. 45:19). "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?...I tell you that He will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:7-8).

If you are born again, and do not have a burden for revival, hear this Word: "...Look on the fields...white already to harvest" (John 4:35; Luke 10:2). Look at the frightful needs, the souls en route to hell all around you, the people in trouble, the wrongs that need to be righted – and PRAY!

It is going to take God to change things, and God works in cooperation with His

Continued on Page 9