

Church of God, The Eternal

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December 1989

Dear Brethren:

Warmest greetings to all. We do pray and trust that you are well and are being greatly blessed of God. Often, and in very specific ways, we do remember you. You are a part of our very emotions and thoughts. May it always be so. And how often we do count on your continued prayers and thoughts of kindness.

A striking statement from prophecy will form the foundation of this month's *Monthly Letter*. We will not deal with the prophetic aspects, but only the spiritual implications which relate to all who are called and chosen of God.

Startling and revealing, God said: ". . . because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God . . ." (Amos 4:12). What are these things which God indicates He will do? To whom is He speaking? How do those factors relate to us in these last days? What would prompt God to give such a stern warning?

Why God Gave Warning

In verse 1 of Amos 4, God gives several reasons for warning His people (v. 12). The reason for these warnings might be reduced to human hardness. It is man's inhumanity to man. The successful in this world are calloused toward all others. Man's inability to remember his own first estate—for there is no man who did not at some point in time

begin at the bottom. Even the most successful, somewhere in the history of the family, most likely lived in poverty and want.

What did God say in verse one? He said: "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan"—human beings likened to cattle—"which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink." Not only were they calloused and indifferent, they desired to revel in their "superiority" over their fellow men. There is a form of meanness which surfaces in the successful—a meanness which grows with the increase of success and attendant power or control. Men are not well known for using their power and wealth benevolently. When carefully evaluated, nearly every charitable contribution has insidious strings attached. Some advantage is being sought. God is aware of the motive of heart and mind. He is incredibly distressed with the behavior of men.

As bad and odious as these physical traits are, there is a "religious" factor which is more deprecating, insidious, hypocritical, and worthy of condemnation. Notice the statements of God in verses four and five. Satirically God says: "Come to Bethel"—the House of God—"and transgress; at Gilgal"—the very place where the reproach of Egypt was removed from Israel and they entered into a covenant with God—"multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years: And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free offerings: for this liketh you . . ." Those called of God to be faithful to Him were using religion as a front to mask their real motives of idolatrous and rebellious inclinations. They appropriated the name of God and the place of worship—even the outward symbols of service—but their ways were ways of rebellion borrowed from Egypt and Babylon. In the pursuit of the physical—honoring the physical house of God, laying claim to their initial status as the chosen of God, and fulfilling the outward trappings of their initial religion, they had assumed an air of unusual self-righteousness. This forms the very basis of the indictment found in Amos 4. The above is the irony of God expressed most profoundly. What good is the honoring of all the physical when the heart is black and defiant. As Christ many years later explained, are not the concepts taught, the ways of life lived, and the relationships

practiced among the chosen of greater importance than the outward, the physical? One can be in the House of God and be a two-fold child of the Devil. On the other hand, one can, by circumstance, be forced out of the physical configuration and be right in heart and mind.

Israel's relationship with God had become ritualistic and perfunctory. They laid claim to the rights of Abraham, the house of God, and the physical duties—sacrifices, tithes, etc. But God was not impressed with their sacrifices and other endeavors. What were the consequences?

Consequences

Amos 4:12 says: "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel. . ." What had God proposed to do to His chosen people? What consequences were they destined to reap for willful, corrupt letter-of-the-law response?

First, they were going to suffer the indignities of want and hunger. These tragic circumstances were to be experienced equally in urban and country locations. They would experience cleanness of teeth (v. 6).

Second, hope and expectation would be frustrated. Not an outright drought; but the rain would come erratically, and never at the appropriate time in all circumstances. Hope and expectation shattered are far more devastating than even certainty of a negative nature. The reality of their evil and willful disobedience must be driven home. Negative experiences are of little value unless the source and purpose are recognized (v. 7).

Third, the frightening experience of insufficient water to quench thirst. Time will be spent in the urgent quest for water. Until one experiences the ravages of unquenched thirst, he is unable to comprehend properly the despair and fright such situations precipitate. At such times a modicum of harmony will prevail. Whole cities and communities will possess but one objective—the quest for water (v. 8).

Fourth, the very source of physical life imperiled. Crop diseases will be universal. Pestilence will rob man of all livelihood. Despair and fright will increase. Hunger and want will be everywhere (v. 9).

Fifth, disease and pestilence will be omnipresent. For physical man there will be no way to escape these ravages and marauding forces. They will have one appointed objective—the ultimate decimation of mankind. The experience will be terrifying (v. 10).

Sixth, war and its attendant afflictions. The basic security and hope of man devoid of an acceptable relationship with God will be rendered impotent. His instruments of protection and confidence will be taken from him. He will suffer from a society out of control. Time and desire will be insufficient to take care of the basic duties of cleanliness and order (v. 10).

Certainty Is Underscored

The physical universe is a living proof of the existence of a God. As the Creator and Sustainer of the mountains and the wind, God has the ability to bring all His words to pass. As the Creator of man, He, further, has the ability to read and comprehend the thoughts and intents of hearts. Based upon His knowledge of man and his evil ways, God will intervene with terrifying power and devastation. And when God thus miraculously intervenes in the affairs of men, they had best turn back to Him and repent of their errors and prepare to meet their Creator. Events occur for purpose. When things happen to us, we manifest intelligence and purpose when we carefully and honestly weigh those events and make necessary adjustments in our lives.

In a prophecy which covers millennia, God states emphatically He has the power to bring to pass all His purpose. See verses 12 and 13 of Amos 4. Man is destined to rendezvous with His Maker. What justifications will man give for his actions? How will he explain the many events which occurred in his life? He has experienced many things; yet, he has not effected change, nor ameliorated his orientation. Though man glosses over his wrong, deceiving himself, God says: ". . .

I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right" (Amos 5:12).

God's punishment for wrongdoing is inevitable. The very character and nature of God demands such action. He has the power to perform and His character insists upon the requisite intervention. His name is God, the Almighty. His perfection demands action. Wrong will be punished. It is more certain than those physical things which we observe and believe to be the base of continuity—like the rising and setting of the sun and the ebbing and flowing of the tides of the ocean.

What Is God's Appeal To Man?

"Hear ye this word which I take up against you. . ." (Amos 5:1). Words spoken are of little value unless they are heard—more particularly, heard by those to whom they are addressed. Only when they are properly heard can ameliorating action be taken.

The defense mechanism of man is subtle. When he hears what he does not want to hear, he will relate the warning to other people. Or, he will apply it to a different time. He will do anything to avoid the personalization of that indictment. The Bible is the history of Israel practicing such deception.

God's people are admonished: ". . . thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live" (Amos 5:4). In verse 6, God reemphasizes this necessity. Only by recognizing who they are and the fact this need is addressed to them can Israel ever turn to God and listen attentively to the instruction given. Those deceived by false conceptions will not, or cannot, apply the personal instructions given by God. Therefore, the first requirement is to gain the attention of those to whom the instructions are given. This is the awesome purpose involved in Amos chapters four and five.

God's people are instructed not to put their trust in the physical. In Amos 5:5 we read: ". . . seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and

Bethel shall come to nought." These were places of historical meaning to Israel. Here they form a part of a prophecy which directly relates to the chosen people of the last days. As we shall see, later, the people of God are doing exactly what God instructed them not to do.

The three concepts above should aid any person in coming to a knowledge of what to do when encountering problems in life. (1) Hear the personalized instruction of God. (2) Seek God with the whole mind and heart—see His will manifested in the events and circumstances occurring in individual lives. (3) Do not rely upon physical relationships—church, family, etc. Rely only upon the revealed way of life, as God required of Israel.

God's way is simple and easily understood. What, then, is the problem?

Attitude: The Real Problem

Does anyone doubt the fact God gave His way of life to Israel? They did not seek it through any form of personal study, human intelligence and evaluation, or through any capacity of the natural mind. The Truth was in a very direct sense given to Israel—even though Moses was a human spokesman. It came miraculously and powerfully.

As a gift from God, He required only that they accept it implicitly and be absolutely faithful in required obedience. Yet, the whole of the Old Testament is a singular chronicle of Israel's departure from the ways of that priceless gift.

After many, many years of warnings, trials, and persecutions—resulting from unfaithfulness—God had the following words recorded for the benefit of all called to know and understand the truths of the Bible. Natural men, once called of God, "hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly" (Amos 5:10). And further, "they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right" (v. 12).

The depth of their depravity is made clear in Amos 4. Here are people once called of God who, when afflicted with terrifying hunger, refuse to turn back to God. (Remember you cannot return to something unless you were there previously.) These are people of God who turned away from God—an apostasy—and refused, even under the punishment of hunger, to return to God. Terrible thirst and water depletion of the body is not sufficient to impel people—once called—to return to God (v. 8). Devastating destruction of all food supply was not sufficient to bring people back from self-appropriated doctrinal concepts to the real revealed Truth of God (v. 9). Even frightening disease epidemics and horrifying warfare were insufficient to compel people to return to their God (v. 10). The decimation of the people within the confines of the body, (historically the nation of Israel) did not prompt a return to God (v. 11).

The capacity of man to rebel is beyond comprehension. He feels so right in his own eyes that he is willing to suffer almost endless indignity for the cause of his spurious conviction. Until man is softened and the mind made willing, there is no way to gain his attention and help him to realize how wrong his ways are. Neither does he see the need of reform and a return to God from which he separated due to the "rightness" in his own mind. Hosea adds to this picture of obstinacy. We read: "As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame. They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity" (Hosea 4:7–8). It seems that men are prone to use numerical or economic increase as a justification for their actions. After all, they say, how could we be so abundantly blessed and increased if God were against us? Therefore, they continue unabated in their sins. Until God removes everything from such adamant and determined people, they will not return to Him. Notice how God inspired Hosea to state this concept. "They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the Lord" (Hosea 5:4). Called of God, they never did really know God. They diligently nurtured and cherished the self for too long. Until one recognizes the self, he simply cannot come to know God. The image of self is too large and obstructive for human beings to see anything else. As

humans, we remain blind until the image of self is removed. The very fact difficult times exist indicates the need for a response. Just what responses are indicated—as revealed by God? Amos wrote: "Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time" (Amos 5:13). It is amazing how difficult experiences in our lives remove the tendencies toward nosiness. Adversity forces us to focus upon the self. Even so, at times, the trial must be incredibly severe to cause some to forsake tendencies which are critical, self-justifying, and judgmental toward others. But, one thing we must remember is that the *will* of God will be accomplished. What God has purposed will come to pass. Nationally, just how much will Israel have to suffer before she returns to God, seeking His divine favor and compassion?

If we would be prudent, silence is golden. That in itself is the manifestation of great character (James 3). When the severity of trial reaches such an intensity that human beings lose the tendency to be hyper-critical, then, and only then, can God begin to work positively with them in the creation of divine character. It is truly amazing how much some of us will have to suffer before we will forsake the self and turn to God in an acceptable attitude of teachableness.

Further, we are told by Amos that we should "seek good, and not evil, that [we] may live. . ." (Amos 5:14). A little later we shall see what that good is. If we will diligently pursue that objective we can and will be successful in achieving the purpose of God's call.

Finally, we are admonished: "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate. . ." (v. 15). What is the good which we should earnestly seek? That, too, will be given just a little later.

The above three concepts seem to comprise the direction and purpose which God determined for His chosen. Though delivered historically by the prophet Amos, were His words recorded as mere historical knowledge? Or, were they recorded for the benefit of others at some future time? Inherently in the recording of the events of that time was there an indication of the time to which they would specifically apply? Indeed, there was!

The Time Element

In the latter part of verse 15 we see an indication of the applicable time. We read: "... it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph." A remnant is the last part. It is the tail-end of a bolt of goods. It is the final, or last, generation of a people. Therefore, we are addressing the last generation of a people called Joseph. Those Biblically educated know "Joseph" to be the nation of Israel. It is a people who continue to exist in these last days. Why? Because this is a generation of people who live into a period of time called the "Day of the Lord." In many places in the Bible the Day of the Lord is positively identified as the time leading up to and including the day of the return of Jesus Christ. An event yet to come. An event which many called (those outside of a basic knowledge of Biblical truths have no interest in spiritual things) are desirous of experiencing. Yet, tragically—in the ignorance of self-righteousness—they are seeking a time of extreme difficulty for themselves. See Amos 5:18-20. The very people who desire the return of Christ have convictions and practices, but in no case are these convictions or practices acceptable to God. What are the spiritual problems of specific people in the last days?

Spiritual Problems

A corrupted, perverse observance of the holy days: (See Amos 5:21). In these last days—the time of the return of Christ—someone is keeping God's Holy Days in a totally unacceptable manner. In fact, God does not call them His days at all. They are identified as "your" feast days. Historically, these days were adopted as the chosen people of God turned from the revealed Way given to them and replaced them with days that reflected their own concepts and ideas. Did not God originally give them His pure and uncorrupted holy days? If so, they initially possessed the Truth; then, due to human, carnal inclinations they turned from God, replacing His priceless ways with their own—their own feast days.

But that was Israel of old. The prophecy of Amos relates to specific people of the last days. Is there anyone who was given the Truth in the last generation—the remnant—and who, because they turned to their own minds, corrupted the original Truth which was given to them? More later.

In verse 22 of Amos 5, God further indicts the people of the last days for another perversion. As Israel of old had corrupted the intent and purposes of the sacrifices instituted, so in these final days someone has perverted the spiritual sacrifices required of the chosen. The sacrifices which the people make for their beliefs and convictions are not "regarded" by God. Since they are not accepted by God, all such sacrifices will be made in vain. How tragic is the cost of efforts made contrary to the specific will of God.

In verse 23, of the same chapter, God emphasizes that even their singing and music making is odious to Him. He asks that the very sound of their singing and playing be removed from His hearing. What an indictment when one is compelled to realize that his very religious efforts are anathema to God—man's Creator.

Of far more serious consequence is the fact they have departed from God—from the very ways which had been delivered to them. As explained above, the last parts of verses 6, 8–11 of chapter four show that those of the last days being addressed had departed and were sufficiently obstinate that they refused to return from their apostasy even in the time of terrifying tribulation. They refused to recognize the hand of God in the events and circumstances of their lives. They chose to look to physical circumstances upon which they made their judgments, that is, they looked to the physical body. Though totally apostate, the Jews of Christ's day made appeal to the same physical circumstances. Did they not appeal to their ancestry—that they were the children of Abraham, that Moses had been their leader, that the Truth had been delivered to them in dim antiquity, that the Temple still stood in their midst, and that God was their God? Yet at the very time of this appeal, they were disobedient to every concept which God had originally delivered to them. They failed to recognize the subtle

transition from the Truth to the pursuit of their own ways—resulting in a great apostasy.

God's indictment is found in Amos 5:7. Here He reveals: "Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth." Notice how they are accused of perverting both judgment and righteousness. Who? These are people living in the remnant age. They are living in our time. The prophet Hosea emphasizes the seriousness of the rebellion of these people in the last days. He records the very words of God: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6). The leaders of God's people rejected the Truth which He gave to them. They turned to their own ways. The result of this action is a rejection by God. They are no longer His chosen servants. However, the people, as we have seen, are unduly influenced by the physical elements of the body of those chosen. They look only to that which they can see. The result will be destruction unless, through trial and tribulation, those called and chosen return to God.

About whom are these prophetic statements made? The internal evidence points to those living as a remnant generation at the time of the Second Coming of Christ—the Day of the Lord. The Holy Spirit emphasized this point through the writing of the Apostle Peter. We read: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: . . . Unto whom [the prophets] it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy [Spirit] sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (I Pet. 1:10, 12). What these prophets wrote specifically applies to us—those living as the remnant, the last-day people chosen of God. Both Amos and Hosea wrote for us—for the chosen body and those individuals chosen to make up that body. Is it any wonder that Christ emphasized that man could not live by bread alone; only by applying the whole of the Bible, the totality of God's words, can man truly live.

Events of ancient peoples make up the fabric of these chosen to write cardinal lessons for us—the final generation.

Alarming events are beginning to occur—worldwide. Avoiding specifics, we can know that God is beginning to intervene in the affairs of men. With this in mind, let us remember the warning of Amos. ". . . Because I will do this [worldwide catastrophes—indicated in verses 6-11] unto thee, prepare to meet thy God. . ." (Amos 4:12).

As the central figure in the Word of God, Jesus Christ spoke of these same events and the very time in which they will occur. In Matthew 24:3, Christ addresses the issue of the end time—the time to which both Amos and Hosea referred. Then Christ spoke of the same events which were destined to occur. See Matthew 24:32-35. Christ addressed the inevitability of the events prophetically uttered many hundreds of years before their day of occurrence.

The apostles were inspired to write about the same religious events addressed by the prophets. As the prophets used historic events to clarify the prophetic, so the apostles used actual events of their day to make clear and emphatic the long-range events which would occur in our day—the time of the remnant, the last days, the time of the Day of the Lord. Note carefully II Thessalonians 2:1–3 and 9–12. An apostasy from the Truth was to occur in the last days, antitypical to those apostasies which occurred in the first century and the historical days of ancient Israel.

Why should an apostasy of such magnitude occur in our day—the last days? One Biblical statement should suffice. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "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 [demons]; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (I Tim. 4:1–2). Due to hardness of heart and mind, Satan and his assistants were able to bring about a deceptive and successful coup within the very midst of those who were originally enlightened and understood the Truth. Being now hardened, conscience did not trouble those so involved. Hypocritical justifications became the order of the day. God called these

justifications and allegations lies. The very people became careless with words, facts, and responsibilities.

At some general point, we are within the last days—the days leading up to the Second Coming of Christ. We are now facing the time of God's prophesied intervention—the time in which God will begin to do the things about which we have been warned. In such a crucial time, the only significant question is, What should we do to prepare for those prophetic days?

What The Faithful Should Do

A few times in the course of human history man has faced similar crises. When plummeted into those times, he loses his natural arrogance and obstinacy. He becomes teachable. However, the big question is this: Can we, as the chosen of God, learn from the lessons of history without the necessity of first-hand experience?

Remember the time when God appeared, personally, on Mount Sinai? At that point the people became completely pliable. They forgot everything but the existence of God and their personal relationship with Him. Their fear did not last long. Within a very brief span of time, they resorted to their old carnal tendencies.

Consider, further, the events occurring on the first memorable day of Pentecost in the New Testament—the day on which the New Testament Church—the Body of Christ—was established. Without reluctance and deceptiveness, the chosen of God on that day cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37) What was the resounding answer given by the inspired Peter? REPENT! (v. 38) Repent means to change—change the heart and mind (attitude) with which we were born naturally.

With that change there are two things which we can begin to accomplish. Both are essential to salvation; and the one is entirely contingent upon the accomplishment of the other.

In conclusion let us take careful note of both responsibilities. Since we cannot become something different from what we are

naturally until we have eliminated what we are by birth, let us comprehend what we must eliminate.

I. We Must Crucify, Mortify, The Natural Self: (Before reading the specific points, please read the following list of texts: Col. 3:5-9, Gal. 5:19-20, I Cor. 3:3, Mark 7:21-23, Jer. 17:9, and Eph. 4:22-31.) What are the manifestations of that natural self? They are emphasized one by one.

1. Fornication: Minds and hearts must be cleaned up from all the filth of sexual perversion and lust.

2. Uncleanness: God wants order, harmony, and cleanliness in all our surroundings. He has given us charge and responsibility. We are duty bound to be cognizant of our surroundings and the duties imposed upon us.

3. Inordinate affection: All relationships which have secret intent and purpose must be mastered. God reads hearts and minds. He wants purity to prevail in both organs.

4. Evil concupiscence: Sensual appetite, lust; eager or illicit desire. Blackened hearts must be washed with the nitre of God's Holy Spirit. We must become pure and clean, both within and without.

5. Covetousness: The secret, and sometimes not so secret, desiring of that which belongs to another individual. In every sense such desire is idolatry.

6. Anger: A lack of self-discipline. Allowing the emotions to run wild. A time during which a man is most vulnerable. Such a trait resides in one devoid of proper orientation, self-control.

7. Wrath: Basically the same as anger, but with the added traits of contempt, resentment, and grudging. Such wrath eats away like a canker.

8. Malice: The desire to inflict hateful revenge upon another party. Personal injury or suffering seems to be the only antidote for such an evil trait.

9. Blasphemy: Impious utterance or action concerning God or things which relate to God. How careful we must be with regard to our words.

10. Filthy communication: Some people seem incapable of expressing themselves without the aid of filth and abominable words. Our words must be seasoned and pure—well chosen.

11. Lying: Telling a falsehood, black or white. Sin is not determined by degrees. Wrong is wrong. Lying is a basic character flaw of far too many human beings.

12. Lasciviousness: Inciting to lust or wantonness. A trait which is veritably foundational to all advertising and promotional work in the business world. Because of the far-reaching influence of the media today, far too many of God's people have surrendered principle for the sake of conformity. Take a look at dress and many social customs of today.

13. Idolatry: Placing anything before God. Accomplished in a myriad of ways. Perhaps the most frequently manifested is "the-way-I-see-it" attitude. The personal will of man is virtually an insurmountable idol. How many ways can you think of by which man is entrapped in hopeless idolatry?

14. Witchcraft: Being mesmerized by the exotic, the unique, and by the desire to employ supernatural power and control. Man has always wanted to occupy himself in the present preserve of God alone.

15. Hatred: The emotional tendency to carry ill-feeling to extremes. Intense dislike, detesting.

16. Variance: Disagreement, dispute, quarrel. Such a trait can cloud harmony perpetually. It is a concept or trait religiously adhered to by some in the name of individualization. A terrible sin in the sight of God.

17. Emulations: Competition, rivalry. Such a trait is self-destructive. It is most injurious to the whole psyche. It is a rottenness to the whole fabric of the self. It is a loss of individuality and confidence.

18. Strife: Basically the same as variance. Conflict, discord. The exact opposite of what God requires.
19. Seditions: Disunion, dissension, division—holding contrary opinions. Incitement of discontent or rebellion against the revealed way. Any form of rebellious disorder.
20. Heresies: To take for oneself, to choose, or to prefer (something different from that given). To make choice, create disunion. An opposing opinion or doctrine.
21. Envyings: An ill-will, a detraction. Jealous spite. In general, a contemptuous attitude toward any other human being.
22. Murders: Defined in the Bible as any form of contempt toward or for a fellow member of the human race. Murders are first committed in the heart or mind.
23. Drunkenness: Defined as any form of excessive drinking. What is excessive? It is usually defined as that state which exists wherein a human being must have a drink. If you can take it or leave it, you are probably all right.
24. Revellings: Defined as turning loose of restraint and self-control. Carousing, rioting.
25. Thefts: Misappropriation of that which does not belong to oneself. Thefts occur in many ways. Failure to live up to an agreement is a form of thievery. There can be a theft regarding time, confidence, trust, duty—every area of life.
26. Deceit: Any act of concealment or perversion to mislead. Fraud, cheating, guile, or hypocritical falsity. God wants His children to be absolutely open and honest.
27. An evil eye: Regarding influence or effect, a countenance of contempt. Hurtful. Watching others critically. Culpability, viciousness, dereliction. A disgusting orientation.
28. Pride: Haughtiness. Self-aggrandizement. Self-satisfaction. Usually translated into a form of self-righteousness. A forerunner to every calamitous end.

29. Foolishness: Senselessness, egotism, recklessness, folly. Behavior which is not seasoned with decorum, respect, modesty, consideration, and self-discipline.

30. Bitterness: Acridity—vile contemptuous speaking. Language that does not grace the hearer. Rancor, ill-will, rankling resentment. A trait or characteristic which will destroy the whole being.

The above are the things which God requires that we master, overcome. They are the manifestations of the flesh and the natural mind and heart. Putting them out of our lives would be of little value unless we replaced the void with traits of an acceptable nature.

II. What does God ask us to "put on"? (Before reading the list of fruits which God requires that we possess, please read the following texts: Col. 3:10, 12-16, Eph. 4:24-32, Gal. 5:21-24, and Ph'p. 4:9.)

1. Mercy: A fundamental need of all human beings. That trait of God which rejoices against judgment. A deep, abiding feeling for what others are experiencing.

2. Kindness: Defined as usefulness in terms of moral character. Gentleness and goodness. A fine spirit. Right-heartedness.

3. Humility: Deprecation of self. Control of the mind and heart. Modesty, lowliness.

4. Meekness: Gentleness. Avoidance of agitation, resentment, volatility, hatefulness. A genuine and quiet spirit of mental self-control.

5. Longsuffering: A form of patience. Putting no ultimate end on the requirement of endurance, compassion, concern, and continuity of benevolent action.

6. Forbearance: To put up with, to suffer long, endure. The ability to keep oneself under consistent mental control. An evidence of understanding and compassion.

7. Forgiveness: Hiding the eyes to the weaknesses and faults of others. A mastery of the natural tendency to criticize. Holding no one liable. Manifested in the ability to treat everyone responsibly regardless of weaknesses and faults.

8. Charity: Being kindly affectioned toward everyone. An empathetic feeling of compassion and kindness. It encompasses the concept of love. Best manifested in the ability to bear the burdens of others, as God's love for a defective human race.

9. Peace: A lack of frustration, doubt, agitation. A settled, confident, purposeful mind. A manifestation of acceptance—conditions, circumstances, events, regardless of time, etc. Complete mental control.

10. Control of tongue: Using our vocal capability for praise, encouragement, honor, and respect to/for others. Avoidance of unsavory language, comments. Speech as designed by God was intended to extend grace and well-being to the hearer.

11. Tenderhearted: A benevolent emotional quality. The ability to feel a sense of compassion, regard, kindness for others. The exact opposite of self-righteousness.

12. Love: Akin to charity. An all-powerful characteristic. It is the very nature of God. Manifested in total self-deprecation and in honor preferring everyone else. That is, giving the benefit of all doubt to others.

13. Joy: The exact opposite of agitation, criticism. A buoyant feeling of freedom and benevolence. That enlarged feeling of abundance which can proceed from the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit only. Exuberance, excitement, enthusiasm for life. A good and acceptable mental orientation.

14. Temperance: Self-control in all things. Moderation. Manifested in the usage of wisdom, intelligence, knowledge.

Note: The above 14 points are best manifested in the fulfillment of the requirement spelled-out in Philippians 4:8. "Finally [the conclusion], brethren, whatsoever things are true [not presumptions, personal deductions or beliefs, only *known* facts], whatsoever things are honest [not concepts of a divisive or deceptive nature, only principled considerations], whatsoever things are just [not concepts of a blackened heart and mind, only morally clean, right principles], whatsoever things are pure [not concepts of gossip, contempt, hate, impurity, and murder,

only those of love, understanding, and deep compassion], whatsoever things are lovely [not the ugly, hypocritical lies, divisive manifestations, and fabricated beliefs, but manifestations of the loving and compassionate nature of God], whatsoever things are of good report [not the concepts or beliefs rumored about by minds and hearts devoid of love, compassion, feeling, and moral integrity, only that which graces and benefits those mentioned]; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think [the employment of mental forces and the consumption of time involved] on these things."

Finally, brethren, let us allow the words of the Apostle Paul speak to us powerfully and purposefully. He wrote: "For if ye live after the flesh [we have seen the 30 points of flesh manifestation], ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit [we have read the 14 points of spiritual manifestation] do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:13-14). "Let not sin [flesh manifestations] therefore reign [unbridled employment] in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield [to give in to the pulls and desires of the natural mind or flesh] ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield [give manifestation to the above 14 points plus all other spiritual fruits] yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:12-13).

How can the spiritual duty imposed upon man by God be made any more plain? If we are to avoid the indictments of God uttered by Amos and Hosea, we must act on the specific information listed above. Let us crucify the old self and then put on Christ. Both are essential. By so doing we will be preparing ourselves to meet God. If we do not make adequate preparation we will find ourselves under the terrifying circumstances mentioned by both Amos and Hosea. By the very statement of the Apostle Peter we know that the recorded information of both prophets is for our benefit—for those who live in the very days of the return of Jesus Christ.

Those who have ears to hear will act. That action will be manifested in the changed lives which follow.

Our love and prayers always. May we commend you to the continued work of God which He has undertaken in your individual lives? He does have a desire for the finished product. But, as in the case of a potter, He can work only with pliable and resilient products. Can we totally yield to His perfect will?

In continued heartfelt love,

Raymond C. Cole

Bryce G. Clark