

# Church of God, The Eternal

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December 2008

Greetings Brethren:

These times in which we are living, and will go through in the near future, will prove to be some of the hardest times that mankind will ever have experienced or will experience in the future. These words of the Apostle Paul to a young evangelist Timothy are just as true for us today as they ever were in Paul's day.

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them (2 Timothy 3:12–14).

In this world we are going to experience persecutions and trials, and we must be on guard. Make no mistake about it, this is the world of the Devil. What we are experiencing now is the result of almost 6,000 years of sin, and it is going to take our Savior Jesus Christ coming back to rule as King of kings and Lord of lords to deliver man from his mess.

What we see in the near future, just ahead, can be rather dismal and discouraging if we do not have our focus grounded in the faith and a love for this way of life—the truth—that we tenaciously hold onto despite all of the pulls to the contrary. If we will look just beyond the final days of the rule of Satan the Devil here upon this earth, the future is glorious. It will be a time when all of the pain and struggles of this life will be over and forgotten, a time worth every effort we now can muster to be loyal and faithful.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:54).

Those who endure and overcome will reap the reward.

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not (Galatians 6:8–9).

Even though contrary to our very nature, we must be very intense and determined to overcome and succeed in our calling. Qualifying means everything to us, and it translates to what our very future will be like by and through the help of God. There are qualities that we must possess in order to be able to succeed and enter into life everlasting. A soldier cannot be a good soldier unless he possesses real purpose backed with the courage to approach the call of duty with great determination to succeed. As spiritual soldiers, the called of God must have the same approach to being victorious in this spiritual warfare. We live in a physical world, but many of our battles are spiritual because we must answer to the spiritual laws of God. In Satan's world we are put to the test of whether or not we will obey or compromise the truth.

It is said that money is power, and that is largely because people trust in money and wealth. The majority of people are willing to do ungodly things to acquire it. The prospect of having money does sway people to compromise on principle in order to gain it, which they think can give them "the good life." People are highly motivated with the philosophy of attaining money and wealth. We are entering into a time when God's people could very well have to sacrifice and do without many of the things that most take for granted as normal.

The called of God do need to approach the physical things of this life much differently from those of the world. If God is working in our lives, then we can have confidence that we will be provided for as promised and know that all comes from God as He instructed the children of Israel through Moses.

But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day (Deuteronomy 8:18).

God did promise Israel great physical blessings—a Promised Land of abundance, but that came with the price of obedience and honoring Him as the one and only true God. The spiritual counterpart to all of Israel's physical promise of a promised land is the called and converted spiritual Israel—the elect that have been promised eternal life in the Kingdom of God. It is a spiritual promise that is so much more magnificent that it cannot even be compared to the physical. Seeking the Kingdom of God should dominate our thinking. Our being physical and having needs that are physical does tend to demand a lot of our thinking, but we can have control of our thoughts if we temper them with faith in the Word of God. God wanted to test and to prove that Israel would be obedient to Him before He showered all of those blessings upon them.

Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end (Deuteronomy 8:16).

Israel would have realized all of God's promises if they had been obedient. We too, as God's people in this end time, can receive all of God's promises if we are obedient to Him and do not let down in the heat of our trials and tests.

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me (Hebrews 13:5–6).

God's desire is for us to make it and not to fail. There are those in history who failed to be true and faithful all of their lives. Some failed toward the end of their physical lives.

King Uzziah loved the Lord, and God blessed him. Coming to the throne at the age of sixteen, Uzziah followed in the footsteps of his father Amaziah: he walked faithfully with God.

Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did. And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper (2 Chronicles 26:3–5).

Uzziah built strong fortifications in Jerusalem and equipped a large army. He gained victory over his enemies and acquired great wealth. But in later years his heart departed from God.

The king had received so many blessings from God that he apparently felt himself above the law. So, he presumed to offer incense upon the golden altar. But his plan was cursed. He became leprous and fled the temple, never to return. He lived out his life unclean and shut up in his palace.

And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the

LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him (2 Chronicles 26:15–16, 20).

Hezekiah began his reign as a man who loved his Lord. He cleansed the temple his father had polluted, and reinstituted the Passover.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done (2 Chronicles 29:2).

King Sennacherib of Assyria besieged Judah and did horrific damage. During this time Hezekiah became sick and realized that he was near death. While ailing, the king pled with God for more time, and the Lord heard his prayer: God destroyed the Assyrian army and granted him fifteen additional years.

The awesome delivery of Judah and his own miraculous healing should have fortified and solidified Hezekiah's relationship with God. But it did not. He became proud, and revealed Judah's confidential secrets and its wealth to ambassadors from Babylon.

And because of Hezekiah's vanity and indiscretion, God revealed to him that Judah eventually would go into captivity. Hezekiah repented, but his descendants continued the downward path he had begun until they marched into exile.

Our spiritual lives stand in the balance of how we approach the remaining years God gives us in this physical life. Our time is of utmost value to us. I know that I must be on guard constantly, because there is an enemy that has many deceptive and divisive tactics to which I certainly am not immune. Satan can get at any of us if we let down and let him influence us in any way. One of our hardest responsibilities is to make sure to put forth the effort to draw close to God and receive His power to fight this spiritual battle. I know by experience that it is a constant daily battle, and I hope to be victorious along with you.

Will we lose *our* faith in God and His Word? Will we become discouraged by the arduous reality of growing older? Will we become embittered because the church hallows the old proven ways revealed to us? Will we dwell too much on what we have or have not done, and feel it is too late to change the way we are?

Unless Jesus comes soon, we will all age and eventually die. How will our relationship with God endure as we go through this very hard and trying time in our lives? Will we, like Uzziah, Hezekiah, and many others, drift from the true paths into the unknown blackness of apostasy, immorality, or rebellion toward our Father who loves us and gave His



only son so you and I could have life and fulfill His desire of the work that He is performing in us? Will we remain faithful to Christ?

We need to make the Kingdom of Heaven our top priority.

But seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness . . . (Matthew 6:33).

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near (Isaiah 55:6–7).

Stay in constant communication with God. Jesus told His disciples that they should *always pray* and not give up (Luke 18:1).

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:16–19).

As we take God into our innermost thoughts in prayer and meditation, it is my prayer that this verse becomes our awe-inspiring and joyous reality:

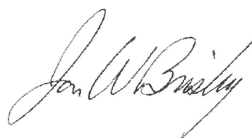
And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

May love and tranquility from God give you the strength and courage to never give up or become discouraged. When life at times seems very discouraging, may we all strive for the mastery of the self and be victorious. There is nothing that we may lose in this physical life for the Kingdom of God's sake that should ever have the power to move us from being grounded in the precious truth. I hope that we all have the courage to move forward and the character to never give up.

With much love, your brother and friend,



Leon S. Whitaker



Jon W. Brisby