

Chapter Eleven

THE PROBLEM OF SLANDER (11:1-33)

IDEAS TO INVESTIGATE:

1. What is slander? Why are preachers slandered?
2. Why would a man like Paul be slandered as “unskilled in speaking”?
3. How did Paul “rob” the Corinthian church?
4. What “disguise” did the “false apostles” use?
5. Why did Paul “boast” if doing so was repugnant to him?

SECTION 1

Unarticulative (11:1-6)

I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! ²I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband. ³But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. ⁴For if some one comes and preaches another Jesus than the one we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit to it readily enough. ⁵I think that I am not in the least inferior to these superlative apostles. ⁶Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not in knowledge; in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.

11:1-4 Unsophisticated: Although the word “slander” is not used in this chapter, that is the burden Paul addresses here. There is no lack of evidence that Paul was “slandered” throughout his life as a christian (see Acts 22:30; 23:28-29; 24:2, 8, 13; 25:5, 11, 16, 18; 26:2, 7; Rom. 3:8). The word “slander,” in Greek, is *diabolos*, or “devil,” (see I Tim. 3:11; 2 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 2:3). The Greek noun is from the

verb *diaballo*, “to throw through, to thrust through, to accuse, slander, defame.” There were “false apostles” at Corinth who had “slandered” Paul to the congregation there. These slanderers were probably Judaizers, who came from Jerusalem, claiming “authority” because of their origins. At the same time they were trying to “deceive” the Corinthians, by their “cunning” that Paul had not shown the proper credentials to be trusted as a “true” apostle. Their first slanderous innuendo seems to be that Paul’s approach and his message was too “simple” (“sincere” 11:3). Their accusation seems to be that Paul was unsophisticated and unarticulate. And how does Paul answer this slander? By a “little foolishness”!

In Paul’s mind, he was acting *foolishly* when he had to “boast” about his accomplishments in the ministry. The Greek word translated “fool” or “foolish” or “madman” (11:1, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23) is *aphrona* which literally means, “out of one’s mind” or “brainless.” Throughout these last four chapters Paul says he is doing what he despises. He apologizes every time he has to do so.

The only reason he now “boasts” of anything (he actually takes pride only in weaknesses) is that he knows the important point is not his own dignity, but the dignity and honor of Christ and his Church which is at stake. He is therefore willing to lower himself in his own eyes and do what was very distasteful for him in order to rescue these Christians from seduction by false teachers.

Satirically, he reminds the Corinthians they “gladly bear with fools . . . even if a man make slaves of you, or preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face . . .” (11:19-20). He begs them to grant him the same indulgence. He wants to spread only a “little” (Gr. *mikron*, microscopic, tiny) “foolishness.” While some people think of the humble, self-sacrificing and spiritually-minded preacher or missionary as a “fool” for “giving up so much” and being so “holy,” the same people “bear with” actual “fools” (false teachers) who tell them what they want to hear. Paul wrote to Timothy and explained why people are so “silly” as to willingly enslave themselves to exploiters, who seduce them with sophistry and insult (“slap in the face”) (see II Tim. 3:1-9) them. It is incredible, but there are people *eager* to be fooled or follow fools (see Isa. 30:9-11; Micah 2:6, 11; 3:5; I Tim. 4:1-5; II Tim. 4:3-5; II Pet. 2:1ff).

Paul was willing to stoop to the game of “fools” because he had a “divine” (Gr. *theou*, “godly”) jealousy for the Corinthians. He had “betrothed” (Gr. *hermosamen*, the word from which we get the English word *harmony*, *harmonized*, it means, “join, unite, fit together, marry”) them to Christ as a “pure bride” (Gr. *hagen parthenon*, “holy virgin”). Paul had not merely “engaged” them to Christ, he “married” them. He had united them in the ultimate relationship — humanity to deity, deity to humanity. There could be no better relationship to Christ. Certainly, the law of Moses could only enslave them — not “marry” them. If being “foolish” joining in the “foolish” game of comparing credentials and affectionate love would save the Corinthians from seduction, hesitant as he was, Paul would do so.

The spirit of the devil was at work in Corinth. That is the way Paul evaluated the situation. He knew the work of these “super” “pseudo-apostles” was like that of the old “Snake” (Satan) when he *deceived* (Gr. *exepatesen*, tricked, cheated, seduced) Eve in the Garden of Eden. The devil is *cunning* (Gr. *panourgia*, lit. “all-working,” adroit, dexterous, expert, artful, cagey). And notice where he attacks! He attacked Eve at the most crucial point of spirituality — the *mind*, the thoughts. That is why Paul’s statement about the “weapons” of spiritual warfare (10:3-5) are so significant! They all deal with the mind — overthrowing *arguments* and *proud* obstacles to the *knowledge* of God and taking captive every *thought* to obey Christ. The devil “led” Eve’s *thoughts* astray — he was about to lead the Corinthian’s thoughts astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. The devil would deceive the Corinthians through “his servants” who “disguised themselves as messengers of light” (11:12-15). John R. Stott says in his concise little book, *The Mind Matters*:

Faith is not optimism. Faith is a reasoning trust, a trust which reckons thoughtfully and confidently upon the trustworthiness of God . . . in Scripture, the deceit of the mind is commonly laid down as the principle of all sin. . . . Clear Biblical knowledge of God’s will is the first secret of a righteous life. . . . The battle is nearly always won in the mind. It is by the renewal of our mind that our character and behavior become transformed. . . . Self-control is primarily mind-control. What we sow in our minds we reap in our actions. . . . Men’s minds need to be fed just as much as their bodies. . . . And the kind of food our minds devour will determine the kind of persons we become.

The word *sincere* is from the Greek word *haplotetos* which means, "simple, sincere, open, elementary, unsophisticated." The devil was about to *lead astray* (Gr. *phthare*, seduce, beguile) the thoughts of the Corinthians from the simplicity of the gospel. This is the way the devil works. He does not now attack bodies. He brings no irresistible force to bear upon people. He plants *cleverly twisted thoughts* in people's minds by *words*. And he is expert at "turning" a word to deceive. He is adroit at using words to make falsehood appear to be truth. What the devil told Eve was clearly false. Eve was not defenseless. God's true word had been spoken to her. But what the devil's words promised was immediate and pleasurable "stroking" of the fleshly nature and Eve chose that. Satan deceived her into believing that what God had said to her was too simple! And any preacher today who proclaims God's word as the answer to life's ultimate and most perplexing problems will be accused of being "too simplistic"! People have been seduced by the master-liar (Satan) that life is too complex, too ambiguous, too paradoxical, too sophisticated to be lived in conformity to the Bible. And this would have been the argument of the Judaizers. Paul taught that living free, under the compulsion and constraint of infinite grace, was sufficient for joy and fulfillment. Peter said that through a knowledge of Christ and his promises God had provided *all* things that pertain to life and godliness and even provided the way for man to become a partaker of the divine nature (II Pet. 1:3-5). But the Judaizers said that was too simplistic — that Paul was teaching people to sin (Rom. 3:8) — that people need to be regimented under the laws of Moses to survive the complexities of life.

When the Corinthians were "bearing with" the "super" apostles, they were "bearing with" *another* Jesus (Gr. *allon*, another of the same kind). The Judaizers believed that Jesus was the Messiah, as Paul did. But they taught that Jesus came to establish Judaism, not to vicariously fulfill the law and abrogate it. The difference was not in the history of the person Jesus, but in the role he was to fulfill as Messiah. There are those today who do much the same thing with Jesus. While they admit his historical existence in the past, they reject his substitutionary death as atonement for man's sins — they present him as an example to follow in living a life of self-righteous goodness in order to be justified before God. That is "another" Jesus! It is cunningly and deceitfully constructed.

They were also "bearing with" those of a *different* (Gr. *heteron*, from *hetero-* "another of a different kind") *spirit* and a *different gospel*. It is interesting that Paul uses the word "spirit" (Gr. *pneuma*) in connection to his opponents. In the context he is talking about those who are *as* "the serpent" (the devil) was with Eve. In other words, the Judaizers brought with them (or in them) the "spirit" of the devil when they came to Corinth. It is possible, then, for people to have "the evil spirit" of the devil without being "possessed" in a "miraculous" way such as were the "demon possessed" in the Gospels and Acts. Demon possession was unique to the public ministry of Christ and the twelve apostles, but does not seem to have been a phenomenon lasting beyond the apostolic first century (see our Special Study on demon possession in *The Gospel of Luke*, pp. 153-156, College Press). But the main thrust of the devil's war against man has been to capture his mind (thoughts). If the devil can "lead astray" or "seduce" the mind of a person, he does not need to possess his body. The human body is doomed to return to dust. But the "spirit" (mind) is immortal and that is what Satan wants to bring down to hell with him. The devil can *get into* people without using demons!

There is no "gospel of another kind" in reality (see Gal. 1:6-9). "Gospel" means "good news." What the Judaizers preached was a "gospel" of law. Law condemns — it does not show mercy and forgiveness. But the Judaizers *claimed* that what they preached was the "gospel" of God. They *claimed* it was the only *true* gospel. Paul called their "gospel" the "dispensation of death" (II Cor. 3:1-18)!

While they were slandering Paul as unsophisticated — too simplistic in message — and those who accepted him as an apostle as "fools," Paul was implying that those who accepted the message of the Judaizers were being "fooled." They *submitted* (Gr. *anechesthe*, "put-up-with," endure) readily enough to the "foolishness" of the spirit of the devil, and the preaching of another Jesus and another gospel, so they might well put-up-with a tiny bit of "foolishness" from Paul!

11:5-6 Unskilled: Not only was Paul unarticulate because of the simplicity of his message, said the Judaizers, he was also unskilled in speech. The first thing Paul does to reply to this slander is state that he "reckoned" (Gr. *logizomai*, reason, think, reckon) he "came behind"

in *nothing* (Gr. *meden husterekenai*, "not inferior") compared to these "superlative" apostles (Gr. *huperlian apostolon*, from *lian* and *huper*, "exceedingly-beyond," or "super-duper"). Either the Judaizers were representing themselves as "super" apostles because they were from Jerusalem and had some credentials they believed were lacking in Paul, or Paul was using sarcasm in calling them "super." Perhaps it was both! Did they have credentials? Paul's were in no way inferior to theirs (II Cor. 12:12). Did they say they cared about the church in Corinth? Paul had shown his care was undebatable (11:2, 7, 8, 9, 28; 12:13, 14, 15, 19, etc.).

Next, Paul admitted he might be "unskilled" in speaking compared to the world's adoration of oratorical eloquence, but he was not "unskilled" in *knowledge*. The word "unskilled" in Greek is *idiotes* (from which we get the English word, *idiot*, *idiotic*). This word began by meaning a private individual who took no part in public life. It went on to mean someone with *no technical training*. True, Paul was not a graduate of the Greeks schools of oratory. He was not a glib-tongued rhetorician who could entertain, mesmerize, or seduce with words. He was not in that business! They accused him of being inadequate, unschooled, inferior and therefore, not to be listened to.

Paul never pretended or claimed oratorical skill (see I Cor. 1:17-25; 2:1-16). The gospel is actually "emptied of its power" by oratorical ostentation and philosophical sophistication. The gospel is *fact*, not oratory or myth. It is *history* — the eyewitnessed evidence of the incarnation of God. It needs simply to be reported, transmitted, announced — not orated! Jesus thanked God that his word was "hidden" from the "wise" but revealed to "babes" Matthew 11:25-30. "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so!" That is the simplicity of the "good news."

He was not "unskilled" or without technical knowledge of the gospel of grace! Paul had *made plain* (Gr. *phanerosantes*, manifested, cleared) *all things* (Gr. *pasin*) *in every way* (Gr. *en panti*) to the Corinthians. His "First" Corinthian letter alone makes plain every doctrine or practice or principle necessary to the christian life! We know he must have preached and taught many more words to the Corinthians besides those he wrote. They should never have been deceived by anyone who would accuse Paul of being unarticulate! He was able to communicate the facts of the Gospel well enough to convert

thousands of people.

One does not need skill or eloquence to communicate the gospel. There is a difference between being skilled in oratory and being skilled in knowledge. Preachers do not need eloquence, but they do need knowledge. People who are asking questions of the soul and spirit do not want entertainment or oratorical showmanship, they want soberness, seriousness, facts, reasonableness, concern, love and kindness. One may have eloquence with deficiency in knowledge and be inadequate for God's use. On the other hand, one may have knowledge and be deficient in eloquence and still be very useful in the Lord's work. Paul converted many people, though "unskilled in speaking," because he went where people were who had not heard the gospel, and taught it. He was not afraid to declare it wherever he was (to kings, philosophers, rabbis, to the hostile and the heedful), and to whomever he confronted. He was bold, blunt and believable. He was captivated by Christ and concerned for the growth of the kingdom of God. He was *urgent* and *unashamed*! What did Paul preach? Read the book of Acts. He preached Christ, him crucified, risen from the dead, judgment, repentance, grace, baptism into Christ. He had no time to waste on mythologies, politics, economics, the weather, entertainment, or fads and fancies. He traveled a lot! He wrote a lot! He studied a lot! He worked (making tents) a lot! And he preached and taught when there were opportunities and made opportunities where there were none! Knowing the terror of the Lord, he "persuaded" men (II Cor. 5:11).

SECTION 2

Unassertive (11:7-15)

7 Did I commit a sin in abasing myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel without cost to you? ⁸I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. ⁹And when I was with you and was in want, I did not burden any one, for my needs were supplied by the brethren who came from Macedonia. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. ¹⁰As the truth of Christ is in me, this

boast of mine shall not be silenced in the regions of Achaia.
¹¹And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

12 And what I do I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. ¹³For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

11:7-11 Undignified: Paul expresses shock! He had done something that made his detractors in Corinth slander him as if he had committed a gross *sin* (Gr. *harmartian*, “miss the mark”). He had “humbled” (Gr. *tapeinon*, lowly mindedness) himself and preached the gospel of God without cost to them! That is, he did not take financial support from Corinth (see II Cor. 12:13-18; I Cor. 9:15-18). According to ancient Greek culture, it was beneath a “freeman’s” dignity to work with his hands. In that society teachers were supposed to make money out of teaching. Augustus Caesar is reported to have paid Verrius Flaccus, the rhetorician, an annual salary of approximately \$500,000. Every town in the Roman empire was entitled to grant complete exemption from all civic burdens and taxes to a certain number of teachers of rhetoric and literature.

Paul figuratively “robbed” (Gr. *esulesa*, one who plunders openly and by violence) other churches (Macedonian brethren, see Phil. 4:15-18) by accepting “support” (Gr. *opsonion*, “meat, bread, provisions for an army, or a soldier’s pay”) from them. He undoubtedly worked at his own tent-making craft to support himself. This he did to better “serve” (Gr. *diakonian*, deacon, minister) the brethren at Corinth. While he was at Corinth, and needed anything — which he says he did — he did *not burden* (Gr. *katēnarkesa*, the word from which we get the English word, *narcotics*, means “to be numbed or torpid, to grow stiff, to be idle, to be in a stupor”) the Corinthians. Paul was no “dead-weight” or “dead-beat” at Corinth. He did not “flop” there.

But for his independence and self-sustaining work, he was slandered as “undignified” and “humiliating.” A “working-apostle” was humiliating to the church in the sophisticated metropolis of Cor-

inth. Some congregations in the twentieth century are "humiliated" when they have "only" a self-supporting preacher. Would they be humiliated if the apostle Paul were their preacher?

Paul promises that he will continue to refrain from burdening the brethren in Corinth in *any* way. He will not let his favorite method of ministry (preaching free of charge) be *silenced* (Gr. *phragesetai*, stopped, quieted) in the regions of Achaia (Corinth). His *reward* for preaching was to preach it without charging for it (I Cor. 9:18). Someone at Corinth had insinuated that his refusal to take money from them for preaching indicated that he did not really care about them. He did take money from churches who offered it. He would not ask for it. He declared authoritatively the right of preachers to be supported (I Cor. 9). But for some reason, known to him and God, he would not take money from Corinth. His love for them, however, was undeniable!

There is a great deal to be said for the advantage in a self-sustaining ministry. Most importantly, the self-sustaining preacher is free from the temptation to "flatter" and preach what the "itching-ears" of those who support him *want* him to preach even if it disagrees with the Scriptures. Second, such a preacher is perhaps in better "touch" with the frustrations and expectations of the "working-man" segment of his congregation. His industriousness and fortitude would be a winsome example to all the unsaved community around him. But there is also a great deal to be said for the advantages of a congregationally-supported ministry. Obviously, a preacher who is paid by his congregation ("get their living by the gospel" I Cor. 9:14) will have more "prime" time to give to the work of ministry (sermon preparation, "pastoral" counseling and visitation, evangelism, direction to corporate activities, etc.). Second, the fact of his physical dependence on the congregation gives the eldership and membership some spiritual control in his ministry should he go astray from sound doctrine. Third, it affords the membership of the congregation a keener awareness of individual participation in the work of the ministry. Individuals whose vocations and family responsibilities prohibit them from devoting as much time to gospel work as they would like may vicariously enter into this work by financial support of the "paid" minister. There are other advantages in both situations. *Both* methods ("paid" and "free") are scripturally sanctioned. It is for

preachers and congregations to decide for themselves. One thing is certain in the present financial status of American christians — they could *support* hundreds (even thousands) more preachers and missionaries than they are!

11:12-15 Unaffected: The trouble-makers in Corinth were demanding financial support, bragging about their stature in the brotherhood, preaching “another” Jesus, “putting on airs” with grand affectation. Paul was humble, self-effacing, always talking of his weaknesses, uneloquent, unpretentious, working for a living, proclaiming a crucified, risen Christ who saves by grace, so his enemies called him a “fool.” They convinced some of the christians at Corinth that Paul could not be an apostle because he was not like they were.

Paul replies, “I will continue to be what I am and do what I do in order to undermine (Gr. *ekkopso* “cut off”) the claim of those. . . .” Paul intends to expose and stop the “pseudo-apostles.” The only way to deal with deliberately *disguised* falsehood is exposure (see Eph. 5:6-13) and excision! Ray Stedman writes:

This tactic of plain-spoken exposure is missing in the churches today; many are destroyed because no one will stand up and confront false teachers. We are caught up with the world’s philosophy and anything goes. We must be nice to everyone, always. But the apostles never did that, nor did Jesus. Look at the sharp language he employed on occasion with the Pharisees. Right to their faces he called them, “snakes and vipers,” and “dead men’s tombs, full of rotting bones.” filled with an awful stench. That is not the way to win friends and influence people! Jesus set that aside and told the truth.

There would be no affectation from Paul. He would not disguise reality. Those slandering him were in reality “deacons of the devil.”

These Judaizers boasted they were “superior” to Paul. They “disguised” themselves so they might appear that way and not be found out to be what they really were — false. Paul intended to show that they were *not* superior but that they “work on the same terms as we do.” Certainly, Paul was not saying here that his opponents were on the same level as he was in Christ. In fact, he says they are servants of Satan! He evidently means to insist that the Corinthians are to judge his opponents on the same terms he is willing to have himself judged — to measure them all, not by one another, but by Christ and his word.

The Judaizers were “false apostles” (Gr. *pseudoapostoloi*, “fake-apostles”). They were “deceitful workmen” (Gr. *ergatai dolioi*, “alluring, ensnaring, baiting, workmen”). The Greek word *dolioi* is also used in II Corinthians 4:2 of those who ensnare people by distorting (“huckstering”) the truth — mingling the truths of God’s word with false doctrines. This is precisely what the Judaizers did. This was their “disguise.” Paul uses the Greek word *metaschematizomenoi* to expose them as “disguising ones.” We get our English words *scheme*, and *schematic* from this Greek word. They were *scheming* (conspiring and deceiving) against Paul and against the Church at Corinth.

But Paul said he was not astonished (“no wonder”) at this scheming of the Judaizers because even Satan *disguises* himself (puts on a facade) as an “angel” (Gr. *angelon*, messenger) of light. Paul uses the same Greek word (*metaschematizetai*) to describe Satan’s scheming deceit. The KJV translation into the English word “transform” is not exact. Satan is *not* able to *transform* himself into an “angel of light.” He *disguises* himself. The only thing Satan can do is *pretend* or deceive. He is only a *pseudo* messenger of truth. There is *no* truth in him at all (John 8:44). He has no power to really rule, really create, or really perform miracles. He can seduce, beguile and disguise himself, but has no power whatsoever to “transform” his nature. Plummer says, “Transform implies a greater change than is meant here, and ‘transfigure’ should be kept for *metamorphoomai* . . . *sunschematizomai* (Rom. 12:2; I Pet. 1:14) means ‘acquire an outward form in accordance with.’ ”

God said of the “serpent” in Genesis 3:1 that he was “more subtle” than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. The Hebrew word translated “subtle” is *aroom* and means “crafty, cunning” — it is translated into the Greek word *phronimotatos* (mental alacrity) in the Septuagint. Satan does not confront people openly and honestly. He will not represent himself as he really is — a liar, a cheat, a deceiver, and a destroyer. He confronts people disguised as one who wants to help, please, give, reward and make life exciting. He is named in the book of Revelation as “the great dragon . . . that ancient serpent . . . the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). Revelation also informs us that he has transferred his deceitful powers to the “beast” (world rulers) who, in turn, transfers deceitful powers to the “false prophet” (religious false

teachers) and to the “harlot” (materialistic, hedonistic, carnal society) (Rev. 13:1-18:24). The devil does not come to us in red leotards with horns, a tail, and a pitchfork. He comes disguised as invincible political power, as a religious “lamb” (which speaks like a dragon), and as an alluring, seductive, desirable companion (“harlot”) whose pleasures we may purchase and enjoy with no untoward consequences at the end of the relationship.

Paul actually calls those slandering him and teaching “another” Jesus and a “different” gospel, *servants* (Gr. *diakonoï*, “deacons, ministers”) of Satan. They had *disguised* themselves as “ministers of righteousness.” But their’s was a “righteousness according to” Judaism — according to the law of Moses. They were ministering the “dispensation of death”! There is *no* righteousness for man in law-keeping (Gal. 2:16). Man’s only righteousness is in the grace of God through Christ, appropriated by faith. It is inevitable for the *servants of Satan* that their end will correspond to their works — that is, they will fall victim to their own lies. They will lose their ability to tell truth from falsehood and they will victimize themselves! They will deceive themselves!

The devil and his servants are very subtle. They are cunning and crafty. They disguise themselves as messengers of light. But the christian has at his disposal mighty weapons through God. He has the weaponry to overthrow all obstacles to the knowledge of God — even the deceit and disguises of Satan! The christian’s primary weapon is the Word of God (the “sword of the Spirit”). The veneer of disguised religiosity is stripped from false teachers by the simplicity of God’s word. Their real character and methods are exposed in such passages as I Pet. 2:1-22; I John 4:1-6; Matt. 7:15-23; 23:1-36; I Cor. 15:1-58; I Tim. 4:1-5; II Tim. 3:1-9; Titus 1:10-16; Jude 3-23. There is hardly any excuse for a christian being led astray by messengers of Satan. The christian need only “prove” a teacher’s manner of life and his doctrine by the Bible and he will be able to see through any disguise of Satan or his ministers! It should not be “strange” (Gr. *ou mega*, “no great thing”) to the christian that the devil has “servants” who “disguise” themselves. The christian should not be surprised or overwhelmed by their machinations. God has supplied weapons by which the christian may not only penetrate the disguises of evil, he has made it possible for christians using these weapons to conquer and capture

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evil thoughts and bring them and the person who thinks them under obedience to Christ. But that means a christian must know the word of God, "think on these things" (Phil. 4:8-9), believe them and practice them. *If he does not he is ignorant and vulnerable to the "designs" (II Cor. 2:11) and the "disguises" of Satan and his servants.* David, the Psalmist, said it succinctly a number of times: ". . . the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psa. 19:8); ". . . I have laid up thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee . . ." (Psa. 11:8-11). And even the Lord Jesus himself, the perfect man, God-Incarnate, depended upon the Scriptures to defend himself against the deceit and disguises of the inveterate Slanderer (see Matt. 4:1-11). The Scriptures expose the schemes of the devil and his servants. Depend on them!

SECTION 3

Unaccredited, 11:16-33

16 I repeat, let no one think me foolish; but even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. ¹⁷(What I am saying I say not with the Lord's authority but as a fool, in this boastful confidence; ¹⁸since many boast of worldly things, I too will boast.) ¹⁹For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! ²⁰For you bear it if a man makes slaves of you, or preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. ²¹To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that! But whatever any one dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. ²²Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. ²³Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a mandman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. ²⁴Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea;

²⁶on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren; ²⁷in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?

30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed for ever, knows that I do not lie. ³²At Damascus, the governor under king Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, ³³but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped his hands.

11:16-21a Unauthoritative: The slander-problem Paul faced was fundamentally a challenge to his *authority*. His enemies charged that, according to their criteria, he had shown no evidence of religious authority. According to his antagonists, he was weak in his message and his methods. Their concept of an authority-figure was one who would move into a congregation and “take over.” Such an “authority” would suppress individual freedoms (enslave), exploit (prey upon), take advantage of, be high and mighty with (put on airs), and insult (slap in the face) people. An authority ought to be somewhat tyrannical and ruthless or he will lose his authority, they rationalized. A religious authority would brag and boast and exude self-confidence just like worldly “leaders” do, according to the Judaizers.

So Paul begins his treatment of this slanderous insinuation. In 11:1 he had satirically asked the Corinthians to “bear with” him in a “little foolishness.” He meant, of course, that he was not really acting foolishly at all, but that his opponents were and if it took that kind of foolish “boasting” to rescue them from the false teachers, he might condescend to a “little” of it. Now he says again, “let no one think me foolish.” The Greek syntax here is strong: *Palin lego me tis me doxe aphrona einai*, “Again I say, not anyone me judge foolish to be!” But Paul was not sure they could see through the foolishness of the false teachers and perceive the wisdom of his behavior. So, again,

he condescends to play the foolish game of boasting in "worldly" accomplishments, just to draw the Corinthians away from the Judaizer's death through legalism, and back to his gospel of life through grace. If they must have a "boasting" fool as their leader, let them "accept" Paul as that "fool."

The next statement (verses 17-18) is parenthetical. The Corinthians must be assured that he was not accrediting his authority, in the long list of boasting he was about to do, on some divine standard or command of the Lord. Not that the Lord would disapprove of Paul's method, but there was no divine order from God that he do it this way. To boast of "worldly things" (Gr. *kata ten sarka*, according to the flesh) was not the standard that the Lord had set up for his apostles. But since Paul's motive was spiritual and only the cause of Christ was his aim, and since everything he would say would be true (as opposed to the falsehoods of his opponents), he could righteously engage in this "contest" of boasting about outward appearances — as repugnant as it was to his soul.

Certainly, if the apostle Paul could, in good conscience (distasteful as it was to him personally), defend himself against slander by entering a "contest" of "boasting" about his credentials and sacrificial ministry for the Lord, it is a precedent that modern ministers may follow — when needed! Paul's aim was to protect the reputation of the gospel and the church of Christ. When slanderous falsehoods are spread about preachers (or other leaders of the Lord's church) the real target is the name of Christ and the church. It is imperative, therefore, that preachers (and other spiritual leaders) be above reproach in their living (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6; Eph. 4:1-5:33; Phil. 1:27-30; I Pet. 2:11-17, etc.). They must also be able, by knowledge of the scriptures, to "stop the mouths of the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9-16; I Tim. 4:11-16; II Tim. 2:14-19; 2:23-26; 4:1-5).

Notice again the *sarcasm* or satire used by the apostle. In verses 19-20 he really bears down! J.B. Phillips paraphrases, "From your heights of superior wisdom I am sure you can smile tolerantly on a fool. Oh, you're tolerant all right! You don't mind, do you, if a man takes away your liberty, spends your money, takes advantage of you, puts on airs or even smacks your face?" We wonder how this was received by all the members of the church at Corinth! In many modern congregations there would be some so "offended" by such sarcasm

they would withdraw membership! Not only that, they would “bad-mouth” a preacher who spoke such satire. But lying slander is such a serious offense to God’s spokesmen and has such *far reaching* evil consequences for the gospel and the church, drastic methods like “boasting” and “sarcasm” are necessary to defeat it.

Paul uses “biting” words to describe the stupidity of the Corinthians. They might as well bear with his “foolish” boasting about his work and his apostleship *because* they bear with the “fools” who are disguising themselves as apostles but are really Satan’s servants. The Corinthians were “fools” themselves (Gr. *aphrona*, “out of their minds”) for they were willing to bear with men who enslaved them, *preyed* upon them (Gr. *katesthie*, “devour” “swallow up”), *took advantage of* (Gr. *lambanei*, lit. “takes them”), *put on airs* (Gr. *epairetai*, “exalt themselves”), or *struck* them in the *face* (Gr. *prosopon humas derei*, “face of you, beats”). What “fool” but a religious fool would allow himself to be dominated, devoured, “taken,” humiliated and psychologically slapped around? What “fool” but a religious fool would think that the true “spiritual leader” sent from God is supposed to tyrannize people, use people and abuse them? Perhaps this is why many people reject all forms of Christianity — they have grown up under a religious system ruled over by “disguised” “pseudo-apostles” who have dominated them, “taken” them, and “slapped them around.” They realized they were made “fools” of and think all Christianity is represented by these “pseudo” messengers of light. Paul minced no words in denouncing the pseudo-messengers and pulled no punches in calling those “fools” who followed them.

Sarcastically, Paul concludes, “To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!” or as J.B. Phillips translates, “I am almost ashamed to say that I never did brave strong things like that to you.” That is sarcasm! Paul’s record with the Corinthian church (even his epistles) stood in sharp contrast to that of the pseudo-apostles. He did everything he could to free them from sin and judgment; he never preyed upon them or “took” them; he was before them in all humility; and even when he had to be “severe” with words, he did so to protect them from those who would enslave them.

11:21b-30 Unqualified: The Judaizers boasted about their qualifications and at the same time disparaged Paul’s. So Paul enters

the "contest" of listing qualifications repeating his disgust ("I am speaking as a fool") that such methods have to be used. How could a man who taught so much about humility be so boastful about his being a "better" servant than others?

Paul was humble. He taught others that humility is what Christ exemplified and what God desires in all men. He wrote, "Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves . . ." (Phil. 2:3ff). But here, Paul is counting himself "better" than the pseudo-apostles who were trying to seduce the Corinthian church! He considered such "boasting" the last resort he had to rescue the Corinthians. For the sake of the gospel and the Corinthians, not for his own sake, it has to be done. His credentials as the *true* apostle and *authorized* spokesman for God must be established. His true love for the church and the gospel must be vindicated. He spoke in plain, factual, historical terminology because he loved the Corinthians. He took no money from them and appeared to be unsophisticated because he loved them. He is even doing what grinds against his spirit (boasting) because he loves them. There are occasions, hopefully few, when true, humble, serving, working preachers have to "show" they are as knowledgeable, as caring, as able, as committed — and even more so — as the hundreds of pseudo-messengers of God. Too many people follow *messengers* rather than the *message*. Occasionally, the messenger with the true message has to "boast" of his messengership to turn the "fool" away from disguised, deceitful pseudo-messengers.

Are they Hebrews, Israelites, descendants of Abraham? So is Paul. His lineage was unquestionable! (see Phi. 3:4-7; Acts 22:3; 26:5; Rom. 11:1). His attachment to his Jewish heritage was unassailable. His love for Jewish people was close to divine (Rom. 9:1-5)! How many of the Judaizers would be willing to go to hell for their Jewish brethren?

Are they saying they are "servants" (Gr. *diakonoï*, ministers) of Messiah (Gr. *Christou*, "anointed one," Christ)? It is so repugnant to Paul to brag or compare himself with others he thinks of himself as a "madman" (Gr. *paraphronon*, "mentally beside myself," or "out of my mind") for having to do so. But he will condescend to "madness" so Corinth may see who *really* is the "servant" of Christ and who are pretenders! Paul gives an incredible list of personal sacrifices he had

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made already for the gospel. This does not take into account what he will go through in the remaining years of his life, some of which is documented in Acts, chapters 19 through 28. All the following took place before he wrote II Corinthians in 57 A.D.

1. "far greater labors" (Gr. *kopois*, toil, hard word). We know Paul "toiled" at tent-making (Acts 18:1-3) at Corinth and other places. Making tents from animal hair, wool, or skins would be arduous labor. What other labor Paul did we are not told. We do believe him when he says he "toiled" in far greater ways than his opponents. Paul appears to have been skilled in seamanship (Acts 27). Being a world-traveler he probably worked with his hands at many different tasks.

2. "far more imprisonments" (Gr. *phulakais*, caged, locked-up). We know Paul was imprisoned at Philippi, at Jerusalem, at Rome (twice). How many other times he was made a prisoner we are not told. It appears he "fought with beasts at Ephesus" — perhaps he was imprisoned there and made to fight in a Roman arena.

3. "countless beatings" (Gr. *plegais*, wound, blow — English "plague"). Paul had so many beatings he was "plagued" with them. He used the Greek word *hyperballontos* ("countless") which literally means, "thrown upon," or "piled high." This would include the Jewish "forty, less one" and the Roman "rods," plus "countless" others . . . so many beatings he had stopped counting.

4. "often near death" (Gr. *en thanatois*, lit. "in death"). Often in his ministry (at the writing of II Corinthians, approximately 15 years) Paul had been so near death he felt he was "in" it. It began at Damascus (Acts 9), continued at Iconium (Acts 14:5), Lystra (Acts 14:19), Phillipi (Acts 16:22), in Ephesus (Acts 19:30-31), at Jerusalem (Acts 21:31; 23:14), many times at sea (Acts 27; II Cor. 11:25-26), in times of hunger (II Cor. 11:27), in Asia Minor (II Cor. 1:8-9), in Roman arenas (I Cor. 15:32), during travel (II Cor. 11:26-27). He "bore in his body, the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17); he "shared in the sufferings of Christ" (Phil 3:10); in his flesh he completed what was lacking in Christ's afflictions . . ." (Col. 1:24). He was so often near death in the Lord's work he considered himself (and other apostles) as "men sentenced to death" (see I Cor. 4:8-13).

5. "five times . . . forty lashes less one" (Gr. *tesseractonta para mian*, the phrase is simply, "forty less one" which was commonly understood to be the "39 stripes" of Mishnaic punishment. The law of Moses laid down this punishment (Deut. 25:1-3) and decreed a maxim of forty

stripes. There was dire warning against exceeding the maxim. It, therefore, became a practice to stop at 39 stripes. The Mishnah says: "They bind his two hands to a pillar on either side, and the minister of the synagogue lays hold on his garments . . . so that he bares his chest. A stone is set behind him on which the minister of the synagogue stands with a strap of calf-hide in his hand, doubled and re-doubled, and two other straps that rise and fall thereto. The handpiece of the strap is one handbreadth long and one handbreath wide, and its end must reach to his navel (when the victim is struck on the shoulder the end of the strap must reach the navel). He gives him one third of the stripes on front and two thirds behind, and he may not strike him when he is standing or when he is sitting but only when he is bending down . . . and he that smites smites with one hand and with all his might. If he dies under his hand, the scourger is not culpable. But if he gives him one stripe too many, and he dies, he must escape into exile because of him." Five times Paul suffered punishment at the hands of his Jewish countrymen which could easily have killed him.

6. "three times beaten with rods" (Gr. *tris errabdisthen*, beatings with the lictors or "serjeants" [*rhabdouchoi*, lit., "rod bearers"]) — rods of Roman soldiers. These were rods of birch wood. There was no limitation on the number of blows that might be administered. Victims often died. Some were beaten until internal organs were visible through the torn flesh. The Romans often used this as a "trial by the rod" to determine innocence or guilt before further sentencing to death by crucifixion. Three times Paul was forced to submit to this torture. Had any of the pseudo-apostles experienced this in the name of Jesus?

7. "once I was stoned" (Gr. *elithasthen*, large rocks, not pebbles — English prefix "lith" [stone] comes from this Greek word). Paul was struck with stones by his persecutors so severely in Lystra, he was pronounced dead and dragged out of the city where his friends gathered around him and saw him rise up and go immediately about his work of evangelism (Acts 14:19ff).

8. "three times . . . shipwrecked" (Gr. *enauagesa*, from *naus* "a ship" and *agnumi* "to break"). Three times Paul went through the terrifying experience of a ship breaking up beneath his feet on the high seas. It would be three of those "countless" times he had been "in death." Being shipwrecked is being as near death as you can be. There are manifold dangers in such an experience: drowning, predators in the seas, exposure to the elements, dying of hunger and thirst.

9. "a night and a day . . . adrift at sea" (Gr. *nuchthemeron en to butho*, the phrase is concise, *nuch* "night," *hemera* "day" in the *deep*

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(*butho* from the Greek *bathos*). Paul's shipwreck experiences and twenty-four hours adrift at sea occurred before he wrote this letter and he was yet to experience the shipwreck recorded in Acts 27.

10. "on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers" (Gr. *kindunois potamon*, lit. "in peril from rivers" — *potamon* signifies "fresh water or natural water" and is translated "flood" in Matt. 7:25, 27; Rev. 12:15, 16). Rivers in Asia Minor and Greece were often in flood-stage and there were few bridges. Paul would have to cross these raging torrents at the peril of drowning or being swept downstream and dashed against rocks.

11. "danger from robbers" (Gr. *kindunois leston*, the word *leston* is related to the word *leia*, "booty," and signifies those who plunder openly and violently in contrast to *kleptes*, a thief). When Paul traveled the countryside was open to highway robbers (the road to Jericho afforded a place for men to rob a man violently and leave him to die, see Luke 10:29-37). While the empire of Rome had made significant improvements toward safety for travelers, the army could not patrol all the thousands of miles of roadway or the uncharted foot-trails traveled by Paul.

12. "danger from my own people" (Gr. *kindunois ek genous*, in peril from his own "kind" or "genre"). Jews were scattered over all the Roman empire, from Italy on the west to Persia on the East. They lived in their own little communities in every city and village. But Paul was not only unwelcome among the majority of his own race, he was "in peril" from them! It was not only a physical problem but undoubtedly a psychological problem for Paul as well.

13. "danger from Gentiles" (Gr. *kindunois ex ethnon*, "in peril from ethnics or nations"). Anyone who was not a Jew was an "ethnic" or "Gentile." Jews considered all non-Jews to be aliens no matter where the Jew lived. The Jews kept the Gentiles stirred up against Paul and his Christianity, claiming it was anti-Jewish and anti-Roman (see Acts 14:19; 16:19ff; 17:13; 18:12; Acts 24:1ff; 25:7; I Thess. 2:14-16, etc.). And, of course, there was a long standing attitude of contempt and malice from the Gentiles toward the Jews (and Paul was a Jew).

14. "danger in the city" (Gr. *kindunois en polei*, "peril in a city"). Huge metropolises like Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, Damascus, Jerusalem were over populated, festered with slums, disease, crime, prostitution, political corruption, conflagrations, and the ever present gladiatorial games which consumed thousands and thousands of slaves, Christians and others in their deadly struggles.

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15. "danger in the wilderness" (Gr. *kindunois en eremia*, "peril in the deserted places"). Areas between the cities and villages were called "deserts" because they were deserted — uninhabited. These "deserts" were often expansive and required many nights "camping out" in them where there was no civilization. They were populated by wild beasts and robbers. There were no shelters, no stores, no human help available. Paul was *often* in peril traveling through such wilderness. Modern missionaries find such situations even today in many "backward" countries.

16. "danger at sea" (Gr. *kindunois en thalasse*). This was discussed in the statements on "shipwreck" No. 8 and "night-day adrift" No. 9.

17. "danger from false brethren" (Gr. *kindunois en pseudadelphois*, "peril in pseudo-brethren"). Paul specifically mentions "false brethren" in his epistle to the Galatians (Gal. 2:4) who "secretly . . . slip in to spy out our freedom . . . that they might bring us into bondage. . . ." He warned the elders from Ephesus that there would be men "from among your own selves . . . arise . . . speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them . . ." (Acts 20:29-30). A true brother would not imperil — only a false brother would pose danger to a christian minister. Evidently there would be "false brethren" in many places to make Paul list them as perils. Jesus warned his apostles "brother would deliver up brother" among them (Matt. 10:16-25). People posing as followers of Christ were slipping into the congregations in order to bring them under Judaism, perhaps to betray them to civil authorities after Christianity began to be persecuted by the Romans.

18. "in toil and hardship through many a sleepless night" (Gr. *kopo . . . mochtho . . . agrupniais pollakis*, "in tiredness and painfulness and sleeplessness many times"). The Greek word *agrupniais* is from *agreuo*, "to chase," and *hupnos*, "sleep." Paul lost many nights of sleep due to being so tired and pain-wracked in body he could not sleep. He was often what we call "bone-weary." When one considers all he has said to this point, one wonders how he could possibly get his body to go on taking the punishment it did after he wrote this letter. There must have been many days when he wondered if he could physically continue to climb mountains, ford flooded rivers, sleep out in the cold nights, go without food, take beatings, shipwrecks, imprisonments, and stay alive! AND WITH ALL THIS HE WAS "WELL PLEASED" (see comments on 12:10).

19. "in hunger and thirst, often without food" (Gr. *en limo kai dipsei en nesteiais pollakis*, the Greek word *limo* means "famine" or

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“hunger” not self-imposed; *nesteiais* is translated “fastings” and could mean self-imposed abstinence from food for some spiritual reason. Paul did fast (Acts 9:9; probably in Acts 21:26; probably in Gal. 1:17). The word *nesteiais* could also mean “hunger” from famine or lack of food available. The word *dipsei* (see the English word *dipsomania*) always means *thirst*. And Paul says he was “often” in such straits.

20. “in cold and exposure” (Gr. *en psuchei kai gumnoteti*, “cold and naked”). The word *gumnoteti* is stronger than the English word “exposure.” While Paul was undoubtedly often exposed to the elements of nature out in the wilderness areas, this word indicates he may have often been “stripped of all clothing” in certain circumstances. Shipwrecked, he might lose his clothing, imprisoned it might have been taken away from him, when he was being beaten he would be stripped. And taken in conjunction with the word *psuchei*, “cold,” it probably means there were many times when his clothing was not sufficient to keep him from being very cold.

21. “. . . daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches . . .” (Gr. *he epistasis moi he kath hemeran he merimna pason ton ekklesion*) *Epistasis* literally means, “standing upon, or burdened upon” me. *Merimna* means “divided mind” or “anxiousness” — it is the same word Jesus warned against in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:22-34). Jesus told us we should not be “anxious” — but about what? He meant not to be anxious about matters of the flesh! Paul had “learned” to be content in whatever state of the flesh he found himself (Phil. 1:20-23; Acts 25:11; II Tim. 4:6-8). But he was pressured or “burdened” and “mentally distracted” about the churches! Paul’s “care” for the churches was a *daily* affair (*hemeran*), not monthly or annually. It was a burden he carried each day (and sleepless night). It kept his mind occupied. His thoughts were constantly distracted to the trouble of the churches. He cared about their persecutions. He cared about their divisiveness. He cared about the false teachers seducing them. He cared about their need for spiritual growth. He cared about their need to give. It is not wrong to occupy our minds with cares and pressures of the church and spiritual things. Jesus wants us to be “distracted” *from* the things of the world and “attracted” to the things of the Spirit! If we worried and fretted and cared half as much about spiritual things as we do about physical things, thousands more people would hear the gospel and thousands more parents would direct their children to be preachers and missionaries. *Concern* for the church is not a lack of faith!

Concluding this long list of weaknesses and perils, Paul declares his credentials as a true apostle are found in his “scars.” He asks the

rhetorical question, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?" In other words, he would have the Corinthians (and his opponents there) understand that the sign of true allegiance to Christ inevitably produces "weaknesses and perils." He is a full participant in these marks of the true servant of Christ. Paul always taught that "weakness" (as the world thinks of weakness) is the way of the christian (see I Cor. 8:11-12; 9:22; Rom. 14:1-2). His second question has two interesting Greek words — *skandalizetai* ("fall" or "stumble") and *pyroumai* ("indignant" or "burn"). He is thinking of the Judaizing slanderers who have been trying to seduce the Corinthians by their false teaching. They would be causing the Corinthians to "fall" from grace by going back to the law of Moses and they would be "boasting" in the strength of fleshly self-righteousness. This would make Paul, whose gospel was that of the weakness of the flesh and the power of grace, "burn" with indignation.

11:30-33 Unassuming: Paul's approach to the ministry, especially the apostolic ministry, is incredible in the light of the world's view of religion. He *summarizes* in these verses his whole philosophy of evaluating a person's service to the Lord! And he says, "If I must boast (compare my ministry to others) I will boast of things that showed my weaknesses."

The Lord gave a signal about "weakness" in ministry at the very beginning of Paul's service. Paul refers to the time he was let down over the wall in a basket. After his conversion he was obsessed with showing the *Jews* that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament and of converting the Jewish nation! He was eminently qualified for this ministry to the *Jews*. That was his burning desire (Rom. 9:2-3). So he started out to do it (Acts 9:1-31) but things kept falling apart until they reached such a terrible state that his friends, fearing for his life, took him out to the Damascus wall and let him down from the city in a basket. "The night I had to sneak out of Damascus . . . that is the event I boast about," he says.

Isn't that interesting? Looking back, with all his *own* plans and dreams of conquest and glory for Christ collapsed around his feet, that was the night he began to learn a great truth: self-made men and self-made plans are not what qualify a person as a servant of Christ.

Today's world is being swamped with the philosophy that such

things are what make us usable as christians (a strong personality, an outgoing, optimistic outlook, gifts of leadership, handsome frame and body, musical ability, speaking ability). All these are the things that some people believe are prime prerequisites for ministry. But Paul says *that is a mistake. God uses weakness!* All the physical, outward attributes Paul once counted gain he decided were nothing but a pile of manure in contrast to what he learned in *weaknesses*.

There is no truth the Lord wants us to learn which is greater than this! The opponent of Paul at Corinth slandered him as “weak.” Paul replies, “I gladly boast of my weaknesses . . . I am content with them (ch. 12). Strengths without Christ’s sovereignty over us are garbage — weaknesses with Christ are priceless jewels!

Slander. Untrue aspersions. Censorious criticisms about lack of ego, personality-power, and sophistication. How should a preacher deal with it? By accepting in faith that the Lord will one day vindicate his faithfulness. And, when necessary for the preservation of Christ’s honor and the church’s stability, by “boasting” of his weaknesses as they have been of service to the Lord in toil, peril, and hardship.

APPREHENSION:

1. Did Paul really intend to act like a “fool”? How is he using the word “foolishness”?
2. What does the word “betrothed” mean as Paul used it about his relationship to the Corinthian church?
3. Where did the devil (serpent) direct his attack upon Eve?
4. How could someone preach “another” Jesus?
5. What was the “different” spirit some were receiving?
6. Was Paul “unskilled” in speaking? What did he say about that in I Corinthians?
7. Why did Paul preach the gospel to the Corinthians without “cost”?
8. How did Paul support himself while he preached at Corinth?
9. How did his preaching free of charge “undermine” the false teachers in Corinth?
10. Where does the word “disguise” come from in this text?
11. How does a “servant of Satan” disguise himself?

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12. Why did the Corinthians “bear with” those who enslaved them?
13. What do you know about Paul’s Jewish lineage? Why did he recite it here?
14. How many times did Paul suffer “beatings”? What kind of beatings were they?
15. How many times did he experience being shipwrecked?
16. Name 7 “perils” Paul faced.
17. In addition to all these, what psychological burdens did he bear? How often?
18. Why does he relate the story about his sneaking out of Damascus in a basket?

APPLICATION:

1. Why is it “foolishness” to compare one’s “accomplishments” in the ministry? Is it ever *not* “foolish”? How can you be sure about practicing it?
2. When you win someone to Christ do you feel like you have played the part of the Bridegroom’s friend in “betrothing” them to Christ? Have you ever been instrumental in “betrothing” anyone to Christ?
3. What is significant about Paul’s information that the devil (serpent) attacked Eve’s *thoughts*? Do you now see how important it is to “bring every thought captive to obedience to Christ”? (II Cor. 10:3-5). What is your congregation doing to bring people’s “thoughts” captive to Christ?
4. If people (like the Corinthians) receive the “spirit” of false teachers, whose “spirit” are they receiving? Can the evil spirit of Satan inhabit people without the phenomenon of demon possession? Isn’t that Satan’s most important method? Why? Do you know any “Satan-spirited possessed” people now?
5. Are you “unskilled in speaking”? Should that hinder you from speaking the gospel to others? What do you need to say to speak the gospel? How do you need to say it? Why can’t you?
6. What are the advantages of self-supporting preachers? Disadvantages? Which do you think would make the kingdom of Christ grow most? Why?

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7. Are there religious leaders in the world today claiming to be "apostles" of Christ? Who? Are they? Why? What should be done about their claims?
8. Have you discovered any messengers of Satan in disguise recently? Who? What did you do about it? Are you obligated to warn others about it?
9. Is it alright to use sarcasm? When?
10. What do you think of all the perils and difficulties Paul went through to preach the gospel? What do you think of Paul?
11. How would you compare in self-sacrifice with Paul? Does his example make you want to do more for Jesus? Will you?
12. Is it alright to be "pressured" and "anxious" about the church? Are you?
13. Why has Paul made such a point to list all his "weaknesses" and "troubles"?
14. Do you really believe the man of God's credentials are his "weaknesses"?
15. What would you do if a man like the apostle Paul became the preacher at your church? Would you run him down, slander his credentials and methods? Would you admire him and work with him?

Special Study

A WATCHMAN FOR GOD

“And at the end of seven days, the word of the Lord came to me: ‘Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me.’ ” Ezek. 3:16-17

Introduction

Some two thousand, five hundred years ago, a young Hebrew priest was taken as a Prisoner of War (POW) to a city and land far away from his homeland. Thousands of his countrymen were taken there with him. Some had already preceded them there. They were not tortured or starved to death by their conquerors. Some of them had risen to places of great prominence in the government of their conquerors.

But they were thrust into a culture and circumstances that reeked of idolatry and lasciviousness. The Hebrew people had been enamored of idolatry and wickedness and playing with it for 400 years, ever since the divided kingdom. Now God has shaken them among the nations (Goyim) like one shakes a sieve. If they think idolatry and worldliness is the reason for man’s existence, God will give them a full blast of it. He will let them see it “up close and personal”! God is risking his reputation on this experiment. Many, in fact all, will have the choice of either embracing the idolatry which surrounds them and beckons so alluringly, or they may reject it. But what is the other choice? That is what the watchman was called to do — proclaim the other choice. The other choice is redemption thru faith and obedience to God.

You see, God, ever since the tragedy of Eden, had been promising to redeem man from his self-made destruction — and God had promised to do it by A Man! First, he started the human race over through one man and his family; out of that man’s seed, and through that nation, God intended to produce the *perfect man*. He would redeem the world.

And for the moment, some 2500 years ago, the whole redemptive process falls upon the shoulders of a few, faithful, courageous watchmen like this priest-prophet. If a remnant of faithful people are to be saved from this wicked, blasphemous world, it will be through these

few watchmen. Their's is an almost overwhelming responsibility. It will take total trust in the word of God and total commitment to the call of God. Whom shall God send, who will go for him, and be a *watchman*? BY NOW YOU KNOW I'M TALKING ABOUT EZEKIEL, THE PRIEST, THE PROPHET, THE *WATCHMAN*

- I. SEE THE GLORY OF GOD, Ezek. ch. 1 (also 3:22-23, and 10:1-22)
 - A. See God's Control
 1. Ezekiel was given a great mental vision of the Almighty God enthroned above all his creation. It showed God in control of all animate and inanimate creation (the creatures and the wheels).
 2. At great crises in the history of redemption, God called certain men aside and gave them such visions of his majestic glory (Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, John the apostle in the Revelation, Zechariah)
 3. At a critical point in the calling of the apostles the Lord Jesus took three of them aside, up to the mountain top, and there he let them see himself transfigured in all his divine glory.

IF EVER GOD SHALL HAVE A MAN TO BE A WATCHMAN, HE MUST BE A MAN WHO HAS SEEN THE MAJESTIC GLORY OF GOD IN CONTROL OF ALL CREATION, IN CONTROL OF ALL CIRCUMSTANCES AND ALL OF IT WORKING TO GOD'S GLORY! THAT IS WHAT EZEKIEL SAW OF HIS PEOPLE'S CIRCUMSTANCES . . . GOD IN CONTROL . . . GOD WORKING THEM TO SERVE HIS PURPOSES! THEN HE WAS SENT TO TELL THE PEOPLE WHAT HE HAD SEEN OF THE GLORY OF GOD!

One of the reasons there aren't more watchmen for God today is God's people have not seen the glory of God!

J.B. Phillips says in his little book, *Your God Is Too Small*: "The trouble with many people today is that they have not found a God big enough for modern needs. While their experience of life has grown in

a score of directions, and their mental horizons have been expanded to the point of bewilderment by world events and by scientific discoveries, their idea of God have remained largely static. It is obviously impossible for an adult to worship the conception of God that exists in the mind of a child of Sunday-school age, unless he is prepared to deny his own experience of life . . . he worships or serves a God who is really too small to command his adult loyalty and cooperation.”

“If it is true that there is Someone in charge of the whole mystery of life and death, we can hardly expect to escape a sense of futility and frustration until we begin to see what He is like and what His purposes are.”

B. See God's Character

1. One of the things Ezekiel saw in this great vision was the rainbow surrounding the throne of the Almighty God. John the Apostle saw the same rainbow (Rev. 4:3).
THE RAINBOW IS, OF COURSE, SYMBOLIC OF GOD'S GREATEST CHARACTERISTIC . . . HIS FAITHFULNESS!
2. Ezekiel saw that God was being faithful to his promises even in the circumstances surrounding him. Faithfulness is the foundation of all goodness. Without faithfulness, words are false and not to be trusted — deeds are exploitative and unloving. Faithfulness is love in action.
3. This is what God kept telling his people century after century through the patriarchs and the prophets . . . I WILL KEEP MY WORD . . . I AM FAITHFUL . . . I DO LOVE YOU . . . I AM REDEEMING YOU.

C. See God's Son

1. People today clamor for what they think would turn them to God . . . a *vision* of God's glory like Ezekiel, or Isaiah, or Zechariah or John the apostle. THEY WANT A MIRACLE TO HAPPEN OR THEY DO NOT THINK THEY CAN SEE THE GLORY OF GOD.
2. Yet the N.T. tells us clearly that we may see the glory of God in Jesus, through the *word* of the apostles.

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Peter: "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,' we heard this voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

AND PETER CONTINUES TO INSIST IN THE WORDS FOLLOWING THESE THAT CHRISTIANS ARE TO SEE THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE INSPIRED WORDS OF THE SCRIPTURES (II Pet. 1:16-21).

John: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life — the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us — that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, *so that you may have fellowship with us*; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ . . ." I John 1:1-4.

Paul: Talking about the New Covenant Word which he had planted in the hearts of the Corinthians said: And we all, with unveiled face, *beholding the glory of the Lord*, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" II Cor. 3:17-18.

SEEING THE GLORY OF GOD IN HIS SON, THROUGH THE WORD OF THE APOSTLES IS BETTER THAN SEEING IT IN A VISION. JESUS SAID TO THOMAS, "HAVE YOU BELIEVED BECAUSE YOU HAVE SEEN ME . . . BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN AND YET BELIEVE."

A WATCHMAN FOR GOD

THAT IS WHAT OZARK CHRISTIAN COLLEGE EXISTS FOR . . . TO MAKE WATCHMEN . . . TO COMMUNICATE FROM THE WORD, THE GLORY OF GOD. THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE HERE FOR . . . TO SEE THAT GLORY! REMEMBER WHAT REUBEL SHELLY SAID NOT TOO LONG AGO IN THIS VERY CHAPEL ABOUT MORE STUDY OF THE GOSPELS . . . MORE PREACHING FROM THE GOSPELS!

The man who fanned into flame the great revival of the 18th century in America . . . called the Great Awakening . . . a contemporary of the American Revolution . . . Jonathan Edwards was suddenly converted, in the moment of reading a single verse of the N.T. He was at home in his father's house; some hindrances kept him from going to church one Sunday with the family. A couple of hours with nothing to do sent him listlessly into the library; the sight of a dull volume with no title on the leather back of it evoked curiosity as to what it could be; he opened it at random and found it to be a Bible; and then his eye caught this verse: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen!"

He tells us in his journal that the immediate effect of it was awakening and alarming to his soul: for it brought him a most novel and most extensive thought of the vastness and majesty of the true Sovereign of the universe. Out of this grew the pain of guilt for having resisted such a Monarch so long, and for having served Him so poorly.

GOD MUST HAVE WATCHMEN. BUT FIRST THEY MUST SEE HIS GLORY. HIS GLORY IS ALL AROUND MANKIND . . . IT IS IN THE STARS, IN THE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE . . . BUT THE GLORY THAT MAKES MEN INTO WATCHMEN IS SEEN IN HIS SON, THROUGH THE WORD WHERE HE IS BEHELD WITH THE EYE OF FAITH, NOT OF FLESH!

II. SPEAK THE WORD OF GOD, Ezek. ch. 2 & 3

A. No Matter What It Says

1. Ezekiel was given a scroll to eat and told to eat what was offered AND THEN TO GO SPEAK TO THE HOUSE

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OF ISRAEL! SPEAK GOD'S WORDS! The scroll represents all God has to say to his people. It is a symbol used often in the scriptures. John the apostle saw a scroll in the right hand of him who sat upon the throne of heaven, sealed with seven seals, and when each seal was opened, some frightful things issued forth from that scroll. Again, John is given a scroll to eat, in Revelation 10, it contained things both bitter and sweet. BUT JOHN WAS TOLD HE MUST PREACH WHAT WAS ON THAT SCROLL.

2. The watchman of God must tell the whole story. He cannot deal with the truth in an underhanded way . . . as a peddler of God's word (a "huckster"). He must not practice cunning or tamper with God's word (II Cor. 2 and 4). He must not "market" God's people by being false with the word (II Pet. 2:3 where the word for *emporium* is translated "exploit") and the Gr. word translated "false" is *plastois* (Eng. plastic).
3. Jeremiah nearly lost his life, a number of times, for telling it like God said. So did Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech and Abed-nego. So did the Apostles.
THEY DID LOSE THEIR REPUTATION WITH THE WORLD, THEY LOST THEIR WORLDLY FRIENDS, MOST OF THEIR WORLDLY POSSESSIONS.
MANY CHRISTIANS HAD (Heb. 10:32-39) THEIR PROPERTY, JOYFULLY
4. Paul, often, suffered the loneliness of being alienated even from his christian brethren (read I and II Corinthians) because he dared declare the whole counsel of God, just as he did to those at Ephesus, house to house, with tears, night and day.

IF YOU WILL BE A WATCHMAN OF GOD YOU MUST PREACH THE WHOLE WORD OF GOD. AND OF COURSE TO PREACH IT YOU MUST KNOW IT, HEREMENEUTICALLY, HISTORICALLY, GRAMATICALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY . . . WITH THE HEART!

B. No Matter Whether They Hear or Not!

1. Ezekiel had quite a constituency to which to preach! Hard-headed, rebellious, stubborn, impudent, wicked, unlistening. A CONGREGATION OF TELEPHONE POLES WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER . . . AT LEAST THEY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN IMPUDENT!

You can read about the attitudes of Ezekiel's congregation in Jeremiah's book, too!

2. But Ezekiel preached the Word of God to them. He told them they were Ichabods . . . "The Glory has Departed."

He told them they were whores unfaithful to God.

He told them their false prophets were liars, soul-hunters.

He told them they were a useless vine, only good for burning.

He told them they were deceiving *themselves* with their false parable," The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge!" IRRESPONSIBLE, GUTLESS NATION BLAMING THEIR ANCESTORS FOR THEIR OWN SINS.

of the nations "No hiding place there" he said.

He preached the glorious, great, demonstrable, worldwide victory of God over the worst the world could do to stop his redemptive plan . . . Gog and Magog (which I believe is fulfilled in Christ and the Church, now, not the millennium).

He preached the future glorious city, and sanctuary . . . his great temple, which if literally built would have engulfed the whole city of Jerusalem of Hezekiah. (which is also the Church of the christian dispensation.)

3. BUT THEY DIDN'T LISTEN. FOR THE MOST PART ONLY A FEW BELIEVED HIM!

God told Ezekiel his success was not to be measured in whether anyone listened or not . . . only in whether he spoke or not.

As God's watchman, if he warned, if he spoke all the

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counsel of God, he would be free of the blood of all men. Jesus told his apostles they would be sent to sow where others would reap, and reap where others had sown. The important matter is in the speaking . . . not the response.

WATCHMEN ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESPONSE . . . ONLY FOR THE PROCLAMATION!

Paul did not care what people thought of his eloquence or how they compared his message with that of the Greek philosophers . . . he only cared that they hear from him the word of God, clearly, correctly, and faithfully.

Paul's instructions to his students and co-workers in the Lord, Timothy and Titus was, "Preach the word. . . ."

Listen to these words from one of the greatest preachers of the Word this country has ever know:

In his 71st year, reviewing some of the highlights of his long and active life in the ministry, R.A. Torrey said: "If I had my life to live all over again, I would spend less time in praying and more time feeding on the Word of God." This is the man who preached all over the world — had 70,000 responses to his preaching in Great Britain alone; was most responsible for Moody Bible Institute's greatness; began the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, BIOLA; wrote "The Fundamentals" and many works on Apologetics.

Moody himself said: "In prayer we talk to God, and in the study of the Bible God talks to us — and you had better let God do most of the talking!"

R.A. Torrey was famous for his sermons being logical, unemotional, to the point, hermeneutically correct, and full of Bible. For some of his campaigns he engaged as a songleader a man named Homer Hammontree. Hammontree was struck by the manner of the evangelist's invitations. There was little emotion or entreaty — almost a "take it or leave it." In some of his first services with Torrey no one came for-

ward. After several such nights he asked him, "Dr. Torrey doesn't it bother you when they don't come?"

"Bother me, Hammie? . . . Hammie, that's none of my business. It's my business to preach the Gospel . . . it's His business to bring results." In a later service "Hammie" saw over one hundred people stand up and come forward at the invitation. His favorite sermon was "10 Reasons Why I Believe the Bible is the Word of God" PREACH THE WORD. THE WORD HAS AUTOMATIC LIFE IN ITSELF (Mark 4:28 . . . the Greek word there is actually, *automate* from which we get automatic). "Produces of itself"

III. SERVE THE PEOPLE OF GOD, Ezekiel, ch. 2-12

A. In the difficult places

1. Ezekiel was not sent to a people who would be responsive. He was sent to his own people who had heard the message over and over and over and over.

God told him he was not sending him to a "people of foreign speech and a hard language . . . who would surely listen to him" . . . but he was sent to "the house of Israel who would not listen to him because they would not listen to God"

2. Sometimes the foreign mission field is considered an easy place to serve. Many a missionary has returned to the good old USA and said "I'm glad I don't serve here!" Some of our own kids who went behind the Iron Curtain a few years ago with TCM heard communist-controlled people say, "I'm glad I don't have to live in the US and try to be a Christian."
3. Actually, there aren't any easy places to *serve*. Service takes humility and work, wherever you are, and none of that is easy! Read II Corinthians some time when you get discouraged with your lot! Read Jeremiah, read I Peter. Read the Gospels. Read Church History.

B. Doing Things You Don't Like To Do

1. Ezekiel was called upon to do many things down in an unclean world that traumatized every fiber of his Jewish upbringing . . . just like Daniel.

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2. First there was his audience.
Second there were the inconveniences and seemingly silly things God asked him to do to communicate his message, like drawing pictures (on an overhead projector) clay tablet; like cooking his meals on unclean fuel; like lying bound hand and foot for long hours every day for months; like cutting his hair and shaving his beard and going through the streets throwing little portions of it around while he preached; like digging holes in the wall and carrying baggage back and forth through them.
3. I read one time of missionaries in New Guinea, in the jungles, among head-hunters. They were invited to a feast in the village of a tribe they desperately wanted to reach with the Gospel. The main course was monkey meat. Near the end of the meal, the old tribal chief took one of the roasted bones with a little meat left on it and began to scrape it off under his fingernail. Earlier he had been scratching his naked body all over and rubbing his fingers between his toes, scratching his matted hair. He began to roll this meat into a little ball . . . then he motioned for one of the white ladies to open her mouth . . . as she did he popped this ball of monkey meat into her mouth. She knew if she spat it out the chief would be deeply offended and they probably would never get to speak to the tribe of the gospel. So she swallowed it! Along with pride and revulsion and maybe even good sense . . . she swallowed it!

HOW MUCH ARE YOU WILLING TO SWALLOW
FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL . . . HOW MUCH
CAN YOU TAKE FOR GOD IN ORDER TO BE A
WATCHMAN.

Are you willing to have no place to lay your head . . . willing to eat with sinners and publicans . . . willing to eat with and talk to hypocrites . . . willing to become all things to all men in order to win some?

C. Even when It Overwhelms You

1. Ezekiel went, "in the heat of his spirit, the hand of the Lord being strong upon him . . . and sat among his people *overwhelmed* among them seven days." 3:14

HE WASN'T BITTER TOWARD THE LORD . . . HE WAS SUFFERING THE BITTERNESS OF THE TASK BEFORE HIM! IT SEEMED OVERWHELMING. HE WAS LIKE MOSES . . . THE JOB SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE!

But when God makes you a watchman, he does not hold you responsible for results — remember — only for proclaiming and serving.

Saving the whole world will always seem to us to be overwhelming. BUT SAVING THE WORLD IS NOT OUR RESPONSIBILITY . . . PREACHING IS!

2. In one of Paul Harvey's books, *Destiny* (from a series of *Now You Know The Rest of The Story*) comes the story entitled, *Anatomy of a Hypochondriac*:

37 years young — too young to be dying — and yet the symptoms of terminal heart disease were unmistakable. She told friends that her life now "hung by a thread, which might snap at any moment." And she went to bed. And waited to die. And did not. Instead she became an invalid, a fearful captive of the fatal symptoms that strangely refused to kill her. So many symptoms — with but one source: psychoneurosis. It was all in her mind. This, then is the anatomy of a hypochondriac.

The peculiar illnesses began when she was about 17. Her wealthy, socially ambitious parents had plans for her; she had her own plans, which included independence from her parents. While I do not mean to suggest that the young lady was playing sick, it must be noted that virtually all her illnesses followed family arguments — as though sickness had become her subliminal defense against parental manipulation. Age 33 she finally left home, got her own place to live, got happy. Her family frustrations gone, so fled her psychosomatic swooning. This bliss lasted for three years. For three years she was an achiever, a woman of responsibility and boundless energy whose only aches and pains were legitimate ones.

You, the investigator of her case history, must be alert at this point, must watch for that moment at which she lapsed into her former self. She was 36 when it happened. Palpitations, respiratory difficulty, sick at the sight of food. Within months she was bedridden, her pulse frighteningly rapid. There she stayed. On occasion her condition grew suddenly worse, and the occasions were almost always predictable. Unwelcome visitors routinely inspired headaches and chest pains and gasping for breath. By now, apparently her psychoneurosis had become a well-oiled problem solving machine. She may even have understood it at one level or another, although outwardly she believed herself to be constantly at the brink of death.

37 years old. Invalid. Anxiously awaiting the dread moment when her heart would drop out from under her. One day it did. She was 90!

Her illness really was psychosomatic, you see. For 53 years, more than half a century, she lived in bed — for nothing. True, her confinement accomplished certain things. It brought the people she wanted to her side, as her sudden attacks drove the unwanted away. Her bed even proved a comfortable vantage point from which she could observe and administer the work of others. Yet the psychoneurosis which held her prisoner for most of her life had deeper roots still.

Remember those 3 years during which she was not plagued by imaginary illnesses? Those years she had spent alleviating the suffering of others. Most of that time at the Crimean War front. For the *passion* her parents tried to suppress, a profession then regarded as unbecoming, *was nursing*. The young lady was happy only as an active nurse. Otherwise, she was a hopeless, helpless hypochondriac.

Yet so astonishing was her physical and emotional strength, her sheer endurance as a nurse during the Crimean War, that nursing became a respectable occupation through her example.

The world forgot, or chose to ignore, that she spent the rest of her life — more than half a century — in bed, in fear, in vain.

You know her as *Florence Nightingale*. Only now, you know THE REST OF THE STORY!

IF IT IS IN YOUR HEART TO BE GOD'S WATCHMAN, LET NO ONE DETER YOU! THE PERSON WITH A WATCHMAN'S HEART, MUST SERVE, MUST SPEAK, HE CANNOT BE HAPPY UNLESS HE IS . . . EVEN WHEN THE TASK SEEMS OVERWHELMING.

CONCLUSION

Twenty years ago, about this time of the year, Easter, I was holding a revival in Grenola, Kansas (the town made famous by the Wartick family). With me was a young OBC student and his girl friend. They were doing the special music, etc. And let me tell you that "etc." was fun to watch — they were love sick. It was at that revival they announced their engagement to be married. The future bride's mother was there for a night or two for the occasion.

Twenty years later, that former OBC student and his wife and family are watchmen for God. Hear what he writes:

"We have been praying for the upbuilding of the Chinese Church in No. Thailand. In the last 5 years great strides have been made in this area. It is getting difficult to find Chinese communities where the gospel has not been preached and there are christians. There are still a few. Within a year the church in Piang Luang has doubled and is growing in quality. . . . Just a few years ago there were no Christians among the Shan. . . . Twenty Shans have started Bible training in the last year in Burma . . . in order to preach among their own people. . . . This is an answer to prayer. And much more will be accomplished if you and I continue to pray. I should say, Start to pray. Let's stop praying, "Protect and bless the missionaries" but pray "clothe them with your whole armor and put them in the battle. Let your kingdom come to earth as it is in heaven whether by our life or death. May every Power in the heaven lies be brought under your subjection as the gospel is preached."

That's my dear brother, former student, and a little "Okie from Muskogee" Alan Bemo and his wife, the former Janet Dittimore. **YOU CAN BE A WATCHMAN FOR GOD . . . YOU ARE A WATCHMAN FROM GOD . . . THE TRUMPET OF GOD IS BEING PASSED INTO YOUR HAND THIS VERY HOUR, THIS VERY SEMESTER!**