



Lesson 10 May 8th, 2021

Isaiah Offering Hope for the Future

Study Scripture – Isaiah 29:13-24

Background Scripture – Isaiah 28 - 29

Key Verse:

Those who err in mind will know the truth, And those who criticize will accept instruction.

Isaiah 29:24

INTRODUCTION

We are considering in our Study the issue of faithlessness caused by pride, a misunderstanding of the weakness of the flesh, a clear misunderstanding as to God is, which leads to formalism in the worship of the Lord God Almighty.

This brings to mind the clear teaching of the Scriptures that the carnal mind is enmity against God which therefore teaches us that the flesh cannot please God.

This problem existed in the days of Isaiah and it exists in our days. The teachings of Scripture and the preaching of the Word about the Cross has been foolishness during every day of human history.

Isaiah therefore lamented in chapter 28 and this analysis forms the basis for our Study. The prophet pointed out how the people of God behaved and why they behaved thus:

***“But they have all erred through wine,
and through intoxicating drink are out of the way,
the priests and the prophets have erred through intoxicating drink,
They are swallowed up by wine,
They are out of the way through intoxicating drink;
They err in vision, they stumble in judgment.
For all tables are full of vomit and filth;
No place is clean.
“Whom will he teach knowledge?
And whom will he make to understand the message?
Those just weaned from milk
Those just drawn from the breasts?
For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little”.
For with stammering lips and another tongue***

**He will speak to this people,
To whom He said, "This is the rest with which
You may cause the weary to rest",'
And, "This is the refreshing";
Yet they would not hear.
But the word of the LORD was to them,
"Precept upon precept, precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little"
That they might go and fall backward, and be broken,
And snared and caught.
Therefore hear the word of the LORD,
You scornful men,
Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem,
Because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death,
And with Sheol we are in agreement.
When the overflowing scourge passes through,
It will not come to us,
For we have made lies our refuge,
And under falsehood we have hidden ourselves".**

The scorn of the rulers, their hypocrisy, their falsehood, their refusal to follow the instructions of God carefully and completely, (line upon line), their agreement with death is highlighted.

The situation in Israel and Jerusalem was so awfully bad that the solution to the iniquity had to come from God. Yahweh had to initiate Salvation and Restoration.

Let us now consider that the same rules apply today among the professing people of God. We behave the same way ancient Jerusalem did. So Yahweh will act:

**Therefore thus said the LORD God;
"Behold I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation,
A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;
Whoever believes will not act hastily
Also I will make justice the measuring line
And righteousness the plummet;
The hail will sweep away the refuge of lies,
And the waters will overflow the hiding place.
Your covenant with death will be annulled,
And your agreement with Sheol will not stand:
When the overflowing scourge passes through,
Then you will be trampled down by it".**



It is to be clearly understood that there will be a time of terrible judgment on the earth. The prophet Isaiah, from Chapter 24 of his book began to describe in great and vivid detail the awful nature of the trouble that lay ahead for Israel and Judah, and for the nations of the earth. The prophet did not only speak of the impending trouble for the peoples and nations, for in Chapter 25, he had also previously looked to a future when there will be restoration and a New Heaven and a New Earth, and he reassures the people of God that Yahweh had a great and beautiful future for His people.

However, in Chapters 26 and 27 Isaiah goes back to look at this terrible time of judgment and in Chapter 28 he introduced six “woes”, focusing mostly on Jerusalem and Judah, calling on them to watch out and to beware, for there were many danger signs in their path.

The proclamation of the prophet is most instructive for our day. The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:11 warned us that what happened to Israel and Judah had been written down so that those who lived at the end of the age would learn and take heed.

We clearly are now in a very dangerous situation. We cannot treat our situation lightly and we have to be aware of rulers and leaders who have made a Covenant with Death and rule by lies, leading us to our destruction.

Clearly then, there can be no ignoring the fact that what happened to Israel physically, literally, and spiritually pictures the kind of danger and spiritual peril that believers will without doubt face in their lives.

THE CONTEXT OF THE TIMES

The situation in the world then of 700 B.C. had Judah under the righteous Hezekiah. They were ruled with the nation under his complete control. He was in fact the greatest king of Judah and no king before measured up to him. The statement about him was made because Scriptures tell us he trusted in the Lord God of Israel more than any other king before or after him. It was not that he was the greatest conqueror like Uzziah was, or the greatest administrative genius like David, or the wisest king like Solomon, but he trusted in God more than anybody else. But he had to struggle with an Egyptianizing party and the faithless politics of some officials despite the clear message of Isaiah.

In the world of that day Assyria was the ascending and probably dominant power. Sennacherib now ruled Assyria after the murder of Sargon. He was determined to restore the power of the Assyrian empire, so he had attacked Babylon who at the time was a vassal state. Then he aimed at attacking his rival Egypt and made plans to do that.

Judah was in a difficult position for they were also in his crosshairs. But despite the word from God through Isaiah Hezekiah was under pressure to make an alliance with Egypt. The majority of the rulers and people preferred that route and Isaiah had to stand alone to persuade the righteous Hezekiah to listen to him as he spoke the Words of Yahweh. Faced with tremendous odds and the opposition of many in the Court trusting God was very difficult



We are not a theocracy like Israel. But note we do not live today in countries that lean on and trust Yahweh and who are prepared to follow the advice of Scripture and the principles it offers in dealing with the world. But nevertheless Isaiah's declarations give us guidance as to how our nations and our individual lives should be lived.

First there is a "woe" pronounced on the proud drunkards of Ephraim with its chief city Samaria, for they were led by prophets and priests who were reeling about because of over-consumption of red wine. Their lifestyle was such that there was no place free of filthiness, and everyone was engaged in what was spiritually destructive.

The second "woe" then followed and that "woe" focused on Jerusalem, the place where the Temple of God was located, right in the capital city of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. There also the rot had set in; the people had also been seduced by "the good life", and the status symbols of the time, and the drive to accumulate wealth had taken over from the pursuit of godliness, and from true worship.

Our Study Scripture looks at a subject that most so-called believers would rather avoid! It deals with the heart of the worshipper of God and points out the hazards of hypocrisy which stands to swallow the professing believer.

It looks at the detours from the straight and narrow path, detours which the people of God so often follow. It really calls on believers to live by their decision to follow God and to remain committed to Him, instead of living a life without any determined intention and where spiritual decline and spiritual stagnation inevitably results.

The Study Scripture brings to mind Jesus' Sermon on the Mount whose instructions we all find so difficult to accept, and where He advised those listening to Him as follows:
"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you".

Spiritual stupor is all too common among the people of God and often the focus is on the act or acts of worship rather than having the right heart with the focus on what is on the inside of a person. One preacher reminds us of:
"Worship from the inside out. What he does he does because of what is in his heart. Not the other way around".

He points out some facts that we would like to forget for these hit too close to home. He states:
"The first person mentioned in the Bible as worshipping God did it all wrong. Cain was the first mentioned to offer an offering to God, and it was unacceptable. His brother Abel offered an acceptable offering. Cain became so upset that he ended up killing his brother. Some have claimed that Cain's problem was that he didn't offer the right thing that he was supposed to offer or that something was wrong with the ceremony that he did, but I think the Bible shows us that his problem was a problem of the heart. He didn't have the heart of a



worshipper. First off, the Bible emphasizes that Abel brought the best, while it merely says that Cain brought part of his harvest. Then when you look at his reaction, you know that cannot be the heart of someone truly seeking God”.

As we consider the Text and we look at what happened to the Northern Kingdom and its capital Samaria, and what was also happening in Jerusalem and Judah, let us examine our hearts and avoid any condemnation that we are religious hypocrites. Remember as one writer states: **“One of the biggest reasons given by non-churchgoers is “church is full of hypocrites”. This is true to some extent. Many persons who are seen by outsiders to be “hypocrites” may be true, yet immature, Christians. Christians are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ. They are being changed into His likeness; some grow quickly in their walk with the Lord, others more slowly.**

However, there is another undeniable fact. There are many hypocrites in the church. People have many reasons for attending church; some are biblical and valid, others are not. Many Pharisees in Jesus’ day performed the external actions of religion without true devotion to God. Jesus didn’t mince words with them. Seven times in Matthew 23, Jesus pronounced “woe” (a curse) on the scribes and Pharisees because they were hypocrites, leading the people astray”.

Judah and Israel should have been more careful in their witness to the nations. They should have behaved in such a way that they would have attracted Gentiles to the God of Israel. But they failed. We also should be careful for we are the representatives of God, and our life and words should be like winsome, attracting outsiders to the Saviour Jesus Christ the Lord. Let us not stray from the straight and narrow path and so be afflicted by the “woes” of Chapter 29.

The focus of the Lesson is on what was said to Israel in verses 13 to 24, however, the earlier verses lay a foundation for what transpired later.

The Scripture speaks of *Ariel*, (lit. altar hearth, Ezek. 43:15-16). which most people agree is a reference to Jerusalem. Another meaning, "lion of God" (31:4; Gen. 49:9; 2 Sam. 23:20; 1 Kings 10:19-20; 1 Chron. 11:22), was probably not intended here since Isaiah described Ariel as the place where Israel's religious festivals took place. Clearly Ariel refers to Jerusalem, the city where David set up his headquarters (2 Sam. 5:9), and Mount Zion (v. 8), the site of Judah's worship.

The heritage of David was a source of great pride to those in Jerusalem, even though they did not have a heart for the Lord like David. The prophet knew this and so as he called out to the people to continue observing the annual feasts in Jerusalem, his language was sarcastic. He warned that given their bad attitude and their treating the important sacrifices lightly, the city would be brought to a place of lament, distress, and mourning.

Jerusalem should have known that her external performance of religious services would not please God nor avert His judgment predicted by so many prophets. As long as their lives were unreformed and their hearts not humbled, they could not hope to pacify an offended God and



to turn away His wrath. This is the lesson every child of God must learn and pass on to any prospective believer so that they may fully appreciate and understand who it is that they serve.

The prophets of God have a daunting task. They are the mouthpiece of the Almighty God. They deliver in the best of times good news from God, and also must deliver the judgments of God, to their very own people because of the iniquity of the people of God.

In this passage, the prophet stands amazed at the stupidity of what should be the best part of the Jewish nation. The Levites whose responsibility it was to teach the good knowledge of the Lord and had been given encouragement from Hezekiah in doing so in 2 Chr. 30:22, failed to do so at this particular time in the Jewish nation. Then we have prophets who we know brought messages of warning, comfort, and exhortations directly from God. This great nation of God, with all its advantages of divine revelation should have been a wiser people, but alas, it was not the case.

When the children of God move away and start to live within their own delusions, rioting and reveling about, instead of crying to God for the mistakes they make, they move swiftly away from God into the arms of sin, with it bringing the judgment of God. However, here God says to the people, and especially the leaders that they should realize there is no security in their sinful ways.

The Bible compares those lost in sin to that of a drunkard; however their situation is much more dire. These people are drunk with the love of pleasures and with corrupt principles. The manifestation of which is that no wisdom leaves their lips, nor do they understand or can account for the words they have spoken. Because of their state, none of their actions are sensible, and hence they were unaware of the divine rebukes which were upon them.

Even in this condition, God pleads with His people to return to Him. Drunk men do not listen, drunk men do not act with wisdom, drunk men do not perceive wisdom of any kind nor do they have the facilities to understand. Thus, this is the state of those who were once learned and wise, they have forgotten the law of God and stagger in their own counsels, are unstable and unsteady, and stumble at everything that lies in their way. This is spiritual drunkenness against which the bible warns people.

Some people might think it strange that God would cause a sleep or a cessation of wisdom and knowledge to fall on them at a time when He should encourage them to be sober and awake, but sometimes people want to go astray, and so they must be taught the reality of what it means to be the children of God. This is the wise judgment of God upon His people.

God called on His people to repent before they fell deeper into sin, however they preferred their own way, for they loved darkness rather than light. In this state, God decided to give them over to strong delusions. Those unbelieving Jews who rejected the gospel of Christ also found their hearts hardened for their infidelity until the wrath of God came upon them completely.



With this particular Lesson, it is incumbent on all believers to be sober and understand that there are reasons to fear the Almighty God. For those of us who know the truth, living in an age where the gospel of light is prevalent, as with these people who had many prophets, rulers, and seers, that should have been guides; they (and us) have no excuse when the judgment of God falls.

God Himself covered the eyes of the leaders, which after Isaiah's time implied that this was the preparatory act to execution. These leaders acted as blind men when they should be seeing and leading the people.

Everyone knows that disastrous consequences occur when the blind leads the blind. Just as in Jesus' time and even today in many churches, the sad effect of this was that all the means of conviction, knowledge, and grace, which once believers enjoyed, were now ineffectual.

This verse 11 describes the people's descent into darkness. It is said that the people would go seeking wisdom from those who were learned, those who should have the oracles of God with them, but the people soon learned that these learned ones could no longer discern the truth of the real visions and the falsehood of the pretended ones.

Even the published visions had become unintelligible to them. The books with the required knowledge and wisdom were with the people, but there was no one to interpret, thus they could never become wiser for it.

These men knew the words of Isaiah was a prophecy, but the meaning was hidden from them. Even worse than that, they lacked the wisdom to be alarmed by the fact that they did not understand.

When the prophets, seers and leaders cannot translate the word of God and lack understanding, then the effects can be seen in the people who because they are not scholars find no need to concern themselves with matters that those above them cannot understand.

If we look at today's society this sentiment is very pervasive. Injustice runs rampant in all levels of government. They can only lay blame for what is going wrong, but never taking the opportunity to work together and try to fix the problem. The people that leaders are supposed to serve have become dull to what is going on, and let it persist. This is the state of sin.

Neither the learned nor the unlearned were the better for all the messages God sent them by his servants the prophets, nor desired to be so. Ordinary people excused themselves from regarding what the prophets did not know.

Will Christians today set aside our responsibilities if our leaders fail to act? First and foremost, we are all responsible to God, then to each other. Part of our worship to God entails helping those of us who have fallen or who have become blind, find their way back to God. Whether an



usher, and minister, pastor, deacon or song leader, God expects us all to shoulder the other, as we lean on Him.

God will not allow us to excuse ourselves like those of Isaiah's time. These people thought that the prophet had a peculiar way of speaking, which was obscure to them, even though they themselves were men of letters, or possessed some insight. But they ignored what they knew, leading to God taking all sense of understanding and knowledge away from them.

Many people "read" or "receive" God's word the way an illiterate man "reads" the newspaper. They can pick out a few words here and there and can glean some understanding of the pictures. However, even though they may get some enjoyment from looking at the newspaper, it is only an appearance, true content really escapes them. This was the state in Jerusalem and one we as Christians hope never to find ourselves in.

THE TEXT

Verses 13-14. It will open our minds properly to read these verses in its entirety:

***"Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths
And honor Me with their lips,
But have removed their hearts far from Me,
And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,
Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work
Among this people,
A marvelous work and a wonder".***

God charged the people with the sin of hypocrisy. They pretend to do the religious performances and observances, but God who can see into their hearts knew their feigned service.

Men have always tried to hide their true intentions, motives, what is in their hearts from God, but He has always stressed that He looks into the hearts and the minds of individuals, that is how He knows them. God knows when those who say they follow Him do not apply their minds to the service. When they pretend to be speaking to God, they are thinking of a thousand impertinences. The end result is that the hearts of these people are far from God. They are no longer connected to God through prayer, nor can they come near the word in understanding as the previous verse illustrates.

These leaders were worshipping God with what is known as lip service, but to worship God is to draw near to Him as those that have business with Him, with an intention to honour Him. This we are to do with our mouth and lips, in speaking of Him and in speaking to Him. When those who truly follow God, follow Him in truth, they make the word of God the rule of their worship, His will their reason. This is how we achieve a right understanding of God. This is how we arrive at the right fear of God.



But as these individuals have demonstrated, their fear of God was taught to them by ungodly men. They do not understand the fear of the Lord and as such when they worship God, it is not according to His appointment, but their own inventions, the directions of their false prophets, idolatrous kings, or they imitate the neighbouring nations.

This is where the danger of traditions creeps into the worship of God. The elders here have put more value and validity into traditions than into the laws which God commanded Moses. Jesus applied this to the Jews in his time. Without doubt that could be applied to many “Christians” in our time today. It is on all of us to ensure that we ourselves and our brethren do not fall into the same trap. They were formal in their devotion and wedded to their own inventions, but in truth just as Jesus then pronounced, He will regard again that their worship to God is in vain.

Verse 14. When people of God leave the counsel of God it is indeed a bad state. God threatened Jerusalem with a spiritual judgment as punishment for their spiritual wickedness. God has seen the insincerity in their hearts.

If sincerity is taken away from our worship to God, then He will take steps to remove sound judgment from our minds. The wisdom of God shall be removed from them, and God will make the wisdom of men foolishness to them. Read Romans 1.

The Lesson must be learned that we should not make the religion of the Almighty God out to be no more than a pretense, to serve a turn, for that will incur the wrath of God, and as seen here God will take steps to deprive men of understanding who part with their uprightness.

But note that the work Yahweh has now to undertake is “marvelous”, and a “wonder”. The dictionary describes marvelous as “**Causing great wonder, extraordinary. Extremely good or pleasing, splendid**”.

Similar words mean “**astounding, breathtaking, phenomenal, or remarkable**”.

“**Wonder**” means “**A feeling of surprise mingled with admiration, caused by something beautiful, unexpected, unfamiliar, or inexplicable**”.

So note the deadly problem of spiritual sleep which only God can change. Note the warning and exhortation of Romans 13:11

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed”.

Talking the talk and not having the heart, one writer states, did not end in Isaiah’s day or even in Jesus’ day (See Mark 15:6-7 or Matthew 15:7-9)

Verse 15. Another “woe” is proclaimed by the prophet to make the people understand that God is condemning their habits and their determination to hide things, to cover up what they think and what they intend to do from Him.



Note that we cannot do anything in secret that leaves the Lord God Almighty in the dark. Many have tried to act in secret, in the dark, in whatever scenario they can construe in order to carry out whatever plans they desire but think that they can hide it from an omnipotent, omniscient, an all-seeing God. No counsel they have sought out can hide their actions from Him, but yet they try, and that is why He said that He will bring all their machinations that they do in the dark into the light for all to see.

This is their hubris; they believe that if they can hide their actions from other men, then it also can be hidden from the eyes of God. All their plotting was futile as not only has God promised to expose them, but He has also turned against them so that they would fail. This is how the foolish act, their sinful ways cause them to sink deeper into sin, trying continually to hide from the counsel of God, who sits in Heaven and laughs at them.

It is sad to think that some Christians today actually believe that they can indulge in pornography, bitterness, evil gossiping, hating others, selfishness, rebellion, gambling, drunkenness, chasing after many women or men, engaging in fornication, adultery, engaging in same sex relationships, and disregarding any of several of the commandments of God without suffering any adverse consequences. It seems outrageous that many believe that God does not see them, or that if He does, He will not do anything about what they are doing!

Verse 16. God's plan is simple. Do what is right, and you will be blessed, do what is ungodly and your plans will be brought to naught.

God in this verse reminds us who is in control, and what our nature is with respect to Him. Our intentions will be thwarted, and He will turn our affairs in this direction and that direction to make them shape us in the way He wants, not the way how we think it should go for our lives. This obviously means to us, that our plans will be turned upside down.

God's providence is not limited to what we think He should know, as this is what unbelievers think and how they may act. This is how those who serve gods also believe. Our God, the Almighty God, will turn us, will manage us, provide counsel as He sees fit for His purposes. He does this as easily and effortlessly as a potter molds the clay. Children of God know this well, and it is for that reason that we understand who God is, and that we fear God.

When actions are carried out without God's blessing, it says something about the individual and their relationship to God. Those that think to hide their counsel from God do in effect deny Him to be their Creator. We are denying that God exist, when we say He does not see what we do in secret or otherwise. We deny Him as our Creator. We also deny His power and power over us, as the thoughts that lead us to our actions, directly challenge God's sovereignty. As Christians we should understand the foolishness of such actions and all this denies who we profess God to be to us, our Creator.

Isaiah goes into much detail in Chapter 45:9 about the relationship between the Creator, the Potter, and the "clay" formed by the Potter.



Clearly there is no “purposeless chance”, and no blind or random event outside of God’s control. One writer comments: **“Assigning such power to “chance” is crazy. Chance has no power ... Therefore, when someone says the universe or anything else came about by chance, they are extremely ignorant, superstitious, or just repeating a line they have heard before and have unthinkingly accepted”.**

Verse 17. In a little while, in the future, God will intervene, and the wicked Jerusalem will be changed and blessed. Roles between the mighty and the weak will be reversed. The changes will be so extensive and dramatic that the mighty Lebanon known for its mighty forests will be brought low and become a field and what was before considered only to be a fruitful field will become a forest. The moral reversal and change in Jerusalem will be as great as that.

There will be no more senselessness to spiritual things.

Verse 18. Nothing will prevent the deaf from hearing and the blind from seeing. Spiritual blindness will no longer be there. Light will come to the people. A miracle will happen in the spiritual sphere. There will be no pride but only humility.

Verse 19. There will be a messianic age and rejoicing will happen and hardships will be replaced. The poor and the humble will always be now joyful. The meek will be joyful forever. The Holy One of Israel, the Messiah will attend to the poor, the blind, and the broken-hearted as Matthew 11:5 and Luke 4:18 confirmed.

Verse 20. Not only will the oppression of the people be changed, but the wicked will be dealt with. Those who dealt unjustly and oppressed the people, the scorners, and the persons of iniquity, will be consumed.

Ultimate, the terrible one, Satan, will be defeated. Sinners will be cut off. Scorners will be destroyed.

Verse 21. Those who speak false testimonies, who offend “by a word” attacking the character of another, who use legal technicalities and win their case at the gates where court trials were held through clever but deceptive arguments will also be cut off.

These same old techniques are widely used today.

Verse 22. The LORD, the Redeemer of His people, who established the Covenant with Abraham, the father of the nation had brought Abraham out of his pagan home and sent him to Canaan. God now addressed the nation not as children of Abraham but as children of Jacob, the father of the tribes. This name was not a name that was complementary for he was a conman and a trickster.

A ‘Jacob’ person would be ashamed. But when God restored the nation the “Jacobs” would not be ashamed.

The nation would be longer be living in a land of idolatry

They would not have to fear the Assyrian invasion and turn to Egypt for help.



In fact, Scriptures tell us that the Assyrians invasion was miraculously destroyed. Judah was saved by God.

Verse 23. When Jacob now looks at his children he will marvel when he looks at the work of God's hands. **They** will be cleansed and will recognize God's deliverance. They therefore will respect what the Holy One has done. They will declare and recognize as holy the Holy One of Jacob and will fear the God of Israel. They will know that God had separated them as His special people; the chastised people will fear the God of Israel.

Verse 24. Note the mercies of God. He restored Jacob and He restored the erring nation. The name of Jacob became great again and the name Israel fully applied to him now. There was no shame.

The people who were in error and spiritual blindness would now come to understanding about the God of Israel. Their chastisement had to come because only then would they become loyal to their God.

So Isaiah reminded the people that those who always complained about God would have to learn doctrine, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line.

CONCLUSION

For our Study to be of any value to you, you must have to come to realize that we are not exempt from punishment from God simply because we have professed faith in Him.

There must be no pride for that would bring us low and would lead to spiritual blindness and spiritual sleep.

Hypocrisy will be the end result of spiritual blindness.

This comes when men begin to believe that God does not know what they think or see what they do. They really in this are denying that God is their Creator.

We should avoid at all costs spiritual illiteracy.

Note that God warned that when we are overcome by the problem of what one writer calls "mechanical religion", meaningless, external conformity in performance of religious things, we are in grave danger and headed for serious trouble. When the truths of Scripture seem dull and commonplace, and we have no joy in your Christian life these are serious danger signs. One writer describes this as being drawn into a 'black hole' from which our personal strength will never be strong enough to allow us to escape.



But note God made provision for Judah and for you. Isaiah warned in verse 5-6 that God would send a disaster into their life to shake them up. He stated:

***“And in an instant, suddenly,
You will be visited by the Lord of hosts
With thunder and with earthquake and great noise,
With whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire”.***

So what can we say? Ask God to send something to wake you up, to stop the drift in your life.

Life can be difficult but study the Word of God and continue to grow, not valuing comfort over your growth in the Lord. Renew your mind in Scripture and develop a daily routine in communing with God.

Give God your best.

Seek the approval of God and not the approval of men.

Humility will cure your spiritual blindness.

Ask God to restore you and you will be restored.

Serve God seven days a week, not just one day, thinking that service on one day makes you right with God.

Make sure that you are the same outside the church as you are inside, that is, always good and righteous.

Do not be a hypocrite, pretending to be what you are not.

Use your life to worship God and do not consider worship a burden.

Always lean on God, trust Him, and remember the words of Isaiah 33:2 quoted below”. Before we read that verse think about this true story.

One scholar tells us about a man in Japan who was brought home drunk by a taxi-driver and they found him the next morning outside his front door dead. It appeared that he was so drunk that he got out of the car, walked up to the front door, and thought he was in his house, so he took off his clothes, folded them and lay it on the snow. He took out his false teeth and put them on the side and then laid down on about 3 feet of snow outside his front door.

The next morning he was found frozen to death because he thought he was in his house and so he had gone through the motions as if he had indeed entered his house.

So what can we say then? This is an illustration of this problem that a lot of people who are senseless to spiritual things have and so they think they are in a safe place when in fact they are not.

Some come to church every week, singing the hymns, read the Scriptures, listen to the preacher, put their money in the collection plate, and then go home with a good feeling saying that they are all right.



But as Isaiah said they have the spirit of deep sleep on them. The Bible is really a closed book to them. They have never been born again.

Let not think that this is strange for we read about the church at Sardis who had a name that they lived but were dead. The leaders were dead, and the people in the church were dead.

Let us not therefore slip into that horrible situation where we are given over to hypocrisy and the doctrines of men, human doctrine. Let us examine ourselves and listen to the words of the prophet so that we are not repulsive to God.

The church at Laodicea were told by Jesus that they were neither hot nor cold and He wished that they were one of the two. He wished that they were cold rather than lukewarm for if they were lukewarm, He was going to vomit them out. Their fear of God was taught by the precepts of men.

So let us be careful. We have a responsibility to each other. Let us help each other and while we do that let us keep on praying:

***“O Lord, be gracious to us; we wait on thee
Be our arm every morning.
Our salvation in the time of trouble”.***

