

Enough is Enough!
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choice of the will has a knock-on effect on the intellect. Sin, especially if wilfully continued-in when the remedy is known, creates its own species of insanity. **Look in the mirror and see if there is a donkey. God will tell you.** His information is from love, not from mockery nor simply to create misery.

One of the people in the Bible through whom we are given powerful lessons, is a prophet of God called Hosea. **Here was a man who God commanded to marry a prostitute.** The woman was unfaithful to him, yet God told him to go and bring her back home. Man, that's tough. All of this was a vivid illustration by God of His own love for the Hebrews, who He had chosen as His own special people, but who were spiritual prostitutes and runaways from God and true worship of Him. The Jews are still runaways, but have been joined by multitudes that profess allegiance to Jesus Christ. Eating different kinds of grass, they are on the same wrong road. What alarm clock will succeed in waking people up? Once awakened, who will keep them awake and alert? Do not fear, for God is able... if you are willing.

It is rude, if not impossible, to speak with your mouth full. In the last chapter (14) of Hosea, God calls for His people to return. That call extends to every person in this world. So, when we answer the call and come to God, what next? Well, in the first place, you don't come unless He has called—try it at Buckingham Palace. This means that God has spoken to you. When you come to Him, it's *your* turn to talk. Verse 2 says *"Take with you WORDS, and TURN to the Lord..."* They say that a picture paints a thousand words, and when a person *really* turns to God, that "turning"

speaks volumes in the ears of God, and His heart is filled with the emotion. We see a picture of this in Jesus' classic story of The Prodigal Son (see Luke 15:11-32). That returning, repenting son didn't even get his speech finished before his father interrupted him with showers of tears and love! Like King Nebuchadnezzar, **this boy was tired of eating animal food.** Read it.

The picture in Hosea 14 shows us how people can get so sick, that they refuse to continue trusting in anything else for rescue, knowing that all other substitutes are doomed to failure in the attempt to save or satisfy. The rescued people are then pictured in illustrative language as trees with out-shooting branches and roots, which provide rest and shelter for others, and a fragrance which surpasses any and all perfume company's best products. That tree-illustration in Hosea 14:4-7 sounds like the king's own kingdom (Dan.4:20-22).

Sin had taken everything away, but the combination of God's grace and man's willing return brought it back, and made it even possible to help others to enjoy the same. **The king had lost his fantastic city which had housed one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.** He had lost it through sinful, prideful disregard of the true God, and heaping all the credit to himself. From the record in Daniel, the king never appears to have turned from the true God again! **Enough was enough.**

And in Hosea 14:8, we see that these people came to the same sensible conclusion. The final verse (9), says that "wise" people understand and learn and obediently walk with God, but that the rebellious sinners shall stumble and fall. This kind of falling, if left uncorrected, will finally reach its ultimate destination. No more transient areas of the terminal called Earth will remain. We will reach the "Home" for which we have been busily preparing. Only now can we change our course, but this will never happen unless

CLONING ? "We are transformed into the same image (of Christ), from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord" (1 Cor.3:18). "To this we are called, because Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps; Who did no sin..." (1 Pet.2:21). "He who says he eats does in Him ought to himself also to walk just as He walked (1 Jn.26)." (see also Matt.16 :21 ; Phil.25 ; Rom .8:29) Who are YOU cloning?

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"Lift up a standard for the people." **Isaiah 62:10**

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It doesn't take people very long to forget...unless it effects their pocketbook or pride. Yet, cows and oxen aren't bothered by such things, as we learn from one of the greatest kings of one of the greatest empires which ever existed. Fables and fairy tales can teach lessons, but real-life experiences should put the matter even deeper and clearer. This king's experience, as with other of his experiences, were "drama *in REAL life!*"

Attackers of the Bible would like me to *discard* it, *distort* it, or at least *demote* it; including the account of King Nebuchadnezzar found in Daniel 4 in the Bible. This king had some "big-time," "way-out" experiences, which you would think would get the point across, but like all the "little kings" running around today, he was "thick." Sin does this to people. **God faithfully warned him, but a year later he started his career as a cow..**I mean, he utterly lost his marbles and

literally ate grass like an ox. Read it yourself. The fact is, there are only two paths in this life, both which lead to eternity in one of two destinations. Those, whoever they are, that have not truly been "saved" from their sins, "converted"—call it what you want, and are minding God...*these* are on the same road as was the king

I am writing about.

There is wide variety on both roads leading to eternity. One great difference is that **on one road, the citizens rest on the grass, as we read in Psalm 23; on the other, they eat it.** What kind of grass are *you* eating? After seven years, the king's mind was restored so that perhaps for the first time in his life, he was able to make the most rational decisions he ever made. That seven years, though awful, was a comparatively short period of time, for when you think about it, most people are on this king's ill diet until they die.

The Bible has various individuals whose painful experiences are intended to provide you and me with lessons— but that's right, we like to learn things ourselves, the hard way. But, again, mark it down: the vast majority don't learn. However, in *this* case, it's not a fault of intellect first, but of the will. The bad

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NEW S BULLETIN...NEW S BULLETIN...NEW S BULLETIN! Like a burst water main, evidence flows non-stop that our society is eating up corruption and worldly pleasures as with both hands, and it is all "PIGGING OUT ON SIN." However, it will be AFTER we leave this "eat-all-you-can restaurant" called Life, that we will face the full bill. This is one kind of flood that we can stop—just decide **Enough is Enough!**



Church of the Jailbird

Grace without Glamour
(St. Paul writing from prison)

St. Paul's letter to the church in Philippi is a letter well-known for its repeated call: **Rejoice!** Methodism, which started in this country back in the 1730s is said to have been "**born in song.**" This is also true of the church started in Philippi. True believers in the Jesus of the Bible have something to sing about, and early Methodism was an excellent example of this glorious heritage. Church song books (hymnals) are full of the broad and blessed truths of God and His salvation.

However, this call to rejoice was not a merely frothy "happy-clappy" type. Try singing when you are locked up with your feet secured in wooden "stocks" which could adjust to spread your legs, and on bare ground and finally with your back bleeding from merciless beating. St. Paul and his companion, Silas, did just this...and the Bible says "*and the prisoners heard them!*" Be sure of this, God hears what you say, but so do many others.

The early church suffered severe persecution. Methodism likewise suffered fierce, relentless and brutal persecution. Other branches from Methodism like the early Salvation Army, which also started here in 1865, faced vicious attack. It should be noted that to this very present hour, Christianity is persecuted world-wide more than any other religion, even by some who profess tolerance and peace!

God doesn't always do things exactly the same way. Sometimes He talks to us "in a still, small voice," as with Elijah, His prophet (1 Kings 19:12). At that occasion,

and prior to the voice, it says that there was an earthquake, "*but God was not in the earthquake.*" On this occasion in Philippi, God definitely sent a literal earthquake. The prisoners were set free by the turbulence, and the jail-warden would have faced death by Roman soldiers for their escape. When he made an obvious move to suicide, Paul called out in the darkness, "*Don't hurt yourself! We are all here!*" **God always speaks to us not to harm ourselves in any way, physically or otherwise.**

But now, as St. Paul writes to this group of believers, some nine years later, guess what...he is writing again as a prisoner, chained to a Roman soldier and awaiting execution. Read Acts 16 to see the church at Philippi get started. Read Philippians to see that the beaten, jailed man who sang the praises of God at the beginning, was still singing in chains.

St. Paul had a background of great learning before finding Christ, Whose Way and people Paul had viciously persecuted. The glorified Christ told Paul that he was actually persecuting Christ Himself. This is the same today. But Paul had 3 main "epochs" in his life: 1) when he participated in and observed the stoning of the first Christian martyr: angel-faced Stephen, 2) Paul's own dramatic "Damascus-road" conversion, and 3) the God-sent vision which brought him to Macedonia and its chief city, Philippi. God had informed another Christian man who was first to assist the newly-saved Paul, saying "*For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake*" (Acts 9:16). This suffering does not refer to general hard times that come to many of us. This suffering is specifically in connection to genuine love to God, and in the offering of this love to others. Philippi was on this road of suffering.

Paul clearly understood that *Christ* was his Saviour, and nothing else, not even the suffering. Yet he informed the Philippians

Church of Jailbird.. (continued)

that in the government of God (God IS Supreme Ruler!), "*it has been GRANTED on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake*" (Phil.1:26). What a Government Grant!

John the Baptist's father prayed in raised faith and expectation "*That God would GRANT to us, that we, being delivered from our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life*" (Luke 1:74,75). The Bible confirms that holiness of heart and life are also a Government Grant by God.

St. Peter also having just been released after threats from the controlling city powers prayed, "*And now, Lord, behold their threats: and GRANT to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness*" (Acts 4:29-31).

Would you like a "Government Grant?" In the above paragraphs we see that God *GRANTS* to those who love and follow Him, to represent His Son, Jesus Christ by a life of holiness, of fearless (though not arrogant!) declaration of God and Christ, and that such a life will be one of suffering directly linked to the message of the Saviour. Not long before his own martyrdom, Paul told the much-younger Timothy, "*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*" (1 Tim.3:12).

I cannot accept that the followers of the Christ, who had nowhere to lay His head, and of the apostles who so clearly suffered, and of great Christians of the past who walked this same way are to be represented today by a mere frothy emotionalism that avoids the cross and holiness, yet runs at seeming break-neck speed after the things of "this present world." The song-writer asked "Shall I be carried to the skies on flowery

beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas?" The answer is supplied: "No, there's a cross for everyone, and there's a cross for me!"

I appeal to professing Christians to get back to the Bible and the early Christians and great ones who clearly demonstrate the way of holiness and unashamed witness for Christ—not mere religion of any sort! **I also appeal to non-Christians who are onlookers:** Take a gaze at the magnificence of Jesus Christ...of the salvation in true peace and holiness, and genuine freedom—freedom that God intends for us all, which Adam and Eve lost, which the devil perverts and which the world today in so many ways is trying to substitute for and counterfeit.

A 96 year old Christian lady who has never given up trying to help this world to God, also enjoys helping me proofread this little paper before it is mass-produced. She enjoys word searches, etc. **A cryptogram** she just worked out reads: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. It is the only thing that ever has." (by Margaret Mead). The world generally fears that their humanistic sand castles will be destroyed if God truly has His way in a community or nation. These castles have always also included religious sand castles, as well as political, etc. People want to hold onto power, prestige and control even if it destroys others and sends everybody to Hell.

Long before Margaret Mead's cryptogram, the envious, worldly opposers of God feared for their sand castles and cried out against the followers of Jesus Christ: "*These who have turned the world upside down have come here too!*" The followers of Jesus wanted to help turn the world right-side-up, but I guess God turns it upside-down first to dump the junk out of everyone's pockets. These early disciples, and all who have followed in their steps had something to sing about—even if it found them in prison or facing death. **And mark it down, their song was never of hatred or violence, but of love to God and their fellow man. What a song!**

YES, ST. PAUL WAS A JAILBIRD...BUT HE WAS NOT A LIAR! Jesus went to the Cross and Paul went to prison and also to death. These facts do not undermine our Faith. The opposition against them both was largely based on envy, hate, corruption, manipulation and deception...funny enough...just like it is today!

GOD'S FINAL GOVERNMENT GRANT: "*To him who overcomes I will GRANT to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*" (Rev.3:21) — Promised by Jesus to those who lovingly obey Him.