

## The Last Campaign Against The Church Of Christ - Part 5

This morning as we continue with our final study dealing with Satan's last campaign against the church of Christ, we're going to spend at least a portion of our time discussing different forms of demonic control. Now I realize there are a lot of people that don't want to think about demonic activity, and you may be one of them; however, we do have a personal adversary that wants to destroy us, and if we stick our heads in the sand because we don't want to think about it, or because we're afraid of becoming acquainted with the devil's devices, or his schemes to defeat us, that doesn't mean we'll be any safer, rather it will render us more vulnerable. The more we know about our enemy, the better we can resist his attacks. This is the way it is in physical warfare, and this is the way it is with spiritual warfare as well.

Over the last several months I've simply been telling you what Satan doesn't want you to know. And so, if we educate ourselves as to his methods and tactics, we'll be better prepared to deal with him and his cohorts as temptations come and different situations arise. PRAY

**Ephesians 6** tells us that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness. We can't physically see our great adversary, and we can't use literal weapons to fight him, so we must find out how to resist him from the only source available to us, and of course that's the Word of God. With spiritual eye sight we can and must become acquainted with Satan's devices and know how to deal with him or we'll surely be overcome.

What we don't want to do is experiment with, or dabble in demonic activity of any kind, or think we're spiritually strong enough and smart enough to resist spiritualism in its varied forms, because the devil only needs to find a small chink in our spiritual armour to gain access to our minds; and if that happens, we'll certainly lose. We have only to look back upon the experience of Eve in the Garden of Eden to know that we are no match for a being that can use what looks like a harmless medium to cause the downfall of the human race. And so, we want to educate ourselves, but we want to stay far away from any kind of experimentation with the forces of evil.

As we learned last time, there are varying degrees of demon control, or demon possession, but there are also various forms in which it can be manifested. At times Satan can better accomplish his purpose by allowing his victims to retain their mental and physical faculties quite intact; they may even manifest an air of piety. They might look like good Christians and even hold high office in the church, but as **2 Timothy 3:5** says, it's only "*a form of godliness*" without the power of the Holy Spirit to give them real victory over sin. These kind of people may appear very religious and even holy: and yet be just as possessed as the demoniac of Capernaum we read about last time.

To the Jews who were plotting His death, Jesus said: "*You are of your father the devil.*" (John 8:44) Just think of it, they were leaders of the church at Jerusalem, the headquarters of the work, and they were revered by the people as godly men; and yet, they were possessed by demons. They were thought of as upstanding citizens, but they were under the control of the powers of darkness.

*The Desire of Ages, page 256* says, "The same evil spirit that tempted Christ in the wilderness, and that possessed the maniac of Capernaum, controlled the unbelieving Jews. But with them he assumed an air of piety, seeking to deceive them as to their motives in rejecting the Saviour.

Their condition was more hopeless than that of the demoniac, for they felt no need of Christ and were therefore held fast under the power of Satan.”

And as we’ll see in a minute, they were never able to escape the Satanic power that held them captive. And by the way, they sincerely thought they were doing God’s service, didn’t they? But they were sincerely deceived.

And, I might add, these kind of people can be the most dangerous, because people are taught to reverence and respect religious leaders, which we should if they’re ministers of righteousness and not ministers of sin, but we have to study for ourselves in order to find out which they are. It’s dangerous for us to just follow blindly after some Priest, or Rabbi, or Imam or Pastor thinking that they know best because they studied theology and have supposedly dedicated their lives to God’s service. That’s what the Jews thought of their religious leaders, and look where it got them. They were so deceived that many of them actually took part in having the Messiah crucified, the very One they had been looking for for many long centuries. And to this day they are deceived as to what their forefathers did, and are still looking for the Saviour to come, and one day soon He will come, but it will be the devil impersonating what they believe to be their long looked for Messiah.

Have you ever wondered how the Jews will give up keeping the seventh-day Sabbath and go to Sunday worship with the rest of the world, or for Muslims to give up Friday, and other religions their holy day? Because according to **Revelation 13:3** the whole world, except for a small remnant, will wonder after the beast power, and that would be the papacy, the one that brought Sunday worship into Christianity in the first place. And what about the fact that the majority of Seventh-day Adventists will do the same? And make no mistake, they will, because *Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, pages 209, 210* tells us that when all this happens, there’s only going to be “a little company standing in the light”, and do you know what they’ll be doing? They’ll be “sighing and crying for the abominations that are done in the land. But more especially will their prayers arise in behalf of the church because its members are doing after the manner of the world.” And what will the world be doing at that time? Following after the beast to avoid the death penalty.

Well, I think I’ve gotten off topic, but this just came to my mind and I didn’t want to let it pass without saying something.

Now getting back to our subject. On *page 323* of *The Desire of Ages*, it says that those unbelieving Jews who attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to the devil in the life of Christ, were ever afterward controlled by Satanic power, and yet you would not know that by looking at them. I’m sure they were thought of as very respectable people. I’m sure they sent their children to church school, and dressed modestly, and ate kosher food, and kept their houses clean, and had nice yards, and well behaved children in public places, and yet, they were under the control of demons for the remainder of their lives!

The point I’m trying to make is that a person doesn’t have to have convulsions and foam at the mouth to be totally demon possessed! And don’t forget that those church leaders, who mocked Jesus while He hung upon the cross, were just as possessed by demons the next day when they stood in the pulpit on Sabbath and talked to their congregation about how important it was to keep

the commandments. They were responsible for murdering the Son of God, and yet they taught the people “*thou shalt not kill.*” This is why, when Jesus was here, He told the people to do what their religious teachers told them to do, but don’t do as they do, because they were hypocrites, and we have to be careful that we don’t fall into the same trap of preaching one thing and doing another.

And what about Judas? **John 13: 2, 27** says that Judas was possessed by evil spirits when the devil suggested the thought to his mind to betray Christ, and when he left the Lord’s table to close the deal with the church leaders who were themselves possessed, he became possessed to the nth degree, and of course, he went out and hanged himself. This a good example of how Satan cares for his followers. Once he’s done with you he’ll just throw you away.

As I was reading through several Spirit of Prophecy statements on this subject, I found something very interesting about how God affects our lives for good, and how the devil affects us for evil. In *Testimonies for the Church, volume 2, page 347* it says, “The brain nerves which communicate with the entire system are the only medium through which Heaven can communicate to man and affect his inmost life. What ever disturbs the circulation of the electric currents in the nervous system lessens the strength of the vital powers, and the result is a deadening of the sensibilities of the mind.”

Interesting. And so, of course Satan doesn’t want you to follow any of the health laws we’ve been given, because by disregarding them we deaden, at least to a certain extent, the sensibilities of our minds and he can then better control our thought processes. You see, there’s a reason for everything God asks us to do, even if we don’t understand sometimes why He asks us to do them. We need to learn to just trust that He has a good reason for asking for obedience, in health as well as in moral issues, and as we obey, we will be blessed and kept from many a heart ache and finally eternal ruin.

Also in *Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, page 44*, speaking of Christ’s temptation in the wilderness it says, “The first great temptation was upon appetite; the second, presumption; the third, love of the world. Satan has overcome his millions by tempting them to the indulgence of appetite. Through the gratification of the taste, the nervous system becomes excited and the brainpower enfeebled, making it impossible to think calmly or rationally. The mind is unbalanced. Its higher, nobler faculties are perverted to serve animal lust, and the sacred, eternal interests are not regarded. When this object is gained (**that is, when the devil has succeeded in his efforts to unbalance the mind through the indulgence of appetite**), Satan can come with his two other leading temptations and find ready access.”

So, Satan first tempts us to indulge a perverted appetite, and then with a clouded brain we begin to presume upon the mercies of God, that He will not follow through with His warnings against disobedience, and then we fall in love with the world and become all caught up with the cares of this life and bend all our energies to acquire material wealth and secular advantages, and without even realizing it, we have been caught in the devils three great leading temptation and it’s nothing but downhill from there. Once a person has fallen for these three great leading temptations of appetite, presumption, and love of the world, then it’s much easier to fall into the grosser sins and become possessed by the devil in a greater degree than we ever thought possible.

Have you ever wondered why many of the leaders of the House and Senate can't seem to get anything done, and when they do, many times it's wrong for America? It's because perverted appetites have given them unbalanced minds; they're not thinking clearly because "the nobler faculties of the mind are perverted to serve the lower passions and the sacred is not regarded as it should be." And of course, the same thing can happen to any of us, as well as to those in the ministry that should have the eternal interests of the people in mind, and I'm preaching to myself here as well, so don't think I'm just picking on certain people groups, because we all have a sinful nature that needs to be held in check by divine power, but we are the ones that must make that choice.

When you were in school, you probably remember learning about the central nervous system of the body. As you probably know, our nervous system is a very complex system: in fact we have more than one. Not only do we have a "central nervous system" that involves the brain and spinal cord, but we have a "peripheral nervous system", a "sensory nervous system", and a "motor nervous system." And within these systems there are "Autonomic nerves", and "mixed nerves", and these nerves are further divided into "Neurons", "Nerve fibers", "Myelin sheath", "Light matter", "Gray matter", "Dendrite", "Axons", "Sympathetic" and "Parasympathetic types", "Synapse", "Ganglia", and many other parts I don't know how to pronounce.

The point is – anything that strengthens or weakens our nervous system, determines which of the two great powers can best communicate with us. Demon possession cannot take place except it first comes through the "sensory nervous system", which in turn affects our thought processes. The "sensory nervous system" transmits to the "central nervous system" when something is happening in or around the body. In other words, the devil gains access to us through our five senses. That's why *Acts of the Apostles, page 518* says, "Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices, must guard well the avenues of the soul." **(It goes on to say)** "They must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind must not be left to dwell at random upon every subject that the enemy of souls may suggest. The heart must be faithfully sentineled, or evils without will awaken evils within, and the soul will wander into darkness."

And once Satan has gained access through these avenues of the soul, he can then control our physical actions through our "motor nervous system" if that can best accomplish his purpose. That's why many who are demon possessed manifest such symptoms as: distortion of the facial features, shrieking, mutilation of the body, glaring with the eyes, gashing with the teeth, foaming at the mouth, and convulsions. This is also why they can't stop doing whatever evil thing they're involved in unless they call upon the name of Jesus, and usually they need the help of someone that knows Jesus. All we have to do is look around to see what terrible things the human heart is capable of. And don't think that it's impossible for you to do some of these terrible things yourself, because without Jesus dwelling in the heart through the Holy Spirit, any of us can fall prey to the devil's devices. That's why it's so important to know our enemy, and more importantly to know Jesus who can give us the victory.

As you read the Gospels you'll find that all of these physical manifestations I just mentioned were present in lives of the various people Jesus healed. However, just because someone manifests these characteristics today does not necessarily mean that they are demon possessed, because there are physical diseases that can affect the "motor nervous system" and bring on these same

symptoms. So how can we tell demon possession from physical disease? I think the only way we can tell is if we know the person well enough to know the kinds of things they're involved with. If you ever find yourself in a situation where you're not sure whether or not the person is demon possessed; first of all you better make sure your own life is right with God or you might find yourself running out of a house wounded and naked like the seven sons of Siva. And secondly you must pray that **if** the person is truly possessed by demons and they **want** to be set free; you see, they have to want it in order for it to happen, then the Holy Spirit can work in that individual's life and they can be set free to serve the Lord.

We're not going to read a bunch of statements to prove the point, but if you'll study it out for yourself you'll find that the things that go into our mouths, as well as what time of the day or night we put them in there, and also the amount, has a direct effect upon our nervous system. Also the things we put into our minds, the clothes we wear, our surroundings where we live, the places we go, how and where we work, whether or not we exercise and follow the other laws of health, all of these things can affect the nervous system. And remember, it's through the nervous system that we open up a clear channel of communication for the Holy Spirit to affect us for good, or unclean spirits to affect us for evil. Now, I realize that some things are out of our control because we have to live in a sinful world, but as far as possible we should avoid placing ourselves in situations where it would be detrimental to our physical and spiritual health.

Let me read you something from *Signs of the Times, May 15, 1884*, "The Christian has duties to do in the world, and God holds him responsible for their faithful performance. He is not to confine himself in monastic walls, nor to avoid all association with worldlings. It is true that his principles will be put to the severest test, and he will be pained by what his eyes see and his ears hear. But he must not, by becoming familiar with these sights and sounds, learn to love them. By association with the world, we incline to catch the spirit of the world, and to adopt their customs, tastes, and preferences. Never let the world say that worldlings and Christ's followers are alike in their tastes and pursuits; for God has drawn a line between His people and the world. This line of demarcation is broad and deep and clear; it is not so blended with the world that it is not discernible. . . . It is only by watching unto prayer, and the exercise of living faith, that the Christian can preserve his integrity in the midst of the temptations that Satan brings to bear upon him."

A couple things here. Did you notice the words, we are not "to confine" ourselves "in monastic walls, nor to avoid all association with worldlings"? In other words, we are not supposed to withdraw from society thinking that will make us more holy. The time is coming, and is not far off, when we will have to head for secluded places in the mountains, but until then we have a work to do to reach people with the great gospel commission. If we all head for the hills in an attempt to save our own skin, who's going to be left to warn the people of coming judgment? Yes, we are not to live in the wicked cities, but have a place in a country setting, especially if we have children, but that is much different than hiding out from other people in an effort to keep from becoming contaminated by their association. If we are living close to Jesus and obeying His word, we will not be drawn away from Him by worldly associations, that's what we just read. God will keep us if we are doing what He has asked us to do.

If withdrawing from society had been the attitude of the people that knocked on my door 40 years ago in order to show me a better way of life, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to know the

truth for this time and what a blessing it is to find salvation in Christ, and I think that could be said for just about everyone.

Let me read once again the last sentence I read to you just a moment ago, because this is the key to keep from losing our connection with Christ in the context of being around other people that don't know what we've been privileged to know.

“It is only by watching unto prayer, and the exercise of living faith, that the Christian can preserve his integrity in the midst of the temptations that Satan brings to bear upon him.”

“Watching unto prayer.” What do these words mean? Have you ever thought about it? In **1 Peter 4:7** it says, “*The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*”

This phrase intrigued me enough to do a little research, because I didn't have a ready answer myself should someone ask me what it means to “watch unto prayer.” In the Spirit of Prophecy there are well over a hundred references to the phrase “watching unto prayer” and “watch unto prayer”, but I'm only going to read you two of the clearest ones I found.

The first one is in *Our High Calling, page 134*, “If we believe we receive the things we ask for, and keep believing and never lose patience in believing. This is watching unto prayer.”

And the second one is *Notebook Leaflets, volume 1, page 46*, “We must not fail to show others that we understand that watching unto prayer means living our prayers before God, that He may answer them.”

And what about “living faith”? It said “watching unto prayer, and the exercise of living faith” is what will preserve us from being overcome by temptation. Isn't living faith an active working faith, as opposed to a dead faith? James says, “*Faith without works is (what) dead.*”

Watching unto prayer and exercising living faith are very closely related as the next couple statements indicate. *Review and Herald, July 12, 1887*, “We want that active, living faith that will take God at His word, and trust in His promises at all times.”

Also *Review and Herald, April 14, 1891*, “Search the Scriptures, and know what is truth. Lean upon God, and know what is living faith, and live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

And one more from *Signs of the Times November 18, 1886*, “Prevailing prayer is the prayer of living faith; it takes God at His word, and claims His promises.”

It's only watching unto prayer, and exercising living faith that will preserve us in the midst of temptations. It's true that we are not to place ourselves needlessly in the way of temptation, but it's necessary to reach people for Christ, and if we are doing these things we will be kept from the snares of Satan as we go about to witness for the Master.

You see, both God and Satan offer us a package deal that affects our whole being, and we are not allowed to negotiate the deal! God will not share us with the devil, and the devil is not willing to share us with God. We must be possessed by one or the other of the two great powers. In this last

campaign against the church of Christ, God has cast His vote for us and Satan has cast his vote against us, and guess who holds the tiebreaker? We do! We will be eternally saved in God's kingdom directly because we have chosen to follow the dictates of the Holy Spirit, or eternally lost if we refuse, it's just that simple. And how we treat our bodies plays a huge roll in those decisions.

You see, God wants all of us that there is, and He's not willing to share us any more than a husband or wife is willing to share their spouse with another. It's got to be all or nothing. Ten times in the Bible, God calls Himself a jealous God. In other words, He's apprehensive of rivalry, because He knows that if you begin to love the things of this world more than you love Him, you will lose eternal life. Now the devil, on the other hand, is willing, outwardly at least, to share his captives with God as long as it can serve his purpose, and by this I mean that he is quite pleased that his subjects appear to be Christians on the outside, and go to church regularly, and to prayer meeting every week, and perform good deeds, while on the inside their thoughts are only evil continually, just like before the flood. And don't think that there are not professed Christians out there today that are just as depraved as the antediluvians were, and maybe even worse!

You only have to listen to the news to see that there are horrific crimes being committed every day all over the world, and so don't think that there are not millions of people alive today that have already reached the level of depravity for which God destroyed, by water, all but 8 people that once inhabited this world. Remember when Jesus said, "*As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man?*" Friends, we are just about there! And yes it's going to get worse as more and more people become demon possessed, but we're just about there. The problem is, many of God's professed people are so desensitized by sin that they don't realize how bad it's become.

There's a statement in the book *Steps to Christ, page 58* under the title "*The Test of Discipleship*", and it poses a question we all need to consider. It says, "It is true that there may be an outward correctness of deportment without the renewing power of Christ. The love of influence and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions. **(By the way, this means that one can be possessed by the devil and still look like a good Christian)** By what means, then, shall we determine whose side we are on? **(Good question, and notice the word "WE", this is a self examination test and not necessarily what we can see in others.)**

"Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things."

And wouldn't that include our appetite as we've been discussing? To bear Christ's image, to breathe His spirit, to do His will, and to please Him and not ourselves, in everything we do is the way we can tell who we belong to. If the Jews, who were responsible for the death of Christ, would have asked themselves these questions, they would have known that they were on the wrong track. Do you realize that when we knowingly disobey the commandments of God that we are crucifying Jesus afresh in the eyes of the unfallen worlds? We need to ask ourselves these questions to test our own discipleship.

Because I'll tell you something, the devil may think it suits his purpose to make demon possessed people look like Christians, but God doesn't work that way; He doesn't use deception or hypocrisy; He can only indorse the truth. **2 Corinthians 6:17** says He wants us to "*come out from among them (that would include those that claim to be Christians but aren't) and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.*" And **Revelation 18:4** says, "*Come out of her (the Babylonian churches that only have a form of godliness) my people*" if we would not partake of her sins and receive of her plagues. The testimony of Scripture is that we can have no fellowship with the works of darkness at all. Why? Because there's no joint interest, and you will become like that which you're constantly around unless you're watching unto prayer and exercising living faith. It's a law of the mind that by beholding we become changed. God wants His people to not only act and look like Christians, but to be Christians in the heart, and the testimony of Scripture is that He will accomplish this for us if we will but submit to the convictions of the Holy Spirit.

In **1 Thessalonians 5:23** Paul says, "*the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I Pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Spirit here having to do with our intellect, soul having to do with our feelings, and body having to do with our physical frame. God wants it all, and He has to have it all if we are to be found blameless when Jesus comes for a church "*without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.*"

Now let's talk about this whole sanctified package for a minute. Doesn't the right arm of the third angel's message have something to do with health laws that affect our whole being? Yes, and I'll read that to you in a minute. And doesn't the mark of the beast have something to do with the third angel's message? Yes! Do you see how this is all connected and how important it is? Friends, if we ignore the health message we as a people have been given, we will end up forfeiting eternal life. This may be shocking to some of you, but it's true!

Notice what it says in *Testimonies for the Church, volume 2, pages 70, 71* "It is a duty to know how to preserve the body in the very best condition of health, and it is a sacred duty to live up to the light which God has graciously given. If we close our eyes to the light for fear we shall see our wrongs, which we are unwilling to forsake, our sins are not lessened, but increased. If light is turned from in one case, it will be disregarded in another. **(Now pay close attention to these next couple sentences)** It is just as much sin to violate the laws of our being as to break one of the ten commandments, for we cannot do either without breaking God's law. We cannot love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength while we are loving our appetites, our tastes, a great deal better than we love the Lord. We are daily lessening our strength to glorify God, when He requires all our strength, all our mind. By our wrong habits we are lessening our hold on life, and yet professing to be Christ's followers, preparing for the finishing touch of immortality."

What a mockery we make of our religion when we disregard the counsel we've been given.

Here's another one from *Testimonies for the Church, volume 6, page 288*, "Again and again I have been instructed that the medical missionary work is to bear the same relation to the work of the third angel's message that the arm and hand bear to the body. Under the direction of the divine Head they are to work unitedly in preparing the way for the coming of Christ. The right arm of the body of truth is to be constantly active, constantly at work, and God will strengthen it. But it is not to be made the body. **(In other words, the health message is not to be the main**



**point of our faith to the neglect of justification by faith, which is the third angel's message in verity we're told, which is also to be the main thrust of our work. It goes on:)** At the same time the body is not to say to the arm, 'I have no need of thee.' The body has need of the arm in order to do active, aggressive work. Both have their appointed work, and each will suffer great loss if worked independently of the other."

Do we wonder why the truth for this time is not making the progress it should? In a large degree it's because the message of justification by faith, which is what the third angel's message is all about at its core, is not married to the health message. The two have to go together and take their proper place in the plan of salvation if we would be "preparing the way for the coming of Christ."

Let me put it another way so we all get the impact of how important the health message is. If we die before the counterfeit day of Sunday worship is enforced by law, we will be lost if we have been knowingly violating the laws of health, because as we read a minute ago, to violate the laws of our being is just as much sin as violating any one of the Ten Commandments. And also if we are alive to see the Lord come and we've been knowingly violating the laws of health, we will by then have received the mark of the beast, regardless of what we profess. That's how important the connection between health reform and the third angel's message is. I say knowingly violate the health laws because we're all at different levels in our knowledge of how to care for our minds and bodies which are to be totally God's possession.

By the way, speaking of the coming Sunday law that will be promoted by the beast power, as well as every false religion, notice what it says in *Signs of the Times February 19, 1894* "Popery is the religion of human nature, **(that's not good, because human nature is fallen)** "Popery is the religion of human nature, and the mass of humanity love a doctrine that permits them to commit sin, and yet frees them from its consequences." Friend, if you fit into this category, you will surely end up with the mark of the beast, because a violation of both physical and moral law is sin, and if you think you can do either and get away with it, you're greatly mistaken.

**James 4:17** says, "*To him that knows to do good and doesn't do it, to him it is sin.*" And **Romans 6:23** says "*The wages of sin is death*", that's eternal death. And so, if your level of knowledge is greater than mine, you may be lost and I saved even if we've both been violating the same law. In other words, if I didn't know to do good in a certain area and you did, disobedience will stick to you but not to me; why, because "*To him that knows to do good and doesn't do it, to him it is sin.*" **Acts 17:30** says "*God winks at ignorance,*" but as soon as an understanding of the truth comes, then repentance must follow, because ignorance is then no longer an excuse for disobedience. Also if we've had the opportunity to know the truth but neglected to take advantage of that opportunity, that can't be claimed as a sin of ignorance either, and God won't wink at it; therefore, you will be held responsible for it.

I remember years ago when I was talking to someone about a certain food item they liked very much, and I said, "did you know that that certain item has something in it that we shouldn't be eating?" And immediately they said, "don't tell me what it is because then I won't be able to eat it anymore." Up till that time the Lord may have winked at their ignorance, but do you think He would continue to wink at it when all they had to do was read the ingredient label? Absolutely not! God's not playing games here, He requires obedience once we know a certain thing is not according to His will, and it won't be a hard thing to obey if we love Him as we should.

Now perhaps we can better understand why Jesus said, “*narrow is the way, and straight is the gate that leads to life, and few there be that find it.*” Finding that narrow way implies effort on our part to bring our lives into harmony with God’s revealed will, and hasn’t He revealed to us that He wants us to be obedient to both the moral law and the laws of our physical being? Absolutely!

The principles of health may be the same across the board, but within the perimeters of those principles we have to decide what’s best for us as individuals. Take diet for example; the same foods don’t agree with everybody, and our tastes are not the same. Some people are gluten intolerant, some can’t eat beans and so forth, but we should all eat things that will make good blood, does that make sense? Is it asking too much that we obey the One who made us and knows what’s best for us in health matters? I don’t think so.

We don’t have time to go into depth today about these things, but we should all be students when it comes to our own health and do our very best with the knowledge we have to follow the counsel we’ve been given in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, don’t you think? And by the way, we have all we can do to discipline ourselves in this area without meddling in someone else’s life. **Romans 14:4** says, “*Who are you that judges another man’s servant? to his own master he stands or falls.*” Are we not servants of our Master in heaven? And is that not true concerning every Christian? We’re not supposed to be cupboard and refrigerator police when it comes to what others eat or do in other areas of their private lives, but we are to warn on occasion and do our best to instruct when we can, and most of all to live by example that others might follow.

Now I have no idea what those of you that are listening to this message today have in your refrigerators, so I’m not picking on anyone when I read this next inspired statement from ***Counsels on Diet and Foods, pages 380, 381*** “Among those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord, meat eating will eventually be done away; flesh will cease to form a part of their diet. We should ever keep this end in view, and endeavor to work steadily toward it. I cannot think that in the practice of flesh eating we are in harmony with the light which God has been pleased to give us.”

Friends, these inspired words were written well over a hundred years ago, but many who know these things have made no progress since then. How can that be if we are truly waiting for the coming of the Lord? I have family members that I love dearly who are still dining at the flesh pots of Egypt as it were, and they know better, and I must raise my voice against this practice because I’ve been ordained to the ministry tell you the truth, even if there are some that don’t like it. We are to be working toward getting back to man’s original diet as prescribed in Genesis; that’s what will make the best blood and protect your nervous system; you know, that channel through which God communicates with us.

You see, you can’t have a more healthy diet than what God gave in the beginning, because at that time He gave us the very best information to follow in order for our bodies to run at peak performance. And as more time has gone by since then, that information has not changed. In fact, as the animal kingdom has become less healthy than years gone by, it’s even more important today that we eat what God said we should eat. Maybe you’ve never thought of this before, but

when a person eats meat they're getting their greens second hand, and second hand is always inferior to getting them first hand, no matter what nutritionists of the world tell us.

Our owner's manual, the Bible, is like the owner's manual of a new car, that if you follow will give you the best and longest service before it breaks down. Wouldn't it be silly for a new car manufacturer to call you up after about six months of owning your new car to tell you it would be best to disregard the owner's manual you were given when you first made your purchase and start using substandard lubricants and longer maintenance intervals, and maybe add some sawdust to the transmission, and sugar to the gas tank? That would be dumb, wouldn't it? Well, the same thing is true with man's original diet of fruits, nuts, seeds, grains, and vegetables. Just like the car manufacturer, God's not going to tell you it's best to scrap the original diet and start eating dead animals; that would be to retrograde; it's to go from better to worse; to go backwards, and that's not how God works, neither physically nor spiritually. The Christian life is all about advancing in our character development and relationship with God; that our whole body, and soul, and spirit be developed and preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord.

But, someone might say, God gave permission to eat flesh food after the flood. Yes that's true, but it was never meant to be a permanent article of food. It was to be a temporary measure until the fruit of the ground would once again yield it's treasure for a plant based diet. But unfortunately, once the taste became perverted from the original diet, people preferred to continue the more stimulating flesh food diet that feeds the lower passions, but it wasn't to their physical or spiritual benefit to continue that since the life span decreased rapidly after the flood and trust in God also decreased as the tower of Babel went up story after story in an attempt to reach the height of the clouds.

I'm sure it wasn't easy once the antediluvians got used to eating the more stimulating flesh food diet to go back to being vegetarians, just as it's not easy today to change one's habits, but it can be done, and you'll be happier and healthier for the change. And let me ask you this: are any animals going to die or be killed in the earth made new? No! **Revelation 21:4** says there will be no more death. Therefore all who go there are going to be vegetarians, and I hope you're not so opposed to that idea that you'll not want to be there. Not only that, but all who go there will from one seventh day Sabbath to another come to worship before the Lord; that's what we're told in **Isaiah 66**. And so, doesn't it make sense to begin preparing for these things before we get there?

Notice what it says in *Ministry of Healing, page 298* "Persons who have accustomed themselves to a rich, highly stimulating diet have an unnatural taste, and they cannot at once relish food that is plain and simple. It will take time for the taste to become natural and for the stomach to recover from the abuse it has suffered. But those who persevere (**that's the key word**) in the use of wholesome food will, after a time, find it palatable. Its delicate and delicious flavors will be appreciated, and it will be eaten with greater enjoyment than can be derived from unwholesome dainties."

I must confess to you that it wasn't easy at first for me to become a vegetarian 40 years ago, but it wasn't very long after I stopped eating meat before my taste buds were converted. If you're a vegetarian you'll understand when I tell you that the smell of raw meat at the supermarket, or the steak and hamburgers cooking on the grill are putrid smelling. Just a couple weeks ago when I was walking past a home where meat was being cooked I thought I was going to throw up, but

years ago I would have told you how wonderful it smelled and how I would like to sink my teeth into it, and you will never understand this until you experience it for yourself.

By the way, there's a lot more to a healthy diet than just leaving off meat as an article of food, because many of us eat spicy foods that irritate the stomach and too much sugar that kills the immune system and brings on disease, and many other things that could be mentioned. But even here we have to find a balance and be careful not to become fanatical or extreme, and that's all I'm going to say about that for now, study it out for yourself.

The reason I share these few things with you is because we truly are what we eat, and what we eat affects to a great extent which of the two great powers will control us through our thought processes, and of course it's through our thoughts that temptation to sin gains a foothold, and sin, says **James 1:15**, "*when it is finished brings forth death.*"

So what should be the answer of the Christian to all the temptations of the evil one? He should say, "I will not lend my influence in any way to the advancement of anything except the cause of Christ." Why? "Because I am not my own; I have been bought with a price. I'm not to live to please myself; for I have been purchased, ransomed by the blood of Christ. Every moment of my life belongs to Him, because I am His possession, a servant employed to do the will of my Master."

Friends, this truly is the only position that is safe for us to occupy; and if every member of the church of Christ felt this way, what a power we would exert to draw and win souls to Christ. It's halfhearted work, the effort to serve God and the devil at the same time, which we know cannot be done, that leaves the church so destitute of the Spirit of God, and I hope that you will become well acquainted with the devil's devices, as we've been admonished to do, so that you will not be taken in his snares, and that you might be a channel through which God can work to get the last message of mercy out to a perishing world.

Well, I hope what we've been studying over the past five months has been a help and an encouragement to you, and I know some of you may be hurting right now because the Holy Spirit has convicted you that changes need to be made in one or more areas of your life, and certain things must be given up, and your fallen flesh is braced against it, and it will be a battle for you to change your habits; but I can tell you this, you'll never regret being obedient to the dictates of an enlightened conscience, whereas you will have many regrets if you ignore what you know to be right. So let's take a moment to pray that God will give us a desire to follow Him that is stronger than the desire to serve another master.