

TEXT FOR PRAYER
The Test Of Discipleship

I shall read from "The Mount of Blessing," beginning on page 209, the last paragraph.

"A mere profession of discipleship is of no value....a belief that does not lead to obedience is presumption. The apostle John says, 'He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' Let none cherish the idea that special providences or miraculous manifestations are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate. When persons will speak lightly of the Word of God, and set their impressions, feelings, and exercises above the divine standard, we may know that they have no light in them.

"Obedience is the test of discipleship. It is the keeping of the commandments that proves the sincerity of our professions of love. When the doctrine we accept kills sin in the heart, purifies the soul from defilement, bears fruit unto holiness, we may know that it is the truth of God. When benevolence, kindness, tender-heartedness, sympathy, are manifest in our lives; when the joy of right-doing is in our hearts; when we exalt Christ, and not self, we may know that our faith is of the right order. 'Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.'"

Let us pray for power that will enable us to turn away from being hypocrites, from being mere professors of discipleship to genuine followers of Christ, living after the manner He lived and toiled -- the very essence of Christianity.

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THE MIGHTY ESAUS AND
THE UNPRETENTIOUS JACOBS

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
MINISTER OF DAVIDIAN 7TH-DAY ADVENTISTS
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MT. CARMEL CHAPEL
WACO, TEXAS

We are to study the sixty-sixth chapter of Isaiah. In this chapter the Lord speaks to two groups of servants: the servants up to the cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:14) -- to the Judgment for the Living, the purification of the church ("Testimonies," Vol. 5, pg. 80), the time in which they

are found "smiting" their fellow servants, eating and drinking with the drunken. The other servants are the servants thereafter. To hear what the Lord has to say to His former servants as the time of the cleansing approaches, we shall begin the study with the first two verses of the chapter.

Isa. 66:1, 2 -- "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest? For all those things hath Mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word."

By saying "the heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool," the Lord actually says that He has not forsaken the earth; that though His throne is in heaven, His feet are still on earth; that He is still interested in His people. But the questions, "where

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is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest?" sadly reveal that the work has been neglected, that neither a house nor a place of rest has been prepared for Him. The Lord's next statement further confirms this fact, for He reiterates that the things which He found were only those things which always were, and which His Own hand, not the hand of His servants, have made.

Then by saying, "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, that trembleth at My Word," He positively makes known that His unfaithful servants are discharged from His work, that others, poor and of a contrite spirit who tremble at His Word, have taken their places, that what the former servants have failed to do, the latter will do. At the same time He charges the former servants that they feel rich in spirit and in need of nothing more; that they do not fear His Word. Hence the servants who are to build Him a house and to make a place for His rest, are to be men of a poor and a contrite spirit; men who tremble at His Word; men who are not proud and boastful, but who are teachable and mindful of His Word; men who are penitent and see themselves in need of everything instead of in need of nothing. Finally the Lord angrily declares:

Isa. 66:3, 4 -- "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut

off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood;
he that burneth
incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and
their soul delighteth
in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their
fears upon them;
because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but
they did evil before
Mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted

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not."

No matter how good or how important the sacrifices may be, so long as we
serve Him in our
own way our gifts and sacrifices are an abomination unto Him. Man's own ways
must be
abandoned, even though it be the hardest task to face, if he is to make peace
with God.

There is no question but that God has now sent this warning message to His
unfaithful
self-important servants, though they do not and will not hear. Having said what
He wished to say
to them, He now turns to His newly hired servants:

Isa. 66:5, 6 -- "Hear the Word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His Word; Your
brethren that hated
you, that cast you out for My name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but
He shall appear to
your joy, and they shall be ashamed. A voice of noise from the city, a voice
from the temple, a
voice of the Lord that rendereth recompence to His enemies."

Some have already had the experience of being carried bodily out of the
churches for no other
reason than for having read "The Shepherd's Rod," and for having said, "I
believe what It says."
Of course, it is incredible that men should act like demons. It is nevertheless
so, and God Himself
testifies against their demon practice. We do not pity ourselves, and are not
at all angry at our
adversaries, but we are sorry about their spiritual blindness, misery, poverty,
and nakedness, for
we know that the coming joy is to be ours, and the sorrow and shame and gnashing
of teeth,
theirs. This we know as verily as Jacob knew that God was with him in his
flight from the face of
Esau.

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The Esaus of today, though, do not know this. No, they do not know it any
more than Esau of
old knew of Jacob's night vision of the ladder that extended from heaven to
Jacob's dew-soaked

bed.

If any part of the Bible is become present Truth, Isaiah 66:5 certainly is. Consequently, from the city there is a noise and there is a voice from the temple against us; but the voice of the Lord, the message of today, is what counts and what settles all things. Are you afraid of being cast out? or are you trembling at God's Word? Now you have to make your choice against opposition if you expect to be in the Kingdom eternal.

Isa. 66:7 -- "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child."

For a woman to be delivered of a child before she travails and before her pain comes, is an incredible thing -- a miracle. And that is just what happened to the church when the Lord was born in the manger of Bethlehem: The church knew not her visitation, and though she felt no need of a Saviour (travailed not), yet she brought forth the child. But according to the verse that follows, the church in this day shall experience even a greater miracle than did the church in Christ's day:

Isa. 66:8 -- "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."

The church is now filled with tares, with bad fish and with goats. It is hard to find the saints. She is

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nevertheless all at once to bring a multitude of converts which no man can number. The Denomination does not believe this; no, no more than the Jews believed that the Saviour was born in the manger, nor any more than did they expect the fishermen of Galilee to take the places of the pious priests and of the exalted religious leaders of that day, and no more than did they expect the Gentiles to share in the promises of Israel. The Denomination of today, too, thinks that tomorrow is to be as today, that the Lord God has left men forever to do as they please. She does not know that the Lord is taking the reins in His Own hands ("Testimonies to Ministers," p. 300). She still thinks that she is rich and increased with goods (Truth), and has need of nothing more. The

church will, nevertheless, see all the promises fulfilled. She will see that these scriptures are not in the Bible merely to fill space. As soon as she thus travails and feels her need, just that soon will her courts be filled with saints and her work finished.

Isa. 66:9 -- "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God."

Would the Lord have made these promises if He were not able to fulfill them? This is the great question before you, before me. And would He start something if He cannot perform and finish? You must not lightly pass over these questions, for your answers will decide your destiny.

Isa. 66:10-14 -- "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance

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of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward His servants, and His indignation toward His enemies."

Here we are told that only those who mourn for Jerusalem, those who pray for the establishment of His antitypical throne of David, and kingdom, are to rejoice with her. They, and only they, will profit from the abundance of her glory. None others will share her peace and her abundant glory. No, none others will be dandled upon her knees. The sinners shall not be comforted in Jerusalem, and their lukewarmness will become red hot and put them running to the hills and to the rocks of the mountains (Rev. 6:14-17).

Isa. 66:15-17 -- "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh,

and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord."

After God has done all He can do to direct the path of His servants, when there is "no more remedy," just then, Divine retribution is to be meted out. Those who continue to walk in their own way will then

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find themselves in the wide path where there is no Divine mercy, where the Avenger of justice takes His toll.

They are those who sanctify and purify themselves in the garden behind one tree (behind the leader); that is, they pretend to be very religious in their gathering places, trusting that the minister will lead them through to the Kingdom. They indulge in the use of forbidden meats and at the same time boastingly pretend to be sanctified and purified. To the Lord, however, they appear as white-washed sepulchres full of rotten flesh, as cups that are clean on the outside but filthy on the inside.

Isa. 66:18, 19 -- "For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see My glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles."

What the Lord is about to do is not to be done in secret. It is not an imaginary thing not something enshrouded in mystery to be guessed at; but it is a plain and open act before all the nations.

Now to their own destruction, men argue that this is a spiritual slaughter, (What is a spiritual slaughter? -- no one knows.) although it is plain to see that it is the Judgment for the Living. The fact that for over a century the Denomination has been teaching that the Judgment for the Dead is to separate the good from the bad (the tares from the wheat) their

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foolish arguments now prove that they are not only ignorant of it, but even so blind (Rev. 3:17) that even after told and shown what it is they cannot see it! Although they claim to know that the

Judgment is to separate the wheat from the tares, the good from the bad, that it is to cleanse the sanctuary by blotting out the names of the bad and the sins of the good, they do not admit that this strange act of God is nothing less than the Judgment for the Living in the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17), the cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:14), the purification of the church ("Testimonies," Vol. 5, pg. 80), the cleansing of the temple (Mal. 3:1-3).

No longer try to console yourselves that this slaughter of the Lord is something imaginary, or that it takes place after the close of probation. Now get ready lest you fall. Let no man divert your attention from it.

The verse we just read explains that those who "escape" the Lord's sword, will He send to the Gentiles, to those who have not heard His fame or seen His glory, and they shall declare His glory among the Gentiles; they shall bring to the house of the Lord all who will be saved. Here let us read the Lord's exact words:

Isa. 66:20, 21 -- "And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord."

Now, in view of the fact that those who escape the slaughter of the Lord are sent as missionaries,

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preachers, and ministers to all the nations and peoples who as yet know not God and His gospel, there is but this conclusion: that the slaughter takes place only among God's people; that it is the Judgment for the Living in the "house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17); that shepherds are slain because they have kept the sheep away from the Lord's green pasture (present Truth); that the faithful laity take their places; that then the church, "bright as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners," "goes forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer." Thus is the gospel work finished and the wicked world brought to an end.

"Only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One will be permitted

to act a part in proclaiming it [Third Angel's Message] when it shall have swelled into the Loud Cry." -- "The Review and Herald," Nov. 19, 1908.

"...We have been inclined to think that where there are no faithful ministers, there can be no true Christians; but this is not the case. God has promised that where the shepherds are not true he will take charge of the flock himself. God has never made the flock wholly dependent upon human instrumentalities. But the days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place, we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that his fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor." -
- "Testimonies," Vol. 5, pg. 80.

Isa. 66:22 -- "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the

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Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain."

With this verse Inspiration now begins to disclose things which take place in the earth made new.

Isa. 66:23 -- "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord."

The Sabbath, you see, is as eternal as the earth. It is to be kept not only now, but even after this sin-cursed earth is made new. And not only now ought God's people to meet together in the house of the Lord each Sabbath, but they shall joyfully continue to do so throughout eternity.

Isa. 66:24 -- "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

Although the preceding verses of this chapter are not studied much by any, the last two have often been discussed and debated upon by many. To some they mean that there is to be an eternal torment. But does the scripture at all sustain such a thought? -- No, it does not. The definition of "carcasses" is "lifeless bodies." And the prophet Malachi says: "For, behold, the day cometh, that

shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of

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the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal. 4:1-3.

The carcasses at first and the ashes at last of the unfaithful servants being under the feet of the saints, can hardly indicate that the unfaithful are pushed into "hell fire," there to live forever. Moreover since only the righteous are given eternal life, then the wicked must be given eternal death. Furthermore, "second death" (Rev. 20:14) cannot mean "second life."

The theory of eternal torment has been superficially derived from the statement, "their worm shall not die." "Their worm," the worm that gorges on their carcasses, though, cannot possibly mean the souls of the people. At least it cannot mean such to him who digs deep into the well of salvation, and that can think and reason for himself. Such a one reads between the lines and notes the full value of each word. If "worm" means anything, then it means that the worm thrives on the carcasses, that it is the agency which reduces the constituents of the carcasses to their original elements. Indeed, "the worm shall not die"; it shall certainly accomplish its consuming work; the carcasses shall He bring down to dust, "for dust thou art," says the scripture, "and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. 3:19. It is this disintegrating agency, the consuming worm that does not die. Moreover, we are told that the soul that sinneth, it shall die. (Ezek. 18:4).

It is plainly seen that the preaching of eternal suffering in hell fire rather than eternal death, is prompted by unscrupulous so-called soul winners

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endeavoring to drive their audiences into church by fright. But if they knew that only the born-again through the love of the Truth are given the right to enter into the Holy City, if they knew that those who must be frightened in are excluded from it, if they knew that anything which maketh a lie is also not given the right to enter therein, -- if they wholeheartedly knew all these,

they would perhaps stop preaching eternal life in hell fire, and begin to preach eternal love of the Truth. Let us now close our study by reading the Lord's final plea:

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over His household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That He shall make him ruler over all His goods.

"But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 24:42-51.

There is but one right choice for you to make, and that is to cease keeping company with the mighty Esaus, and to join the unpretentious Truth-laden Jacobs.