

The Zacchaeus Principle

(Copyright 03-22-2025) by Gary C. Miller
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PAGE 2

Why Do We Keep the Passover?

(Copyright 03-22-2025) by Rod Reynolds
(Wentzville, Missouri)

PAGE 3

Date for Pentecost in 2025

(Copyright 03-22-2025) by Keith Slough
(Kannapolis, North Carolina)

PAGE 4

The WOW Factor

(Copyright 03-24-2025) by Darwin Lee
(Bismarck, North Dakota)

PAGE 5

'The apostle Paul walks into a bar' (an oldie but goodie)

(Copyright 03-24-2025)
by Curtis Dahlgren
(Stephenson, Michigan)

PAGE 8

Does Geology Really Disagree with the Bible?

(Copyright 03-24-2025) by David Rives
(Lewisburg, Tennessee)

PAGE 11

What Does 'Examine Yourselves' Mean?

(Copyright 03-26-2025) by Staff
(Charlotte, North Carolina)

PAGE 12

Need Bibles!

(Copyright 03-27-2025)
by Kasuba Manad
(Unknown)

PAGE 16

The Golden Age of America?

(Copyright 03-27-2025) by James Steinle
(Swanville, Minnesota)

PAGE 16

Guard Your Lips

(Copyright 2010) by Jamie McNab
(England)

PAGE 17

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

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Publisher: Church of God, Bismarck, Darwin & Laura Lee, **Editor:** Laura Lee, **Assistant Editor:** Darwin Lee We do not necessarily agree with all contributors, or their works submitted and printed in this newsletter. It is up to you to get out your Bible and see whether these things are true. Iron Sharpens Iron

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1Co 14:26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

The Zacchaeus Principle

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What was Zacchaeus' little-known secret that made him rich?



WHO WAS THIS MAN?

Zacchaeus was not just that "wee little man in a sycamore tree." He was the highest-ranking publican (Lk. 19:2) collecting revenue for the Roman government. Publicans had bad reputations (often overcharged; Lk. 3:13).

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

But Zacchaeus was different.

WHAT WAS HIS SECRET OF RICHES?

Regardless of present circumstances; difficult financial situation, education, training, talent, pedigree, or past failures, Zacchaeus’ secret to riches can be applied by virtually anyone, anywhere, most any time!

**FREE YOURSELF FROM FINANCIAL “PRISON”
THE KEY IS IN YOUR HAND!**

His method had two parts: **GIVING HALF OF HIS GOODS TO THE POOR** and **TREATING OTHERS FAIRLY** (Lk. 19:8).

Notice the second thing mentioned about him: “...he was rich.” (Lk. 19:2), and the **FIRST THING** he said when meeting Yahshua *were those two parts* (Lk. 19:8).

A GENEROUS GIVER WILL BECOME A GENEROUS RECEIVER

Did generosity work for Zacchaeus? **ABSOLUTELY.**

Will it work for YOU? What Does It Take?

IT TAKES THE NERVE OF ZACCHAEUS, THE COURAGE TO GIVE...GENEROUSLY.

“He that has a bountiful (“generous” SEC) eye shall be blessed for he gives of his bread to the poor.” (Prv. 22:9).

“The generous man will be prosperous...” (Prv. 11:25).

“He who is gracious to a poor man lends to Yahweh, and He will repay him for his good deed.” (Prv. 19:17).

These are promises from Yahweh. And we know He cannot lie.

NOTICE Zacchaeus did not give of his time but of HIS GOODS. His material possessions.

EVEN WHEN THE CHIPS ARE LOW, THERE IS STILL SOME LEFT FOR GIVING.

SO IF YOU HAVE ANY MONEY AT ALL, YOU NOW POSSESS THE KEY TO UNLOCK THE DOOR TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM!

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Why Do We Keep the Passover?
(Copyright 03-22-2025) by Rod Reynolds (Wentzville, Missouri)

It's widely acknowledged among Biblical scholars and historians that Jesus and the early Apostles kept the Passover — as the historical and Biblical evidence clearly shows. Is there any reason for Christians to keep the Passover today? YES! Find out why!

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The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

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[Sermon Link: Why Do We Keep the Passover? | COGMessenger](#)

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Date for Pentecost in 2025

(Copyright 03-22-2025) by Keith Slough (Kannapolis, North Carolina)

I noticed a typo in your Holyday dates at the end of the page. The Day of Pentecost is JUNE 8th. Someone wrote June 2nd -- so I thought I would bring this to your attention so you can correct it.

I'm an independent COG minister in North Carolina -- AC graduate in Pasadena

Editor's Note:

My education comes directly from God and Christ through their Holy Scriptures (the Bible) and the Holy Spirit that was granted to me at Baptism. I am glad we got those credentials out of the way.

June 2, 2025, is Sivan 6, which is the correct day to keep Pentecost as per God's Word in the Bible.

Exodus 19

Exo 19:1 In the **third month (Sivan is the 3rd Month)**, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day **(Meaning the day matched the month, in other words in the 3rd month on the 3rd day of the 3rd month.)** came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai. **Exo 19:2** For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come *to* the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. **Exo 19:3** And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; **Exo 19:4** Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. **Exo 19:5** Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: **Exo 19:6** And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. **Exo 19:7** And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. **Exo 19:8** And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. **Exo 19:9** And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD. **Exo 19:10** And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them **to day and to morrow (meaning the 4th and 5th day of Sivan)**, and let them wash their clothes, **Exo 19:11** And be ready against the **third day**: for the **third day** the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. **(This would be the 3rd day from the 3rd day spoken of in verse 1 or in other words they were to be sanctified by the 6th of Sivan.)** **Exo 19:12** And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, *that ye go not up* into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: **Exo 19:13** There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. **Exo 19:14** And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. **Exo 19:15** And he said unto the people, Be ready against the **third day (the 3rd day from when they arrived spoken of in verse 1 or in other words, Sivan 6):** come not at *your* wives. **Exo 19:16** And it came to pass on the **third day in the morning (Again talking about 3 days after they arrived as spoken of in verse 1 or Sivan 6)**, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled. **Exo 19:17** And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. **Exo 19:18** And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. [Exo 19:19](#) And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. [Exo 19:20](#) And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses *up* to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. [Exo 19:21](#) And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. [Exo 19:22](#) And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. [Exo 19:23](#) And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. [Exo 19:24](#) And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. [Exo 19:25](#) So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

Then continue reading into Exodus Chapter 20 and you will find that according to scripture the giving of the law was on Sivan 6 or as we know it Pentecost.

Please show me in scripture where Pentecost was kept on June 8 (Sivan 12) instead of Sivan 6 as spoken of in scripture. In other words can you prove from scripture what day Pentecost was actually kept on? If so, I would love to see those articles. Our Pentecost date is not a typo. We keep a Sivan 6 Pentecost according to scripture and in 2025 Sivan 6 falls on June 2nd. Laura Lee

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The WOW Factor

(Copyright 03-24-2025) by Darwin Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

No doubt everyone has used the word “wow” in expressing some excitement in something they have never seen or heard before. I know I have; I lost count of them back when I was four or five years old. Like when I first saw in person or in a photo an exotic bird. Wow! Or when I first heard the story of God parting the waters of Red Sea. Wow!

Just where am I going with this one might ask? A word used often; many can relate to. At least I can as it applies to various belief systems.

The following bible verse can be hard to fathom: **Re 12:9** “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him”. Wow! Now who can possibly believe that? The devil-Satan being able to deceive every human? Wow!

On the one hand that seems like quite a feat to accomplish of all humans ever to have life. Maybe a good place to start is in the very beginning of the true source of all unanswered questions, the bible.

Ge 3:1 ¶ Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Ge 3:2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden

:

Ge 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

Ge 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

Ge 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

gods, knowing good and evil.

“Wow” is what I thought when I first came across that. Read the rest of the story on your own. There it is the first deception-lie told. Masses of people living today still conduct their daily lives by this lie, in many forms. Best example, **Jg 17:6** In those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but* every man did *that which* was right in his own eyes.

To this day, that has not changed even though nations still have “kings”. Yes, humans always have many excuses for what they do as being right in their own eyes.

Back to Revelation 12:9, there are the communists-atheists who sincerely believe there is no God. Wow! Try and convince them otherwise and see how far you will get them to believe otherwise. These same people, Satan has even got them to believe he (Satan) doesn’t exist! Wow!

Here is a good one, **Mal 2:17** Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied *him*? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil *is* good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where *is* the God of judgment? Wow!

Then there are the Hindu, Buddha, Muslim belief systems. The serious Bible studying student can right them off as being deceived and there are millions upon millions of them. Wow! Then there are those not well known with belief systems of their own style gods by many smaller tribes all over the world, like in Africa, south America and perhaps right in our own back yard, that could well be in the millions. Wow!

Since Revelation 12:9 says the whole world, we must focus on the many “Christians” various beliefs also, unless they are not part of the “whole world”. I sort of think they are included in that world. This is not sounding so good at this point, especially since they all claim the Bible being God’s word. There are millions of them. Wow!

There must be some deception amongst them, after all if one investigates their many denominations and independent or “side show Christians”, one can only conclude there are many lies that so-called Christians have “ate up” with fervent desire. Turns out most would rather be in this category, **2Th 2:11** And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: Wow!

Now it’s time to come down to the “nitty-gritty” of possible persons other than the ones already listed. The category of people being those reading this message? You say, “not”. If you say not me, you are lying to yourself. Satan has got you too. Ouch!

Let me explain. Since God says the whole world, I must include myself in that category as having been lied to. Well, one might say, “I have seriously studied the Bible for fifty plus years now. I’ve completed the course and ferreted out all the lies I once fell for. I’ve checked all the boxes and now I have ‘the whole-all the truth’ and am free of believing any more lies! Wow! “Free at last-free at last”!

I’m one not to judge anyone on that, but maybe it would be a good idea to reassess that belief just in case you don’t yet have all the lies ferreted out yet after all! Remember this scripture? **2Pe 3:18** But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

“Grow in knowledge”, what kind of knowledge? How about true knowledge over the false knowledge-lies you’re holding on to? Can you at this point in your life-at this very moment as you read this, firmly believe you have all true knowledge there is available from God Himself? If you do I feel sorry for you! Because you believe there is no more capacity for anymore “growth” within you. You are full of all wisdom and pure true knowledge! Is this how you think: I am perfect in my ways and have no need for any more knowledge?

Then there are the Church of God “Christians”, why are so many confused on various subjects, like is God a triune, or one only God, (Jesus being created by God)? Jesus not really God having had an eternal existence as God who Jesus calls “Our Father”. Maybe there really were-are two ever existing God beings existing together without a beginning. Why not wrap your mind around that being possible?

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

How about all the confusion over what calendar God has for Holy convocations for His Holyday observances? I thought the Church of God people were so quick to quote the scripture when referring to those various denominations + Catholic “Christians”.

1Co 14:33 For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

Since God does not author confusion, then it must be people in the church who author this confusion. authored by its leaders who are not really connected to God as they claim! Wow! To claim as many do that it's not so important as to what calendar one prefers verses the more important aspect but one's focus should be on the “spirit of the law”! Where have I heard that one before?

Like many teach that the spirit of the law is what only counts now and not the letter of the law. Wow! How can that be accomplished? You mean, the spirit of the law as Jesus said not to have hate in your heart for your brother? Now you can go murder your brother (like dead), because the letter is no longer valid? Is that what you mean? Cleaver deception indeed. Wow!

There was one person in our former church of God fellowship that said, “the spirit of the law is what Christians live by. The letter of the law was nailed to the cross”! Wow! How can once enlightened Christians become so deceived?

Why would any other of the commandants be any different including what, confused calendar you use for God's holy days? You mean, if you keep the days you like, “the spirit of the law” that then has God's approval? A literal day, a literal calendar appointed by God Himself, is no concern to God? Wow!

Did not our forefathers try that back when they were in their promised land? Some wanted a different time to set for the special worship of Holy Days?

1Ki 12:32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made.

1Ki 12:33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar and burnt incense.

1Ki 13:34 And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut *it* off, and to destroy *it* from off the face of the earth.

Keeping God's Holy Day Feasts is the (a) letter of the law and comes with a literal calendar to be able to keep those days by certain appointed times. Your own appointed times God will not accept. **Isa 1:14** Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear *them*.

Thus, this would be a good reason to reassess what day you should keep for the Feasts of God! It's the unrepentant law breakers that will be destroyed forever. **Re 21:8** But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Take note, “all liars”, if you are teaching lies about anything, unrepentant of, including when God's feast days are according to His one and only one calendar, you could be in danger. God just doesn't have a dozen or more calendars to choose from!

So, we plead with you, take a closer look at this subject, as well as others and be not arrogant in believing you have all true knowledge wrapped up in a “golden basket”!

The editor of this newsletter (my wife) and myself have studied this topic of God's only one calendar. There cannot be a dozen or more and any one to think that God would be ok with that any more than He was ok with Jeroboam doing what

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

he did. The calendar we keep, is God's only sanctioned calendar, all lies to the contrary.

If you want to really know which one that is, you will have to do some serious study on your own. We cannot make anyone believe the truth in any doctrine. That is something only you can do on your own. If you have read various calendar articles in our newsletters, you would have a clue where we stand.

All we ask, please don't be an unrepeatable liar!

The “New” Church of God Messenger
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‘The apostle Paul walks into a bar’ (an oldie but goodie)

(Copyright 03-24-2025) by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)

THREE DAYS before Christmas, I walked into a bar. I looked around, but no one was there, though the Packers were playing to a full house. After awhile a bartender appeared, all bubbly and bright, and I ordered a beer. As she popped the top, a stranger came in, dusting off snow, kind of nondescript. He had nary a smile, and for some reason he seemed older than he looked (though I'm not too good at judging the cover of a book).

I SAID "HOWDY" and he said "Shalom, or, that is to say, *hello*, more or less." I couldn't place the guy's accent, but he certainly didn't look Nordic, so I said:

"You from around here?"

"Not hardly," he said with half a smile.

So, I said as I stared, "So where are you from? Not that it matters, but . . ."

He turned, as if looking right through the plate glass mirror behind the bar, thinking, I guess. Just as he started to speak, who should appear but the bubbly bartender. "What'll you have, Bud?" said she, and says he:

"Have you any Mid-Eastern wines from about 40 A.D.? If so, I'll have it."

"Not in this place," she laughed. "Would you settle for a Mogen David?" And he says:

"Close enough! I know how to abound and how to be abased."

"Hey, that's pretty good," I said. "What do you do? Are you a writer or what?"

"I'm retired," he says. He stuck out his hand and says "My name is Paul. But I used to be called Saul. Of Tarsus."

We shook hands and I said, "My name is Curt, but some people call me the crazy woodcutter. Because." And he says:

"I can relate, I think. That is to say, I used to be a tent maker on the side, and some people thought that's all I was."

"Let me guess," I said. "You were on Reality TV. Or were a TV evangelist. Before they got such a bad reputation?"

"Close, but before TV," says he.

I began to wonder if this guy was sick, so I just said, "You're the Apostle Paul." And he says:

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

"How did you ascertain that so quick? Quickly, I mean?"

I looked around, but no one was there, not even the bartender (she must have been stomping the grapes yet). I managed to catch Paul's eye and said, "Well, let me hear a few lines. Something you've written."

"God gave them over to a reprobate mind, being filled with fornication, wickedness, covetousness, and maliciousness; full of envy, hatred, deceit, and malignity; whisperers, backbiters, proud, disobedient to parents; without understanding or natural affection, liars, and unmerciful debaters; who, knowing the judgment of God – that those who commit such things are not worthy of immortality – not only do the same, but have pleasure in those who *do them too!*"

"Sounds very judgmental," I said with a smile and a sip of my beer. "Before I go home, I'll buy you that Mogen David if you can recite the first sentence of your letter to Rome *without taking a breath*" (I finally got a laugh out of him). "But seriously, what is 'malignity'?"

"*'Malignity,'* from *'malignus'* – *'bad'* or *'wicked'* – other words from this family including *'malice,' 'malaise,'* and *'malignant';* but the simplest way to define *'malignity'* is **'TROUBLE' – as in *'here comes trouble,'* that is to say, a popular culture out of control like a malignant growth, so to speak," he said.**

I took a quick glance at the wide-screen and around the room, and then I said:

"Assuming for a minute that you're the Apostle Paul, where have you been?"

"I DON'T KNOW," said the stranger. "It seemed like I was sleeping, having, on occasion, pleasant dreams; then I had this horrible nightmare. I dreamt that people are full of envy, hatred, and immorality; that governments are corrupt and corrupting; that there are wars all over the world, and that believers were being persecuted and killed, just for being believers again."

"That's actually all true," I said. And he says:

"All of a sudden I woke up and here I was."

And you were standing in front of a saloon?" I asked.

"Exactly," he says. "And my first thought was, I could use a glass of some good old Mediterranean wine. So, I came in here, but where AM I?"

"You're in the Upper Peninsula," I said, and he says:

"Where's that?"

"It's in Michigan," I said.

And he says, "Where's that?"

"It's in the United States of America," I said. "We used to call this the New World. It's about three months west of Europe by sailboat, or a few hours by supersonic airplane." And he says:

"Is that some kind of a flying machine? I saw those in my bad dream. They were battling each other in the sky."

"Yes," I said. "And people are being killed in battle every day. Even in this part of the world Christians are maligned for quoting the Apostle Paul, er, you."

"Why?" asked the stranger. And I said:

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

"They want to silence us. Drive religion into the shadows, underground. Any other questions?" And he says:

"Where's the bartender? Is she still stomping the grapes, or what?" And I said:

"THAT REMINDS ME," I said. "I have a question for *you*. In your letter to the Romans, you told them to be 'submissive' to the powers-that-be, the authorities. Elucidate for me, if you will."

"In the first place," he says, "I was writing to the Christians in Rome *specifically*. We ministers didn't want our lay members there to get crucified."

"That was for *you guys*, wasn't it?" I said. And he says:

"Exactly. I could still show you scars on my back that I got for *disobeying* the authorities. Another point is, I had to put something in the letter to get it past the censors in case it got intercepted. And I knew the Christians would understand what I meant." And I said:

"What about Christians in other parts of the world?" And he says:

"At that point in time, people in Asia Minor and Greece weren't under the thumb of the Empire quite as much. On Mars Hill, a person could speak just about almost anything that was on your mind. Peter and I said that if you have Freedom of Thought, Freedom of Religion, and Freedom of Speech, don't *waste it!* That would be like having God give you a talent, or dollars, and burying them in the ground!"

"In other words," I said, "Unto whom much is given, much shall be *required*."

"*Exactly!*" he said. "Any other questions?"

"Well," I said, "we could talk about theology, about the 'faith-works' controversy, but I already understand that."

He nodded and says:

"Faith WORKS!"

"Absolutely," I said. "But I have one other question."

And he says, "What's that?" And I said:

"When did you learn how to speak English?"

"Oh," he says. "That happened on one day of Pentecost when I was in the desert being trained by the Lord Himself."

"That figures," I said. "But if He taught you English, He was ahead of His time, wasn't He?" And Paul said:

"He was *always* ahead of His time; He *created* time, and everything else people seem to enjoy so much at this time of the year. Their overindulgence only verifies His prophecies, especially if people try to put believers to silence. The Lord predicted a Time of Great Hatred."

Then what should appear but the dear lass with the bubbly glass of burgundy. I told her to put it on my tab, and Paul raised the glass:

"To the Kingdom."

I raised my Back 40 bock and said:

"Uffda. To the Kingdom!"

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

But then I added, "By the way, I do a little writing. If I quote you, is that okay?"

With a lurch of his head and a laugh from his belly, the rosy-cheeked stranger said, "OKAY!"

Then, without another word, he was gone. Not up the chimney, but straight through the looking glass.

[I woke up on the couch and God said "Have a nice day!"]

P.S. Someday I need to take on the topic of the "ever-burning Hell." The Bible talks about a second death for the unsaved, but never says we have an immortal soul or that the lost will suffer for all eternity.

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Does Geology Really Disagree with the Bible?

(Copyright 03-24-2025) by David Rives (Lewisburg, Tennessee)

Galileo famously stated that the Bible teaches "*how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go,*" which highlights the idea that the bible is not an exhaustive record of how God uses physics. But some have taken it too far, using this idea to support a long-standing belief that faith and science are fundamentally opposed. This perspective is increasingly being challenged and has been by the brightest minds in science for years.

Today, a growing body of evidence suggests that Biblical scripture can offer valuable insights into various scientific fields, particularly geology. While the Bible is not an exhaustive scientific textbook, its references can resonate with scientific phenomena, prompting a reevaluation of the common understanding of the Earth's history. In fact, it's extensive enough that I wrote a short book on the topic, entitled "*21 Verses backed by science*".

Take, for instance, Job 28:5, which states, "*As for the earth, out of it cometh bread: and under it is turned up as if it were fire.*" This verse might be interpreted as a description of molten rock deep beneath the Earth's surface. Such references highlight the potential for scriptural insights to align with scientific findings. To state it plainly, science backs up the Bible, over and over again.

Let's now do a deep dive into one specific example, which would be the large sand formations around Bridgnorth in the United Kingdom and Sydney in Australia, traditionally attributed to ancient desert dunes. Geologists have long believed these formations were remnants of aeolian, wind-blown sand dunes from arid climates. However, this desert-centric view may not provide the complete picture. What if these deposits were the result of water deposited sand during a global flood?

In a recent article "*Shifting Sands,*" the connection between large sand formations and dry environments is examined. While it is widely accepted that arid conditions contribute to such landscapes through wind erosion and sediment transport, this perspective overlooks the impact of water in shaping terrain. The geological record certainly allows for multiple interpretations, especially when considering the potential for large-scale flood events to mobilize vast amounts of sediment, leading to the deposition of sand in many forms.

Dr. Tas Walker points out that geologists can't observe the original processes that created these formations; they rely on current observations to infer historical events—which, of course, is the best they can do. The interplay of wind and water in shaping landscapes is a critical area of study that requires further exploration. Sand, which is a pretty extraordinary material, can reveal a lot about Earth's history. The variations in sand types and colors provide insights into their mineral composition and the environments from which they originate.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

For example, the black sands of Hawaii are rich in volcanic minerals, while the pristine white sands of the Bahamas derive from crushed coral and shells. What about the striking red sands of Australia’s Pinnacles?

They are rich in iron oxide. Makes sense. These variations highlight the dynamic processes that contribute to the formation of different sand types, suggesting that a broader range of geological processes should be considered!

The Bible, with its extensive historical context, contains numerous references to events that have shaped our planet. And these sand formations and deposits certainly seem to corroborate the reality of the global flood. As Walker says, “*Starting from the true history given in the Bible, we can confidently expect to find that the evidence fits.*”

So, when people say that the Bible and science don’t agree, that idea is increasingly dismantled as scientific evidence emerges that supports the compatibility of the Word of God with scientific inquiry. God made the earth. He made science. And He wrote the Bible.

So, rather than viewing faith and science as opposing forces, we should consider them as complementary fountains of knowledge that can bring us greater understanding of the natural world.

I’m David Rives,
Truly, the heavens declare the glory of God.

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What Does ‘Examine Yourselves’ Mean?

(Copyright 03-26-2025) by Staff (Charlotte, North Carolina)

"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the [faith](#)." —II Corinthians 13:5

From time to time, it is desirable to examine or prove ourselves to *know* we align with God's mind and will. We check ourselves, as it were, to ensure that we are walking worthy of our calling. [Passover](#) is only a short time away. As Christians, we need to consider the self-examination process God's Word says we should be undergoing as the spring festivals approach.

The apostle Paul writes in [I Corinthians 11:28-30](#):

But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

It is evident that, because of the times in which we live, self-examination is necessary so that we correct ourselves regularly to ensure we continue to bring honor to [God](#) and Christ. The apostle suggests that problems and trials, leading even to death, among church members have their sources in our unexamined conduct.

Getting to Know You

In considering the process of examining our lives, one verse, also written by Paul to the same congregation, expands on this concept, providing four areas for contemplation. Other scriptures will help to provide God's perspective on each point. The verse we need to spotlight is [II Corinthians 13:5](#):

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that [Jesus Christ](#) is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

As mentioned, we can break this scripture down into four major points:

One: Examine yourselves

Paul advises in [Galatians 6:3-4](#): "For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." The Greek word for *examine* here is *dokimázō*, which means, according to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, "'to test, prove,' with the expectation of approving." It can also indicate "to discern" or "to distinguish," suggesting proving whether a thing is worthy or not.

The Living Bible helps to clarify [Galatians 6:4](#): "Let everyone be sure that he is doing his very best, for then he will have the personal satisfaction of work well done and won't need to compare himself with someone else." We realize it is unwise to compare ourselves with others ([II Corinthians 10:12](#)), but there is no *need* to compare ourselves with anyone else if we seek God's help in making the inner secrets of our hearts plain to us through His Spirit! Then, we can work on changing what God reveals He is concerned about in us.

In other words, if we sincerely, wholeheartedly, ask Almighty God to make us understand the depths of our beings, *He is faithful* to do it. Our responsibility is then to be prepared to [repent](#) fully of what God makes plain to us. This is an easy process to describe, but often hard to follow through on. Nevertheless, it is part of a continuing process in the life of any Christian who wishes to draw closer to God; it is our work. We must exert effort—sometimes a great deal of even painful effort—to assure our entrance into God's Kingdom (see, for instance, [Philippians 2:12](#); [Colossians 1:23](#); [II Peter 1:10-11](#)). We cannot leave this labor undone!



Two: Do you not know yourselves?

We have all learned many things through trial and suffering over the years, but it has not been all pain and agony. At various times, we have also abounded with [joy](#), contentment, [peace](#), and growth, and we should thank God who has

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

engineered and authored these blessings. However, beyond honestly identifying how far we have come, we also need to recognize and acknowledge the stony parts that are still in us, repenting before God with our whole hearts.

As Paul says in [I Corinthians 6:19-20](#):

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

To paraphrase, do we not realize the magnitude of our relationship with God and the obligation this puts us under to live every second as an example of God's way of life? God's people are not ordinary in any sense!

Solomon writes in [Proverbs 4:23](#), "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." The heart, the mind, is the storehouse of our character. We must spend time in meditation and prayer, asking for insight from God to reveal to us exactly who we are—*inside*—where normally only God can see. We must implore Him to help us understand who we really are right now in His eyes. We need this information to understand our relationship with Him properly.

This is a solemn and sobering process, but it should not be something we fear. Still, we must come to God in this process with humility and a heart ready to repent immediately of flaws that He shows us. This process is not superficial by any means, but one designed to reach the very heart of our being.

Remember, God may be a consuming fire to His enemies ([Hebrews 12:29](#)), but to His children, He is a boundless provider and loving Father ([Ephesians 3:14-21](#)). He is quick to forgive if we freely confess our sins to Him ([I John 1:9](#)).

Three: [Do you not know] that Jesus Christ is in you?

Paul exhorts these same Corinthians:

And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting [holiness](#) in the fear of God. ([II Corinthians 6:16-20](#); [7:1](#))

Because we are God's children, we are special, but nothing of our own makes us that way. It is only God dwelling in us by His Spirit that separates us from others. But what a difference that makes!

Jesus says in [John 14:23](#), "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will [love](#) him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." This should make us think, "What kind of home am I providing for the Sovereign God and His glorified Son?" Our desire to give God nothing to judge as unworthy of His presence should run the gamut from our physical health to our most secret thoughts.

Clearly, every one of us falls short. But this is why Paul exhorts us to cleanse ourselves, continually maturing in holiness *in the fear of God*. We must scrub deeply out of deep reverence for Him who dwells in us.

Four: Unless indeed you are disqualified

Disqualified (*adókimos*, *Strong's* #1384; translated as "reprobates" in the King James Version) means, according to *Vine's*, "not standing the test, rejected." It suggests "unacceptable," "disapproved," "unworthy," "spurious," "worthless," or "cast away." The following verses illustrate this word's meaning:

Romans 1:28: And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased [*adókimon*] mind, to do those things which are not fitting.

Titus 1:16: They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified [*adókimo*] for every good work.

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

Hebrews 6:7-8: For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected [*adókimos*] and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.

Being disqualified or rejected is the opposite of having Jesus Christ dwell in us; it is being unfit or unworthy of His presence in us. In other words, a disqualified person is cut off from God! This is the worst possible outcome of a Christian's life: to return to a life of [sin](#) and have so much pride that he or she rejects salvation and all that comes with it! God's Word clearly shows that it can happen (see [Hebrews 6:4-6](#); [10:26-31](#))!

Regular self-examination is a proven way to ensure it does not happen to us!

Accentuate the Positive

God intends for us to discover the reality of our nature. Of course, it is impossible to fathom it entirely, but we can and must come to grips with the potential for evil that exists in each of us. We must at least annually measure the extent to which we have overcome the evil in us and the sincerity of our commitment to our relationship with God. As we examine ourselves this and every year, God expects us to prepare ourselves as mature Christians to rededicate ourselves to Him afresh at Passover and to put sin out of our lives diligently and actively, which is the lesson of the [Feast of Unleavened Bread](#).

As mentioned earlier, if we sincerely ask God in faith, He will reveal our inward, hidden faults to us (see [Psalm 19:12-13](#); [51:6](#); [139:23-24](#)). It is crucial that we not be overly discouraged by what He reveals. It is human nature. It has lived and grown within us for as long as we have lived, and it takes long years to overcome its influence. In fact, we cannot entirely escape it in this flesh, a compelling reason Christians long for the resurrection at the [return of Jesus Christ](#).

Rather than wallow in discouragement, we should channel our energies to eradicate its power over our lives (see [II Corinthians 7:9-11](#)). Paul relates in [Romans 7:14-23](#) that, to his shame and regret, he often did what he hated, sin, and conversely, he did not do what he really wanted to do. Yet, the same apostle also writes in verse 25: "I thank God—[I am delivered from my sinful flesh] through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then with the mind I myself serve the [law of God](#), but with the flesh the law of sin." As long as we are "in the flesh," we will sin, but we must continually—daily—repent and ask God for help in fighting our carnal nature.

God has promised the overcoming if we do our part. Although every imaginable wrong influence in this age besets us, we must remember that God has promised to stick with us and give us the help we need: "For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord *is* my helper; I will not fear'" ([Hebrews 13:5-6](#)).

In [Psalm 119:57-60](#), David intimates that it is a Christian's obligation to turn again, day after day and year after year, to God, saying:

You are my portion, O LORD; I have said [declared, promised] that I would keep Your words. I entreated Your favor with my whole heart; be [merciful](#) to me according to Your word. I thought about my ways and turned my feet to Your testimonies. I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments.

By doing so, we will succeed in attaining eternal life due to God's help.

As the Passover season approaches, we would do well to fast, dedicating a whole day to searching the Scriptures and ourselves. We need to sincerely inquire before God about our sins and shortcomings, so that He will never need to reveal them to us in condemnation.

Recall [I Corinthians 11:28-30](#):

But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

Now notice verse 31: "For if we would judge ourselves, we would not [need to] be judged." Christ is the righteous Judge.

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

He would much rather we judge ourselves and turn to righteousness than have to point out our faults to us.

In **II Timothy 4:7-8**, Paul speaks of his life's accomplishments. He knew he had run the course of his life in a way that was "pleasing" to God. He described it this way:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

He is speaking about us!

We have no need to be discouraged at Passover time. It is our opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to Almighty God and renew our dedication to putting on the new man. As James says, sometimes we have not because we fail to ask (**James 4:2**). We need to ask God for a clean heart before Him, as well as for hope, joy, peace, and a close, personal relationship with Him and His Son.

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Need Bibles!
(Copyright 03-27-2025) by Kasuba Manad (Unknown)

Dearest Saints of our Lord Jesus Christ, Sister LAURA,
Warmest Christian greetings to each one of you all, your beloved families and all the dear brethren at your Church in the Precious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Myself, my beloved families, the Orphans under my care and all the dear brethren at our Church we greet each one of you with so much Christian love!

How are you and your beloved families? It has been a long time since I last heard from you. I am here humbly requesting you in the Precious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, if you can buy us Bibles in the local language.

We shall continue to pray for you, your beloved families, all the dear brethren at your Church and God's work you are faithfully doing. Please continue to pray for me, my beloved families, all the dear brethren at our church, the Orphans under my care and God's work I am doing here.

It is always encouraging to hear from you soon again,
SHALOM, SHALOM,
BRO.KASUBA MANAD

Response:
We do not distribute bibles from here but perhaps someone reading this might. Laura Lee

The Golden Age of America?
(Copyright 03-27-2025) by James Steinle (Swanville, Minnesota)

MIGHT BE VERY USEFUL TO WATCH THIS...
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKfoECigaPo> 23:33 Min.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

It covers pride and the results of pride, for the last days of this age (if you understand what I mean). A well put-together report/study/sermon. If he is right...and he seems to be..

Guard Your Lips

(Copyright 2010) by Jamie McNab (England)

Today I want to return to a topic that I have spoken on at least a couple of times before over the last five or ten years. This is a very important topic; but also, one which is very practical, because it affects our conduct throughout our waking hours.

I want to look again at our words – how we use our tongues. Do we use them for good or bad, for blessing or cursing, for life or death? Because, if we do not learn to use our words properly – in the way that God instructs us – our tongues can harm both us and other people. Or they can bless us and other people. If you think about it, the ability to speak – to communicate in words – really is a godly attribute. Animals, birds, and fish communicate to a degree – but very basically compared to human beings with our various range of topics, knowledge, moods, thoughts and dreams in which we can communicate.

Our ability to speak words really is a godly characteristic; but unfortunately, there is a tendency for us to be rather careless with our words. We fail, too often, to realize the importance of controlling our words and choosing our words. Scripture has a lot to say about this.

So, today’s message will be the first of three or four, and I have entitled it, “Guard your Lips.”

Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

If we take this scripture as it is written, it says that *death* and *life* are in the power of the tongue. That sounds to me like the tongue is quite important and quite influential, if indeed the tongue has the power of life and death. Both would probably be the extremes, but in between death and life, there is a lot of discouragement, or a lot of despair that can be brought about by our tongues. I think it is fairly evident to all of us, that words can be encouraging; can build us up, can build up and inspire other people. If you think about it, preaching the Word of God brings life, brings hope, brings truth. Equally, of course, we know that the opposite is also true – that words can discourage, they can hurt people, they can break up families, and they can destroy careers.

Words can drive some people to despair, and even to suicide. So, at their extreme, *your* words according to scripture have the power of life and death. And it says here in Proverbs that “those who love it will eat its fruit.” There is fruit from our words. Our words can produce both good and bad; and you and I often eat the fruit of our own lips.

One of the translations says, “*Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and they that rule it shall eat the fruits thereof.*” I quite like that. It implies that you and I should be able to rule our tongues, to rule our words, and to choose our words carefully. And then, of course, if we choose our words carefully and wisely, the fruit that we produce will be good fruit, up building fruit, the fruit of life. We can probably all remember that in times past, we have said some rather good things, and encouraged ourselves and others; but equally we have been a bit careless, and did not think too much, and blurted out something that caused harm. Now in most cases the harm can be healed, but sometimes it is too late. Sometimes, we open our mouths and speak, and it is done, and you cannot unravel it; and that can be harmful.

Just to show you the importance of words, I remember some years back, probably twenty years ago, there was a famous Jeweler’s chain in Britain called Ratner’s. It was a family company with stores in all parts of the country. They were not highly priced; you could get rings, earrings, belly-button rings, nose rings, candelabras, sherry, and port glasses, and whatever else you would want to buy. Once, at a private function, Gerald Ratner was speaking – apparently privately; but there were some people there that took his comments away and leaked them to the press. He said, apparently in good humor, “How come the goods are so cheap in our shops?” And he said, (excuse the language), “Because they are total c**p.” Amazingly, within about a week, the word was out, and the value of that business dropped by five hundred

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

million pounds, that is nearly a billion dollars. This was all because of one man's words. They almost went bankrupt, and, in fact, Mr. Gerald Ratner was thrown out within a few months. A few careless words destroyed his future, his destiny, his company, and the livelihoods of many people who served in his shops; and, of course, hugely disappointed the owners of Ratner's Jewelry. So, words *can* be important. The scriptures say that the fruit that words can produce are death and life.

Matthew 12:36-37 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Are words important? It looks like it! Jesus said, "by your words you will be justified" – accepted and made righteous; or alternatively, "by your words you will be condemned." Which would you rather be? Justified or condemned? Are *your* words important? Yes! Is the power of life and death in *your* words? Yes!

Looking again at verse 36 again, "*But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment.*" What is an idle word? The Greek gives us some other synonyms – *inactive, useless*. We know that every useless, inactive, non-productive, empty, idle, meaningless word that we may speak, we will give account of it in the Day of Judgment.

I think that we all recognize that our society is full of useless words. Television and radio have some good things on them, but there is also a huge amount of useless, idle, empty, vain, and futile words that surround us. You know that for a fact. Just as is the case with talk-shows and the words used in texting. How many vain, empty, inactive, pointless, idle words surround us every single day? We are not immune to that. So, a question might be, "Are *our* words productive?" If you are called to give an account of your words, what you speak about, what you are saying, the words that you use from when you wake up in the morning until you tumble into bed at night, your words, and my words – how do they look? Are they idle words? Are they words that produce life, or are they words that produce death? Are they words that build up, or are they words that tear down? Our words do demonstrate and allow us to see what is in our hearts.

Matthew 12:34 "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

That is a true statement, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Whatever fills your heart to overflowing, that is what you and I say. So when we hear our words, when God hears our words, when others hear our words, it is actually giving away, very often, what is *in our heart* – because, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" Or as I have often said, "the mouth leaks"! Sometimes when we are not really paying attention and are not really focused on our words and what is in our heart, oops! It just leaks out.

Matthew 12:34 A good man (*or woman*) out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

We have commented in the past on "the heart and mouth connection," and that is demonstrated here. What the mouth often speaks reveals what is in the heart; and an evil heart produces evil sayings, evil things, evil fruit, and ultimately, of course, death; whereas a good heart produces good fruit, and fruit that would lead to life. The question that we have is, "What is our conversation? What do our words reveal about what is in our hearts?" Remember – death and life! Just to reinforce the importance of our conversation, the importance of our words, Jesus said in verse 37, "*For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*"

Life and death are in the power of our words. Jesus confirms that.

Ecclesiastes 5:1 Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.

Of course, we can sacrifice to God with praise. It says in Hebrews that the praise of our lips can be a sacrifice to God; but it says here in Ecclesiastes that, when we go to the house of God and draw near, we should be more hearing, more listening; and whether it is a physical sacrifice or whether it is the sacrifice of a fool with his empty words, it says that they do not know that they do evil.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

Ecclesiastes 5:2 Do not be rash with your mouth and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.

It says, “Do not be rash.” One translation says, “Do not be hasty in word, or impulsive in thought, but be careful.” It says, “Guard your lips.” It implies more than just at the House of God; but that is the particular place when you are communing with God, when you are spending time with God, and you must be careful what you say. Do not be rash with your mouth, do not be hasty, especially before God. God is in heaven, and you are on earth; therefore let your words be few. Let them be carefully chosen, carefully selected.

Ecclesiastes 5:4-6 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed — Better not to vow than to vow and not pay. Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?

The principle being brought out here is: Say what you mean and do it! Do not make a vow to God; do not make any promise to God; do not make any commitment to God with your words, and then fail to deliver. It says that God is not pleased by that. He wants us to use our words properly. He is not impressed by idle words, inactive words, non-productive words. He makes it very plain that when you and I are talking to God, dealing with God, it says, “Go into the House of God, let your words be few, do not be rash with your mouth,” do not jump to saying things. Be careful, because if you make any commitment, be ready to deliver it. God is not impressed by idle words, by cheap talk, and by meaningless statements. The general principle is that no matter what you and I are up to, we should be a people who say what we mean, and then we do it. Empty talk, empty promises, boastful statements, and abject failure to deliver reveals bad character, and it is not impressive at all.

Of course, if we are saying things and not delivering, then we are creating a problem, and we are not faithful.

We should be very careful with what we say and be very careful if we make any commitments, especially to our God, that we deliver on them, even if it is to our own hurt.

Psalms 15:1 LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

Who are these people that can dwell with God? Who are these people who can live with the Father? Who are those who can dwell in God's Holy tabernacle? Who are they? What are their characteristics? The answer is:

Psalms 15:2 He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart;

Here is the “speaking and heart connection” again. This person speaks what is true; and speaking what is true is good. Speaking deceit is not good.

Psalms 15:3 He who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;

And that would typically be through words. We will see increasingly that how we use our tongues is very important. Here, people who are backbiting, people who are condemnatory, people who are critical, people who have the old gossip problem – that is not what God gave us our tongues for, and that is leading to death and not to life.

Psalms 15:4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the LORD; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change;

This person keeps his or her word, even if it costs them, because their word is important – their word is good. You can depend on their word and, if you think about it, God's word is important to us because we know that it is dependable, it is reliable, it is forever settled in heaven. God's word does not change, and God cannot lie. You and I, as followers of God, should have the same characteristics – one of which is that, if we have made a commitment – one that we should think through first, of course, and possibly think again, maybe even think yet again! But once we have made a commitment – once we have said we will do something – then the man or woman who dwells in God's tabernacle is a

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

person who swears to his own hurt and does not change; he is that reliable.

Psalms 15:5 He who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.

So, we want our word to be good and dependable, not inactive, inoperable, idle or useless. God is looking for people whose word is good, who speak the truth in their heart, who do not backbite and condemn, and whose words are not harmful and destructive words.

Of course, we talk all day long and so we have plenty of opportunity to test our words, and to ensure that they are words that lead and tend to life, and not the other way.

Psalms 34:11-12 Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?

Who is that person that desires life? Do *you* desire life? Would *you* like many days that you can “see good” in? I would! And I think that most of us would. We desire life; we want life abundantly; and we do not want many days of abject poverty, many days of struggling, or many days of seeing grim things around us. But it says here, “Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?” We all do! Here is one of the ways that you can do that:

Psalms 34:13 Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.

That is the first thing he mentions. Do you want to live for a long time? Do you desire good for all of those days? Okay, “Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.” This word “deceit” can mean saying one thing but meaning another.

Psalms 34:14-15 Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.

So, if we are living that way of life, God’s eyes are upon us and His ears are attentive to us. We must keep our tongue from speaking evil and our lips from speaking guile.

The scriptures, from Genesis to Malachi, instruct us in how we should choose our words carefully, how we should be honest and true, and shun deceit, gossip, backbiting and all of the rest of it.

There is a key there, “Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.” This is something that we can do if we want to enjoy a good life. And if we want to have good fruit, remember, those who rule their tongues will eat the fruit thereof. But we want *good* fruit, we want happiness, joy, wisdom, a long life, and we want friends. All of the good things come from guarding our lips and choosing our words carefully.

Psalms 39:1 I said, “I will guard my ways, Lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, while the wicked are before me.”

This means that we must be alert. Do not just open up your mouth and start rattling away. Our words are important, and they can influence us; they can influence the lives of others. There is a time when you and I need to restrain our lips as with a muzzle. The old saying is, “Engage the brain, before operating the mouth.” We must have self-control, and not be too hasty with our words, not just rattling away and saying things that are not conducive to life. They need to build up and encourage, and they must be pure and right in God’s sight.

But words that are cheap, tacky, nasty, harmful, destructive, and that pull down and degrade are not the words that come out of the mouth of a human being made in the image and likeness of God.

Proverbs 29:20 Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

It does not say that he *is* a fool, but that there is more chance of a fool having a successful life than a man, or woman

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

who is hasty or rash in his or her words. Remember, Ecclesiastes says, “Do not let your words be rash when you go to the House of God.” You and I do need to be watchful of our words, do not be so hasty, and think if what we are going to say is good. “Do I select my words carefully here, or just rattle off and think about it later?” That is often what we do, but that is not the best way to do it. Sometimes the vocabulary of silence is the wiser option. Most of us, when growing up, heard from our parents, “If you cannot say something good about a person do not say anything at all.”

That is quite good advice, because the wrong words, wrongly spoken at the wrong time, words uttered hastily and impulsively, cannot be taken back; it is too late, the words are out, and the damage is done.

Sometimes, of course, we are damaging ourselves because what we say to ourselves has an effect, it is not just a question of what we say that might encourage or depress another person, what we say can actually harm ourselves. We have to be very careful about our words. It says that a person hasty in their words, just letting it all blurt out, there is more chance of a fool becoming a successful person than there is of that hasty person succeeding in life. Basically, they are a disaster area, and you and I do not want to be in that category.

Proverbs 15:4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

A tongue that speaks good things, wholesome things, upbuilding things, encouraging things, one who speaks the truth, one who is honorable and noble. “A noble tongue is a tree of life.” What did the tree of life do? The tree of life was in paradise and provided access, if you wanted it, to everlasting life. So, a wholesome tongue, a good tongue, a person who chooses their words wisely to build up and to encourage, words which are noble and true, and honest and decent are life-giving. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, but perverseness in the tongue breaks the spirit. That is harmful and destructive. A perverse or twisted spirit harms people and actually ourselves, and it breaks the spirit. Parents can do that sometimes unthinkingly. They say, “You are no good, you are absolutely hopeless” or “You will amount to nothing in school” or “You are just like your father.” There are some kids, of course, where it just bounces off them, but there are others for whom it breaks the spirit; and those children never recover. Their entire lives, and even when married they are affected by the perverse speech and perverse tongue of the parent’s decades earlier. But on the other hand, a wholesome tongue to children is the tree of life. It builds up and encourages. “You can do that! Go for it!” Building up or tearing down? Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Those who love it and rule over it will eat the fruit thereof.

Proverbs 15:1-2 A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.

Again, when we are in conversation, if irritation, anger or wrath is starting to develop, a soft answer can calm that down, whereas otherwise we can throw some more fuel on the fire, can’t we. That is not wise. Some years ago, an experiment was conducted about choosing soft and calming words. They actually tried this in some telephone calls. People were phoning in, complaining, getting very agitated, angry, and shouting. The people that were picking up the calls were being taught to speak in a softer voice. So, the people phone up and they are irate because their washing machine has turned up late, or not at all, or it is broken yet again. There is noisy shouting, and the recipient listens attentively, but speaks back very softly. And, strangely enough, they found that, in most cases, it calmed the other party down. “*A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word.....*” “How dare you speak to me like that?” and the thing starts a battle and to escalate, and that does not help. “*The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.*”

The Hebrew implies the term, “belches.” The mouth of an idiot lets it all come out; but the wise person uses their tongue properly, and a soft answer turns away wrath. It is important that we are conscious and aware of the impact of our tongues. We will continue to see later the heart and mouth connection, and the words that we speak do reveal what is in our heart, we saw that earlier. Equally, if you are looking at working faith, first of all you have to believe in your heart and speak the words of faith. We have covered that in other messages.

If the people, mentioned in Numbers 13, had guarded their lips, and not been hasty towards God, things might have ended very differently, but this is what did happen because of the danger of their loose lips. There’s was a mixed story. Ten spies had one version of the story and Joshua and Caleb had another version of the story:

Numbers 13:30-33 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and take possession,

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

for we are well able to overcome it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

They brought back a bad report. By the way, what *is* a bad report? They brought back *words*, but were they the words of life, of encouragement, words of faith? Did these words lift up the people to go and possess the land flowing with milk and honey, that God had promised? Or did these words discourage, produce fear, anxiety?

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and there was lots of death coming out of their tongues.

Numbers 14:1 So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.

That is the impact that those words had on the people.

Numbers 14:2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!

This was a big mistake. "*If only we had died....*" Do words lift up, or pull down? Is death and life in the power of the tongue? What we believe in our hearts, we say with our mouths. "*If only we had died in this wilderness.*" That is what they said. Should they have said that? No! Are these things written down for our admonition? Yes! Did God hear what they said? Yes, He did, and He was not pleased; and things started to go very wrong for the Israelites. Moses intervened, because God was minded to virtually wipe them out, and he said to God please do not. God said, "I will hear you Moses."

Numbers 14:26-27 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me.

God hears!

Numbers 14:28 Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you:'

In a sense, they had pronounced their own sentence. They believed in their hearts that they were going to die in the wilderness. That is precisely what came to pass, "*Just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you.*"

Ecclesiastes 5:2 Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.

They did not do this, but they opened their mouth and they said things which were harmful and injurious, plain wrong and provocative, and they got what they said. They said, "We are going to die in the wilderness," and, of course, they *did* die in the wilderness.

Numbers 14:29-32 The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.

Is death and life in the power of the tongue? Absolutely! They were the evidence of that, they all died due to what they said; and that revealed fundamentally what was in their heart. What scared them a lot were the giants, the warriors, the fortified cities, and the fact that they did not really believe in God, and they spoke words of death.

There is an opposite example that we can look at in I Samuel 17. This is a similar sort of scenario, vaguely, but a very different outcome.

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

I Samuel 17:3-5 The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

Nobody is too sure about what a cubit was. It appears to be that Goliath was either, at the shorter end, about 9 foot 6 inches, or at the higher end, about 11 foot 10 inches. Either way he was a big lad!

I Samuel 17:5-7 He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze (*which my margin says is 125 pounds of armour*). And he had bronze armour on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him.

This is one big beast out there!

I Samuel 17:8-11 Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." And the Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together." When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

They went hiding under bushes, because this was one mean hombre and they did not want to tangle with him. A little bit like ancient Israel: all those giants in the land and they were afraid. But there is a slight change in the story here:

I Samuel 17:32-37 Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

Saul said to David, "Go on then!" So, David, unlike ancient Israel, said, "God will deliver us. He may be a giant, and they may be fortified cities, he may have armour, but God will deliver me, and I will succeed." A very different response: the words are different. Ancient Israel said, "We are going to die in this wilderness." David's words are, "I will fight, and God will deliver!"

I Samuel 17:33-47 So the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!" Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD'S, and He will give you into our hands."

We all know the rest of the story. There is a similar sort of environment. There was a giant here, and formerly there were giants, and the people of Israel feared in their hearts, spoke words of fear, and spoke words of unbelief and words of death. But David was very different; he believed God, he trusted God, and he spoke words of life; and God honored David's faith and He heard his words. You and I need to be aware that God hears *our* words; because, again, these things are written for our admonition.

James 3:1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

The words that a teacher speaks can affect dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of people. So, he can influence for good or for bad; and he has to be very careful what he says.

James 3:2 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

We must control our words, and this is something to aim at. Do you stumble in word? Do I? Certainly, we are human and we do err from time to time. But if we can control our words, control our tongues, “then we are perfect men,” it says.

James 3:3 Indeed, we put bits in horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

If you control a horse’s mouth, you control his body.

James 3:4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

Just a little thing controls a huge ship. A little bit in the horse’s mouth controls a great big lumbering carthorse.

James 3:5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

A little tiny fire from a discarded cigarette or match can cause a blaze across a huge forest. A little tongue in our mouth can cause a huge amount of destruction.

James 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

Certainly, we are given some interesting pictures here of just how dangerous a tongue can be.

James 3:7-8 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

I would take this to be “no *unconverted* man can tame the tongue.” But you and I, with the Spirit of God, *can* tame the tongue. God’s Spirit in us can help us control and exert discipline on the tongue. It says that the tongue is full of deadly poison, and that is why we have to control it. Just let the tongue waggle and do its stuff, and it is like a poisonous serpent.

James 3:9-10 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

James is in effect saying, “How can you do this? How can you bless God, and at the same time use the same tongue to say bad words and evil words about your own brethren. It should not happen.”

James 3:11-12 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

James means that our tongue should be pure. We should not be speaking out of the same mouth blessing and cursing. And, talking of cursing here, James does not primarily mean bad language and four-letter words. He is talking about cursing in the sense of devoting to destruction by our words. To bless is to assign favour to somebody by words. So, to James, to curse means to devote to destruction by the words that we speak, and to bless is to assign favour to somebody by the words that we speak.

Mark 11:12 Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, “Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.” And His disciples heard it.

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

Jesus is speaking to a tree! "I would never do that," you might say. This is why we do not get the same results that Jesus got! Words are important, and here Jesus is speaking words to a tree. *"Jesus said to it, 'Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.' And His disciples heard it."* That was a curse. Jesus had just devoted the tree to destruction. With His words he cursed the tree.

Mark 11:20-21 Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

Jesus spoke words of harm because it was a corrupt tree.

Mark 11:22-23 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says."

Is Jesus saying that you and I should be speaking to mountains? Talking of words that can influence and produce life and death, which we could address to a mountain, or to a tree? That is exactly what Jesus is saying.

Jesus says that, if we believe in our hearts and speak to the mountain, we will have whatever *we say*. If you do not *say it*, you do not get it. It is not thinking. It is not praying *to God* to move the mountain. It is believing in your heart and speaking words to the mountain; and then you will get what *you say*.

Mark 11:24 "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

Notice that Jesus is clearly teaching this in a positive sense. If there is something bad to move, some obstacle in your life, well speak to it! Do not speak to God and ask *Him* to move it. You or I should speak to it and, provided that we believe in our hearts, then the job is done. But equally, this can apply in a negative sense. If you believe bad in your heart and say it, then you are in danger of having whatever you say. You might say things like, "I just heard on the news that the Swine Flu is coming. I know that I will be the first to get it in our family, and it will last the longest in my body!" Or, when there are rumours of redundancy, you say, "I will be the first one to lose my job." For Israel, they said, "We are going to die out here in the wilderness; we know that, we believe we are going to die." They received just what they said. We have to be very careful. The scriptures illustrate how powerful our words are. Our words can move mountains. We still have to be careful not to harm others with our words. If our words are negative and injurious, we are in danger of cursing other people.

Genesis 27:1-4 Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." And he answered him, "Here I am." Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver, and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."

You see, blessing is bestowing favour on someone with our words. Isaac wanted to bestow very important favours and graces on his son. You know the story. Jacob and his Mum contrived to dress him up in goat-skins and hairy garments and to pass him off as Esau.

Genesis 27:22-29 So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He said, "I am." He said, "Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed.

Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren and let your mother's sons bow down to you.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

Cursed be everyone who curses you and blessed be those who bless you!"

Those were blessings of prosperity, and national greatness; and it was passed on legally, formally, by words. Words actually have a real, proper, genuine – not imaginary – effect.

Then Esau arrived on the scene:

Genesis 27:30-37 Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that your soul may bless me." And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" So he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him — and indeed he shall be blessed." When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me — me also, O my father!" But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing." And Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?"

The principle is that you cannot take back your words very easily. Once they are uttered, good or bad, it is often done and the consequences are on the way. The fruit of your lips has been released. Isaac could not take it back. Our words, you see, are important. These were words assigning favour. We have to be careful. We can bless with our words. Remember when the little children were brought to Jesus and the disciples wanted to push them away and told the people that He was far too busy? Jesus said, "No, let the little children come to me." It says that Jesus took them in His arms and He blessed them. That was not just some platitude like some Catholic nun or priest waving their arms around or sprinkling water on a child. Jesus was imparting favour to these children with His words, and His blessing.

There is an interesting illustration of the importance of words in Numbers 20:

Number 20:2 Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron.

So, Moses and Aaron went to God for guidance.

Numbers 20:7 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals."

Jesus later said, "Speak to the mountain, and if you believe in your heart it will move." Here, God says, "Speak to the rock, Moses, and it will yield its water." This is fairly straightforward and it certainly illustrates the importance and the impact of words. "Speak to the rock." Unfortunately, things went wrong, and for once Moses was rather disobedient:

Numbers 20:9-11 So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

This is what they call "improvisation" and it is also deviating from instructions from God and getting off the path. God told Moses *to speak* to the rock, "Use your words on the rock, and honour me." But Moses *struck* the rock – twice.

Numbers 20:12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

Does this mean that Moses could not see that he could have spoken to the rock, and it would have given water? The words of faith, you see! You and I have to believe in our hearts and "speak to the mountain."

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 3, 2025 --- Issue No. 222

Numbers 20:13 This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them.

So, it looks like Moses did *not* believe that his words could produce water from the rock; and so he relied on his strength and physical effort and he did not follow God's instruction. Now the principle here is that, if you and I deviate from God's instructions, what can we expect? Just because we are the called – the saints, the Church of God – does not mean that we can get away with ignoring and transgressing God's instructions. Moses could not, and he was probably a bit farther ahead than you and I are. But, God said, “Do *this!*” But where did Moses come from doing *that*? Also, it was not Moses' place to call them “rebels.”

Psalms 106:32 They angered Him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses on account of them; The Israelites provoked Moses. He had dealt with them for a long time and they never stopped complaining, moaning and murmuring. None the less, that did not excuse Moses' behaviour. God said, “Speak to the rock.” But he did not. He said, “You rebels! Shall we bring the water out for you?” Then - *bang, bang* on the rock!

Psalms 106:33 Because they rebelled against His Spirit, so that he (Moses) spoke rashly with his lips.

So, the lesson for you and I is, hopefully, fairly clear. We have to be very careful with our words, and certainly must not be hasty with our words. Remember that there are some extremes.

Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Death and life! It really is potentially as extreme as that. It is our choice. We pretty much control our own tongues – our own mouths; and it is our choice whether we use our tongues to produce the fruit of life or to produce the fruit of death. It is your choice, and it is my choice. Hopefully we have seen today that our words are very important, our words are very influential; and our words can build up, or they can destroy. They can produce life and they can produce death.

So, as the title of the message says, **Guard your lips!**

Transcript by Patricia Plunkett (many thanks Trish!)

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New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)
As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Holy Days 2025

Passover – April 13, 2025 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)

Passover/Unleavened Bread – April 13-19, 2025

Pentecost – June 2, 2025

Trumpets – September 23, 2025

Atonement – October 2, 2025

Tabernacles –October 7, 2025, to October 13, 2025

Last Great Day – October 14, 2025

Notes