

## I. The Power of Old Songs and the Holy Spirit

I watch when either Donny or others sing the old songs. From my vantage point up there, I want to tell you something: I watch people who have come in who probably are so far from God it is unbelievable. Many of them do not even know God. I guarantee you something true about almost every one of them: you would be absolutely amazed and surprised at how many of them grew up around the Gospel and around churches.

When I sit up there and those songs go forth, you can actually see the light come back on in their eyes because something is being rekindled that they have forgotten about a long time ago. You can actually see a smile come across a face that probably has not smiled in a long time, with the heartache and the tragedy they are going through. Yet, it is the things that bring them back to a time in their life when God spoke to them. Maybe it was with their parents when they used to go to church before they got rebellious and thought they were smarter than their parents. Maybe it was a time when they were young and they went to church as a visitor sometime, but they got back into the world. God just never, never, never got a hold of their heart.

But from my vantage point, when somebody begins to sing those songs that touch their hearts and touch their lives, you can see that the fire is still there. That is why it is so important for when a man of God tonight gets up to preach and lays out the Word of God that you use that. It is not about just learning to put a sermon together; it is about learning to watch your crowd before you ever get to the pulpit. It is about understanding the spiritual temperature and where you are at and where the people are at.

The Holy Spirit of God is a marvelous thing. The older I get in the Lord, the more I stand amazed at what He has the ability to do if we will allow Him to do it.

## II. Micah: God's Witness and the State of the Church

The book of Micah is again one of the books about the old prophets in the Old Testament. We just finished up Thursday night taking a major section of your Bible on the kings of Israel and Judah: 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles.

The name Micah means "Who is like the Lord," and I think that is very instructive for how Christ is portrayed. In this book, Christ is portrayed as our witness.

*Revelation 1:5*

*And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,*

The Holy Spirit of God does some amazing things, but you also need to understand that the only vehicle by which the Holy Spirit of God can work today is through you or me, through the Church of Jesus Christ. This is where the book of Micah is such an important book.

Micah prophesied during the reign of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. You find that in Micah 1:1. There you have a great picture of where we have talked about. We talked about those guys just in the last couple of weeks, and now you have kind of a context to put it. As all Old Testament prophets, he is a unique individual. He is cut from the same piece of granite as the rest of the prophets.

He is a lot like old Micaiah, who in 1 Kings 22:14, when he was going up against two wicked kings, Jehoshaphat and Ahab, who had made an alliance together against the things of God. Remember, I told you that the Old Testament prophets had a job to do. That job was, as the nation of Israel was going into apostasy, as the nation of Israel was being deceived and about ready to face God's judgment, they had lost the witness of God.

Now God is sending them these prophets that we have talked about: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zechariah, Zephaniah, and of course, here we are with Micah. Jonah last week. He sends them these prophets, and these prophets go down to a wicked, sinful nation that is pretending they are having a relationship with God, but they are far away from God. He uses these men to try to bring them back on course.

I told you the parallels to where we are at in the church today. Churches today are about as far from God as you could ever hope to be for the most part. The job of a pastor today, if he is doing his job, is to hold the line with the truth of God in a world that no longer wants to hear truth. That is really the job of the church today. That is my job, and it is also your job.

Old Micaiah, back there in 1 Kings 22:14, one of my favorite verses in the Bible, when he was confronted by the leaders of Israel because of his hard preaching and his honesty in his preaching, and they were trying to get him to quit preaching, old Micaiah said:

*1 Kings 22:14*

*And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.*

That needs to be the voice behind every preacher and every pulpit, not only in America, not only in Kansas City, but across the world.

The theme of this book, as we come down through it here, will be obviously the second coming of Christ. We know that the prophets are all going that way. Doctrinally, they all foreshadow God's coming at the second coming of Christ, God judging the nation of Israel, and then God restoring the nation of Israel.

I want to read for you Micah 1:1-9.

*Micah 1:1-9*

*1 The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.*

*2 Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord GOD be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple.*

*3 For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth.*

*4 And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place.*

*5 For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?*

*6 Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof.*

*7 And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate: for she gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot.*

*8 Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls.*

*9 For her wound is incurable; for it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem.*

Father, we come to You today, and we thank You for the day that You have given us. We thank You for our church. We thank You for our stand, without apology, on the Word of God for its truth. Lord, we thank You for the folks that have decided to come today, that they may leave today with the message that You have for them. I am sure that everybody here has a different need today, but only the Holy Spirit of God can fulfill that need through the preaching of the Word of God. Lord, I do pray today that I will be a clean vessel that You will be able to use, that anything in my life that has not already been confessed and put under the blood would be done today, that Father, You would have the honor and glory out of what is said today. We love You. We thank You, Father, now in Jesus' name, for Your sake we ask it. Open up now our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of Thy law. In Jesus' name, for Your sake we ask it. Amen.

### III. Understanding God's Word: Three People Groups

I want to draw your attention here to Micah 1:2. This is the first thing I want to show you here, and I think you need to get this down for those of you who are actively trying to put your Bible together. It says in Micah 1:2, "Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth." This verse begins to declare something to the inhabitants of planet Earth, in other words, the Gentile nations.

There is a great key in your Bible, and you have heard me talk about it many, many times. The great key is that the Bible is written to three groups of people. If you think that the Bible was just written to one group of people, you have made some mistakes in your theology. There are three people groups that are addressed in the Bible:

- The nation of Israel.
- The Church, the Christians, you and I.
- The inhabitants of the earth.

Most people do not understand that. Let me say this: I am not saying that all the Bible is not written for you, but all the Bible is not written directly to you. The Bible says that we have to rightly divide the word of truth. Do you know what that means in part? It means being able to understand when you come to the Bible what is written to you and what is written to the Jew, or what is written to the Jew versus what is written to you, or what is written in this case here in some of these verses to the Gentile world.

#### IV. God's Grace Precedes Judgment

There is a reason why God declares some things to the world. Most of the things that He declares, and I am going to give you a number of references here in a moment, most of the things that He declares to the world will be about His coming judgment. That is when God steps in and declares to the world what He is going to do. God never brings judgment to anything without first telling you that He is going to do it.

The flood is a perfect picture of God's judgment, where God wiped out the whole planet with a universal flood. But yet God did not say to Noah on Monday, "I am going to destroy the world," and then do it on Tuesday. What God did do was tell Noah what He was going to do and then He gave Noah 120 years to preach the message of God's coming judgment before that judgment came. God always does that. God is a merciful God. God is a righteous God.

When Jesus Christ came, in John 1:17, He said a great verse. He said that the law came by Moses, but Jesus Christ came by grace and truth. Grace and truth have to be the two elements in our lives because it is the two basic elements that God operates by. God may judge you; that is His truth. But God always gives you the grace first before the judgment comes. That is grace.

You hear me say it all the time that this church is available on the same fundamental principles. This church stands on the truth. Now, I have met a lot of churches that have the truth but they have no grace. Then I know a lot of churches that have grace but they have no truth. The real issue that has to be in any church, and it is laid out in His book, and Christ is the great example of it as is God, is that we have truth. The truth is having the grace to be able to use that truth. That is what God does. God is truth, but He is also grace. Because He is grace, before He exercises His truth, in this case judgment, He always gives grace and shows you what He is going to do to give you a chance to get right.

#### V. The Bible as Light in a Dark World

That is what the Bible is written for. The Bible is written for a number of reasons, obviously. The Bible is the greatest history book the world has ever seen. The Bible is the greatest scientific book the world has ever seen. The Bible is the greatest companion you will ever have in your life. The Word is a light that shines in a dark place. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." We live in darkness, and the devil has put all kinds of stumbling blocks out there.

Every Halloween I think about it. I have not gone for a lot of years, but I used to love to go through haunted houses. I do not know why everybody likes to get scared; we just do. I think when I went to \$25, I can just get scared other ways. I think the Bible is a lot cheaper. But something about going into a dark place and going through there. I am kind of a creative guy. Years ago, I picked up at an Army Navy deal someplace like that a set of night vision goggles. They were small enough. I really loved going to them. Once I got in there, I snapped those suckers down, and I could see everywhere. It was more fun because it was like that movie. I forget what movie it was. It was one of those great science fiction movies. It was one of those movies where this monster was trying to get these guys. They all got together, and then they said, "What are we going to do?" The guy says, "We got the advantage." He said, "What is the advantage? This guy has killed almost everybody we got." The advantage, I love this part, he said, "Here is the advantage: we are going to hunt him, and he is not going to know it." I like that kind of stuff. Now I am in a haunted house, and I am hunting them, and they do not know it.

I tried all kinds of things. I tried my camera phone. You top the phone up, you have a little light, but that does not work very well. They can see it coming. But those night vision goggles, I had some fun with those things. I will tell you what, it got so expensive that not only did I pay \$300 for the night vision goggles, but I spent \$1,600 just going through haunted houses in the course of time, so that did not work either.

But anyway, we are in darkness, and the devil has strewn, like a haunted house, all kinds of pitfalls. When you go through those haunted houses, you are feeling your way along, much like we do in life. Around every corner is some big ghoulish guy who is dressed up in some Freddy Krueger outfit or Dracula or some zombie or the Night of the Living Dead, or "meet my first wife," or whatever the case was. As you walk around, they scare you. I never come to that time of the year that I do not think that that is just the way life is.

The devil, we live in this world of darkness, and the devil has pitfalls for all of us. But the greatest aspect of it is the Word of God that God has given you, because the Word of God is a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path. The Word of God is like the little night vision goggles. You put them on, and you can see in the darkness, and you know exactly where everything is at. God has not given us the spirit of fear. Do you know why that is? Because you fear darkness. If you went into a haunted house and the lights were on, would you be afraid? What is there to be afraid of? You walk in there, and the guy is standing up against the wall, and you see him before you get 50 feet from him. You just go, "Okay, how do I look?" What are you going to do? But you take the light and put it in darkness, and now fear comes. Fear always comes when there is darkness. That is why the Bible says that God has not given us the spirit of fear, because we have the light of the Word of God, which illuminates everything around us, and there is nothing to be afraid of.

The Bible is written to three groups of people, and it is written to you and I to get us through this dark world. The Bible is many things. It is a history book. It is a book that gets us around all the problems in life. It is a book that tells us what is wrong with us. It tells us how to fix what is wrong with us. It tells us how to keep it fixed. It is a great book, but it is written in other forms.

Not everything that is written is written directly to you. Some things are written to the nation of Israel.

## VI. The Dangers of Deception and Delusion

There is a lot of heresy, and I feel bad for people who get caught. I think one of the most terrible heresies that the devil ever concocted was the terrible teaching that you can lose your salvation. I think that is a terrible thing. For me, I guess I am just not that smart. A guy said to me one time, "You can lose your salvation." I said, "Okay." He says, I said, "How do you lose it?" He said, "Well, you lose it by doing things that make you unworthy of it." Now, I am just a dumb guy. I just asked him back, and I said, "Well, how can I lose something I was unworthy of when I was unworthy when He gave it to me? I was not any less unworthy now that I got it than I was when I got it." If you are going to give it to me and I am unworthy, and then you are going to take it away, well, that is not even consistent.

Do you know why people believe they can lose their salvation? Because they take verses in that Bible that are written to the nation of Israel and try to put them into the church. That Bible is not written directly to you. It is all written for you, but you have got to learn how to rightly divide the word of truth. When you do that, then you get it in the right place. That is the key. You are going to find some churches that have a mixture of the Old Testament and the New Testament. They will do certain things that they did in the Old Testament and then try to combine with the New Testament. We found that in the Bible in the book of Galatians. Not four or five years after Christ had died and established a church, there was a group that was coming into the early churches and were trying to bring them back under the law and say that you are supposed to keep some of the law like Moses did and then you are supposed to have the faith in Jesus Christ. Paul took them on in the book of Galatians.

Some of your Bible is written to the nation of Israel. You want to look at those verses and you want to put them in a context. I did not say they were not written for you, but they are not written exactly to you. For instance, in the Old Testament, they killed lambs and sacrificed lambs. We do not do that. The reason why we do not is because when Christ came and died on the cross, He fulfilled the law, so we do not have to do it anymore. But that was to them, you see. Just like I would not go out and kill a lamb and try to make it work for today, I would not go out and try to keep the Sabbath or eat some dietary law under the Old Testament Levitical system and try to make it work for me today. There are certain portions of that Bible that are written to the Jew. There are certain portions of that Bible that are written to you. We have talked about that many, many times. Then there are certain portions that are written to the world in general.

You are going to find this in:

- Isaiah 1:2
- Isaiah 18:3
- Isaiah 34:1
- Isaiah 45:22
- Isaiah 42:3

- Jeremiah 22
- Micah 1:2

If I were you, and we are trying to learn our Bibles together, for those of you who have been around here for a while, I would get those verses and I would get those in each one of those places so you have that. This is the first thing I want you to see here.

The context of this book, as we start to go through it, is the deception and the delusion that God sends this earth. This is what He is talking about. This is what He is declaring to the earth. This is what He is doing. He is getting ready to come down and judge the earth, and He is laying this thing out and He is telling them. The context of this book to the world is the deception and the delusion that God is going to send this earth to follow the Antichrist when he shows up. That deception is based on, as all deceptions that come from God. People do not even think that God would do something like this. When we are done today, maybe you will have a better understanding. You are going to find that I only use the Bible. You are going to find that everything we talk about is based on the Bible. We go to the Bible.

You have got to remember that when the Antichrist comes, and he is going to come very shortly, the Bible says that he is going to deceive the world and he is going to deceive the nation of Israel. You and I will not be deceived because the church is going to be taken out. We are gone. But what is going to be left is going to be deceived.

There are three great deceptions in the Bible:

1. Israel got deceived. How did Israel get deceived? She got deceived because she started early on to get rid of the Bible. Israel always had a problem. Do you know what that problem was? She dumped God in a heartbeat for something the world had to offer. So Israel goes through that cycle, and pretty soon she gets deceived. She deceives herself. The deception finally takes full account when God comes down in 606 BC and basically wipes Israel off the planet for a temporary time being.
2. The second deception is for you and for me in the church. Right now, the Bible is gone from us. It is hard to find the Word of God. We know the Word of God is found in the King James 1611 Authorized Version. We know that to be the Word of God. We understand manuscript evidence. We understand church history. We are going through it right now on Tuesday night, and we understand how that thing all ties together. But the Holy Spirit of God is still here. The Holy Spirit of God will take the Word of God, and He will work it through you and me to be a witness for Christ. That is what happened to the nation of Israel. Once they lost the Word of God, they lost the witness. This is what He is talking about in Micah. God no longer has a witness on this planet through the nation of Israel. Unfortunately, today, God does not have an effective witness through the church in most cases because the church has been deceived.
3. The third deception will be the world itself. You are going to find that when the Antichrist comes, Revelation 12:9, which is a great verse. In fact, Revelation 12 and Revelation 13 are the two great chapters in your Bible that show you the coming man of sin pretty much in an "all you need to know" way.

*Revelation 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.*

When the devil comes to this world, when he is cast out in the Tribulation period, he comes down to this earth to take over in the body of the Antichrist. He establishes a kingdom, and the kingdom is called Babylon. Do you know what the word Babylon means? It means confusion. In other words, when the devil comes to this planet, and you are already seeing the things around you happening that tell you it is very, very, very, very close. When he finally comes, the Bible says that his job, when the church goes out, that is you and me. If you are saved here this morning, if there has been a time in your life where you have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior, you and I are going out. We are going to be raptured out. We are going to be taken out. The Bible says that the church is not to experience the wrath of God. So we are taken out.

But then what happens is God turns His attention to the judgment of the nation of Israel and the judgment of the world. This is where we see it in 2 Thessalonians 2:11, where after the Antichrist comes, after the church is gone, after the Holy Spirit of God has taken off this planet, and literally for seven years, which we know as the Tribulation period, the devil has complete control of planet Earth. God just basically turns it over to him. God is doing other things right then, and He basically for seven years, until Christ comes back, He lets him have this planet.

*2 Thessalonians 2:11-12*

*11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*

*12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

This confusion and deception is sent from God through the devil. People have a tough time of that sometimes. They say, "Well, why would God use the devil?" First of all, Proverbs 16:4 tells you that the devil was created by God for a specific purpose. The devil just did not pop up and God would say, "Ooh, where did you come from?" The whole plan orchestrated by God needed to have someone that would fit that role because of what God was going to do, and God allows him. Without making a long story short, God prepared him, the Bible says, for the day of evil.

You see it in the book of Job. They are up there in heaven one day, and the devil comes in before the throne. God is sitting up on the throne, and the devil walks in, and he says, "Hey, how are you doing?" God says, "I am doing just fine, how are you doing?" He says, "I am doing all right." He says, "Where have you been? I have not seen you for a while." He said, "Oh, I have been walking down up and down in New York. I have been walking down there, just checking things out, seeing how I am going to all run it someday because You are not going to make it forever. I am going to..." God says, "Is that right?" He says, and then God said, "Have you considered My servant Job?" The devil said, "Yeah, he is not much." God says, "He loves Me with all his heart." He says, "He loves You because of everything You have given him. He is like

Ben Cartwright with a Ponderosa. He has got everything down there. You take that from him, and he will curse You to Your face." God said, "Take it then. We will see."

What I found out is an interesting story. Do you know why? Because it was not the devil that brought Job's name up. It was God that brought Job's name up. Then, do you know what God did? God had a message for Job, but God used the devil to be the delivery boy of that message. There will be times in your life and my life that God will have something that He wants you to get that you are not getting, or I am not getting. Let us face it, if there is one thing we all have in common when it comes to God, we are dumb as a stump most of the time. We do dumb things. We do stupid things. We do not follow the direction very well. Sometimes God has to come down and shake our little world sometime. God has somebody that does that just fine. So it is no great thing that God uses the devil to deceive the world.

This deception only comes after the world rejects the Word of God. Remember the story of Nineveh last week in Jonah? Jonah was told to go to Nineveh, and God told him, "If you take the Word of God to them, they will repent. If they repent, I will not come down and judge them." You see, it is the witness of Christ to this world that God uses not to bring God's judgment. But in the Old Testament, God had lost that witness in the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, He has lost that witness in you and me. Do you know how I know that? When is the last time you told someone about the Lord Jesus Christ? When is the last time you even won somebody to Christ? When is the last time you ever opened up your Bible and sat down?

I am giving you a break here. I always tell people, if you have been saved five years or less, I give you a break. If you have been saved under five years, you are just all learning it. But I am telling you right now that there has to come a time in your life that you have to be able to be Christ's witness. The Bible says that God is not the author of confusion. God makes it very clear. The way it gets clear is through biblical principles. But if you do not have a light, you are going to be deceived. That is why the devil does not like the Bible.

Right now in church history, for those of you involved in that, and I think probably this time in church history, I have done the most intense, in-depth time I have ever done in my life. I have probably taught it 30 times in my 40-some years. This time I wanted to basically do it for the last time. I am not saying I will not do it again, but I wanted to get a set of tapes out that could get into some kind of book form that would do everything that needed to be done. Right now we are talking about how the devil hated the Bible and showing these men and women exactly how the devil got rid of the Bible, that we sit here today in Christianity as blind as a bat, as confused as can be, and as deluded as we could ever hope to be and deceived because of the fact that we have lost the light that God has given us.

## VII. The Command to Take Heed

There is a great truth found in Matthew 24. I know that Matthew 24 is the definitive chapter on the Tribulation period. We have talked about that before. But it is also a great book on the end of the world. Everybody is interested in the end of the world today. It was an interesting thing in Christ's time because in Matthew 24, His disciples came to Him. They are sitting down there,

and they are on the Mount of Olives. I always thought that was interesting because that is exactly where it is all going to end when Christ comes back, is the Mount of Olives. So in the right place, wrong time, but they are asking two great questions in Matthew 24:3. The two questions they asked are, "What is the sign of thy coming? What is going to be the end of the world?"

That is exactly what everybody wants to know today. I have never in all my life seen more toward this time when everybody is looking, expecting, scared to death that the world is going to end. The 2012 syndrome, how many times? Almost a week does not go by that somebody sends me an email saying that the planets are going to line up in a year or whatever, and we are all going to be torn apart. Everybody seemingly is on this kick. The Mayan calendar. What are we going to do when the Mayan calendar runs up? I never used it anyhow. I will just stick with the one I got. One of my watches is just fine. People are all hung up on that.

I had a guy call me a couple of years ago. He was panic-stricken. He had read this article somewhere, someplace, or maybe he saw a movie, I do not know. He said that the earth is going to get hit by an asteroid. I said, "I heartily hope so." He said, "What?" He said, "Well," he said, "it is going to blow up." Then you have the global warming issue. People worrying about that it is going to be... I read on the thing the other day that in 6 billion years from tonight, 6 billion years from today, the sun is going to supernova, and we are going to be fried crispy critters. Because when the sun is supernova, it is already 867,000 miles in diameter. It will get 50,000 times bigger than that. It will just get bigger than the solar system, and everything will be eaten up. I am going to stay up worrying about that tonight.

The end of the world is everywhere. You cannot look around this world and not see that we are in trouble. I feel bad for you going to Afghanistan because you are in a hot spot over there. You are in the hottest spot in the world right now. We are going to pray for you. That is the worst place you could be on this planet right now because when it erupts, that is where it is going to erupt. It is a lot like being in Berlin during the 40s when the Berlin Russians, where everybody was afraid they were going to come down and swallow up Berlin. That is where you are at. You may have a battalion, you may have a brigade, you may have 60, 70,000 troops in one spot, but all around you are probably 400,000 Muslims who do not like you at all. All it takes is one little fire into the torch. God will protect you. He will protect you a lot because Old Baptist Church is going to be praying for you. He likes us, He does. Not everybody else does, but He does. I do not care about anybody else as long as He does.

What is the sign of Thy coming and the end of the world? Of course, we are looking at global disasters all around us: the planets lining up, the Mayan calendar, the 2012 syndrome, and all the other things. I remember when we hit 2000, everybody thought the world was going to collapse. The clocks were going to explode, your microwave was going to go backwards, everything was going to go down because it is all set up on this system. I have got to tell you that night we had a bunch of friends over, and we were down there, and they were getting close to midnight, and I just excused myself to have to go to the bathroom. I went downstairs to the basement and watched my thing and turned it downstairs to you, and when that countdown, I was in there, and as soon as they hit, I shut the power off in the house. What did you do then? Well, I put my night vision goggles on and found my way out.

Do you know what Jesus' answer was when they asked the question about the sign of the coming of the Lord and the end of the world? Do you know what His answer was in Matthew 24:4?

*Matthew 24:4*

*And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.*

People who are looking for 2012 and people who are looking for the aligning of the planets or the Mayan calendar or some asteroid to hit, some global and I think that would be neat. Sit on your front porch and watch that sucker come. I think that would be nice. I guess I am the only one that thinks that way, but that is okay. If you believe that is going to happen, you have been deceived, but that is not how it is going to end. Somebody said, "Do you believe in the Big Bang theory?" I said, "Yes, I do." You said, "You mean it started with the Big Bang?" I said, "No, but I believe it is going to end with a Big Bang." That Big Bang is in Revelation 19.

Do you know what the devil uses? You need to know this. The devil uses misinformation and misdirection. Those are two powerful things to use if you want to mess with somebody: misinformation and misdirection. Send people the wrong way, tell people the wrong things. That is why every country has a propaganda minister. He puts out the disinformation. Our CIA is famous for it. They want to mess up the American people like UFOs or JFK or whoever you want to talk about or whatever, and they have something to cover up. I am not saying they do in those areas, but if they want to, they put out this information, and that is what the devil does.

Back in the Vietnam War, most people do not even know this. They had an operation called Elder Sun. The Elder Sun operation was an incredible thing. It was a black ops. It was a covert operation. I do not know who thought it up, one of those think tanks at Langley. But what they did was they were getting up all these munitions that we were finding that belonged to the Vietcong. Somebody got the great idea to take that ammunition, take it someplace, and they flew tons of it to Hawaii, opened up the crates, took about 15 rounds out of each case, about 600 rounds, and then they pulled the bullets on those, dumped the powder out, and then pasted it with 5,000 times more powerful powder than they should have had in it, put them back in there, seated them back in the case, put the foil back on them, put the lid back on them, gave them back to the special ops guys, and then they snuck back in and put those cases of ammunition back into the Vietcong storage places.

Their idea was that the Vietcong were not making their own ammunition. They were getting it from Bulgaria. They were getting it from Red China. They were getting it from Russia. They were getting it from Czechoslovakia. They were getting it from everywhere. What the Americans wanted to do was sow discord and distrust and sow misinformation that the ammunition was substandard. Because out of every case, there would be five rounds that when a guy would fire it, the bolt would explode, and the bolt would go back through his forehead, killing him. They even did it with mortar rounds. They actually found after battles, Vietcong guys whose rifles had blown up because they had, and they did not do all the rounds. They did not want to do all the rounds. If they did all the rounds, somebody would have said, "Ah, somebody is messing with it." They did five or six, 10 rounds in every case of ammo, just enough that if you got, heard the rumor, rumors go in the military when they are everywhere, and you start getting five or six guys

that start shooting his ammo and start blowing up and getting a bolt through your AK bolt through their forehead is not the most pleasant thing you could think of having that happen to you. What are you going to do next time you have to fire that weapon? Well, you are going to be thinking, I will tell you that was a great piece of work. That is what the devil does. He throws out disinformation. He puts out things that are not true. He gets us to be afraid because we do not stay in the book. We do not get the light of the Word of God.

When they asked Jesus about the end of the world and the sign of His coming, He simply said, "Take heed that no man deceive you." The word "take heed" is a great study. I do not know if you have ever even studied it. I do not know if you ever thought about it. I like the places in the Bible where the Bible stops and directly tells you something, like the verse that says, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Maybe you just blow by that, read it, and do not think anything about it. To me, I think what He is saying is, "If I have ears, hear this." He said it about one particular thing here, one particular thing over here, one particular thing over here. I am going to go back and find out what He has got to say.

In your New Testament, there are seven things. Most of you know this, there are seven things that God told us as Christians not to be ignorant of, and yet the average Christian has no idea. The word "take heed" I think is one of the greatest study phrases in the Bible. Did you ever run it through your Bible?

- Mark 8:15: He tells us to take heed of leaven. Leaven is a picture of bad doctrine, and He is telling us to take heed of bad doctrine. Do not let bad doctrine creep into your church. Your church needs to be built on the fundamental principles of the Bible, and it needs to be able to go back all the way to Antioch, and you find a true line that believes everything that your church teaches right back to where they were first called Christians at Antioch. So He says, "Take heed of leaven."
- Mark 13:9: He says, "Take heed to yourselves." He says that five times. I think that is very important. Most of us do not know our limitations. Most of us do not ever look at our own personal self. We are too busy looking at everybody else's problems. The Bible gives some great advice when it says, "Take heed to yourselves."
- Luke 8:18: I think this is a great one for today. He said, "Take heed how you hear." I have come to the conclusion, and I have been in this business for a long time. I have seen a lot of things transition, a lot of things change. If I had my way, I cannot do this, but if I had my way, I would take one sermon and I would preach that sermon every Sunday morning for a month. Same sermon for four weeks. Instead of doing one every Sunday, I would do one sermon for four weeks straight, pick up another sermon, do it four weeks straight, and whatever I taught, whatever I do, we have Thursday night to be whatever we want to do, but I would take four weeks on one sermon and preach it before I change to another sermon. Do you know why? Because God's people, they do not hear a thing you say. They do not. I have sat up here and preached things till my heart comes out my mouth, and God's people just do not get it. They do not hear it. It is not because they are bad people. I do not think there are bad people here. It is just a fact that they do not hear what you are saying because of the world we live in today. We are taught not to hear. It did not say, it said, "how you hear." One

of the things back there in Proverbs 2 talks about the things that we have to do to find God and get God's wisdom is "incline thine ear unto what he says." Do you know what "incline" means? It means "take heed how you hear." God's people do not hear anything. I can get up, preach a sermon on bitterness, and God's people will be bitter tomorrow just like they were today. It just goes right over their head. Do you know why that is? Because we apply everything that preacher says to somebody else. We do not apply it to ourselves. That is why I said five times, "Take heed to yourself."

- 1 Corinthians 3:10: "Take heed how you build." That is your temple. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. You are told to take heed how you build that temple.
- Galatians 5:15: That was a great one. It talks about biting and devouring one another. It says, "Take heed how you consume each other," because that is what churches do.
- Colossians 4:17: This is a great one. He says, "Take heed of the ministry God has given you." So many of us get into ministry, and for us, it is just about, "Well, I am here. I am getting to do it." We do not ever take heed of what it takes to be in the ministry. You have got to do some things. You have got to see some things.
- 2 Peter 1:19: He talks about "take heed to the sure word of prophecy as a light that shineth in a dark place."

I think those things are very important. Jesus said, "Take heed that no man deceive you." I have a message out of Matthew 24 that fits right in with Micah because that is the theme of Micah. The theme of Micah is simply this: Israel was supposed to be God's witness to the world. They got deceived. You and I are to be God's witness to the world today. We have been deceived, and the very fact that we have been deceived is because we are not doing it. It is just that simple.

Jesus answered and said, "Take heed that no man deceive you." I have a great message out of Matthew 24, probably the greatest warning for Christians today outside of a message on the judgment seat of Christ, but it simply says this: be not deceived, be not disarmed, and be not discouraged. God's people are the most defeated, discouraged people on the planet today. There is no joy in their life. There is no happiness in their life. Their life is filled with problems and heartaches. I am not saying that there is not always going to be a heartache. God never promised that He would make a life free of heartaches and problems. God just promised you that He would get you through it every time you had to deal with it. He did not say it would not be there. This life is a veil of tears. If you are going to take a stand for the Lord Jesus, you are going to come to the point where you are going to have to pay the price. That is all there is to it, but let Him pick up the tab. He will get you through it. He will do everything that He has told you He would do. You just cannot get deceived because when you get deceived, you get disarmed, and the Bible gets taken away from you.

I do not know how many times I have talked to God's people, and I tell you this all the time. They get in some issue in their life, and the first thing I ask them, they are struggling with something, the first thing I ask them is, "Are you spending any time in the Bible?" "Oh, I cannot concentrate. Oh, I tried to read it, and I just cannot focus. I just cannot focus." I guarantee you if the doctor told you you had cancer and you had to have cobalt treatments or whatever radiation treatments, you would not go into the radiation guy and say, "Oh, I cannot do this today. I am just

too nervous. I am afraid that I will not sit still." You would be in there so fast getting anything that you think will prolong and save your life.

Let me tell you something. You have a life physically, and you have a life spiritually. This book, getting into it, "be not deceived." The first thing the devil does through disinformation, just like we did in Vietnam, he gets telling you things that are not true. He focuses on your fears, and because you do not have the principles of the Word of God in your life, we fall forth. We get disarmed. Do you know what happens after we get disarmed? We get discouraged.

## VIII. The Church's Lost Witness and Spiritual Falsehood

Micah, the book deals with Christ our witness, and Israel has lost the witness of God to the world. So God is going to come down, and He is going to do it Himself. That is what He is telling the world in the book of Micah. He is telling them Israel has been deceived. The world has been deceived. Israel was supposed to be My light that shineth in a dark place. It was supposed to be the witness for Me on this planet, and it has got deceived. It has been disarmed, and now it is in confusion.

Our time today, Bible Christianity, we have lost the witness for Christ. I will tell you what, God's people, Bible Christianity, and Christians are about as confused and deceived as they could ever hope to be. They are spending enormous amounts of time so close to the coming of the Lord doing things that just do not matter.

When I was a young kid, and my father in the Lord sat me down as I was growing up to that thing, he told me some things, and like Samuel, I never let his words fall to the ground. He told me one time, almost 40 some years ago, he said, "Bob, in your life as a child of God, as God's man, invest your life in only two things because those are the only two things that are going to last for all of eternity. Everything else does not matter. Nothing else matters. There are only two things that are going to last for eternity that are worth investing your life in: one of them is the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. The other one are the souls of men." Ladies and gentlemen, there just is not anything else. But because we have been deceived, because we have been disarmed, we as the body of Christ are now discouraged.

Christ can only be the witness on this planet through me and you. He is not going to rent a billboard. He is not going to get airtime. He is not going to set up His own radio station and broadcast it out. No, no, no. He shows everybody, if you are saved, everybody in this room, to be His radio station. Everybody in this room to bear the witness for Him. Bible Christianity has lost a witness for Christ, and now God again is going to come down and declare to this world what we have failed to do. I simply put, and I say it all the time as it is so true of Christianity, you cannot be a witness for Christ with a Bible in one hand and a beer in the other one. You just cannot do it. If you think you can, you have deceived yourself. Anything in the world falls into that category.

Now, I want you to look at Micah 2:11. This is what happens, we have laid a good foundation here. This is what happens, whether it is the Old Testament or the New Testament, when God's people get deceived, get disarmed, and get discouraged.

*Micah 2:11*

*If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.*

When a person comes to the point that they dump the Word of God and they get deceived, they get disarmed, and they get discouraged, and they walk away from the Word of God, then God gives them a pastor, a preacher, teachers, churches that have the spirit of falsehood, and they get deceived.

Let me give you another old phrase my old father in the Lord said, "You better mark this one down and never forget it: Light rejected becomes lightning." It is just that simple. You reject the light of the Word of God, it comes back as lightning in God's judgment.

Two hundred years ago, 150 years ago, if you went to a Baptist Church and you did not like what you heard, the guy kind of made you mad because he stepped on your toes, and you say, "I am not going back there. I am going to go to the Methodist Church." You went to the Methodist Church next week. That old Methodist pastor would tear your hide off. He would tear your hide off, saw it down, and hang it on the wall. You get mad at him and say, "I am not going back there. I will go to Presbyterian Church." Do you know what happened? You went there, that old boy would tear your hide off. He would take the paint off the walls, he would tear you up one side and down the other. You say, "I am not going back there. I am going to a Lutheran Church next week." You go there, he would tear your hide off. In other words, there was no way to run. Wherever you went, churches stood for the Word of God, preached the truth, pastors preached the truth, and they held the line, and you did not have anywhere to go.

But you know what you can find today? You can find a church that will teach whatever you want to hear, whatever you want to hear, because the spirit of falsehood in churches, in pastors, and preachers, and Christians is the prevailing spirit in the time that we live. Absolutely true. "If a man walking in the spirit of falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink." He is saying, I just use this because God put it in here, it can be anything. He is saying, "You want to find a church that tells you it is all right to go out and get drunk and drink and party? God will give you that church if you want one." It is part of what the Word of God says. I love it. Reject what the book says, and God sends you exactly what your heart wants to tell you exactly what you want to hear.

*Ezekiel 14:4-5*

*4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh unto the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;*

*5 That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.*

I do not make any apology for this. I really do not. We build our church on the Bible. If you are looking for a church that will tell you what you want to hear and make you feel good, I am not interested in making you feel good, but I am interested in making you stronger in the Lord. If you are looking for a church that will tell you what you want to hear, I will tell you right now, you have just a few more minutes in here, but this is the wrong place for you. I am not interested in pleasing people. I am interested in pleasing the Lord, and I exercise grace, and I exercise grace in the truth. I do not care what you have done. I do not care where you have been. I have had people stab me in the back, shoot me in the back, blow my brains out, discredit me and everything in the world. I see them on the street, I treat them like they were my lost friend. Do you know why? Because that is what grace is. You would have to work a long time to get me off my keel. What God has given me and what I have, the blessings in my life, and the Word of God, and the things God gives me, I am not going to let a pipsqueak like anybody kick me off of that thing. That is where you get into the Word of God, and God does for you what He promised He would do for you.

I do not know if you have seen this or not. You go down 350. There is a big billboard there right before you get to Sterling and 350. Some of you have seen it. I love it. It starts out like this. I am telling you spiritual falsehood. What church, in a question form, "welcomes gay families, encourages questions, seeks social justice, honors many paths to God?" And then the answer is a cute little thing here: [www.thatchurch.isus](http://www.thatchurch.isus). No, I was intrigued by that. So I got on my computer. Yes. Got onto my computer, and I had to search this thing out. Maybe you know what, you have got to say one thing, and I learned something. I tell you now, I have repented last week, and I told you this last Sunday. I have not been using the right terminology to reach people, and I am working on it. It just illuminated me. I will tell you what, this is what I am looking for right here.

So I went on, and they go on to say this: "This means that we are not only, we not only welcome those who happen to be gay, happen to be gay, lesbians, bisexual, transgender, but we celebrate them as children of God as they are, in case of transgender, who you were." And I found the first word that I am missing in my ministry. We do not celebrate enough. We need to celebrate more. We do not celebrate. I go into obituaries. Do you know what really bothers me? You learn a lot if you learn how to read a newspaper. Have you ever noticed that any obituaries, it is all about celebrating their life? Have you ever noticed that? Whatever happened to the biblical principle, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints"? Whatever happened to celebrating their death because they are in Christ Jesus and they are home in heaven?

If I die, please do not celebrate my life. My life has been a pain in the life. My life has been absolutely a veil of tears, up one hill, down the other, with disappointments, heartbreaks. The only good thing in my life is the day I met Jesus Christ and He kissed my wounded soul and put His arms around me. That only leads to the best day of my life, which will be the day that I go home to be with Him. That is the day you want to celebrate. Do not celebrate the day that Ruth Alexander gave birth to Bob Alexander, squalling and squawking and kicking and squirming. Because I was, I never did stop squalling and squawking and kicking and squirming. I just learned to do it as an adult. No, no, no, the word "celebrate." Now, I just have got to throw this

in, you know, you may not like this, and I am sorry, but you do not "happen to be gay." Okay, I am done.

They go on: "Many of us are familiar with church environments that tell you exactly what to believe, where everything is black and white, and you do not need to think at all." Now, I have got to stop here. I am sorry. I thought I read in Genesis 1, before I got four verses, that God divided the light from the darkness and saw that the light was good and the darkness was evil. I am sorry. I thought I read that the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. It is black and white. How do you read the Bible, preach the Bible, and then come to the conclusion that things are not black and white?

I will tell you something else. There are some things you do not have to think about. I do not tell you what to think. I have never told you what to think. I tell you you ought to think. But I am also telling you there are some things that you do not have to think about, just like there are some things you do not... People all the time drive me crazy. They are the big spiritual gurus. They pray about everything. "Well, I have got to go to the bathroom. I want to pray about that before I go." "Well, should we buy a new car? Well, let us pray about that." "Well, we are going to go do that. Well, let us pray about that." Sometimes you can play that spiritual facade out till it exposes who you are because the more spiritual you are, really, the closer you are to God. The more you ought to know there are some things you do not have to pray for. You just know to do them because the Bible already tells you to do it. Why are you praying about something that God already clearly told you in the book you are to do? "Well, I am going to pray about soul winning." Really? Wonder what answer you will get. You have already deceived yourself. The principle is there.

God's people put on this great spiritual facade because they think prayer, which it is, prayer is a tremendous thing, but they cloak themselves in this prayer. "Oh, I pray. Oh, she is so spiritual. She is so spiritual. They pray about everything. They pray for everything. They pray for, I pray about..." Everything you say, people are like that. All that tells me, you do not know your Bible very well. No, I pray. I pray for you. I ask you all the time, "What is going on with your prayer request?" because I pray for you. I will pray for you, Shane. I will pray for you every day of your life. I guarantee you probably four or five times. Every war movie I watch, I am going to think of you. I will pray for you, but I do not know where you are going to end up yet. You may go there someday. I pray for all of you. No matter what you are saying. You younger Christian that just got saved or started coming to church, I know how the devil is going to nail you. I know exactly what he is going to do. He is going to come after you. He is going to bring some old boyfriend, some old girlfriend. He is going to bring something in there, and he is going to try to drag you down. I pray for you and think about you all day long, but I do not go around praying, "Should I do this or should I do that?" Going to McDonald's, "Should I get a Big Mac or should I get a McRib?" Give me both.

"Many of us are familiar with churches environments that tell us exactly what to believe, where everything is black and white, and you do not need to think at all. Life and faith are filled with questions, but in spite of what we want to believe, all churches only attempt to answer these questions. Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Atheists," and I love this, it had a line in,

"search yourself here. All have answers that cannot be proven. At our best, what we offer is a community in which we can explore life's questions together and live out answers that bring more love, more life, more peace, and justice to all God's great."

Well, I told you, remember I taught you with Amos and Ahaz, what did they do? They changed the church at Bethel into a chapel. We are not a church anymore. This is the next buzzword. We are going to start using, "We are not a church. We are a community. We are a community. We are a community. We are not a church." Because communities do not preach hard. Communities love life, happiness. We hold hands, sing Kumbaya, except in this church, better keep one eye open.

You notice it, I came down through here, and it said, "in which we can explore." That is the other thing. We are in a community. We are celebrating. But we are explorers. "Let us explore together." I hate Bible studies where you go to churches, and maybe some of you have been there, where you go to that church, and you go in there, and you say, "Okay, let us all sit around here, and let us all have a Bible study. Okay. All right. Let us do that. Okay. Okay. We have 10 guys here and 10 guys and girls. Okay. Let us have a time in the Bible. Let us read a verse. God gave me this verse today. That is a great verse. Now, let us do this. Let us have a Bible study. What do you think it means?" "Oh, that is rich. What do you think it means?" "Thank you for sharing that with us. What do you think it means?" "Oh, and what do you think it means?" "Oh, that is wonderful. What do you think it means?" "And what do you think it means?" "Now you are the transgender. Do you think it meant before what it was with what it means now?" Who cares what it means to you? What does it say? That is the problem we have today. I do not care what you think it means. I do not care what I think it means. They came down there, and they said, "We need to explore." I am all for exploring. I have my night vision goggles. I can go anywhere. "Explore life's questions together to live out the answers to being more love, more life, more peace, and justice to God's creation."

Whatever happened to the word "truth"? You realize when you go through your Bible, over 247 times He uses the word "truth." How can you be a pastor, claim to know the Bible, preach the Bible, and read it through and miss 247 times the word "truth," and then leave it out of your sermon? Because the world does not want any truth today.

They go on: "We do not believe that Jesus is the only way to God, to know God's presence and experience God's salvation. That same God or Spirit..." Now that was interesting. Why did not you say "the God and Spirit"? Because if you had said "the God and Spirit," it would have been a reference to the one God, the Godhead. But when you say "that God or Spirit," you make it whatever anybody wants it to be. What we do, I think they taught that in English. "That same God or Spirit of life and love is present in many religions around the world. We seek our..." Here is the word we do not have enough of: "dialogue." "Would you like to dialogue with me? Let us dialogue." Well, you would be wonderful to dialogue with. You are so opinionated. You just have no dialogue at all. "Oh, yes, wonderful, you dialogue with you." I think not. But that is the problem. It is a problem.

Then it goes on: "We do not believe that Jesus is the only way to know God." In other words, there are many roads to God. I think your sister talked about this when she told my daughter,

who was witnessing to her one time. She said, "Now look, Jamie. You want to talk about going to heaven, ways to God. Let me ask me to put it in a context so you can understand. There are many ways to get to Florida. You can take an airline. You can drive on different roads. You can take a bus. There are many paths to Florida. And there are many paths to God." Now that sounds good if you have been deceived. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." There is only one way to God.

I want you all to go to heaven. I want everybody to go to heaven. I want my worst enemies to go to heaven. You say, "Why would you want to do that?" Because they are going to find out how wrong they were, and I will feel real good about it. I want everybody to go to heaven. The bottom line simply is, if you are going to get there, you are going to go His way and not your way. Because there are not many paths to God.

"May we seek dialogue with people by their face as another way to learn and to grow. Recently, we were highlighted in the Kansas City Star." That will be the Kansas City Red Star, if you are familiar with things in the Kansas City. "We had a Kansas City Star for outreach to our other Muslim neighbors to show our spirit and embracing them." Now that is another great word. I told you that one last word. Here is our problem. We need to embrace. We need to start celebrating. We are a community. We need to explore. We need to go after social justice. We need to have love in life. We need to dialogue. We need to embrace. You say, "You said embrace twice." I like embracing.

That is what they saw. That is the church, the pastor. Nobody will get mad at you anywhere in there. "I love this place." They are meeting right now, 10:30, the time we start. "I am going there next week." I will tell you what. I am going to see if they need a new pastor. Do you want to get rid of the woman they got? Maybe they will get into that place. I fit in with a place like that. I will not make anybody mad. No, no, no. I have my lesson down, buddy. I do. I will embrace them. I will celebrate with them. It will be a community. We will hold hands and explore. We will go after social justice. We will do live life, peace, and happiness. We will dialogue, and nobody ever gets mad.

You see, my friend, you want a church to believe whatever you want to believe? If you cannot know your Bible and read that and just see that thing reek with violated biblical principles of the Word of God, and I am not against them. I do not know who they are. I do not know who is the pastor. If he comes back and he gets mad, I will buy him lunch. I could care less. The bottom line is this: we get deceived, and if you want to believe what you want to believe in spite of what that book says, God will give you the lie to believe. That is what Micah is all about.

The whole idea and concept of a New Testament local church is gone today. It is finished. That is why, if you come here this morning and you walk away saying, "You know, that is just not for me," I understand. I have had people come up afterwards and say, "I thank you for, but I do not think I will be back." I say, "You know what? I understand. I have to be back next week." I understand. I realize it takes a certain kind of person to be able to just take the Word of God when it comes tumbling out. It is not for everybody today. I know that. I know that the whole idea and concept of a New Testament local church is gone today. It is finished. The church is

now a community. It is now a chapel. There is no hard preaching anymore, and God's people do not have a clue.

The thing that built this country, that made this nation, were men like Bob Jones Senior, Sam Jones, Mordecai Ham, Billy Sunday, the guys who tore the paint off and for 200 years held this country accountable with that book, and they did not dialogue. They did not sing Kumbaya. They did not embrace. They did not explore. They preached the hell out of people. We do not like that today. I understand.

## IX. A Critique of Modern Church Practices

I think in Revelation 3:14-22 is the great picture of the Laodicean church, which we are a part of. We are here now. I think again, the Bible says when it comes to this point, I might go tell you this, it says seven times in these churches, "If you have ears to hear, let him hear." Something God wants you to hear. It is a great contrast.

*Revelation 3:17-18*

*17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

*18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

Now you see that. There is a church that has deceived itself. What a joke between what they think they are in Revelation 3:17 and what God wants them to be in Revelation 3:18. That is where you and I are found today. You are either in Revelation 3:17 or you are in Revelation 3:18. The contrast is clear. They have deluded themselves in the time period that you and I are living in, that they are so rich and they have so many goods, and they have absolutely need of nothing, including God. Yet they do not have a clue that in reality they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Again, before God's judgment comes, Revelation 3:18, He counsels them to go buy of Me gold tried in a fire, and that gold obviously is the relationship with Christ, and tells them what to do. What a contrast.

If I would ask the average church today, average pastor anywhere, I would ask them six or seven basic questions.

4. First question I would ask them: Why do you think you need a \$60 million building to do the ministry? You have people in your church that are having tough times, lost their jobs. You are driving around in a Lexus or a Cadillac. The church is paying for your house. Your house is probably a million dollars. The church is paying for it. You have a \$60 million building. You have glass windows and this and that, and you have everything laid up there, and you really think that that is the ministry? According to Revelation 3:17, that is not the ministry. Why do you need a \$60 million building to think you have got to do the ministry?
5. Second question I would ask you: Why do you need some \$100,000 or \$150,000 sound system with a lighting system? You go into most churches, and they look like a TV studio.

They have camera lights to set the mood. Let me tell you something, if my preaching this book does not set your mood, turning the lights out is not going to do it either. You can go in, turn lights out, thinking you can stop me from preaching, but I have my goggles right under here, and I will find you wherever you are at. What is wrong with us? What happened to the Holy Spirit of God dealing through the preaching and the Word of God in the people's hearts? Whatever happened that we have got to have smoke come out from under this, a praise band, a praise choir, people get up who sway back and forth to put the mood in it? There is nothing for this old-time preacher. There is nothing that puts me in the mood to preach more than the song that you sing before I get up here. Just like old Bubba going down there and Donny going down there, or Danny when he sings, or whoever sings, and I watch the fire come back in those old boys' eyes. Do you know why? Because those things were the things that the Holy Spirit of God dealt and put in their lives when they were kids that they never forgot. Do you know why we have forgotten it? Because we have everything we want. You do not have to worry about where you are going to eat today. Most of you do not have to worry about where you are going to sleep tonight. Most of you do not have to worry about any of those things. You have got it all. You have three quarters, or basically 98% of the world population beat right now in what you have in Kansas City, and even if you do not have a job. You see, we get so big with all of that stuff, and I would ask them, I would ask them, "Why do you think you need a \$150,000?" I had a church one time that they put in a \$200,000 sound system. I will tell you something, if we bought a \$200,000 sound system tomorrow, it would not make me sound any better. You would not get any more truth out of it. It certainly would not make me look any better. Darker lights might help, but the smoke may help, but the bottom line is, what do we do it for? What happened to just getting up, taking the Word of God, letting it change a man's life, and then help change your life through the Holy Spirit of God being the witness that God wants us to be? I do not understand. We do not have a website in our church. I mean, we have a website for the tapes and the sermon, but there is no way to find our church on the website. It was just a couple of months ago we put a sign up. We are just known as the crazy church in the basement. I like that. I like that. There have been people that say, "I would not go to that church. It is in an old diner, in an antique mall." I said, "Well, yeah, that is where we are at, down here in the antique mall." "Well, I would not go to a church like that." We would not allow you to come in. You are such a sinner. We do not like you. You are way over the line of sinners. We do not allow them in our church. Do you know why? I will tell you why. Do you know what brings people to this church? You think they had websites in the book of Acts where they added 5,000 people to the church? You think they had all of the things that we have got today out there? No, no, it was people like you and me who were God's witness everywhere you went. That is how people get saved, and I would rather have a church of 20 people without all the show than to have 5,000 people where it is all a sham and it is all a show, and nothing is real because you cannot live in that world and not get deceived.

That is why it is good for some of you guys to get your rear ends kicked when you get into the ministry, like Mark. Personally, I have never had this happen to me, so I have to just vicariously experience it here. But some of you guys, you get into the ministry, and then somebody gets mad at you, and they do not like you, and they cheap shot you, and they do all kinds of things behind

your back, and say all kinds of things. You think that is a bad thing? No, no, no. It is hard to get proud when every time you stop, a bullet goes zinging by your ear. It is a good thing. It is hard to think how great you are when everybody else does not think that. My dogs tell me all the time. I have no problem with it.

I would ask them, "Why do you need a \$100,000, \$50,000, \$20,000 sound system with all the lighting, with all the choreography? Why do you need all of the things up there? Why does everybody have to have their own microphone? I remember the old days, you had five guys sneaking around an old big old microphone, and that is all you had. Oh boy, we are professional today. Why do you need a cafeteria and a restaurant, a Starbucks, and a McDonald's in your church?" I know we like that. Be careful. It is not because we have an Italian restaurant upstairs, Wampo Mama's, and she will fix up a good pizza. But why do you need that?

Let me tell you something, and this is where I am at. This is a good day for you to be here and be a visitor because you are going to go out of here saying, "I will never go back there," or "I will die by life." I will tell you what. If I can entice you with a clear, unadulterated truth of God's Word and you do not want to come back, then do not come back. If I have got to have a, "Well, we are going to go there because we can eat free afterwards." You can eat free while you are here, and then you will be so upset stomach, you will not want to eat afterwards. Look how much weight you can lose. The bottom line is this: if you are looking for a convenience, that is all it is. Churches have workout centers now. But why would not they? We are communities, not churches anymore. Communities have restaurants, Starbucks, wibbly-swivelies, hamburgers, McDonald's. We have a racquetball court. We have this over here. We have everything you could ever want except the truth of God. Without the truth of God, it is all worthless. I would rather have that book and be stark naked, no house to sleep in, no clothes, no car, no food, no nothing. If all I had was that book, I would take that in a heartbeat because the way to happiness and life is found in that book.

So I would ask them, I would say, "Why do you need a \$60 million building? Why do you need a \$150,000 sound system? Why do you need a cafeteria? Why do you need a praise service, a praise band? Why do you have to have, what do you have to have to meet everybody's needs? We are going to have a traditional service at 9 o'clock. Then we are going to have a contemporary service at 11 o'clock, and then we are going to have a blended service." What are you making a martini? Whatever happened to just taking the book and preaching what God gave you? Where did you ever find that the Bible is a smorgasbord? Do you know what I like about the City Union Mission? You eat what they serve you, or you go hungry. Do you know what a church ought to be? It ought to have the best food you could have, but it ought to be dished up one plate at a time, and that is what you get this week. But no, no, we have got to cater to you.

Then there are the other three questions I would ask them:

6. Why have you quit preaching on hell? You do not believe in it anymore? Why would any pastor, any church, quit preaching on hell? Why would you? Why would you quit preaching on a place that Jesus spoke about in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John some 28 times and filled throughout the Bible?

7. Why would you quit preaching on the sins of the saints? Why would you quit preaching on things like gossip, corruption, politics? Why would you quit preaching on the things that... Are you afraid you are going to make people mad? Are you afraid people are going to get upset and you are going to leave because you preach the truth? So what? You fit it to everybody. You give them what they want. You curtail the message so you do not offend them. Let me tell you something, when you learn this, boys, when you get into the ministry down the line, I guarantee you with people that are committed to your church and believe the truth and love the truth, God will run a lot of people through your church to find the people who are going to stay and are going to be part of this work, and everybody else is window dressing. It is just that simple and that plain. They can stay as long as they want. You can love them all you want. But the bottom line is, people who are not really going to get committed, they are not going to hang in there. They are not going to hang in there. I do not want people in my church like that. Just like you do not want people in the foxhole with you like that. You want somebody that when they come over the wire, you are going to be there with them, and they are going to be there with you. That is the same way you are, all you military guys are, that is the way I was when I was in the military. I do not want somebody... If I had to go back in the military for the most part today, other than some of the guys that I know, and guys like Shane, and guys like the guy over here, I would just as soon have a big German Shepherd in the foxhole with me. Christianity has come the same way. We are feminine. We are afraid to make people mad. "Well, we are going to lose people." Well, that is because your goal is not to reach people. Your goal is to build a big church. My goal has never been to build a big church. Obviously, my goal is to take the people that God gives me and give them everything. My pastors tell me, "Well, you know what? If I preach hard messages, people will leave, and how am I going to..." Well, that is your problem for getting into a \$60 million building in the first place because you cannot tell me when your church payment is \$100,000 a month that that does not affect what you preach because you do not know something about so-and-so, and if you preach that, they may leave, and they are a big giver. Do not ever fall into that trap. Do not ever fall in that trap. Preach the truth. Let the truth be the truth, and let the chips fall where they are. I guarantee you, in the last two years, and I do not even know who all it was, in the last two years, all the people that did not like this church and left this church, when you put them all together, our offerings went down a dollar sixty. I would ask you, "Why have you quit preaching on the sins of the saints?" Do you know why? Because the saints do not have any sins anymore. No, no, we do not want to preach. We want to dialogue. Communities do not preach. We want to share. We want to explore. I am all for those things.
8. Then I, and I, and I, please, but do not, maybe I misrepresented something in the fervor of my preaching when the church talked about where church or we get gay people are, "gay people are welcome here." I mean, anybody is welcome here. There will never be a time when somebody will stand back there and say, "You cannot come to this church," unless you are under some form of discipline or something, or you have killed somebody or whatever and shot me or somebody like that, but everybody is welcome. It does not matter. Everybody needs to hear the truth, but let us not pretend that there is not truth to be preached, and that is where the problem comes in. Then I would ask them this: Why have you quit preaching on

the judgment seat of Christ when you are so close to it, folks? I do not know if you even have a clue. Maybe you do not. I do not know why if you are saved here this morning, I do not know why you are wasting the time that you are wasting. Maybe you do not understand it. Maybe you do not hear like I told you. I do not understand why you are so caught up in the things of this world when you are so close to facing the Lord Jesus Christ at the judgment seat of Christ. I will tell you why, I will tell you why in a heartbeat: because you have been deceived, you have been disarmed, and that is why you are discouraged.

## X. The Call to Be God's Witness

There is no witness today. That is the theme of this book, Christ our witness, the Book of Micah, God giving His witness to the Gentile world of what He is about to do because of Israel's failure to do it. God to you and me, telling us to wake up, do not be deceived, disarmed, and discouraged. You have a message and you have a mission, and you are to be God's witness, and everything you need, you need to get everything you need to be that witness if you are a saved person this morning in these last days.

I promise you this, I promise you this, I promise you this: I will always preach on hell. I will never quit preaching on the sins of the saints, and I will never quit preaching on the judgment seat of Christ because those are the things, those are the things that all of us need to keep in front of us as the truth of God's Word. Every head bowed and every eye closed. We are going to be done here in just a moment.