

## The Greatest of These! 02

A Discourse by Darrio Taylor on 1 Corinthians 13: 06/ 2015

**“If ye love me, keep my commandments.” John 14:15**

I invite you to kneel and pray with me as we open the Scriptures.

Our Father which art in heaven; we want to claim the promise found in Your Word which says, “Call unto Me and I will answer thee and show thee things which thou knowest not.” We realize that knowledge puffs up, but charity edifies. And if we think that we know anything, then we know nothing, as we ought to know. This is life eternal, that we would know Thee, the only true God and our Saviour Jesus Christ whom Thou hath sent. We realize that the knowledge that leads to life eternal and that restores the moral image of God in man, this is the essential knowledge, and this is what we desire at this time. We pray that You would separate that knowledge which is earthly sensual and devilish, and that you would give us that heaven born knowledge, that knowledge which is full of the fruits of righteousness; easily entreated, without hypocrisy, without partiality, and we are asking that You would give us great wisdom and great understanding to comprehend these most important, practical truths of the Third Angel’s Message. In Jesus’ name—Amen.

In our first presentation we read from Seventh Day Bible Commentary, Volume 6 which actually deals with 1 Corinthians 13. We are told that we are to read that chapter every day for strength and comfort, and we are to learn the lessons of true sanctified heaven born love, Christlike love, and we are to bring these lessons home to the heart. 1 Corinthians 13 is also an expression of those that have Christlike love which leads them to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts that they may obey God and his Ten Commandments. That they might be in harmony with the only test of character, the only standard, which we have learned is love to God and love to men, for love is the fulfilling of the law. Of course we are talking about self-sacrificing love, the love that causes us to renounce ourselves and anything that would get in the way of our love to God and our love to fellow man.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 KJV Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. [2] And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. [3] And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. [4] Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, [5] Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; [6] Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; [7] Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. [8] Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. [9] For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. [10] But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. [11] When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. [12] For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. [13] And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

In the first presentation we identified speaking with the tongues of men and of angels; having the gift of the Spirit, the former rain and the latter rain, in order to communicate the everlasting gospel; And the tongue of angels, the Three Angel’s Messages, the books of Daniel and Revelation, Daniel 11:40-45, if I have not charity, self-sacrificing love, then I become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. We learned

that to speak and do not, is like sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. To preach these truths to others and not be sanctified in obedience to the truth, to allow the truth to remain in the outer court where it is not brought into the inner sanctuary of the soul, transforming the character after the life of Christ, and all our knowledge and all the truth that we profess is as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. We also identified that this is as the religion of the Pharisees, Pharisaical righteousness. That's why Jesus said, "Except your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees you will in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." So many people are being turned off to the truth, because when they hear us, when they look at our actions and our practices which are not consistency with our teaching, it's like sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. It produces noise of confusion, perplexity, irritation and annoyance, and that is why many people reject the truth today, because they're hearing the Three Angels but through our lifestyle it is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

1 Corinthians 13:2 "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

Let us deal with the gift of prophecy; as we understand that the gift of prophecy was the Spirit of Prophecy as was manifested in the church, with the prophets that were among the brethren. God had selected prophets and prophetess as his mouth piece in order to communicate the will of God to his church through visions, dreams, revelations, similitudes and parables. In Matthew 7, the Bible also speaks about His people that have often also been given the gift of prophecy, not so much to be a prophetess like Mrs. E.G. White, but to be able to interpret prophecy, and to teach prophecy, because when we declare the end from the beginning based on the revelations of His Word and we are predicting what is ready to happen, you know the events connected with the close of probation, then in a sense we are also prophesying. We know God has called each and every one of us to be students of prophecy. Having the gift of prophecy but not having charity the Bible says it profiteth me nothing.

Matthew 7:21 "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Prior to this verse, Jesus said, "By their fruits you shall know them." Remember in context He was speaking about the wolves in sheep's clothing; those false prophets that outwardly look like Christ but inwardly are ravening wolves. One of the characteristics of a wolf is they are going to speak perverse things to draw disciples after them. We read a quote which says that those who's chief aim in study is to present light and truth for the purpose of lifting up themselves and drawing and absorbing all the sympathies and all the emotions and attracting people to themselves; remember this too is the characteristic of a wolf as well, and of the Pharisees, that's what they did.

Unless we do the will of our Father which is in heaven, and we have learned that the will of God is the Ten Commandments, and the Ten Commandments are love to God and love to men, self-sacrificing love, which is the love that Ellen White says 1 Corinthians 13 describes.

Matthew 7:22-23 "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Obviously they didn't have the fruit of the Spirit, they didn't have the fruits of obedience, as manifested in 1 Corinthians 13, although they prophesied and casted out devils and did many wonderful works, they were workers of iniquity, they never did God's will.

Matthew 7:24-27 "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: [25] And the rain descended, and

the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. [26] And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: [27] And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

Now here are the two classes of the wise and the foolish virgins. Obviously the wise, they're prophesying in His name, they're casting out devils and many wonderful works, but they are doing God's will. In other words they hear the sayings of Jesus and they do them, they practice them, they bring them into their experience, they have the oil in the lamp and the vessel. But the foolish virgins also prophecy in His name, they also do many wonderful works, they also cast out devils, but they're not building their houses of faith upon the rock, but on the shifting sand. So of course when the floods, the winds, and the rains descend, they are not prepared for the crisis, they have no oil; they didn't do His will. Even though they could prophecy, but yet without charity it profiteth those foolish virgins nothing.

We're going to look in the Bible at some examples of prophets, and even kings, that had the gift of prophecy. Balaam was once a true prophet of God; Balaam received the gift of prophecy, the Spirit of Prophecy. What I find interesting about Balaam here is that we know that Balaam was hired through the wages of unrighteousness and the rewards of divination to curse Israel. So obviously at this time he was not walking with the people of God. In fact his name, 'Balaam' means 'not for the people', he was against the people of God and the Moabites knew this, so they wanted to hire him to curse the people of God through divination and enchantments. Even though Balaam's heart was against God and His people, we find that the Spirit of God came upon him and overwhelmed him so much that instead of uttering a curse he uttered a blessing. Yet he had the gift of prophecy even though his heart was not converted, it wasn't even in harmony with God, but yet Balaam still had the gift of prophecy and could prophecy.

Numbers 24:15-16 "And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: (16) He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:"

Here is the genuine gift of the Spirit of Prophecy.

Numbers 24:17-19 "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. (18) And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. (19) Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city."

Now who is Balaam prophesying about, a star that comes from Jacob? This is Christ, now this is Christ first and even His second coming, in many other prophecies of Balaam because this is not his only prophecy. Balaam prophesied four prophecies that related to these last days and God's last remnant people as well as to last day events. But notice he was not converted of God, because his purpose was to curse the people of God, to bring about divination, to try to teach God's people to eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication; to get them to fall; to get them to apostatize, but yet he still had the gift of prophecy. And were his prophecies true, did they come to pass? Yes, the first part did, Christ came the first time and the rest of the prophecies are in processes of fulfillment even now. But how did Balaam die? Because Balaam desired to die the death of the righteous, but what was his last end; did he die the death of the righteous?

Did he remain a true prophet? The prophecies he uttered, did they lead him to change his purpose and his desires? Think about it! He is prophesying about Israel, and the Messiah of Israel, now you would think that after seeing all this in vision, he would have forsaken the call of Moab and Balak to curse the people, you would have thought that he would have joined the people. But notice this had no moral influence upon his character whatsoever, even though he uttered true prophecies and had the gift of prophecy. How did Balaam die?

Joshua 13:22 "Balaam also the son of Beor, **the soothsayer**, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them."

Balaam perished in battle with the armies of the enemy, and he died a soothsayer, he died a psychic. He died a spiritualist, he died a wizard, and yet he had the gift of prophecy earlier; but though I have the gift of prophecy and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. You might say Balaam was never fully converted to God so obviously that's why he ended up losing his way. But let us look at another example in the Bible; King Saul, the first king of Israel.

1 Samuel 10:9-12 "And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him **another heart**: and all those signs came to pass that day. (10) And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; **and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.** (11) And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? (12) And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Now was Saul a changed man? Yes; was he converted? Yes he was; God gave him another heart, and the signs and wonders came to pass, and he had the spirit of God. he came among the prophets at the school of the prophets and he started prophesying just like them. So much so that those that knew him before in his past life said, "Is Saul also among the prophets? What has come upon the son of Kish?"

He was even anointed with the holy oil; he had the Holy Spirit. He was a changed man; but can a saved man choose to be lost? Yes, did Saul abide in this new covenant experience? No, I wish I could say that he remained obedient and faithful throughout his administration as king.

Notice what the Bible says in 1 Chronicles 10. We know that Saul lost his way; instead of being the voice of God became the voice of the dragon. He began to be a persecuting power; he didn't have brotherly love and charity against David. In fact he envied David, he was jealous of David, and yet there were times in Saul's life where even though he was trying to kill David and Samuel, there would be times he would go to the campus of the prophets and he would ask, "Where are Samuel and David?" And because of the influence of the prophets, because they had the Holy Spirit on their campus, the Spirit of God would come upon him, and he would strip himself naked and prophesy all night.

If you read the book of Samuel, that wasn't the first time he prophesied. Now this is when he was a converted man; but even when he was demon possessed, the Spirit of God came upon him and he was able to prophecy. It is in the Bible, read it yourself, it is there.

Just because his heart was one time right with God, yes, the Spirit of God came upon him and prophesied; and even when he was trying to kill and persecute God's people, the Spirit of God would come and he would still prophesy. What makes us think that just because we have the gift of prophecy and can understand prophecy, that we are converted, or we are remaining or abiding in that first love experience, where we are converted. How Saul died, what was his last day like?

1 Chronicles 10:13-14 "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; (14) And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse."

Now he is a man when he was faithful knew that all wizards and witches should not be suffered to live, put them to death. But there came a time when even though he had the gift of prophecy, God was no longer speaking to him through visions, dreams and prophets and he found himself going to a spiritualist. He went into spiritualism, and he was deceived by demons impersonating Samuel. Those demons were able to predict a true event; because we know that it was through the influence of that spiritualism that led him to the battle with the Philistines where he lost his head and his crown. That battle against the Philistines representing the Sunday Law crisis. He was a lost man.

So even though he had the gift of prophecy; even though he prophesied and had a new heart at one time; the Bible tells us at his last end, the reason why he died is because he didn't keep God's Word and as a result he was deceived by spiritualism. Not only did he lose his earthly crown but unfortunately he lost his heavenly crown also. Though I have the gift of prophecy and have not charity it doesn't profit me anything.

Let us look at another example. So a man can have the gift of prophecy, hear the words of God and know the knowledge of the Most High, but can end up going off into darkness and into spiritualism. It's not a guarantee, it's not a passport to heaven, just because you are able to understand prophecy and teach prophecy.

1 Kings 13:1-6 "And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. (2) And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. (3) And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out. (4) And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. (5) The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. (6) And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before."

So in the very same day, this man that had the gift of prophecy and prophesied against that altar and said that it would be rent and the ashes pour out, it happened. Even Jeroboam, even though he tried to lay hold on the man of God, he tried to persecute him, but the hand outstretched against the messenger of Jehovah suddenly became powerless and withered, and could not be withdrawn. It withered and dried up like a stick.

Jeroboam said, "Pray to God that my hand will be restored, I see that God is with you because the sign which you uttered happened in that day." We also know that even the prophecy of Josiah being born, many years later it happened, Josiah was born, and that was the final reformation before the king of the North came into the glorious land and destroyed the city and the sanctuary. We know that Josiah was indeed born; but to call him by name before he was born, this was the gift of prophecy.

He showed that he had no malice or evil, he didn't hate king Jeroboam; because when Jeroboam asked him to pray for him, the prophet did so. Jeroboam would have killed him if he could, and yet he prayed for him and his hand was restored. Obviously God was with this man, and he had the gift of prophecy, signs and wonders followed.

1 Kings 13:7-10 "And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. (8) And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: (9) For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. (10) So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel."

Now we know and understand the rest of the story; obviously signs and wonders, the Holy Spirit, prophecy and the gift of prophecy was with this man of God, and Jeroboam said come home with me, let us eat and drink. God's word, that same prophetic word that he gave earlier against the altar said unto the prophet: "Don't eat bread, don't drink any water, don't go back home the same way you came, go another way." Now I wish I could say this man of God remained faithful to the Word of God, but unfortunately when we come to verse 20, the Bible talks about how this prophet was deceived by a false prophet with another counterfeit prophetic message.

1 Kings 13:20-24 "And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back: (21) And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, (22) But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulcher of thy fathers. (23) And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. (24) And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcass."

So notice the man of God, the one who prophesied through the gift of prophecy, when it came down to obeying the moral purpose of prophecy, to keep him from wickedness, to keep him from evil, to keep him from deception he failed at that point. He didn't have a problem prophesying, and denouncing sin and apostasy and false religion. But when it came time to himself obeying prophecy, he found himself being disobedient and what happened to him? He was destroyed by a lion and this is miraculously, because the lion that killed the prophet stood by the ass and did not have the ass for his dinner and the ass didn't run away. So this was something supernatural. God wanted you to take heed and to see that though you have the gift of prophecy and have not charity, self-sacrificing love, it doesn't profit you anything; you can still be lost.

So we can understand prophecy and the role of prophecy, the fulfillment of prophecy and the great Second Advent movement, but knowing these things alone and not having charity, we will be like Balaam, we will be like Saul; we will be like this man of God. They all prophesied true prophecies, but at the end, it didn't keep them from spiritualism, or false deception. The Bible tells us that though I have the gift of prophecy and though I understand all mysteries; there are many mysteries in the Bible but there are two mysteries I want to focus on; one of those is the mystery of iniquity found in 2 Thessalonians 2.

Let us talk about the mystery of iniquity and the mystery of Godliness. You can understand how both these mysteries are to work. In fact the entire plan of salvation, the whole of the scriptural testimony is

about these two mysteries. From Genesis to Revelation; we see the mystery of iniquity and mystery of Godliness.

2 Thessalonians 2:5 "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"

In other words Paul was just talking about the man of sin, the son of perdition; he was talking about the anti-Christ, the little horn and he was coming from Daniel 11. He said remember when I was with you I told you these things, meaning Paul was always faithful. He didn't shun to declare all the counsel of God. The Bible talks about how he taught them publicly and also from house to house; so he was a faithful pastor; he let them know about the rise of the antichrist. This is something the church knew about, they were familiar with it.

2 Thessalonians 2:6-10 "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. (7) For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. (8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: (9) Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, (10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

Here is the reason why they perish, even though they know about the mystery of iniquity, they know about the man of sin, they understand the role of the king of the North, the great controversy between Christ and Satan; they understand it intellectually. But here is the reason why they perish and why they're going to be deceived!

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; **because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.** [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."

So if we don't receive the love, the charity of the truth and allow the love of the truth to produce an experience. . . meaning, when you receive the love of the truth, you're going to love righteousness and hate iniquity. Those foolish virgins in Matthew 7, they prophesied in his name, they did many wonders in his name, they cast out devils in his name, but Jesus said, "I don't know you depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." They didn't realize that even though they were prophesying, and doing many wonderful works and casting out devils, what they failed to realize was that without charity, the mystery of iniquity was also working in them, and they become workers of iniquity. They did not receive the love of the truth so that they might be saved. They did not truly love righteousness and hate iniquity, even though they understood the mystery of iniquity, they ended up, unfortunately, experiencing iniquity in their life.

That's the strong delusion brethren; we can understand the role of Rome, Paganism and Papalism, but if we are not allowing the love of the truth to come in, we are not producing sanctified heavenly born love, self-sacrificing love where we are led to self-renunciation, then the mystery of iniquity will work in us, both to will and to do of its evil pleasure.

Let's look at another mystery which we need to know and experience, God wants us to know the mystery of iniquity so we don't experience it. But this mystery here, He wants you to know it that you might be able to experience *this* mystery of godliness and not experience the mystery of iniquity.

Colossians 1:26-29 "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: [27] To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: [28] Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may

present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: [29] Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

Christ in you the hope of glory that's the mystery of godliness, which is to be finished even now, under the sounding of the seventh trumpet. In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when the seventh trumpet shall sound, the mystery of God is to be finished, as the prophets have spoken about. In this time period, Christ sent us the hope of glory, where we are presented perfect in Christ, that's what it means. But there are going to be many who will never ever have Christ come in them the hope of glory. Even though they can explain it, even though they can teach it; they can share it, they have preached sermons on it, they have read books on it; wrote books on it, but Christ will never come in them, why?

It is because in Revelation 3, Christ is kept outside the door of the heart. This brings to view the Church of Laodicea; this is the church that is around at the sounding of the seventh angel, the seventh angel that not only bring to us the third woe, and the closing events of earth's history, but also the experience of the mystery of godliness.

Revelation 3:19-21 “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. [20] Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. [21] To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

The reason why Christ cannot come inside the door of the hearts, the homes and the houses of his people, is because they are rich and increased in goods; they don't think they have need of anything. They don't know that they're poor, blind, wretched, naked and miserable and also, the reason they don't let Jesus in, is they think they already have Jesus in them. What they fail to realize is that it's another Jesus, a false Christ, another gospel, another spirit. So now, they look at the knockings of Jesus at the door as a stranger, and they won't open. They won't receive the counsel of the True Witness; the gold, the white raiment, the eyesalve. They won't be zealous and repent and therefore Christ never comes in the door. This is one of the reasons why Christ in us the hope of glory will never happen in us.

So we can understand these mysteries; mystery of iniquity and mystery of godliness, and unfortunately if we don't experience the mystery of godliness, receive the Laodicean message, receive that straight testimony, that counsel of the True Witness, and let it work deep revival and reformation in us, Christ will never be formed within. But if Christ is not formed within, then perhaps the antichrist will be formed within; that's the mystery of iniquity. I can understand all mysteries but if I don't have charity, it profiteth me nothing. I can have all knowledgeable and without charity it doesn't profit me anything. I am nothing.

I want to take you to one of the wisest and most knowledgeable men in the world, next to Christ. This is King Solomon. We know Solomon also lost his way; he apostatized. It's interesting that when Solomon was younger and he was faithful, he wrote the books of Proverbs and Songs of Solomon. In the book of Proverbs, he is always warning us, listen stay away from the strange woman; stay away from the harlot; don't go down to her house, her house is the way to hell. Then somehow somehow, Solomon finds himself loving the strange women, and marrying them. Daughter of Pharaoh, daughter of Edom, Moab and Ammon, the Amalakites, the Moabites, the Phoenicians, and these women turned his heart from God.

Not only did he marry these pagan wives, it would be one thing if he could say, “Alright, I love you, and we have the flesh in common, it is just so I can have a political alliance. It is just a strategy. If I marry all the daughters of these foreign kings, then I will become their son in law, and then they won't make war against me.” I mean that was a brilliant strategy, when you think about it, this was very wise. So it could

be one thing marrying them for political alliances. But tell me, why did he have to build their pagan altars, and build their temples; and not only that, he went and worshipped with them, he burned incense with these pagan wives? In other words he supported it, he endorsed it; he was perfectly involved. He became a convert, and he knew better.

Ecclesiastes was written after he had come back to God, it was after he had been reconverted. You can read about it in the book 'Prophets and Kings', the early chapters talk about Solomon, about his pride and prosperity, his transgression and how he wrote Ecclesiastes after he was coming back to God. Praise God that he was able to be recovered, as it were, to be saved. But now he is giving his testimony and he is giving his experience, and I want you to notice what he said in Ecclesiastes chapter 1.

Ecclesiastes 1:16 "I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge."

So notice when it came to wisdom and knowledge, he had great experience in these things; more than all that were before him, and even more than most that came after.

Ecclesiastes 1:17-18 "And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and **to know madness and folly**: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. [18] For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

Wait a minute: he said he gave his heart to know both wisdom, madness and folly; do you see any problem there? Wisdom, but madness and folly? It looks like Solomon is about to become reeducated; looks like he is about to partake of that fruit from the 'Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil'. He says, "This is all vexation of spirit because he that increaseth in knowledge increaseth sorrow." We don't often look at that point do we? We believe that when the Little Book of Daniel is unsealed knowledge is increased. We are running to and fro in the Bible; but with the increase of knowledge, there is an increase of sorrow with it. Why?

Ecclesiastes 2:1-3 "I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. [2] I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? [3] I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life."

Now do you notice something strange? He said, "I took hold of wine; and then I wanted to know wisdom, but I also wanted to lay my hand on folly as well". Wait a minute, if he was wise, wouldn't he want nothing to do with folly, and nothing to do with foolishness? Now he wants wisdom *and* folly, and he is drinking wine; wine could be a symbol of good doctrine or corrupt doctrine. Notice as he goes on here;

Ecclesiastes 2:4-10 "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: [5] I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: [6] I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: [7] I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: [8] I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. [9] So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. [10] And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour."

What is he saying? He said, "Listen I had everything; you think of it, you name it, I had it all." He was a world wonder, people wondered at him. People were, I am sure, envious, and probably jealous of him. Anything his eyes wanted, he did not have to withhold; he had the money, he had the fame, he had the popularity, the riches, he had it all. It was almost as though, you would have thought that he had already arrived in heaven.

Ecclesiastes 2:11 "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, **and there was no profit under the sun.**"

It almost sounds like 1 Corinthians 13; he had all knowledge, all wisdom, but yet there was something lacking, something was missing. Perhaps it was charity and self-sacrificing love; because he said, "All this that I just mentioned, that you envy for, it was all vanity, it was all vexation of the spirit, it didn't profit me anything." That's what he is saying.

Ecclesiastes 2:12-15 "And I turned myself to **behold wisdom, and madness, and folly**: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done. [13] Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness. [14] The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all. [15] Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity."

In other words what he is saying is, listen, he had the greatest light, and the greatest darkness came upon him. He said, "What happened to the fool that happened to me as well". He is writing this after he had come back unto God. What he is saying is that his knowledge and wisdom didn't keep him from going after madness and folly!

He is showing us how he ended up going astray. With all these riches, and all these pleasures, and all these things, it reminds me of Laodicea; rich and increased with goods, not having need of anything. This was Solomon before he fell; it was vanity it profiteth him anything, if he didn't have charity; self-sacrificing love. His knowledge could not preserve him from going after strange women. His knowledge and wisdom could not preserve him from building their altars and their temples, and sacrificing to their gods. His knowledge could not protect his heart from turning after the false gods of his wives.

Vanity and vexation, it didn't profit him anything; **this is not what brings true happiness and true success**. It seems like all those that have everything they can want in life, they end up committing suicide; they end up taking drugs; they end up drinking themselves to death; they take their own life. What are they missing? They have everything; they have money, cars, women, everything Solomon had, they have it; but there's something missing. True sanctified, heaven-born love; a love for God and a love for man, obeying his commandments, and dying to self and sin to ensure that you will be obedient. Notice what the Bible says in 2 Peter:

2 Peter 2:19 "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."

Have you ever found yourself promising people liberty and encouraging people that they can have freedom from sin, that they can have victory over themselves, that they can be an overcomer? But yet you yourself are a servant of corruption? You yourself are brought in bondage, because you yourself don't overcome either, even though you promise liberty to others?

2 Peter 2:20-22 "**For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. [21] For it had been better for

them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. [22] But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

How did they have escaped the pollutions of the world? Through knowledge! They escaped the pollutions, they came out of the world, came out of Babylon. But notice; they are again entangled therein and overcome. The later end is worse with them than the beginning. You escape through knowledge; but you get entangled, you get overcome. You knew the way of righteousness, but you turned from it and you go back to your vomit, you go right back to the mud pit. In other words, knowledge is essential, but it cannot preserve you from going back to the pit; being overcome and in bondage and seven times worse comes upon thee.

The children of Israel were delivered out of Egypt; what was easier bringing them out of Egypt or keeping them out of Egypt? What was more challenging? It was easier to bring them out in comparison to keeping them out of Egypt. It is easy to come out, many have come out; but to stay out, that's the challenge. And knowledge alone will not keep you from going back. Knowledge alone does not save.

What the Lord is trying to reveal us is this, if we don't have charity and self-sacrificing love, knowledge and wisdom no matter how correct or true it might be, in the end will not have any moral power to save us. If we look to the knowledge instead of looking to the God who gave us the knowledge. Like Lucifer our wisdom and our knowledge can pervert us and corrupt us. He looked at how wise he was, he looked at how intelligent he was, and how beautiful and glorious he was, and it perverted him; it corrupted him, says Ezekiel 28.

Hebrews 6:4-5 “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, [5] And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,”

What is this talking about here? You were enlightened; how are we enlightened? You have tasted of the heavenly gift, you were made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, you tasted of the Word of God and the powers of the world to come—what is this describing? How were we enlightened? By knowledge of the truth; but you have tasted it, what does it mean to taste? To eat the Little Book. Remember in 1 Samuel 14:24 when the armies of Saul were weary, faint and hungry, because he told them, “Cursed be any man that eats anything until I avenge my enemies.”

Remember they saw the honey in the wilderness dropping and nobody wanted to eat it; but Jonathan wasn't there to hear his father's oath, and he ate of the honey and his eyes were enlightened. So what is this describing? You have been enlightened, you have tasted the heavenly gift, you are partakers of the Holy Ghost; you have tasted the word of God. This is describing those who eat the Little Book. And the powers of the world to come, in other words you know that this world is going to end and the new earth is before us, and the glory of the New Jerusalem and the promises, you understand all that.

Hebrews 6:6 “If they **shall fall away**, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

Have mercy! Do you mean it is possible that after you have tasted of the word of God, you have eaten the Little Book, you've been enlightened, you've been a partaker of the Holy Ghost, that you can still fall away? That you could still need repentance, that you can still crucify the Son of God afresh? “Not after partaking of the Holy Ghost; not after tasting the heavenly gift? No! This is all what we need to do, all that's essential for salvation.” Is that what the Bible teaches? No; you can still fall away, just like Balaam did, just like Saul did, just like the man of God from Judah.

Though I have all knowledge, I know all the mysteries, I have the gift of prophecy; if I don't have charity I am nothing. And even though I have all Faith so that I can move mountains, without charity I am nothing.

We have to eat the Little Book, but if we are not also partaking of charity, self-sacrificing love, you will fall away. You will crucify Jesus again; you will go back to your vomit; you will go back to your mire. It's not a threat, it's a promise, it's sure, it will happen, by and by soon or later. It's not if, it's just when, it's just a matter of time. Paul said, "Even I have all faith that I can move mountains if I don't have charity it doesn't profit me anything."

James 2:14-26 "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? [15] If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, [16] And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? [17] Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. [18] Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. [19] Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. [20] But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? [21] Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? [22] Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? [23] And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. [24] Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. [25] Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? [26] For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

Having Faith but not having practical, experimental religion, we are dead; it doesn't profit us anything.

1 Corinthians 13:3 "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Notice he says that even though I give my goods to feed the poor; now wouldn't we say today that those who do feed the homeless and take care of those that need shelters and those that need food and clothing, wouldn't we say that is charitable? They are being very charitable; that's what we would say, you know charitable organizations, they do these works. But I want you to notice here, it is very clear that giving your goods to bestow upon the poor; you can still do those things and not have charity.

In other words those are misconceptions in the word that says that if you do these things and take care of the poor, that's being charitable. No, he says, "I can do that and still not have charity". In other words bestowing your goods upon the poor merely, that is not what constitutes biblical charity. So how many those who think they are being charitable, that's good, but that doesn't mean that you have charity. You can even give your body to be burned and still not have charity.

Why is it that I can give my goods to the poor and yet still have not charity? That is not the charity that the gospel is requiring us to have. I am not saying that we shouldn't feed the poor and take care of the homeless, I am not saying that, because Isaiah 58 talks about doing that work. Notice what Luke 18 says;

Luke 18:9 "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in **themselves** that they were righteous, and despised others:"

Trusted in themselves; this is self-righteousness, self-exaltation.

Luke 18:10-11 "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. [11]The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with **himself.**"

Notice that everything he is about to say, he is not praying and talking to God as a man to a friend, he is praying with himself; he is talking to himself and God is not hearing him.

Luke 18:11-12 "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. [12] I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

I give my money to help the poor and the unfortunate, I do all that.

Luke 18:13-14 "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. [14] I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

I fast twice a week, I give tithes of everything of that I have; but that wasn't commending him to God.

Luke 20:45-47 "Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples, [46] Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; [47] Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation."

Luke 21:1-4 "And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. [2] **And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. [3] And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:** [4] For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had."

There were people here that were giving far more money, far more gifts and donations than this widow had. How is it that this widow just give two mites, just pennies? How could Jesus say, "Listen, she gave all that she had, while all they did was just give in the abundance of the leftovers of that which they had, but she gave all?" She was poor and they were rich. Paul says, "I can bestow my goods to feed the poor and have not charity, it doesn't profit me anything. What is Jesus trying to teach here, why did He call attention to this, do you think this is important? If it's written in the Bible it's for our salvation.

"The Saviour called His disciples to Him, and bade them mark the widow's poverty. Then His words of commendation fell upon her ear: "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all." Tears of joy filled her eyes as she felt that her act was understood and appreciated. Many would have advised her to keep her pittance for her own use; given into the hands of the well-fed priests, it would be lost sight of among the many costly gifts brought to the treasury. But Jesus understood her motive. She believed the service of the temple to be of God's appointment, and she was anxious to do her utmost to sustain it. She did what she could, and her act was to be a monument to her memory through all time, and her joy in eternity. Her heart went with her gift; its value was estimated, not by the worth of the coin, but by the love to God and the interest in His work that had prompted the deed."

"Jesus said of the poor widow, She "hath cast in more than they all." The rich had bestowed from their abundance, many of them to be seen and honored by men. Their large donations had deprived them of no comfort, or even luxury; they had required no sacrifice, and could not be compared in value with the widow's mite."

**"It is the motive that gives character to our acts,** stamping them with ignominy or with high moral worth. Not the great things which every eye sees and every tongue praises does God

account most precious. The little duties cheerfully done, the little gifts which make no show, and which to human eyes may appear worthless, often stand highest in His sight. A heart of faith and love is dearer to God than the most costly gift. The poor widow gave her living to do the little that she did. She deprived herself of food in order to give those two mites to the cause she loved. And she did it in faith, believing that her heavenly Father would not overlook her great need. It was this unselfish spirit and childlike faith that won the Saviour's commendation."

"Among the poor there are many who long to show their gratitude to God for His grace and truth. They greatly desire to share with their more prosperous brethren in sustaining His service. These souls should not be repulsed. Let them lay up their mites in the bank of heaven. If given from a heart filled with love for God, these seeming trifles become consecrated gifts, priceless offerings, which God smiles upon and blesses."

"When Jesus said of the widow, She "hath cast in more than they all," His words were true, not only of the motive, but of the results of her gift. **The "two mites which make a farthing" have brought to God's treasury an amount of money far greater than the contributions of those rich Jews. The influence of that little gift has been like a stream, small in its beginning, but widening and deepening as it flowed down through the ages. In a thousand ways it has contributed to the relief of the poor and the spread of the gospel. Her example of self-sacrifice has acted and reacted upon thousands of hearts in every land and in every age. It has appealed to both the rich and the poor, and their offerings have swelled the value of her gift. God's blessing upon the widow's mite has made it the source of great results. So with every gift bestowed and every act performed with a sincere desire for God's glory. It is linked with the purposes of Omnipotence. Its results for good no man can measure."** DA 615, 616.

So I can bestow my goods to feed the poor, but if I don't have self-sacrificing love, if I don't have charity, which leads me to give all, even depriving myself of food and my comforts, it doesn't profit me anything. And yet she gave more than they all, because what she did has inspired thousands to give. For two thousand years, those two mites have been multiplying and multiplying and multiplying. Who would have thought? She didn't want to be seen, because what was this compared to what they were doing. She threw it in and tried to run and get away unnoticed; and Jesus said, "Wait a minute." And stopped her. God sees the little things, the gifts that are done in self-sacrifice. But I can do all that and have not charity and it doesn't profit me anything. I can give my body to be burned it doesn't profit me anything.

**"No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellow men is not a true disciple of Christ."**

By their fruits you shall know them.

"Though he should possess great faith and have power even to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless. He might display great liberality; but should he, from some other motive than genuine love, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, **the act would not commend him to the favor of God. In his zeal he might even meet a martyr's death, yet if not actuated by love, he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite."** AA 318.2

So think about this, "I am going to give my body to be burned, I'm going to be a martyr for the cause!" And you don't even have self-sacrificing love, you don't have the same self-sacrificing love that caused Jesus to lay down his life. To cause Jesus, who was rich to become poor for our sakes, that we through His poverty might be made rich; God looks at you as a deluded enthusiast or as an ambitious hypocrite. You dying because you say you're going to die for God, and God says, "You're a hypocrite; you're just a fanatic." You gave your body to be burned, but you didn't have charity, you didn't have self-sacrificing

love, so now, you gave your body to be burned, but you come up in the second resurrection, and then you're going to be burned again, this time in the lake of fire and brimstone.

Though I have the gift of prophecy, though I have all mysteries, though I have all knowledge and all faith, if I don't have charity, I am nothing. I can bestow my goods to feed the poor and give my body to be burned, it doesn't profit me anything.

Shall we pray?

Father in Heaven; we don't want to be among those foolish virgins that say, "Lord, Lord" But have not done Your will. "I prophesied in Your name; I've given Bible studies; I've traveled the world; I've won souls; I've gone to camp-meetings and prophecy schools; I stood for unpopular truth; I promoted these truths; I cast out devils; I did many wonderful works in Your name"; but those works were not for God, they were for self because we never were converted; we were never change into the image of Christ. Everything we did was with the spirit of self-exaltation, because we did not have the Spirit of self-sacrificing love, we were workers of iniquity, while at the same time we thought we were working for God. These are the saddest words that could ever fall on mortal ear; "I never knew you!"

We don't want to be simply deluded enthusiasts, or ambitious hypocrites; we realize that our prophesying, the understanding of gospel mysteries, our knowledge, our faith, we know that alone is not able to save us. Charity is what profiteth; charity must be mingled with the works that we do in order to be approved of Thee. So Father, please allow us to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, that we may by beholding Christ, be changed. That we might be actuated by the same Spirit; that our motives would be true, that they would be pure; that they would be honest. Indeed that we would be like our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ in word and action, having not just theoretical knowledge, which can't save, but to have experimental religion with the knowledge and truth for this time. Thank You Father, for hearing and answering our prayers; we ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.