



# THE CHALLENGER

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PROCLAIMING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

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## Do You Know for Sure?

BY THE EDITOR

**W**ELL, I do not know for sure that I am going to reach heaven. I hope so. I hope God will notice that I tried. After all, I have not killed anybody. I made a decision in a Billy Graham Crusade. And I made a public profession in front of the church congregation. You know, we are not to judge as to a person being saved or not. Our course of action will never rescue us from the consequences of sin, which is ultimately hell. God must do it. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

He is very much interested in our possessing the assurance of eternal life. In fact, one entire book in the Bible is given to this subject. If we will hear His Word, we will know who is saved and who is not, including ourselves. The theme of I John is stated in the above verse in capital letters. How dare we flounder around wondering if people are saved when God uses the word "KNOW." "We shall KNOW them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs or thistles? Wherefore by their fruits you shall KNOW them. Not everyone that says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of My Father (obedience) which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:16,20,21). These verses leave no doubt as to absolute assurance.

Ever wonder why we hear so few dissertations from I John? Although it is the easiest book in the Bible to understand, it leaves no question as to whether we are headed for heaven. If we are not going to be there, we can be assured of the torment of hell. This is the book that plainly declares the conduct of a child of God. Here is plain declaration of the actions of a believer in Christ. If we want no fruit inspection, we had better keep this book closed. We have done a good job of that very thing. Such action also robs us of real joy. "And these things write we to you, that your JOY may be full" (I John 1:4). Do you know of any greater happiness than the assurance of heaven for eternity? God has declared the action of His children in I John. He states what we will do and not do. Few people want to hear it. This is the reason most professing Christians do not read it, study it, or look for church people under its absolute authority.

### A Very Important Fact

First John gives us a clear picture of His work within the lives of those who have been saved. Their action is the consequence of the work of the Spirit of God within them, named "regeneration" or "born again." The action here in this message is not to be saved, but the *reaction* of those who have already been made NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST. (II Corinthians 5:17)

### We Will Obey God's Commandments

"And hereby we do KNOW that we KNOW Him, if (since) we keep His commandments. He that says, I KNOW Him, and keeps not His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keeps His word, in him verily is the love

of God perfected, hereby KNOW we that we are in Him. He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (I John 2:2-6). "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and DO those things that are pleasing in His sight" (3:22). Here is the main reason for unanswered prayer. God states in 5:2,3 that His commands are not grievous. We know that in His strength we can obey. (Philippians 4:13)

### Love Other Christians

Why so much turmoil, dissention, and backbiting in today's churches? The individuals participating are not saved. People who love one another do not render such treatment. "He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now." The Scriptures give us only two words in relationships with others. It is either love or hate. Cannot we tell by the actions of others if Romans 5:5 has happened to them? "But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not where he goes, because that darkness has blinded his eyes" (I John 2:9-11). Also read and study I John 3:11;4:7,8,11,12,20, 21;4:7. "Beloved, let us love one another (no favorites); for love is of God; and every one that loves God is born of God and KNOWS God. He that loves not knows not God; for God is love" (vs.7,8).

### Practice Righteousness

"If you KNOW that He is righteous, you know that everyone that does righteousness is born of Him" (I John 2:29). "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that does (practices) righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. In this

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## Do You Know for Sure? (continued from page 1)

the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil; whosoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother" (I John 3:7,10).

### Does Not Practice Sin

"Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law; for sin is the transgression of the Law (of God). And you KNOW that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abides in Him sins not, whosoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him" (I John 3:4-6). (Remember, these are continuous actions.) "He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:4-6,8,9). The devil cannot touch us as God's children. (5:18)

### Possess God's Witness

"Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God" (I John 4:13,15). "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which he has testified of His Son. He who has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life" (I John 5:10,12). That last verse makes clear, understandable distinction as to the saved and lost.

### Overcome the Enemy

"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you; than he that is in the world. They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God; He that is not of God hears not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (I John 4:4-6). "For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world; and He is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God (who He is and what He has promised to do for us)" (5:4,5).

### Born of God

"Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and everyone that loves Him that begat loves Him also that is begotten of Him" (I John 5:1). (Here is our love for other Christians.) "For whosoever is born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (v.4).

### My Deepest Sorrow

Nothing bothers me more during my lifetime than to realize the majority of people on this earth who plan for heaven and will never reach there. They will land in hell. "Not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that DOES the will of My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). (Repeated on purpose.) It is a strait and narrow gate that leads to heaven. It is the wide gate and path leading to hell. Few today are willing to accept the reign of Christ over them. They refuse to deny themselves, take up the cross of Jesus Christ and follow Him. They have not repented of their sin. That is the reason for so many continuing in their sin. Do you believe a holy God is going to accept them into His family? I know He will not, as plainly stated in His Word. Remember, corruption is involved in their conduct. (vs.17,18) Their faith is vain, empty and nonexistent. (I Corinthians 15:2) the rest of this chapter gives the consequence of God's judgment upon such people. "DEPART FROM ME, you that work iniquity. He never knew you. (v.24)

Of course, the Christian can sin, but he will not continue in it. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all

unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). We know He is addressing His family, for in two verses away He calls them, "My little children."

### God's Concern

His desire for your assurance is to be part of our observance in every communion service. Its purpose is twofold: 1) We are to remember the death of His Son on the cross, and 2) We are to examine ourselves to be sure we are saved and in His family. "For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do shew the Lord's death till He comes. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread and drink of this cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (I Corinthians 11:26-29).

The scriptures in this message indicate your possession of eternal life. Not many demonstrate these actions. With a few days of personal fellowship, I will know whether you are saved or not. Any difference between being alive in Christ or dead in your sins? Holiness or sin? Light or darkness? God's blessing or judgment? Friend, the Bible is very clear as to our being a Christian. When you become one, everyone will know. Your actions will announce the fact. Has the miracle of the resurrected life of Jesus Christ been imparted within you? Have you been set free from the power of sin in your life? With God's help, are you obeying Him? Is it still *your* will or *his* will to be accomplished in your life? Are you living for yourself or for God's glory in obedience with love that motivates such? "He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me; and He that loves me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and manifest Myself to Him" (John 14:21).

### Want to Be Saved Now?

Find a place of prayer, fall on your knees and talk to the Lord Jesus. "For whosoever shall call up the name of the Lord, shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).

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## Personal Word



We THANK GOD for you who enable us to make the following announcement: **We are up to date in mailing all requested literature!** We have been through a big transition and our volunteer workers have done a magnificent job. Did you join with us in prayer as I requested? Keep praying with thanksgiving to God who answered our prayers. The assistance of those who couple their prayers and purse is vital to maintaining and increasing the ministry entrusted to us by the Lord. God is to be praised for your passion for souls to be saved and strengthened in the faith. Dr. Mike Eccleston, our assistant director, told me that on a particular day, there were five volunteers who labored in our literature room. What hope that conveys as to our future accomplishments.

### The Difference

From an inmate in a California prison came the following letter:

“I hope and pray this letter finds you deep in the blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Recently, *The Challenger* was given to me; and I want to tell you that I was truly blessed. It was truly Spirit-filled, and I hung on every word of it. It was a breath of fresh air to read of your boldness, just as it is spoken in the Word of God. Today’s churches need to open their eyes to the Word of God and realize that salvation is a matter of life and death. The easygoing and around-the-bush teaching of the Word needs to get serious. It is surely expressed so in your paper. It is light from above. I am interested in reading it every month, as well as having a copy of your literature sheet. I would also like to receive your Bible Study Course and more information about your wonderful ministry. Thank you again for being there. You will be in all my prayers.”

### Now Is the Time

We must look forward to a real increase in our prison ministry. Have you heard that for the first time, America ranks as the world’s number one incarcerator? The Pew Center reports 2,319,258 Americans were in jail or prison at the beginning of 2008, one out of 99.1 adults. This is the highest percentage in U.S. history. Hear these shocking statistics! The USA spent more than \$49 billion on corrections last year alone. This is up from less than \$11 billion 20 years ago. This rate of increase for prison costs was six times greater than for higher education spending. Getting tough on the prisoner also means getting tough on the taxpayer.

Senator Bernie Sanders (VT), commenting on this report, said, “Perhaps, if we adequately invested in our children and their education, kids who now grow up as criminals could become productive workers and taxpayers.” Back to the report: While one in thirty men between the ages of 20 and 34 are behind bars, the figure for black men in that age group is one in nine. The United States has more people in jail than all other nations, including Russia and China.

### Prisoners Read

One chaplain stated that they will read anything — the Bible, a *Playboy* magazine, or the label from a soup can. They have plenty of time. If we are supplying them with good gospel literature, lives will be changed by God; and I am here to tell you, this is their only real hope. Remember that this literature we send to inmates never takes a vacation. It is still working after being discarded by one individual. We have received a number of our Bible course lessons, taken out of waste baskets, filled out with a request for the other eight lessons. It is the Word of God that makes the gospel a reality in their lives. This we learn in Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of

Christ; for IT IS THE POWER OF GOD TO SALVATION to every one that believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Gentile).”

### An Emergency Exists

Believing the promises of God, we are left with only one course of action. We do not know the length of time this opportunity is available to us. Muslim literature is flooding our prisons, surpassing all our efforts. Ninety percent of new Muslim recruits in the USA come from our prison system. Watered-down, feeling-oriented religious literature is coming on fast. That is a serious condition! We must speed up our operation while this day of opportunity lies before us. We know night is coming. Many prisoners will be released; many are taking their places. Let’s make sure they hear the gospel while in prison. You can be confident those who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will not be a part of the 85 percent who return to prison within two years after their release.

### Our Promise to You

We have adequate volunteer help, for which we thank God. Only one factor limits our reaching many more inmates with TRUTH that sets them free from sinful bondage. It is funds for printing and postage, our two greatest expenses. This is one of the solutions to this emergency situation. This is not an appeal for money, for we want only the funds that God lays upon the hearts of those who say YES to His direction. Who is more important in God’s sight than the men and women in prison? Many of you inmates are reading this publication. Be assured of our love and prayers for the plan and purpose of God to be realized in your lives.

*GIVE US THE ABILITY AND WE SHALL HERALD FORTH GOD’S GLORIOUS SALVATION THAT SETS MEN AND WOMEN FREE FROM SIN, THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT MAY ABIDE WITHIN TO GUIDE WITH ENABLING POWER, AND DIRECT THEM TO THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD’S PLAN AND PURPOSE THROUGH HIS WORD.*

FROM THE DESK OF . . . DR. MICHAEL ECCLESTON

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“ . . . they should believe a lie ” (II Thess. 2:11)

## THE EUPHORIC LIE (continued from May issue)

The Euphoric Lie. You will own nothing. All will be subject to the whim and direction of one man. There will be no privacy, no freedom, no liberty. There will be no personal conveniences. Everything will be monitored. All people who are a drag on the progress of the government will disappear. Children will be systematically and medically singled out to serve the world government ahead of their birth, or be eliminated by abortion. Humanism, a product of evolutionary theories in defiance and rebellion against God, will be the one-world religion, and monitored by the leadership of a totally apostate and heathen religion. There will be no room for the saving gospel of Christ. Only 144,000 bold in Spirit — led and protected Jewish men — will go forth with the precious good news of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, that is, for three and a half years. After that . . . nothing. The last half of this terrible time on the earth will resemble death, while yet alive and suffering. There will be no extra chances to be saved. There will be no repentance. Mankind will take the mark of the beast in his forehead or hand. Anyone saved in the first half of tribulation will not take the mark. And they will be hunted down unmercifully. Thankfully, the tribulation ends before there are none left that are saved upon the earth. Saved Jews will flee and be preserved by God in a prepared place. Lost Jews will receive the full fury of the dragon, Satan, and almost be fully exterminated.

Creative fiction or the result of a wild imagination? Neither. And it is as close as the twinkling of an eye, not even one full breath in and out. The rising of Fascist-Socialist politician and leaders, even in so-called democratic nations, are preparing the secular world to welcome without question the one-world government. Tragically, current “Christian” leaders hold platforms for the sheep, inviting wolves in to prepare them for the coming slaughter.

You’re not as free as you used to be, but you definitely are freer than you’re going to be — regardless of your present circumstances. What born-again Bible believers need to be doing, they need to be doing now. We may not have tomorrow to do anything. Take the gospel next door, over the Internet, in the local churches, to the person across from you or in the next room or cell. The gospel can only be contained or silent as we allow it to be — but always in disobedience to the command of our Lord, “Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” You need to realize that our time is running out. Develop a sense of urgency, not only with the gospel, but in backing up the gospel message with an obedient life, in accordance with God’s Word, for the sake of the lost. Settle for nothing less. The souls of mankind are worth it.

## Do You Know for Sure? (continued from page 2)

In your prayer, name your sins, tell Him of your sorrow of breaking His commandments (disobedience). Ask Christ to save you. Believe Him to do according to His promises. Thank God for doing so. Ask Him to help you to serve Him with all your heart. KEEP YOUR KNEES BENT IN PRAYER AND READ HIS WORD, YOUR BIBLE, DAILY.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** You are welcome to the above outline with the scripture references. When requesting, mention the word “assurance.” As with all literature, there is no cost or obligation. The scriptures in this message are from the KJV. Only the Old English has been changed.

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We have discontinued our radio ministry, but we continue full speed in our other outlets. You can hear our messages by cassette or CDs; let us know of your interest. Five couples volunteer their time and energy in this ministry. We pay no salaries, which means your gifts go 100 percent to reach thousands weekly by literature, cassettes, Bible studies, and on our website. We welcome your participation.

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“Be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord . . . You know your labor is not in vain in the Lord” I Corinthians 15:58



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