

unto the root of the trees: (the heart) every tree therefore which bringeth not good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." History clearly reveals that only a remnant of Israel rightly heeded God's message during that hour. The subsequent painful consequences have been severe.

Here is a GREAT IRONY. Bible texts including Isaiah 40 reveal a divine edict for holiness and righteous living directly preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ. In this hour of history, the heaven-sent proclamation is directed to the Church. The apostle Paul declares God's sovereign purpose for the Church in Ephesians 5:27, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Prophetically, Joel 2:12-13 speaks about the need to turn unto God with all one's heart. The MOST HIGH will require more than an outward garment of traditional religious activity. A mere form of godliness (II Timothy 3:5) will not suffice. Genuine FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT will be essential. Surely, we are now living in an hour of great shaking among God's people.

A SWEET PERFUME

In Exodus 30:34-38, God made known to Israel a formula for a sweet incense or perfume. It was for use in the Tabernacle of the Congregation where the priests ministered in the presence of the Lord. It was to continually ascend upward to God from the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place. Daily maintaining coals of fire and this SWEET INCENSE upon the ALTAR OF INCENSE was the responsibility of the priesthood. The resulting sweet fragrance permeated the entire atmosphere of the Holy Place. This truth was in addition to the sacred anointing oil (Exodus 30:23-25) which sig-

nified consecration and empowerment for ministry. This sweet perfume signified the necessity for the priesthood to maintain a personal, abiding, fruitful relationship with the Lord.

Today, new testament believers are challenged to be a holy priesthood (I Peter 2:9) before the Lord. This obviously involves consecration and a gift enabling anointing for successful service. But in addition, EVERY BELIEVER is faced with the necessity of a personal, genuine, abiding, and fruit-bearing relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. A wake-up call to this critical, often neglected truth certainly warrants the title, A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

Other Publications:

*The Anointing
Turning the Battle to the Gate*



A Startling Discovery

By Robert Hooley

*Wherefore, "by their fruits" ye
shall know them.*

Matthew 7:20

The Fruit of the Spirit in believers' lives is an essential, yet greatly neglected truth in the Church today.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22-23 says the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance. The previous verses (19-21) list some contrasting works (or fruit) of the flesh. These encompass carnal revellings and immorality, religious apostasy, and divisions (hatred and strife). The Bible teaches that godly fruit results from a believer's personal abiding relationship in Jesus Christ. John 15 illustrates this truth by describing Jesus as the vine (or tree) and believers as the branches. Our Lord beautifully describes the successful Christian life. John 15:4-5 says, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Nature teaches us that the branch bears good fruit because of the healthy root system and tree of which it is a part. This analogy answers questions about how and why God expects good fruit in the lives of His people. The contrasting works of the flesh are rooted in an over-reliance on one's own strength and abilities. The Church is described as God's vineyard, and He is the skillful master husbandman. He purges (prunes) his branches so they might bear MUCH FRUIT. When the MOST HIGH initiates such a sovereign cutting back process in our lives, we are not likely to respond with a vibrant hallelujah. Hebrews 12:11 says no chastening of the present seemeth joyous, but rather grievous. It is afterward that peaceable fruit bearing occurs through our obedience and submission to God. In Luke 13:6-9, Jesus spoke a meaningful parable on this subject. We read that a non-bearing fruit tree is dunged (fertilized) about its roots in anticipation of future fruit bearing. In God's wisdom he knows how and when to initiate such a process. Resulting events

A phenomena unique in New Testament church history has occurred during the last one-half of this twentieth century. A rapid escalation of communication and travel opportunities has resulted in an increased universal promulgation of the gospel. This includes television, radio, films, videos, audio tapes, and records. We have seen an EXPLOSION in the realms of gospel music, evangelistic crusades, bible colleges and training seminars, and large mega-churches. This scenario has provided immense publication and media exposure for uniquely skilled and gifted men and women.

In recent years we have experienced the worldwide charismatic movement with its emphasis on spiritual gifts. Successful, powerfully anointed ministries have benefited from a crescendo of public acclaim and notoriety. Gifts, talents, and skills which Almighty God bequeaths upon mankind are mantles of His love and grace. He has especially equipped HIS CHURCH so that the WORD OF GOD might be declared victoriously to this entire planet. We rejoice with thanksgiving in the harvest of precious souls reaped for His kingdom. However, a very painful disappointing reality has emerged FAR TO OFTEN. The administration of godly gifts, visibly and statistically successful are not an absolute guarantee of honesty and moral integrity. God's barometer for evaluating and judging godly character is stated in Matthew 7:16. "Ye shall know them by their fruits..." Gifts testify of God's spotless integrity and goodness, but fruits reveal the true condition of one's heart.

and circumstances may not initially appear clear to our understanding; Praise God, His ways are higher than ours. His perspective encompasses both the present and FUTURE. Our eternal well-being is His ultimate purpose.

THIS PRESENT CRUCIAL HOUR OF HISTORY

The earthly ministry of Jesus Christ at His first coming was directly preceded by a precise heaven-sent message to Israel. It included a plea for individual and national repentance and a return to righteous holy living. This powerfully anointed word was in fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3-5 where the prophet wrote, "...prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together..." John the Baptist, who spearheaded this ministry, challenged Israel in Luke 3:8 "...bring forth fruits worthy of repentance..."

Almighty God obviously wanted the hearts of His people prepared for the imminent shining forth of their Messiah Jesus Christ. Israel had a great religious tradition as an elect, covenant established CHOSEN PEOPLE, but God was saying it was not enough for them to call themselves the Children of Abraham. He expected them to arise from the valleys of carnality and immorality. The mountains and hills of boastful, prideful, humanistic self-reliance needed to come down. The crooked ways of rebellion and dishonesty had to be made straight. The rough places involving many stumbling blocks of disobedience were to be removed. The seriousness of the divine edict of that hour is recorded in Luke 3:9, "And now also the axe is laid