

ALMOST IN TROUBLE

Gabriel L. Mancino



A man I heard on radio while in my West Virginia home town once said, "You can be on the right track, but you'll still get run over if you don't keep moving." This is also true, *spiritually!*

The writer in Psalm 73 got his eyes on the *apparent* prosperity of evil, God-ignoring, God-denying people. His envy became so strong that he was about ready to quit walking with God. He felt that holiness in heart and life was, after all, a useless, no-purpose decision he had made. **He was about to fall** when God helped him to get his eyes open. Then he saw the bigger picture of where these people *really* were, and where they were *really* heading...so quickly. **He had thought they were foolish. Now he saw that he was the foolish one**, for having not kept his spiritual focus and equilibrium. *Almost!*

Psalm 94 pictures yet **another person whose feet were almost slipping**. Life's circumstances, plus Satanic attack can give a person **enough to slip and fall down, and even fall away** from God. This can happen, as well, to those who desire seriously to walk in holiness and truth. Another growing danger for *this* man was that his troubles were **about to make him shut up**, spiritually. The Devil wants to

silence our personal testimony for God. **Don't let it happen**, for *your* sake, and for the sake of *others*. Though we must not "push our religion" on others, yet the world needs the clear testimony of people who are genuinely walking with God. The Devil wants to silence that. Sin, depression or other things can silence one's testimony.

Unbelief is a testimony-killer. Ask John the Baptist's father. He disbelieved God, and was made unable to speak until John was born. Of course, some people can rattle religious words who are hypocrites and false prophets. We see this in the Bible, but the same sad practise exists today. **It was God that kept the Psalmist from slipping and silence**, but the Psalmist had cried out to Him. We must, too. Get a real testimony. Keep it and share it. Don't let it go silent; **not even Almost.**

The writer in Proverbs 5:14 confessed "I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly." Another translation reads "I was on the verge of total ruin." This *evil...this ruin* happened, as it were, **right in church!** Jesus preached in a synagogue, and a demon-possessed man was there! **The Devil goes to church, too.** The problem of the man in Prov. 5 may have been adultery temptation. Even blind people can have an evil imagination. But *any* sin...not just "big sins," will ruin a person, regardless of whether they read the Bible and go to church...or not. Do not slip into *any* sin; **not even Almost!**

We ARE In Trouble! India recently left millions...did you hear...MILLIONS of tons of wheat to rot while MILLIONS of their own starve. From "The Asian Triangle"—India, China and Russia—flows Technology, Industry and Oil (and cheap labour!), but not morality or common sense. This enormous and sinful food waste is obviously only one example...and they are not alone! An "old-time" preacher once said that God would judge America on its garbage cans. He referred to wasted food in homes. After the first Atomic Bomb detonated, one involved scientist said that if morality does not keep up with technology, we are in trouble. Governments, politics, military, industry and so on (long-controlled by International banker puppet masters), have their place, but they do NOT have the answer. The ONLY foundational answer on which to build is to get thoroughly to God, repent for and turn from ALL sin... NOW.

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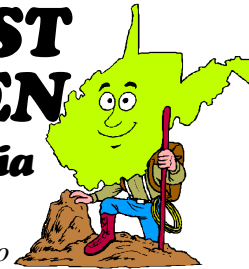
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"Lift up a standard for the people." Isaiah 62:10

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ALMOST HEAVEN

West Virginia



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Where a person is going is often more important than where they came from. Those that have asked me, however, have learned that though my family is originally from Italy, I was born and raised in West Virginia, USA. In 1971, John Denver came out with that world-famous song **Take Me Home, Country Roads**. The song refers to West Virginia as "**Almost Heaven.**"

As much as I love my earthly "roots," I do not wish to go *almost* to heaven, but *all the way!* As far as where I live, a certain Bible chapter does well to describe my "dwelling place." Psalm 91 begins, "*He who*

dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.'"

Psalm 91 describes a place of security unequalled, amid life's difficulties and Satan's "arrows." This safety is needed and provided "24/7." Many will fall in the battle, but *YOU* don't need to be among the casualties. This safety is no accident, but is the result of a Cause! It is like the 23rd Psalm that says, "*Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil BECAUSE You are with me!*" Psalm 23 tells of the speaker's love for and obedience to the "Shepherd." It is like "*For You are with me... and I am with You!*" Commitment! Read it for yourself.

So, in Psalm 91 God is heard saying "*BECAUSE he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him.*" We cannot rightfully expect the benefits of God's safety and guidance if we do not set our whole-hearted love upon Him; not just in words, but in daily life and action.

(continued inside)

WEST VIRGINIA was called "The Little Switzerland of America." For beauty's sake, I like that. Yet, learning of the generations of evil financial control networked from Switzerland, I abhor my home state being compared. Under the guise of "neutral" during two world wars, and ever since then, Switzerland has been a primary hub of economic control, and corruption on a global scale. Yet, what of the sins of West Virginia? Do they compare? ALL sin leads its "carriers" to the same place, so in that sense, the two locations and their people face equal danger. And where does Britain and its inhabitants come in this picture? No mountains, including the two places above, or Snowdon, Cumbria or Ben Nevis, will hide the population from God's wrath (Rev. 6: 15, 16). Let's "bank" ALL in the One Who made the mountains!

Almost Heaven...

(continued from front page)

Some people *assume* they are “ok” with God simply because they admire Jesus, or were christened, or any other number of reasons. This is not enough. We may even know some of the Bible and can quote it. The Devil himself used part of this Psalm 91 and quoted it to Jesus in the Wilderness Temptation! **The Devil can be very orthodox.**

There is no protection for those *not* under the shelter. People who are under the shelter and *stay there*, do so on purpose. You are not there just because *someone you know* is there. Shelter is not by proxy. Psalm 91’s shelter is likened to a mother hen sheltering her little chicks. In *this* case, *everyone* is welcome to find shelter. Jesus wept His greatest tears for Jerusalem, the city that had become “expert” at rejecting Him and the truth of God. Weeping out His prayer, Jesus lamented “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*” (Matt. 23: 37). This is the cry of Heaven to London, to Britain, the USA, to the world. Come to the Shelter!

Apparently, **John Denver** did not originate the song about West Virginia, but “he flipped” when he heard it, and wanted it badly. The original writers had planned to offer the song to **Johnny Cash**, but Denver got it and they stayed up all that night reworking the lyrics. I was momentarily offended...certainly *shocked* a bit...to discover that they had even considered **Massachusetts** instead of West Virginia! You see, they needed a state whose name was in four syllables, that’s all! I was horrified. I thought: “These guys didn’t really care

about West Virginia! They just needed four syllables!” The same may be true of a lot of people’s sporadic desire of God and salvation. They just want a four-syllable “religion;” something superficial that fits a momentary need or emotion; a passing whim; a convenience.

So, **Johnny Cash** nearly got the song! I remember **his song, Ring of Fire, about love**. Well, whether we go to Heaven...or *Almost*, depends on our love. Either way involves love. We either love God or we love this present world, with all of its allurements and attractions, as *temporary* and often *empty* as they are. Jesus said, “*No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other*” (Matt. 6:24). St. James says that “*friendship with the world is hostility against God. Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God*” (4:4).

Earlier in his epistle, James had said that “*a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways*” (1:8). Other translations have “*a two-souled man*” or “*a man of two minds*” is “*irresolute at every turn*” or “*undecided in every step*” or “*uncertain or not dependable in all his ways*,” and so on. People need to make up their minds and settle it in their hearts if they really want to walk with God and **plan to make it to heaven...not Almost.**

Cash sang of *fire* that encircles and burns those who descend into it. Either the *world’s fire* or *God’s Fire* will engulf you. It’s up to *you*. The Fire of God will “burn up” sin in your life as you plunge yourself into its purifying flames, but it will make you free and able to ascend into heaven itself where Christ has gone before us! (Heb. 9:24; 6:20). *God’s Fire* links to *Pentecost* (Acts 1 and 2). The *world’s fire* leads to a *worse* one. **Almost Heaven? No! Let’s go all the way!**

ALMOST PERSUADED

Gabriel L. Mancino



God’s strategy for reaching people is amazing. I believe we would be stunned speechless to see how many times and in how many ways God has tried to get peoples’ attention. **Sometimes** God has done so in a community-wide manner, or even on a national scale. He certainly does it “One on one,” so to speak. **Sometimes** God gets a person’s attention in a subtle, gentle way. **Sometimes** it can be by a jolting experience. The critical matter is what a person does *after* God “taps them on the shoulder.”

“**The tendency of fire is to go out,**” said the Salvation Army Founder “General,” William Booth. He was speaking of the need to “add fuel to the fire.” God commanded Moses and gave specific details on the construction of the big Tent of Worship they had in the Wilderness those forty years. Part of the worship involved a fire near the front that was never to go out. It was to be kept burning by Moses’ brother, Aaron, who was the first “High Priest.” Yet, Aaron didn’t *start* that fire. God did.

Likewise, God will get a person’s attention, but the person must build on that contact, rather than let the fire go out. A person will “**jealously**” guard something or someone they love, not desiring the bonding “fire” to go out. Jesus said that *nothing* is worth more to you than your soul, and its eternal destiny.

Felix the “scaredy-Cat” was Rome’s Emperor-appointed “procurator” in mid first century Judea, southern Israel. One job he had was to raise (“procure”) funds for Rome. St. Paul, the prisoner, was

brought before this man, noted for his wickedness. “**Felix**” means “**Happy**.” Countless ways of living *without* or *against* God make people *seem* or *feel* “happy.” When Paul preached holiness in Felix’s presence, the Bible says Felix “*trembled*”... “*was terrified*”... “*was alarmed*”... “*was filled with fear*.” Not so “happy”

when truth came! His instant strategy was to postpone, saying he would call Paul again when he had **convenient time**. He **also wanted bribe money** to set Paul free. Finally, he left Paul a prisoner just to please the people. These same “chess moves” are used by many today. How about **YOU**?

Felix was replaced by Festus, who got Paul an audience with King Agrippa, along with **the king’s very wicked wife**, Bernice. Paul gave his defence by way of personal testimony, since his alleged “crime” had to do with his “religion.” His defence makes good reading (Acts 26). Paul emphasized that he was not disobedient to God’s direct direction to him for his life. *That* “direction from God” fit perfectly with the Scriptures, so Paul was not merely being subjective, and going on “whims and fancies.”

Festus blurted out that **Paul’s intense studying had made Paul crazy**. Paul replied to Festus courteously, but seriously. Then, Paul asked King Agrippa, with direct personal appeal, *if* the king believed the prophets. Paul did not wait for an answer, but supplied it *himself*: “*I know you believe!*” Agrippa then said, “**You Almost persuade me to be a Christian!**” Paul replied that he desired that the king, *and the whole audience*, would be not *Almost*, but *Completely* like *him*, then added... “*except for my prison chains!*” **Almost Persuaded!** The king “*believed*,” but avoided commitment. Five centimetres or five *miles* from the door of Noah’s Ark, when the door is shut, if you’re *out*, you’re out. “**Almost Persuaded**” is not enough.

We meet at Christ Church on the corner of Brent Street and Heriot Road in Hendon (NW4) at 5:45 pm Sundays. Nearest Tube: Hendon Central.