

HOW I TURNED BACK TO ALMIGHTY GOD

THE CHURCH OF ALMIGHTY GOD

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Table of Contents

1. The Fog Clears and I Find the Path to the Kingdom of Heaven
2. The Road to Purification
3. Uncovering the Mystery of Judgment
4. The Awakening of a Deceived Spirit
5. A Wandering Heart Comes Home
6. Listen! Who Is This Who Speaks?
7. How I Nearly Became a Foolish Virgin
8. Almighty God Led Me Onto the Path of Obtaining Cleansing
9. A Different Kind of Love
10. The Kingdom of Heaven Is Actually Upon the Earth
11. Notifications From YouTube Reunited Me With the Lord
12. The Riddle of the Trinity Revealed
13. Where Does This Voice Come From?
14. The Lord Has Appeared in the East
15. Through Understanding the Mystery of the Names of God, I Keep Pace With the Footsteps of the Lamb
16. God's Word Is My Strength
17. Breaking Through Satan's Tight Encirclement
18. The Word of God Guides Me Through the Snares
19. A "Messenger Pigeon" Brings Critical News
20. I See Through the CCP Government's Lies and God's Love Draws Me Back to Him
21. Breaking Free From the Rumor Trap
22. Fleeing From the "Tiger's Den"
23. A Battle
24. God's Words Guided Me Through Satan's Temptations
25. What I Gained Through Personally Experiencing Satan's Temptations
26. Who Is the Obstacle on the Road to the Heavenly Kingdom?
27. After Comprehending the Truth of Discerning Between the True Christ and False Christs, I No Longer Blindly Put Up My Guard
28. Opening the Door to My Heart and Welcoming the Lord's Return

29. Reunited With the Lord
30. Breaking Through the Fog to See the Light
31. A Warm Light After a Dark Tunnel
32. The Sky Was Especially Clear and Sunny That Day
33. A Small Blade of Grass That Grew Among the Brambles
34. A Breakthrough
35. Fortune and Misfortune
36. A Christian Spiritual Awakening
37. I Have Found True Happiness
38. A Happy Marriage Starts With Accepting God's Salvation
39. The Return of a Prodigal Son
40. God Is by My Side
41. I Have Found a True Home
42. A Different Kind of Salvation
43. I Have Welcomed the Lord's Return
44. Coming Home
45. The May 28 Zhaoyuan Case Gives Rise to a Family Crisis
46. The Storm of Divorce Quelled
47. Lost and Found Again
48. I Have Come Home
49. Back From the Brink
50. Returning to Life From the Brink of Death

1. The Fog Clears and I Find the Path to the Kingdom of Heaven

By Chen Ai, China

I followed my parents in their belief in the Lord ever since I was small, and now old age is staring me in the face. Although I've believed in the Lord all my life, the problem of how to rid myself of sin and get into the kingdom of heaven had been an unsolvable riddle that caused me constant consternation, leaving me feeling lost and pained. I wished so much to be able to figure out during my lifetime how to rid myself of sin and get into the kingdom of heaven so that when my time came I would be able to face death with the knowledge that my life was complete, and I could at last meet the Lord with peace in my heart.

In an attempt to resolve this dilemma, I avidly consulted the Bible, going from the Old Testament to the New and from the New Testament back to the Old, reading the Bible over and over. But in the end, I could find no right answer. Out of options, all I could do was throw my effort into behaving as well as I could according to the Lord's teachings, for the Lord said: **"[T]he kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force"** (Matthew 11:12). But I discovered that in real life, no matter how hard I tried, I still couldn't live up to what the Lord required of me. Just as the Lord said: **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like to it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself"** (Matthew 22:37–39). The Lord requires that we love God with all our hearts and minds, and that brothers and sisters love each other. But no matter what I did, I just couldn't achieve this kind of love, because my love for my family was greater than my love for the Lord, and I just wasn't capable of truly loving my brothers and sisters in the church as I loved myself. On the contrary, I was often petty and calculating with others when my own interests were involved, so much so that resentment would be aroused within me. How could someone like me ever be saved and get into the kingdom of heaven? The Lord Jesus also said many things about getting into the kingdom of heaven, such as: **"Truly I say to you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"** (Matthew 18:3). **"For I say to you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven"** (Matthew 5:20). I was unable to put any of these

requirements of the Lord into practice. I would often tell lies, and would blame the Lord whenever I encountered something that wasn't to my liking. My thoughts contained deceit and dishonesty, and I was constantly languishing in sin, sinning and repenting, repenting and sinning, over and over again. The Lord is holy, and in the Bible it states: "[H]oliness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). How could someone as utterly filthy as me ever be fit to enter the kingdom of heaven? This was very vexing for me. But whenever I read about the way of justification by faith as espoused by Paul in Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians—that to have faith and be baptized means that one is certainly saved, that if we believe in the Lord in our hearts and acknowledge Him with our mouths, then we are justified by faith, forever saved, and that when the Lord comes again He will surely raise us up into the kingdom of heaven—I would feel overwhelmed with joy. I would feel that I need not worry about getting into the kingdom of heaven. But then I would remember what the Lord said about people only being able to get into the kingdom of heaven through their own efforts, and I would feel uneasy. To be justified by faith and then to get into the kingdom of heaven—could it really be that simple? Especially when I saw old pious believers nearing the end of their lives and appearing restless and worried, so much so that they would even weep copiously and not one of them seemed happy to go, I couldn't help but wonder: If they say that they can get into the kingdom of heaven through justification by faith alone, why then do they look so terrified on their deathbeds? It seemed as though they themselves had no idea whether they'd been saved or not, nor where they would be going after death. I pondered the Lord Jesus' words over and over, and I contemplated Paul's words, too, and discovered that the words of Jesus and the words of Paul differed greatly on the matter of who could get into the kingdom of heaven. According to Paul, a person is justified by faith simply by believing in the Lord—if that were the case, then everyone would be saved. So then why did the Lord Jesus say, **"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away"** (Matthew 13:47–48)? Why, when the Lord returns in the last days, does He need to separate the wheat from the tares, the sheep from the goats, and the good servants from the evil servants? From these words spoken by the Lord Jesus, it is clear that not everyone who believes in Him can get into the kingdom of heaven. So I wondered: Am I saved? And will I be able to get into the kingdom of heaven when I die? These questions still lingered in

my mind like riddles, and I was at a loss to answer them.

In an effort to resolve this problem, I consulted works written by well-known spiritual personages throughout the ages, but most of what I read were interpretations of justification by faith as it appears in Romans, Galatians and Ephesians, and not one of those books could dispel my confusion. I then paid visits to all the well-known elders in the Lord and attended gatherings of many different denominations, but found that they all said pretty much the same things, and no one could clearly explain to me the mystery of how to get into the kingdom of heaven. Later, I found a new up-and-coming foreign denomination, and I thought to myself that this kind of church would perhaps be able to shed some new light. And so, in high spirits, I went to attend one of their gatherings. At the beginning of their sermon I found it to be somewhat illuminating, but by the end, I found that they too were preaching the way of justification by faith, and I felt crushed with disappointment. After the gathering, I sought out the head pastor, and asked, "Pastor, I'm afraid I didn't understand when you said, 'Once saved, always saved.' Can you share more fellowship with me on this?" The pastor said, "This is a very easy thing to understand. It says in Romans, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns?' (Romans 8:33–34). The Lord Jesus Christ has already absolved us of all our sins by being crucified upon the cross. That is to say, all of our sins, whether they be the sins we've committed in the past, the sins we commit today, or the sins we have yet to commit in the future, are all forgiven. We are forever justified by faith in Christ, and if the Lord doesn't condemn us for our sins, who would possibly accuse us? Therefore, we must not lose faith in getting into the kingdom of heaven." The pastor's reply confused me even more, so I followed up by asking, "How do you explain what is written in Hebrews, 'For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins' (Hebrews 10:26)?" The pastor's face reddened and he said no more, and my question was left unanswered. Not only had this gathering failed to resolve my confusion, but instead, it had increased my vexation. I thought to myself: "I've believed in the Lord for decades, but if I'm not even clear on whether or not my soul will go to the Lord when I die, doesn't that mean that I've had a muddled sort of faith all my life?" I then embarked on the path of searching absolutely everywhere for the answer to my problem.

In March 2000, I went to study at a seminary run by foreigners, confident that the sermons preached by foreigners would be superior and that they would surely resolve my

confusion. To my surprise, however, after studying there for two months, during which time I was bursting with faith, I discovered that the pastors all preached the same old things, and there was no new light in their sermons at all. While there, I didn't hear about a single life-giving sermon, nor did I read even one spiritual essay. Not only had my confusion not been dispelled, but instead my time there only left me feeling even more flustered. I couldn't help but feel confused, and I thought: "I've been here for more than two months, but what have I gained? If I can't gain provision here, then what's the point in continuing with these studies?"

One evening after dinner, I asked a pastor, "Pastor, as students of theology, is this all we study? Can we not talk about the way of life?" The pastor replied very solemnly, "If we don't discuss these things in our theological studies, then what should we talk about? Just relax and keep studying! We are the largest religious organization in the world and we are internationally recognized. We'll train you here for three years and then you'll be internationally certified as a pastor. When that time comes, you can take that certificate anywhere in the world to preach the gospel and establish churches." The pastor's response was really disappointing for me. I didn't want to be a pastor, I just wanted to know how to get into the kingdom of heaven. And so I asked him, "Pastor, seeing as having a pastor's certificate unlocks so many doors, will I be able to use it to get into the kingdom of heaven?" Upon hearing this, the pastor fell silent. I went on. "Pastor, I heard that you've believed in the Lord since you were a boy. It's now been many decades, so I wonder, have you been saved?" He replied, "Yes, I have." I asked, "So will you be able to get into the kingdom of heaven?" Self-assuredly, he said, "Of course I will!" I then asked, "May I ask then, what's your basis for saying that you'll be able to get into the kingdom of heaven? Are you a more righteous man than the scribes and Pharisees were? Do you love your neighbors as you love yourself? Are you holy? Think about it: We still can't help but sin all the time and go against the Lord's teachings, and we live every day in the state of sinning by day and confessing by night. God is holy, so do you really think we'll be able to get into the kingdom of heaven when we are so full of sin?" The pastor was stumped and his face turned beet red, and he didn't utter another word for quite a while. I found his reaction very disappointing, and I felt that if I continued my studies there I would not be able to understand the mystery of how to gain life and enter into the kingdom of heaven. And so, I left my studies at the seminary behind and went back to my hometown.

On my trip home, I felt the lowest I had ever been; I felt as though my last hope had

been crushed. I thought to myself: “Even at a seminary run by foreign pastors my seeking still didn’t yield the path to rid myself of sin and get into the kingdom of heaven. Where else can I go to seek this path?” I felt like I’d reached the end of the road. At that very moment, the image of my old father and an old pastor weeping as they approached death flashed before my eyes again. I thought about how they had spent their whole lives preaching the way of justification by faith, that people would get into the kingdom of heaven after death, but ultimately they passed away filled with regrets. I had believed in the Lord all my life and had been telling people every day that they would get into the kingdom of heaven when they died, and yet I had never had real clarity on how to actually get into the kingdom of heaven—would I leave this life filled with regret just as my father and the pastor had? In the midst of my grief, these words from the Lord suddenly came to mind: **“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you”** (Matthew 7:7). “That’s right,” I thought. “The Lord is faithful, and as long as I seek with a true heart then the Lord will surely guide me. I cannot give up. As long as there is a single breath left in my body, I will keep searching for the path to the kingdom of heaven!” I then came before the Lord to pray: “Dear Lord, I’ve searched everywhere for the way to rid myself of sin and enter into the kingdom of heaven, but no one has been able to solve my problem. Dear Lord, what should I do? As a preacher, I tell brothers and sisters every day that they should be diligent seekers and be patient till the end, and that You will come to take us into the kingdom of heaven after we die. But at this point, I really have no idea how to rid myself of sin and get into the kingdom of heaven. Am I not the blind leading the blind, leading my brothers and sisters into a pit? Dear Lord, where should I go to seek the path into the kingdom of heaven? Please guide me!”

After I got back to my hometown, I heard that many good sheep and head sheep in our church had been stolen away by Eastern Lightning. Many people were saying that the way of Eastern Lightning provided new understanding and new light, and even seasoned pastors had admiration for their sermons. Whenever I heard these things, I would think: “It seems as though the sermons given by Eastern Lightning are lofty indeed. It’s a shame I haven’t come across anyone from Eastern Lightning. It would be so great if I could meet them one day! If that day comes, I’ll certainly listen and seek in earnest to see why exactly their sermons are so good, and whether or not they can dispel this confusion I’ve carried with me for years.”

One day, a church leader said to me, "Such-and-such church has had many of its good sheep stolen away by Eastern Lightning. All denominations are now locking down their churches, and we have to urge our brothers and sisters to absolutely not have anything to do with anyone from Eastern Lightning, and particularly to not listen to their sermons. If all our faithful start believing in Eastern Lightning, who will be left for us to preach to?" I was disgusted to hear the church leader say this, and I thought to myself: "Our church is open to everyone, so why do we have to lock it down? Why would you not welcome a stranger from a far-away place? It says in the Bible: 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares' (Hebrews 13:2). Abraham took in strangers and was thus blessed by God, and he had a son at the age of one hundred; Lot took in two angels and so was saved from the destruction of Sodom; Rahab the prostitute admitted spies from Israel and her whole family was saved; and a poor widow received Elijah the prophet and thus they staved off starvation for three-and-a-half years. Out of so many people, not one was harmed because they took in strangers from a far-away place but, on the contrary, they were all blessed by God. It is therefore clear that taking in strangers accords with the Lord's will. So why then would you go against the Lord's will, wantonly locking the church down and not allowing any strangers in?" As I thought this, I shook my head, and said to her, "Doing this is at odds with the Lord's will. Our church belongs to God and it is open to all. As long as their fellowship is about faith in the Lord, we should welcome anyone, no matter who they are, and we should seek with open minds and explore ideas together. Only by doing this will we be in accord with the Lord's teachings."

One day in July 2000, I met two sisters who were preaching Eastern Lightning while at Brother Wang's house. After briefly greeting each other, I asked them, "I've always been perplexed about whether or not I can be saved and get into the kingdom of heaven. The whole religious world now adheres to the words of Paul in the belief that we will be saved just by believing and being baptized, and that by believing in the Lord in your heart and acknowledging the Lord with your mouth, you're justified by faith, forever saved, and will surely be raised up into the kingdom of heaven when the Lord returns. But personally, I don't think getting into the kingdom of heaven can be that simple. As it says in the Bible: '[H]oliness, without which no man shall see the Lord' (Hebrews 12:14). Whether it's me or the brothers and sisters around me spending all day every day languishing in sin, I don't think that people like us who live every day in sin can get into the kingdom of heaven. I'd

just like to know exactly how to get into the kingdom of heaven. Can you share fellowship with me on this?”

Sister Zhou smiled and said, “Brother, this question you ask is crucial. How to get into the kingdom of heaven is a major concern for every believer. Gaining clarity on this issue means first knowing that believers in the Lord should always conduct themselves in accordance with the Lord Jesus’ words, and not according to what human beings have said. The Lord Jesus has told us clearly: **‘Not every one that said 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). The Lord never said that we can get into the kingdom of heaven just by relying on grace to be saved, or by being justified by faith. To be justified by faith, to be forever saved because of faith, and then to be raised up into the kingdom of heaven—those were the words of Paul. Paul was just an apostle, one of corrupt mankind, and he needed the Lord Jesus’ salvation as well. How could he have possibly determined whether other people could get into the kingdom of heaven or not? Only the Lord Jesus is the Lord of the kingdom of heaven, the King of the kingdom of heaven; only the words of the Lord are the truth, and only they possess authority. Therefore, when it comes to how we can get into the kingdom of heaven, we should listen only to the Lord’s words—this is beyond question!

“Then there are the questions ‘What are justification by faith and being saved because of faith all about?’ and ‘Can you get into the kingdom of heaven once you’ve been saved?’ These are explained very clearly in Almighty God’s words, so let’s now read a couple of passages of God’s words. Almighty God says: **‘You only know that Jesus shall descend during the last days, but how exactly will He descend? A sinner such as you, who has just been redeemed, and has not been changed, or been perfected by God, can you be after God’s heart? For you, you who are still of your old self, it is true that you were saved by Jesus, and that you are not counted as a sinner because of the salvation of God, but this does not prove that you are not sinful, and are not impure. How can you be saintly if you have not been changed? Within, you are beset by impurity, selfish and mean, yet you still wish to descend with Jesus—you should be so lucky! You have missed a step in your belief in God: You have merely been redeemed, but have not been changed. For you to be after God’s heart, God must personally do the work of changing and cleansing you; if you are only redeemed, you will be incapable of attaining sanctity. In this way you will be unqualified to share in the good blessings**

of God, for you have missed out a step in God's work of managing man, which is the key step of changing and perfecting. And so you, a sinner who has just been redeemed, are incapable of directly inheriting God's inheritance' ("Concerning Appellations and Identity" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). 'Though Jesus did much work among man, He only completed the redemption of all mankind and became man's sin offering; He did not rid man of his corrupt disposition. Fully saving man from the influence of Satan not only required Jesus to become the sin offering and bear the sins of man, but it also required God to do even greater work to rid man completely of his satanically corrupted disposition. And so, now that man has been forgiven of his sins, God has returned to the flesh to lead man into the new age, and begun the work of chastisement and judgment. This work has brought man into a higher realm. All those who submit under His dominion shall enjoy higher truth and receive greater blessings. They shall truly live in the light, and they shall gain the truth, the way, and the life' (Preface to The Word Appears in the Flesh)."

Sister Wang continued her fellowship, saying, "In the Age of Grace, the Lord Jesus performed the work of the redemption of mankind, becoming a sin offering for humanity by means of the crucifixion, and redeeming us from the clutches of Satan. As long as we accept the Lord's salvation and confess and repent our sins to the Lord, then our sins are forgiven, and we are then fit to enjoy the grace and blessings of the Lord. What I mean by 'our sins are forgiven' is that we are no longer condemned or sentenced to death under the law for violating the law, and this is what justification by faith and being saved because of faith really mean. But this doesn't mean that we are then without sin or without filth, nor does it mean that we'll be able to get into the kingdom of heaven. This is because, although our sins may be forgiven, our sinful nature remains deeply rooted within us, and when we encounter issues we still often tell lies and deceive others to protect our own positions and interests. When we enjoy the Lord's grace, we give thanks and praise to Him, and we expend ourselves energetically for the Lord. But the moment a catastrophe occurs, or something bad happens to our family, we misunderstand the Lord and blame Him, to the point that we may even deny and betray the Lord. And so how can people like us, who have been redeemed but who often sin and resist God, ever be qualified to enter into the kingdom of heaven? God is righteous and holy, and He would never allow filthy and corrupt people to enter His kingdom. In order to save us once and for all from the influence of Satan, He works

according to His management plan and our needs as corrupt mankind, performing His work of judging and purifying man in the last days. God incarnate has expressed millions of words in order to judge our corruption, our filth, our unrighteousness and resistance, and to show us the path to cast off our corrupt dispositions. When we, through experiencing the judgment and chastisement of God's words, cast off our satanic corrupt dispositions, are able to put God's words into practice, and have become people who truly obey and worship God, only then will we become fit to enter into God's kingdom. In fact, the Lord Jesus prophesied long ago that He would return in the last days to perform the work of judgment. As He said: **'And if any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejects Me, and receives not My words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day'** (John 12:47–48). **'And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment'** (John 16:8). It is therefore clear that only by accepting God's work of judgment in the last days, casting off our corrupt dispositions and achieving purification can we enter into God's kingdom."

After listening to the sisters' fellowships, everything suddenly became clear and light instantly filled my heart. "Ah, so that's how to get into the kingdom of heaven!" I thought. "Only now do I finally understand that the Lord Jesus performed the work of redeeming mankind, not the work of ridding us of sin. The Lord did indeed absolve us of our sins, but our sinful nature remains deeply rooted within us, and we still frequently and involuntarily sin and resist the Lord. It's no wonder I've never been able to free myself from the bonds and fetters of sin—turns out it's because I haven't accepted Almighty God's work of judgment in the last days!" And so, I said to the two sisters, "Thank the Lord! By listening to Almighty God's words and your fellowships, at last I know that the belief we've held—that everyone who believes in the Lord in their heart and acknowledges the Lord verbally can be raised up into the kingdom of heaven—is just our notion and imagining! I now understand that the work the Lord Jesus performed was the work of redemption, and that the returned Lord will perform the work of judgment. That is, He will thoroughly cleanse and transform our corrupt dispositions, and only then will we be able to get into the kingdom of heaven. It's no wonder I've read so many spiritual books but never found the solution to the problem of man's sinfulness! Sisters, how then does God perform the work of judgment and chastisement in the last days? Can you share more fellowship with me?"

Sister Wang then said, “The answer to this question is clearly stated in God’s words, so let’s read a passage of them. Almighty God says: **‘In the last days, Christ uses a variety of truths to teach man, to expose the essence of man, and to dissect the words and deeds of man. These words comprise various truths, such as man’s duty, how man should obey God, how man should be loyal to God, how man ought to live out normal humanity, as well as the wisdom and the disposition of God, and so on. These words are all directed at the essence of man and his corrupt disposition. In particular, the words that expose how man spurns God are spoken in regard to how man is an embodiment of Satan, and an enemy force against God. In undertaking His work of judgment, God does not simply make clear the nature of man with a few words; He exposes, deals with, and prunes over the long term. These methods of exposure, dealing, and pruning cannot be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced into submission to God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God. What the work of judgment brings about is man’s understanding of the true face of God and the truth about his own rebelliousness. The work of judgment allows man to gain much understanding of the will of God, of the purpose of God’s work, and of the mysteries that are incomprehensible to him. It also allows man to recognize and know his corrupt substance and the roots of his corruption, as well as to discover the ugliness of man. These effects are all brought about by the work of judgment, for the substance of this work is actually the work of opening up the truth, the way, and the life of God to all those who have faith in Him. This work is the work of judgment done by God’** (“Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*).

“God’s words tell us clearly that, in the last days, God expresses all the truths we need to attain full salvation, judging and exposing our God-resisting satanic nature and corrupt essence. All these words are the truth, they carry God’s own authority and might, and they reveal to us what God has and is as well as His righteous disposition that brooks no offense. Through the judgment and chastisement of God’s words, and by the revelation of facts, we come to have some understanding of our satanic nature and the truth of our corruption by Satan; we see that we have been so deeply corrupted by Satan, that we are by nature arrogant, conceited, crooked, deceitful, selfish, egotistical, greedy, wicked, eager to prevail

over others, and that all we reveal down to our very blood and bones are our satanic dispositions. Dominated by these corrupt dispositions, we constantly resist and rebel against God in spite of ourselves. For example, when we work and deliver sermons in our churches, we ramble on with high-sounding speeches, and we show ourselves off and exalt ourselves so that others look up to us and hold us in high regard; we often tell lies and deceive others to protect our own interests, even going so far as to engage in intrigues and vie with one another; when we encounter people, events, things or situations that are at odds with our own notions, we always make unreasonable demands of God or harbor extravagant desires, and we are unable to submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements. Through experiencing the judgment and chastisement of God's words, we gradually come to understand some truths, we gain some true understanding of our satanic nature and feel genuine hatred for it, and we also come to have some true understanding of God's righteous disposition. We know what kind of people God loves and what kind of people He hates as well as what kind of pursuit accords with His will. We learn some discernment between positive and negative things. Once we understand these things, we become willing to forsake our flesh from the very bottom of our hearts and practice in accordance with God's words. Slowly, over time, the desire to revere and love God arises within us, we are freed from some of the bonds and fetters of our satanic corrupt dispositions, and we make fewer unreasonable demands of God. We become able to take our place as created beings and perform our duty, we submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements, and we begin to live out a semblance of a true human being. As we experience God's work, we come to have a deep appreciation for the fact that the only path for us to get into the kingdom of heaven is to accept Almighty God's work of judgment and chastisement in the last days, pursue the truth, achieve knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves, and have our corrupt dispositions changed."

Hearing these words from Almighty God and the sister's fellowship brought me even greater internal clarity. The truths expressed by Almighty God are very practical and are indeed what are needed by us corrupt human beings. Only by accepting and experiencing Almighty God's work of judgment in the last days can we cast off the bonds and fetters of our corrupt dispositions once and for all! I couldn't help but heave a sigh, and I said, "I've believed in the Lord for so many years and yet, I always sin by day and then confess those sins by night, living a life of just languishing in sin. If God hadn't expressed all the truths to

purify mankind, if He hadn't shown us the path to rid ourselves of our corrupt dispositions, I would certainly have been bound up so tightly by sin that I never would have found the path to freedom. It's no wonder the Lord said, **'I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come'** (John 16:12–13). The Lord Jesus told us long ago that He had more words to express in the last days and that He would lead us to enter into all truths. The words of Almighty God carry authority and might, they have revealed all the truths and mysteries that I'd wanted to understand but never could, and they've utterly convinced me. At last, I've found the path to get into the kingdom of heaven!" The two sisters nodded happily.

I then said excitedly, "This is the voice of the Lord. Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned! Something I've wished for so long has finally happened, and I'm so lucky, so blessed! Back when the Lord Jesus was born, Simeon felt incredible joy when he saw the baby Jesus who was just eight days old. To be able to welcome the Lord's return and hear God's own utterances in my lifetime, I'm so much more fortunate even than Simeon was, and I'm so grateful to the Lord!" As I spoke, I was overcome by emotion, and I shed tears of excitement. I knelt down on the floor to pray to God but was crying so much I couldn't speak; the sisters were moved to tears as well.

The vexation that had plagued me for so many years finally found its resolution in the words of Almighty God. I thought about how I had sought everywhere but could never find the path of purification that would lead to the kingdom of heaven, but now I've found it at last. I know that this is God's grace and salvation for me! Afterward, through attending gatherings and fellowshiping with brothers and sisters on Almighty God's words, I came to understand more and more truths, and I gained some understanding of God's will to save us. I now wish to accept more of the judgment and chastisement of God's words, experience His work, gradually rid myself of my corrupt dispositions and be purified. Thanks be to God!

2. The Road to Purification

By Christopher, Philippines

My name is Christopher, and I'm a pastor of a house church in the Philippines. In 1987, I was baptized and turned to the Lord Jesus and then by the Lord's grace, in 1996 I became a pastor in a local church. At that time, I was not only working and preaching in many places around the Philippines, but I was also preaching in places such as Hong Kong and Malaysia. Through the work and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I felt that I had inexhaustible energy in my work for the Lord and endless inspiration for my sermons. I would often offer support to brothers and sisters who were feeling negative and weak. Sometimes when their nonbeliever family members were unfriendly toward me, I was still able to be tolerant and patient; I didn't lose faith in the Lord and believed that the Lord could change them. So, I felt like I had changed a great deal since becoming a believer. However, starting in 2011, I was no longer able to feel the work of the Holy Spirit as strongly as before. I gradually lost new enlightenment for my sermons and lacked the strength to break free from living in sin. I could not help losing my temper with my wife and daughter when I saw them doing things I didn't like and scolded them out of anger. I knew that this was not in keeping with the will of the Lord, but often I could not help myself. This was particularly distressing for me. In order to free myself from a life of sinning and then confessing, I put more effort into reading the Bible, fasting and praying, and looked everywhere for spiritual pastors so we could seek and explore this together. But all of my efforts came to naught; there was no change to my life of sin and the darkness within my soul.

Then one evening in spring 2016, my wife asked me, "Christopher, I've noticed you've been really troubled recently. What's on your mind?" I told her what was troubling me, "I've been wondering these last few years why I can't break free from living in sin despite being a pastor and having believed in the Lord for many years. I'm no longer able to feel the Lord—it's as if He has forsaken me. Even though I go all over the place to preach, as soon as I have a moment to myself, especially in the dead of night, I always feel a kind of emptiness and anxiety, and this feeling is just growing. I think about how I've believed in the Lord all these years, I've read the Bible so much, I've listened to so many of the Lord's sermons, and I've often resolved to bear the cross and conquer myself, but I'm always bound by sin. I'm capable of telling lies to protect my own interests and face, and I fail to live up to 'And

in their mouth was found no guile' (Revelation 14:5). When facing hardships and refinement, although I know these happen with the Lord's consent, I still cannot stop myself from complaining about the Lord and misunderstanding Him. I utterly fail at willing self-renunciation. I'm afraid that, living in sin this way, when the Lord comes, I won't be able to enter the kingdom of heaven!"

Hearing this, my wife said, "Christopher, how can you think like this? You must have faith; you are a pastor! Although we live in sin and have not broken free from the binds of sin, the Bible says, 'That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved' (Romans 10:9). 'For whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved' (Romans 10:13). As long as we keep reading the Bible, attending gatherings, praying to the Lord, and we bear the cross, unerringly following Him until the second coming of the Lord, we'll be able to enter the kingdom of heaven and receive the Lord's blessing."

I then said to my wife, "I thought so before, but in 1 Peter 1:16 it says: 'Because it is written, **Be you holy; for I am holy.**' I have believed in the Lord for thirty years, yet I cannot keep to the Lord's way and, living in sin, I am still capable of often resisting the Lord. I don't remotely meet the Lord's requirements. Ugh! How many times have I resolved to obey the teachings of the Lord, yet I haven't been able to put His words into practice. How could I be worthy of entering the kingdom of heaven this way? The Lord Jesus said: '**Not every one that said 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). According to the Lord's words, entering the kingdom of heaven is not as simple as we think. The Lord is holy, so how can people who cannot practice His word and who frequently oppose Him be raptured into the kingdom of heaven? Only those who have transformed and who do God's will can enter the kingdom of heaven!"

My wife thought for a moment and said, "What you're saying makes sense. The Lord is holy and we are still sinful. We are not worthy of entering God's kingdom. It's just that ... I suddenly remembered ... didn't Pastor Liu invite a Korean Pastor Kim to the church? How about we do some seeking on this issue?" I said: "Yeah, that's a good idea. The Lord Jesus said: '**Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you**' (Matthew 7:7). As long as we seek, I believe that the Lord will lead us. As a pastor, I have to consider the lives of our brothers and sisters. If I'm cavalier in my faith, I'll

be doing them as well as myself a disservice. Let's wait until Pastor Kim comes and then seek from him on this issue."

Since I was planning to seek out Pastor Kim, I wanted to know a little about his background. I went online to search for the Korean church he was with. On the pages that popped up, I saw the website <https://www.holyspiritspeaks.org>. Opening it, these words drew me in: **"Man received much grace, such as the peace and happiness of the flesh, the faith of one member bringing blessing on an entire family, the healing of sickness, and so on. The rest were the good deeds of man and his godly appearance; if man could live on the basis of these, he was considered an acceptable believer. Only believers of this kind could enter heaven after death, which means that they were saved. But, in their lifetime, these people did not understand at all the way of life. All they did was to commit sins and then confess their sins in a constant cycle without making any path toward changing their disposition: Such was the condition of man in the Age of Grace. Has man received complete salvation? No!"** ("The Mystery of the Incarnation (4)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). These were so well put that I absolutely had to keep reading: **"Therefore, after that stage of work was finished, there still remained the work of judgment and chastisement. This stage is to make man pure by means of the word and thereby give him a path to follow. This stage would not be fruitful or meaningful if it continued with the casting out of demons, for it would fail to extirpate man's sinful nature, and man would come to a standstill at the forgiveness of his sins. Through the sin offering, man has been forgiven his sins, for the work of the crucifixion has already come to an end and God has prevailed over Satan. But the corrupt disposition of man still remaining within him, man can still sin and resist God, and God has not gained mankind. That is why in this stage of work God uses the word to expose the corrupt disposition of man, causing him to practice in accordance with the right path. This stage is more meaningful than the previous one, as well as more fruitful, for now it is the word that directly supplies man's life and enables the disposition of man to be completely renewed; it is a much more thorough stage of work"** ("The Mystery of the Incarnation (4)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Reading this was incredibly exciting for me. Although I couldn't entirely understand it and some of it was even puzzling for me, these words allowed me to see some hope. I felt that within this I could find a path to purify and change myself. I thanked God from the bottom of my heart for

hearing my prayer. As I went on reading, I felt that these really were wonderful words that watered and shepherded my thirsty soul. I saw this on the website: “If you can’t find the Gospel Hotline in your country or region, please leave us a message and we will contact you as soon as possible.” I took a quick look and didn’t see a hotline for the Philippines, so I immediately left a message, and wrote down my contact number and email address with no hesitation.

After I got home that evening, I told my wife about it and after hearing what I had to say, she was willing to seek as well. I really thank the Lord that they responded to my message the next day and arranged to connect with us online that very same afternoon. That afternoon, we spoke to Sister Liu and Sister Su. From that conversation, I felt that they spoke simply, deftly and with insight. My wife was even more anxious than me and said, “Do you mind if I ask a question?” They enthusiastically said, “Of course.” My wife replied, “On your church’s website it says, ‘God of the last days has done a stage of the work of judgment and chastisement.’ My husband and I know that no unholy person will see the Lord because He is holy, but in Romans it says, ‘That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved’ (Romans 10:9). ‘For whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved’ (Romans 10:13). If we believe in the Lord Jesus then we are already saved and can enter the kingdom of heaven, so why is God of the last days doing a stage of the work of judgment and chastisement? I’m not really clear on this and I hope to hear your thoughts.”

Sister Liu replied, “Thanks be to God! Let’s fellowship together and let God guide us. Let’s first take a look at what ‘being saved’ means here. In the latter period of the Age of Law, people had all grown far from God and no longer had God-fearing hearts. They had become more and more sinful and went so far as to offer up blind, lame and diseased livestock and birds as sacrifices. The people of that time no longer upheld the law and they were all in danger of being condemned to death for violating the law. Given the situation, in order to save those living under the law from certain death, God Himself became flesh and undertook the work of redemption, and was ultimately crucified to redeem the whole of mankind from sin. People could be forgiven of their sins by believing in the Lord Jesus, thus becoming qualified to come before God in prayer and enjoy the grace and blessings of God. This is the true meaning of ‘being saved’ in the Age of Grace. In other words, ‘being saved’ is nothing more than a person’s sins being forgiven. That is, God doesn’t regard people as

being tainted by sin anymore, but that doesn't mean that they're not inherently sinful. Therefore, being saved does not mean that we are completely purified and have attained complete salvation. If we want to be purified, we have to accept God's judgment work of the last days."

Only after hearing their fellowship did my wife and I understand that "being saved," as spoken of in the Epistle of the Romans, referred to the acceptance of the Lord Jesus' salvation and to no longer being condemned to death for violating the law. It was not the "being saved" that we had imagined, of being thoroughly purified. What they said made sense. That explanation of "being saved" is in line with our situation of living in a state of committing sins and then confessing those sins. So, what the Lord Jesus did was just the work of redemption, not the work of thoroughly purifying and saving man. Although once people believe in the Lord they are saved, this does not mean that they have been thoroughly purified. Listening to their fellowship, I felt that there was truth to be sought from within it, so I expressed my willingness to continue on. I said, "Thanks be to the Lord! What you're saying is wonderful. From this fellowship with you now we understand the true meaning of 'being saved.' Please continue on with your fellowship, and may the Lord guide us." Sister Su went on to say, "Great, let's read a few passages of the word of Almighty God and it will all become clearer. Almighty God said: **'At the time Jesus' work was the redemption of all mankind. The sins of all who believed in Him were forgiven; as long as you believed in Him, He would redeem you; if you believed in Him, you were no longer a sinner, you were relieved of your sins. This is what it meant to be saved, and to be justified by faith. Yet in those who believed, there remained that which was rebellious and opposed God, and which still had to be slowly removed. Salvation did not mean man had been completely gained by Jesus, but that man was no longer of sin, that he had been forgiven his sins: Provided you believed, you would never more be of sin'** ("The Vision of God's Work (2)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **'The work of the last days is to speak words. Great changes can be effected in man by means of words. The changes now effected in these people upon their accepting these words are much greater than those effected in people upon their accepting the signs and wonders of the Age of Grace. For, in the Age of Grace, the demons were cast out from man with the laying on of hands and prayer, but the corrupt dispositions within man still remained. Man was healed of his sickness and forgiven his sins, but as for just**

how man was to be purged of the corrupt satanic dispositions within him, this work had yet to be done. Man was only saved and forgiven his sins for his faith, but the sinful nature of man was not extirpated and still remained within him. The sins of man were forgiven through the agency of the incarnate God, but this does not mean that man no longer has sin within him. The sins of man could be forgiven through the sin offering, but as for just how man can be made to sin no more, and how his sinful nature may be extirpated completely and transformed, he has no way of solving this problem. The sins of man were forgiven, and this is because of the work of God's crucifixion, but man continued to live within the corrupt satanic disposition of old. This being so, man must be completely saved from his corrupt satanic disposition, so that his sinful nature may be completely extirpated, never to develop again, thus enabling the disposition of man to be transformed. This would require man to grasp the path of growth in life, to grasp the way of life, and to grasp the way to change his disposition. Furthermore, it would require man to act in accordance with this path, so that his disposition may gradually be changed and he may live under the shining of the light, so that all that he does may be in accord with the will of God, so that he may cast away his corrupt satanic disposition, and so that he may break free from Satan's influence of darkness, thereby emerging fully from sin. Only then will man receive complete salvation' ("The Mystery of the Incarnation (4)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). 'Though Jesus did much work among man, He only completed the redemption of all mankind and became man's sin offering; He did not rid man of his corrupt disposition. Fully saving man from the influence of Satan not only required Jesus to become the sin offering and bear the sins of man, but it also required God to do even greater work to rid man completely of his satanically corrupted disposition. And so, now that man has been forgiven of his sins, God has returned to the flesh to lead man into the new age, and begun the work of chastisement and judgment. This work has brought man into a higher realm. All those who submit under His dominion shall enjoy higher truth and receive greater blessings. They shall truly live in the light, and they shall gain the truth, the way, and the life' (Preface to The Word Appears in the Flesh). We can see from the words of Almighty God that if we adhere to God's redemptive work from the Age of Grace and do not accept His judgment work of the last days, then the root of our sinfulness cannot be resolved. Almighty God of the last days has arrived and is carrying out a step of work on

the foundation of the work of redemption, judging and purifying man. He is uttering truths to reveal the truth of man's corruption, judging man's satanic nature. He has come to transform people's satanic disposition, to completely free them from Satan's influence so they may attain full salvation. It is evident that Almighty God's judgment work of the last days is the most critical and fundamental work for purifying, saving and perfecting people. Therefore, it is only by accepting Almighty God's judgment work of the last days that we can gain a true understanding of our own corrupt essence and God's righteous disposition, completely break free from Satan's influence, be fully saved by God and become people who obey, worship and are compatible with God."

My heart really brightened from hearing all of this fellowship, and I felt like my long-standing confusions had finally been resolved. It turns out that God just carried out the work of redemption in the Age of Grace, not the work of ridding people of their corrupt satanic disposition. God's judgment work of revealing the truth through His incarnation in the last days is the work of the thorough purification and salvation of mankind. So how does God actually purify, transform people and completely save them? I was eager to know the answer to this question, so I couldn't wait to ask, "I understand what you just said, and now I know that we can only attain purification through the returned Lord carrying out the step of the work of judgment. This is what I've been longing for for quite some time. What I really want to know now is how Almighty God does His work of judgment to purify and save people? Please share your fellowship."

Sister Su continued on, "The question of how Almighty God does His judgment work to cleanse and save people is particularly important for anyone who wants to achieve change and purification. Almighty God's words provide particular clarity on this aspect of the truth. I'll send them to you. Brother, please read them!"

Thrilled, I read out Almighty God's words: "**In the last days, Christ uses a variety of truths to teach man, to expose the essence of man, and to dissect the words and deeds of man. These words comprise various truths, such as man's duty, how man should obey God, how man should be loyal to God, how man ought to live out normal humanity, as well as the wisdom and the disposition of God, and so on. These words are all directed at the essence of man and his corrupt disposition. In particular, the words that expose how man spurns God are spoken in regard to how man is an embodiment of Satan, and an enemy force against God. In undertaking His work of**

judgment, God does not simply make clear the nature of man with a few words; He exposes, deals with, and prunes over the long term. These methods of exposure, dealing, and pruning cannot be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced into submission to God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God. What the work of judgment brings about is man's understanding of the true face of God and the truth about his own rebelliousness. The work of judgment allows man to gain much understanding of the will of God, of the purpose of God's work, and of the mysteries that are incomprehensible to him. It also allows man to recognize and know his corrupt substance and the roots of his corruption, as well as to discover the ugliness of man. These effects are all brought about by the work of judgment, for the substance of this work is actually the work of opening up the truth, the way, and the life of God to all those who have faith in Him. This work is the work of judgment done by God" ("Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*).

After I had finished reading God's words, Sister Su continued with her fellowship, "Almighty God's words explain so clearly how God judges and purifies people. God in the last days is primarily uttering truths to target man's corrupt disposition and satanic nature of resisting God in order to judge, purify and save mankind. Almighty God has uttered so many aspects of the truths—how Satan corrupts people, how God saves people, what it is to just follow man and what it is to obey God, what perspectives we should have in our faith, what a dispositional change is, what fearing God and shunning evil is, what offending God's disposition is, how to be an honest person, etc. These truths all possess authority and power, and can provide people with sustenance for their lives. They are the path to eternal life that God has bestowed upon mankind. As long as people accept and practice the word of God, they can attain purification and salvation. After undergoing several years of Almighty God's work of judgment we have personally experienced all of this. When we read Almighty God's words of judging, chastising, and exposing man, we feel that they are like a double-edged sword, revealing our rebelliousness, corruption, resistance, wrong intentions, notions and imaginations and even Satan's toxins hidden in the depths of our hearts. It makes us see that we are indeed corrupted by Satan too deeply and we are filled with satanic dispositions such as being arrogant and self-righteous, crooked and cunning, selfish, mean and blind to

all but our own interests, with no fear at all for God. We see we are filled with filth and corruption in our actions, hearts, and minds, without any human likeness. We feel too ashamed to show our faces and realize that if we continue to live by our corrupt satanic dispositions, we will always be people who disgust God, we will never be able to win God's praise and we will be destined for elimination and punishment. The judgment and revelations of Almighty God's words make us recognize God's majestic, wrathful and righteous disposition and gradually develop a God-fearing heart as well as true repentance and change. We now feel that we are living out a bit of a human likeness and we see that we have indeed attained God's great salvation. If God's judgment hadn't come upon us, we wouldn't have had the chance to know God's righteous disposition which does not tolerate man's offenses and His holy and benevolent essence. We wouldn't be able to come to hate our own rebelliousness and corruption, nor would we be able to cast aside our corruption and be purified. So, the more we experience God's judgment and chastisement, the more we see that God's judgment and chastisement is the best care for us, our greatest blessing and the truest salvation!"

Sister Liu also shared this in fellowship, "Almighty God's judgment and chastisement work of the last days is the work of thoroughly purifying, saving and perfecting people. If we do not accept judgment before the seat of Christ of the last days, then we won't be able to attain purification and changes to our life disposition. Our outcome will most certainly be rejection and elimination by God; we will suffer perdition and will perish. We will never have a chance at salvation and entering the kingdom of heaven. This is an absolute."

I happily said, "Thanks be to God! My heart is so brightened by your fellowship. I've believed in the Lord for so many years but in fact I've been living in sin and have been powerless to break free. Now I understand that if I do not experience God's judgment and chastisement in the last days, I won't be able to break free from the bondage and constraints of sin. I have now found the path to purification and complete salvation." After several days' fellowship, my wife and I came to understand some truths and we accepted Almighty God's work of the last days.

I give thanks to Almighty God for His love and salvation for me! As a pastor, I have the responsibility and the obligation to bring all the other pastors and the brothers and sisters that I know before God. After working with these brothers and sisters for a period of time, not only did dozens of brothers and sisters in the church who often attend gatherings all

accept Almighty God, but I also brought a pastor of another house church into God's family, and the majority of the brothers and sisters from his church also turned toward God. I was delighted seeing those brothers and sisters accepting God's salvation of the last days and being raised up before the throne of God. This is all the fruit of the work of Almighty God: May all glory be to Almighty God!

3. Uncovering the Mystery of Judgment

By Enhui, Malaysia

My name is Enhui; I'm 46 years old. I live in Malaysia, and I have been a believer in the Lord for 27 years. In October 2015, I moved to another city to take up a job. My new colleagues were all really into Facebook, which they used for chatting, finding new friends, and making posts. Seeing that I didn't have a Facebook account they set one up for me, and I gradually learned how to go online and use it. When I had the time, I would take a look at the postings of some brothers and sisters in the Lord and I'd share them and like them. Sometimes I'd make some posts about praising the Lord or share the Lord's grace with the people in my friends group. Every day was really fulfilling for me.

One day in February 2016 when I was browsing the profile of one of my Facebook friends, I saw this post: "We discussed the issue of judgment today in our group. We all said different things but agreed on the major points. Someone said: 'If I don't understand something, I don't dare spout some old nonsense—it's something that God will do in the future and we shouldn't try to make wild conjectures.' Someone else said: 'Psalm 75:2 says **"When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly."** God takes note of everything that every single person does, so when the Lord Jesus returns to judge all humans He will reveal our deeds to all, just like playing a movie. So we should always be upright in our behavior and absolutely never do evil so that God doesn't judge us and then cast us into hell.' Someone else said: 'It says in the Bible: **"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books,**

according to their works” (Revelation 20:11–12). From the scriptures we can see that when the Lord Jesus returns in the last days He will set up a giant desk in the sky, take a seat behind it, and open the books. Then, with all of mankind kneeling on the ground, He’ll call out the name of every individual and judge each of them one by one according to their deeds. Good people will be taken up to the kingdom of heaven by the Lord, while the wicked will be cast into hell.”

After reading this post I continued sitting in my chair, and sketched out a mental image of the Lord Jesus judging mankind: The Lord sitting on a throne, people all kneeling in front of His desk and coming clean on all their sins for God to judge, and the Lord sending each one of them to heaven or to hell according to their deeds. I thought about how I’d been a loyal follower of the Lord for over 20 years and had tried my best to put His teachings into practice. I believed that the Lord would see my piety and take me up to the kingdom of heaven. But as I thought it over more and more, I suddenly had an idea: Now that I knew how to use the Internet why not do a search for “judgment” and see what came up? I opened up a browser and typed in the word; I can’t remember which link I clicked on but to my surprise, this sentence popped up: “God’s Chastisement and Judgment Is the Light of Man’s Salvation.” This piqued my interest immediately, and so I went to the website to read more. As the webpage loaded I heard this hymn that was both pleasing and thought-provoking: “God’s Chastisement and Judgment Is the Light of Man’s Salvation.” The lyrics included: “... **In his life, if man wishes to be cleansed and achieve changes in his disposition, if he wishes to live out a life of meaning, and fulfill his duty as a creature, then he must accept God’s chastisement and judgment, and must not allow God’s discipline and God’s smiting to depart from him, so he can free himself from the manipulation and influence of Satan and live in the light of God. Know that God’s chastisement and judgment is the light, and the light of man’s salvation, and that there is no better blessing, grace or protection for man**” (Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs).

I pondered the lyrics after the hymn had ended; I found it quite moving. I began to think: “Is God’s chastisement and judgment the light of our salvation? Is it mankind’s greatest protection and grace? How are we to understand this? If people want to be purified and live meaningful lives, does that mean they have to accept God’s chastisement and judgment?” As I mulled over these lyrics, many questions circled around my brain. I also thought: “If God were to judge man, wouldn’t man be condemned? And how come judgment becomes a light

of salvation?" I was both curious and excited because I had never heard anything like this before. Even though the judgment being talked about in the hymn was not how I understood judgment to be, I still had this vague feeling that judgment possesses really deep significance, and is relevant to a person's future and fate. When I checked the source of the hymn I saw that it was from The Church of Almighty God, so I went to their website. I saw that not only was the homepage novel and aesthetically pleasing, but the content was also rich and varied. There were things to listen to, things to read, songs, discussions and lots of other stuff. I thought to myself: "How come no one ever told me about this website? It's so great, but could it be that no one's shared it because they haven't found it yet?" I clicked on the "Books" link and as I was scrolling down the list I saw this title: Testimonies of Experiences in Entry Into Life. Clicking on it, I saw that they were mostly testimonies about God's judgment, for example: "God's Judgment and Chastisement Saved Me," "God's Judgment and Chastisement Was a Great Salvation for Me," "I Saw God's Love in His Judgment and Chastisement," "God's Judgment and Chastisement Awoke My Sinful Heart," "God's Judgment and Chastisement Put Me on the Right Path." It was almost time for me to go to work, so I only had time to quickly skim through a few of these testimonies. They were all written by believers describing how their corrupt dispositions were purified, and also talking about their deficiencies, corruption, mistaken views in faith, etc., and how these were somewhat changed through the words of judgment of Almighty God. This made me even more curious about "God's Chastisement and Judgment Is the Light of Man's Salvation." Could it be that judgment wasn't about being condemned? That it wasn't about determining each person's ending? I started to feel really unsettled, and I knew I had to get to the bottom of what "God's Chastisement and Judgment Is the Light of Man's Salvation" was talking about. I came to the conclusion that Testimonies of Experiences in Entry Into Life was probably an extremely helpful book for people in their faith, and that I should take a good look at it. But time was running short, so I turned off my computer and went to work.

That night I was tossing and turning in bed, unable to sleep; images of The Church of Almighty God's website kept on popping into my head. I especially couldn't get my head around the sentence "God's Chastisement and Judgment Is the Light of Man's Salvation," and I really wanted to know what was meant by the "judgment."

I got up early the next morning, opened up The Church of Almighty God's website and started searching for the word "judgment." I saw an article titled "Christ Does the Work of

Judgment With the Truth,” opened it, and read these words: **“In the judgment beginning at the house of God spoken of in times past, the ‘judgment’ of these words refers to the judgment that God today passes on those who come before His throne in the last days. There are, perhaps, those who believe in such supernatural imaginings as that, when the last days have arrived, God will erect a big table in the heavens, upon which a white tablecloth will be spread, and then, sitting upon a great throne with all men kneeling on the ground, He will reveal the sins of each man and thereby determine whether they are to ascend to heaven or be sent down to the lake of fire and brimstone. No matter what man imagines, it cannot alter the substance of God’s work. The imaginings of man are nothing but the constructs of man’s thoughts; they come from the brain of man, summed up and pieced together from what man has seen and heard. Therefore I say, however brilliant the images conceived, they are but depictions, and are incapable of substituting the plan of God’s work. Man, after all, has been corrupted by Satan, so how could he fathom the thoughts of God? Man conceives God’s work of judgment as something fantastic. He believes that since it is God Himself who does the work of judgment, then this work must be of the most tremendous scale, and incomprehensible to mortals, and must resound throughout the heavens and shake the earth; if not, how could it be the work of judgment by God? He believes that, as this is the work of judgment, then God must be particularly imposing and majestic as He works, and those being judged must be howling with tears and on their knees begging for mercy. Such scenes would surely be spectacular, and deeply affecting.... Everyone imagines God’s work of judgment to be miraculous. Do you know, however, that, at the time when God has long since begun His work of judgment among man, you remain nestled in peaceful oblivion? That at the time when you think God’s work of judgment has formally begun, God will have already made heaven and earth anew? At that time, perhaps, you will have only just come to understand the meaning of life, but God’s merciless work of punishment shall bring you, still deep in sleep, into hell. Only then will you suddenly realize that God’s work of judgment has already concluded.”** I was really amazed by these words. They so accurately revealed people’s innermost thoughts and views on God’s judgment work of the last days—they were also so real and practical. I wondered, “Could it be that the idea of a judgment in the sky that I’d been holding on to was just my imagination? This passage shows

that people all imagine the work of God's judgment to be mysterious and supernatural. It also indicates that the work of judgment began long ago and will soon conclude, and it exhorts people to waste no time seeking the manifestation of God. Could that be the voice of God?" That thought left me unsettled and I really wanted immediate clarity on what the meaning of God's judgment really is. But there was just too much content on The Church of Almighty God's website and at the time I didn't know where to start looking, so I decided to seek out the church members themselves and see if they could help me understand things.

Using the online chat function on The Church of Almighty God's website, I sent a message telling them that I was interested in learning more about judgment. Someone answered me very quickly, and introduced two sisters from The Church of Almighty God who connected with me: Liu Hui and Li Mei. Over the course of our exchange, I discovered that these two sisters had an open and honest approach, and were very straightforward; I wanted to have a heart-to-heart chat with them. I said to them: "I really like The Church of Almighty God's website. There are all sorts of spiritual books, hymns of praise, music videos, gospel movies, recitations of God's words, and more. There really is a lot of content, but I just don't understand what is meant by God's judgment. I just read 'Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth' which seems to say that God's work of judgment has already begun and that the idea of judgment in heaven is just a product of human notions and imagination. This is quite different from my usual understanding of judgment. Could you share your understanding of this with me?"

Sister Liu Hui replied: "Praise God! Let's seek and fellowship together! I used to think of it that way too, believing that God's work of judgment of the last days would be carried out up in heaven. But after reading Almighty God's words and fellowshiping with brothers and sisters I came to realize that this really was just my own notion, my own imagining. Whether God's work of judgment will be done in heaven or on earth is stated very clearly in some of the prophecies in the Bible. For example, Revelation 14:6-7 say: **'And I saw another angel fly in the middle of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.'** In Psalm 96:13 it says: '[F]or He comes, for He comes to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth.' In John

9:39 it says: **'For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see.'** In these biblical verses it mentions **'having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth,'** 'for He comes to judge the earth' and **'For judgment I am come into this world.'** From this we can see that in the last days, God must personally come into the world, and He will come to the earth to do the work of judgment, to judge all peoples and all nations. In addition, from reading the Bible we know that before God created mankind He created the heavens and earth and all things in order to prepare a suitable living environment for us. God then created mankind and arranged for us to live on earth, not in heaven. So how could we possibly ascend up into heaven? Corrupt mankind has no choice but to accept God's judgment here on earth. Plus, it's recorded in the Book of Revelation that John saw a great white throne in the sky on the island of Patmos. In fact, this was just one of John's visions, but some people have interpreted this to literally mean that when God returns in the last days He will judge people in the sky. This is nothing but our own notions and imaginings, and it's a misinterpretation of the prophecies—it's not at all a reality of God's work."

I was stunned by what I heard: I'd read all of the Bible verses that the sister was sharing with me, so how come I'd never noticed the real meaning of those words? Yes! God had created mankind to live on earth, so how could it be possible for us to go up to heaven? My faith really was full of vagueness and ignorance!

Sister Li Mei then fellowshiped this with me: "In the last days God has not only incarnated to do the work of judgment on earth, but His work started a long time ago and will soon conclude. God's work of judgment isn't done in heaven as people imagine, and it's not directly condemning people as they believe. In fact, before God's work of judgment concludes, all those who come before God's throne are those who can be judged, tried, and cleansed by God's words. All those who accept God's judgment and are purified will be taken by God into His kingdom. But for those who refuse to accept the judgment of God's words, since their sinful natures won't have been judged and cleansed by God, they will continue to live in sin, continuing to constantly sin. They will lie, cheat, rebel against God and resist God. They will be annihilated in hell for their sins—this is a true manifestation of God's righteous disposition. Those of us who have followed the Lord for many years have deeply experienced that though we have been redeemed of our sins because of our faith, the problem of our sinful nature hasn't been resolved. We follow the Lord, yet at the same time we often go against the Lord's teachings and instead give free rein to our fleshly desires to

commit sins such as lying, cheating, engage in intrigues, and struggle for fame and fortune. We thirst after empty vanities and chase after the evil trends of the material world. And so on. Particularly when we're faced with trials, accidents, and disasters, we misunderstand God, blame Him, and even betray Him. We could say that we are living in a constant state of sinning and then confessing our sins, but never shaking off the shackles of our sinful nature. In the Bible it says: '[H]oliness, without which no man shall see the Lord' (Hebrews 12:14). How can people who are as corrupt as we are enter God's kingdom? Almighty God has said: **'A sinner such as you, who has just been redeemed, and has not been changed, or been perfected by God, can you be after God's heart? For you, you who are still of your old self, it is true that you were saved by Jesus, and that you are not counted as a sinner because of the salvation of God, but this does not prove that you are not sinful, and are not impure. How can you be saintly if you have not been changed? Within, you are beset by impurity, selfish and mean, yet you still wish to descend with Jesus—you should be so lucky! You have missed a step in your belief in God: You have merely been redeemed, but have not been changed. For you to be after God's heart, God must personally do the work of changing and cleansing you; if you are only redeemed, you will be incapable of attaining sanctity. In this way you will be unqualified to share in the good blessings of God, for you have missed out a step in God's work of managing man, which is the key step of changing and perfecting. And so you, a sinner who has just been redeemed, are incapable of directly inheriting God's inheritance'** ("Concerning Appellations and Identity" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). So, during the last days, God is implementing His management plan, carrying out the stage of work of judging, chastising, and cleansing people in accordance with what corrupt mankind needs. The purpose is to thoroughly save us from Satan's domain, and to remove the shackles of our sinful nature so that we can be purified and saved. From this we can see that God's work of judgment of the last days is all about cleansing and salvation. It's not about condemning us, as people imagine."

Sister Liu Hui went on in fellowship with me: "That's right, Sister Enhui. Let's think about it, if God's work of judgment was to condemn and punish us, then not a single one of us, who have all been deeply corrupted by Satan, would ever be saved or be able to enter God's kingdom. If that were the case, what would be the point of God's work of judgment? The words of Almighty God clearly state why God does the work of judgment in the last days,

and what its significance is. Let's read two passages of Almighty God's words: **'Man's entire life is lived under the domain of Satan, and there is not a single person who can free themselves from the influence of Satan on their own. All live in a filthy world, in corruption and emptiness, without the slightest meaning or value; they live such carefree lives for the flesh, for lust, and for Satan. There is not the slightest value to their existence. Man is incapable of finding the truth that will free him from the influence of Satan. Even though man believes in God and reads the Bible, he does not understand how to free himself of the control of Satan's influence. Throughout the ages, very few people have discovered this secret, very few have touched upon it. ... If man is not cleansed, then he is of the filth; if he is not protected and cared for by God, then he is still a captive of Satan; if he is not judged and chastised, then he will have no means of escaping the oppression of the dark influence of Satan. The corrupt disposition that you show forth and the disobedient behavior that you live out are sufficient to prove that you are still living under the domain of Satan. If your mind and thoughts have not been cleansed, and your disposition has not been judged and chastised, then your entire being is still controlled by the domain of Satan, your mind is controlled by Satan, your thoughts are manipulated by Satan, and your entire being is controlled by the hands of Satan'** ("The Experiences of Peter: His Knowledge of Chastisement and Judgment" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **'By means of this work of judgment and chastisement, man will fully come to know the filthy and corrupt substance within his own self, and he will be able to change completely and become clean. Only in this way can man become worthy to return before the throne of God. All the work done this day is so that man can be made clean and be changed; through judgment and chastisement by the word, as well as through refinement, man can purge away his corruption and be made pure'** ("The Mystery of the Incarnation (4)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). So what can we experience from God's words? Looking at them from one angle, we can see that God's words are extremely practical and reflect our real-life situation very well. From another angle, we could see that we first have to experience God's judgment and cleansing to rid ourselves of filth and corruption, and to escape from Satan's dark influence. Only then will we be qualified to be taken by God into His kingdom. Without God's work of judgment of the last days we couldn't be cleansed enough to become people who are after God's heart, and we certainly wouldn't be able to enter God's kingdom.

We would just never stop sinning and resisting God, and ultimately, we'd be annihilated by God in hell. In fact, from the real-life testimonies of the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God we can see that God's judgment and chastisement is the light of salvation for mankind. Every one of us has been corrupted by Satan, but because we can come before Almighty God and receive the judgment and chastisement of God's words, our life disposition gradually changes. We go from rebellion and resistance to acceptance and submission; we go from arrogance, self-righteousness and giving in to no one, to becoming willing to put aside our own egos and submitting to what is right, submitting to the truth. In addition, all that is expressed in God's judgment and chastisement is the truth, and it is also an expression of God's righteous and holy disposition, so the more we experience God's judgment and chastisement, the more we know God. And the more we know God, the more clearly we can see into people, things, and events in the world. Accordingly, our viewpoints and values change to varying degrees. We gain more reverence of and submission to God. This is what Almighty God's judgment and chastisement achieve in us. Without the judgment of the light of truth in God's words, we would all live in darkness, committing sins and then confessing them, confessing them and then committing them again every day, never shaking off the shackles of sin. Then how could we ever be taken by God into His kingdom?"

After fellowshiping with Sisters Li and Liu it felt like a bright light had been turned on in my heart. What they said was true: The pastor, the elders, and the brothers and sisters in my church were all unable to extricate themselves from the bondage of sin. I myself also often sinned in spite of myself and was unable to put the Lord's words into practice. We are all living in a state of committing sins and then confessing—we truly do need God to return and do a stage of work of judgment and cleansing. If I hadn't looked into Almighty God's work of the last days I would never have come to understand these truths. I felt so grateful for God's guidance. By reading the words of Almighty God and listening to the sisters' fellowship, plus reading the written testimonies of the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God describing how their corrupt dispositions were purified through the judgment of God's words, I had gained a bit of understanding of God's work of judgment of the last days. My own notions had been dispelled, and I now knew that God's judgment and chastisement are essential for us to escape from sin and gain purification.

Then Sister Liu Hui said: "Let's read two more passages of Almighty God's words. Almighty God said: **'In undertaking His work of judgment, God does not simply make**

clear the nature of man with a few words; He exposes, deals with, and prunes over the long term. These methods of exposure, dealing, and pruning cannot be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced into submission to God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God. What the work of judgment brings about is man's understanding of the true face of God and the truth about his own rebelliousness. The work of judgment allows man to gain much understanding of the will of God, of the purpose of God's work, and of the mysteries that are incomprehensible to him. It also allows man to recognize and know his corrupt substance and the roots of his corruption, as well as to discover the ugliness of man. These effects are all brought about by the work of judgment, for the substance of this work is actually the work of opening up the truth, the way, and the life of God to all those who have faith in Him. This work is the work of judgment done by God' ("Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). 'Those who wish to gain life without relying on the truth spoken by Christ are the most ridiculous people on earth, and those who do not accept the way of life brought by Christ are lost in fantasy. And so I say that those who do not accept Christ of the last days shall forever be despised by God. Christ is man's gateway to the kingdom during the last days, and there are none who can go around Him. None may be perfected by God except through Christ. You believe in God, and so you must accept His words and obey His way. You cannot only think of gaining blessings while being incapable of receiving the truth and incapable of accepting the provision of life. Christ comes during the last days so that all those who truly believe in Him may be provided with life. His work is for the sake of concluding the old age and entering the new one, and His work is the path that must be taken by all those who would enter the new age. If you are incapable of acknowledging Him, and instead condemn, blaspheme, or even persecute Him, then you are bound to burn for eternity and shall never enter the kingdom of God' ("Only Christ of the Last Days Can Give Man the Way of Eternal Life" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). From the words of Almighty God it can be seen that in the last days God has become flesh in order to express all truths to cleanse and save humanity, in accordance with mankind's needs. He reveals God's righteous disposition which will

tolerate no offense to mankind. Through His words, God reveals people's nature and essence, and the true state of their corruption. Only through accepting the words of judgment that Almighty God has expressed can we know our own arrogance, cunningness, selfishness, evil, etc., which are all part of our satanic nature and corrupt dispositions. Only through accepting God's judgment and chastisement can we know God's righteous disposition and develop hearts of reverence for God and true repentance. Thus we can attain transformation and cleansing of our corrupt disposition. This is the significance of God's judgment, and it is also our only road to salvation. Sister Enhui, as long as we earnestly read as much of Almighty God's words as we can, then the significance of God's work of judgment of the last days will become clear to us and even more, we'll see that only Christ of the last days can bestow the way of eternal life upon people."

Praise the Lord! I gained an enormous amount from communicating with the sisters. Even though I've yet to experience God's judgment and chastisement, through fellowshiping with them and reading Testimonies of Experiences in Entry Into Life, I've felt that Almighty God's judgment and chastisement really can change people. I also feel that I really need God to perform His stage of judgment and chastisement work to transform and purify me so that I will be qualified to be taken up into the kingdom of heaven. At a later date, after a few more days of fellowshiping, I came to understand more of the significance of God's work of judgment and the truth concerning God's names. I also learned truths to discern the true Christ from false ones, and real churches from false ones. I learned truths about God's incarnation, the difference between God's work and human work, how Satan corrupts mankind, how God saves us, and more. I came to the firm conclusion that Almighty God really is the returned Lord Jesus, and with a happy heart I accepted Almighty God's work of the last days. Praise God! Since then I've had an unquenchable thirst for reading the words of God. By living a church life, fellowshiping truths with the brothers and sisters, and accepting the watering and feeding of God's words I feel that my spirit is gaining a great deal of sustenance. This has allowed me to witness the total fulfillment of this prophecy in the Book of Revelation in the Bible: **"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"** (Revelation 3:20). I've also felt it being fulfilled in me personally. The words of Almighty God have knocked open my heart's door and allowed me to hear the voice of God, know God's work of judgment, and return before Him. Praise be to God!

4. The Awakening of a Deceived Spirit

By Yuanzhi, Brazil

I was born in a small city in Northern China and in 2010, followed relatives to Brazil. Here in Brazil, I got acquainted with a Christian friend who brought me to church to listen to some sermons, after three visits I still hadn't absorbed anything. I got really busy with work after that, so I didn't go back to church again until one day in June, 2015, when my friend brought me to church once more. That time, I finally gained some understanding of the Lord Jesus as the Redeemer through what the brothers and sisters shared. In particular, when I first read Genesis, I realized that man was actually created by God, that God had created all things, and I felt that the Creator is truly wondrous. When I was in school all the textbooks had taught me that man evolved from primates, and all the things in the world were formed naturally—it turned out that I had been deceived for over two decades. Only after reading the Bible did I fully awaken, and from that point on, I believed in the Lord Jesus.

In late 2015, I went back to Brazil after five months in China. This time, I decided to find a steady job and settle down properly. However, things don't always turn out as planned. Things weren't going smoothly with work or my personal life, leaving me very agitated and anxious. One evening, I phoned that Christian friend to complain, and he told me, "Quiet yourself and pray to the Lord and see how the Lord arranges everything for you." So, I quieted my heart and prayed to the Lord, "Lord Jesus! I've encountered some problems at work that I don't know how to deal with. Lord, I hope that I may receive some help from You." To my surprise, four days later, my boss called me and asked me to come back to work. I was ecstatic and thankful that the Lord Jesus heard my prayers. I received more of the Lord's grace after that, so I started attending gatherings every week to repay His love, even if I had to take time off from work.

Starting in June 2016, not only was I attending church gatherings, but I also shared Bible verses with friends on Facebook, plus I would browse through Facebook for content so I could gain more understanding of the Lord. I added a lot of friends who would all share Bible verses with me when they had time. This was extremely rewarding for me. One day while browsing Facebook, I saw a video with a description "God Descends With

Judgment”—this immediately grabbed my attention. Curious, I clicked on it. I was pleasantly surprised that it had been so well done. Simply put, it was spectacular! I was drawn in by the sonorous, powerful singing, lyrics that tugged at the heartstrings, and the enthusiasm of everyone in the performance. Giving it a closer look, I saw that the video was from The Church of Almighty God. I thought: “All the performers really throw themselves into it—it’s as if they’re singing for God to hear. The Church of Almighty God seems not bad at all! This is the first time that I’ve heard of them; if I get the chance I should get in touch with them.”

One day, I sent the link for that video to a Facebook friend, Sister Yang, with whom I frequently discussed the Bible. She really liked it too, and said that she was interested in learning more about The Church of Almighty God. She felt that this church was indeed very special and that it was filled with the Holy Spirit’s work. I then shared the video on my Facebook page, but to my surprise, one of my friends watched it and told me that The Church of Almighty God was no good, plus he sent me all sorts of negative stuff about it. Seeing all these materials that blasphemed Almighty God and condemned The Church of Almighty God really scared me and I thought: “This church seems fine—how could anyone have a problem with them?” When I went to give the video another look, I suddenly thought back to something my pastor had once said in a sermon, that false Christs will appear in the last days. If I stray from the Lord Jesus’ path, wouldn’t it all be over for me? I knew that was something that I couldn’t just disregard, so I decided not to watch it just then. I reached out to Sister Yang right away and explained the situation to her. Her response was, “We can’t just rely on one side of the story to determine whether it’s true or false. This is not in accordance with the Lord’s teachings. All of us who are believers in the Lord are awaiting His return, and right now, some people are saying that He has already come. We have to investigate this. We can’t just follow the herd, blindly judging and condemning it. Let’s find some people from The Church of Almighty God and look into it. We’ll see their true colors—nothing real can be made fake, and nothing fake can be made real.” I thought: “Sister Yang is right. This is indeed the first time that I’ve heard anyone preach the gospel that the Lord has returned, plus I have no idea whether that stuff on the Internet condemning The Church of Almighty God is true or false. I can see that the videos and movies shot by The Church of Almighty God are pretty good. I should go and learn about them—that’s the only rational way to approach the return of the Lord.” And so, I agreed to investigate Almighty God’s work of the last days with Sister Yang.

Sister Yang reached out through the contact details left at the end of the video and ended up in contact with Brother Zhang of The Church of Almighty God in North America. Once we were online with him, Sister Yang and I brought up the same question: “We both know that the Lord will return in the last days; however, the Lord Jesus said: **‘Then if any man shall say to you, See, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect’** (Matthew 24:23–24). Brother Zhang, what do you think of this issue of false Christs emerging in the last days to deceive people?”

Brother Zhang said: “The Lord Jesus said these things to warn us: When He returns during the last days, false Christs will also emerge. The Lord’s will is to have us develop discernment so that we’re not deceived by false Christs. However, He didn’t say this so that we would just wholesale reject anyone who says that the Lord has returned, or even go so far as to judge and condemn them. This is our misunderstanding of the Lord Jesus’ words. The Lord Jesus was clear about what false Christs are: **‘For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect’** (Matthew 24:24). The obvious hallmarks of false Christs are that they imitate the Lord Jesus’ work, showing signs, performing miracles, healing diseases and casting out demons. These are the areas where false Christs are most cunning and evil, and they are their primary distinctive features. Almighty God’s words are even more specific and incisive regarding the manifestations and hallmarks of false Christs. Almighty God said: **‘If, during the present day, there is to emerge a person who is able to display signs and wonders, cast out demons, heal the sick, and perform many miracles, and if this person claims that they are Jesus who has come, then this would be the counterfeit of evil spirits, and their imitation of Jesus. Remember this! God does not repeat the same work. Jesus’ stage of work has already been completed, and God will never again undertake that stage of work. ... If, during the last days, God still displayed signs and wonders, and still cast out demons and healed the sick—if He did exactly the same as Jesus—then God would be repeating the same work, and the work of Jesus would have no significance or value. Thus, God carries out one stage of work in every age. Once each stage of His work has been completed, it is soon imitated by evil spirits, and after Satan begins to follow on the heels of God, God changes to a different method. Once God has completed a stage of His work, it**

is imitated by evil spirits. You must be clear about this' ("Knowing God's Work Today" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). We all know that all that is false can only ride on the coattails of what is true and imitate it. False Christs are no exception. They are evil spirits and they lack the essence of Christ. They cannot do the work of Christ, they are unable to express the truth, and they are unable to express God's disposition or all that God has and is. They cannot bring man the truth, the way, and the life. Therefore, false Christs can only imitate the work that the Lord Jesus has already done; all they can do is perform some signs and wonders to deceive foolish and ignorant people. There are some people who have been possessed by evil spirits, who presumptuously declare that they are the returned Lord Jesus, and imitate the Lord Jesus in doing things such as healing diseases and casting out demons, performing miracles, and preaching the way of repentance and forgiveness. There is no shred of a doubt that they are false Christs that deceive people. God's work is always new and never old, always developing in a forward direction. He will never repeat old work that He has done before. This is just like when the Lord Jesus came to work; He brought a close to the Age of Law and opened up the Age of Grace. He did not repeat the work that Jehovah God had done of issuing the law to guide people in their lives, but instead, He performed His work of redemption upon the foundation of the work of the Age of Law. The Lord Jesus brought the way of repentance and forgiveness to mankind; as long as we come before Him, confess, and repent, the Lord will pardon our sins and forget our transgressions, making us fit to enjoy the abundant grace and blessings that the Lord bestows upon mankind. All of that work was new, and it could not have been done by any evil spirits or by Satan. This is the same for the returned Lord Jesus in the last days—Almighty God concluded the Age of Grace and began the Age of Kingdom. Almighty God did not repeat the Lord Jesus' work of redemption—He does not cast out demons, heal the sick, or perform miracles for people. Instead, He expresses the truth and performs the stage of work of judging and cleansing man on the foundation of the work of redemption. He fully saves mankind from the domain of Satan and brings us into God's kingdom. This is all new work from God that He has never before performed and could not be performed by any false Christ whatsoever. As long as we know that God's work is always new and never old, and we understand the principles of discerning the true Christ from false Christs, we will naturally differentiate between the appearance and work of God and the deception of false Christs."

I gained a great deal from Brother Zhang's communication; his fellowship was very

clear. False Christs can only repeat and imitate some of the work that God has done in the past, but they can never perform any new work, nor can they provide a new path for mankind. At this point, I understood the true meaning behind the Lord Jesus' words: **“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect”** (Matthew 24:24). Sister Yang also said that she had reaped a great harvest from this, so we made an appointment with Brother Zhang for the following evening so that we could continue listening to his fellowship.

I felt that what Brother Zhang from The Church of Almighty God had to share was wonderful and really edifying for me. However, when I thought of all those online rumors I was still a little apprehensive. After I went back to my church, I asked one of the elder brothers whether he knew anything about The Church of Almighty God. He told me that the pastor had said we shouldn't have anything to do with them; he also told me about some things a number of pastors had said, judging, attacking, and condemning Almighty God. When I heard this I vacillated a bit. I lost no time letting Sister Yang know about this negative information and suggested that she cut off contact with The Church of Almighty God. However, Sister Yang seemed determined to investigate Almighty God's work of the last days. She said to me, “Wherever the footprints of the Lamb lead me, I will follow. Recently, I've understood a number of truths by reading the words of Almighty God online and watching all sorts of videos and gospel movies from The Church of Almighty God. A lot of the confusion and the difficulties that stymied me in the past have been resolved. I feel that Almighty God's words are the truth. Regardless of how others condemn The Church of Almighty God, I will look into this until I've gained total clarity.” I was unable to persuade Sister Yang, so I blocked both her and Brother Zhang on Facebook and didn't dare contact them again.

However, not even two days had gone by before I started to go through a dry spell with work. Day in, day out, I had nothing to do except to make food at home. Since I was idle, I opened up YouTube to watch some movies, but strangely, every single time, movies, music videos, and choral works by The Church of Almighty God would appear. I started to think: “The videos and movies of The Church of Almighty God are put out so quickly. It's astonishing! Anything that comes from God must certainly thrive, so could it be that The Church of Almighty God truly comes from God? Everything Brother Zhang talked about last

time was in line with the truth. Maybe I should try to gain an understanding of The Church of Almighty God one more time. I can't offhandedly refuse to investigate Almighty God's work of the last days just because of what other people say." However, as soon as I thought about what I had seen online condemning Almighty God as well as my pastor's warning to not contact The Church of Almighty God, I thought perhaps I should not go any further. So, I decided to look for other videos to watch on YouTube. However, everywhere I looked, there were videos from The Church of Almighty God and I started to feel a sense of helplessness. In the end, my curiosity took over and I thought: "It doesn't matter if The Church of Almighty God is good or not. I'll just take a quick look at their videos, and if they really aren't any good, then it'll be a lesson on gaining discernment." I then clicked on a video called Gospel Choir 9th Performance. This video attracted my interest because it was a genuine depiction of contemporary society that I really identified with. It portrayed human life so vividly, realistically, and genuinely. I cried and laughed along with it; my heart was very moved, and was filled with energy. I had this urge to immediately watch every single video produced by The Church of Almighty God. After that I started watching videos from The Church of Almighty God on a daily basis, and within one week I had watched all 17 episodes of the Chinese choral videos. The more I watched them the more of an affinity I felt for them. There seemed to be a force within my heart urging me to watch and investigate without delay. I thought: "I've watched so many videos of The Church of Almighty God; each and every one has been so beneficial to me, plus there hasn't been a single negative word in any of them: It is all positive. Some of them expose the darkness of the world, some bear witness to God, and some guide man to return before God. There's no adulteration of fleshly or worldly matters. The Church of Almighty God is filled with the Holy Spirit's work. It is not at all like what the rumors say. Almighty God's work in the last days is definitely worth looking into!"

One day while browsing through Facebook, I read someone's experience and testimony entitled "I Found Salvation of the Last Days on Facebook." I opened it and saw that this sister had similar experiences to me. When she first got in touch with The Church of Almighty God, her online friends sent her some rumors about the church that really stood in her way. I read on impatiently, eager to know what happened in the end. I saw that after this sister prayed to the Lord and asked Him to guide her, she felt that she could not be selective in what she chose to listen and believe, but she had to investigate The Church of Almighty God in a practical way in order to discern whether it was true or false. Blindly listening to the

rumors and refusing to investigate the second coming of the Lord would not be a very rational approach, so she felt that she had to find out the truth about the Lord's return. These words really resonated with me. The return of the Lord is an important thing and one must treat it prudently. We can't just follow the herd; we can't just blindly reject and resist it. I continued reading the article and saw that what this sister came to understand about The Church of Almighty God was entirely different from what her online friends were telling her. She also personally hosted some visiting sisters from The Church of Almighty God who fellowshiped with her on Almighty God's words, and were helpful and caring toward her. The real-life experiences of this sister told me that I could no longer continue to be deceived by these rumors, nor could I be taken in by gossip, refusing to investigate the work of Almighty God in the last days. Otherwise, I would very likely lose God's salvation of the last days. I knew I had to get back in touch with The Church of Almighty God for further investigation!

That night while I was tossing and turning restlessly in bed, I thought, "I have to find Sister Yang again, even though I blocked her. If I can find her I'll definitely be able to find Brother Zhang from The Church of Almighty God. Sister Yang is a genuine believer and she has been investigating Almighty God's work of the last days this whole time. She's probably gained a lot of understanding by now. I really need to ask her how her investigation is coming along." It was no easy task, but through the help of some friends, I found Sister Yang's Facebook account a couple of days later. I was really happy that she wasn't angry at me for blocking her. When I contacted her, she told me that she had already gained clarity through her investigation, and that Almighty God is the return of the Lord Jesus. She also very happily put me in touch with Brother Zhang. When the three of us all connected online, I told them, "Through my recent experience, I can see that the Lord is guiding me. I am also willing to seek and investigate the work of Almighty God in the last days, but, I have so many questions for the two of you that I'd like your fellowship on. The one thing I really can't make heads or tails of is that Jesus incarnated as a man to do His work, so how is it that He would now return to the flesh as a woman to do His work? This is a mystery. Brother Zhang, can you explain this to me?"

In response to my question, Brother Zhang replied, "Yes. There are mysteries contained within God's incarnations—the significance is immense and profound, as well as something unfathomable to us. Therefore, we must maintain hearts of reverence regarding the return of the Lord. Even if God's work is not remotely in line with our notions, we must watch our

tongues. We must not judge it without thinking the matter through. Seriously speaking, arbitrarily judging God's work is blaspheming against God, and the sin of blasphemy cannot be pardoned in this life or the next. Almighty God of the last days has come and opened up all mysteries. This completely fulfills Jesus' prophecy: **'I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come'** (John 16:12–13). Let's read the words of Almighty God together to understand this aspect of the truth. Almighty God said: **'Back then, when Jesus came, He was male, and when God comes this time, He is female. From this, you can see that God created both male and female for the sake of His work, and with Him there is no distinction of gender. When His Spirit comes, He can take on any flesh He pleases, and that flesh can represent Him; whether male or female, it can represent God as long as it is His incarnate flesh. If Jesus had appeared as a female when He came, in other words, if an infant girl, and not a boy, had been conceived by the Holy Spirit, that stage of work would have been completed all the same. If that had been the case, then the present stage of work would have to be completed by a male instead, but the work would be completed all the same. The work done in either stage is equally significant; neither stage of work is repeated, nor does it conflict with the other. At the time, Jesus, in doing His work, was called the only Son, and "Son" implies the male gender. Why is the only Son not mentioned in this current stage? Because the requirements of the work have necessitated a change in gender from that of Jesus. With God there is no distinction of gender. He does His work as He wishes, and in doing His work He is not subject to any restrictions, but is especially free. Yet every stage of work has its own practical significance. God became flesh twice, and it is self-evident that His incarnation during the last days is the final time. He has come to make known all His deeds. If in this stage He did not become flesh in order personally to do work for man to witness, man would forever cling to the notion that God is only male, not female. ... In the beginning, when Jehovah created humankind, He made two kinds of human being, both male and female; and so there is the division of male and female in His incarnate flesh. He did not decide His work based on the words He spoke to Adam and Eve. The two times He has become flesh have been determined entirely according to His**

thinking at the time He first created humankind; that is, He has completed the work of His two incarnations based on the male and the female before they were corrupted' ("The Two Incarnations Complete the Significance of the Incarnation" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **'In gender, one is male and the other female, so completing the significance of God's incarnation, and dispelling man's misconceptions of God: God can become both male and female, and in essence, the incarnate God is genderless. He made both man and woman, and to Him, there is no division of gender'** ("The Essence of the Flesh Inhabited by God" in The Word Appears in the Flesh)."

After reading God's words, Brother Zhang shared this fellowship, "Whatever God does has meaning. God absolutely would not do anything lacking meaning or value. The Bible says: 'So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them' (Genesis 1:27). We can see from this that in the beginning, God created man and woman in His image. God can incarnate as a man, and He can incarnate as a woman as well. In God, there is no distinction between genders; whether He becomes a man or a woman, He possesses the essence of God and is able to do God's own work. God taking on two different genders the two times He has incarnated is to complete the significance of His incarnation and dispel man's fallacious belief that God can only incarnate as a man, that He cannot incarnate as a woman. This allows mankind to realize that not only can God's incarnation embody the identity of a man, but it can also embody the identity of a woman. This allows humanity to see that God is indeed almighty, that we are unable to fathom Him, and we should not arbitrarily judge or delimit God. Additionally, God's essence is of the spirit, and there is no differentiation of sex in spirits. Sex only applies to created mankind. God has become flesh twice in order to save and redeem mankind, therefore, the sex of God's incarnation is only dependent on the period of time in which He does His work in flesh. Once the incarnated God's work on earth concludes, He returns to the spiritual world and at that time, there is no longer any differentiation according to sex. Therefore, if we delimit God within a certain sex, it is a great blasphemy!"

Listening to the words of Almighty God and Brother Zhang's fellowship gave me a sudden flash of insight. I finally understood why God has taken on a different sex in each of His incarnations. I realized that contained within this is God's will from when He first created mankind as well as His kind intentions. If God came to work as a man for both of His incarnations, we would believe for eternity that God is a man and we would believe in error

that the male sex is greater and of higher status than the female sex. God incarnate of the last days working as a woman is an embodiment of God's fairness and righteousness, and it allowed me to see the incredible significance of God incarnating and working as a woman this time! Otherwise, we would never have an understanding of God, and our notions and delimitations of God would never be eliminated and furthermore, this would offend God's disposition. The first time that God was incarnated, He appeared as a man, and in the last days, He has appeared as a woman. These two incarnations of God truly show us the complete significance of God's incarnation; they've given me a more accurate and a more genuine understanding of God. Thanks be to God! God's work is truly wise!

After Sister Yang and Brother Zhang listened to my understanding and knowledge of God's words, they felt happy that I had been able to understand God's will and dispense with my notions and misunderstandings of God. They were moved to tears by the work of salvation that God had done upon me. We joined together in fellowship three more times. Thank God for His guidance. I understood more and more of the truth, I learned the mystery of God's incarnation, and I learned the mystery of God's three stages of work. I learned of the differences between God's work and man's work, the differences between the Holy Spirit's work and Satan's work, and other aspects of the truth. I could truly feel that Almighty God is the return of the Lord Jesus and that He is the truth, the way and the life. That Saturday evening, Sister Yang sent me a new music video called God's Love Circles My Heart, "God's will has been revealed—to perfect those who truly love Him. Innocents, pulsing with life, offer up your praises to Him. A dance of joy is beautiful, leap and prance around the throne. From the earth's four corners, we come, summoned by God's voice. His words of life bestowed on us, we're cleansed by His judgment. ..." This song was so encouraging for me that I was moved to tears. I dialed Sister Yang's number, but I was so overcome with emotion that I couldn't speak. All I could do was say over and over, "Thank God! Thank you ..."

Once the intensity of my feelings had subsided, that same night I had a very heartfelt talk with my brothers and sisters. I was thankful that Almighty God had not given up on my salvation that whole time and that He had not dealt with me according to my rebellion and resistance. Instead, He was always with me. He used gospel movies, videos, and brothers' and sisters' articles on their own experiences to guide and move me bit by bit, bringing me back to His house, bringing me before Him. From the bottom of my heart, I told my brothers

and sisters: “I have already experienced God’s love and I also understand the truth of God’s incarnation. I’ll never again believe hearsay or rumors. I completely accept Almighty God as my Savior and as my God. For I have already determined that Almighty God is the return of the Lord Jesus—He is the God that has provided me with so much grace, and He is the Redeemer of mankind.”

When I think back on how I listened to rumors in the past, how I was rife with conflict about the work of God in the last days and even said some words of judgment against God, of how I was so rebellious, I feel incredibly indebted to God—I’m aggrieved and full of regret. However, Sister Yang told me: “When we don’t know God, as human beings we’re really prone to being deceived by lies. As long as we truly repent, God will not keep a record. God’s word says, **‘God did not come this time to strike people down, but rather to save people to the greatest extent possible. Who is entirely free of error? If everyone were struck down, then how could it be called “salvation”?’** Some transgressions are done on purpose, while others are done involuntarily. With involuntary matters, if you can change after you recognize them, would God strike you down before you changed? Can God save people that way? That is not how He works! Regardless of whether you transgress involuntarily or out of a rebellious nature, you must remember: **Afterward, you must hurry up and wake up to reality, and press onward; no matter what situation arises, you must press onward. The work God is doing is that of salvation, and He will not casually strike down the people He wants to save**” (“God’s Will Is to Save People to the Greatest Extent Possible” in Records of Christ’s Talks). God’s words have given me great comfort and they have allowed me to see that God is full of mercy and forgiveness. God’s love is so great! I can’t hold back the gratitude to God I feel within my heart. Over the period of time that followed, through my interactions with brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God, I could see that the church is not at all what the rumors purport it to be. In fact, it is completely the opposite. This is the place for us to pursue the truth and know God. When we have gatherings in The Church of Almighty God, nobody talks about eating, drinking, and making merry; nobody talks about cars, money or houses; nobody talks about the dirty, filthy, evil things in the world. We all read Almighty God’s words together and we fellowship on our experience and knowledge of God’s words. We practice and adhere to Almighty God’s words. I can see that within The Church of Almighty God, God’s words hold power, the truth holds power, and Christ holds power. This is a place full

of fairness and righteousness. I feel like I'm getting a taste of a beautiful life in a new heaven and earth! Now when I think back on those rumors, I realize that they do nothing but trap and harm people, and it was due to those rumors that I nearly lost God's salvation of the last days. Thankfully, Almighty God saved me and allowed me to gain some understanding of God's work. My spirit was awakened, I broke through the tangled web of Satan's rumors, and I came before the throne of God. I give thanks to God for saving me!

5. A Wandering Heart Comes Home

By Novo, Philippines

My name is Novo, and I'm from the Philippines. I have followed my mom in her belief in God since I was little, and would go listen to sermons at church with my siblings. Although I had believed in the Lord for many years, I felt that I hadn't undergone any change and that I was the same as an unbeliever. Within my heart I was constantly thinking about how to make more money, and about how to spend my days in comfort and enjoy the good life. On top of that, I would also go out drinking with my friends all the time, and the moment I had any spare cash I'd go gambling. I knew that doing these things was at odds with the Lord's will—I would often pray to the Lord and confess my sins, and I would firmly resolve to Him that I would give up these bad habits and never sin again from that day on. But with the cajoling and enticement of my friends, I simply couldn't control myself. And so it was that I became more and more degenerate, my heart grew farther and farther away from God, there was no longer any sincerity in my prayers. Every week I would just say a few simple prayers to get it over and done with. Sometimes I felt real despair as I knew that when the Lord returned He would judge each and every person based on their actions and behavior, and then whether they would go up to heaven or down to hell. I felt I was so degenerate that God would not forgive me again. I later married and had kids, and all I thought about was my wife and my children. I had pushed my faith to the back of my mind long before. In order to provide a better future for my children and to realize my desire to become rich, I decided to go work abroad, which is what brought me to Taiwan. After finding a job I still didn't make any lifestyle changes. In my leisure time I would go with my workmates to drink and sing karaoke, living a life of revelry; I'd long since relegated my belief in God to the back of my

mind.

In 2011, I worked as a welder in a factory in Taiwan. One day in 2012, a colleague in Taiwan learned that I was a Catholic, so she invited me to Mass at her church. One Sunday morning, she came to fetch me from the factory and took me to her friend's house. It was there that I met Brother Joseph. He asked me, "Brother, do you believe in the second coming of the Lord Jesus?" I said that I did. He then asked me, "Do you know what work the Lord Jesus will do when He returns?" I replied, "I believe that when the Lord Jesus returns, He will sit upon a great white throne and judge mankind. Everyone will account for their sins kneeling before the judgment seat, and then the Lord will decide whether they are to go up to heaven or down into hell based on their actions and deeds." Brother Joseph continued to ask me, "If we told you that the Lord Jesus has already come and is currently doing His work of judgment of the last days, thus fulfilling the prophecy that **'judgment must begin at the house of God,'** would you believe this?" I was quite surprised when I heard him say this. I thought: "Has the Lord Jesus already returned? How is this possible? I haven't seen the great white throne appear in the sky, and I haven't seen the Lord descending on a white cloud. And yet he says that the Lord has returned to do His work of judgment, thus fulfilling the prophecy that **'judgment must begin at the house of God.'** It makes sense. God's wisdom is unfathomable to man, so I'd better keep seeking." I then replied, "Brother, I wouldn't dare say whether the Lord Jesus has or has not returned, so please fellowship this with me." They then found a number of passages within the Bible concerning prophecies of the Lord's return and His doing His work of judgment that they read to me. For instance, there was chapter 4, verse 17 in the First Epistle of Peter which says: "**For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.**" And also chapter 16, verses 12–13 in the Gospel of John: "**I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.**" Brother Joseph said this "Spirit of truth" refers to the return of the Lord and His expressing the truth and doing His work of judgment. God of the last days has returned in the flesh as the Son of man. On the foundation of His work of redemption in the Age of Grace, He expresses the truth and does the stage of His work of judgment beginning with the house of God. In reality, this work of judgment is the work to thoroughly purify and save man. This precisely fulfills the Lord Jesus' prophecies: "**And if**

any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejects Me, and receives not My words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:47–48). **“For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son.... And [He] has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man”** (John 5:22–27). I listened attentively to the brother’s fellowship, and I believed that all these messages he was sharing with me were true because I believe that all the Lord’s prophecies have to be fulfilled, that they must come true.

Afterward, Brother Joseph read two passages of Almighty God’s word in **“Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth”** to me: **“The work of judgment is God’s own work, so it must naturally be carried out by God Himself; it cannot be done by man in His stead. Because judgment is the use of the truth to conquer humankind, there is no question that God would still appear in the incarnate image to perform this work among man. That is to say, in the last days, Christ shall use the truth to teach people across the world and make all truths known to them. This is God’s work of judgment.”** **“In the last days, Christ uses a variety of truths to teach man, to expose the essence of man, and to dissect the words and deeds of man. These words comprise various truths, such as man’s duty, how man should obey God, how man should be loyal to God, how man ought to live out normal humanity, as well as the wisdom and the disposition of God, and so on. These words are all directed at the essence of man and his corrupt disposition. In particular, the words that expose how man spurns God are spoken in regard to how man is an embodiment of Satan, and an enemy force against God. In undertaking His work of judgment, God does not simply make clear the nature of man with a few words; He exposes, deals with, and prunes over the long term. These methods of exposure, dealing, and pruning cannot be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced into submission to God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God. What the work of judgment brings about is man’s understanding of the true face of God and the truth about his own rebelliousness. The work of judgment allows man to gain much understanding of the will of God, of the purpose of God’s work, and of the mysteries that are incomprehensible to him. It also allows**

man to recognize and know his corrupt substance and the roots of his corruption, as well as to discover the ugliness of man. These effects are all brought about by the work of judgment, for the substance of this work is actually the work of opening up the truth, the way, and the life of God to all those who have faith in Him. This work is the work of judgment done by God” (The Word Appears in the Flesh).

After reading these words, Brother Joseph fellowshiped with me many truths regarding God’s work of judgment of the last days. I came to understand that God’s work is very practical and that it isn’t supernatural at all, that God’s work of judgment of the last days is not at all like I had imagined. I had imagined God placing a gigantic table in mid-air, with God sitting on a great white throne and all of mankind kneeling before Him. Then God would list our sins one by one in order to determine whether we were good or wicked, and would decide whether we went up to heaven or down to hell. Instead, God has become flesh and has come to the world to express the truth in a practical way, to judge man’s sins, and expose the truth of man’s corruption as well as his nature and essence. Brother Joseph went on in fellowship to tell us that our satanic dispositions, such as our arrogance and self-importance, our crookedness and cunning, and our selfishness and baseness, must all undergo God’s judgment before we can be purified. The ultimate outcome of God’s work of judgment is so that we may see our own filth and corruption, our ugliness and wickedness, and see our essence that defies and betrays God, that we may know that we have been corrupted so deeply by Satan, that we are filled with satanic dispositions, that we are the embodiment of Satan, and that we should perish. Only in this way can we come to hate and curse ourselves, and forsake Satan once and for all. Moreover, it is so that, within the judgment and chastisement of God’s words, we may come to know God’s righteous, holy and unoffendable disposition. We can then unconsciously develop a God-fearing heart, never again dare to recklessly disobey and defy God, and become able to forsake our flesh, and practice the truth. Once our life disposition has undergone change we will then be able to truly obey and worship God. And once we have gained various aspects of the truth expressed by God in the last days, we will then be thoroughly purified and saved by God, and qualified to be brought by God into His kingdom. Those who refuse to accept God’s work of judgment of the last days are incapable of gaining God’s purification—in the end they can only be eliminated by God’s work, and will have lost the opportunity to be saved and enter into the kingdom of heaven. Hearing Brother Joseph’s fellowship, I felt that God’s work to save man

is so very true and practical!

I thought of how I had believed in the Lord for many years and although I often confessed my sins to the Lord and repented, I would then continue sinning, lying, cheating, being crooked and cunning, and would even often reveal my wildly self-important, arrogant and self-righteous satanic disposition. I was constantly living in a cycle of sinning and confessing, confessing and sinning—I was living in such pain. God has now come to do His work of judgment and purification of the last days, and this is sorely needed by corrupt mankind. Those who believe in the Lord and have had their sins absolved still need the purification of God's work of judgment in the last days. The Bible says, "[H]oliness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). The Lord is holy. If we only have our sins absolved, but our sinful nature and satanic dispositions are not purified, then at any moment we are still capable of sinning and defying God, of frequently complaining or even betraying God. How could we, filled with such defilement and corruption, be qualified to look upon the Lord's face? Only then did I feel in my heart how very necessary God's work of judgment in the last days is! It would be so unrealistic, so impractical if the Lord came and took everyone up into the air to meet Him in accordance with people's notions and imaginings! Brother Joseph then fellowshiped with me his experiences and testimony of how he accepted God's judgment and chastisement. I really felt that his fellowship contained the enlightenment and illumination of the Holy Spirit. Listening to it was very edifying, and I believed that the Lord Jesus must really have returned. I thus decided to seek and investigate God's work of the last days so that I wouldn't miss my chance to welcome the Lord's coming.

Afterward, Brother Joseph gave me a copy of *The Word Appears in the Flesh*, and I was thrilled. When I got back to my dormitory that evening, I began to read God's words and I read them all night long. I read these words of Almighty God: **"Your mouths are filled with words of deceit and filth, of betrayal and arrogance. Never have you spoken words of sincerity to Me, no holy words, no words of submission to Me upon experiencing My word. What, in the end, is your faith like? There is nothing but desire and money in your hearts, and nothing but material things in your minds. Every day, you calculate how to get something from Me. Every day, you count how much wealth and how many material things you have gained from Me. Every day, you await ever more blessings to come down upon you so that you may enjoy, in greater quantities and of a higher**

standard, the things that may be enjoyed. It is not Me who is in your thoughts at each and every moment, nor the truth that comes from Me, but rather your husband or wife, your sons, daughters, and the things you eat and wear. You think of how you can gain ever greater, ever higher enjoyment. But even when you have filled your stomach to bursting, are you still not a corpse? Even when, outwardly, you adorn yourself in such beautiful apparel, are you not still a walking corpse devoid of life? You toil for the sake of your stomach, until your hair is streaked with gray, yet none of you sacrifice a single hair for My work. You are constantly on the go, taxing your body and racking your brain, for the sake of your own flesh, and for your sons and daughters—yet not one of you shows any worry or concern for My will. What is it that you still hope to gain from Me?” (“Many Are Called, but Few Are Chosen” in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

What these words revealed was exactly the situation in my life, and they were how I truly felt in my heart. The words were like a double-edged sword that cut through into my numb heart. I knew that only God could examine man’s innermost heart, and only God could reveal the truth of mankind’s corruption as well as what’s hidden deep within man. I felt that these words were the Holy Spirit’s utterances, and they were God’s voice. From God’s words, I came to know that although I had believed in the Lord for many years and I often confessed and repented to the Lord, my sinful nature and satanic disposition had not been purified and had not changed at all. I was only acknowledging the Lord’s name, but there was no place for the Lord in my heart, nor did I expend myself or work for the Lord. I was constantly caught up in how to make more money, how to enhance my pleasures of the flesh, and how I could get my family to live more prosperously, never once concerning myself with God’s will. I even knew that I lied and sinned often but thought nothing of this. I had always believed that God was the forever loving, forever merciful God, and even if I sinned, He would absolve me of my sins, be merciful to me and bless me. Only after having read these utterances expressed by God in the last days did I see God’s righteous and holy disposition, and I knew that God’s disposition is something that no one may offend. The judgment and chastisement of God’s words gave rise to reverence for Him within me and I lamented my own past. I fell down before God and wept bitterly: “O God, I have rebelled against You, cheated You and defied You in many things, and I am unworthy to come before You. All I’ve done only merits punishment. O God, thank You for giving me the opportunity to repent and be saved. From now on, I shall do all in my power to pursue the truth, perform

my duty well and repay Your love.” After I prayed, I made firm my resolution: I must accept God’s judgment and change my life of sinning and confessing; I must read God’s words more and contemplate them more so that I may understand more of the truth and have the strength to forsake my flesh, practice the truth and meet God’s will.

From that time on, I took *The Word Appears in the Flesh* with me to work so that I could read and contemplate God’s words during my work breaks. From Almighty God’s words, I saw how corrupt and rebellious my behavior and thoughts were. Later, I read these words of God that say: **“Your prayer should proceed step by step, in line with the true state of your heart and the work of the Holy Spirit; you come to commune with God in accordance with His will and with what He requires of man. When you begin the practice of prayer, first give your heart to God. Do not attempt to grasp God’s will—only try to speak the words within your heart to God. When you come before God, speak in this way: ‘Oh God, only today do I realize that I used to disobey You. I am truly corrupt and despicable. I have only been wasting my life. From today I will live for You. I will live a life of meaning and will satisfy Your will. May Your Spirit always work in me, continuously illuminating and enlightening me. Let me bear strong and resounding testimony before You. Let Satan see Your glory, Your testimony, and the proof of Your triumph, manifest in us.’ When you pray in this way, your heart will be completely set free. Having prayed in this way, your heart will be closer to God, and if you can pray in this way often, the Holy Spirit will inevitably work in you”** (“Concerning the Practice of Prayer” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). Within God’s words, I found a path of practice to resolve my corrupt disposition, and I began to earnestly pray to God with a sincere heart, opening up to God about my corrupt disposition and telling God about what I hoped within my heart to achieve. I asked Him to guide me that I may live by His words. Through these kinds of prayers, I often felt that God was leading me and enlightening me, and my heart became filled with faith and strength. I no longer lived the way I had before, nor did I act any longer in accordance with those corrupt thoughts and ideas I had in my heart. My life had changed; it was no longer the degenerate life I had led before of sinning and confessing, but instead I was truly living before God, and I had gained God’s care and protection.

In July 2014, I returned to the Philippines, and only then did I become aware that God had also chosen many brothers and sisters in the Philippines. I was so happy. Now I

fellowship God's words with my brothers and sisters in the church, we live a life of the church, and we help and support one another. We all pursue the truth; we seek to change our dispositions and be saved by God. We also bear witness to Almighty God's work of the last days to the people of our own country as well as to those of other countries so that they know that the Lord Jesus has already returned and they may, like us, gain God's salvation of the last days. Thank Almighty God! I now live a very enriched and happy life. I have completely rid myself of the kind of degenerate, decadent life I had before. It is Almighty God who has led me to find my life goal and direction. I feel that this is the only way to live a life of meaning!

6. Listen! Who Is This Who Speaks?

By Zhou Li, China

As a church preacher, nothing is more painful than spiritual impoverishment and having nothing to preach. I felt helpless seeing fewer and fewer brothers and sisters coming to meetings, and I came before the Lord many times to pray earnestly and ask the Lord to strengthen brothers and sisters' faith. But the desolation of the church did not improve at all and even I lived in weakness and negativity ...

I was working at home one day when Brother Wang and Brother Lin suddenly appeared, and I happily let them in. After exchanging pleasantries, Brother Wang said, "Sister Zhou, how is your spirit doing at present?" I sighed and said, "Don't mention it. I am weak in spirit now and I have nothing to preach in my sermons! Brothers and sisters are all negative and weak too. There is hardly anyone in the church." Brother Lin asked, "Sister Zhou, do you know why you have nothing to preach about in sermons and why there is hardly anyone in the church?" As soon as he had spoken, I thought: This is exactly what I want to know. Could they really know why? I hurriedly asked, "Why?" Brother Wang said, "Because the Lord has already returned. He has incarnated for the second time and is uttering His words and performing new work. Many brothers and sisters have already accepted God's work in the Age of Kingdom and live within the stream of the Holy Spirit's current work. Their conditions are getting better and better. Those who have not kept pace with God's new work have lost the Holy Spirit's work, and thus they have no words to preach and are negative and weak.

We must make haste to keep up with God's footsteps!" Hearing this, I suddenly remembered the words of my senior co-worker: "If someone says that God has come to do new work and that He has uttered new words, then that is deviating from the Bible, and deviating from the Bible is not believing in the Lord; it is apostasy." Thinking of this, I very seriously said: "Do senior co-workers not often tell us that to deviate from the Bible is to not believe in the Lord? You should all know this, that deviating from the Bible is deviating from the Lord's way. How dare you try to preach this way to me!" I angrily stood up as I said this. Brother Lin said, "Sister Zhou, don't get worked up. We know that you sincerely believe in God and are zealous, and that is why we are telling you about God's new work. We have believed in the Lord for so many years. Have we not always looked forward to the Lord's return? Now the Lord has returned and is performing the judgment work of the last days. This is great news. We must seek and investigate diligently and not miss the opportunity to welcome the Lord!" Without waiting for Brother Lin to finish, I put up my hand and loudly interrupted him, "Stop, stop, stop! Don't say anymore. I will not believe in that which deviates from the Bible. You do not abide by the Lord's way, but I must." They saw that I really was not listening and so had no choice but to leave. Later, they came back a few more times, but I just ignored them.

Later on, Brother Wang and Brother Lin came to my house with two sisters to preach the gospel to me. That day, I was picking beans at home while my husband was outside working. He saw them coming and let them into the house. As soon as I saw them, my heart began to race: Why had they come back again and brought two reinforcements with them? The four of them came into the house and said hello to me and then began to fellowship with my husband. I felt even more anxious and thought to myself: "What they are preaching deviates from the Bible so I have to watch my husband and not let him take in anything!" I wanted to drive them away, but I was worried that my husband would get upset with me. All I could do was stay silent, although I didn't take in a word they said. But my husband listened and nodded his head and could not stop himself from saying, "Yeah! That's right! Yes! That's how it is. You explain it so well!" Seeing my husband so won over, I suddenly felt furious and pointed at my husband and snapped: "What is right? How much have you read the Bible? How long have you believed in God? Have you prayed to the Lord? You say, 'Right, right, right,' but how much do you understand?" With me making such a racket, the room suddenly fell silent and they all looked at each other. My husband hastily said to me, "Don't shout. Listen first. It's good for us. If you do not listen, how can you know whether it's right or

wrong?" Seeing that I couldn't stop him from listening to them, I angrily pushed the beans back and forth with both hands, deliberately making loud noises, and thought, "Let you listen? I won't let you hear anything. I'll put an end to this!" But making loud noises with the beans did not stop my husband from listening to their fellowship. On the contrary, he talked and laughed with the four of them and their fellowship was most harmonious. After a while, my husband said to me happily: "Oh, Li! The Lord has really returned. The words of this book are the personal utterances of God! It's so great! Li, go and cook something for us." I gave him a look and did not respond. Later, Brother Lin left some tapes, a book of hymns and a copy of *The Word Appears in the Flesh* with my husband and then left. I just couldn't take it anymore and I said to my husband, "How many times have senior co-workers told us that to believe in God we cannot deviate from the Bible, and that deviating from the Bible is not believing in God. Have you forgotten? Why can't you take a stand on this issue?" My husband said without hesitation: "What they are saying is not deviating from the Bible but higher and deeper than the Bible. Moreover, God's new work that they are spreading fulfills the word of the Lord and the prophecies of the Book of Revelation. After listening to their fellowship, I understand and am clear about many of the things in the Bible that I did not understand before. The gospel of Almighty God that they testify is the true way. Open your eyes and look. There are only a few people left in our church. The church has become desolate. Yet you still do not give up on the words of senior co-workers. Isn't this too foolish? You'd better hurry and look into this." Hearing him say this, I angrily said, "What do you know? To deviate from the Bible is to betray the Lord. If you do not abide by the Bible, I will!"

After this, every day as soon as my husband had time, he read the book that Brother Lin had left, *The Word Appears in the Flesh*. One day, my husband got up before dawn to read that book. In a daze, I heard my husband reading: "**[C]ould it be that you have forgotten...? Have you forgotten...?**" ("How Peter Came to Know Jesus"). Hearing him reading out loud, I felt a little angry and thought: So early in the morning and not letting people sleep! After a while, I faintly heard: "**[B]ecause before Jesus was crucified, He had told Peter: 'I am not of this world, and you too are not of this world'**" ("How Peter Came to Know Jesus"). Strange! Why is the Lord Jesus mentioned in this book? Could I have heard wrong? Then I clearly heard: "**[C]ould it be that you have forgotten...? Have you forgotten...?**" When I heard this, my heart was a little stirred and I could no longer sleep. I said to myself: "Who spoke these words? O God! Is it You who is asking me this question?"

It's like You are saying these words to me. They are so gentle! I have to quickly get up and make breakfast. After breakfast I will see what is said in that book after all, to see whether or not it actually deviates from the Bible and whether or not these are the words of God."

After breakfast, my husband went to read the book again. I thought to myself: Why did he not ask me to read it with him? I stood at the door for a long time, but my husband kept his head buried in the book and did not notice me. So I paced back and forth in the kitchen. I felt very worried. I really wanted to read what was written in the book. So I poked my head in the room and saw that my husband still had his head buried in the book. I wanted to go and read it too, but when I thought of the many times the brothers and sisters had come to preach to me and how I had always refused, I wondered whether my husband would criticize me if I took the initiative to go and read it. If he criticized me, I'd feel so embarrassed! Thinking of this, I retreated. As I paced back and forth outside, I remembered the words my husband had read out loud in the morning and felt even more anxious. I thought: This won't do. I have to go in and see what that book is all about. But I backed away again when I got to the door. Like a cat on hot bricks, I didn't know what to do. Finally, I made my mind up: Oh! God wants me to speak up! Who told me to speak like that and not listen to my husband's advice? So I braced myself and walked into the room and, plucking up my courage, I said awkwardly, "May I read it together with you?" He glanced up at me and looked very surprised, then delightedly said, "Come, come! Let's read together." At this moment, I was extremely moved. My husband hadn't criticized me as I had imagined! My anxious heart finally settled down and I happily read the book with my husband. However, the words I read in the book were not what I had heard in the early hours of the morning! Just then, my husband went out, and I hurriedly flicked through the pages of the book. All at once, I saw what I was looking for, and I happily read it out loud: **"Peter was greatly encouraged by Jesus' words, because before Jesus was crucified, He had told Peter: 'I am not of this world, and you too are not of this world.' Later, when Peter reached a point of great pain, Jesus reminded him: 'Peter, have you forgotten? I am not of the world, and it was only for My work that I departed earlier. You too are not of the world, have you really forgotten? I have told you twice, do you not remember?' Hearing this, Peter said: 'I have not forgotten!' Jesus then said: 'You once spent a happy time gathered with Me in heaven and a period of time by My side. You miss Me, and I miss you. Although the creations are not worth mentioning in My eyes, how can I not love**

one who is innocent and lovable? Have you forgotten My promise? You must accept My commission on earth; you must fulfill the task I entrusted to you. One day I will certainly lead you to be by My side” (“How Peter Came to Know Jesus” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). I read it several times and the more I read it the more I felt that these words did not deviate from the Bible. They were just clearer and more transparent than the Bible. But my senior co-workers had said, “Whoever spreads the message of God coming to do new work and God uttering new words is deviating from the Bible, and deviation from the Bible is deviation from the way of the Lord.” But what they had said did not tally with the facts, did it? I prayed in my heart: “O God! What does it all mean? May You enlighten and guide me, so that I can understand Your will. ...”

Later, I saw that the words of Almighty God said: **“For many years, people’s traditional means of belief (that of Christianity, one of the world’s three major religions) has been to read the Bible; departure from the Bible is not the belief in the Lord, departure from the Bible is heterodoxy and heresy, and even when people read other books, the foundation of these books must be the explanation of the Bible. Which is to say, if you say you believe in the Lord, then you must read the Bible, you must eat and drink the Bible, and outside the Bible you must not worship any book that does not involve the Bible. If you do, then you are betraying God. From the time when there was the Bible, people’s belief in the Lord has been the belief in the Bible. Instead of saying people believe in the Lord, it is better to say they believe in the Bible; rather than saying they have begun reading the Bible, it is better to say they have begun believing in the Bible; and rather than saying they have returned before the Lord, it would be better to say they have returned before the Bible. In this way, people worship the Bible as if it were God, as if it were their lifeblood and losing it would be the same as losing their life. People see the Bible as being as high as God, and there are even those who see it as higher than God. If people are without the work of the Holy Spirit, if they cannot feel God, they can carry on living—but as soon as they lose the Bible, or lose the famous chapters and sayings from the Bible, then it is as if they have lost their life”** (“Concerning the Bible (1)” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God’s words really touched my heart. Was this not actually speaking of me? Thinking back to when I started believing in the Lord, this was how I upheld my belief. I treated the Bible as my lifeblood. I had to put it somewhere high up after every time I read it, for fear of the children touching it.

I had regarded the Bible as being above all else and had even thought that deviating from the Bible was a betrayal of the Lord. Had I been wrong to do this? With a seeking heart, I continued reading, from “Concerning the Bible (1)” up to “Concerning the Bible (4).” The more I read, the more enlightened I felt. The words of Almighty God made me fully understand. It turned out that the Bible was just a historical record of God’s work and a testimony of the first two stages of God’s work. Just as the Old Testament records the work done by Jehovah God from the creation of the world to the end of the Age of Law, the New Testament records the work of the Lord Jesus in the Age of Grace. God’s work is always new, never old and always moves forward. Now God has done new work outside of the Bible—the work of the Age of Kingdom. This stage of work is the last stage of work of God’s salvation for mankind. From the Age of Law, to the Age of Grace and then to the Age of Kingdom in the last days, the three stages are all done by one God. It was a big eye-opener for me to read the words of Almighty God, and I feasted my eyes on the words! Yes, God is so almighty and wise, how could He only do the limited work recorded in the Bible? And from the words of Almighty God, I truly saw that God’s last days’ words and work did not repudiate the Bible. Instead, they elevated and deepened the work of the Age of Law and the Age of Grace as recorded in the Bible, and everything God does now is more in line with people’s present need. One passage of God’s words says: **“You must understand why, today, you are asked not to read the Bible, why there is another work that is separate from the Bible, why God does not look for newer, more detailed practice in the Bible, why there is instead mightier work outside of the Bible. This is all what you should understand. You must know the difference between the old and new work, and even though you do not read the Bible, you must be able to dissect it; if not, you will still worship the Bible, and it will be difficult for you to enter into the new work and undergo new changes. Since there is a higher way, why study that low, outdated way? Since there are newer utterances, and newer work, why live amid old historical records? The new utterances can provide for you, which proves that this is the new work; the old records can’t sate you, or satisfy your current needs, which proves that they are history, and not the work of the here and now. The highest way is the newest work, and with the new work, no matter how high the way of the past, it is still the history of people’s reflections, and no matter its value as reference, it is still the old way. Even though it is recorded in the ‘holy book,’ the old way is history; even though there is**

no record of it in the 'holy book,' the new way is of the here and now. This way can save you, and this way can change you, for this is the work of the Holy Spirit" ("Concerning the Bible (1)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). At this moment, I suddenly saw the light, and I realized why I had always upheld the Bible yet my spirit had become increasingly negative, so much so that I had even run out of things to preach; I realized that brothers and sisters were also getting weaker and weaker, to the point where they did not even attend meetings, whereas those brothers and sisters who had accepted the gospel of the kingdom of Almighty God were full of faith. No matter how I treated them, they were never negative or discouraged, and still they came repeatedly to preach the gospel to me. The reason for this was that what I was clinging to was God's past work. It was the old way, that had long since lost the work of the Holy Spirit. Yet the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God had accepted the leadership of God's new work, had received the supply of God's present words and obtained the work of the Holy Spirit. This was the difference between the new way and the old way! This was the root cause of why the religious world was declining, and The Church of Almighty God was becoming more and more prosperous! "Lord," I prayed. "Now I finally understand that You have really come back, and You have given us a new way, a new supply of life. I thank You!"

At this time, my emotions were torn between happiness and feeling bad. I was happy that God had not abandoned me, despite me being so rebellious and disobedient, and that He had used this special way of my husband reading out God's words to make me hear God's voice. This really was God's love for me and His salvation to me! I felt bad because I had looked forward to the Lord's return for many years, but I had never considered the possibility that I would reject the Lord when He returned and knocked on my door. Those brothers and sisters repeatedly came all this way to spread the gospel to me, yet all I did was ignore them. They fellowshiped with my husband and yet I mocked them and deliberately disturbed them.... Thinking of this, my heart felt pained and I couldn't stop the tears flowing from my eyes. I knelt before God and prayed to Him: "Almighty God! I was wrong. For so many years I have always upheld the Bible and thought that deviating from the Bible was not believing in God. I treated the Bible as God and rejected Your new work again and again, and I rejected Your coming. I was so blind! Now I am willing to put aside the Bible, follow Your new work and listen to Your words of the new age. I will never be

hostile to You again and I am not willing to let my entire life be ruined by my notions and imaginings. O God! I wish to make a resolution, to cooperate with You and to bring those in the church who truly believe in You back into Your family to make up what I owe You!"

7. How I Nearly Became a Foolish Virgin

By Li Fang, China

In the fall of 2002, Sister Zhao from my denomination, the Church of Truth, brought her niece, Sister Wang, to my home to tell me the great news of the coming of the Lord. After a few days of reading the words of Almighty God and listening to Sister Wang's detailed fellowship, I understood that, from the creation of the world until now, God has performed three stages of work in order to save mankind. Other truths that I also came to know were God's adoption of a different name during each stage of His work, the significance of God's name in each age, and the mystery of God's incarnation, etc. These truths really came as big eye-openers for me, and I feasted my eyes upon them. I thought to myself: "This way sounds crystal clear, and Almighty God very probably is the returned Lord Jesus, so I'd better make sure I grasp this chance and read more of Almighty God's words." Before leaving, Sister Wang left some books of God's words for me. Whenever I had time during the day, I read God's words. The more I read them, the more I loved reading them and the more I felt that they were the words of God. After three days I became anxious. I thought: "My son, who is also a believer, and many brothers and sisters in my church still don't know this great news about the return of the Lord. I'd better hurry up and tell them."

The next day early in the morning, I went to my son's home. I said happily to him, "This is such a great book. You should read it as soon as possible." My son gave me a glance and asked, "What book? You seem pretty delighted. Just put it down there and I'll take a look at it when I have time." I thought that, as all believers looked forward to the Lord's return, my son would be happy to learn that the Lord had already arrived.

I would never in a million years have imagined, however, that three days later my son would show up at my home at the head of six people. One of them was Pastor Xia from my denomination, and the others were pastors and preachers from my son's denomination. I was a bit stunned to see them, as I couldn't figure out what was up and why so many people

had come to see me. A pastor surnamed Li looked closely at me for a moment and with a look of concern on his face he said, “Auntie, we’re all believers in the Lord, one big family. Your son tells me that someone has given you a book, but you really shouldn’t read it. Now it’s the last days, and the Lord Jesus said: **‘Then if any man shall say to you, See, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect’** (Matthew 24:23–24). We believe that these words of the Lord Jesus mean that anyone who says that the Lord has returned is a fraudster who we must guard against and refuse to listen to. Right now, throughout the whole world there is only Eastern Lightning that is publicly bearing witness to the Lord’s return, so, whatever you do, don’t have anything to do with them anymore. Don’t read any of Eastern Lightning’s books either. Their way is different from our faith, so don’t listen to them. You don’t understand the Bible very well, and you have small stature, so you’re easily deceived. We’ve been preaching for many years and we understand the Bible well. We’ve traveled all over China and we’ve seen a lot and we are more mature in life. We’ve come today specially to rescue you, so you’ve got to believe us and not try to have it your own way.” When I heard this, I thought to myself: “This pastor seems to be concerned about me and what he said isn’t wrong. I’m old and not very well educated, and I don’t understand the Bible that well. I certainly can’t discern as well as they do.” At this point, Pastor Xia said, “I’m a pastor, and the Lord has given me His flock to manage. So it’s my responsibility to make sure that you don’t stray from the true way. If I don’t look after the Lord’s flock, I won’t be able to render account to the Lord. Sister, don’t run around to other groups like this. If you get stolen from us by Eastern Lightning, then all these years that you’ve believed in the Lord will be wasted!” Looking at their tense faces and hearing the serious tone in which they were talking to me made me feel a bit frightened. I thought: “That’s right. If I start believing wrongly then won’t all those years of faith be wasted?” But then I thought: “The words in that book seemed so good, so right. These pastors and preachers haven’t read the words of Almighty God, so how could they say that it isn’t a true way?” So I said to them, “You may be right when you say this, but what I heard from them completely matches the words of the Lord in the Bible!” When they heard me say that, they all started talking at once, saying so many things to scare me that I became dizzy and confused and experienced a lot of emotional turmoil. I sat there, unable to say a single thing. Then they wanted me to pray with them and curse against Eastern Lightning, but I

didn't go along with it, and so they started to terrorize me again. Finally, my son said, "Let me deal with my mom now." Then he took the two hymn books and the cassette tapes of Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs, as well as a book of God's words named Judgment Begins With the House of God from the cupboard, and he gave them to the pastor to take away.

After they left, I was so upset that I couldn't even eat my dinner, so I came before the Lord and prayed: "Lord Jesus, is what those pastors said true or not? It seems like they're really concerned for my life. If I don't listen to them, will I put my faith in the wrong place? Oh Lord, if You really have returned as Almighty God and I don't accept You, then wouldn't I be closing the door on You? Wouldn't I just be like one of the foolish virgins? Oh Lord, through reading the words of Almighty God these last few days, I feel like my spirit has gained a lot of provision. I've truly and honestly felt this, but could I be wrong? Now that they've taken away my books and my cassette tapes of hymns, I feel really sad and I don't know what to do. Please show me the way...." After praying, I suddenly remembered that Sister Wang had given me another book of Almighty God's words and had asked me to hide it deep inside the cupboard. When I realized that I still had this book, I felt a little bit better. But then I thought about what those pastors had said, and I was still at a loss about what to do. Should I read that book or not? That night, I hardly slept at all, my mind in turmoil. Again and again I prayed to God in tears ...

Early the next day, my son came to take me to a meeting at my former church. I was very much undecided, but my son dragged me down to the meeting place and even told a preacher that I'd been stolen by Eastern Lightning and he asked her to do her best to persuade me to stay. In an instant, the preacher and all of the brothers and sisters surrounded me. The preacher took hold of my hand, and in a gentle voice said, "Auntie, whatever you do, don't listen to anyone else preaching. If you start believing wrongly, when the Lord comes to rapture the congregations then you'll be left behind, won't you? You have small stature, so if anyone gives you any kind of book to read it would be better for you to ask us first. Let us check on it for you...." The brothers and sisters also kept trying to persuade me to stay, and I was moved to tears by their "love." When they saw how moved I was, they made their point once more: "If anyone from Eastern Lightning comes to visit you again, don't let them in. Don't have anything more to do with them!" I nodded in agreement.

It was only a few days later that Sister Wang came to see me again. I told her: "The

pastor read this passage from the Bible to me: **‘Then if any man shall say to you, See, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect’** (Matthew 24:23–24). In the last days, false Christs shall appear and anyone who says that the Lord has returned is a fraudster. I don’t understand the Bible, and my stature is small, so I’m easily misled. I don’t dare to listen to any other way, so I’m not going to let you in. Don’t come again.” With great sincerity Sister Wang said: “The Lord Jesus said this to ensure that we would guard against false Christs during the last days, but He didn’t intend for us to also turn our backs on Christ. If there are false Christs it’s because the real Christ has already appeared, because without the real Christ the imposters have nothing to imitate. Those words of the Lord Jesus tell us that we have to learn how to discern; they aren’t saying that we should refuse to listen to the gospel of the Lord’s return just because false Christs will appear during the last days. Otherwise, how will we be able to welcome the Lord’s return? Actually, the Lord Jesus has already clearly described the characteristics of false Christs. The main ones include manifesting signs, performing miracles, healing the sick and exorcising demons, and copying the work that the Lord Jesus has already done in order to deceive people. So during the last days, anyone who impersonates the Lord Jesus to preach the way of repentance and who can manifest a few simple signs or heal the sick and exorcise demons is a false Christ. Almighty God, who is the Lord Jesus returned in the flesh in the last days, doesn’t repeat the work that the Lord Jesus has already done, but instead does new work on the foundation of the Lord Jesus’ work of redemption. Almighty God has ended the Age of Grace and has opened the Age of Kingdom, and He expresses truths and performs the stage of work of judging and cleansing mankind. Almighty God will thoroughly save all those people who have been redeemed but who still live in sin by casting off the shackles of their sinful nature and removing them from Satan’s dark influence. He will then take mankind to their wonderful final destination. Only God Himself can do this work; none of the false Christs can.” Although what the sister was saying seemed reasonable, the things that the pastors had told me were still swirling around in my head. My mind was agitated and unable to focus and I didn’t want to hear any more of her fellowship. So I told her that I had something to do at my neighbor’s next door, which was a lie, in order to get away from her. Sister Wang came back to my home many times after that, but I always avoided her. My neighbor said to me, “She doesn’t look like a bad

person. What are you afraid of?" In my heart I knew that Sister Wang was a good person, but as I was of small stature, I was afraid of misplacing my faith.

After I returned to attend a meeting at my former church, I heard the preachers still saying things in the sermon that they'd said before. They always talked about how to guard against Eastern Lightning, or donating to the church, or they repeated a lot of boring old stuff about how much they had worked and suffered for the Lord and how much of the Lord's grace they had enjoyed.... They could not even say the tiniest bit of something with new light. I quickly grew fed up of listening to them, and I started to doze off. On one occasion, a brother from another church came to give a sermon, but it was more of the same stuff about how he'd gone uphill and down dale to do the Lord's work, about how much he'd suffered, how many people he'd converted through spreading the gospel and how many churches he'd set up. He just kept blowing his own trumpet. Listening to him made me feel very uncomfortable, and I came to the opinion that he wasn't bearing witness for the Lord but just bearing witness for himself. On another occasion, I'd just arrived at the meeting place when one of the sisters said to me, "Today we've got a 20-something female theology student giving the sermon." I was very happy to hear that and I told myself that I was going to pay special attention on this occasion, because she would definitely give a better sermon than our preachers did. But the student started her sermon with how to guard against Eastern Lightning, and then went on to talk about how she'd given up her regular studies at the age of 16 to enter the seminary to study theology, how she'd worked and suffered outdoors in spite of the rain, how many places she'd been to.... The more I listened, the more fed up I got. I thought to myself: "This is all just old wine in new bottles! Why do they keep on trotting out the same old boring stuff? None of this has got anything to do with their experience or knowledge of the Lord's words, nor is it leading us in following the Lord's way or practicing and entering into His words." I'd already been back at the meetings for over a month, but I hadn't gained anything from them. The more I listened to these sermons, the more withered my spirit became, and I thought that I would die of spiritual thirst and hunger if I carried on believing like this. Where could I go to find a bit of life? The more I thought about it, the more upset I got.

After the meeting, I walked home with a heavy heart. I thought about the book Judgment Begins With the House of God that Sister Wang had given me, which stated that people shouldn't be arrogant and shouldn't exalt themselves but should honor God as great and

exalt God. But these preachers were all bearing witness for themselves, honoring themselves above all else, and getting others to look up to them and idolize them. It seemed to me that what the book said was right! So that evening, when I was alone at home, I took out the copy of Judgment Begins With the House of God and read some of it. The more I read, the more my heart soared, and I really felt that these words could be sustenance for my life. I was puzzled as to why our pastor wouldn't let us read such a good book. Our pastor often said that he was responsible for our life and yet he only seemed to know how to bear witness for himself in his sermons. He never told us how to gain life. I remembered a period when I was very weak and didn't want to go to church meetings. The pastor never came to visit me or offered me any support. So then how come, as soon as I started getting some spiritual nourishment from reading Almighty God's words, he showed up and dragged me back to my old church to listen to them repeating the same old stuff? That wasn't taking responsibility for my life! I suddenly realized just how wrong I'd been, and I blamed myself bitterly: Almighty God's words could supply my life, and so that meant that they very probably came from God. How could I have been so stupid and blind as to believe what the pastor had said and give up investigating the true way? I also thought about how Sister Wang had always given me loving support and had borne witness to God's work of the last days for me so that I had the chance to gain God's salvation of the last days. But I hadn't been all that nice to Sister Wang, and had even avoided seeing her on a number of occasions. I shouldn't have treated her like an enemy. When I thought of this, I felt extremely sad. So I came before the Lord and tearfully said a prayer of repentance: "Lord, I treated that sister who brought me the book of God's words as an enemy and turned my back on her. This wasn't me turning my back on a person, but was actually me refusing Your salvation! Lord, now I know that I shouldn't have listened to those pastors and given up investigating God's work of the last days. I wish to repent to You, but I don't know how to find Sister Wang. Please help me...." After praying, I picked up the book again and read it late into the night. The more I read it, the more I felt that the content was good, and the more I came to despise the pastors for preventing me from reading the words of Almighty God.

I'm so grateful to the Lord for listening to my prayer! The next day at noon, when I was eating lunch, Sister Wang came to my house. I told her about everything that had happened since I last saw her. When she heard that I'd been unable to gain sustenance within religion, she read out a passage of Almighty God's words for me: "**God will accomplish this fact:**

He will make all people throughout the universe come before Him and worship the God on earth, and His work in other places will cease, and people will be forced to seek the true way. It will be like Joseph: Everyone came to him for food, and bowed down to him, for he had things to eat. In order to avoid famine, people will be forced to seek the true way. The entire religious community will suffer severe famine, and only the God of today is the wellspring of living water, possessed of the ever-flowing wellspring provided for the enjoyment of man, and people will come and depend on Him (“The Millennial Kingdom Has Arrived” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Then the sister fellowshiped this with me: “God is the wellspring of living water, and only God can supply people’s lives. When people leave God, all becomes dark and withered, just like a branch that has broken off from the tree trunk. In our faith in God, we must closely follow the footsteps of the Lamb, accept God’s present work, and come before God, for only then can we gain the work of the Holy Spirit and the nourishment and supply of God’s living water of life. Why is it that we can’t get sustenance from listening to those pastors and elders in religion? There are two reasons for this. One is that those pastors and elders don’t abide by the Lord’s commandments and don’t put the Lord’s words into practice. They don’t have real life experience and have no real knowledge of God, much less have hearts that fear God. They don’t at all exalt God or bear witness to Him in their work and preaching. They always blow their own trumpets and bear witness to themselves. By completely deviating from the Lord’s way, they have turned into typical false shepherds who deceive people. This is why they are loathed and rejected by the Holy Spirit and never obtain His enlightenment and guidance. And this is the main reason why the religious community is so desolate. The other reason is that the Lord Jesus has already returned to do the work of the new age. The Holy Spirit’s work on people of the Age of Grace has already been withdrawn and is now being done on the group of people who are up to speed with God’s new work. But the pastors and elders do not at all investigate God’s new work, and they do not follow God’s footsteps or accept His leadership. On the contrary, all they do is crazily resist and condemn God’s work of the last days, and slander and blaspheme Almighty God, the Christ of the last days. They do whatever they can to prevent believers from investigating the true way and returning to God, and thus have become just like the Pharisees who nailed the Lord to the cross. They have already been condemned and weeded out by God, so there is no way the Holy Spirit could work on them. So, if we want to receive life sustenance, we must keep up with the

Holy Spirit's current work, accept the words that God is currently expressing, and accept the leadership, supply, and shepherding of Almighty God, the Christ of the last days. This is the only way for us to gain truth and life. This fulfills what the Lord Jesus said: **'I am the way, the truth, and the life'** (John 14:6). **'But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life'** (John 4:14)."

After listening to Sister Wang's fellowship about God's words I had a sudden realization as to why the pastors, elders and theology students had nothing worthy to preach: They don't have truth! They resist God, and the Holy Spirit left them long ago. When they preach, they only have intellectual knowledge to rely on, but they don't have the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and that's why their preaching does not benefit anyone. But there was still something that I didn't understand, so I asked Sister Wang, "All those pastors and elders say that they're very familiar with the Bible, that they've been to seminary school and have much life. I don't understand the Bible that well and I believed that they were really more mature than me in life, so that's why I listened to them. So now I can't decide whether they really have much life or not. Sister, do you think that they really have much life?" Sister Wang replied, saying, "No one can testify themselves that they have life. This is all decided according to God's words. What does it mean to have life? What things specifically should be manifested? The Lord Jesus said: **'I am the way, the truth, and the life'** (John 14:6). And Almighty God said: **'Whether you are in possession of reality is not based on what you say; rather, it is based on what you live out. Only when God's words become your life and your natural expression can you be said to have reality, and only then can you be counted as having gained true understanding and actual stature. You must be able to withstand examination over long periods of time, and you must be able to live out the likeness that is required by God. This must not be mere posturing; it must flow from you naturally. Only then will you truly possess reality, and only then will you have gained life'** ("Only Putting the Truth Into Practice Is Having Reality" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **'Why is it said that many people have no life? Because they do not know God, and thus it is said that they have no God in their hearts, and have no life'** ("Only Those Who Know God Can Bear Testimony to God" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). From God's words we can see that Christ is the truth, the way and the life. Truth can act as people's life, so gaining truth is the same as gaining life, and having life indicates that

someone has gained truth and knows God. Someone who doesn't understand truth and doesn't know God will not have a heart that fears God and will be unable to live out the reality of God's words. This means that they have no life. If someone doesn't have God's words as their life, then they will still live by Satan's poisons that are inherent within them. They often reveal their corrupt dispositions—arrogance, conceit, selfishness, despicableness, crookedness, cunningness, and so on. And even if they believe in God, they are still unable to fear God and stay away from evil. They often lie, cheat, commit sins, and resist God. How could they ever be called people who have life? If they say they have life, it's just the same fleshly life, the satanic life that is full of corrupt dispositions that are in opposition to God, and not the new life, which comes from experiencing God's words and gaining the truth. So, though the pastors and elders may be familiar with the Bible, and possess knowledge of the Bible and theological theories, that doesn't mean that they know God and fear God and that they understand truth and have the work of the Holy Spirit. And it certainly doesn't mean that they practice the Lord's words or obey Him. Instead, what we see is that they usually exalt and bear witness to themselves, and generally try to get believers to worship them. What they reveal and live out is the likeness of Satan—being arrogant and conceited, lacking fear for God, and being hypocritical in order to fool people. Neither in their work nor in their preaching can they speak of any real knowledge of the Lord's words or any practical experience that is beneficial to other people. No matter how many years you listen to them you will never understand any truth and your life will never grow. They have no knowledge of God or of His work, and when God returns in the flesh in the last days to express truths and do His work of judgment, they frenziedly resist, condemn, and blaspheme Him without the tiniest bit of fear for God in their hearts. What kind of life do they have? They totally have the life of Satan. They're just like the Pharisees who knew the Bible well and thought that they had sincere faith in God and had life but who didn't know God and even resisted and condemned the Lord and nailed Him to the cross. This tells us that just because someone knows the Bible well, it doesn't mean that they have truth and life. The only people who have life are those who understand and practice truth and who know God, have a heart that fears Him, and can live by God's words. Those pastors and elders say that they have much life, and this is only fooling believers and deceiving themselves.”

After listening to Almighty God's words and the fellowship of Sister Wang, everything

became perfectly clear in my mind: Just because someone knows the Bible well and can expound on the Bible, it doesn't mean that they understand truth, know God or have life. I used to think that people in high positions or who had studied theology or had Bible knowledge all had much life. But now I see that my viewpoint was totally absurd. It seems that people who don't have truth are unable to discern, and so are easily fooled. I then asked Sister Wang a question: "Almighty God speaks so well. All we have to do is read His words carefully and we'll realize that these are the words of God and are God's voice. So how come the pastors and elders don't accept this and even do their utmost to resist and condemn Him?" Sister Wang replied, "Now in the last days, Almighty God has come and expressed all of the truths that are necessary for corrupt mankind to be cleansed and saved. These truths are the way of eternal life that God has bestowed upon us. As long as people seriously read God's words, they will admit that these words are the truth, the life, and the way and are the foundation and the guide for mankind's survival. This is a fact. Although most pastors and elders resist and condemn God's work of the last days and try to prevent people from reading Almighty God's words, this doesn't mean that they can't hear the authority and power in them. Some pastors and elders can't preach anything useful, so they steal Almighty God's words and preach them to their congregations, claiming that they are enlightenments that the Holy Spirit offered to them. But why do they still frenziedly resist and condemn Almighty God? This has to do with their nature and substance of hating the truth. If we think back to when the Lord Jesus first started doing His work, He manifested many miracles, especially the resurrection of Lazarus and the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves of bread and two fish, which were more astonishing for the people throughout the land of Judea. So, many of the common people in those days recognized from the Lord's words and work that He was the coming Messiah. But the leaders of the Jews didn't accept the Lord Jesus, and instead resisted and condemned Him and, in the end, conspired with the Roman government to crucify the Lord. Why did this happen? Was it because they couldn't hear the authority and power in the Lord Jesus' words? No! It was because they saw that more and more people were accepting the Lord Jesus' way. They were afraid that if all of the ordinary folk believed in the Lord Jesus then no one would follow or worship them, and they would lose their status and their livelihood. They clearly knew the Lord Jesus was God and yet they purposefully resisted Him; this revealed their antichrist essence, which was resistant to God and which hated the truth. The Lord Jesus bitterly rebuked them when

He said: **'But now you seek to kill Me, a man that has told you the truth, which I have heard of God'** (John 8:40). **'Why do you not understand My speech? even because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stayed not in the truth, because there is no truth in him'** (John 8: 43–44). In present times, the words of Almighty God have revealed with crystal clarity the nature and essence of the current leaders of the religious community. Almighty God said: **'There are those who read the Bible in grand churches and recite it all day long, yet not one among them understands the purpose of God's work. Not one among them is able to know God; still less can any one among them accord with God's will. They are all worthless, vile people, each standing on high to lecture God. They willfully oppose God even as they carry His banner. Claiming faith in God, still they eat the flesh and drink the blood of man. All such people are devils that devour the soul of man, demons that deliberately get in the way of those trying to step onto the right path, and stumbling blocks impeding those who seek God. They may appear of "sound constitution," but how are their followers to know that they are none other than antichrists who lead people to stand against God? How are their followers to know that they are living devils dedicated to the devouring of human souls?'** ("All Who Do Not Know God Are Those Who Oppose God" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). These leaders of the religious community today are just like the Pharisees of old: Although they know the Bible well, they know absolutely nothing about God's work. They see that the words of Almighty God are being accepted by more and more people who long for and seek God's appearance, and they're afraid that if the believers all believe in Almighty God then no one will follow them anymore or donate money to them. So in order to protect their status and their livelihoods, under the banner of being loyal to the Lord and protecting His flock, they have manufactured all kinds of vicious rumors to frenziedly resist and condemn God's work of the last days, and they do their best to prevent believers from seeking and investigating the true way. We can therefore see that religious leaders are in fact Pharisees who are sick of the truth and hate the truth. They are living demons who devour people's souls, and they are antichrists who are being revealed by God's work of the last days."

After listening to God's words and the sister's fellowship, I suddenly saw the light. I nodded my head a few times and said, "Now I finally get why those pastors and elders, on

hearing that there are people bearing witness to God's return, don't seek or investigate it but instead persistently condemn Him. Now I understand why those pastors and elders claim loudly to be protecting me and that they are concerned about my life, when in fact they are doing their utmost to hold me back and prevent me from reading God's words and gaining the life sustenance from God. It is all because everything they do is to protect their own interests. They're afraid that if people start following Almighty God, then they won't listen to their sermons or donate money to them, and that's why they prevent people from investigating the true way. They really are despicable, and they almost ruined my chance to attain true salvation. Now that I know how to discern better, I'm going to refuse to have anything to do with them. No matter what they do to disturb me, I'm going to stand firm and follow Almighty God." After that, I never went back to my old church meetings again.

Not long after, two preachers from my old church came to my house. One of them, Preacher Zhang, said to me, "Auntie, why haven't you been to the meetings? Have you been in contact with the people from Eastern Lightning again? Whatever you do, don't switch to their faith. If you follow their faith, you're done for!" With a firm voice I replied, "I gained nothing from attending meetings with you recently, I grew ever darker in my spirit and I wasn't able to feel the Lord's presence. But since I started reading Almighty God's words, my spirit has been uplifted, and now I'm starting to understand truths and my life is nourished. I feel that God is with me and that the Holy Spirit is working on me. Now I'm sure that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus and that the truths expressed by Almighty God are the living water of life. Only Almighty God's words can give me sustenance, and wherever I can gain life, that is where I shall go." The other of them, Preacher Song, then said, "We worry about you. We worry that you'll deviate from the right way. You're immature in life...." I said to her, "I may be immature in life, but God will lead me anyway. Thanks for your concern, but you should think about your own lives. My life is in God's hands...." After they heard what I had to say, they left in a huff. As I watched them disappearing into the distance, I felt a huge sense of relief like I'd never felt before. Afterward, they came back twice more, but seeing that I was totally unmoved by their exhortations they never returned again. Thanks to God's guiding me, I saw through to the true faces and the wicked motives of those religious leaders, and I saw through Satan's tricks and found my way out of the confusion and back to God. I'm now being supplied with the living water of life, and I will always follow and worship Almighty God!

8. Almighty God Led Me Onto the Path of Obtaining Cleansing

By Gangqiang, United States

I came to Singapore on my own in 2007 to try to make a living. Singapore is really hot year-round, so I was sweating buckets every day at work. It was utterly miserable, and on top of that I was in a completely unfamiliar place without any family or friends—life felt so dull and tedious. One day in August, I received a gospel leaflet on my way home from work which read: “But the God of all grace, who has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Peter 5:10). I felt warmth in my heart upon reading these words. After that, I went to church with a brother, where the enthusiastic reception from the brothers and sisters, who asked after my well-being, made me feel the warmth of family which I hadn’t had in a long time. My eyes suddenly welled up with tears—I felt just like I had come home. From then on, every Sunday going to church was a must for me.

I was baptized that December, officially stepping onto the path of faith. In one church service, I heard the preacher reading from chapter 18, verses 21–22 of Matthew: “Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus said to him, **I say not to you, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.**” Hearing this, I thought to myself: “How can the forgiveness and patience of the Lord Jesus be so great? He forgives people seventy times seven times. If men could really do this, then there would be no fighting, but just love and warmth!” I was very moved by the Lord’s words, and I resolved to act in accordance with His teachings.

Two or three years later, my boss put me in charge of managing a construction site, so I put all my energy into work and stopped attending gatherings as regularly. I was later introduced by a friend to a Mr. Li, a business financier, and we set up a construction company together. I was very happy, and was determined to really throw myself into it. I then got totally into the vortex of money and stopped going to church for gatherings altogether. I wanted projects to be done well to win others’ praise for my competence, so I became more and more demanding of workers. I would reprimand them whenever I saw that they had done

something that wasn't right or wasn't up to my requirements. The team leader was often brought to tears by my abuse. The workers were afraid whenever they saw me and would even hide from me. Even people who used to be good friends became cold toward me and no longer wanted to confide in me. Seeing this was very distressing. The Lord Jesus instructs us to forgive others seventy times seven times, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. However, I had not put this into practice in the slightest, not even once. How was that being a Christian? I knew that I was sinning and I often prayed to the Lord, confessing and repenting. I resolved to change. But whenever something came up, in spite of myself I would still sin. I was really vexed.

In August of 2015, we suspended business operations because the company was not doing well, and I went back home. Depressed and miserable, I just drank and gambled all day. When my wife told me I should stop drinking, I would just yell at her: "It's my money, I earned it, and I'll spend it however I want..." There was nothing she could do, so she would just sit there and cry. Each time that I gave vent to my anger, I felt remorseful and I hated myself, but I just couldn't rein myself in. By that time I had completely lost all Christian propriety; my behavior and conduct were entirely the same as a nonbeliever's.

In my pain and helplessness, I went back to church to attend gatherings again. Over that period, I was constantly praying to the Lord Jesus: "Oh, Lord! I've done so many things I didn't want to do, I've said so many things that hurt others. I've been living in sin and rebelling against You. Each time that I sin, I'm remorseful and really hate myself, but I can't ever control myself! I confess my sins by night, but then by day I fall back into my old ways and sin again. Oh, Lord! I beseech You to save me, what can I do to break free from sin?"

On New Year's Day of 2016, I set foot on American soil—I had come to New York to make some money. I kept going to church in my free time and also joined a prayer group, reading the Bible and praying with other brothers and sisters. There, I became acquainted with a sister called Qinglian. One day, Sister Qinglian gave me a call to say there was some good news she wanted to share with me. I said, "What's the good news?" She said, "There's a missionary visiting. Do you want to go hear her speak?" I said, "Great! Where is it?" She then arranged a time for me to go to her house.

I went to Sister Qinglian's house on that day. Several other brothers and sisters were there, and after meeting and exchanging greetings, we all began to discuss the Bible. Sister Zhao's fellowship was very enlightening and it was really edifying for me. I then told her

about my constant sinning and confessing, and the pain of being unable to rid myself of sin, and I sought her help. In fellowship, she said that even after we have begun to believe in the Lord, we still sin all the time, and that living life in the never-ending cycle of sinning by day and confessing by night, never able to rid ourselves of it, was not a problem that afflicted me alone. Rather it was a problem shared by all believers. Sister Zhao then had us watch a video of some recitations of God's words. These were the words: **“Changing man's disposition starts with knowledge of his substance and through changes in his thinking, nature, and mental outlook—through fundamental changes. Only in this way will true changes be achieved in the disposition of man. Man's corrupt disposition stems from his being poisoned and trampled upon by Satan, from the egregious harm that Satan has inflicted upon his thinking, morality, insight, and sense. It is precisely because the fundamental things of man have been corrupted by Satan, and are utterly unlike how God originally created them, that man opposes God and does not understand the truth. Thus, changes in man's disposition should begin with changes in his thinking, insight, and sense that will change his knowledge of God and his knowledge of the truth”** (“To Have an Unchanged Disposition Is to Be in Enmity to God” in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

I was really moved, thinking, “Isn't it me they are talking about? I always look down on others, scolding them for this or yelling at them for that. I lack morality and reason, and have lost any vestige of saintly decorum.” These words all pierced me to the core of my being. I had never read anything like it before, nor had I heard any preacher deliver that kind of sermon. I had been distressed by my constant sinning, but still hadn't been able to break free from the constraints of sin. These words showed me the path to leaving sin behind, and I marveled: This is so well put. Who could have written them?

Sister Zhao told me that this was the word of God, that the Lord Jesus had already returned in the flesh, and He was currently doing the work of judging and cleansing people through His word in the last days. I simply didn't dare believe my own ears. What believer is not longing for His return? Suddenly hearing this news of the Lord's return, I was so excited that I was somewhat at a loss: Had the Lord truly returned? I eagerly asked her to continue with her fellowship. Sister Zhao said, “The Lord Jesus has truly returned, and He is Almighty God—the incarnated Christ in the last days. He has expressed all truths to purify and save mankind, and has started to do the work of judgment beginning with the house of God. He

will thoroughly save us from the domain of Satan, who have been bound up by our satanic nature and living in sin from which we cannot extricate ourselves. Ultimately we'll attain full salvation and be obtained by God. In the Age of Grace, the Lord Jesus only performed the work of redemption; He redeemed us from sin and absolved our sins so that we would no longer be condemned under the law. Although the Lord absolved our sins, He did not pardon our satanic nature or our satanic dispositions. The arrogance, craftiness, selfishness, greed, maliciousness, and other corrupt dispositions still exist within man. These are things which go deeper and are more stubborn than sin. It is precisely because these satanic dispositions and satanic nature have not been resolved that we continue to sin in spite of ourselves, and we even commit sins that are more serious than violating the law. As for the Pharisees back then, wasn't the reason why they resisted and condemned the Lord, to the point where they even crucified Him, that man's sinful nature had not been resolved? In fact, we all have a deep appreciation of this because we are ourselves controlled by these corrupt dispositions. So, we often tell lies, act deceitfully, are arrogant and conceited, and reprimand others condescendingly. We know clearly that the Lord demands that we pardon others and love our neighbor as ourselves, and yet we do not put this into practice. People scheme against each other, scramble for fame and gain, and are unable to get along harmoniously. During times of illness, natural or man-made disasters, we still blame God, and we even deny or betray God. These facts show that if we do not resolve our satanic nature and satanic dispositions, then we will never be able to escape this circular life of sinning and confessing, then confessing and sinning. Therefore, to thoroughly save man from sin, it is necessary for God to perform a stage of His judgment and cleansing work to resolve our sinful nature. This is the only way we can be purified and fully saved by God, and be obtained by Him. Let's read a few more selections from Almighty God's words and you'll understand."

Sister Zhao opened up the book of the word of God and began to read: "**For all that man may have been redeemed and forgiven of his sins, it can only be considered as God not remembering the transgressions of man and not treating man in accordance with his transgressions. However, when man, who lives in a body of flesh, has not been set free from sin, he can only continue to sin, endlessly revealing his corrupt satanic disposition. This is the life that man leads, an endless cycle of sinning and being forgiven. The majority of men sin in the day only to confess in the evening. This way, even if the sin offering is forever effective for man, it will not be able to save man**

from sin. Only half the work of salvation has been completed, for man still has a corrupt disposition” (“The Mystery of the Incarnation (4)” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). “Though Jesus did much work among man, He only completed the redemption of all mankind and became man’s sin offering; He did not rid man of his corrupt disposition. Fully saving man from the influence of Satan not only required Jesus to become the sin offering and bear the sins of man, but it also required God to do even greater work to rid man completely of his satanically corrupted disposition” (Preface to The Word Appears in the Flesh). “The sins of man were forgiven, and this is because of the work of God’s crucifixion, but man continued to live within the corrupt satanic disposition of old. This being so, man must be completely saved from his corrupt satanic disposition, so that his sinful nature may be completely extirpated, never to develop again, thus enabling the disposition of man to be transformed. This would require man to grasp the path of growth in life, to grasp the way of life, and to grasp the way to change his disposition. Furthermore, it would require man to act in accordance with this path, so that his disposition may gradually be changed and he may live under the shining of the light, so that all that he does may be in accord with the will of God, so that he may cast away his corrupt satanic disposition, and so that he may break free from Satan’s influence of darkness, thereby emerging fully from sin. Only then will man receive complete salvation” (“The Mystery of the Incarnation (4)” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Sister Zhao said in fellowship: “Now that we’ve read these words of God, we understand why we are always bound by our satanic nature and unable to rid ourselves of sin, right? During the Age of Grace, God only performed the work of redemption, not the end-time work of judging, cleansing, and thoroughly saving people. So no matter how we confess our sins and repent, how we try to conquer ourselves, how we fast and pray, we will not be able to achieve freedom from sin. That means that if we want to break free of the bondage and control of our sinful nature, just undergoing the Lord Jesus’ work of redemption is still not enough. We must accept the work of judgment done by the returned Lord Jesus. This is because in doing His judgment work of the last days, God expresses many aspects of truth to judge and expose man’s satanic nature of resisting and betraying God. He reveals God’s righteous, holy, unoffendable disposition, allowing mankind to clearly see the truth of his own profound corruption by Satan through the judgment and chastisement of God’s words, to truly know God’s righteous disposition that

does not tolerate man's offense, to develop a God-fearing heart, thus transforming and purifying man's satanic disposition and saving man from Satan's influence. In God's majestic, wrathful judgment and chastisement we see God face-to-face. Like a double-edged sword, God's word pierces our hearts, it reveals our satanic nature of resisting and betraying God as well as even our corrupt dispositions in the deepest recesses of our hearts which we ourselves have no way of discovering. It makes us see that the essence of our nature is filled with such satanic dispositions as arrogance, conceit, selfishness, baseness, evasiveness, and craftiness, that we are simply without a shred of human likeness, and are completely the embodiment of Satan. It is only then that we prostrate ourselves before God, beginning to hate and curse ourselves. At the same time, we also sense profoundly that all of God's word is the truth, it is all the revelation of God's disposition as well as what the life of God is. We see that God's righteous disposition does not tolerate offense, and that God's holy essence will not be sullied. The result is developing a heart of reverence for God; we begin to pursue the truth with all our might and to behave according to the word of God. As we gradually come to understand the truth, we will have more and more of an understanding of our own satanic nature and disposition, and gain more and more discernment. Our knowledge of God will also increase. Our internal corrupt dispositions will slowly be cleansed and we will be freed from the bonds of sin. We will gain true release and live freely before God. This is precisely the outcome achieved in mankind through God's work of judgment in the last days. It can therefore be seen that the work of 'redemption' in the Age of Grace and the work of 'ridding man of sin' in the last days are two different stages of work. 'Redemption' was just the Lord Jesus taking on man's sins in their stead and allowing man to escape the punishment they should have suffered for their sins. But that didn't mean that people were without sin, much less that they would never again sin or that they were totally purified. Whereas 'ridding man of sin' is completely exposing mankind's sinful nature so that we can live without relying on our corrupt nature anymore, so we can achieve a change in our life disposition and become totally purified. Therefore, only by accepting God's work of judgment in the last days can our corrupt dispositions be thoroughly resolved, can we rid ourselves of Satan's influence and be saved, be led into the kingdom of God and attain God's promises and blessings."

Hearing the word of God and the sisters' fellowship, I felt that it was completely in line with reality and was very practical. I thought back on my many years as a man of faith: I not

only often lied and cheated, but I was also arrogant and unrestrained, rude and unreasonable, and willful. People who worked for me were afraid of me and kept their distance from me, and even in my own home my wife and daughter were a little scared of me as well. No one wanted to open up to me and I couldn't even find a close friend to confide in. It was painful and I felt helpless. Even though I often read the Bible and prayed, confessed my sins to the Lord, and even despised myself, I would keep doing the same terrible things. I could not change myself at all. Someone like me who's constantly sinning and resisting the Lord is in great need of God's work of judgment in the last days! The Lord Jesus has now returned—He is Almighty God incarnate. Today, having the chance to hear the voice of God and to learn that the Lord Jesus has come again to deliver the truth and undertake the work of judging, cleansing, and saving man, I really am extremely fortunate! That sister saw that I was filled with longing, so she gave me a copy of a book of God's word: God's Sheep Hear the Voice of God. I accepted it happily and resolved to really practice my faith in Almighty God!

I read many of God's words after accepting Almighty God's work in the last days. I read about the three stages of God's work, the mystery of the incarnation, the meaning of God's name and the inside story of the Holy Bible, as well as how the overcomers are made, how the kingdom of Christ is realized, how the final outcome and destination of each type of person will be determined, and other aspects of the truth, gradually gaining some understanding of them. I also gained more faith in God.

At first, when I read God's words that judge and expose man so harshly, I felt distressed and uncomfortable and had some notions about them; I felt that God's words were too severe. Could He not be a little gentler? If God judges man in this way, is man not then condemned? How can he then be truly saved? Later, I read in the word of God: **"In the last days, Christ uses a variety of truths to teach man, to expose the essence of man, and to dissect the words and deeds of man. These words comprise various truths, such as man's duty, how man should obey God, how man should be loyal to God, how man ought to live out normal humanity, as well as the wisdom and the disposition of God, and so on. These words are all directed at the essence of man and his corrupt disposition. In particular, the words that expose how man spurns God are spoken in regard to how man is an embodiment of Satan, and an enemy force against God. In undertaking His work of judgment, God does not simply make clear the nature of man**

with a few words; He exposes, deals with, and prunes over the long term. These methods of exposure, dealing, and pruning cannot be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced into submission to God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God” (“Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). “Through what is God’s perfection of man accomplished? Through His righteous disposition. God’s disposition primarily consists of righteousness, wrath, majesty, judgment, and curse, and His perfection of man is primarily through judgment. Some people don’t understand, and ask why it is that God is only able to make man perfect through judgment and curse. They say, ‘If God were to curse man, wouldn’t man die? If God were to judge man, wouldn’t man be condemned? Then how can he still be made perfect?’ Such are the words of people who do not know the work of God. What God curses is the disobedience of man, and what He judges are the sins of man. Although He speaks harshly, and without the slightest sensitivity, He reveals all that is within man, and through these stern words He reveals that which is essential within man, yet through such judgment, He gives man a profound knowledge of the essence of the flesh, and thus man submits to obedience before God. The flesh of man is of sin, and of Satan, it is disobedient, and the object of God’s chastisement—and so, to allow man to know himself, the words of God’s judgment must befall him and there must be employed every kind of refinement; only then can God’s work be effective” (“Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of God” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). From God’s words I realized that God performs His work of judgment in the last days through expressing the truth, and that He severely judges, exposes and condemns man’s corrupt dispositions, satanic nature, and wicked deeds that oppose God. He does this so that we see clearly the truth of our own corruption, understand thoroughly the essence of our corrupt dispositions, and know our own satanic nature and the source of our corruption. This is the only way we can despise ourselves and forsake the flesh. In addition, it is only because God shows His righteous, majestic and wrathful disposition through His judgment and chastisement that we are able to see His righteousness and holiness, as well as see clearly our own filthiness, ugliness and wickedness. God also does this so that we may know our own satanic nature and the truth of our corruption. If God did

not judge man so severely, if God did not expose man's corruption by striking right at the heart of the matter, and if He did not reveal His righteous and majestic disposition, then we humans, who have been corrupted so deeply by Satan, would be unable to reflect on ourselves or know ourselves. We would be incapable of knowing the truth of our own corruption or our satanic nature. If that were the case, then how would we rid ourselves of our sinful nature and be purified? From the results achieved by God's stern words we can see that hidden within them are God's true love for man and the painstaking efforts He goes to to save man. The more I read God's words, the more I feel how wonderful God's work of judgment is. God's work is so practical! Only God's severe judgment can purify, transform, and save man. God's work of judgment in the last days is truly what we need!

Due to my arrogant and extremely self-righteous nature, when speaking to others I often lectured them in a condescending way, and in my actions I was a law unto myself. I always loved getting others to listen to me and was prone to showing off. Several times at gatherings, I gave fellowship about how I had handled problems in my work unit, how I had rebuked staff who hadn't followed instructions and subdued them, as well as how my wife and daughter did what I told them to. Particularly when I shared fellowship on God's words, I would say things like, "I believe this passage of God's words means this," and "this is what I think." A brother saw that I was always revealing an arrogant and self-righteous disposition without being aware of it myself. He pointed this out to me at a gathering, saying that speaking and acting in this way was an expression of arrogance, self-righteousness, and unreasonableness. If anyone had exposed me that way in the past, and in front of so many people to boot, I would certainly have argued my own case and refuted them right away. But at the time, I chose to be silent without arguing or justifying myself, because these words from a sermon came to mind: "If you always say 'I think' with every subject you encounter, well, you had best let go of your opinions. I urge you to let go of your opinions and seek the truth. See what the words of God say. Your 'opinion' is not the truth! ... You are too arrogant and self-righteous! When faced with the truth, you cannot even let go of or deny your own notions and imaginings. You do not want to obey God in the slightest! Of those who truly pursue the truth and truly have a heart that reveres God, who still says 'I think'? This saying has already been eliminated, for by saying it one reveals one's satanic disposition" (Sermons and Fellowship on Entry Into Life). This fellowship reminded me that, whenever I encountered an issue, words such as "I think," "I maintain," and "I believe" were generally

on my lips, always starting with the word “I,” and myself always had the final say on everything. I believed that I could see through things myself, and could deal with problems. I always made others do as I said and obey me. By always regarding myself so highly, was that not precisely revealing an arrogant disposition? What that brother said to me when he pointed out my disposition was all true, and I should accept it. The things I believed emanated from my notions and imaginings, they came from Satan, and they were certainly not the truth. I thought about how, whether at home, at work, or amongst colleagues, I was always behaving as if I were number one. If anyone didn't listen to me or did something out of line with my views, I would get angry and tell them off. The fact that I was capable of revealing these things meant that there was no place for God in my heart, that I did not honor God as great, but rather honored myself as great. That was generally how I spoke and behaved, proving what an incredibly arrogant disposition I have!

I later read those words of God: **“If you really possess the truth within you, the path you walk will naturally be the correct path. Without the truth, it is easy to do evil, and you will do it despite yourself. For example, if you had arrogance and conceit, you would find it impossible to keep from defying God; you would feel compelled to defy Him. You would not do it on purpose; you would do it under the domination of your arrogant and conceited nature. Your arrogance and conceit would make you look down on God and see Him as being of no account; they would cause you to exalt yourself, constantly put yourself on display, and, finally, sit in God's place and bear testimony for yourself. In the end, you would turn your own ideas, your own thinking, and your own notions into truths to be worshiped. See how much evil is done by people under the dominance of their arrogant and conceited nature! To resolve their evil acts, they must first resolve the problem of their nature. Without a change in disposition, it would not be possible to bring a fundamental resolution to this problem”** (“Only by Pursuing the Truth Can You Obtain Changes in Your Disposition” in Records of Christ's Talks). Every word spoken by God is the truth—I was utterly convinced. I thought of how I used to lecture others condescendingly at construction sites, around my colleagues, and when I was at home. All of this was me being dominated by my satanic, arrogant nature; it was not brought about because I'm an angry person, or because I have a bad temper or lack self-restraint. I believed myself to have caliber and talent and good earning power, which fed my arrogance and became the currency of my life, so I thought of

myself as better than others. I looked down on everyone else, I thought I was better than everyone else and always lorded over other people. I had found the source of my sin and had seen the perilous consequences of leaving my satanic and corrupt disposition unresolved. And so I made an effort to look up and read many of God's words judging and exposing man's arrogant nature, and reflected on myself in comparison. Through God's words of judgment and revealing as well as the fellowship of brothers and sisters in gatherings, I began to gain a shallow understanding of my own arrogant nature. I saw that I was not in fact better than anyone else, and that my ability and wealth had all been bestowed by God, so I had nothing to boast about. If God hadn't bestowed wisdom and intelligence on me, if God hadn't blessed me, what could I have done just relying on myself? There are so many talented people in the world; why do they toil and rush about all their lives just to end up empty-handed? I also found the path to resolve my arrogant nature within God's words, which was to accept more of being pruned and dealt with by brothers and sisters, to accept more of the judgment, chastisement, trials and refinement of God, reflect on myself in light of God's words, achieve true self-knowledge and self-hatred, and to no longer act according to my satanic disposition but to act in accordance with God's words. I later experienced many instances of being judged and chastised, pruned and dealt with, and I experienced many setbacks and failures. My knowledge of my satanic nature and corrupt essence was gradually deepened, and I also gained a shallow understanding of God's greatness, righteousness and holiness. The more I came to know God's righteousness and holiness, the more I saw my own filthiness, lowliness, insignificance and pitifulness. The things which I thought important before or had boasted about, I then felt weren't even worth mentioning. Before I knew it, my arrogant disposition began to change. Whoever said something that was correct—brothers and sisters, my colleagues, or my family—I would accept it. I no longer spoke to others condescendingly, but acted with humility and I was no longer a law unto myself. Whenever an issue arose I would discuss it with others, and I would act according to whoever's suggestion was correct. Slowly, my relationships with those around me began to normalize. I had peace and joy in my heart, and I felt that I was finally living out a bit of a human likeness.

By constantly reading God's word and living the life of the church, I felt more and more how truly great it was that I was able to accept God's work of judgment in the last days. I genuinely experienced that I would have no way to resolve my corrupt disposition myself.

Only through the judgment and chastisement of God's words have I been gradually changed and cleansed. In The Church of Almighty God, I see many brothers and sisters working hard at pursuing the truth, and accepting the judgment and chastisement of Almighty God's words. Whenever someone reveals corruption, others point it out and everyone helps each other. We all reflect on ourselves and know ourselves in the light of God's words, and we seek the truth to resolve our corruption. Everyone practices being honest people and being pure and open; we accept and submit to whatever fellowship is in conformity with the truth and our corrupt dispositions change more and more. The words of Almighty God can indeed purify and change people. God incarnate has come amongst us, He personally expresses His words to judge and purify us, and He leads us to cast off sin and be fully saved—we are so fortunate! Thinking of all those true believers who are waiting impatiently for His return, who yearn to cast off the bonds of sin and be cleansed, yet who live in pain without a path to follow, I said a prayer to God and made a resolution: "I wish to preach Your kingdom gospel to other people so that they can be like me, following Your footsteps and embarking upon the path to purification and complete salvation!"

9. A Different Kind of Love

By Chengxin, Brazil

A chance opportunity in 2011 allowed me to come to Brazil from China. When I had just arrived, I was overwhelmed with fresh and new experiences and filled with curiosity, and I had a good feeling about the future. But after some time, this fresh and new feeling was quickly replaced by the loneliness and pain of finding myself in a far-off foreign land. Every day I went back home all alone and ate by myself, staring at the walls around me day by day without anyone even to talk to. I felt so lonely, and would often cry in secret. Just when I was feeling at my most distressed and helpless, the Lord Jesus brought me into a gathering by means of a friend. Through reading the word of the Lord, singing hymns, and praying in gatherings, my lonely heart was consoled by the Lord. I learned from the Bible that the heavens and earth and all things were created by God, and that man too is God's creation. I also learned that the Lord Jesus was crucified for the redemption of mankind, that it was the Lord Jesus who redeemed us from sin, and that He is the only Redeemer of mankind.

Having come into the presence of the Lord's salvation, which is greater than all else, I felt deeply moved and resolved to follow the Lord for the rest of my life. I was therefore baptized on Thanksgiving and formally became a Christian. Because I liked singing, especially singing hymns in praise of God, after I was baptized I became actively involved in working for the church by joining the choir. Because of God's guidance and blessings, I lived in peace and happiness. Every time I went to a gathering or praised God in worship, I felt suffused with energy.

But good times don't last forever, and as I entered the ranks of the church ministry, I gradually came to see that the brothers and sisters in the church appeared on the surface to care for and look after one another, and they all seemed to get along well together, but that actually everything they said and did was for their own self-interest. They didn't want to suffer any personal loss while working in the ministry of the church, and often gossiped behind each other's backs about who was doing more and who was doing less. Even the pastor was extremely snobby. He treated people based on the amounts of their donations, and made special mention of donations whenever he gave a sermon. Every time he came to a gathering, the issue the pastor was most concerned with was whether or not people were giving donations and how much they were giving, and he didn't want to hear anything about the lives of the brothers and sisters. He talked about love but I never saw him take any real action. Whenever a brother or sister had a difficulty, the pastor wouldn't help them or support them. But what was even more outrageous was that he would still criticize people and look down on those powerless and penniless brothers and sisters. When I saw this situation in the church, I was disappointed but also confused: How had the church changed to become no different than society at large? Slowly, I lost the love and faith I'd had in the beginning, and I no longer participated so actively when I went to church on Sundays. I didn't even want to sing. Every week when I went to church, I would either stand outside drinking coffee or take a quick nap in the pews. When the sermon was over, I'd hand over a donation and head out, and I would always leave with a feeling of grief and helplessness in my heart.

One Sunday in August of 2016, I met Sister Li Min in a park. She had come from America and had been the classmate of sisters Gao Xiaoying and Liu Fang. We all believed in the Lord, and got to chatting while sitting on the grass. We talked and talked and got on to the topic of the situation in the church, and I told them everything I had seen in the church. After I'd finished talking, Sister Li Min nodded thoughtfully and said, "Nowadays, not only

has your church become this way, but the whole religious world has lost the work of the Holy Spirit, and it has fallen into darkness and desolation. The Lord Jesus once prophesied: **‘And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold’** (Matthew 24:12). We are now at the end of the last days, and lawlessness is growing ever more rampant in religion. The pastors and elders don’t abide by the Lord’s commandments, they don’t practice the way of the Lord, and they think it is not a big deal to live in sin like that. We all know that the flourishing of the church is the result achieved by the work of the Holy Spirit. Today, God has already performed new work, and the work of the Holy Spirit has shifted to a group of people who accept and obey God’s new work. The pastors and elders in religion don’t lead believers to seek and investigate God’s work of the last days, but instead they resist and condemn God’s new work by disseminating all kinds of rumors and fallacies to stop people from turning to God. They meet with God’s hatred and rejection, and so the entire religious world is without God’s blessing, has completely lost the work of the Holy Spirit, and has been cast aside and eliminated by the Lord. The church therefore becomes more and more desolate and darkened. It is just like the time when the Lord Jesus incarnated to perform His work. The work of the Lord Jesus began the Age of Grace and put an end to the Age of Law. Because those who followed the Lord Jesus accepted and obeyed the new work of God, they then gained the work of the Holy Spirit, whereas the Holy Spirit did not work among those who did not accept the Lord Jesus and who remained in the temple. And so, the temple that once was filled with the glory of God and where believers worshiped God became a place for doing business and a den of thieves. In other words, there are two reasons for the desolation of the church: The first is because the pastors and elders do not adhere to God’s commandments or practice the word of God, and because they constantly commit sins and do evils; the second reason is because God is performing a new work, because the work of the Holy Spirit has shifted, and because people are not keeping up with the footsteps of God. However, God’s will is behind the desolation of the church, and there is a truth to be sought here. Through the desolation of the church, God compels all those who believe in Him with true hearts and who thirst for the truth to leave religion behind, so that they can search for the work of the Holy Spirit, keep up with the footsteps of God, come into the presence of God, and obtain God’s present work and salvation.”

After listening to Sister Li’s fellowship, I nodded and said, “What you say is right. It’s certainly just as you say. I was never able to understand this problem. The church was

originally a place for worshipping God, but there is no difference anymore between the church and society at large. Furthermore, there is no new light in what the pastors preach, nor any enjoyment in listening to them, and people all now live in darkness. As it turns out, it's because we have not kept up with God's new work, so what must we now do to keep up with God's new work?" Sister Li said, "The Lord Jesus has long since returned. In the last days, God has incarnated as the Son of man to express the truth under the name of Almighty God, and to perform the stage of the work of judging and purifying mankind. We have to keep up with God's work in the last days and accept the judgment of God's word, and only then will we be able to obtain the work of the Holy Spirit." When I heard that the Lord Jesus had already returned and was performing the work of judgment, I was astonished. I thought: "Isn't judgment to punish a person after he is declared a sinner? God comes in the last days to judge those who don't believe in God, and we who believe in the Lord Jesus have already been absolved of our sins and have been graced with salvation. We don't need to receive God's judgment, for when the Lord comes He will directly raise us up to the heavenly kingdom. How could He come to judge us?" With that thought, I gave voice to my opinion, at which point Sister Liu Fang said, "Brother, I have already been looking into Almighty God's work of the last days with Sister Gao for a week. By reading the word of Almighty God, we have recognized it to be the voice of God. Almighty God is indeed the returned Lord Jesus. Read the word of Almighty God, and then you will understand. The reason why the Lord Jesus has returned to perform the work of judgment is because, although we who believe in the Lord have been forgiven of our sins, we are still always living in sin from which we cannot free ourselves. We are incapable of freeing ourselves from the bondage and control of sin, and we really do need God to express the truth to judge and purify us, and to root out our sinful nature and satanic corrupt dispositions. Almighty God's work of judgment in the last days is a newer and higher work built on the foundation of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus. It completely purifies and saves man through the judgment of the word, and leads people to a wonderful destination." Afterward, they patiently fellowshiped about many more truths with me. But no matter what they said, I just couldn't accept that the Lord had returned to judge those who believed in Him. While I was dealing with this inner conflict, I also felt bewildered: Sisters Gao and Liu were very pious believers, and everyone acknowledged their belief and love for the Lord, so how could they believe that the Lord Jesus was returning to judge those of us who believed in Him, and that He would not raise us up directly into the

kingdom of heaven? Could it be that there was some mystery or truth in this matter that I did not know?

As I was thinking, Sister Li Min took out a book and said earnestly to me, “Brother, the Lord Jesus said: **‘Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven’** (Matthew 5:3). Don’t jump to conclusions, OK? Let’s first see if the word of Almighty God is the voice of God, and whether it can provide for our lives, and whether it can purify and save us, and then we will know whether Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus or not. I trust that God’s sheep will hear the voice of God, so let’s read God’s word together!” I felt a little reluctant and didn’t answer her. The three sisters were a little saddened to see my attitude. Sister Liu suddenly suggested: “First let’s pray, and then read the word of God.” The three sisters then began to pray, and I had no choice but to follow along with them. Still, as I was praying, I could hardly quiet my heart. Even though I couldn’t hear what the sisters were praying about, I was moved by the way they conducted themselves. Their attitude toward God was so sincere, and they sought God’s will in everything. They hoped that I would investigate God’s work of the last days, and this hope was also born of God’s love. After praying, Sister Li handed me a book and said earnestly to me, “Most of the questions in this book, *A Hundred Questions and Answers on Investigating the True Way*, are asked among people of all denominations. Related passages have been chosen from the word of God to answer each question. Go ahead and take a look.” I didn’t want to take the book, but seeing how sincerely she had spoken, I looked again at Sister Gao and Sister Liu, and saw how much they hoped I would investigate and seek this. I thought how crucial a matter it was to welcome the coming of the Lord, and that I shouldn’t treat it carelessly. At that, I accepted the book and said, “Alright, I’m willing to accept this book. Let’s not talk any more about it today. I’ll read the book first, and then we’ll talk some more.”

After I went back home, I set the book to one side—my mind was in turmoil. I thought about what Sister Li Min had fellowshiped and it all felt clear and transparent to me. Everything she had said was true, but what I couldn’t understand was why the Lord would perform the work of judgment upon His return? I contemplated it carefully, but still didn’t understand. As for the matter of the Lord’s second coming, however, since I had now heard about it, I couldn’t just blindly make my own decisions about it and sit resigned to my fate. I thought it would be a good idea to take a look at the book and develop some discernment. I therefore spent six days reading that book from cover to cover. I saw that Almighty God

had made known many, many truths and mysteries that I had never heard of before and I was greatly sustained by reading them. Also, when I read the words of Almighty God, I felt that there were many things that were said in the same tone as that of the Lord Jesus. The words were possessed of authority and power, as if God Himself was speaking. And so, after I finished reading the book, I wanted to better understand what the work of judgment done by Almighty God was all about, and I decided to go find Sister Gao to ask her about it.

On the next day, I went to Sister Gao's house, and happened to meet some of her friends. They had all accepted the work of Almighty God of the last days and were holding a gathering and fellowshiping with each other. We greeted one another, and Sister Li Min got right to the point by asking me, "Brother, what notions do you still have? What aspect of God's work of the last days do you want to understand? We can fellowship together." I said, "You mentioned that the church has become desolate in the last days because the work of the Holy Spirit has moved on. I can accept this, but we who believe in the Lord have already had our sins absolved, and the Lord does not see us as sinners. Why does God still want to perform the work of judgment? Will we be unable to be raised up into the heavenly kingdom if God does not perform this stage of work? When God judges a person, is that person not then condemned? Must we all be punished? How then can we be raised up into the heavenly kingdom?" Sister Li Min said, "As far as most people's notions are concerned, the people who the returned Lord judges are unbelievers who do not believe in God. They believe that, because God judges someone, that person is then condemned and punished. They believe that those who believe in the Lord have had their sins absolved, and that when the Lord comes, He will raise them directly into the heavenly kingdom, and will certainly not judge them. They therefore refuse to accept God's work of judgment in the last days. By doing this, they completely misunderstand God's will and show that they do not know God's work. Actually, the work of Almighty God in the last days—that of expressing the truth and of judging and purifying man—is performed precisely for the sake of raising believers up to the heavenly kingdom. We all know the Bible says: '**[J]udgment must begin at the house of God**' (1 Peter 4:17). This prophecy tells us clearly that God's work of judgment in the last days begins first in the house of God. That is, it begins with those people who believe in God with true hearts and accept God's work in the last days. So, we think that believing in the Lord Jesus means that we don't have to accept God's judgment, but this view is wrong. In the last days, God uses His words to judge all those who come before His throne, and He

purifies and saves these people, and makes a group of people into overcomers before the disasters come. Afterward, when the great disasters come, He will reward the good and punish the evil. This is how God's work of judgment in the last days proceeds. No one is able to escape from God's work of judgment in the last days, but to those who accept and obey God's judgment it is purification, salvation, and perfection. As for those who refuse and resist God's work of judgment in the last days, although they may hide from the judgment of God's word, they still cannot escape the judgment of the great disasters in the end. This is a fact! The reason why God wants to judge us in the last days is explained very clearly in the word of Almighty God. Let us read together a passage of God's words. Almighty God says: **'You only know that Jesus shall descend during the last days, but how exactly will He descend? A sinner such as you, who has just been redeemed, and has not been changed, or been perfected by God, can you be after God's heart? For you, you who are still of your old self, it is true that you were saved by Jesus, and that you are not counted as a sinner because of the salvation of God, but this does not prove that you are not sinful, and are not impure. How can you be saintly if you have not been changed? Within, you are beset by impurity, selfish and mean, yet you still wish to descend with Jesus—you should be so lucky! You have missed a step in your belief in God: You have merely been redeemed, but have not been changed. For you to be after God's heart, God must personally do the work of changing and cleansing you; if you are only redeemed, you will be incapable of attaining sanctity. In this way you will be unqualified to share in the good blessings of God, for you have missed out a step in God's work of managing man, which is the key step of changing and perfecting. And so you, a sinner who has just been redeemed, are incapable of directly inheriting God's inheritance'** ("Concerning Appellations and Identity" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). We understand from the word of God that by believing in the Lord Jesus we only have our sins forgiven. This does not mean that we do not sin, nor that we are sinless. In reality, we all live in the vicious cycle of sinning and confessing, and we still need God to express His word to judge and cleanse us. Only when we are cleansed will we be qualified to be raised up into the heavenly kingdom. It is recorded in the Bible: **'[Y]ou shall be holy; for I am holy'** (Leviticus 11:44). **'[H]oliness, without which no man shall see the Lord'** (Hebrews 12:14). God is holy. Defiled and corrupt people may not see God's face and are unfit to enter God's kingdom. The work of redemption done by the Lord Jesus only

absolved us of our sins, but it did not absolve us of our corrupt dispositions and sinful nature. Therefore, our satanic corrupt dispositions still remain, such as those of being arrogant and conceited, crooked and crafty, selfish and despicable, evil and greedy, feeling aversion to the truth and enjoying injustice. These corrupt dispositions are precisely the root cause that leads us to sin and to resist God. If they are not resolved, we will often sin, vie with each other for fame and gain, engage in jealous disputes, lie and deceive, exalt ourselves, bear witness to ourselves, and more. Especially when God's work doesn't conform to our notions, we still rely on our notions and imaginations to judge, deny, and condemn God, and to resist God's work. How can people like this who resist God be raised up into the heavenly kingdom? God expresses the truth and does the work of judgment in the last days, and His goal in doing so is to cleanse us of our satanic corrupt dispositions and fulfill our dream of being raised up into the heavenly kingdom. When we accept God's judgment, break free of our corrupt dispositions, and become purified and transformed, we then become qualified to inherit God's promise and to be led by God into the kingdom."

After listening to the sister's fellowship and to the word of Almighty God, I thought: "When one believes in the Lord, one's sins are forgiven, but that does not mean that one no longer commits sin. This really is true! Looking at those in the church, from the pastors and elders all the way down to the ordinary members, including myself, everyone is living in a state whereby we sin during the day and confess our sins at night, and we are unable to escape from the bondage and control of sin. It seems that people will certainly be unable to see the face of the Lord without first being judged and purified by the word of God. When one puts it that way, it is absolutely necessary for God to come and perform the work of the judgment and purification of man! I once believed that if one had faith in the Lord Jesus, then one did not have to be judged. I thought that the Lord would come to judge those who did not believe in Him. Now I understand that this notion is not in keeping with God's will at all, and that it is a misunderstanding." Just then, Sister Gao played for me a video with singing and dancing from The Church of Almighty God called The Happiness in the Good Land of Canaan: "I've returned to God's family, excited and happy. My hands hold my beloved, my heart belongs to Him. Though I've passed through the Vale of Tears, I've seen God's loveliness. My love for God grows day by day, God is the source of my joy. Bewitched by the beauty of God, my heart is attached to Him. I can never love God enough, songs of praise well up in my heart ..." (Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs). The whole song was

cheerful and stirring, and it was incredibly inspirational. I saw that the face of every brother and sister in the video was brimming with happiness, and we couldn't help but join in with singing the hymn. We started dancing along to the music and our hearts filled with joy. I saw that the brothers and sisters who had the provision of God's word were blessed and joyful. Though they had gone through the judgment and chastisement of God, they still had no worries at all, but instead were liberated, free, joyful, and happy. I thought about how my own faith and enthusiasm in religion had all but disappeared, and all I saw was the desolation and darkness of the church. The brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God, on the other hand, were filled with of the work of the Holy Spirit. Light shone from their fellowships about the truth, they praised God with vigor, and they bore witness to God with great excitement and energy. In comparison, they seemed to be living in an entirely different world to me. Right then, I felt like a drifting orphan who had returned home and was enjoying the warmth of his mother's embrace. I thought: There really is truth to be sought here. I must listen well to the fellowships given by the brothers and sisters about the truth of God's work of judgment in the last days so that I won't miss my chance to welcome the Lord's coming and be raised up into the heavenly kingdom.

Following that, Sister Li read us two more passages from the word of God: **“Through what is God's perfection of man accomplished? Through His righteous disposition. God's disposition primarily consists of righteousness, wrath, majesty, judgment, and curse, and His perfection of man is primarily through judgment. Some people don't understand, and ask why it is that God is only able to make man perfect through judgment and curse. They say, 'If God were to curse man, wouldn't man die? If God were to judge man, wouldn't man be condemned? Then how can he still be made perfect?' Such are the words of people who do not know the work of God. What God curses is the disobedience of man, and what He judges are the sins of man. Although He speaks harshly, and without the slightest sensitivity, He reveals all that is within man, and through these stern words He reveals that which is essential within man, yet through such judgment, He gives man a profound knowledge of the essence of the flesh, and thus man submits to obedience before God. The flesh of man is of sin, and of Satan, it is disobedient, and the object of God's chastisement—and so, to allow man to know himself, the words of God's judgment must befall him and there must be employed every kind of refinement; only then can God's work be effective”** (“Only

by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of God” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **“What the work of judgment brings about is man’s understanding of the true face of God and the truth about his own rebelliousness. The work of judgment allows man to gain much understanding of the will of God, of the purpose of God’s work, and of the mysteries that are incomprehensible to him. It also allows man to recognize and know his corrupt substance and the roots of his corruption, as well as to discover the ugliness of man. These effects are all brought about by the work of judgment, for the substance of this work is actually the work of opening up the truth, the way, and the life of God to all those who have faith in Him”** (“Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth” in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

Sister Li fellowshiped to us, saying, “After we were corrupted by Satan, we all lived under the domain of Satan and became degenerates who resisted God. According to God’s righteous and holy substance, we were all targets for God’s curse and destruction, but it is not God’s will to destroy mankind, but rather it is to save mankind. So, in order to completely save people from the domain of Satan, God expresses His words and performs the work of judging and purifying man in the last days. The work of judgment is actually God using His word to expose people’s rebellious and God-resisting speech, actions, nature, and essence, so that people may come to know their corrupt essence and the truth of their corruption, to recognize God’s disposition of righteousness and holiness, and to achieve self-hatred. Then, people can truly repent and transform, and they can break free of their corrupt satanic dispositions and be gained by God. In this way, people will attain full salvation. Only through the judgment and chastisement of the word of God are we able to see that we are filled with corruption, that at all times and in all places, we display such corrupt dispositions as selfishness, arrogance, deceitfulness, and greed, and that we are filled with notions and imaginings, extravagant desires, and unreasonable demands with respect to God, and that we are without conscience or reason, loyalty or obedience. The more we accept God’s judgment, the more we recognize how deeply corrupted we are and that we indeed have no humanity. We begin to feel disgusted with ourselves, and to hate ourselves in our hearts. The more we accept God’s judgment, the more we see God’s holiness and righteousness, and the more our hearts revere God. We become willing to forsake our fleshly desires and live in accordance with God’s word. Subsequently, a transformation occurs in our perspectives on things and in our corrupt dispositions, and we start to live out some

semblance of a genuine human being. We then truly come to appreciate that God's judgment and chastisement are God's great love and salvation for us. Without God's judgment and chastisement, we would all be targets for destruction."

The sister ended her fellowship here, and I felt very moved by what she'd said and saw how great and true God's love is. He is the God who loves mankind! It was I who had misunderstood God's good intention in saving people. I had thought that God judged people to condemn and punish them, and had never thought that God expressing His word and judging man in the last days could be an even truer love, or that it was an even greater salvation for us! Thanks be to Almighty God! Through reading the word of Almighty God and from the sisters' fellowships, I gained some understanding of God's work of judgment and my misunderstandings about God were dispelled. I came to the firm belief that Almighty God is none other than the returned Lord Jesus, and I became willing to accept God's work of judgment. I had fully emerged from the fog of confusion, and my face beamed with a joyous smile. Sister Li said happily, "Thanks be to God for guiding you. All this is the result of God's word. From this, we can see that, before we have come to understand the truth, though notions about God and God's work may arise, as long as we seek and accept the truth, and listen to God's word, then we will understand the truth and have knowledge of God's work, and our notions and imaginings will be blown away like clouds of smoke. We will then be able to understand God's will and will no longer misunderstand God." I nodded happily and thanked God for saving me.

After having accepted God's work in the last days, I installed a messaging app on my phone so that Sister Gao and the others could often share with me gospel movies, music videos, and hymns from The Church of Almighty God. When I saw the gospel movie from The Church of Almighty God called From the Throne Flows the Water of Life, it had a great impact on me. The desolate situation of the church in the movie was just like the situation in our own church, and the movie showed the root cause of this desolation with perfect clarity. Because God's work had shifted, and God was no longer working within the religious church, the people who refused to accept Almighty God's work of the last days were all suffering a famine. Those people who accepted the word of Almighty God attained God's provision of the water of life and were no longer parched, and they lived a blessed life with God. When I watched the movie Waiting, I couldn't help but let out a sigh. The old pastor in the movie had believed in the Lord his whole life and thought that his hard work was meritorious. He was

just waiting for the Lord to come so he could be raised up into heaven. But he stubbornly clung to the belief that when the Lord came He would descend upon a cloud and would give the revelation to him first. Because of this stubbornness, he resisted and refused to accept God's work of the last days, so in the end he was left just staring at the sky, waiting for a cloud, and he died filled with regret. This bitter lesson really gave the viewer food for thought! At the same time, I rejoiced in my heart and gave thanks to Almighty God for saving me, a rebellious son who only sought to gain blessings from Him but was reluctant to accept His judgment and purification, and for leading me before His throne to attain His salvation in the last days.

I now live the church life in The Church of Almighty God, and through truly experiencing the judgment and chastisement of the word of God, I have slowly begun to perceive how real and practical it is for God to perform the work of judgment. When God dissected man's treacherous nature, I felt that because I myself never lied, I therefore refused to acknowledge the actual situation revealed by God's words. When I encountered a practical situation which God had arranged for me, I involuntarily blurt out lies to protect my own interests and safeguard my vanity. Moreover, I felt treachery and deceit in my heart, and I also had many secrets I did not want openly known. This led me to see that everything revealed by the word of God is the truth and the real situation, and that it is man's nature and essence. Only then was I truly convinced of God's word, and I had an urgent desire to seek the truth and to transform my own deceitful nature. After this experience, I came to realize that if it hadn't been for God's practical judgment and chastisement, I never would have known my own treacherous nature, and I never would have been able to practice the truth to change my own deceitful disposition. God's judgment and chastisement were indeed cleansing and saving me, and they are a different kind of love. I want to cherish this special kind of love well and accept the judgment and chastisement of God, and I want to change as soon as may be into a new person so that I may satisfy God.

10. The Kingdom of Heaven Is Actually Upon the Earth

By Chen Bo, China

The greatest longing we believers have is to be able to enter the kingdom of heaven,

and to enjoy the eternal bliss bestowed upon man by the Lord. Every time I heard a pastor say in a sermon that the place the Lord will prepare for us in the future is up in the heavens, that there will be fields of gold and walls of jade, gems will glisten everywhere, we'll be able to eat the fruit of the tree of life and drink the water of the river of life, there will be no more pain, tears, or sorrow, and all will be free and liberated, I would feel this incredible surge of emotion and joy. This is a place I longed for so much, and my life on earth of toil and sorrow truly left me so weary within my heart. And so, I ran around preaching the gospel and expending myself enthusiastically for the Lord; I would spread the gospel and establish churches, and I never stopped to catch a breath no matter how painful or difficult it got. Especially since I knew that we're in the last days and that the Lord would soon return to take us all into our heavenly home, I worked and expended myself that much more proactively.

One day, I went to my sister's house to visit our mom, and just as I was about to leave, my sister gave me a book and urged me to read it carefully. I thought to myself: "This book that my sister gave me has to be something spiritual, and it just so happens that my spirit feels quite parched right now. I'm not feeling the presence of the Lord. When I read the Bible I'm not gaining any illumination. When I get back, I have to give this book a good read. Perhaps I'll gain some sustenance from it." After returning home, I opened up the book and started reading—I was sucked in before I knew it. The more I read it, the more I wanted to read, and the more I felt that there was light within these words, that they contained the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and there was no way that these words could be uttered by a regular person. After reading that book I came to understand truths that I had never understood before from reading the Bible, and I felt a sense of internal clarity and enjoyment. It made me want to pray and grow closer to the Lord—my faith grew and my spiritual state got better and better. I thought: "Only the work of the Holy Spirit can provide man with faith and strength, and provide nourishment and sustenance for man's spirit. The words in this book certainly come from the Holy Spirit." As a result, the first thing I did every morning after getting up was read this book.

One day, I opened the book and read the following passage: **"God entering into rest means that He will no longer carry out His work of humanity's salvation. Humanity entering into rest means that all of humanity will live within God's light and under His blessings; there will be none of Satan's corruption, nor will any unrighteous things**

occur. Humanity will live normally upon earth, and they will live under God's care" ("God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). My heart skipped a beat when I read this, and I thought to myself: "In the future man is going to live upon the earth? Didn't the Lord Jesus promise that in the future we would live in heaven? Why does this say we'll be on earth? How could this be possible? Am I misreading this?" So, I carefully re-read the passage; it really did say that in the future man would live upon the earth. I wondered, what does that actually mean? This wouldn't do—I knew I had to understand what this actually meant. I continued reading: "**God has God's destination, and man has man's destination. While resting, God will continue to guide all of humanity in their lives upon earth. While in God's light, man will worship the one true God in heaven. ... When humanity enters into rest, it means that man has become a true creation; humanity will worship God from upon the earth and have normal human lives. People will no longer be disobedient to God or resist God; they will return to the original life of Adam and Eve**" ("God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). The more I read the more confused I felt: Man will worship God from upon the earth? How is this going to happen? Doesn't the Bible mention being in heaven? How could it be on earth? I rushed over to my Bible, opening it to John 14:2–3, and read these words from the Lord Jesus: "**In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.**" The Lord Jesus clearly says that His resurrection and ascent into heaven was to prepare a place for us, so our destination should be up in heaven. This is the Lord's promise! I thought to myself: "What this book is saying is different from what the Lord says, so I cannot keep reading it." After closing the book I was in a very confused state of mind and didn't know what the right thing to do was, so I prayed to the Lord over and over: "Oh Lord, please guide me and lead me. Should I read this book, or not? Oh Lord, please enlighten me, guide me...." After praying I thought about how after reading this book, I felt closer in my relationship with the Lord, more enthusiastic about my faith, and that my spirit had gained sustenance. I felt that if I put it down and stopped reading it, I'd return to my previous state of feeling spiritually parched. Since that book had been so incredibly edifying for me, and since I could confirm that it had come from the Holy Spirit, and anything from the Holy Spirit could not possibly be in error, I knew I shouldn't reject it and refuse to read it,

even though some of its content wasn't in line with my notions. After thinking through all of this, I decided I should keep reading before making up my mind.

So, I picked up the book again and continued reading: **“Man’s place of rest is on earth, and God’s place of rest is in heaven. While man worships God in rest, he will live upon earth, and while God leads the remaining portion of humanity in rest, He will lead them from heaven, not from earth”** (“God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). I ruminated on this over and over, thinking: “This passage says that God’s place of rest is up in heaven, and that in man’s rest, he will worship God upon the earth. Could it be that man’s place of rest really is on earth just as this says? That’s impossible! The Lord Jesus already said that we should be wherever the Lord is, and since the Lord Jesus was resurrected and ascended up into heaven, so we will also surely ascend into heaven!” I thought back over the past few years, how I had been pounding the pavement for the Lord, how I had endured so much suffering. Wasn’t all that suffering so that I could go up into heaven and no longer experience the suffering of the world? If it’s really like what this book is saying, that in the future man will still be living upon the earth, then wouldn’t my hopes come to nothing? I sat on my bed, unable to move, feeling weak from head to toe. The more I thought about it the more unsettled I felt. I wanted to get some clarity on this, so I rushed over to my sister’s house.

When I got there I saw a middle-aged woman, who was introduced to me as Sister Li by my sister. Shortly after, I opened up to them about my thoughts after reading this book. After hearing me out, Sister Li shared this fellowship with me: “Sister, all of us who believe in the Lord believe that the Lord Jesus has promised to prepare us a place, that wherever He is, we will be also. We think that since the Lord went back up into the heavens, when He returns in the future He will certainly welcome us into heaven where we will live, together with Him. But have we ever thought about whether this kind of imagining, this kind of extrapolation is tenable? If it were as we imagine, that the Lord is going to come and take us up into heaven to live, then wouldn’t the words in the Lord’s Prayer **‘Your kingdom come, Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven’** (Matthew 6:10) and the prophecy in the Book of Revelation **‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God’** (Revelation 21:3) come to naught? How could they be fulfilled? If the final destination that God will give us was in heaven, then when God originally created man, what was the

significance of Him having us live upon the earth?" I wasn't remotely convinced, and retorted: "Although that's what said in the Scripture, the Lord Himself said: **'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also'** (John 14:2–3). After the Lord Jesus was resurrected He ascended to heaven, and here the Lord is saying that He will go prepare a place for us. He says that where He is, we may also be. So, this proves that God promised us that we will ascend to heaven to obtain eternal life, not that we will obtain eternal life upon the earth. This is something that no one can deny!" Sister Li continued on patiently: "Sister, it is true that the Lord is preparing a place for those who believe in Him, but is this place actually on the earth or up in heaven? That's not stated in these words from the Lord, so what are we basing it on when we say that the place He is preparing for us is in heaven? Is this actually the Lord's promise or is it our own notions and imaginings? For those of us who believe in the Lord, all things should be based on the word of the Lord—we should not adulterate the Lord's words with our own notions and imaginings and then claim that's what He meant. Is this not going by our personal ideas and motives to explain the word of the Lord? Is this not distorting the word of the Lord? We cannot rely on what we imagine within our own heads or our own thoughts and preferences to explain the word of the Lord. This is making a mistake. In Genesis 2:7–8 it says: 'And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed.' It's clear that in the beginning, God created man on the earth, and before God created man He first created all things in order to prepare an environment suitable for our survival. We can see that God's will is for us to live upon the earth. In addition, in the Lord's Prayer, the Lord has us pray to God that His kingdom come to earth. It is prophesied in the Book of Revelation, **'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ'** (Revelation 11:15) and **'[T]he tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them'** (Revelation 21:3). We can see from these verses and prophecies that the place that God is preparing for us is on the earth, and that our future destination is on the earth, not up in heaven." Sister Li's fellowship was entirely contrary to my notions. I simply did not listen to what she said. I stood up and said to her angrily: "I've heard enough! All these years I've been pounding the pavement, I've expended myself and suffered for the Lord so that I can go up into heaven! I've always longed for the Lord to take me home, up

into heaven, so that I'll no longer suffer on earth, but you're saying that our final destination is on earth. This is simply unacceptable to me." After saying this I turned around to leave. My younger sister rushed over to try to talk some sense into me: "Hey, how can you be so stubborn? Is this notion you're clinging to right? You don't know the true meaning of the Lord saying '**go and prepare a place for you,**' but are just holding your own counsel. Isn't that being foolish? This is not the kind of attitude that seekers of the truth should have! The Lord Jesus we have been longing for has already returned—Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus! That book that I gave you to read contains the personal utterances and words of God! The Lord, whose return we have awaited every single day so that He can come receive us, has now returned. We must listen carefully. We absolutely cannot miss this opportunity of a lifetime!"

I was shocked to hear my sister say all of this. I simply didn't dare believe my ears: The Lord has returned? Is this true? Then my sister said: "Didn't you say before that the words in this book come from the Holy Spirit? You said reading it provided you with great sustenance, you gained the work of the Holy Spirit, and your relationship with the Lord grew closer. Now think about it: Apart from the Lord's own words, who else can speak in a way that achieves this kind of effect? Now the Lord has returned to carry out work and utter new words, and we are able to savor the sweetness of the words of God. If we don't seek and examine this, if we just blindly cling to our own notions and imaginings and to the literal meaning of the Bible, eventually we will do ourselves in. In their time, Pharisees who were well-versed in the Bible blindly clung to the letter of the Bible, but didn't try at all to question whether their own understanding of the Bible was correct, or whether it conformed to God's will. Instead, they just believed that anyone not called the Messiah was not the Savior who was to come. They simply did not examine whether the Lord Jesus' way provided sustenance for the life of man, or if it could provide a path of practice. They just stubbornly held on to their notions and imaginings, blindly refusing the salvation of the Lord Jesus, ultimately committing the heinous sin of nailing the Lord to the cross. We cannot follow in the footsteps of the Pharisees and go down their path of resisting God!" After listening to my sister's words I thought to myself that what she was saying was reasonable. Only the Lord's words are the solution to parched spirit. I thought back to how, since I had started reading this book, my spiritual state really had been getting better and better. It had given me faith in God, and I was able to feel the Lord's presence. I had even come to understand some

truths. Could it be that the words in this book really were the utterances of the returned Lord? The Lord returning is a big deal. I knew I couldn't blindly reject and judge this, but had to make an effort to look into it and seek. I couldn't be like those Pharisees who did not seek the truth, but just held on to their notions and resisted God! At that moment I felt both pleasantly surprised and scared. I was pleasantly surprised because I believed in the Lord and longed for Him to return and accept me into the kingdom of heaven where I could live a carefree life, where I no longer had to live a life of hardship on the earth, and that day I heard news of the Lord's return. It was truly a monumental, joyous thing. I was scared because if Almighty God is the returned Lord, then my dream of waiting for the Lord to take me into the kingdom of heaven would be shattered.... My heart was in utter turmoil—it was awash in different emotions. In this helplessness, all I could do was turn to the Lord in prayer: "Oh Lord! Every single day I have looked forward to You coming to take me into Your heavenly home, but they are saying that the place You have prepared for my final destination is here upon the earth. I really am incapable of confronting this fact. I really don't want to continue living such a hard life on earth. Oh Lord! I'm really suffering within my heart now, please help me and guide me on the path ahead." After praying, these words of the Lord Jesus came to mind: "**Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**" (Matthew 5:3). It's true! The Lord likes those who are poor in spirit, who seek the truth, and only they can enter the kingdom of heaven. I should be one who is poor in spirit—only carefully listening to their fellowship is in line with the will of the Lord.

Just at that moment, Sister Li said: "The Lord said: '**Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God**' (Matthew 5:8). We should listen to the word of the Lord; we should be pure in heart to welcome the return of the Lord. Although the work that God carries out today does not conform to our notions or imaginings, everything that God does is good, it is all for the sake of mankind, and it all contains the will of God—there's truth to be sought within it. If we don't have a thorough understanding, we have to first set ourselves aside and make an effort to seek the truth so that we can receive the enlightenment of God and understand His will. Sister, please open up your heart and share whatever you're still unclear on, and we can seek together in fellowship." I felt like what Sister Li had said made sense and that I should calm down and seek, so I said: "Sister, there's one thing I don't understand. Why is it that our final destination wouldn't be in heaven, but rather here on earth?" Sister Li found John 3:13 "**And no man has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from**

heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” and Isaiah 66:1 “**The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool,**” and gave me these two verses to read. She then fellowshiped on the meaning of these two passages. Her fellowship suddenly brought light into my heart—I was already familiar with these Bible verses, so hadn’t I ever really thought about them before? The Lord very clearly says that except for the Son of man who came down from heaven, no man can ascend up to heaven, for heaven is God’s throne and earth is God’s footstool, so how could man be worth of going up into heaven? God created man on earth and has us live on earth. From the very day that God created man, man has lived and multiplied on earth, generation after generation. All of God’s work to save mankind has also been carried out on earth. This was predestined by God long ago, and something that no one can change. She went on to tie the Bible into her fellowship, about how the Lord said He would prepare a place for us. She explained that this referred to God incarnate’s appearance and work on earth in the last days, and that He had predestined that we would be born in the last days, that we would hear God’s voice, be caught up before God’s throne, accept God’s judgment and purification of the last days, and finally be led into the kingdom of God. This is the true meaning of the words, “**where I am, there you may be also**” (John 14:3). I saw that God’s kingdom is actually upon the earth, and that mankind’s final destination is on the earth and not in heaven! That whole time I had been living within my own notions and imaginings, I had delimited God’s return to just taking me up into heaven to live, but that was not at all in line with the Lord’s will, or with the facts! However, I still wasn’t willing to live this kind of life on earth, being afflicted by Satan. I then explained the thoughts within me to Sister Li.

After hearing me out, Sister Li opened up *The Word Appears in the Flesh*, and read a passage from the word of Almighty God to me: “**The life in rest is one without war, without filth, without persisting unrighteousness. This is to say that it lacks Satan’s harassment (here ‘Satan’ refers to hostile forces), Satan’s corruption, as well as the invasion of any force opposed to God. Everything follows its own kind and worships the Lord of creation. Heaven and earth are entirely tranquil. This is humanity’s restful life. ... After God and man enter into rest, Satan will no longer exist, and like Satan, those wicked people will also no longer exist. Before God and man enter into rest, those wicked individuals who once persecuted God upon earth and the enemies who were disobedient to Him upon earth will have already been destroyed; they will have**

been destroyed by the great disasters of the last days. After those wicked individuals have been completely destroyed, earth will never again know Satan's harassment. Humanity will obtain complete salvation, and it will only be then that God's work ends completely. These are the prerequisites for God and man to enter into rest" ("God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together" in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

Through reading the words of Almighty God I came to understand that, although we will continue to live on earth, once God finishes His final stage of work of saving mankind, Satan will be destroyed, and in our earthly lives, we will never again be disturbed by Satan, we will never again toil or be distressed, and there will be no tears or sighs. It will be just like when Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden. We will be free to worship God, and we will live beautiful and blessed lives where God is with man. This is mankind's final destination, and this is what God will ultimately accomplish in His work of the last days. It truly is great! At that moment I exclaimed: "Who could so clearly explain mankind's final destination? Who could arrange mankind's outcome? Only God could do this!" I recognized God's voice within the words of Almighty God, and saw that the work of Almighty God is the appearance and work of God! The notions within me had finally been dispelled, and I joyfully accepted Almighty God's work of the last days, returning before God's throne.

11. Notifications From YouTube Reunited Me With the Lord

By Li Lan, South Korea

In life, sometimes chance occurrences can have unforeseen consequences. Something unexpected and amazing happened to me a few months ago: Notifications from YouTube reunited me with the Lord.

One morning in June, I woke early and began to gently thumb through the Bible that I kept near my pillow, and I read what the Lord Jesus said when He rebuked the Pharisees: **"My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves"** (Matthew 21:13). I couldn't help but worry when I read this, as the situation in my church had become just the same as that in the temple toward the end of the Age of Law: In my church, the pastors and elders often preached to us that believers had to love one another, but they themselves actually accepted small gifts of money when they prayed for members

of their congregation, and sometimes the amount of money given would determine how long they prayed for the giver. The church was supposed to be a place where people worship God, and yet now it had become just somewhere where believers got married. The faithful were growing fewer by the day, and the pastors and elders weren't putting much effort into their sermons or seeking how they could best shepherd the Lord's flock but were instead finding endless enjoyment in performing wedding ceremonies. I couldn't help but think: "The pastors and elders have deviated from the Lord's way and the church is now no different from the world outside. It has become a den of thieves, just like the temple at the end of the Age of Law. Will the Lord still appear in such a church as this when He returns?"

"Beep, beep, beep ..." An alarm broke my chain of thought. I picked up my cellphone and turned the alarm off, and by chance I noticed a notification on my phone sent from YouTube. The seemingly familiar words "The Church of Almighty God" caught my eye and I felt as though I'd heard them somewhere before, but I couldn't think of where just then. I felt very puzzled, and thought: "I've never subscribed to The Church of Almighty God's videos on YouTube, so why would YouTube send me a notification about this church?" I suddenly remembered that, about a month ago, a friend had taken me to The Church of Almighty God to hear one of their sermons. Their sermon was fresh and illuminating, it was in keeping with the Bible, and it sounded very refreshing to me. I had wanted to continue investigating it, but my friend had said to me that The Church of Almighty God testified that the Lord had returned already as the incarnated Almighty God, and that He was performing a new stage of work in the last days and expressing many truths. My friend also told me that believers in The Church of Almighty God all read the words expressed by Almighty God, and not the Bible, and so I thought: "The pastors and elders often say at our gatherings that the words of God are all in the Bible, and there can't possibly be any words or work of God outside the Bible. What's more, believers throughout the ages have all believed in the Lord through the Bible—to have faith in the Lord is to have faith in the Bible, so how could anyone depart from the Bible and still believe in the Lord?" My friend had invited me to go listen to more sermons at The Church of Almighty God, but I always refused. Looking at this notification on my cellphone, I couldn't help but wonder: "I've never subscribed to their videos, and yet I've received a notification about The Church of Almighty God. Could the Lord have arranged this?" Because I clung to my notions, however, I did not open the link and watch The Church of Almighty God's video.

To my surprise, however, for several days afterward I often received notifications from YouTube recommending new movies and hymn videos uploaded by The Church of Almighty God. I thought to myself: "Could the Lord really be guiding me? Is it the Lord's will that I watch The Church of Almighty God's videos?" And so, I said a prayer to the Lord: "Dear Lord, why am I getting notifications about The Church of Almighty God on my cellphone? They testify that You have returned already, but is this really true? Should I watch these videos? O Lord, please guide me." Afterward, I thought of the Lord Jesus' words: "**Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**" (Matthew 5:3). "Yes," I thought. "The Lord's coming is so important. Now that I've heard the news that the Lord has returned, I ought to seek with an open mind, investigate in earnest, be wise in my discrimination, and see whether Almighty God truly is the Lord Jesus returned or not. If I don't seek or investigate it and it just so happens that the Lord really has returned, won't I then have missed my chance to be reunited with the Lord?" Thinking this, I decided to watch The Church of Almighty God's videos. Thank the Lord! If I hadn't watched them, I would never have known. Only when I watched the videos did I discover that the YouTube channel of The Church of Almighty God has everything one could wish for, and it has it in plenty! There are gospel movies, choral performances, music videos, hymns, and more. All the different songs and gospel movies captured my attention immediately, and in particular I felt deeply moved by the music video of the hymn My Beloved, Please Wait for Me. When I watched it, I couldn't help but think of my experiences over the past few years, searching everywhere for a church with the Holy Spirit's work due to the desolation in my own. The more videos I watched, the more I wanted to see. I felt incredibly sustained, and I wished to understand and look into The Church of Almighty God even more.

One day, I watched a wonderful clip entitled What Is the Relationship Between God and the Bible? taken from the gospel movie Who Is My Lord. A passage of Almighty God's words in this video left me with a very deep impression: "**They believe in My existence only within the scope of the Bible, and they equate Me with the Bible; without the Bible there is no Me, and without Me there is no Bible. They pay no heed to My existence or actions, but instead devote extreme and special attention to each and every word of Scripture. Many more even believe that I should not do anything I wish to do unless it is foretold by Scripture. They attach too much importance to Scripture. It can be said that they see words and expressions as too important, to the extent that they use**

verses from the Bible to measure every word I say and to condemn Me. What they seek is not the way of compatibility with Me or the way of compatibility with the truth, but the way of compatibility with the words of the Bible, and they believe that anything that does not conform to the Bible is, without exception, not My work. Are such people not the dutiful descendants of the Pharisees? The Jewish Pharisees used the law of Moses to condemn Jesus. They did not seek compatibility with the Jesus of that time, but diligently followed the law to the letter, to the extent that—after having charged Him with not following the law of the Old Testament and not being the Messiah—they ultimately nailed the innocent Jesus to the cross. What was their essence? Was it not that they didn't seek the way of compatibility with the truth? They obsessed over each and every word of Scripture while paying heed neither to My will nor to the steps and methods of My work. They were not people who sought the truth, but people who rigidly clung to words; they were not people who believed in God, but people who believed in the Bible. Essentially, they were watchdogs of the Bible" ("You Should Seek the Way of Compatibility With Christ" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Almighty God's words revealed our attitude toward the Bible in perfect clarity. In my heart, I did indeed regard the Bible as being above everything else; I believed that the Lord's words were all within the Bible and that therefore the Bible represented the Lord, that to have faith in the Lord was to have faith in the Bible, and that departing from the Bible meant that one couldn't possibly believe in the Lord. There was something I didn't understand, however: The Bible is a testimony to the Lord, it forms the basis of our faith, we Christians have based our belief in the Lord on the Bible for two thousand years, and no one has ever separated the Bible from faith in the Lord—why then did it say in Almighty God's words that the Bible could not be equated with God? What did this mean?

I continued to watch the video and, next, a brother from The Church of Almighty God gave fellowship, saying, "Let us ponder together: What does it mean to believe in the Lord? What does it mean to believe in the Bible? What is the relationship between the Bible and the Lord? Which came first, the Bible or the Lord? Who is it that does the work of salvation? Then, can the Bible stand in for the Lord in doing His work? Can the Bible represent the Lord? If people put blind faith in the Bible and worship the Bible, does this mean that they believe in and worship God? Is holding onto the Bible tantamount to practicing and experiencing God's word? Does holding onto the Bible necessarily mean that one is

following the Lord's way? If people place the Bible before everything else, does this mean that they are worshiping the Lord as great, that they are reverent of and obedient to the Lord? ... For thousands of years, people have been blindly worshiping the Bible and affording the same status to the Bible as they do to the Lord. Some even use the Bible to substitute for the Lord and His work. But no one truly knows the Lord and is obedient to Him. The Pharisees held onto the Bible, yet nailed the Lord Jesus to the cross. What was the issue? Does understanding the Bible mean knowing God? Does holding onto the Bible mean following the Lord's way? The Pharisees were experts of biblical exegesis, but they didn't know God. Instead, they nailed the Lord Jesus who expressed the truth and did the redemptive work, to the cross. Have we actually forgotten this? Exactly what does it mean to really know God? Does just being able to interpret the Bible and understanding the Bible knowledge qualify as knowing God? If that's the case, then why would the Pharisees condemn and oppose the Lord Jesus even as they interpreted the Bible? The key of whether one is able to truly know and obey God is whether or not he knows and obeys the incarnate Christ."

As I contemplated the brother's questions, I answered them myself in my heart: "Surely the Lord came first and then the Bible, and the Bible cannot perform the work of saving mankind. The Bible is the Bible, and the Lord is the Lord. I always believed that the Bible represented the Lord, so haven't I been regarding the Bible as being above the Lord?" As I thought this, I suddenly startled, and thought: "Since the Lord is the Lord and the Bible is the Bible, have I been practicing in accordance with the Lord's will by following what the pastors and elders say, idolizing the Bible, and regarding the Bible as above everything else?" But then I thought: "How could faith in the Lord truly be called faith in the Lord if one departs from the Bible? Could it be wrong that we have clung to the Bible in our belief in the Lord?" Just then, these words spoken by the Lord Jesus came to mind: "**Search the scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And you will not come to Me, that you might have life**" (John 5:39–40). Pondering these words, I realized that the Bible was just a testimony for God, and that if one wanted to gain the Lord's approval and obtain life, then one had to seek the Lord! "It seems as though the Bible really can't represent the Lord," I thought. "The One who provides for our lives is the Lord, not the Bible, and faith in the Bible does not mean that one has faith in the Lord or that one follows the Lord. If I just keep on blindly clinging to the Bible and idolizing it, and I

do not seek or submit to God's new work, then I will more than likely end up just like the Pharisees and will nail God to the cross once again! The words of Almighty God are possessed of the truth, and they are able to unravel my notions and perplexities. I must investigate and seek in earnest so that I don't miss my chance to welcome the coming of the Lord." Thinking this, I decided to ask my friend to take me to The Church of Almighty God so that I might look into it.

After my friend and I arrived at The Church of Almighty God, the brothers and sisters gave us a warm welcome, after which they fellowshiped patiently with us. I asked, "I've recently gained a lot from watching the movies and videos on your church's website, and I see that the words of Almighty God are possessed of truth, that they can resolve my problems and perplexities, and allow me to understand the truth. But there is something that I still don't understand. The pastors and elders often say to us that God's words are all within the Bible, that the Bible is the foundation of our faith in God, and that believers in the Lord cannot depart from the Bible. And yet you testify that the Lord Jesus has returned as Almighty God, and that He is performing a new stage of work in the last days and expressing new words—what is the meaning of all this? Please could you fellowship with me regarding this issue?"

Sister Zhou then responded to my question by playing a wonderful clip entitled Are All of God's Work and Words in the Bible? taken from the movie Who Is My Lord. The preacher in the movie gave fellowship, saying, "We all know, the New and Old Testaments of the Bible are only a record of two stages of God's work. As for the words and work of God during the Age of Law and the Age of Grace, do any here dare say that the Bible holds a complete record? Does anyone here dare say that all of the words of God delivered through the prophets during the Age of Law and all of the Lord Jesus' words during the Age of Grace are recorded in the Bible? Actually, you're all well aware many of the Lord Jesus' words are not recorded in the Bible. The words of the Lord Jesus recorded in the Bible are just the tip of the iceberg! Many of the prophets' books in the Age of Law are also not included in the Bible. This is commonly acknowledged! How could you say that all of God's words and work are recorded in the Bible? Is this not in clear contradiction to fact? In this sense, are you not liars? The Lord Jesus foretold many times that He would come again. How could the words of the returned Lord Jesus be recorded in the Bible ahead of time? We should be very clear that the Bible is a record of God's work in the past. So many years after the writing of the

Old Testament, the Lord Jesus came and carried out the work of redemption during the Age of Grace. Isn't that right? Tell me, would the Lord Jesus' words and work automatically get written down in the Bible? God's words and work had to be compiled before they could be the text in the Bible. In the last days, Almighty God has come to do the work of judgment starting from God's house, and expressed all the truths to purify and save mankind. Could these truths automatically appear in the Bible? The Church of Almighty God compiles all the truths expressed by Almighty God into the Bible of the Age of Kingdom, that is, The Word Appears in the Flesh. This Bible of the Age of Kingdom contains only the expression of God. You could say The Word Appears in the Flesh is the eternal way of life gifted to man by God in the last days. So the view that God's words and work are all recorded in the Bible and that God's words and work will not appear elsewhere outside the Bible is erroneous, absurd and completely the product of man's notions and imaginations."

After listening to the preacher's fellowship, I felt that what he'd said was true to the facts: The Bible can be a reference book for us to use in our belief in God, but it cannot represent the Lord, much less can it represent the Lord's words or work. I knew that I must take the correct approach to the Bible, and not regard the Bible and the Lord as being of equal status, much less limit God's work and words to within the pages of the Bible. The Bible is merely a record of God's previous two stages of work, and it records the work of God in the Age of Law and the Age of Grace. But God is so great and overflowing, so how could just this one book, the Bible, possibly contain everything about God? The Gospel of John says: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25). It now seemed as though the Lord Jesus' work and words were not all recorded in the Bible, and yet I had gone along with the interpretations given by the pastors and elders of the religious world, and had believed that there was no work or words of God beyond those that are in the Bible—what a blind fool I'd been, clinging to the notions and imaginings of man! This position was simply untenable!

I kept on watching the video, and the preacher read out several passages of Almighty God's words: **"The things that are recorded in the Bible are limited; they cannot represent the work of God in its entirety. The Four Gospels have fewer than one hundred chapters altogether, in which are written a finite number of happenings, such as Jesus cursing the fig tree, Peter's three denials of the Lord, Jesus appearing to**

the disciples following His crucifixion and resurrection, teaching about fasting, teaching about prayer, teaching about divorce, the birth and genealogy of Jesus, Jesus' appointment of the disciples, and so forth. However, man values them as treasures, even verifying the work of today against them. They even believe that all the work Jesus did in His life amounted only to so much, as if God were only capable of doing this much and nothing further. Is this not absurd?" ("The Mystery of the Incarnation (1)" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). "At the time, Jesus only gave His disciples a series of sermons in the Age of Grace on such subjects as how to practice, how to gather together, how to supplicate in prayer, how to treat others, and so forth. The work He carried out was that of the Age of Grace, and He expounded only on how the disciples and those who followed Him ought to practice. He only did the work of the Age of Grace, and none of the work of the last days. ... The work of God in each age has clear boundaries; He does only the work of the current age, and never carries out the next stage of work in advance. Only thus can His representative work of each age be brought to the fore. Jesus spoke only of the signs of the last days, of how to be patient and how to be saved, of how to repent and confess, and of how to bear the cross and endure suffering; never did He speak of how man in the last days should achieve entry, nor of how he should seek to satisfy God's will. As such, is it not ridiculous to search the Bible for God's work of the last days? What can you see by merely clutching the Bible? Be it an expositor of the Bible or a preacher, who could have seen the work of today in advance?" ("How Can Man Who Has Delimited God in His Conceptions Receive the Revelations of God?" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). "If you wish to see the work of the Age of Law, and to see how the Israelites followed the way of Jehovah, then you must read the Old Testament; if you wish to understand the work of the Age of Grace, then you must read the New Testament. But how do you see the work of the last days? You must accept the leadership of the God of today, and enter into the work of today, for this is the new work, and no one has previously recorded it in the Bible. Today, God has become flesh and selected other chosen ones in China. God works in these people, He continues on from His work on earth, continues on from the work of the Age of Grace. The work of today is a path that man has never walked, and a way that no one has ever seen. It is work that has never been done before—it is God's latest work on earth. ... How could the Bible contain explicit

records of such work? Who could have recorded every single bit of today's work, without omission, in advance? Who could record this mightier, wiser work that defies convention in the moldy old book? The work of today is not history, and as such, if you wish to walk the new path of today, then you must depart from the Bible, you must go beyond the books of prophecy or history in the Bible. Only then will you be able to walk the new path properly, and only then will you be able to enter into the new realm and the new work" ("Concerning the Bible (1)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

After the preacher had finished reading God's words, a brother in the movie gave fellowship, saying, "Almighty God's word is completely in line with fact. The Bible is just a record of the words and work of God during the Age of Law and the Age of Grace. The words and work of God in the last days couldn't be written into the Bible in advance. We used to claim that all of God's words and work could be found within the Bible only. But this really doesn't line up with the fact of God's work." I couldn't help but nod my head in agreement after I'd listened to God's words and the brother's fellowship. I thought to myself: "That's right. How could anyone write in the Bible about work God had yet to do? Only now do I understand chapter 5, verse 5 in Revelation that states: '**And one of the elders said to me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.**' Here it says that the book sealed with seven seals can only be opened when the Lord returns in the last days, so doesn't that show that the Lord still has words to say and work to perform that are not recorded in the Bible?" Thinking this, I regretted not having investigated The Church of Almighty God sooner. I really shouldn't have blindly followed the pastors and elders and delimited God's work by relying on my own notions and imaginings!

Sister Zhou then gave fellowship, saying, "Sister, now that we have watched this video, we understand that the Bible is merely a record of God's past work and a testimony to God's work, and it cannot take God's place in performing the work to save mankind in the last days. God's work is always forging onward, and today Almighty God is performing a new stage of work—that is, the work of using words to judge and chastise in the Age of Kingdom—upon the foundation of the Lord Jesus' work of redemption. This entirely fulfills the biblical prophecies, '**And if any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejects Me, and receives not My**

words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day' (John 12:47–48). **'For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God'** (1 Peter 4:17). The words and work of Almighty God in the last days do not negate the Bible, but instead are on a higher, more profound level than God's words and work in the Age of Law and the Age of Grace, and Almighty God's work is more fitting for our current needs. The words of Almighty God form the Bible of the Age of Kingdom—The Word Appears in the Flesh. These words are the way of eternal life which God gives to mankind in the last days, they reveal the mystery of God's three stages of work and the mystery of God's incarnation, and they express God's disposition, what He has and is, and His almightiness and wisdom. Among other things, they also show us the path to exalt God, testify to God, and serve God, the path to enter into the reality of the truth, and the path to attain full salvation and be perfected. Only when we accept Almighty God's work of the last days, keep pace with God's work, and obtain provision from God's current words, can we gain the work of the Holy Spirit. If we always cling to the Bible, and refuse to accept God's work and utterances in the last days or follow the steps of God's work, then we will be unable to obtain the provision of the living water of life which God bestows on us, and we will just be weeded out and abandoned. Now, all religions and denominations are becoming increasingly desolate. Because they have not kept pace with God's work of the last days, they have not obtained provision from God's current words, and so they find themselves lost in the wilderness with no way out...."

Through the fellowships given by the brothers and sisters at The Church of Almighty God, I realized that Almighty God's work of the last days entirely accords with biblical prophecies and does not deviate from the Bible at all. Instead, God performs a newer, higher stage of work according to our needs, so that we might cast off the bonds of sin once and for all, be purified and saved by God, and obtain from God truth and life. I also came to understand why the religious world is becoming more and more desolate and debased and why my spirit always felt so parched. It is because we are arrogant and conceited and we cling to our own notions, limiting God's words and work within the pages of the Bible, and not seeking or accepting God's new work in the last days, and not keeping pace with the footsteps of the Lamb. The brothers and sisters then gave me fellowship on all manner of truths and, one by one, God's words resolved my problems and perplexities. I became absolutely certain that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned, and my heart was filled with

gratitude for the Lord.

After I'd accepted God's work of the last days, I actively participated in the church life, and through being watered and supplied by God's words and fellowshiping with the brothers and sisters, I came to understand many truths and mysteries I'd never before understood, and my spirit was content. I felt as though I was drawing closer and closer to God, my heart was filling with more and more light, and every day I felt an abundance of peace and joy. Sometimes, when I thought about how I'd clung to the Bible, about how I'd delimited God's words and work within the pages of the Bible and refused to seek or investigate God's work of the last days, I would feel incredibly remorseful and very indebted to God—I saw how truly blind and ignorant I'd been! If God hadn't shown me mercy and saved me by using YouTube to send me notifications about The Church of Almighty God, thus leading me to hear God's voice, I would still be blindly following the pastors and elders, and would not have sought or investigated God's work of the last days. In that case, I could have read the Bible for a hundred years and would still have been unable to welcome the return of the Lord. That I have today been able to receive God's salvation in the last days is entirely due to God's leadership and guidance, and it is the wondrous salvation of God. Thanks be to God!

12. The Riddle of the Trinity Revealed

By Jingmo, Malaysia

I was fortunate in 1997 to accept the gospel of the Lord Jesus and, when I was baptized, the pastor prayed and baptized me in the name of the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. From then on, whenever I prayed, I offered up my prayer in the name of the Trinity, the loving heavenly Father, the Savior Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. But there was always some uncertainty within my heart: How could three become one? I could never fully articulate or understand what the Trinity was all about.

Two years later, I became a deacon in my church, and when I would accompany prospective believers in their religious studies, there would often be someone asking me what the Trinity meant. People would often ask about the Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit during confession as well. As I didn't understand this mystery either, I was never able to answer them, and this distressed me a great deal. I very much wanted to gain

clarity on this issue, and so I asked the pastor and preachers to explain it to me, in the hope of getting a definitive answer. Their response, however, basically consisted of: “God is a Trinity, comprising the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father lays the plans for our salvation, the Son concludes it, while it is the Holy Spirit who carries out the plan. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, too—three persons, which together form the one, true God.” This explanation only left me even more puzzled, and I asked, “But if He is three persons, how can He be one God?” They then said to me, “The Trinity is a mystery. Don’t think too deeply on it. Just rely on your faith and believe in it, and that’s all you need to do.” Although I still felt very perplexed by this, I forced myself to accept it, thinking: “Don’t think about it anymore. Just believe in it!” When I prayed, I still prayed to the Trinity: the loving heavenly Father, the Savior Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. I felt as though only by praying in that way would God hear my prayers, and I was afraid that, if I only prayed to one of God’s persons, then He wouldn’t hear me. And so, I carried on in such confusion for years, believing in the Trinity of my own imagination. After that whenever brothers and sisters in the church would ask me what was meant by the Trinity, I still didn’t know how to respond. All I could do was answer them according to what the pastor had told me, though I could tell from their faces that they didn’t really understand. This gave me a feeling of helplessness, and all I could do was come before the Lord in prayer: “I give thanks to You, dear heavenly Father! When the brothers and sisters and the prospective believers ask me questions about the Trinity, I don’t know how to answer them. I ask You to help me. May the Holy Spirit guide me so that I may come to understand what is meant by the Trinity, so that I am no longer confused by this issue, and may more people come to know You.”

In May of 2017, I met a sister on Facebook. She was very loving and patient, and after we had shared and discussed a few passages of Scripture, I found that there was light in her fellowships. I derived a great deal from them, and I was keen to exchange ideas with her. She later took me and a few other brothers and sisters to some gatherings. Through the fellowships shared at these meetings, I came to understand some truths I had never understood before, such as what the incarnation was and the way in which the Lord will come, and so on. I benefited a great deal from them and gained a much clearer understanding of some passages of Scripture. When I asked the sister how come she was able to understand so much from reading the Bible, whereas I couldn’t, she told me, “Everything I understand has come from reading God’s words. Our Lord Jesus has already

returned. He has incarnated as the Son of man to express His words and perform new work in the last days....” I was astonished and thrilled at this news, and I asked the sister a flurry of questions: “Is it true? Has the Lord truly returned?” She replied with certainty, “Yes, it’s true!” She went on to say that the Lord had returned in incarnate form in the last days, but that God’s name had changed. God was now called Almighty God, being “the Almighty” who was prophesied in the Book of Revelation. The moment I heard the name “Almighty God,” my heart skipped a beat, and I thought to myself: “Almighty God? Isn’t that Eastern Lightning? Our pastor asked us to be on our guard against Eastern Lightning and told us not to have anything to do with them. What’s more, we believe in the Lord Jesus, but this sister is saying that the Lord Jesus has returned and has taken the name of Almighty God, so how come His name is different? Will I end up going astray?” But then I thought: “Since I’ve known this sister, I’ve found that not only do her fellowships accord with the Bible, but that they are also very illuminating, and they clearly contain the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. If this way is wrong, how could it have the work of the Holy Spirit? Should I keep listening to her, or not?”

Just as I was feeling torn by conflicting feelings, I suddenly remembered a passage the sister had previously shared with me: **“God become flesh is called Christ, and so the Christ that can give people the truth is called God. There is nothing excessive about this”** (“Only Christ of the Last Days Can Give Man the Way of Eternal Life” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). This passage mentions Christ and says that Christ can give people the truth. In the Gospel of John, chapter 14, verse 6, the Lord Jesus says: **“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by Me.”** The Lord Jesus is Christ, God become flesh, and He said, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”** Both Almighty God’s and Jesus’ words mention Christ and the truth. “If Almighty God is Christ,” I thought, “then He can surely express the truth and provide sustenance for people’s lives.” I thought about the many words of Almighty God which the sister had recently read to me. As I’d listened to them, I’d felt them to possess authority and power, and I’d felt that Almighty God’s words were indeed the truth and that they’d come from the Holy Spirit! I therefore realized that this way must be the true way, and that it could not be wrong. It says in the Bible: “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). If Almighty God was the Lord Jesus returned and I failed to seek or investigate this way, but just blindly believed in what the pastors and elders said, then wouldn’t I miss out on the Lord’s salvation and be unable to welcome His return? Thinking this, I decided to attend a few more gatherings so

that I could better understand Almighty God's work of the last days.

At another gathering, the sister shared this passage of God's words with us: **"The work of today has pushed forward the work of the Age of Grace; that is, the work under the entire six-thousand-year management plan has moved forward. Though the Age of Grace has ended, there has been progress in God's work. Why do I say time and again that this stage of work builds upon the Age of Grace and the Age of Law? Because the work of this day is a continuation of the work done in the Age of Grace, and an advance over that done in the Age of Law. The three stages are tightly interconnected, with each link in the chain closely tied to the next. Why do I also say that this stage of work builds on that done by Jesus? Supposing that this stage did not build on the work done by Jesus, another crucifixion would have to take place in this stage, and the redemptive work of the previous stage would have to be done all over again. This would be meaningless. And so it is not that the work is completely finished, but that the age has moved forward and the level of the work has been raised higher than before. It can be said that this stage of work is built on the foundation of the Age of Law and upon the rock of Jesus' work. God's work is built stage by stage, and this stage is not a new beginning. Only the combination of the three stages of work may be deemed the six-thousand-year management plan"** ("The Two Incarnations Complete the Significance of the Incarnation" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). The sister then gave fellowship, saying, "God's work moves ever onward, and He performs different work and takes on different names in different ages in accordance with the needs of man. But no matter what stage of work God performs with what name, in essence, it is always God Himself performing the work to save mankind. In the Age of Law, God took the name Jehovah to perform His work: He proclaimed the law and the commandments to guide man's life on earth, and He allowed man to know what sin was, what rules they should follow, how they should worship God, and so on; in the Age of Grace, God became flesh and took the name Jesus and, upon the foundation of the work of the Age of Law, He performed the work of being crucified to redeem mankind, the result of which was that man's sins were forgiven. Now, in the final Age of Kingdom, God has become flesh for the second time and, taking the name Almighty God, He performs His work of judging and purifying man upon the foundation of the work of redemption. The result of this is that the sinful nature and corrupt dispositions which man harbors within are eliminated, and the root cause of man committing sins and

resisting God is uprooted once and for all. The three stages of work complement each other perfectly, with each stage of work higher and more profound than the last. No stage of God's work can stand alone—only the three stages of work interwoven together form the complete work to save mankind that is performed by God, and together they form God's six-thousand-year management plan for mankind. God merely uses His name to demarcate the ages and to change the ages, and that is why we see that God's name always changes along with the age. But no matter how God's name may change, God is still one God." After listening to God's words and the sister's fellowship, I was amazed. I had believed in the Lord all that time and never had I met anyone who was able to explain God's six-thousand-year management work, and yet the words of Almighty God had unveiled this mystery—these words truly were the voice of God! I had not gone astray in my belief: Almighty God truly is the Lord Jesus returned. It is just that God changes His name from one age to another, that's all. But He is still one God.

I continued to look into it for a few more days. The sister gave us fellowship on aspects of the truth such as the work of judgment God performs in the last days and the significance of God's names, and the more I heard, the more clarity I gained. One day, she said, "God's words have revealed all the mysteries of the Bible," and when I heard this, my heart instantly brightened; I told her about the Trinity issue that had been causing me such consternation for so many years. The sister then read to me a passage of God's words. Almighty God says: **"If any among you says that the Trinity indeed exists, then explain what exactly is this one God in three persons. What is the Holy Father? What is the Son? What is the Holy Spirit? Is Jehovah the Holy Father? Is Jesus the Son? Then what of the Holy Spirit? Is not the Father a Spirit? Is not the substance of the Son also a Spirit? Was not the work of Jesus the work of the Holy Spirit? Was not the work of Jehovah at the time carried out by a Spirit the same as Jesus'? How many Spirits can God have? According to your explanation, the three persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one; if so, there are three Spirits, but to have three Spirits means there are three Gods. This means that there is no one true God; how can this kind of God still have the inherent substance of God? If you accept that there is only one God, then how can He have a son and be a father? Are these not all simply your notions? There is only one God, only one person in this God, and only one Spirit of God, much as it is written down in the Bible that 'There is only one Holy Spirit and only one God.'**

Regardless of whether the Father and the Son of which you speak exist, there is only one God after all, and the substance of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit you believe in is the substance of the Holy Spirit. In other words, God is a Spirit, but He is able to become flesh and live among men, as well as to be above all things. His Spirit is all-inclusive and omnipresent. He can simultaneously be in the flesh and throughout the universe. Since all people say that God is the only one true God, then there is a single God, divisible at will by none! God is only one Spirit, and only one person; and that is the Spirit of God” (“Does the Trinity Exist?” in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

The sister gave fellowship, saying, “God’s words are very clear. God is unique and there is only one God. There is also only one Holy Spirit. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are of one essence, which is that of the Spirit. God is able to work in the Spirit, like Jehovah, but He can also work by incarnating as the Son of man, like Jesus and Almighty God. But whether God works in the Spirit or in the flesh, in essence, it is still God’s Spirit performing His own work. Therefore, the concept of the Trinity pertains to the notions and imaginings of man and is wholly untenable. Actually, the concept of the Trinity was established over 300 years after the Lord, at the ecumenical council of Nicaea. At that council, religious experts from all over Christendom engaged in a lively debate about the unitary and manifold natures of God until finally they established the concept of the Trinity based on their notions, imaginings, and logical inferences. From then on, people defined the one, true God who created the heavens and earth and all things as a Trinity, in the belief that, besides the Holy Son the Lord Jesus, there is a Holy Father in heaven and also a tool used by both the Father and the Son, which is the Holy Spirit. This is just too preposterous. If we go by the interpretation of the religious world and believe in the Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, then that means that there are three Spirits and three Gods, and doesn’t that contradict the fact that there is one, unique God? In truth, the Trinity does not exist. This is an interpretation born wholly from the mind of man and is a conclusion made by corrupt mankind based on our notions and imaginings. God never said such a thing, no prophet or apostle inspired by God ever said such a thing, and there is no record of such a thing anywhere in the Bible.”

Some confusion still remained within my heart as I listened to God’s words and the sister’s fellowship, and so I asked, “The Bible states that after Jesus was baptized, the

heavens opened and the Holy Spirit came like a dove and alighted upon Jesus, and a voice from heaven said: **'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'** (Matthew 3:17). Also, before He was crucified, the Lord Jesus prayed and said: **'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as You will'** (Matthew 26:39). The scriptures say that the God in heaven called Jesus His beloved Son, and Jesus called the God in heaven His Father when He prayed. So, here we have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—doesn't this show that God is a Trinity? Why does it say in Almighty God's words that the Trinity doesn't exist and that it is nothing more than man's notion and imagining? What does all this mean?"

In answer to my question, the sister gave fellowship, saying, "There is simply no such concept as the Trinity in the Old Testament. It was only after the Lord Jesus became flesh and came upon the earth to perform His work that we had the interpretation of 'the Father and the Son.' It is recorded in the Gospel of John that Philip did not know God and believed that, besides the Lord Jesus on earth, there was also a Holy Father in heaven, and so he said to Jesus, 'Lord, show us the Father.' The Lord Jesus corrected his erroneous view and uncovered this mystery, saying to Philip, **'Have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip? he that has seen Me has seen the Father; and how say you then, Show us the Father?'** (John 14:9). He also said, **'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me'** (John 14:10). **'I and My Father are one'** (John 10:30). The Father is the Son, and the Son is the Father; the Father and the Son are one, They are of one Spirit. By saying this, the Lord Jesus was telling us that He and the Father are one God, not two."

The sister then showed me a wonderful movie clip entitled Revealing the Mystery of "the Father and the Son." Afterward, we went on to read a passage of Almighty God's words: **"There are still those who say, 'Did not God expressly state that Jesus was His beloved Son?' Jesus is the beloved Son of God, in whom He is well pleased—this was certainly spoken by God Himself. That was God bearing witness to Himself, but merely from a different perspective, that of the Spirit in heaven bearing witness to His own incarnation. Jesus is His incarnation, not His Son in heaven. Do you understand? Do not the words of Jesus, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me,' indicate that They are one Spirit? And is it not because of the incarnation that They were separated between heaven and earth? In reality, They are still one; no matter what, it is simply God bearing witness to Himself. ... Because He was the incarnation, He was called**

the beloved Son of God, and, from this, came the relationship between Father and Son. It was simply because of the separation between heaven and earth. Jesus prayed from the perspective of the flesh. Since He had put on a flesh of such normal humanity, it is from the perspective of the flesh that He said: 'My outer shell is that of a created being. Since I put on a flesh to come to this earth, I am now a long, long way from heaven.' For this reason, He could only pray to God the Father from the perspective of the flesh. This was His duty, and that which the incarnate Spirit of God should be furnished with. It cannot be said that He is not God simply because He prays to the Father from the perspective of the flesh. Though He is called the beloved Son of God, He is still God Himself, for He is but the incarnation of the Spirit, and His substance is still the Spirit" ("Does the Trinity Exist?" in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

The sister said, "When God became flesh the first time as the Lord Jesus and came to perform His work, no one knew God, they didn't understand the truth of the incarnation, and they didn't know what the incarnation was. If the Lord Jesus had said to them directly that He was Jehovah God whom they worshiped, they wouldn't have been able to accept it due to their statures at that time, and the Lord Jesus would have been condemned and rejected by mankind before He'd even begun to perform His work. God's work to redeem mankind would then have been impossible, and mankind would never have gained Jesus as a sin offering. So that mankind would accept the Lord Jesus, believe in Him, and attain God's salvation, before Jesus formally began His work, God bore witness to Himself from the standpoint of His Spirit and called His fleshly self His Son, so that people could see that Jesus truly came from God; this helped to facilitate our acceptance of the Lord Jesus' salvation. And when the Lord Jesus prayed and called the God in heaven His Father, this was the incarnated Son of man calling the Spirit within Himself Father from the standpoint of the flesh. This was done on the basis of the difference between the Spirit and the flesh; it did not mean that there was a separate Father and Son. In fact, the interpretation of the Father and the Son was only appropriate during the time of God's incarnation. When God's work on earth was concluded, that is, when the Lord Jesus completed the work of redemption, was resurrected, and ascended to heaven, there was no longer any need for the interpretation of the Father and the Son. We cannot therefore use the interpretation of the Father and the Son cooked up by the notions of mankind and apply it wholesale to God, saying in God there is a Father and a Son, and that there is also a tool used by both the

Father and the Son—the Holy Spirit—and that God is a Trinity. To say such a thing is at odds with the word of God and at odds with the facts. We did not understand the truth before, and so when we said such a thing, God did not condemn us. But now God has completely revealed this truth and mystery, and we must accept the truth and know God in the light of His words. Only this is correct, and only this accords with God's will."

Through this sister's fellowship, I came to understand why the Lord Jesus would call the God in heaven His Father. It was because He had incarnated as the Son of man and was praying to the heavenly Father from the standpoint of a man. God bore witness to Jesus as His beloved Son, and this was God bearing witness to His own incarnated flesh from the standpoint of the Spirit. One was in heaven and One on earth but They, in essence, were of one Spirit. It was just that God was saying these things from different standpoints, and thus the interpretation of "the Father and the Son" arose. God is the one, true God, He is one Spirit, all-encompassing and omnipresent. He can be in heaven, He can be on earth, and He can become flesh. Once I'd understood all of this, everything suddenly became clear, the confusion that had been my constant companion for years was gone in an instant, and I felt an incredible sense of illumination and release.

Afterward, the sister showed me a gospel testimony movie called Exploration of the "Trinity" in which I saw these words from God: **"Throughout these many years, God has been split by you in this way, being split finer and finer with each generation, to the extent that one God has been openly split into three Gods. And now it is simply impossible for man to rejoin God as one, for you have split Him up too finely! If not for My prompt work before it was too late, it is hard to say how long you would have brazenly continued this way! To continue splitting God in this way, how can He still be your God? Would you still recognize God? Would you still return to Him? If I had arrived any later, it is likely that you would have sent the 'Father and Son,' Jehovah and Jesus back to Israel and claimed that you yourselves are a part of God. Fortunately, it is now the last days. Finally, this day I have long awaited has come, and only after I carried out this stage of work by My own hand has your splitting of God Himself been halted. If not for this, you would have escalated, even placing all the Satans among you onto altars for worship. This is your artifice! Your means of splitting God! Will you continue to do so now? Let Me ask you: How many Gods are there? Which God will bring you salvation? Is it the first God, the second, or the third**

that you always pray to? Which of Them do you always believe in? Is it the Father? Or the Son? Or is it the Spirit? Tell Me who it is that you believe in. Though with every word you say you believe in God, what you actually believe is your own brain! You simply do not have God in your heart! And yet in your minds are a number of such 'Trinities'! Do you not agree?" ("Does the Trinity Exist?" in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

After we finished the movie I felt happy, but I also felt upset and I felt some self-reproach. I was happy because the confusion that had been with me for years had been resolved at last: God is one, and the interpretation of the Trinity simply doesn't exist. Only believing in the one, true God accords with God's will, and I no longer had to pray to the Father one minute, and then to the Holy Spirit or the Son the next like I had before—I felt very much at ease. But I felt upset and reproachful of myself because I had believed in God for so many years and yet had not known God. What I'd been believing in was nothing more than a God invented by my notions and imaginings—a vague God of legend. I had not been believing in the real God and, what's more, I had been resisting God and fragmenting God—I had actually been blaspheming against God! Thanks be to God, for it is the coming of Almighty God that has revealed all the absurdities of corrupt mankind's faith, and it is Almighty God who has unveiled this mystery that has always stumped the religious world. Almighty God is without a doubt the Lord Jesus returned, the Lord who created the heavens and earth and all things. He is the one, true God!

Later, through reading the words of Almighty God, I saw that all of God's words are the truth and that they are the voice of God. Without hesitation, I accepted Almighty God's work of the last days and began to keep pace with the footsteps of the Lamb. Now when I pray, I have no need to pray to three Gods. I just pray in the name of Almighty God, and this makes me feel very much at ease, peaceful, and joyful. I no longer have to worry when I pray that I'm not praying enough to one or another of God's persons, and that God therefore won't hear my prayers. I have truly experienced the release, the freedom, the joy and the happiness that come from understanding the truth and knowing God. Thanks be to God!

13. Where Does This Voice Come From?

By Shiyin, China

I was born into a Christian family, and a lot of my relatives are preachers. I believed in the Lord along with my parents from the time I was little. After growing up, I made this prayer to the Lord: If I could find a husband who was also a believer, I would offer myself up together with him in service to the Lord. After I got married, my husband really did come to believe in the Lord, and in fact became a full-time, devoted preacher. So that my husband could keep his mind on his work for the Lord and honor the commitment he had made before the Lord, I took the initiative to take on the difficult task of managing our household affairs. Although it was a little bit difficult and tiring, my heart was filled with joy and peace no matter how hard things got because I had the Lord as my support.

The year 1997 came and went, and at some point I realized that my husband's sermons didn't contain the light they once had. Whenever I asked him to do something around the house he would just make excuses about being busy with his preaching work. Even if he did do some housework, his heart just wasn't in it, and he would often lose his temper with me over trivial things. Although on the outside I kept my patience and didn't argue with him, in my heart I really felt dissatisfied with my husband's behavior. The heavy burden of our household and the darkness within my spirit left me in agony. All I could do was come before the Lord to pray and pour my heart out in the dead of night when everyone was asleep, and ask Him to give me more faith and strength. At the same time, I yearned for the Lord to return soon and save me from my miserable existence.

One day in April of 2000 when I was putting some clothing away I stumbled across my husband's bag and saw that it was stuffed completely full. I unzipped it out of curiosity and saw a Bible and a hymnal as well as a brand-new book that had an outer cover. I thought to myself: "How have I never seen this book before? It has to be some kind of reference book for preaching or the experiences of some spiritual personage. I have to read it—maybe I can gain some sustenance from it." I opened it up out of curiosity and saw a title which read, "Those Who Are to Be Made Perfect Must Undergo Refinement." "What a novel title!" I thought, "Judging by the title, the experience of refinement is not a bad thing! I am now undergoing refinement that I can't surpass, so I need to read this carefully to see his experience of refinement. Then I'll be able to find a path of practice from within that." At that,

I began to read: **“It used to be that people would all make their resolutions in front of God and say: ‘No matter who doesn’t love God, I must love Him.’ But now, you are faced with refinement. It is not in line with your notions, so you lose faith in God. Is this genuine love? You have read many times about the deeds of Job—have you forgotten about them? True love can only take shape from within faith. ... When you face sufferings you must be able to not consider the flesh and not complain against God. When God hides Himself from you, you must be able to have the faith to follow Him, to maintain your previous love without allowing it to falter or disappear. No matter what God does, you must submit to His design, and be more willing to curse your own flesh than to complain against Him. When you are faced with trials you must satisfy God in spite of any reluctance to part with something you love, or bitter weeping. Only this can be called true love and faith. No matter what your actual stature is, you must first possess the will to suffer hardship as well as true faith, and you must have the will to forsake the flesh. You should be willing to personally endure hardships and suffer losses to your personal interests in order to satisfy God’s will. You must also have a heart of regretting yourself, that you weren’t able to satisfy God in the past, and be able to regret yourself now. Not a single one of these can be lacking and God will perfect you through these things. If you lack these conditions, you cannot be perfected”** (The Word Appears in the Flesh). These words really touched my heart. I wept while reading this—wasn’t this precisely what I was going through? In the past I had resolved to dedicate myself and my husband to the Lord. I was perfectly happy to undertake all the burdens of running a household in order to support my husband in the work he was doing for the Lord outside of the house, no matter how arduous or exhausting it was. But at that point, because of difficulties at home and my husband’s lack of consideration for me, I lived with a perpetual feeling of having been wronged; I was living in the midst of refinement and losing hold of the faith and love that I once had. I had become unable to hold fast to the resolution I had made before God, and would often cry alone in secret. I thought about how Job was able to stand witness to God in the midst of such a great and arduous trial and not lose faith in God. He even said, “Jehovah gave, and Jehovah has taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah” (Job 1:21). How could I have forgotten even that? I then felt deeply regretful about all that I had done in the presence of the Lord. Job would rather personally suffer and sacrifice his own interests than fail to satisfy God. In spite of so many

years of belief in the Lord, I had lost faith in Him. I complained to the Lord while enduring refinement and wasn't remotely expressing my love for Him! As I realized this I secretly resolved that I could no longer be as I had been before, that I should support my husband in his work for the Lord, and that it was right for me to suffer a bit of hardship.

Once my thoughts reached that point my mood took a strong turn for the better. I felt these words were very well spoken and really got to the heart of my actual circumstances. They pointed out a path of practice to me and before I realized it, strength and faith arose within me. I wondered, "Who said these words? How could he have such lofty understanding? I've read books written by well-known spiritual personages, and although they are somewhat edifying, they are not written in as clear and elucidating a way as this book, nor do they possess truth. Who did these words really come from?" I was drawn in by the words in this book and wanted to continue reading on; the more I read the more I felt how wonderful those words were. Each and every line spoke directly to my heart. They allowed me to understand that no matter how great one's suffering is, we must follow God to the very end and happily submit to God in the face of suffering. Even if one becomes weak in the midst of a trial, they should have faith in the Lord and rely on God to stand firm. The more I read, the more I felt illuminated within my heart and the more I felt I had a path of practice. My husband came home right then, and I asked him right away, "Where did you get this book?" He smiled and said, "I borrowed it from somebody, and I have to give it back to him soon." I didn't say anything else.

One day while I was cooking, I could hear bits and pieces of a hymn my husband had on. **"Who is not adoring? Who doesn't long to see God? ... God once shared joys and sorrows with man, and today He has been reunited with mankind, and shares tales of times gone by with him. After He walked out of Judea, people could find no trace of Him. They yearn to once more meet with God, little knowing that today they have again met with Him, and been reunited with Him. How could this not stir thoughts of yesterday? Two thousand years ago today, Simon Bar-Jonah, the descendant of the Jews, beheld Jesus the Savior, he ate at the same table as Him, and after following Him for many years felt a deeper affection for Him: He loved Him to the bottom of his heart, he loved the Lord Jesus profoundly. Today God has been reunited with mankind, and shares tales of times gone by with him"** ("Two Thousand Years of Longing" in Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs). The lyrics of this hymn gave voice to my own

innermost thoughts and evoked my feeling of longing for the return of the Lord. I wept as I listened, and thought to myself: “Since I became a believer all the way up until now, I have thought of the Lord Jesus every single day, hoping that He might return soon so that we could come together and reminisce over times gone by.” The hymn lyrics were so genuine and moving, and particularly able to express the feeling of longing that people have for the Lord. I then set aside the food that I was making and listened with full attention. Another hymn came on next, called “A Loyal Heart for God”: **“I ask for nothing in my life but that my thoughts of love for You and my heart’s desire be accepted by You”** (Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs). I thought, “Who wrote this hymn? How can his resolve be so great?” This line in particular was really inspiring for me: **“I ask for nothing in my life but that my thoughts of love for You and my heart’s desire be accepted by You.”** That kind of love for God is so pure! In my faith in the past, I did not know to love the Lord, but just wanted to enjoy His grace, and pursue peace and joy. This hymn really opened up my worldview that day, and I saw that those who believe in God must love God, and must not seek anything for themselves—only this kind of love can be pure. This hymn was so well-written. I then secretly resolved within my heart that I too wanted to pursue this goal, and that I would love the Lord whether anyone else did or not.

After reading the words in that book and listening to those hymns, I began to act according to what they said. When my husband went out to work again and had no time to help with the housework, I didn’t feel as distressed as before. If the other brothers and sisters slipped up in something they said, I was able to be tolerant because I wanted to satisfy God. I just sought to love God as the hymn described with all of my heart.

In the blink of an eye it was time to plant our crops. One evening, while tidying up, my husband said to me, “I need to go to another church out of town tomorrow.” My immediate response was, “Will you be back within a few days?” “I don’t know,” he said. “I’ll try my best to come back soon. Don’t stress yourself out about the work here at home.” I pulled a long face right away and thought, “You say don’t stress about it, but how can I not be stressed? You’re going off without any idea of when you’ll be back, and everyone else’s fields have already been sown. We haven’t even plowed ours, and if the seeds are planted late, we won’t have a good harvest in the fall. And then what will we do? If only you would finish sowing the fields and then go off to help the brothers and sisters!” That evening I lay in bed, totally unable to get to sleep. I was completely wracked with turmoil, thinking: “The last time

my husband left, he was gone for over two weeks, but we didn't have any work on the farm then. This is a critical time for planting, so if he's gone for two weeks again, what will I do? Maybe I should ask him to get a co-worker to do the work and be done with it." But I gave it more thought: "No, that won't do. The brothers and sisters are awaiting his support. If he doesn't go, won't that be an offense against the Lord?" In the midst of this refinement I came into the presence of the Lord and prayed: "Lord! It isn't that I am unwilling for my husband to go support the brothers and sisters, it's just that we need to plant the fields now. I'm really feeling the effects of this refinement and I don't know what to do. Lord! I ask for Your help, to safeguard my heart and to keep me from being disturbed by these things." After praying, these words came into my mind very clearly: **"No matter what your actual stature is, you must first possess the will to suffer hardship as well as true faith, and you must have the will to forsake the flesh. You should be willing to personally endure hardships and suffer losses to your personal interests in order to satisfy God's will ..."** ("Those Who Are to Be Made Perfect Must Undergo Refinement" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). These words instantly took hold of my heart and brightened it considerably. "That's right," I thought, "If someone wants to satisfy the Lord, they need the resolve to endure hardship, and should be happy to suffer in the flesh and have their own personal interests compromised as long as it means meeting the will of God!" These words gave me faith, and I thought: "If the fields are planted a bit late, then so be it! However much we harvest is up to God, and my husband working for the Lord is what's most important." With this in mind, I felt a sense of ease and release in my heart, and before I knew it I had fallen asleep. The next morning I said to my husband: "Go do your work for the Lord and don't worry about anything. Whenever you come back will be just fine. I'll submit to what the Lord arranges." Thinking about the fact that my actions were satisfying the Lord, I felt joy and steadiness in my heart.

My husband came back a few days later, and he seemed to me like a completely different person. He helped me with the housework, and even said to me: "You're working too hard! These last few years have been hard enough for you, handling all our affairs, both inside and outside of the house. I'm aware of this. I've been just heading out to work without helping to share the burden of housework with you. From now on I'll help out more whenever I have time." Hearing him say this was very moving for me, because my husband had never spoken like this before. I thought to myself: "Ever since he read that book I've seen such a

big transformation in him. Not only are his sermons filled with light, but his attitude toward me is different. Reading the Bible all these years hasn't changed him, but now he's changed so much in such a short time. It seems the words in that book really have the power to change people!" At the same time I sensed that what was in that book had been of great benefit to me, as well. Reading it imbued me with faith and strength, and when I acted in accordance with what it said, the dissatisfaction I felt toward my husband just melted away. And after reading it his attitude toward me had also changed; he understood how to be considerate of me and take care of me. All these changes deepened my feeling that the content of that book is truly powerful and authoritative. But I wondered, who was it who had written the words in this book? I had not found the answer.

One day, two months later, my husband said he wanted to take me with him to attend a gathering. I had a feeling that this gathering would be something very special, otherwise he wouldn't take me along. I was filled with anticipation and looked forward to seeing that book again. The following day, my husband and I along with two sisters were happily in a car on the way to a sister's house. There were a number of other brothers and sisters taking part, among them a sister in her thirties who integrated the Scripture into the fellowship shared with us many truths about God's work in the last days. My heart really lit up as I listened to her, and I gained a clear understanding of many Bible verses that I had never understood before and of God returning to do the work of judgment. I thought to myself, "How is it that her fellowship is so wonderful, that she can explain the Bible so clearly? How does she understand so much?" Just then, this sister said to us loudly, a smile filling her face, "I'd like to tell you, brothers and sisters, an incredibly good news that is truly thrilling. The Lord Jesus we have long been yearning for has returned incarnate among us to carry out His new work; to utter words and unveil all truths and mysteries; to lay bare the mysteries of the three stages of God's work, His six-thousand-year management plan, the incarnations of God, and the Bible. Everything I shared in fellowship today came from the words that have been uttered by God." All the brothers and sisters in attendance and I heard this great news and finally realized: It turned out that this sister understood so much because it had all been shared with mankind by the Lord, who had returned. Now we too were hearing the voice of the Lord. We all happily embraced each other and shed tears of excitement—the entire place began to quiver with exuberance. I was so happy that I felt like jumping for joy, and thought: "I've always hoped for the Lord Jesus to return soon, and now He really has

returned! I am so incredibly blessed that I can welcome the Lord Jesus' return during my lifetime!"

When the gathering was about to come to a close, the sister gave each of us a book called Judgment Begins With the House of God. Carefully holding the book of God's words in both hands, that book I had read before suddenly came to mind. Could it be the same book? After we got back home I couldn't wait to ask my husband, "The book that I saw that day—was it the same book of God's words that the sister gave us today?" He smiled and said, "It is." I then felt like I was just waking up from a dream. That voice was from God after all—that is the voice of the returned Lord Jesus, the voice of God! No wonder those words had been so moving to me, giving me faith and strength, changing me, and taking me out of my suffering. I then reproached my husband, "Why did you hide from me that you had accepted God's new work?" He said, "At the time I really wanted to tell you, but most of the people in your family are preachers in religious circles, and they oppose and condemn God's work in the last days. They've been standing in the way of us investigating the true way all along. I was afraid that if I couldn't explain it clearly enough and then your relatives found out about it, as soon as they started coming out of the woodwork to disrupt and hinder you, not only would this ruin your chance at salvation, but it would also make me an evildoer! So, I decided to tell you after I had investigated it and gained clarity on it." Hearing this explanation dispelled my misunderstanding of my husband, and I was all the more thankful for God's salvation for me. I resolved to read this book of God's words carefully.

Reading Almighty God's words brought nourishment and sustenance to my parched spirit. I never thought that I would be able to hear the words of the returned Lord with my own ears, to be raised up before God, or to be face-to-face with God. I felt especially grateful to God for His love and salvation. Ten or so days later, my husband and I worked with the sisters who spread the gospel to bring the other brothers and sisters in our church with true faith in the Lord into the presence of Almighty God.

14. The Lord Has Appeared in the East

By Qiu Zhen, China

One day, my younger sister called me to say that she was back from the north and that

she had something important to tell me. She asked me to come over right away. I had a feeling that something bad might have happened, so I went over to her house straight away. It was only when I'd got to her place and saw her reading a book that my uneasiness left me. My sister saw me come in, jumped up and said cheerfully, "Qiu Zhen! This time in the north I heard some good news: The Lord Jesus has returned!"

After hearing my sister say this, I distractedly thought: "Over the past few years Eastern Lightning has been testifying that the Lord Jesus has returned; could it be that my sister has accepted Eastern Lightning?" Before I could speak, my sister said seriously, "Oh, Qiu Zhen! The Lord has incarnated again and has come to our country, China." I hurriedly said, "Don't believe everything you hear. Can God come to China? In the Bible it says very clearly: **'And His feet shall stand in that day on the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall split in the middle thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south'** (Zechariah 14:4). The coming of God will be in Israel. He cannot come to China. You work for the Lord and yet you don't even know this!"

My sister said sincerely, "I used to think the way you do, but through the words of Almighty God and the fellowship of brothers and sisters, I have realized that the Lord really has incarnated in China. The scripture you speak of is a prophecy, but prophecies cannot be interpreted however we want. They are fulfilled and made visible to man through the facts of God's work. When the Lord Jesus came to carry out work, neither Peter nor the Samaritan woman, nor the eunuch of Ethiopia clung to the literal meaning of the prophecies of the Bible, but rather it was the facts of what the Lord Jesus said and the work He carried out that affirmed to them that the Messiah had come as the Lord Jesus. They all followed God's footsteps and received the Lord's salvation. And those Pharisees who clung to the literal meaning of the prophecies of the Bible all treated the Lord Jesus, the Messiah who had already come, as an ordinary person and denied, resisted and condemned the Lord Jesus. In the end they crucified the Lord Jesus, and thus were punished by God. Qiu Zhen, we must handle the Lord's coming carefully and we must have God-fearing hearts. You really mustn't be too quick to judge this matter!"

I glanced at my sister and held the Bible up and said, "Jehovah God promulgated the law in Israel and the Lord Jesus was crucified in Israel too. China is a country ruled by an

atheistic party, so would God come to such a country? We have believed in the Lord for so many years, and we absolutely must not believe everything we hear!”

My sister said anxiously, “Qiu Zhen, when the Lord Jesus was performing His work at that time, the Pharisees resisted the Lord and said, ‘Search, and look: for out of Galilee rises no prophet’ (John 7:52). ‘Shall Christ come out of Galilee?’ (John 7:41). But in fact, the Lord Jesus grew up in Nazareth in Galilee. The Bible says: ‘O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been His counselor?’ (Romans 11:33–34). How can we fathom God’s wisdom? We cannot analyze God’s work with our own minds. We look forward to the coming of the Lord every day. Now that the Lord has really returned, if we hold onto our own notions and do not seek or investigate, we will miss the opportunity to welcome the Lord and we will be full of remorse!”

Seeing my sister look so serious, I thought: “My sister sincerely believes in the Lord and is a thoughtful person who knows her own mind. She is generally careful about what she does, and for such a big deal as the Lord’s coming, she is even less likely to just blindly believe what someone else says. She has now accepted Eastern Lightning, so could it be that the Lord has really returned and is performing His work in China?” But then another thought came to me: “How could the Lord perform His work in China? It’s too unimaginable!” So I said firmly, “The Bible is like a cake with a thousand layers, and each person’s way of interpreting it is different. The Bible prophesies that God will actually descend in Israel in the last days. Moreover, most Chinese people worship Buddha and the national government has always persecuted religious beliefs. God will not come to China to perform His work!”

My sister eagerly said, “Qiu Zhen, the Lord has returned and has appeared in China to perform His work. This is very significant. I just accepted Almighty God’s work of the last days so I still can’t explain this aspect of the truth very clearly, but the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God testify in a very illuminating way. I will get them to fellowship with you!” I waved my hand and said, “Don’t bother. I’m leaving.” After returning home, I sat stolidly on the couch and thought about what my sister had said. My mind was racing and I could not calm down. I had always waited for the Lord Jesus to step foot on the Mount of Olives, so how could my sister suddenly say that the Lord had come to China? How could this be? I ceaselessly leafed through the Bible but could not find any chapter or verse that foretold that the Lord would come to perform His work in China. “When the Lord Jesus was

performing His work at that time, the Pharisees resisted the Lord and said: 'Search, and look: for out of Galilee rises no prophet' (John 7:52). 'Shall Christ come out of Galilee?' (John 7:41). But in fact, the Lord Jesus grew up in Nazareth in Galilee. ..." My sister's words floated intermittently through my mind, and I thought that what she'd said was true. I alternated between looking through the Bible and thinking about what my sister had said. My mind raced and I didn't know what to do for the best, so I just called out to the Lord in my heart, "Dear Lord, what should I do? O Lord, where exactly will You come down?"

A few days later my sister came to find me again. As soon as she entered the house she smiled and said, "Qiu Zhen, Sister Xie and Sister Hao from The Church of Almighty God came to my place to give me support. They have believed in Almighty God for a long time and understand much more than I do. If there is anything you do not understand about the Lord's return, go and fellowship with them." I thought: "I've believed in the Lord for many years and have always hoped for the coming of the Lord. Has the Lord really come? Perhaps I should take advantage of this opportunity to fellowship with them." And so, I went with my sister to her home. As soon as I entered the room, the two sisters greeted me very warmly and spoke very cordially. They asked me to speak out if I had any questions, and then everyone could fellowship together. I asked, "You say that the Lord Jesus has already returned and is performing His work in China. Are there any grounds for this claim in the Bible?" Sister Hao smiled and said, "Sister, there are actually prophecies in the Bible about the Lord coming to perform His work in China in the last days." I was stunned and said, "How could this be? I have been through the Bible many times, but have not discovered a single biblical record concerning this. Where in the Bible is the basis for your claim?" Sister Hao patiently said, "Sister, let's read two verses of Scripture and you will know. In Malachi 1:11 it says: **'For from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same My name shall be great among the Gentiles; ... said Jehovah of hosts.'** In Matthew 24:27 it says: **'For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even to the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.'** From these two verses of Scripture, we can clearly see that the place where God shall once again descend is in the East of the world and it is in the lands of the Gentiles. We all know that China is in the East of the world. The first two stages of God's work were both in Israel. As far as the state of Israel is concerned, China is a Gentile nation. Therefore, God coming to China to appear and perform His work in the last days fulfills these prophecies." After listening to the sisters' fellowship and pondering the meaning

of these two verses of Scripture, I thought their fellowship to be very illuminating. Although I had read these two verses before, I never saw the meaning of the Lord's return being in the East, in China. As I listened to their explanation, I felt that their fellowship had its source in the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

Sister Hao went on to say, "Let's see what Almighty God says. **'Throughout the universe I am doing My work, and in the East, thunderous crashes issue forth endlessly, shaking all nations and denominations. It is My voice that has led all men into the present. I shall cause all men to be conquered by My voice, to fall into this stream, and submit before Me, for I have long since reclaimed My glory from all the earth and issued it forth anew in the East. Who does not long to see My glory? Who does not anxiously await My return? Who does not thirst for My reappearance? Who does not pine for My loveliness? Who would not come to the light? Who would not look upon the richness of Canaan? Who does not long for the return of the Redeemer? Who does not adore the Great Almighty? My voice shall spread throughout the earth; I wish, facing My chosen people, to speak more words to them. Like the mighty thunders that shake the mountains and rivers, I speak My words to the whole universe and to mankind. Hence the words in My mouth have become man's treasure, and all men cherish My words. The lightning flashes from the East all the way to the West. My words are such that man is loath to give them up and at the same time finds them unfathomable, but rejoices in them all the more. Like a newborn infant, all men are glad and joyful, celebrating My coming. By means of My voice, I shall bring all men before Me. Thenceforth, I shall formally enter into the race of men so that they will come to worship Me. With the glory that I radiate and the words in My mouth, I shall make it such that all men come before Me and see that the lightning flashes from the East and that I have also descended unto the "Mount of Olives" of the East. They will see that I have already long been on earth, no longer as the Son of the Jews but as the Lightning of the East. For I have long since been resurrected, and have departed from mankind's midst, and then reappeared with glory among men. I am He who was worshiped countless ages before now, and I am also the infant forsaken by the Israelites countless ages before now. Moreover, I am the all-glorious Almighty God of the present age! Let all come before My throne and see My glorious countenance, hear My voice, and look upon My deeds. This is the entirety of My will; it is the end**

and the climax of My plan, as well as the purpose of My management. Let every nation worship Me, every tongue acknowledge Me, every man repose his faith in Me, and every people be subject unto Me!' ("The Seven Thunders Peal—Propheying That the Gospel of the Kingdom Shall Spread Throughout the Universe" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). We all know that God brought the gospel of the kingdom of heaven the first time He was incarnated, and this gospel spread from the West to the East. But we never once thought that God would return in the flesh in the East of the world, in China, bringing the eternal gospel and performing the work of judging, purifying and saving people. This time God's work will spread from the East to the West—"

When I heard this, I interrupted the sister and asked in a puzzled manner, "Sister, the Bible records that Jehovah God performed His work in Israel, and the Lord Jesus' work was in Judea. God's two stages of work were both in Israel, so the Lord's return should also be in Israel. How can you say it is in China?" Sister Hao smiled and said, "We think that because God's first two stages of work were both in Israel, the Lord will definitely perform His work in Israel when He returns. But does such thinking accord with the facts? Could it be that God is just the God of the Israelites? Could it be that God just administers and saves the Israelites? Let's see what Almighty God says."

Sister Xie opened the book of God's words and read: "**If the Savior arrived during the last days and were still called Jesus, and were once again born in Judea and did His work there, then this would prove that I only created the people of Israel and only redeemed the people of Israel, and that I have nothing to do with the Gentiles. Would this not contradict My words that 'I am the Lord who created the heavens and earth and all things'? I left Judea and do My work among the Gentiles because I am not merely the God of the people of Israel, but the God of all creatures. I appear among the Gentiles during the last days because I am not only Jehovah, the God of the people of Israel, but, moreover, because I am the Creator of all My chosen ones among the Gentiles. I not only created Israel, Egypt, and Lebanon, but all the Gentile nations beyond Israel. Because of this, I am the Lord of all creatures. I merely used Israel as the starting point for My work, employed Judea and Galilee as the strongholds of My work of redemption, and now I use the Gentile nations as the base from which I will bring the entire age to an end**" ("The Savior Has Already Returned Upon a 'White Cloud'" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). "**I will make all people know that I am not only the**

God of the Israelites, but also the God of all the nations of the Gentiles, even those that I have cursed. I will let all people see that I am the God of all creation. This is My greatest work, the purpose of My work plan for the last days, and the only work to be fulfilled in the last days” (“The Work of Spreading the Gospel Is Also the Work of Saving Man” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). “He led the Israelites and was born in Judea, and He is also born in a Gentile land. Is not all His work for the whole of the mankind that He created? Does He love Israelites a hundred fold and loathe Gentiles a thousand fold? Is that not your notion? It is you who do not acknowledge God; it is not that God was never your God. It is you who reject God; it is not that God is unwilling to be your God. Who among the created is not in the hands of the Almighty? In conquering you today, is not the goal to have you acknowledge that God is none other than your God? If you still maintain that God is the God of Israelites only, and still maintain that the house of David in Israel is the origin of God’s birth and that no nation other than Israel is qualified to ‘produce’ God, and even less is any Gentile family able to personally receive Jehovah’s work—if you still think this way, then does that not make you an obstinate holdout? ... You have not believed in God for very long, yet you have a lot of notions about Him, to the point that you dare not for a second think that the God of the Israelites would deign to grace you with His presence. Even less do you dare to think about how you could see God make a personal appearance, given how unbearably filthy you are. You also have never thought about how God could personally descend in a Gentile land. He ought to descend on Mount Sinai or the Mount of Olives and appear to Israelites. Are not Gentiles (that is, people outside of Israel) all objects of His loathing? How could He personally work among them? All these are the deep-rooted notions that you have developed over many years. The purpose of conquering you today is to smash these notions of yours. You thereby have seen God personally appearing among you—not on Mount Sinai or on the Mount of Olives, but among people whom He has never led in the past” (“The Inside Truth of the Work of Conquest (3)” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). “If His current work were carried out among the Israelites, by the time His six-thousand-year management plan comes to a close, everyone would believe that God is only the God of the Israelites, that only the Israelites are God’s chosen people, that only the Israelites deserve to inherit God’s blessing and promise. God’s incarnation during the last days in the

Gentile nation of the country of the great red dragon accomplishes the work of God as the God of all creation; He completes the whole of His management work, and He ends the central part of His work in the nation of the great red dragon. The core of these three stages of work is the salvation of man—namely, making all of creation worship the Creator. Thus, there is great meaning to each stage of work; God does nothing that is without meaning or value” (“God Is the Lord of All Creation” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*).

Sister Hao then gave fellowship, saying, “In the past we determined in our hearts that God was the God of the Israelites because God’s first two stages of work were both done in Israel. Israel was the birthplace of God’s work and also the base area for God’s work, so we thought that God’s work could only be in Israel, that the gospel could only come out of Israel and that only the Israelites are truly God’s chosen people. Therefore, if God still performed this final stage of His work in Israel, then we would believe even more strongly that God could only perform His work in Israel, that God could only bless the Israelites and that He has nothing to do with Gentiles. In the last days, God has chosen to carry out His work of judging and purifying people in a Gentile country, being the land where the great red dragon lies coiled—China. By doing this, He has upturned everyone’s notions, so that people can actually see that God is not only the God of the Israelites, but also the God of all the nations of the Gentiles, and the God of all created beings. God not only blesses the Israelites but also blesses Gentiles. This accomplishes the work of **‘God is the Lord of all creation.’** It is clear that God choosing to perform His work in the last days in China is profoundly significant. God is truly so omnipotent and so wise.”

Listening to the sister’s fellowship, I sank into contemplation: “Yes,” I thought, “God is the Lord of all creation. Wasn’t the whole of mankind created by God? God not only saves the Israelites, but also saves the people of China. Does God coming to work in China today not show His love for the Gentiles? It seems that I really do not understand God’s will!” Thinking of this, I felt somewhat ashamed. I softened my tone and said, “Sister, I understand what you say. If God once again performed His work in Israel, we would delimit God and think that God is just the God of the Israelites. God works in this way today to destroy people’s notions and to make people understand that God is the Lord of all created beings, that God can perform His work in Israel and also in China, and so accordingly we do not delimit God’s work. It seems that by delimiting God’s work based on my notions and

imaginings, I've really been so foolish and ignorant! However, there is still one thing I don't understand. There are so many countries in the world, such as the many countries of Europe and North America, where Protestantism and Catholicism are the national religions and where God has always been worshiped. Would it not be easier for God to come and do His work of judging and purifying people in those countries? China is an atheistic country, full of idolaters. The national government frantically persecutes those who believe in God, so why would God perform His work in China?"

Sister Xie smiled and said, "Sister, your question is so essential! Why did God choose to perform His work of judgment and purification in China? Only by understanding the purpose and significance of God performing His work in Israel and in China will we understand this aspect of the truth. Let's take a look at what the word of God says. Almighty God says: **'The Old Testament records Jehovah's words to the Israelites and His work in Israel; the New Testament records Jesus' work in Judea. But why does the Bible not contain any Chinese names? Because the first two parts of God's work were carried out in Israel, because the people of Israel were the chosen ones—which is to say that they were the first to accept the work of Jehovah. They were the least corrupt of all mankind, and in the beginning, they were of a mind to look up to God and revere Him. They obeyed the words of Jehovah, and always served in the temple, and wore priestly robes or crowns. They were the earliest people to worship God, and the earliest object of His work. These people were a specimen and model for the whole of mankind. They were specimens and models of holiness and righteousness. People such as Job, Abraham, Lot, or Peter and Timothy—they were all Israelites, and the most holy of specimens and models. Israel was the earliest country to worship God among mankind, and more righteous people came from here than anywhere else. God worked in them in order that He could better manage mankind throughout the land in the future. Their achievements and the righteousness of their worship of Jehovah were recorded, so that they could serve as specimens and models to the people beyond Israel during the Age of Grace; and their actions have upheld several thousand years of work, right up until today'** ("The Vision of God's Work (2)" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). **'The work of Jehovah was the creation of the world, it was the beginning; this stage of work is the end of work, and it is the conclusion. At the start, God's work was carried out among the chosen ones of Israel, and it was the dawn of**

a new epoch in the most holy of all places. The last stage of work is carried out in the most impure of all countries, to judge the world and bring the age to an end. In the first stage, God's work was done in the brightest of all places, and the last stage is carried out in the darkest of all places, and this darkness will be driven out, the light brought forth, and all the people conquered. When the people of this most impure and darkest of all places have been conquered, and the entire population has acknowledged that there is a God, who is the true God, and every person has been utterly convinced, then this fact will be used to carry out the work of conquest throughout the entire universe. This stage of work is symbolic: Once the work of this age has been finished, the work of 6,000 years of management will come to a complete end. Once those in the darkest of all places have been conquered, it goes without saying that it will also be so everywhere else. As such, only the work of conquest in China carries meaningful symbolism. China embodies all forces of darkness, and the people of China represent all those who are of the flesh, of Satan, and of flesh and blood. It is the Chinese people who have been most corrupted by the great red dragon, who have the strongest opposition to God, whose humanity is most base and impure, and so they are the archetype of all corrupt humanity. This is not to say that other countries have no problems at all; the conceptions of man are all the same, and although the people of these countries may be of good caliber, if they do not know God, then it must be that they oppose Him. Why did the Jews also oppose and defy God? Why did the Pharisees also oppose Him? Why did Judas betray Jesus? At the time, many of the disciples did not know Jesus. Why, after Jesus was crucified and rose again, did people still not believe in Him? Is man's disobedience not all the same? It's merely that the people of China are made an example of, and when they are conquered they will become a model and specimen, and will serve as reference for others. Why have I always said that you are an adjunct to My management plan? It is in the people of China that corruption, impurity, unrighteousness, opposition, and rebelliousness are manifested most completely and revealed in all their varied forms. On the one hand, they are of poor caliber, and on the other, their lives and mindset are backward, and their habits, social environment, family of birth—all are poor and the most backward. Their status, too, is low. The work in this place is symbolic, and after this test work has been carried out in its entirety, His subsequent work will go

much better. If this step of work can be completed, then the subsequent work goes without saying. Once this step of work has been accomplished, great success will have been fully achieved, and the work of conquest throughout the entire universe will have come to a complete end. In fact, once the work among you has been successful, this will be equivalent to the success throughout the entire universe. This is the significance of why I have you act as a model and specimen. Rebelliousness, opposition, impurity, unrighteousness—all are found in these people, and in them is represented all the rebelliousness of mankind. They are really something. Thus, they are held up as the epitome of conquest, and once they have been conquered they will naturally become a specimen and model for others’ (“The Vision of God’s Work (2)” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*).

After reading God’s words, Sister Xie continued on with her fellowship. “The words of Almighty God clearly tell us that, for every stage of His work, the kind of place and the objects of His work are all chosen based on the needs of His work, and that they are all considerably meaningful. For example, the first two stages of God’s work were in Israel because the Israelites were God’s chosen people. They were the least corrupt of all mankind and they had God-fearing hearts. Performing His work amongst them, it was easiest for God to make a group of models and specimens to worship Him. Thus, God’s work could spread faster and more easily, so that the entire human race would know of God’s existence and God’s work, and so that more people could come before God and receive God’s salvation. Therefore, it was most meaningful for God to do the first two stages of His work in Israel. In the last days, God performs the work of conquering and purifying people. He also needs some representatives to first accept God’s conquest and purification. Amongst the whole of mankind, the people of China are the most corrupt and backward, and China is the nation which least believes in God and which offers the staunchest resistance to God. In the last days, therefore, by God performing His work of judgment and conquest first in China, by performing His work of chastisement and judgment upon those who have been corrupted most deeply, and by conquering and purifying the people of China who are the most corrupt in the world, God’s omnipotence, holiness and righteousness are best demonstrated and Satan is most shamed. When those who are the most corrupt are conquered by God, it goes without saying that the rest of mankind will be conquered and that Satan will also be completely defeated. From the place and the objects of His work chosen by God in every

stage of His work, and from the final results achieved, we can see even better that God's work is so wise and wonderful!"

After listening to the words of Almighty God and the sisters' fellowship, I understood: God previously performed His work in Israel because He wanted to make a group of models and specimens amongst the least corrupted of mankind and, through their testimony and preaching of God's gospel, to allow even more people to receive His salvation. The work that God performs in the last days is the work of conquering and purifying man, and He has chosen the people of China, who are the most corrupt and most defiled in the world, as the objects of His work, making these people models and specimens who are conquered and saved. This is even more revealing of God's wisdom and almightiness. I never understood God's will and when I read in the Bible that the Lord would return by descending upon Israel's Mount of Olives, I accepted the literal meaning and thought that God would definitely perform His work in Israel. I never expected that God would have already come to China long ago! It seemed that God's work was not as simple as people imagine!

At this time, Sister Xie went on to say, "No matter which country God performs His work in it is all for the sake of His work and to better save mankind, and it is all very meaningful. If we want to seek God's appearance today, we must first put aside our imaginations and notions. We must not delimit God's footsteps within a certain scope, thinking that God should come to this or that country. God is the God of all of mankind. He can freely choose the place of His work according to the needs of His work. Almighty God says: **'God is the God of the entire human race. He does not consider Himself the private property of any nation or people, but goes about doing His work as He has planned it, unconstrained by any form, nation, or people. Perhaps you have never imagined this form, or perhaps your attitude to this form is one of denial, or perhaps the nation where God reveals Himself and the people among whom He reveals Himself just happen to be discriminated against by everyone and just happen to be the most backward on earth. Yet God has His wisdom. With His great power, and by means of His truth and His disposition, He has truly gained a group of people who are of one mind with Him, and a group of people that He wished to make complete—a group, conquered by Him, who, having endured all manner of trials and tribulations and all manner of persecution, can follow Him to the very end'** ("The Appearance of God Has Ushered in a New Age" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*)."

After hearing Almighty God's words, I wept in excitement and said to the sisters, "These words carry God's power and authority and come from God. Now I finally understand: God is not only the God of the Israelites, but also the God of the people of China and, even more so, He is the God of the whole of mankind. God really has returned! These past few days, I've not been able to eat or sleep well because I was afraid of taking the wrong path! Thanks to fellowshiping with you today, the weight in my heart has vanished. I truly give thanks to God for not giving up on me!" Afterward, the two sisters gave me a copy of *The Word Appears in the Flesh*, and I happily returned home clutching the book in both hands. Through reading Almighty God's words, I became convinced that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus. Our Lord Jesus really has returned!

15. Through Understanding the Mystery of the Names of God, I Keep Pace With the Footsteps of the Lamb

By Mu Zhen, Taiwan

When I was little, I was a smart and sensible kid and so I always received the loving care of my parents, relatives and friends. Because I always got good grades at school and was kind and easygoing, I was well liked by teachers and classmates. During that time, I was full of hope for the future. Much to my surprise, however, when it came time to test for high school, I missed qualifying for the top girls' school by half a point and was admitted instead to a second-grade school. I was so unable to accept what had happened that I locked myself in my room for two days and refused to eat or drink. That was the first time I had experienced failure in my life—I felt as if I had fallen into an abyss and I was wracked with torment and pain.

When school started up again, I went to orientation feeling deeply depressed. During orientation, a senior female schoolmate preached to me the gospel of the Lord Jesus. As I attended more church gatherings and as I heard more of the experiences of the brothers and sisters, I felt that the Lord's grace was faithful and could be relied upon. I believed that as long as I prayed to and beseeched the Lord Jesus Christ, then I would receive His protection and care, and would enjoy a feeling of peace and security in my heart. From that

place of dark depression, I gradually recovered my optimism and positivity. Later, in my second year of high school, I was baptized as a Christian.

To learn more about the truths of the Bible, I went to a theological college and as a freshman I took a course taught by the pastor called “Introduction to Religion.” During one class, the pastor said to us, “Chapter 13, verse 8 of Hebrews states, ‘Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.’ The Lord Jesus is the one and only Savior. He is faithful and reliable and His name will never change, no matter the age. Only by trusting in the name of Jesus may we be saved....” From his speech, I learned that only through the Lord Jesus’ salvation may we be delivered from evil and death and only by trusting in the Lord Jesus’ name may we be saved. It occurred to me that the reason the senior female classmate who had brought me into the church always seemed to be so happy and confident was probably because of the strength in life she derived from her trust in the Lord. After that class, I made up my mind to follow the Lord Jesus and put all of my efforts into serving Him. To this end, I spent all my time after classes participating in communion, Bible study, gospel missionary work, and I never once missed a sermon or gathering.

Over time, I realized that the pastors’ and elders’ sermons always talked about the same old things—there was no new light in what they said and we, as believers, gained not even the slightest spiritual sustenance from their words. Some brothers and sisters lived in weakness—they never attended gatherings and no one bothered to help or support them. Some brothers and sisters would doze through sermons and then try to sell people merchandise and insurance after gatherings. Some people even helped political candidates campaign for office. I thought to myself, “Are you still a Christian if you believe in the Lord while only seeking personal profit and not pursuing advancement in your spiritual life? The pastors and elders don’t even try to stop these things from happening—is this in keeping with the Lord’s will and requirements?” The situation in the church made me angry and disappointed. Because I hadn’t received any spiritual provision for a long time, I felt spiritually impoverished and weak. What’s more, because I was busy with work and often worked overtime on weekends, I ended up not even bothering to attend gatherings. Only when I encountered some issue would I read my Bible and pray in the Lord’s name. I felt hopeless and aimless, lost and helpless.

In October of 2016, I met Brother Wang of The Church of Almighty God online. Brother Wang introduced me to Brother Jin and a few other brothers and sisters. Brother Jin’s

fellowships helped me to understand many truths that I hadn't understood before. His fellowship with regard to the truth of God's incarnation was particularly practical and clear and I gained a great deal from it. I had believed in the Lord for many years, had studied the Bible, and had listened to countless sermons by spiritual personages, pastors and elders, but I had never heard anyone fellowship on this aspect of the truth so incisively and clearly. My spirit was watered, and the desire to seek arose within me. Thereafter, I often attended their online gatherings.

During one such gathering, Brother Jin fellowshipped saying, "In order to completely save humankind, God launched a six-thousand-year management plan, divided it into three different ages and He performs a new stage of work in each age. God's name changes along with the different work He performs. In the Age of Law, for example, God performed His work under the name 'Jehovah,' proclaiming the laws and commandments, and leading the early Israelites in their life on earth. However, once God had finished His work in the Age of Law and begun His work of redemption in the Age of Grace, His name changed from 'Jehovah' to 'Jesus.' Now we are in the last days, and God is performing the work of judgment beginning in the house of God upon the foundation of Jesus' work of redemption. He has concluded the Age of Grace, ushered in the Age of Kingdom and, in doing this, His name has changed to 'Almighty God.'" When I heard Brother Jin say God's name had changed, I thought to myself, "The Bible clearly states: 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8). The Lord Jesus that I believe in is the one true God and the Lord Jesus' name will never change. Only through the Lord Jesus' name may we be saved—how could you say that God's name has changed? If, in our prayers, we don't call on the name Jesus, but use some other name, how can that still be in keeping with the Bible?" Brother Jin's fellowship deeply challenged my beliefs. He made the following analogy, saying, "Sister Mu Zhen, if a company made you Planning Officer one year and Manager the next, then whether you were the Planning Officer or the Manager, the requirements of your work would dictate your title change. People would have called you Planning Officer Mu, but now they call you Manager Mu—despite the change in title and position, would you yourself have changed? Would you not still be you?" I replied, "I would still be me," and didn't raise any objections, but in my heart I still couldn't accept what he was saying. I thought to myself, "God's name can never change. Only by trusting in the Lord Jesus' name may we be saved. You won't convince me so easily. I'll just ignore you all from now on and that will

be that.” After the gathering was over, I blocked all the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God in the chat app.

To my amazement, on the day after I had blocked all the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God, at around 8 p.m. while I was washing the dishes in the kitchen, I suddenly heard my doorbell ring. I opened the door and before me stood two girls I had never seen before. One of the girls handed some information to me. I was initially very polite to the girls, but when I saw that the pamphlet the girl had handed to me read, “Christ’s Return—the Lord Jesus Has Returned With Clouds” in big letters, I suddenly realized that they were coming to preach the gospel. Because I believed at the time that the Lord Jesus’ name would never change, I was a little annoyed by the two girls and returned the pamphlet they had given me. They seemed a bit dejected and as they turned to leave, one of the sisters asked me, “Sister, are you unable to accept this news because you don’t believe in God or because you’re from another denomination? Have you ever carefully investigated and sought the truth?” No matter what the sisters said, I didn’t really want to give them any more of my time, so I just went back to washing my dishes in the kitchen. While I was washing the dishes, the sister’s question kept playing in my mind, “Have you ever carefully investigated and sought the truth?” I thought to myself, “I guess I really haven’t ever carefully sought the truth.” I thought back to how Brother Wang and the others had fellowshiped about God’s name changing and then I thought about how this had differed from my own understanding. But even when I hadn’t understood, I hadn’t had the desire to seek the truth, and had analyzed what he’d said using my knowledge of the Bible. I’d accepted those aspects of their fellowship that I agreed with, but had failed to seek or pay any mind to those aspects that I disagreed with. Only then did I realize that my knowledge of the Bible had caused me to lose my pureness and simplicity of heart. I had adopted a self-righteous attitude to the truth—how could I have considered myself someone who sincerely sought the truth?

When I had calmed down a bit, I remembered something that the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God often fellowshiped: “God’s sheep listen to God’s voice—if we want to welcome the Lord’s return, we must listen for God’s voice, discern His voice and understand what is the truth.” The fellowship given by the brothers and sisters was in keeping with the Bible. The wise virgins had to listen for God’s voice, and hadn’t Peter of the Age of Grace been able to follow the Lord Jesus because he had heard God’s voice in the

Lord's words? Having realized this, I hurriedly took out my Bible and opened to the Book of Revelation chapter 3, verses 20–22, where it says, **“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. To him that overcomes 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. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”** I carefully pondered this passage of Scripture and thought to myself, “God asks of us that whenever the Holy Spirit speaks, we must listen. I have now been lucky enough to hear of the Lord's return and to have the opportunity to become acquainted with Almighty God's work of the last days, so why am I still letting my notions hold me back? Why do I refuse to listen to any ideas that I don't understand or that are at odds with my notions? Even if I can't accept right away that God's name has changed, I should at least seek and investigate this issue and make a decision once I have a fuller understanding!” I then came upon the following passage in Matthew chapter 7, verse 7: **“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.”** “If God really has come knocking,” I thought, “and I, having been deceived by my own notions, close my ears and lock Him outside in my utter insensitivity and miss out on God's salvation in the last days, wouldn't that be a terrible shame?”

That night, I couldn't get to sleep and kept replaying in my head all that had happened that evening. I thought to myself, “I've lived here for 18 years and this is the first time anyone has ever come to spread the gospel. That sister even asked me if I had ever carefully sought and investigated the truth—could it be that it was God's plan for these two sisters whom I'd never met to come spread the gospel to me? Then when I was feeling restless after rejecting them and had read through the Bible for answers, God directed me to a passage about the Lord knocking on the door—was I wrong to turn them away? Is Almighty God really the returned Lord Jesus?” With these thoughts in my mind, I immediately got up out of bed and prayed to the Lord, asking for His guidance and enlightenment. After finishing my prayer, I opened my computer and navigated to the official website of The Church of Almighty God, which is called Gospel of the Descent of the Kingdom and looked up passages related to God's name. I found this passage of Almighty God's words: **“Some say that the name of God does not change. Why, then, did the name of Jehovah become Jesus? It was prophesied that the Messiah would come, so why then did a man by the name of**

Jesus come? Why did the name of God change? Was such work not carried out long ago? Is God unable to do newer work today? The work of yesterday can be altered, and the work of Jesus can follow on from that of Jehovah. Cannot, then, the work of Jesus be succeeded by other work? If the name of Jehovah can be changed to Jesus, then cannot the name of Jesus also be changed? None of this is odd; it is just that people are too simple-minded. God will always be God. No matter how His work changes, and regardless of how His name might change, His disposition and wisdom will never change. If you believe that God can only be called by the name of Jesus, then your knowledge is far too limited” (“How Can Man Who Has Delimited God in His Conceptions Receive the Revelations of God?” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). After reading this passage, I understood that God does a new work in every age and takes on a new name as His new work requires. I thought of how, in the Age of Law, God’s name was Jehovah, and under this name God led the Israelites. However, when the Lord Jesus came to do His work, had God’s name not changed from Jehovah to Jesus? Almighty God had now explained this issue with great clarity—who could have unfolded such mysteries if God had not come to express the truth? I had refused to seek and investigate the idea of God’s name changing because it hadn’t squared with my own views. If Almighty God really was the reappearance of the Lord Jesus, and I shut the Lord out even as He knocked on my door time after time, what a terrible shame it would be if I then missed out on the opportunity to welcome the Lord’s return. As such, I decided to carefully seek and investigate Almighty God’s work of the last days.

Later on, I unblocked the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God and told them about the experience I had had that night. During a gathering, the brothers and sisters shared this passage of Scripture with me: **“How think you? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, does he not leave the ninety and nine, and goes into the mountains, and seeks that which is gone astray?”** (Matthew 18:12). The brothers and sisters said that I was just like that lost sheep and that God had gone looking for me and brought me back before Him. It was truly by God’s grace that, when I had gone astray, God guided me to unblock the brothers and sisters and continue attending gatherings. Thanks be to God for not abandoning me!

Just then, Sister Xiling asked me, “Sister Mu Zhen, why did you block everyone suddenly? Did you not understand some aspect of the truth?” I nodded, saying, “The Bible

clearly says, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8). This proves that Jesus Christ is forever unchanging. Even when God returns in the last days, He should still go by the name Jesus—this name will never change. Yet Brother Jin fellowshiped saying that God's name in the last days is Almighty God and I just can't quite accept this. Ever since I was baptized, I've always prayed by calling on the Lord Jesus' name, so how could I call Him by any other name?" When I had finished, Sister Xiling sent me the following passage of God's words: **"There are those who say that God is immutable. That is correct, but it refers to the immutability of God's disposition and His substance. Changes in His name and work do not prove that His substance has altered; in other words, God will always be God, and this will never change. If you say that the work of God is unchanging, then would He be able to finish His six-thousand-year plan of management? You only know that God is forever unchanging, but do you know that God is always new and never old? If the work of God is unchanging, then could He have led mankind all the way to the present day? If God is immutable, then why is it that He has already done the work of two ages? ... [T]he words 'God is always new and never old' refer to His work, and the words 'God is immutable' to what God inherently has and is. Regardless, you cannot make the work of six thousand years hinge upon a single point, or circumscribe it with dead words. Such is the stupidity of man. God is not as simple as man imagines, and His work cannot linger in any one age. Jehovah, for example, cannot always stand for the name of God; God can also do His work under the name of Jesus. This is a sign that God's work is always moving in a forward progression"** ("The Vision of God's Work (3)" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*).

Sister Xiling then said, "Almighty God's words explain this very clearly: When we say that '**God is immutable**,' we are referring to His disposition and substance. This does not mean that God's name never changes. God is always new and never old, God's work is always moving forward, and His name must change to reflect the changes in His work. However, no matter how God's name may change, God's substance never changes—God is still God. And yet we don't understand what 'immutable' really refers to and don't see how God's work is always new and never old, and so it's very easy for us to delimit God's work and even resist God based on our notions and imaginings. For example, the Pharisees clung to the notion that 'Jehovah is the only God, there is no Savior but Jehovah.' When God came

to do His work with the name 'Jesus,' therefore, and the Pharisees saw that Jehovah's name had changed but that He was not called 'Messiah' as the prophecies had foretold, they denied that the Lord Jesus was Christ, that He was God Himself, and they frantically condemned and resisted the Lord Jesus, until finally they colluded with the Roman authorities to nail the Lord Jesus to the cross. For this most egregious of sins, they suffered God's punishment. Similarly, if we persist in blindly clinging to the Bible, and we cling to the notion that God's name is unchanging, and deny God's work of the last days, then will we be any different than the Pharisees, who claimed to believe in God but who took the path of resistance to God?"

Next, she asked me to read two other passages of God's words: **"In each age, God does new work and is called by a new name; how could He do the same work in different ages? How could He cling to the old? The name of Jesus was taken for the sake of the work of redemption, so would He still be called by the same name when He returns in the last days? Would He still be doing the work of redemption? Why is it that Jehovah and Jesus are one, yet They are called by different names in different ages? Is it not because the ages of Their work are different? Could a single name represent God in His entirety? This being so, God must be called by a different name in a different age, and must use the name to change the age and to represent the age. For no one name can fully represent God Himself, and each name is able only to represent the temporal aspect of God's disposition in a given age; all it needs to do is to represent His work. Therefore, God can choose whatever name befits His disposition to represent the entire age"** ("The Vision of God's Work (3)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **"Could the name of Jesus—'God with us'—represent God's disposition in its entirety? Could it fully articulate God? If man says that God can only be called Jesus and may not have any other name because God cannot change His disposition, these words are blasphemy indeed! Do you believe that the name Jesus, God with us, alone can represent God in His entirety? God may be called by many names, but among these many names, there is not one that is able to encapsulate all of God, not one that can fully represent God. And so, God has many names, but these many names cannot fully articulate God's disposition, for God's disposition is so rich that it simply exceeds the capacity of man to know Him. ... One particular word or name does not have the capacity to represent God in His entirety, so do you think His**

name can be fixed? God is so great and so holy yet you will not permit Him to change His name in each new age? Therefore, in every age in which God personally does His own work, He uses a name that befits the age in order to encapsulate the work that He intends to do. He uses this particular name, one that possesses temporal significance, to represent His disposition in that age. This is God using the language of mankind to express His own disposition” (“The Vision of God’s Work (3)” in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

Sister Xiling fellowshipped saying, “God only performs one part of the work of His plan in any age and only expresses one aspect of His disposition. The name He takes in a particular age only represents the disposition He manifests and the work He does in that age. In the Age of Law, for example, the name Jehovah was used to represent the work God did as well as to express the majestic, wrathful, merciful and cursing aspects of His disposition. Under the name Jehovah, God proclaimed the laws and commandments and guided humankind in their life on earth. In turn, people’s behavior became more and more regulated and they learned how to worship God. Toward the end of the Age of Law, because people had become more and more corrupted by Satan, they stopped abiding by the laws and commandments and ran the risk of being condemned and put to death. In order to save people from the rigor of the law, God performed the work of redemption under the name of Jesus, thus beginning the Age of Grace and concluding the Age of Law. He expressed His loving and merciful disposition, preached the way of repentance and finally redeemed mankind through His crucifixion. All those that accepted the Lord Jesus as Savior and prayed in the Lord’s name to confess and repent were forgiven. From this, we can see that the name God chooses in every age is meaningful. Each name only represents a portion of God’s work and an aspect of His disposition—one name cannot represent the entirety of God. If, in the Age of Grace, God had come with the name Jehovah and not Jesus, then God’s work would have ceased to progress beyond the Age of Law and, we, as corrupt humans, would never have received our redemption, but would instead have been condemned and put to death for violating the laws and commandments. Similarly, if, when God returned in the last days, He was still called Jesus, then God’s work would cease to progress beyond the Age of Grace. Our sins would be forgiven, but we would still live within that vicious cycle of committing and confessing sin and we would be unable to break free of the fetters of sin and attain purification. As such, to completely deliver us from the fetters of sin and attain purification,

God has once again incarnated in the flesh to express His words and perform the work of judgment and purification, to establish the Age of Kingdom and bring the Age of Grace to an end. With the changing of the ages, God's name has also changed to 'Almighty God,' which fulfills the prophecy in the Book of Revelation chapter 1, verse 8 that says, **'I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, said the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.'**"

Through the fellowship given by the brothers and sisters, I came to understand how the passage of Scripture that states, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8) does not mean that God's name will never change, but rather that God's substance is immutable. I also learned that God divided His six-thousand-year management plan into three ages—the Age of Law, the Age of Grace and the Age of Kingdom—and with each new stage of work, God takes on a new name to represent His work and disposition during that age. He also uses the adopting of a new name to usher in a new age. How meaningful God's name is in every age! If, as I had previously believed, God's name never changed and, when He returned, He was still called Jesus, would His work not then remain at a standstill?

After the gathering, I again looked up some passages from Revelation: **"I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, said the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty"** (Revelation 1:8). **"Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God: and I will write on him My new name"** (Revelation 3:12). Everything suddenly became clear after reading these passages, and I thought to myself, "I've read these two passages before, so how come I didn't notice what they really meant? These two passages of Scripture clearly foretell how, when God returns in the last days, He will no longer be called Jesus and His new name will be 'the Almighty.' I had always clung to that quote from the Bible that states, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8), thinking that God's name would never change, but I never thought to examine other passages of Scripture, and just continually rejected and resisted God's work of the last days. How ignorant I was!" Through the fellowship given by the brothers and sisters, as well as the prophecies in the Bible regarding God's name, I no longer had any doubts about the name God has chosen in the last days.

Some time later, during a gathering, we read another passage of God's words: **"I was once known as Jehovah. I was also called the Messiah, and people once called Me Jesus the Savior with love and esteem. Today, however, I am no longer the Jehovah or Jesus that people knew in times past; I am the God who has returned in the last days, the God who shall bring the age to an end. I am the God Himself that rises up from the end of the earth, replete with My entire disposition, and full of authority, honor, and glory. People have never engaged with Me, never known Me, and have always been ignorant of My disposition. From the creation of the world until today, not one person has seen Me. This is the God who appears to man in the last days but is hidden among man. He resides among man, true and real, like the burning sun and the blazing flame, filled with power and brimming with authority. There is not a single person or thing that shall not be judged by My words, and not a single person or thing that shall not be purified through the burning of fire. Eventually, all nations shall be blessed because of My words, and also smashed to pieces because of My words. In this way, all people during the last days shall see that I am the Savior returned, and that I am the Almighty God that conquers all of mankind. And all shall see that I was once the sin offering for man, but that in the last days I also become the flames of the sun that incinerate all things, as well as the Sun of righteousness that reveals all things. This is My work in the last days. I took this name and am possessed of this disposition so that all people may see that I am a righteous God, the burning sun, the blazing flame, and so that all may worship Me, the one true God, and so that they may see My true face: I am not only the God of the Israelites, and I am not just the Redeemer; I am the God of all creatures throughout the heavens and the earth and the seas"** ("The Savior Has Already Returned Upon a 'White Cloud'" in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

Sister Xiling fellowshiped saying, "In the last days, God has begun the work of judgment by words in the Age of Kingdom under the name 'Almighty God,' and has revealed to humankind His righteous, majestic disposition that brooks no offense. The words Almighty God has expressed expose the reality of humankind's corruption by Satan as well as the source of our resistance to God. God's words cast judgment on our rebelliousness and unrighteousness and show us the path and the direction we need to follow to transform our dispositions. As long as we focus on pursuing the truth in all things, use the truth to uproot

our corrupt dispositions, and behave and treat others according to God's demands, we can gradually rid ourselves of our corrupt dispositions and attain the full salvation of God. When Almighty God's work on earth is finished, all those that accepted God's work in the last days and attained God's purification and salvation shall be led by God into His kingdom to enjoy God's blessings and His promise. As for those who rejected God's work in the last days and even resisted, condemned, slandered and blasphemed Him, they will all be consumed by the great disasters of the end times and will be punished and destroyed by God. So, God takes the name 'Almighty God' to manifest His righteous, majestic disposition that brooks no offense to all humankind, He separates people according to their kind, brings this age of evil to an end and completes all the work of God's six-thousand-year management plan. God wants us to see that not only is He the Master and Creator of all things, He can also serve as our sin offering and can even perfect, transform and purify humankind. God is the First and the Last and His wondrous acts are unfathomable to man. As such, God taking the name 'Almighty God' is particularly meaningful. At present, the Holy Spirit only safeguards the work done under the name of Almighty God. All who accept God's work of the last days and pray in the name of Almighty God may receive the work of the Holy Spirit, and the supply of the living water of life. The churches of the Age of Grace have become bleak and desolate—their believers' faith grows cold, their sermons lack substance, they are unmoved in prayer, and more and more of them are seduced by worldly trends. The source of their problems lies in the fact that God is performing a new work, and the work of the Holy Spirit has shifted from the churches of the Age of Grace to the churches of the Age of Kingdom. They have failed to keep pace with the footsteps of the Lamb, have failed to accept Almighty God's work of judgment and, as such, they cannot gain the supply of the living water of life and must wallow in darkness with no way out."

Through reading God's word and listening to the sister's fellowship, I gained a deeper understanding of the meaning of God taking different names in different ages. I also gained knowledge of God's work of judgment and the disposition He expresses in the last days—this is crucial for our deliverance from the bonds of sin and for our salvation by God! As it turned out, the reason why I'd not felt supplied listening to sermons in recent years, and why my brothers' and sisters' faith had become weak and the sermons had lacked substance was because the work of the Holy Spirit had already shifted: The Holy Spirit now only safeguards the work done under the name Almighty God. Because we hadn't accepted

God's new name and hadn't kept pace with the footsteps of the Lamb, we had fallen into darkness. It was then that I knew in my heart that Almighty God truly is the returned Lord Jesus.

Later on, my brothers and sisters fellowshipped with me regarding how to discern true churches from false churches, how to distinguish the Holy Spirit's work from Satan's work, and other aspects of the truth. I greatly benefited from these fellowships. Every time I got together with my brothers and sisters to watch gospel movies and videos, I felt spiritually fulfilled and a sense of peace and security filled my heart. Almighty God's words not only resolved many questions I previously had in my belief in the Lord, but they also solved many problems I was having in my life. I also regained that sense of faith I had when I first began believing in the Lord. I rejoiced that God chose me to accept His work of the last days and I began to keep pace with the footsteps of the Lamb. Now, I read Almighty God's words every day. The more I read, the more I feel light filling my heart, and from the bottom of my heart I am absolutely certain that Almighty God's word is the truth and is God's voice. I was completely certain that God has now appeared and is working as Almighty God, and I accepted Almighty God's name and officially joined The Church of Almighty God. Thanks be to Almighty God for saving me!

16. God's Word Is My Strength

By Jingnian, Canada

I have followed my family's belief in the Lord since I was a child, often reading the Bible and attending services. I shared the gospel of the Lord Jesus with my mother-in-law after getting married, and from then on she no longer lost her temper when things happened or acted entirely on her own whims as she had in the past. Relationships in our family began to improve overall. Seeing the changes in his mother, my husband also began believing in the Lord in 2015, and went to church with me every week. My family was at peace after accepting the Lord's gospel, and when I saw this I knew that this was the Lord's grace—I thanked the Lord from the bottom of my heart.

While at work one day in February 2017, a female customer saw me and became very excited. She pulled me aside and said, "You look very much like a friend of mine. Can I

introduce you to her? She's just come to Canada and hardly knows anyone, would you like to meet her and get together with her if you have time?" I was really surprised to hear this and thought: Could such a thing happen? Does her friend really look that much like me? But I realized that the Lord's benevolent will is within all things, and that lovingly helping others is also one of the Lord's teachings, so I agreed to her request. A few days later, I met her friend Xiao Han, who did indeed look very much like me; people who saw us asked if we were twin sisters. I don't know if it was because we looked so much alike or because the Lord's arrangements were behind things, but when I saw her, I immediately felt very close to her. We met up just a few times and became like sisters who could talk about anything. What surprised me the most was that through Xiao Han, I heard the gospel of the returned Lord Jesus in the last days.

One day, Xiao Han took me to her aunt's house, where her aunt shared Almighty God's kingdom gospel with us. She had us read the words uttered by God in the last days, and fellowshiped with us on God's will in the creation of Adam and Eve, God's thoughts and intentions when He called on Noah to build the ark, how God's heart ached when He destroyed the people of Noah's time, and more. She said that these mysteries are all revealed in God's words of the last days, otherwise no one could understand them. I believed her, because only God Himself could explain the thoughts behind everything He does. If God had not come personally to speak and work, who else could fully explain God's thoughts and intentions? I was deeply drawn in by God's words, and decided to seriously investigate Almighty God's work in the last days. Over the period of time I was looking into it, I raised a number of questions that I had never understood when reading the Bible, and Xiao Han's aunt gave me answers based on the words of Almighty God—the answers were very thorough, and they were clear and understandable to me. As I read more and more of God's words, the confusion within my heart was slowly resolved, and I came to understand that in the last days, Almighty God does the work of judgment through His words, which fulfills the prophecy in the Bible that “[J]udgment must begin at the house of God” (1 Peter 4:17). This stage of God's work is an escalation and a deepening of the work of the Lord Jesus, and it is the final stage of God's work in the last days to purify and save mankind. After investigating for a period of time, I became certain that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus; I happily accepted Almighty God's work of the last days and began to attend meetings with my brothers and sisters.

One morning a little over three months later, I was gathering with other sisters as usual, when suddenly my cell phone began to beep. I took a look and saw a notification that someone was trying to locate my position using my iPhone. I was very surprised and didn't know what was going on, but immediately after that, my husband sent me a WeChat message asking, "Where are you?" I looked at the message and hesitated a bit; I remembered that, after returning from a church service over a month ago, my husband told me that the pastor had said many negative things about The Church of Almighty God, and warned the believers to be on their guard and not have any contact with people from Eastern Lightning. At the time, I was afraid that my husband would be misled by the pastor and elder, and that their rumors would turn him against The Church of Almighty God. I wanted to wait to share the gospel with him until I understood more of the truth and could clearly bear witness to God's work of the last days, so I never dared to tell him about my gatherings with the sisters of The Church of Almighty God. With that in mind, I replied to him, "I'm on my way to work." But when I thought about it again, I felt that something was wrong, "He never messages me at this time. Why is he suddenly asking me where I am today? What's going on?"

When I got home from work that evening, I saw my husband sitting on the bed glowering. He had found the book of God's words that I had hidden in the house, and he had it laid out on the desk. The sight of this really took me aback, but before I had time to give it any thought, my husband asked me, "When did you start believing in Almighty God? There's a lot of negative stuff online about The Church of Almighty God, don't you know that? You lied to me today. You weren't on your way to work this morning. Where were you?" I replied somewhat indignantly, "So when my phone started beeping today it was you trying to locate me!" He said, "On my break at work this morning I wanted to know where you were, so I looked up your location and discovered you weren't where you said you were." He softened his tone and continued, "The Chinese government said online that the boundaries between men and women aren't clearly maintained among believers in Almighty God, and there were all sorts of other negative things, too. Can you please not contact them anymore? It would be so much better if you just went to church services—I could go with you every week. Why are you having anything to do with them?" After saying this he went online and found a lot of negative information about The Church of Almighty God for me to read. After reading these baseless rumors, I said angrily, "These people have never had any contact

with The Church of Almighty God at all. Why are they spouting off about it? This is all completely unfounded, it's hearsay. These are lies and rumors and totally lacking credibility! Over these last few months, I've been around the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God, and what I've seen is that their clothing is simple and in good taste, and they speak and behave in a dignified manner. There are definite boundaries between brothers and sisters and there are principles in how they interact. They're nothing like the rumors the CCP government and the pastors and elders spread. One of the administrative decrees for the Age of Kingdom issued by Almighty God clearly states, **'Man has a corrupt disposition and is moreover possessed of emotions. As such, it is absolutely prohibited for two members of the opposite sex to work together unaccompanied when serving God. Any who are discovered doing so will be expelled, without exception'** ("The Ten Administrative Decrees That Must Be Obeyed by God's Chosen People in the Age of Kingdom" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God is holy and righteous, and loathes nothing more than licentious behavior. So, God has issued strict administrative decrees for His chosen people, and anyone who violates them will be expelled from the church. The brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God strictly abide by God's administrative decrees, and no one dares violate them. This is what I have personally seen and experienced. The rumor spread by the CCP government and the pastors and elders that the boundaries between men and women of The Church of Almighty God are unclear is nothing but lies and slander!" But no matter what I said, my husband simply wouldn't listen, and he insisted that I no longer attend gatherings with the brothers and sisters. Seeing how rigid he was being, I started to feel some negativity, because the only person close to me in this foreign place was my husband and I didn't want to fight with him. On top of that, I was afraid that he would tell my family in China and the pastor, which would only bring me more trouble. So, when he insisted that I not go to gatherings, I agreed, but I said that I wanted to continue reading God's words at home; he agreed. And so, the storm subsided for the moment.

Since I was just reading God's words at home alone, there were many things I didn't understand. So, I used my mobile phone to contact a sister when my husband was at work, which allowed me to continue gathering with the sisters. When I told my sisters about how my husband had stopped me from going to gatherings, one of them read a passage of God's words to me, **"In every step of work that God does within people, externally it appears to be interactions between people, as if born of human arrangements or from human**

interference. But behind the scenes, every step of work, and everything that happens, is a wager made by Satan before God, and requires people to stand firm in their testimony to God. Take when Job was tried, for example: Behind the scenes, Satan was making a bet with God, and what happened to Job was the deeds of men and the interference of men. Behind every step of work that God does in you is Satan's wager with God—behind it all is a battle. ... When God and Satan do battle in the spiritual realm, how should you satisfy God, and how should you stand firm in your testimony to Him? You should know that everything that happens to you is a great trial and the time when God needs you to bear testimony” (“Only Loving God Is Truly Believing in God” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). My sister fellowshiped, “When we encounter this kind of thing soon after accepting Almighty God, from the outside it appears that our family is standing in our way and preventing us from going to gatherings, but if we look at it through God's words, it's Satan's disruption behind it: This is a spiritual battle. God wants to save us, but Satan doesn't want to give up so easily, so it follows behind God to disrupt us, and uses the people around us to keep us from coming before God. Satan's goal is to ruin our proper relationship with God, to make us feel negative and weak so that we distance ourselves from God and betray Him, and finally return to its domain and lose our chance to be saved by God. That's why we must learn discernment, look at things according to God's words, see through Satan's tricks, pray and rely on God more, and have genuine faith in God. Then we'll be able to see God's actions through our faith.” After hearing God's word and the sister's fellowship, it dawned on me, “My husband is standing in the way of me believing in and following God because Satan is using him to disrupt me and get me to betray God—this is the same as the trial that Job went through. Satan tried every means it knew to tempt Job. It made him lose his immense wealth and his herds of cattle and sheep, covered him in horrible boils, plus used Job's friends to disrupt and attack him. It even used his wife to tempt Job to abandon God. Satan arrogantly tried to destroy Job's faith in God and make him deny and reject God. Satan is truly evil and despicable!” These thoughts filled my heart with loathing for Satan, but then I thought, “Although Satan was crazed in its persecution of Job, it never would have dared to do mortal harm to Job without God's permission, so doesn't that mean what I am going through is also in God's hands? As long as I truly look up to God and rely on God, He will surely guide me to overcome the temptations of Satan.” That thought gave me further faith in God, and I resolved to stay in

contact with the sisters and continue to attend gatherings and have fellowship through my mobile phone.

One night I put my phone down on the table, not expecting that my husband would pick it up and look through it—he saw my chat record with the sister. He said to me very angrily, “You’re still in contact with them, and you chat with them for two hours at a time.” He then bombarded me with more negative propaganda that was online, and started monitoring me through a variety of means. I couldn’t get in touch with the sister on my phone anymore. And so this is how I lost my church life again and couldn’t get any help from the sister. After that, my husband started sending me rumors he found online day in and day out, and he also hassled me and prevented me from having any contact with brothers and sisters. Faced with my husband’s oppression and obstruction, I became utterly miserable, and I couldn’t help but start feeling weak again. I thought, “Why is my husband so opposed to me believing in Almighty God? I only want to believe in God, why is it so hard? When will I be able to practice my faith without being hassled so much? Is this going to be my life from now on?” At that thought I absolutely could not hold back the tears—I felt particularly lonely and helpless. I didn’t know where to go from there. I can’t even count how many times I cried over that. In my misery, all I could do was pray to God, “God! I don’t know what to do in the face of my husband’s constraints or how I should get through this, but I believe that whatever the situation, it contains Your benevolent will. I ask You to guide me and give me the faith to get through this.”

Miraculously, just as I finished my prayer, I received two passages of God’s word from the sister, **“Satan is at war with God, trailing along behind Him. Its objective is to demolish all the work God wants to do, to occupy and control those whom God wants, to completely extinguish those whom God wants. If they are not extinguished, then they come to Satan’s possession to be used by it—this is its objective”** (“God Himself, the Unique IV” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). **“You must have My courage within you and you must have principles when facing relatives who do not believe. But for My sake, you must also not yield to any of the dark forces. Rely on My wisdom to walk the perfect way; do not allow the conspiracies of Satan to take hold. Put all your efforts into placing your heart before Me and I shall comfort you and give you peace and happiness in your heart”** (“Chapter 10” of *Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh*). By pondering God’s words, I gained some discernment over

Satan's evil intentions. God works to save mankind while Satan racks its brains to destroy God's work and vie with God for people, so it spreads all sorts of rumors on the Internet to mislead and deceive people. It also uses our families to hinder and harass us so that we can't come before God to receive salvation. My husband had been blinded and deceived by the rumors spread by Satan because he didn't know the truth, which is the only reason he was stubbornly standing in the way of my faith. Satan had also seized upon my own weakness to shackle and harm me. Satan knew that my fatal weakness was emotions, so it was attacking me through my feelings for my husband, getting me to give up on following God because of my concern for my fleshly attachments and desire to preserve family harmony, and thus abandon the true way and lose my chance at God's salvation. Satan is truly despicable! At the same time, I felt God comforting me with His words, encouraging me not to surrender to the dark forces of Satan. God was also giving me a path of practice. God said, "**Rely on My wisdom to walk the perfect way.**" In such an environment, how could I cooperate with God and use wisdom to get to gatherings? I remembered that last time my husband had used my phone to track me, so I was no longer able to go to the sister's house for gatherings, plus I couldn't use my phone to meet with her either, but I could go meet her at one of the seating areas in the mall. If my husband asked again, I could say I was going shopping. So, with God's guidance, I was able to meet with her again. Once she came to understand my difficulties, she gave me fellowship on God's words and she comforted and encouraged me. After understanding the truth, my negativity was quickly dispelled.

One day, I got home from work and wanted to read God's words; I went through every single drawer and cabinet where I usually kept my book, but to no avail. I was incredibly anxious and thought, "This is it. My husband must have thrown away my book. He's a really cautious person, so he definitely wouldn't have thrown it into a trash can where I might find it. If he got rid of it at his office I'll never find it." The thought made me miserable, and I didn't know what to do.

I went along with my husband to his driver's license exam a few days later and saw one of the sisters there. I covertly let her know that my book of God's words had disappeared. She told me to pray more, rely on God, and make another thorough search. God controls and rules all things, she told me, so whether my husband had thrown it away was in God's hands, and I shouldn't let my imagination run wild and be quick to judge. I messaged another sister about it when I got home, who said the same thing to me. Having received the same

fellowship from two different sisters, I believed that God's good intentions must be behind this. Was God using the sisters to remind me? I then thought of a passage from God's words, **"Almighty God dominates all things and occurrences! As long as we look up to Him in our hearts at all times and enter the spirit and fellowship with Him, He will show us all the things we seek, and His will is sure to be revealed to us. Our hearts will then be in joy and peace, steady with perfect clarity"** ("Chapter 7" of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). I understood from God's words that God is always there for people to lean on and find succor. When we encounter trouble and have no way out, as long as we genuinely call out to God, He will enlighten and guide us, and help us through our difficulties. Thanks to the enlightenment and guidance of God's words, my faith in God was strengthened yet again, and I regained a path of practice. I also understood that as for the matter of losing my book of God's words, I would never find it if I relied only on my own efforts. God is all-powerful, and as long as I relied on and looked up to God, and then cooperated with Him in a practical way to go look for it, I trusted that God would guide and help me. So, I came before God and sincerely prayed, "God! I can't find my book of Your words. At first, I relied on my own notions and imaginings to guess what might have happened, and I just reacted according to my own impulses. I didn't put You above all, and I didn't realize that everything is under Your control. Now I wish to look up to You and entrust this matter to You, and then cooperate with You in my next search. Whether I will find the book or not, this will happen with Your permission. I ask for Your guidance."

After praying I had a sudden desire to go to the storage room for a pair of shoes. To my surprise, as I was kneeling down to pick them up, I came across a white bag, and a very clear thought suddenly sprang into my mind: The book of God's words is in this bag. I picked it up and looked, and it was true! Both surprised and delighted, I couldn't help but shout, "Thanks be to God! Thanks be to God!" I only then realized that it was God guiding me to find the book. I really saw that everything is under God's rule, that God even arranges people's thoughts and ideas, and that nothing is impossible when we lean on God and look up to Him. I lost no time getting the book back to the bedroom and carefully placed them in my drawer. That evening when my husband came back, he discovered that I had found the book of God's words hidden in the storage room and demanded that I hand it over. This time, I truly relied on God and asked Him to give me confidence and strength. I refused to compromise further with him. Seeing my determination, he didn't press any further.

The sister later gave me a mobile phone just for listening to sermons that also had lots of God's words downloaded on it; this was to make it easier for me to attend gatherings and do my devotionals. Once when I was switching between bags, I left that phone at home out of carelessness, and my husband found out that I was going to gatherings again. He messaged me demanding to know, "Why are you still in contact with them? Why are you sneaking around to go to gatherings?" I was both angry and concerned when I saw these messages, but then I called to mind my experiences over the past period of time, how every time my husband tried to stand in my way or oppress me, I always compromised, retreated, or I felt negative and weak, and that what I lacked most was the ability to rely on God and testify for God. I knew that this time I couldn't yield to Satan. I would rely on God, look to God, overcome Satan through faith, and stand witness for God. I thought of God's words, **"No matter where or when, or how adverse the environment is, I will show you clearly and My heart shall be revealed to you if you look to Me with your heart; this way you will run down the road ahead and never lose your way"** ("Chapter 13" of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). So, I prayed to God, "God! You have now chosen me and allowed me to follow Your footsteps. If I don't pursue with all my strength, if I bow to Satan's forces, I will lose my chance at salvation. Oh God, I wish to entrust my current difficulties to You. Even if my husband tells my family or the pastor about my faith in Almighty God, or whatever else he may do to me, I will submit to You. This time, I will rely on You to stand witness for You and humiliate Satan."

After praying I gradually began to feel much calmer. I picked up my phone and sent him a response. "Yes, I'm attending gatherings again. Let's sit down and have a real talk about this tomorrow evening." Once I had sent the message, I still felt that I was being refined: Why is it that each time I want to seriously pursue the truth, I am disrupted? Job's experience, which the sisters had fellowshiped about with me many times, then came to mind. And I also thought of what God said, **"And what did God do when Job was subjected to this torment? God observed, and watched, and awaited the outcome. As God observed and watched, how did He feel? He felt grief-stricken, of course"** ("God's Work, God's Disposition, and God Himself II" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). I weighed God's words, and thought over Job's experience. He spent his whole life fearing God and shunning evil, but Satan wasn't content to let God gain Job, and so tempted him many times. But while Satan was tempting Job, God was observing and watching everything, and God

gave Satan a strict limit: Satan could not take Job's life, thereby ensuring Job's safety. I could see that God cherishes people, does not want us to suffer, and doesn't want to see us fall under Satan's influence and be harmed by Satan. In addition, God's benevolent will was within Him allowing Satan to tempt Job. God hoped to gain testimony from Job and to perfect Job's faith and obedience to God. Wasn't that precisely the situation I had found myself in? Although Satan tempted me time and again, God never left me, and had guided me until then. God arranged those circumstances in the hope that I would grow in life, stand witness for Him, and humiliate Satan, so I knew that time I had to struggle to stand witness for God and humiliate Satan. I once again felt more faith in God and was determined to submit to what God had arranged, to stand on God's side, and never again compromise with Satan.

The next evening when I got home from work, my husband was already there waiting for me. When I sat down, he said, "Can you give up your faith in Almighty God?" He then began talking about all sorts of negative propaganda about The Church of Almighty God that he had seen online. My response was, "No, I can't. What do you really know about The Church of Almighty God? Everything you've seen online are just rumors fabricated by the CCP government to defame, libel, and condemn The Church of Almighty God. None of it is true. The CCP is an atheistic political party that particularly loathes the truth and God, so it does its utmost to fabricate and spread all kinds of rumors to mislead people. It vainly hopes to deceive people into resisting God and ultimately being destroyed along with it. That is the CCP government's sinister intention. But I haven't done anything wrong by believing in God, nor have I done anything to let you down. My path of faith is the right path in life, and I have decided to continue on it. I've given it enough thought, and I've decided that you can go ahead and call the pastor and the preachers, and let them condemn me in their sermons and then expel me from the church. You can also call my parents and have them lay into me and oppress me. But no matter what you do, I won't change my mind. I have now accepted God's work of the last days, and through reading God's words and going through the situations arranged by God, I have become certain that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus. I will stand by my choice no matter what." My husband said, "You do realize that you're betraying the Lord, right? The Lord has given you so much grace. How could you betray Him?" I said, "Believing in Almighty God is not betraying the Lord; it is following the footsteps of the Lamb, because Almighty God and the Lord Jesus are the same God. It is precisely because I have enjoyed so much of the Lord Jesus' grace that when I heard the

news that the Lord Jesus has now returned, I knew I should investigate it, and then I accepted it. The Lord Jesus has now returned in the flesh to utter new words, and to explain everything about God's work and will. I have heard God's voice, so I should work even harder in my pursuit, go to more gatherings, and repay God's love for me." Eventually my husband said, "Fine, forget it! Do what you want! I was going to tell the pastor and get him to convince you to come back to the church, and I was going to call your parents too, but I was afraid they'd be so upset they'd fall ill. Believe whatever you want from now on—I won't get involved."

I was elated to hear my husband say that he would no longer stand in the way of my faith in Almighty God. I knew that this was God's guidance and that my husband's heart and mind were also in God's hands. Such words leaving his mouth were entirely because of God's rule; it was God who had opened the way for me. I saw through this experience that God wants my heart, and when I truly rely on Him, look to Him, and risk everything to satisfy Him, I see God's deeds, and that He has always been silently guiding and helping me. I thought of God's words: **"Whenever Satan corrupts man or inflicts unbridled harm upon man, God does not stand idly by, and neither does He brush aside or turn a blind eye to those He has chosen. God understands with perfect clarity all that Satan does. No matter what Satan does, no matter what trend it causes to arise, God knows all that Satan is trying to do, and God does not give up on those He has chosen. Instead, without attracting any attention—secretly, silently—God does everything that is necessary"** ("God Himself, the Unique VI" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). As I pondered these words I felt really moved. I thought back over what I had experienced that period of time—when Satan used my husband to disrupt and oppress me to keep me from going to gatherings, God allowed me to see through Satan's tricks and come out from my negativity through the brothers' and sisters' fellowship on God's words; when my husband hid my book of God's words and tried to stop me from believing in God, I genuinely relied on God and looked to Him, and then I witnessed God's wondrous deeds; once I resolved to stand with God and became willing to risk everything to follow God, Satan was humiliated and retreated. Through my experiences I saw that God really is on my side, and that He sets things up for me in accordance with my stature. God did not give me a burden I was not able to bear. I thought of how in the past, before truly giving my heart to God, I was always preoccupied with the affections of the flesh, I relied on human means to cope with problems,

and didn't dare to forsake Satan. As a result, Satan exploited my weakest point, taking advantage and attacking me time and time again, tormenting me to no end. But when I truly relied on God and became willing to put everything on the line, God opened up a way for me, and Satan was humiliated in defeat, left with no recourse. After going through all of this I gained true understanding of God's almightiness and sovereignty, as well as my own rebellious disposition. My faith in and obedience to God grew, I gained discernment over Satan's schemes, and I saw Satan's evil and despicable nature. A true hatred of Satan arose within me. It was all thanks to God's guidance and enlightenment that I was able to come to understand all of this. I am truly grateful to God!

I reaped a great harvest from what I experienced over that period of time. Over the course of it I experienced weakness and negativity, but the guidance of God's words and the support and help of my sisters gave me the faith to overcome Satan's temptations and attacks, and to continue on until the present day. I have seen God's love through my practical experiences, and that God has been leading me and has never once strayed from my side through everything. When we truly give our hearts to God, look to God, and rely on God, we can see His wondrous deeds and emerge from our suffering. From this day forward, I wish only to experience more of God's work and seek true knowledge of God!

17. Breaking Through Satan's Tight Encirclement

By Zhao Gang, China

It was bitterly cold this past November in Northeast China, none of the snow that fell to the ground melted away, and many people who walked outside were so cold that they stuffed their hands into their armpits and walked along cautiously, bodies bent over. The other day in the early morning the winds were blowing from the northwest, when I, my brother-in-law and his wife and about a dozen brothers and sisters were sitting in my home on the warm bed. Everyone had a copy of the Bible beside them, and in their hands everyone was holding a copy of the book of God's words, Judgment Begins With the House of God. Two sisters from The Church of Almighty God were fellowshiping on the truth concerning God's three stages of work. The two sisters were drawing pictures of the three stages of work as they fellowshiped: "God's work for the salvation of mankind can be divided into three stages.

From the Age of Law to the Age of Grace and then to the Age of Kingdom, each stage of work is higher and more profound than the previous stage. The work done in the last days is the final stage of work, in which God expresses words to judge and cleanse man....” We nodded our heads as we listened, and our hearts filled with light: Who would’ve thought that God’s management plan for the salvation of mankind would have so many mysteries! Besides God Himself, who else could speak of the mysteries of these three stages of God’s work so clearly? This truly is the work of God! We fellowshiped into the evening of the following day, and our whole group expressed a willingness to seek out and look into Almighty God’s work of the last days.

Afterward, the two sisters then fellowshiped on the truth regarding the significance of the incarnation of God, and the rest of us were listening attentively when, all of a sudden, our church leader Wang Ping showed up. As soon as she entered the house, she pointed her finger at the two sisters from The Church of Almighty God and asked me: “What are these two doing?” I spoke frankly: “They are Sister Zhang and Sister Mu—” But before I could even finish speaking, she said in an exasperated tone, “Who are Sister Zhang and Sister Mu? I can see they are preachers of Eastern Lightning, they are sheep-stealers....” After Wang Ping finished talking, we all sat there in shock. I thought to myself: “Sister Wang Ping has almost always talked about loving our neighbors as we love ourselves and about loving our enemies; why is it that today she comes in here saying such unreasonable things? Why is she judging and condemning these two sisters?” I was thinking this over when I heard Sister Zhang calmly say to Wang Ping, “Sister, there are no hidden intentions in us coming here today. The Lord Jesus has already returned. We just want to spread God’s gospel of the last days to you—” Wang Ping interrupted Sister Zhang and yelled out: “The Lord has returned? Not even those of us who serve as leaders know anything about the Lord’s return, so how could you know anything about it? That is not possible! The Lord Jesus said: **‘All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them’** (John 10:8). You both need to leave right now and never come back here.” When I heard Wang Ping say this, I felt disgusted inside: Her sermons are usually always so reasoned and well-argued; how is it that she can be so compassionless all of a sudden? So I asked Wang Ping: “Sister Wang, it’s late. Where do you want them to go? The Lord teaches us that we must love our enemies, to say nothing of these two sisters who believe in God. If we treat these two in this way, we would in no way resemble believers in the Lord—” But before

I could even finish what I was saying, Wang Ping anxiously grabbed the hand of my brother-in-law's wife and said to her and her husband, "If Zhao Gang doesn't want these two women to leave then let's go. Don't listen to them anymore!" She then furiously grabbed hold of these two and walked out.

After they left, Sister Mu turned to us and asked: "Brothers and sisters, how do you all feel about the scene that we just witnessed? Let's discuss this together." The brothers and sisters all turned toward me, without anyone saying a word. I said frankly, "Sister, through our readings of the word of Almighty God over these past two days, and through listening to your fellowship, I firmly believe that Almighty God's words are the truth, and that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus. However, the things that Wang Ping said aren't without reason. After all, she is our leader and she has had faith in the Lord for a long time. She is well-versed in the Bible and she has always busied herself and expended herself for the Lord. If the Lord has returned, she ought to be the first to know." Sister Zhang replied kindly, saying, "People believe that God's return should first be revealed to leaders who then tell believers about it, but is there really any basis in the Lord's words for this kind of thinking? Does it conform to the truth and to the facts of God's work? The Lord Jesus said: **'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me'** (John 10:27). **'He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'** (Revelation 2:7). The Lord Jesus clearly tells us that when He comes, He will surely utter words and express the truth, and that all who hear God's voice and then seek and accept it will welcome the Lord's return and be raised up before God. Did the Lord say He would enlighten any leader with the knowledge of His coming when He returns? No, He didn't. Therefore, this view that people have simply misleads and confounds people, and if they wait for the Lord to enlighten them in line with this statement, then they are just waiting passively for the end to come. Let's look at what it says in the words of Almighty God. Almighty God said: **'There are even more who believe that whatever the new work of God might be, it has to be substantiated by prophecies, and that in each stage of such work, all those who follow Him with a "true" heart must also be shown revelations; if not, such work could not be the work of God. It is already no easy task for man to come to know God. Taken in addition to man's absurd heart and his rebellious nature of self-importance and self-conceit, it becomes all the more difficult for him to accept God's new work. Man neither gives careful consideration to the new work of God, nor accepts it with humility; instead, he adopts an attitude of**

contempt as he awaits revelations and guidance from God. Is this not the behavior of those who rebel against and resist God? How can such people gain God's approval? ("How Can Man Who Has Delimited God in His Conceptions Receive the Revelations of God?" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). From God's words we realize that, in the matter of the coming of the Lord, if people blindly hold to their own conceptions and imaginings and do not seek the truth or focus on hearing God's voice, but instead merely wait for God to enlighten them, then they will never be able to welcome the return of the Lord. Only those who take care to listen to God's voice are able to welcome the appearance of the Lord. In fact, not even one out of the people who followed the Lord Jesus in the Age of Grace was enlightened by God prior to following Jesus. They heard someone else bear witness to the Lord Jesus, or they heard the Lord speak or give a sermon, and they followed Him only after recognizing the voice of the Lord. Although Peter gained the enlightenment of God and recognized the Lord Jesus to be Christ and to be the Son of God, that only happened after he had followed the Lord Jesus for a time; only after he came to have some knowledge of the Lord from His words and work did he gain the enlightenment and illumination of the Holy Spirit—this is a fact. Now in the last days, the incarnate Almighty God expresses the truth, and does the work of judging, purifying and saving mankind. Many people accept and follow Almighty God, but there is not one among them who gained the enlightenment of God prior to following Him. God is righteous and He certainly does not favor anyone. God takes joy in kind-hearted people who thirst to seek out the truth. It's just as the Lord Jesus said: **'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled'** (Matthew 5:6). **'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God'** (Matthew 5:8). Almighty God also said: **'God seeks those who long for Him to appear. He seeks those who are able to hear His words, those who have not forgotten His commission and offer up their hearts and bodies to Him. He seeks those who are as obedient as babes before Him and do not resist Him'** ("God Presides Over the Fate of All Mankind" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). This allows us to see that, so long as man loves the truth and thirsts for the truth, regardless of whether or not he has any status, regardless of how much he understands the Bible, God will enlighten and guide him, and He will allow man to hear His voice and witness His appearance. If those who serve as leaders think that God must first enlighten them when He returns, then this shows that they do not have any understanding of the work of God and they do not know God's righteous disposition. It also

reveals them to be very arrogant. It is said in the word of Almighty God: **‘And so I say that those who claim to “fully understand” God and His work are an inept lot; they are all overweening and ignorant. Man should not define the work of God; moreover, man cannot define the work of God. In the eyes of God, man is as insignificant as an ant; so how can man fathom God’s work? Those who like to spout, “God does not work in this or that way,” or “God is like this or that”—are they not speaking arrogantly?’** (Preface to *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). God’s almightiness and wisdom are unfathomably profound. People are just tiny creations. Our minds and our thoughts are limited, so how could we fathom the work of the Creator? So, as we wait for the Lord to return, we ought to keep reverence for God in our hearts and search and investigate carefully. We ought not to use our own conceptions and imaginations to confine God and judge God arbitrarily, for this will offend God’s disposition, and it will also ruin our chances to attain true salvation.”

After hearing God’s word, I understood that we are so insignificant in the presence of God, more insignificant even than an ant. Furthermore, we have been corrupted by Satan to the point that we are full of the corrupt disposition of arrogance and conceit. We love to always rely on our imaginations and conceptions to confine God, and whenever God’s work does not conform to our conceptions, we even deny God, condemn God and resist God. Apparently, if man does not understand the truth and does not have a single speck of reverence for God in his heart, then he will dare to do whatever he wants. It’s so dangerous! This made me remember that the Lord Jesus once said: **“I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Your sight”** (Matthew 11:25–26). It wasn’t until today that I saw that this really is how things are! The revelation of God’s word and Sister Zhang’s fellowship allowed me to recognize that this idea that “leaders ought to be the first ones to be enlightened to the knowledge of the Lord’s coming when He returns” is false and absurd, it simply does not conform to the truth, and it totally hails from the conceptions and imaginings of man. In reality, only those who thirst for the truth and seek the voice of God will have the opportunity to receive God’s work and His guidance and be brought before God. This gave me a new understanding of God’s fairness and righteousness. Thanks be to God!

Early in the morning on the third day, after Sister Zhang and Sister Mu had left, my

fellow Brother Guan, a co-worker from the upper echelons of our church, came to me and asked: “Brother Zhao, I heard that you both now believe in Eastern Lightning?” I told him earnestly, “Yes, I’ve accepted Almighty God’s work in the last days, because through the words of Almighty God I have come to understand many truths that I previously didn’t understand, such as the mysteries of His three stages of work and the significance of the incarnation of God. I see that the words of Almighty God are ‘**what the Spirit says to the churches**’ as prophesied in the Book of Revelation.” Brother Guan glanced over at me and said, “Brother Zhao, are you really going to follow what these people believe? Do you know what kind of people they are?” I said, “I see that they all have a great human nature and that they fellowship about the truth very clearly. Everything they discuss has to do with the truths of God’s work. I truly have gained a lot these past two days.” Brother Guan said to me angrily, “How can you be so stubborn? Hebrews 6:6–8 tell us: ‘If they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes off on it, and brings forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God: But that which bears thorns and briers is rejected, and is near to cursing; whose end is to be burned.’ You are a preacher, you enjoy so much of the Lord’s grace, but not only are you not leading brothers and sisters to believe in the Lord, but instead you are leading them to leave our church. Aren’t you afraid of being punished? If you do not turn back, you will lose the Lord’s protection, and you will not live a happy life. Your previous sicknesses will recur, and your two children will not have good jobs....”

After brother Guan left, I felt a little nervous, and I thought to myself: The things he said seem to have some reason to them, so what should I do just in case my faith in Almighty God causes me to lose the Lord’s grace? When I thought about this, I felt my heart grow weak, so I hurriedly got down on my knees and prayed to God: “Almighty God! Brother Guan’s words have made me feel a bit weak. God! Are the things he said actually true or not? I really don’t know what to do now....” As I was praying to God, my wife came back, and I told her about what had just happened. After hearing this, she said nervously, “Is that really what he said?” I nodded my head, and my wife said worriedly, “He has been a major leader who has believed in the Lord for many years, and he’s well-versed in the Bible. I don’t think he would tell lies. If it’s really going to be like what he says, then what should we do?” Just then, I suddenly thought of the truth of God’s three stages of work that Sister Zhang

and Sister Mu had fellowshiped about: God's work for the salvation of mankind is divided into three stages, but all three stages of work are carried out by one God. As I thought about this, it suddenly became clear to me, and I blurted out to my wife: "What Brother Guan said doesn't seem right. He said that by accepting God's work in the last days we are leaving the way of the Lord and betraying the Lord Jesus, but the words of Almighty God that we have been reading these last few days are truly God's voice and Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus. By following Almighty God, we are actually following the footsteps of the Lamb. We are the ones who are the wise virgins. Why would the Lord punish us? ..." We were in the middle of fellowshiping about this when Sister Zhang and Sister Mu came in ...

My wife told the sisters what Brother Guan had said when he came to our house, and Sister Zhang asked me how I felt about this whole thing. So I told the sisters about the weakness that I had felt and about the understanding that I had just reached. Sister Zhang smiled, saying, "Thanks be to God! This is such a pure understanding, and this is God's enlightenment and guidance!" My wife asked, confused, "Since we haven't gone astray, why is Brother Guan saying those things? He is a major leader who has believed in the Lord for many years!" I looked at my wife and said: "He just wants us to come back to our former church!" Sister Zhang smiled and said, "Right now, all that we can see is their outward appearance, but we haven't looked into the substance of their nature! The Lord Jesus once said: **'But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer you them that are entering to go in'** (Matthew 23:13). **'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like to white washed sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness'** (Matthew 23:27). Judging by their outward appearance, the Pharisees were very loyal in their service to God. In people's minds, the Pharisees were devout servants to God, and they were the most trustworthy of religious leaders. However, when the Lord Jesus came to carry out His work, the God-resisting nature of the Pharisees was revealed. It was these Pharisees who frantically resisted and condemned the work of the Lord Jesus. They fabricated all kinds of rumors and bore false witness to deceive the common people. They said that the Lord Jesus had cast out demons through Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. And once the Lord Jesus was resurrected three days after being nailed to the cross, they bribed soldiers to spread rumors about the Lord Jesus' body being stolen away by His disciples, among other things.

The Pharisees fabricated all kinds of lies and used all the tricks at their disposal to block people from seeking out and investigating the true way. Their goal was to ban the work of God so that they could forever hold dominion over God's chosen people. Although they appeared devout on the outside, in essence they were antichrists who hated the truth and who stood as enemies to God. The Lord Jesus said when He exposed and condemned them: **'You serpents, you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell?'** (Matthew 23:33). So now, let's think about it: Are these religious leaders of today any different from the Pharisees?" The sisters then asked me to read a passage of Almighty God's words: **"There are those who read the Bible in grand churches and recite it all day long, yet not one among them understands the purpose of God's work. Not one among them is able to know God; still less can any one among them accord with God's will. They are all worthless, vile people, each standing on high to lecture God. They willfully oppose God even as they carry His banner. Claiming faith in God, still they eat the flesh and drink the blood of man. All such people are devils that devour the soul of man, demons that deliberately get in the way of those trying to step onto the right path, and stumbling blocks impeding those who seek God. They may appear of 'sound constitution,' but how are their followers to know that they are none other than antichrists who lead people to stand against God? How are their followers to know that they are living devils dedicated to the devouring of human souls?"** ("All People Who Do Not Know God Are People Who Oppose God" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). The sisters gave us a detailed fellowship according to these words of God, dissecting all the actions of religious leaders along with the substance of their nature, until finally I came to realize that they persistently disturb and obstruct us from believing in Almighty God, and even threaten and intimidate us, not in order to protect us, but rather so that they can hold dominion over God's chosen people, so that we worship and enshrine them as if they were God. So actually, they are just like the Pharisees. They all are antichrists who hate the truth and resist God. God has come to save us, but they think up every possible method to stop us from accepting God's work and to stop us from reading God's words. Aren't they pulling us down into hell by doing this? They truly are so malicious! If it weren't for Almighty God's words revealing the substance of how these people resist God and fight with God over man, then I would have nearly fallen for their tricks, ruining my own chance of attaining true salvation. Just then, my wife said in astonishment, "It turns out that they are here to do harm

to us! These people really won't quit until they've dragged us down into hell! I will no longer believe what they say."

Sister Mu then read us another passage of God's words: **"In every step of work that God does within people, externally it appears to be interactions between people, as if born of human arrangements or from human interference. But behind the scenes, every step of work, and everything that happens, is a wager made by Satan before God, and requires people to stand firm in their testimony to God. Take when Job was tried, for example: Behind the scenes, Satan was making a bet with God, and what happened to Job was the deeds of men and the interference of men. Behind every step of work that God does in you is Satan's wager with God—behind it all is a battle"** ("Only Loving God Is Truly Believing in God" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Then Sister Zhang started fellowshiping: "Through God's words we can see that, whatever happens to us, though from the outside it may appear to be done by man, in reality it is Satan making a wager with God behind the scenes. It's just like when Job was tempted by Satan. His wife asked him to abandon Jehovah, but Job was able to see through Satan's trickery. He relied on his faith in God and he stood witness for God, and Job reprimanded his wife for being an ignorant and stubborn woman. Job's experiences inform us that, for everyone that God wants to save, Satan will always frantically tempt and disturb them and pull out all the tricks at its disposal to attack them so that they forsake God and betray God, and ultimately lose their chance to attain true salvation. Since Satan wants to control and devour man forever, it really doesn't want man to attain God's salvation." Sister Mu also fellowshiped: "It's true. Time and time again, Satan uses leaders to attack us and intimidate us, with the goal of making us deny God, betray God and abandon the true way. This is the trickery of Satan. We must be able to clearly see this fight that is going on in the spiritual world." After listening to the fellowship of these two sisters, I mulled things over for a while, and then said, "So Satan is making a wager with God, and it is through the things that leaders say that Satan attacks us where we're weak, and it wants us to abandon the true way and leave God because of our cowardliness! Satan truly is treacherous!" Then my wife also said, "Satan is so repulsive! If we didn't listen to God's words and your fellowship, then how could we have known that this was one of Satan's schemes?" I said with delight, "Now that we understand these things, we need to rely on God to break through Satan's tight encirclement, stand witness for God, and shame Satan with our practical actions!" Sister Zhang then said

cheerfully, "Brother, sister, from now on let's come together more often to fellowship about the word of God. Only in this way can we equip ourselves with more of the truth so that we can someday soon be certain about God's work in the last days and lay down a foundation in the true way, and then we will no longer be deceived by all manner of Satan's rumors and outright lies." I said, "Great! It would be great if you could come fellowship with us more often." Sister Mu smiled and said, "Then that's what we'll do."

Early in the morning a few days later, I got out of bed and looked out the window to see that there had been a big snowfall, and I started unconsciously rubbing my hands together. Then, I put on a wool cap and cotton gloves and went into the courtyard to sweep the snow. When I had finished, I went back inside and opened the top of the stove to stoke up the fire while my wife was tidying up the house. At this time my wife's older brother and his wife came in, and as soon as my sister-in-law came in, she said in an anxious voice, "Leader Wang and Co-worker Guan came here and spoke so much to you, how could you not listen to them? They specifically asked us to come here today to try to persuade you once again. Do not believe in Eastern Lightning anymore. It is our leaders who take responsibility for our lives!" After hearing her say this, I said firmly, "If they truly take responsibility for our lives, then they ought to lead us to study Almighty God's work in the last days and welcome the Lord's return!" My wife then said bluntly, "They're not doing this for our sake. They fear that if we all believe in Almighty God then there will be no one left to listen to them." My sister-in-law became somewhat irritated upon hearing this and said, "How can you both say such things? They haven't asked you to do anything else. Don't they just want you to return to the church? Listen to me. Do you think I could mean you harm when our two families are so close?" My wife's brother continued. "Think about how I've treated you over the years. Do you know how much we've done for you? Do you really have the heart to separate yourselves from us? Do you not feel guilty?" After hearing the two of them say these things, I felt very upset, and I thought to myself: "They really have helped us a lot, and now they see that we are insisting on following Almighty God. Surely, they feel deeply hurt, but what can be done? They may ask me to abandon the true way and to betray God but I cannot possibly do that, for I know that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus. But if I insist on believing in Almighty God, then what will they think of me? Will they say that I am ungrateful?" I felt upset just then, like my heart was being pulled in two different directions. I prayed to God in silence, asking Him to give me a way out. Suddenly, I thought about these

words of God: **“Everything that happens to people happens when God needs them to stand firm in their testimony to Him”** (“Only Loving God Is Truly Believing in God” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Then I thought back on the words that Sister Zhang and Sister Mu had fellowshiped with me a few days before: Everything that happens to you relates to the fight that is being waged in the spiritual world, and it is Satan making a wager with God. I was thinking, “Today my wife’s brother and my sister-in-law tried to use our kinship to urge us to betray God and return to religion, but this is one of Satan’s tricks. If I were to betray God in order to protect my private feelings, then that would truly be ungrateful and would show that I lack conscience. If I don’t want to let my brother-in-law down, then I should share with them God’s gospel of the last days so that they too will have an opportunity to attain God’s salvation. This is the only way to show the compassion that I ought to possess.” As I thought about this my heart suddenly filled with light, and I said: “Brother, sister-in-law, I know that you two have been good to me, and it’s because of this that I need to tell you that Almighty God really is the returned Lord Jesus. Only by following Almighty God’s work in the last days will we be able to attain God’s salvation! Otherwise, our faith in the Lord all these years will have been in vain, and we will gain nothing! Here, let me read to you a passage of God’s words, and after hearing it you will know whether or not these words are the truth, and whether or not they are God’s utterances.” I picked up my book of God’s words and was just about to start reading from it when my sister-in-law instantly stood up and said unhappily, “We came here today to try to persuade you, but instead of changing your minds, you even try to spread this gospel to us, but we will not listen to you.” After saying this, she grabbed her husband and stormed out in anger.

I followed them out into the courtyard until I got to the entryway, but I saw that they had already gotten quite far away. Feeling helpless, I stood there shaking my head. It was at this time that I saw that the weather had cleared up, and that a warm light was shining upon a pine tree outside of the courtyard. The snow that had accumulated on the pine tree started to melt, as if at that very moment the tree had just undergone a baptism. In contrast to the snow-covered ground, the straight and tall tree appeared especially verdant. I felt very happy, as if, like the pine tree, I had also experienced a baptism of wind and snow, and had grown from the nourishment of the sunshine. I knew that it was God’s words that had led me to break through this tight encirclement and stand witness for Him. Thanks be to Almighty God!

18. The Word of God Guides Me Through the Snares

By Tian'na, Hong Kong

Paging through the article of God's words, "Did You Know? God Has Done a Great Thing Among Men," I cannot help but recall my experience two years ago of breaking free from the binds of rumors and returning before God.

My family and I all live in Hong Kong. My father-in-law and brother-in-law (my husband's younger brother) both believe in the Lord Jesus. My brother-in-law is a pastor in a church, so brothers and sisters from the church would often come to our home to visit where they would pray together and sing hymns in praise of the Lord. And then in December 2014, a good friend of mine told me that she also believed in the Lord. Influenced by my family and friends, I became somewhat interested in faith in the Lord. I met Sister Peipei, another church member, one day not long afterward. She was easygoing and friendly. She was very happy when she found out that some of my family and friends believed in the Lord and invited me to visit her home, where she introduced me to Sister Chen Hui. Over the course of several gatherings, Sister Chen shared with me truths regarding God creating all things and His sovereignty over everything as well as the origin of Satan, etcetera. The things she told me really drew me in and left me feeling extremely happy. I really liked to listen to them share their experiences and understanding of faith, and really wanted to share this happiness with others. One day, unable to contain myself, I shared my desire to become a believer with my family. The news quickly spread to my brother-in-law; he called and asked why I suddenly believed in God and also said, "There's a church called Eastern Lightning, and they're all over the place bearing witness that the Lord Jesus has already returned. They've stolen a lot of dedicated seekers from every denomination. Don't be too casual about it; don't have anything to do with them." He then questioned me again and again as to whether the people sharing the gospel with me had given me a book, and repeatedly exhorted me to be especially careful about anything faith-related. My brother-in-law's words kept going around and around in my head, leaving me feeling distraught. On the one hand, my brother-in-law opposed me finding a different church, but on the other hand, I really enjoyed what Sister Chen had to say about believing in God. I felt stuck between a rock and a hard place, and had no idea if I should continue to stay in touch with Sister Chen.

So, I started to look online for some pastors' sermons to listen to. I saw a lot of information online about Eastern Lightning, but I didn't pay much attention to it; I was wholly focused on finding good sermons. I listened to and compared a lot of them and in the end, I still thought that Sister Chen's sermons were best, because she shared more about bearing witness to God, and listening to them gave me a better understanding of God. After giving it some thought, I decided to continue listening to Sister Chen's fellowship. In the days that followed, she told me the stories of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt, Abraham sacrificing Isaac, the Lord Jesus being crucified for mankind, the experiences of Peter, Lazarus being resurrected and glorifying God, and more. These wonderful biblical stories were really fascinating to me and gave me a deeper understanding of the work that God has done. After every gathering I waited eagerly for the next one.

A month later during a gathering, Sister Chen read some Bible verses and a passage of Almighty God's words to me. In the Bible it says: **"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be"** (Matthew 24:37–39). Almighty God says, **"Look back to the time when Noah built the ark: Mankind was deeply corrupt, people had strayed from the blessing of God, were no longer cared for by God, and had lost the promises of God. They lived in darkness, without the light of God. Then they became licentious by nature and abandoned themselves to hideous depravity. Such people could no longer receive the promise of God; they were unfit to witness the face of God or to hear the voice of God, for they had abandoned God, had cast aside all that He had bestowed upon them, and had forgotten the teachings of God. Their heart strayed farther and farther from God and, as it did, they became depraved beyond all reason and humanity and became increasingly evil. Then they walked ever closer to death and fell under the wrath and punishment of God. Only Noah worshiped God and shunned evil, and so he was able to hear the voice of God and hear His instructions. He built the ark according to the instructions of God's word, and there assembled all manner of living creatures. And in this way, once everything had been prepared, God unleashed His destruction upon the world. Only Noah and the seven other members of his family survived the destruction, for Noah worshiped Jehovah**

and shunned evil.

“Now look upon the present age: Such righteous men as Noah, who could worship God and shun evil, have ceased to exist. Yet God is still gracious toward this mankind and still absolves them during this final era. God seeks those who long for Him to appear. He seeks those who are able to hear His words, those who have not forgotten His commission and offer up their hearts and bodies to Him. He seeks those who are as obedient as babes before Him and do not resist Him” (“God Presides Over the Fate of All Mankind” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). Sister Chen said in her fellowship: “The people of Noah’s days were ‘eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage’; they were promiscuous and corrupt, and did not listen to the word of God or worship God. Instead, they worshiped idols and were sinful to an extreme. In order to save the people of that time, God called on Noah to build the ark and tell people that God would destroy the world with a flood. But even after Noah had preached this for more than a hundred years, no one believed God’s words and no one repented to God. Thus, God used a great flood to destroy the people of that age. The people of the last days are even more corrupt than the people in the time of Noah. The whole of society is morally bankrupt and is devolving by the day. The divorce rate remains high, crime is commonplace, plus pornography, gambling and drugs have eroded people’s souls. People are becoming increasingly crafty, greedy, evil, mean and selfish. No one cares about having a conscience or being a good, honest person, but they only place importance on eating, drinking, having fun, and trading power for sex, or sex for power. People are fed up with the truth and exalt evil. They are greedy for the joys of sinning, and they have long since reached a point that merits destruction by God. All of these signs indicate that the last days have come. Now the Lord Jesus has returned and His second incarnation lives in the world. He has uttered all truths for the purification and salvation of mankind; He has come to completely save us, such deeply corrupt people that we are. God’s love and compassion for mankind is so great!” Hearing the sister say these words was thrilling for me and I thought to myself: “We are all deeply evil people and should have been destroyed by God long ago. It is only thanks to God’s mercy that we are fortunate to come into the house of God, to read the words that God has uttered, and have the chance to know God. What a great blessing!” I thanked God over and over for guiding me and for allowing me to come abreast of God’s last days’ work and gain the opportunity for salvation. Just as I was about to leave, the sister gave me a

book of God's words. Clutching the book with both hands, I was so moved that I began to weep. I set my resolve to follow God to the best of my ability.

One day after turning on my computer, I saw a website that said something about Eastern Lightning. Driven by curiosity, I clicked on the link and saw some negative propaganda about Eastern Lightning from the CCP government and the religious community. When I realized that the "Eastern Lightning" mentioned on the website was the last days' work of Almighty God that Sister Chen had preached to me, I was dumbstruck and felt very flustered: Could it be that I had gone astray in my belief? What should I do? However, I remembered how every time I was in touch with Sister Chen and the others, they were all very loving toward me and were not at all like it said on the Internet. I thought back to when I first began to read the word of God and was touched by God's love—those words possessed authority and power, so how could they not be the expression and the voice of God? I then got God's words out with the intent of reading them, but I couldn't regain that feeling I initially had of being moved—God had hidden His face from me. All I could see was white paper and black words. Every piece of negative propaganda I had seen online flashed through my mind one by one. I was at my wits' end. I kept wondering: "Should I believe this, or not? Is Eastern Lightning God's work? What if Eastern Lightning is really God's work? If I don't practice this faith, won't I just lose my chance at knowing God and being saved? But if it is fake and I just blindly follow it, won't that mean I've been duped? Should I keep looking into it, or not?" These questions kept bothering me and even left me in no mood for work. I really wanted to discuss it with my family and ask them for advice, but I thought about how my brother-in-law had exhorted me over and over about exercising caution, and to not just go around looking for other churches. If my faith really was in error, wouldn't they come down on me that much harder? So, I dismissed the idea of discussing it with my family even though my state of mind had hit rock bottom, I was in a great deal of emotional pain, and I really felt at a loss. I felt worlds away from the joy and ease I had felt a few days before when fellowshiping with the sisters.

With nowhere left to turn, I tried to pray and seek God, to entrust God with each and every one of the difficulties and insecurities in my heart, and to beseech His enlightenment. After praying, something that Sister Chen had once told me suddenly came to mind: When the Lord Jesus was born, because King Herod was afraid of losing his throne at the time, he gave the order for all boys in the whole city under the age of two to be killed. When the Lord

Jesus shared His teachings, the leaders in the Jewish faith went wild to take a stand against and condemn Him because they feared that believers would follow the Lord Jesus, and that they would lose their status. They knew well that no mere man could perform the miracles that the Lord Jesus did, but they intentionally slandered Him, saying that He was casting out demons with the help of Beelzebub. They also accused the Lord Jesus of blasphemy. In the end, they cooperated with the Roman government to crucify the Lord Jesus. And today, the CCP government's and the religious community's insane acts of condemnation of Almighty God are exactly the same as those perpetrated by the Roman government and the leaders of Judaism in the Age of Grace against the Lord Jesus. The true way has suffered suppression ever since ancient times. Every time God comes to work, He suffers persecution from the religious world as well as the powers that be. However, no one can stand in the way of God's work. Ultimately, the Lord Jesus still completed the work of being crucified and saving mankind and His gospel spread throughout the entire world. And today, the Chinese government and the religious community have fabricated so many rumors online that condemn Almighty God and His work, yet His gospel of the kingdom has still spread rapidly. If this was not God's work, would it not have been wiped out by the Chinese government long ago? It then occurred to me that each time I had met with Sister Chen and the others, they had all been really genuine toward me, and all of their fellowship exalted God and bore witness to God. They never talked about worldly things or about things that were of no benefit to people's lives. It had all provided positive guidance and help for me. Before I knew it the doubts within my heart dispelled somewhat, so I prayed again to God with a heart of seeking: "God! If it really is You who has come back, please guide me to know Your work and to return before You." Sure enough, God heard my prayer.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I opened the book of God's words, *The Word Appears in the Flesh* and saw the article, "Did You Know? God Has Done a Great Thing Among Men," in which Almighty God said, **"You should know that if this flesh did not exist, all mankind would face an ineluctable calamity and find it impossible to escape the even more severe punishment that God metes out to mankind in the last days. Had this ordinary flesh not been born, you would all be in a state where you beg for life without being able to live and pray for death without being able to die; if this flesh did not exist, then you would not be able to gain the truth and come before the throne of God today, but rather, you would be punished by God because of your grievous**

sins. Did you know that were it not for the return of God to the flesh, none would have a chance at salvation; and were it not for the coming of this flesh, God would have long ago put an end to the age of old? This being so, are you still able to reject the second incarnation of God? Since you can derive so many benefits from this ordinary man, why would you not gladly accept Him?" "The work of God is something that you cannot comprehend. If you can neither fully grasp whether your choice is correct, nor can you know whether the work of God can succeed, then why not try your luck and see whether this ordinary man may be of great help to you, and whether God has indeed done great work?" Thanks be to God! I felt much calmer after reading God's words—they couldn't be more right! I realized that since I wasn't familiar with God's work and couldn't fully understand all that stuff on the Internet, why not try my luck? Why not continue to go more deeply into my investigation and then come to a conclusion? If it really is the appearance and work of God, then if I reject it, is that not a rejection of God? Would that not be a lifelong regret? I decided to go and see Sister Chen the next day and to continue with my seeking and investigation.

When I saw Sister Chen I shared my experience over the past few days with her and asked her what was really going on with Eastern Lightning. She read two passages of God's words to me: "**When all people take heed, when all things are renewed and revived, when every person submits to God without qualms, and is willing to shoulder the heavy responsibility of God's burden—this is when the eastern lightning issues forth, illuminating all from the East to the West, terrifying all of earth with the arrival of this light; and at this moment, God once again begins His new life. ... Which is to say, in the world's East, from when testimony to God Himself begins, to when He begins to work, to when divinity begins to wield sovereign power across the earth—this is the glowing shaft of the eastern lightning, which has ever shone out to the whole universe. When the countries on earth become the kingdom of Christ is when the whole universe is illuminated. Now is the time when the eastern lightning issues forth: God incarnate begins to work, and, furthermore, speaks directly in divinity. It can be said that when God begins to speak on earth is when the eastern lightning comes forth. More precisely, when living water flows from the throne—when the utterances from the throne begin—is precisely when the utterances of the seven Spirits formally begin**" ("Chapter 12" of Interpretations of the Mysteries of God's Words to the Entire

Universe in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **“Only when the light of the East gradually turns white will the darkness across the earth begin to turn to light, and only then will man discover that I have long ago gone from Israel and am rising anew in the East. Having once descended into Israel and later departed from it, I cannot again be born into Israel, because My work leads all of the universe and, what is more, the lightning flashes straight from East to West. For this reason I have descended in the East and brought Canaan to the people of the East. I wish to bring people from all over the earth to the land of Canaan, and so I continue to issue forth utterances in the land of Canaan to control the entire universe. At this time, there is no light in all the earth apart from Canaan, and all men are imperiled by hunger and cold. I gave My glory to Israel and then took it away, and afterward I brought the Israelites to the East, and all of humanity to the East. I have brought them all to the light so that they may be reunited with it, and be in association with it, and no longer have to search for it. I shall let all who are searching see the light again and see the glory I had in Israel; I shall let them see that I have long ago come down upon a white cloud into the midst of mankind, let them see the countless clouds of white and fruits in their abundant clusters, and, what is more, let them see Jehovah God of Israel. I shall let them look upon the Master of the Jews, the longed-for Messiah, and the full appearance of Me who have been persecuted by kings throughout the ages. I shall work upon the entire universe and I shall perform great work, revealing all My glory and all My deeds to man in the last days. I shall show My glorious countenance in its fullness to those who have waited many years for Me, to those who have longed for Me to come upon a white cloud, to Israel that has longed for Me to appear once again, and to all mankind who persecute Me, so that all will know that I have long ago taken away My glory and brought it to the East, so that it is no longer in Judea. For the last days have already come!”** (“The Seven Thunders Peal—Prophesying That the Gospel of the Kingdom Shall Spread Throughout the Universe” in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

She then shared this in fellowship: “We can see from God’s words that God’s work and words in the last days are the lightning that comes from the East. ‘Lightning’ refers to light, and ‘light’ refers to God’s words; that is, God’s return in the last days is His incarnation as the Son of man, appearing and working first in the Orient, in China, uttering words and making a group of overcomers. And then His gospel of the last days rapidly spreads to the

West, so that all of the people around the world can receive God's salvation of the last days. This fulfills what was said in Matthew 24:27: **'For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even to the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.'** In addition, God's time for working in the last days is short and goes quickly, just like lightning. Over just two short decades, God's gospel of the kingdom has already spread throughout the entirety of mainland China and is spreading across countries around the world. Eastern Lightning is God's word and work of the last days, the truth expressed by God. Almighty God is the Son of man who appears before man in the last days, as prophesied of in the Bible; He carries out new work in the last days. All those who do not accept God's work of the last days will be eliminated by the work of the Holy Spirit." Only when I heard this did I realize that Eastern Lightning refers to God's work, to the truth expressed by God, and it is God's appearance in the last days! God first appeared and began working in China, an atheistic political power. He first conquered and perfected a group of people into overcomers in China, and then extended this into the West and even into the entire world, so that God's chosen people from all nations and all places could accept God's work of the last days and attain God's purification and salvation, fully realizing God's six-thousand-year management plan. Is this not a manifestation of His wisdom? If God Himself had not uttered words to reveal these mysteries, I would never have understood!

Sister Chen continued on with her fellowship: "However, faced with the appearance and work of God, not only did the leaders of all denominations fail to seek and investigate it, but they madly condemned, resisted and blasphemed God; they openly spread rumors to smear The Church of Almighty God and joined hands with the atheistic CCP government to hysterically coerce, arrest and persecute those who follow Almighty God in an attempt to keep Almighty God's gospel of the kingdom from spreading, destroy God's work of the last days and stop believers from returning to Almighty God. Just like the Roman government and Jewish leaders who resisted, condemned and crucified the Lord Jesus, they are all satanic devils who hate the truth, hate God, and are enemies to God. They know that the words uttered by Almighty God are all the truth and that they possess authority and power. Once these words have spread throughout the world, all those who love the truth and thirst for God's appearance will turn to Almighty God and worship Him. Then, no one will continue to follow them. Therefore, now that God has once again incarnated to work to save mankind, the atheistic CCP government and the religious community's antichrist forces are trying

desperately to block and destroy God's work. They are using all sorts of despicable means and methods to bind and deceive people, to keep them from seeking and examining the true way. It's just like you developing doubts about the work of God after seeing those rumors on the Internet—Satan's goal is to get all of us to doubt God. It wants us to deny and betray God, to lose His salvation and return under its domain, to achieve its evil goal of permanently controlling and harming people. As God's words reveal: **'God works, God cares for a person, looks upon a person, and Satan dogs His every step. Whoever God favors, Satan also watches, trailing along behind. If God wants this person, Satan would do everything in its power to obstruct God, using various evil ways to tempt, harass and wreck the work God does in order to achieve its hidden objective. What is its objective? It does not want God to have anyone; it wants all those that God wants, to occupy them, control them, to take charge of them so they worship it, so they commit evil acts alongside it. Is this not Satan's sinister motive?'** ("God Himself, the Unique IV" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). We should see through Satan's trickery according to God's words; we should clearly see Satan's evil essence of being an enemy of God and preventing people from returning to God. We should see its sinister intention to possess and devour people whole, so that we do not miss the opportunity to be saved by God." Through reading God's words and listening to the sister's fellowship, I truly understood that all those rumors online had come from Satan. I saw that they are the snares and traps that Satan has set to hinder people from examining the true way and returning to God. If I lacked discernment over them, then I would be taken captive by Satan. The sister's fellowship gave me some true understanding of Eastern Lightning, that it is God's appearance and work. I now possess discernment regarding the despicable means that the satanic evil forces of the CCP government and religious community make use of to attack God; I have also seen that the true way has been suppressed ever since ancient times. Surprisingly, Satan's disruptions afforded me a greater understanding of God's work and also enabled me to gain true discernment over Satan, and to reject it. God's wisdom is indeed carried out based on Satan's tactics. Thanks be to God!

When I got home I started watching The Church of Almighty God's videos online. I watched a series of ten choral videos in a row as well as some of the recitations of God's words and some gospel movies. Everything conveyed by these videos and movies was all the truth and what they bore witness to was the appearance of God and His last days' work.

They allowed me to see God’s genuineness and loveliness, and to gain some knowledge of God’s righteous disposition. Seeing that the words uttered by Almighty God are all the truth and that they really can change, cleanse and save people allowed me to find the path to the kingdom of heaven—it gave me hope of salvation. When my brother-in-law later learned that I had accepted Almighty God’s last days’ work, he showed up a number of times to hassle me, and even gathered some people in the church to do so as well. He also parroted a lot of negative press from the Internet in an attempt to confuse me and get me to give up my faith in Almighty God. However, I was already entirely certain of the work of Almighty God and those rumors had no effect on me. Looking back, it really was God’s guidance that allowed me to understand some truths; step by step I broke free from the shackles and binds of the rumors and established a foundation upon the true way. Thanks be to God for His salvation and protection for me, and for guiding me into the house of God!

19. A “Messenger Pigeon” Brings Critical News

By Su Jie, China

One day in 1999 after a gathering had wrapped up, the pastor approached me and said, “Su Jie, here’s a letter for you.” As soon as I saw it, I knew that it had come from a church I had established in Shandong. I took the letter and on the way home, I wondered as I walked along, “This letter is so thick, could it be that they’ve encountered some difficulties?”

I couldn’t wait to open the letter after getting home and in it I read: “Sister Su, peace be with you in the Lord! I am writing to tell you some incredible news: The Lord Jesus our Savior whom we’ve yearned for day and night has returned. He has already returned to the flesh and is doing the stage of work of judging and cleansing people through His words in China; He has ended the Age of Grace and started the Age of Kingdom. . . . I hope you accept God’s new work and keep pace with God’s footsteps. Whatever you do, do not miss this chance at God’s salvation of the last days.” Once I read up to that point I felt a sense of shock: They hadn’t actually encountered any difficulties, but believed in Eastern Lightning! I was eager to know who wrote this letter, so I quickly turned to the last page. It turned out that Brother Meng had been the one to write it, and the signatures of all the other brothers and sisters of the church were at the end, too. After reading through the whole letter I was dumbfounded.

I stared at it blankly for a while before I recovered and thought to myself: “Eastern Lightning testifies that the Lord has returned, and they’ve stolen away lots of good sheep and head sheep from a number of denominations. I never thought that Brother Meng from the Shandong church would believe in Eastern Lightning too. All the brothers and sisters of this church have been stolen by Eastern Lightning—what can be done?” When this thought occurred to me I felt an even greater sense of urgency, but it was too far to travel to Shandong and I was tied up with my work here. I couldn’t go right then. Helpless, I could only cry and pray to the Lord: “Lord! These brothers and sisters haven’t believed in You for very long and they don’t have a stable foundation yet. Please watch over them....”

After that, I combed through the Bible and put pen to paper to write the first letter back to them. In the letter I said: “Brothers and sisters, in Jesus Christ, I respectfully advise you to be wary. Paul said: ‘I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ to another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel to you than that you have received, let him be accursed’ (Galatians 1:6–9). Brothers and sisters, bringing you before the Lord was no easy task; how could you betray the Lord so quickly? Your stature is too small—don’t just cavalierly listen to other ways! You must listen to me because what I shared with you is the true way. Only the Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior. You must uphold this forever....” Only after I finished writing and looked at the eight-page letter did I feel at ease. I thought to myself: I wrote all that I should write, consulted all of the scriptures that I should consult, and wrote all the words of advice and encouragement that I should. I believe that after they read this, they will certainly respond and acknowledge their mistake.

Two weeks later, I received this response: “Sister Su, we cannot not speak of all that we have seen and heard because Almighty God whom we believe in is the returned Lord Jesus. We are upholding the true way and moving forward; we have not remotely betrayed the Lord, but are following the Lord’s footsteps. You mentioned these words from Paul: ‘I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ to another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ’ (Galatians 1:6–7). There is a background to what Paul said. We just need to study the Bible to know that ‘another gospel’ that Paul spoke of then referred to the

Pharisees asking people to keep to Jehovah's law; it didn't refer to people of the last days spreading the gospel of the kingdom, bearing witness that the Lord has returned in the flesh and is doing His work of judgment starting with the house of God. When Paul wrote this letter to the Galatian churches, no one at all was preaching God's kingdom gospel. Therefore, the 'another gospel' that Paul spoke of does not refer to the Lord returning and doing His judgment work of the last days beginning with the house of God. This stage of judgment work that the Lord has now returned to carry out fulfills this prophecy in the Book of Revelation: **'And I saw another angel fly in the middle of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come'** (Revelation 14:6–7). Here 'everlasting gospel' refers to the gospel of the kingdom. Moreover, this final salvation was long ago revealed by the Holy Spirit to the disciples of the Lord Jesus. As Peter said: **'For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God'** (1 Peter 4:17). 'Who are kept by the power of God through faith to salvation ready to be revealed in the last time' (1 Peter 1:5). Sister Su, isn't the return of the Lord what we as believers yearn for? Now the Lord has indeed returned; we must be humble seekers. We absolutely cannot be like the Pharisees in their treatment of the Lord Jesus, God's first incarnation, blindly using knowledge of the Bible and their notions and imaginations to delimit God's new work, condemning and resisting the Lord because of the Lord Jesus not obeying the law, and then crucifying the Lord. The Pharisees only believed in Jehovah God but did not accept the incarnation of Jehovah God—the Lord Jesus' work—and ultimately they were condemned and cursed by the Lord. Isn't this bloody lesson worthy of our reflection? No one can deny that the Lord Jesus is our Savior. But if we only accept the Lord Jesus yet do not accept the return of the Lord, are we not the same as the Pharisees? Have we not then become people who believe in God yet resist Him? Furthermore, Sister Su, we can't do as you say just because you preached the Lord's gospel to us. What we believe in is God. Peter and the other apostles once said, 'We ought to obey God rather than men' (Acts 5:29). And in matters regarding the coming of the Lord we particularly can't just listen to other human beings. We have already determined that the word of Almighty God is the voice of God. We hope that you look into it too."

While reading the letter I was incensed, and not the least bit convinced. I pounced on my biblical reference book and paged to the introduction to the Book of Galatians. I read

carefully and was so surprised: This really was true! The “another gospel” that Paul spoke of really referred to the Pharisees getting people to adhere to Jehovah’s law; sure enough, it didn’t refer to the Lord’s work of judgment starting with the house of God upon His return. All those years, how was it that I had never noticed that this was the context of that verse? No wonder they were unconvinced. But then another line of thinking occurred to me: Even if what I said was wrong, that still can’t prove that the Lord has returned, as they preach. I read the letter again from start to finish and the more I read it, the angrier I got. I thought, “I never expected that after being gone for such a short time, they would have the audacity to take such a high tone with me and even dare ... dare to call me a Pharisee. I hate the Pharisees more than anyone. How could I possibly resist the Lord the way the Pharisees did? I’ve worked so hard for so many years, toiling day and night for believers. How could they not know that?” The more I thought about it the more upset I felt and I thought: “No, how can I be out-argued by a handful of believers who are still wet behind the ears? I’ve read the Bible so many times—there’s no way I can’t win this debate.”

So, I once again whipped out my pen and wrote a second letter back to them, saying: “Brothers and sisters, may peace be with you in the Lord! Reading your letter was very upsetting for me. I’m not asking you to do as I say—you’ve really misunderstood my intention. I am afraid of you departing from the way of the Lord Jesus because the Lord Jesus said: **‘Then if any man shall say to you, See, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect’** (Matthew 24:23–24). Paul also said: ‘Now we beseech you, brothers, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together to Him, That you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means’ (2 Thessalonians 2:1–3). Dear brothers and sisters, I advise you in the name of the Lord Jesus that there will be dangerous days ahead in the last days, and that you must not believe anyone who preaches of the Lord’s coming. We have to be extremely careful and bear the Lord’s words in mind, lest we take the wrong path and displease the Lord!”

Two weeks later I got another letter from them, which said: “Sister Su, the scriptures you found for us is not in error, but we must be clear on the Lord Jesus’ true meaning within these words and not misunderstand the Lord’s will. The Lord Jesus clearly told us that false

Christs would appear when the Lord comes in the last days, and that false Christs would pass themselves off using the Lord's name, and show miracles to deceive people. By saying this, the Lord is telling us to practice discernment; He's not saying that all those who preach of the Lord's coming are false. If, as you say, all those who preach of the coming of the Lord are false and we must guard against them and reject them, then wouldn't we be very likely to close the door on the Lord Jesus who has returned to flesh? We say this because the Lord said He will come again. Obviously, that kind of perspective is not in line with the Lord's will. As for how to distinguish between the true Christ and false Christs, we have transcribed a passage of the words of Almighty God for you and hope that you will take a good look. Almighty God said: **'If, during the present day, there is to emerge a person who is able to display signs and wonders, cast out demons, heal the sick, and perform many miracles, and if this person claims that they are Jesus who has come, then this would be the counterfeit of evil spirits, and their imitation of Jesus. Remember this! God does not repeat the same work. Jesus' stage of work has already been completed, and God will never again undertake that stage of work'** ("Knowing God's Work Today" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's work cannot possibly be always unchanging. God's work is always new, never old, and it never repeats. Just as God's work in the Age of Law and the Age of Grace were two different stages of work. In the last days, God has already performed one stage of the work of judging and cleansing people through His words in accordance with mankind's needs. This is a stage of thoroughly purifying and saving people. It is newer, loftier, and more practical than previous work. From every stage of God's work, we can see the truths that He expresses as well as the wisdom, authority and power of His work. But false Christs are possessed by evil spirits and do not possess the essence of God. They are entirely lacking the truth and so they are incapable of expressing truths, and they are incapable of expressing God's almightiness, wisdom and God's disposition. It's clear that false Christs cannot do God's work at all. False Christs can only imitate work that the Lord Jesus has already done, healing the sick, casting out demons and showing some ordinary miracles to pass themselves off as Christ in an effort to deceive people. Sister, we need a pure understanding of the Lord's words; we cannot misinterpret the Lord's will, let alone cut off our nose to spite our face just because false Christs appear in the last days. We can't not even study the work of the Lord's return...."

Even though the brothers and sisters' fellowship in the letter was all well-founded, I had

absolutely no intention of seeking or pondering it. I only cared about whether or not they accepted the scriptures I had found for them and turned back to the Lord. I thought back about these two debates over our correspondence and saw that they hadn't been remotely convinced. On the contrary, I had allowed them to argue me into the ground to the point that I had no face at all. I rushed to make a prayer to the Lord and then got the Bible and all of my spiritual books, and laid them out on my bed. I kept flipping through them, wanting to find a basis for refuting them. The room was totally silent aside from the swish, swish sound of me turning the pages. Night fell before I realized it and I still hadn't found anything. I was so tired that I gave a deep sigh and thought: "It's really not easy to come up with a response to this letter." All I could do was pick up my pen and write: "Brothers and sisters, reading your letter has left me with the feeling that you are no longer the lovely little lambs you once were. You won't even listen to me, you insist on departing from the Lord's way, and you are so contrary with me. I think that your behavior saddens the Lord, and I am very sad too. May the Lord Jesus move you and may this letter enable you to turn back soon. Amen!"

After a couple of weeks I received another reply from them, but to my disappointment, they had not turned back because of my love and encouragement. On the contrary, they said harshly and categorically: "Sister Su, you converted us, that is true, but the One we should thank for this is the Lord, because it was God who gathered us, these lost and wandering sheep, into a flock with your help. You were just a servant caring for the flock, but only the Lord Jesus is our true shepherd. As the Lord Jesus said: '**I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine**' (John 10:14). The Lord entrusts sheep to every person who works for Him. A person's responsibility is just to look after them and when the Lord returns, they should return the flock to Him. Sister Su, we all know the parable of the 'evil tenants' which the Lord Jesus spoke of in the Bible. In order to forcibly occupy the estate, the tenants struck the servants who came to collect the fruit, and when the householder sent his son, they killed the son to occupy the estate. When the householder returns, how will he deal with these evil tenants? We must not be like them. The Lord has now returned, and we should hand the Lord's sheep over to the Lord. This is the reason we must possess."

This letter really took me aback. I thought to myself: "How can they gain so much understanding in the blink of an eye? It's only been two years since I went to Shandong and set up that church. When I left they were still like 'babies' in their faith. I never thought that

just a few months after accepting Eastern Lightning their words would contain so much strength, or that they'd be able to find such perfect Bible passages to argue me down, that I'd be left without a word to counter them." At that moment I was bitterly disappointed and felt that these brothers and sisters had become unshakable in their resolve to follow Eastern Lightning, that they had no plans to turn back. I knew that I wouldn't be able to persuade them to return. Feeling completely weak and feeble, I reluctantly sent them a fourth letter, in which I said: "Suit yourselves. As it is written in the Bible, since ancient times, that which stems from God will prosper and that which stems from man will be defeated. Do not write to me again. I hope that you are able to hold on to your faith and love for Jesus Christ."

After rejecting God's last days' work that the Shandong brothers and sisters had shared with me, my spirit had grown darker and weaker, and my general condition had deteriorated. Even though I often fasted and prayed and reflected upon how I may have sinned against the Lord, I could never grasp the Lord's will, and I just couldn't feel the presence of the Lord. It was during this time that the pastors and elders made false charges against me to vie for the money from offerings, and they successfully pushed me out of the church. I was incredibly miserable and didn't know where to turn. I would often go to the riverbank and sing the hymn "Lord, You Are My Closest Friend" while I wept. I longed for the Lord to return soon so that He could save me from my woes.

One day six months later while making lunch, I heard my mother-in-law call my name from outside the front door. Upon opening the door, I saw a slender young woman with delicate features standing behind my mother-in-law. My mother-in-law said, "This young sister has come to see you. She had an address but couldn't find you, so went to the church. She said that she needed to see you urgently, so I rushed to bring her over." I carefully sized up this sister and thought to myself: "Why is it that I don't seem to know her?" Seeing me, she came right over to me, took my hand and said excitedly: "So you are Sister Su. I found you after all!" Dumbfounded by her actions, I looked at her in surprise and asked: "Who are you? I don't think we've met before?" Her enthusiastic response was: "Sister, my surname is Wang. I'm here because of Brother Meng and Sister Zhao from Shandong. Brother Meng and the others wrote a letter to The Church of Almighty God here and asked us to think of a way to find you, no matter what. They entrusted us with sharing God's gospel of the kingdom with you because they're way too busy and there really wasn't time for them to come in person. I have no idea how many people's hands this letter has passed through, but it made

a few rounds before getting to us. I've come around so many times asking about you. It wasn't easy to find you." When she got to that point, the young sister choked up and put the letter into my hands. I took it and read: "Sister Su is a true believer. Please, you have to find her and share God's gospel of the kingdom with her...." Reading these words warmed my heart and my tears could not stop flowing. My mother-in-law was moved and said: "This really is thanks to the Lord! This really is the love of the Lord!" Looking at this kind, sincere young sister, I thought over the moving, heartfelt words in that letter and could feel the sense of urgency the brothers and sisters had to share the gospel of the Lord's return with me. My intuition from within my soul told me that this love came from God. Only God cherishes every single soul this way and cares deeply about every person who truly believes in God. And so, I decided that this time I would seek and study Almighty God's work of the last days. I could no longer refuse. I said to her enthusiastically: "Sister, come inside and have a seat." She nodded happily, her eyes still shining with tears.

We had something to eat, and then I called my co-worker Sister Zhang over too. My husband heard that we were going to have fellowship and asked for the day off as well. The young sister warmly asked: "Sister, in Brother Meng's letter they said they had written several letters to you about God's work of the last days, but you wouldn't accept it. I wonder what your thoughts on this are? Sister, if you have any difficulties, please share them; we can fellowship and seek together." I said: "Since you ask, I'll open up and share with you. I've been afraid of being taken in by false Christs that appear during the last days and so have kept to 'all those who preach of the Lord's coming are false,' so I never looked into Almighty God's work of the last days. Later, I gave some thought to what Brother Meng and the others said in their letters, and thought about how it made sense. Blindly rejecting any gospel of the Lord's return because false Christs appear in the last days really is cutting off our nose to spite our face. However, if we want to welcome the Lord's return, we can't be incapable of discerning between the true Christ and false Christs. Since you're here, please fellowship with us on this." Sister Zhang, my husband and my mother-in-law also nodded their heads in agreement.

The sister then read a passage of God's words to us, where Almighty God said: **"It is not difficult to inquire into such a thing, but it requires each of us to know this one truth: He who is God incarnate shall possess the essence of God, and He who is God incarnate shall possess the expression of God. Since God becomes flesh, He shall**

bring forth the work He intends to do, and since God becomes flesh, He shall express what He is, and shall be able to bring the truth to man, bestow life upon him, and point the way for him. Flesh that does not have the essence of God is decidedly not the incarnate God; of this there is no doubt. If man intends to inquire into whether it is God's incarnate flesh, then he must corroborate this from the disposition He expresses and the words He speaks. Which is to say, to corroborate whether or not it is God's incarnate flesh, and whether or not it is the true way, one must discriminate on the basis of His essence. And so, in determining whether it is the flesh of God incarnate, the key lies in His essence (His work, His utterances, His disposition, and many other aspects), rather than external appearance. If man scrutinizes only His external appearance, and as a result overlooks His essence, this shows that man is **benighted and ignorant**" (Preface to The Word Appears in the Flesh). After reading God's words, this young sister said in fellowship: "We can see from the words of Almighty God that the key to discerning between the true Christ and false Christs is to look at their essence. This can be discerned from their work, words and disposition. The Lord Jesus once said: '**I am the way, the truth, and the life**' (John 14:6). Clearly, since He was God in the flesh, He could express the truth and do God's own work; He could also express God's own disposition and what He has and is. Just as in the Age of Grace, the Lord Jesus expressed many truths, expressed a disposition primarily of mercy and love, and completed the work of redeeming the whole of mankind. From the Lord Jesus' work and words, and from the disposition He expressed, we can be sure that Jesus Christ was the truth, the way, and the life, that He was God incarnate Himself. Now Almighty God has come and expressed all of the truths to purify and save mankind; He has done the last days' work of judging and chastising people. Almighty God's words reveal the truth of mankind's corruption by Satan and the nature and substance of man. They tell us all aspects of the truth such as what attaining salvation is, what dispositional transformation is and the path to achieve it, as well as what mankind's future destination is and what the ending will be for all kinds of people. His words also reveal the mysteries of God's six-thousand-year management plan and the incarnations, plus they express God's inherent disposition, essence, and what He has and is. Provided we diligently read God's words, we will be able to see that the words uttered by Almighty God are the voice of the Spirit of truth, the way of judgment in the last days. Almighty God's work of the last days has fulfilled prophecies in the Bible, such as,

‘[J]udgment must begin at the house of God’ (1 Peter 4:17). **‘[W]hen He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth’** (John 16:13) and **‘He that rejects Me, and receives not My words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day’** (John 12:48). The truths that Almighty God has expressed, the work of judging, chastising and purifying people that He has done, and the disposition characterized by righteousness that Almighty God has expressed all fully confirm that Almighty God is the manifestation of Christ of the last days. But on the contrary, false Christs do not possess the essence of God. Most of them are possessed by evil spirits or are extremely arrogant demons and evil spirits completely devoid of reason. They can neither express truths to provide sustenance for people, nor can they carry out judgment work to purify people. They can only deceive those foolish, ignorant, confused people who want to stuff their bellies with bread to stave off hunger by showing them simple signs and wonders. Therefore, it is very easy for us to discern between the true Christ and false Christs by this one principle: Christ is the truth, the way, and the life. This is entirely in line with God’s will.”

As I listened to the sister’s fellowship, I turned this over and over in my mind: “I’ve believed in the Lord all these years but I’ve never heard this kind of fellowship. Now Almighty God’s words speak of discerning between the true Christ and false Christs so thoroughly; it seems as though the words of Almighty God really might be the voice of the Holy Spirit. Oh Lord! I have always anxiously awaited Your return, but these last few years I’ve only focused on guarding against false Christs and have hardly had any heart to seek. I have never looked into You returning to do the work of judgment in the last days as The Church of Almighty God bears witness to, but just blindly resisted and condemned it. Lord, have I really shut You out?” This thought got my heart to start pounding. I felt a sense of panic and couldn’t sit still any longer, so I got up and went into the kitchen to pretend to get some water, trying to calm myself down a little. While pouring water, I pondered: “This sister is very young, but her fellowship on the truth is so practical. The Shandong brothers and sisters also progressed so fast after accepting the work of Almighty God. Their understanding of the Bible and knowledge of God’s work were much higher than mine. This way allows people to understand the truth and gain knowledge of God’s work. Is this not God’s work?” Thinking through all of this, I felt both excited and remorseful. I thought back about when I was writing those letters to the brothers and sisters in Shandong. I was brandishing my pen, scolding

them with an arrogant tone. And in my approach to the Lord's return, not only did I fail to seek the truth and accept the brothers and sisters' fellowship, but instead, I persistently refuted and rejected it. I considered myself the master of truth and wanted all the brothers and sisters to listen to me, plus I thought that I was doing my utmost to defend the true way. It never occurred to me that I was resisting God. So wouldn't that make me a modern-day Pharisee? At that moment, I felt like I had been soaked from head to toe by cold water; I felt limp and weak all over. Both of my hands were trembling uncontrollably and I kept replaying scenes of me resisting God in my mind over and over.... I could no longer hold it in—tears started flowing from my eyes. I hated myself for being so arrogant and blind. After quite a while, I wiped away my tears and went back into the room with a tray of glasses of water. The sister looked at me and asked with concern: "Sister, do you accept this fellowship?" I let out a sigh and said with self-reproach: "After listening to Almighty God's words and your fellowship just now, I feel that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus. I've waited every single day for the Lord's return but never imagined that now the Lord has returned, I would actually fill the role of a Pharisee. I really have done a great evil! I've resisted God." I then started crying so much that I could not speak.

Later, after a period of time spent reading the words of Almighty God, Sister Zhang, my mother-in-law, my husband and I became completely certain that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus. I was so incredibly delighted that I excitedly sent the Shandong brothers and sisters a fifth letter: "Dear brothers and sisters! Thanks be to God that through you sharing with me God's gospel of the kingdom many times, I have now accepted Almighty God's work of the last days and have become a member of The Church of Almighty God. Although I accepted it later than you, I don't want to fall behind. I'll throw my heart and soul into catching up...." At that moment, I felt like my heart was flying back to Shandong along with the letter to gather closely together with my brothers and sisters there. Thanks be to God for His love!

20. I See Through the CCP Government's Lies and God's Love Draws Me Back to Him

By Kemu, South Korea

"I'm telling you one more time—don't keep talking to me about that God stuff, and you're not allowed to have anything to do with those believers in God anymore. If I see that you've been in touch with them again, I'll smash your phone to pieces!"

"Why? Why are you standing in the way of my faith?" my wife asked, her face full of confusion.

"Why? It's for your own good and the good of our family. Don't you know that the CCP government is seriously cracking down on and suppressing The Church of Almighty God? Don't you know about the May 28 Zhaoyuan Case in 2014? It says online that Zhang Lidong, the main offender in the case, was a member of The Church of Almighty God. If you get together with those people, you'll just be putting yourself into extreme danger!"

She responded resolutely, "Zhang Lidong and those others weren't with The Church of Almighty God—you just can't believe those things they say online. I've been in contact with brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God for two or three months and what I've seen is that they're all upstanding people who are kind and sincere toward others. They help each other out whenever anyone has a problem, and it's not like what they say online at all."

I was incensed and remained unconvinced. "Go online and see for yourself, then you'll know whether I'm right or not."

My wife then led me over to a seat and said, "You're the sort of person who thinks things through. You have to approach this reasonably and speak according to the facts—you can't just listen to one side of the story! Every major media outlet in China is just a mouthpiece for the CCP government; they're just tools for the government to deceive the people. What kind of credibility do their reports have? Don't you remember the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989? The students in Tiananmen Square were protesting against corruption and advocating for democratic freedoms, but the CCP government found some unknown people and had them disguise themselves as students and infiltrate the students' ranks, then had them start to hit, smash, rob, burn, and overturn military vehicles. Those people created a lot of chaos, and then the CCP government framed the students with their crimes. After that, the CCP government used media like TV and radio to flood the airwaves with their reports,

slandering the student movement as a counterrevolutionary riot, and then launched a bloody crackdown on them, which resulted in at least several thousand students shot dead or crushed by tanks. Anyone who knows about the history of the CCP government knows that it has always struck out against righteousness, and that it simply doesn't tolerate the existence of any groups or individuals that have different political views or opinions. In order to achieve a dictatorship, the CCP government has always attacked and condemned those groups or people, even going so far as to suppress them or ban them entirely. Every time the CCP government has violently suppressed a religious faith, a movement for democratic rights, or ethnic minority protests, it first starts by fabricating false cases, and then it creates a huge public outcry to stir up the people, and then it violently suppresses them. That's a fact. The May 28 Zhaoyuan Case was the CCP government framing The Church of Almighty God—it carefully concocted yet another false case.”

I couldn't refute what she had said at all, and thought to myself, “She's known some of the family members of victims of the Tiananmen Square protests and knows the inside story. Everything she said is true. But still, even if that Zhaoyuan incident has nothing to do with The Church of Almighty God, I've never been in contact with their members and I don't know what sort of church it is. We live in such a troubled world now—what if she gets conned?” So, I told her again that she wasn't allowed to have contact with anyone from The Church of Almighty God. As I left, I slammed the door, leaving her there in tears.

It was a particularly dark night with no moonlight and no stars. I felt really awful as I walked along the road. I thought of our ten years of marriage—from our first meeting, to falling in love, to getting married, we had been through a lot, but no matter what we faced we had always talked things through and supported each other. We'd never had any huge fights. Yet, I had just really laid into her for her faith—I felt I really shouldn't have treated her that way. But then again, it said online that The Church of Almighty God was no good, so by not letting her practice her faith I was doing her a favor. Why couldn't she understand me? At that moment I felt incredibly tired and upset. I got out my phone and a wonderful photo of our happy family flashed in front of my eyes—our daughter's sweet smile momentarily dispelled my fatigue. I thought of how I was the backbone of the family and that preventing my wife from practicing her faith was for her own protection and was for the good of our family, so I decided that I had to stick to my guns.

Over the period of time that followed, I was afraid of damaging my wife's feelings for me

and thus didn't dare start any major conflicts, so I just told her not to talk to me about anything to do with God. Even though we seemed to get along normally on the surface, there was already a chasm opening up between us.

One day, just as I had walked in the door after getting off my morning work shift, I heard the sound of cheerful music wafting out from the bedroom along with bursts of happy laughter from my wife and daughter. Curiously, I thought, "Hm? I haven't heard such a joyful sound at home in so long. Ever since my wife came to South Korea, she's never really gotten used to the environment here because of the different lifestyle, language and culture. In particular, she left behind her elderly mother and a job that she loved, and she doesn't have any relatives or friends by her side—she often sits alone and cries. I've seen her looking pained and upset but have never known how to comfort her, so what kind of song could be bringing her so much happiness now?" I very quietly opened the door and saw a dance and song video produced by The Church of Almighty God The True Love of God being displayed on the computer screen. Six young women were joyfully dancing and singing with such feeling, but it was their faces brimming with such joyful smiles in particular which instantly pulled at my heart. I was full of curiosity, thinking, "What sort of church is this, and what kind of group is this? Why is it that their songs and dances are so infectious and so soothing? If they really were bad people, how could they have such kind, genuine smiles?"

Seeing me, my daughter said happily, "Dad, isn't this a nice song? Mom and I really like it. Sing and dance with us!" I picked her up in an embrace and kissed her little face, then said indulgently, "Sweetheart, I like energetic, powerful songs and dances." She swayed her head and thought for a moment. "Dad, you like tap dancing, right? Mom, put on that video with the really great dancing for him." I couldn't bear to interrupt her and figured that I'd watch it for just a little bit even if it was from The Church of Almighty God—these days this kind of harmonious atmosphere was hard to come by in our home. Holding my daughter, I sat next to my wife and started watching. The dance and song video God Has Brought His Glory to the East was powerful and energetic with a delightful rhythm. In a tap dancing style, they danced with such heroic vigor; I've always loved singing and dancing, so I was really drawn in. Seeing how engaged I was, my wife said excitedly, "These songs and dances have all been arranged and recorded by brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God. None of them are professionals." I couldn't help but seriously reflect on this. "How could people without professional training dance so incredibly well?" I thought. Smiling, she said,

“It’s amazing, isn’t it! Without God’s own work and guidance, would non-professionals be able to dance like that? You’d be even more astonished if you saw the films that they’ve made. The Church of Almighty God has the work of the Holy Spirit—it has God’s blessing. That’s why their songs, dances and films are so well made, and on top of that, all the truths communicated in their films benefit people a lot. All that negative propaganda online is just the CCP government spreading lies about The Church of Almighty God. They’re not at all true. The reason the CCP government spreads these lies is so that everyone will become hostile to The Church of Almighty God and won’t dare to look into God’s work of the last days, and thereby lose God’s salvation.”

Hearing what she said and seeing the glowing look on her face, I became even more curious. I thought about how, since she had started believing in Almighty God, she had recovered from her depression from feeling homesick and missing her mom. I also saw that she had become more patient with our daughter and no longer lost her temper; she had also started to take care of me incredibly well. Could it really be that Almighty God had changed my wife? Was The Church of Almighty God really as great as she said? As I thought through all of this, my heart felt tied up in knots—I didn’t know if I should let her continue practicing her faith. After a bout of internal struggle, I decided to go to The Church of Almighty God and check it out for myself. If it wasn’t like what it said online, then I wouldn’t stand in her way anymore.

Over the weekend when I was free from work, I approached my wife and told her that I wanted to go have a look at The Church of Almighty God—she was both surprised and pleased. Once we got there the brothers and sisters received us warmly, and I felt from their expressions, actions, and how they interacted with others that they were kind and sincere. My nervousness and guardedness gradually eased. Then, a sister told everyone excitedly, “Brothers and sisters, the musical, Xiaozhen’s Story won an international award!” I asked out of curiosity, “Can I watch it?” They all voiced their agreement in unison and started playing the musical. Xiaozhen’s ups and downs in the story really touched my heart and I thought of how I myself was another Xiaozhen. I drifted through society when I was younger because of a family misfortune, suffering all sorts of bullying and humiliation just to get by and being given the cold shoulder. And now I was striving and working hard to make a living and had gone through all sorts of things, sweet and bitter. I had suffered a lot through ups and downs over the years, and I felt tired and sad, but I always acted strong in front of my

wife and friends. Who could have known the pain in my heart? Toward the end of the musical this song was sung: “... **The Almighty has mercy on these people who have suffered deeply; at the same time, He is fed up with these people who lack consciousness, as He has had to wait too long for an answer from humanity. He wishes to seek, to seek your heart and your spirit, to bring you water and food and to awaken you, that you may no longer be thirsty and hungry. When you are weary and when you begin to feel something of the bleak desolation of this world, do not be lost, do not cry. Almighty God, the Watcher, will embrace your arrival at any time ...**” (“God Is Seeking Your Heart and Your Spirit” in Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs). Every line of the song warmed my lost, suffering soul, and every note sung felt like a mother stretching out her hands to her long-lost child. What I felt was the call of love—I was incredibly moved. I couldn’t stop the tears flowing down my face as the musical ended. It was the first time I had ever cried in front of so many people and I felt a bit embarrassed, so I quickly and quietly turned my head to wipe away the tears. I exclaimed sincerely, “That’s such a wonderful musical!” I then gave Xiaozhen’s Story a round of applause.

My wife looked at me and said to me happily and with great emotion, “That your heart has been stirred by Xiaozhen’s Story was because God has moved you! I know that the May 28 Zhaoyuan Case had an impact on you and that you’ve had a lot of misunderstandings about Almighty God’s work of the last days. I also know that you’re concerned for my safety and the safety of our daughter, so today let’s look and see what really happened with that case.”

The brothers and sisters then played a video for me, The Truth Exposed Behind the May 28 Zhaoyuan Case. It revealed several major suspicious aspects of the case and then dissected them layer by layer. I was really engrossed in it and did my own analysis of the case along with the video to find out the truth. The furrow in my brow gradually relaxed as the video went on and, as I saw layer after layer of lies being exposed, I let out a long breath. I realized that the May 28 Zhaoyuan Case was single-handedly concocted by the CCP government to stifle religious belief and eradicate The Church of Almighty God. The offenders in the case, Zhang Lidong, Zhang Fan and the others, denied with their own mouths that they were members of The Church of Almighty God, and said that they were completely unaffiliated with the church. But the CCP government completely disregarded the suspects’ testimonies and flagrantly went against the facts, insisting that the crime has

been committed by people from The Church of Almighty God. What was even more outlandish was that even without a court trial or verdict, the CCP government rushed headlong into publicly and definitively planting the case on The Church of Almighty God through TV and Internet media, all to create a public uproar to suppress the church and wipe it out. The CCP government framed the church and created such a false case so that it could start to frantically suppress and arrest Christians in the church without a hitch. It's just like how it suppressed the June 4 students' movement in 1989—it first fabricated rumors to portray the students' patriotic movement as a counterrevolutionary riot, and then it started carrying out arrests and murdering people. Faced with the facts, I finally saw with complete clarity that the CCP government's tactic for eradicating any dissenters has been to first fabricate rumors and distort the facts, then frame them, and then violently suppress them. By turning the truth on its head, distorting reality and framing The Church of Almighty God, the CCP government makes it so that people who don't know the truth are taken in by its lies and will misunderstand the church—the CCP government is so detestable! But something I still didn't understand was that the brothers and sisters in The Church of Almighty God are upright people who are nothing like it says online, so why would the CCP government so frantically persecute the church and go to such pains to plant that murder case on The Church of Almighty God and arrest its members? What was really going on?

I spoke about my confusion and a sister responded, saying, "Let's first read two passages from God's words. **'Satan wins its fame through deceiving the public. It often establishes itself as a vanguard and role model of righteousness. Under the banner of safeguarding righteousness, it harms man, devours their souls, and uses all sorts of means to benumb, deceive and incite man. Its goal is to make man approve of and follow along with its evil conduct, to make man join it in opposing God's authority and sovereignty. However, when one grows wise to its schemes, plotting and vile features and does not wish to continue to be trampled upon and fooled by it or to continue slaving away for it, or to be punished and destroyed together with it, Satan changes its previously saintly features and tears off its false mask to reveal its true evil, vicious, ugly and savage face. It would love nothing more than to exterminate all those who refuse to follow it and those who oppose its evil forces'** ("God Himself, the Unique II" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **'The reason why Satan is exasperated and furious is thus: Its unspeakable schemes have been exposed; its plots are not easily**

gotten away with; its wild ambition and desire to replace God and act as God have been struck and blocked; its goal of controlling all of humanity has now come to nothing and can never be achieved' ("God Himself, the Unique II" in The Word Appears in the Flesh)."

After reading God's words, she gave fellowship, saying, "God's words expose the root cause of why Satan opposes God and harms mankind. If we then use God's words to regard the CCP government's actions in opposition to God and its persecution of Christians, we can clearly see that it is the embodiment of Satan, the devil, and it is the satanic regime that most hates the truth and resists God. It absolutely will not allow people to believe in God or take the right path so as to establish China as a zone of atheism—it wants to eradicate all religious beliefs. This is particularly true in the last days—Almighty God incarnate has appeared and worked in China, expressing truths to bring light to mankind. People from all religions and denominations who genuinely believe in God and love the truth, after reading Almighty God's words, become certain that they are the truth, and, one by one, they are accepting His work of the last days. Many people have come to understand the truth by reading God's words and have learned how to discern between good and evil. Thus they come to see clearly the CCP government's evil essence and become willing to reject it, and they begin to pursue the truth and take the right path in life. As it sees more and more people gaining faith in God and following Him, its eyes burn with rage. It vainly hopes to drag people back into its camp so they can continue to be its slaves and remain downtrodden. To this end, the CCP government frantically persecutes and suppresses The Church of Almighty God by not only fabricating all manner of lies to frame and slander it, but also by employing all sorts of despicable tactics. It has issued confidential documents many times to mobilize huge numbers of armed police and military troops to frantically arrest and persecute Christians from The Church of Almighty God on a national scale in a deluded attempt to stop the spread of God's gospel work and completely eliminate The Church of Almighty God. Particularly over the last few years, all sorts of gospel films and videos produced by The Church of Almighty God have been uploaded to the Internet one after another and God's kingdom gospel has spread across the globe like wildfire. The CCP government is aware of its guilt, knowing that since coming to power, it has committed countless murders and done all manner of evil; its blood debt from persecuting Christians is a heavy one. It's afraid that people all over the world will accept God's work, understand the truth, clearly see its evil

countenance and then reject it, which would then leave it without any footing in the world. Then its wild ambition to control all of humanity and be a god would be shattered. This is why the CCP government's persecution of The Church of Almighty God has escalated. It meticulously crafted the May 28 Zhaoyuan Case in order to frame the church, in an attempt to rile up and confuse those who don't know the truth into hating God and The Church of Almighty God, and doing evil along with it. We can see from this that the CCP government is perverse and runs contrary to Heaven, and that it absolutely detests God and hates the truth. It is the enemy of God—a demon that resists God. However, God is almighty and His wisdom is exercised upon Satan's trickery. The CCP government's ugly countenance is exposed to the light by its own mad opposition and oppression, and God's chosen people can see its evil, reactionary nature even more clearly. They develop discernment of its despicable and evil nature, their will to follow God becomes even firmer, and they'd rather give up their very lives than stop following God. This shows that no matter how savage the CCP government is, it cannot stop true believers from following God, much less is it capable of stopping God's work.”

After hearing Almighty God's words and this sister's fellowship, I understood that the CCP government persecutes The Church of Almighty God because its very essence is one that hates the truth and is an enemy to God. It wants to control the people, to have people firmly in its grasp, but the truths expressed by Almighty God take root deep in people's hearts. The CCP government certainly wouldn't want the people to all walk with God, so it does everything it can to fabricate rumors to deceive the public and concoct false cases, fostering public outrage in order to persecute The Church of Almighty God. That's how the May 28 Zhaoyuan Case came about. My doubts about The Church of Almighty God were dispelled once I had understood the truth. However, I still had a concern: Since the CCP government is so oppressive of the church, would it be safe for my wife to believe in God?

The brothers and sisters then played a movie for me, *The Lies of Communism*. There was a passage of God's words in it that really touched my heart. **“We trust that no country or power can stand in the way of what God wishes to achieve. Those who obstruct God's work, resist the word of God and disturb and impair the plan of God shall ultimately be punished by God. He who defies the work of God shall be sent to hell; any country that defies the work of God shall be destroyed; any nation that rises up to oppose the work of God shall be wiped from this earth and shall cease to exist”**

("God Presides Over the Fate of All Mankind" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). I could feel God's authority and majesty from His words. No evil force of Satan nor any human being can possibly hinder God's work. Although those in the CCP government are racking their brains to discredit and condemn The Church of Almighty God, even diabolically arresting and persecuting the church's brothers and sisters, the brothers and sisters still persist in believing in and following God, and the gospel movies, choral works, and dance and song videos they produce are constantly being released online, totally unhindered by the CCP government. I finally saw how almighty God is and that no force can possibly stop His work. In her belief in God, my wife has God as her backup force, so there's nothing for me to worry about. After understanding all of that, the worries and misgivings in my heart all disappeared. Smiling, I said to my wife, "It's right for you to believe in Almighty God. I was so blind before—I mistakenly believed what I had heard and caused you to suffer so much. It was so wrong of me. From now on, I'll fully support you in your faith." Tears welled up in her eyes and she said with emotion, "It's thanks to God that you've been able to see through the CCP government's lies and emerge from the fog of confusion. This is God's guidance and leadership!"

From that point on I started occasionally watching videos made by The Church of Almighty God with my wife, and I listened to her talk about her faith. However, I still felt that faith in God was a simplistic kind of belief. Sure, I could believe in God in my heart. But I still had to earn a living and raise my family, and provide enough so that we could live a good life. It was only later, after undergoing a bout of ill health, that I gained a completely new understanding about belief in God.

Around dusk one evening as our family was having dinner, I started to experience terrible stomach pains and huge drops of cold sweat began to run down my face. My wife quickly got me to the hospital where I was diagnosed with a burst appendix. It was a critical situation that required immediate surgery. I felt a sense of helplessness and fear that I'd never felt before—if I didn't make it, how would my wife and young daughter get by in a foreign country? Who would be there for them? Seeing what I was thinking, my wife held my hand and said, "I know what you're worried about. God is almighty, and all things are in His hands. He has the final say over whether the surgery is successful, too. We have to lean on God and, no matter how the operation turns out, we can't blame God, but must submit to His rule and arrangements." I nodded after hearing what she had to say. Once the door to

the operating room had closed, I closed my eyes and prayed to God. “O Almighty God! I’m terrified. Please give me faith so that I’m no longer afraid. I’m willing to lean on You.” I felt less afraid after praying, and an excerpt of God’s words from a video came back to me: **“[E]verything man has—peace and joy, blessings and personal safety—is in fact all under God’s control; He guides and decides the fate of every individual”** (“God Himself, the Unique VI” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). “It’s true,” I thought. “God is almighty and my life is in His hands. The success of my surgery today depends on God’s rule and arrangements, so by handing everything over to God, there is nothing for me to worry about.” God’s words gave me faith; my uneasy heart was calmed, and I was no longer so concerned about the possible failure of the surgery. I gradually lost consciousness under the effect of the anesthetic. When I came to, the doctor told me that the surgery had been a success, and I knew that God had protected me. I offered up my praise and thanks to God over and over.

Later, I saw these words from God: **“[T]he first thing they must understand is where human beings come from, why people are alive, who dictates human fate, and who provides for and has sovereignty over human existence. This knowledge is the true means by which one lives, the essential basis for human survival—not learning how to provide for one’s family or how to achieve fame and wealth, not learning how to stand out from the crowd nor how to live a more affluent life, much less learning how to excel and to compete successfully against others. Though the various survival skills that people spend their lives mastering can offer an abundance of material comforts, they never bring true peace and consolation to one’s heart, but instead make people constantly lose their direction, have difficulty controlling themselves, and miss every opportunity to learn the meaning of life; these survival skills create an undercurrent of anxiety about how to face death properly. People’s lives are ruined in this way. The Creator treats everyone fairly, giving everyone a lifetime’s worth of opportunities to experience and know His sovereignty, yet it is only when death draws near, when its specter looms, that one begins to see the light—and then it is too late!”** (“God Himself, the Unique III” in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

My heart brightened after reading God’s words and I understood that we don’t just live on this earth so we can lead mediocre lives to feed our families and be prosperous, or to be envied and looked up to by others, seeking fame and profit. We human beings are God’s

creations and only by believing in and worshipping God, pursuing and understanding the truth, achieving knowledge of God, and clearly understanding that God rules over all things in our lives and that our fates are in His hands can we truly obey His rule and arrangements and behave and conduct ourselves according to His words. That is the only way to live with meaning and value; it's the only way to not live this life in vain. I thought back on how I had felt before, that faith in God was a simplistic sort of belief, and that earning money for my family was what I should do with my life. Only when I had that life-threatening illness did I finally wake up. No matter how much money we earn or how high our status is, when we fall ill, those things can't alleviate our suffering or the fear and helplessness deep in our hearts. On the brink of death, money, fame, and fortune can't possibly give us back our lives or increase our longevity. I give thanks to God—it was He who gave me faith and strength through His words when I was faced with illness and felt so afraid and helpless. He gave me something to lean on so that I could calmly face everything that was to come. In particular, it was only God's care and protection that allowed me to get through my surgery without a hitch. Through that experience I truly came to feel that God is both real and alive, that He can be our help and support at any time, and that He is also our strong backup. What we as humans should most pursue throughout our lives is belief in God, worshipping God, and we should understand and submit to God's rule. That is what our spirits are most in need of, and that is the most meaningful life that we should pursue. That experience also changed my mistaken impression that faith in God was a simplistic kind of belief and I resolved to practice my faith alongside my wife, to read God's words, and take the path of pursuing the truth and knowing God.

Brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God heard that I had fallen ill, so they came to visit me in the hospital. When they learned that I wouldn't be able to work for some time and our family wouldn't have any source of income, they helped me apply for a hardship grant and apply for reimbursement for the larger part of my medical expenses. In such a cold, indifferent society, the sincere helpfulness of the brothers and sisters really gave me a feeling of warmth, like we were all part of the same family. After staying in contact with them for some time, I saw that they were all deeply kind people who relied on God's words in their interactions with others, that they treated other people sincerely, were upright and dignified in their words and actions, and that their humanity and the way they lived their lives were exactly they should be for Christians. They were entirely different from the people I worked

with—there were hardly any people like them left in the world. I felt that the words of Almighty God really could change people and guide us onto the right path, and I felt that this church was full of love and that it gave people a great sense of warmth.

I think of the past when I was blinded by the CCP government's lies and refused over and over again to seek or investigate God's work of the last days, and even stood in the way of my wife's faith, but God didn't give up trying to save me. Using His words which the brothers and sisters read to me and the videos they played for me, God allowed me to see through the CCP government's lies and clearly see the sinister truth behind them. When I was concerned about the outcome of my surgery and was living in fear, God's words enlightened and guided me, they gave me faith and strength, and corrected my mistaken viewpoints. When I couldn't work after surgery, God helped and supported me through the brothers and sisters. I experienced God's love and mercy for me as well as the authority and preciousness of His words, and I very gladly accepted God's work of the last days. Now, I frequently attend gatherings with my wife and read God's words, and my heart is fulfilled and full of joy! I give thanks to God for saving me!

21. Breaking Free From the Rumor Trap

By Xiaoyun, China

I used to be a female army officer. One day in 1999, a Korean pastor preached the gospel of the Lord Jesus to me. Because of my earnest pursuit, I soon became the focus of the pastor's training and his primary assistant. In the summer of 2000, the pastor came to Yunnan on a short summer missionary trip with more than a dozen college students from the Korean Gospel Church. Unexpectedly, this alarmed the CCP government. We were arrested whilst having a meeting at the pastor's home and then brought to Yunnan Province Public Security Department for questioning. The Korean university students were deported that same night and the Korean pastor was also expelled from the country. The church suffered persecution by the CCP government, and many believers became afraid and did not dare believe. A proportion of believers were also forced to go to the Three-Self Church, and this was how the church was broken up by the CCP government. I was the main co-worker in the church and the persecution by the CCP government this time also caused me

to lose my job.

In March 2005, I heard Almighty God's kingdom gospel. When I learned that the Lord Jesus had returned, I was so excited that tears of joy filled my eyes and I felt so indescribably grateful. I just wanted to bring my brothers and sisters before God as soon as I could. Under God's guidance, one by one the brothers and sisters accepted God's last days' work. But unexpectedly, one of the church's most talented co-workers, after hearing the testimony of the last days' work of Almighty God, declared: "This doctrine sounds right, but we need to ask the pastor first and see what he says." Soon after, the pastor gave me a call and said, "It is very disorderly outside now. You have not believed in God for long and your stature is small. Whatever you do, do not carelessly listen to sermons from outside the church, and then you won't go astray. We can only accept the shepherding of this church. Do not listen to the ways preached by other churches." After listening, I said calmly, "Through this period of time studying Almighty God's last days' work, I have found that everything they preach conforms to the Bible, has the enlightenment and illumination of the Holy Spirit and it is the true way." My pastor said, "No matter how well they preach, we must understand that only the Lord Jesus is the true God. We must not leave the Lord!" I said firmly, "I have not left the Lord, but am following the footsteps of the Lamb. The Lord Jesus has already returned. It is only right that we should welcome the Lord just like the wise virgins." The pastor said harshly, "How could the Korean Gospel Church not know that the Lord has returned?" I said, "This is not something that can be explained in a few words." The pastor asserted eloquently, "What they believe in is Eastern Lightning, which was the target of the CCP government's crackdown. It's explained very clearly on the Internet. Go online, and you will see. You have to go online to check it out...." After putting down the phone, my heart could not calm down for a long time. The pastor's words kept ringing in my ears. I particularly wanted to know exactly what was being said online.

In order to find out, I quickly ran to an Internet cafe. The moment I opened websites, I was dumbfounded. On the websites there was a lot of the CCP government's blasphemy and condemnation of God, as well as slander and blasphemy from religious figures of authority. I had some doubts: Almighty God's words cannot be spoken by just anybody. They are the expression of the Spirit of truth. This is a fact recognized by many people from many different denominations who sincerely believe in the Lord and yearn for the truth. But why do the websites start rumors to make people deny Almighty God? There are also many

famous pastors who also condemn and blaspheme God along with the CCP government. What is going on here? Seeing all this negative propaganda, I felt a flurry of indecision. After that, I saw an attack on the man used by the Holy Spirit online. My heart once again dropped. Did I really believe in a man? As I continued to browse through the information on the Internet, I became more flustered and felt very bewildered and perplexed so that, in the end, I had no idea how I left the Internet cafe.

On the way home, I recalled all the time I had spent seeking and investigating Almighty God's work of the last days. Whenever I raised some questions, brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God read the words of God to me. Every issue was resolved one after the other, and I had become completely convinced. It took a full eleven days of debate and investigation before I firmly believed that Almighty God was the Lord Jesus returned. I also read some of God's words. God has disclosed all of the mysteries of the three stages of work and the six-thousand-year management plan, and He has also clarified truths such as the inside story and the essence of the Bible, which are God's words and which are people's words in the Bible, and how people should approach the Bible. When I read these things, everything became clear and I reaped great benefit. From these words of God, I saw that Almighty God should be the Lord Jesus returned. But why was the propaganda on the Internet all negative? The more I thought about those rumors, the more depressed and heavier my heart felt, and I was almost hit by a car as I crossed the road.

After returning home, my heart simply couldn't calm down and those Internet rumors came to the forefront of my mind from time to time and lingered there. My heart felt overwhelmed as I thought one thing and then another. I couldn't sleep that night, and I thought: "If I take the wrong path, then would my faith not all be in vain? No, I have to turn back right away. But what if Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned? Then won't I miss my opportunity to welcome the Lord and lose my chance to be saved?" As I wavered back and forth, I came before God in prayer: "O God! Since accepting this step of work, my heart has always felt at ease, I have found it very enjoyable to read God's words and my soul has felt very nourished. But after seeing some negative propaganda on the Internet, I cannot calm down. Please guard my heart. O God! My stature is small and I don't know how to discern these things. If Almighty God really is You who have returned, then I ask You to guide me to be certain of Your work without being disturbed by anyone or anything. If not, then I ask You to guide me to develop discernment...." After praying, an idea came into my heart: To quickly

finish reading the words of Almighty God in order to determine whether or not it is God's voice. That night, I read God's words all night and I do not know when I fell asleep at the table.

Early the next morning, I was awakened by a knock at the door and I drowsily went to open it. It turned out to be Sister Wu who had watered me. She saw me looking sleepy and asked what had happened in a concerned manner. I said, "I was online yesterday and saw a lot of things which resisted and blasphemed against God, and now I feel very conflicted...." After hearing this, Sister Wu fellowshiped with me: "Sister, you know very well the CCP government's attitude toward Christians. They have arrested and persecuted countless Christians. This is a hard fact. The rumors online are all fabricated by the CCP government so as to persecute The Church of Almighty God. Their aim is to suppress God's work and to make China an atheistic zone and not allow people to follow or worship God. Sister, the CCP is an atheistic government. Can we believe what they say?" The sister's remarks were a timely reminder. Right! The CCP is atheist. They are the ones who hate and resist God the most. How can one believe what they say? The CCP government goes under the guise of the banner "freedom of religion," but behind the scenes, they wantonly coerce and arrest people who believe in God. I thought of how the CCP government had coerced and oppressed those from our church before and how many brothers and sisters had lost faith and did not dare believe, and I thought of how I had also lost my job because of this—was this not the CCP government's attitude toward people who believe in God? In order to restrict religious belief, the CCP government established the Three-Self Church and asked people to first "love the state" then "love religion." Their purpose is to keep control of people firmly in their hands and to restrict people's freedom of belief. When I thought of this, I came to have some discernment about the despicable intentions of the CCP government. The CCP government has always persecuted religious beliefs and condemned the true way. So was their fabricating rumors and condemning the last days' work of Almighty God not a great unveiling of their God-hating and God-opposing satanic nature?

Sister Wu continued to fellowship with me: "The CCP government is an atheist satanic regime and the enemy of God. In order to achieve their wild ambition of permanent control of the people, they perversely twist black into white to condemn and discredit The Church of Almighty God. We are able to distinguish this pretty well. But how can the religious pastors and elders follow the atheist regime in resisting, condemning and blaspheming God? Most

people cannot figure out this problem. Actually, this is related to the religious leaders' nature and essence of resistance to God and hatred of the truth. Thinking back to two thousand years ago, when the Lord Jesus did the work to redeem mankind, He was met with the utmost opposition and persecution from the chief priests, scribes and the Pharisees. This was because the way the Lord Jesus preached and the miracles He performed at that time caused a sensation throughout Judea. Many ordinary people were attracted by the Lord's words and one after the other they turned to the Lord Jesus. The chief priests, scribes and Pharisees saw this as a threat to their status and livelihoods, and they conspired with the Roman government to resist and condemn the Lord Jesus. They spread rumors, slandered the Lord's work and crucified the Lord Jesus on the cross. Now the history of two thousand years ago is repeating itself. Religious leaders see the last days' work of Almighty God being accepted by growing numbers of people and they immediately become jealous and unite with the CCP government in resisting and condemning God's last days' work. This completely shows that most religious leaders are antichrists who do not love the truth and love only status. 'Since ancient times, the true way has always been suppressed.' It is therefore not surprising that Almighty God's last days' work could be strongly opposed and condemned by the evil forces of the CCP government and the religious community." Yes, the Pharisees, chief priests and scribes were all figures of authority in the religious community, but they were not true believers in God and did not love the truth. They knew that the Lord Jesus' words had authority and power, but they did not seek or investigate whatsoever. Rather, in order to maintain their status and livelihoods, they condemned and blasphemed the Lord. Their nature was indeed to resist God and to be the enemies of God. Nowadays, how the pastors and elders of the religious community act with regard to the Lord's second coming is the same as what the Pharisees did. It turns out they are God-hating, truth-hating antichrists! When the Lord Jesus' return is prophesied in the Bible, it says, "**But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation**" (Luke 17:25). Now Almighty God has come to perform His work, yet He is being resisted and condemned by the religious community and the atheist CCP regime. Is this not the fulfillment of the Lord's prophecy? At that moment, my heart was illuminated. Sister Wu carried on with her fellowship: "The negative propaganda disseminated by the CCP government and the religious community on the Internet is essentially meant to destroy and disturb God's work. Satan has always used lies to deceive and confuse people and to make people doubt, deny,

and betray God. In the end, they will be punished by God and sent to hell, and they will lose the opportunity to be saved by God forever. We must be able to discern their rumors and realize their sinister intentions and despicable purpose in spreading rumors. Otherwise, we will become deluded and will lose the opportunity to be saved by God.” I nodded in approval and felt that the sister’s fellowship and help had come in the nick of time. I couldn’t wait to continue listening ...

Sister Wu took out the book of God’s words and said to me: “Sister, let’s read a passage of Almighty God’s words! Almighty God said: **‘In My plan, Satan has ever snapped at the heels of every step, and, as the foil of My wisdom, has always tried to find ways and means to disrupt My original plan. But could I succumb to its deceitful schemes? All in heaven and on earth serves Me—could the deceitful schemes of Satan be any different? This is precisely the intersection of My wisdom, it is precisely that which is wondrous about My deeds, and it is the principle by which My entire management plan is carried out. During the time of the building of the kingdom, still I do not avoid the deceitful schemes of Satan, but continue to do the work I must do. Among all things in the universe, I have chosen the deeds of Satan as My foil. Is this not My wisdom? Is this not precisely that which is wondrous about My work?’** (“Chapter 8” of God’s Words to the Entire Universe in The Word Appears in the Flesh).”

After reading God’s words, Sister Wu said in fellowship: “We see from Almighty God’s words that every step of God’s work embodies God’s will, wisdom and wondrousness. From beginning to end, God’s work does not shy away from Satan’s trickery, but uses Satan’s trickery for the benefit of God’s work, to perfect those who truly believe in God and to complete God’s management plan to save mankind. On the surface, Satan appears to be swollen with arrogance in its resistance to God, but God’s wisdom is exercised based on Satan’s trickery. In the beginning, Satan corrupted mankind, but God did not destroy it directly. Instead, God uses the three stages of His work to save mankind and, whilst saving mankind, God allows Satan to create disturbances and interruptions, His purpose being to show Satan’s true devil face of corrupting and confusing mankind, of furiously resisting God and being the enemy of God, so that mankind actually sees Satan’s hideous face and evil essence. In so doing, people can proactively reject and forsake Satan and return to God, and Satan will be completely shamed and defeated. This is the most powerful testimony against Satan, and it reveals God’s wisdom and almightiness. Just as Job was a God-fearing

man who shunned evil, yet God allowed Satan to inflict suffering on Job and eventually He used Job's testimony in trials to humiliate Satan and prove that God's evaluation of Job was entirely correct. This was God's wisdom. In addition, what God does in the last days is the work of saving and perfecting people. It is also the work of separating people according to their kind and bringing the age to an end. God uses the persecution by the CCP government and the religious community to cause people to experience various trials and tribulations. Those who truly believe in God can understand the truth and develop discernment by experiencing tribulations, they can know God's almightiness and wisdom, see through to Satan's wickedness, and in the end completely reject Satan and attain God's salvation. Yet those who are timid, those who lack true belief, those who are bored of the truth and those evil ones who hate the truth are all exposed through trials and tribulations, and they become targets to be weeded out. Thus the goats are separated from the sheep, the tares from the wheat, the evil servants from the good servants, and the foolish virgins from the wise virgins, as all are separated according to their kind. This is God's wisdom and almightiness." After listening to Sister Wu's fellowship, I couldn't help but think back to two thousand years ago when the Lord Jesus was crucified by the Jewish Pharisees and the Roman government. From man's perspective, the work of the Lord Jesus had failed, but the Lord Jesus said, "**It is finished.**" It was precisely through Satan's persecution and crucifixion that God finished the work of redeeming mankind. Today in the last days, the CCP government and religious community's condemnation and defamation have precisely rendered a service to God perfecting those who truly believe in Him, and they have also become God's evidence to convict them. Almighty God says: "**My wisdom is exercised based on Satan's schemes**" ("The Inside Truth of the Work of Conquest (1)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). In the Bible it is recorded: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33). Thinking of this, I saw that God's work was so wise and so wonderful, and I praised God from the bottom of my heart.

Through Sister Wu's fellowship, I came to have a little understanding of God's work and could also distinguish somewhat the essence of the CCP government and religious community's resistance to God, but I still did not understand what it said on the Internet about us believing in a man, that is, believing in the man used by the Holy Spirit. I asked Sister Wu: "On the Internet it says that we believe in a man. Is that the case?" Sister Wu

said in fellowship regarding this question: “Your problem is that you are not clear about the truth relating to the difference between God’s work and man’s work. Let’s first read two passages of Almighty God’s words. Almighty God says: **‘The work of God Himself involves the work of all of mankind, and it also represents the work of the entire era. That is to say, God’s own work represents the movement and trend of all of the work of the Holy Spirit, whereas the work of the apostles follows God’s own work and does not lead the era, nor does it represent the working trend of the Holy Spirit in the entire era. They only do the work man ought to do, which does not at all involve the management work. God’s own work is the project within the management work. Man’s work is only the duty of men being used and bears no relation to the management work’** (“God’s Work and Man’s Work” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **‘The work that God does does not represent the experience of His flesh; the work that man does represents man’s experience. Everyone talks about his personal experience. God can directly express the truth, while man can only express the corresponding experience after experiencing the truth. ... You just have to compare the differences between them to tell whether it is God’s own work or man’s work’** (“God’s Work and Man’s Work” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Almighty God’s words allow us to understand that God’s work is the work of ushering in a new era. It is the work that saves the whole of mankind. Man cannot usher in any age, nor can he perform the work of saving mankind. The work of man is just to perform man’s duty upon the foundation of God’s work. It is doing some work watering, supplying and guiding people to enter into the reality of God’s words and is done in cooperation with God, but man’s work cannot replace the work of God Himself at all, nor can it be regarded in the same category as God’s work. Take the Age of Grace, for example, when the Lord Jesus began the Age of Grace and ended the Age of Law, leading mankind into a new era. After the Lord Jesus finished His work, the apostle Peter and others started to continue the work of the Lord Jesus, leading and shepherding the church and leading brothers and sisters to follow the way of the Lord. This was entirely in cooperation with the work of the Lord Jesus. At that time, the people of the church accepted Peter’s shepherding and leading, but no one said that they were believing in Peter or some other apostle. This is a fact. In the same way, Almighty God of the last days has come and has ended the Age of Grace and ushered in the Age of Kingdom; He performs the work of judgment starting with God’s house and expresses all truths to purify and save mankind. If we can understand,

practice, and enter these truths, then we are the ones who shall attain true salvation and be perfected. However, because of our poor caliber, through reading God's words ourselves and experiencing God's words, achieving true salvation is a very difficult and slow process. Therefore, God enlisted the man used by the Holy Spirit to lead us. The man used by the Holy Spirit has been prepared and perfected by God in advance. He has the experience of attaining salvation and perfection through experiencing God's work. He uses his experience of God's words to guide us to know God's words and to enter God's words. This helps us to deviate from the path less. As long as we accept and obey the leadership and the watering of the man used by the Holy Spirit, then we can take the right path of belief in God and attaining true salvation. This is entirely God's kindness and blessing toward us. The work that the man used by the Holy Spirit does is exalting and witnessing God and guiding us to obey and worship God. He has never asked us to treat him as God, nor has he demanded that we believe in him. All of God's chosen people are very clear about this: The man used by the Holy Spirit is only our brother and our leader, and we believe in Christ of the last days, Almighty God, not the man whom the Holy Spirit uses. It is rumored on the Internet that we believe in the man used by the Holy Spirit. This is purely a distortion of the facts and a confusion of right and wrong. It is Satan's fallacy and it is a lie to delude people. You might as well go to The Church of Almighty God to see for yourself, walk amongst the brothers and sisters, listen to them and truly understand. Then you will see that we read the words of Almighty God, we pray in Almighty God's name and we believe in the incarnate God Himself, that is, Almighty God, Christ of the last days. Christ wields power over The Church of Almighty God entirely. It is God's words that wield power. So tell me, do we believe in a man or in God? Is this not obvious?" After listening to the sister's fellowship, I came to know a little about God's work and man's work, and I also understood a little about God's intention in enlisting the man used by the Holy Spirit. I also knew that we believed in Almighty God incarnate, not a man. I could not help but think to myself: What we have received is God's work and the supply of God's words. We believe in Almighty God; we do not follow and believe in a man. It seems that those online rumors are really Satan's lies, falsehoods meant to delude people. In the beginning, our first ancestors, Adam and Eve, were taken in by Satan's tricks; they committed sin and were cast out of the Garden of Eden because they listened to Satan's lies. The Jewish people who joined the Pharisees in crucifying the Lord Jesus also listened to rumors and were taken in by Satan's trickery and became eternal

sinner against God. I must learn from the lessons of previous failures. I should no longer be taken in by Satan!

When Sister Wu left, she told me to read God's words more and also left the fellowship of the man used by the Holy Spirit for me to read. One day I saw a passage of the fellowship: "At this critical final moment, people should make the following the top priorities in their practice: eating and drinking the words of God, doing whatever God entrusts them to do, carrying out their duties, satisfying God, and glorifying God—only by practicing in these ways can people be loyal to God. The saints of the past often said, 'What we gain or lose doesn't matter; we should pay mind to God's will.' This should be the motto of all people. The specific practices are as follows: If one is afflicted by the harassment of Satan, then the first task is to uphold God's testimony and God's work and to use the truth to defeat Satan; if one faces sin or temptation, then glorifying God comes first, and one must not sin and humiliate God; if people, issues, or things encumber the fulfillment of one's duties, then what God entrusts one with comes first and one must break free of all entanglements and be loyal to God; if and when matters involving one's personal interests arise, then the interests of God's family come first. Abandoning one's personal interests and being considerate of God's heart is vital. If worldly affairs entangle and constrain one, then fulfilling one's duty and satisfying God must come first and one must cast aside all else and expend oneself for God" (The Fellowship From the Above). I came to know very clearly from the fellowship of the man used by the Holy Spirit how I should practice in real life in order to satisfy God's will and what to do so as to be faithful to God. I felt that the man used by the Holy Spirit was really guiding us to obey God, to enter the truth and fulfill God's will. I came to appreciate that the "interpreter" God has arranged for us is really good! I felt even more clearly that God has prepared someone used by the Holy Spirit for us in advance to guide us to understand the truth more quickly and come to know God. This is God's sincere love for us! At this point, I completely saw through and discarded those rumors that had been spread online that condemned God's last days' work and attacked the man used by the Holy Spirit. From feeling on tenterhooks, I could finally be at ease. I really came to believe that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned. By accepting the last days' work of Almighty God, I keep up with the Lamb's footsteps, attend the marriage feast of the Lamb and am raised before God's throne!

After going through this disturbance by Satan, I became even more convinced about Almighty God's last days' work. Now I have followed Almighty God for more than a decade.

I think back to all of the notions I had when I had just accepted God's last days' work, to understanding some truths and seeing through the CCP government and the religious community's rumors, casting aside my notions and no longer being deluded, to striving to pursue the truth and doing my duty as a created being and repaying God's love, and resolutely following Almighty God. All this has made me really appreciate the truth of these words of God: **"In his relationship with God in the flesh, man progresses from opposition to obedience, from persecution to acceptance, from conception to knowledge, and from rejection to love. These are the effects of the work of the incarnate God"** ("Corrupt Mankind Needs Salvation by the Incarnate God Most of All" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Thanks be to God!

22. Fleeing From the "Tiger's Den"

By Xiaoyou, China

My name is Xiaoyou and I am 26 years old. I used to be a Catholic. When I was little, I went with my mother to church to attend Mass, read the Bible, go to confession and receive Communion. My mother was very zealous in her faith. She would often donate food and various other things from our home to the church, and she would also donate money. The church leaders and nuns particularly liked my mother. When they saw her, they would greet her with smiles and show great concern for her, and they would also frequently call my mother on the phone to ask her to participate in all kinds of church activities and to help out with various tasks. I also actively participated in the classes that the nuns taught, and my church friends and I would read the Bible together. At that time, I was able to feel the joy and peace that came from having the Lord by my side, and I felt happy every day. However, as time went on, the faith of my church friends became colder and colder. My spirit also became weak and I was unable to adhere to the Lord's teachings. I would frequently commit sins and then confess them and, after I got married, I moved with my husband to another part of the country for work.

In the blink of an eye, it was Christmas 2013, and I had the good fortune to encounter a sister from The Church of Almighty God. She told me that the Lord Jesus had already returned and that He is performing a new stage of His work. When I heard this, I was

surprised and I said excitedly, “Really? The Lord has returned! When did the Lord return? Where is the Lord right now? Sister, tell me right away.” The sister gave me fellowship, saying, “Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus. Almighty God has expressed millions of words and He is performing His work of judgment in the last days. He has revealed all the truths that can purify and save mankind, including the three stages of work that God performs to save mankind, the mystery of the incarnation, the mystery of the Bible, the significance of God’s names, and mankind’s end and destination, among others. This fulfills the Lord Jesus’ words when He said: **‘I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth. For he shall not speak of himself; but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak; and the things that are to come, he shall shew you’** (John 16:12–13).” I earnestly listened to the sister’s fellowship and thought: “I never expected to be able to welcome the return of the Lord. This is fantastic.” Afterward, the sister bore witness to me of the three stages of God’s work and the significance of God’s names. Afraid that I would not understand, the sister furnished me with analogies and examples. She gave fellowship in meticulous detail, in a way that was both clear and transparent. Through her fellowship, I came to understand many truths I had not understood before. I also learned that the Lord had returned in order to perform the work of judging, chastising, cleansing and perfecting man. I felt that it was very possible that Almighty God was indeed the returned Lord Jesus, and I told the sister that I wished to investigate the work of God in the last days. Afterward, I attended gatherings with the brothers and sisters, and together we read God’s word, sang hymns and danced in praise of God. Whenever I came across something I didn’t understand while I was reading God’s words, the brothers and sisters would always take the trouble to fellowship with me about it. Their fellowships had the Holy Spirit’s enlightenment and illumination, and attending gatherings with them allowed me to enjoy once more the pleasure of the Holy Spirit’s work. I felt incredibly happy. In this big family of The Church of Almighty God, there were no distinctions between high and low or poor and wealthy. The brothers and sisters were all open with each other and always said what was on their minds. When it came to living a happy life, I felt like this was the real deal! After more than a month of investigation, I had read many of Almighty God’s words and I became certain that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus. I felt so very fortunate, and at the same time I wanted to tell this good news to my mother and my friends at church.

During Chinese Spring Festival, my husband and I returned to our hometown. After we arrived, I immediately bore witness to Almighty God's work of the last days to my mother, but she refused to accept it no matter what I said. I felt a bit disappointed and very bewildered. "Clearly, Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus," I thought. "How could she not accept this?" Seeing as my mother would not accept it, I had no choice but to drop the subject. When our trip back to our hometown was over, I returned to where I was working. I attended gatherings with my brothers and sisters and practiced fulfilling my duties for the church. During that time, my spirit was overflowing with enjoyment and my life was filled with incomparable happiness and joy. I read in God's words about how Job had lost all his possessions and sons and daughters in trials, and about how his body had become covered with sores and yet still he had been able to praise God's name and have true faith in God. And then there was Abraham, who was able to offer up his only son Isaac and return him to God. When I read about these things in particular, I felt very moved by their faith and their obedience toward God, and I too wanted to be this kind of person.

Just as I was feeling immersed in God's love, my life suddenly turned into a nightmare. One day in August 2014, my mother called me out of the blue to say that my daughter was seriously ill. My heart skipped a beat when I heard this. "My daughter is so young," I thought, "how could she be seriously ill?" I was very worried for my daughter and I felt terribly distressed. I therefore went before God and prayed: "O God, it is by Your permission that this situation has befallen me. My daughter's sickness is in Your hands. I wish to entrust my daughter to You. Please give me true faith." I felt a little more at ease after that. My husband and I hastily returned to our house in our hometown. When we got there, I was astonished to see my daughter sleeping peacefully in her bed. I wanted to wake her, but my mother raised her hand to stop me and said sternly, "Don't wake her. She's fine!" Only then did I become aware that many relatives had gathered there at my house, and I realized that she had tricked me into returning home in order to try to stop me from believing in Almighty God. I thought: "God has arranged this situation for me today. It must be something that I have to experience." I then asked my mother, "Mother, my daughter is fine. Why did you trick us into returning home—" Before I could finish speaking, my mother flew into a rage and shouted, "I went to the church and asked the priests and the church leaders. They said that Eastern Lightning is dangerous, and that once you join it you can never leave it again. Don't believe in it any longer. I'm doing this for your own good. I'm afraid that you've taken the wrong

path.” My mother also repeated some lies and calumny fabricated by the religious world against The Church of Almighty God. As I listened to my mother say these things, I thought: “My belief is not wrong at all. On the contrary, I’m keeping pace with God’s new work. The Almighty God I believe in is the returned Lord Jesus who now performs the work of judging, chastising and cleansing man. I am absolutely certain that this is the true way, so why would I give it up? When the priests and the church leaders say, ‘If you believe in Eastern Lightning and you join their church then you can never leave,’ these are purely lies and fallacies designed to deceive people. I have attended gatherings at The Church of Almighty God for more than six months now and I know more about it than you people do. The door of The Church of Almighty God is always open and people can freely choose to leave. It’s not at all like what the priests and the church leaders say. The brothers and sisters all become certain about the true way by reading God’s words, they obtain life nourishment and they have found the spring of living water, and that is why they don’t wish to leave the church. Through reading Almighty God’s word, our spirits gain contentment. Who would want to go back to their old desolate and barren church? The priests and the church leaders have not investigated Almighty God’s work of the last days at all. They have not read Almighty God’s words and, moreover, they have not attended gatherings at The Church of Almighty God. What are they basing their claims on? Aren’t they just fabricating baseless rumors out of nothing?” When my mother saw that I was not responding, she stormed over to me in a rage, slapped me a few times, and tried to force me to say things to betray God. It pained me greatly to see her like this. I thought that if it hadn’t been for the lies fabricated by the priests and the church leaders, then there was no way my mother would have tried to force me to abandon my belief in Almighty God. I then said to her, “Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus. Believing in Almighty God is an unalterable law of earth and heaven, and I will believe in Him till the very end!” When my mother heard me say this, her face went livid with anger and her eyes were red with rage. She shouted at me loudly, “I am your mother. You must listen to me!” Seeing how unreasonable my mother was being, I decided not to say anything more. Just then, my relatives also started criticizing me all at once and they said many things to try to make me betray God. I thought: “I have already welcomed the Lord Jesus. The God I believe in is real and the path that I walk is the right path. I will absolutely not betray God!” I really wanted to advise them to investigate God’s work of the last days and to not be deceived by the rumors of the priests and the church leaders into blindly

condemning and resisting Almighty God. However, seeing that their attitude was one of hatred for the truth and for God, I felt that they would not accept the truth and it would have done no good no matter what I said, so I said nothing more to them. After a while, my mother and my relatives left together. My mother had not let me off the hook, however, as she then had my younger brother come to stay at my house. Every day, my brother would keep an eye on me as if I were a convict and he would follow me wherever I went. Just like that, my personal freedom was gone.

Two days later, just as my family and I were eating dinner, my mother suddenly came in. She was beaming ear to ear and said to me in an affected tone, “Xiaoyou, look who’s here!” My mother’s expression and tone of voice made me wonder what kind of person had come that could elicit such a big reaction out of her, and I knew it couldn’t be anything good. Just then, the church leader Liu and a parishioner named Wang came in. I greeted them calmly and asked them to sit. After we’d finished eating, the church leader Liu looked at me, smiled and said, “Xiaoyou! We are not going to beat around the bush. According to your mother, you now believe in Eastern Lightning. I have to tell you that you must stop believing in it. Your whole family has been Catholic for generations. You cannot abandon the Lord, or else He will abandon you. Today, we have come to give you some advice, but if you do not listen to us, then you will have no one to blame but yourself when the time comes and you descend into hell. Xiaoyou, we are doing this for your own good. Think about your husband’s illness. He wouldn’t have gotten better if it hadn’t been for your mother and me praying to the Lord every day. If you continue to believe in Eastern Lightning and your husband’s illness returns, then no one will do anything to help.” Listening to her say these things, my heart was thumping and I couldn’t help but feel a little afraid. I thought: “My husband did get extremely sick and even though we spent a lot of money he still didn’t get better. In the end, he only got better because of our prayers every day. If things really are as they say, and my husband’s illness returns, what would I do?” Just as I was beginning to fall for their deception, a line of God’s words floated up into my mind: **“Almighty God is an all-powerful physician!”** (“Chapter 6” of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). When I thought of this, I suddenly woke up and my mind became clear. “That’s right,” I thought. “I believe in Almighty God who is the Lord returned. Whether or not my husband will become ill again is in the hands of God; it is not up to them. God has sovereignty over everything, so what is there for me to be afraid of? In any case, it was the Lord who

cured my husband's sickness, not them. I never imagined they would try to use my husband's sickness to threaten me into betraying God, or that they would try to make me deny and betray God out of fear of trouble happening in my family. How insidious they are!" When I saw through their malicious motives, I felt nothing but disgust for them, and I no longer wanted to talk to them.

When the church leader Liu saw that I remained silent, she said in a sarcastic way, "It seems that you are very insistent! We have done all the talking so far today, so tell us where you stand!" Since they had just talked about the matter of my husband's illness, I felt a little perturbed. But when I thought about God holding sovereignty over everything, I suddenly found my confidence. Regardless of what happened, I would not betray God. I gathered up my courage and said, "Let me tell you then that I firmly believe in Almighty God and I will not relinquish my faith in God!" My mother roared, "Let's go! We'll go to church to pray." After she said this, they all stormed angrily away. Seeing how ferocious they looked, I could not help but feel a little bit scared. "They are going to pray," I thought. "Are they going to curse me? What can I do?" Feeling helpless, I came before God and prayed: "O Almighty God! They have all formed a battle line against me and are besieging me, and I feel all alone. O God! I don't know what to do. I'm very scared. Please guide me!" After I finished praying, I recalled some of God's words: "**You should know that all things in the environment around you are there by My permission, I arrange it all. See clearly and satisfy My heart in the environment I have given to you. Do not fear, Almighty God of hosts will surely be with you; He has your back and He is your Shield**" ("Chapter 26" of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). With the enlightenment and guidance of God's words, my heart suddenly filled with light: "Yes! God is my staunch support," I thought. "With God by my side, there is nothing to be afraid of. The church leader and the one named Wang said those things just to make me scared that I will go to hell, scared of trouble occurring in my family, and scared that my husband will get sick, and thereby forsake God. If I am timid or scared, then doesn't that mean that I have fallen for Satan's scheme? The fate, the final destination and the fortunes and misfortunes of me and my husband are not up to anybody, much less do the priests and the church leaders have any say in it all. It is all in the hands of God. It is useless for them to condemn and curse me." Thinking this, I felt calm again and I was not afraid at all. From the bottom of my heart, I praised God and thanked God for guiding me with His words, and for granting me the faith

and strength to see through Satan's schemes so that I would not be disturbed or deceived by my mother or the others.

One afternoon, just as I was about to have a midday nap with my child, Sister Zhao and Sister Zhang from my old church came to harass me. Sister Zhao said some things to intimidate me, and then Sister Zhang, acting very serious, said, "It's true. We have had contact with people from The Church of Almighty God in the past, and were almost deceived by them." When I heard her say this, I became furious. I knew that my brothers and sisters were absolutely incapable of trying to deceive anybody. Everything they were saying were just lies and slander. So, I asked them, "How did they deceive you?" Sister Zhang said in a serious tone, "There is no way you would know. They gave me a book!" I went on and asked her, "Tell me, what was the book like that they gave you? What was the name of the book? What was the book about?" Sister Zhang looked embarrassed, and after hemming and hawing for a bit, she finally tried to brush the question away, saying, "I've forgotten." When I heard her say this, I thought, "You're nuns! How dare you bear false witness and knowingly try to lay false accusations against others? How could you have such little reverence for God? Are you actually believers in God? Are you not afraid of being punished by God?" Afterward, Sister Zhao asked me again, "Are you going to work?" I resolutely replied, "Yes!" With feigned friendliness, she advised me, "Don't go to work. Staying at home and looking after your child is much better!" I felt disgusted by their hypocrisy, so I started to walk out of the room and said, "Mind your own business." Seeing that their attempts to disturb me had failed, they left dejectedly. After they'd left, I felt very troubled and depressed. I thought about how the church leader and these nuns had recently kept coming to harass me, and were either slandering, attacking and spreading rumors about Almighty God and my brothers and sisters, or else they were spreading fallacies to deceive me and cow me into submission. Even though I was not deceived by them and had argued and refuted their claims, every time I was left feeling very agitated and was unable to quiet myself before God and read God's words. My younger brother was still watching me all the time as well. I felt constrained whenever I prayed, sang hymns and read God's word, and I felt incredibly oppressed. In the midst of my suffering, I prayed to God: "Almighty God! This church leader and these nuns have come to harass me time after time. I feel very troubled and upset. Right now, I don't know how I should deal with them. Dear God, please enlighten me and guide me!"

After praying, I took out my MP5 player and just happened to see this passage of God's

words: **“There are those who read the Bible in grand churches and recite it all day long, yet not one among them understands the purpose of God’s work. Not one among them is able to know God; still less can any one among them accord with God’s will. They are all worthless, vile people, each standing on high to lecture God. They willfully oppose God even as they carry His banner. Claiming faith in God, still they eat the flesh and drink the blood of man. All such people are devils that devour the soul of man, demons that deliberately get in the way of those trying to step onto the right path, and stumbling blocks impeding those who seek God. They may appear of ‘sound constitution,’ but how are their followers to know that they are none other than antichrists who lead people to stand against God? How are their followers to know that they are living devils dedicated to the devouring of human souls?”** (“All People Who Do Not Know God Are People Who Oppose God” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). After I finished reading God’s words, I understood immediately. It turned out that these priests and church leaders were the very religious antichrists that God was exposing in His words. Even though they believed in the Lord, they did not seek the truth at all and they had no God-fearing heart whatsoever. Not only did they not investigate God’s work of the last days themselves, but they also blasphemed God, condemned God’s new work and made up rumors to deceive my mother so that she would hit me, scold me and put me under virtual house arrest. Then, they repeatedly came to my home trying to harass, cheat, deceive and threaten me. Thankfully, with God’s words to guide and lead me, I did not fall for their schemes, nor did I betray God. The Pharisees also used all kinds of despicable methods to stop the ordinary Jewish people from accepting the Lord Jesus’ gospel. They even used lies to deceive the people, saying that the Lord Jesus’ work overstepped the Old Testament and that Jesus was not the returned Messiah. This caused the ordinary Jewish people to go along with the Pharisees in nailing the sinless Lord Jesus to the cross. The Lord Jesus rebuked them by saying, **“But woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in; and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter”** (Matthew 23:13). I compared what the Pharisees did with the actions of the priests, church leaders and nuns, and thought about the fellowship my brothers and sisters had given me before regarding how to discern the essence of the Pharisees. I then saw clearly that the priests and church leaders were basically no different whatsoever from the Pharisees of the past. In order to protect their own

status and livelihoods, they were using every possible means to stop me from believing in Almighty God. They were afraid that I would preach the work of Almighty God of the last days to my mother and my entire family, and that my family would then start believing in Almighty God. This would then reduce the size of their flock and the amount of donations they received each month would also decrease. They truly are the evil servants and antichrists who steal the offerings to God and who obstruct people from entering the kingdom of heaven! Once I saw clearly their antichrist essence, I then knew how to deal with these people. They believed in God and yet they resisted God and were God's enemies and, as such, I knew I must abandon them. Although, over recent days, I had suffered from their harassment, yet I had the guidance and enlightenment of God's words. By acting as negative foils to God, they allowed me to develop discernment and, moreover, they allowed me to gain some practical experience in regards to God's words. I experienced for myself that God's words are the truth, the way and the life, and I became even more certain that Almighty God is the true God. I felt incredibly happy and at ease in my heart and I silently made a resolution: Regardless of how Satan tries to disturb me, I will never betray God, and I am determined to stand witness for God and humiliate the devil Satan!

I never expected that, after just two days of peace, I would encounter Satan's harassment and coercion once again. One night, my mother, a few of my uncles and aunts as well as my third grandaunt came over to try to stop me from believing in Almighty God. When I saw them all gathered together, I became extremely angry. I thought, "I just believe in the true God. What's wrong with that? Why are they going on and on about this?" My third grandaunt said in a strange tone, "Come on, Xiaoyou. Let's go home to see your grandma." I was surprised to hear her say this and thought: "They are here to take me to my mother's place. They want to lock me up with my mentally disturbed grandma! Oh no, how can my relatives do this to me? How can they be so heartless?" Just as I was thinking this, my mother grabbed a rope and rushed toward me, squatted down and began to tie my feet together. I became very anxious. I pushed her hands away and yelled, "What are you doing? Why do you want to tie me up?" Seeing this, two of my uncles walked over and each of them held on to one of my shoulders so that I could not resist. At that time I was sitting on the sofa and was unable to stand up. I urgently cried out to God in my heart: "O God! They are trying to tie me up and take me away. If they succeed, I will be unable to believe in You and won't be able to find the church. O God! Grant me faith and strength and open a way out for me!"

After I finished praying, I felt strength surge through my body. I struggled and shouted, "What are you doing? Let me go!" When they saw how ferociously I was resisting, they released me. I felt very thankful to God. I truly experienced that as long as one genuinely relies on God, one will witness God's deeds. I also really felt that God was by my side, protecting me and watching over me at all times. I thought: "In this environment, I must offer my true heart to God and I must thoroughly humiliate the devil Satan." So I staunchly said to them, "When it comes to other matters, I will listen to you. However, when it comes to believing in God I will only listen to God! I am already certain that Almighty God is the returned Lord. No matter how you try to force me, I will not be swayed!" Once I became resolved to follow God, I witnessed God's deeds again. One of my aunts said, "Don't tie her up. It won't do any good. I can see that she is set on her faith." Only when my aunt said that did they all turn and leave dejectedly. After they went, I instantly felt limp and exhausted both physically and mentally. I did not have an ounce of strength left. I lay down on my bed and drifted into sleep. The next morning, I thought about what had happened the night before with a heavy heart. When I thought about the way my relatives were treating me, I could not help but think: "Oh, my mother and my relatives have been deceived by the rumors spread by the priests and the church leaders, and they keep on trying to coerce me. When is all this going to end?" Then I thought back to when I'd been together with my brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God. With one accord, we had pursued the truth and fulfilled our duties, everyone had helped each other and supported each other. Nobody tried to bully or oppress anyone else, and there had been no need to be on my guard. I'd felt very free and liberated, and I'd felt fulfilled and at ease every day. And yet now I was confined in my home, I had no freedom whatsoever, and I was living each day on tenterhooks. I never knew when my relatives or the people from my old church would turn up. At best, they lightly reprimanded me. At worst, they threatened and tried to intimidate me. I felt so pained and unhappy. I really wanted to go back to The Church of Almighty God and attend gatherings, sing hymns and praise God with my brothers and sisters.

Immediately following this incident, something happened that was even more unexpected. One day, my husband and I went out shopping. After we returned home, I wanted to read God's words on my MP5 player but I couldn't find it. I felt so anxious and flustered. I thought: "Where did my MP5 player go? I definitely left it at home. Why can't I find it?" I suddenly thought my mother must have taken it away. I remembered that there

was one day that my mother came in and saw me reading God's word on the MP5 player. After that, she would frequently come to my house and rummage through my things. I was certain that the reason my MP5 player could not be found was because she had taken it. With this thought, I became very angry, and I stormed over to my mother's house. When I went in, I saw that my mother was talking with my second grandaunt. I went over to her and said, "Mother, did you take my MP5 player? That is mine. If you took it, give it back to me right away." To my surprise, my mother flatly denied having taken it. She gave me a contemptuous look, and I said angrily, "I keep my MP5 player at home. Nobody else would have touched it. You are the only person who constantly rummages through my things. It was definitely you that took it. Give it back to me!" Faced with my interrogation, my mother replied in a harsh tone of voice, "I will not give it back to you. You'd better go home as you'll never get it back from me!" No matter how much I insisted, she would not give it back to me, so I had no choice but to go home empty handed. On the way back home, I felt very miserable. I thought: "I no longer have my MP5 player so I can't read God's words anymore. In the past, even though my mother and the others came to harass me, I was still able to read God's words and have the guidance and leadership of God's words. As a result, I was able to understand God's will and have the faith and strength to withstand their attacks. But now, my MP5 player is gone! What will I do? Without God's words, isn't it over for me?" The more I thought about it the more hopeless I felt, and my spirit slumped into negativity. I felt extremely miserable. At my weakest and most disheartening moment, a hymn of God's words floated up into my mind: **"Today, most people don't have that knowledge. They believe that suffering is without value, they are persecuted for their belief in God, they are renounced by the world, their home life is troubled, and their prospects are bleak. The suffering of some people reaches a certain point, and their thoughts turn to death. This is not the true love of God; such people are cowards, they have no perseverance, they are weak and powerless! ... Thus, during these last days you must bear testimony to God. No matter how great your suffering, you should go on to the very end, and even at your last breath, still you must be faithful to God, and at the mercy of God; only this is truly loving God, and only this is the strong and resounding testimony"** ("Seek to Love God No Matter How Great Your Suffering" in Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs). With the guidance of God's words, I understood that God was hoping that I would be able to bear witness for Him in this situation. Regardless of how difficult

things got, I absolutely had to be loyal to God until the end and not lose faith in God. I thought back over all the persecution I had experienced, and I realized that each incident had been a battle in the spiritual world. Satan was using all kinds of methods to break me bit by bit. Right now, it had snatched away the “food of my spiritual life” in the desire to swallow up my soul. Satan is truly savage. I knew that I must not fall for its schemes. Even though my MP5 player was gone, I still had God. God would still enlighten me and guide me, and I believed that as long as I relied on God at every moment, God would help me get through every difficulty and hardship. Regardless of what circumstances I had to face in the future, as long as I had just one remaining breath in my body, I would stand witness for God. God’s words once again guided me and gave me the faith I needed to carry on.

Through experiencing this persecution and adversity time and time again, I witnessed the power and authority of God’s words. Each time I became negative, weak, confused and perplexed, God’s words gave me the faith and strength I needed and guided me to see through Satan’s schemes and stand witness for God. At the same time, I was also able to see that God was at my side at every moment, acting as my support and opening up the way for me. My faith in God increased little by little and my desire to leave my family became stronger. I knew I had to escape from this “tiger’s den” as soon as I could and go find the church and my brothers and sisters. I therefore prayed to God and entrusted Him with this matter, and I asked God to guide me. A few days later, I managed to evade my brother’s surveillance and successfully got away from home. Once again, I returned to The Church of Almighty God to live the church life and to fulfill my duties to the best of my abilities. More than a month of pain had finally come to an end, and the feelings of oppression and anxiety within my heart vanished like smoke in the air. Thank God for guiding me to break through Satan’s dark influence and escape from the “tiger’s den,” and for once again guiding me back to God’s family.

This experience remains fresh in my memory because during that time I vividly witnessed God’s love and salvation, and I saw that God was at my side protecting me at every moment, and preventing me from being deceived and swallowed up by Satan. At the same time, this extraordinary experience also enabled me to develop discernment of the priests, the church leaders, and others. They frantically condemned and blasphemed Almighty God, and they fabricated rumors and bore false witness to deceive me. They used all sorts of tricks to try to stop me from following Almighty God. They are the obstacles and

stumbling blocks to us accepting God's work of the last days, receiving God's salvation and being gained by God, and they are satanic demons that are here to devour people's souls! It was at this time that I finally understood the true meaning of the following words that Almighty God spoke: **"Believers and unbelievers are not compatible but rather opposed to one another"** ("God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). I recognized that even though the priests, the church leaders, the nuns, the members of my old church and my mother appeared to believe in God on the surface, they did not understand God's voice and they did not know God. They refused to accept the work of the returned Lord, and so God does not recognize their faith. In God's eyes, they are nonbelievers. They are the tares revealed by God's work in the last days and they are, in essence, demons and antichrists that oppose God. Additionally, I also saw that the persecution from family members and the harassment from religious people are all attacks that originate from Satan, and that they are intense battles being waged in the spiritual world. Satan wanted to use these people, events and things to disturb me, to cause me to renounce the true way, to betray God, enter into its "embrace," lose the chance of being saved by God and be destroyed along with it in hell. However, God's wisdom is exercised based on Satan's plots. Whenever Satan attacked and harassed me, God guided me and led me at every moment so that I could experience His words, and develop discernment and insight through His words. God also perfected my faith in Him, and He enabled my faith in Him to become true, resolute, and no longer weak. I thank God for guiding me and helping me understand some truths in just over a month. Now I know the difference between good and evil, between beauty and ugliness. My faith in God has been strengthened and I have become closer to God. Pain is truly God's blessing! In my future life of faith, I wish to experience even more of God's work and I am willing to follow Almighty God until the very end!

23. A Battle

By Zhang Hui, China

My name is Zhang Hui, and in 1993 my entire family came to believe in the Lord Jesus. I was an enthusiastic seeker, so I quickly became a preacher. I would often travel around to different churches to work and preach. After a few years, I quit my job and began to serve

the Lord full time. However, for some unknown reason, my brothers' and sisters' faith and love gradually cooled, and jealousy and strife grew between co-workers. I also felt that my spirit was withering, and I had nothing left to preach on. In 2005, my wife got cancer, and she died soon after that. This was a huge blow for me and I became even weaker. One day, I went to stay at my cousin's house and met two sisters there who preached Almighty God's gospel of the kingdom. Over several days of fellowship and debate, I came to truly believe that the Lord Jesus had returned and that He is Almighty God in the flesh. Through reading Almighty God's words, my thirsty heart was watered and supplied, and I savored the sweetness of the Holy Spirit's work, understanding many truths and mysteries I had never understood before. However, just as I was immersed in the joy of reunion with the Lord, the temptations and attacks of Satan came creeping ever closer to me ...

One afternoon, I was practicing spiritual devotions when there was a sudden knock on the door. When I opened it, I found Pastor Li Yang and Co-worker Wang Jun from my old church standing outside. I startled with surprise, and wondered: "What are they doing here? Could it be that they have learned of my faith in Almighty God? Before, when the brothers and sisters who were good seekers began to believe in Almighty God, Pastor Li and Co-worker Wang frightened them with rumors and incited their families to coerce them into shunning The Church of Almighty God. They did everything in their power to block them from following Almighty God. Today, I don't know what kind of tactics they're going to use to disturb me." I greeted them and sat them down. Soon after, my daughter Xiaoyan and my son Dayong came back too. I was puzzled: My kids had said they were really busy with work, so why would both of them come home today? Could it be that Pastor Li had them come? It seemed that Li Yang and Wang Jun had come prepared! I hurriedly prayed to God: "Almighty God! Today, they have definitely come to hinder and disrupt me. God, my stature is too small. I beg You to guide me and help me to deal with them. I am willing to stand witness for You!" After praying, my heart calmed down. At that moment, Li Yang flashed a disingenuous smile and said: "Brother Zhang, I've heard that you believe in Eastern Lightning now. Is that true? No matter how much truth there is in Eastern Lightning, we cannot accept it. Brother Zhang, we've all believed in the Lord for many years, and have preached and done work for Him. We are all clear on the fact that the Lord Jesus was crucified and became a sin offering, which has redeemed us from our sin. We have also enjoyed the rich grace, and the peace and joy bestowed on us by the Lord, so we must uphold the name and the way of the Lord

at all times. We cannot believe in another God. Isn't your departing from the Lord Jesus and believing in Almighty God a betrayal of the Lord?"

I calmly said: "Brother Li, when we speak, we ought to be objective and practical, support our contentions with evidence and not make arbitrary condemnations. Have you looked into the way of Eastern Lightning? Have you read Almighty God's words? You've never investigated it, so how can you come to the conclusion that I've betrayed the Lord by accepting Eastern Lightning? Do you know where the truth comes from? Do you know who expresses the truth? The Lord Jesus said, '**I am the way, the truth, and the life**' (John 14:6). God is the truth! How can you say that no matter how much truth there is in Eastern Lightning, you won't accept it? Isn't that intentionally resisting the truth, and resisting God? If we were to do that, would we even count as believers in the Lord? To be honest, because the pastors and elders of the religious world openly resist and condemn Almighty God's work of the last days, when I started believing in Almighty God I too was afraid that I might be wrong, and that I might have gone astray. But, later I read a lot of Almighty God's words, and I've discovered that they are all the truth, that they reveal many mysteries, such as the mysteries of God's 6,000-year management plan and the inside truth of the three stages of work, the mysteries of God becoming flesh, the true inside story of the Bible, and more. The confusion and difficulties I've faced in my many years of believing in the Lord have all been resolved through Almighty God's words. The more I read God's words, the more I feel that these are the utterances of the Holy Spirit, that they are God's voice. I firmly believe that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned, and that the Lord is appearing to us! Brother Li, Brother Wang, Almighty God and the Lord Jesus are the same God. Believing in Almighty God is welcoming the Lord's coming! Let's think about it. When the Lord Jesus came to work, many people left the temple to follow Him. At the time, there were certainly many people who passed judgment on them saying that they had betrayed Jehovah God and were guilty of apostasy. Now we all know that although the Lord Jesus' work of redemption was different from Jehovah God's work of issuing the law, and God's name changed as well, the Lord Jesus and Jehovah God are one and the same God. Believing in the Lord Jesus is not betraying Jehovah God, but is rather keeping pace with God's footsteps and gaining His salvation. In fact, those who believed in Jehovah God but did not follow the Lord Jesus were the ones who were truly forsaking God and betraying Him. The same goes for today. Even though Almighty God's work of judgment in the last days is not the same as the Lord Jesus' work of

redemption, and God's name has changed, Almighty God and the Lord Jesus are one and the same God. This is an undeniable fact. In the Age of Grace, the Lord Jesus' work of redemption only forgave man's sins, but did not absolve man of their satanic dispositions and sinful nature. Almighty God's work of judgment in the last days is to resolve man's satanic dispositions and sinful nature, to fully save them, to have them cast off the influence of Satan and be gained by God. Clearly, these two stages of work are complementary, closely linked and deepen as they progress. This truly is done by one God. My belief in Almighty God is not a betrayal of the Lord Jesus. It is keeping pace with the footsteps of the Lamb. If we only believe in the Lord Jesus and refuse to follow Almighty God, not only will we be the same as the Pharisees who only believed in Jehovah God and rejected the Lord Jesus, losing God's salvation, but we will also suffer God's punishment. Only this is true resistance and betrayal of the Lord! Wouldn't you say so?"

When Li Yang heard me say this, he looked very uncomfortable, and Wang Jun tried to ease the situation by saying: "Elder Zhang, Pastor Li is giving you this advice out of a sense of responsibility for your life, fearing you may take the wrong path. You have believed in the Lord for many years and you have served the Lord together. Over the years, getting through all these ups and downs has not been easy. You are an elder in our church and you have given a lot for the work of the church. All of our brothers and sisters respect you and trust you, but you leaving the church and believing in Almighty God has been so disappointing for them! Elder Zhang, please come back soon!"

Li Yang then took the lead, trying to cajole me, saying: "Brother Wang is right. You've worked hard all these years. How can you so cavalierly throw away the prestige and status you've built up in the church? It's such a shame! Turn back now. Everyone is waiting for you to come back! Our church has set up a retirement home, we've made connections with churches abroad and they're giving us financial support. If you come back, we'll provide a car for you right away. If you'd like to manage the retirement home, or manage the church, or continue to take care of the church's finances, that's all up to you. Whatever you want to do is fine!" The more I listened to them, the more I felt something was off. What they were saying didn't sound at all like things believers in the Lord would say. The devil Satan's temptation of the Lord Jesus as told in the Bible came to mind: "Again, the devil takes Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And said to Him, All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and

worship me” (Matthew 4:8–9). Didn’t all those things they were saying have exactly the same feeling, the same tone as what Satan said? Wasn’t this Satan’s temptation? Their goal in enticing me with fame, status, and wealth was to have me turn my back on the true way and betray Almighty God. This was Satan’s trickery! I’d believed in God for over ten years and had finally welcomed the Lord’s return. I could not fall for Satan’s trickery now or else I’d regret it all my life. I realized then that God was leading me, guiding me, so that I could recognize their cunning scheme. Thinking of this, I sternly asserted, “Haven’t I believed in the Lord these years with the hope of welcoming His return? Now that He has returned, my only choice can be to go with God. Don’t try to persuade me anymore. I will not return to religion again.”

At this moment, my daughter said to me in tears, “Dad. Please listen to us! Mom passed away recently and we’re already suffering enough. If you continue to believe in Eastern Lightning, how will we face brothers and sisters from our church in the future? Our brothers and sisters will abandon us!” Seeing my children brimming with tears, I felt much pain and suffering in my heart. I thought of how sad they had been because they had just lost their mother, and how they would be laughed at and abandoned because of my faith in Almighty God. I really didn’t have the heart to allow them to undergo any more suffering. I felt deeply conflicted in my heart: If I agreed to the conditions set out by Li Yang and Wang Jun to return to religion, my family would be able to live harmoniously; if I didn’t follow God’s last incarnation who has come among men to save mankind, that would be a betrayal of God, and I would lose my chance at salvation. I was in a dilemma about how to choose. In the midst of this pain all I could do was silently cry out to God: “Oh God, I’m caught between a rock and a hard place and my heart is weak. I beg You to give me faith and strength so that I can be free of their disturbances and become resolute in my faith to follow You.” After praying, I thought of some of God’s words I had read a few days earlier: **“You must be awake and waiting at every moment, and you must pray more before Me. You must recognize the various plots and cunning schemes of Satan, know the spirit, know people and be able to discern all kinds of people, matters and things.... Satan’s various hideous features are set before you; do you stop and backslide, or do you stand up and walk onward, relying on Me? Thoroughly expose Satan’s corrupt and ugly features, spare no feelings and show no mercy! Fight Satan to the death!”** (“Chapter 17” of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

Almighty God's words gave me strength and served as a reminder that I must learn to have discernment. What I had encountered that day was full of Satan's deceit and trickery. They used status, money, and my own emotions to tempt and attack me, causing a disturbance in my heart with the goal of having me betray God. I absolutely could not fall into Satan's trap or fall prey to its tricks! So, I said to my children, "Xiaoyan, Dayong, I've looked into it and I have clarity. Almighty God is the true God, and His words and work are the truth and the true way. For so many years we have longed for the Lord's return, and today we've found the footsteps of God and the true way. This is more precious than anything. We can't give up the true way just because we're afraid of being abandoned by others. If they abandon us, if they no longer want us, there's nothing frightening about that. People can always go on living after others turn their backs on them, but if we believe in God, and do not seek or investigate the true way, if we lose our chance to be raptured by the Lord and are cast out and eliminated by God's work in the last days, we will be ruined. We will definitely meet with disaster and be punished! What meaning would our lives have then? Xiaoyan, Dayong, you don't understand. If you could investigate the work of Almighty God in earnest, you would recognize that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned." When Li Yang and Wang Jun saw how resolute I was in my beliefs, all they could do was leave in helpless frustration.

A few days later, Li Yang and Wang Jun came to my house again. This time they did not urge me to return to the church, but instead they used marriage to tempt me. Li Yang said, "Brother Zhang! Your wife passed away, your daughter has gotten married, and your son is not at home. You are all alone. You really should have someone here to cook for you. Sister Wang from our church is single now too, and she's fairly well-off. Our church can help the two of you make a match, and then you can serve the Lord together. What do you think? You should give it some more thought. Our brothers and sisters in the church are praying for you, hoping that you'll come back soon. You mustn't follow that road into darkness!" Sister Wang called me that evening, and during the call she continually urged me to return to the church. She also said that if I was short of money for my son's marriage, 100,000 or 200,000 yuan, I need only say the word.... Hearing her say this, and thinking of how Sister Wang had always been good to my family and had often looked after my daughter, I felt a deep sense of gratitude to her. I became conflicted because I knew that Sister Wang had come to advise me out of the kindness of her heart and I really didn't want to say anything that would hurt her, so with a heavy heart, I said, "Sister Wang, I know you've always looked out for my

family, and I thank you for it.” After we’d ended our call, I felt a battle being waged in my heart. I had always respected Sister Wang, but today I’d hurt her feelings and I felt terrible about it! However, it was God’s protection that saved me from being enticed by her words and betraying Almighty God.

One day, I was working in the fields when Pastor Li found me and said: “Brother Zhang, even if you don’t think of yourself, you have to think of your children. Dayong just got engaged, and his fiancée’s entire family believes in the Lord. If they find out that you believe in Almighty God, would they still let her marry into your family? Wouldn’t that be disastrous for Dayong’s marriage plans? You should give it some more thought.” When I heard what Pastor Li had to say, I thought to myself: “In order to get me back into the church, they’re even using my son’s marriage to threaten me. What does my accepting God’s work in the last days have to do with my child’s marriage? What’s more, my son and his fiancée are so in love, why would they not marry just because I believe in Almighty God?” So, I very calmly told him: “Whether or not my son gets married is all in God’s hands, and it has nothing to do with my belief in Almighty God. Since I have determined that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus, I will follow Him until the end. My children might still not be clear on this and we have our misunderstandings, but one day they will understand me.”

One day, I went to my son’s electric welding shop and saw that he’d been lying on his bed all day and not working, so I was puzzled and asked him what was up. He looked depressed and said in a low voice, “Dad, my fiancée called and said that if you have set your heart on believing in Eastern Lightning, then she won’t marry me.” Hearing this really shocked and angered me, and I thought: “Li Yang and the others hate that I believe in Almighty God and it’s enough that they attack me alone. How could they use something as important as my son’s marriage to threaten me?” Seeing my son so crestfallen, I felt terrible. Tears pooled up in my eyes. My son continued, “She also says that if you do not return to the church, then if I still wanted to get married, I would have to make three promises to her. First, I would have to terminate our father-son relationship. Second, I would not be able to take care of you in your old age. Third, I would have to cut off all family ties with you. Dad, please just return to the church for the sake of our family.” My son’s words pierced my heart like a knife. I thought to myself: “Just because I believe in the true way, they’ve forced my son to cut off ties with me. Why is it so hard to believe in the true way?” I forced back my tears and said to my son, “Son, I must believe in Almighty God and I agree to your fiancée’s

demands. I won't get you mixed up in this anymore from now on. Live a happy life together." I then turned and walked out of the shop, but as I walked along the street, I couldn't hold back the tears any longer. Once I got home, I knelt down on the floor and cried out loudly: "O Almighty God! I'm in such pain! O God, I know this is the true way and that You have come, and I cannot not follow You. But ever since I accepted Your work of the last days, people have harassed me, and now my son even wants to terminate our father-son relationship. O God! My stature is too small, and I simply cannot get through this by myself. I ask You to guide me and to give me faith, so that I may stand firm...." After I'd prayed, I opened my book of hymns and read this hymn of God's words: "**When you face sufferings you must be able to not consider the flesh and not complain against God. When God hides Himself from you, you must be able to have the faith to follow Him, to maintain your previous love without allowing it to falter or disappear. No matter what God does, you must submit to His design, and be more willing to curse your own flesh than to complain against Him. When you are faced with trials you must satisfy God in spite of any reluctance to part with something you love, or bitter weeping. Only this can be called true love and faith**" ("How to Be Perfected" in Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs). As I read God's words, I felt God comforting me and encouraging me, giving me faith and allowing me to understand His will: God expects me to rely on Him, to keep faith with Him and not to betray Him no matter what adverse environment or trial may befall me. I thought about the co-workers from my old church who had come again and again to harass and pressure me more and more, and yet every time when I was in the depths of suffering, so long as I prayed to God and relied on God sincerely, God's words always enlightened and guided me, giving me strength and showing me the path to practice. I was not alone after all, for God was always beside me. At that moment, strength returned to my heart, and I became willing to endure the pain and part with the things I most treasured to satisfy God—I would absolutely not betray God and turn back.

The next day, Sister Gao and Sister Zhao from The Church of Almighty God came to my home, and I told them about what had happened over the past few days. "Brother, how do you feel about these things which have befallen?" asked Sister Gao. I thought for a moment, and said, "At first, I thought Pastor Li and the others were acting in my best interests, though they hadn't investigated Almighty God's work of the last days and they didn't understand. But I never would have thought they would have used something as important

as my son's marriage to threaten me. This is really hard for me to get my head around." Sister Zhao then said, "Brother, how about we read a passage of God's words? Almighty God said, **'In every step of work that God does within people, externally it appears to be interactions between people, as if born of human arrangements or from human interference. But behind the scenes, every step of work, and everything that happens, is a wager made by Satan before God, and requires people to stand firm in their testimony to God. Take when Job was tried, for example: Behind the scenes, Satan was making a bet with God, and what happened to Job was the deeds of men and the interference of men. Behind every step of work that God does in you is Satan's wager with God—behind it all is a battle. ... Everything people do requires them to pay a certain price in their efforts. Without actual hardship, they cannot satisfy God; they do not even come close to satisfying God, and they are just spouting empty slogans!'** ("Only Loving God Is Truly Believing in God" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's words reveal the true nature of the battle being waged in the spiritual world. When we encounter such things, it appears on the outside as though religious leaders are harassing us, but in reality, a battle is being waged in the spiritual world, and Satan is vying with God over man. Actually, many leaders of religious denominations acknowledge in their hearts that the words expressed by Almighty God are the truth, but because the work of judgment through words that God performs in the last days is so far out of keeping with their own conceptions and imaginings, and it destroys their dream of simply being blessed and being raised up into heaven, they obstinately oppose and refuse to accept God's new work. Moreover, they are afraid that if more people accept the work of Almighty God then they will lose their status and livelihoods, and so they do all they can to compel people and stop them from turning to Almighty God, making them give up the true way and betray God. In fact, they are the embodiment of Satan in the spiritual world and, in reality, their disrupting people from turning to God is Satan trying to devour people. So long as we can discern the intent and motivation behind their actions and behavior, then we will be able to thoroughly understand their essence. When Job was undergoing trials, people's physical eyes told them that thieves were taking away Job's property, but in the spiritual world Satan and God were making a wager. At the time, although Job was unaware that a battle was raging in the spiritual world, he chose to suffer all that pain and even curse the day he was born rather than blame God. Still he extolled the name of Jehovah and stood witness for God, thus shaming the devil

Satan and winning God's praise. Being now besieged by Satan, although we have suffered the pain of duress and abandonment and have lost the transient enjoyments of the flesh, we have kept to the true way, have stood witness for God and obtained God's praise. The pain we've suffered has been so worthwhile!" Hearing Almighty God's words and the sister's fellowship, my heart was brightened, and I said, "Yes, I was ignorant before and I hadn't thoroughly understood the essence of my co-workers from my old church. I thought they were acting in my best interests. Only today do I understand that they are the real-life Satan. Only through this fellowship do I now have some insight into the true situation of the battle in the spiritual world. Although I still don't understand the truth and there are certain things I still don't understand thoroughly, through this process I have personally experienced God guiding and protecting me, and this has all been God's blessing upon me." The two sisters then said happily, "Truly, thanks be to God! If they come again to harass you, pray more, and you can defeat Satan by relying on God!" Filled with faith, I nodded in agreement.

One morning, some co-workers from my old church came calling again, and I hurriedly prayed in my heart for God to give me faith, wisdom and courage. Pastor Li immediately threatened me, saying, "Brother Zhang, if you don't leave Eastern Lightning, then our church will abandon you and will not permit you to have any more contact with our brothers and sisters." I said to him, "You can abandon me if you like, but I hope that you can take responsibility for the lives of the more than one thousand brothers and sisters in the church. You may not accept that the Lord has returned, but don't try to obstruct the brothers and sisters from investigating and accepting the true way. Look at the current situation in the church—brothers and sisters feel weak and dispirited. Some have gone to find work elsewhere and some have left the church and no longer believe in the Lord, and there are many instances of people being possessed by devils. The church has clearly lost the Lord's care and protection. Then look at the situation with us preachers—there is not a shred of new light in our sermons, we always preach tired old things and brothers and sisters are simply not being supplied. Is this not worth reflecting on and pondering deeply about? Is it not worth us seeking to find the truth of the matter?" Having said this, my heart felt stirred and I said sincerely to them, "All of us here are the primary co-workers of the church, and we would do well to consider for a moment: We talk about shepherding the Lord's flock all day long, but the Lord has returned to perform new work and to express new words, and yet we don't seek or investigate it in the slightest, and we don't lead our brothers and sisters to

accept being watered and nourished by God's words. Instead, we stop brothers and sisters from investigating the true way by any means possible—by doing this, are we not causing our brothers and sisters to die of thirst and weariness by keeping them bound to religion? Are the people who are capable of this good servants or wicked servants? Have you ever thought of what the consequences of these actions will be?" Just then, Pastor Li said in exasperation, "We've come to your home to say this to you today because we mean you well, and yet you lecture us instead!" Speaking with the force of justice, I said, "You have come again and again to harass me, knowing full well that The Church of Almighty God is possessed of the truth, and yet you won't allow me to accept it and you won't allow me to gain life. Is this your idea of 'meaning well'? You have spread rumors about me, sowed discord between me and my children, and caused my son to end our father-son relationship. Is this the love you speak of? Have you really meant me well by cooking up all these schemes or have you some ulterior motives?" Hearing me speak like this, Li Yang's expression changed at once, and he yelled angrily at me, "You don't know what's good for you!" I shouted back at him, "Let's go our separate ways from now on. God takes responsibility for my life, and you need not concern yourselves with it!" Hearing me say this, Li Yang and the others left looking dejected. From that day on, no one came to harass me again.

Having experienced this spiritual battle, I came to have some discernment of Satan's trickery and I also came to have a thorough understanding of the God-defying essence of leaders in the religious world. I was never again constrained by the evil forces of religion, and was at last free and liberated to follow Almighty God!

24. God's Words Guided Me Through Satan's Temptations

By Ma Xin, China

Since my husband was not engaged in honest work, drank a lot, and showed no concern for family matters, I was often mired in bitterness and pain. At a time when I did not have the strength to struggle on, a relative shared Almighty God's gospel of the kingdom with me. Through reading God's word, I understood that God expresses the truth and does the judgment work of the last days in order to save the human race from the hands of Satan.

He allows man to understand, obey, and turn toward Him in order to receive His protection and care. As a result, I joyfully accepted Almighty God's work of the last days and quickly began living a life of the church. However, just as I was feeling fortunate and happy because I had found something I could depend on in life, Satan's temptations pounced on me like a wild beast chasing its prey, and a spiritual war ensued ...

One day, my daughter came home from school and said to me, "Mom, today when I was helping my teacher bring some things upstairs, I accidentally banged my hand into the railing. It hurts a lot." Concerned, I took a look at her hand. It wasn't red or swollen. There was just a bit of broken skin at the base of her thumb. I comforted my daughter and said, "Don't worry, it'll be better in a couple of days." I thought, "Now I believe in Almighty God, so with God's protection and care, my child will certainly be fine." However, ten or so days passed, and her thumb and half her palm were getting more and more swollen. After two months, the whole area was black and purple. Her thumb had become bigger than her big toe. I then became very worried. My husband and I brought our daughter to the hospital immediately, but nothing out of the ordinary turned up through all the standard examinations. I silently prayed to God in my heart, "Almighty God. What is wrong with my daughter's hand? I am willing to look to You and entrust my daughter to You. Please care for her and protect her." However, when family and friends saw her hand, they all said, "Something really weird is wrong with your daughter's hand." Her grandmother also anxiously said, "She will probably have a disability in her hand." Hearing these things gave rise to a mix of emotions; I felt really uneasy. If my daughter really does become disabled in that hand, what will we do from here on out? She is so young. How can she bear this kind of setback? The more I thought, the more vexed, worried and pained I felt. I thought, "I've been praying to God all this time. Why hasn't my daughter's hand gotten better? God has not answered my prayers; He has not protected my daughter!" My heart was filled with misunderstandings about and complaints toward God. And during this time, my husband botched things up at work again due to his drunkenness and his boss wanted to fire him. When it rains, it pours—it was just one thing after another! When I heard this news, I became even more distraught. If my husband lost his job, how would our family get by? These things left me feeling very ill at ease and I couldn't calm down no matter what I did. Even when I read God's word, I was unable to absorb any of it. I thought, "I believe in God. Why are all these bad things happening in my family? Why is God not watching over us?" I became very negative over

this.

When my relative who had shared the gospel with me learned of my thoughts, she patiently shared fellowship with me, “The adversities we’re facing today are because of Satan’s disturbance—there is a war going on in the spiritual world. God’s work in the last days is to save mankind, so when people forsake Satan and return to God, Satan won’t resign itself to defeat. It will disturb and deceive man in every possible way. It will bring all sorts of suffering and tribulations to people so that they start having misunderstandings and complaints about God. Its purpose is to get man to deny and reject God, to lose God’s salvation and once more return to Satan’s domain. If we are this negative and distance ourselves from God, then we have fallen for Satan’s crafty ruse! In fact, these things would be unavoidable even if we didn’t believe in God, but we give Satan an opportunity to harm us when our perspective on faith is wrong. Let’s take a look at a passage of God’s words. Almighty God said, **‘Most people believe in God for the sake of peace and other benefits. Unless it is to your benefit, you do not believe in God, and if you cannot receive God’s graces, you fall into a sulk. How could what you have said be your true stature? When it comes to inevitable family incidents such as children falling ill, loved ones being hospitalized, poor crop yields, and persecution by family members, even these oft-occurring, quotidian matters are too much for you. When such things happen, you are thrown into a panic, you do not know what to do—and most of the time, you complain about God. You complain that God’s words tricked you, that God’s work made a mockery of you. Do you not have such thoughts? Do you think such things happen among you only rarely? You spend every day living amid such events. You do not give the slightest thought to the success of your faith in God, and how to meet God’s will. Your true stature is too small, even smaller than a little chick’s. ... You are overflowing with complaints, and you sometimes do not attend gatherings or eat and drink the words of God because of this, sometimes becoming negative for a great length of time’** (“Practice (3)” in The Word Appears in the Flesh).”

Hearing these words of God, my heart trembled: God really scrutinizes the depths of human hearts! Each and every word reached deep into my heart. The reason for my faith really was because I wanted my family to be safe! When I encountered adversity, I misunderstood God, I complained about God and I lost my faith in Him. I was living in a negative state and my stature was too small. My relative went on in fellowship, “God’s words

point out our faulty outlook of having faith just to seek blessings. Due to our notions and imagination, we think that as long as we believe in God, He will bless us and ensure we are safe and sound, that everything goes smoothly. Since this notion exists within our hearts, as soon as we encounter unhappy situations in our lives, we immediately blame God. As a result, we may deny, betray or abandon God at any time. Satan understands all too well this fatal weakness of ours; that is why it brings us all kinds of calamities and suffering in order to disrupt us. If we are unable to see through Satan's crafty machinations, we will oppose, blame, and deny God in spite of ourselves, and we may even forsake and betray God. We will ultimately be seized and swallowed up by Satan. God's words say, **'On earth, all manner of evil spirits are forever on the prowl for a place to rest, and are endlessly searching for human corpses that can be consumed'** ("Chapter 10" of God's Words to the Entire Universe in The Word Appears in the Flesh). What is revealed by God's words is entirely the truth of the spiritual world! The moment we are swallowed up by Satan, we lose our chance at being saved by God. We must see through Satan's crafty schemes!" My heart brightened considerably as soon as I heard her say these things. I realized that the things that my family was encountering were in fact Satan's disturbance and calamity. At the same time, God revealed my faulty outlook on faith. I said to my relative, "Since believing in God, I have thought that God is a God that bestows grace upon man and that as long as you believe in God, things will go smoothly in your family and you'll receive God's care and protection. When I encountered problems in my life, I thought that something was wrong, and that having faith means that I shouldn't have these kinds of problems. Only after hearing you read those passages of God's words did I understand that my perspective on faith has been wrong and that Satan has been using this as a way to disrupt me and get me to generate notions and misunderstandings about God, and to distance myself from Him. I really fell for Satan's cunning schemes! From now on, no matter what Satan does to harass me, I have to see through its tricks. I will no longer blame, misunderstand or especially betray God. I must stand witness for God. Regardless of whether my child's hand gets better or whether my husband is able to work, I am willing to entrust these things to God and let God make His arrangements." To my surprise, once I became willing to obey God's arrangements and orchestrations, within a short period of time, my daughter's hand started to suppurate. When the doctor cleared out the pus, he discovered that there was a splinter stuck at the base of her finger. After that was removed, it wasn't long before my daughter's hand

recovered. After this experience, I could see that once I turned my mistaken perspectives around and became willing to obey God, Satan was shamed and defeated. God removed my daughter's ailment. God is truly miraculous and almighty!

However, sinister Satan would not fold. When one of its tricks fails, it will try another. One night at around 8 p.m., my husband called me out of the blue and asked me to go downstairs to give him some money. I bundled up our baby, just a little over one year old at the time, and went downstairs, where I saw my husband getting out of a taxi with some effort. He even had great difficulty walking. Seeing him in this state, I felt really anxious and I did not know what to do. All I could do was continuously call out to God, "Almighty God. Faced with this situation, I ask You to protect my heart. My stature is small. Please give me the faith to stand witness in this kind of situation and to not blame You." I felt significantly more at peace after praying. But after that my husband's legs got worse and worse to the point that he couldn't even walk. I had no choice but to have his elder brother and his wife take him to the hospital. I was so worried when I thought about how my husband couldn't use his legs, so I once again prayed to God, "God! My husband is not well. It is Satan coming to disrupt me so that I will complain to You and betray You. I want to see through Satan's tricks. No matter how costly my husband's treatment is, I will not blame You. I am willing to obey You. I ask You to protect me so that I am able to stand witness for You." After praying I felt much more at peace. Not long after that, my sister-in-law called and said that my husband wouldn't go to the hospital; he insisted on coming home. Believing this embodied God's will, I agreed. After they got back, my brother-in-law and his wife tried pinching his legs and washing them with warm water. They busied themselves for quite a while, but my husband still could not feel anything in his legs. Out of desperation, he said, "It's over. I don't have any feeling in my legs!" Hearing this, tears suddenly rolled down my face and I thought, "That's it. He won't be able to walk anymore. What will we do if he's paralyzed? How will our family get by?"

Just as I was about to be overcome by pain and despair, I thought of God's words: "**If many things come upon you that are not in line with your notions but you are able to put them aside and know God's actions from these things, and in the midst of refinements you reveal your heart of love for God, this is standing witness. If your home is peaceful, you enjoy comforts of the flesh, no one is persecuting you, and your brothers and sisters in the church obey you, can you display your heart of love for God? Can this refine you? It is only through refinement that your love for God can**

be shown, and it is only through things occurring that are not in line with your conceptions that you can be perfected. It is through many negative things, many adversities that God perfects you. It is through many of Satan's actions, accusations, and its expression in many people that God allows you to acquire knowledge, thus perfecting you" ("Those Who Are to Be Made Perfect Must Undergo Refinement" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Through God's words, I understood that Satan was using my husband's condition to work its machinations. Since my mindset of obtaining blessings from God and conducting transactions with Him in exchange for faith had not been entirely resolved, Satan did this in order to draw me into misunderstanding, blaming, denying, and betraying God, ultimately losing God's salvation. But God used just such an environment to perfect my faith in Him, allowing me to see things according to God's words and see through Satan's plotting so that I would no longer haggle with God with the intention of obtaining blessings. This allowed me to stand on God's side and bear firm witness for Him in the battle between God and Satan. Once I understood God's will, I silently prayed to God, "God, protect my heart so that I may stand firm in this situation. Regardless of what happens with my husband, I will not blame You. Even if he is paralyzed, I am willing to continue to follow You." Amazingly, as soon as I finished praying, I heard my husband say happily, "I'm better now. I can move my legs." I was incredibly excited—God truly is wise and almighty! God did not intentionally make me suffer these things. Rather, He used these circumstances to test me and to change the mistaken views I held in my faith!

Afterward, I continued reading God's words, "**Satan has continuously carried out plots; humanity has been continuously corrupted by Satan, and Jehovah God has also continuously carried out His wise work. He has never failed, and He has never ceased His work from the creation of the world through now. After humanity was corrupted by Satan, He continuously worked among people to defeat His enemy who corrupts humanity. This battle will continue from the beginning until the world's end. In doing all this work, He has not only allowed humanity, who has been corrupted by Satan, to receive His great salvation, but also allowed them to see His wisdom, almightiness and authority, and in the end He will let humanity see His righteous disposition—punishing the wicked and rewarding the good. He has battled Satan to this very day and has never been defeated, for He is a wise God, and His wisdom is exercised based on Satan's plots. And so He not only makes everything in heaven**

submit to His authority; He also makes everything upon earth rest below His footstool, and not last of all, He makes those evildoers who invade and harass humanity fall within His chastisement. All the results of the work are brought about because of His wisdom” (“You Should Know How the Whole of Humanity Has Developed to the Present Day” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). I understood from God’s words that ever since mankind was corrupted by Satan, Satan has been disrupting and harming man all along. And all along the way, God has been saving man so that he may break free from Satan’s harm. Looking back on my own experience, ever since I gained my faith, Satan never stopped coming up with schemes to harass me. It used my daughter’s and my husband’s health problems to make me negative and weak, to have me misunderstand and blame God. It attempted in vain to get me to depart from and betray God, to drag me down into hell. Also, God’s wisdom is always based on Satan’s schemes. God used Satan’s disruptions to reveal my incorrect perspective on faith while also using His words to enlighten and illuminate me. This helped me recognize my motive of obtaining blessings from God and conducting transactions with Him. Through actual people, events, and things, God has allowed me to see through to Satan’s evil nature and despicable motives, enabling me to renounce evil and turn to virtue. I will no longer live by my desire to obtain blessings. With genuine faith in God, I can defeat Satan and be gained by God.

These experiences showed me how real God’s love and salvation for man is! From now on, I will pray to God and lean on God more, and I will stand witness through trials. I am determined to follow God unswervingly to the very end!

25. What I Gained Through Personally Experiencing Satan’s Temptations

By Xinzhi, Australia

When returning to South Africa to handle some affairs in December 2017, I met a sister in the Lord, who told me that the Lord Jesus has returned as the incarnated Almighty God. She also fellowshiped with me in detail about such truths and mysteries as God’s six-thousand-year management plan, the purpose of God’s three stages of work and the significance of God’s name. After listening to her fellowship, I felt both amazed and excited.

I had never before heard these truths, but I knew that only God Himself could reveal the mysteries of His work. I therefore became certain from the bottom of my heart that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned, and I gladly accepted Almighty God's work of the last days. Every day, I enjoyed the watering and supply of God's words and I felt incredibly at ease and supported. Little did I know, however, that Satan's temptations were hiding just around the corner ...

After I accepted God's work of the last days, I actively attended church meetings. However, for reasons unbeknownst to me, whenever my brothers and sisters began reading God's words, I would become sleepy. This would happen even when I rested before the meeting. My brothers and sisters would have to wake me several times, but no sooner had they woken me than I would fall asleep again. In this manner, I would doze through almost an entire meeting, my mind was always fuzzy, nothing would sink in, and this upset me greatly. I was deeply puzzled: I wouldn't normally feel sleepy when doing anything else, so why did I feel so sleepy as soon as I got to a church meeting? I ended up hoping for the meetings to end as soon as possible, and it eventually got to the point where I didn't even want to attend meetings anymore. One sister saw that I was always dozing at meetings, and so she shared fellowship with me, saying that this was a spiritual battle. She then read to me a passage of God's words, **"God works, God cares for a person, looks upon a person, and Satan dogs His every step. Whoever God favors, Satan also watches, trailing along behind. If God wants this person, Satan would do everything in its power to obstruct God, using various evil ways to tempt, harass and wreck the work God does in order to achieve its hidden objective. What is its objective? It does not want God to have anyone; it wants all those that God wants, to occupy them, control them, to take charge of them so they worship it"** ("God Himself, the Unique IV" in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

She gave fellowship, saying, "In the last days, Almighty God expresses the words and performs the work of judgment in order to transform and purify our satanic dispositions, to enable us to be totally free of the shackles of sin and be purified and saved by God. Satan, however, does not wish for us to be saved by God, and so it tries to disturb us in every possible way. For instance, we feel sleepy as soon as we start reading God's words at a meeting, and yet have lots of energy when we do anything else—this is obviously Satan trying to disturb us. Satan disturbs us so much that we are unable to quiet ourselves before

God to hear and contemplate His words. In this way, we will never be able to understand the truth or understand God's will no matter how long we attend meetings for. On the contrary, because of the suffering of our flesh, we become increasingly fed up with attending meetings, and it may even get to such a dangerous level that we desire to betray and leave God and return under Satan's domain. This is the cunning scheme and the malicious intent of Satan. Sister, we must see through Satan's cunning schemes, pray more and rely on God more, and have the resolve to forsake Satan, for only in this way will we be able to overcome the disturbances and attacks of Satan!"

After listening to the sister's fellowship, everything suddenly became clear, and I felt a little afraid and also somewhat angry. I thought: "Satan is truly terrible! No wonder I feel sleepy as soon as I get to a meeting. It turns out that this is Satan trying to disturb me." I thought about how I had been dozing off as soon as I got to meetings, how my brain would feel like sludge even after the brothers and sisters woke me, and how I had even entertained the idea of not attending meetings anymore; as it turned out, I had been falling prey to Satan's cunning scheme. "No," I thought. "Next time I attend a meeting, I will forsake my flesh and give battle to Satan, and I will stand firm in my testimony in this spiritual battle!" I then prayed with the sister to God, and I announced to Satan that, no matter how it may try to disturb me, I would always persist in attending meetings and worshiping God, and that I would not be fooled by it again. In this way, when I felt sleepy again during a meeting, I would constantly declare my resolve to Satan. At the same time, I would keep praying to God, asking Him to protect my heart, and I would make a conscious effort to quiet my heart before God and contemplate His words. A week later, I no longer felt sleepy, and I was able to properly attend meetings with the brothers and sisters and fellowship God's words.

This experience allowed me to see that Satan was using this despicable method to disturb me so as to make me give up the true way—Satan is so evil and contemptible! I also came to perceive that, if we don't come before God and accept His salvation, we will only be able to live under Satan's domain, being harmed and controlled by it. Thinking about this, I made a resolution to God: No matter how Satan may try to disturb me, I will never surrender. I will believe in and follow God in earnest, and I will spread God's kingdom gospel to even more people who live under Satan's domain, so that they too might attain God's salvation of the last days and be rid of Satan's harm.

One day, I testified to a friend about God's work of the last days. She wanted to look

into it further, so I planned on talking with her about it again in a couple of days' time. Unexpectedly, however, two days later I suddenly started to feel very drowsy and my right ear became swollen inside and out. It hurt so bad that I couldn't even touch it. I thought it might have been a symptom of the flu, so I didn't think too much of it.

One morning a week later, as I was washing my face, I discovered that the right side of my face had gone numb, I couldn't close my right eye all the way, I couldn't move my eyebrow and my mouth looked askew. When I looked at myself in the mirror, I realized I looked like an old person with Alzheimer's, and I panicked, thinking: "My hearing hasn't recovered yet and now my face is all askew. I've never had this condition before. How could this have happened?" I was very afraid, so I hurried to the hospital. The doctor said I had facial paralysis and my condition was very serious, and that it wasn't certain whether or not it could be cured. Just then, I became completely enveloped in fear, and I thought: "How could I have gotten such a serious illness? What will I do if it can't be cured?" I was terror-stricken and prayed constantly to God: "O God, I'm so afraid. O God, please help me, please be with me...." After praying, God's words came to mind, **"Almighty God, the Head of all things, wields His kingly power from His throne. He rules over the universe and all things and He is guiding us on the whole earth. We shall often be close to Him, and come before Him in quietness; never shall we miss a single moment, and there are things to learn at all times. The environment around us as well as the people, matters and objects, all are permitted by His throne. Do not have a complaining heart, or God will not bestow His grace upon you. When sickness happens it is due to God's love, and His good intentions are surely behind it. Even when your body endures suffering, take no ideas from Satan. Praise God in the midst of illness and enjoy God in the midst of your praise. Do not lose heart in the face of illness, keep seeking and never give up, and God shall shine His light on you. How faithful was Job? Almighty God is an all-powerful physician! To dwell in sickness is to be sick, but to dwell in the spirit is to be well. If you have but one breath, God will not let you die"** ("Chapter 6" of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's authoritative words gave me faith and strength. "Yes," I thought. "God is all-powerful, and all things are in His hands. He also holds my life and my death in His hands, and whether or not my face will get better is up to God. Although I don't understand how I could have been struck with this illness so suddenly, I believe that God's good will is behind it. I must not misunderstand God

but should instead have faith in Him. When Job lost everything and his whole body broke out in painful boils, he still kept his faith in God and ultimately stood firm in his testimony to God. I must be like Job!" Having thought this, my anxious heart was eased.

Later, I saw the following words from God: **"Those who truly follow God are able to withstand the test of their work, whereas those who do not truly follow God are incapable of withstanding any of God's trials. Sooner or later they will be expelled, while the overcomers will remain in the kingdom. Whether or not man truly seeks God is determined by the test of his work, that is, by God's trials, and has nothing to do with the decision by man himself. God does not reject any person at whim; all that He does can utterly convince man. He does not do anything that is invisible to man, or any work that cannot convince man. Whether man's belief is true or not is proved by the facts, and cannot be decided by man. That 'wheat cannot be made into tares, and tares cannot be made into wheat' is without doubt. All those who truly love God will ultimately remain in the kingdom, and God will not mistreat anyone who truly loves Him"** ("God's Work and Man's Practice" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). Thanks be to God! By reading God's words, I understood that God does not commend every single person who believes in Him. The ones God will save are those who follow Him sincerely, who do not leave Him no matter what pain or tribulations they encounter, and who can stand witness for Him during trials. Those false believers, on the other hand, who merely believe in God with the intent of gaining His blessings will be exposed and weeded out during trials. As I contemplated God's words, I thought again about Job. During his trials, he lost his property, his children, and his whole body broke out in painful boils, yet he did not lose his faith in God, but maintained a God-fearing, God-obeying heart, extolling the holy name of Jehovah God, saying, "Jehovah gave, and Jehovah has taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah" (Job 1:21). "[S]hall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10). By saying these words, he bore resounding and beautiful testimony to God, and he caused Satan to be shamed. Then there was Abraham. When God asked him to offer up his only son Isaac as a burnt offering to God, though his heart was rent with pain, he did not complain or resist, nor did he argue with God. Instead, he obeyed God unconditionally, bore faithful testimony, and obtained God's blessing and promise. I then understood that this illness that had befallen me was another spiritual battle, behind which Satan was trying to tempt me. It was also God testing me to see whether I had true faith in God and whether or

not I was a true believer in God. Thinking back over the time since I began to believe in God, I realized that Satan had always tried to disturb me, from feeling sleepy during church meetings to my head feeling drowsy and my ear swelling up, and then suffering from facial paralysis—each of Satan’s disturbances was more severe than the last. Satan was not reconciled to allow me to accept God’s salvation but wanted to keep me under its control and within its grip, to be corrupted and toyed with at will. Through the guidance of God’s words, I came to have some discernment of Satan’s despicable motives, and I knew that I must not fall prey to its cunning schemes again, but that I must give my true heart to God and submit to His orchestrations and arrangements. Thinking about this, I no longer felt constrained by my illness, and I felt a great sense of ease and release. I then entrusted my illness to God, and I made this resolution: Whether I get better or not, I will not blame God or deny God, but will follow God till the very end!

When I became willing to bear testimony for God, I witnessed His wondrous deeds. A week later, a doctor friend of mine found out about my situation and suggested that I go to her for acupuncture. I thought that my friend’s suggestion might have come from God, so I agreed to give it a try. To my surprise, after only around three weeks of acupuncture treatment, my face began to gradually recover. I then stopped going for acupuncture, and just constantly prayed to God, entrusting my illness into His hands, and trusting God to have the final say on when I would get better. Thanks be to God! Before a month had passed, my facial paralysis was completely cured. Even my friend was surprised and said that there was no way my condition could have gotten better so quickly. I knew that God had opened a way out for me, and my faith in God grew.

Some time later, I moved to Australia after being transferred to a new job. After making contact with the brothers and sisters in the church, they came to my home to help me download Almighty God’s words as well as the software needed to attend online meetings. To my surprise, no sooner had I downloaded this software, than out of nowhere I began to feel a pain in my head and my whole body broke out in a sweat. I hurriedly lay down on the sofa, I was utterly drained of energy and felt for all the world like I was falling to pieces. It almost felt as though there were something growing in my head, and I clutched my head with both hands in pain. One of the church brothers saw the state I was in and hurriedly gave me fellowship, saying that this was Satan trying to disturb me. He told me to pray more to God, to keep my faith and stand witness for God, and not to fall prey to Satan’s cunning

schemes. The brother's reminder made me realize that a spiritual battle was once again upon me, so I hurriedly drew close to God in my heart and asked the brother to play a recitation of God's words for me to listen to. Through continually praying and listening to God's words, the pain began to subside a little. That evening, however, the pain in my head got worse. I felt as though my head were about to split open, and the pain was accompanied by a feeling of vertigo which made me so dizzy that I threw up. I was in great pain and suffering, and I couldn't help but cry, thinking: "I feel so dizzy. Will I make it through the night?" The more I thought about it, the more afraid I became, and I was really worried that I would suddenly faint and die. But I knew that these thoughts were Satan trying to disturb me, and I knew I must not blame God again like I had before. And so, I said a prayer to God: "O God, I'm suffering so much right now. I don't know why Satan won't ever let me go, and I don't know how long this illness will last. But I do not regret believing in You in this life, and no matter how much I suffer, I will never blame You, for I am sure that You are the one true God, and I will believe in You and worship You!" I prayed this way to God in my heart over and over. Just then, a line of God's words suddenly came to mind: **"Faith is like a single log bridge, those who cling abjectly to life will have difficulty in crossing it, but those who are ready to sacrifice themselves can pass over without worry"** ("Chapter 6" of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's words soothed my nerves, and they calmed my suffering, restless heart. They also showed me the path of practice: Only by being willing to give my life could I shame Satan and make it admit defeat. I thought about how I had always treasured my flesh a great deal and had considered my life more important than anything else. Satan knew my weaknesses, and so it used the illness of my flesh to disturb and attack me, trying to make me blame God and betray God. But after experiencing the temptations and disturbances of Satan time and time again, I understood that these were all cunning schemes employed by Satan to try and stop me from coming before God, and that they were also God's way of testing me. I therefore made a resolution to God: "No matter how Satan might try to disturb me or how my flesh might suffer, I will hold onto my faith and follow You till the very end!" Thanks be to God, for when I became willing to stand witness for God even at the cost of my own life, the pain in my head gradually went away, and my health has stayed fine ever since.

During Satan's repeated attempts to disturb and tempt me, my flesh did indeed suffer to a degree, but I feel like it was all valuable and meaningful. By experiencing Satan's

temptations, I saw clearly Satan's despicable and evil ugly countenance, as well as the truth of how it harms and hurts people. I saw that Satan uses all manner of underhanded means, even exploiting our Achilles' heels, in order to attack and tempt us, vainly attempting to make us misunderstand and blame God and even betray God and lose God's salvation of the last days. Satan is so evil and despicable! During my experiences, I always felt God beside me, using His words to enlighten and guide me, enabling me to understand His will, to see through Satan's cunning schemes and to have the faith to stand witness for God! I truly witnessed the fact that God's wisdom is eternally exercised based on the cunning schemes of Satan, and that God uses Satan's temptations and cunning schemes to test us, and to perfect our faith in Him and our love for Him—I have truly come to appreciate the love God has for me, and I give thanks and praise to God!

26. Who Is the Obstacle on the Road to the Heavenly Kingdom?

By Meng'ai, Malaysia

The year my husband died, I was deep in despair, and on top of that I had the added burden of raising my children. Hardship had suddenly befallen my life, but I had the love of the Lord with me all along and, with the help of my brothers and sisters, I got through this difficult time. To repay the Lord's love, I continued to make donations and serve the church, and have been doing so for over thirty years. In this time, I have experienced the thriving of the church and seen the glorious event of the spreading of the gospel of the Lord Jesus. I've also witnessed desolation and helplessness in the church. I thought back to when the Holy Spirit first began to do the great work in the church, when we experienced enjoyment and gained much from listening to the pastor's preaching. There was mutual love among the brothers and sisters just as if we were all one family, and everyone was united in spreading the gospel and bearing witness to the Lord. Later, without knowing what had happened, there was no longer any light in what the pastor preached. It was like everything was just the same old story repeated again and again, and the believers simply could not derive any nourishment or supply. Their faith and love gradually waned, and there were fewer and fewer people coming to gatherings. Those of us who participated in service were also just going

through the motions. We all acted according to the wishes of the people in the ministry and not at all in the service of God, but rather we just exerted ourselves in front of other people and tried to please them. I knew that this kind of service was not in line with God's will, and so it was very painful for me. I also felt helpless, with no idea how to walk the path ahead of me. I therefore hoped all the more for the Lord to return as soon as possible, so that all these problems would be solved.

Just when I was feeling at a loss, in 2016 I looked into the work of Almighty God in the last days. I read a great deal of the word of Almighty God and I listened to what the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God fellowshiped and what they bore witness to, and finally I understood that the Lord Jesus had long since incarnated and come into the world to express His words and perform the last days' work of judgment beginning at the house of God, and He was doing all this to completely purify and save mankind and to bring mankind into the heavenly kingdom. The word of Almighty God made clear to me the mystery of the Lord's return which I had thought about for so many years. I understood that the Lord's return was divided into the two forms of the hidden advent and of coming openly. The Lord first becomes incarnate as the Son of man at the hidden advent to express His words and to judge and cleanse man, and to make a group of overcomers before the disasters. When the great disasters descend, He will reward the good and punish the evil, and He will come openly, appearing to all nations and peoples. At that time, the work of God incarnate at the hidden advent will already have ended, and all who resist and condemn God's work in the last days will meet the disasters with much weeping and gnashing of teeth. The brothers and sisters also fellowshiped to me such truths as the three stages of God's work to save mankind, the significance of God's incarnation, and how God performs the work of judgment in the last days. I then understood why before, in serving the church, we had not had God's guidance, and why there was no path forward for us in reading the Scripture, prayer, and Bible study. I understood why we had not felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. God had already performed new work, concluded the Age of Grace and brought about the Age of Kingdom. The Holy Spirit was no longer working within the churches of the Age of Grace, so people's spirits had withered and grown dark, devoid of any joy or contentment, and they could not obtain any sustenance in their spiritual lives. It was thanks to God's guidance and direction that I was able to recognize God's voice in the word of Almighty God, and I happily accepted the work of God in the last days. Afterward, the brothers and sisters would

frequently share the word of Almighty God with me online. Seeing the movies, videos of choral dances, and music videos produced by The Church of Almighty God provided great sustenance to me, and I thanked God from the bottom of my heart for leading me before His throne. I enjoyed being shepherded and nourished by the word of God, and I entered a blissful life of living face to face with God.

One day, a wife of one of the pastors in the church sent me a message out of the blue, saying: "Why did you like a post by Eastern Lightning? You also allowed it to be posted on your timeline, and it goes against the Lord's will to do so. If our parishioners see the post about Eastern Lightning, and become interested in the words of Almighty God, they'll all go read up on Eastern Lightning, and then what will we do? You mustn't get in touch with the people from Eastern Lightning again. You should delete their contact information right away...." I replied: "The gospel movies, hymns, and music videos of The Church of Almighty God are all quite good, and I've gotten a lot out of them. I should give it a like!" I wanted to send more messages to the pastor's wife, but before I'd even finished my message, she said many things attacking and condemning Almighty God, and slandering The Church of Almighty God. I saw that she had no desire whatsoever to investigate this great matter of the Lord's return, but just made whatever judgments and condemnatory remarks she saw fit. I didn't want to talk about this with her anymore, so I just changed the subject.

A few days after this happened, Pastor Yang came looking for me to have a talk. After some pleasantries, Pastor Yang asked me, "Have you looked into any other religious groups online?" I didn't know why Pastor Yang would ask me such a question, and I said, "My friends on Facebook belong to many different denominations, and if I think the articles they post are correct and good, I always try to understand them and see if there's any new light in them. Are you saying it's wrong to do this?" Pastor Yang asked me again, "Did you convert to Eastern Lightning two years ago? Why do you want to investigate Eastern Lightning? Also, do you frequently go looking for so-and-so (a sister who had accepted God's work in the last days, whose pictures had been posted and who had been condemned and abandoned by the pastor of her original church)? ..." Hearing the barrage of questions from Pastor Yang, I started to get annoyed, and said, "The Church of Almighty God is good, and within it there is the truth and the work of the Holy Spirit. I will follow along wherever there is the truth and the work of the Holy Spirit, and this is only proper. There is no new light in our church, and my spirit is darkened and can't find any sustenance there. I want to find a church that has

the work of the Holy Spirit, where my life can receive the nourishment of the truth. The teachings of Eastern Lightning appeal to me, and the words of Almighty God are all the truth. They allow me to obtain sustenance. I wasn't wrong to investigate Eastern Lightning, and I am free to do so." Pastor Yang said, "What the people from Eastern Lightning preach oversteps the Bible, and there are no other words of God than those that are within the Bible. If what they preach deviates from the Bible, then it is wrong." I said, "I once heard a preacher say the same thing, and I used to be of the same viewpoint myself. But after reading the word of Almighty God, and hearing what the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God fellowshipped, I have come to know that this view is just our own notions and imaginings. It is not at all in accord with the truth and it does not tally with the facts. God is all-encompassing, and God is rich in wisdom. How can we delimit God's words and work to just the Bible? The Bible says: 'And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written' (John 21:25). We can see here that the words and work of God recorded in the Bible are too limited in scope. Not all that the Lord Jesus said at the time was written down in the Bible, much less the words spoken by the returned Lord. On top of that, the work of Almighty God is built on the foundation laid by the Lord Jesus. The work of Almighty God and that of the Lord Jesus are the work of one God...." Pastor Yang didn't listen to a word I said and had no interest whatsoever in seeking and investigating. He just continued to say things resisting and condemning Almighty God and The Church of Almighty God, and he asked me, "How did you learn about the website of The Church of Almighty God? Do you have their books? Have you preached the work of Almighty God to anyone else? Have you preached it to your children? Give me the names of the people in The Church of Almighty God...." He also demanded that I never again attend a gathering with people from The Church of Almighty God. If I didn't listen to him and continued to be in contact with The Church of Almighty God, then he would expel me from the church, he would never again let me go to any church and would thoroughly smear my reputation. I was shocked by the Pastor Yang I saw right in front of me. How had Pastor Yang, who was always so good-natured and humble, and always spoke such gentle words, transformed into such a barbaric and unreasonable person? I told him, "It is my right to investigate the truth, and no one has any right to interfere with this. As for whether or not the teachings of Eastern Lightning are the true way, you should first of all not judge and condemn it blindly. You can

go and investigate for yourself on the website of The Church of Almighty God, where they have a lot of content. There are all kinds of books of God's words. Go see for yourself whether the word of Almighty God is the voice of the returned Lord Jesus...." Pastor Yang absolutely would not listen to what I was saying, but just kept on resisting and condemning. He threatened me, saying I must leave The Church of Almighty God. The more he spoke, the more Pastor Yang crossed the line. I became extremely indignant and said to him, "The Lord Jesus said: '**Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged**' (Matthew 7:1–2). If you have never investigated the words and work of Almighty God, then how can you just make whatever judgments and condemnatory remarks you want? When you act like this, is it in a way that reveres the Lord?" Pastor Yang saw that I wasn't listening to him and that I had refuted him, and so he didn't say anything else.

In the following days, Pastor Yang started to keep an eye on me. This filled me with worry, and I lost my freedom of faith as well. In the church, there was only a hallway separating Pastor Yang's office from my own. He kept popping into my office to see what I was up to, and sometimes he would say he was going to the toilet and then watch me from the corridor. One day, two sisters of The Church of Almighty God came to my office to chat. Once the sisters left, Pastor Yang went to find my assistant. My assistant later told me that Pastor Yang had asked her who these two people were, and why they had come.... Pastor Yang watched me the whole day as if he were keeping an eye on a criminal. It made me feel very oppressed and completely without freedom. One day, I did not go to the church, and was taking part in a gathering online with some brothers and sisters. Just then, as I was earnestly taking the meeting notes in my living room, Pastor Yang suddenly appeared behind me (the door was ajar, and whoever came could enter the room) and said, "What are you doing? What are you writing?" I jumped up in fright at the sudden and unexpected voice. I felt inwardly ill at ease at being disturbed by him in such a way, and whatever I did I could not return to a state of tranquility. I resented him intensely, and thought: "Investigating the true way in one's belief in God is right and proper, and is a right that a Christian should have." The Holy Spirit was no longer working within our church, and the parishioners were all negative, weak, and withered in spirit. They were living in an environment that had sunk down into darkness, and I was looking for a church in which the Holy Spirit was at work. How was it wrong to look for the footsteps of God? Why did he want to keep an eye on me?

Why wouldn't he let me be?

Not only was the pastor monitoring and disturbing me, but one elder even called me up to harass me. He told me: "What the people from The Church of Almighty God preach has overstepped the Bible. If you believe in the Lord, you cannot betray the Lord, who has given you so much kindness. You can't be without a conscience...." I said in retort, "Almighty God and the Lord Jesus are one and the same God, and I have certainly not betrayed the Lord Jesus by believing in Almighty God. I am merely keeping up with the footprints of the Lamb...." However, no matter how I tried to explain it, the elder was just the same as the pastor. Other than saying condemnatory and blasphemous things, and obstructing me from accepting the work of Almighty God in the last days, he didn't listen to one word of what I fellowshiped or advised. I didn't want to talk with him anymore, so I just thought of some excuse to hang up. But the elder didn't let me off the hook. He kept calling to harass me and said that, by my belief in Almighty God, I had forgotten the grace of the Lord and had betrayed Him. I remembered what was said in Revelation: "**These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes**" (Revelation 14:4). On the foundation of the Lord Jesus' work of redemption, Almighty God is performing the stage of the work of judging and purifying people through words, and my acceptance of Almighty God's work in the last days clearly showed that I was keeping up with the footprints of the Lamb. How could anyone say I was betraying the Lord Jesus? At first, when the Lord Jesus came to do work, the people who had believed in Jehovah left the law behind and they accepted the gospel of the kingdom of heaven that was being preached by the Lord Jesus. They followed the Lord Jesus, but had they forgotten the salvation of Jehovah? Was this a betrayal of Jehovah? Isn't this a fallacy? After this took place, the pastor once again sent me some messages online blaspheming, resisting, and condemning Almighty God. Reading such hideous words made me feel disgusted and furious again. Only Satan was capable of uttering such blasphemies, and in their capacity as leaders in the church, how was it that they had no fear whatsoever of God and dared to say all manner of blasphemies? It reminded me of the words of the Lord Jesus: "**[B]ut whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come**" (Matthew 12:32). Blaspheming against God is a major and terrible sin! I felt a lingering sense of dread on their behalf, but no matter what I said, they just closed their ears and refused to hear anything. They just kept condemning, resisting, and blaspheming. I just could not understand it: The elder and the pastor both had

knowledge of the Bible and had studied theology, and the words of Almighty God were spoken with such clarity, so why was it that they would not seek or investigate His words? Why did they absolutely insist on condemning and resisting Almighty God?

Bearing this question in mind, I went to find the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God. Sister Lin fellowshiped to me, saying, “As for why it is that the elder and the pastor do not seek or investigate Almighty God’s work in the last days, but instead frantically condemn and resist Him, Almighty God long ago made clear the essence and origin of this problem. Almighty God says: **‘Do you wish to know the root of why the Pharisees opposed Jesus? Do you wish to know the substance of the Pharisees? They were full of fantasies about the Messiah. What’s more, they believed only that the Messiah would come, yet did not seek the truth of life. And so, even today they still await the Messiah, for they have no knowledge of the way of life, and do not know what the way of truth is. How, say you, could such foolish, stubborn and ignorant people gain God’s blessing? How could they behold the Messiah? They opposed Jesus because they did not know the direction of the Holy Spirit’s work, because they did not know the way of truth spoken by Jesus, and, furthermore, because they did not understand the Messiah. And since they had never seen the Messiah, and had never been in the company of the Messiah, they made the mistake of paying empty tribute to the name of the Messiah while opposing the substance of the Messiah by any means. These Pharisees in substance were stubborn, arrogant, and did not obey the truth. The principle of their belief in God is: No matter how profound Your preaching, no matter how high Your authority, You are not Christ unless You are called the Messiah. Are these views not preposterous and ridiculous?’** (“By the Time You Behold the Spiritual Body of Jesus, God Will Have Made Heaven and Earth Anew” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **‘Just look at the leaders of every denomination—they are all arrogant and self-righteous, and they interpret the Bible out of context and according to their own imagination. They all rely on gifts and erudition to do their work. If they were incapable of preaching anything, would those people follow them? They do, after all, possess some knowledge, and can preach on some doctrine, or know how to win over others and how to use some artifices. They use these to bring people before themselves and deceive them. Nominally, those people believe in God, but in reality they follow their leaders. If they encounter someone preaching the true way, some of them say, “We**

have to consult our leader about our faith.” Their faith has to go through a human being; is that not a problem? What have those leaders become, then? Have they not become Pharisees, false shepherds, antichrists, and stumbling blocks to people’s acceptance of the true way?’ (“Only the Pursuit of the Truth Is the True Belief in God” in Records of Christ’s Talks). When the Lord Jesus had first come to do His work, He was beset by the frantic condemnation and resistance of the Jewish leaders—the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees. In the end, they crucified the Lord Jesus. The ancestors of the Pharisees believed in God and were expert in the law. So why would they resist and condemn the Lord Jesus, and nail Him to the cross? We can see from the word of God that this was brought about by their satanic nature of being arrogant, conceited and not submitting to the truth. The Lord Jesus expressed so much truth, and they did not seek after or investigate it, but rather adhered to their own viewpoints. Their belief in God relied only on their own notions and imaginings, and they interpreted the Bible by taking verses out of context. This caused them to be blind, and not to obtain any enlightenment from God. They did not know the work of the Holy Spirit, and did not understand the truth, nor could they understand God’s voice. This truly caused the words of the Bible to come true: **‘By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed’** (Matthew 13:14–15). The pastors and elders in religious circles in the last days are the same as the Pharisees of that time, as what they place importance on is knowledge of the Bible and theological theory. They rely on their own thinking and imaginings to interpret the word of the Lord, and to delimit the way the Lord will return. They stubbornly cling to their own notions and imaginings, and they do not seek the truth whatsoever. Not only do they not investigate the work of God in the last days, but they blindly resist and condemn Him, thus exposing their stubbornness and their satanic nature of arrogance and hostility to the truth. They study theology, equipping themselves with knowledge of the Bible, but that does not mean that they have any love for the truth, nor does it mean that they are able to accept and obey the truth. They expound Bible knowledge and theological theory, their only goal being to increase their own renown and reputation. They do so to safeguard their own status, and make believers look up to them reverently, adore them, and follow them. They see that the words which Almighty God expresses are the truth, and that they are able to conquer and save people, and that many people who have a love for the truth and who

yearn for God's appearance have read the word of Almighty God and have turned to Almighty God. They believe that the work of Almighty God is a threat to their status and livelihood, and so they fight back frantically and do their utmost to condemn and resist Almighty God. They take whatever means necessary to obstruct and disrupt believers from turning to Almighty God in an attempt to dominate God's chosen people for all time. This is the root cause why elders and preachers do not seek or investigate the work of Almighty God and why they frantically resist and condemn Almighty God. It can be seen in the evil deeds of the preachers and elders who resist God that they are the Pharisees of our time, and that they are the obstacles and the stumbling blocks preventing believers from accepting the true way and being raised up into the heavenly kingdom. They are the antichrists, who resist God and make God their enemy, and who have been revealed by God's work in the last days."

After hearing the word of Almighty God and what the sisters fellowshiped, I compared it to what the pastor and elder had said and done. I saw that the word of Almighty God was spoken in a very practical way and that, even though the pastor and elder were well-versed in the Bible and could expound on the Bible, it still did not mean that they had any knowledge of God. They relied on natural talent and knowledge in their work to elevate themselves so that others would worship them and follow them. On the surface, they seemed to be serving God, but in reality, what they were serving were their own notions and imaginings, their own status and livelihood. Through the pastor and elder repeatedly harassing and obstructing me, I was able to see through to who they truly were. They were antichrists who believed in God but did not seek the truth, and who served God yet resisted Him. Even though the pastor and elder have still not given up harassing me to this day, I have already seen clearly their true antichrist essence of hostility for the truth and resistance to God. I will no longer allow myself to be harassed or controlled by them, and I am completely certain that the work of Almighty God in the last days is true. I wish to follow Almighty God to the very end, and never give up! Amen!

27. After Comprehending the Truth of Discerning Between the True Christ and False Christs, I No Longer Blindly Put Up My Guard

By Xiangwang, Malaysia

From a young age I've followed along with my mother, a church deacon and Sunday school teacher, in believing in the Lord. I often attended gatherings and read the Bible with her and, as I got older, I moved from the children's group into the teen group.

The pastor responsible for giving sermons to the teen group was a doctor of theology. He often told us that being a pastor was not easy and that without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it was very difficult to persevere in the work of the pastorship. We therefore idolized him, believing him to be one in whom God delighted and who received inspiration from the Holy Spirit. When he would preach to us, he would often use two verses from the Bible: **“And then if any man shall say to you, See, here is Christ; or, see, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect”** (Mark 13:21–22). He would tell us that there would be many false Christs appearing in the last days and would exhort us to always be careful and not just casually go and listen to other sermons. Especially for those of us who did not yet have a strong foundation in the Bible and whose statures were too small, he said it was best for us not to listen to, read or investigate any sermon preached by anyone from another denomination, so as to avoid being deceived.

Besides this, the pastor would also often mention certain churches that we absolutely had to avoid at all costs, including Eastern Lightning, and he related to us some of the negative publicity that was circulating about Eastern Lightning. When the members of my group heard this, they all said that they would avoid that church. The pastor would often preach to us that, as long as we often read the Bible, maintained our regular attendance at gatherings and regularly performed spiritual devotions, confessed and repented our sins to the Lord every day and kept a patient watch at all times, then when the Lord came we would be raptured into the heavenly kingdom. I strongly believed in what he said, didn't dare to casually go listen to sermons preached in other churches, and acted in exact accordance with the pastor's instructions. As such, I felt I had already secured a position among those awaiting the Lord's return.

One day in August 2017, Brother Hu from our church suddenly came to visit me at school and said to me in a very earnest tone, "I've got something very important to tell you. It seems as though your mom and your sister are now believing in Eastern Lightning." I was stunned when I heard this news, and I thought to myself: "Isn't the pastor always exhorting us not to have anything to do with Eastern Lightning? How could my mom start believing in it?" Brother Hu then told me about some of the negative publicity surrounding Eastern Lightning, and the more I heard, the more afraid and panicked I became. I couldn't stop thinking: "What can I do? What can I do?" Just then, Brother Hu said, "Hurry home and ask your mom if she really has started to believe in Eastern Lightning. But when you ask her, pretend that you don't know anything. First listen to what she has to say, then give me a recording of your conversation." Because I was afraid that my mom had gone astray, I agreed.

Sure enough, no sooner had I returned home than my mom told me that the Lord Jesus had returned as Almighty God and that, in the last days, Almighty God was expressing many words and was performing the work of judgment beginning from the house of God in order to purify and change man, and to save man utterly from the bonds of sin. She went on to say that this was the last stage of God's work to save mankind and that, if we missed it, we would not have another chance to be saved. She said that she hoped I would also make haste to look into God's work of the last days and attend a gathering with The Church of Almighty God. When she'd said this, I immediately thought of the negative publicity concerning Eastern Lightning that Brother Hu had told me about and felt a strong aversion to what she was saying. But in order to secretly record our conversation, I restrained my feelings and continued to listen to her.

The next day, my mom asked me to go online for a gathering with people from The Church of Almighty God, but I immediately cut her off and said, "Mom, I won't attend their gatherings, and you shouldn't attend them anymore either. You seem to be leaning more and more toward them." My mom gently replied, "Since I've been attending gatherings and fellowshiping with brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God, I've gained new insight into and understanding of God's words in the Bible, and I feel certain in my heart that their fellowships are filled with light and that they arise from the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. What's more, the words of Almighty God have resolved much of my confusion, and I am now absolutely certain that The Church of Almighty God definitely has the work of the

Holy Spirit and that the words expressed by Almighty God are the truth....” At that point, my mind was filled with notions about Eastern Lightning and I simply couldn’t accept anything my mom said. Afterward, I went online to show my mom some of the negative publicity surrounding Eastern Lightning that Brother Hu had told me about, and I said, “You see, mom? It’s all stated very clearly here online, and our pastor often tells us not to look into Eastern Lightning as well. Please tell me you won’t have anything to do with them from now on.”

My mom didn’t look at the negative publicity, but just continued to speak patiently to me, saying, “My dear daughter, the Chinese Communist government is an atheist organization that despises the appearance and work of God and despises anyone who has a religious belief. In China, Protestantism and Catholicism are condemned by the CCP government as cults, and the Bible is condemned as being a cultist book, with countless copies burned or destroyed, and now it is even banned from being sold in China. Many Protestants and Catholics have been arrested, persecuted and imprisoned by the CCP government, and some have even been maimed or killed. International human rights groups and western nations have vehemently denounced the Chinese Communist government many times. Can you really believe the words of such a God-opposing satanic regime? Is it qualified to assess and condemn the appearance and work of God? And why don’t the pastors and elders allow us to look into God’s work of the last days? Do their actions conform to the Lord’s teachings? The Lord Jesus told us, **‘Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven’** (Matthew 5:3). We can see from the Lord’s words that the Lord wants us to be open-minded seekers who actively investigate when we hear someone testifying the Lord’s return, for only then can we welcome the return of the Lord. My dear daughter, as believers in the Lord, why is it that we listen to the opinions of other people but don’t heed the Lord’s words? If we believe what the pastor says and the negative publicity released by that satanic regime, and we become passive and guarded when hearing someone testifying the Lord’s return, does that accord with the Lord’s will? By doing so, aren’t we going against the Lord’s words? The Jewish believers at the time of Jesus did not seek or look into the Lord’s words and work, but instead blindly believed the rumors fabricated about the Lord by the Pharisees, and so they resisted and condemned the Lord Jesus and finally they crucified Him upon the cross and were thus punished by God. We must learn the lesson of the failure of the Jews and avoid missing our chance to welcome the Lord. It is prophesied many times in Revelation: **‘He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches’**

(Revelation 2, 3). From this verse we can see that, when the Lord returns, He will also express His words, and if we wish to welcome His return, then we must learn to listen to God's voice. Only by reading and investigating the words of Almighty God will you know whether or not they are the voice of God." Having said her piece, my mom picked up a book entitled Utterances of Christ of the Last Days and handed it to me.

I looked at the book in her hands but didn't take it. Because I still couldn't accept what she was saying, I just said, "I don't want to read it," then turned and went to my bedroom.

Sitting at my desk, I recovered my calm and reflected on what my mom had just said. I thought to myself: "What mom said actually wasn't wrong. Eastern Lightning testifies that the Lord has returned, yet I have just blindly believed what the pastor says and believed the negative publicity put out about Eastern Lightning by the Chinese Communist government without having even read the words expressed by Almighty God. I suppose that was a rather arbitrary decision on my part. If Almighty God truly is the Lord Jesus returned and I refuse to accept Him, then I will miss my chance to welcome the Lord. But the pastor always preaches to us that false Christs will appear in the last days, and if I happen to go astray, won't my belief in the Lord all be for nothing?" My heart swayed back and forth, and I just didn't know whom to believe, so I called on the Lord: "O Lord! I've always yearned for Your return but now I'm afraid of being deceived by the false Christs that appear in the last days. O Lord! People from Eastern Lightning are now testifying that You have returned, so if You truly have returned as Almighty God, then I ask that You enlighten and guide me, and allow me to recognize Your voice."

The next day, my mom encouraged me again to attend one of her gatherings. After some hesitation, I decided to go online and listen to what they had to say. When the gathering had just begun, I felt very agitated and I didn't really listen to what the brothers and sisters were fellowshiping about. Later on, Brother Zhang gave fellowship about aspects of the truth such as God's management plan to save mankind, the mystery of God's three stages of work as well as the work of judgment God performs in the last days; my heart was drawn in and the more I listened, the fresher and newer it all felt. Although I had previously attended Bible study classes, the preachers had only talked about the miraculous nature of God's work by mentioning the miracles He performed, or else talked about how saints of the past had obeyed God to accomplish God's commissions, and so on. They had never once mentioned anything about God's management plan to save mankind. Brother Zhang's

fellowship allowed me to gain some understanding regarding God's work of managing mankind; these were all things I'd never before understood despite having read the Bible for so many years. By the time the gathering was over, I'd changed my mind. I decided that I would first investigate Almighty God's work of the last days and that I would delete the recording I had made of my conversation with my mom.

During our gathering on the third day, we discussed the difference between the wise virgins and the foolish virgins. Brother Zhang said, "The wise virgins are wise because they yearn for the appearance of God and know how to listen to God's voice. They are intelligent, possess caliber, and they are people who love and seek the truth. Consequently, when they hear the news that the Lord has come, they actively seek and investigate—people like this cannot be deceived by false Christs. The foolish virgins do not love the truth, they pay no attention to listening to God's voice, nor do they know how; they are confused and have no discernment and, concerning the coming of the Lord, they can only cling to their own notions and imaginings to resist and condemn God's work. For example, some brothers and sisters don't place importance on listening to the Lord's words in their belief in Him, but instead they believe what the pastors and elders say. Whatever the pastors and elders say, that is what they believe and, although they believe in the Lord in name, in truth they follow and obey the pastors and elders. Then there are some brothers and sisters who focus solely on blindly guarding against false Christs, and they don't seek or investigate even when they hear someone spreading the news of the Lord's return—isn't this like giving up eating for fear of choking? Are people like this capable of welcoming the Lord's return?"

Brother Zhang's words gave me a sudden burst of insight, and I thought, "That's right! For such a long time now, I've believed in what my pastor preaches, and I haven't looked into God's work of the last days. If Almighty God truly is the Lord Jesus returned, then have I not been exposed as a foolish virgin? The Lord Jesus said, '**Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you**' (Matthew 7:7). I've always looked forward to welcoming the Lord and now The Church of Almighty God is testifying that the Lord has returned. I should be a wise virgin and actively seek and investigate Almighty God's work of the last days, for only that accords with God's will." And so, I decided to carry on looking into Almighty God's work of the last days.

At a gathering the next day, I asked, "Brother, you fellowshiped yesterday that the key to being a wise virgin is to focus on listening to God's voice. I feel like I now have a path to

follow to investigate God's work of the last days, but my pastor often says in his sermons that false Christs will appear in the last days to deceive people, so how should we discern between the true Christ and false Christs? I don't understand this aspect of the truth, so I was wondering if you could share your fellowship with me?"

Brother Zhang said, "The question you've asked is crucial as it relates directly to whether or not we can welcome the Lord's return. As long as we can understand the truth about discerning between the true Christ and false Christs, then no matter how false Christs may try to impersonate God, we will remain undeceived by them. In relation to how to discern between the true Christ and false Christs, the Lord says, '**Then if any man shall say to you, See, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect**' (Matthew 24:23–24). The Lord's words tell us clearly that false Christs in the last days will mostly use signs and wonders to deceive people. Because false Christs are devoid of truth and their essence is that of evil spirits and demons, they can only imitate the past work of God and perform some simple signs and wonders, or else misinterpret the Bible to confound people with arcane theories. Only Christ is the truth, the way and the life, and only He can express the truth, show us the way and give us life. All who call themselves Christ but who cannot express the truth, are certainly false Christs and impostors, and this is the principle by which we can possess basic discrimination of false Christs."

After listening to the brother's fellowship, I carefully read this passage of Scripture again and then it suddenly all became clear: "Yes, it really does say in the Bible that false Christs will perform great signs and wonders to deceive people. So then how could those pastors who are so well-versed in the Bible not have seen this principle by which we can discern false Christs?"

Brother Zhang then sent over a passage of Almighty God's words: "**If, during the present day, there is to emerge a person who is able to display signs and wonders, cast out demons, heal the sick, and perform many miracles, and if this person claims that they are Jesus who has come, then this would be the counterfeit of evil spirits, and their imitation of Jesus. Remember this! God does not repeat the same work. Jesus' stage of work has already been completed, and God will never again undertake that stage of work. ... If, during the last days, God still displayed signs and wonders,**

and still cast out demons and healed the sick—if He did exactly the same as Jesus—then God would be repeating the same work, and the work of Jesus would have no significance or value. Thus, God carries out one stage of work in every age. Once each stage of His work has been completed, it is soon imitated by evil spirits, and after Satan begins to follow on the heels of God, God changes to a different method. Once God has completed a stage of His work, it is imitated by evil spirits. You must be clear about this” (“Knowing God’s Work Today” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*).

Brother Zhang gave fellowship, saying, “We can see from the words of Almighty God that God is an ever new and never old God, and He has never done the same work twice. Each time God launches a new stage of work, He expresses new words and gives man new paths of practice. When the Lord Jesus came, for example, He did not repeat the work of promulgating the laws and commandments, but instead He used that work as a basis to perform the work of redeeming all mankind, and He gave the people of that time new ways to practice. For example, He taught people to confess and repent, to love their enemies, to learn to forgive, to love one another, and so on. Now Almighty God has come in the last days and He does not express the way of repentance all over again, but instead He uses the work of redemption as a basis upon which to perform the work of judging and purifying man through words. During this stage of work, God does not perform signs and wonders, but instead expresses His words practically in order to reveal our corrupt dispositions and to judge our unrighteousness. At the same time, God bestows on us all the truths we need to attain true salvation and He enables us to understand the path to dispositional change, through which we can cast off our corrupt dispositions and be led by God into His kingdom. The majority of false Christs, on the other hand, are possessed by evil spirits and are all exceptionally arrogant and absurd. They are unable to begin new ages, neither can they bring ages to an end, much less express the truth to show people the path to dispositional change. All they can do is imitate the past work of the Lord Jesus and perform a few simple signs and wonders to deceive people. However, as for the great miracles which the Lord Jesus performed, such as bringing the dead back to life and feeding five thousand with two fish and five loaves of bread, false Christs are simply unable to imitate these deeds, for only God possesses such authority and power, and false Christs could never achieve such things.”

Only through the brother’s fellowship did I come to understand that God’s work is ever

new and never old, and false Christs are only capable of imitating God's past work and performing a few simple signs and wonders. They are incapable, however, of doing God's work, and as long as we understand the principles behind God's work, then we will not be deceived. In the past, I had always been afraid of being deceived and so I'd dared not listen to any sermon given by Eastern Lightning, much less seek and investigate Almighty God's work of the last days. Instead, I cloistered myself in the church, listened to sermons there and praised the Lord, thinking that was the safest way to go, and that I would be reunited with the Lord in the future. Thinking about it now, however, being so passive and guarded and not proactively seeking the Lord's utterances in the last days had really made me prone to missing my chance to welcome the Lord.

Brother Zhang continued his fellowship, saying, "God is the truth, the way and the life, and besides discerning between the true Christ and false Christs by the principles of God's work, we can also discern them by the essence of Christ." At that point, Brother Zhang sent over a passage of God's words: **"God become flesh is called Christ, and so the Christ that can give people the truth is called God. There is nothing excessive about this, for He possesses the substance of God, and possesses God's disposition, and wisdom in His work, that are unattainable by man. Those who call themselves Christ, yet cannot do the work of God, are frauds. Christ is not merely the manifestation of God on earth, but also the particular flesh assumed by God as He carries out and completes His work among man. This flesh cannot be supplanted by just any man, but is a flesh that can adequately bear God's work on earth, and express the disposition of God, and well represent God, and provide man with life. Sooner or later, those who impersonate Christ will all fall, for although they claim to be Christ, they possess none of the substance of Christ. And so I say that the authenticity of Christ cannot be defined by man, but is answered and decided by God Himself"** ("Only Christ of the Last Days Can Give Man the Way of Eternal Life" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*).

Brother Zhang went on with his fellowship, saying, "We can see from God's words that Christ is the incarnation of the Spirit of God—He possesses a divine essence, He performs the work of God, He expresses the disposition of God, He can express the truth to supply and shepherd man at any time and in any place, and only Christ can perform the work of saving man. The Lord Jesus was Christ, for example, and His appearance and work brought the Age of Law to a close and began the Age of Grace. He also spoke His words to bestow

mankind with the way of repentance, to enable them to know clearly God's will and requirements and to give them a way to follow when difficulties arose. Through the words of the Lord Jesus, man understood how to pray to the Lord, how to get along with one another, how to forgive each other, and so on. Moreover, the Lord Jesus expressed His disposition of loving-kindness and mercy, He healed the sick, cast out demons and bestowed endless grace on man. Ultimately, He was crucified in order to redeem mankind, thus completing the work to redeem all mankind and saving us from the bonds and fetters of the law, as well as sparing us from the danger of being condemned and put to death for violating the law. These are just some of the things the Lord Jesus did, and no one else could have done them in His stead. From the work and words of the Lord Jesus, we can see that He is the truth, the way and the life. Similarly, God has once again become flesh in the last days and has ended the Age of Grace and begun the Age of Kingdom. He has uttered millions of words, He performs the work of judgment and purification, and He expresses the righteous disposition of God that is majestic, wrathful and unoffendable. The words spoken by Almighty God not only unveil the mystery of God's entire management plan and the end and final destination of man, but they also expound in perfect clarity the truths we need to be purified and to attain true salvation according to our needs. For example, He explains how Satan corrupts man, the truth of man's corruption at the hands of Satan, how God judges and purifies man's corrupt dispositions, how man should believe in God and obey God, what kind of person God loves and what kind of person He detests and weeds out, how we should pursue in order to be made perfect by God, and so on. Through experiencing the judgment and chastisement of God's words, we see clearly the essence and root of our corruption by Satan and we come to understand God's righteous, holy and unoffendable disposition. We then cannot help but fall to the ground before God in true remorse, we become more and more reverential and obedient toward God and, gradually, we cast off our satanic corrupt dispositions, free ourselves from the bonds of sin and achieve the true salvation of God. The utterances and work of Almighty God bring us the truth, the way and the life—Almighty God is God Himself and He is Christ become flesh. False Christs do not possess the essence of God and they cannot express the truth, much less perform the work of saving mankind. They can only make specious pronouncements to deceive and harm people. When someone listens to them, they not only obtain no supply whatsoever, but furthermore, their hearts become darker and darker, sink lower and lower, they have nowhere to turn to, and they

inevitably end up being devoured by Satan. Therefore, we are able to ascertain from God's utterances, work and the disposition God expresses whether He is the incarnate Christ."

After listening to the words of Almighty God and the brother's fellowship, I thoroughly understood the truth of how to discern between the true Christ and false Christs. Only Christ is the truth, the way and the life, and only Christ can express the truth and perform the work of God Himself. All who call themselves Christ but who are incapable of expressing the truth and who cannot perform the work of saving man are false Christs. I had finally found the way forward and was no longer blindly guarded and passive for fear of being deceived by false Christs. Thanks be to God!

After that, Brother Zhang gave me fellowship on other truths, such as the mystery of the incarnation, the difference between God's work and the work of man, the inside story of the Bible, and more. The more I listened, the more satiated I felt, and I looked forward every day to attending gatherings with the brothers and sisters. Each time a gathering ended, my mother and I would discuss the new light we had attained through the gathering, and slowly, I came to have some understanding of God's work of the last days. After a period of seeking and investigating, I became certain that Almighty God was indeed the Lord Jesus returned. I then began to spread the gospel and to tell the news of the Lord's return to even more people who longed for the appearance of God.

Later, my mom and I went to our old church to attend Friday worship. After the assembly was over, to our surprise, the pastor began to play a video that laid false charges against The Church of Almighty God. When I saw the fabricated rumors and the slander they'd leveled against The Church of Almighty God, I became angry, and I thought: "The Church of Almighty God is nothing like they say at all. They've had no contact with The Church of Almighty God and neither have they investigated God's work of the last days. How can they so baselessly and arbitrarily judge the work of God?"

After the video was over, the pastor, two deacons and two church council members asked my mom and me to stay behind. The pastor asked us, "Are you two now believers in Almighty God?" We replied, "Yes."

The moment we said this, one of the deacons suddenly sprang to his feet and, pointing at my mom, said ferociously, "So you now believe in Almighty God? From tomorrow, you are no longer permitted to teach Sunday school. Tomorrow afternoon, I'll come to your home and take back the church's money."

My mom said, “You can take it whenever you like.”

The pastor asked angrily, “The entire religious world resists and condemns The Church of Almighty God. Why would you persist in having contact with them?”

My mom retorted, saying, “Pastor, does the religious world possess the truth? Did the Lord Jesus ever say that only by following the religious world can we welcome the Lord? When the Lord Jesus appeared and performed His work all those years ago, the Jewish leaders not only refused to seek or investigate His work themselves, but they also stopped believers from accepting it, and even made up rumors about the Lord Jesus, frantically resisting, judging and blaspheming Him. In the end, they offended God’s disposition and were thus cursed and punished by God. If we go by what you say, that any way the religious world resists and condemns is not the true way, then would that not mean that you are denying even the work of the Lord Jesus? You refuse to seek or investigate God’s work of the last days because the religious world resists and condemns The Church of Almighty God—does this accord with the Lord’s words? As the pastor and deacons of the church, why do you just arbitrarily condemn and judge Almighty God’s work of the last days without even bothering to look into it? Through reading many of Almighty God’s words, by seeing that Almighty God’s words are the truth and that they are the voice of God, we have become certain that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned.” To my surprise, they showed a contemptuous disregard for what my mom had said and didn’t accept it at all.

My mom opened an app on her phone and read Almighty God’s words to them. One of the church council members then spoke very arrogantly and made some blasphemous comments about Almighty God. My mom said angrily, “You are so unbelievably arrogant. These words are the truth—can you not recognize it? Can you not understand the voice of God when you hear it? Are you really God’s sheep?”

With mirthless smiles, they stared at us haughtily. The pastor then said arrogantly, “The One we wait for is the Lord Jesus who has nail wounds in His hands and who comes with the appearance of a Jew. Apart from the Lord Jesus, we won’t accept anything, even if what Almighty God expresses is the truth.” Seeing how stubborn they were being, my mom and I gave up trying to talk to them. I saw that their behavior was exactly the same as that of the Pharisees who had resisted the Lord Jesus; they believed in God but they didn’t seek the truth, nor did they focus on listening for God’s voice. Instead, they were just arrogant and conceited, they stubbornly clung to their own notions and imaginings and they arbitrarily

judged and resisted God's work—they were indeed the ones who appeared to serve God but who actually resisted Him.

The pastor then threatened us, saying, "We'll give you one month to reconsider. If you still persist in your belief in Almighty God in a month's time, I'll expel you from our church."

I said indignantly, "No need to wait a month. Just expel us now. Having spent this time seeking and investigating God's work of the last days, we're already certain that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned. We have finally heard God's voice, so even if you don't expel us, we won't be coming back to attend assemblies in this church anyway."

The pastor lowered his voice and said slyly, "That won't do. If we expel you now, what will the brothers and sisters think of us? They'll say that we expelled you just for attending some gatherings online, and then we'll look totally heartless. In a month's time, we'll tell the brothers and sisters in our church that we've gone to great lengths to counsel you and have given you more than enough time to reconsider, but in the end you persisted in believing in Almighty God and decided to leave the church, and only then did we expel you."

Hearing the pastor say this, I felt disgusted, and I didn't want to say one more word to them. I then started to walk out, pulling my mom along with me. Just as we were leaving, the pastor gave us a warning: "It's up to you whether you believe in Almighty God or not, but I won't allow you to have any contact with the brothers and sisters in our church anymore."

When we left the church, it was already past one in the morning. As I thought back over what had just happened, I just couldn't believe that the pastor, the preacher whom we'd always venerated for his morality and virtue could behave in this way. Just then, God's words came to mind: **"There are those who read the Bible in grand churches and recite it all day long, yet not one among them understands the purpose of God's work. Not one among them is able to know God; still less can any one among them accord with God's will. They are all worthless, vile people, each standing on high to lecture God. They willfully oppose God even as they carry His banner. Claiming faith in God, still they eat the flesh and drink the blood of man. All such people are devils that devour the soul of man, demons that deliberately get in the way of those trying to step onto the right path, and stumbling blocks impeding those who seek God. They may appear of 'sound constitution,' but how are their followers to know that they are none other than antichrists who lead people to stand against God? How are their followers to know that they are living devils dedicated to the devouring of human souls?"** ("All

People Who Do Not Know God Are People Who Oppose God” in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

I'd always thought that the pastors and elders were servants of the Lord and that they should have the best understanding of the Bible and be most in accord with God's will. I'd always thought that, when the Lord returned, they would definitely be able to welcome the Lord. I never would have imagined that when the pastor heard the news of the Lord's return, not only would he not seek or investigate it, but he would also become so arrogant and self-righteous, stubbornly clinging to his notions and imaginings, and that he would judge and condemn both God and God's work of the last days. He was completely lacking in a God-fearing heart, so much so that under the guise of “protecting the flock,” he obstructed and stopped believers from investigating God's work of the last days just for the sake of maintaining his own status and livelihood. For those believers who did accept God's work of the last days, the pastors and elders resorted to intimidating them with threats of expulsion from the church and even made the other brothers and sisters in their church reject them so that they wouldn't be able to preach the gospel to their brothers and sisters. How sinister and malicious they were! In order to maintain their positions and livelihoods, the Pharisees at the time of Jesus wildly resisted and condemned the Lord and crucified Him upon the cross. The pastors and elders of today have exactly the same essence as the Pharisees—they are the antichrists who have been exposed by God's work of the last days, and they are the demons who devour the souls of man. At that moment, I finally understood completely that when someone believes in God without knowing God and His work, then no matter how much they appear to suffer or how much they appear to expend themselves, they will always resist God and offend God's disposition by relying on their arrogant and conceited satanic dispositions.

At that moment, I couldn't help but express thanks and praise to God in my heart. Thinking back, I had been deceived by the sanctimonious appearance of the pastors and elders and had always idolized them, followed and obeyed them. When it came to the matter of welcoming the Lord, I had even gone along with them and resisted God. God exposing them for what they were allowed me to see, at last, the truth-hating, God-hating demonic essence of the pastors and elders, and I was then able to pass through the labyrinth they had set out for me and welcome the return of the Lord. I truly give thanks to God for saving me, and I wish to pursue the truth in earnest on the path of faith in God so that I may repay God's love!

28. Opening the Door to My Heart and Welcoming the Lord's Return

By Yongyuan, United States

In November of 1982, our whole family emigrated to the USA. We had all had faith in the Lord since my grandfather's generation, so we found a Chinese church in New York's Chinatown soon after arriving in the United States so we could attend mass. We never missed a single mass, and my mother and sister were especially good about reading the scriptures whenever they had time in order to seek God's blessing and protection. The priest would often say: "When the Lord comes, He will judge people publicly and divide them into categories: Those who truly repent and confess and practice their faith will be able to go to heaven; those who commit minor sins but not grave ones will suffer the torment of purgatory, but they will still be able to be saved and ascend to heaven; those who do not believe in God or commit sins that are too grave will suffer the punishment of hell." These words left a deep impression on my heart, just as if they had been branded there. They spurred me to believe in God enthusiastically, and no matter how busy I was, I never failed to go to mass.

In seemingly no time at all, 2014 arrived. One day, a parishioner told me out of the blue, "Your sister now believes in Almighty God...." And he said many things besides, slandering and condemning Almighty God and The Church of Almighty God. Hearing this unexpected news, I felt very anxious, and became very worried that my sister had gone astray. The news of my sister having accepted the work of Almighty God in the last days quickly spread throughout the whole church. The priest exhorted me to keep my distance from her, and there were several other church members who also said a number of things slandering and condemning Almighty God to my face. After the father and other parishioners "helped" me a number of times, I started to believe their words and determined that my sister had gone astray. I told the father and the parishioners that I wouldn't listen to my sister anymore, and that if given the opportunity, I would try to bring her back into the fold so she could repent to the Lord. I called my brothers after I got home, and they stood by me. We all tried persuading my sister together, but not only was she resolute in her faith in Almighty God, but she also bore witness to us that Almighty God is the returned Lord. She tried to persuade us to accept

God's work in the last days so that we wouldn't miss our opportunity to attain God's salvation. But my heart had already been filled with negative ideas that were instilled in me by the father and parishioners. No matter how my sister fellowshipped with me or how she bore witness, I just would not listen.

Later, my mother and I had several arguments with my sister because of her belief in Almighty God, but no matter what she said, I continued to believe the father and the rumors I had read on the Internet, never daring to seek or investigate the work of Almighty God. There was never any resolution to our arguments, but I realized that my mother was gradually starting to agree with my sister's fellowship and testimony. She actually formed a "united front" with my sister and ultimately accepted the work of Almighty God in the last days. Seeing this, I started to get worried. If things really were as the father and parishioners claimed, what if something happened to my family? Desperate, I went to find Sister Qianhe who was on good terms with both my sister and me, and got her to try and persuade my mother and sister. But not only did she fail to persuade them, but she herself also came to believe in Almighty God. This was very puzzling for me: This sister was upstanding and she was an enthusiastic seeker, so how could it be that she wasn't able to persuade them, but actually came to believe in Almighty God herself? Does the word of Almighty God really possess so much power? Could it be that the word of Almighty God really can provide sustenance for human life? However, as soon as I thought of the words of the father and parishioners attacking Almighty God as well as what I had seen online opposing and condemning The Church of Almighty God, I once again felt fear in my heart and didn't come into contact with them anymore. After that, I rarely went to see my mother. I would occasionally go just to pay a visit and then leave in a hurry, and I refused to listen to the fellowship of my mother and sister. This "cold war" with my mother and sister went on like this for a year and a half.

One day in March of 2016, I heard that some prominent members of the church had also gone to persuade my sister, so I wanted to go see whether or not she had had a change of heart. When I saw her, I asked her about what she thought. She said to me, "I have caught up with the footsteps of the Lamb and affirmed that the way of Almighty God is the true way. Almighty God is the returned Lord and I absolutely will not depart from Him." My sister's steady gaze and resounding, strong answer made my heart waver somewhat and aroused my curiosity. I thought: Out of the believers in our family, my sister was the most ardent

seeker, and within the church Sister Qianhe was also someone who was a seeker and possessed discernment. My mother, too, had always had firm faith in the Lord. Now, they were all believers in Almighty God, and their faith had grown all the more after following Him. They spoke with more and more insight and no one could shake or refute them. What power was it that could allow them to maintain such great faith in the face of the opposition of so many? Could the work of Almighty God in the last days really be the true way? Could Almighty God really be the second coming of the Lord? It had been nearly two years since my sister, Sister Qianhe, and my mother had accepted the work of Almighty God, but when I saw that everything was going fine for them, I could see that the alarmism and scare tactics of the father and what I had read online had not come true in their case.... Realizing this, my heart softened a bit and I also wanted to investigate the word and work of Almighty God. I shared my thoughts with my sister. She agreed very happily and invited me to my mother's house so that a sister from The Church of Almighty God could fellowship with me and bear witness to Almighty God's work in the last days.

I drove to my mother's house that weekend. My sister, Sister Qianhe, and Zhang Xiao, a sister from The Church of Almighty God, were all there. Sister Qianhe was particularly happy when she heard that I wanted to seek and investigate. She fellowshipped with me: "The main reason for God coming in the last days is to express the word and do the work of judging and cleansing people in order to save us from the bondage of sin. At present, those in the Age of Grace are living in a cycle of committing and then confessing sin. Even though we persevere in attending mass and reading the scriptures, as well as confessing to the father, we still continue to lie and deceive, and to live within our corrupt dispositions such as arrogance, greed, and selfishness. In spite of ourselves, we commit sins and resist God, and there is no one who is able to break free of the bondage of this sinful nature, nor anyone able to attain to purity and holiness by relying on confession and repentance. That is why we still need to accept the work God has come to do in the last days of judging and cleansing people. Only by doing so can we completely break free from the bondage of sin, be cleansed and transformed, and attain salvation from God." Hearing this, I asked in confusion: "The father often says: 'If people commit minor sins, then when the Lord returns to openly judge people, once they complete their suffering in purgatory they will be able to ascend to heaven. Those who commit major sins will go straight to hell to be punished.' How can you say that the work of judgment God will do upon His return is to cleanse and save people?" Sister

Qianhe said: "I too used to believe the words of the father. I had the same notions as you about how the Lord will return to do the work of judgment, but thinking about it now, does what the father says actually accord with the Bible? Is it based on the word of God? Did the Lord Jesus say that there is a purgatory? Did He say anything about people who commit minor sins being able to ascend to heaven after concluding their suffering in purgatory, and that only those who commit major sins go to hell? Of course not! So where have these words come from? They have obviously come out of people's notions and imaginations, and are just man's speculation and conjecture. They do not accord whatsoever with the words of God, nor do they accord with the reality of God's work. What use is it for us to uphold this?"

Listening to her fellowship, I nodded in silence. She continued: "At present, all of us are filled with sin, and there is no one who is pure. Based on what the father said, when the Lord returns to publicly judge all peoples, those who commit minor sins will go to purgatory whereas those who commit major sins will go to hell. In that case, wouldn't we all be condemned and suffer the punishment of going to hell? Wouldn't God's work of saving mankind be all for naught? Would there be any meaning in the Lord's coming?" What the sister fellowshipped touched my heart. It's true—even if we believe in God, if all we do is constantly commit sins and then confess them, no one will be cleansed. Indeed, no one will be fit to see God, and if God has come to openly judge, condemn, and punish people, then everyone will have to go to hell. No one could attain salvation.... It was only then that I realized how unrealistic the words are that "when the Lord comes again to openly judge all peoples, those who commit major sins will go directly to hell whereas those who commit minor sins will go into purgatory, and after completing their suffering there will ascend into heaven." It is not at all in keeping with God's will to save mankind. Sister Qianhe then said: "As for God's work of judgment in the last days, let us all take a look at how it is described in the word of Almighty God! Almighty God says: **'God has not come to kill or destroy, but to judge, curse, chastise, and save. Until His 6,000-year management plan comes to a close—before He reveals the outcome of each category of man—God's work on earth will be for the sake of salvation; its purpose is purely to make those who love Him complete—thoroughly so—and to bring them into submission under His dominion. No matter how God saves people, it is all done by making them break away from their old satanic nature; that is, He saves them by having them seek life. If they do not do so, then they will have no way to accept God's salvation'** ("You Should Put

Aside the Blessings of Status and Understand God's Will to Bring Salvation to Man" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **'In the last days, Christ uses a variety of truths to teach man, to expose the essence of man, and to dissect the words and deeds of man. These words comprise various truths, such as man's duty, how man should obey God, how man should be loyal to God, how man ought to live out normal humanity, as well as the wisdom and the disposition of God, and so on. These words are all directed at the essence of man and his corrupt disposition. In particular, the words that expose how man spurns God are spoken in regard to how man is an embodiment of Satan, and an enemy force against God. In undertaking His work of judgment, God does not simply make clear the nature of man with a few words; He exposes, deals with, and prunes over the long term. These methods of exposure, dealing, and pruning cannot be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced into submission to God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God. What the work of judgment brings about is man's understanding of the true face of God and the truth about his own rebelliousness. The work of judgment allows man to gain much understanding of the will of God, of the purpose of God's work, and of the mysteries that are incomprehensible to him. It also allows man to recognize and know his corrupt substance and the roots of his corruption, as well as to discover the ugliness of man. These effects are all brought about by the work of judgment, for the substance of this work is actually the work of opening up the truth, the way, and the life of God to all those who have faith in Him. This work is the work of judgment done by God'** ("Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth" in The Word Appears in the Flesh)."

After reading the word of God, Sister Zhang Xiao gave fellowship, saying, "The word of Almighty God makes the significance of the work of judgment in the last days, the exact nature of judgment, and the outcomes of the work of judgment among man entirely clear. God's work of judgment is not to kill or punish people like in our notions and imaginations. Instead, this work makes use of the word to expose people's thoughts, speech, and actions, to root out our deeply-entrenched satanic nature and corrupt dispositions that resist God. It allows us to recognize the truth of how we have been corrupted by Satan while also allowing us to know God's righteous and holy disposition. When we get an understanding of these

things, we begin to hate ourselves, and this produces true repentance and a true heart of reverence for God. Through the judgment of the word of God we can better understand and gain access to the truth, and naturally live relying on the truth. This way, whatever satanic things we hold within will gradually be cast away, and we will be able to be in harmony with God. From then on we will no longer rebel against or resist God, but will be able to truly obey Him—only this is attaining salvation. After being corrupted by Satan, we no longer have the likeness of a human and we lose the conscience and reason that a proper person ought to have. Instead, we are filled with arrogance, self-assuredness, selfishness, and other aspects of a satanic disposition. Our attitudes and notions toward things are also no longer compatible with God. For example: When faced with God's work of judgment in the last days, we all have different things that we accept and we all cling to our own notions regardless of whether there is a basis in God's word. We do not seek God's will, but blindly believe that our own way of thinking is correct. When God's work doesn't conform to our notions and imagination, we make our own judgments about God, and we deny, attack, and condemn Him. This is the result of our arrogant disposition. With such a satanic nature we are all too prone to resisting God, so we are in urgent need of God coming to carry out a stage of the work of judgment, and of Him cleansing and transforming our satanic disposition. Without that, no one will be able to break free of corruption and attain salvation."

After listening to the word of Almighty God and the fellowship of this sister, my heart suddenly became clear and open, and I felt that this was very well put. Although there were some things I didn't quite understand, it still gave me a sense of the wisdom within God's work as well as how much love God has for man. In the past, when it came to God coming to judge mankind, I thought that people would either go to hell or suffer the torment of purgatory. In fact, God's work of judgment is not at all what we imagined, but rather, it is God coming in the flesh to practically express the truth and carry out the work of judgment. This is how He cleanses and saves people. God's work of judgment is so full of meaning. It is exactly what we corrupt mankind needs!

While I was listening to all this with keen interest, my husband suddenly called to say he wanted to use the car. Seeing that this time I was able to hear all of this, just as I was about to leave my mother gave me a book called *The Scroll Opened by the Lamb* and said that the words within it were the voice of God Himself. She also strongly advised me to read the word of Almighty God. After going back home, I would read that book whenever I had

time. Through reading the word of Almighty God, I understood many truths and gained quite a lot of knowledge. At the same time, I also truly experienced God's scrutiny of the depths of men's souls. Every word of Almighty God pierced me straight through the heart, revealing my inner corrupt nature. Sometimes when I saw how the word of God reveals our corruption, I felt how He particularly loathes it. It seemed that God is expressing His anger with us, and my numb and unfeeling heart was stirred immediately. I developed awe for God in my heart, and I was no longer like I had been before, when I had committed sins without fear. Through many experiences and the enlightenment and guidance of God's words, I saw that Almighty God's work of judgment could indeed save people from sin and allow them to break away from sin. How practical are God's work and words! I felt great remorse when I thought back on how I had resisted God's work of the last days over the last two years. I hated myself for being so foolish and ignorant, not seeking to understand or investigating a matter as great as the second coming of the Lord. But no, I listened blindly to those rumors, I shut God out, I condemned God, and I resisted God. I nearly missed the Lord's salvation in the last days. I really was so blind! I saw clearly that the slander, judgments, and blasphemy against Almighty God and the defamation of The Church of Almighty God were all just falsehoods from Satan. Those are tricks used by Satan particularly to confuse and entrap people, and hinder them from accepting God's work in the last days. No longer will I believe in the falsehoods of Satan. No matter what I encounter or hear in the future, I will always judge right from wrong according to the word of God and reality. I will no longer listen to Satan's lies and deceit—only in so doing can one be in accord with the will of God. With this in mind, I sincerely gave thanks to Almighty God for the mercy and salvation He has provided to me. God did not give up on saving me because of my rebellion and resistance, but continued to arrange for people to spread the gospel to me and bring me back into the house of God. How great is God's love! Every time I hear the lyrics of the music video Song of Heartfelt Attachment, which go: "Here is One, He is God in the flesh. What He says, what He does, all is the truth. His wisdom, His righteousness, I love them all. Meeting Him, obeying Him, I am so blessed," my heart is particularly touched and inspired. I feel how fortunate I am to welcome the return of the Lord and to encounter the word of God directly. What a great blessing this is!

I later started participating in the church life of The Church of Almighty God. Brothers and sisters sing hymns, dance, and give praise to God together. They read the word of God,

and if there is any corruption to reveal open up their hearts and have fellowship on it. Everyone discusses their knowledge and experience of the word of Almighty God and seeks a path of practice and entering in. This kind of life in the church is particularly liberating and I gain great sustenance from it. I have truly realized that only such a church in which the Holy Spirit is at work can be the house of God. This is where I belong. I am now entirely determined that Almighty God is the second coming of the Lord, and I am determined to follow Almighty God to the very end!

29. Reunited With the Lord

By Jianding, United States

I was born into a Catholic family, and from an early age my mother taught me to read the Bible. That was during the time the Chinese Communist Party was building up the nation after the civil war, and since the CCP government was suppressing all religions, I was 20 years old before I finally got the chance to go to church and listen to sermons. The priest often said to us: “We Catholics must properly confess our sins and repent. We must do good, not evil, and always go to Mass. During the last days, the Lord is going to come and judge everyone and send people to heaven or to hell based on their behavior. The greatest sinners will suffer eternal punishment in hell, whereas those who commit minor sins can still go to heaven as long as they confess their sins to the Lord and repent. Anyone who doesn’t believe in the Lord will never get to heaven, no matter how good they are.” When I heard this, I rejoiced that I had the good fortune to be born into the Catholic faith. I told myself to be serious in my seeking, attend Mass more often, and confess my sins and repent to the Lord more so that I could go to heaven and not suffer in hell. That’s when I developed the determination to go to church and participate in Mass regularly. The priest also told us then that the Lord would return in the year 2000—we were all elated to hear that, and we all became very earnest in our pursuit, awaiting the Lord’s return. But the year 2000 came and went and we didn’t see any sign of the Lord’s return. Many in our congregation lost their faith, and fewer and fewer people attended Mass. I also felt a sense of disappointment, but I still felt that my faith in the Lord wouldn’t be shaken, no matter what others did. That was because there had been many times when I’d been in danger when the Lord had protected

me and I had emerged safely. If it hadn't been for the Lord's protection I'd have died long before, so I wasn't going to be so ungrateful as to lose faith in the Lord.

In the following years I heard from people around me that the USA was "heaven on earth," and so a strong desire to come here grew in me. In December 2014 my entire family immigrated to the U.S., but the reality of life here was nothing like the beautiful picture I'd painted in my mind. At first, everything in the U.S. seemed unfamiliar—we were strangers in a strange land. The environment and climate were very different from what I was used to in China, and I soon began to suffer some physical complaints. I often felt weak and listless, completely devoid of energy, but when I went to see doctors they couldn't find anything wrong with me. I was at my wit's end, so I started praying even more sincerely to the Lord, hoping to gain His protection. While keeping up my prayers I began looking for a church where I could attend Mass and eventually found one for Chinese Christians. But after going to the church a few times I discovered that it wasn't much different from what was going on in everyday society: Members of the congregation were superficially friendly but their interactions were governed by power and money. Seeing this situation in the church was really disappointing for me. I thought to myself: "Oh Lord, when will You return? When You return, the good will be separated from the wicked and the world will be cleansed." Although I still kept on going to Mass I was never able to feel God's presence in the church; this left me frequently feeling disappointed and depressed, and it impacted my faith.

One day in July 2015 when I was working out of state, I got a phone call from my wife. She said to me excitedly: "The Lord has returned. He has uttered words and is doing the work of judgment of the last days! Hurry back so that we can accept God's new work together." Hearing this, I couldn't help but feel a bit suspicious. I thought: "The Lord has returned? How is that possible? When the Lord returns it will be to judge the world, and to separate the good from the evil. But now the good and the evil are still mixed together, so why is my wife saying that the Lord has returned? Does she have a different belief system now? We've been Catholics for most of our lives, there's no way we can stray from this path now!" So I finished up my work as quickly as I could and returned home.

Upon returning I asked my wife: "How do you know that the Lord has returned? You haven't strayed from the path, have you? You're saying that the Lord has returned to do the work of judgment, but right now the good and the evil are still mixed together, so how could it be that the Lord has already returned? We may long for the Lord's return, but we can't be

disloyal to Him!” She heard me out and then patiently replied: “It’s okay, don’t worry. I only just found out myself about the Lord’s return. The Church of Almighty God is now bearing witness to the Lord’s return and Almighty God is expressing truths to do the work of judgment beginning with the house of God. I’m not clear on the specifics, but I’ve been reading a lot of the words that Almighty God has expressed online and I’m sure that they are all the voice of God. The Lord once said: **‘My sheep hear my voice: and I know them, and they follow me’** (John 10:27). We can find out whether Almighty God is the returned Lord by going to The Church of Almighty God together to look into it, right?” What my wife said sounded reasonable, and the Lord’s return to do the work of judgment is in line with biblical prophecies, so I figured there was no harm in me going along with her to the church to take a look, and then I could make up my mind.

So, my wife and I went to the home of Brother Zhang, one of the members of The Church of Almighty God. Brother Wang, Sister Li, and some other fellow Catholics also came. Seeing that I had plenty of company greatly put my mind at ease. After a little polite chit-chat we all sat down and I asked the brothers and sisters this: “My understanding of the Lord’s return is this: When He returns to do the work of judgment, the good will be separated from the wicked, and then the good people will be accepted into heaven by the Lord and will meet with Him, while the wicked will be sent to hell and punished. You say that the Lord has returned and He is doing the work of judgment, so how come we haven’t seen any of these things happening?” Brother Wang replied: “Brother, I used to think the same thing. I also thought that the Lord’s return meant that good people would be separated from wicked people, that good people would live in heaven eternally and the wicked would be punished, and that if we didn’t see this happen then that proved that the Lord hadn’t returned. But after reading Almighty God’s words I realized that is only our notions and imaginings—it isn’t the reality of God’s work. God’s way of undertaking the work of judgment in the last days is something that God alone plans and organizes. God’s wisdom surpasses the heavens, and in God’s eyes humans are as small as a speck of dust, so how can we fathom God’s work? In the Bible it says: ‘Who hath forwarded the spirit of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor, and hath taught him?’ (Isaiah 40:13). ‘Behold the Gentiles are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the smallest grain of a balance: behold the islands are as a little dust’ (Isaiah 40:15). Every one of us has thoughts in our heads, so we can speculate about God’s work as we like, but God never does His work according to what we imagine. If we

use our imaginations to delimit God's work, isn't that extremely arrogant? So then, how does God do His work of judgment? How does He separate the good from the wicked? Let's read several passages of Almighty God's words to help us understand. Almighty God said: **'The work of judgment is God's own work, so it must naturally be carried out by God Himself; it cannot be done by man in His stead. Because judgment is the use of the truth to conquer humankind, there is no question that God would still appear in the incarnate image to perform this work among man. That is to say, in the last days, Christ shall use the truth to teach people across the world and make all truths known to them. This is God's work of judgment'** ("Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **'The last days have already arrived. All things in creation will be classed according to their kind, and divided into different categories based on their nature. This is the moment when God reveals humanity's outcome and their destination. If people do not undergo chastisement and judgment, then there will be no way of exposing their disobedience and unrighteousness. Only through chastisement and judgment can the outcome of all creation be revealed. Man only shows his true colors when he is chastised and judged. Evil shall be put with evil, good with good, and all humanity shall be classified according to their kind. Through chastisement and judgment, the outcome of all creation will be revealed, so that the evil may be punished and the good rewarded, and all people become subject to the dominion of God. All this work must be achieved through righteous chastisement and judgment. Because man's corruption has reached its peak and his disobedience become exceedingly severe, only God's righteous disposition, one that is principally compounded of chastisement and judgment and is revealed during the last days, can fully transform and complete man. Only this disposition can expose evil and thus severely punish all the unrighteous'** ("The Vision of God's Work (3)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **'My purpose in doing the work of conquest is not solely to conquer for the sake of conquest, but to conquer so as to reveal righteousness and unrighteousness, to obtain proof for the punishment of man, to condemn the wicked, and, furthermore, to conquer for the sake of perfecting those who willingly obey. In the end, all will be separated according to kind, and the ones who are perfected will be the ones whose thoughts and ideas are filled with obedience. This is the work that shall ultimately be accomplished. Those whose every action is rebellious, meanwhile,**

will be punished and sent to burn in the fires, the objects of eternal curse' ("Those Who Obey God With a True Heart Shall Surely Be Gained by God" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). We have the notion that God coming to do the work of judgment is to directly separate the wheat from the tares, the sheep from the goats, the good servants from the wicked servants. In other words, it is to classify all people according to their kind. But if we give it some thought, there are at present over 2 billion Christians around the world—and they all say they have true faith in God and love God—so how are we to discern good from bad, righteous from evil? If God determines that you are good and that I'm evil, I'll certainly have an issue with that because I'll feel that I'm also a good person. If God determines that I'm good and that someone else is evil, they'll have an issue with it too. So how on earth are we supposed to know who is good and who is evil? We can't, because we humans don't have the principles or standards to gauge this. If God were to determine things this way we certainly wouldn't submit and would have notions about it, believing God to be unfair and unjust. So how could the work of classifying each according to his own kind thus proceed? The Lord who has returned in the last days, that is, Christ of the last days—Almighty God—uses truths to do the work of judgment. For all Christians, who are the wheat and who are the tares, who are the goats and who are the sheep, who are the good servants and who are the wicked servants, who are the wise virgins and who are the foolish virgins, is all revealed through the truth, through God's words. The wise virgins are those who truly believe in God and love the truth. When they hear that someone is bearing testimony of God's coming they go out to welcome it and actively investigate God's words and work. They recognize God's voice and accept His work of the last days, and they will ultimately gain purification and full salvation through God's judgment. They will have God's protection through the great disasters and will remain, and in the end will be taken into God's kingdom. By contrast, the foolish virgins do not love the truth, they insist on holding onto their own notions and imaginings or believing in rumors. They don't seek or investigate God's work of the last days, and some of them even follow religious leaders in resisting and condemning God and refusing God's salvation of the last days. For all of these reasons, they will be revealed as evildoers by God's work of the last days and will be eliminated. Their fate will be to suffer punishments during the great disasters. We can see from this that God's work of putting each with its own kind during the last days is not done according to our notions and imaginings. Instead, God uses the method of judgment to do the work of exposing

people, and the ultimate outcome is that everyone is thoroughly revealed and sorted according to their own kind based on whether they accept or resist the truth. Isn't this exactly God's wisdom, God's fairness, God's righteousness?"

After listening to Almighty God's words and Brother Wang's fellowship, I recalled what the priest in our church had said about "When the Lord comes the good will be separated from the bad" and realized that this notion is just too vague, too impractical, and doesn't match the reality of God's work at all. We all live in sin, we continue to commit sins and then confess but can't escape from this cycle, so who are the truly good people? When the Lord returns, if we haven't been cleansed of our sins, will we be allowed to enter the kingdom of heaven? Thinking of this was like turning on a light in my heart, and I thanked the Lord for His leadership. I hadn't gone to that gathering in vain, because I then understood that God distinguishes good from evil according to how people approach the truth. In other words, people are good or evil depending on whether or not they accept and obey the judgment and chastisement of God's words, and this is God's righteousness being wholly manifested. Through His words and work, God separates the wheat from the tares, the sheep from the goats, the wise virgins from the foolish virgins, the true believers from the false believers, and the lovers of the truth from the haters of the truth. God is so incredibly wise! However, I also recalled the priest saying that when the Lord returns to judge people He does it one by one, and each individual's sins are also listed and judged one by one before He decides if that person will go to heaven or to hell. But now Almighty God is saying that God's work of judgment of the last days is being done through His words, so just how are these words being used to judge people?

I then raised this question and Brother Zhang answered it by reading two passages of Almighty God's words to me: **"Some believe that God may sometime come to earth and appear to man, whereupon He shall personally judge the whole of mankind, testing them one by one without anyone being omitted. Those who think in this way do not know this stage of work of incarnation. God does not judge man one by one, and does not test man one by one; to do thus would not be the work of judgment. Is not the corruption of all mankind the same? Is not the substance of man all the same? What is judged is mankind's corrupt substance, man's substance corrupted by Satan, and all the sins of man. God does not judge the trifling and insignificant faults of man. The work of judgment is representative, and is not carried out especially for a certain**

person. Rather, it is work in which a group of people are judged in order to represent the judgment of all of mankind. By personally carrying out His work on a group of people, God in the flesh uses His work to represent the work of the whole of mankind, after which it is gradually spread. The work of judgment is also thus. God does not judge a certain kind of person or a certain group of people, but judges the unrighteousness of the whole of mankind—man’s opposition to God, for example, or man’s irreverence against Him, or disturbance of the work of God, and so on. What is judged is mankind’s substance of opposition to God, and this work is the work of **conquest of the last days** (“Corrupt Mankind Needs Salvation by the Incarnate God Most of All” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **“In the last days, Christ uses a variety of truths to teach man, to expose the essence of man, and to dissect the words and deeds of man. These words comprise various truths, such as man’s duty, how man should obey God, how man should be loyal to God, how man ought to live out normal humanity, as well as the wisdom and the disposition of God, and so on. These words are all directed at the essence of man and his corrupt disposition. In particular, the words that expose how man spurns God are spoken in regard to how man is an embodiment of Satan, and an enemy force against God. In undertaking His work of judgment, God does not simply make clear the nature of man with a few words; He exposes, deals with, and prunes over the long term. These methods of exposure, dealing, and pruning cannot be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced into submission to God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God”** (“Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth” in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

Brother Zhang then fellowshiped this with me: “We have the notion that during God’s work of judgment in the last days He will call each and every person to come before His white throne in order to judge them. Every person will have to kneel on the ground and then confess to every single one of the sins they’ve committed throughout their lifetime, and then God will decide whether they will go to heaven or to hell depending upon the severity of their sins. We think that God judges people according to sins such as physically or verbally abusing people, not being filial to their parents, or stealing from or robbing others. But in fact, God’s work of judgment in the last days is not concerned with these external behaviors

or flaws of ours, but is instead aimed at judging mankind's satanic nature of resisting God and each one of our corrupt dispositions. These include our arrogance and self-importance, our crookedness and craftiness, our selfishness and baseness, our greed and evil, and so on. We also have many viewpoints that are not compatible with God, many outdated religious notions and feudal ideas. These things are all sources of our resistance to God, they are all problems that are shared by all of corrupt mankind, and so are the things that God's work of judgment aims to purify and transform. So, the words that God expresses reveal mankind's nature and essence and every corrupt member of humanity on earth is a part of this, without exception. Or to put it another way, God's words of judgment are directed at the whole of mankind and so there is no need to judge people individually. By reading the words of Almighty God and accepting the judgment and chastisement of God's words we can understand many truths and clearly see the essence, nature and truth of our being corrupted by Satan. Doing this will also allow us to recognize God's righteous disposition and develop hearts of reverence for God, and we can start to despise ourselves so that we'll be willing to betray our flesh and practice the truth. In this way, our corrupt satanic disposition will gradually be purified and our viewpoints and outlook on life will also change. When we start to live by God's words, when we cease to oppose and resist God, instead truly obeying and revering Him and shunning evil, then we will gain God's salvation and become people who are compatible with God's will. This is the reality of and the purpose of God expressing truths to do the work of judgment during the last days."

Listening to Brother Zhang's fellowship left me with a sense of just how practical and realistic God's work of judgment is! I was able to accept what he said—it resonated with me deep in my heart. Yes, people are arrogant, they seek fame and fortune and status, and they live mired in their various corrupt dispositions. God uses the judgment of His words to rid us of all of the filth and corruption inside of us. Our nature of resisting God can thus be resolved and our corrupt disposition transformed, and then we can become truly good people. Looking at it this way, I could see that when the priest had spoken of people being judged one by one and each one of their sins being judged when the Lord returns to judge mankind is nothing but human notions and imaginings. It has nothing to do with the way God actually does His work. Almighty God's words really do contain truths; they really are the voice of God! I then decided to thoroughly examine the work of Almighty God.

While I was looking into this, I watched a number of gospel movies produced by The

Church of Almighty God, including The Days of Noah Have Come, The Mystery of Godliness, and Caught the Last Train, as well as some hymnal videos of God's word such as How Important God's Love for Man Is. I also read a lot of Almighty God's words and listened to brothers and sisters fellowshiping on a number of aspects of the truth. This helped me determine that Almighty God is indeed the returned Lord Jesus, and that Almighty God is the one true God and is the returned Lord that we have been awaiting! I very happily accepted Almighty God's work of the last days.

Since believing in Almighty God I've been frequently gathering with other brothers and sisters or listening to sermons with them. Every day is filled with joy for me and I feel that I'm gaining spiritual sustenance. I'm enjoying the comfort that comes from the work of the Holy Spirit, and I'm starting to understand more and more truths. In The Church of Almighty God, the brothers and sisters are all very warm and honest with each other, and nobody tries to deceive anyone else or keeps their guard up. Everybody is simple, open and sincere, and even when they reveal their corrupt dispositions they are each able to know themselves through God's words and seek the truth to resolve their corrupt dispositions. I feel that this is the only kind of true brotherhood and sisterhood in Christ. I'm particularly impressed by the hymnal videos, music videos, dance and song videos, and gospel movies produced by The Church of Almighty God, which all hold the truth on high and bear witness to God and His work of the last days. This is all so that people may submit to and worship God, and the church really does feel like a place where God does His work! Having seen, heard, and experienced all of this is proof within my heart that The Church of Almighty God is a true church where God personally nurtures and shepherds His flock. The fact that I've been able to enter God's house and live a life face-to-face with God is being exceptionally exalted by God. I really am so fortunate! Thank You, Almighty God!

30. Breaking Through the Fog to See the Light

By Xinxin, China

I am an ordinary worker. At the end of November 2013, a work colleague saw that my wife and I were always getting into arguments about little things, and that we were worried and vexed all the time, so he preached Almighty God's work of the last days to us. From the

word of Almighty God, we learned that the heavens and earth and all things were created by God, and that man's life is bestowed on him by God. We also understood such truths as the mystery of God's six-thousand-year management plan, the mystery of the incarnation, God's three stages of work to save mankind, and the significance of God's work of judgment in the last days. My wife and I felt it was a great blessing to have happened upon God incarnate working to save mankind during our lifetimes. We happily accepted God's work in the last days and began to lead the church life. Under the guidance of the word of God, we both pursued the truth and sought to transform ourselves, and whenever something happened and we started to argue, we no longer found fault with each other like we used to, but rather we would reflect on ourselves and try to know ourselves. We would then forsake our flesh and act in accordance with God's requirements. Our marital relations became better and better, and our hearts felt peaceful and at ease. We felt that believing in God was great. However, just as we were joyously and happily following God and enjoying a life of happiness, we were subjected to a vehement assault by our families.... But just when I was losing my way, it was the word of Almighty God that led me to see through Satan's deceitful scheme, and to break through the fog and embark upon the radiant path of a virtuous life.

I had just retired in February of 2014, when my daughter-in-law asked us two elderly folks to travel to Sichuan to look after our grandson. I felt as though we'd been placed in a very awkward position, and so I prayed to God: "Almighty God! My daughter-in-law has asked me to look after my grandson, but I'll have trouble adjusting to life in that place, and it will be difficult to believe in You and read Your words there. Please open up a way out for us...." Not long after that, my daughter-in-law called me again to say that she would bring my grandson to us. I was overjoyed to hear this news, and felt how almighty God is. God had heard my prayer and opened up a way out for me. A few days later, my daughter-in-law and her parents came with my grandson. As it happened, the day after that I was going to a church gathering, and I told them that I believed in Almighty God. My daughter-in-law said unhappily, "Dad, how can you believe in Almighty God? I'm sure you know that the government doesn't allow people to believe in Almighty God, and in recent years they have constantly been arresting believers in Almighty God. You can't continue to believe in Him." I retorted, "When we believe in God, we don't participate in politics. We just attend gatherings, read the word of God, pursue the truth, and follow the right path. How can they not let us

believe?” My daughter-in-law said, “No matter what you say, and even if believing in God is the right path, as long as the government opposes it, you can’t believe in Him!” I thought to myself, “No matter what you say, it is the true God whom I believe in. Even if the CCP government doesn’t allow it, I will still believe.” Later, my daughter-in-law went and found my wife and urged us not to believe in God anymore, and after that, my son in faraway Sichuan called me up and said, “Dad, I heard you believe in Almighty God. That’s something the CCP government opposes, so you mustn’t believe in Him anymore.” When I heard my son say this, I felt perturbed, and thought: “Believing in God is an unalterable law of heaven and earth, so why are you all trying again and again to stop me from believing in God? It’s so hard to believe in God and follow the right path!” I then prayed silently to God to protect me from my son and daughter-in-law’s attempts to disrupt my faith. After praying, my heart gradually became tranquil. Although my son and daughter-in-law did not understand, I knew perfectly well that it was right to believe in God and follow the right path, and I knew I must not allow myself to be influenced by them. After three days, my daughter-in-law came running home in a hurry, and I saw that she had two stacks of printed materials in her hands. She urged me to hurry and look at them, and I saw that they were filled with rumors and falsehoods put out by the CCP government vilifying, condemning, and defaming The Church of Almighty God. For a moment I felt a little confused, and I thought: “It can’t be, I’ve been attending meetings for several months and I’ve never seen any brothers or sisters missing arms or legs! Why does the CCP government want to spread rumors and discredit The Church of Almighty God? What is really going on here?” That night, I couldn’t sleep because I kept turning this over in my mind. “Oh, the CCP government persecutes believers in God so frantically, and my son and daughter-in-law are also trying so hard to stop me from believing in God. What should I do?”

The next day, I went out for a stroll in the neighborhood, and saw rumors slandering and condemning Almighty God posted on a bulletin board. I thought: “What I believe in is the true God, so why does the CCP government oppose my belief in this way? It seems that in this state controlled by the atheistic CCP government, believing in God really isn’t easy!” When I thought about this, I began to feel spiritually weak, and I returned home downcast and dejected. As soon as I got home, my daughter-in-law said to me again, “Dad, I’m begging you to give up your faith. If the government finds out that you believe in God, I won’t be able to keep my job. Your son will soon get his doctorate, but I’m afraid that he won’t

even be able to find a job because of your belief in Almighty God. Even your little grandson might get caught up in this, and it's possible that in the future he won't be able to attend school." It all sounded so terrible—believing in God can even compromise the future of one's children! I got more and more scared, as I knew that the CCP government's ways of punishing people are extremely cruel, so cruel that they kill people without batting an eye. I also thought about how difficult it had been to support my son through his studies until he graduated with his doctorate, so now what would I do if my faith in God affected my son? The price I had to pay for believing in God and following the right path was too high, so I thought it would be best if I just forgot about it. Just at that moment, my daughter-in-law threatened me, saying, "My dad said that if you continue to believe in God, he will report you to the police. You know that my dad is a Party Secretary and has given more than thirty years of his life to the Communist Party. He hears and obeys whatever the CCP says. He's as good as his word, so this isn't just to try to scare you." The defenses in my heart then completely collapsed and toppled over, and I felt that it was too hard to believe in God, that the pressure was too much. With my son and daughter-in-law taking it in turns to attack me like this, if they really reported me to the CCP police and I was arrested and imprisoned, an old man like me could not bear such a thing. "Forget it," I thought. "It's better to just give up my faith." After that, I didn't attend gatherings anymore, and sisters came many times to my house looking for me but I always hid and avoided them.

But during that time when I was not attending gatherings, I had only to think about how it was God's immense love that saved me from my suffering and about the sweetness and joy of being together with the brothers and sisters, singing hymns and praising God, and I would miss and yearn for the church life a lot. But still I feared my daughter-in-law reporting me to the police, and I felt terrible pain and torment in my heart. I didn't know how things would come right. At that time, a colleague at work (a brother who also believed in God) came to visit me to see why I hadn't been attending gatherings recently. I explained to him how my daughter-in-law had been harassing me about my faith in God and, after he heard this, he fellowshiped with me, "When we are beset by these things, it's actually a battle being waged in the spiritual realm. It's just like the disaster that Job was faced with in that, on the surface, it seemed like it had been caused by thieves robbing him, but actually what lay behind it was Satan tormenting people and fighting over mankind with God. Job was someone who feared God and was able to shun evil, and in the end he could stand witness

for God, and Satan was humiliated in defeat. So when we are beset by these things, God's intention is to get us to discern Satan's essence of evil. When we believe in God, all we need to do is rely on God in all things and seek the truth. Only then will we be able to see through Satan's scheme and stand witness, and only then will we be able to avoid being captured by Satan. If we do not do this, we will lose our chance to attain full salvation!"

After that, my colleague read to me from the word of Almighty God: **"God works, God cares for a person, looks upon a person, and Satan dogs His every step. Whoever God favors, Satan also watches, trailing along behind. If God wants this person, Satan would do everything in its power to obstruct God, using various evil ways to tempt, harass and wreck the work God does in order to achieve its hidden objective. What is its objective? It does not want God to have anyone; it wants all those that God wants, to occupy them, control them, to take charge of them so they worship it, so they commit evil acts alongside it. Is this not Satan's sinister motive? Normally, you often say that Satan is so evil, so bad, but have you seen it? You can only see how bad man is and have not seen in reality how bad Satan actually is. But have you seen it in this issue concerning Job? (Yes.) This issue has made Satan's hideous countenance and its essence very clear. Satan is at war with God, trailing along behind Him. Its objective is to demolish all the work God wants to do, to occupy and control those whom God wants, to completely extinguish those whom God wants. If they are not extinguished, then they come to Satan's possession to be used by it—this is its objective"** ("God Himself, the Unique IV" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **"You must be awake and waiting at every moment, and you must pray more before Me. You must recognize the various plots and cunning schemes of Satan, know the spirit, know people and be able to discern all kinds of people, matters and things; you must eat and drink more of My words and, more importantly, you must be able to eat and drink them by yourselves. Equip yourselves with all the truth, come before Me so that I may open your spiritual eyes and allow you to see all the mysteries that lie within the spirit"** ("Chapter 17" of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

After he had finished reading from the word of God, my colleague fellowshiped with me about it, saying, "It is an intense spiritual battle when we are beset with these things. At present, the whole world is under the domain of Satan, the evil one, and Satan continues to

corrupt mankind, and to disturb and disrupt God's work in the vain hope of fully taking possession of and devouring mankind whom God created—this is Satan's evil goal. God's six-thousand-year management plan is carried out for the sake of saving mankind from the dark influence of Satan so that they can be gained by God. Especially in the last days, while God is expressing His word and performing the last stage of work, that of cleansing and saving mankind, Satan is afraid that we will accept God's work, and that we will understand the truth and attain full salvation. It is afraid that we will come to discern its evil and reactionary essence and then abandon it and forsake it. Because of this, it is in the throes of its final desperate struggle—battling with God for His chosen people and using every contemptible strategy to stop us from coming into God's presence. Deceitful schemes such as all manner of rumors and lies disseminated by the CCP government, the frantic suppression and capture of believers, harassment and persecution of believers by family members, as well as the condemnations and slander spread by the religious world are all implemented by Satan in order to prevent us from turning toward God. But God's wisdom is exercised based on the deceitful schemes of Satan, and it is precisely Satan's disruption that God uses to render service to His work, thereby perfecting our faith and loyalty. From the outside, it is the CCP government and our families using all kinds of tricks and means to persecute us and obstruct us from believing in God, but actually behind the scenes it is all the deceitful schemes of Satan. As long as we do more to seek the truth and to understand God's will, have some knowledge of God's work, are able to discern all of Satan's tricks and ruses, and are able to stand witness for God, Satan will be humiliated in defeat. If we don't seek to understand the truth, then we will be incapable of understanding the battle in the spiritual realm, and when Satan causes disruptions for us we will be liable to be led astray and to give rise to doubts about God, even to the point of denying God, betraying God, and abandoning our faith in God. That is precisely how one falls victim to Satan's tricks and misses the opportunity to receive the salvation of God; in the end, this is how one is devoured by Satan. We must therefore pray and draw near to God more, and we must read the word of God and equip ourselves with the truth with greater urgency. Only in this way can we understand God's will, see through Satan's tricks, and stand witness for God."

Through listening to the word of God and my colleague's fellowship, I suddenly realized: "This is actually a battle in the spiritual realm. God expresses the truth in the last days in order to save us, but Satan thinks up every conceivable way to use the oppression and

persecution meted out by the CCP government to prevent me from believing in God and following God. It is afraid that I will accept God's work of the last days and understand the truth, thereby discerning its evil, hideous, satanic, demonic essence and rejecting and forsaking it, and attaining God's salvation. Today, I have finally seen Satan's contemptible malice and I now understand the painstaking care and thought that God puts into saving mankind." Just then, the emotions I had held back for so long were finally set free, and I felt so happy, as if I were seeing the light of day again. "Thanks be to God!" I thought to myself. "From now on, I will read more of the word of God and equip myself with the truth so as never to be fooled by Satan again."

Although I understood that my unbelieving family members harassing me for believing in God was just one of Satan's tricks, and that I should not be fooled by Satan, I was still rather worried that if the CCP government found out about my faith it would have an impact on the careers of my son and daughter-in-law. I was even more afraid of the impact it would have on my grandson going to school. I therefore told my work colleague about my concerns and he read me another passage of Almighty God's words: **"God's authority exists regardless of the circumstances. In all situations, God dictates and arranges every human fate and all things in accordance with His thoughts and His wishes. This will not change as a result of human change; it is independent of man's will, cannot be altered by any changes in time, space, and geography, for God's authority is His very substance. ... At all times, God wields His authority, shows His might, continues His management work as He always has; at all times, He rules all things, provides for all things, orchestrates all things—just as He always has. No one can change this. It is fact; it has been the unchanging truth since time immemorial!"** ("God Himself, the Unique III" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). My colleague went on to give me fellowship, saying, "God is the Creator, and He holds sovereignty over the heavens, earth, and everything within. He also controls the fate of every person, and whatever kind of job or future prospects each of us has was predestined long ago by God. This is something no one can decide or change by himself. Your son and daughter-in-law's careers and future prospects are all controlled by God. It doesn't matter if they believe in God or not, their fate is ruled over and arranged by God. It is unnecessary for us to be worried about this or that. Job never worried about these things, because it was clear to him that all he had was given to him by God, and whatever was given to him or taken away from him, he knew that it was

all in God's hands. Therefore, you should only be concerned with praying to God, and entrust the future of your son and daughter-in-law into God's hands and have faith that God has a suitable plan." Through fellowshiping on God's words concerning God's authority, I found my faith in God, and I felt at ease and at peace in my heart. I would no longer worry about my son or daughter-in-law's prospects.

Afterward, through reading the word of God, I made progress in discerning the God-opposing, evil essence of the CCP government. Almighty God says: **"The devil tightly trusses all of man's body, it puts out both his eyes, and seals his lips firmly shut. The king of devils has rampaged for several thousand years, right up until today, when it still keeps a close watch on the ghost town, as if it were an impenetrable palace of demons; this pack of watchdogs, meanwhile, stare with glaring eyes, deeply fearful that God will catch them unawares and wipe them all out, leaving them without a place of peace and happiness. How could the people of a ghost town such as this have ever seen God?"** ("Work and Entry (8)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Sermons and Fellowship on Entry Into Life also says: "In the heart of the great red dragon, it thinks God has come to take away from it all the people who belong to it, and He is making an enemy of it. This great red dragon is a peremptory and unreasonable thing! Mankind was created by God, and God has the right to save mankind. Originally, mankind belonged to God, and it is the great red dragon which has usurped the chosen people of God, corrupting and trampling on them at will, eventually devouring them all. However, when God comes to save mankind, it opposes Him. We can see from this that the great red dragon's nature and essence are in opposition to Heaven, extremely reactionary, unreasonable, and absurd. It is a wild beast and a demon" (Sermons and Fellowship on Entry Into Life). I now understood that in this atheistic country, the rule of the CCP is the rule of Satan. The Chinese government does not permit God to come to this land and do the work of saving people, nor does it allow people to break free of its dark influence and be gained by God, and to be led by God into a beautiful destination. It therefore does all it can to resist and condemn the work of Almighty God, frantically harassing and obstructing us from following Almighty God. If we do not have the truth, are unable to see through the deceitful schemes of the CCP government, and cannot see through to its evil and reactionary essence, we will easily be led astray by all the various lies it disseminates and be frightened into submission by its repression and persecution. We wouldn't dare to come into the presence of God, and this

would mean it has achieved its base purpose of devouring people and destroying God's work of saving people. But no one can fathom God's wisdom. It is precisely the CCP government's persecution God uses to render service to perfecting His chosen people, to enable us to understand the truth, to understand thoroughly that the CCP government is a satanic demon which is full of enmity for the truth and takes God as its enemy, so that we can completely forsake it and turn fully toward God. I give thanks to God for using His words to lead me and enlighten and illuminate me, which allowed me to discern the God-resisting, devilish essence of the CCP government and no longer to be constrained by its threats. I am also grateful to God for arranging my colleague to come and give me support, and to fellowship about the truth with me at a time when I was feeling negative and weak, when I had fallen down and lost my way. God saved me from the temptations of Satan, and I broke through Satan's net, returned to the presence of God. I now have a chance to attain full salvation. I have resolved that, no matter how many difficulties there are on the road ahead, I will follow Almighty God till the very end!

31. A Warm Light After a Dark Tunnel

By Wang Yuping, China

Just like all the other brothers and sisters who thirst for the return of the Lord Jesus, I too have always longed for our Lord to return soon, to receive us into the kingdom of heaven so that we can enjoy its blessings. Then one day in November of 2006, I finally heard the news of the Lord's return. Through reading the words expressed by Almighty God and through brothers' and sisters' fellowship and testimony of God's work in the last days, I ultimately recognized that Almighty God incarnate is the returned Lord Jesus. Thereupon, I very happily accepted Almighty God's work in the last days.

In a gathering once, Sister Yang shared this fellowship with me in a very serious tone: "Recently there have been a lot of brothers and sisters who are faced with some disruption and temptation from Satan after accepting God's work of the last days. Some are deceived by the lies of the CCP government, some are disturbed and threatened by pastors and elders, some are coerced or obstructed by their families, and some have family members who fall ill or meet with disaster. All these things are Satan's tricks to stop us from returning to God.

We all already understand that the work of Almighty God's judgment starts from God's house, and this is God's final stage of work in saving mankind. He is doing His utmost to save man, and Satan is practicing its own tricks and disruptions on us in order to stand in the way of us coming before God and receiving His salvation. Right now the fight that is being waged in the spiritual world is becoming more and more intense, so there is an urgent need for us to be equipped with the truth and to learn discernment so that we're not deceived whenever Satan's tricks befall us, but instead, we can stand witness for God. Let's read a passage from the words of Almighty God." So, I took the book of God's words and earnestly read the following passage: **"As God works, Satan harasses. In the last days, it will finish its harassment; likewise, God's work will be finished, and the kind of person God wishes to complete will be completed. God directs people positively; His life is living water, immeasurable and without limits. Satan has corrupted man to a certain degree; in the end, the living water of life will complete man, and it will be impossible for Satan to interfere and carry out its work. Thus, God will completely obtain these people. Satan still refuses to accept this now; it continuously pits itself against God, but God pays it no attention. He has said, I will be victorious over all of Satan's dark forces and over all dark influences. ... God is wiser than it, and His work far exceeds it. Therefore, I previously stated the following: The work that I do is carried out in response to Satan's ruses. In the end I will reveal My almightiness and Satan's powerlessness. When God does His work, Satan tails Him from behind, until in the end it is finally destroyed—it will not even know what hit it! It will only realize the truth once it has already been smashed and crushed; at that time it will already have been burned in the lake of fire. Will it not be completely convinced then? For it has no more schemes to employ!"** ("You Should Know How the Whole of Humanity Has Developed to the Present Day" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Sister Yang said gently: "From God's words we can see that Satan is always close on the heels of every step of God's management work. God is in front working to save man while Satan is in the back being disruptive and destructive. It is constantly vying with God over man, and this is particularly true during God's final stage of work to completely save man. And now to an even greater extent, Satan is doing everything in its power, exploiting all kinds of people and things to disturb us and keep us from accepting and submitting to the work of God. It is Satan's despicable goal to distance man from God, to have us deny and betray God, thereby losing God's salvation. But God's

wisdom is carried out in response to Satan's trickery. He uses Satan's disturbances to give us an understanding of His work, His wisdom, and His almightiness, and also to allow us to clearly see Satan's wickedness and ugliness. So, no matter what we encounter later on, we all must pray to and rely on God, and seek the truth. We must also see through Satan's trickery so that we can stand witness to God. It's just like the trials that Job went through. He stood witness to God and Satan retreated in humiliation." I listened to Sister Yang's fellowship and responded with total confidence: "Yes, we believe in the true God. If we depend upon God then we have nothing to fear; if I come across Satan's temptations, I will certainly stand on God's side."

One day not long after just as I was approaching my front door after a day of sharing the gospel, my neighbor came rushing over to me waving her hands and said: "Why are you back so late? There's been a terrible accident! Earlier today your son's friend Liu went to borrow your truck, but he was having a hard time starting it, so he got the tractor to tow it to get it started, but after a few tries it still wouldn't move. It just so happened that Hu was there too, so he got up into the tractor and put it straight into fifth gear. The tractor careened off and the metal cable attached to the truck suddenly snapped, and—whoosh!—the cable snapped back and hit Hu on the temple. Blood started pouring out right away. He's been taken to the hospital." My mind suddenly went totally blank. I rushed inside and prayed to God: "Oh God! I don't know what Your will is. Why has this suddenly happened to me? Please enlighten me." After praying I thought of Sister Yang's fellowship about truths regarding the spiritual battle, and then I understood. These things were just Satan tempting me and disturbing me. Satan just wanted to use these adverse events to attack me so that I would doubt, blame, and deny God. I realized it truly was a spiritual battle! Just then these words from God came to mind: **"[Y]ou are able to stand on the side of God when He does battle with Satan, and you do not turn back to Satan, then you will have achieved the love of God, and you will have stood firm in your testimony"** ("Only Loving God Is Truly Believing in God" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's words filled me with great faith and I thought to myself: "Satan, no matter how you disturb me I will not fall for your tricks; I will not blame or doubt God, but I will stand on His side. I will follow Almighty God as I should." Once I had understood the will of God I felt much steadier in my heart.

But Satan was unwilling to admit defeat—it didn't rest in its campaign to disturb me through other people and things. While Hu was hospitalized his family pushed all the

responsibility onto my family; they wanted us to pay for all of the medical expenses. I kept trying to negotiate with them, telling them that I was willing to pay half, but they just continued to refuse. Twenty-odd days later Hu had recovered, but he still wasn't discharged from the hospital. This was done deliberately to extort my family. Then one day Hu said: "The truck is yours, so all the expenses should be paid by you." Hu's wife also stood up and yelled, "That's right! Since the accident was with your truck, you should pay for everything." I stood there with them pestering me to no end and started to become very angry. I had unwillingly gotten caught up in this matter. I felt really pained and was in emotional turmoil. I didn't want to talk to them anymore, so I just walked out of the hospital room, disgruntled. As I was going downstairs I thought to myself: "I'm a believer in God, so when these kinds of things happen to me I shouldn't get so angry, but I should entrust this matter to the hands of God. I need to rely on God." When I got home I opened up my book of God's words and read this: **"In every step of work that God does within people, externally it appears to be interactions between people, as if born of human arrangements or from human interference. But behind the scenes, every step of work, and everything that happens, is a wager made by Satan before God, and requires people to stand firm in their testimony to God. Take when Job was tried, for example: Behind the scenes, Satan was making a bet with God, and what happened to Job was the deeds of men and the interference of men. Behind every step of work that God does in you is Satan's wager with God—behind it all is a battle. ... You should know that everything that happens to you is a great trial and the time when God needs you to bear testimony"** ("Only Loving God Is Truly Believing in God" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). As I read these words I thought back to how I had boasted in front of Sister Yang that day that I would certainly stand by the side of God whenever Satan's temptations befall me. I hadn't imagined that when Satan pestered me time after time, I couldn't be able to calmly come before God and seek His will, but my mind would always be preoccupied. I felt terrible about this—wasn't this falling for Satan's tricks? It wasn't until I had ruminated over all of the ins and outs of this matter that I finally saw how truly sinister and evil Satan is. It had used this issue to disturb me, to make me angry over my worldly interests; even more so, it wanted to use this to get me to deny and betray Almighty God. I knew I couldn't fall for Satan's tricks, but was willing to depend on God and to hand this matter over to God. I believed that the matters of whether or not Hu would be discharged from the hospital and how much money I would

have to spend in the end were all orchestrated at the hands of God, and I would submit to the outcome, whatever it was. Once I had come to understand God's will and was willing to stand witness to God, to my surprise, I witnessed one of God's wondrous deeds the following day. God inspired a young man to go to Hu's hospital room and reprimand him: "I just can't stand to look at someone like you, someone who bullies good people, who extorts others for their money. If it were me I wouldn't give you a single dime!" Other patients in the same room also chimed in: "That's right, he was the one that got into that tractor of his own volition and now he wants this person's money. How unreasonable!" "Yeah! The person who borrowed the truck should pay something, too! They can't have the owner pay for everything!" Hearing this, Hu bowed his head and didn't say a word. Three days later Hu was discharged from the hospital. I knew deep in my heart that behind all this was God, that He had opened up this way out for me.

After going through this, I could see the wickedness and despicableness of Satan. It had used people and things around me to disturb me and attack me in an attempt to get me to complain to God, to blame Him and distance myself from Him because I was going to lose some money. It wanted me to live in suffering. At the same time, I could also see that when I stopped considering my fleshly gains and losses, when I relied on God in my faith, when I stood on God's side, then He used the words of unbelievers to open up a way out for me, forcing Satan to retreat in shame. This allowed me to see God's authority to mobilize anything and rule over everything. It's just as it is written in God's words: **"I will mobilize all to serve Me, and moreover, I will reveal My power, so that every man can see that in the whole universe world not a single object is not in our hands, not a single person is not in our service, and not a single accomplishment is not performed for us"** ("Chapter 119" of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). The more I read God's words, the more I see God's almightiness and His wondrousness. Seeing that all things are in God's hands bolstered my faith in God and I became willing to experience more of His work in whatever happens next, and rely upon God to overcome Satan's temptations.

A month later a temptation from Satan befell me again. One day, my recently married daughter came back home for a visit, but she suddenly fainted right at the front door. My neighbor picked her up and helped her into the house. At first I thought it was just a common cold and didn't think much of it, but I certainly wasn't expecting that in the middle of the night

she would suddenly start shaking from head to toe. I was so scared and had no idea what to do, but I just quickly grabbed her and held her to my chest, and after a little while she seemed a little better. The next morning, she said, "Mom, go perform your duties, I'll be okay." I silently prayed to God: "Dear God! All things are in Your hands, so I entrust my daughter to You." I then turned to my daughter and said: "Jing, you need to pray to God more and rely on God, for He is our strong backup force." After exhorting her about this I went to go perform my duties. To my surprise, when I returned two days later, my daughter was in a hospital bed, dead to the world. My daughter-in-law turned to me and said sadly: "Mom, after you left, Jing started getting worse. When the doctor examined her, he said she had a cerebral hemorrhage and that she needed a craniotomy. But since her husband hasn't been here the last couple of days and you haven't either, there hasn't been anyone to sign for her. We've missed the window for surgery. I also heard the doctor tell Jing's mother-in-law that her condition couldn't be cured and that even if she did wake back up, she would be in a vegetative state." Hearing this was like a knife twisting in my heart, and tears started falling from my eyes. I just couldn't accept this as the truth. Holding on to a shred of hope, I went to talk to a specialist, but he shook his head as he said: "We've done everything that we can, we've tried as hard as we can, but the best possible outcome is that she'll regain consciousness but be in a vegetative state." Hearing this was just like feeling the sky come crashing down on me. I was living in a state of limitless suffering. When my son-in-law later saw the state my daughter was in, not only was he unconcerned about whether she would live or die, but he even turned to me and, displaying a total lack of humanity, asked me to return the betrothal money that he had given us when they got married. The way home from the hospital that day felt so long; I was a lost soul wandering down that road. It felt like I was walking through a long, dark tunnel and couldn't see any light in front of me.

When I got home I feebly opened my book of God's words and read this: "**On earth, all manner of evil spirits are forever on the prowl for a place to rest, and are endlessly searching for human corpses that can be consumed. My people! You must remain within My care and protection. Never be dissolute! Never behave recklessly! You should offer up your loyalty in My house, and only with loyalty can you mount a countercharge against the devil's trickery**" ("Chapter 10" of God's Words to the Entire Universe in The Word Appears in the Flesh). "**When you face sufferings you must be able to not consider the flesh and not complain against God. When God hides Himself**

from you, you must be able to have the faith to follow Him, to maintain your previous love without allowing it to falter or disappear. No matter what God does, you must submit to His design, and be more willing to curse your own flesh than to complain against Him. When you are faced with trials you must satisfy God in spite of any reluctance to part with something you love, or bitter weeping. Only this can be called true love and faith” (“Those Who Are to Be Made Perfect Must Undergo Refinement” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). As I read these words from God I thought back over the events that had just taken place, and I truly could see Satan’s despicableness, malice, and savageness. In its effort to wrest me away from God’s hands, to devour my soul, it carried out its cunning schemes against me at every turn to disturb me and attack me. First, I was extorted by someone and I suffered from the prospect of that financial loss; this time, Satan was using my beloved daughter to again tempt me, trying to use my daughter’s illness to get me to complain to God, to deny and betray God, so that I would lose God’s salvation of the last days. These were all the cunning schemes of Satan. It was just like the trials that Job faced in his time. There was a battle going on behind all of that—Satan wanted to get Job to abandon and deny God by having him lose his wealth and his children, but Job never blamed God. Instead, he praised God’s name, causing Satan to retreat in shame; he gave beautiful and resounding testimony to God. Although my flesh is weak, I knew I had to see through Satan’s cunning schemes and stand by God’s side. God says: “[A]nd only with loyalty can you mount a countercharge against the devil’s cunning.” “[Y]ou must satisfy God in spite of any reluctance to part with something you love, or bitter weeping. Only this can be called true love and faith.” God was using Satan’s attacks to perfect my faith and my loyalty in God. Man’s life and death are both in God’s hands, so I was willing to put my daughter into His hands. As I thought about this, I knelt to the ground as bitter tears ran down my face, and I prayed to God: “Almighty God! People’s fates lie in Your hands. If You don’t allow it to happen, then my daughter won’t die so long as there is a single breath left in her body. And if the doctors are right and she’s going to become a vegetable, then I absolutely will not blame You, but will continue to follow You.”

Late that night, I was sitting at my daughter’s hospital bed and dozed off at some point. I woke up in a daze hearing my daughter say, “Mom, mom, I need water.” Hearing my daughter’s voice my heart skipped a beat and I jumped to my feet. I rubbed my eyes and stared at her. Her hands really were moving and her eyes were open. I was immediately so

flooded with emotion that I didn't know what to say, and all I could do was continue blurting out: "Oh! God! Oh! God!" Someone else in the same ward also said in amazement: "Oh! It's a miracle! How could she have gotten better just like that?" I was so elated that I was grinning from ear to ear. I truly saw that man's life and death are both in God's hands; God's deeds are so wondrous. It was God who had saved my daughter. Three days later, my daughter miraculously recovered her health, and she seemed just like a normal person again. After undergoing this blow at Satan's hands I was able to see how intense the fight being waged in the spiritual world is, and I could see clearly Satan's sinister despicableness and wicked cruelty. At the same time, I also gained a much better understanding of the will of God. God had allowed these trials to befall me so that He could better save me and perfect me. This allowed me to recognize God's almightiness and wisdom. It also allowed me to see God's authority and sovereignty. This perfected my faith, loyalty and obedience toward God; this rescued me from the influence of Satan, allowing me to grow in my life. God truly is so lovely!

I later read this passage from the words of God: **"My entire management plan, the six-thousand-year management plan, consists of three stages, or three ages: the Age of Law of the beginning; the Age of Grace (which is also the Age of Redemption); and the Age of Kingdom of the last days. My work in these three ages differs in content according to the nature of each age, but at each stage this work befits the needs of man—or, to be more precise, is done according to the tricks that Satan employs in the war that I wage against it. The purpose of My work is to defeat Satan, to make manifest My wisdom and omnipotence, to expose all of Satan's tricks, and thereby to save the entire human race, which lives under Satan's domain. It is to show My wisdom and omnipotence, and to reveal the unbearable hideousness of Satan; even more than that, it is to allow created beings to discriminate between good and evil, to know that I am the Ruler of all things, to see clearly that Satan is the enemy of humanity, a degenerate, the evil one, and to allow them to tell, with absolute certainty, the difference between good and evil, truth and falsehood, holiness and filth, and what is great and what is ignoble. Thus will ignorant humanity become able to bear witness to Me that it is not I who corrupt humanity, and only I—the Creator—can save humanity, can bestow upon people the things that they can enjoy; and they will come to know that I am the Ruler of all things and Satan is merely one of the beings that I created and that later turned against Me"** ("The True Story Behind the Work of the Age of

Redemption” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). These words of God gave me a better understanding of God’s will. I could see that everything that God does is salvation and love for mankind. As I thought back over trial after trial that I had gone through, although I had endured some hardships, I had gained so much. It was through these experiences that I saw how Satan was always using the people and things around me to harass me, but all along God was by my side, using His words to enlighten me and guide me, so that I could gain more discernment. He was giving me a path to follow, giving me faith and strength, so that I could be firm in times of passivity and weakness. Every step of the way I was able to break away from Satan’s dark influence and witness God’s wondrous deeds. I matured and grew tougher in my life through these experiences. Going through all of this left me with the feeling that I need not fear these disturbances and afflictions from Satan any longer, because I have God at my side. So long as we depend on God and do not depart from His words, so long as we have faith in God, He will guide us to victory over Satan’s temptations and attacks, and we will live protected under God’s watchful eye. Now I am even more firmly convinced that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus. He is my Lord, my God! I also recognize that we are created beings, and regardless of whether we enjoy blessings or suffer hardships, we should always obey and worship God. I have made this ironclad resolution: My heart is set on following Almighty God to the end of the road!

32. The Sky Was Especially Clear and Sunny That Day

By Tian Ying, China

I used to be a believer in the Three-Self Church in China. When I first started participating in gatherings, the pastors would often say to us, “Brothers and sisters, it is recorded in the Bible that, ‘For with the heart man believes to righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made to salvation’ (Romans 10:10). We’ve been justified due to our faith, and since we believe in Jesus, we have been saved. If we believed in anything else, then we wouldn’t be saved....” I kept these words spoken by the pastors always in mind. They spurred me on as I ardently engaged in pursuit and actively attended gatherings, waiting for the Lord to come and receive me into the kingdom of heaven. Later, a series of unlawful deeds were committed in the church, and as a result I began to weary of the

gatherings there. Not only were the pastors divided amongst themselves, with each trying to establish themselves at the top and set up their own fiefdoms, but also the sermons given by the pastors were constrained to toe the line drawn by the United Front Work Department (UFWD). The UFWD didn't allow our pastors to preach from the Book of Revelation out of fear that it would "incite disturbance among the people," and so, they didn't preach from the Book of Revelation. The pastors would often preach about donations, saying that the more one donated then the more blessings one would receive from God. Seeing the church in this condition, I felt bewildered: How had the church come to this? Did the pastors not believe in the Lord? Why did they not follow the Lord's word? Why did they not have even the slightest reverence for the Lord? From that point on, I no longer wanted to go to gatherings at the Three-Self Church because I felt that they did not truly believe in God, and that they were false shepherds who pretended to believe in God in order to obtain the brothers and sisters' hard-earned money.

In late 1995, I left the church without hesitation and joined a house church (the Sola Fide Church). At first, I thought that their sermons were not subject to the restrictions of the national government, and they even integrated the Book of Revelation into their sermons and discussed the last days, the Lord's return, and so on. So I felt that their preaching was much better than that of the pastors in the Three-Self Church, and that there was more enjoyment to be had by attending gatherings here compared to the gatherings in the Three-Self Church—I was very happy. But after a period of time, I discovered that here, too, among the co-workers there were some who engaged in jealous disputes and who created schisms. None of the brothers and sisters were living out the requirements of the Lord, and they were not as loving as they had once been. When I saw that this church wasn't really any different to the Three-Self Church, I felt very disappointed, but I also didn't know where I could find a church that had the work of the Holy Spirit. For lack of a better option, all I could do was stay within the Sola Fide Church, and so I kept attending their gatherings. The pastors and preachers all said "once saved always saved" and "so long as you endure to the end, toil and work for the Lord and keep the way of the Lord, then you will be able to enter the kingdom of heaven." So I thought to myself at that time: "Regardless of what happens to other people, as long as I persevere in my faith in the Lord Jesus and do not depart from the way of the Lord, then when the Lord returns I will have a chance to be raptured into the kingdom of heaven."

In the blink of an eye it was late 1997, God's kingdom gospel had already reached us, and our church was thrown into uproar. Leader Li said to us, "Nowadays a group has emerged that is spreading Eastern Lightning, they are stealing good sheep from various denominations, and they are saying that the Lord Jesus has already returned and that He is carrying out a new stage of work. The Lord Jesus was nailed to the cross for us, and He has already paid the price of His life in order to redeem us. We have already been saved. We just need to endure to the end, and when the Lord returns we will certainly be raptured into the kingdom of heaven. We must therefore be careful, and we absolutely cannot receive these people from Eastern Lightning. Whoever receives them shall be expelled from the church! Also, you must be sure not to listen to what they say, and you must be sure not to read their books...." It seemed that co-workers at all levels were all talking about these things at pretty much every gathering. After hearing what they said, the brothers and sisters unwittingly began to resist and guard against Eastern Lightning. I began to be even more careful and cautious, for I feared that I would be stolen away by Eastern Lightning and would therefore lose my chance to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

However, the new year had just begun in 1998 when, one day, I unexpectedly ran into someone from The Church of Almighty God, and I had the fortune to listen to the way of Eastern Lightning for the first time. That day, my elder sister gave me a call and invited me to her house. She had also invited Sister Hu from her village to come over too. When Sister Hu saw me she smiled and said, "Oh good, you came. A distant relative of mine who believes in the Lord is visiting me. Why don't we all gather together?" I happily agreed. Before long, Sister Hu came back with her relative. When this sister saw us, she greeted us with enthusiasm. Although I had never met her before, I felt a sort of closeness to her. She said, "There is widespread desolation in the church nowadays. The preachers don't have anything fresh or new to sermonize about. At every gathering, when they aren't preaching about how to resist Eastern Lightning, it's all just listening to tapes and singing hymns. This is all that happens at gatherings. Co-workers engage in jealous disputes, they collude and connive, they are all extremely self-righteous and no one listens to anyone else. The brothers and sisters are negative and weak, and they have lost their faith and love. Many have left the Lord to return to the world to make money." Deep inside me I felt the same way, and as I nodded my head, I said to the sister, "This is what it's like in my church, too. Before, we would have 20 to 30 people in every meeting place at our monthly meetings, but now there

are just a few elderly people, and even the preachers have gone into the world to make money! There is no enjoyment to be had at the gatherings.” The sister nodded her head and said, “This kind of situation doesn’t just exist in certain churches anymore, but is a widespread phenomenon throughout the religious world. This shows that the work of the Holy Spirit is not to be found within the church any longer, and so unlawful deeds are being committed all the time—this is a sign of the Lord’s return. It’s just like the end of the Age of Law, when the temple became a place where livestock was sold and people exchanged money. It was because God had already stopped carrying out His work in the temple, and instead had incarnated as the Lord Jesus to carry out a new stage of work outside of the temple.” I listened attentively, nodding from time to time. The sister went on, saying, “Sister, in Luke 17:24–26 it says: **‘For as the lightning, that lightens out of the one part under heaven, shines to the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day. But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.’** How do you interpret these lines of Scripture?” I thought seriously about them for a while, and then laughed awkwardly and said, “Sister, aren’t these lines of Scripture talking about the coming of the Lord?” The sister replied, “These lines of Scripture are discussing the coming of the Lord. However, they are not talking about the coming of the Lord Jesus back in those olden days. Rather, they are referring to the return of the Lord in the last days because, here, the Lord is very clearly prophesying about what will happen when He returns in the last days. Sister, right now the faith of the believers in the church has grown cold, and they are negative and weak. This is because God has become flesh once again to carry out a new stage of work. God’s work has moved on, and everyone who does not follow God’s new work will lose the work of the Holy Spirit.” As soon as I heard the sister say that the Lord Jesus had already returned, I immediately guessed that she belonged to Eastern Lightning, and my heart instantly sank. The smile on my face disappeared as the words from my leaders who had sealed off the church at once appeared in my mind: “To believe in Jesus is to be saved, and once saved always saved! ... Do not receive those from Eastern Lightning! ...” As I thought about these words from my leaders, I wanted to rush back home. But when this idea came into my mind, the Lord enlightened me by having me remember a verse from a hymn: “Jesus is our refuge, when you have troubles hide with Him, when the Lord and you are together what do you have to fear?” “That’s it!” I thought. “If I have the Lord by my side, then

what do I have to fear? The things I am afraid of do not come from God, they come from Satan.” Just then, the sister said, “If anyone has any questions, go ahead and share them. The word of God will be able to solve all the problems and difficulties that we have.” When I heard the sister say this, I thought to myself: “You may not be able to answer my questions! I now have to find out exactly what is really being preached by Eastern Lightning, and how it has been able to steal away so many good sheep.”

Thinking this, I decided to jump straight in and take the initiative, and I said, “Our leaders are always saying that the Lord Jesus was nailed to the cross for us, and that He has already paid the price of His life in order to redeem us, and therefore we have already been saved. It is recorded in Scripture: ‘For with the heart man believes to righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made to salvation’ (Romans 10:10). Since we have been saved once we have been saved forever, and so long as we endure to the end, then when the Lord returns we will certainly be raptured into the kingdom of heaven. This is the promise that the Lord has made to us. We therefore do not need to accept any new work being carried out by God.”

The sister smiled and said to me, “Many believers think that the Lord Jesus was nailed to the cross for us, and that since He paid the price of His life to redeem us, we have been saved. People believe that to be saved once is to be saved forever, that all we need to do is endure to the end, and then when the Lord returns we will certainly be raptured into the kingdom of heaven, and we do not need to accept any new work carried out by God. But is this way of thinking really correct? Does it really conform to the Lord’s will? Actually, this idea that ‘to be saved once is to be saved forever, and when the Lord returns we will be raptured into the kingdom of heaven’ is just a notion and an imagining of man, and it simply does not accord with what the Lord said. The Lord Jesus never once said that those who have been saved by their faith may enter into the kingdom of heaven, but rather, He said, **‘[B]ut he that does the will of My Father which is in heaven’** (Matthew 7:21). To be saved and to do the will of the Father which is in heaven are not the same thing. When we speak of being saved by one’s faith, this being saved refers to being forgiven for your sins. That is to say, if someone was supposed to be put to death according to law, but then they came before the Lord and repented and received the Lord’s salvation, then the Lord would forgive them their sins, and that person would cast off the condemnation of the law, and would no longer be put to death according to law. This is the true meaning of being saved. But to be saved

doesn't mean that a person has been freed from sin and been cleansed. We have all profoundly experienced this. Though we have believed in the Lord for many years, and we often confess our sins to the Lord and repent, and also enjoy the joy and peace of being forgiven for our sins, we still often involuntarily commit sins, and we are bound by our sins. This is a fact. For example, our corrupt dispositions such as arrogance, deceitfulness, selfishness, greediness, wickedness and so on still continue to exist; we still enjoy pursuing the trends of the world, pursuing wealth and fame, and the pleasures of the flesh, and we covet sinful pleasures. In order to protect our personal interests, we are also capable of frequently telling lies and deceiving others. Therefore, to be saved does not mean that one has attained full salvation. That is a fact. It is recorded in Scripture: **'[Y]ou shall therefore be holy, for I am holy'** (Leviticus 11:45). God is holy, so would He allow those who often sin and resist God to enter the kingdom of heaven? If you believe that those who have been saved by their faith may enter into the kingdom of heaven, then why does the Lord Jesus say the following words? **'Not every one that said to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? and in Your name have cast out devils? and in Your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess to them, I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity'** (Matthew 7:21–23). Why is it said that when the Lord returns, He will separate the goats from the sheep and the tares from the wheat? It is therefore completely untenable to say that those who have been saved by their faith may enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is completely at odds with the words of the Lord Jesus, and it defies the words of the Lord! So, if we do not receive and believe in the Lord's word, but rather cling to the fallacies disseminated by the pastors and elders and rely on our own notions and imaginings to believe in God, then we will never be able to meet the Lord's requirements, and we will never be able to be raptured into the kingdom of heaven."

I mulled over the sister's words and felt that what she'd said made a lot of sense, so I sat there listening quietly. The sister went on, saying, "The word of Almighty God has already revealed the mystery of being saved and attaining full salvation, so let's take a look at the word of Almighty God and see what He has to say about this. Almighty God says: **'At the time Jesus' work was the redemption of all mankind. The sins of all who believed in Him were forgiven; as long as you believed in Him, He would redeem you; if you**

believed in Him, you were no longer a sinner, you were relieved of your sins. This is what it meant to be saved, and to be justified by faith. Yet in those who believed, there remained that which was rebellious and opposed God, and which still had to be slowly removed. Salvation did not mean man had been completely gained by Jesus, but that man was no longer of sin, that he had been forgiven his sins: Provided you believed, you would never more be of sin' ("The Vision of God's Work (2)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). 'Before man was redeemed, many of Satan's poisons had already been planted within him and, after thousands of years of being corrupted by Satan, he has within him an established nature that resists God. Therefore, when man has been redeemed, it is nothing more than a case of redemption in which man is bought at a high price, but the poisonous nature within him has not been eliminated. Man that is so defiled must undergo a change before becoming worthy to serve God. By means of this work of judgment and chastisement, man will fully come to know the filthy and corrupt substance within his own self, and he will be able to change completely and become clean. Only in this way can man become worthy to return before the throne of God. ... For all that man may have been redeemed and forgiven of his sins, it can only be considered as God not remembering the transgressions of man and not treating man in accordance with his transgressions. However, when man, who lives in a body of flesh, has not been set free from sin, he can only continue to sin, endlessly revealing his corrupt satanic disposition. This is the life that man leads, an endless cycle of sinning and being forgiven. The majority of men sin in the day only to confess in the evening. This way, even if the sin offering is forever effective for man, it will not be able to save man from sin. Only half the work of salvation has been completed, for man still has a corrupt disposition. ... [R]unning deeper than sin, it is something planted by Satan and deeply rooted within man. It is not easy for man to become aware of his sins; he has no way of recognizing his own deeply rooted nature, and must rely on judgment by the word in order to achieve this result. Only thus can man gradually be changed from this point onward' ("The Mystery of the Incarnation (4)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). 'You only know that Jesus shall descend during the last days, but how exactly will He descend? A sinner such as you, who has just been redeemed, and has not been changed, or been perfected by God, can you be after God's heart? For you, you who are still of your old self, it is true that you were saved

by Jesus, and that you are not counted as a sinner because of the salvation of God, but this does not prove that you are not sinful, and are not impure. How can you be saintly if you have not been changed? Within, you are beset by impurity, selfish and mean, yet you still wish to descend with Jesus—you should be so lucky! You have missed a step in your belief in God: You have merely been redeemed, but have not been changed. For you to be after God’s heart, God must personally do the work of changing and cleansing you; if you are only redeemed, you will be incapable of attaining sanctity. In this way you will be unqualified to share in the good blessings of God, for you have missed out a step in God’s work of managing man, which is the key step of changing and perfecting. And so you, a sinner who has just been redeemed, are incapable of directly inheriting God’s inheritance’ (“Concerning Appellations and Identity” in The Word Appears in the Flesh).”

The sister then continued with her fellowship. “From the word of Almighty God, we can see that every stage of work carried out by God is carried out in accordance with the needs of the corrupt human race. At the end of the Age of Law, man was becoming more and more deeply corrupted by Satan and was committing more and more sins. Man had violated the laws of Jehovah and was in danger of being stoned to death and burned by the fires of heaven. God loves mankind. He incarnated Himself to become the likeness of sinful flesh, and He was nailed to the cross to redeem man from sin. So, as long as we believe in the Lord Jesus then we will be saved, and the Lord will not remember our sins. We can come directly before God and pray to Him, and enjoy the abundance of grace bestowed by Him. But although we have been redeemed, that does not prove that we are without sin. We, the human race, have been corrupted by Satan for thousands of years, and Satan’s poison has taken root deep inside of us—it has become our life and it has become our nature. We are controlled by our satanic natures, such as those of conceit and arrogance, deception and crookedness, selfishness and contemptibleness, and greed and evil. We are still capable of frequently telling lies, engaging in deception, sinning, and resisting God. This is the root of our living in the cycle of constantly committing sins and then confessing them. Therefore, based on the needs of the corrupt human race and God’s management plan for saving humankind, God has come to carry out a stage of work in the last days to judge and chastise man in order to cleanse us and change our corrupt dispositions, and in the end God will lead those who have attained full salvation and who have been perfected into His kingdom. If we

still now cling to the notion 'once saved always saved,' and we refuse to accept God's work of judgment in the last days, then the poison of Satan that is in our blood will never be cleansed, we will never be able to attain God's full salvation, and being raised up into the kingdom of heaven will be out of the question. These consequences are very serious. So, now, in these last days, only by leaving the Age of Grace behind and accepting Almighty God's judgment work of the last days will man be thoroughly cleansed, attain God's full salvation, and go to a good destination."

As I listened to the fellowship given by the sister, I thought to myself: "Yes, Almighty God's words are so practical. During these last several years, haven't I been constantly living a life where I commit sins during the day and then confess them at night? We really have only been forgiven our sins because of our faith in the Lord, but our sinful nature still exists. We can still sin and resist God. The Lord is holy, so how can those who often sin and resist Him be raptured into the kingdom of heaven? Almighty God's words have unraveled these issues that have weighed heavily on my mind for so many years. Almighty God's words really do contain truths for us to seek. Could it be that Almighty God really is the returned Lord? I really do need to look into this properly."

I was gradually dropping my guard against the sister, but just as I was thinking about looking into the matters we had discussed, a loud and urgent knocking sound suddenly came from the door. Sister Hu rushed to open the door, and my pastor came storming into the room. He looked at me, and then at the sister who was spreading the kingdom gospel of Almighty God, and then said to me in a tone of astonishment and anger, "What are you doing here? Didn't I tell you not to go around listening to strangers' sermons? How could you still come running over here to listen to them? Go home at once, and do not listen to them again. If you are deceived, then your regret will come too late!" After the pastor had finished chiding me, he then turned to threaten the sister. "And you people who are spreading Eastern Lightning, you do nothing but come to our church and steal our flock! Leave at once! If you do not go, I will not be so polite!" Witnessing the pastor treat the sister in this way made me feel quite disgusted, so I said to him, "Pastor, this sister just had some really good things to say, and what she said accords with the Bible. I feel that it's really quite possible that Almighty God is the returned Lord. Why don't you just give it a listen, and then we can decide. Besides, doesn't the Bible say, 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares' (Hebrews 13:2)? We who believe in the

Lord ought to show some compassion, and we cannot treat people this way. Doesn't throwing this sister out like this go against the Lord's teachings?" The pastor then yelled at me, "What do you understand? We who believe in Jesus have already been saved. We do not need to be saved again! They have come here to steal our flock, and so we mustn't receive them!" At this time the sister who had been spreading the gospel smiled and said, "We are all waiting for the return of the Lord, so why can't we sit down and have a conversation? If we miss out on the Lord's return we will regret it very much—" Without waiting for the sister to finish talking, the pastor started shoving her out, saying, "That's enough out of you! No matter how well you talk, I still won't listen to you! Leave at once!" And just like that, the pastor went so far as to push, pull and swear at the sister to drive her out of the house. After the sister left, the pastor looked back and threatened me, saying, "Hurry back home. From now on you are no longer allowed to be in contact with people from Eastern Lightning. If you do, you will be expelled from the church, and if that happens you will never have the chance to receive the praise of God and enter into the kingdom of heaven." Because I had already heard the fellowship given by the sister, I understood that the work of the Lord Jesus had been that of redemption, but not of purifying man, and that only when the Lord returns to carry out His work of judgment in the last days will He thoroughly cleanse and save man. Without accepting God's work of judgment in the last days, man's corrupt dispositions will not be changed, and he will not be able to attain God's full salvation and enter into the kingdom of heaven. The pastor's words therefore did not have much of an effect on me, so I just went along with it and nodded in feigned agreement, and then I returned home.

After returning home, I kept thinking over the fellowship given by the sister, and I thought to myself: "What that sister was saying all accords with the Bible. It really was ill-founded of me when I believed that 'once saved always saved!'" I thought back on all the years I'd believed in the Lord and realized that I was constantly living in a state whereby I would commit sins and then confess them, but I was never able to solve this problem, and I personally went through a lot of suffering. I felt that if I went on believing like this, then ultimately I would not be able to attain God's praise. After listening to the sister's fellowship, I became even more certain that if people believing in the Lord want to attain full salvation and enter into the kingdom of heaven, then they really do have to accept the work that judges and cleanses man performed by the returned Lord Jesus. So I wondered: What really is

Almighty God's work of judgment in the last days? And how does Almighty God cleanse and change man? As I was thinking these things over, I thumbed through the Bible until I saw a passage wherein the Lord Jesus says: **"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come"** (John 16:12–13). I also read this in the Bible: **"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God"** (1 Peter 4:17). **"He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches"** (Revelation 2:7). When I read this, it felt like I had finally awoken from a dream: As it turns out, the Lord Jesus long ago prophesied that in the last days God would express more of the truth and carry out a new stage of work. Wouldn't this be Almighty God coming to carry out the work of judging and cleansing man? "Oh," I thought, "if only the pastor hadn't come and caused such disruption today, I would have been able to continue listening in earnest about the way of Almighty God. Before, I always listened to what the pastors and elders said, and I never sought out or investigated Almighty God's work in the last days. I just did whatever the pastors and elders said. Only today have I recognized that I had no place for the Lord in my heart. As for my investigation into the Lord's return, I didn't seek the Lord's will but listened instead to the words of the pastors and elders. What a fool I've been! Those of us who believe in the Lord should magnify Him, and we must actively seek out God's footsteps with regard to the Lord's return, for only in this way will we be conforming to God's will. Today I saw that the pastor's actions simply do not conform to the Lord's will. I can no longer just blindly listen to what they say, but must seek out and investigate the way of Almighty God."

First thing in the morning of the following day, I decided to go to Sister Hu's home and look for the sister who had spread the gospel of Almighty God so that we could continue fellowshiping. Much to my surprise, before I had even gone out the door, Sister Hu brought the sister over to my house. This was truly guided by the Lord. She first asked me with concern whether or not I had been harassed by the pastor the day before, and I replied very definitively, "No. After yesterday's fellowship, I came back here and carefully thought over everything, and I realized that we really cannot be cleansed just by believing in the Lord Jesus. Our corrupt nature still exists, and with it we will not be able to attain God's full salvation. What's more, I also read a passage in the Bible that does indeed prophesy that

the Lord will return to carry out His work of judgment in the last days. The thing that I now wish most to know is what the work of judgment that Almighty God is to carry out in the last days is really all about, and how will Almighty God's work of judgment both cleanse and change man?"

The sister said delightedly, "Thanks be to God! This question you have asked really is very crucial, for it has to do with the important topic of whether or not our faith in God will enable us to attain full salvation and enter the kingdom of heaven. Let us first look at what the word of Almighty God says. **'God's work in the present incarnation is to express His disposition primarily through chastisement and judgment. Building on this foundation, He brings more truth to man and points out to him more ways of practice, thereby achieving His objective of conquering man and saving him from his own corrupt disposition. This is what lies behind the work of God in the Age of Kingdom'** (Preface to The Word Appears in the Flesh). **'At the mention of the word "judgment," you are likely to think of the words that Jehovah spoke to all the places and the words of rebuke that Jesus spoke to the Pharisees. For all their severity, these words were not God's judgment of man; they were but words spoken by God within different environments, that is, in different contexts. These words are unlike the words spoken by Christ as He judges man during the last days. In the last days, Christ uses a variety of truths to teach man, to expose the essence of man, and to dissect the words and deeds of man. These words comprise various truths, such as man's duty, how man should obey God, how man should be loyal to God, how man ought to live out normal humanity, as well as the wisdom and the disposition of God, and so on. These words are all directed at the essence of man and his corrupt disposition. In particular, the words that expose how man spurns God are spoken in regard to how man is an embodiment of Satan, and an enemy force against God. In undertaking His work of judgment, God does not simply make clear the nature of man with a few words; He exposes, deals with, and prunes over the long term. These methods of exposure, dealing, and pruning cannot be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced into submission to God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God. What the work of judgment brings about is man's understanding of the true face of God and the truth**

about his own rebelliousness. The work of judgment allows man to gain much understanding of the will of God, of the purpose of God's work, and of the mysteries that are incomprehensible to him. It also allows man to recognize and know his corrupt substance and the roots of his corruption, as well as to discover the ugliness of man. These effects are all brought about by the work of judgment, for the substance of this work is actually the work of opening up the truth, the way, and the life of God to all those who have faith in Him. This work is the work of judgment done by God' ("Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth" in The Word Appears in the Flesh)."

After reading the word of God, the sister gave fellowship, saying, "Through the word of God we understand that during the work of judgment in the last days, Almighty God uses many aspects of the truth to expose man and dissect man; He uses words to reveal man's corrupt substance and the truth about man's corruption, to judge man's satanic nature that resists God and betrays God, and to cleanse all manner of corruption that resides within us. Examples of such corruption include being filled with notions and imaginings about God's work, taking the measure of God's work by regarding our own notions as the truth, and judging God, condemning God and resisting God however we wish. Another example is that, although we may believe in God, we really are no different from unbelievers; we all pursue fame and fortune and are willing to pay any price for it, but not a single person lives to satisfy God. Our outlook on many things is also incompatible with God, such as our belief that so long as we believe in the Lord then we will be saved, and that when the Lord comes we will be raptured into the kingdom of heaven, when in fact God actually said that only by following the will of God will man be able to enter the kingdom of heaven. These are just a few examples of the corruption we harbor within us. Through God's judgment and chastisement, these corrupt dispositions, these erroneous views and ways of thinking, and Satan's life axioms will be cleansed and transformed, and we will come to be truly obedient to God. At the same time, through God's judgment and chastisement, we also come to recognize that God's righteous disposition brooks no offense by man, we come to know what kind of person God loves, what kind of person God despises, we come to understand God's intention to save man, we come to have reverence for God, and we come to know how to pursue the truth and properly perform our duties so as to attain God's praise. Through experiencing and practicing God's words, we come to understand many truths. For example, we come to know what it means to have faith in God, what it means to truly attain salvation, what it means to

obey God and love God, and what it means to follow God's will, and so on. Our corrupt dispositions will all change to varying degrees, and our life views and values will also be transformed. This is the work of judgment and chastisement that God carries out on us, and you could also say that it is the salvation of God's love. So, only by receiving judgment before the seat of Christ of the last days—Almighty God—are we able to gain the truth, and only then are we able to break away from sin, be cleansed and attain full salvation. Sister, are you able to comprehend this fellowship?"

Through reading God's words and through the sister's fellowships, I came to understand God's work and His will. I nodded, feeling deeply moved, and I said, "Thanks be to God! Through listening to the word of Almighty God, I have come to understand that, in the last days, God uses the truth of His word to carry out the work of judging and cleansing man. My past pursuits were so vague and unrealistic. Now I understand that it is only through accepting God's work of judgment and chastisement in the last days that man will be able to be cleansed by God, attain full salvation, and enter into the kingdom of heaven. Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus! I am willing to accept Almighty God's work of the last days and accept the judgment and chastisement of God's words so that my corrupt dispositions may someday soon be changed." After hearing me say this, the sister smiled happily, and continuously gave her thanks to God.

Almighty God's words freed me of the notions I harbored in my mind, and they showed me the way to throw off my corrupt dispositions and be cleansed. I felt that my direction and goal in pursuing full salvation were now clear, and my spirit felt bright, steady, and liberated. As I looked outside through the window, I noticed how especially clear and sunny the sky was on that day. I fell to my knees on the ground and prayed to God: "O God, I give my thanks to You. To be fortunate enough to welcome Your return and witness Your appearance in my lifetime is such a blessing! But I am blind and ignorant, for I believed the rumors that were spread by the pastors and elders, I clung to my notions and imaginings, and I almost lost my eternal salvation. O God, I am so ignorant and numb! I am willing to repent, and I treasure this extremely rare opportunity to attain full salvation. I am also willing to bring more brothers and sisters into Your presence so that they may attain Your salvation! Amen!"

33. A Small Blade of Grass That Grew Among the Brambles

By Yixin, Singapore

In November 2016 I became acquainted, through Facebook, with Brother Lin and Sisters Zhang and Xiaoxiao of The Church of Almighty God. They integrated some of the prophecies from the Bible into the fellowships they gave me and bore testimony to God's work of the last days. Their fellowshiping and testimonies made me understand that Almighty God is performing the work of judging and cleansing people through words upon the foundation of the work of redemption that was done by the Lord Jesus. Almighty God performs this work to thoroughly save mankind from Satan's domain and rid us of our corrupt dispositions so that we will no longer rebel against and resist God, but instead will become people who truly obey and worship Him. From the words of Almighty God I came to understand that God's work of judgment in the last days will reveal the wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats, and the wise virgins and foolish virgins, ultimately separating each according to their own kind and rewarding the good and punishing the wicked. I realized that Almighty God was the return of the Lord Jesus I'd been longing for and I joyously accepted Almighty God's work of the last days.

One day, Sister Zhu from my old church asked me out of the blue what I'd recently been busy with, and so I told her that I'd been investigating Almighty God's work of the last days. Sister Zhu had a lot of bad things to say about The Church of Almighty God and also blasphemed Almighty God. She urged me not to have anything to do with them. I said, "I've been in touch with some brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God for some time now and it's been great exchanging ideas with them. They have a fresh and clear way of fellowshiping truths, and I've understood a lot of truths from listening to them. It has helped me a lot, I've benefited a lot, and they certainly aren't like you say. What's more, Almighty God's words are very practical and have resolved many issues I could never figure out before. His words can sustain our lives and they have shown us the path of practice." Seeing my unyielding attitude, Sister Zhu changed tact and asked me if I'd tell Sister Yun—who preached the gospel of the Lord to us—about my investigation into Almighty God's work of the last days. I told her, "No need to tell her yet. There are still many things that I don't understand, but when I've finished looking into it and have become absolutely certain, then I'll tell everybody what I've discovered." She agreed that I should have a clear picture before

I said anything to Sister Yun.

It therefore came as a surprise when, five days later, the boss of the salon I worked for came to me and said, “Yixin, Sister Yun has asked me to pray for you. In fact, I don’t know how to pray but I’ll do my best...” On hearing this I immediately realized that Sister Zhu had told Sister Yun about my investigation into Almighty God’s work of the last days. I felt that Sister Zhu hadn’t behaved very virtuously, and I was a bit annoyed with her. I felt that she’d deceived me and sold me out, and I started to feel that even my brothers and sisters in the Lord were untrustworthy. Just as I was thinking this, my boss, without consulting me about anything, got the attention of the dozen or so colleagues in the salon and told them that I wasn’t a good Christian and that I had gone astray. She went on to say many things which opposed and condemned The Church of Almighty God. This all happened so quickly that I didn’t know how to react, and I got very upset. I said a silent prayer: “Dear Lord, they’ve heard the news that You have returned, so why aren’t they at all interested in investigating Your return? Why are they only listening to online rumors and saying all that stuff that opposes and condemns You? Almighty God has expressed so many truths, so doesn’t that prove that Almighty God is Your return? Why do they have to oppose my belief in Almighty God? Could it be me who’s wrong? O Lord, I don’t know what to do. Please lead me and guide me...”

I later told Brother Lin what had happened that day, and he found a passage of Almighty God’s words for me: **“Satan is constantly devouring the knowledge that men hold of Me in their hearts, and constantly, with teeth bared and claws unsheathed, engaged in the last throes of its death struggle. Do you wish to be captured by its deceitful stratagems at this moment? Do you wish, at the moment that the last phase of My work is completed, to cut off your own life? Surely you are not still waiting for Me to dispense My leniency one more time? Seeking to know Me is the key thing, but neither should you neglect to pay attention to actual practice. I am revealing insights to you directly in My words, in hopes that you will be able to submit to My guidance”** (“Chapter 6” of God’s Words to the Entire Universe in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Brother Lin then gave fellowship. “We can see from God’s words that what happened to you was a battle in the spiritual world and you came up against Satan’s temptation. In the last days, God has incarnated in the flesh and is uttering His words in order to save mankind. By doing so, He enables us to understand the truth from His words, know God’s work, know God’s

disposition, totally forsake Satan and turn back to God, and attain salvation and be gained by God. Satan is always on God's heels, trying to disrupt and disturb God's work, and using all kinds of people to create rumors to slander and condemn Almighty God—the Christ of the last days—and prevent us from coming before God. Religious leaders and atheists in positions of power are the embodiment of Satan, and every time God incarnates on earth to do His work they resist and condemn Him, and they try to disrupt and prevent people from following Him. When the Lord Jesus did His work, the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees of that time acted as Satan's lackeys and they did everything they could to condemn and oppose His work. They spread false rumors and bore false testimonies to slander and blaspheme the Lord Jesus. For example, they blasphemously claimed that the Lord Jesus was exorcising demons by the power of Beelzebub, they slanderously said that the Lord Jesus was inciting local citizens to not pay taxes to Caesar, and they bribed some soldiers to bear false testimonies stating that the Lord Jesus had not resurrected and that His body had been secretly taken by His disciples. When God incarnated to do His new work in the last days, the Chinese Communist government, who are attempting to turn China into a zone of atheism, along with many religious pastors and elders who want to protect their own livelihoods and status, began to spread countless lies and false testimonies about Almighty God and The Church of Almighty God in order to deceive and frighten people, and to prevent people from investigating and accepting God's work of the last days. A lot of people who don't understand the truth and who are without discernment blindly believe these rumors and do Satan's bidding by spreading these fallacies, harassing people and preventing them from accepting the true way. Such people become the accomplices of Satan and they become the evil ones who oppose God. We must therefore see clearly that the atheist Chinese Communist government is the enemy of God, and see clearly that those pastors and elders who prevent others from investigating God's work are the Pharisees of our time. We must see that all the rumors on the Internet are part of Satan's scheme to prevent us from turning to God, and we must also be clear that if we want to investigate the true way, then we should only listen to God's words and absolutely must not believe Satan's rumors. This is how we will be able to stand on God's side during spiritual battles and bear testimony for God, and not be taken by Satan.”

Brother Lin's fellowship helped me to understand the origins of the rumors. I now understood that Satan's aim in spreading rumors to disrupt and obstruct me was to prevent

me from attaining God's salvation of the last days. After thinking more about it, I realized that these people who were attacking me had never read Almighty God's words, had never investigated Almighty God's work of the last days, and were merely blindly believing in rumors and resisting and condemning Almighty God. Their minds had been completely addled by Satan and they were doing Satan's bidding and resisting God without even knowing it. A wise person would first read Almighty God's words in earnest and conduct a thorough investigation before reaching any conclusion. But faith in God is no small matter, and I was afraid of taking the wrong path, so I still had some worries in my heart. After getting home from work, I prayed to the Lord with tears in my eyes: "O Lord, I am very lost and confused, but I don't want to just believe in what others say and parrot it word for word. I want to act according to Your will, so please lead me and guide me." That night, I fell asleep, and some hours later I had a vague feeling that something was pressing down on me. I struggled to open my eyes but couldn't. Realizing that struggling was pointless, I hurriedly shouted, "Save me Lord Jesus!" I shouted this twice, but nothing happened. I could still feel something pressing down on me. I was at a loss about what to do and got very scared. Suddenly, I thought about Almighty God, and so I called out, "Almighty God! Almighty God!" and then I woke up. After waking, I was still a bit shaken, and it took a while before I fully gathered my wits. I wondered why calling out the name of the Lord Jesus hadn't worked while calling out "Almighty God!" had woken me up straight away. Then I remembered a fellowship that Brother Lin had given me: "God takes a different name in each age and, after God begins a new work, the Holy Spirit then upholds His name for the new age. So for believers to gain God's commendation, care, and protection, they must pray using the name of God in the current age. In this age, the Lord Jesus has already returned and is using the name 'Almighty God' to end the Age of Grace and begin the Age of Kingdom. During the last days, God's name is Almighty God, so we must use this name in our prayers, otherwise God won't hear them." It was then that I realized that my nightmare hadn't been spontaneous, but that God had heard my prayer and had given me proof that Almighty God is the return of the Lord Jesus. Thanks be to God! After realizing this, my heart surged with strength and I now had the faith to face any assault from my boss and colleagues.

The next day at work my boss once again said in front of everyone who worked there that I had gone astray and also said a lot of things that blasphemed Almighty God. Hearing her say such things made me really angry, so I asked her, "We are all believers in God. Why

don't you investigate the words and work of Almighty God and seek God's will instead of just blindly condemning and blaspheming Him? Doing such things shows that you have no reverence for God in your heart!" After saying all this, I stormed out. A short while later my boss came looking for me and told me that I should not have lost my temper with her. I said, "I didn't want to lose my temper but you shouldn't have said those things. The things you said that blasphemed, opposed, and condemned God are not things that we believers in God should ever say, because they offend Him. From your perspective, it may seem that you are doing a good deed by urging me to change my mind. But I'm an adult, and I think things through rationally. The issue of whether or not Almighty God is the return of the Lord Jesus is something that I've sought and investigated. It's not something that I just randomly decided to believe in. Please respect my decision, and don't try to stop me or constrain me from seeking and investigating God's work of the last days." My boss then asked me if I'd seen any of the rumors on TV and on the Internet about The Church of Almighty God. I replied, "Negative stuff always comes from Satan. What I read are the words of Almighty God, and what I watch are the films, choir videos, and music videos produced by The Church of Almighty God. I don't watch what you watch. The Church of Almighty God doesn't allow its members to do wicked deeds, which is exactly the opposite of what you are all saying. Almighty God asks that we become honest people and good people who possess humanity, conscience and reason." After listening to what I had to say my boss was at a loss for words, and having no other option, she left.

After that my boss started picking on me and even started saying sarcastic things about me. I knew that she was saying these things in an attempt to force me to abandon my faith in Almighty God. One day, she suddenly said to me, "Sister Yun wants to talk with you when she returns from her business trip." When I heard that, I felt a bit upset and a bit nervous. I thought: "Sister Yun will definitely try to prevent me from believing in Almighty God. I became a Christian after listening to her preaching and she's a VIP customer in our beauty salon. If I offend her then the boss won't be happy and I'll have even more problems getting along with her in the future." As the day of Sister Yun's return drew closer, I became more nervous and afraid. One afternoon, I was sitting in the VIP room praying to God. I'd just finished my prayer when my phone rang. It was my boss. "Sister Yun is coming over. Give her a facial." I wasn't at all keen to do it but there was no way I could refuse. When I got back to the treatment room I put on a recording of hymns in order to calm myself in God's presence.

While listening to the hymn “I Am Determined to Love God With My Heart” I heard these lines: **“May You open my spiritual eyes and may Your Spirit move my heart. Make it so that, as I come before You, I throw off all that is negative, cease to be constrained by any person, matter, or thing, and lay my heart completely bare before You, and make it so that I may offer my entire being before You. However You may test me, I am ready. Now, I give no consideration to my future prospects, nor am I under the yoke of death. With a heart that loves You, I desire to seek the way of life”** (Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs). God’s words gave me faith, and gradually I began to feel calmer and more grounded. “That’s right,” I thought. “I shouldn’t be restrained by any person, matter, or object when choosing the true way. Since I’m already certain that Almighty God is the return of the Lord Jesus, I should follow Him without the slightest doubt or hesitation. How my boss sees me and treats me or how my relationship with Sister Yun develops is all in God’s hands. I should rid myself of my worries and abide by God’s arrangements.” I therefore went to face the situation with confidence.

A few minutes later, Sister Yun arrived. I prayed silently to God: “O Almighty God, I’m afraid that she’ll say something that blasphemes, resists, condemns and attacks You. I’m also afraid that she’ll try to harass me. Please help and protect me, God.” At first, Sister Yun only talked about her business trip to Israel and how successful it had been. Eventually, however, she brought up the topic in a roundabout way. “During the last days there are lots of false Christs and false prophets who try to deceive people—” I didn’t want to hear her say anything that would blaspheme Almighty God so I interrupted her by saying, “Yes, the Lord gave us this reminder so that we can guard against those false Christs who imitate the Lord Jesus by manifesting signs and miracles. But the Lord’s intention was to make us develop discernment, not to have us refuse to listen to all who preach the gospel of the Lord’s return. The Lord Jesus said: **‘My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me’** (John 10:27). The Lord will lead us along the right path, so we shouldn’t just worry about being misled by the false Christs of the last days, but should also keep in mind the fact that the Lord will return during the last days. As long as we seek the Lord then we’ll find the manifestation of the Lord because He has told us that God’s sheep can hear God’s voice.” But Sister Yun didn’t pay any attention to what I said and just repeated the stuff about false Christs deceiving people during the last days and that I should be more careful. Then she said more things about how bad The Church of Almighty God was. I ignored her, and when

she saw that I wasn't going to reply, she stopped talking.

After that, my boss still wasn't happy about me believing in Almighty God and continued to pick on me and attack me in front of my colleagues. During this period, the brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God were always there to fellowship and share God's words with me so that I could understand God's will. They also told me that God is holy, and that when God created mankind, He gave us free will, the freedom to choose. They said that God never forces anyone to do anything but only expresses truths that provide sustenance for us and that help us to understand His will and to differentiate between good from evil. For example, God told Adam and Eve that they could eat fruit from any tree in the Garden of Eden except the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, because if they did they would surely die! The essence of God is good and He gives mankind the freedom to choose; it is only Satan that controls and coerces people, because Satan is evil. So, accepting Almighty God's work of the last days is each individual's decision, and nobody is forced into it. As well as telling me these things, the brothers and sisters also found a passage of God's words: **"In every step of work that God does within people, externally it appears to be interactions between people, as if born of human arrangements or from human interference. But behind the scenes, every step of work, and everything that happens, is a wager made by Satan before God, and requires people to stand firm in their testimony to God. Take when Job was tried, for example: Behind the scenes, Satan was making a bet with God, and what happened to Job was the deeds of men and the interference of men. Behind every step of work that God does in you is Satan's wager with God—behind it all is a battle. ... When God and Satan do battle in the spiritual realm, how should you satisfy God, and how should you stand firm in your testimony to Him? You should know that everything that happens to you is a great trial and the time when God needs you to bear testimony"** ("Only Loving God Is Truly Believing in God" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). The fellowships with the brothers and sisters helped me to understand this passage a little. I now understood that no matter what happened to me, it was always sanctioned by God. God was using these situations to test me to see if I had real faith in Him and to make me develop discernment. God wanted me to see clearly what comes from Him and what comes from Satan, and He wanted me to learn to rely on Him and look to Him in times of trial, to stand witness for God like Job, and thereby humiliate Satan.

With the guidance of God's words and the assistance of the brothers and sisters, I was able to build a clearer picture of the true way, I became certain that I wasn't on the wrong path by following Almighty God but was instead keeping pace with the footprints of the Lamb. The brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God were fellowshiping truths and God's will with me. They were bearing witness to God's work of saving mankind, and to all that God has and is. They never tried to force me to believe anything, but instead helped me to learn how to discern between various voices so that I could make my own decisions freely. But Sister Yun and my boss believed in all the online rumors and continuously said things that resisted and blasphemed God in order to obstruct and coerce me, and to prevent me from accepting God's work of the last days. When I didn't accept their point of view, they started to bully me, mock me, and verbally attack me. But I saw clearly that everything they said and did came from Satan, because bullying, coercing, and attacking people are actions that can only derive from Satan. Thanks be to God! I was now able to see at a glance who comes from God and who from Satan, and I now had discernment of these types of people. I now felt light filling my heart and that a heavy weight had been lifted from it. I was so grateful to God for incarnating in human form during the last days and expressing so many truths so that, every time I was harassed, I was able to turn to God's words to understand His will and find the path of practice. I felt so fortunate to be able to grow, a little at a time, under the provision of God's words!

At first, I thought that the whole affair had come to an end, so I was surprised when a new round of attacks began. One day, I had just finished giving a customer a beauty treatment when my boss came and took me to the building next door. As we got to the door, she told me that Sister Yun was in there waiting for me. I went in, and when I saw that Sister Yun and Pastor Liu and his wife were there, I immediately began to feel nervous, and I had no idea what they were going to do. I quickly said a silent prayer to God: "O God, they've come to talk with me again. Please protect me and help me by giving me the wisdom to answer them." After praying, I no longer felt nervous, and I wondered: Had they come to force me to leave Almighty God? And if I refused, would I lose my job? But then I remembered that everything was in God's hands and that God's arrangements were always suitable, so I resolved that, even if I lost my job, I still wouldn't leave Almighty God.

The pastor asked me when I first started believing in the Lord, and then talked about many things to do with faith in the Lord. Then he asked me, "Do you know about The Church

of Almighty God? Are you still in touch with them?” He then went on to say many things that blasphemed Almighty God and laid false accusations against The Church of Almighty God. I got angry listening to him, and said, “Why is it that The Church of Almighty God that you describe is nothing like the one that I have been in contact with and actually know something about? We have all seen the stuff online. What I’ve seen are the words of Almighty God and the films and videos produced by The Church of Almighty God, as well as the written testimonies of experiences had by the brothers and sisters. I’ve also looked at some of the negative propaganda, but all I saw was a lot of empty, baseless rumors and lies. They are not able to produce a shred of believable evidence to back up even one of those rumors. They either make things up from scratch or take an existing falsehood and embellish it and then spread it around more. These are all Satan’s lies, so I don’t believe them and have absolutely no interest in them. How is it that you only believe the negative rumors but never even look at the words of God on The Church of Almighty God’s website? None of you read Almighty God’s words, nor do you investigate God’s work of the last days, but instead you just condemn it however you please. Is that the right thing to do?” The pastor didn’t answer my question directly but instead said, “The Church of Almighty God has expanded very quickly, and they’ve been actively going to other churches to steal their members. If you insist on believing in Almighty God, then we won’t be nice to you any longer. We’ll tell all of the brothers and sisters in our church that you now believe in Almighty God, so the next time you come to our congregation they’ll think you’ve come to steal them away and they’ll reject you.” He then tried to use some false testimonies to scare me but nothing he said affected me. In fact, I felt even more emboldened and said, “This stuff that you’re talking about, did you personally see it happen? Or have you done a thorough investigation and got solid evidence? What proof do you have that the members of The Church of Almighty God did all this? Where’s the evidence? You’re just taking the rumors and false testimonies spread by the CCP government and the religious community to condemn Almighty God and falsely accuse and incriminate The Church of Almighty God. Aren’t you worried that you’ll be condemned by the Lord, just like the Pharisees were?”

I went on, saying, “The Lord Jesus predicted this about His return: ‘**But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation**’ (Luke 17:25). What does this mean? At present, the whole religious community and the atheist Communist government of China are trying their best to resist and condemn Almighty God’s work of the last days.

Doesn't this fulfill the Lord's prediction? Isn't the religious community's resistance to and condemnation of Almighty God today exactly the same as the Jewish Pharisees' resistance to and condemnation of the Lord Jesus all those years ago? The Pharisees resisted the Lord Jesus and denied that He was the foretold Messiah, but the Lord's disciples were able to recognize that the Lord Jesus was the Messiah foretold in the prophecies and so they followed Him. And today, we now find ourselves in the exact same situation. The pastors and elders don't accept Almighty God's work of the last days, and they resist and condemn Almighty God, but the good sheep in the various denominations are able to recognize the voice of God in the words of Almighty God and recognize that Almighty God is the return of the Lord Jesus. How is it so? The Lord Jesus said that God's sheep are able to hear God's voice, and that God's return would separate the sheep from the goats. I've only believed in the Lord for a short time, and I don't understand the Bible all that well, so I don't know how the Lord will separate the sheep from the goats. Pastor Liu, you've been to seminary and have been a pastor for many years now. Perhaps you'd be so good as to explain it to me?" Pastor Liu looked at me angrily, because he clearly didn't know how to explain this to me. All he said was, "We believers gain eternal life because we have been baptized." So I said, "What? Gaining eternal life is that easy? So everyone who has come to your church and been baptized will enter the kingdom of heaven? Does that accord with what the Lord said? Are they all people who approach the Lord with true hearts? Do they all abide by the will of the heavenly Father? Every sermon in the church mentions giving offerings, but the Lord never said that giving offerings is the same as loving the Lord. So what is loving the Lord?" Pastor Liu replied, "Reading the Bible a lot and praying a lot is loving the Lord." Although I didn't know what truly loving the Lord meant, I knew that it was foolish to say that reading the Bible and praying a lot is loving the Lord. The Pharisees read the Bible a lot and did plenty of praying, but can it be said that they loved the Lord? If they loved the Lord, then why did they blaspheme and condemn Him, and nail Him upon the cross? It seemed to me that the pastor didn't understand what loving the Lord meant at all. Pastors may well understand biblical knowledge and theological theories but that doesn't mean that they understand truths! But I could only blame myself for not previously having enough discernment and regarding them too highly.

When I realized this, I saw no point in continuing to debate with Pastor Liu, so I stopped talking. But the pastor had more to say. "Do you know that they say the Lord has returned

incarnated as a woman to perform God's work?" I replied, "What form the Lord takes when He returns and incarnates to do the work is God's business. We are just tiny, insignificant beings created by God, so how can we make rules for God's work? In the Bible it says: '[W]ho has been His counselor?' (Romans 11:34). Almighty God's words say: **'Man should not define the work of God; moreover, man cannot define the work of God. In the eyes of God, man is as insignificant as an ant; so how can man fathom God's work?'** (Preface to The Word Appears in the Flesh). God is the Creator of all things and God's wisdom exceeds everything, so however God does His work He doesn't need to check in with us humans first!" Seeing that they didn't have the slightest interest in seeking and investigating God's work of the last days, but only wanted to nitpick and look for chances to attack and blaspheme God and prevent me from accepting God's work of the last days, I decided not to continue the conversation. Finally, I asked them, "Did you ever think about how your coming to the salon today would affect my work here?" To my utter surprise, the pastor lied to my face and said, "Your boss doesn't know what this conversation is about." Before, I would have been very shocked that this pastor—a man who preaches and instructs people and knows the Bible so well—could tell such a bare-faced lie. But after having just heard them make up lies that blasphemed God, I wasn't at all surprised. This behavior was all too normal for them. I couldn't help but think of the Lord Jesus' words: **"You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stayed not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it"** (John 8:44). In my heart I said these words to God: "Thank You, God! You have allowed this event to happen to me today so that I can see that they have no understanding of the truths, and that they are liars who brazenly spread falsehoods and deceive people. Truly, they are hypocritical Pharisees." I had nothing more to say to them and wanted to leave immediately.

Seeing that I was in no mood to continue the conversation, Sister Yun said to me, "Yixin, you should think about your children and your parents." I replied, "They are all doing well, and we're all fine. I believe in the one true God, the Creator of all things. Almighty God is the return of the Lord Jesus. God is the God that loves and saves people, and with God's blessings and guidance, my family will do better and better." The pastor and Sister Yun wanted to pray for me, but I refused. Pastor Liu finished off with a warning: "If you don't leave The Church of Almighty God then you'll be ostracized from our church!" I thought: "And what

is the church like these days? It's like the temple when the Lord Jesus first started His work: nothing but a den of thieves. The gatherings don't provide any spiritual sustenance, so what is there for me to miss?" I'd already accepted God's work of the last days, was keeping pace with the footprints of the Lamb, and had come before God's throne. I was being provided with the living water of life issued by Christ and enjoying being face-to-face watered and shepherded by God. I was the happiest woman on earth, and The Church of Almighty God was now my true home.

Almighty God's words say: **"Everything that has been arranged now is for the purpose of training you so that you may grow in your lives, to make your spirit keen and sharp, to open your spiritual eyes and make you recognize the things that come from God"** ("Chapter 13" of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). I'm grateful to God for having mercy on me and for using the harassment of religious forces to enable me to develop discernment. I saw how full of lies the religious pastors are, how they resist and condemn God's work of the last days, and how they don't have a shred of reverence for God. I saw how their congregations cling to their sinful ways, how they follow the trends and fashions of the material world, how they cheat each other, and how they don't behave like believers in God at all. All this made me even more certain that the religious community no longer has the work of the Holy Spirit, that it is smothered in darkness and under Satan's control. At the same time, I was able to see that the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God pursue the truth and seek to know God under the guidance of God's words and, when they encounter difficulties, they seek to use God's words to resolve their problems. Within The Church of Almighty God it is wholly the truth, God's words, and the Holy Spirit which rule. Almighty God's words must be accomplished, and what is said will be done. Nobody can stand in the way of what God wants to accomplish, and this is an undeniable fact! Almighty God's words are indeed the truth, and Almighty God is the manifestation of the Lord of creation. I wish to follow Almighty God for the rest of my life!

34. A Breakthrough

By Fangfang, China

All of us in my family believe in the Lord Jesus, and while I was just an ordinary believer in our church, my father was one of the church's co-workers. In February 2004, I accepted Almighty God's work of the last days and I preached the kingdom gospel to my youngest sister soon after. I was originally planning on bearing witness to God's work of the last days to my father after equipping myself with some of God's words and truths. But to my surprise, when my father heard that I'd accepted Almighty God's work of the last days, he became frantic, trying to disrupt and obstruct my belief.

One evening, my father came over to my house in a huff and said angrily to me, "I would never have believed that you would ignore my advice and the advice of our church leader and start believing in Eastern Lightning! You'd better hurry up and go to the leader's place and repent, and ask the Lord to forgive you of your sins!" I replied, "Dad, I've read a lot of Almighty God's words and I really believe that they are the voice of God. Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus, and I'm sure of my faith. The Age of Grace is already over, and now we are in the Age of Kingdom. God has come to do new work and to take us to the wedding feast of the Lamb. Doesn't it say, '**These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes**' (Revelation 14:4) in the Bible? In believing in Almighty God, I'm following the footsteps of the Lamb..." But no matter what I said, my father wasn't interested in hearing any of it and kept insisting on taking me to see our church leader. My husband also joined him in putting pressure on me. The look on my father's face told me that he was thoroughly determined to bring me back into my old church. I realized that emotions were running high and they were putting me under incredible pressure, and I couldn't help but feel a little nervous. So I said a silent prayer to God and asked Him for protection and guidance. Sure enough, without letting me say another thing, my father got my husband to drive us all to the meeting place of my old church. When I entered the room and saw 60 or 70 people waiting there—including my youngest sister, who had been taken there by her mother-in-law—I realized that this meeting had all been pre-arranged and that they were going to gang up on the two of us. Everyone in the room was looking at my sister and me strangely, and some of them were pointing at us and whispering to each other. Our senior leader swept over to us and immediately began urging us to stop believing in Almighty God. Then he

started to condemn and blaspheme God's work of the last days without any restraint. He even told a whole bunch of lies, such as, "People who join Eastern Lightning can never leave, and if they do escape they get their noses cut off and their eyes gouged out...." By speaking these falsehoods and whipping up the congregation, the leader made my father and my sister's mother-in-law even more angry and agitated, and they made us close our eyes and asked the leader to say a prayer for us. Although I was disgusted by what they were doing, and we didn't say anything when the leader was praying for us, the lies the leader had told had already left a deep impression on me.

On getting home, I could still hear those terrible lies ringing in my ears and disturbing my peace of mind. I couldn't even concentrate on God's words. I thought about how I'd already been in contact with Sister Zhang of The Church of Almighty God for some time and how she was always decent and upstanding in both her speech and behavior. Sister Zhang also showed a lot of love in the way she fellowshiped with us and was nothing like what the church leader had described. But the most important thing was that the words of Almighty God were the truth, and were full of authority and power. No human being could express such words and I thought that they must be the utterances of God. So why were there so many scary rumors surrounding The Church of Almighty God? And so, all night I tossed and turned in bed, unable to sleep as my thoughts went from positive to negative and back again, over and over. The next day I felt sleepy and listless—troubled in a way that was hard to express—and I didn't feel like doing anything. My youngest sister came over, and it soon became clear that she'd been unable to stand up to being ganged up on by the leader and her mother-in-law. She no longer dared to believe in Almighty God and was now urging me to give up my belief in Almighty God as well. I said to her anxiously, "Sis, I know that you're worried, and I'm also very confused and upset, just like you are. But I've pondered over this problem a lot, and also prayed to the Lord for guidance, and so no matter what the leader and the others say, there is one thing that we can be certain of, and that is that the words of Almighty God could never have been spoken by a human being. I am certain that these words are the voice of God. I've read *The Scroll Opened by the Lamb* many times, and this book unveils the mysteries of God's six-thousand-year management plan. Reading the book taught me that there are three stages to God's work of saving mankind, and that the work of judgment with words of the last days is the work that will save man once and for all. Only the work of judgment can enable us to truly shake off the shackles of our sinful nature and

attain purification so that we may be raised up into the kingdom of heaven. The content of the book totally accords with the Lord's prophecies in the Bible and it contains truths that are not to be found in the Bible. Only God could know these truths and mysteries. So that's why I'm so sure that the words of Almighty God are the voice of God and that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus whom we've so longed for! Sis, our faith isn't wrong. Whatever you do, don't give up on the true way so easily!" After my youngest sister left, I felt very sad and thought: "Almighty God is obviously the returned Lord Jesus. It's just so true and right. So why won't the church leader and our family let us believe in Him?" Just as I was thinking this, my husband's cell phone rang. It was my father, and he wanted me to go to his home immediately. I knew without a doubt that my father was going to harass me again, so I said I didn't want to go, but my husband grabbed me and dragged me to the car. When I got to my father's house, I saw that my youngest sister and her mother-in-law were already there. On seeing me, my father's face hardened, and he said, "Last night the church leader prayed for the atonement of your sins before the Lord Jesus. But neither of you have yet confessed your sins and repented. I've called you both here today so that you can say a prayer of total repentance before the Lord, and so that you don't go believing in Almighty God ever again...." On hearing all this, I felt totally fed up. I thought to myself: "By accepting Almighty God's work of the last days I am following the footsteps of the Lamb and welcoming the Lord's return. Where's the sin in that? I'm not going to knowingly tell lies and talk nonsense." Seeing that I wasn't going to say a prayer of repentance, my parents and my sister's mother-in-law began to gang up on me. They started slandering and blaspheming Almighty God and repeating those terrible lies in order to force me to confess and repent. Having all those lies flying around my head and my family constantly ganging up on me made me feel short of breath, and I started to feel dizzy and weak. I thought to myself: "If they keep this pressure up on me every day, I won't be able to make contact with the brothers and sisters nor will I be able to read God's words properly. I don't think I'll be able to go down this particular path of faith in God...." At that moment, my parents and the mother-in-law grabbed hold of me and forced my sister and me to close our eyes and repent. Seeing just how aggressively they were behaving made me extremely upset, and I couldn't stop the tears from welling up in my eyes. As I cried, I prayed to the Lord: "O Lord Jesus, I know that You have returned as Almighty God, but right now I don't have the courage to believe in You. I beg You to forgive me and pardon my sins." Upon reaching this point in my prayer, I was sobbing so much that

I couldn't continue, and so my prayer ended. After that, I suddenly felt very weak-minded, all my courage disappeared, and I couldn't feel God's presence at all. I felt very uneasy, and I said to my youngest sister, "Before that prayer of repentance I felt that I still had some strength, but after saying it I felt completely drained, as if the Holy Spirit has left me. Actually, to believe in Almighty God is to follow the Lord, and by saying that prayer of repentance we have betrayed the Lord."

The strife in my heart continued after I got home. I had read so many of Almighty God's words and had recognized that they were God's utterances. I knew that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus and that to not accept Him would be to betray God, which would lead me to not only fail to attain salvation, but also to be condemned by God. But if I insisted on believing in Almighty God, then the church leader and my father would certainly continue to harass me and I'd never know a day of peace ever again. I really felt like I didn't have the courage to persevere in my faith. My mind was in turmoil, I faced difficulties every way I turned, and I didn't have a clue what to do. My head was buzzing, and I felt I was close to having a nervous breakdown. I wanted Sister Zhang to come over so that I could return the book of God's words to her, and in doing so I would be able to rid myself of this life of pain.

A few days later, Sister Zhang came to the store to lend me her support. I was extremely nervous, as I was worried that my husband would see her and tell my father. And so, breathlessly, I told her all that had happened over the last few days. I then hurriedly took out the book of God's words that I'd hidden under some boxes of goods and gave it to her. I told her, "Sister, my parents and husband are harassing me, and the leaders and brothers and sisters from my old church are hindering me so much that I feel utterly worn down with anxiety. I can't take it anymore, so please take this book away with you." Sister Zhang looked at me, and with great sincerity said, "Sister, we have accepted God's new work of the last days, and so this disruption and pressure from religious leaders and family is actually a battle being waged in the spirit realm! The Lord Jesus said: '**Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword**' (Matthew 10:34). '**And a man's foes shall be they of his own household**' (Matthew 10: 36). From the Lord's words we can see that God's coming to earth to do the work of salvation will inevitably result in a battle in the spirit realm. That's because people who truly believe in God and love the truth will follow God when they hear God's utterances. This will inevitably stir up the enmity of all those who are sick of the truth, who hate the truth, and who resist God. As a result, the two

sides—the positive, who belong to God, and the negative, who belong to Satan—will be revealed and each will be separated according to their own kind. This is God’s almightiness and wisdom! Back when the Lord Jesus first started doing His work, a lot of the ordinary Jewish people who heard the Lord Jesus’ utterances and witnessed His great power came to believe that the Lord Jesus was the Messiah who had been foretold, and so followed Him. But all the Jewish chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, who saw the common folk abandoning them and following the Lord Jesus, began to fabricate and disseminate lots of rumors to deceive the common people. They said that the Lord Jesus relied on Beelzebub the king of demons to cast out demons, and that He was gluttonous and loved to drink wine. And when the Lord Jesus resurrected, they bribed the Roman soldiers with silver to make up and spread the rumor that the Lord Jesus’ body had been stolen by His disciples. These were some of the ways they tried to prevent people from accepting the Lord Jesus’ salvation. And what happened in the end to all the Jews who believed what their religious leaders said and didn’t dare to follow the Lord Jesus? Not only did they lose the Lord’s salvation, they were also punished and cursed by God: Israel was subjugated for nearly 2,000 years, and the Jews went into exile all over the world, where many of them were persecuted and killed. This was the terrible consequence caused by them crucifying the Lord and seriously offending God’s disposition. Today, God has become flesh once again to do His work, and history is now repeating itself. Today’s religious leaders are just like the Pharisees of old: They clearly see the reality of God coming to perform His work, expressing truths and saving people, but because they have no love for the truth they deny and condemn God’s work of the last days. In order to protect their positions and keep their livelihoods, they fabricate rumors to resist and condemn God and use these rumors to deceive and control people. They even use and incite some unwitting people to put pressure on believers who have accepted the true way, and they frantically try to disrupt and prevent people from turning to Almighty God, thus ruining people’s final chance of salvation. Sister, we must be able to clearly see that this is a spiritual battle and see through Satan’s cunning schemes.” After listening to Sister Zhang’s fellowship, everything suddenly became clear: From ancient times, the true way has always been persecuted and I really was in an ongoing spiritual battle! The leaders of my old church were making up rumors and condemning God’s work of the last days, and they were persecuting me and harassing me over and over to stop me from believing in Almighty God, all because they hated the truth and were enemies of God.

The sister's fellowship helped me to understand why those things were happening to me, but I still felt very weak and too afraid to keep the book of God's words. I knew that my father and the others would come to my house and kick up a fuss if I did and would make family life difficult for me, so I was hesitant to keep the book. Seeing that I was caught between a rock and a hard place, Sister Zhang gave me a phone number and said, "Sister, how about this—I'll take the book of God's words home with me and keep it safe for you. Whenever you feel like reading it, just call me and I'll bring it right over." I agreed and walked Sister Zhang to the door. Just at that moment, my husband came running over and, pointing at Sister Zhang, shouted, "Take that book and leave, right now. And don't come back again, otherwise I'll give you a piece of my mind!" As I watched Sister Zhang walk away into the distance, I felt very upset and distressed in a way that was hard to describe.

At first, I thought that handing the book of God's words back to Sister Zhang would mean that my father would stop harassing me and that the tranquil life I once had would resume. In fact, things turned out just the opposite: Not only did I feel no peace in my heart, but instead I actually felt an inexplicable emptiness there. I was lackluster in whatever I did, and the words of Almighty God and the hymns of God's words kept finding their way into my head at all times of the day and night. I knew Almighty God to be the Lord Jesus returned, and that the words expressed by Almighty God are the truth; however, the things the church leader said to me, and the scenes of my father and the others harassing and attacking me also kept on flashing through my mind. I was suffering badly, and I felt as if I'd fallen into a deep abyss from which I couldn't climb out. I couldn't eat or sleep properly, and I felt so stressed out, as if my head was about to explode. In the midst of all this pain, I knelt and beseeched God: "O God, the one true God who created the heavens and earth and all living things! I'm in a lot of pain and feel very lost right now. I know that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus, but my stature is so small and whenever I think about the harassment and attacks my father heaps upon me, I get too afraid to follow You. O God, I'm stuck at a crossroads, unable to make a decision. I don't know what to do, so please guide me and lead me...." During the prayer, without realizing it, I suddenly started to think of these words of Almighty God: **"You shouldn't be afraid of this and that. No matter how many difficulties and dangers you face, you shall remain steady before Me; do not be obstructed by anything, so that My will can be carried out. ... Be not afraid; with My support, who could ever block the road? Remember this! Remember!"** ("Chapter 10"

of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's words gave me a burst of strength that was enough to make my timid heart strong. "Yes!" I thought. "With God as my backup, what on earth is there to be afraid of? Since I've already determined that this is the true way, then I shouldn't be restricted by any person, event, or thing. I must break through the forces of darkness and follow God with an unwavering determination. As a believer in God, if I'm not even able to admit my faith when confronted with the hostile forces of Satan then what kind of a believer am I? Aren't I just surrendering to Satan and betraying God?" I then remembered how, during her fellowship, Sister Zhang had told me that the harassment from my family and the church leader was all part of a spiritual battle, and that if I chose to stand with them, then I would be falling precisely into Satan's cunning trap. That would mean that I'd totally lose any chance of being saved and entering the kingdom of heaven. I then thought about the spiritual suffering that I'd gone through since Sister Zhang had taken the book of God's words back. I felt that I couldn't not have God in my life and that leaving God was even more painful than being abandoned by my family and my former church. So I picked up the phone and called Sister Zhang, and arranged a place to meet her so that I could get the book of God's words back.

After that, whenever my husband was not at home, I'd take the opportunity to avidly read God's words and sing hymns. The more I read the words the more I enjoyed them, and the more I sang hymns, the more relaxed and at ease I felt. My original faith was restored, and all my pain and troubles vanished like the morning mist. I felt intimately that God's words could sustain my life, and that I could do without anything except God. Three months later, Sister Zhang took me to The Church of Almighty God to attend meetings.

Unexpectedly, my husband found out about my attending meetings at The Church of Almighty God and told my father. One evening, I was upstairs when I suddenly heard a great commotion down in the yard. I opened the curtains and broke into a cold sweat when I saw my father and four or five of his church co-workers rushing in looking like they were ready for trouble. My heart started pounding, and I quickly knelt down and called out to God: "O Almighty God, my father has brought those church guys to harass me again and I'm really afraid. O God, You know that my stature is small, so please give me faith and courage...." These words of God suddenly came to me: "**You must have My courage within you and you must have principles when facing relatives who do not believe. But for My sake, you must also not yield to any of the dark forces. Rely on My wisdom to walk the**

perfect way; do not allow the conspiracies of Satan to take hold. Put all your efforts into placing your heart before Me and I shall comfort you and give you peace and happiness in your heart ("Chapter 10" of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's words gave me faith and strength, and I no longer felt timid and afraid. I thought: "No matter how much they harass me I'm not going to fall into Satan's trap again and be deceived by them. I was created by God. Having faith in God and following God are unalterable laws of both heaven and earth, and nobody has the right to interfere, not even the people closest to me." Consequently, I was able to go downstairs and greet my father and his co-workers in a calm manner. As soon as they saw me, they all started talking at once. A female co-worker among them had a look of "loving concern" on her face as she said, "Fangfang, you're such a smart person, so how come you can't understand how we feel? We all have your best interests at heart. Don't be so stubborn. Come before the Lord and repent, OK?" Very calmly I replied, "Sister, none of you have listened to the sermons of Eastern Lightning, neither have you read the words of Almighty God. I urge you all to investigate it properly and not just blindly condemn and resist Almighty God. All you need to do is read the words of Almighty God and then you'll know whether or not Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus." She replied, "We don't dare to read that book because the content really has too much power to draw people in. It's so easy to get sucked into it." I said, "It's exactly because what Almighty God expresses are all truths and because His words are the voice of God that it has the power to subdue people. Only God's words have this kind of authority and power. The reason why people are drawn in by God's words when they read them is because they can understand truths and gain life sustenance from reading them. Who would leave the wellspring of living water of life after finding it?" They had no reply to that, but just said a lot of stuff that blasphemed Almighty God and tried to scare me by saying I would be judged in hell if I didn't repent. In a steely tone, I said, "You slandered The Church of Almighty God by saying 'People who join Eastern Lightning can never leave, and if they do escape they get their noses cut off and their eyes gouged out.' There's not a shred of actual evidence for such a claim. It's all rumors and malicious slander! You find me one person who has had their nose cut off or their eyes gouged out. If you can't produce factual evidence then you're a bunch of liars who are just out to deceive people. Almighty God's kingdom gospel has already spread far and wide throughout China, and everyone has now heard about it. There are at least a few million Christians in The Church

of Almighty God now. Of course, when the gospel is being preached there are always some people who hate the truth and who don't accept it. But have you ever seen anyone who has had their nose cut off or their eyes gouged out? If there had been even one, the media would have immediately reported it and it would have become a national sensation. My sister and I have been purposefully harassed by you until we gave up our belief. But we appear to be fine, don't we? You're telling lies in order to deceive people. By believing in Almighty God, I'm following God's footsteps and choosing the true way. I've done nothing wrong, so I don't have anything to repent. My faith in Almighty God will never waver, so if you don't want to believe that's fine, but at least don't try to stop me from believing. As for what my end will be, no human being has the final say, because the fate of every single person is in God's hands. Only by keeping pace with God's work and accepting God's work of the last days will people have a good final destination. So don't come harassing me again." No sooner were the words out of my mouth than my father stood up quickly and abruptly, and in an aggressive tone of voice issued this threat: "If you keep on believing in Almighty God, then you're no daughter of mine!"

On hearing my father's threat to end our relationship I felt quite upset, and thought: "The truths expressed by Almighty God are indeed what the Spirit says to the churches. So why don't you listen to them, but instead listen to the rumors and lies spread by the church leaders? How could you be like them in hating me for believing in Almighty God, and even be willing to end our relationship?" The more I thought about it, the sadder I became, but then I suddenly thought of a passage of God's words: **"God created this world and brought man, a living being unto which He bestowed life, into it. Next, man came to have parents and kin, and was no longer alone. Ever since man first laid eyes on this material world, he was destined to exist within the ordination of God. The breath of life from God supports each and every living being throughout growth into adulthood. During this process, no one feels that man is growing up under the care of God; rather, they believe that man is doing so under the loving care of his parents, and that it is his own life instinct that directs his growing up. This is because man knows not who bestowed his life, or from whence it came, much less the way in which the instinct of life creates miracles"** ("God Is the Source of Man's Life" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's words enabled me to understand that even though my physical body came from my parents, the source of my life is God. "Without God's gift of life," I thought,

“my body would just be a piece of rotting flesh, and the fact that I’m alive today is all down to God’s care and protection, otherwise I would have been swallowed up by Satan long ago. God is the source of my life, not my parents, and I can break any relationship except the one with God. My parents are not only not interested in seeking or investigating the Lord’s return, they are also one hundred percent behind the church leaders in slandering and blaspheming God’s work and trying to force me to betray God. This proves that their essence is resistant to God and in enmity to God, but I’m not going to become tainted by them and resist God. I’m going to stand by God’s side, and even if my parents disown me, I’ll still follow God till the very end, and I will stand firm and bear witness for God.” So I said to my father, “Dad, when it comes to faith in God, I obey God, not people, and I’m not swayed by emotions, either. If what you said accorded with the truth and God’s will then I would listen to you. But if you tell me to betray God, then I’ll never do what you say!” When they saw how unyielding my attitude was, they all shook their heads, stood up, and left looking dejected. At that moment, I felt that I had won a victory and I couldn’t help but praise and thank God in my heart: “O Almighty God, You are so omnipotent. It was Your words that gave me faith and courage, and that brought this thorough and humiliating defeat to Satan.”

Although the people from the religious community didn’t come to bother me again, the church leader still continued to incite my parents to harass me. Every few days they would come over to my house to urge me to change my mind, and they always insisted that I go over to the leader’s place to repent. One day, my folks came over and my father tried to use arbitrary passages from the Bible to deceive me while my mother stood to one side and tearfully pleaded with me to go to the leader’s place to repent. It really saddened me to see my mother so upset. I thought about how she had lost her mother at the age of three and was then abused by her stepmother. She had suffered a lot in her life and was now getting on in years, and I hadn’t been a very filial daughter, especially in the way I was making her worry now. Then I looked at my father’s aged face and graying hair, and that made me even sadder, and I was soon in tears. Just as I was beginning to weaken, I thought of a passage of God’s words: **“In every step of work that God does within people, externally it appears to be interactions between people, as if born of human arrangements or from human interference. But behind the scenes, every step of work, and everything that happens, is a wager made by Satan before God, and requires people to stand firm in their testimony to God. Take when Job was tried, for example: Behind the scenes,**

Satan was making a bet with God, and what happened to Job was the deeds of men and the interference of men. Behind every step of work that God does in you is Satan's wager with God—behind it all is a battle” (“Only Loving God Is Truly Believing in God” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's words helped me to understand that on the surface it seemed as if my parents were harassing me, but in the spirit realm it was Satan making a wager with God. It was like when Job was undergoing God's trials, and his wife, who played the part of one of Satan's servants, said to him: “Do you still retain your integrity? curse God, and die” (Job 2:9). But because Job feared God and shunned evil, he scolded his wife, calling her an ignorant and stubborn woman; he did not sin with his words. He stood witness for God in front of Satan, and in Jehovah God's eyes he was a perfect man. Now I was being harassed by my parents, who had believed all of the outright lies that the leaders were saying, and this was one of Satan's temptations too. Satan knew that I cared a lot about my parents and was taking advantage of the opportunity to try to get to me. Satan was vainly hoping to use my empathy for my parents to make me deny and betray God, which shows just how sinister and insidious Satan is! But I wasn't going to give Satan the satisfaction of seeing its schemes come to fruition. I wasn't going to disappoint and sadden God, so I resolved to stand by God's side. Following that, whatever my parents said, however they urged me, my heart was not swayed in the slightest. Seeing that I was totally unmoved, my parents left, looking very dejected.

At a later date, the church leader made my father stand in front of all of the members of their church and announce that I had been expelled from the church. The leader also made my parents stay away from me. As a result of the harassment from the church leader and my parents, my husband began to frantically persecute me. Every time I returned home from fulfilling my duties for the church, he would either beat me or shout abuse at me, and sometimes he even locked me out of our home. He would damage my electric scooter or my bicycle, and one time he even took me to the police station. I was tormented by him until I felt physically exhausted and looked totally haggard, and our neighbors in the village also began to mock and slander me. Faced with this situation, my spirit weakened and I began to feel that faith in God was too hard. I didn't know how to proceed, and so I often knelt before God and prayed and wept, begging God to give me faith and strength. And then, on one occasion, I read these words of God: **“Those who God refers to as overcomers are those who are still able to stand witness, maintain their confidence, and their devotion**

to God when under the influence of Satan and under siege by Satan, that is, when within the forces of darkness. If you are still able to maintain a heart of purity and your genuine love for God no matter what, you stand witness in front of God, and this is what God refers to as being an overcomer. If your pursuit is excellent when God blesses you, but you retreat without His blessings, is this purity? Since you are certain that this way is true, you must follow it until the end; you must maintain your devotion to God. Since you have seen that God Himself has come to the earth to perfect you, you should give your heart entirely to Him. No matter what He does, even if He determines an unfavorable outcome for you at the very end, you can still follow Him. This is maintaining your purity in front of God” (“You Should Maintain Your Devotion to God” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). From God’s words I came to understand that, during the last days, God will make a group of people into overcomers. God will allow Satan to tempt people, and whether it be the CCP government’s oppression, the harassment from the religious community, abandonment by relatives, or the mockery and insults received from the general public, we believers must undergo these trials practically, because only those believers who can obey God, stay loyal to God and bear witness to God in any situation will become the overcomers who have been made by God. God had arranged these difficult situations in order to perfect me, to see if I really had faith in Him, and to see if I really was someone who truly believed in Him, who truly obeyed Him, and who was truly loyal to Him. After understanding God’s will, I went before God and made this pledge: No matter what difficulties or oppression I face, I will always follow God with determination, I will always fulfill my duties as one of God’s creatures in order to satisfy God, and I will bear victorious testimony for God in front of Satan. After that, although my husband continued frantically to harass and disturb me, I still prayed to God frequently, looked to God, equipped myself with God’s words every day, and I no longer felt any suffering in my heart. God also opened up a way out for me: My husband was punished by God on a number of occasions for persecuting me so frenziedly, and after that he didn’t dare to beat me or tamper with my bicycle again. Through these experiences, I saw God’s almightiness and sovereignty and His wonderful deeds. I saw that there isn’t any dark force that can surpass God’s authority and power, and I personally experienced the fact that as long as we rely sincerely on God and face everything that comes by relying on God’s words, then God will open up a way forward for us and will lead us to overcome Satan’s dark influence. After

experiencing all of this persecution and suffering, although my physical body had suffered a little, I still felt that I'd gained so much. My faith in God went from strength to strength, and this was all God's blessing upon me. Thank You, Almighty God!

A year later, I went with Sister Zhang to my youngest sister's workplace and bore witness to God's work of the last days for her again. My sister accepted it, and when I saw her take the book of God's words, I came to have a profound appreciation for just how difficult it is for a person to be saved by God. God's desire to save man is so real! I couldn't stop tears of gratitude from rolling down my face, and my heart soared with thanks and praise for God! In 2006, my youngest sister and I teamed up and preached the kingdom gospel to our other sister and, following that, we were able to bring some of our other relatives before Almighty God, too. This enabled me to see that regardless of how frantic religious leaders get in fabricating falsehoods and disturbing and harassing true believers, God's kingdom gospel will spread, and no one can stop it. God's lambs will surely hear His voice and return before His throne. As Almighty God says: **"The kingdom is expanding in humanity's midst, it is forming in humanity's midst, and it is standing up in humanity's midst; there is no force that can destroy My kingdom"** ("Chapter 19" of God's Words to the Entire Universe in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

35. Fortune and Misfortune

By Dajuan, Japan

I was born into a poor family in a village in rural China. Because of my family's economic hardships, I would sometimes have to go without eating, to say nothing of snacks and toys. What's more, all my clothes were hand-me-downs from my older sister. Because her clothes were usually too big for me, my classmates would laugh at me and refuse to play with me. I suffered greatly throughout my childhood. From that point on, I resolved to myself: When I grow up, I must make a lot of money and rise above my peers. I won't let others look down on me again. Since my family had no money, I was forced to drop out before graduating from junior high school and work in a medicine factory in the county town. In order to make even more money, I would frequently work overtime until 9 or 10 p.m., but, despite my efforts I earned just a small pittance. At some point I heard that my sister was able to earn in five

days selling vegetables what I earned in a month, so I quit my job at the medicine factory and went to sell vegetables. After a while I found that I could make even more money selling fruits, so I decided to start a fruit business. After I married my husband, we opened our own restaurant. I thought that now that I owned a restaurant, I would be able to earn even more money. Once I could earn a considerable amount of income I would naturally win the admiration and regard of my peers and, at the same time, I would also be able to live the lifestyle of an elite. However, after managing the business for a while, I found that we couldn't make that much money. I started getting anxious and worried. When would I be able to lead a life that others would admire?

In 2008, a random opportunity came up. I learned from a friend that in Japan one day's wage was roughly equal to ten days' wages in China. When I heard this I was overjoyed. I thought that I had finally found a good opportunity to make money. Although the agent's fees to go to Japan were expensive, I thought to myself: "Nothing ventured, nothing gained. No matter how much the agent's fees are, as long as we have jobs in Japan, we'll be able to recoup the money quickly." In order to realize our dreams of leading a better life, my husband and I decided to go to Japan right away. After we arrived in Japan, we were able to find jobs very quickly. Each day, my husband and I worked for over ten hours. Work stress was quite significant and I felt completely exhausted all day long. After work, all I wanted to do was lie down and rest—even eating seemed like a chore. I found it difficult to endure such a fast-paced lifestyle. However, when I thought about all the money I would have after struggling for a few years, I would encourage myself, thinking: "It might be hard work now, but in the future you'll lead a wonderful life. So keep going and don't give up." So, each and every day I worked my fingers to the bone, grinding relentlessly like a money-making machine. In 2015, I finally collapsed under the heavy work load. I went to the hospital for an examination and the doctor told me that I had a herniated disc and that it was pressing against a nerve. If I continued to work the way I was working, I would eventually be bedridden and unable to care for myself. This news hit me like a bolt from the blue. Immediately, I became extremely weak. My life had only just started improving, and I was getting closer and closer to my dream. I never would have thought that I would get sick. I refused to give up. I thought: "I'm still young. I can just grit my teeth and push through this. If I don't make more money now, and return to China with such meager earnings, won't I lose even more face?" And so, I kept on dragging my sick body to work every day to make more money. However, after a few

days, I was so sick that I literally couldn't get out of bed.

Lying there on a bed in the hospital with nobody to take care of me, I felt absolutely miserable. "How did I end up in this situation? Am I actually going to end up bedridden?" How I hoped in that moment for someone to sit by my side. Unfortunately, my husband was at work and my son was at school. My boss and colleagues were only concerned with their own personal profit; none of them showed me the least bit of care. When I looked around the sick ward at all the various patients, each absorbed in their own suffering, I experienced a kind of inexpressible sadness and couldn't help pondering: What's the purpose of life? How can one live a meaningful life? Can money really buy happiness? I reflected on what I had to show for 30 years of struggling. I had worked in a medicine factory, sold fruit, run a restaurant and come to Japan to work. Even though I had indeed earned some money during all these years, it had come at the expense of my own happiness, and there was no one to whom I could relate my suffering. I had thought that once I reached Japan I would be able to realize my dreams very quickly. After a few years in Japan, when I returned to China, I would be able to start life anew in wealth and splendor and become the envy of my peers. However, now here I was, lying in a hospital bed and even facing the prospect of spending the whole second half of my life confined to a wheelchair and in constant pain.... At the thought of this, I started to regret that I had risked my life just to earn money and get ahead in life. The more I thought about this, the more bitter tears began flowing down my face. In agony, I couldn't help calling out in my heart: "Oh, heavens! Save me! Why is life so cruel?"

Just when I was sunk most deeply in pain and helplessness, Almighty God's salvation came to me and my sickness became my blessing. By chance, I became acquainted with three sisters from The Church of Almighty God. Through reading God's words together with them, I understood that all things in heaven and on earth do not arise out of natural processes, but are created by God, that God is the Master of the entire universe, that man's destiny is also in God's hands, that God has all along guided and supplied mankind, and that He constantly looks after and protects mankind. I felt how greatly God loves man. But there was something I still didn't understand: God rules and presides over our destinies, and we ought to be happy and joyful, so why do we still suffer illness and pain? Why is life so hard? Where exactly does life's pain come from? One day, I told the sisters about my confusion. One sister read out a passage of Almighty God's words for me, "**Where did the pain of birth, death, illness, and old age present throughout the life of humans come**

from? What caused people to have these things? Humans did not have them when they were first created, did they? So, where did these things come from? These things came after humans were tempted by Satan and their flesh became degenerate. The pain of the flesh, its afflictions and its emptiness, as well as the extremely miserable affairs of the human world all came after humans were corrupted by Satan, from when Satan began to torment people; the result was that they became more and more degenerate. The diseases of humanity grew more and more profound, and their suffering became more and more severe. More and more, people sensed the human world's emptiness and tragedy, as well as their inability to go on living there, and they felt less and less hope for the world. All this came after Satan's corruption. Thus, this suffering was brought down upon humans by Satan, and it only came after they had been corrupted by Satan and they had become degenerate" ("The Meaning of God's Experiencing the Pain of the World" in Records of Christ's Talks). The sister fellowshiped with me, saying, "At the beginning when God created men, God was with them, and He took care of them and protected them. At that time there was no birth, ageing, illness or death, and no worries or annoyances. Men lived free of anxiety and care in the Garden of Eden, delighting in all the things that God bestowed upon them. Mankind lived happily and joyfully under God's guidance. But after mankind was enticed and corrupted by Satan, they betrayed God and heeded the words of Satan over those of God. For this reason mankind lost the care, protection and blessing of God, and fell under the domain of Satan. For thousands of years, Satan has consistently used such heresies and sophistries as materialism, atheism, and evolutionism, as well as the absurdities and lies publicized by great men and celebrities to deceive and harm people: 'There is no God at all,' 'There has never been any Savior,' 'One's destiny is in his own hand,' 'Distinguishing oneself and bringing honor to his ancestors,' 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost,' 'Man will do anything to get rich,' 'Money makes the world go round,' and 'Money is first,' and so on. After mankind accepted these absurdities and heresies, they denied the existence of God, denied God's sovereignty, and betrayed God. They desired to rely on their own two hands to create a happy life. Man's disposition also became more and more arrogant and conceited. They became ever more self-righteous, selfish, crafty, and evil. All manner of connivance, intrigue and competition arose between men in their struggle for status, wealth and personal profit. They fought with and cheated each other, in the process becoming increasingly anxious and

exhausted. Ultimately, this caused them to become ill, to experience pain and suffering and to become spiritually empty. These pains and anxieties make us feel that man's life in this world is too trying, too tiring, and too full of suffering. This all came about after Satan corrupted man, it was Satan harming us, and it was also the bitter consequence of mankind denying God, distancing themselves from God, and betraying God."

The sister continued her fellowship with me, saying: "God cannot bear watching mankind continue to be corrupted and harmed by Satan and so He incarnated twice among men to redeem and save us corrupt humans. Especially in the last days, the incarnate Christ has expressed millions of words; they are the truth that allows people to wrest themselves from Satan's corruption, to be purified and fully saved. As long as we listen to God's word and understand the truth within God's word, we will be able to distinguish and see clearly all the methods and ways that Satan corrupts mankind. We will see through to Satan's evil essence and have the strength to abandon Satan, break free from Satan's harm, return before God, obtain God's salvation and in the end, be brought by God to a wonderful final destination." When I heard that God had personally come to save mankind, I became very emotional. I really didn't want Satan to continue to harm me, so I told my sisters of my pain and confusion: "There is a matter I don't quite understand. A proverb says, 'Man struggles upwards; water flows downwards.' I've worked so hard to stand out and live a comfortable life, and according to societal norms, this would be seen as being idealistic and ambitious. Could it be that this way of life is also a way in which Satan harms us?"

The sister read another two passages of Almighty God's words to me: "**During the process of man's learning of knowledge, Satan employs all manner of methods, whether it be telling stories, simply giving them some individual piece of knowledge, or allowing them to satisfy their desires or ambitions. What road does Satan want to lead you down? People think there is nothing wrong with learning knowledge, that it is entirely natural. To put it in a way that sounds appealing, to foster lofty ideals or to have ambitions is to have drive, and this should be the right path in life. Is it not a more glorious way for people to live if they can realize their own ideals, or successfully establish a career? By doing these things, one can not only honor one's ancestors but also has the chance to leave one's mark on history—is this not a good thing? This is a good thing in the eyes of worldly people, and to them it should be proper and positive. Does Satan, however, with its sinister motives, take people on to**

this kind of road and that's all there is to it? Of course not. In fact, no matter how lofty man's ideals are, no matter how realistic man's desires are or how proper they may be, all that man wants to achieve, all that man seeks for, is inextricably linked to two words. These two words are vitally important to the life of every person, and they are things Satan intends to instill in man. What are these two words? They are 'fame' and 'gain.' Satan uses a very subtle kind of method, a method very much in concert with people's notions, which is not at all radical, through which it causes people to unknowingly accept its way of living, its rules to live by, and to establish life goals and their direction in life, and in doing so they also unknowingly come to have ambitions in life. No matter how grand these life ambitions may seem, they are inextricably linked to 'fame' and 'gain.' Everything that any great or famous person—all people, in fact—follow in life relates only to these two words: 'fame' and 'gain.' People think that once they have fame and gain, they can then capitalize on those things to enjoy high status and great wealth, and to enjoy life. They think fame and gain are a kind of capital that they can use to obtain a life of pleasure-seeking and wanton enjoyment of the flesh. For the sake of this fame and gain which mankind so covets, people willingly, albeit unknowingly, hand over their bodies, minds, all that they have, their futures and their destinies, to Satan. They do so without even a moment's hesitation, ever ignorant of the need to recover all that they have handed over. Can people retain any control over themselves once they have taken refuge in Satan in this way and become loyal to it? Certainly not. They are completely and utterly controlled by Satan. They have completely and utterly sunk into a quagmire, and are unable to free themselves. Once someone is mired in fame and gain, they no longer seek that which is bright, that which is righteous, or those things that are beautiful and good. This is because the seductive power that fame and gain have over people is too great; they become things for people to pursue throughout their lives and even for all eternity without end. Is this not true?" ("God Himself, the Unique VI" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). "So, Satan uses fame and gain to control man's thoughts, until all people can think of is fame and gain. They struggle for fame and gain, suffer hardships for fame and gain, endure humiliation for fame and gain, sacrifice everything they have for fame and gain, and they will make any judgment or decision for the sake of fame and gain. In this way, Satan binds people with invisible

shackles, and they have neither the strength nor the courage to throw them off. They unknowingly bear these shackles and trudge ever onward with great difficulty” (“God Himself, the Unique VI” in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

After finishing reading God’s words, the sister fellowshiped with me regarding the facts and reality of Satan’s use of fame and gain to corrupt man. Only then did I understand that all those who hold power in this world and who control mankind are the evil forces of Satan, that famous and revered people are devil kings who corrupt mankind, and that the atheism of Marx and the theory of evolution advanced by Darwin have deceived and corrupted mankind to the extreme, and have led mankind to shun God and betray Him. It was only then that I realized that the books I had read in the past were all filled with Satan’s poison, Satan’s philosophy, and Satan’s logic. If it were not for the word of God that revealed to me how the devil Satan has corrupted mankind, I would still be deceived and controlled by Satan, strenuously struggling in the darkness. There is nothing wrong with man having ideals and aspirations per se, but in the process of man’s pursuit of his ideals, Satan uses all kinds of methods to imbue men with its methods and principles of survival, enticing men to live only for fame and gain. When men expend and strive for fame and gain, they no longer search for what is light, and how to live a meaningful life, because the allure of fame and gain is so great for us, and we become so obsessed with it that we have no way of extricating ourselves. These are the shackles with which Satan binds our bodies, the conniving plots by which Satan corrupts men. Reflecting back, in the pursuit of excelling above my peers and earning money to win the admiration of others, I had lost my sense of self, became a soulless, money-making machine, and even sacrificed my health for the sake of fame and gain without the slightest misgiving. I had truly become a slave to money, fame and gain. Because I was under the control of a mistaken view of life expressed in the saying “Distinguishing oneself and bringing honor to his ancestors,” I made great efforts to struggle on, always wanting to be better. I was never satisfied, and I only stopped because I had worked my body to the brink of collapse and had no other choice. The pursuit of fame and gain had really made my life so difficult and tiring! If it was not for the revelations of the words of Almighty God, I would never have known that my pursuit of wealth and fame and gain was mistaken and that this is one method by which Satan seriously harms people, much less would I have seen through the sinister motives and conniving schemes by which Satan corrupts man. After this, the sister read to me several passages of the words of Almighty God, and through her fellowship

about the word of God and the different methods and ways in which Satan corrupts mankind, I understood that by constantly seeking fame and gain over these years, I had been overwhelmed by pain, and in the end had fallen ill. All of this pain was the result of not believing in God and knowing the truth—I had been harmed and corrupted by Satan!

Afterward, the sisters often came to share fellowship with me on the words of God. Gradually, I became more and more convinced of God's work of the last days, I developed some discernment with regard to the ways in which Satan harms men, and I understood that what is most important is to believe in God, read the words of God, pursue the truth, and submit to God's rule and arrangements. Only by living in this way would I receive God's commendation, and live the most meaningful and joyful life possible! Soon after, I learned that one of my female colleagues had also come to Japan with her husband to find work and make money, but despite having made some money, her husband started to experience some physical discomfort and later had no choice but to return home for treatment. Upon returning home, testing revealed that he had late-stage cancer. After the diagnosis, they no longer wanted to come to Japan again to earn money. The whole family was living in fear and sorrow. My colleague's misfortune gave me a profound sense of the fragility and preciousness of man's life. If we are bereft of life, what is the use in having more money? Can money buy life? One day, I read the words of Almighty God, which say: **"People spend their lives chasing after money and fame; they clutch at these straws, thinking they are their only means of support, as if by having them they could live on, exempt from death. But only when they are about to die do they realize how distant these things are from them, how weak they are in the face of death, how easily they shatter, how lonely and helpless they are, with nowhere to turn. They realize that life cannot be bought with money or fame, that no matter how wealthy a person may be, no matter how lofty their position, all are equally poor and insignificant in the face of death. They realize that money cannot buy life, that fame cannot erase death, that neither money nor fame can lengthen a person's life by a single minute, a single second"** ("God Himself, the Unique III" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's words allowed me to see even more clearly that Satan uses money and fame to fetter and harm men, and to destroy many people's lives. But because we cannot see through Satan's schemes, and we fail to realize that money and fame are the tools which Satan employs to torment mankind, we are drawn down inextricably into the vortex, and, in spite of ourselves, are deceived and

harmful by Satan. At that moment, I realized how lucky I had been to be able to receive the last days' work of Almighty God. Had I not read the words of Almighty God, I would never have seen through to the truth of Satan's use of money and fame to harm people, and sooner or later, I also would have been swallowed up by Satan.

While I was unwell, the sisters of the church often called on me. Since I couldn't move my back, the sisters would give me massages and cupping. One of the sisters who was medically trained told me which acupuncture points to press to bring relief to my condition. They also actively helped me with my household chores, taking care of me as if they were family. As an expatriate in a foreign country, I had no one that I could really rely on close by, so I was truly moved that these sisters took care of me better than even my own relatives would. I thanked them again and again. However, my sisters said to me, "Thousands of years ago, God predestined and selected us. Now, He has arranged for us to be born in the last days and, insofar as we've accepted God's work of the last days, to walk this path together. This is the rule of God. We were actually all already family a long time ago. It's just that we got separated and it wasn't until now that we were reunited." Once my sisters said this, I could no longer control my emotions and I hugged them, tears streaming down my face. At that moment, I felt a closeness with my sisters that I cannot describe. My heart was even more grateful to Almighty God than ever.

Gradually and imperceptibly, my illness began to improve. After experiencing the torment of this sickness, I reflected on how I had been under the control of Satan's philosophy of life. All along, I sought to stand out among my peers, firmly believing that in so doing I would be able to lead a life of happiness and would receive the admiration and envy of those around me. However, I never thought what I would obtain instead was pain and sadness, without even a sliver of peace and happiness. Now that I have read the words of God and understood God's will, I am no longer willing to fight against destiny nor am I willing to seek fame and gain. This is not the life I want. Now, aside from going to work, I frequently attend gatherings, read God's word and share my own experiences and understanding with my brothers and sisters. I've also learned to sing hymns. I lead a happy life and have gained a kind of assuredness and peace that I've never felt before.

One day, during my devotions I came across these words of God: **"When one looks back on the road one has walked, when one recollects every phase of one's journey, one sees that at every step, whether one's journey was arduous or smooth, God was**

guiding one's path, planning it out. It was God's meticulous arrangements, His careful planning, that led one, unknowingly, to today. To be able to accept the Creator's sovereignty, to receive His salvation—what great fortune that is! ... If one has a positive attitude toward God's sovereignty over human fate, then when one looks back upon one's journey, when one truly comes to grips with God's sovereignty, one will more earnestly desire to submit to everything that God has arranged, will have more determination and confidence to let God orchestrate one's fate and to stop rebelling against God. For one sees that when one does not comprehend fate, when one does not understand God's sovereignty, when one gropes their way forward willfully, staggering and tottering through the fog, the journey is too difficult, too heartbreaking. So when people recognize God's sovereignty over human fate, the clever ones choose to know it and accept it, to bid farewell to the painful days when they tried to build a good life with their own two hands, and to stop struggling against fate and pursuing their so-called 'life goals' in their own way. When one does not have God, when one cannot see Him, when one cannot clearly recognize God's sovereignty, every day is meaningless, worthless, miserable. Wherever one is, whatever one's job is, one's means of living and the pursuit of one's goals bring one nothing but endless heartbreak and suffering without relief, such that one cannot bear to look back on one's past. Only when one accepts the Creator's sovereignty, submits to His orchestrations and arrangements, and seeks true human life will one gradually begin to break free from all heartbreak and suffering, and to be rid of all the emptiness of life" ("God Himself, the Unique III" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God is the Creator, and men are His created beings. The life of every person is in the hands of God, under His orchestration and arrangement. All that man obtains in life lies in God's control, and is preordained by God. Man's rushing about hither and thither is certainly not a deciding factor. However much God bestows upon man, that is how much he can obtain. If God makes no such bestowal, no matter how much man works, his efforts will be in vain. It is just like the sayings "Man plants the seed, but Heaven decides the harvest," and "Man proposes, God disposes." Therefore, in our lives we should submit to the Creator's sovereignty and arrangements. This is the secret to happiness in life, and this is what a real life consists in! At the same time, I also understood that regardless of how much wealth a person has, or how high a position he holds, these are all merely worldly possessions. He did not bring

them with him when he was born and he cannot take them with him after he dies. In devoting himself to the pursuit of fame and gain what he obtains in the end is all emptiness and suffering, and the final outcome is that he is consumed by Satan. After I had achieved this understanding, I resolved to take on a different way of life, to start anew. I wished only to obey God's orchestration and arrangements, and to leave the second half of my life in God's hands for Him to arrange. I would no longer pursue wealth and status to win the admiration of others, but instead I would seek to be someone who obeys God, I would live truly for God and live to repay God's love. Now, I work for three to four hours each day. My boss is Japanese. Although we have language difficulties, my boss takes good care of me. Whenever she tells me to do something she always uses simple words that I can understand and never gives me any pressure. I know that this is God's mercy on me, and His blessing. I feel very grateful. At the same time, I have understood even better that if man listens to God's words, and submits to God's orchestrations and arrangements, only then will he be able to lead a relaxed and joyful life.

Whenever I am alone, I often think back on the path I took in coming before God. If it were not due to illness I would not have halted my pursuit of money and fame, and I would still have been a complete money-making machine in the world, right up until I was cruelly killed off by Satan, never thinking to repent or change my ways. Satan used fame and gain to harm me, causing me to become ill, but Almighty God used my illness to bring me before Him, enabling me to clearly see through God's words that Satan is the chief culprit in the corruption of man, and to recognize the true nature of Satan's plot to use money and fame to corrupt man and consume man, leading me to see through some aspects of the mundane world. I knew from where man had come, and where man was going, I also knew the source of man's sinning and depravity, and I understood how man should live a meaningful life. God's words say, **"When some people have just begun to believe in God, it is because of illness. This illness is God's grace for you; without it, you would not believe in God, and if you did not believe in God then you wouldn't have come this far—and thus even this grace is the love of God"** ("Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of God" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's words are truly practical. Only through disaster have I acquired blessings! Nowadays, under the supply and guidance of God's words, I have thrown off the bonds of Satan, and have a correct outlook on life. I have walked upon the right path of life, and my spirit has been greatly liberated. God truly is

so wise, so omnipotent! I thank Almighty God for loving me and saving me!

36. A Christian Spiritual Awakening

By Lingwu, Japan

I'm a child of the eighties, and was born into an ordinary farmer household. My older brother was feeble and prone to illness from the time he was little. My father was wounded in an accident when I was 10; he became completely paralyzed two years after that. Our family was poor to begin with, and we went heavily into debt for my father's medical treatment. Our friends and relatives didn't want to lend us any money because they were afraid that we would never be able to pay back the debt, so, left without any options, I was forced to drop out of school at 16 to go find work elsewhere. Deep in the night when everything was still, I would often think: "When we were all little, my peers were free to play after school, while I would have to go to the fields to do farming work; now we've all grown up, and they're still in school, acting like spoiled brats in front of their parents, but I have to start working at such a young age and suffer all kinds of hardships to support my family." At that time, I blamed my parents for having me in the first place, wondering why I had come into this world just to suffer and toil. But there was nothing I could do about it—all I could do was accept this reality. At the time, my greatest wish was to work hard and earn money so that my parents could live comfortably and no longer be looked down on by others.

I started out working in a privately-owned aluminum alloy factory. Since I was a child laborer, the boss always took good care of me with my food and housing. After a year had passed I started to feel that my wages were too low, so I decided to move on to working in a furniture factory, doing lacquer spraying work that other people didn't want to do. At the time, I would do any kind of work at all if I could make more money, as long as it wasn't against the law. That was because my only goal was to become well-off, so that I never had to live like a poor person again. At some point later one of my relatives got me into a company that had opportunities to leave the country for work, and to my surprise, a few years later I actually did get to go abroad.

In the spring of 2012, just as I had hoped, I came to Japan and began my new life. I was involved in the shipbuilding industry, and I signed a three-year contract with the

company. When I started work, I didn't know how to cook so I ate nothing but instant noodles for a month until I started to feel like I was going to throw up every time I had them, forcing me to learn to cook. I have no idea how many days I ate half-cooked rice. We were foreigners in Japan, so it was inevitable that local employers treated us somewhat unfairly. They made us do a lot of dirty, tiring, and dangerous tasks. Particularly when I was spraying lacquer I often felt pretty scared, because if the gas came into contact with any fire it would ignite, and if my attention wandered for a moment my life could be in danger. But whether it was suffering in my life or danger in my work, whenever I thought about making more money to send back to my family, plus being able to buy a car and a house after I went back to China so that I could lord over others and no longer live a life of poverty, looked down on by others, I felt that my suffering at that time actually wasn't too bad. Three years of my life passed in the blink of an eye working there. Just when my visa was about to expire, I learned that the company had a policy of renewing contracts; in order to make more money, I decided to go ahead and do that, and continue to work in Japan. What pleasantly surprised me was that not long after I renewed my contract, the gospel of the kingdom of Almighty God came upon me.

In September of 2015, a friend I had met in Japan told me about Almighty God's work in the last days. When she first started talking to me about things having to do with faith, I wasn't remotely interested, thinking it was just some sort of belief. I felt that believing in God wouldn't change my fate. Soon after that, I shared my perspective with my friend and asked her, "Can believing in God change my fate? I'm just an ill-fated person, I've suffered so much since I was little. If I had money I wouldn't need to suffer anymore. I think right now what's most real for me is making more money. For me personally, faith in God is something remote." In response, my friend read to me a passage of God's words: **"Where you will go every day, what you will do, who or what you will encounter, what you will say, what will happen to you—can any of this be predicted? People cannot foresee all these occurrences, much less control how these situations develop. In life, these unforeseeable events happen all the time; they are an everyday occurrence. These daily vicissitudes and the ways they unfold, or the patterns they follow, are constant reminders to humanity that nothing happens at random, that the process of each event's occurrence, each event's ineluctable nature, cannot be shifted by human will. Every occurrence conveys an admonition from the Creator to mankind, and it also**

sends the message that human beings cannot control their own fates. Every event is a rebuttal to humanity's wild, futile ambition and desire to take its fate into its own hands. ... From these daily vicissitudes to the fates of entire human lives, there is nothing that does not reveal the Creator's plans and His sovereignty; there is nothing that does not send the message that 'the Creator's authority cannot be exceeded,' that does not convey this eternal truth that 'the Creator's authority is supreme' ("God Himself, the Unique III" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). These words made a lot of sense to me, and I couldn't help but think that being able to renew my contract seemed like something that had been arranged by Heaven. I also thought about the family that I had been born into, about my life with my family, and everything that had happened around me—they were all things that were out of my control and that I could not anticipate. I had the feeling that somewhere out there, there is a Sovereign Ruler in control.

My friend then had me read a passage from God's words in "God Himself, the Unique III" in The Word Appears in the Flesh, which mentions six junctures that a person must pass through in life. The first juncture is birth; the second juncture is growing up; the third juncture is independence; the fourth juncture is marriage; the fifth juncture is progeny; the sixth juncture is death. I was amazed after reading these words from God. I had never imagined that God had spoken so clearly about man's destiny throughout his life. But the facts are indeed as He described. The family a person is born into is absolutely not up to them to choose, and they can't choose what kind of parents they have, either. After they grow up, the kind of spouse they have is also not up to them. The more I pondered them, the more I felt these words were very practical, and I then began to believe within my heart what Almighty God had said, that fate is not something that you can change on your own. After that I became more and more interested in faith; I believed that God exists and that a person's fate is not under his own control. But because I didn't know much about God, I felt that He was very remote from me. However, through an experience not long after that, I genuinely felt that God is beside me, watching over and protecting me.

It was raining that day, and I got to work on time as usual. A little past 10:00 in the morning I was working on the jobsite when I suddenly heard a bang. Something, I didn't know what, had fallen to the ground hard, and it gave me an icy shudder of fear. When I turned my head to look, what I saw stunned me—it was a long iron pipe with diameter of about 40 centimeters and a length of about 4 meters, weighing about half a ton. It had fallen

from a crane. It had crashed down to the ground behind me, less than half a meter from where I was standing. I was so terrified in that moment that I was totally speechless, and it took a while for me to regain my composure from the shock. In my heart I was crying out nonstop: "Thank You God! Thank You God! Without You there watching over and protecting me, the iron pipe would have come straight down onto me, and my insignificant life would have been over."

After getting off work I told the brothers and sisters about what had happened that day, and they fellowshipped to me that it had been God's protection. They also read to me from the word of Almighty God: **"In the long course of human life, almost every individual has encountered many dangerous situations and faced many temptations. This is because Satan is standing beside you, its eyes constantly fixed on you. When disaster strikes you, Satan revels in this; when calamities befall you, when nothing goes right for you, when you become entangled in Satan's web, Satan takes great enjoyment from these things. As for what God is doing, He is protecting you with each passing moment, steering you away from one misfortune after another and from one disaster after another. This is why I say that everything man has—peace and joy, blessings and personal safety—is in fact all under God's control; He guides and decides the fate of every individual"** ("God Himself, the Unique VI" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). After reading God's words I understood that people live every day in Satan's net, and may face all manner of dangerous temptations from Satan at any moment. They may meet with disasters, calamities and any number of things that don't go as they wish. Without God watching over and protecting them, people would have long since been swallowed up by Satan. Thinking of the danger I encountered in my own work, with an iron pipe weighing nearly half a ton falling and hitting the ground just half a meter from me, I knew that this was not just my own luck. Rather, it was God watching over me and protecting me that allowed me to dodge that bullet. I don't know how many times I've benefited from God watching over and protecting me all those years, but even so, I never understood God or worshiped Him; I truly had no conscience. From that very moment, I gained a better understanding of God's grace of salvation. The fact that I was still alive was all thanks to God's loving hand protecting me; I thanked God from my heart. I also decided that from then on I would do all I could to follow God. In the days that followed, I frequently attended gatherings, read God's words, fellowshipped and shared experiences and understandings of

God's words, and sang hymns in praise of God with brothers and sisters. I felt free and liberated within my heart. We, brothers and sisters, helped and supported each other in our spiritual lives. Not one of them looked down on me, nor was there anyone who had disdain for the poor and fawned over the rich—I felt I was able to live with dignity. Living in this big, warm, and happy house of The Church of Almighty God, changes gradually occurred in my life. I no longer felt the anxiety, suffering, and emptiness of days gone by. I felt much happier and fulfilled than I ever had before.

One day, something bad happened to a longtime employee in our company; he was Japanese and had worked in the company for more than a decade. He was really strong in both safety awareness and more technical domains, but that day on his shift, he was driving a lifting truck and was doing some work twenty meters up in the air. In the course of operating it, the truck's liquified gas started to leak as a result of his inattention. Another worker was doing some welding suspended in the air just above him. A spark fell onto his clothing, came into contact with the leaking gas—just like that, there was a massive fire. All of us there just looked on as our longtime colleague was engulfed in flames, but there was absolutely nothing we could do. There wasn't enough time for anyone to go save him, and within just a few minutes, he had been burned alive. Many who looked on as this tragedy occurred felt terrible for him, and came to a realization about life: What is it, after all, that people are living for? Because of something like this happening right next to me, I truly realized that if someone distances themselves from God and doesn't have God watching over and protecting them, then their lives are hanging by a thread. Faced with any kind of disaster, human life is so very fragile, unable to withstand the slightest blow. I also deeply felt that no matter how great a person's skill is or how much money they have, they have no control over their own destiny, and they are particularly unable to save themselves from disasters and death.

Not long after that, I read this passage of God's words: **“Because of the Creator's sovereignty and predestination, a lonely soul that started out with nothing to its name gains parents and a family, the chance to become a member of the human race, the chance to experience human life and see the world. This soul also gains the chance to experience the Creator's sovereignty, to know the marvelousness of the Creator's creation, and more than that, to know and become subject to the Creator's authority. Yet most people do not really seize this rare and fleeting opportunity. One exhausts a**

lifetime's worth of energy fighting against fate, spends all of one's time bustling about, trying to feed one's family and shuttling back and forth between wealth and status. The things that people treasure are family, money, and fame, and they view these as the most valuable things in life. All people complain about their fates, yet still they push to the back of their minds the issues that are most imperative to examine and understand: why man is alive, how man should live, what the value and meaning of life are. They spend their entire lives, however long they may last, merely rushing about seeking fame and fortune, until their youth has fled and they have become gray and wrinkled. They live in this way until they see that fame and fortune cannot stop their slide toward senility, that money cannot fill the emptiness of the heart, that no one is exempt from the laws of birth, aging, sickness, and death, that no one can escape what fate has in store. Only when they are forced to confront life's final juncture do they truly grasp that even if one owns vast wealth and extensive assets, even if one is privileged and of high rank, one still cannot escape death and must return to their original position: a solitary soul, with nothing to its name" ("God Himself, the Unique III" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). After reading these words of God, I was deeply stirred: People's souls come from God, and come into the world because of what God has preordained. Even so, people still don't want to believe in or worship God; they don't treasure this opportunity to experience the Creator's authority personally. Instead, the only thing they know to do is live for money, fame, and affection. They are madly dashing hither and thither in order to escape what's already been arranged for them, but what can people gain by seeking these things? When death is upon them, which of these things—loved ones, fame, or wealth—can save them? Wasn't my colleague's passing the best illustration of this fact? And when I thought about the things I had sought in the past, weren't those the same? When I came abroad to work, I would take on any job—filthy, tiring, or dangerous—just to earn more money, gain others' high regard, and claw my way out of poverty. In spite of intense suffering, changing my lifestyle never even occurred to me. I just kept plodding down that same road. In my heart, I didn't know if there was a God or if man's fate was in God's hands, but just relied on my own hard work to change my destiny. I strove to escape from God's orchestrations and arrangements for my life. Wasn't I on the road to ruin? If it hadn't been for God's salvation, if it hadn't been for God watching over and protecting me, I'm afraid that my meager life would have been snatched away by Satan long

ago. Then how could my life be as fulfilling and meaningful as it is now? In that moment, I finally saw that the meaning of life isn't to seek wealth or fame, nor is it to seek to get ahead of others so that they look up to us, but rather, it is to come into the presence of God and to accept His salvation. Only by worshiping and submitting to God can we break free from Satan's harm and live in peace and happiness. The more I think about this, the more moved I am. I've seen that my ability to have faith is God's special grace for me. I thank Almighty God for saving me!

37. I Have Found True Happiness

By Zhang Hua, Cambodia

I was born into an ordinary farming family. Even though we weren't wealthy, my father and mother loved each other and treated me very well—you could definitely say that we were happy in our family life, and blessed. After I grew up, I told myself: I have to find a husband who will treat me well, and then build a blissful, happy family. This is what is most important. I do not seek riches—all I need is a loving relationship with my husband and a peaceful family life.

I met my husband through a mutual acquaintance. I didn't like him at first because he was quite short, but my father and mother had a good impression of him. They said that he had a kind heart and he would treat me well. I could see that he treated people with sincerity, and he seemed like someone who would treat his family well. I thought, "It's okay that he's a bit short. As long as he treats me well, it's fine." And so, I agreed to the wedding and in 1989, we got married. After getting married, my husband treated me tenderly and took good care of me. I also put my heart into caring for him and always kept him at the front of my mind. After our two daughters were born, I stayed at home and took care of the household so that he could go to work without having to worry about anything. Our two children later had to leave town for school, so I rented a place nearby to be with them while they studied. As long as I was able to take care of something, I never troubled my husband about family matters, large or small. Sometimes things were difficult or tiring, but our relationship as husband and wife was filled with mutual love, care and consideration, and we lived a peaceful life. I felt that I had a really happy life.

At that time, the money that my husband earned was just enough to cover our daily expenses. Even though our lives were a little hard, I never complained to him. I felt that a husband and wife should share in life's joys and sorrows. But later on, the financial situation at my husband's workplace deteriorated; it got to the point that he was only taking home half of what he used to make each month and we were having a hard time paying for our children's tuition. In an effort to help share the stress my husband was burdened with, I started borrowing money from our relatives frequently. I thought, "These hardships are only temporary. Things will get better with time." Since we ended up borrowing money for so long, our debts grew and grew, and we both became very stressed. In 2013, my husband got the idea to go abroad to earn money. When he told me, even though I was reluctant to see him go, I thought, "If he goes abroad for two to three years and earns some money, we'll be able to pay off our debts and improve our family situation. What's more, our children are growing up and we want to give them a nice life." For the sake of our family, I agreed to him going abroad to work.

My husband went to Cambodia and stayed there for three years, during which time I stayed at home and took care of the kids and our aging parents. At first, my husband would frequently call home and show that he cared for the family. He would also send money back home. But over time he started calling less and less and in the end, things got so bad that he didn't call or send any money for a long time. I was worried that something had happened to him, so I went to go see him, and took our daughters along with me. When we got to Cambodia and I saw that my husband was safe and sound, I was very relieved. Since it was our first time in Cambodia, I had planned on the three of us staying there for a while to be with my husband, and then going back to China. However, I found that every time I left the house with my husband, the people that knew him would give me strange looks. Since we did not speak the same language, I had no idea what they meant by it. A week later, without any warning, my husband carried a strange child in his arms to come see me. He told the child, "Go on, say hello to your auntie." At the time, I just stared blankly because I had no idea what was going on. When I asked my husband, I found out that this was a child he had had with another woman in Cambodia. I got so angry that I couldn't speak, not even a single word. I felt like an idiot, completely at a loss. When I tried to tell him off, he said, very calmly, "This is totally normal. A lot of people here do this!" Hearing him say this made me so angry that I started trembling all over. I never would have thought that my own husband, who had

loved me for so many years, could say something so cold and heartless and do something so brazen. In my rage, I gave him a couple of hard slaps. His betrayal was like a bolt from the blue for me—I simply could not accept this fact. I became totally paralyzed. I just sat on the floor and cried bitterly. I asked myself over and over, “Why would he do this to me? Where is the husband that I used to know? He gave me his pledge of undying love—was that, and his tenderness and care, all fake? I’ve given my all for this family. I never asked him for money or for nice things. But now ...” I felt terribly humiliated, and deep inside I felt hurt and wronged. I felt like there was no way I could go on living.

In the days that followed my face was constantly wet with tears. I despised that woman and I despised that child. I told my husband that I wanted to get a divorce and I got ready to take my daughters back to China and then make my exit from this so-called family. But to my surprise, my husband not only wouldn’t agree to a divorce, but was also unwilling to leave that woman. I later learned that some of my family members had known for some time that my husband had taken up with another woman and had a child with her, but had been keeping me in the dark the whole time. I then felt even more so that I had been robbed of any dignity in my life. I had put my heart into managing our family, never imagining that I would be repaid with betrayal and deceit. My heart was broken. This hard blow was already painful enough, but what I really couldn’t accept were those strange looks that all of my husband’s acquaintances would give me; they even gossiped about me. It was my husband who had betrayed me and that woman who had shattered my family in the first place, but at that point, in others’ eyes, I was the interloper. I simply cannot put words to the pain that I was feeling at that time. Every single day crawled by as if it were a year and I had lost more than 10 kilograms.

Just when I had totally given myself over to despair, Almighty God’s salvation of the last days came upon me. My next-door neighbor Lin Ting heard about what had happened, so she came over and shared the gospel with me. She said, “Have faith—God can help you.” However, for someone like me who had grown up with an atheistic education, I couldn’t just snap my fingers and suddenly have faith! I didn’t respond at all. Lin Ting later came to speak with me again and said, “Read God’s words. Only God can save you from your suffering....” Everything she said was so sincere that I was a bit moved and I was embarrassed to reject her a second time, so I accepted the book *The Word Appears in the Flesh*. When I opened it up, I saw the following passage: “**Humanity, having strayed from the Almighty’s**

provision of life, is ignorant of the purpose of existence, but fears death nonetheless. They are without help or support, yet still reluctant to close their eyes, and they steel themselves to drag out an ignoble existence in this world, sacks of flesh with no sense of their own souls. You live in this way, without hope, as do others, without aim. Only the Holy One of legend will save the people who, moaning in the midst of their suffering, long desperately for His arrival. ... When you are weary and when you begin to feel something of the bleak desolation of this world, do not be lost, do not cry. **Almighty God, the Watcher, will embrace your arrival at any time**" ("The Sighing of the Almighty" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). When I read God's heartfelt words, I wept out loud and felt that God truly understands mankind. I wanted to die because of my husband's betrayal, but I lacked courage and didn't want to die that way. I had lost my purpose and direction in life and I had gotten to the point of not caring about keeping myself together at all. When I read God's words, it was like seeing that there was hope in life and my heart found some peace. Even though my husband had betrayed me, I could rely on God. I was not alone. Almighty God said, "**When you begin to feel something of the bleak desolation of this world, do not be lost, do not cry. Almighty God, the Watcher, will embrace your arrival at any time.**" I became willing to lean on God because I was someone who had been hurt, who had no one to care for me. I needed God's embrace. Each and every day felt so hard, so exhausting, and I didn't want to go on like that. I figured that since God understands mankind so well, He could definitely lead me away from this pain. And so, I started reading God's words and learning to sing hymns of praise to God with Lin Ting. She told me, "When you're going through hard times, pray to God and read His words. God can comfort our injured souls." I did just that. Happiness bubbled up within my heart when I watched the music videos and hymn videos that the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God had filmed. Especially when I saw the video The Happiness in the Good Land of Canaan, I felt like my own heart was dancing along with the brothers' and sisters' singing and dancing. The depression and pain in my heart gradually disappeared and a smile finally started to appear on my face. I suddenly felt that this was the family that I truly desired and that true happiness could only be found with brothers and sisters. So, I joined The Church of Almighty God and started living a life of the church with my brothers and sisters.

I later read these words from God: "**Satan corrupts man is through social trends. 'Social trends' include many things. Some people say: 'Does it mean the clothes we**

wear? The latest fashions, cosmetics, hairstyles, and gourmet foods?' Are these things considered social trends? They make up one part of social trends, but we will not be talking about them here. We only wish to talk about the ideas that social trends bring about in people, the way they cause people to conduct themselves in the world, and the life goals and outlook that they bring about in people. These are very important; they can control and influence man's state of mind. These trends arise one after another, and they all carry an evil influence that continually debases mankind, causing people to lose conscience, humanity and reason, weakening their morals and their quality of character ever more, to the extent that we can even say that the majority of people now have no integrity, no humanity, and neither do they have any conscience, much less any reason. ... When a new trend sweeps through the world, perhaps only a small number of people are on the cutting edge, acting as the trendsetters. They start off doing some new thing, then accepting some kind of idea or some kind of perspective. The majority of people, however, will be continually infected, assimilated, and attracted by this kind of trend in a state of unawareness, until they all unknowingly and involuntarily accept it and become submerged in it and controlled by it. One after another, these kinds of trends make man—who is not of sound body and mind; who does not know what truth is; and who cannot differentiate between positive and negative things to begin with—happily accept them as well as the life view and values that come from Satan. He accepts what Satan tells him about how to approach life and the way to live that Satan 'bestows' on him. He has neither the strength nor the ability, much less the awareness, to resist" ("God Himself, the Unique VI" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). These words from God brought to mind what my husband had said to me: "This is totally normal. A lot of people here do this!" Aren't my husband's thoughts and views a real-life example of what is revealed in God's words about how society's evil trends suck people in and corrode them? Before my husband left the country, he could take care of the family and he cared for me and our children. However, in the three short years since leaving home to work, he had fallen headlong into following the evil trends of society—he had betrayed the people he was closest to. When my thoughts turned to society today, I realized that many women don't think that being a mistress is anything shameful—instead, they think it means they have know-how. Many men have been poisoned by evil thinking such as "The red flag at home stays aloft while colorful flags

elsewhere flutter in the breeze.” Ideas like this lead them to brazenly have affairs. They don’t think of it as shameful, but instead think of it as something to be proud of. My husband didn’t want to divorce me, but he also didn’t want to leave that woman. Wasn’t that him being controlled by that kind of evil thinking and perspective? Through reading Almighty God’s words, I was finally able to understand that actually, everyone is a victim. Everyone has been deceived by the evil thinking planted in us by Satan. This is the only reason we have been corrupted to the point of having no morals, no shame. I wondered, “What do people gain by fulfilling their own selfish desires? Can they actually obtain happiness?” As I saw it, I don’t think my husband and that woman were any happier than I am, and on top of that, that child is an innocent victim. Isn’t the misery that our entire family has suffered just the result of Satan’s corruption and harm? When I think of myself, if it hadn’t been for God’s salvation coming upon me, I would also have been rotted inside by society’s evil trends. I thought that since my husband found another woman, I could do the same and look for someone else since there would be plenty of other men who would want me. I am thankful that God saved me just when I was about to be swallowed up by Satan. God allowed me to come before Him and receive His protection. Otherwise, I would have been ruined by the evil trends of this society.

I later read these words of God: **“Because the essence of God is holy, that means that only through God can you walk through life on the righteous path of light; only through God can you know the meaning of life; only through God can you live out real humanity and both possess and know the truth. Only through God can you obtain life from the truth. Only God Himself can help you shun evil and deliver you from the harm and control of Satan. Besides God, no one and nothing can save you from the sea of suffering so that you suffer no longer. This is determined by the essence of God. Only God Himself saves you so selflessly; only God is ultimately responsible for your future, for your destiny and for your life, and He arranges all things for you. This is something that nothing created or non-created can achieve. Because nothing created or non-created possesses an essence like the essence of God, no person or thing has the ability to save you or to lead you. This is the importance of God’s essence to man”** (“God Himself, the Unique VI” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). From God’s words, I could feel His love and concern for mankind, and I also came to understand that, though Satan may use all manner of social trends to corrupt and harm us, God has

never given up on our salvation. God is always silently protecting us, setting up all kinds of different situations so that we may come back before Him and accept His salvation. Thinking back to how I was living in resentment and suffering after my husband's betrayal, I knew that if it hadn't been for God's care and mercy, if I hadn't been comforted and encouraged through His words so that I could see through the ploys and deceitful schemes Satan uses to corrupt people, and see clearly how Satan's evil trends poison us, then I would have remained forever living in that state of resentment and pain. I never would have been able to free myself from it. I even would have totally destroyed myself just to make the loathing in my heart go away. Through this experience, not only did I experience God's love, but I also really came to feel that only God can save mankind from Satan's corruption and harm, and only God can lead us onto the path of light in life. Thanks be to Almighty God for saving me from that abyss of pain!

These days, now that I've read more of God's words, I've come to understand a bit of the truth and I can see into a lot of issues. I no longer hate my husband or that woman. They are free to choose whatever kind of life that they want to live. I'm also able to be calm and poised with relatives and friends. I no longer have any blame for my family, because we have all been corrupted by Satan and we are all its victims. Now, I frequently attend gatherings with my brothers and sisters where we read God's words, fellowship, and share our individual experiences. I reap a daily harvest from God's words. I have peace and joy within my heart and my life is full of hope. I give thanks to Almighty God for guiding me onto the right path in life and for giving me a true home. This is where I have found true happiness, and all I wish is to follow God forever!

38. A Happy Marriage Starts With Accepting God's Salvation

By Zhui Qiu, Malaysia

I'm a beautician and my husband is a farmer; we met in Malaysia at an orange throwing event, a traditional activity for women trying to find love. Our wedding, witnessed by a pastor, was held in a church a year later. I was very deeply moved by the pastor's prayer for our marriage and though I wasn't religious, I silently implored God: "May this man unswervingly

cherish and care for me, and be my companion throughout the rest of my life.”

After starting married life, the conflicts between me and my husband emerged one by one. He would leave the house by 4 a.m. every morning to sell vegetables and wouldn't get back until after 7 p.m., but I didn't get off of work until after 10 p.m. We had very little time together. Every time I was dragging my exhausted body back home, I was very much hoping to be on the receiving end of some of my husband's solicitude, care, and understanding; I wanted him to ask me how work had gone, whether I was happy or not. But to my disappointment, practically every time I came home from work, if he wasn't watching TV he was messing around on his phone, and sometimes he wouldn't even bother to greet me. It was just as if I didn't even exist. This left me really dejected and I gradually grew dissatisfied with my husband.

Once I had a disagreement with a customer and was feeling really irritated and really wronged. After getting home I vented about it to my husband hoping that he would comfort me, but to my surprise, while playing on his phone he just barely acknowledged me, hardly paying any attention. He then put his head down and went straight back to his phone. His complete indifference toward me was really upsetting, so I came at him and yelled, “Are you made of stone? You can't even have a chat? Do you care about anybody?” Seeing me so angry, he refused to respond. The more of the silent treatment I got, the more my anger built up. I nagged and nagged him, absolutely determined to get him to say something. Unexpectedly, he suddenly yelled back at me, “Haven't you said enough already?” This made me feel even angrier, and even more wronged, so I continued trying to reason with him. Finally, he just refused to say anything at all, so our argument was pretty much over. There was another time I complained to my husband about something that upset me at work thinking that he would try to make me feel better, but instead he responded abruptly, cold as ice, “It takes two to tango. All you see is other people's problems—why don't you take a look at yourself?” My temper flared up instantly and I couldn't stop myself from giving him a piece of my mind. Filled with resentment, I thought, “What sort of person is he? Why did I get married to someone like him? He has absolutely no consideration for my feelings—he doesn't have a single word of consolation for me!” From then on I almost entirely stopped sharing what happened at work with him. At some point later he tried to ask me about my job, but I never felt like paying him any mind. He gradually stopped asking me about anything. We came to have fewer and fewer common topics of conversation and whenever

something frustrating happened I'd just go find a friend to lend me an ear. Sometimes I'd stay out late talking to someone and wouldn't get home until after midnight. Even when I came home so late, he still didn't seem to care but just said I was treating our home like a hotel. I felt really put out, and my dissatisfaction with my husband grew, leading us to bicker and argue really frequently. Both of us were suffering. I didn't want things to continue on that way, so I decided to find a chance to have a good talk with him.

One day after dinner, I asked him, "You really can't stand me, can you? Why don't you ever pay any attention to me? If you have a problem with me, just tell me directly." When he didn't say a word in response, I just kept after him. Surprisingly, he yelled at me with irritation, "Stop asking me all these questions! Everything's a problem with you—I'm sick of it!" Getting that kind of response from him stirred up my own anger, and we started arguing again, going back and forth with each other. This went on for a while until he got up and gave me a shove; I lost my footing and landed on the sofa. Seeing that my husband would raise a hand against me was absolutely heartbreaking. I thought, "This is the husband I chose so carefully? This is the marriage I had such hopes for? How could he treat me this way?" From that point I no longer placed any hopes in him.

In April 2016, by fortuitous chance, a sister shared the gospel of the Lord Jesus with me. She said that the Lord loves us and was nailed to the cross in order to save us. I was really moved by His love, and so I accepted the gospel of the Lord. When I spoke to my pastor later on about the problems in my marriage, he told me, "We can't change anyone else unless we first change ourselves. We should follow the example of the Lord Jesus and practice tolerance and patience for others." So, I started trying to change myself. I'd go home as soon as I got off work and clean up the house, and sometimes when my husband ignored me and I was about to lose my temper, I'd pray to the Lord, asking Him to bestow tolerance and patience upon me. At the times that I couldn't control myself and got into an argument with my husband, after the fact I'd try to make the initial effort to smooth things over. Seeing the changes that had taken place in me, my husband also began believing in the Lord. Once we were both believers, we argued less frequently and communicated more. I was full of gratitude to the Lord after seeing His personal salvation for us.

But more and more time passed, and we still remained unable to control our own moods. Domestic disputes would still erupt sometimes, and particularly when the other person was in a bad mood neither one of us was able to practice tolerance and patience, so

as a result our fights became fiercer and fiercer. My heart was burdened with pain after every argument, and I would pray to the Lord, “Lord, You teach us to be tolerant and patient, but I just can’t seem to do that. When I see my husband do something that I don’t like I feel really disgruntled with him. Lord, what should I do?” I later started going to every single class organized by the church hoping to find a path of practice, but I didn’t get what I was hoping for out of it. I asked our group leader for help, who just said, “My wife and I argue frequently too. Even Paul said, ‘For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not’ (Romans 7:18). No one has a solution to the problem we face of the cycle of constantly sinning and confessing. All we can do is pray to the Lord and ask for His mercy.” Hearing him say this left me feeling at a loss: Could it be that we were doomed to spend the rest of our lives mired in conflict?

In March 2017, my husband, who had always been taciturn, suddenly turned into a lively conversationalist. Plus he’d often share fellowship with me on his understanding of the scriptures, and what amazed me even more was that what he shared in fellowship was really full of light. I was puzzled; it was like he had suddenly become a different person, and the things he was saying were really insightful. I really wanted to figure out what was going on. One day I accidentally discovered that he was a member of a group in a social media app, and without delay asked him what he was chatting with them about. With a very serious look on his face, he told me that he was considering Almighty God’s work of the last days, that the Lord Jesus had already returned and His name was Almighty God. He said that Almighty God had already uttered millions of words and was doing the work of judgment and cleansing of mankind in the last days. He also said that that fulfilled this biblical prophecy: “**For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God**” (1 Peter 4:17). My husband told me that when we seek God’s appearance and work, we have to focus on hearing the voice of God instead of just blindly clinging to our notions and imaginings. If we don’t seek the truth but just passively wait for God’s revelation, we’ll be unable to welcome the Lord’s return. Hearing this stunned me and it seemed inconceivable. It later occurred to me that I had heard an Indian pastor once say that if we ever heard anything about the Lord’s return, we should seek with an open heart and investigate it earnestly; we couldn’t rely on our notions and imaginings and just blindly pass judgment. So I said a prayer to the Lord: “Lord, if Almighty God really is Your return, please lead and guide me so that I can seek the truth and investigate this with an open heart. Otherwise, please protect my heart so that I don’t

stray from You. Amen!”

I opened up the Bible after this prayer and saw this in Revelation 3:20: **“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.”** I had a sudden moment of inspiration and felt that it was the Lord speaking to me, telling me that when He returned, He would knock at my door; I felt this was Him commanding me to listen for His voice and open the door. It was just like the wise virgins in the Bible who rushed to welcome the groom when they heard his voice. I then thought of John 16:12–13: **“I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.”** As I pondered these Scripture verses, a sense of excitement welled up within me. I realized that the Lord had long ago told us that upon His return He would utter more words and bestow the truth upon us. And Almighty God’s work of the last days is the work of expressing words to judge and cleanse mankind—could it be that Almighty God really is the Lord Jesus returned? If the Lord really has returned and has expressed truths to resolve all of humanity’s difficulties, then there is hope for us to escape from the bonds of sin. Then couldn’t the problems between me and my husband be resolved? I lost no time asking my husband to put me in touch with brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God; I wanted to investigate Almighty God’s work of the last days as well.

While in a gathering, some brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God selected some Bible verses to fellowship with me on various aspects of the truth such as the manner of the Lord’s return, the Lord’s new name, and what work He will do. Their fellowship was incredibly convincing and completely new for me. I really wanted to know more about the Lord’s work of the last days, so I prayed to God over and over again, asking Him to enlighten me so that I could understand God’s words. By reading God’s words and listening to the fellowship of the brothers and sisters I gradually gained an understanding of God’s objective in His management of mankind, His three stages of work to save mankind, and humanity’s outcome and destination. While looking into Almighty God’s work of the last days, I still couldn’t help but bicker with my husband over some petty little things. After the fact, I would feel really guilty and upset, and I’d ask myself, “Why is it that I can never put God’s words into practice?” This left me perplexed. In a gathering one time, I asked a sister,

“Why is it that my husband and I are always arguing? Why can’t we get along peacefully?” She found a couple of passages of God’s words for me. **“Before man was redeemed, many of Satan’s poisons had already been planted within him and, after thousands of years of being corrupted by Satan, he has within him an established nature that resists God. Therefore, when man has been redeemed, it is nothing more than a case of redemption in which man is bought at a high price, but the poisonous nature within him has not been eliminated. Man that is so defiled must undergo a change before becoming worthy to serve God. By means of this work of judgment and chastisement, man will fully come to know the filthy and corrupt substance within his own self, and he will be able to change completely and become clean. Only in this way can man become worthy to return before the throne of God”** (“The Mystery of the Incarnation (4)” in The Word Appears in the Flesh) **“Though Jesus did much work among man, He only completed the redemption of all mankind and became man’s sin offering; He did not rid man of his corrupt disposition. Fully saving man from the influence of Satan not only required Jesus to become the sin offering and bear the sins of man, but it also required God to do even greater work to rid man completely of his satanically corrupted disposition. And so, now that man has been forgiven of his sins, God has returned to the flesh to lead man into the new age, and begun the work of chastisement and judgment. This work has brought man into a higher realm. All those who submit under His dominion shall enjoy higher truth and receive greater blessings. They shall truly live in the light, and they shall gain the truth, the way, and the life”** (Preface to The Word Appears in the Flesh).

She then shared this fellowship: “In the beginning, Adam and Eve lived happily before God in the Garden of Eden. There were no arguments; there was no suffering. But after they listened to the serpent and ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they grew distant from God and betrayed Him, losing God’s care and protection and living under Satan’s power. The days of sadness and suffering then began. It has been this way until now, and we’ve become more and more deeply corrupted by Satan. We’re full of corrupt, satanic dispositions; we’re all incredibly arrogant, selfish, deceitful, and willful. We’re self-centered in all things, always wanting others to listen to us. That’s why people fight with each other and murder each other. Even parents and children and husbands and wives have no tolerance and patience for each other and aren’t able to get along harmoniously with each

other—we're lacking even the most basic conscience and reason. Although we've been redeemed by the Lord Jesus, although we pray to the Lord, confess, and repent, and we work hard to adhere to the Lord's teachings, we still just can't help but sin and resist God. That's because the Lord Jesus only performed the work of redeeming mankind; He did not do the work of fully saving and cleansing mankind. Accepting the salvation of the Lord Jesus just means that we are no longer of sin and we have the opportunity to come before the Lord in prayer, to receive His mercy, and have our sins forgiven. However, we have not been cleansed of our corrupt dispositions. Our sinful nature is still deeply rooted within us; we still need God to return in the last days and do the stage of work to cleanse and transform mankind, thus resolving the problem of our sinful nature. And now God has once again become flesh, expressing the words to do the work of judgment and cleansing to completely save us from our corrupt dispositions and allow us to escape from Satan's influence and be fully saved. As long as we keep up with God's new work, accept the judgment and chastisement of His words, pursue the truth, and put God's words into practice, our corrupt dispositions will gradually be transformed. That's the only way we'll be able to live out a true human likeness, and only then will we be able to achieve harmony in our interactions with others."

I finally realized from God's words and this sister's fellowship that the reason we were always living within this state of sinning and then confessing was because though the Lord Jesus had done the work of redeeming mankind, our sins as believers were merely forgiven; our inner sinful nature, however, was still very deeply entrenched and our satanic disposition had not yet been cleansed. A perfect example is how I intended to practice patience and tolerance in accordance with the Lord's teaching, but as soon as my husband said or did something that I didn't like, I couldn't stop myself from losing my temper. I just couldn't rein myself in no matter what. Without God's work to save us, it's impossible for us to cast off our satanic, corrupt dispositions relying on our own efforts. And now, God has incarnated once again, coming to do the work of judging and cleansing mankind. By accepting God's new work and really pursuing the truth, we have the opportunity to achieve dispositional transformation. I felt really moved and incredibly grateful for the Lord's mercy which had allowed me to hear His voice. But I still wasn't entirely clear—I knew that God had come this time to utter words to purify and transform us, but how can words judge and cleanse our corrupt disposition? So, I explained my confusion.

The sister read another passage of God's words for me. **"In the last days, Christ uses a variety of truths to teach man, to expose the essence of man, and to dissect the words and deeds of man. These words comprise various truths, such as man's duty, how man should obey God, how man should be loyal to God, how man ought to live out normal humanity, as well as the wisdom and the disposition of God, and so on. These words are all directed at the essence of man and his corrupt disposition. In particular, the words that expose how man spurns God are spoken in regard to how man is an embodiment of Satan, and an enemy force against God. In undertaking His work of judgment, God does not simply make clear the nature of man with a few words; He exposes, deals with, and prunes over the long term. These methods of exposure, dealing, and pruning cannot be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced into submission to God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God. What the work of judgment brings about is man's understanding of the true face of God and the truth about his own rebelliousness. The work of judgment allows man to gain much understanding of the will of God, of the purpose of God's work, and of the mysteries that are incomprehensible to him. It also allows man to recognize and know his corrupt substance and the roots of his corruption, as well as to discover the ugliness of man. These effects are all brought about by the work of judgment, for the substance of this work is actually the work of opening up the truth, the way, and the life of God to all those who have faith in Him. This work is the work of judgment done by God"** ("Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth" in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

She went on to share more fellowship with me. "God's words clearly explain for us how He does the work of judgment. He uses words to judge and purify mankind; He primarily uses words to directly reveal and dissect our corrupt nature and essence and our satanic disposition. He has also clearly told us how we should submit to and worship God, how to live out proper humanity, how to pursue the truth to achieve dispositional change, how to be an honest person, and what God's will for and requirements of people are. He has told us what kind of people He likes and what kind of people He eliminates, and more. He also sets up people, events, things, and environments to prune and deal with us, to test and refine us.

This exposes our corrupt dispositions and forces us to come before God and seek the truth, to accept the judgment and chastisement of His words, and to reflect on and know ourselves. When we accept God's words of judgment and chastisement, we feel like He is speaking with us, face to face, vividly, fully revealing our rebelliousness and resistance to Him, our incorrect motives, and our notions and imaginings. Only then can we see that our natures and essences are full of arrogance, conceit, deceit, crookedness, selfishness, and despicableness. We see that we are entirely lacking hearts of reverence for God and that we live entirely based on our satanic, corrupt natures, that everything we reveal is our satanic disposition, and that we are utterly lacking a human likeness. We begin to hate ourselves and be disgusted by ourselves from within our hearts and wish to no longer live under Satan's influence, and be toyed with and hurt by Satan. On top of that, through God's judgment and chastisement we see God's holy essence and His righteous disposition that tolerates no offense. A heart of reverence for God develops within us and we become willing to put the truth into practice to satisfy God. Once we start practicing the truth, God's benevolent and merciful disposition appears to us. By continually reading God's words and experiencing His judgment and chastisement, we gain a deeper understanding of our own corrupt natures, we better understand the truths expressed by God, and become even more willing to accept and submit to His judgment and chastisement, and to forsake the flesh, put the truth into practice, and satisfy God. We reveal less and less corruption, practicing the truth becomes easier and easier, and we gradually step onto the path of fearing God and shunning evil. By experiencing the judgment and chastisement of God's words, all of us are able to confirm from within our hearts that this is the panacea that saves us and cures us of our corrupt dispositions. This is God's truest love for us corrupt humans, and without experiencing the judgment and chastisement of God's words, we will never be able to live out a true human likeness."

God's words and the sister's fellowship had a huge impact on me. I felt that God's work of judgment and chastisement in the last days really is very practical, and that if we want our corrupt dispositions to be transformed, we have to experience the judgment and chastisement of God's words. Otherwise, we will live in the cycle of sinning and then confessing forever, and we'll never escape the bonds of sin. So I said a prayer to God within my heart, asking Him to water and feed me with His words, and to set up environments to judge and chastise me so that I could know myself, my corrupt disposition could be

transformed someday soon, and I could live out a true human likeness.

After accepting God's work of the last days I also gained a new understanding of the marriage that God had arranged for me. At one point a sister read a few passages of God's words for me. **"People harbor many illusions about marriage before they experience it themselves, and all these illusions are quite beautiful. Women imagine that their other halves will be Prince Charming, and men imagine that they will marry Snow White. These fantasies go to show that every person has certain requirements for marriage, their own set of demands and standards"** ("God Himself, the Unique III" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). **"Marriage is an important juncture in a person's life. It is the product of a person's fate and a crucial link in one's fate; it is not founded on any person's individual volition or preferences, and is not influenced by any external factors, but completely determined by the fates of the two parties, by the Creator's arrangements and predeterminations for the fates of both members of the couple"** ("God Himself, the Unique III" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). **"[W]hen one enters into a marriage, one's journey in life will influence and touch upon one's other half, and likewise one's partner's journey in life will influence and touch upon one's own fate in life. In other words, human fates are interconnected, and no one can complete one's mission in life or perform one's role in complete independence from others. One's birth has a bearing on a huge chain of relationships; growing up also involves a complex chain of relationships; and similarly, a marriage inevitably exists and is maintained within a vast and complex web of human connections, involving every member of that web and influencing the fate of everyone who is a part of it. A marriage is not the product of both members' families, the circumstances in which they grew up, their appearances, their ages, their qualities, their talents, or any other factors; rather, it arises from a shared mission and a related fate. This is the origin of marriage, a product of human fate orchestrated and arranged by the Creator"** ("God Himself, the Unique III" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). She then shared her fellowship with me. "Every single one of our marriages has been predestined by God, and God long ago determined who we would start a family with—this is all arranged through God's own wisdom. The marriage that He chooses for us doesn't depend on our social status, our outward appearance, or our caliber, but it's determined by both people's missions in life. However, we're controlled by our corrupt dispositions, so we constantly have many

requirements of our other half, always wanting them to do things our way. When they don't, we refuse to accept this and feel dissatisfied; we argue with them and get angry, or even complain, and we blame and misunderstand God. This leads to both people living in pain. That kind of pain isn't brought about by anyone else, nor is it brought about by God's rule and arrangements, but it occurs because we live by our arrogant and conceited corrupt dispositions. That sort of corrupt disposition puts us at odds with God's rule; we're unable to submit to His orchestrations and arrangements."

Hearing this sister's fellowship, I thought back over the course of my relationship with my husband. I was always expressing dissatisfaction with him and always demanding that he do things my way—if he didn't keep me in mind, show consideration and caring for me, if he didn't inquire after my well-being, I'd grumble about him and think that he was no good. I would look down on him in all sorts of ways and wage a cold war with him, refusing to acknowledge him. I finally saw that I really was an arrogant, conceited, selfish, and despicable person. I was someone who only thought of my own interests and gave no thought to other people's feelings. Giving it careful thought, I saw that it wasn't at all true that my husband didn't care about me, it's just that he was more introverted and wasn't very emotionally expressive. He also had his own thoughts and preferences, but I insisted on forcing him to do things that he didn't like doing. I always wanted everything he did to revolve around me, and that was what had led to so much conflict developing between us. I then couldn't help but feel regret over my past behavior. I also thought about what my husband said, that in the past, I had been the one to share the gospel of the Lord with him, but now he had shared God's gospel of the last days with me. This was God's great grace for us and His wondrous arrangement. We're both extremely blessed people, but I hadn't known any sort of gratitude. Instead, I was unwilling to submit to the marriage that God had arranged for me, constantly blaming God. I saw that I was so arrogant, so devoid of reason! Thank God for guiding me with His words. I had found the root of all the suffering in my marriage—I gained a sense of ease and release in my heart. I also became willing to lean on God and look to God in my life from then on, to forsake my arrogant, conceited corrupt disposition, and to interact harmoniously with my husband.

Since then, my husband and I have read God's words and fellowshiped on the truth together frequently, and we perform the duty of a created being to the best of our abilities. We are also fed and watered by God's words every day; when we encounter an issue we

seek His will according to His words. If we do reveal corruption or get into an argument, both of us come before God, and reflect upon and know ourselves. When we put this into practice we gain more understanding and forgiveness of each other. Our arguments are less and less frequent, our home life has become harmonious, and our lives have grown fuller and fuller. What has been most moving for me is that my husband's understanding of the truth is better than mine. He frequently shares fellowship with me on his understanding of God's words, and when he sees me reveal a corrupt disposition, he shares fellowship on the truth and God's will with me. I have really felt his care and love for me—I'm happy from within my heart. Looking back over our path, I'm still who I am, and he's still who he is; it's just that because we've accepted Almighty God's work of the last days and have understood some truths, absolutely everything has changed. I give thanks to Almighty God for saving us!

39. The Return of a Prodigal Son

By Ruth, United States

I was born in a small town in southern China, into a family of believers dating back to my paternal great-grandmother's generation. Bible stories, hymns of praise and sacred music played in church were my constant companions through the happy days of my childhood. As I started getting older and academic pressure grew, my heart started to slowly grow distant from the Lord. However, the Lord never left me; whenever I called out for Him, He would help me. The grace and holy name of the Lord Jesus were rooted deep within my heart. I remember the year I took the college entrance exam, no one thought I'd be able to test into a good college, including my teachers. Facing blow after blow, I nearly gave up all hope, and I too thought that I'd never be able to test into the college I wanted to get into. But then something popped into my mind—a phrase I heard at church when I was little: "Where man ends, God begins," and in a flash I felt like I'd been enlightened. I knew it was right: Where I reach my limit is where God begins. The Lord's capabilities are the absolute greatest, and I believed that as long as I genuinely leaned on the Lord then He would certainly help me. And so, I started praying to the Lord Jesus often: "Oh Lord, please help me. If I can test into the college of my dreams without a hitch then from now on I promise I will never distance myself from You, and I will accept You as my one and only Savior in this

life.” While doing that, I was also paying a price inconceivable to most people; during my entire senior year of high school I was practicing the piano whenever I wasn’t eating or sleeping. I was pretty much practicing for 10 to 12 hours a day. I didn’t know where that strength was coming from that was propping me up, but I figured it had to be the Lord listening to my prayers and quietly helping me. The gratitude to the Lord within my heart grew. In the end, my long-cherished wish was fulfilled; I tested into one of the top music academies in the country, and as a result I believed firmly that the Lord Jesus was my only Savior. In my senior year of college I didn’t know what path I should take after graduating, so I called on the Lord Jesus and asked Him to show me the way, to open up a path for me. In 2004, shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States, practically all visas for entry had been frozen, but to my surprise I received a full-ride scholarship to a university in the US as a result of a professionally recorded CD of myself. I got a student visa without a single hiccup and went to America to pursue my studies. These two experiences—testing into college and going abroad—showed me that the Lord had helped me to realize dreams that I never would have been able to achieve on my own. I became even more firmly convinced that the Lord Jesus is the true God and that He is my Savior, and I need to properly practice my faith in the Lord and follow Him.

One day in 2007 I gave my mother back in China a phone call, as I often did, to chat. In our call she blurted out: “Did you know that the Lord Jesus Christ has already returned?” Hearing her say this, I had a sudden feeling of pleasant surprise, but then I immediately thought about how in the Bible it says that in the last days false Christs will appear, so I didn’t know if this thing about the Lord having returned was real or fake. I knew I had to approach it with caution. Nowadays the Internet is so fast and convenient, so I figured I should go online to check this out. After I hung up the phone I went online, feeling like I was walking on air, to try to find a reliable source of information. To my surprise, all that I came across were voices of protest blaspheming and condemning the return of the Lord Jesus—Almighty God. I couldn’t make heads or tails of whether this was true or false, leaving me afraid and uneasy, scared that my mother wouldn’t have discernment over right and wrong and that she would go down the wrong path. I immediately called her to tell her about all that bad stuff I had read online, but mother was very calm, and comforted me by saying: “My child, you haven’t read Almighty God’s words so you don’t understand, and it would take a long time to explain it to you, but don’t worry, I’m not going down the wrong path. In fact, I am

following the footsteps of the Lamb. Let's not talk about this over the phone anymore." I knew that China is ruled by an atheistic dictatorship, and that the CCP government is always persecuting and arresting Christians, so it wasn't good for my mother to discuss anything to do with faith over the phone. I didn't dare say too much about it with her, so I gave a call to a pastor in China that I was well acquainted with to ask for help, pleading with him to go "rescue" my mother. When the pastor later told me the news that he had been unable to get her back into the fold, I got so angry that I practically lost my mind. After that, in an effort to stand in the way of my mother's faith in Almighty God, I even told her she had to make a choice between me and her faith in Almighty God. After telling her that, I had the same dream for three nights in a row, that it was the darkest of dark nights, it was raining torrentially, and I was carrying a black umbrella, walking along a once-familiar seaside. There wasn't a single person around, and all of a sudden a flash of lightning as bright as day struck my umbrella.... Every time I had this dream I would wake up scared and in a cold sweat, but being so insensitive, ignorant and stubborn, I failed to make the slightest effort to seek and pray, to figure out why I kept having that dream: Was the Lord warning me and telling me to turn back from a path of resisting God, and to instead return to Him? I later saw that no matter what I tried to persuade my mother, it was all of no use. On top of that I was in a faraway foreign land and had a busy life, so I stopped trying to force her hand.

In 2010 when I returned to China my mother brought up her faith in Almighty God with me. She seemed to know just what I was thinking, and she asked me bluntly: "You know that I've believed in Almighty God for several years now, so do you think there's anything strange about me like all that stuff they say online?" I was stumped by her question and couldn't come up with a response right away. Giving it careful thought, I realized those things they said online that made me tremble with fear had not happened to my mother; she was quite normal, and stood unharmed before me. In fact, I could see that she had changed more since gaining faith in Almighty God than she had after she started believing in the Lord Jesus. Not only had she become more rational in her words and actions, but she also had gained a greater understanding in her approach to issues. Seeing all of this, I thought: It seems like the online rumors aren't true, because facts speak louder than words. My mom then said, "Why don't you believe your mother, and why don't you look at the facts, but instead believe the rumors online? Have you investigated and gathered evidence about that stuff?" Embarrassed, I answered "I haven't." She went on: "You didn't do your research to

find out that it's all just hearsay, but believed the rumors you heard online and made a snap conclusion. Shame on you for being so highly educated but so lacking in reason. You should take a careful look at the Four Gospels, and you'll see that when the Lord Jesus was carrying out His work the Jewish priests, scribes and Pharisees made up all kinds of rumors and false testimony. They said that the Lord Jesus was a friend of sinners, that He was a man who indulged in food and alcohol, and they falsely accused Him of inciting the people to stop paying taxes to Caesar. They even bribed soldiers into giving false testimony, getting them to say that the body of the Lord Jesus was stolen by His disciples and that He wasn't resurrected. Surely you know about these things? What the Four Gospels record is just a small part of the work carried out by the Lord Jesus, and they contain written accounts of so many rumors that the Jewish leaders spread about the Lord Jesus. Have you thought about this before? If the Internet had existed at that time then the Jewish priests, scribes and Pharisees certainly would have spread their rumors and false testimony online, and their words slandering, blaspheming, framing and condemning the Lord Jesus would have been all over the Internet just like how it is with the religious world today condemning Almighty God. Do you know what this means? The Lord Jesus said: **'This is an evil generation'** (Luke 11:29). **'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd'** (John 3:19–20). Almighty God said: **'Man lost his God-fearing heart after being corrupted by Satan and lost the function that one of God's creatures should have, becoming an enemy disobedient to God. Man lived under Satan's domain and followed Satan's orders ...'** ("God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **'God's creation of the world goes back thousands of years, He has come to earth to do an immeasurable amount of work, and He has fully experienced the human world's rejection and slander. No one welcomes God's arrival; everyone merely regards Him with a cold eye. In the course of these several thousand years' worth of hardships, man's conduct has long ago shattered God's heart'** ("Work and Entry (4)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's word very clearly reveals the nature and essence of corrupt mankind's resistance to God and how it treats God as an enemy. Mankind has been deeply corrupted by Satan, and all of humanity has become enemies of God, no one loves the truth, and no one welcomes the arrival of God. When the Lord Jesus was in Judea working and

expressing the truth, He performed many miracles, many common people were drawn to follow Him, and so Jewish leaders became worried that all the common people were going to follow the Lord Jesus and abandon them. So, they made up rumors and gave false testimony on the Lord Jesus, frantically resisted and condemned Him, and ultimately they nailed Him to the cross. This is ironclad evidence of corrupt mankind hating the truth and viewing God as the enemy. Today God has once again become flesh, and He is once again being met with the frantic resistance and condemnation of corrupt human beings. The CCP government is afraid that the people will all follow Almighty God and gain discernment over its evil substance, that they will then reject it, and then it will lose its position of power. Leaders in the religious world also fear that believers will follow Almighty God, and then they will lose their status and livelihood. So, just like the Roman regime and Jewish leaders of that time, they are adopting contemptible and malicious tactics, fabricating all sorts of rumors and giving lots of false testimony on The Church of Almighty God, thereby slandering and condemning Almighty God and discrediting The Church of Almighty God. Their goal is to get people to stand up and condemn and reject Almighty God's words and work, and stand in the way of people receiving God's salvation. We must have discernment over Satan's tricks! The CCP government is an atheistic and satanic regime that has always been an enemy of God. When it first came to power it destroyed copies of the Holy Bible, demolished churches, slaughtered Christians and even deemed the Holy Bible, a work recognized all over the world, as cult literature and protestants and Catholics as members of an evil cult just to suppress and persecute them. It commits every misdeed imaginable, so what rumors would they dare not come up with? The facts show that both the CCP government and leaders in the religious world are satanic devils that hate the truth and are enemies of God. This is something that we must see clearly. We are people of faith—we must believe God's word and we must believe the truth. We absolutely cannot believe the rumors and lies of the CCP government and leaders within the religious world. If we lack discernment over the rumors spread by the CCP government and the religious world, if we do not seek and investigate the word and work of Almighty God, then in the end we will be just like the Jewish common people, forsaking Christ and refusing the true way because we're taken in by the rumors that we hear. That way, not only would we lose God's salvation, but in the end also be met with God's righteous punishment for resisting Him!"

As I listened to what my mother had to say, I felt as if I was awakening from a dream

and I had to reflect on them: “She’s right. Why did I blindly believe that negative stuff online without reading the word of Almighty God or doing any investigation? This world has been so corrupted by Satan that it’s brimming with lies and deception; there is so much treachery everywhere that we can’t really guard against it. I didn’t do any kind of research into the information online but just blindly believed it. I parroted what everybody else said and drew an arbitrary conclusion. Wasn’t that incredibly careless and ignorant of me? Wasn’t that following along with the wicked and making arbitrary judgments?” Seeing that I wasn’t saying a word, my mom handed me a copy of *The Word Appears in the Flesh* and calmly said: “This book contains words spoken by God in the last days. I hope you will be able to set aside your notions and look into it carefully. Bring up any questions you may have so that we can fellowship on them together.” I took the book and started reading it without saying a word. But I wasn’t really reading it with an attitude of seeking the truth. Instead, I had the mentality of a researcher, wanting to measure and verify God’s words against my own personal knowledge, and I even wanted to refute them. It was precisely because of my irreverent and contrary attitude toward God’s words that I was unable to attain the enlightenment and illumination of the Holy Spirit, so much so that the entire time I was not actually getting acquainted with Almighty God’s work. But even so, I continued to cling to my erroneous notions and didn’t want to accept God’s new work. I talked it over with my mother: “Mom, before, I believed all of the rumors I heard online, and tried to obstruct you from believing in Almighty God, but in reality it was I who was blind and ignorant. From now on, I won’t oppose your faith in Almighty God, but there’s no way that I can pray with you in the name of Almighty God, because I called on the name of the Lord Jesus to test into my dream school and receive a full-ride scholarship to pursue my studies abroad. I’ve received such great grace, so how could I abandon the Lord Jesus? Wouldn’t this be ungrateful and treacherous?” She gave me a passage from the words of Almighty God to read that was directed at this notion of mine: **“From the work of Jehovah to that of Jesus, and from the work of Jesus to that of this current stage, these three stages cover in a continuous thread the entire gamut of God’s management, and are all the work of one Spirit. Since the creation of the world, God has always been at work managing mankind. He is the Beginning and the End, He is the First and the Last, and He is the One who begins an age and the One who brings the age to an end. The three stages of work, in different ages and different locations, are unmistakably the work of one Spirit. All those who separate**

these three stages stand in opposition to God. Now, it behooves you to understand that all the work from the first stage until today is the work of one God, the work of one Spirit. Of this there can be no doubt” (“The Vision of God’s Work (3)” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). She then shared this fellowship with me: “You think that accepting Almighty God’s name is betraying the Lord Jesus, but this is entirely your own notion and imagination. In fact, Jehovah God, the Lord Jesus and Almighty God are all one God. In the Age of Law, God was called by the name Jehovah; He issued laws to guide mankind’s life on earth and had man follow His laws and commandments in order to rein in and guide humanity. Toward the end of the Age of Law, mankind had been corrupted by Satan to the point that they could no longer abide by the laws, and all of mankind was living under the condemnation and cursing of the law. God became flesh using the name Jesus to carry out the work of the Age of Grace, and in order to redeem mankind He was nailed to the cross as an eternal sin offering for man. Ever since then, as long as we come before God to confess our sins and repent, then our sins will be absolved and we will no longer be condemned or cursed by the law. On top of that, we also receive the Lord’s boundless blessings and mercy. However, even though our sins can be forgiven and we can enjoy the Lord Jesus’ abundant grace, our sinful nature and corrupt dispositions have not been eliminated. We still live in a vicious cycle of committing sins and then confessing them, unable to free ourselves. In the last days, God has once again become flesh as Almighty God to express the truths that will judge and cleanse man; this allows man to come to an understanding of the truth and obtain the truth through God’s judgment, throw off our satanic, corrupt dispositions, be thoroughly cleansed by God, and live out a true human likeness. This way, in the end man can become fit to inherit God’s promise and be brought into His kingdom. So, the Lord Jesus and Almighty God are both the incarnations of God in different ages, and They are one God.”

Her fellowship was reasonable and there was nothing I could refute, but my notions were still manifold, so I immediately replied: “Since Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus, then whether I call Him by the name Jesus or the name Almighty God it’s all the same. Either way, He’s the God that bestows grace.” “Jehovah God, Lord Jesus and Almighty God are one God,” my mother responded, “this is undoubtedly true, but God takes a different name in each age. So we can only receive God’s salvation by accepting God’s new name. It’s like how in the Age of Law God used the name Jehovah to carry out work, and people prayed in

the name of Jehovah, and God listened to and blessed man. Then, in the Age of Grace God used the name the Lord Jesus to carry out work, and then people needed to pray in the name of Jesus, otherwise their sins wouldn't be forgiven, nor would they receive the Lord's grace and blessings. It's just like the Israelites who cried out for Jehovah God in the temple didn't have God's presence and didn't obtain the Lord Jesus' salvation because they didn't accept the Lord Jesus' name. Now it is the Age of Kingdom and God is using the name Almighty God to carry out new work. Only by praying in the name of Almighty God can you receive the work of the Holy Spirit and attain God's salvation. If you hold on to the name Jesus and do not accept the name Almighty God, then you are actually believing in God's past work and resisting God's present work, which in essence is resisting and betraying God. The Holy Bible says: **'[Y]ou have a name that you live, and are dead'** (Revelation 3:1). Only by accepting God's new name and submitting to His present word and work will we have the reality of belief in God. Do you understand what I am saying?"

I felt everything that my mother was saying was both sensible and also practical, but in my heart I still could not let go of the name Jesus, because the Lord had bestowed such great grace upon me. Everything I have today has been given to me by the Lord Jesus, and I couldn't not follow my original promise: to properly practice my faith in the Lord and follow the Lord. And as a result, I continued to refuse the gospel of Almighty God.

After my summer vacation ended and I returned to the US, my busy studies and fast-paced life very quickly brought me back into the "real" world. Whenever I went back to church services, I discovered that none of the sermons contained anything new, regardless of whether it was a pastor in a Chinese church or an English-speaking church. It was all just the same old song and dance all the time. Church life was tedious and it didn't feel like I was getting any sustenance in my life. In an effort to hold on to their flock, church co-workers would frequently organize trips, outings, parties and other activities for all of us to take part in. There were all kinds of people within the church, including many people who weren't really devout seekers, but rather just people looking for a boyfriend or girlfriend, a roommate, someone to travel with, someone to have meals with, etc., and I realized that the church was no longer a place where I could find peace of mind. This filled me with pain and sadness. I later stopped participating in services altogether, but I was in a constant state of anxiety. I felt like a desperate child who had lost its way and was just passing through life in a daze.

After I gave birth to a son in 2014, the conflict between me and my husband intensified

because I didn't have any breast milk to feed our child. When he got home from work every day, the first thing out of his mouth was: "How is there still nothing there? Without breast milk my son's immunity will be compromised." This was the first time I had ever had such a feeling of incompetence—I felt as though I was entirely unfit to be a mother. I saw both Western and Chinese doctors, and even searched for home remedies online, but nothing helped me produce milk. I felt hurt, sad, and angry, as if I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and I felt that if that went on I would truly lose my mind soon. During my entire convalescence after childbirth my face was constantly wet with tears, and no matter what I did, I couldn't understand why this was happening to me. I often felt an indescribable panic come over me, and all it took was for me to hear words such as "mother's milk" or "feeding," and I would immediately burst out sobbing, completely unable to control myself.

After my mother learned of the difficult situation I was in, she came overseas to look after me. When she saw how I was suffering she said to me: "Have you ever thought about why there's more and more darkness in your life, why it's more and more filled with suffering? It's because you believe in God but do not seek the truth. The Lord has returned, yet you do not seek or investigate. Instead, you blindly cling to your own notions and imagination, just going along with what everyone else is saying and arbitrarily judging God's new work. This is resisting God! You're not accepting God's new work, so you have lost God's care and protection. You live under the domain of Satan, and this will only leave you afflicted and toyed with by Satan, filling your life with more and more suffering." Hearing my mother say these words, I sank into silence. In the days that followed, whenever mother put my child to sleep, she would put on some hymns of God's words for me to listen to. A wonderful thing happened—my mind unexpectedly started to slowly find peace along with the music of these hymns. One time, I listened to this hymn: **"... The heart and spirit of man are too distant from God, to the point where man remains in the service of Satan even as he follows God—and still doesn't know it. No one actively seeks out God's footsteps and the appearance of God, and no one is willing to exist in the care and keeping of God. Instead, they wish to rely on the corrosion of Satan, the evil one, in order to adapt to this world, and to the rules of existence that wicked mankind follows. At this point, the heart and spirit of man have become man's tribute to Satan and become Satan's foodstuff. Even more, the human heart and spirit have become a place in which Satan can reside and its fitting playground. Thus does man unknowingly lose his**

understanding of the principles of being human, and of the value and meaning of human existence. The laws of God and the covenant between God and man gradually fade away in man's heart, and he ceases to seek or pay heed to God. With the passage of time, man no longer understands why God created him, nor does he understand the words from the mouth of God and all that comes from God. Man then begins to resist the laws and decrees of God, and his heart and spirit become deadened.... God loses the man that He originally created, and man loses the root of his beginning: **This is the sorrow of this human race**" ("The Sorrow of Corrupt Mankind" in Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs). Every last line of Almighty God's words grabbed hold of my heart. I could see that I was in precisely the state described by God's words, that I had recognized God with my words, but in reality my heart had been completely possessed by Satan. All my thoughts and feelings were about matters of the flesh, what I was pursuing was also the flesh, and what I was going down was the secular path. In the Holy Bible it says: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6). "[K]now you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). I thought about how there was nothing about any of my actions that conformed to God's will, but all ran totally counter to God. I came before God and prayed: "O God, I'm in this situation today because I cherish my degree, identity, marriage and other things of this world, thinking that having these things should be enough. I simply have not sought out the truth, nor have I pursued knowledge of God, to the extent that each time You have knocked on the door to my heart and laid out God's word and the truth right before my eyes, I have failed to treasure this. When I heard that You have come to carry out new work, I was obstinate and opinionated, and made baseless judgments. I was fully aware that there was reason in my mother's fellowships, yet I stubbornly held on to my own notions without investigating the true way. O God, all I cherished was Your grace while rejecting the truth—I really was so stubborn and rebellious! If You will still give me a chance, I will certainly investigate Your work to the best of my ability." At that time I didn't know if that kind of prayer would be heard by God, but I still kept on crying out to God in this way.

In April 2015 I went back to China with my mother because of a health issue, which gave me an opportunity to get in touch with The Church of Almighty God. I thought about how I had strived and struggled in this world without attaining happiness, and how within

religion as well I had failed to find the truth that could dispose of the darkness and emptiness in my heart. I had this strong sense in my heart that perhaps it was because Almighty God, who I had continuously refused to accept, was the Savior Jesus who helped me test into college and got me to the United States. When this occurred to me, I told my mother that I wanted to take part in church activities at The Church of Almighty God. Before long, brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God came to meet with me, and I saw that when they got together, what they read was the word of God, what they fellowshiped about was the truth, and what they put into practice was the truth. No matter what they did, God's words served as their standard and the truth served as their principle. They did not act according to the flesh, nor did they have secular dealings with each other. I saw that The Church of Almighty God is the good land of Canaan where the truth rules. My spirit was filled in that place, I was provided for, and my heart was no longer empty—I gained a sense of fulfillment.

One day at another gathering with some brothers and sisters, Sister Wang read this passage from the words of God: **“The Almighty has mercy on these people who have suffered deeply; at the same time, He is fed up with these people who lack consciousness, as He has had to wait too long for an answer from humanity. He wishes to seek, to seek your heart and your spirit, to bring you water and food and to awaken you, that you may no longer be thirsty and hungry. When you are weary and when you begin to feel something of the bleak desolation of this world, do not be lost, do not cry. Almighty God, the Watcher, will embrace your arrival at any time. He is keeping watch by your side, waiting for you to turn back around. He is waiting for the day you suddenly recover your memory: when you realize that you came from God, that, at some unknown time you lost your direction, at some unknown time you lost consciousness on the road, and at some unknown time acquired a ‘father’; when you realize, furthermore, that the Almighty has always been keeping watch, waiting there a very, very long time for your return”** (“The Sighing of the Almighty” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). This passage of God's words moved me deeply. I felt that Almighty God was just like a loving mother calling out for a missing child, expectantly waiting for His child to someday soon return to His side. I could hear that this was the voice of the Lord. I realized that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus who helped me time and again to surmount one crisis after another, and that He had never left me a single step of the way, but persistently waited for me to turn back. I thought about how I believed in God yet didn't seek the truth or believe

God's words, but instead believed online rumors and the words of pastors. I had given my allegiance to the enemy, joining the CCP government and pastors in religious communities in disparaging and attacking God, who had been caring for me night and day. I had rejected God's salvation. I truly was so blind and ignorant. My faith in God was still based on my own notions and imagination; I believed that the Lord Jesus had helped me successfully test into college and guided me to go abroad without a hitch to pursue my studies, so I had to always remain true to the Lord Jesus' name, and that this alone was devotion to the Lord. I relied on my notions and imagination in my view of things. When God began a new age and took on a new name I did not recognize God's work, and time and again I refused God's salvation for me. How was that having faith in God? Wasn't it just having faith in myself? All that God had given me was love, yet time and again I hurt God. I knew I owed such a great debt to God ...

I absolutely had to kneel down, and I cried bitter tears as I prayed to God: "Oh Almighty God! I have been blind and ignorant. I believed the rumors of the CCP government and the religious world; I forsook You and condemned You, and I relied on my own imagination and notions to delimit You. I refused Your gospel of the last days—I am a modern-day Pharisee. Just based on my behaviors and deeds I should be destroyed along with Satan, but, because of Your love for me, You have time and again given me chances to repent. Oh God, I am willing, just like the people of Nineveh, to come before You 'in sackcloth and ashes,' to truly confess my sins to You and repent, and beg You to have mercy on me. I wish to cooperate with You, and be cleansed and saved by Your word."

After that, brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God would come meet with me three times a week; this went on uninterrupted for over four months. During this time I read several passages from the word of God nearly every day, and as I came to understand more and more of the truth, my relationship with God became more and more proper and my original faith was restored. I felt at peace in my heart, and I no longer felt anxious or desolate. Through reading the words of Almighty God and gathering to fellowship about the truth, I came to be absolutely certain of God's work in the last days, and that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus whose return I had longed for. I made a resolution to follow Almighty God to the end of the road, and to repay God's love by being one who pursues the truth.

I went back to the US in 2016, where I got in touch with brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God through their website and started taking part in activities at their

church. Thanks be to God! It was God who led me each step of the way to where I am now. In order to repay God for His love, I want to offer all of my strength to carry out the work of spreading God's gospel, so that more people who thirst for and seek the truth can come to know that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus. I will also tell them that if they follow in my footsteps—blindly believing Satan's rumors, resisting God alongside Satan—in the end, they'll be the only ones to lose.

40. God Is by My Side

By Guozi, United States

I was born into a Christian family, and when I was one year old, my mom accepted the new work of the Lord Jesus returned—Almighty God—though my grandma was strongly opposed to it. I remember when I was little, my grandma would most often say to me, “If you don't feel well or you can't do your homework, just pray to the Lord Jesus. He'll give you intelligence and wisdom, and He'll keep you safe.” My mom, though, would often tell me, “God created this world and He created mankind. He's always with us. Remember to pray to Almighty God when you encounter any issue and He will watch over you and protect you.” These two different voices frequently sounded in my ears. I once asked my mom uncertainly, “Grandma wants me to pray to the Lord Jesus and you want me to pray to Almighty God. Who should I listen to?” She said, “Actually, the Lord Jesus and Almighty God are the same God. It's just that the times are different, the names God adopts are different, and the work He does also differs. The Lord Jesus did the work of the Age of Grace, and Almighty God does the work of the Age of Kingdom. He changes the way He works in every age, and He also changes His name. But no matter how His name and His work may change, His essence doesn't change. For example, today you're wearing red to go to school and tomorrow you'll wear blue to go to a restaurant—even though you're wearing different clothing, and doing different things in different places, you're still you. But when God's new age arrives, we have to keep up with His new work. That's why we should pray to Almighty God now.” Even though I listened to my mom's explanation, I still felt very perplexed and still harbored a somewhat doubtful attitude toward Almighty God's new work.

In August 2014, I came to the United States to study abroad. My mom also came after

a few months and got in touch with The Church of Almighty God in the US. From that time on, I began little by little to perceive the existence of Almighty God. When I had just arrived in the US for my studies, I found it really difficult to adapt to life here, particularly living in someone else's home on my own. I'm really timid, so I was afraid to sleep alone. My mom told me, "We must believe that God's authority is unique. Satan and demons are also under His authority, so when you're scared at night just pray to God. As long as you have God in your heart, Satan can't get near you." Every time I listened to my mom give fellowship, I would feel much more at peace and at ease.

In December 2015 I started attending gatherings at The Church of Almighty God, but because I still didn't have much understanding about matters of faith, I would quite often have to force myself to attend. It was only later after experiencing two events that I came to appreciate practically God's true existence, after which I was able to confirm from the bottom of my heart that Almighty God is the one true God, and that He is always by my side ...

It was a Friday afternoon and I just had one art class left before I was done with school for the day and could go home. A classmate suddenly said to me, "Let's skip our last class and go downtown to have some food and window-shop. I heard there's a new seafood restaurant that's really good." Hearing this, I was tempted—I hadn't had anything to eat for lunch and I was really hungry. My stomach was growling, almost as if it was urging me to hurry to the seafood restaurant. But I was still hesitant. "I've never skipped a class," I thought. "What if I'm caught?" But then I thought: "Xiaoli from our class skips even important classes and has done it so many times without being found out, so I won't be caught either." I therefore agreed to go with my classmate and asked my art teacher to excuse my absence, saying that I had to go to the doctor that afternoon and needed to leave early. Then my classmate and I took a taxi downtown to window-shop and eat, and I didn't get home until eight or nine that evening. After getting back, I got an email from a teacher in charge of international students asking me to bring documentation from my visit to the doctor when I was next in school. Seeing that, I panicked, and hurriedly discussed it with my classmates. One said, "You don't have to give the teacher any documentation. That's private." I felt that what she said was right, but since I was in the wrong in this matter, I felt embarrassed to indignantly argue on my own behalf. I therefore asked my landlady to help me think of a way out of it. She told me to go to the person in charge and admit my error. After listening to what she said, my heart was tied up in knots—I didn't know if I should admit fault or continue with

my deception. I tossed and turned that night, unable to sleep. I wanted to admit my fault, but I was afraid of what my teacher and classmates would think of me, that the positive image I usually maintained would be destroyed in the blink of an eye. In the midst of my pain, I came before God to pray and seek, and then I read this passage of God's words: **"But deceitful people do not act this way. They live based on the philosophy of Satan and their deceitful nature and substance. They have to be cautious in everything they do lest others have something on them; in everything they do, they have to use their own methods, and their own deceitful and crooked manipulation, to cover up their true face, for fear that sooner or later they'll give themselves away—and when they do show their true colors, they try to turn things around. When they try to turn things around, there are times when it's not so easy, and when they can't, they start getting anxious. They're afraid that others will see through them; when that happens, they feel they've shamed themselves, and then they have to think of ways to say something to retrieve the situation. ... In their minds, they're always thinking about how to prevent you misunderstanding them, how to get you to listen to what they're saying and regard what they're doing in a way that achieves the aims of their motivations. And so they go over and over it in their head. When they can't sleep at night they think about it; during the day, if they can't eat they're thinking about it; during discussions with others they deliberate it. They're always putting on a front, so that you don't think they're that kind of person, so that you think they're good, or that you don't think that's what they meant"** ("The Most Fundamental Practice of Being an Honest Person" in Records of Christ's Talks). One after another, every one of God's words exposed my inner thoughts, as though a light had suddenly shone on the dark side of my heart, exposing it to the light, leaving me feeling terribly ashamed and with nowhere to hide. "It's true!" I thought. "I skipped class and lied, and afterward not only did I not take the initiative to admit my error, but I racked my brains to think of a way to cover up for my lie, to cover up the truth. I didn't feel the slightest guilt or remorse. I even felt that the teacher in charge of international students should mind his own business. Oh! This kind of behavior is rebellious against God and it disgusts God! Not one of my thoughts or deeds is remotely in accord with God's requirements—this is not how a believer in God behaves! No, I must not resolve my problems the way unbelievers do. I have to repent to God and act according to His requirements. I have to speak honestly and be an honest person."

So, on the next school day I went to the teacher and admitted my error in skipping class. I was shocked when the teacher in charge didn't criticize me at all, but instead said I was very honest and that it was good to be able to admit to a mistake! But there still had to be a punishment for skipping class, so the teacher gave me detention for one class period after classes let out, so that I could think about what I'd done. Although I received a very small punishment for skipping class and lying, I felt that this was God protecting me. Later, I fellowshiped with my church sister about this event at a gathering. After listening to my account, she read this passage of God's words for me: **"If you believe in God's rule, then you have to believe that the things that happen every day, be they good or bad, are not random occurrences. It is not that someone is intentionally hard on you or targeting you; it is actually all arranged by God. What does God orchestrate these things for? It is not to reveal your shortcomings or to expose you; exposing you is not the end goal. The end goal is to perfect you and save you. How does God do that? Firstly, He makes you aware of your own corrupt disposition, of your nature and essence, your shortcomings, and what you lack. Only by knowing these things and understanding them in your heart can you pursue the truth and gradually cast off your corrupt disposition. This is God providing you with an opportunity"** ("To Attain the Truth, You Must Learn From the People, Matters, and Things Around You" in Records of Christ's Talks). Through fellowship on God's words, I came to understand why nothing happened even though my classmates had skipped class so many times, but I was found out by the teacher the very first time: It was indeed God's sovereignty. God set up an environment in a practical way to expose me, chasten me, and discipline me; it was done so that I might understand my own satanic nature and know my corrupt disposition of lying and cheating, and thus pursue the truth, be an honest person, and live out a human likeness. This was God loving and saving me! In the past, everyone would praise me for being a good kid, and I always thought that was the case, too. But through the revelation of the facts and being judged and exposed by God's words, I finally realized the crookedness and deceitfulness of my own nature. I was able to brazenly lie and cheat, and I was of really small stature; at all times and in all places, I was capable of going along with unbelievers and living within my corrupt dispositions, thereby shaming God's name. The teacher gave me detention—although I suffered a bit in the flesh, it made me remember this lesson, and I would never again lie or cheat in the future. If I had gotten away with skipping class that

time, I would have wanted to do it again when afterward faced with tests and temptation. Then, I would have just lied and lied, become more and more slippery and deceitful, and in the end I would have been completely carried off by Satan. By that time God would no longer even acknowledge me because He loves and saves honest people and hates and eliminates deceitful people. At that moment I finally saw clearly what great harm lying does, and I also saw how critical, how important it is to be an honest person!

We had a math exam not long after that. While I was reviewing on the evening before, I discovered that there were still a lot of topics I hadn't mastered. Considering the exam was on the next day, I became really anxious. Because that term's grades were the most important for getting into university, they would look at my grades from that year, and if I failed math, all of my past hard work would have been in vain. The more I thought about it, the more stressed I felt. The next day, literally minutes before the exam, I suddenly realized that I had forgotten to bring the notebook I had written all the formulas in. I was thrown into total confusion. I had secretly written down lots of example questions in that notebook, but now that it was lost, I was sure to fail the exam. Holding on to a shred of hope, I looked everywhere, hoping that I had accidentally dropped it on the floor somewhere. Just as I was looking high and low, I spied the answers on the exam paper of the student sitting next to me. I rejoiced at this stroke of luck, feeling like I had suddenly seen a ray of hope. I stole a furtive glance at the teacher and saw that he was engrossed in work in front of the computer. I then quickly made a pass through all of the math exam questions and then I tapped the student next to me, motioning to him to compare our answers. Though I'd said I wanted to compare answers, in fact I wanted to copy his answers onto my own exam paper. On tenterhooks the whole time, I surreptitiously got through the entire math exam in this way.

I thought I had finally taken care of the subject I least excelled at and was planning to go have a great time once vacation started. Much to my surprise, however, a few days later the school held a meeting for parents and guardians, and my landlady went in my stead to pick up my report card. She said I got good grades in everything, but my math grade hadn't been entered in with the rest because the school suspected that there could be an issue of academic integrity. When I heard this, my heart instantly dropped into my shoes—I was worried and flustered, and I didn't know what to do. I thought to myself over and over: "Issue with academic integrity? Could they have found out I copied my classmate's answers? If that's the case, what should I do? Plagiarism is a really serious problem and it could even

impact my chances of getting into university. But right now, the school just suspects it, so I still have hope. It'll be fine as long as I can give a clear explanation, but how should I explain it? I really did commit plagiarism. Maybe I should just go and admit it?" I turned this over and over in my mind. My classmates suggested that I never admit it under any circumstances whatsoever, that I should just come up with any excuse and bluff my way through it. But then I thought: "That's not something a believer in God should do. What on earth am I going to do?" It just so happened that there was a church gathering that evening, so I opened up to my sisters in fellowship about the situation I was in. One of my sisters had me read a passage of God's words: **"Up until now, people have listened to a lot of sermons on the truth, and have experienced a lot of God's work. Yet under the interferences and obstructions of many different factors and circumstances, most people can't attain putting truth into practice, and can't attain satisfying God. People are increasingly slack, increasingly lacking in confidence. ... God's only desire is to give these truths to man, and imbue His way unto man, and then arrange various circumstances in order to test man in different ways. His goal is to take these words, these truths, and His work, and bring about an outcome where man can fear God and shun evil. Most people I've seen just take God's word and regard it as doctrines, regard it as letters, regard it as regulations to be observed. When they go about things and speak, or face trials, they don't regard God's way as the way that they should observe. This is especially true when people are faced with major trials; I have not seen anyone who was practicing in the direction of fearing God and shunning evil"** ("How to Know God's Disposition and the Results His Work Shall Achieve" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). I felt reproach in my heart after reading these words. Even though I understood a little about the truth about being an honest person and had not long before undergone God's chastening and disciplining in that respect, as soon as I faced another trial I was still unable to put the truth into practice. I very clearly knew that plagiarism was wrong, but for the sake of my own grades, I clean forgot about the truth of God requiring that we be honest people. Not only did I not bear witness, but I had shamed God. I couldn't sleep that night, turning it over and over in my mind. I finally resolved to be an honest person and to no longer shame God's name for the sake of upholding my own personal interests. Once I came to that decision, I leaped out of bed, turned on the computer, and wrote a self-criticism, confessing my wrongdoing. The next morning, I got to school very early and handed my self-criticism over

to my teacher, apologized to him for my behavior, and guaranteed that in the future I would never again engage in any cheating. I steeled myself to receive zero points for math and was willing to accept any punishment the school gave me. I never could have imagined that the teacher would actually decide to let me take the exam again. In that moment, I couldn't help but express my thanks and praise to God from the bottom of my heart: Thanks be to God for showing me mercy! This showed me that God scrutinizes the innermost heart of man, and when I set aside my own personal interests and practiced the truth of being an honest person, God opened up a way out for me and had the teacher allow me to retake the exam. I genuinely felt that God was by my side, observing every move I made, and arranging all the people, events, things and environments around me so that I could personally experience His true existence. God's love for me is so real!

What came as an even greater surprise was that, a few days later, there was a schoolwide assembly to issue certificates of merit for straight-A students that term. When the teacher announced my name, I thought it was a mistake. Only when some of my classmates said something to me did I realize that I really was receiving a certificate of merit. My classmates were all really surprised, wondering how I could get a certificate of merit after I'd committed plagiarism in my math exam. I silently exclaimed within my heart: "This is all God's deeds! I know that this certificate isn't for my grades, but it is God giving me an award for practicing being an honest person." This confirmed even more for me that God truly is by my side at all times and is watching over me at every moment. Everything God arranges for me always works out the best.

Now I'm enjoying gatherings and reading God's words more and more. Even though I still reveal my corrupt dispositions in life, no matter what I encounter, I can always fellowship with my sisters and seek the truth from God's words to resolve my problems. Through working together and cooperating in practical ways, I have come to understand more and more truths, and I put them into practice with greater and greater strength. I feel that God is by my side, and that He can expose me at any time through various people, events, and things, and He also uses His words to lead and guide me to enter into the truth. I now feel that my relationship with God is growing ever closer, and I am absolutely certain that Almighty God is the true God, and that at all times and in all places, He is the God who keeps watch by my side, and who cares for me and protects me!

41. I Have Found a True Home

By Yangyang, United States

When I was three years old, my father passed away. At that time, my mother had just given birth to my younger brother, and my grandma, owing to superstition, said that it was my mother and younger brother who had caused my father's death. For lack of a better option, mom had to take my younger brother to her father's house to live, so from the start of my earliest memories I was living together with my grandpa and grandma. Although my grandpa and grandma treated me well, I still felt lonely and really wanted to be together with my mom and little brother. I longed for the same kind of motherly love that other kids received. Really, what I was asking for wasn't much—all I wanted was a true family, a mother who loved me dearly, who could share her true feelings with me. But even this small ask turned into an extravagant hope, as I was only able to see my mom on the weekends. Whenever I had trouble at school, mom was never there by my side either; I was like a blade of grass by the side of the road that nobody showed any interest in. Over time, I became very self-abased, I held everything back in my heart and was unable to take the initiative to interact with others. When I was 16, some people in my village went abroad for work, and the idea tempted me. I thought to myself: My situation at home isn't very good. If I were to go abroad, then I could earn my own living, and even give some of my earnings to my family. That way I could help my family live a little better.

In August 2000, I came to the United States to make it alone. Here in the US, I'd wake up early in the morning and work all day late into the night, and there was no one by my side who I could share my thoughts with. I held on to a tough exterior, but on the inside, I felt especially lonely and desolate. Whenever I felt this way, I would really miss my family, and I would yearn even more to be able to have a happy family.

When I was 21, I got to know my husband while working at a restaurant. He was a good guy and devoted to his parents, so I had a favorable impression of him. One time, I sprained my foot while not being careful and, to my surprise, he quit his job to take care of me, which made me feel very touched. I slowly began to depend on him. In April 2008, we got married. I felt like I had found someone whom I could trust with my life, and finally it felt like I had a family to call my own. I felt very happy in my heart, and what I'd hoped for for so many years

had finally come true. After getting married, my husband's sister and I partnered up to start a building materials company, but since I was the only one in our family who knew English, the entire company was basically kept going by me. I was both looking after everyone in my family and managing the company. Through several years of struggle, I not only was able to help my husband pay back his previous debts, but I was also able to collect some savings for my family. Originally, I had thought that my efforts would win me the respect of my husband's family, but the reality came like a slap in the face. Once the business started having some success, we planned to have a child, but I couldn't get pregnant. I therefore took a lot of medicine and visited lots of doctors, but I couldn't see a single ray of hope. My husband was the eldest son in his family, and his parents and other relatives became very disappointed in us because we hadn't given them a grandchild. Facing this kind of pressure, my husband's attitude toward me also changed dramatically. Following suit, everyone in my husband's family then changed their attitudes toward me. My husband's older sister would often say things to exclude me, and would even distort the facts to say bad things about me in front of my husband. I felt I had been wronged, so I told my husband how I was feeling. He was not only unsympathetic to me, but sometimes he would yell at me as well, which made me feel even more hurt and wronged. Later on, we went to the hospital for another checkup, and finally found out that it was actually a problem with my husband. But this was no longer important, because after several years of fighting, our relationship had begun to deteriorate. Starting from the beginning of 2012, my husband would often go back to China to visit doctors and carry out business, only coming back home once every six months. Every time he came back, it was just to get money, telling me that the company he was running back in China needed funding to cover its costs, but he was completely indifferent toward me. In this way we were barely ever together for over three years, and our relationship drifted further apart.

In September 2015, we finally ended up getting a divorce. What hurt me the most was that, when we were dividing up our property, my husband went so far as to authorize a lawyer to make me sign a contract saying that, if the court did not approve our divorce, then I would have to give him all of my own assets within one week. Another lawyer had me think it over carefully: If I signed this contract, it would be very detrimental to me, and he said that he could help me write an agreement that would win me alimony. Seeing my husband be so cold and ruthless made me feel very disillusioned. From first falling in love to getting married,

for nearly a decade I gave everything to my husband and this family, to which no amount of money or material possessions could compare. But now, because my husband couldn't get me pregnant, he and his family placed all the blame on me, and turned heartless toward me, without the slightest consideration for my feelings. What I got in return for what I put in was a lot of pain and chagrin. I felt exhausted. I didn't want anything more to do with this family. I just wanted to leave this home as soon as possible and get far away from these people who had hurt me so deeply. So, without the slightest hesitation, I signed my name.

After my divorce, I felt very helpless. I didn't know who I could believe in, and I didn't know who I could go to to share my feelings with. Every time I thought about my own failed marriage, it made me feel so depressed and sorrowful. I reexamined my current self. In order to have a child, I had taken so much medicine with hormones that I had gained half again my original weight. I was so afraid that others would see me now in these dire straits, in this difficult situation that I was in. On the surface, I feigned being strong, but in my heart I felt extremely weak. I really did long for the day that I would be able to live a life where my spirit could be set free. It was from this point in time that I started having the desire to believe in God.

Not long after this, I ran into Carmen one day while at the mall shopping for clothes. She was very enthusiastic in helping me, and we exchanged phone numbers. Afterward, I saw a message she posted on WeChat, and I discovered that she was a Christian. Carmen would often share with me God's love for man, and I felt very moved in my heart. I gradually discovered that I, who had always been so closed off, had become willing to open my heart and interact with other people. As Carmen and I got to know each other, all the suffering that I had felt in my heart these past many years came pouring out. Carmen really understood my suffering, and she shared with me a similar experience that she had gone through. I felt that I had met someone who truly cared, and it warmed my heart. One day, Carmen invited me to another sister's home where I met Brother Kevin and several other sisters from The Church of Almighty God. While I was with them, I felt that they were very different from the people I had come across in the past. Whenever I was with other people, even if they were my relatives or friends, it felt like I wasn't truly understood when I opened up my heart to them. On the contrary, I would worry that my mishaps would be ridiculed by them, so I became unwilling to share my feelings with anyone. However, while with Carmen and these others, I felt very at ease, for they were all able to understand my suffering, and they also

shared with me their own experiences. I never could have imagined how sincerely I could open up my heart and talk with everyone here the first time I met them and how we all shared our experiences with one another. I felt like these brothers and sisters treated me like a relative more than my own family did, which was something I had never enjoyed before throughout my life in this world over the past several decades, and it made me feel very moved inside.

Later, we all got together to watch the musical *Xiaozhen's Story from The Church of Almighty God*, and my heart was stirred. The story in the movie was so true: As a child, the protagonist in the film played with her friends innocently and purely, but once they grew up and began to have conflicting interests, everyone's hearts began to change. They started to scheme against each other, even becoming enemies and fighting with one another. There was no longer any affection or friendship to be spoken of. I couldn't help but think about all those years my husband and I struggled together. Because we couldn't have a child, however, our relationship fractured, and in the end my husband actually fought me for every penny when it came time to divide up our property. It made me think about how terrible people really are; whenever it's their own interests at stake, all feelings are forgotten. Fortunately, the protagonist in the film eventually finds God, and returns to God's family, where God becomes the only One she can rely on, and she is no longer lonely, nor does she go on feeling indecisive and helpless. I felt so moved after seeing this, my eyes filled with tears. I thought to myself: "When Xiaozhen returned to God, she took off the mask she had worn in order to survive; she truly lived in the presence of God, received His salvation, and was able to live a liberated and free life. Almighty God surely will also save me, so that I may live as happily as Xiaozhen." In the film, I heard Almighty God say: **"Humanity, having strayed from the Almighty's provision of life, is ignorant of the purpose of existence, but fears death nonetheless. They are without help or support, yet still reluctant to close their eyes, and they steel themselves to drag out an ignoble existence in this world, sacks of flesh with no sense of their own souls. You live in this way, without hope, as do others, without aim. Only the Holy One of legend will save the people who, moaning in the midst of their suffering, long desperately for His arrival. So far, such belief has not been realized in those who lack consciousness. Nevertheless, the people still yearn for it so. The Almighty has mercy on these people who have suffered deeply; at the same time, He is fed up with these people who lack consciousness, as**

He has had to wait too long for an answer from humanity. He wishes to seek, to seek your heart and your spirit, to bring you water and food and to awaken you, that you may no longer be thirsty and hungry. When you are weary and when you begin to feel something of the bleak desolation of this world, do not be lost, do not cry. Almighty God, the Watcher, will embrace your arrival at any time. He is keeping watch by your side, waiting for you to turn back around. He is waiting for the day you suddenly recover your memory: when you realize that you came from God, that, at some unknown time you lost your direction, at some unknown time you lost consciousness on the road, and at some unknown time acquired a ‘father’; when you realize, furthermore, that the Almighty has always been keeping watch, waiting there a very, very long time for your return” (“The Sighing of the Almighty” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). Upon hearing these words, it was as if my mother was calling out for me, and it seemed like I had returned to my mother’s side, where I felt an incomparable warmth in my heart. As it turned out, God had always been by my side watching over me, waiting for my return. I was no longer alone. God knew my plight and my needs. In my greatest time of need, when my spirit ached the most, through these brothers and sisters preaching the gospel to me, He brought me back into the house of God, where I received God’s salvation and enjoyed the love God has for me. In that moment, I felt like a lost child who had finally found home, who had found their family, and I really felt truly happy!

After this, I started living the church life and, through reading the word of Almighty God, I felt that I had found something I could truly rely on, and that I now had a purpose and a direction in my life. However, since I understood too little about the truth, every time I thought about my failed marriage, I would still feel pain in my heart. I hated the way that my husband’s family had treated me, and every time I thought about it, I would become mired in pain. So, I prayed to God about my troubles, and I opened up to the brothers and sisters and fellowshiped with them about my problems, seeking the truth to resolve them. One time, Brother Kevin shared with me this passage of Almighty God’s words: **“Man has walked through these periods together with God, yet he knows not that God rules the fate of all things and living beings, nor how God orchestrates and directs all things. This has eluded man from time immemorial to the present day. As for why, it is not because the deeds of God are too hidden, nor because the plan of God has yet to be realized, but because the heart and spirit of man are too distant from God, to the point where**

man remains in the service of Satan even as he follows God—and still doesn't know it. No one actively seeks out God's footsteps and the appearance of God, and no one is willing to exist in the care and keeping of God. Instead, they wish to rely on the corrosion of Satan, the evil one, in order to adapt to this world, and to the rules of existence that wicked mankind follows. At this point, the heart and spirit of man have become man's tribute to Satan and become Satan's foodstuff. Even more, the human heart and spirit have become a place in which Satan can reside and its fitting playground. Thus does man unknowingly lose his understanding of the principles of being human, and of the value and meaning of human existence. The laws of God and the covenant between God and man gradually fade away in man's heart, and he ceases to seek or pay heed to God. With the passage of time, man no longer understands why God created him, nor does he understand the words from the mouth of God and all that comes from God. Man then begins to resist the laws and decrees of God, and his heart and spirit become deadened.... God loses the man that He originally created, and man loses the root of his beginning: **This is the sorrow of this human race**" ("God Is the Source of Man's Life" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). Brother Kevin then fellowshipped on this, telling me: "The reason that our lives are so full of pain is because we accept Satan's ideas, views and life axioms, and because we are harmed and corrupted by Satan. In fact, mankind has been corrupted by Satan for thousands of years. For a long time now, we have been used to all the things Satan instills in us. We rely on Satan's rules of survival to live, making us blind to all but our own profits, selfish, contemptible and without conscience. Your former husband's family was able to treat you in the way they did because they too were controlled by such feudal thoughts as 'Carry on one's ancestral line,' 'There are three ways to be unfilial, having no sons is the worst,' and 'Bring up children so as to be looked after in old age' that had been instilled in them by Satan. And when your husband was dividing up your property, he didn't consider at all your many years of being together as husband and wife, and this too was him being affected and controlled by such rules of survival as 'Money is first' and 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost,' and he became selfish and unfeeling. Because of Satan's corruption, people simply cannot get along with each other, and there is no happiness to speak of in our lives. All the suffering that we experience is caused by Satan's afflictions. All of our families are afflicted by Satan as well, the entire human race is under Satan's domain,

and can do nothing about being harmed by Satan. Therefore, without God's guidance, people who live by the philosophies and axioms of Satan live lives that are without true joy and happiness. What we need the most in our lives is not material wealth or the love of our families, but rather God's salvation. What we need is to be supplied with the word of God. God alone can lead us to break away from Satan's corruption and affliction, and restore our conscience and reason, enabling us to live like true people and obtain freedom and liberation." After listening to Brother Kevin's fellowship, I suddenly realized: So it's not just me who has lived in pain, but rather the entire human race has been fooled by Satan and corrupted by Satan, and all of us are struggling in pain. Only by coming before God and accepting God's salvation, can people break away from the affliction of Satan, and come through this suffering. This is the only way to obtain happiness and freedom. Once I understood this, my mind felt so clear, and I felt so liberated.

Once I understood the root cause of why man lives in pain, I realized that the resentment between myself and my ex-husband's family had been caused by the affliction of Satan, and I was even willing to try and forgive them and stop holding a grudge against them. When I started putting the word of God into practice, I felt a lot more joy in my heart. One day in August 2016, I ran into my ex-husband on the street. We greeted each other and I felt clearly in my heart that I no longer resented him, because I knew that he had been living with Satan's afflictions, that he had been fooled and tormented by Satan. If I had the opportunity, I would spread God's gospel of the last days to him, so that he too would be able to come before God and receive the Creator's salvation. In that moment, I felt that God truly is so lovable, and that God's word is the truth. So long as we come before God and receive His salvation, then we can free ourselves from the bonds of Satan and obtain freedom and liberation, and live happy and blessed lives.

Every time that I watch the dance and song video The Happiness in the Good Land of Canaan, I feel so happy, and I feel like the words of this hymn express perfectly how I feel: "I've returned to God's family, excited and happy. My hands hold my beloved, my heart belongs to Him. Though I've passed through the Vale of Tears, I've seen God's loveliness. My love for God grows day by day, God is the source of my joy. Bewitched by the beauty of God, my heart is attached to Him. I can never love God enough, songs of praise well up in my heart." When I think back on the path I've followed, regardless of what I experienced on the way, God was always by my side watching over me and, in the end, He led me back into

His family. Now, every day I enjoy being watered and provided for by the word of Almighty God. The pain I felt inside has gone away, and I have found direction in my life and obtained true freedom and happiness. Thanks be to God for saving me. I will strive to pursue the truth and fulfill my duty as a creation as best I can to repay God's love!

42. A Different Kind of Salvation

By Huang Lin, China

I used to be an ordinary believer in Charismatic Christianity, and ever since I started believing in the Lord I never once missed a service. It was particularly because I knew we were in the last days and the prophecies in the Bible about the Lord's return had basically been fulfilled; the Lord would soon return, and so I attended services even more enthusiastically, eagerly looking forward to His return, lest I miss my chance to meet with the Lord.

One day, my younger sister came and said happily to me, "Hey, I've come today to tell you the absolute best news ever—the Lord Jesus has returned! And what's more, He has returned in the flesh; He's expressing the truth and performing His work of the last days to judge and cleanse man, thus fulfilling the prophecy in the Bible '**For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God**' (1 Peter 4:17). Don't waste any time—follow God's new work!" When I heard the news that the Lord had returned, I was both shocked and full of doubt. I said, "It says in the Book of Revelation, '**Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him**' (Revelation 1:7). And the pastors and elders often tell us that when the Lord returns, He will come to us on a white cloud. You say the Lord has returned and that He has come in the flesh. How is that possible?" My sister said solemnly, "You say that the Lord Jesus will return with the clouds, but are you sure about this? It also prophesies in the Bible: '**Behold, I come as a thief**' (Revelation 16:15), and '**And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him**' (Matthew 25:6). Do you dare say that the Lord could not possibly come in secret? There is a mystery in the Lord's return, so we must seek with an open mind! If we cling to our own notions and imaginings, how could we then welcome the Lord's return?" But no matter how she gave fellowship, I remained unconvinced, believing instead that the Lord would return on a white

cloud and that He couldn't possibly come in the flesh. She later preached the gospel to the rest of the family, and after sharing her fellowship several times, my husband, my younger son and his wife (who had been unbelievers) all accepted Almighty God's work of the last days. Yet I continued to cling to my own notions, refusing to accept it.

After that, I continued attending services at my old church, while my husband, younger son and his wife all attended gatherings at The Church of Almighty God. Every time I came home from service, I felt listless and felt that they were all done by rote; my heart was empty and I was gaining nothing. They, on the other hand, were always so happy when they returned from a gathering, and they would often have fellowship and seek together on things like which corrupt dispositions they revealed when they encountered issues, how they should seek God's will, and how they should know and reflect on themselves. They would also discuss how to practice the truth and live by God's words, how to cast off their corrupt dispositions and be purified, and so on. Hearing them discuss these things left me puzzled, and I thought: "They've had faith for hardly any time at all; how is it that they know they need to seek God's will when they encounter issues, that they're able to find a path of practice, and everything they say is so well-reasoned? I've believed in the Lord Jesus for all these years; I've prayed, attended service and read the Bible consistently, so why am I never able to understand the Lord's will when things happen to me? And it's not just me—all my brothers and sisters in my church are the same. We are bound by all manner of sins and cannot free ourselves; our spirits are withered, dark and hopeless, and we feel like we're getting further and further away from the Lord. What on earth's going on?" The topics they were discussing were so fresh and new, talking about what corrupt dispositions they were revealing, about how to reflect on and know themselves, about being purified, and so on. I'd believed in the Lord for so many years but had never heard the pastors or the elders in my church preach about that stuff, and I just couldn't understand how they had come to understand so much! I was at a loss.

In the blink of an eye, harvest time had arrived; my two sons harvested their corn and brought it home. In past years, I would always help my elder son shuck the corn first and then help my younger son, but this year my younger son and his family did it themselves. I thought to myself: "I haven't helped my younger son's family with their work this time, so his wife must surely be angry with me. She'll say that I'm showing favoritism." But to my surprise, not only was she not angry, but she said to me cheerfully, "Mom, you and dad aren't getting

any younger. Don't worry yourselves anymore about helping us with our work. Just take care of your health!" I was very surprised to hear her say this. It was indeed the first time she had ever said something so considerate of us. She had never said anything like this before! And later it happened again—I said to my sons and their wives, "Your children are going to start middle school, so I'm going to buy each of them a bicycle." So I bought a bicycle for my elder son's child, but then something came up and I had to spend all the money I had left over; I could no longer afford to buy a bicycle for my younger son's child. My daughter-in-law's mother ended up buying him a bicycle. I felt bad and thought: "My daughter-in-law has to be upset with me and she's going to say that I don't follow through on what I say." But to my surprise, not only was she not upset but she comforted me by saying, "Mom, there's no need to be sorry for not buying my child a bicycle. You and dad keep your money from now on and spend it on yourselves. Don't worry about us!" I was really surprised by these two events. Ever since my daughter-in-law had begun believing in Almighty God, she no longer wrangled with me over things, but instead showed care and consideration for us—she really had changed. And my husband always used to lose his temper with me at the drop of a hat—the slightest thing would set him off. But now he always had a smile when he spoke to me, and even sometimes when I was angry at him, he would endure it patiently and would say calmly to me, "We believe in the same God. Our fleshly relationship is that of husband and wife, but spiritually speaking we are brother and sister. We should love each other, be understanding and forgiving of each other, and live by God's word. Don't you think so? I used to have a bad temper and would get angry really easily, and this was the result of my satanic corrupt disposition. I was too arrogant and conceited and lacked proper humanity. Now, I have read a lot of Almighty God's words, and I have come to understand that God's work of the last days is to save mankind by expressing His words. In seeking to attain God's salvation, people need to put God's words into practice in real life, and handle every matter in accordance with the principles of the truth. I have to forsake my flesh, practice in accordance with God's words, and live out proper humanity." Looking at my husband, my son and his wife, I kept pondering in my heart: "They only accepted Almighty God's work of the last days two short years ago, so how have they changed so much? I can't help but be convinced by this. I've believed in the Lord for so many years now, and I read the Bible and pray every single day, so why haven't I changed at all in all this time? When something happens to me, why do I always sink into sin that I can't extricate myself from? Only God

has the power to change people. Could it be that the Almighty God they believe in is the Lord Jesus returned? If this really is true and I keep refusing to accept it, won't the Lord abandon me? Wouldn't I be a fool to have such great salvation laid out before me but fail to attain it?" Thinking this, I couldn't help but feel some anxiety. I wanted to seek and investigate it, but I was embarrassed to talk to my family about it.

One day when my husband was out, I secretly took out the book he was always reading. The moment I looked at the cover, the six large words "The Word Appears in The Flesh" written in glittering gold leaped out at me, and I thought: "What mysteries does this book contain exactly? It can change people so much—I have to read it carefully." Gingerly, I opened the book and saw these words written there: **"This incarnation is God's second incarnation, which follows upon Jesus' work. Of course, this incarnation does not occur independently; it is the third stage of work after the Age of Law and the Age of Grace. Every time God initiates a new stage of work, there must always be a new beginning and it must always bring a new age. So too are there corresponding changes in the disposition of God, in the manner of His working, in the location of His work, and in His name. No wonder, then, that it is difficult for man to accept the work of God in the new age. But regardless of how He is opposed by man, God is always doing His work, and is always leading the whole of mankind forward. When Jesus came into the world of man, He ushered in the Age of Grace and ended the Age of Law. During the last days, God once more became flesh, and with this incarnation He ended the Age of Grace and ushered in the Age of Kingdom. All those who are able to accept the second incarnation of God will be led into the Age of Kingdom, and will moreover become able to personally accept the guidance of God"** (Preface to The Word Appears in the Flesh). After reading this, I pondered: If God's second incarnation brought the work of the Age of Grace to an end, could it be that God is no longer working in churches from the Age of Grace? Have we now entered the Age of Kingdom? It says here: **"All those who are able to accept the second incarnation of God will be led into the Age of Kingdom, and will moreover become able to personally accept the guidance of God."** Since my husband, my son and his wife accepted Almighty God's work, they have really changed a lot. Could it be possible that the Almighty God they believe in truly is the Lord Jesus returned? Are they really following God's footsteps and accepting God's personal guidance? Otherwise, how could they understand so many truths and how could they have

changed so much? This must be the result of the work of the Holy Spirit—this isn't something they could achieve on their own, without the work of the Holy Spirit. Just as this thought occurred to me I suddenly saw that my husband was coming home. I hurriedly put the book back where it had been, and thought: He mustn't know that I've been reading his book, or he'll laugh at me.

The next day when my husband went out to attend a gathering, and I once again took out that book and began to read. I read this passage: **“Though Jesus did much work among man, He only completed the redemption of all mankind and became man's sin offering; He did not rid man of his corrupt disposition. Fully saving man from the influence of Satan not only required Jesus to become the sin offering and bear the sins of man, but it also required God to do even greater work to rid man completely of his satanically corrupted disposition. And so, now that man has been forgiven of his sins, God has returned to the flesh to lead man into the new age, and begun the work of chastisement and judgment. This work has brought man into a higher realm. All those who submit under His dominion shall enjoy higher truth and receive greater blessings. They shall truly live in the light, and they shall gain the truth, the way, and the life”** (Preface to The Word Appears in the Flesh). I really mulled over this passage. The Lord Jesus redeemed all of mankind by being crucified, but He did not eliminate man's corrupt dispositions. A sinful nature remains within man—this is absolutely true. As for those of us who believe in the Lord, we often fail to uphold the Lord's teachings; and we lie and cheat, and every day we sin and then confess, constantly mired in sin and helpless to free ourselves from the bonds of sin. This is an undeniable fact. Just then these words of God in the Bible came to mind: **“[Y]ou shall therefore be holy, for I am holy”** (Leviticus 11:45). God asks that we achieve holiness, and yet we often sin and displease the Lord—how is that holy? God is holy, and His kingdom cannot be tarnished. So how could we, who sin so often, enter the kingdom of heaven? This thought left me a bit frustrated, and I reread this passage: **“Fully saving man from the influence of Satan not only required Jesus to become the sin offering and bear the sins of man, but it also required God to do even greater work to rid man completely of his satanically corrupted disposition.”** Could it be that Almighty God's work of the last days is an even greater work performed by the returned Lord Jesus? Is it only through accepting and experiencing the judgment of Almighty God that we can rid ourselves of sin, and be purified and transformed? Is it possible that the

changes wrought in my husband and my daughter-in-law have come from their experiences of Almighty God's work of chastisement and judgment? My husband, my son and his wife had believed in God for such a short time and yet had come to understand some truths, plus they could articulate their understanding of their own corrupt dispositions, seek God's will when things happened to them, and could find a path of practice. Whereas I, on the other hand, had believed in the Lord for many years, and yet if someone had asked me what exactly faith in God was or what exactly God's will was, to be honest, I would have been tongue-tied, much less able to talk about any changes in my disposition. Thinking of myself compared to them, I felt truly ashamed! It looked to me that I had to investigate Almighty God's work of the last days in earnest.

From then on, every day I secretly read the book *The Word Appears in the Flesh* behind my husband's back, and the more I read it, the brighter I felt within my heart and the more I enjoyed reading it. Sometimes I didn't even want to attend service at my church, but just stayed home reading this book. Once, I read these words of Almighty God: **"I will surely illuminate and enlighten all those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and who search with sincerity. I will show to you all the mysteries of the spiritual world and show you the way forward, cause you to cast off your old corrupt dispositions as soon as possible, so that you may achieve life maturity and be of use to Me, and that the work of the gospel may soon proceed without hindrance. Only then will My will be satisfied, only then will God's six-thousand-year management plan be accomplished as soon as possible. God will gain the kingdom and will come down to earth, and together we will enter into glory!"** ("Chapter 8" of *Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh*). I then couldn't help but think of these words from the Lord Jesus: **"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled"** (Matthew 5:6). The more I read, the more I felt that the words of Almighty God and the words of the Lord Jesus shared a single source. The words from both of Them possess authority and power, and so it seemed highly likely to me that Almighty God was indeed the Lord Jesus returned! At this thought, I was stunned: I knew that if this was true, I had to hurry to accept Almighty God's work of the last days, for if I kept refusing to accept it, I would be really left behind by God's work! But how could I tell my family? They had shared the gospel with me quite a lot in the past, but I'd always refused to accept it. If I said now that I was willing to accept Almighty God's work of the last days, what would they

think of me? Just as I was wavering in indecision, God opened a way for me.

One day, my daughter-in-law and another sister came to share the gospel with me again. I knew then that this was a God-given opportunity, so I told them honestly: “Actually, I’ve been reading a lot of Almighty God’s words in secret and I feel that these words come from God. There is simply no way any human being could utter words that carry such authority and power.” My daughter-in-law was amazed to hear me say this, and she looked at the other sister and laughed with joy. I went on: “But there is something I still don’t quite understand. The Lord Jesus prophesied ‘**And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory**’ (Luke 21:27). We believers all long for the return of the Lord Jesus, for Him to come down amongst us on a white cloud. But you say that the Lord has already returned, that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned. So why haven’t we seen the Lord come on a white cloud? Please fellowship with me on this.”

The sister responded earnestly, “Thanks be to God! As we all know, there are many verses in the Bible that prophesy the Lord’s return. But if we look carefully, we will see that the Lord’s return is prophesied in two different ways: One is that the Lord will come openly on a cloud and everyone will see Him, like in Luke 21:27 that says ‘**And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.**’ The other is that the Lord will come in secret, like a thief, and no one will know, as in Matthew 24:36: ‘**But of that day and hour knows no man, not the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but My Father only.**’ We can see that the Lord’s coming will happen in two stages: First, He will come in secret, and after He has performed one stage of His work, then His coming will be made known. What you’re talking about is the prophecy of the Lord coming openly, whereas we are currently in the stage of the prophecy of His secret coming being fulfilled. This is the stage in which God becomes flesh to perform His work and save mankind. Once God has finished working in the flesh, He will then come openly so that all may see Him....”

Hearing this fellowship illuminated my heart, and I thought: “As it turns out, it is prophesied in the Bible that the Lord will come in two different ways. First, He will come in secret, and afterward He will come openly—this truly is a mystery! I’ve been reading the Bible all these years, how is that I never discovered this? But now that I think about it, I’m sure this is the case!”

My daughter-in-law said to me, “Mom, the time that Almighty God performs His work in the flesh to judge and purify man with words is the stage in which God comes in secret, and

it is when God exposes people and separates us according to our kind. Let's read the words of Almighty God to better understand this aspect of the truth." She then read: **"Many people may not care what I say, but I still want to tell every so-called saint who follows Jesus that, when you see Jesus descend from the heaven upon a white cloud with your own eyes, this will be the public appearance of the Sun of righteousness. Perhaps that will be a time of great excitement for you, yet you should know that the time when you witness Jesus descend from the heaven is also the time when you go down to hell to be punished. It will herald the end of God's management plan, and will be when God rewards the good and punishes the wicked. For the judgment of God will have ended before man sees signs, when there is only the expression of truth. Those who accept the truth and do not seek signs, and thus have been purified, shall have returned before the throne of God and entered the Creator's embrace. Only those who persist in the belief that 'The Jesus who does not ride upon a white cloud is a false Christ' shall be subjected to everlasting punishment, for they only believe in the Jesus who exhibits signs, but do not acknowledge the Jesus who proclaims severe judgment and releases the true way of life. And so it can only be that Jesus deals with them when He openly returns upon a white cloud. They are too stubborn, too confident in themselves, too arrogant. How could such degenerates be rewarded by Jesus? The return of Jesus is a great salvation for those who are capable of accepting the truth, but for those who are unable to accept the truth it is a sign of condemnation"** ("By the Time You Behold the Spiritual Body of Jesus, God Will Have Made Heaven and Earth Anew" in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

The sister continued her fellowship. "From God's words, we can see that while Almighty God is performing His work in secret, He only does the work of judging and chastising people with words. That is to say, He expresses all truths to provide us with what we need in life, and all who accept God's work of the last days, who go through the chastisement and judgment of God's words, who come to understand the truth and know God, and whose life dispositions are changed, are the overcomers who will be made by God prior to the disasters. Once these overcomers have been made, God's great work will be successfully completed, and the work He performs in secret will also come to an end. It is after that that God will come with clouds and appear openly to all nations and peoples. Some people cling blindly to their own notions, waiting only for the Lord Jesus to come with clouds, yet they

refuse to accept any of the truths expressed by God while He performs His work in secret. These are all people who rebel against God and defy Him, and if they cannot turn back to God and accept His salvation of the last days, then they will be wailing and gnashing their teeth in the midst of the great disasters. It's prophesied in Revelation 1:7, '**Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.**' Think about it: When the Lord comes with the clouds, everyone will see Him, and what else would they do other than welcome His coming with great joy? So then why would all peoples wail? It's because that, when God comes openly, they will see that the Almighty God whom they have defied is indeed the Lord Jesus returned, so how could they not then beat their breasts, wail and gnash their teeth?"

I kept nodding my head as I listened to the sister's fellowship, and I said, "Ah, I never understood this verse before. I asked the pastor in my church, but he didn't explain it clearly. It turns out that this verse is referring to all those who refuse to accept Almighty God's salvation in the last days, to all those who defy Him." At that moment, I couldn't help but think of how time after time my family had shared the gospel with me, and yet I had resisted and refused to accept it—I felt very distressed. Remorsefully, I said to the sister, "If I hadn't read Almighty God's words, if Almighty God's words hadn't opened the door to my heart and allowed me to have a heart of seeking, I fear I still wouldn't be listening to your fellowships, but would still be obsessed with waiting for the Lord Jesus to come on a white cloud and appear openly to people. I really am so ignorant and foolish! Only now do I understand that the stage of God's secret work is indeed a wonderful opportunity for us to accept the judgment and chastisement of God's words, and to cast off our corrupt dispositions so that we may attain full salvation! When God comes on a cloud and appears openly to man, His work of salvation will have already ended, and He will begin to reward the good and punish the wicked. And when that happens, even if I am utterly gutted with regret, it will be too late. I give thanks to God for not abandoning me and for giving me this chance at salvation. I wish to accept Almighty God's work of the last days!"

I later took the initiative and asked to join The Church of Almighty God, and like my husband, son and daughter-in-law, I read God's words and fellowship on the truth every day, and I am experiencing the judgment, chastisement, purification and salvation of God's words. In the big family of The Church of Almighty God, I live a true life of the church, and my spirit

is filled with peace and joy. I truly feel how great God's love for me is; it's just that I was so numb and I kept God waiting so long. I thank God for meticulously arranging all sorts of people, events and things to lead and guide me step by step back into God's family—I thank God for bringing me a different kind of salvation!

43. I Have Welcomed the Lord's Return

By Chuanyang, United States

The winter of 2010 in the United States left me feeling very cold. Besides the bitter cold of the wind and snow, what was even worse was that my heart felt as though it had been invaded by some kind of "cold wave." For those of us in the interior decorating business, winter is the hardest time of the year, as once winter starts there is very little work. We even face losing our jobs. This year was my first year in the United States, I was fresh off the boat, and everything felt unfamiliar to me. Neither renting an apartment nor finding a job was easy—and my days were full of hardships. It got so bad that I had to borrow money to pay the rent on my apartment. Faced with this predicament, I became melancholy, and I felt like my life was really hard to bear. At night I faced the ice-cold wall, feeling so sad that all I wanted to do was cry. One day, as I walked around listlessly in my sadness and anxiety, someone who was spreading the gospel of the Lord Jesus handed out a card to me, and said, "The Lord Jesus loves you. Brother, come to our church and listen to the Lord's gospel!" I thought to myself: "I guess there's nothing I have to do right now, so there's no harm in me going to listen to this. I might as well, it's something to do." So just like that, I stepped into the church. I listened to the pastor read aloud something the Lord Jesus had said: "**For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life**" (John 3:16). When I heard this, I felt deeply moved by the Lord's love. I cannot clearly explain how I felt, but I could feel that the Lord's love was real, and that it surpassed any love that could be found in the world. My grief-laden heart felt greatly consoled. As a result, I decided to earnestly place my trust in the Lord Jesus. Afterward, I started enthusiastically participating in meetings every Sunday, and because of my enthusiastic pursuit I quickly became a co-worker in the church.

After serving in the church for two years, I was feeling less and less like the Lord was

with me. I didn't feel enlightened when reading the Bible, I didn't feel moved when I prayed, and I didn't feel like I was getting anything out of attending meetings. In addition, I saw how everyone in the church was living a life whereby they sinned in the day only to confess at night, and how everyone, whether pastors, elders or ordinary believers, was bound by sin, engaging in jealous disputes, colluding with each other to form factions, fighting over fame and profit, and coveting worldly things. All kinds of unlawful deeds were being committed more and more. I also saw that people in society at large were becoming more depraved with each passing day, more and more evil and selfish, and that disasters were occurring all over the world—earthquakes, famines and epidemics were constantly breaking out. All kinds of signs made it clear that the last days had come, and that the Lord Jesus would soon return. The pastors and elders often preached about these Bible verses to us: **“Then if any man shall say to you, See, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect”** (Matthew 24:23–24). In their sermons, they recklessly claimed that false Christs would appear in the last days, and they told us that by all means we must not listen to strangers preach. They even said that, besides those in our church, the believers in other denominations were all wrong, and that we must take care to be discerning about other people so as not to allow ourselves to be deceived and end up following the wrong path. Since I often heard the pastors preach in this way, I told myself: “I must not deviate from the path in this crucial moment of the Lord's imminent arrival, and I must be sure to keep my faith in the Lord.”

One day in mid-September 2016, I received an unexpected phone call from Sister Zhu. Sister Zhu was a long-time believer and an enthusiastic seeker in our church, and we had always been on good terms, so I was very happy to get a phone call from her. I listened as Sister Zhu spoke to me excitedly, “Brother, I have some good news to tell you: The Lord Jesus has returned as Almighty God! This time God has incarnated to carry out the work of judging, cleansing and saving man!” I was somewhat surprised to hear these words, and I thought to myself: “Has Sister Zhu not kept the way of the Lord? Has she joined another denomination? How could she be so foolish? The pastors and elders have repeatedly emphasized that false Christs will emerge in the last days, so why hasn't she listened to them? If we go astray in our faith at this crucial moment when the Lord is soon to come, then won't we have practiced our faith in vain all these years?” As I thought this, I nervously asked

Sister Zhu, “Sister, in the Bible it says that in the last days there will be false—” but without waiting for me to finish speaking, Sister Zhu cut in. “Brother, the Lord Jesus warned us to ‘**Judge not,**’ and we must not pass judgment as we please, so as not to be condemned by God.” The sister’s warning made me think of these words of the Lord: “**Judge not, and you shall not be judged: condemn not, and you shall not be condemned**” (Luke 6:37). I didn’t dare say anything more. However, concerning such an important event as the return of the Lord, Sister Zhu and I each had our own opinions, and we both wanted to persuade the other. We therefore took turns trying to make our points, but in the end neither of us could persuade the other.

For over a month after this, Sister Zhu gave me repeated phone calls to preach the gospel of the kingdom of Almighty God to me, but I always refused to accept it, and kept urging her to come back to our church and continue believing in the Lord. As time went on, I saw that she was very firm in her belief in Almighty God and that she would not waver in the least in her faith, so I had to let it go, and stopped trying to persuade her. I said, “From now on, I’ll still believe in my Lord Jesus and you can believe in your Almighty God, and we won’t interfere with each other’s faith!” After that, whenever Sister Zhu called me to bear testimony to God’s work of the last days, I would look for an excuse to avoid her. I kept on refusing to accept God’s work of the last days, but she never gave up trying to spread the gospel to me.

One morning in November shortly after 5 a.m., before daylight had even broken, someone rang the doorbell at my home. I opened the door and saw Sister Zhu, and with her were a brother and a sister. When I saw Sister Zhu, I felt quite defensive. I thought to myself: “Haven’t I been clear with you? Why would you still travel such a long way to come to my home? Regardless of what you say I’m not going to believe in Almighty God.” Heedless of all the years we’d known each other as members of the same church, I said some unpleasant words to them and refused to let them in. When Sister Zhu saw how determined I was, a downcast look showed on her face and in a voice choked with emotion she said to me, “Brother, the reason I have come to spread the kingdom gospel to you is because I have been moved by the Holy Spirit. If it weren’t for God’s love, I wouldn’t have been able to swallow my pride and keep trying to spread the gospel to you time and again. Brother, the Lord Jesus really has returned. Right now, the Holy Spirit is working on those who have accepted God’s new work. If it weren’t for the work of the Holy Spirit, how could anyone have

this much faith and willpower to come to preach the gospel to you? You too have seen the current situation of our church. Our brothers and sisters all live bound by sin and they lack the strength to break free. God has come this time to express His words to judge man and to carry out the work of ridding us of sin and cleansing us. If we miss God's work of the last days, we will not have another opportunity to attain God's salvation." The sister's sincere words moved me and I relented a little. In particular, when she was talking about the situation in our church, all the things I'd seen happen in churches suddenly began to flash through my mind: In the first church I served in, the pastors said one thing and did another, and whoever contributed a lot of money was welcomed by the pastors with smiling faces and given lots of attention. Anyone who didn't contribute very much money, however, was ignored and looked down upon by the pastors. I really couldn't bear to see this happen, so I joined another church. In this church I witnessed the co-workers excluding one another, getting into jealous disputes, and colluding with each other to form different factions, and they were no different from people in the secular world. This disappointed me greatly. At first, I wanted to move to yet another church, but a brother told me that he had already gone through many churches, and that no matter where he went he always found the same desolation and darkness.... I also thought of the various behaviors I myself exhibited while living in sin, which made me begin to waver in my heart. I thought: "Could it be that the Lord Jesus truly has returned in the flesh to carry out the work of eradicating sin?" Just then, Sister Zhu went on, saying, "As for whether or not Almighty God is the returned Lord, all you need to do is read the word of Almighty God, and then you'll know. At the time that the Lord Jesus came to carry out His work, His disciples followed Him because they recognized through His words and His work that He was the Messiah who was foretold. Today, in order to determine whether or not Almighty God is the appearance of the Lord Jesus who has come to carry out His work, we must also do so by looking at the work and the words of Almighty God. If, after you read Almighty God's words, you still believe that He isn't the returned Lord, then I will not try to force you to believe, and I will stop preaching the gospel to you, because God has never forced anyone to accept His gospel."

After Sister Zhu said this, I hesitated for a moment and thought to myself: "I might as well read them and see exactly what truths are spoken in the words of Almighty God that have given Sister Zhu such a staunch belief in Almighty God." Thereupon, I opened the door and let Sister Zhu and the rest of them into my home. Sister Zhu introduced the others, and

they were Sister Zhang Qing and Brother Liu Kaiming from The Church of Almighty God. Sister Zhu said, “Brother Chuanyang, it has been several months since I accepted Almighty God’s work of the last days. I went to The Church of Almighty God to check it out for myself, and I have participated in their church life. Through personal experiences and through earnest investigation, I have seen that The Church of Almighty God really is a church that has the work of the Holy Spirit. It is a genuine church, and it absolutely arose from God. You and I have been members of the church together for years, and as a co-worker in the church, you ought to know better than I about what’s going on within it now. The Holy Spirit stopped working in our church long ago, and this is something everyone knows. The pastors cannot preach sermons that supply us with life. They only preach about how to attack or to be on guard against other denominations, telling us that we must keep the Lord’s name and that we will be saved so long as we don’t leave our church. But really there is no basis in the word of the Lord for them to act this way. They only do so in order to protect their positions and keep their livelihoods, and they give no thought to our lives. If they truly felt responsible for our lives then they should take the initiative and lead us in search of a church where the Holy Spirit is at work, rather than have us remain obstinately in a religion in which the Holy Spirit stopped working long ago, awaiting our deaths by starvation or from being trapped in a church without the Holy Spirit’s work.” After hearing this I thought to myself: “Sister Zhu really is describing what’s going on. The church today really does not have the work of the Holy Spirit, everything the pastors and elders do really is not done out of consideration for the lives of us believers, and as I’ve stuck with this church over the years I’ve felt more and more like the Lord is not with us. My spirit has long felt parched and far from the light, as though it has come to a dead-end.” Hearing her speak in this reasonable and well-grounded way, I no longer felt opposed to their visit.

Right then, the brother who had come with her—Brother Liu—said, “Brother, the reason the religious world is this desolate is because God has come to carry out new work and the work of the Holy Spirit has moved on, but people have not kept up with the new work that God is doing. An even bigger reason is that the pastors and elders have not obeyed the Lord’s commandments or put the Lord’s words into practice, but instead have led believers to follow the evil trends of the world, and have even resisted and condemned the new work of God. It’s just like when the Lord Jesus came to carry out His work, the temple had been turned into a place where cattle, sheep and doves were sold and money was exchanged.

Priests violated laws and offered animals with blemishes as sacrifices to deceive God, the Pharisees coveted wealth and enjoyed the spoils of their position, and other such sins were committed. Even those who served God lived in sin, without the least bit of reverence for God in their hearts. This was enough to show that the Holy Spirit no longer worked in the temple, that the work of the Holy Spirit had moved on, and that God's work in the Age of Law had come to an end. The Lord Jesus had come to carry out the work of redemption upon the foundation of the work of the Age of Law, and the Holy Spirit no longer worked in those who kept the name of Jehovah God and clung obstinately to the laws. Instead, the work of the Holy Spirit shifted to those who accepted the new work of the Lord Jesus. Since the presence of God was no longer in the temple, it became more and more desolate, until in the end it became a den of thieves. The Lord Jesus' disciples, on the other hand, received the Lord's salvation, they put into practice the Lord's teachings, they followed the Lord with faith and strength, they forsook their homes and abandoned their jobs in order to bear witness to and spread the Lord's gospel, fearing no persecution or adversity. Wasn't all of this the effect achieved in them by the work of the Holy Spirit? In the same way, today the return of the Lord signifies that the old age has come to an end and a new age has begun. The Holy Spirit long ago stopped working in the churches of the Age of Grace; rather, He has begun to work on those who have accepted God's new work, which fulfills these prophecies in the Bible: **'And also I have withheld the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain on one city, and caused it not to rain on another city: one piece was rained on, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered'** (Amos 4:7). **'Behold, the days come ... that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah'** (Amos 8:11). Almighty God also says: **'God will accomplish this fact: He will make all people throughout the universe come before Him and worship the God on earth, and His work in other places will cease, and people will be forced to seek the true way. It will be like Joseph: Everyone came to him for food, and bowed down to him, for he had things to eat. In order to avoid famine, people will be forced to seek the true way. The entire religious community will suffer severe famine, and only the God of today is the wellspring of living water, possessed of the ever-flowing wellspring provided for the enjoyment of man, and people will come and depend on Him'** ("The Millennial Kingdom Has Arrived" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). **'God has made this group of**

people the sole focus of His work throughout all the universe. He has sacrificed all His heart's blood for you; He has reclaimed and given to you all the work of the Spirit throughout the universe. That is why I say you are the fortunate ones. Moreover, He has shifted His glory from Israel, His chosen people, onto you, and He shall make the purpose of His plan fully manifest through this group. Therefore, you are the ones who will receive the inheritance of God, and even more than this, you are the heirs to God's glory' ("Is the Work of God As Simple As Man Imagines?" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). 'Because those in religion are incapable of accepting God's new work, and only hold to the old work of the past, thus God has forsaken these people, and does His new work on the people who accept this new work. These are people who cooperate in His new work, and only in this way can His management be accomplished' ("God's Work and Man's Practice" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). From these words of God, we can see that the Holy Spirit no longer works in the churches of the Age of Grace, so no matter how hard people try or what kind of human methods they use to revive the churches, it is of no use. The Catholic Church and the Protestant denominations are all the same; the spirits of their believers are parched and starved, their faith and their love gradually grow cold, they are unable to keep the Lord's teachings, and many of them follow the evil trends of the world, pursuing wealth and coveting worldly things. The churches have become places of desolation. On the other hand, the brothers and sisters in The Church of Almighty God are those who have left different denominations and who come from different professions to accept God's work of the last days. They are the wise virgins who, upon hearing the voice of God, have returned before His throne. They are receiving the supply of the living water of life that flows out from the throne of God, they are being shepherded and led by God Himself, and they are spreading and bearing witness to the gospel of the kingdom of God with one accord. They endure being ridiculed and slandered by the world, they endure the abuse and condemnation from the leaders of various denominations, and are even beaten, and they endure being arrested, having their homes searched, their possessions confiscated, and being cruelly tortured and imprisoned and more by the CCP government. Still, they have faith, they have strength, they have love, and they are tenacious and unyielding as they follow Almighty God and bear witness to God's work of the last days. It isn't by their own strength that they are able to do so. These are all effects achieved through the work of the Holy Spirit! In addition, God's will is to be found in

His sending of famine into the religious world. His purpose in doing so is to compel those who truly believe in God and who thirst for the truth to break away from religion, to rid themselves of the deception and control of religious antichrists, and to walk away from religion. In doing so, they can then seek God's footsteps and God's appearance, accept God's work of judgment in the last days, and be cleansed and perfected by God. At the same time, those nonbelievers who remain in religion, who seek to eat their fill of bread and who do not believe in God with a true heart, but who instead idolize and follow people, shall be exposed and eliminated. In this way, all people will be separated according to their kinds. Is this not the wisdom and almightiness of God?"

After listening to God's words and this brother's fellowship, I felt it all sounded very practical, and that it completely accorded with how things really were. I felt like I had awoken from a dream, and I understood the source of the desolation of the various churches. In this moment, I finally saw how insensitive I had been. Although I had seen that, from the pastors and elders to the ordinary believers, all had been bound by sin, and that the church was brimming with lawlessness and iniquity, I still had not sought God's will, nor had I sought the work of the Holy Spirit. I also had not paid any attention to listening to God's voice and, as a result, I had been eliminated by the work of the Holy Spirit without even being aware of it. I realized that I needed to carefully read the word of Almighty God. On that day, as Sister Zhu and her companions were leaving, they arranged a time to come back and fellowship with me again, and they also left me with a copy of *The Scroll Opened by the Lamb*, which I was very happy to receive.

Later, when I read *The Scroll Opened by the Lamb*, a book of Almighty God's word, I saw that the word of Almighty God reveals many mysteries, such as the three stages of work carried out by God to save mankind, the work of His judgment in the last days, the beauty of His kingdom, and so on, which gave me a deeper understanding of God's work. My parched spirit felt quenched, and the more I read this book the more I loved it. I had used to get up at 5:30 a.m., but after I received my copy of *The Scroll Opened by the Lamb*, I started getting up at 4:30 a.m. to read the word of Almighty God and ponder over His words, and my spirit felt such contentment. One morning, as I was reading the chapter "Are You a True Believer in God?" I felt a tremendous stirring in my heart. Almighty God is the God who scrutinizes people's innermost hearts, and He has exposed our corrupt nature that we could never know by ourselves, thus I became able to see the truth of my corruption by Satan.

This was especially true when I read these words of Almighty God: **“In any case, I say that all those who do not value the truth are nonbelievers and traitors to the truth. Such men shall never receive the approval of Christ. ... You should understand that God does not belong to the world nor any one person, but to all those who truly believe in Him, all those who worship Him, and all those who are devoted and faithful to Him.”** While I contemplated these words, I kept asking myself: Am I someone who truly believes in God? Do I esteem the truth? What have I esteemed over these past years of my belief in the Lord? I thought about how I was the same as the majority of the brothers and sisters: Externally, I read the Bible and attended meetings, but I paid no attention to experiencing or practicing the word of the Lord; rather, I esteemed the sermons preached by pastors and the literal meaning of the scriptures in the Bible. I put unquestioning faith in the biblical knowledge and theological doctrines preached by the pastors. I never thought about whether or not what they preached actually had any truth in it, or whether or not it conformed to the will of the Lord, and I certainly never used the Lord’s words to examine and measure what they were saying. We believers just believed whatever they preached. Thinking about it now, I realized how foolish and ignorant I’d been to have blindly idolized people! I thought back over the sermons given by the pastors and elders. They either gave sermons on giving offerings or about guarding against other denominations and sealing off the church, or they would just preach about the same old things that they’d been preaching about for years. There was no new illumination, no new enlightenment, they had absolutely nothing to provide us with, they couldn’t solve the problem of the barrenness in our spirits, and they certainly couldn’t solve the desolation in the church. This led to the brothers and sisters just going through the motions when they participated in meetings. During meetings some would chat, some would doze off, and some would play games on their phones. I had lived in this dark and desolate church, but I had not known to seek God’s will, nor had I known to seek the work of the Holy Spirit. Apparently, I was not someone who sought the truth or who truly believed in God at all. Almighty God says: **“[A]ll those who do not value the truth are nonbelievers.”** **“God does not belong to the world nor any one person, but to all those who truly believe in Him, all those who worship Him.”** These words were so real, and they made me suddenly think about the Lord Jesus’ words: **“I am the way, the truth, and the life”** (John 14:6). I understood then that God is the truth, that God carries out His work in order to give man the truth, the way and the life, and that the people who truly believe in

God pay attention to seeking the truth and obtaining the truth. As a believer in God, I had not been paying attention to seeking the truth, so had I not been all muddled up in my faith? If this was the way I believed in God, then how could I ever have received God's approval? The words of Almighty God benefited me so greatly! The more I read the word of Almighty God, the more I felt that I was lacking in so many ways. And so, except for when I had to work, I spent all of my spare time reading the word of Almighty God. From the bottom of my heart I felt sure that this was the true way. But I still felt perplexed by these words spoken by the Lord Jesus: **"Then if any man shall say to you, See, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect"** (Matthew 24:23–24). I didn't know what the inner meaning to these words was, so I decided to seek about it when Sister Zhu and the others came again.

Sister Zhu and the other brother and sister came by my house at the time we had arranged, and I said to Sister Zhang, "These past few days I've been reading a lot from the word of Almighty God, and I feel that every word spoken by Almighty God is the truth, and that it is really what I need. Before, Sister Zhu tried again and again to invite me to look into the work of Almighty God, but because my pastors had preached about how false Christs would appear in the last days to deceive people, I refused to look into the true way, and now I truly regret it. However, I still feel confused about this, so I would like to seek with you. The Lord Jesus said: **'Then if any man shall say to you, See, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect'** (Matthew 24:23–24). How do you all understand these words?"

Sister Zhang said, "Thanks be to God, and may He lead us in this fellowship. As for the question that you have raised, first we must understand what the purpose was for the Lord Jesus saying these words, and what He meant when He said them. The Lord Jesus told us that, when He returned, He would become flesh again as Christ, as the Son of man, and in this passage the Lord said that false Christs would also appear, showing signs and wonders to deceive people. That is to say, the next time that God appears in the flesh, these false Christs will also appear. From this, we can see that the Lord said these words in order to tell us that we must develop discernment to prevent us from being deceived by these false Christs. He did not say these words so that we would refuse to listen to anyone who spreads

the good news of the Lord's arrival and always close our doors to them. It would be a mistake to act like this, and it would be a total misunderstanding of the Lord's intention. The Lord Jesus prophesied: **'And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him'** (Matthew 25:6). **'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'** (Revelation 3:20). **'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me'** (John 10:27). The Lord's words make it very clear that when the Lord returns, He will use His voice to call God's sheep, and through His voice God's sheep will recognize Him and return to Him. That is to say, whether or not we are able to welcome the Lord's return crucially depends on whether or not we are able to recognize God's voice. If we do not make an effort to listen to God's voice, and constantly refuse those who spread the gospel of the Lord's return, then wouldn't we be prone to shutting the door on the Lord and locking Him out? From the words of the Lord we see that the distinguishing characteristic of false Christs is the ability to work signs and perform miracles, emulating the work that the Lord Jesus has performed in the past and working some signs and wonders, like healing the sick and casting out demons, in order to deceive man. However, false Christs are the embodiment of evil spirits, so regardless of what kind of signs they work, they cannot express any truth. This is incontrovertible. The words of Almighty God make the expressions and substance of false Christs abundantly clear. Let us look at several passages from the word of Almighty God and you will understand. Almighty God says: **'If, during the last days, a "God" the same as Jesus appeared, one who healed the sick, cast out demons, and was crucified for man, that "God," though identical to the description of God in the Bible and easy for man to accept, would not, in its essence, be the flesh worn by the Spirit of God, but by an evil spirit. For it is the principle of God's work never to repeat what He has already completed. And so, the work of God's second incarnation is different from the work of the first'** ("The Essence of the Flesh Inhabited by God" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **'If, during the present day, there is to emerge a person who is able to display signs and wonders, cast out demons, heal the sick, and perform many miracles, and if this person claims that they are Jesus who has come, then this would be the counterfeit of evil spirits, and their imitation of Jesus. Remember this! God does not repeat the same work. Jesus' stage of work has already been completed, and God will never again undertake that stage of work. ... If, during the last days, God**

still displayed signs and wonders, and still cast out demons and healed the sick—if He did exactly the same as Jesus—then God would be repeating the same work, and the work of Jesus would have no significance or value. Thus, God carries out one stage of work in every age. Once each stage of His work has been completed, it is soon imitated by evil spirits, and after Satan begins to follow on the heels of God, God changes to a different method. Once God has completed a stage of His work, it is imitated by evil spirits. You must be clear about this' ("Knowing God's Work Today" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Almighty God's words make it very clear that false Christs are all evil spirits posing as Christ. Even though they call themselves God, they do not possess the least bit of truth and certainly cannot carry out God's work, since they do not have the substance of Christ. All they can do is follow on the heels of God to imitate the work that the Lord Jesus has already carried out in order to deceive people. False Christs will never be able to bring the truth or a new path of practice to people. Everyone knows that all the knockoff products in this world are made by copying real products. False Christs are just the same. They heal the sick and cast out demons and perform some simple miracles to deceive people by copying the work carried out by the Lord Jesus, but there's no way false Christs could perform such miracles as bringing the dead back to life and feeding 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish. So, anyone who calls themselves Christ, who says they are the Lord Jesus returned and who displays signs and wonders and heals the sick and casts out demons, these people are without a doubt false Christs deceiving people. However, Christ is the incarnation of God Himself, He is the Spirit of God realized in the flesh, He has normal humanity and complete divinity, and He is absolutely God Himself. Almighty God says: **'God become flesh is called Christ, and so the Christ that can give people the truth is called God. There is nothing excessive about this, for He possesses the substance of God, and possesses God's disposition, and wisdom in His work, that are unattainable by man. Those who call themselves Christ, yet cannot do the work of God, are frauds. Christ is not merely the manifestation of God on earth, but also the particular flesh assumed by God as He carries out and completes His work among man. This flesh cannot be supplanted by just any man, but is a flesh that can adequately bear God's work on earth, and express the disposition of God, and well represent God, and provide man with life. Sooner or later, those who impersonate Christ will all fall, for although they claim to be Christ, they possess none of the**

substance of Christ. And so I say that the authenticity of Christ cannot be defined by man, but is answered and decided by God Himself' ("Only Christ of the Last Days Can Give Man the Way of Eternal Life" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). So, only Christ can carry out God's own work, only Christ can express the truth, and only Christ can express God's disposition and provide for man and shepherd man. Only Christ can carry out the work of redeeming and saving mankind, only He can bring an end to the old age and usher in the new. What's more, God's work is always new and never old, and God never repeats the same work. Therefore, every time Christ comes to carry out work He will always bring new work, expressing God's disposition and what He has and is. When the Lord Jesus came to carry out work, for example, He ended the Age of Law and ushered in the Age of Grace, He delivered the sermons that enabled people to confess their sins and repent, and He taught people to love their enemies, to be humble, to be patient and to forgive others. These were just some of the things the Lord Jesus did. The Lord Jesus revealed to man God's loving and merciful disposition. Similarly, Almighty God has come in the last days, and He has ended the Age of Grace and ushered in the Age of Kingdom. He is carrying out the work of judging man and cleansing man with His words on the foundation of the Lord Jesus' work of redemption, giving us all the truths we need to be cleansed and to attain salvation, showing us the path to rid ourselves of sin and attain salvation, and expressing the righteous, majestic and wrathful disposition of God. Through the work and words of Almighty God, we are entirely able to recognize that Almighty God is God incarnate and that He is God Himself appearing among mankind in the last days."

After listening to God's words and the fellowship given by this sister, I felt like I had awoken from a dream, and I finally understood how to distinguish between the true Christ and false Christs. This made me feel both happy and ashamed, as I saw how pitiful I was to be without the truth. I thought about how I had time and again refused God's work of the last days, and realized that it had been because I'd been afraid of being deceived by false Christs, with the result that I rejected the true Christ like someone not eating for fear of choking. When the Lord returned and knocked on my door, I had refused to listen to the voice of God, time and again shutting the door on the Lord. But God did not give up on saving me, but instead He moved these brothers and sisters to come to my home to spread the gospel. God really had never left me—God's love really is so great! Because I'd believed what my pastors had said, I'd decided that everyone who bore witness for the returned Lord was

preaching a false Christ. I had misunderstood the word of the Lord, and I had rejected, condemned and resisted Almighty God, and I had also believed that the notions I clung to were right—I had been so ridiculous! If I hadn't read the word of Almighty God and listened to the fellowships of these brothers and sisters on the differences between the true Christ and false Christs, then I would have never been able to distinguish between the true Christ and false Christs, and I would have only been deceived by what the pastors and elders said. I would have followed the pastors and elders in their resistance and refusal of God's arrival, and would thereby have lost this extremely rare opportunity to attain God's salvation. As I thought about this, I said to Sister Zhu and the others, "Through reading the word of Almighty God and listening to your fellowships, I now know how to distinguish between the true Christ and false Christs. Now I am convinced that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned, and I am willing to accept the work of Almighty God in the last days."

After I began to participate in the church life, I saw that the brothers and sisters understood many truths, and that I was so lacking compared to them. I thought to myself: "I must have Sister Zhu and the rest of them fellowship with me more on the word of God and help me so that I will more quickly understand the truth." I discussed this with Sister Zhu, asking her if we could turn my home into a meeting place, and she agreed right away. After that, we gathered together every week to read the word of God and fellowship about the truth. I gradually came to have more and more knowledge of the words of God and to understand more and more truths. I could feel from the bottom of my heart that these words were the expressions of the truth. In that moment, I thought about the words the Lord Jesus had said: **"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come"** (John 16:12–13). I felt all the more moved, and I saw that these words of the Lord had all come to pass. The word of Almighty God is **"what the Spirit says to the churches"** (Revelation 2:7). Almighty God is in the process of guiding man to understand and gain entry into all truths. Only by accepting God's work in the last days and only by accepting the truths expressed by God can one be cleansed, attain salvation and become someone who is after God's heart. It was the word of Almighty God that brought me back to the house of God and that brought me before the throne of God. Now, every day I have God's words to provide for me and guide me, and I feel peaceful and joyful, at ease

and filled with light. I wish to do all that I can to pursue the truth and follow Almighty God to the very end!

44. Coming Home

By Muyi, South Korea

“God’s profuse love is gratuitously bestowed upon man, surrounds man; man is naive and innocent, unencumbered and carefree, blissfully living under God’s eye. ... If you are a person with a conscience, with humanity, then you would feel warmth, you would feel cared for and loved, and you would feel happiness” (“How Important God’s Love for Man Is” in Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs). Every time I start to sing this hymn of the word of God, it’s hard to keep control of the emotions stirring inside me. That is because I once shunned God and rebelled against Him. I was like a lost lamb, unable to find the path home, and it was God’s steadfast love that led me back to the house of God. In the following article, I wish to share both with my brothers and sisters in the Lord, as well as with friends who have not yet turned to God, my experience of returning to God’s house.

I lived every day in fear as a child because my mother and father were always fighting. After I graduated from middle school, my mother began to believe in the Lord Jesus at the urging of a neighbor, and I followed her into the church. From that time on, I knew that God is the Lord of all created beings, and that to redeem mankind from sin, the incarnate God Himself was crucified on the cross to become a sin offering for man—God’s love for man is so great! Inspired by the Lord’s love, I resolved to believe in the Lord in earnest and to repay Him for His love, and thus I found direction and purpose in life. After that, I frequently attended gatherings, read the Scriptures, and gave praise to the Lord, and over time I began to feel happy. Especially when I read in the Bible that in the last days the Lord would come again upon a cloud and welcome us into the kingdom of heaven, my heart filled even more with hope. On top of that, the pastor often expounded on this verse of the Scriptures for us at gatherings: “You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). I became even more convinced that the Lord Jesus would descend upon a white cloud to welcome us into our heavenly home!

In 2005, I met a Korean who became my boyfriend and I went with him to Korea. Because of the language barrier, I tried to find a church of Chinese expatriates but I couldn't find one, and so my spirit grew weaker and weaker. Without knowing it, I grew distant from God. We got married, but because the cultural difference was too great we couldn't stay living together, so pretty soon we were divorced. This setback in my marriage was a great shock to me spiritually, and it caused me a great deal of pain. What with being in a foreign land without any friends or family, I felt even more alone. All I could do was pray silently to God and relate the suffering in my heart to Him. I asked God to guide me to a Chinese church so that I might return to the house of God.

A year later I found a Chinese ministry in a Presbyterian church, and I was extremely happy. Finally, I was able once again to give praise to God in church. But what disappointed me was that, whenever we held a gathering, the pastors would just read passages of scriptures to us and expound a little to us about the literal meaning of the words. Their sermons were totally devoid of any light or anything to enjoy. They didn't supply anything at all for our lives, and the gatherings just became nothing more than a formality. During the gatherings, some people would be whispering to each other, some people would be playing games on their cell phones, some would be sleeping, some would only be there looking for girlfriends or boyfriends, and there would even be some people putting their arms around each other. I thought: "The church is a temple, a place to revere God. We come here to attend gatherings but no one has even a shred of a God-fearing heart. God must be so disgusted with what He sees! Wouldn't the Lord abandon a place as sordid as this?" But the pastors and preachers acted like they didn't notice all this going on, and they paid no attention to it at all.

Living in this huge cauldron of evil that is the world, I gradually began to take up dissolute ways, and would often go out drinking with friends in my free time, never behaving anything like a believer in God. However, whenever my heart began to grow distant from the Lord, His words would appear in my mind: "**When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walks through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he said, I will return into my house from where I came out; and when he is come, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goes he, and takes with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first**" (Matthew 12:43–45). The Lord's words restrained and protected me, and

they stopped me from becoming too estranged from God or doing anything that went too far, out of fear that I would aggravate the Lord and cause Him to become disgusted with me. I was afraid to be abandoned by the Lord and to fall into the hands of the unclean spirit.

At Christmas in 2016, to raise spirits in the church, the church got a group of talented brothers and sisters to put on a show. There was a sister whom I had never seen before who sang to us a song in praise of God: **“The scene painted in the Bible ‘God’s command to Adam’ is both touching and heartwarming. Though there is only God and man in it, the intimacy between them is so worthy of envy: 1 God’s profuse love is gratuitously bestowed upon man, surrounds man; man is naive and innocent, unencumbered and carefree, blissfully living under God’s eye; God shows concern for man, while man lives under God’s protection and blessing; every single thing man does and says is closely linked to and inseparable from God. 2 God has had a responsibility toward man since the moment He created him. What is His responsibility? He has to protect man, to look after man. He hopes man can trust and obey His words. This is also God’s first expectation of man. 3 It is with this expectation that God says the following: ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.’ These simple words represent God’s will. They also reveal that God’s heart has already begun to show concern for man. 4 In these few simple words, we see God’s heart. Is there love in God’s heart? Does it have any concern in it? God’s love and concern can not only be appreciated by people, but it can also well and truly be felt. If you are a person with a conscience, with humanity, then you would feel warmth, you would feel cared for and loved, and you would feel happiness. 5 When you feel these things, how will you act toward God? Would you feel attached to God? Would you love and respect God from the bottom of your heart? Would your heart grow closer to God? You can see from this just how important God’s love is to man. But what is even more crucial is man’s appreciation and comprehension of God’s love”** (“How Important God’s Love for Man Is” in Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs).

With each word of the hymn, my heart beat even faster and tears of emotion would not stop pouring from my eyes. I felt I was in this beautiful picture accompanied by God, loved by God and enjoying all the things He bestows upon creation. The air, the light, the water and so on—everything was brimming with God’s love! I was enjoying everything that God

had bestowed upon us but my heart had grown distant from God, and how saddened God must have been by this. I especially felt that the words **“If you are a person with a conscience, with humanity, then you would feel warmth, you would feel cared for and loved, and you would feel happiness”** were God calling out to my heart and spirit. In 2007, when I could no longer continue living together with my husband and had no place to call home, God arranged Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea for me. They provided free food and shelter for me there and found me a lawyer. They took care of the legal proceedings of my divorce for me at no cost. When it was time for me to apply for naturalization, God moved a minister from the Presbyterian church to serve as my sponsor. Normally, Koreans are seldom willing to be a sponsor for someone, especially since I was a foreigner and, moreover, I had only gone to that particular church three or four times. I knew this was all made possible through the hidden help of God. There was also the fact that foreigners applying for naturalization have to have 30 million won in fixed assets, but I didn't even have 3 million. The Immigration Office asked me to provide proof of employment to demonstrate that I was able to provide for myself, and they didn't make it difficult for me at all.... God always produced miracles for me when I was most in need, and it was all a display of His sovereignty! God's love is vast and deep, and yet I was too rebellious. I had long ago forgotten God and broken His heart. This hymn of praise touched my spirit, and I determined to regain my faith and never again engage in debauchery and cause God grief.

On February 19, 2017, my head and eyes began to hurt terribly. I went to the hospital but the treatment I received didn't work. Sister Li, who was in our church, introduced me to one of her friends who knew Chinese traditional medicine and said that the course of treatment would only take one week to be effective. I went along with her to get treated, and that day we met a brother surnamed Jin, who was a friend of the one who knew Chinese medicine. I did not expect to meet a brother in the Lord, and I thought it must have been arranged by God. I got to talking about the Bible with Brother Jin. Brother Jin read to us the parable of the ten virgins from the Bible. He asked me, “Sister, are you looking forward to the Lord's return?” I said, “Of course!” The brother said, “Then how will the Lord return?” I said without hesitation, “The Scriptures say He will descend upon a cloud!” The brother said, “You know what? The Lord has already returned.” I was astonished to hear that, and said, “Mark chapter 13 verse 32 says: **‘But of that day and that hour knows no man, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.’** No one knows when the

Lord will come. You're saying that the Lord has returned, but how could you know?" Brother Jin didn't give me a straight answer but instead found some prophecies in the Bible about the Lord's return. Luke 12:40 says: **"Be you therefore ready also: for the Son of man comes at an hour when you think not."** Luke 17:24–26 says: **"For as the lightning, that lightens out of the one part under heaven, shines to the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day. But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man."** Revelation 3:20 says: **"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."** John 10:27 says: **"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."**

Once he was done reading, Brother Jin said, "The Lord asks us to keep a vigilant watch because no one knows the day on which He will come. But according to what the prophecies say, when the Lord comes again it will be in the form of the Son of man. The Son of man is God become man, which means God incarnating in the flesh. Even though we don't know the exact time the Lord will come, we will know Him by His voice. This is because the sheep of God will hear God's voice, and when they hear it, they will follow Him...." I thought then about my pastor who had said that anyone testifying that the Lord Jesus had returned in the flesh was a faker. I could no longer listen to what Brother Jin was saying, so I sent a text message to the pastor that said, "Someone is telling me that the Lord has returned incarnate. What church do they belong to?" The pastor replied, saying, "They are from Eastern Lightning." He told me to leave right away and not to have any more contact with them. He also wanted me never to read their books and went on to send me some sermons on how to guard against heresy. I thought that whatever the pastor said must be correct, and so I decided not to listen to their fellowships again and to just ignore them.

To my surprise, on the afternoon of the 20th, Brother Jin and his younger sister came to the place where I was receiving treatment and he told me so much about the work of the Lord's return. However, because that morning I had just received news of my mother's passing, as well as having some doubts about what they were preaching, I just couldn't take in anything they said. This went on for three days, and it seemed like Brother Jin had not given up on preaching the gospel to me. But because of my inward turmoil, I told him to leave me alone. I said, "Let it go. If you keep talking to me, then if you don't go, I will!" Brother

Jin saw that I really wasn't listening and had no choice but to leave. I thought Brother Jin would not try to come again, but to my surprise the next day he brought someone named Brother Cheng along with him and continued to preach the gospel to me. I thought to myself: "Why does he keep on like this?" To save face, all I could do was put up with it, but I didn't get into any discussion with them. Although I acted coldly toward them, Brother Cheng kept patiently talking to me. He said, "The Lord has already come incarnate into the world and He is performing the work of judgment and chastisement..." Seeing how patient and loving he was and how he thought it no trouble to preach to me, I thought: "The people in our church are weak. Their faith and love have grown cold. Why is it that the faith and love of people who believe in Eastern Lightning are so great? What power is it that supports them to persevere with their efforts in spreading the gospel to me? If it weren't for the work of the Holy Spirit, they would never be able to do this on their own strength!"

During this time, there was another brother surnamed Yang who was looking into Almighty God's work of the last days like I was. Whereas I always had a careless and absent-minded attitude, Brother Yang was earnest in his investigation of The Church of Almighty God. Brother Yang said that he had rejected the gospel of Almighty God when people had preached it to him before, but that hearing it again today must be an opportunity granted by God, and so he'd become willing to investigate it. Brother Yang saw that I was only interested in listening to the pastor's words and not seeking with an open mind. He found a passage for me, which was Matthew 5:3–6: "**Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ... Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.**" After I'd read the word of the Lord, I wondered: "Why is it that I can't quiet myself in the presence of the Lord and seek the truth? If by some chance the Lord really has returned, and I don't listen to or investigate their preachings, won't I be left behind? I should also be a bit more open-minded, and I must not blindly come to conclusions based on my own imaginings." Just when I had decided to quieten my heart and investigate it sincerely, a preacher from my church gave me a call out of the blue and asked me if I were still with the people from The Church of Almighty God. I said that I was, and the preacher again reminded me to cease contact with them. The preacher's exhortation dispelled the thoughts that I had just had about looking into The Church of Almighty God. I thought, "The pastor and preacher have a much better understanding of the Bible than I do, and they do not acknowledge that the Lord

has returned. I have too little understanding of the Bible and I lack discernment, so I had better just listen to what the pastor and preacher say.” When I hung up the phone, I said to Brother Cheng, “If Brother Yang wants to look into it, then you two can go on with your discussions. I’m not listening to it anymore.” Just like that, I once again abruptly rejected the salvation of God.

I returned to work after a week of treatment. Due to my mother’s passing, my heart was full of sorrow and anguish and I could not stop thinking about her. Every day when I came home from work, I would look at a picture of my mother and talk to her. One day, I suddenly thought: “I’m a believer in the Lord and whenever I experience any difficulty or weakness, I can always tell these things to the Lord.” After that, whenever I encountered hardships I would come into the presence of the Lord and pray, asking the Lord to console me. But no matter how I prayed, I never felt moved within. Sometimes I would fall asleep while praying. I was living in a state of severe anxiety every day at that time, so much so that the slightest sound behind me caused me to feel indescribable fear. In my fear and helplessness, I prayed earnestly to the Lord: “O Lord! My heart is full of darkness and I am trembling with fear. Could I have made a mistake somewhere? O Lord! Over the past few days people have been telling me that You have returned as Almighty God. O Lord! If You really have returned and really are the Almighty God they told me about, I ask You to set up a time and prepare appropriate circumstances for Brother Yang to call me or send me a text message. When they come back, no matter what they say, I will have a heart that accepts Your new work and words obediently and eagerly. If it is not Your work, and if the message they are preaching to me is false and deceptive, then please block their way and not let them come back ever again.”

Amazingly, after I prayed like this, God fulfilled exactly what I had prayed for. Brother Yang actually did call me, and I told him about everything that had been going on the last few days. Brother Yang said that my heart had been darkened because I had rejected God’s work of the last days and had rebelled against Him. He hoped that I would continue to look into God’s work of the last days, and this time I did not reject his suggestion.

Soon afterward, Brother Yang sent me a gospel movie. There was a line of dialogue in this movie that shook me awake: “Since we believe in God we should listen to God, not people.” “That’s right!” I thought. “It’s God that I believe in, and it’s God’s word I should listen to! But during that time when Brother Jin and Brother Cheng were telling me of God’s work

of the last days, I kept asking the pastor about it. I complied with what the pastor and the preacher said and did not want to earnestly investigate the new work of Almighty God or listen to God's word. I had believed in the Lord but had not prayed to or sought from the Lord, and had instead blindly trusted what the pastor and preacher had said. How stupid I was! The Bible says: 'We ought to obey God rather than men' (Acts 5:29). I believed in the Lord but did not obey Him. Instead, I obeyed people, so have I not become someone who believes in and follows men? Isn't this resisting and betraying the Lord? If Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned, and I've rebelled against Him and resisted Him like this, unwilling to accept Almighty God, have I then not been a blind fool? Have I not been shutting the Lord out?" With this in mind, I deeply repented in my heart and tears welled up in my eyes.

I again came into the presence of the Lord and prayed: "Lord Jesus Christ! Someone preached the gospel saying that You have already returned incarnate, and that You are Almighty God, Christ of the last days. I cannot bring myself to feel certain of this, but I am willing to come into Your presence to seek and to ask You to enlighten me, so that I might recognize Your voice. If You really have returned and are Almighty God, I want to repent to You and accept Your work and salvation. I ask You to lead me back into Your presence." After praying, I felt a kind of joy and a feeling of being comforted that I could not put into words. It was something I had not felt in a long time, and I knew that the Lord had heard my prayers, that it was the Lord comforting me, and that it was proof given to me by God. I wanted to go right away to The Church of Almighty God to look into it, but I thought about how I must have offended the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God, and so I felt too ashamed to go to their church.

Right in the middle of this dilemma, Brother Yang called me to ask if I had time and said that he hoped that I could continue to investigate the work of Almighty God of the last days. I told him about my misgivings. Brother Yang said, "No problem, we believers in God are all one family, and it doesn't bother the brothers and sisters in The Church of Almighty God at all." When I heard Brother Yang say this, I knew that God was showing understanding for my immature stature, and so the next day I went to The Church of Almighty God with Brother Yang.

The brothers and sisters were happy to see that I had found my way back to the path. They formally bore witness to me that the Lord Jesus had returned to express the truth and perform the work of judgment beginning in the house of God in the last days. They also

fellowshipped to me the meaning of the incarnate God's work in the last days as well as the importance of the incarnation to mankind's salvation. After that, I read God's words that say: **"I tell you, those who believe in God because of the signs are surely the category that shall suffer destruction. Those who are incapable of accepting the words of Jesus who has returned to flesh are surely the progeny of hell, the descendants of the archangel, the category that shall be subjected to everlasting destruction. Many people may not care what I say, but I still want to tell every so-called saint who follows Jesus that, when you see Jesus descend from the heaven upon a white cloud with your own eyes, this will be the public appearance of the Sun of righteousness. Perhaps that will be a time of great excitement for you, yet you should know that the time when you witness Jesus descend from the heaven is also the time when you go down to hell to be punished. It will herald the end of God's management plan, and will be when God rewards the good and punishes the wicked. For the judgment of God will have ended before man sees signs, when there is only the expression of truth. Those who accept the truth and do not seek signs, and thus have been purified, shall have returned before the throne of God and entered the Creator's embrace. Only those who persist in the belief that 'The Jesus who does not ride upon a white cloud is a false Christ' shall be subjected to everlasting punishment, for they only believe in the Jesus who exhibits signs, but do not acknowledge the Jesus who proclaims severe judgment and releases the true way of life. And so it can only be that Jesus deals with them when He openly returns upon a white cloud. They are too stubborn, too confident in themselves, too arrogant. How could such degenerates be rewarded by Jesus? The return of Jesus is a great salvation for those who are capable of accepting the truth, but for those who are unable to accept the truth it is a sign of condemnation. You should choose your own path, and should not blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and reject the truth. You should not be an ignorant and arrogant person, but someone who obeys the guidance of the Holy Spirit and longs for and seeks the truth; only in this way will you benefit"** ("By the Time You Behold the Spiritual Body of Jesus, God Will Have Made Heaven and Earth Anew" in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

After reading the word of God, I carefully thought about the truths that my brothers and sisters had fellowshipped to me and to which they had born witness. I understood that there are two ways in which the Lord returns in the last days, one of which being the hidden advent

and the other being the Lord's coming openly to all. Now, the incarnate Almighty God's work of judgment that begins in the house of God is indeed the work of the Lord's hidden advent. Because the incarnate God has returned among mankind, His appearance is that of an ordinary person and no one is able to tell just by looking at Him that He is God. No one knows His true identity, and this is kept secret from people. Only those who are able to distinguish the voice of God will know, accept, and follow Him. It is just as the Lord Jesus said: **"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me"** (John 10:27). Those who do not recognize the voice of God will certainly treat the incarnate God as an ordinary person. They will deny, resist, and refuse to follow God, just like the Jewish Pharisees did in their time. They saw the Lord Jesus but did not know His identity, and they blindly condemned the Lord. The present time is the stage of God's hidden work of saving mankind. Almighty God expresses the word to judge, purify, and perfect people. Before the disasters, He will make a group of people into overcomers, and once this group of overcomers is made complete, the incarnate God's work of the hidden advent will come to an end. When the disasters begin, God will reward the good and punish the evil, and He will appear openly to all nations and peoples. At that time, the prophecies that the Lord shall come openly will be fulfilled, just as it says in the Bible: **"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"** (Matthew 24:30). **"Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him"** (Revelation 1:7). This is why all the kindreds of the earth shall wail when the Lord descends upon a cloud. At this time, my heart was suddenly filled with light, and I saw that the Lord's work of the hidden advent is a great salvation for us. We can only be cleansed and attain God's salvation by accepting the judgment of the word of God during the Lord's hidden advent. If we do not accept God's work of judgment now, then when He comes openly with clouds we will have become those who resisted the Lord, and we will surely weep and gnash our teeth. At that point, our regret will come too late, for Almighty God says: **"[T]he judgment of God will have ended before man sees signs, when there is only the expression of truth."**

Thanks be to Almighty God! The word of God unveils all mysteries and clearly elucidates the truth in all the aspects—my eyes were opened and I was thereafter convinced in heart

and by word. In the following days, I regularly went to church to read the words expressed by God in the last days together with the brothers and sisters. We listened to hymns and watched music videos, videos of recitations of the word of God, and gospel movies, all produced by the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God. I felt that I gained something new at every gathering and I felt incomparably happy. Especially in the gospel movies, the brothers and sisters fellowshiped about every issue with such detail and clarity that all the doubts and confusion I had harbored in my belief in the Lord for so many years were resolved little by little. I saw that The Church of Almighty God really does have the work of the Holy Spirit, and that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus! What made me even more excited was that, on the third day after I'd joined the church, I saw the sister who had performed onstage the song of praise at Christmas in 2016. She had also accepted Almighty God's work of the last days. I truly give my thanks to God, for it was the guidance and enlightenment of God that led us to keep pace with the footsteps of the Lamb, that led us to reach the good land of Canaan from the wilderness and to return to the house of God, and that led us to enjoy the abundance and supply of God's words of life together with Him!

I think that it was because of a special kindness from God that I was able to return to the house of God. Given my rebellious nature, how could I have welcomed the Lord's return without God's leadership and guidance or the patience of the brothers and sisters in fellowshiping the word of God to me? God's love for me is truly so great that I find it impossible to describe! I want only to sing my praise to God through hymns and to unswervingly follow Almighty God!

45. The May 28 Zhaoyuan Case Gives Rise to a Family Crisis

By Enhui, China

I'm an ordinary country woman, and the heavy burdens of my household responsibilities used to weigh me down so much I could hardly catch my breath. As a result, I became really short-tempered, and my husband and I were at each other's throats day in and day out. We simply couldn't go on living like that. Whenever I was suffering, I would cry out, "Heavens! Please save me!" And then in 2013, the gospel of Almighty God in the last days came to me.

Through reading the words of God and attending gatherings with brothers and sisters, I became certain that Almighty God was the One I had been crying out to in my suffering, and so I gladly accepted Almighty God's work in the last days.

I read these words from God: **"Since the creation of the world I have begun to predestine and select this group of people, namely, you today. Your temperament, caliber, appearance, stature, family in which you were born, your job and your marriage, the entirety of you, even the color of your hair and your skin, and the time of your birth were all arranged by My hands. Even the things you do and the people you meet every single day are arranged by My hands, not to mention the fact that bringing you into My presence today is actually My arrangement. Do not throw yourself into disorder; you should proceed calmly"** ("Chapter 74" of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). From these words of God I finally realized that all things are in God's hands, and that my having the good fortune to come before God's throne, accept God's salvation in the last days, and gain the watering and sustenance of His words had all been foreordained by God eons ago. What kind of husband and family I have had also been foreordained by God. I knew I should accept and submit to what God has brought about and arranged. From then on, whenever things that I found disagreeable came up, I no longer grumbled as I had before. Rather, I had faith that it was arranged by God and was willing to submit so that He could guide me and lead me to learn to live in harmony with my family. With time, I became able to stop quarreling with my husband. When he saw the changes that had taken place in me since believing in God, my husband also became very supportive of my faith. When brothers and sisters came to my house for a gathering he was very polite to them, and would sometimes engage in pleasantries. At that time I was reading God's word every day and frequently attending gatherings and sharing experiences with other brothers and sisters. I felt enriched in my spirit and enjoyed a kind of peace and joy that I had never had before. I felt that faith in God is truly a wonderful thing.

But all good things must come to an end, and after the Zhaoyuan, Shandong incident occurred on May 28, 2014, those harmonious and tranquil days in our home were no more. This was originally an ordinary criminal case, but three days later it took on a new form—the Chinese Communist Party government labeled it as something perpetrated out of religious motives. On this pretext, the CCP government made The Church of Almighty God

its focal point; it used the media to wantonly plant false evidence, make false charges, and defame The Church of Almighty God. In no time at all, people were inundated with every kind of rumor imaginable about The Church of Almighty God. My husband saw this reported on the news and was taken in by the CCP government's propaganda. It was as if an instantaneous change had come over him. He began to do everything he could to oppose my faith in Almighty God.

One evening, my husband came home fuming with rage and loudly reproached me: "What really is this religion that you believe in?" I was totally baffled by this odd attitude of his and said in response, "What I believe in is the returned Lord Jesus, Almighty God, who we used to refer to as 'Heaven.'" He said, "You believe in Almighty God! Look what they're saying on TV!" Saying this, he turned on the TV, and right then the May 28 Murder Case in Zhaoyuan, Shandong was all over the news. They were saying all sorts of things condemning The Church of Almighty God, and they went on to say that believers in Almighty God were people who disrupt public order, and the Public Security Department in Shandong was prepared to launch a strong counter-attack and round them up with no leniency. This filled me with righteous indignation, and I said to my husband right away, "This is nothing but slander and rumors. This murderer absolutely is not a believer in Almighty God! The Church of Almighty God has principles in its evangelical work, which is to only share it with good people who believe in God's existence and are kind-hearted. We never share it with wicked people. Evil people like Zhang Lidong don't remotely conform to these principles of The Church of Almighty God for sharing the gospel, so they certainly can't be believers in Almighty God. Another thing—when Zhang Lidong asked that woman for her phone number and she refused, it was out of humiliation that Zhang flew into a rage and killed her. We, brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God, never try to force people to accept the work of God when spreading the gospel, because God clearly stated in 'The Ten Administrative Decrees That Must Be Obeyed by God's Chosen People in the Age of Kingdom' that **'Kin who are not of the faith (your children, your husband or wife, your sisters or your parents, and so on) should not be forced into the church. God's household is not short of members, and there is no need to make up its numbers with people who have no use. All those who do not believe gladly must not be led into the church. This decree is directed at all people. You should check, monitor, and remind each other of this matter; no one may violate it.'** When brothers and sisters from The

Church of Almighty God spread the gospel, they never twist others' arms—this is something that no one can violate. This news is just slander, a fabrication. It's nothing more than the CCP government spreading rumors and defaming The Church of Almighty God." But who would have guessed—after hearing this, my husband opened his eyes wide and roared at me, "It doesn't matter if it's true or not. As long as the CCP is opposed to it, you can't be involved in this! I don't want the government here searching the house. Our son hasn't even gotten married yet!" Seeing my husband deceived by those rumors and lies on TV created out of thin air, my heart was filled with hatred: The CCP government would stop at nothing to repress and persecute The Church of Almighty God just to strike out against religious belief. It was using the Zhaoyuan case to frame and make false charges against The Church of Almighty God—such a vile tactic!

Neither one of us was able to get a good night's sleep after that. My husband urged me to go into hiding and to hide my book of God's words well, or to give it back to the church in case the CCP police ever raided our home. Hearing him say all that brought to mind for me the experiences of brothers and sisters that I had heard about, who had been arrested, whose homes had been searched, and who had been fined or imprisoned; I also thought of my own cousin. He got into a dispute with the local chief of police station because he couldn't bear the guy swaggering around, bullying the common people, and ended up sentenced to a year of reeducation through labor. Everyone in our family suffered as well, young and old. The CCP is a demon that can't be reasoned with. If I were arrested and imprisoned because of my faith, and if our house were raided, would that be fair to my husband and child? I tossed and turned, unable to fall asleep, imagining over and over the scenario of me being taken away and my house raided by the CCP police, and my husband and child being implicated.... I couldn't help but feel a wave of desolation and fear in my heart. I felt how difficult it is to believe in God, be a good person, and follow the right path in China, and that my life was in constant danger. But if I were to betray God out of fear of the CCP government's persecution, my conscience would condemn me for the rest of my life. Even if I were drifting along, living without purpose, I would essentially be a walking corpse and after dying I wouldn't have the face to see God again. I was tied up in knots and pained within my heart; I felt totally powerless, incredibly negative and weak.

In the midst of my suffering, I recalled these words of the Lord Jesus: "**And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is**

able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). “For whoever will save his life shall lose it: and whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it” (Matthew 16:25). The Lord Jesus’ words gave me faith and strength, and dispelled the anxiety and fear from my heart. I thought: “God is sovereign over all things and living creatures, and my life and family are also under God’s control. All that I have come from God, and I cannot betray Him at this crucial time.” I then thought about Job’s family’s possessions being stolen and his children being taken away from him; he was left with nothing, yet he was still able to maintain his devotion to God. He praised the holy name of Jehovah God and stood witness to God. And yet, facing nothing more than the rumors and disturbances manufactured by the CCP government, without arrest or having my home searched, I had become weak and negative. I saw that my stature was in fact pathetically low, and that I had not one iota of true faith in God. This thought filled my heart with shame before God and I silently resolved: No matter what, I must not betray God, and I will keep my faith no matter how much suffering or difficulty I may face!

My husband came home at midday the following day, threw down the newspaper in his hand right in front of me, and said, “Take a good look! It says here that anyone can be arrested as long as they’re found to believe in Almighty God. Prison is not a place you want to spend any time at all. Not only are people beaten, but dozens are crammed onto a single sleeping platform. If someone goes to the bathroom in the middle of the night, they won’t have a place to sleep when they get back. If you’re arrested, our family can’t afford to bail you out, so if they take you and you get sentenced for several years, you’ll be more willing to comply!” Hearing such cold words from my husband deeply pained me, and I hated the demonic CCP government even more. If not for its deception, rumors, oppression, and persecution, my husband would support me in my faith. There’s no way he would be pressuring me that way. In my helplessness, all I could do was implore God in my heart: “Almighty God! I know that the CCP government is just disseminating rumors, slander, libel, and blasphemy against You. The CCP government is none other than Satan, Your enemy. But I’m feeling some weakness in my heart now, and I wish for You to protect me, to bestow me with wisdom, and allow me to see through Satan’s tricks and craftiness so that I can stand firm on Your side and not be intimidated by the evil forces of the CCP government.” After praying, I had no desire at all in my heart to shun God, and these words of Almighty God came to mind: **“When the Lord Jesus did something such as bringing Lazarus**

back from the dead, His goal was to give proof for humans and for Satan to see, and to let humans and Satan know that mankind's everything, mankind's life and death are determined by God, and that even though He had become flesh, as always, He remained in command of the physical world that can be seen as well as the spiritual world humans cannot see. This was to let humans and Satan know that mankind's everything is not under the command of Satan. This was a revealing and a demonstration of God's authority, and it was also a way for God to send a message to all things that mankind's life and death is in God's hands. The Lord Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus—this type of approach was one of the ways for the Creator to teach and instruct mankind. It was a concrete action in which He used His ability and authority to instruct mankind, and to provide for humans. It was a way without words for the Creator to allow mankind to see the truth of Him being in command of all things. It was a way for Him to tell mankind through practical actions that there is no salvation other than through Him. This type of silent means of His instructing mankind lasts forever—it is indelible, and it brought to human hearts a shock and enlightenment that can never fade. The resurrection of Lazarus glorified God—this has a deep impact on every single one of God's followers. It firmly fixes in every person who deeply understands this event the understanding, the vision that only **God can command mankind's life and death**" ("God's Work, God's Disposition, and God Himself III" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). This fact of God allowing Lazarus to rise from the dead deeply encouraged me. I once again had strength in my heart and I rose up again unyielding: Yes! God controls all things in the universe, and people's lives and deaths are in the palm of God's hand. I knew that no one can control this, and whether or not I was arrested was also in God's hands. The words of God once again protected me, and my faith in God within my heart grew yet again. The panic and fear inside my heart also settled quite a lot.

The CCP government's rumors had shattered the peace and happiness that we once had in our household. I had to be very cautious, very careful in attending gatherings and doing my duty to avoid any further disturbances to our home life; this was really oppressive for me. And later on when my father heard about the May 28 Zhaoyuan incident, he began to stand in my way as well. He said, "You can believe whatever you want, but you can't go out spreading the gospel to anyone else or go attend gatherings. At my age I won't be able

to handle any trouble. You have to keep the entire family in mind, young and old! Believing in God is a good thing, but you weren't born in a country with freedom of belief. An arm can't wrestle down a leg—the CCP, the 'leg,' treats people of faith as political prisoners. You know all this, so don't subject us to the kind of fear you feel." The pressure from my own family and their lack of understanding really tormented me. Over that period of time, I felt like I was constantly hanging by a thread, living in fear that I would be arrested by the CCP government and would bring trouble to my family if I made the slightest mistake. So whenever I went out, I would carefully hide my book of God's words and anything that had to do with believing in God. When I went to gatherings I was incredibly afraid that I would be reported by someone and that my family would be implicated, so I was constantly in a state of high alert and was on guard; whenever I saw a police car or an officer my heart would jump into my throat. This was indescribable suffering, and I felt that believing in God in China was like living life on the edge of a knife blade. I couldn't help but feel even greater hatred for this evil atheist party: What was wrong with having faith and following the correct path? Why can't they just let people believe in God? Why do they so madly oppress, arrest, and persecute anyone of faith? Why do they hate people believing in God so much? It's so evil!

Later, I finally came to understand the truth of the matter when I read the words of Almighty God. It says: **"God works, God cares for a person, looks upon a person, and Satan dogs His every step. Whoever God favors, Satan also watches, trailing along behind. If God wants this person, Satan would do everything in its power to obstruct God, using various evil ways to tempt, harass and wreck the work God does in order to achieve its hidden objective. What is its objective? It does not want God to have anyone; it wants all those that God wants, to occupy them, control them, to take charge of them so they worship it, so they commit evil acts alongside it. Is this not Satan's sinister motive? ... This issue has made Satan's hideous countenance and its essence very clear. Satan is at war with God, trailing along behind Him. Its objective is to demolish all the work God wants to do, to occupy and control those whom God wants, to completely extinguish those whom God wants. If they are not extinguished, then they come to Satan's possession to be used by it—this is its objective"** ("God Himself, the Unique IV" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). Through God's words, I suddenly saw the light: Looking at it from the outside, it was the CCP government oppressing those of us who are believers, but behind the scenes it was a spiritual battle taking place; it was

Satan vying with God for people. Because Satan is the arch enemy of God and is the demon which betrays and resists God, ever since it corrupted mankind it has wanted to take control of them; it doesn't allow people to worship God or allow God to obtain mankind, who God created. So, ever since the beginning of God's work to save mankind all the way up to the present, Satan has been doing its utmost to create disturbances and to tear down God's work. Satan makes use of every kind of despicable means to stand in the way of people returning to God. I knew that then, in order to obstruct my faith, Satan was using rumors to sow discord within my family. It was using my feelings for my family and psychological warfare tactics to threaten, entice, menace, and attack me. Its goal in doing all of this was to get me to shun, deny, and betray God, and to attempt to get me into its grasp and make me its slave, so that ultimately I will be destroyed by God alongside it. The CCP government's intentions are truly insidious; it madly resists God and is an enemy of God. It truly is a demon which devours the souls of the people. Just as it says in the words of God: **"Satan wins its fame through deceiving the public. It often establishes itself as a vanguard and role model of righteousness. Under the banner of safeguarding righteousness, it harms man, devours their souls, and uses all sorts of means to numb, deceive and incite man. Its goal is to make man approve of and follow along with its evil conduct, to make man join it in opposing God's authority and sovereignty. However, when one grows wise to its schemes, plotting and vile features and does not wish to continue to be trampled upon and fooled by it or to continue slaving away for it, or to be punished and destroyed together with it, Satan changes its previously saintly features and tears off its false mask to reveal its true evil, vicious, ugly and savage face. It would love nothing more than to exterminate all those who refuse to follow it and those who oppose its evil forces"** ("God Himself, the Unique II" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). The revelations in God's words allowed me to see through to the true face of the CCP government, to see that it is genuinely the embodiment of Satan, and that it is the most evil satanic regime that resists God. It was using the May 28 Zhaoyuan case to start rumors and frame The Church of Almighty God in an attempt to deceive people and get them riled up, and to incite those who don't understand the truth of the matter to stand on its side and resist God along with it. The CCP government's aim in concocting the Zhaoyuan case and shifting the blame onto The Church of Almighty God was to search for grounds and excuses for arresting and persecuting Christians. It is a futile attempt to round

up all Christians in one fell swoop, and eliminate them root and branch, and to thoroughly wipe out The Church of Almighty God. They even want to realize their wild ambition to establish a zone of atheism in China. The essence of the CCP government truly is that of extreme treachery and evil!

Once I recognized the reality of the spiritual war and the evil essence of the CCP government, another question arose in my mind: Isn't God omnipotent? Why would God allow the CCP government to persecute us? Unable to unravel this confusion within me, I read these words from Almighty God: **"I once said that My wisdom is exercised based on Satan's schemes. Why did I say that? Is that not the truth behind what I am saying and doing right now?"** ("The Inside Truth of the Work of Conquest (1)" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **"God intends to use a portion of evil spirits' work to perfect a portion of man, so that these people can completely see through demons' deeds, and allow everyone to truly understand their ancestors. Only then can humans completely break free, not only forsaking the posterity of the demons, but even more so their ancestors. This is the original intent of God completely defeating the great red dragon, to make it so that all of man knows the great red dragon's true form, completely tearing off its mask, and seeing its true form. This is what God wants to achieve, and it is His final goal on earth for which He has done so much work; He aims to accomplish this in all of man. This is known as the maneuver of all things for God's purpose"** ("Chapter 41" of Interpretations of the Mysteries of God's Words to the Entire Universe in The Word Appears in the Flesh). I understood from God's words that He was making use of the oppression of the CCP government's evil satanic force to do service for the perfection of His chosen people. Through the CCP government's resistance, condemnation, and rumor-mongering to smear the name of The Church of Almighty God, and its oppression and arrests of Christians, God has allowed us to see through to the satanic, demonic essence of the CCP government as something that hates the truth and hates God. This has allowed us to gain true discernment, to reject it, and never again be taken in by it. Instead, we can come out from the domain of Satan and return to the presence of God. On top of that, God makes use of the CCP demons' arrests and persecution to expose people for what they are, to separate people according to their kind. Those who are cowardly, are not genuine in their belief, or are Judases are exposed and eliminated through the CCP government's ferocious persecution. However, those who truly believe in God,

pursue the truth and who are devoted to God stand witness for God under the CCP government's crazed persecution and become overcomers made by God. Once I had understood all this, my misunderstandings, complaints, and confusion about God were all resolved. Furthermore, I saw how wise and almighty God is, and that God's wisdom truly is exercised based upon Satan's schemes.

I also read these words of God: **"We trust that no country or power can stand in the way of what God wishes to achieve. Those who obstruct God's work, resist the word of God and disturb and impair the plan of God shall ultimately be punished by God. He who defies the work of God shall be sent to hell; any country that defies the work of God shall be destroyed; any nation that rises up to oppose the work of God shall be wiped from this earth and shall cease to exist"** ("God Presides Over the Fate of All Mankind" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). God's words showed me His righteous and majestic disposition, and I saw that no force can surpass God's almightiness and authority. Although the CCP government always frantically resists God, and it oppresses, arrests, and persecutes His chosen people as well as concocts all kinds of rumors to mislead people and prevent them from returning to God, God's work has still spread throughout the whole of China. Furthermore, a group of overcomers has been made in China, and the gospel of God's kingdom is currently expanding throughout the entire world. No one can stand in the way of God's work. Those who resist God, who obstruct and undermine God's work, are fated to suffer His righteous punishment and to be annihilated. This is determined by the righteous disposition of God. The words of Almighty God gave me a sudden flash of insight and I was enlightened in an instant. I could not help but marvel within my heart and praise God's miraculous work. God's wisdom is truly higher than the heavens; God using the CCP government to do service is incredibly wise. God's salvation of mankind is very practical—I am utterly convinced and cannot stop praising Him! I silently prayed to God from the heart, "God! I don't want to become chaff that You throw out from the threshing floor, and I don't want to be blown away by the evil wind of the CCP government. I want to become the wheat that You harvest. God! I have never satisfied You, but amidst the CCP government's wild oppression, I hope that I can show my sincerity, really pursue the truth, and not surrender in the face of the CCP government's evil forces. I hope to be a person who thirsts for justice and yearns for the light, to stand witness for You so that You may gain glory...."

Armed with this knowledge, I grew strong within my heart. I understood that when I am

faced with my family members' misunderstandings and obstructions, this is all with God's permission, and it is God who meticulously arranges all of this to perfect my faith, devotion, and obedience. I no longer complained about the environment around me, nor was I constrained by the surrounding environment. Rather, I became grateful to God, and quietly resolved that no matter what kind of environment God arranges for me, I must always stand witness for Him and loyally do my duty; I absolutely will not betray God! Later on I saw God's deeds—my husband no longer opposed me or was oppressive as he had been. Rather, he told me: "It's not that I don't want you to have faith. I admit that you've changed since you started believing in God; it's just that going forward you have to be careful, you have to be on your guard when you go out to attend gatherings." Hearing him say this brought tears to my eyes. I gave thanks and praise to God within my heart for His deeds, because I saw that truth and justice are able to overpower all that is dark and evil. Satan's evil forces will eventually be obliterated through God's work! Although I suffered some of the hardship of being refined through this experience, I gained some knowledge of God's wise work. I also gained some ability to distinguish between positive things and negative things—all of this is a kind of wealth in my life that has aroused my resolve and faith to pursue the truth and aspire to the light.

46. The Storm of Divorce Quelled

By Lu Xi, Japan

In 2015, a friend of mine got me to start believing in Almighty God. After receiving Almighty God's work of the last days, I hungrily devoured the word of God, and through it came to understand many mysteries of the truth that I had not known before, such as: God's work of saving mankind is divided into three stages, how God carries out His work in every stage, the connection between the three stages of work, what the incarnation is, and why God must become flesh. This made me even more certain that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned. Since I had the guidance of God's words, I no longer passed the time by watching TV like I had in the past, and my husband said to me: "Your faith in God has got you reading, that's better than watching Korean soap operas every day. It really makes me happy." Although my husband didn't go to assemblies, he had always believed there was a

God since his mother was a believer—he also supported my faith in God. Ordinarily, whenever I'd gain some sort of enlightenment from God's word I would share it with my husband, and he also approved of having faith. Later on, my husband got curious as to why I was always mentioning "Almighty God" when it was the Lord Jesus that his mother believed in, and so he went online to find out about The Church of Almighty God. But unexpectedly, what he saw was that the Internet was rife with rumors, false testimony and blasphemy against Almighty God. He was deeply poisoned by this and started to oppose my faith in Almighty God. Since I had read the word of Almighty God and heard the fellowship and testimonies of brothers and sisters, I was already certain in my heart that Almighty God is the one true God, and I knew that those things online were just rumors and lies meant to deceive people. However, my husband was taken in by the rumors and failed to understand the reality of the situation, no matter how I tried to persuade him and give him testimony on God's work in the last days, he wouldn't listen.

After a period of time, with the help of Sister Yinghe, who repeatedly shared fellowship and testimonies with my husband, he finally reluctantly agreed to look into God's work in the last days. However, my husband was influenced by his mother and was relatively conservative about the Bible, so in order to solve this problem of his, some sisters recommended that I watch the evangelical movie *Disclose the Mystery About the Bible* with my husband. However, I didn't have him do that. Instead, I acted on my own initiative and had him watch the movie *Break Through the Snare*, which exposes how the CCP government and the antichrists of the religious world resist God's work. After seeing just a part of the film, he said: "The CCP is an atheistic government, and China is an atheistic country that has always persecuted religious believers. The Church of Almighty God is being cracked down on by the CCP government, and we are merely an arm, which can never wrestle down a leg. What if we went back to China and got arrested? Besides, all sorts of things are said online, and I can't tell what is true and what is false. I still think you shouldn't believe in this." I urged my husband to finish watching the film and then make his decision, but he wouldn't. Seeing that I insisted on keeping my faith, one time he rushed at me in anger, saying: "If you insist on believing then believe, if you want to get arrested then get arrested. But if you do get arrested, don't say that I'm your husband! Don't you know that right now I'm under a lot of pressure? If I don't believe, I'm afraid this is the true God, but if I do believe, there's all that stuff online plus I'd be in danger of being arrested. So who should

I really listen to?” Seeing my husband’s suffering from being constrained by those online rumors, I realized how harmful the rumors and false testimony fabricated by the CCP government really are. Not only do they hinder people’s acceptance of the true way, but they also ruin family relationships. Apparently, these people who fabricate rumors and provide false testimony are the brood of Satan the devil, pure and simple!

One day, my husband came home from work and saw that I was in a gathering. His face immediately fell, then he threw open the door and left. Dinner time came and went, but I still hadn’t seen him return—I couldn’t help but start to worry. He finally returned home at eight o’clock but he was still holding on to his anger. I had planned to fix a meal for him, but he said to me coldly: “Don’t bother! Since you won’t listen to me and you’re continuing to keep your faith, from now on keep out of my affairs. From here on out I’ll just be responsible for our living expenses, and whatever I do outside of this house has nothing to do with you! Even if I do anything that would let down this family, it’s still none of your business!” Hearing this from my husband, I became more and more upset the more I thought about it. That night I tossed and turned in bed, unable to fall asleep, constantly praying to God in my heart: “Oh God! My husband has been deceived by rumors and is trying to clamp down on my faith in You, and he’s saying such heartless things. What should I do? Please show me the way! I do not want to part from You.” The next morning, I suddenly recalled some words of God that we had fellowshiped about in a gathering: **“In every step of work that God does within people, externally it appears to be interactions between people, as if born of human arrangements or from human interference. But behind the scenes, every step of work, and everything that happens, is a wager made by Satan before God, and requires people to stand firm in their testimony to God. Take when Job was tried, for example: Behind the scenes, Satan was making a bet with God, and what happened to Job was the deeds of men and the interference of men. Behind every step of work that God does in you is Satan’s wager with God—behind it all is a battle. ... When God and Satan do battle in the spiritual realm, how should you satisfy God, and how should you stand firm in your testimony to Him? You should know that everything that happens to you is a great trial and the time when God needs you to bear testimony”** (“Only Loving God Is Truly Believing in God” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). Through the enlightenment of God’s word I was somewhat awakened: During this time I had always been fixing my gaze on my husband, and feeling like there were so many shams and scams

in the world today, that everywhere was brimming with lies and deception, especially with all the lies and false statements coming from the CCP media. I thought that anyone with a little brains could think about it for a second and then realize that these words online attacking, judging and condemning Almighty God are all lies and nonsense, that they shouldn't be deceived and confused by them. But unfortunately, my husband believed the rumors he heard online, and I really felt that he shouldn't have. At that time I could no longer look outside of myself for the root cause. It was God trying me, using this to test whether or not my faith in Him is true, to see if I am able to hold firm in the true way while being attacked by Satan, and whether or not I can bear testimony to God while in the midst of this trial. As I realized God's will, the haze that had enveloped my heart and mind dispersed, and my heart brightened quite a bit.

The next day while we were eating breakfast, my husband was still looking dour and not speaking to me, but since I had the guidance of God's words, I was not as worried or scared as the day before. I said to him calmly: "I believe in God and I have never done anything to let this family down. If you want to do so, then that's just you willing to be a degenerate, it's not because of my faith in God." Hearing me say this, my husband took on a softer tone, and he said: "Didn't I say those things only because you wouldn't listen to me and kept insisting on keeping your faith?" Afterward he didn't say anything else, and the storm passed. Thanks be to God! It was God's words that gave me the strength to triumph over Satan's temptations!

But a good thing doesn't last forever. A month later my husband was once again getting online and reading those rumors. One day when he came home from work he saw that I was sitting at the computer, and started to yell at me: "I think you've gone mad! I've thought it over: Either you give up your faith at once or we need to get a divorce. I've also thought about the issue of our two kids; you can take both of them, but I'm guessing you won't be able to stay in Japan, so take our children back to Shanghai! I'll give you our apartment in Shanghai, and each month I'll also give you 100,000 yen in child support. And if you don't want the children then that's fine too, whatever you choose! I've even looked into the divorce proceedings. All we need to do is go to the ward office and both sign a divorce agreement, so just tell me where you stand!" After I heard him say all that, my heart was pounding and I felt like my head was abuzz. I just sat there unable to say anything, and I even forgot to pray to God. All I could think was, if we got divorced, what about the children? They could

come with me, but I didn't have financial means! If they didn't come with me, it would be such a pity if they didn't have a mother! And then there were my parents, friends and other relatives, what would they think of me? Being abroad was originally such a great thing, but if we got divorced then how could my parents keep their heads up in front of others.... So, I didn't give my husband an answer; I just told him that I had to think about it. I went to my room and started to cry bitterly. The more I thought about my life after the divorce the more pain I felt. I didn't sleep at all that night, and my tears soaked my pillowcase. The next day, my husband left for work without saying a word, and only then did I come before God in prayer, asking Him to give me more strength so that I could triumph over the weakness of the flesh. As I was living mired in suffering and at a loss as for what to do, I told some brothers and sisters about what had happened. They all encouraged and consoled me, saying that this was one of Satan's temptations that I was going through, and helped me learn how to rely on God. They said I could not lose my faith or misunderstand God. They also shared the experiences and testimony of other brothers and sisters with me, and fellowshiped about how God is the One who saves mankind, that Satan alone afflicts us, makes us suffer, and destroys our relationships with other people. They also read a passage from the word of Almighty God to me: **"When people have yet to be saved, their lives are often interfered with, and even controlled by, Satan. In other words, people who have not been saved are prisoners to Satan, they have no freedom, they have not been relinquished by Satan, they are not qualified or entitled to worship God, and they are closely pursued and viciously attacked by Satan. Such people have no happiness to speak of, they have no right to a normal existence to speak of, and moreover they have no dignity to speak of. Only if you stand up and do battle with Satan, using your faith in God and obedience to, and fear of God as the weapons with which to fight a life-and-death battle with Satan, such that you fully defeat Satan and cause it to turn tail and become cowardly whenever it sees you, so that it completely abandons its attacks and accusations against you—only then will you be saved and become free"** ("God's Work, God's Disposition, and God Himself II" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God's word made me realize that whenever I wasn't practicing my faith in God, I was living entirely under the domain of Satan, that I was a slave and plaything of Satan. After gaining my faith, I came out of Satan's camp and returned before the presence of God; because I forsook Satan, it was unwilling to be defeated, so it used my husband to attack my weak

points. It used the divorce to compel me to betray God and return to its domain. This truly was the trickery of Satan. I was worried about what to do with the children after the divorce, how the people from my hometown would see me, and how my parents could hold their heads up in front of their neighbors. All of these thoughts came from Satan's disruptions, and if I were controlled by these thoughts then I would be controlled by Satan, eventually leading me to distance myself from God or even deny Him, and once again return to Satan's camp. My faith and my worship of the Creator are completely positive things, it is heaven's law and earth's principle, and no man has the right to interfere with it, yet Satan tries everything to control me, to push me into betraying God. Satan truly is so despicable and so hateful! At that moment, I knew that I lacked the faith to face Satan's temptations on my own, but I was willing to rely on God and rely on the guidance of God's word to take the path in front of me, and I was determined to stand by God's side and bear witness to God; there was no way that I would give in to Satan. When this occurred to me, my restless heart finally found some sure footing and my suffering abated.

Later on, some brothers and sisters again shared God's word with me: **"Without God's permission, it is difficult for Satan to touch even a drop of water or grain of sand upon the land; without God's permission, Satan is not even free to move the ants about upon the land—let alone mankind, who was created by God. In the eyes of God, Satan is inferior to the lilies on the mountain, to the birds flying in the air, to the fish in the sea, and to the maggots on the earth. Its role among all things is to serve all things, and work for mankind, and serve God's work and His plan of management. Regardless of how malicious its nature, and how evil its substance, the only thing it can do is to dutifully abide by its function: being of service to God, and providing a counterpoint to God. Such is the essence and position of Satan. Its substance is unconnected to life, unconnected to power, unconnected to authority; it is merely a plaything in God's hands, just a machine in service to God!"** ("God Himself, the Unique I" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). From God's word I came to realize that God's authority is supreme, God controls the heavens and earth and all things, and everything of ours is in His hands. My divorce and my family are also in God's hands, and without God's permission there is nothing that Satan can do. Whether I got divorced or not was all under the sovereignty and predestination of God—it was not my husband who had the final say, so I was willing to submit to the sovereignty and designs of God. I thought about unbelievers

who get divorces. Some do it for money, some do it because their partners have affairs, and some do it because their relationship just falls apart.... My husband wanted to divorce me because I chose to believe in God and take the correct path of life, to pursue the truth and live out a meaningful life. This is honorable, not shameful! Right then these words from God came to mind: **“Faith is like a single log bridge, those who cling abjectly to life will have difficulty in crossing it, but those who are ready to sacrifice themselves can pass over without worry. If man has timid and fearful thoughts, they are being fooled by Satan. It fears that we will cross the bridge of faith to enter into God. Satan devises every way possible to send us its thoughts, we should always pray that the light of God will shine on us, and we must always rely on God to purify us from Satan’s poison. We shall always be practicing in our spirits to come close to God. We shall let God have dominion over our whole being”** (“Chapter 6” of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). God’s words once again gave me faith and strength, a path to follow, as well as the courage to face my husband. That’s right—the only thing I could do was throw caution to the wind. No matter what my future path held, there could be no wrong in taking the path of faith!

After my husband returned home that evening, I told him plain and simple: “You don’t want me to believe in Almighty God, but for me that is impossible. If you want to get a divorce then we’ll do it your way!” My husband was a little dumbstruck after hearing this, and left with no other options, he said: “Apparently I can’t control you anymore! There’s all sorts of stuff online—if I don’t put you under control, then if someday something happened to you I would be responsible. I’m just using this divorce as a way to threaten you, but you still won’t renounce your faith in God. If something happens to you because of your faith, your mom will know, so don’t put the blame on me.” From then on, he no longer concerned himself with my faith in God; our relationship made a miraculous recovery and he no longer talked about getting a divorce. This is how the storm of divorce that had been caused by the CCP government’s rumors was quelled.

Later on there was one time when my younger daughter and I both caught a cold. At that time it was raining lightly, but my older daughter needed to go to practice, so I had no choice but to take her, dragging my exhausted body along with my younger daughter. After my husband learned about this, he said: “You worked hard today. Lu Xi, I’ve noticed a change in you recently. You’ve been more loving with the children and really diligent.”

Hearing these words from my husband, I thanked Almighty God within my heart because I knew that it was Almighty God's words that had changed me. With God's words as my foundation, I have direction in my life, I know what proper humanity is and what a corrupt disposition is. Only by conducting yourself according to the word of God can you live out proper humanity. As a result, I no longer let my temper flare up randomly with my children, and I no longer live life just for the sake of enjoyment. Slowly, I came to discover that my husband had also changed. In the past he always felt that he was always the one who was right, but now when handling some affairs he will seek my opinion. He has even given his friends testimony of God's authority and sovereignty. Seeing these things, my heart is full of gratitude. Oh God, You are truly almighty! Your words are our life force, and no matter how aggressive or furious Satan's force is, so long as we have Your words to guide us we will be able to triumph over all of Satan's temptations, and live peacefully under Your care and guardianship.

Thanks be to God for arranging all of this for me, and for allowing me to experience His word and understand many truths. Through experiencing these kinds of situations I have seen that Satan truly is despicable, that it thinks up every possible means to get people to leave God and become its prey for it to devour. At the same time I have also seen that God controls all things and arranges everything; without God's permission, it doesn't matter how much more frantic Satan becomes. It will not be able to do anything, it will not be able to accomplish anything—it won't even be able to touch a single hair on our heads. So long as we have faith, and rely on God's word to live, then we will be able to overcome Satan's dark influence, stand witness for God and bring glory to God! The facts also prove that the rumors and false testimony online are untenable. Facts and time will prove everything, and in the end these rumors will go down in history with eternal ignominy, just like "Atheism," "Darwin's theory of evolution" and "Communism." They will become a mark of eternal shame for the CCP government. God's sheep will listen to God's voice, no matter how great Satan's obstruction, all those who sincerely believe in God and love the truth, will be able to discard the deception and bonds of rumors, coming before God and being gained by God. This is because this is something that God wants to accomplish—none of Satan's forces can stand in the way!

47. Lost and Found Again

By Xieli, United States

I came to the U.S.A. to work as hard as I could in pursuit of a happy life with a high standard of living. Though I suffered no little over the first few years, with time I was able to start my own company, get my own car, my own house, etc. I was finally living the “happy” life that I’d dreamed of. During this period, I made a few friends; in our free time we’d go out to eat, drink, and have some fun. We all got on pretty well together, and I thought I’d met a good bunch of guys. But then I came to realize that they were all just drinking buddies who didn’t have a single substantial thing to say, and when I was worried or depressed there was not one of them I could go to share my troubles with. Not only that, but they schemed to rip me off: One of them lied to me about his mother in China being really ill and when I lent him some money he disappeared without a trace. Another, from my hometown, told a bunch of lies about needing financing for a project and cheated me out of some money. And even the person nearest and dearest to me—my girlfriend—betrayed me and cheated me out of a large sum of money that it had taken me years of blood, sweat, and tears to accumulate. The heartlessness of these people and the indifference of society left me depressed and disheartened. For a time I lost the confidence to keep on living; my heart was empty, and I was in pain and helpless. After that, I often turned to eating, drinking and having fun to fill the emptiness within me, but I knew that these temporary physical pleasures couldn’t resolve my spiritual suffering at all.

In the fall of 2015, by accident of fate, I became acquainted with the woman who is my wife today. At that time she had already accepted Almighty God’s work of the last days. When she shared the gospel of the kingdom with me, having faith seemed well and good to me, but because I was so busy with work I said to her: “I don’t have time for faith in God, but if you want to believe, go ahead. Knowing in my heart that God exists is enough for me.” One day six months later my wife had me watch one of the videos from The Church of Almighty God with her—The Days of Noah Have Come. What I saw in the video really startled me: When faced with disasters mankind was tiny and fragile, unable to withstand the slightest of blows. I suddenly felt that no matter how much money a person has, how much luxury they enjoy or how high their status is, it’s all meaningless. In the face of disaster, when death is coming upon us, all these things are worthless and useless. As Almighty

God's words say: **"However, I must tell you that in the time of Noah, men had been eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage to such an extent that it was unbearable for God to witness, so He sent down a great flood to destroy mankind, sparing only Noah's family of eight and all kinds of birds and beasts. In the last days, however, those spared by God are all those who have been loyal to Him until the end"** ("Did You Know? God Has Done a Great Thing Among Men" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **"Now look upon the present age: Such righteous men as Noah, who could worship God and shun evil, have ceased to exist. Yet God is still gracious toward this mankind and still absolves them during this final era. God seeks those who long for Him to appear. He seeks those who are able to hear His words, those who have not forgotten His commission and offer up their hearts and bodies to Him. He seeks those who are as obedient as babes before Him and do not resist Him"** ("God Presides Over the Fate of All Mankind" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). In these words I could feel the urgency of God's intention to save mankind. I thought about how in these times nobody seems to love positive things or long for God's return. People's hearts are full of selfishness, arrogance, and trickery. For the sake of fame and gain, they plot and scheme against one another, cheat one another, and even resort to killing one another. People are slaves to their sensual desires, and constantly violate morals and virtue and bury their conscience. People have lost all humanity.... The degree of corruption of mankind in the last days really is far beyond that of the age of Noah. However, God hasn't outright destroyed mankind because of this wickedness and corruption, but instead is raining down various kinds of disasters to warn mankind and give us the chance to turn back toward God. When I pondered over God's words, my heart was deeply moved by God's love. I also thought about how the world was becoming more evil and corrupt by the day, disasters were becoming bigger and bigger, and about how when God vents His rage upon evil mankind and destroys humanity, all of the money and status that I had been pursuing would not be able to save me. Only by coming before God and seeking the truth can a person gain protection. When I thought all of this through it was like waking from a dream—my intuition told me that I should come before God and accept His salvation, as this is the only way to be saved. If I were to lose my chance at attaining salvation for the sake of the temporal enjoyments of the flesh, that would be a lifelong regret! Consequently, in May 2016 I began to believe in God and take part in church meetings.

Not long after gaining my faith, I was surfing the web and came across some negative propaganda condemning and slandering The Church of Almighty God. Reading that left me momentarily stunned. What was this “making people donate money and not respecting the boundaries between men and women” stuff? What I read seemed to be rational, making difficult for me to distinguish right from wrong, fact from fiction. I became adrift in confusion, and the burning fire of my faith in God was instantly extinguished by the negative stuff I was reading. And just at that moment, I overheard my mother-in-law on the phone with my wife talking about donating money to the church, which made me even more inclined to believe what I was reading online. After that, I stopped my mother-in-law from donating money and also urged my wife to give up her faith so that we wouldn’t be taken in. But she didn’t listen to me at all, and told me unequivocally: “The reality of the situation is nothing like you’ve read online. The stuff online is all rumors, all false testimonies! ...” She then got a book of God’s words to fellowship with me, but I’d already been blinded by the rumors and didn’t take in anything she was saying. Not long after, some brothers and sisters came to our home, but I wouldn’t pay them any mind, either. Over those few days I was living entirely within darkness, always worried about my wife and mother-in-law being cheated. I was constantly on edge—I couldn’t get food down, I couldn’t sleep well at night, and was tormented psychologically. Seeing how I was suffering, my wife tried to fellowship with me again. She opened up a book of Almighty God’s words and chose this passage to show me: **“What I want is not human conceptions or human thoughts, even less do I want your money or your possessions. What I want is your heart, understand? This is My will, and even more it is what I want to obtain”** (“Chapter 61” of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). She then read some of the principles for managing church life for me: “The church does not allow anyone to ask for donations in sermons, nor to ask for donations for any other reason” (Work Arrangements). She shared this in fellowship with me: “In The Church of Almighty God there are strict required standards and principles for every aspect of church life. As for donating money, the words of Almighty God state very clearly that God does not want mankind’s money or material objects. The church’s work principles also clearly stipulate that the church does not allow anyone to preach about donating money or to encourage people to donate money for any reason. Since I’ve been following Almighty God, the church has not asked me to donate a single cent. Not only does the church not call on people to donate money, but it even gives all the

brothers and sisters who are true believers all sorts of books, CDs, and other things free of charge. Now, my mother wants to contribute something to help out some of the brothers and sisters who are experiencing difficulties. She's doing it of her own free will; nobody is forcing her to do it. Anyway, helping people in need is a good deed, so there's no reason for reproach, right?"

After reading Almighty God's words and listening to my wife's fellowship, something that one of the sisters had shared with me in fellowship before suddenly occurred to me: The Church of Almighty God does not accept monetary donations from new members, and anyone who wants to donate money has to first go through several rounds of prayer until they are sure they are completely willing to do so, and that they will never regret it. If they are not more than willing, the church absolutely will not accept it. When I remembered this, some of the worries and concerns that I had were somewhat alleviated, but the knot in my heart was not entirely loosened. My wife saw my frown, and knowing what I was thinking, she said: "Don't believe those rumors. In order to disrupt and sabotage God's work of saving people and prevent us from coming before God and accepting His salvation, Satan will say all sorts of garbage and give all sorts of false testimonies. God is holy and God detests mankind's evil. As for those with bad reputations and who don't know how to behave properly around members of the opposite sex, The Church of Almighty God never accepts them. This is something that Almighty God has spoken very explicitly about." My wife then opened up God's words and read: **"Many people will kneel down for mercy and forgiveness because the seven thunders peal. But this will no longer be the Age of Grace: It will be the time for wrath. As for all people who do evil (those who fornicate, or deal in dirty money, or have unclear boundaries between men and women, or who interrupt or damage My management, or whose spirits are blocked, or who are possessed by the evil spirits, and so on—all except My elect), none of them will be let off, nor any pardoned, but all will be cast down to Hades and perish forever!"** ("Chapter 94" of Utterances of Christ in the Beginning in The Word Appears in the Flesh). Almighty God's utterances are majestic and wrathful in order to produce fear and reverence in people's hearts; this made me aware of God's righteous disposition that will not tolerate mankind's offenses. God is incredibly disgusted by those who engage in promiscuity, and those people will eventually suffer God's righteous punishment. Some of my concerns were alleviated. My wife then fellowshipped the following with me: "When God was doing His work in the Age of

Law anyone who behaved promiscuously would be stoned to death. This fully reveals God's righteous, majestic and wrathful disposition. In the Age of Kingdom, God's rules within His administration are even stricter regarding men and women consorting with each other. As it says in God's words: **'Man has a corrupt disposition and is moreover possessed of emotions. As such, it is absolutely prohibited for two members of the opposite sex to work together unaccompanied when serving God. Any who are discovered doing so will be expelled, without exception'** ("The Ten Administrative Decrees That Must Be Obeyed by God's Chosen People in the Age of Kingdom" in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*).

When my wife read this out, I recalled an incident that had occurred in the spring of 2016. At the time, I hadn't yet properly investigated Almighty God's work of the last days. I was driving my wife and one of the sisters from the church to another state. On the way, we stopped so that my wife could attend to something, and when she got out of the car that sister also got out. It was cold and windy outside, and the sister stood beside the car stomping her feet to keep warm. I called to her to get in the car but she said: "It's okay. I'll stand outside for a bit." It was quite a while before my wife returned, and only then did the sister get back into the car. Seeing that she was visibly shivering from the cold my wife asked her: "It's so cold outside. Why didn't you stay in the car?" She replied: "There's an administrative rule in our church that a man and a woman can't be alone together or have physical contact. This is one of the requirements that God has of His chosen people, and we have to strictly abide by it." On hearing this, I felt that the people with The Church of Almighty God truly are different from the people of the world—even in such trivial matters they keep themselves in check. With this in mind, I couldn't help but smack my head in self-disgust for not properly investigating the facts and instead blindly believing those online rumors. When I thought about all of the times I'd interacted with the brothers and sisters of The Church of Almighty God and seen how clearly delineated the boundaries between men and women were, how proper and decent they were in speech and action, how principled they were when associating with people or attending to affairs, it was obvious that those rumors online didn't hold any water. At that point I felt very ashamed—it turned out that those online rumors were all fabrications, slander, outright distortion—yet I blindly took in those lies and developed doubts about Almighty God and The Church of Almighty God. I was such a confused idiot! My wife then continued on in fellowship: "In the last days, God becoming

flesh and expressing truths to judge and cleanse people is to thoroughly save mankind from Satan's domain and to rid us of our corrupt dispositions—our arrogance, trickery, deceit, selfishness, vileness, evil, and filth—and to help us to achieve transformation in our life disposition so that we may live out a true human likeness. God knows that mankind has been very deeply corrupted by Satan and doesn't have the capability to overcome sin; so in order to ensure that people don't offend God's disposition when they are accepting God's salvation and thus be eliminated and punished, God has laid out the administrative rules of the Age of Kingdom in order to keep believers in check. Anyone who violates these rules will be punished by God, and serious offenders will be expelled from the church and lose any chance of salvation. God issuing these decrees for the church is to have us gain some real knowledge of God's unoffendable righteous disposition, and also so that we have rules to keep us in check. This way, in all of our behaviors there will always be a line that can't be crossed, and if we keep within these boundaries then we can avoid many of Satan's temptations. This is God's way of protecting us and, even more so, it is God's true love for us!" Listening to my wife's fellowshiping I found myself involuntarily nodding my head, and thus the knot in my heart was completely untied and the pain suffocating my heart was released. After that, I started attending church meetings again.

Every time I recall this experience there is always some lingering fear in my heart. I saw how damaging these rumors are; I was nearly taken in by them and almost lost the chance for God's salvation of the last days. In the Age of Grace, the Israelites were also deluded by false rumors and did not acknowledge the Lord Jesus as the coming of the Messiah. They rejected the Lord Jesus and thus lost the Lord's salvation. This made me realize just what huge obstacles such rumors are on the path of true faith! But what I still couldn't make heads or tails of was why there are so many false rumors and false accusations about The Church of Almighty God online when it clearly is a good church. So, during one of the church gatherings I brought up this question with the brothers and sisters so that we could openly fellowship on it. They played one of the church's gospel movies for me, Break Through the Snare, which completely resolved my confusion. With a bit more fellowshiping from the brothers and sisters I gained even more clarity. Using rumors to disrupt and sabotage God's work has been Satan's consistent tactic. When the Lord Jesus was doing His work, the Jewish chief priests, scribes and Pharisees wanted to ensure that they kept permanent control over God's chosen people, and so they created many false rumors about the Lord

Jesus. They blasphemed the Lord Jesus by saying that He relied on Beelzebub's power to exorcise demons, they falsely accused the Lord Jesus of not letting people pay their taxes to Caesar, and they also gave false testimony by saying that the Lord Jesus' physical body was stolen by His disciples and that He hadn't been resurrected. I'm sure that if the Internet had existed then, those religious leaders would have put all of their rumors and false testimonies online in order to blaspheme, attack, and condemn the Lord Jesus. Nowadays, in the Age of Kingdom, Almighty God is doing the work of words to judge and cleanse mankind; the government of China as well as the pastors and elders in the religious community are acting as Satan's tools. In order to achieve their goal of controlling and ensnaring people, they are blaspheming and condemning Almighty God, wantonly fabricating rumors and false testimonies, and smearing The Church of Almighty God in order to confuse people and keep them in the dark. In their arrogance, they think they can make people abandon God's work of salvation of the last days and follow them in resisting God. Satan really is just so evil and loathsome!

Then the brothers and sisters read out another two passages of God's words for me: **"On earth, all manner of evil spirits are forever on the prowl for a place to rest, and are endlessly searching for human corpses that can be consumed"** ("Chapter 10" of God's Words to the Entire Universe in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **"Satan is constantly devouring the knowledge that men hold of Me in their hearts, and constantly, with teeth bared and claws unsheathed, engaged in the last throes of its death struggle. Do you wish to be captured by its deceitful stratagems at this moment? Do you wish, at the moment that the last phase of My work is completed, to cut off your own life?"** ("Chapter 6" of God's Words to the Entire Universe in The Word Appears in the Flesh). They also shared fellowship with me that Almighty God's words tell us the truth about the spiritual battle, which is that in order to block people from coming before God and swallow them up, Satan carries out all sorts of trickery. This includes the deception of spreading rumors and false testimonies on the Internet, getting religious leaders to harass and threaten believers, and getting family members to coerce them and prevent them from following Almighty God. In short, anything which makes us doubt, deny or move away from God comes from Satan. If we are unable to seek the truth, then we will never be able to see through Satan's trickery, will easily lose the chance to gain God's salvation, and will sink into disaster along with Satan. Thanks to God's leadership, I was able to more clearly see Satan's evil and

despicable essence and see through Satan's schemes through watching The Church of Almighty God's gospel movie and listening to the fellowshiping of the brothers and sisters.

Since following Almighty God I've gained true release and freedom. Now, whenever I encounter difficulties I can read God's words and pray to God to help me find a path of practice. The brothers and sisters in the church all abide by God's requirements and seek to become honest people. Their mutual relationships are uncomplicated and open; they help and support each other. There's no need to worry about someone trying to put me down, deceive me, or rip me off. I feel truly happy and content, and this is the life that I always want to live.

48. I Have Come Home

By Chu Keen Pong, Malaysia

I believed in the Lord for over a decade and served in the church for two years, and then left my church behind to go abroad for work. I went to quite a few places, including Singapore, and earned a decent amount of money, but living in this existence in modern society where might makes right, everyone's scheming against each other, and there's treachery everywhere. In the face of all manner of complex interpersonal dealings, I was always on my guard against others. They were also always on their guard against me, leaving me with a feeling deep down inside that I couldn't find any stable ground to stand on. That kind of life left me exhausted in body and spirit. The only thing that offered me any consolation was the diary I carried with me in which I had copied some passages of Scripture. Sometimes I would read them and they would fill an emptiness in my soul. I hadn't been to a church gathering in a number of years but over the past year I had just had one thing in mind: to find a church in which I could serve the Lord in earnest. I later took advantage of some free time to go to a number of churches in Malaysia, both large and small, but every time I trotted in merrily and left feeling dejected. I always felt something was lacking inside, but I could never put words to exactly what it was. Faced with this conflict I went to another extreme, just playing video games and watching movies online, sometimes staying up playing until dawn or watching one movie after another. My sleep schedule was a mess. When I first started doing this I had a bit of awareness, feeling that the Lord wouldn't be

pleased, but I gradually became numb. It was during that time that I lost my cell phone. At the time, I felt really put out—my cell phone was gone and a lot of data had gone with it, plus I had no way to log in to Facebook. On the surface, this was a bad thing, but I never expected that it would be a turning point for my life. It's just like the old saying, "a blessing in disguise."

I bought a new cell phone in early 2017. One day in late February, I logged into Facebook and then inadvertently clicked on the timeline of an English-language profile, and saw that there was scripture in the posts. I also saw quotes that were not from the Bible, yet they were really inspiring for me, and they really drew me in emotionally. I kept my eye on that Facebook account for the next few days, and even spent some time looking up some words. Finally, I finished reading the post that I was interested in. Only after reading it did I realize that the main content of this post was an interpretation of the passage of Scripture in which the Lord Jesus says: "**Not every one that said to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven**" (Matthew 7:21). I felt that this was quite a unique interpretation, and that it was full of inspiration and light. I hadn't added that person as a friend, so though I wanted to see more posts on their timeline, I wasn't able to. What I was able to see on their timeline, however, was that this Facebook user was from South Korea and was a sister named Susan. I sent her a friend request, but she probably wasn't online at the time and so didn't accept my request right away. Two days later, I added another Chinese-speaking person on Facebook named Qi Fei, another Christian from South Korea. She chatted with me about some of her experiences in her faith, and I really liked what she had to say. To my surprise, Sister Qi Fei was also friends with Sister Susan, so this time we added each other as friends. By reading their Facebook posts and through our occasional chats, I came to feel that they understood a lot about faith in God.

After some time of discussing the Bible and chatting about things in our lives, I really felt that their approach to helping me address some of my vexations was really unique, and that there was a lot of reason and insight in what they said. I could see firsthand that they were different from other people. I felt more stable and at peace within my heart through being in contact with them, and even though I didn't know them very well, before I realized it, I had started to think of them as close friends because of their simplicity and honesty. I wanted to lay my heart bare to them. Gradually, I started to make some changes in how I lived my life.

About a week later on the evening of March 11, I got on Facebook and saw that Susan

was online. I chatted with her about some work stuff first, then told her about my heart's desire, to find a church to serve in, and that I wanted to hear her suggestions. Sister Susan said that everything is arranged and ruled by God, and that I should pray more to God and engage in seeking on this issue. She said that everything has a time appointed by God, and we should all learn to wait and submit. She then brought up the current situation in many of the churches: The preachers have nothing left to preach about, some churches don't have anyone attending gatherings, and in others, even if there are some people there, they're all just talking about making money, making business connections, and other things totally unrelated to faith. She said that these things are actually all manifestations of churches no longer having the work of the Holy Spirit, and having become desolate. I could really identify with everything she had said. When I was serving in the church before, co-workers were scrambling to make a name and make some money for themselves, scheming against each other, slandering each other, and trying to lord over their own little territories. There was even licentious behavior. Seeing these things happening one after another, I felt both depressed and indignant. At the time, I asked the pastor and some of my co-workers how I should look at all of this, but they couldn't offer a clear explanation. To my great surprise, it was Sister Susan who resolved this confusion that had vexed me for so long. I felt an inexpressible sort of happiness within my heart.

We also explored the topic of the various disasters and wars occurring at the time, and judging by the signs of disasters all around and of imminent wars, the biblical prophecies of the Lord's second coming had basically all been fulfilled, and the Lord would soon return. That reminded me of a believer I had met online around midday who said that the Lord had returned in 1991, but I really had my doubts about that. I simply had to ask Susan about this. When she asked me what I thought about it, I said: "There's no way. When the Lord returns He'll definitely descend upon a cloud and will be seen by everyone. But we haven't seen the Lord descending on a cloud, so how could anyone say that the Lord has already returned?"

Susan responded, "Brother, you're well-versed in the Bible. If you examine the words of the Bible closely, I'm sure you'll find your answer. In fact, there are a lot of different prophecies regarding the Lord's second coming. We can all see from the biblical prophecies that they primarily fall into two categories. One is as you just described, prophesying that the Lord will openly descend on a cloud and be seen by everyone. The other kind prophesies the Lord's secret advent, which only a certain group of people will be aware of. It is just as

the Lord Jesus said: **'Behold, I come as a thief'** (Revelation 16:15). **'And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him'** (Matthew 25:6). '[A]s a thief' and 'at midnight there was a cry made' mean it will be silent and motionless, unknown to anyone. The heavens will not sound and the earth will not shake—it won't be something that everyone can see. There is only a small group of people able to hear the Lord's voice, who are able to welcome Him. These are the prophecies of the Lord coming in secret. If we cling only to the prophecies of the Lord descending openly on a cloud but neglect the prophecies of the Lord coming in secret, is that right? Then wouldn't we fail to hear the voice of the Lord, and miss our opportunity to welcome the Lord and be raised up into the heavenly kingdom?"

I was stumped by Susan's question. I read these two passages over and over again, and thought: "Could there be contradictions within the Bible? No, no, no! How could that be? But in fact, there are two different categories of biblical prophecies about how the Lord will return! How can this be explained?" Confused, I asked her to continue with her fellowship. Susan said: "We can see from the prophecies in the Bible that the second coming of the Lord will occur in two different ways. One is the hidden advent, and one is openly appearing. In the last days, God will become flesh in the world as the Son of man, and on the outside Christ will appear to be an ordinary, common person just like the Lord Jesus in the flesh. He will possess humanity, and will eat, dress, live, and act just like an ordinary person. He will live among man, and so this is considered hidden from our perspective because no one will see that He is God, and no one will know His true identity. Once the Son of man begins to work and speak, those who are able to hear God's voice will see the expression of God's disposition through the words and work of the Son of man. They will see God's authority and power, and will recognize that the Lord has come. This will fulfill the Lord Jesus' prophecy: **'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me'** (John 10:27). Those who are unable to discern the voice of God are sure to treat the incarnate God as an ordinary person based on His outer appearance. They will deny and reject, and even resist, condemn, and blaspheme Christ of the last days. This is just like when the Lord Jesus came to do His work—on the outside, He appeared to be an ordinary, common Son of man, leading the majority of people to deny, resist, and condemn Him. Only a small group of people recognized through His words and work that the Lord Jesus was the incarnate Christ, that He was the manifestation of God, and thus followed the Lord Jesus and attained His

redemption.” Hearing the sister’s fellowship, I felt it made a lot of sense because these were all facts—that’s really how it was when the Lord Jesus came to perform His work. But then I thought: It says in Revelation that when the Lord returns He will openly descend on a cloud, and that’s what the pastors and elders all say, too. With this in mind, I immediately asked Susan, full of conviction: “The Lord Jesus Himself said that His second coming would be upon a cloud. How could it be an incarnation? How can you deny those words of the Bible?” Sister Susan said: “You just need to investigate the Bible very carefully and you will discover that there are many places that clearly prophesy that the Lord will return incarnate.” In light of what Sister Susan said, I found some passages of Scripture and began to read: **“Be you therefore ready also: for the Son of man comes at an hour when you think not”** (Luke 12:40). **“For as the lightning, that lightens out of the one part under heaven, shines to the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day. But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation”** (Luke 17:24–25).

After I finished reading these scripture passages, Sister Susan said: “These prophecies mention ‘the Son of man comes’ and ‘so shall also the Son of man be.’ The ‘Son of man’ is born of a human and possesses normal humanity. If He manifested in a spiritual body, then He could not be referred to as the Son of man, just as Jehovah God is the Spirit and cannot be called the Son of man. People have also seen angels, which are spiritual beings and so cannot be called the Son of man either. All who have a human form but are spiritual beings cannot be called the Son of man. The incarnate Lord Jesus is called the Son of man and Christ because He was the fleshly incarnation of God’s Spirit, and the realization of the Spirit in the flesh. He became an ordinary, common man, and lived among man. The Lord Jesus was the Son of man, the incarnation of God, so when the Lord Jesus said He would return again as the Son of man, He meant that He will come again in a physical body as the Son of man, and not in spiritual form. Therefore, when the Lord Jesus said He will come again, He meant that He will return in the form of an incarnation. Furthermore, the Scripture says: **‘But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.’** This further proves that when the Lord comes again it will be in the manner of the incarnation. Think about it: If the Lord appeared to us upon His return in a spiritual body rather than a fleshly body, He wouldn’t suffer as much, much less be rejected by this generation. Who would dare reject the Spirit of God? Who would be able to cause God’s Spirit to suffer? Therefore, as for whether the Lord will return incarnate or come in a spiritual body, doesn’t it go without

saying?”

I was astonished at reading the words “Son of man.” I had thought in the past about the question of the “Son of man,” but it had never been clear to me. Sister Susan’s explanation completely resolved all my doubts, and I was overcome with emotion when I heard it. It had gotten late, so we said our goodbyes and logged off. I was so excited that night that I couldn’t sleep until it was very late. I thought about how I had believed in the Lord for so many years, but had never heard such wonderful fellowship. I was stunned, and there was a kind of blissful clarity in my heart that I could not put into words.

The next day, March 12, I felt an indistinct sort of hope and ineffable excitement. This was because Susan and I had mostly discussed the Son of man and the incarnation the previous night. Even though I could draw a connection between the Son of man and the incarnation, and I knew in theory that the Lord Jesus is none other than Christ incarnate, I still really wanted to know the answers to questions such as what the incarnation truly is, what Christ is, on what basis one could say with certainty that God has incarnated, and so on. But since Susan and I both had work during the day and were only free in the evenings, I just hoped that time would move a bit more quickly.

Finally, evening came around and we were both online. After logging on, the first question I asked Sister Susan was about the incarnation. She sent me some passages from the words of Almighty God, and asked me to read them. And so I began to read: **“The ‘incarnation’ is God’s appearance in the flesh; God works among created mankind in the image of the flesh. So for God to be incarnated, He must first be flesh, flesh with normal humanity; this is the most basic prerequisite. In fact, the implication of God’s incarnation is that God lives and works in the flesh, that God in His very essence becomes flesh, becomes a man”** (“The Essence of the Flesh Inhabited by God” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **“The incarnate God is called Christ, and Christ is the flesh donned by the Spirit of God. This flesh is unlike any man that is of the flesh. This difference is because Christ is not of flesh and blood; He is the incarnation of the Spirit. He has both a normal humanity and a complete divinity. His divinity is not possessed by any man. His normal humanity sustains all His normal activities in the flesh, while His divinity carries out the work of God Himself”** (“The Substance of Christ Is Obedience to the Will of the Heavenly Father” in The Word Appears in the Flesh). **“He who is God incarnate shall possess the essence of God, and He who is God incarnate**

shall possess the expression of God. Since God becomes flesh, He shall bring forth the work He intends to do, and since God becomes flesh, He shall express what He is, and shall be able to bring the truth to man, bestow life upon him, and point the way for him. Flesh that does not have the essence of God is decidedly not the incarnate God; of this there is no doubt. If man intends to inquire into whether it is God's incarnate flesh, then he must corroborate this from the disposition He expresses and the words He speaks. Which is to say, to corroborate whether or not it is God's incarnate flesh, and whether or not it is the true way, one must discriminate on the basis of His essence. And so, in determining whether it is the flesh of God incarnate, the key lies in His essence (His work, His utterances, His disposition, and many other aspects), rather than external appearance" (Preface to The Word Appears in the Flesh). After I had finished reading, I felt that these words explained very clearly the mystery of the incarnation, especially regarding the definition of Christ: **"The incarnate God is called Christ."** This was so clear, simple, and eloquent! Even though I had believed in the Lord for more than a decade and knew that Jesus was Christ, I had never understood mysteries of the truth such as why we say that the Lord Jesus is Christ. That day, I learned from those passages of God's words that Susan had sent me that the incarnate God is actually what we call Christ, and Christ is He in whom God becomes incarnate. I pondered these words very carefully, and the more I pondered them, the brighter my heart became.

Sister Susan then told me that these were the words of Almighty God; she also said that God's word is the truth, and that only God Himself is able to express the truth. When she mentioned the words "Almighty God," I was speechless for a moment, though it didn't come as a complete surprise since I had already guessed that she might belong to The Church of Almighty God. I had also read some rumors online about this church. It was just that I thought of myself as a Christian, and that I had to have a heart of reverence for God, so I did not want to come to any conclusions lightly before understanding the truth of the matter. This was to avoid sinning with my words and offending God. Besides, I had been thinking these last few days: Sister Susan and I had spoken together quite a few times, and even though I could not see who I was talking to, the truth she fellowshiped to me was still able to resolve my confusion. Through our discussions and by reading her posts on her timeline, I felt that she and Qi Fei were both sincere, warm, and good people. The content of their fellowship was really edifying and beneficial for me. It is written in the Bible that you

can know a tree from its fruit; good trees produce good fruit, while bad trees produce bad fruit. So, through my contact with Sisters Susan and Qi Fei, I slowly let go of the doubts and apprehension in my heart, and asked Susan to go on fellowshiping.

Sister Susan said: “Since He is God incarnate, He has the expressions of God—that is, He utters words. God incarnate of the last days has come mainly to express the truth to judge, cleanse, and save people. All those who hear the voice of the returned Lord, and who can seek and accept it, are the wise virgins who attend the banquet with the Lord, and this fulfills the prophecy uttered by the Lord Jesus: **‘And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him’** (Matthew 25:6). The wise virgins hear the voice of God and go out to meet Him. Unwittingly, they are raised up before God’s throne to meet face-to-face with the Lord; they accept God’s judgment and cleansing in the last days. Through the judgment of the words of God, their corrupt dispositions are transformed and purified, and they are made overcomers by God before the disasters. This is currently the phase in which Almighty God is working in secret to save and perfect man. Once a group of overcomers has been made, God’s hidden work in His incarnate flesh will come to an end, and the disasters will befall the world. God will begin to reward the good and punish the evil, and then will make Himself known to all countries and peoples of the world. At that time, the prophecy of the Lord descending on a cloud in Revelation 1:7 will be fulfilled: **‘Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.’** One could reasonably say that when people see the Lord descending on a cloud, making Himself manifest to all people, they should all go wild with joy. But the Scripture says that all kindreds of the earth shall wail. Why is this? It is because when God manifests Himself publicly, God’s hidden work of salvation in His incarnate flesh will already have ended and He will begin the work of rewarding the good and punishing the evil. At that time, all who rejected the hidden work of God will completely lose their chance to attain salvation, and those who pierce Him—those who resist and condemn Almighty God, Christ of the last days—will see that Almighty God, whom they have resisted and condemned, is none other than the Lord Jesus returned. Just think about it, how could they not then beat their breasts, and weep and gnash their teeth? This is the context of the words **‘all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.’**”

Hearing that fellowship from Sister Susan, that feeling I had had of contentment and

excitement returned. I hadn't ever really understood these passages when I was a member of my old church, but had only understood their literal meaning, thinking that the Lord's return would be upon a cloud and known to all. Only then did I finally understand that God first comes in secret to do a stage of the work of judging and saving man. Once a group of overcomers has been made, only then will He openly manifest Himself to all nations and peoples of the world. If we blindly cling to the idea that the Lord will descend upon a cloud when He returns, if we refuse to accept God's hidden work in His incarnate flesh and wait until the Lord openly comes down upon a cloud, that will be the time we go straight to hell, because God's work of saving mankind will have already ended. Thank the Lord for His guidance. I had come to understand a great deal in the brief time that Sister Susan had been fellowshiping to me.

Sister Susan then asked me if I wanted to accept Almighty God as my Savior. The first time she asked me, I did not answer, and when she asked again, an indescribable feeling of excitement burst forth within me, and I began to tear up. Earnestly, I answered: "I ... want ... to!" Once I had uttered these words, I felt like a prodigal son who had been wandering out in the wilderness for a long time, who had finally returned to a warm home. In my heart, I felt full of joy and ease.

After I had accepted Almighty God's work of the last days, I reposted some of Sister Susan's own posts. Soon after that, five or six Facebook friends sent me messages telling me to "wake up" and sent me some links to sites that were full of attacks, accusations, and defamation of The Church of Almighty God. I knew that this was the disruption of Satan, and didn't let it get to me. The next day, a pastor found me online, and after a bit of idle chatting, he asked me, "Do you really believe in Almighty God? Why is it that you want to believe in Almighty God?" This really upset me, so I asked him in return: "The sheep of God listen to the voice of God. I have recognized from the words of Almighty God that everything expressed by Almighty God is the truth, that it is the voice of God, so why should I not believe in Almighty God? Why?" He probably hadn't anticipated that I would ask him something like that and didn't respond for a while. So, I asked him again, "Pastor, have you investigated the work of Almighty God in the last days? Have you read Almighty God's words? As a pastor, how can you refuse to seek and investigate, but just make random judgments and accusations?" To my surprise, he hemmed and hawed without giving a substantive response, then suddenly logged off. Seeing him so flustered, I felt an indescribably sense of happiness,

and felt a satisfaction as if I had triumphed over one of Satan's tests. In fact, all that I had done was make use of some of the questions that Sisters Susan and Qi Fei had often brought up in our discussions; I had just said something from what I had understood from the words of Almighty God. I had never expected such a formidable pastor to be stumped by my questions. This tiny little experience gave me a lot of confidence. Thanks be to God!

More than five months had gone by in the blink of an eye. By attending gatherings and reading the words of God, I gained understanding of what the incarnation is, what kind of people may enter the kingdom of heaven, and other aspects of the truth. Throughout this time, I experienced disturbances from all sorts of rumors spread by pastors and elders. At times I was negative and weak because I could not see through the trickery of Satan, but God never departed from me. Through God's words read to me by the sisters as well as their patient fellowship on the truth, I was able to gain some discernment over the elders' and pastors' satanic nature and essence of hostility to the truth, and resistance to God. I also began to have some discernment over their despicable drive to do their utmost to prevent believers from seeking and investigating the true way. I will never again be led astray or controlled by them. Being able to break through the dark influence of Satan and be raised up before God's throne was God's grace and blessing for me. Thanks be to Almighty God! Being able to turn to God was predestined and arranged by God long ago. I will rely on God and move forward without any misgivings! When I came into the house of God, the first hymn I learned was "Walking on the Right Path of Human Life": "God's words are the truth, the more I read them, the brighter my heart becomes. God's words reveal the mystery of life and they make me suddenly see the light. I see that everything I have comes from God—it is all God's grace. I follow Christ and pursue truth and life; I'm walking on the right path of human life ..." (Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs). And today, I preach the gospel and bear witness to God with my brothers and sisters in the church. I want to throw myself into my duty and repay God's love!

49. Back From the Brink

By Zhao Guangming, China

At the beginning of the 1980s, I was in my 30s and was working for a construction

company. I considered myself to be young and fit, treated people with loyalty and respect, and did my work responsibly. My construction skills were also top-notch, and I was sure that I was going places in the company and that, once my career really took off, I would be living like a prince. This was my goal and so I stayed with the company and worked hard for many years. But despite my impeccable character and professional skills, my efforts never seemed to be recognized by the company, which is something I never understood. The top salary grade in our company was grade 6, but my salary never got above grade 3. I watched a number of colleagues, who had neither my skills nor had worked in the company as long as I had, get pay raises, but it never happened to me. I was puzzled and resentful about why they got raises and I didn't. Finally, one of the colleagues who I got along with quite well gave me a tip: "In this company, the most important thing is to butter up the manager and at least wish him a happy Chinese New Year, and do the same at other festivals." On hearing this, I finally understood the real reason why I had been overlooked by the company, and the injustice of it made me furious. But although I hated those sycophants in the company, and had even less time for those who did little work but still got wage rises and promotions by using underhand methods, I needed to firm up my standing in the company and so I had to adapt to these unwritten rules. So the next time Chinese New Year came along I "expressed my heartfelt good wishes" to the manager and was immediately promoted to team leader.

As team leader, I became even more conscientious and responsible in my work. I would go to the construction sites to strictly supervise and direct the work to make sure it was being done up to standard and that the project targets were met. I also kept worker safety in my mind at all times, and my work attitude and professional guidance were universally praised by the workers in my team. But none of this mattered much when it came to keeping or firing team leaders—what counted most was the value of the gifts each team leader gave to the manager. To keep my job in the company, I had no choice but to go along with this law of survival, which allowed me to experience deeply the cruelty and helplessness embodied by the saying "survival of the fittest."

In the years that followed, economic reforms and a loosening of restrictions by the government led to large-scale development and construction projects being undertaken all over China. My company thus began to allocate projects to individuals, which meant that the team leaders had to compete for the contracts. This led to even more wining and dining

and giving of gifts, with each team leader trying to outdo the others. Whenever we team leaders heard that a work unit had a project up for tender, we would scramble to grease the wheels by getting our gifts to the relevant people in the unit as soon as possible. So as to avoid offending these unit leaders' tastes, we would rack our brains to think of the best gifts and the best ways to give them: Some people put gold inside of fish or chicken stomachs; some gave cash; some gave gold jewelry or diamond rings. I also got caught up in this culture of bribery and spent many hours thinking of what gifts to give to toady up to these people. Eventually, I won a contract with much difficulty, but no sooner had we started work than officials from the Construction Bureau, the Construction Design Institute, and the Bureaus of Quality and Technical Supervision—as well as local cadres—all came along to “supervise and direct the work.” They said there was this or that problem with the site, that such and such was not up to standard, and after a whole morning of inspections we still couldn't start work. I immediately invited them all out for a boozy lunch at a classy restaurant, a meal which cost me thousands of yuan. And at the end of the meal, I still had to give bribes to each one of them, ranging from 2,000 yuan to 10,000 yuan. It was the only way to get their ratification and approval for work to begin. But even after work started these supervisory agencies still regularly sent inspectors to inspect the project. They called these inspections “routine” but in fact they were just another excuse to squeeze us for more money. Every time they honored us with their presence at the worksite, I would busily rush about, arranging meals and drinks to entertain them, and these supervisory agency directors even found reasons to get me to go with them to shopping malls where they would shop for designer clothes and expect me to pick up the bill. Sometimes they were even bold enough to say they were hard up and ask me directly for cash to spend. In order to keep the project on track, all I could do was grind my teeth, swallow my anger, be nice to them, and just take the hit. Even worse was that for a long time I had to accompany these agency directors out on the town. Because of drinking to excess over a long period of time and having an irregular sleeping pattern, I ended up with stomach problems and high blood pressure, and I felt utterly exhausted. And so, when the project was finally completed and I had been paid, I discovered that I'd made nearly no money at all. I really could have cried. Faced with such a hard way of life, I thought to myself: “Why is it so difficult for me to make money by relying on my skills and hard work? How come the leaders of every single department in the national system are so corrupt?” I felt extremely helpless, but I had no other choice but to pin all my

hopes of making money onto these officials. I had originally reckoned that building good relationships with them would also mean building the foundations for the development of my career, and it never occurred to me that all I was doing was sinking deeper into a slimy pit of sin and wading through a hopeless situation.

In 1992, after a complex and difficult process, I won the contract for a construction project in the city, and I estimated that the project would earn some money for me. Just when I was enthusiastically putting my all into preparations to start work, my manager told me that I had to first build a private villa for each of 4 city officials. He said this was a good opportunity regarding my career development, and that doing a favor for the city officials would guarantee that I would never have to worry about money in the future and would soon be living the good life. With a heart brimming with hope, I took out a loan from the bank and also borrowed money from friends and relatives, getting the money together by all means possible, to raise enough capital to build the 4 villas. But just as the building work was nearing completion, some senior officials from the Commission for Discipline Inspection showed up, and I had to spend more money to smooth things over and shield the four city officials. But in the end, all of my efforts were unable to keep the long arm of the law away from them: Because the four officials were suspected of accepting bribes and being involved in corruption, they were dealt with by the inspection authorities. All of my painstakingly laid fine plans went up in smoke, and the 4 unfinished villas were confiscated by the authorities. I was in debt to the tune of several hundred thousand yuan which I had no way to pay back, and an inexpressible bitterness sat in my belly like a heavy rock.

In my state of helplessness, I could only pin my hopes on another construction project. In order to pay off my debts I started to do something that I'd never done before in my whole career, the thing I was most unwilling to do—cutting corners and using inferior materials. Instead of using national standard steel I started using 2nd grade stuff, and instead of bundles of 6 rebars in the concrete I started using bundles of 4, thus reducing my steel costs by a third. I also mixed inferior concrete to further reduce my overall costs. To be honest, every time I did this my heart was in my mouth because I was terrified that the quality of the finished construction would be seriously affected. And when I heard reports of shoddily-built constructions all over China that had collapsed and killed, injured and bankrupted so many ordinary citizens, I would get particularly anxious and would often have nightmares. It even got to the point where the sound of thunder was like an announcement of my impending

doom, perhaps by being struck by lightning or something. Fear stalked me every day. This situation caused me to eventually fall ill, and I was beset by frequent dizziness, headaches, and insomnia, all caused by my high blood pressure. I was, both physically and spiritually, a wreck, and life became a living hell for me. This is how I lost myself in worldly trends and sank deeper and deeper into that slimy pit of sin. To my surprise, when the project was half done, the unit I was building it for refused to pay me as had been agreed in the contract. The loan I'd gotten from the bank wasn't enough to cover the workers' wages, so I had no choice but to take out a high-interest loan with a loan shark. After many more setbacks, I finally found out that the contracting unit had long been in debt and had no way to finance the construction project. Another of my projects had failed, and I racked my brains for a way to make some good of it. I was totally exhausted and was living in a state of despair. Then I heard the news that a team leader in another company who had won a construction project had taken out a huge loan and was unable to repay it, and so he had ended up hanging himself. It felt like I too was standing at the gate of hell and that I was sinking into desperation. After that, the creditors started coming to my house to get their money back: Some of them lay on my bed and refused to leave, while others kicked up a fuss and threatened me. I was as polite and humble as I could be with them, and I felt totally humiliated. Even my closest friends and relatives thought that I was unable to repay them and started turning against me. It was during those days that I truly came to appreciate how fickle human relationships can be. I recalled all those years of hustle and bustle that had not only left me penniless but had also left me physically and mentally exhausted, and with debts of several hundred thousand yuan to boot. I looked up at the sky and let out a long sigh and said, "Heavens, this is just too hard. I really don't want to live any longer!"

Just when I was wavering at the gate of hell, the kingdom gospel of Almighty God reached my ears. I saw these words of Almighty God: **"Today, since I have led you to this point, I have made fitting arrangements, and have My own aims. If I were to tell you of them today, would you truly be able to know them? I am well acquainted with the thoughts of man's mind and the wishes of man's heart: Who has never looked for a way out for themselves? Who has never thought of their own prospects? Yet even though man is possessed of a rich and prismatic intellect, who was able to predict that, following the ages, the present would turn out as it has? Is this really the fruit of your own subjective efforts? Is this the payment for your tireless industry? Is this the**

beautiful tableau envisaged by your mind? If I did not guide all mankind, who would be able to separate themselves from My arrangements and find another way out? Is it the thoughts and wishes of man that have brought him to today? Many people go their whole lives without having their wishes fulfilled. Is this really because of a fault in their thinking? Many people's lives are filled with unexpected happiness and satisfaction. Is this really because they expect too little? Who of the whole of mankind is not cared for in the eyes of the Almighty? Who does not live in the midst of the Almighty's predestination? Whose life and death come from their own choices? Does man control his own fate?" ("Chapter 11" of God's Words to the Entire Universe in The Word Appears in the Flesh). When I read these words, I became utterly convinced. I really felt that our fates are not in our own hands. I thought back over the previous years, about how I'd planned and calculated for my own future, but nothing had worked out for me. I'd put my all into earning lots of money and living a superior lifestyle, but not only had I not made any money, but I'd also wasted heaps of it. I'd never once imagined that I—who was once someone of note—could end up in such a pitiful state of poverty. Why was it that I'd worked so hard for my future and yet had encountered one failure after another? It was because the fate of every person is not in their own hands but is in the hands of God. Everything is ruled over and predestined by God; good fortune or misfortune is all administered by God. From the bottom of my heart I could feel that these were the words of God, and I couldn't help but cry out to Almighty God: "O God! In the past I didn't know You. I tried to rely on myself and on man's power but ended up in a hopeless situation. Today, I have finally understood that the fate, and the life and death, of every single person is in Your hands. If this situation hadn't befallen me, I wouldn't have come before You. O God! I thank You for saving me from the brink of death and for giving me the courage to face life anew. From now on, I will submit to Your arrangements concerning the path in life I should follow."

After that, I started living the church life. The environment in The Church of Almighty God was completely different from that of the outside world: The brothers and sisters had simple, straightforward relationships with each other, and treated each other honestly without any sign of pretense, infighting or scheming. Everyone would read God's words and sing hymns in praise of God together; at gatherings, the brothers and sisters would be honest and open with each other, would fellowship about their own experiences, deficiencies and difficulties, as well as about their understanding and knowledge of God's words. I felt

that every gathering I attended was fresh, new, and full of vitality. There was no estrangement or suspicion between the brothers and sisters; everyone understood each other and knew each other well. I felt an unprecedented sense of relief and freedom there and I felt more relaxed and happier than I had ever felt before. At the same time, God guided me to understand why I had lived in such suffering over the past few decades. I read these words of Almighty God: **“There is an enormous secret in your heart, of which you have never been aware, for you have been living in a world without light. Your heart and your spirit have been wrested away by the evil one. Your eyes are obscured by darkness, and you can see neither the sun in the sky nor that twinkling star of the night. Your ears are clogged with deceitful words, and you hear neither the thunderous voice of Jehovah, nor the sound of the waters flowing from the throne. You have lost everything that is rightfully yours, everything that the Almighty bestowed upon you. You have entered an endless sea of affliction, with no power of rescue, no hope of survival, and all you do is struggle and rush about.... From that moment onward, you were doomed to be afflicted by the evil one, far away from the blessings of the Almighty, out of reach of the provisions of the Almighty, walking down a road of no return. A million calls can hardly rouse your heart and your spirit. You slumber soundly in the hands of the evil one, who has lured you into a boundless realm without direction or wayposts. Henceforth, you lost your original innocence and purity, and began to shun the care of the Almighty. Within your heart, the evil one steers you in all matters and has become your life. No longer do you fear him, avoid him, or doubt him; instead, you treat him as the God in your heart. You began to venerate him, to worship him, and the two of you have become as inseparable as body and shadow, committed to each other in life as in death. You have no idea from whence you came, why you were born, or why you will die”** (“The Sighing of the Almighty” in *The Word Appears in the Flesh*). **“Satan corrupts people through the education and influence of the national governments and the famous and great. Their nonsense has become man’s life and nature. ‘Everyone for himself and the devil take the hindmost’ is a well-known satanic saying that has been instilled into everyone and has become people’s lives. There are other words of life philosophy that are also like this. Satan uses each nation’s fine traditional culture to educate people, causing humanity to fall into and be engulfed in a boundless abyss of destruction, and in the**

end people are destroyed by God because they serve Satan and resist God (“How to Know Man’s Nature” in Records of Christ’s Talks). So the reason why I’d exhausted myself and made myself so miserable hustling and bustling in this world over the last few decades was because I’d been living by Satan’s rules of life, such as, “One’s destiny is in his own hand,” “Money makes the world go round,” “Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost,” “One accomplishes nothing without fawning and flattery,” and so on. By living by these satanic philosophies, I’d had no idea of the existence of God, and hadn’t known that God rules over and arranges everyone’s fate. I had drifted with the tides of this dark world, without any direction in my life or principles of conduct. I certainly couldn’t see that this dark world is ruled over by Satan, and that human society is full of Satan’s temptations, snares and deceit. In order to make money in this dark and evil world, I learned how to flatter and toady up to those in charge and had even secretly used shoddy materials in my construction projects. My conscience had disappeared bit by bit, and I was left without an iota of integrity or dignity. The deeper I sunk into sin the less I felt like a human being. In the end, I didn’t make any money and was left with a pile of debt, and I felt so despairing that I almost committed suicide. I thought of that team leader who had killed himself because of his huge debts—hadn’t he been a sacrificial offering to Satan? And who knows how many other similar tragedies are being played out every day of every year? At that point I realized that the reason why people get in such a state is because of the harm caused by Satan’s poisons, and because of the worldly trends directed by Satan’s rule. When I thought of all this, a surge of gratitude for God filled my heart and I was so grateful for God’s mercy and salvation. God had saved me from the dark world and brought me back to God’s house where I could enjoy His care and protection.

After a period of time, I once again had to face my creditors, and my heart was in great turmoil. When I thought of all the debts I still had to repay, I once again wanted to take on construction projects. I knew, however, that my abilities did not match my ambitions. My high blood pressure problem flared up again, and I was at a total loss about what to do. At one of the gatherings, one of the brothers read some of God’s words for me: **“True faith in God means the following: On the basis of the belief that God holds sovereignty over all things, one experiences His words and His work, purges one’s corrupt disposition, satisfies the will of God, and comes to know God. Only a journey of this kind may be called ‘faith in God’”** (Preface to The Word Appears in the Flesh). The brother then gave

fellowship, saying, "Since we believe in God then we should have true faith in God. From the bottom of our hearts we must believe in the authority and power of God to hold sovereignty over all things, and we should hand everything in our lives over to God. Most importantly, we should learn to rely on God, look up to God, experience God's work, seek God's leadership, and no longer hurry around busily thinking we can do it all ourselves. Paying off debts is something that all reasonable and conscientious people do, so we have to be brave and face our debts. We must believe that everything is in God's hands, and that there isn't any mountain that we can't climb. Concerning your debts, you should pray more to God and seek His will."

Through the assistance of the brother, I now had a way to practice. I found a job on a construction site nearby that didn't interfere with my attending gatherings or fulfilling my duties, and I began to earn some money to pay off my debts. I no longer just relied upon myself to get ahead. When my creditors came to me for money, I would practice being honest with them and give them whatever I had. I was also able to pay some money back from what I made by selling the crops that I harvested from my farmland. I made a solemn promise to all of my creditors that I would repay all my debts, and after that they didn't make life difficult for me anymore. When the bank sent people to push me to repay the loan, I prayed to God and entrusted Him with it all. "If I have to do time in prison because I can't repay that large loan," I thought, "I will obey all of God's orchestrations and arrangements." It was when I submitted to God while experiencing His work that I saw how miraculous His deeds can be, as I saw Him open up a way forward for me. The government announced that all bank loans taken out before 1993 would not have to be repaid, because none of them had been input into bank computer systems and incomplete information meant that some of the loans could never be repaid. Thanks be to God! All my loans were taken out pre-1993 and so my debt of several hundred thousand yuan was canceled. Thrilled, I offered up my thanks and praise to God. I thought: "If I had to earn that amount I'd probably die of exhaustion before I made it all." This allowed me to personally experience that the fate of every person really is in God's hands, as is described in these words of God: **"The fate of man is controlled by the hands of God. You are incapable of controlling yourself: Despite always rushing and busying about for himself, man remains incapable of controlling himself. If you could know your own prospects, if you could control your own fate, would you still be a creature? In short, regardless of how God works, all His**

work is for the sake of man. Take, for example, the heavens and earth and all things that God created to serve man: The moon, the sun, and the stars that He made for man, the animals and plants, spring, summer, autumn and winter, and so on—all are made for the sake of man's existence. And so, regardless of how He chastises and judges man, it is all for the sake of man's salvation. Even though He strips man of his fleshly hopes, it is for the sake of purifying man, and the purification of man is for the sake of his existence. The destination of man is in the hands of the Creator, so how could man control himself?" ("Restoring the Proper Life of Man and Taking Him to a Wonderful Destination" in The Word Appears in the Flesh).

During my experiences, I became even more sure about Almighty God's work and my faith was strengthened. In the years that followed, I continued to go to gatherings and fulfill my duties while also working for local construction teams to make the money to repay my remaining debts. Whenever I met someone of good character who was a suitable candidate to hear the gospel, I would preach it to them, and I brought some of the people I had good relationships with before God. Although I was still busy every day, life was different because I no longer lived by Satan's philosophies and rules, and I no longer followed the evil trends of the world and sought to make it rich and live a superior lifestyle. Instead, I lived in submission to God's rule and according to His requirements, conducting myself according to the truth, being honest and humane, fearing God and shunning evil. This way of behaving felt open and straightforward, and I began to feel at ease and filled with light inside. Gradually, I began to recover my conscience and reason, and the various ailments that I'd suffered from began to disappear. This year I turned 75, but I'm healthy, I have my wits about me, and I have repaid all of my debts. People who know me well all say they admire me and that I'm lucky. But I know without a doubt that all this is the result of Almighty God's salvation and kindness. It was Almighty God who saved me from the brink of death, who gave me back my life in my hour of need, and who showed me the right direction for my life. During all these experiences, I truly felt that without God's leadership we human beings will inevitably be harmed and swallowed up by Satan. Only Almighty God can save people; only the words expressed by Almighty God can lead people away from the bondage of sin and show us how to live as true human beings. Only by accepting the truths that Almighty God has expressed and submitting to and worshiping Almighty God can mankind live in true happiness and have a good future and final destination!

50. Returning to Life From the Brink of Death

By Yang Mei, China

In 2007 I suddenly fell ill with chronic renal failure. When they heard the news, my Christian mother and sister-in-law, and some Catholic friends all came to preach the gospel to me. They told me that as long as I turned to the Lord, my illness would be cured. But I didn't believe in God at all. I thought that illness could only be cured through scientific medical treatment, and that any disease that couldn't be cured by science was incurable. After all, was there any power on earth greater than the power of science? Faith in God was just a kind of psychological crutch, and I was a dignified state school teacher, a person who was well-educated and cultured, so there was no way I'd start believing in God. As such, I turned them down and began looking around for medical treatment. Within a few years I'd been to virtually every large hospital in my home county and throughout the province, but my condition still hadn't improved. In fact, it was getting worse, but I stubbornly clung to my own way of looking at the situation and insisted that science could change anything, that curing illness was a process that takes time.

In 2010 a sister from The Church of Almighty God came to preach the gospel of God's kingdom to me. She said that the Lord Jesus had returned to the mundane world to perform new work, which involved issuing truths to judge and cleanse people. This was a stage of God's work designed to thoroughly save mankind, and was also mankind's last chance to be saved by God. I still wasn't willing to accept all this, but because of all the failures and frustration that I'd encountered over the previous few years seeking medical treatment, my attitude wasn't as unyielding as it had once been and I allowed myself to be persuaded to take a book of God's words from the sister. But, at the time, I certainly didn't believe that the words in that book were truths expressed by God. I still maintained that only science could change my fate, and thus continued to believe that only drugs could improve my condition. Eventually, I was ingesting more drugs every day than I was eating food, and yet my condition didn't show even the slightest sign of improvement. I lost count of the number of times the sister came to my home, but I still refused to believe in God. This went on for about a year.

Then one day, out of the blue, my vision in both eyes went blurry and both of my legs became so numb that I couldn't walk. The doctors said that my symptoms were the result of drug poisoning from taking large quantities of medicine over several years. I first spent a week in the county hospital and was then transferred to a military hospital in Beijing where I was treated for a month. I was then transferred to a well-known traditional Chinese medicine hospital in Beijing to receive TCM treatment. But these 2 months of treatments did nothing to improve my condition. My primary doctor even asked the retired former head of the hospital's neurology department to come and take a look at me, but there wasn't the slightest improvement in my condition. Then I heard my future daughter-in-law mention a doctor in Yunnan who was famous for being able to treat difficult and complicated conditions like mine. After various twists and turns, I managed to be taken there in a wheelchair. But after being treated for nearly a month, not only did my condition fail to improve, but the drugs I was taking for my eyes and legs actually exacerbated my kidney disease. Feeling beyond help, and in great discomfort, I decided to go home. After that, I gave up all treatments and drugs for my eyes and legs in order to protect my kidneys.

During that period, I felt that there was absolutely no hope for me. I often thought about how I'd put all of my faith in science but science had proven to be utterly ineffectual in the treatment of my disease. After any hope I had that science could cure me was destroyed, I felt extremely depressed and had a complete breakdown. I had no idea how I was going to go on with life. In the fog of pain and suffering, my thoughts often ran wild: "Why have I suffered from so many illnesses and why can't they be treated with drugs? I believed in science and trusted in science, and did my best to seek out the best treatment, and yet nothing worked. In fact, my condition just got worse. Could it be that science really can't save me? Could it be that there really is a God in this world? Is the fate of every person really in God's hands?" No matter how much I thought about these issues, I couldn't come up with any answers. During that period, I lived in great pain and suffering every day, and every time I thought about my being a useless invalid I would secretly break down in tears. I felt that I was involving my family too much and I didn't want to be a burden to them anymore. On more than one occasion I wanted to end my own life but I was afraid of death. So I just took each day as it came and waited for death to come to me ...

One day, my husband saw the book that the sister from The Church of Almighty God had left for me and opened it. He saw the following heading, "Did You Know? God Has Done

a Great Thing Among Men,” which immediately grabbed his attention. So he read out the following passage for me: **“The work of God is something that you cannot comprehend. If you can neither fully grasp whether your choice is correct, nor can you know whether the work of God can succeed, then why not try your luck and see whether this ordinary man may be of great help to you, and whether God has indeed done great work?”** (The Word Appears in the Flesh). This short passage was like a jolt to my heart! The phrase **“then why not try your luck,”** in particular, kept reappearing in my mind. It was like a shaft of light shining down upon my desolate heart, and it seemed that I could see a glimmer of hope of staying alive. I urgently made my husband read out another 2 passages of God’s words, which contained truths about God using His word to judge and cleanse people and transform their life dispositions. All this was completely new to me, and even though I didn’t really understand the full significance of what was being said, I could feel in my heart that these teachings were different from the gospel of the Lord Jesus that I’d heard from other people. They had mostly told me about how to gain grace, and that all I needed to do was believe in God and my illness would be cured, which I didn’t believe. But the words of Almighty God seemed much more practical, and the more I heard the more I wanted to hear.

After that, I had my husband read some of God’s words to me every day. In the book it said that religious people believe in God but don’t know God and even resist God, and that they often commit sins in the daytime and confess them at night. This was even more convincing to me because my mother, and two sisters-in-law were all Christians and the way they lived was just like God’s words described. They really did commit sins and then confess them and then commit them again. That’s when I had a spiritual awakening: Is this really God’s voice? If it’s not God, then how is it that the author understands the religious world so well? Unbelievers don’t understand, the great and famous haven’t a clue, and even religious people themselves don’t realize that they believe in God but also resist God. The more I thought about it the more I felt that the words in the book were not things that people could express, and that they probably were the utterances of the incarnation of God in the mundane world.

Only a few days later, the sister who had originally preached the gospel of Almighty God’s kingdom to me heard that I was back at home after being in the hospital and came over to my house, accompanied by another sister, to preach the gospel to me again. This

time I was aware of the voice of my conscience telling me: "I've become an invalid but the sisters haven't abandoned me in disgust and have even come to preach the gospel to me again and again. This is something that ordinary people wouldn't be able to do. Anyone else would have forgotten about me long ago." In my mind it was very clear that this kind of love must have come from God, as it can never be found in the mundane world. As the saying goes, "A friend in need is a friend indeed," and that day I experienced this profoundly. That my family stayed by my side was something that they couldn't avoid, but for these people, who were totally unrelated to me and who had no ulterior motives or conditions, to come regularly for over a year to preach the gospel to me and put themselves out for an invalid like me, showed how amazing their faith, love and patience really was! I was truly moved by God's love, and from then on had no reason to refuse God's gospel anymore. As a result, my husband and I both accepted God's work of the last days.

In June of 2011, my husband and I formally began our church life in The Church of Almighty God. Because my eyesight wasn't good enough to allow me to read on my own, my husband usually read out God's words to me, and during church meetings the brothers and sisters also read God's words to me. Sometimes when I was by myself I'd also listen to hymns. Later, I found the reason for my illness and suffering in God's words: **"Where did the pain of birth, death, illness, and old age present throughout the life of humans come from? What caused people to have these things? Humans did not have them when they were first created, did they? So, where did these things come from? These things came after humans were tempted by Satan and their flesh became degenerate. The pain of the flesh, its afflictions and its emptiness, as well as the extremely miserable affairs of the human world all came after humans were corrupted by Satan, from when Satan began to torment people; the result was that they became more and more degenerate. The diseases of humanity grew more and more profound, and their suffering became more and more severe. More and more, people sensed the human world's emptiness and tragedy, as well as their inability to go on living there, and they felt less and less hope for the world. All this came after Satan's corruption. Thus, this suffering was brought down upon humans by Satan, and it only came after they had been corrupted by Satan and they had become degenerate. ... This is why it is possible for you to have illnesses, troubles and to feel suicidal, and at times also feel the desolation of the world, or that life has no meaning. That is to say, this suffering**

is still under Satan's mastery; it is one of man's fatal weaknesses" ("The Meaning of God's Experiencing the Pain of the World" in Records of Christ's Talks). God's words were spot on in describing how the suffering brought on by the pain of illness was so great that I had lost all the will to live and wanted to end my life. But God's words said that all that pain of illness and suffering was due to Satan's harmful ways. At first, I didn't really understand why God said these things, but after reading more of God's words I gradually came to understand these truths.

One afternoon my husband was reading God's words to me as usual, and I heard these words of God: **"Since mankind's contrivance of the social sciences, the mind of man has become occupied by science and knowledge. Science and knowledge then have become tools for the ruling of mankind, and there is no longer sufficient room for man to worship God, and no more favorable conditions for the worship of God. The position of God has sunk ever lower in the heart of man. Without God in his heart, man's inner world is dark, hopeless and empty. ... Science, knowledge, freedom, democracy, leisure, comfort: these bring man only a temporary consolation. Even with these things, man will inevitably sin and bemoan the injustices of society. These things cannot restrain man's craving and desire to explore. This is because man was made by God and the senseless sacrifices and explorations of man can only lead to more distress and can only cause man to exist in a constant state of fear, not knowing how to face the future of mankind or how to face the path that lies ahead. Man will even come to fear science and knowledge, and fear even more the feeling of emptiness"** ("God Presides Over the Fate of All Mankind" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). It was when I heard these words that I finally understood why God said that all of mankind's illnesses and suffering originate with Satan: Satan uses knowledge and science to corrupt us. Satan fills us up with its absurd ideas, such as "Humans evolved from apes," "There has never been any Savior," "Knowledge can change people's fates," "Your fate is in your own hands," "Science saves people," and "Man can conquer nature." Satan has brainwashed mankind with these philosophies, rules, ideas and notions. They have occupied people's hearts and souls, and force people to have blind faith in knowledge and to worship science. People have the delusion that they can change their fates with knowledge or employ science to solve every difficult problem. People have taken Satan's absurd ideas to form the basis of their lives, and have thus been taken prisoner, bound, and controlled by Satan. People

have started to deny all that comes from God, to distance themselves from God's care and protection. Satan manipulates them like a puppeteer playing with his puppets, and I was just one of the many millions being harmed in this way. When I was ill, I relied on science to treat me; I blindly believed in and worshiped science. I really thought that the specialists in the famous hospitals, with their advanced techniques and modern medical facilities, would be able to cure my illness. But not only did my condition fail to improve, I actually ended up on the verge of death. The only things science brought me were dream-like hope and irredeemable pain. Science caused me to not believe in God, and so time and time again I rebelled against God, resisted Him, and refused His salvation. But despite my rebelliousness, God never gave up on my salvation, and has since used His words to guide me. Little by little, He has awakened my spirit, which had once been so smothered by knowledge and science. I, who had once been close to death, now came before God and gained God's salvation.

My husband continued to read God's words to me every day, and one day I heard these words of God: **"God created this world, He created this mankind and, moreover, He was the architect of ancient Greek culture and human civilization. Only God consoles this mankind, and only God cares for this mankind night and day. Human development and progress are inseparable from the sovereignty of God, and the history and future of mankind are inextricable from the designs of God. ... If mankind wishes to have a good fate, if a country wishes to have a good fate, then man must bow down to God in worship, repent and confess before God, or else the fate and destination of man will be an unavoidable catastrophe"** ("God Presides Over the Fate of All Mankind" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). This passage helped me realize that the fate of all people is in God's hands and that God is the source of human life. Only by coming before God, following God, and worshiping God can people have good destinies. When people move away from God, resist and abandon God and instead rely on Satan, they are handing themselves over to Satan. As a result, they will be harmed and trampled on by Satan, and will be subject to endless disasters and limitless suffering. This is how people harm themselves and bring about their own demise. At that moment, I realized just how foolish, blind, and pitiful I'd been. I saw that my views on knowledge and science were all just poison, just tools Satan used to corrupt me. All these years I was being poisoned by the devil, and now I regretted it immensely. From the bottom of my heart, I experienced a true longing for God. I was willing

to act like the people of Nineveh recorded in the Bible, to throw myself on the ground in front of God and confess and repent. I wanted to leave behind all my evil ways and accept the guidance and sustenance that God provided. I wanted to follow God and worship Him, and so I actively requested to be assigned hosting duties by the church. In my interactions with the brothers and sisters nobody looked down on me or disparaged me because of my illness. In fact, they gave me a huge amount of help and support and I always felt that I was surrounded by their sincere love.

After some time had passed, my illness still wasn't improving and so I began to make demands of God, asking God to help me get better. But the sisters fellowshipped the following with me: "God is the Creator of all things and we are the created, so no matter how God treats us we have to accept His orchestrations and arrangements. If we request things from God, we are just showing our unreasonableness. Curing illnesses, exorcizing demons, and performing miracles were part of the work of God during the Age of Grace, but now we are in the Age of Kingdom, and God's main work now is to accomplish everything through His words, to use words to cleanse and transform people's corrupt dispositions. God wants to turn us into people who obey Him, are loyal to Him, know Him, and love Him so that He can take a group of such people into the next era. What God wants is the love and obedience that people display naturally once they have come to know God. He does not want people to follow Him out of a sense of gratitude for healing their illnesses. As God's words say: **'People believe that when God saves man, He does so by moving them with His blessings and grace, so that they can give their hearts to God. That is to say, His touching man is His saving them. This sort of salvation is done by striking a deal. Only when God grants them a hundredfold will man come to submit before God's name and strive to do well for Him and bring Him glory. This is not what God intends for mankind. God has come to work on earth in order to save corrupt mankind; there is no falsehood in this. If there were, He would certainly not have come to do His work in person. In the past, His means of salvation involved showing the utmost love and compassion, such that He gave His all to Satan in exchange for the whole of mankind. The present is nothing like the past: The salvation bestowed upon you today occurs at the time of the last days, during the classification of each according to kind; the means of your salvation is not love or compassion, but chastisement and judgment, in order that man may be more thoroughly saved'** ("You Should Put Aside the Blessings

of Status and Understand God's Will to Bring Salvation to Man" in The Word Appears in the Flesh). So we should analyze and understand how we are motivated by a desire for blessings and how our relationship with God is transactional. We should also read more of God's words and implement them in our lives, accept the judgment and chastisement in God's words, accept the dealing, pruning, trials, and refinements, and seek to attain purification and transformation in our corrupt dispositions. Whether your illness will get better is in God's hands, and we should submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements."

Through the sisters' fellowship, I came to understand that just enjoying God's grace is not enough to change our satanic dispositions. Only by accepting God's judgment and chastisement of the last days can we rid ourselves of our corrupt dispositions, recover our conscience and reason, and thus attain God's salvation and become compatible with His will. All those Christians who don't accept God's work of the last days might well receive God's abundant grace, but they still live in a cycle of committing and confessing sins. This is because their corrupt dispositions haven't been cleansed, and so they travel around and expend themselves with the goal of gaining God's blessings and grace. In other words, they want to cut a deal with God and, as such, they'll never gain His approval. After I understood God's will, I stopped requesting God to cure my illness and instead made the firm commitment to believe in God and worship God no matter how good or bad my condition became. I committed myself to fulfilling my duties as one of the created, to pursuing truths and seeking to know God more earnestly, to ridding myself of my corrupt dispositions, and to living like a true human being in order to satisfy God. Once I started putting all this into practice, I felt great release in my heart and no longer felt bound or restricted by the pain of my illness, and was no longer so afraid of death. All I wished for was to completely hand myself over to God and obey His dictates and arrangements.

After that, I frequently got together with the brothers and sisters to read God's words, fellowship on truths, and sing hymns of praise to God. I felt that my heart had been greatly enriched, and with this enrichment came a decrease in my suffering. Even more mysterious was that, almost without realizing, the numbness in my legs started to fade and I slowly began to regain the ability to walk, eventually not having to rely on a wheelchair at all. What was even more unexpected was that one day my vision suddenly returned and I was able to see the words printed in the books of God's words. I could finally see God's words! I couldn't believe it, but I truly had experienced a miracle. The joy that I felt in my heart was

something indescribable, and so I continually prayed to God, thanking and praising Him. When I excitedly told my husband the good news, he was overcome with emotion. With tears in his eyes, he cried out over and over again, “Thank You God, thank You God!” Yes, it’s true—I submitted to God just a little bit and God bestowed this great blessing on me. I deeply felt how even though God’s work of the last days doesn’t involve performing miracles, the authority of God’s words far surpasses the authority of God’s miracles. God really is the almighty God, the God who loves people!

One day, my husband was in the county hospital and ran into the doctor who had been primarily responsible for treating me. The doctor asked him how the treatment of my kidney illness was progressing and if dialysis was being used. My husband replied: “She didn’t have dialysis but her condition is already improving. She can walk now, and she can see too!” The doctor was very surprised, and said: “Well, that’s a miracle. I thought she had already been on dialysis for a while now.”

Nowadays I live a normal life. My relatives, friends, and neighbors always express their surprise and say things like: “I never thought that your condition would improve so quickly. Physically and mentally you seem like a normal person!” Every time I hear something like this I say a few silent words of gratitude to God: “God, I will never forget, my whole life, the love You have shown me and Your salvation. Although there’s nothing I can do for You, I resolve to follow You, worship You and do my duty as one of Your created beings for the rest of my life to repay Your love.” I’d been deeply corrupted, I originally hadn’t recognized the existence of God, and time after time I’d refused God’s salvation, but not only did God not hold my transgressions against me He even saved me in a truly magnificent way. I have gained an immense amount of God’s mercy, and I know I’m totally unworthy of such grace. These powerful and abiding experiences have shown me that science and knowledge can’t save people, but will only bring people unending suffering, fear, and death. Only the Creator and Ruler of everything in the universe can give humans life and the sustenance that they need. God is the only foundation for the survival of mankind, and is mankind’s only hope and redemption. People’s only hope of having a good destiny is to worship God. I thank God for saving me—a person who was deeply hoodwinked by Satan and was close to death—from Satan’s influence. God brought me back to life and brought me back before Him, the Creator of all things. I now walk the brilliant path of life!

If you want to read more of God's words and know God's work of the last days, please contact us.

Gospel Website: <https://www.holyspiritspeaks.org>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/godfootstepsen>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/godfootstepsen>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/churchAlmighty>

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Blog: <https://en.blog.hidden-advent.org>

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