

APRIL 1985

# The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



**NOW!**  
**Prophecy**  
**Comes Alive**

# The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

APRIL 1985

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13



9

**Are You Letting  
Guilt Destroy You?  
See page 21**



## Contents:

Personal From Herbert W. Armstrong: How Your Financial Future Is Determined	1
Does Easter Commemorate the Resurrection?	2
Prophecy Comes Alive!	4
GN Focus: Does God Know What You Will Do Tomorrow?	9
Questions & Answers	11
Sharing: The Most Important Ingredient	13
"The Train's Done Gone"	14
Letters	18
Ministry: What Is the Holy Spirit?	19
Are You Letting Guilt Destroy You?	21
Prove All Things: What Is Man?	28

**COVER:** In symbol, the four horsemen of Revelation 6 portend cataclysmic events marking the end of the present age. Be sure to read this issue's fascinating study of Bible prophecy, beginning on page 4. Illustration by C. Winston Taylor.

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# How Your Financial Future Is Determined

**S**ome of our readers of *The Good News* are unemployed right now. Others may be in danger of losing their jobs.

And yet employers are even now hiring many thousands every month. Someone must replace those who retire, quit, die or are fired. Of course, new jobs constantly open as businesses expand, communities grow, buildings are built and people buy more goods.

Who will obtain these jobs depends on certain basic, unseen laws. There are definite economic laws that constantly regulate economic conditions.

I remember vividly the sudden, nose-dive depression of 1920. I was then a publishers' representative in Chicago, Ill. I was a member of the Chicago Association of Commerce, through its Advertising Club division.

In early January that year, at the regular, midweek Association of Commerce luncheon in the Cameo Room of the Morrison Hotel, the noted business analyst Roger Babson was the speaker.

He warned the businessmen of Chicago that within less than a year we were going to crash into the most drastic economic depression our generation had seen.

I noticed some important bankers and security brokers smile knowingly in disagreement. They were sure that Mr. Babson was

wrong. A year later Mr. Babson was again the speaker at the same association luncheon.

"I saw some of you businessmen smile, a year ago, when I warned you of the coming economic tragedy," he said. "Now let me tell you WHY I knew what was coming, and you didn't.

"When you want to know the temperature in the room, now, you look at the thermometer on the wall. But if you want to know what the temperature *will be*, an hour or two from now, the thermometer can't tell you. You go down to the boiler room, or consult the U.S. weather prophet.

"You look to the factors that *determine* conditions, not the thermometer that records conditions after they have occurred. You gentlemen looked at charts of current business activity, at bank clearings, records of freight car loadings, the stock market quotations — the thermometers on the wall. But," he continued, "there are LAWS that *govern* economic conditions. These laws are the factors which determine what conditions *will be*, a few months or a year from now. They are the CAUSES."

Yes, and *your own personal* economic future is determined by definite LAWS! Very few realize that the eternal Creator set in motion invisible yet inexorable LAWS, which regulate personal financial conditions!

In my 50 years in God's ministry, I have seen these laws *actual-*

*ly work* in the experiences of many people whom I have known personally. I have experienced their relentless working *in my own life!*

I had to learn this lesson *the hard way*, myself!

I have often mentioned on the air and in articles how God struck me down, not physically, but *economically*, to bring me to Him.

That very depression of 1920 destroyed my business in which I was making the equivalent of \$175,000 a year in today's money. Everything I touched turned, *not* to gold, like King Midas, but to loss of and lack of money. It was in poverty and hunger that God actually *conquered* me, and turned me to HIM, giving my life to HIM, more than 50 years ago.

But even after conversion — even after my ordination as a minister of Jesus Christ in 1931 — our family was still on the economic rocks. I had begun to learn something about God's law of tithing as a Bible *doctrine*. I had studied it in the Bible. I had learned — seen *PROVED* — that this law was still in effect.

Yet, in those early years, it didn't seem to apply to *me*. I had seen it as a doctrine to accept as true — *not* as a LAW that I, personally, must OBEY.

How many of YOU are right now like I was then?

For a few months I had been receiving a salary of \$20 per week as a minister, holding evangelistic

(Continued on page 24)

# Does Easter Commemorate the Resurrection?

*Jesus Christ did not rise on Easter Sunday!  
Here is an article explaining what  
Christ did command His Church to observe!*

By Herbert W. Armstrong

**H**ave you ever really stopped to consider *why* you believe the things you believe?

Where did you learn the custom of observing Easter?

"I learned it from childhood," you reply. Of course you learned it from childhood! But where did the custom *really* originate?

You have *supposed* it was part of the true Christian religion to observe Easter, Good Friday, Lent and Holy Week, to have colored Easter eggs, to dress up and go to church Easter Sunday. Yes, you have *supposed* the Bible taught these customs.

But *where* did God ever command you to keep any of them?

## The meaning of Easter

From a child you have been led to believe that Easter signified the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For 1,600 years the Western world has been taught that Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday morning.

Wide World photo These are merely some of the *fables* that the apostle Paul never taught. Christ did not rise Easter Sunday. He said He would be in the grave "three days and three

*nights.*" How can you figure 72 hours between so-called "Good Friday" at sunset and "Easter morning"? You will want to

slightly changed English spelling of the name of the ancient Assyrian goddess *Ishtar*. As Hislop says in *The Two Babylons*, Eas-



know *when* Jesus *did* rise from the dead, so write for our booklet *The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday*. It's free for the asking.

The name *Easter* is merely a

ter "bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than *Astarte*, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven, whose name, as pronounced

by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use" (page 103).

Easter, according to Webster's dictionary, comes from the name of the old Teuton goddess of spring. You probably never were taught that, were you?

But if Easter came from a pagan origin, where did we get Lent?

Not from the true Church! For Cassianus, who wrote in the fifth century, says: "It *ought* to be known that the observance of the forty days (Lent) had no existence, so long as the perfection of that primitive Church remained inviolate."

Jesus never observed Lent, nor did the apostles.

"The 40 days' abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonish goddess. Such a Lent of 40 days, 'in the spring of the year,' is still observed by the Yezidis or pagan devil-worshippers of Koordistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians" (from Hislop's *The Two Babylons*, pages 104-105).

Lent came from the ancient heathen sun-worship, not from Jesus Christ. The same is true of the use of hot cross buns, of dyed eggs and the Easter *sunrise* services. You will want to learn many more facts about these pagan customs that can't be included in this short article.

Write for our free booklet *The Plain Truth About Easter*, which explains these and many more facts you surely need to know.

### **Apostles observed Passover**

Instead of observing the customs of the churches of our day, the original *inspired* Church of God, under the guidance of the apostles, observed the Passover as Jesus commanded on the eve before His death. Even the writers of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition, realized that when writing their article "Easter": "There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. . . . The first Christians

continued the observance of the Jewish [that is, God's] festivals, though in a new spirit, *as commemorations of events* which those festivals had foreshadowed" (page 828).

Yes, the true, original Church kept the Passover annually when God commanded.

It was years later, after the death of the apostles, after many gentiles had made a profession of faith, that we find the observance of Easter beginning.

The gentiles began observing the day on Sunday, rather than on the eve of the 14th day of God's first month, when Jesus always kept the Passover, setting us an example. A controversy then arose between these gentiles, who were bringing pagan customs into the Western churches, beginning at Rome, and those who still remained faithful to the instructions of Jesus and the apostles.

Here is a brief sketch showing how the Easter that you have been taught from childhood crept into the churches:

"Polycarp, the disciple of John the Evangelist, and bishop of Smyrna, visited Rome in 159 to confer with Anicetus, the bishop of that see, on the subject, and urged the tradition *which he had received from the apostle* of observing the 14th day. . . . A final settlement of the dispute was one among the other reasons which led Constantine to summon the council of Nicaea in 325. . . . The decision of the council was unanimous that Easter was to be kept on Sunday, and on the same Sunday throughout the world, and that 'none hereafter should follow the blindness of the Jews'" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition, pages 828-829).

That, in plain language, is how the apostate church decreed that none should follow the ways of Christ — the ways of the TRUE Christian Church! That's where the universal custom of observing Easter in the churches began.

### **It was prophesied**

This astonishing account of the injection of Easter into the church, which is much more thor-

oughly documented in our free booklet *The Plain Truth About Easter*, was prophesied by Jesus and the apostles. They did not tell of a widespread, popular growth of the true New Testament Church, but of a FALLING AWAY FROM THE TRUTH on the part of the great majority.

Prophesying of this universal FALLING AWAY from the faith that Jesus delivered for you and me to keep, Paul wrote the Thesalonians, "The *mystery of iniquity* doth already work" (II Thesalonians 2:7, Authorized Version) — only some 30 years after the Church began! He referred to the very "Chaldean Mysteries," of which Easter and Christmas were the two chief festivals!

In another place, Peter wrote, "Many will follow their destructive ways" (II Peter 2:2).

So today, it's the *many*, not the *few*, who are going the wrong way. It is the *many* who are keeping Easter, which God never once commanded, but it is only the *few* who are observing the ordinance which God, through Jesus Christ, commanded.

Remember, the broad way leads to destruction. Let's quit these pagan customs and return to the faith once delivered.

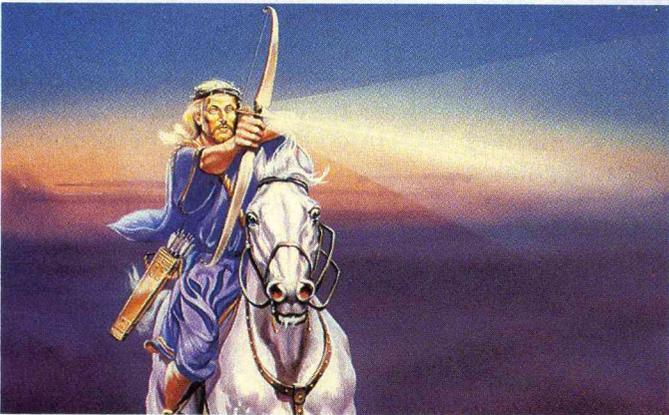
### **What God did command**

The "communion," often misnamed the "Lord's Supper," is actually the Passover — as the ordinance should properly be called. On observing the Passover, as on every practice, Jude exhorts that we should "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

Now that we know the *pagan* origin of the Easter celebration, let's clear away the web of error that covers the truth about keeping the Passover, the memorial of Christ's death. Let's examine the way Jesus observed this ordinance, because we can't be wrong if we follow His example.

In Luke 22:14-20, we read, "And when the *hour had come*, He [Jesus] sat down. . . . And He took bread, gave thanks and

(Continued on page 26)



# Prophecy Comes

*The skillful structure of Bible prophecy has been largely ignored. Artistic craftsmanship, while adding force and beauty to the prophecies, also helps cloak God's message from the careless and disobedient.*

By K. Neil Earle

**S**ometimes menacing, sometimes sublime — yet always vivid and arresting — Bible prophecy speaks to all of us across the centuries.

The eternal God of Israel, Himself an author (Hebrews 5:9), so stamped His prophets with His message that in His hands they became powerful,

eloquent instruments (II Peter 1:21).

“A lion has roared! Who will not fear?” cried Amos. “The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?” (Amos 3:8).

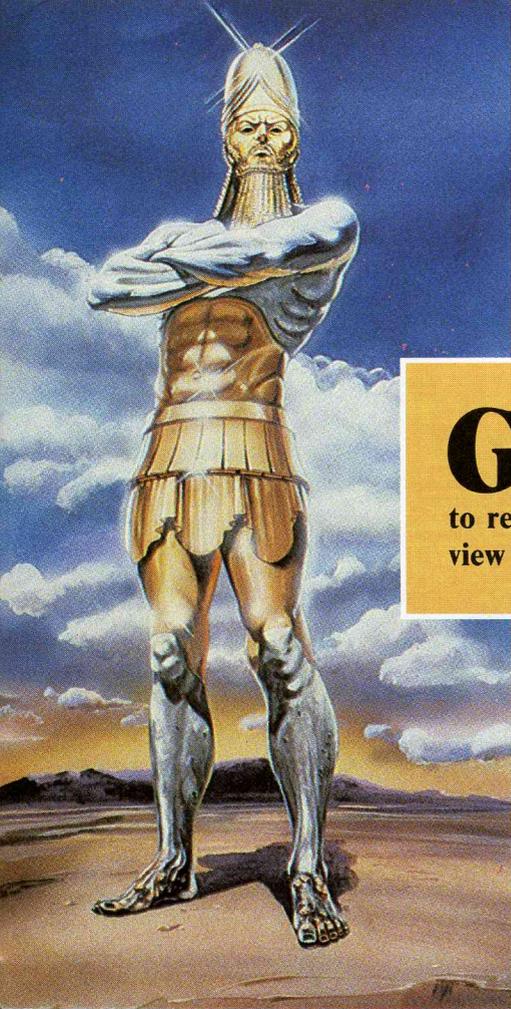
Some passages of Bible prophecy are, like Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, disarmingly simple yet deeply profound.

Yet often God inspired His servants to use dramatic, artistic techniques in recording His

prophecies, resulting in powerful literature that sealed the messages until God's time for revealing them (Daniel 12:9, I Corinthians 2:7, Revelation 5:3).

Sometimes, too, prophetic passages remain a mystery (Revelation 10:7) until certain historic and contextual matters are clarified.

“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,” wrote Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived,



**G**od inspired His servants to use dramatic techniques to record prophecy. Here, an artist's view of prophetic symbols.

one phase in God's plan; the spiritual phase comes later and is more significant.

So we have the duality principle: Old and New Testaments, Mt. Sinai and the Sermon on the Mount, the "congregation in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38) and the

the scholars think that the prophecy is redundant (Matthew 24:6, 16-21).

Not so. For one thing, Christ has not yet visibly appeared, as He promised in verses 29 and 30. Verse 22 is clearly speaking of our time: "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved."

Human extinction has been possible only in our generation. Matthew 24 is dual, as any careful study will reveal.

### Typology

Certain events and personalities in the past foreshadow or symbolize future conditions. This is typology.

In Hosea 11:1, for example, the nation of Israel stands as a symbol of Jesus Christ Himself: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son." Matthew 2:15 applies this verse to the time Joseph and Mary sojourned briefly in Egypt to protect the infant Jesus.

Strange? Not if we remember how nations can symbolize people and vice versa ("Uncle Sam," "John Bull"). Winston Churchill personified the "bulldog spirit" of Great Britain in 1940, and many times the nation of Israel personified some of Christ's actions (Isaiah 49:3-6).

In the same way, David's agonized cry of "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Psalm 22:1) directly foreshadowed Christ's sufferings on the stake. Many of the Psalms reveal David as a type or symbol of the Messiah (verses 6-8, 16-18, Psalm 2:7, 12).

This principle clarifies many future prophecies. Daniel 11, the longest prophecy in Scripture, time-wise, is a good example. Daniel 11:1-20 surveys various political trends from the sixth century B.C. to the second century B.C. As most commentaries show, however, beginning in verse 21 one figure predominates. This was King Antiochus Epiphanes of the Seleucid Empire in Syria (176 to 163 B.C.).

Yet Daniel 11:40 mentions "the time of the end" — the pul-

Church of God (I Corinthians 1:2), physical circumcision and circumcision of the heart (Deuteronomy 10:16). Paul even shows that there is duality, at present, in the Godhead (I Corinthians 8:6).

Does this principle apply to prophecy? Yes. Isaiah 41:22 states it directly: "Let them show the former things, what they were, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them."

So prophecies may have dual fulfillments, with the secondary fulfillment more significant than the first.

Malachi 4:5 illustrates this point. Malachi predicted that an Elijah-like figure would precede the first appearance of the Messiah; Christ interpreted that this prophecy referred to John the Baptist (Matthew 17:12-13).

But notice verses 10 and 11 of Matthew 17: "And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Elijah truly is coming first and will restore all things.'"

So although John the Baptist was the prior fulfillment of Malachi 4:5, there is to be a latter-day fulfillment in our time! Christ Himself confirmed this duality.

Missing this crucial principle leads scholarly theologians to overlook the focal point of prophecy — Matthew 24. Because the brutal Roman armies virtually destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70,

"but the glory of kings is to search out a matter" (Proverbs 25:2).

Armed with this background, let's study seven important principles that help clarify the "living oracles" (Acts 7:38).

### Duality

God's entire plan of salvation is a prime example of this first technique. The apostle Paul explained this dual aspect in I Corinthians 15:45-46:

"And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual."

The physical creation is only

# Alive!

sating 20th century in which you and I live. The point is that there is no historical evidence that Antiochus Epiphanes ever fulfilled verses 40 to 45. What he did from 168 to 165 B.C. is remembered by most orthodox Jews to this very day.

For more than three years Antiochus forbade the Jews' daily sacrifices in the Temple, and commanded swine's flesh to be offered instead. This was preceded by the slaughter of many of Jerusalem's citizens. Daniel 11:31 refers to this as "the abomination of desolation."

Incredibly, though, Jesus Christ warned His disciples: "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place,' (whoever reads, let him understand), 'then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains'" (Matthew 24:15-16).

Jesus Christ reveals, then, that Antiochus Epiphanes and his despicable actions are only a type or foreshadowing of a still more nefarious event yet to occur in Jerusalem. This makes Daniel 11 the key to prophesied events in the Middle East. Typology thus helps us understand the future (Daniel 12:10).

### Time lapses

Travelers who see on the horizon two mountain ranges, one range behind the other, often think the two ranges are close together. By the time they reach the first mountain range, however, they see that dozens or even hundreds of miles lie between the ranges.

Similarly, in Bible prophecy time measurements are often compressed. It is not unusual for prophecies to span thousands of years, yet be constructed in such a way that they seem limited to one time period.

Isaiah 9:6 is an interesting example of the time-lapse method in Bible prophecy. The first phrase in this verse states: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given." This is a well-known reference to Jesus Christ's

birth in Bethlehem. Now notice the next phrase: "And the government will be upon His shoulder." Incredibly, in just one phrase, Isaiah's prophecy has jumped ahead almost 2,000 years, from Christ's first coming as a humble infant in Bethlehem to

**J**esus Christ will smash a group of 10 nations (in prophecy, the toes of a metal image) at His Second Coming.

His dramatic Second Coming in power and majesty to control the government of this earth (Revelation 11:15).

Genesis 40:9-11 is another vivid illustration of this prophetic time-lapse principle. In the butler's dream, the vine thrust forth its blossoms, grapes shot forth and the juice turned instantaneously into wine.

Today we would call it time-lapse photography.

The parable of the 10 virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) epitomizes the history of the true Church of God, for those who understand the symbolism of God's Church as a young virgin (II Corinthians 11:2).

The bridegroom in the parable obviously represents Christ Himself (Matthew 9:15). So Matthew 25:5 relates the sorry condition of the true Church following the energetic apostolic era of the first century: "While the bridegroom [Christ] was delayed, they all slumbered and slept."

Yes, God's true Church almost disappeared from history! But notice verse 6: "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him.'"

Now the prophecy has jumped ahead to our day! After a lapse of 1,900 years, the Church of God is taking on new life, reinvigorated to announce that the Bridegroom, Christ, is soon to appear at the wedding supper (Revelation 19:7-9).

What a thrilling encouragement to those of us in this work



today, and what a vivid example of time-lapse technique in Bible prophecy!

### Understanding the historical background

The future thrust of many prophecies is often evident once the historical background and past fulfillments are considered.

Take Daniel 2, for example. Here Daniel explains to King Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon the meaning of a resplendent metal image about which the king had dreamed. The head was gold, the breast and arms silver, the belly and thighs brass (verse 32).

These symbols are interpreted for us in verse 38: "You [Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire] are this head of gold." How clear!

Here we see the Bible interpreting itself.

Verse 39: "But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule

over all the earth.”

Most historians record this clear progression of empires from the sixth century B.C. onward: Chaldean-Babylonian Empire (625 to 538 B.C.), Medo-Persian Empire (538 to 330 B.C.), Greco-Macedonian Empire (333 to 31 B.C.).

This historic sequence sets the stage for vital end-time prophecies. How? Because Daniel lists no other empire after the fourth. The fourth system must thus hold sway until the end time and be readily identifiable today — and it is. History proves it.

Around 31 B.C. the Roman city-state consolidated its rise to empire. From then until A.D. 476 it dominated world politics. It was a divided empire after Constantinople became the eastern capital around A.D. 325 (hence the two iron legs of verse 33).

The 10 toes are to be smashed by Christ, the Rock (Daniel 2:34, I Peter 2:8), and sure enough, Revelation 17:12-14 shows the “Lamb” (the prophetic code word for Christ) destroying a group of 10 nations at His return.

Clearly, the availability of historical records to help us plot out how far we have come in prophecy is part of the knowledge explosion predicted for these last days (Daniel 12:4). History is a useful tool that helps bring us up to date and lets us know how far we have come in God’s plan.

### “Here a little, there a little”

Isaiah 28:9-10 states a cardinal principle of effective Bible study strikingly relevant to the field of prophecy:

“Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.”

This principle is restated in verse 13.

Jesus said to “search the Scriptures” (John 5:39), an activity for

which the Bereans were commended (Acts 17:10-11). The point is that it is wise to survey all the particular prophecies bearing on a subject instead of rushing in with a snap judgment or some instant pet interpretation (II Peter 1:20).

Not grasping this principle, some interpreters have created theological quagmires in the “beast chapters,” Revelation 13 and 17.

Speculation abounds! Pseudo-scholars have authoritatively elected Germany as the leopard, Russia as the bear and Great Britain as the lion.

Why is this erroneous? Let the Bible interpret the Bible. The symbols of the leopard, bear and lion are presented in another beast chapter — Daniel 7. Yet Daniel 7 is amplified by Daniel 2, where the four great gentile empires are outlined, beginning with Babylon (Daniel 2:32, 38) and following through to Persia, Greece and Rome (Daniel 2:39-40).

Thus the composite beast of Revelation 13 and 17 is a code that can be cracked by the “here a little, there a little” principle.

There is logic, consistency and internal structure in Bible prophecy. We must allow the Bible to interpret itself and clarify vague scriptures with clearer ones.

### Poetic devices

Approaching Hebrew thought patterns of 2,500 years ago sometimes presents problems for modern readers. A scientific age such as ours looks for precision in literature. Extraneous material is often deleted to fit the time constraints of today’s reader. Logic is paramount.

Yet the ancient Hebrews operated on a more intuitive, emotional level while retaining striking dramatic force.

Where Greek language, for example, is more technically

expressive (hence different words to express our English word *love*), Hebrew writing depends more upon context, sense of the passage and various degrees of emphasis and repetition. This less inhibited mode of expression frees up the language for powerful, eloquent and emotional passages often lyrical in their dramatic content.

Examples? Note forceful, spontaneous passages in David’s psalms (Psalms 6:6, 64:3), or the simple yet powerful tone of Ruth 1:16:

“Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.”

This emotional intensity has survived more than 3,000 years of transmission and helped make the King James Bible a masterpiece of English literature. Yet this very emotional richness and figurative dramatic force pose problems for more literal-minded, rational moderns.

To most people today, for example, poetry consists of rhym-



ing sounds: “Poems are made by fools like me, but only God can make a tree.”

To the ancient Hebrews, however, poetry consisted of matching, reversing or balancing thoughts. Striking word pictures and rugged metaphors abound in the prophetic writings, some of

which have become classic English idiom:

“Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?” (Jeremiah 13:23).

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness” (Isaiah 40:3).

“But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree” (Micah 4:4).

“Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” (Amos 3:3).

Even more subtly, inspired writers capitalized on such striking effects as repetition, poetic reversal and major and minor themes alternating and recurring after discrete interludes.

One example of this skillful thought pattern is Psalm 1:1, where three of the most common activities of everyday life — walking, standing and sitting — portray the total effect of a life devoted to God.

Purposeful and metrically paced repetition is the key to the emotionally satisfying cadence of Psalm 124:1-2:

“‘If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,’ let Israel now say — ‘If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us.’”

Prophetic passages abound with these poetic devices. Amos’ elegantly organized “for three transgressions . . . and for four” (Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 13) masterfully subdivides his message into a wave-like pattern that listeners and readers can more easily assimilate.

Joel’s ingenious reversal of Isaiah’s colorful “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks” (Isaiah 2:4) is an adept attention-getter (Joel 3:10).

These literary devices enhance the weight and force of God’s message to man. Yet they can also hide that message from those who look for excuses to turn their backs on God (Isaiah 6:10, Matthew 11:25).

Daniel 9:26-27 is a pertinent example. Here the prophet has arranged two separate themes in “layer-cake” style — A, B, A, B. This is a common device in symphonies to this day. Especially in

classical music, listeners are familiar with major or minor themes becoming alternated, restated and recapitulated.

Notice the first thought (A) in Daniel 9:26: “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself.”

This messianic reference is completed in the first phase of verse 27:

“Then he [the Messiah] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.”

Not grasping the poetic structure here has caused some interpreters to force thought B (“the people of the prince who is to come”) in verse 26 together with thought A. They have tried to make the prince who destroys Jerusalem identical with the Messiah. This does not fit.

### Blending

Seemingly obscure or jumbled passages often contain interesting literary patterns. This helps us appreciate blended prophecies like Isaiah 7 and 8.

Here the prophet announces to King Ahaz of Judah that his own (Isaiah’s) son will prophetically foreshadow the doom of the neighboring kingdom of Israel (Isaiah 8:18).

Yet embedded in these prophecies relating to Israel and Judah in the eighth century B.C. we find one of the great themes of all the prophecies — the Messiah, specifically Christ’s birth to a young virgin (Isaiah 7:14). Isaiah’s son, named Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (meaning, roughly, “the spoil speeds, the prey hastens”), by his very name testified to Israel’s imminent defeat at the hands of Assyria in 721 B.C.

So we have two births, two sons, two themes occurring in the same prophetic chapters. Blended here also are prophetic references to Christ’s rejection by His own people (Isaiah 8:14), Christ’s disciples and the preservation and perpetuation of the canon (verse 16).

Yet Matthew 1:23 is sure proof that Isaiah 7:14, the passage

about “Immanuel,” refers directly to Christ’s birth, not the birth of Isaiah’s son. The blending of major and minor themes here has masked, to a certain extent, the prophecy of Christ’s birth to a virgin.

Illogical? No. This approach is “plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge” (Proverbs 8:9). Psalm 111:10 tells us that those who keep God’s commandments will have a “good understanding.” That is precisely where most people err. Not approaching the prophecies prayerfully, carefully and humbly — seeking to act on the knowledge revealed — totally short circuits most people’s understanding.

One major reason God inspired these subtle but skillful techniques in prophecy was to ensure that a right attitude would have to precede understanding (Matthew 18:3-4). The childlike willingness to act on revealed truth is one of the first rules of effective Bible study. Unless the willingness to obey is there, the prophecies will remain a mystery (Isaiah 29:11).

God’s dynamic inspiration of His writers often flowed into creative, artistic channels. These devices enhanced the value of His Word as literature, yet also helped cloak the true message to those who had not been called to understand it.

“Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden” (verse 14).

Yet, paradoxically, we who have been given the precious gift of understanding these truths (Daniel 12:10, Proverbs 1:7) can marvel at the variety and diversity in God’s revelation to us. Bible prophecy is replete with treasures that God wants His chosen people to dig out and examine (Proverbs 2:1-5).

Surely David’s exultant cry should be ours: “I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure” (Psalm 119:162). □

# Does God Know What You Will Do Tomorrow?

**G**od knows everything — right?

Right.

So God must know what you are going to do tomorrow, and the next day, and the next — right?

No, not necessarily.

God is certainly all-wise and all-knowing. He knows every-

thing there is to know about you. Some even believe that they have been predestined to be saved while others are inevitably predestined to be lost!

They have, unfortunately, totally misunderstood the scriptures on the subject of predestination. We have a free booklet entitled *Predestination — Does the Bible*

course of their lives, and if it is therefore beyond their control.

Scriptures such as James 4:13-15 and Luke 12:16-20 seem to indicate that God has already decided what is going to happen to us tomorrow, and that there is no point in our making plans. If good things happen, that is God's will. And if bad things take place? Well, that was also "meant to happen."

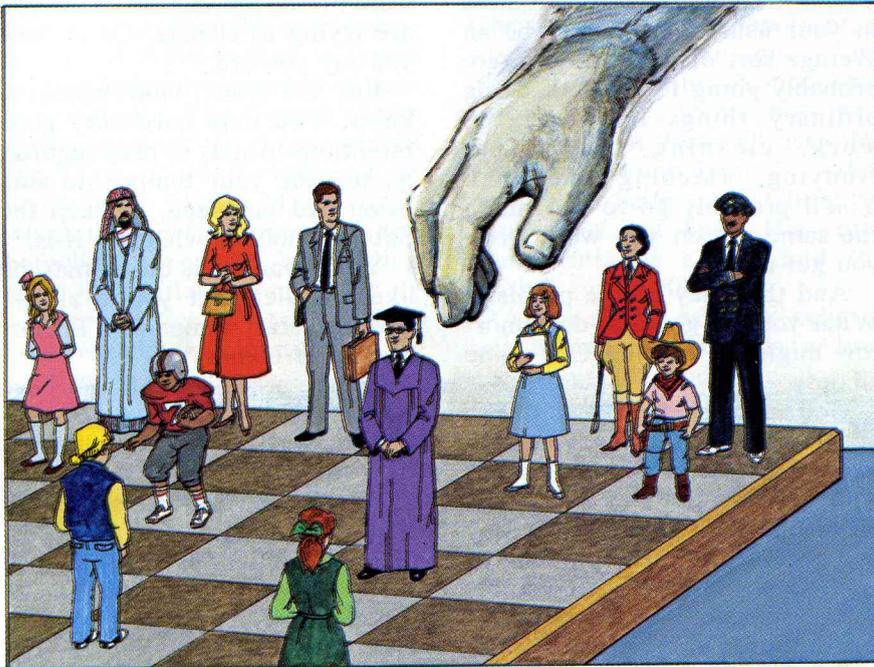
The Bible certainly does show that God is able to decide what happens in the future, and reserves the right to override any individual's plans. He has intervened often in the course of events. He has had to make sure that the right people are in the right place at the right time in order that some aspect of His master plan can be fulfilled.

But this is not His usual way, and it is probably not going to be *your* experience. Most of us have not been called for special individual missions or to perform earth-shattering miracles. We are ordinary people whose minds have been opened to the truth of God.

In that sense God *has* intervened in your life. And if He has, it has a lot to do with the topic we are discussing. The fact that you have an interest and understand is evidence that God is drawing you to Him, and that you are a part of His plan now.

But if that plan is to succeed, God cannot plot every move of your life from now on. So He doesn't know what you're going to do tomorrow. But He would like to know.

Many readers of this magazine may be understanding the truth



thing there is to know about you. He knows what you are doing now and what you did yesterday. He even knows how many hairs you have on your head (Matthew 10:30).

But He doesn't know what you're going to do tomorrow. He doesn't know that because it hasn't been decided yet. And God does not decide it. You do.

A lot of people don't understand this. They have an almost fatalistic superstitious belief that

*Teach It?* that explains those scriptures thoroughly, and we would be pleased to send it to you if you would like it.

## Is your future decided?

We won't go into that aspect of predestination in this article, since most people do not believe in fate so strongly as to believe that their eventual salvation or damnation is predetermined. But many do wonder if God has to some extent plotted the future

and the plan of God for the first time in their lives. They are finding a new interest in the Bible. Their minds are becoming filled with new knowledge.

Perhaps they are beginning to obey the laws and commandments of God more diligently than ever before. Maybe they have even begun to pray regularly for the first time.

Does that describe you? If so, you can thank God for it. He has begun to open your mind. You could not have opened it for yourself, however open-minded you might claim to be (I Corinthians 2:11-12, 14). Understanding requires the working of the Spirit of God, if even the best brain is to really get the point.

Contrary to what many have been taught, God is not trying to save this world now. He is opening the minds of only a very few. Jesus knew this, so He was not frustrated by His apparent lack of success during His earthly ministry 2,000 years ago. He did not try to save the world then, and He is not worried about the lack of knowledge of Christianity in the world of today. If you have not already read it, be sure to write for our free article "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?"

That doesn't mean, of course, that Jesus Christ doesn't care about the people of this world. He loves them and He died for them. And one day they will feature greatly in His plans for all the human race.

But Jesus knows and accepts what He once explained to His critics, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44). If God the Father has decided not to call them yet, Christ abides by that decision. Let them live out their lives. Their time will come.

### **Tomorrow and you**

But you may be different. If this magazine is beginning to make sense to you, and if the words of the Bible are starting to come to life, and if you are beginning to act on what you know, then God is calling you. And if

you are one who is able to come to Christ because God has drawn you, you can be certain that He is very concerned about what you do now and in the future.

Jesus Christ takes seriously the responsibility of being a good shepherd to God's people. He strives not to lose even one person that the Father has drawn to Him (John 10:27-29, 17:12).

So you can be sure that He is watching over every aspect of your life carefully. You may be giving Him some anxious moments. That's why He would like to know what you are going to do tomorrow.

He has, of course, a fairly good idea. Human beings are predictable. Tomorrow you probably are going to perform your normal workday or weekend routine. You'll face usual circumstances in your usual way. It will be an average sort of day, and you are probably going to spend it doing ordinary things like going to work, cleaning the house, studying, watching television. You'll probably go to bed much the same person you were when you got up.

And that may be the problem. What you are going to do tomorrow might be causing God some anxiety.

God must get to know His people, just as they must get to know Him. One day soon He's going to change them from mortal to immortal so that they may live forever in the Kingdom of God. God will give them important responsibilities with power and authority over others.

But first He must know what they will do with that power. Will they use it, as Christ does, to serve and do good? Or like Satan, a great immortal being who became perverted and now uses his great powers only to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10)?

God must know. He must be able to predict what we are going to do and how we are going to act once we have been given eternal life. The basis of that prediction is what we do now in this life.

God has got to know you. He

must know the kind of decisions you will make concerning right and wrong. He's given you freedom of choice since He wants His sons and daughters to choose to obey Him, even in the face of any and all opposition.

God must allow us that freedom of choice. Otherwise the Kingdom would be full of preprogrammed, obedient automatons, but not lively sons and daughters who can share the joys of eternal life with Him.

### **Getting to know you**

"Therefore by their fruits you will know them," said Jesus (Matthew 7:20). Your fruits — what you do — show where you are spiritually. Perhaps before you came to understand the way you should live, those fruits weren't too good. But now you are trying to change. Or at least you say you are.

But are you? God needs to know. You may have very good intentions to start to pray regularly, to keep your temper, to stop using bad language, to keep the Sabbath holy or whatever it is.

You mean well, but it may be like the diet that you're always going to start tomorrow. Tomorrow never comes.

On the other hand, if you have been diligent and begun to practice the ways of God in your life, then you will probably keep doing so tomorrow. And the longer you have been doing it, the more predictable you will be. In your case God knows that most likely tomorrow will find you obeying Him once again.

But you don't have to. You are still a free moral agent with the power of choice. Some people have given up after years of living a Christian life. It is unlikely that you will throw it all away tomorrow, but it could happen if you decide to do it.

So based on what you have done so far with the knowledge you have been given, God has a good idea about what you will do tomorrow — good or bad.

But you could surprise Him! □

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## What is the origin of April Fools' Day?

April Fools' Day — or All Fools' Day, as it is also known — is of ancient origin, although its exact origin is obscure. The custom of playing practical jokes on friends on a particular day or sending them on fools' errands was practiced from earliest times.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*: "What seems certain is that it [April Fools' Day] is in some way or other a relic of those once universal festivities held at the vernal equinox, which, beginning on old New Year's Day, the 25th of March, ended on the 1st of April. This view gains support from the fact that the exact counterpart of April-fooling is found to have been an immemorial custom in India. The festival of the spring equinox is there termed the feast of Huli, the last of which is the 31st of March, upon which the chief amusement is the befooling of people by sending them on fruitless errands."

The practice of April-fooling long antedates Christianity, its roots buried in dimmest antiquity. Obviously, April Fools' Day is of pagan origin!

Another source declares: "To find the practice so widely prevalent over the earth, and with so near a coincidence of day, seems to indicate that it has had a very early origin amongst mankind" (*Book of Days*, page 462).

Since the evidence is overwhelming that April Fools' Day stems from ancient pagan custom and tradition, and since the Bible, the Word of God, nowhere teaches Christians to partake in observing such a day of mockery, foolishness, jesting and ridicule, and since God actually condemns foolish jesting in His Word (Ephesians 5:4), followers of Jesus Christ should have nothing to do with this custom.

God commands Christians, "Learn not the way of the

heathen" (Jeremiah 10:2, Authorized Version). Regarding worldly customs inherited from heathenism, God declares: "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you" (II Corinthians 6:17).

**The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). I have been told that we don't have to obey God's commandments, but that we can still be saved just as long as we believe. Is this right?**

What do you mean, *believe*? The word *believe* implies faith, conviction, trust, certainty.

If we believe on or in Jesus Christ — and, more important, if we believe *what He says* — we come to know Him. Notice what I John 2:4 says about those who claim to know Jesus Christ: "He who says, 'I know Him,'" — that is, he who believes on Christ — "and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Anyone who says he believes but refuses to obey is a liar, according to God. He doesn't really believe what Jesus Christ said. What did Jesus say? What did He command us to believe? "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15, Authorized Version). The Gospel deals with obedience! Notice:

"If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17).

"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (I John 2:3).

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (I John 5:3).

Acts 5:29 says, "We ought to obey God." And to whom does God give His Spirit? "To those who obey Him" (verse 32).

"Faith [belief] without works is dead" (James 2:26).

Why is obedience so neces-

sary? Because "the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Romans 7:12). The law of God is good for you. Sin is bad for you. That's why Jesus Christ commands you to obey God's law — it's for your own good!

Will you believe Him?

**Why didn't God reprove Abraham for having a child by Hagar? Wasn't that a case of adultery?**

The Creator of the universe set in motion a living, dynamic, active law. That law, when violated, brings on misery, heartache and death, unless repented of. Abraham violated that law, and he suffered the penalty.

Abraham and Sarah for the moment lacked faith in God's promise to provide them with an heir (Genesis 15:1-6), and Sarah urged Abraham to produce an heir through Hagar, her maid (Genesis 16:2).

Let's notice the result: "Then Sarai said unto Abram, 'My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she [Hagar] saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes'" (Genesis 16:5).

Yes, they knew they had sinned. Not only did their consciences trouble them, but their deeds brought family problems, animosity, resentment and contempt. The rest of their physical lives was not to be the same. Abraham and Sarah learned an important lesson.

Too many people have the idea that God is a harsh monster who fiendishly punishes human beings the moment they step out of line. No such thing — God set a law in motion to bring us peace and happiness. When we break that law, we bring on ourselves the penalty of sin and suffering.

God designed human beings as free moral agents with capability of making decisions, thereby developing character through experience. God gave man His law

to help guide and direct him in living a happy, abundant life. David said: "Oh, how I love Your law! . . . Your word is a lamp to my feet" (Psalm 119:97, 105).

Yes, Abraham did break God's law, and it was a bitter lesson not soon forgotten. Abraham did repent, of course, and was blessed by God. But that mistake of Sarah's and Abraham's is with us yet — in the animosity between Jew and Arab today!

**How did we get the Bible? Can we be sure that the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures have been accurately preserved?**

God works through human instruments. He worked through a human, physical nation in preserving the Old Testament. That nation was the House of Judah, the people we call Jews today.

At Mt. Sinai, God gave the lively oracles to the "church [the physical national Israel] in the wilderness" through Moses (Acts 7:37-38, Authorized Version). Out of the 12 tribes of Israel, God chose and commissioned one tribe, the Jews, to preserve His Word. In Romans 3:1-2, Paul wrote: "What advantage then has the Jew? . . . Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God."

The Jews have carefully preserved the original, inspired Hebrew Old Testament for us to this day. The basic reason, of course, is that only the Jews have kept an understanding of Hebrew. All the other tribes lost their language and do not speak Hebrew today.

But the Jews as a nation rejected both Jesus and the record of His message and life. Since the Jews would not preserve the story and message of God's own Son, God led the apostles to use Greek, the most widespread language of their day, for the New Testament record. Greek was a highly developed, precise, accurate language, and was known throughout the Roman Empire. For centuries, the inspired original New Testament

was copied and preserved in the Greek world for us today.

God has made it His responsibility to see that both Jews and Greeks have carefully copied the Scriptures from generation to generation. God has not left it to men to decide what is His Word.

Now, in this 20th century, God has raised up a work in the House of Israel — in the English-speaking world — to carry the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations. Neither the Jews nor the Greeks were willing or able to fulfill that commission.

To carry out His work through His true Church today, God has had His Word translated into the leading modern languages from the original Hebrew and Greek. Now all may hear and, if God is calling them and they are willing, understand!

**Can a person understand the Bible on his own? I've been trying to understand the Bible for a long time, but I'm more confused than ever.**

The Bible records an example of a man who sought to find God on his own and failed. Notice it in Acts 8:26-40.

Philip, a deacon in the New Testament Church, met an Ethiopian man of great authority. Sitting in his chariot on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, the Ethiopian was reading in his Bible the prophecies of Isaiah.

Philip asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" (verse 30).

The Ethiopian replied simply, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" (verse 31).

Here was an educated man of responsibilities and accomplishments, the treasurer of a queen's wealth. But he realized that unless a minister helped him, he could not understand God's Word. Verse 35 shows that Philip gave him the instruction he sought: "Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him."

You can on your own under-

stand some of your own Bible, but the Bible itself reveals that God has sent teachers like Philip to make the whole truth plain.

Notice what Paul wrote in Romans 10:13-15: "For 'whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, unless they are sent?"

Here is the key to understanding your Bible. First, you must determine who the ministers are that God Almighty has sent. Listen with an open mind to those who are God's faithful and true servants, willing to believe what you are taught out of your own Bible. As verse 17 says, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

If you would like to begin a thorough study of your own Bible, enroll now in the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. This is a unique Bible study course — the only textbook you need is your own Bible. This course provides an easy-to-follow, step-by-step study to help you learn the basic truths of God's Word.

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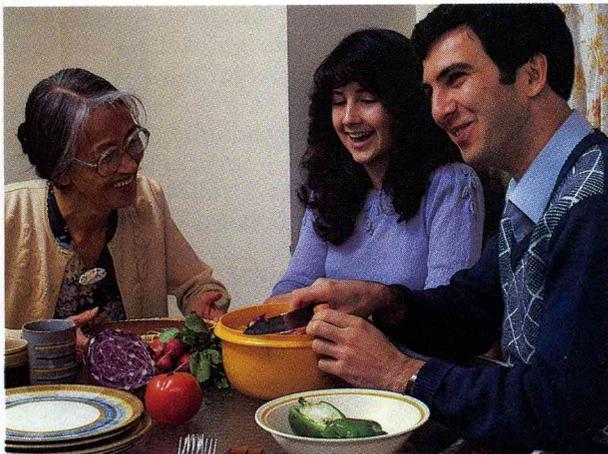
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Lessons are sent to you monthly, and periodic quizzes help you chart your own progress. Send for your first free lesson now. □

# The Most Important Ingredient

“Invite someone to *my* place for a meal? Oh, you see, I couldn’t, because. . . .” And there usually follows one or a combination of often used reasons, such as: “I can’t afford it.” “My place doesn’t lend itself to entertaining.” “I can’t cook.” “I don’t feel up to it.”



Too bad. Some of the most enjoyable and memorable person-to-person experiences take place around the sharing of food. But it really isn’t the food itself that counts.

I can recall with every bit as much pleasure sharing a pot of beans around a campfire as I can recall dining in various plush restaurants. The smoky-tasting beans served on a limp paper plate were as satisfying as roast duckling on the finest china.

Why? Because of the company. And the conversation.

Proverbs 15:17 expresses it this

way: “Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a fatted calf with hatred.” What counts is love — true outgoing concern. That is the most important ingredient in a social occasion. All other factors are merely trimmings.

## A widow’s example

I for one will be forever glad that a remarkable widow in God’s Church knew and practiced this principle. She died years ago, but scores of people, now scattered all around the world, who at some time or another ate at her table, whose lives she touched, will recognize the person to whom I am referring.

If anyone ever had an excuse for not inviting others to eat with her, this woman did. As a widow living off government assistance, her means were quite limited. She made no secret that she shopped in the thrift and second-hand stores. The mismatched furniture in her tiny apartment, the dishes her guests ate from — for all I know, most of it came from such sources.

But that didn’t matter. Love was present, and that’s what counted.

In addition, though, it seemed that there was always an abundance of food at her place. It was there whether she had to haul it herself (she had no car) or whether it came as a result of the many potluck meals that never would

have taken place had she not gotten the ball rolling and provided the location for them to happen.

## Bringing people together

In the latter months of her life, this woman’s face became severely deformed from cancer of the mouth. The laughter that had always been so generous was now pained. Only with difficulty could she converse. Her energy waned and she had to lie down much of the time.

But that didn’t stop her from doing what she did so well: She continued to bring people together to have potlucks at her place, though she herself had to recline and suffer in silence, not able to fully participate.

She brought people together. Food happened to be present at the same time. It’s a great combination. Jesus talked about such occasions in His coming Kingdom (Luke 12:37, 22:29-30, Revelation 19:9). This widow served that way. Had she not, many who

presently enjoy friendships made at her table would be the poorer.

I learned a great lesson from her. Invite people over to share food? No need to worry about the furniture. Or the carpet. Or the kind of food. Or any other physical



factors. If love is present, everything else is secondary. □

Photos by G.A. Belluche Jr.

# 'The Train's Done Gone'

*The old stationmaster heard all kinds of excuses from late passengers, but no excuse was to any avail. Here's a lesson about qualifying for the Kingdom of God.*

By William J. Kessler



**“I** ain’t never seen the likes since I’s been born — how the people keep a-comin’ and the train’s done gone.”

These were the words of an old friend of mine, the railroad stationmaster of my boyhood hometown. The son of a former slave, living deep in the southern United States, he advanced himself to the highest position in our depot through a lifetime of dedicated service to the railroad.

I remember him with white hair, standing tall with a dignity that I envied as a child.

In those days a stationmaster was an important person. He was responsible for the safety and welfare of everyone who entered the station. All employees had to account to him. His watch was the official railroad time. He directed the loading and unloading of all train passengers and freight.

I admired him because of all the gold on his arm — each gold braid on his uniform represented seven years of service on the railroad, and each star (and there were many) a position that he held.

He called himself, and was affectionately addressed by all, as Ol’ Man Moses, because his word was the law of the railroad station. I never knew him by any other name.

By the time I met him he had become a philosopher and would talk to any who would listen. To this day I can still hear him saying to me, “I ain’t never seen the likes since I’s been born — how the people keep a-comin’ and the train’s done gone.”

### **The danger of being late**

There is a spiritual lesson embodied in the old stationmaster’s words of wisdom. As true Christians, our time is short. It won’t be long till we must board a train, as it were, bound for the Kingdom of God and eternal life.

God is even now setting His

Church on the spiritual track heading for His Kingdom. There is not much time left to prepare for departure. Are we going to be on time to board that train, or be among those left behind?

There will be many, Scripture warns, who will not be on board. They will be left standing at the gate pleading to be included, but will be denied entrance to God’s Kingdom (Matthew 25:10-12).

Our stationmaster’s responsibility was to rule that railroad station. No one boarded or left the train unless he gave his permission. You may not have always seen him because he directed others who served under him, but his job was critical to the lives of all who entered the station.

Two nonstop trains, mainliners, roared by our station daily. One came from the west, going east; the other came moments later from the east, traveling west. The trains rolled through at between 40 and 80 miles per hour. Our stationmaster made sure that the tracks were clear of people and debris and that nothing would endanger the lives of those in and around the station.

A commuter train left our station every morning to take working people and shoppers to a nearby big city. In order to be on the job by 8 you had to be at the station’s train gate by 7 o’clock at the latest, with ticket in hand, to board the commuter train. It stood waiting for its morning load of passengers about five tracks out.

You had to be aboard and in your seat no later than 7:04, because at 7:05 the mainliner from the west came rushing through the yard. If you were on the tracks then, you might easily have been startled by the roar of the train, become frightened and not known what to do as the train bore down upon you. If you were not hit by that train, seconds later the mainliner from the east could easily have trapped you on the tracks and killed you.

Ol’ Man Moses, our stationmaster, closed the gate promptly at 7 each morning, and no one went through the gate after that

time. Even though you could see the commuter train still standing on the tracks, Ol’ Man Moses refused you permission to cross the tracks to board.

On any given day latecomers entered our station wanting to board the commuter train. Our beloved old stationmaster would refuse them all, stand, shake his head and say, “I ain’t never seen the likes since I’s been born — how the people keep a-comin’ and the train’s done gone.”

He was inflexible in this rule. He knew its importance.

When he was a young man working in a much lower position at that same station, a mother and her two children were caught on the tracks when the mainliners came through. The woman stood transfixed, not knowing what to do or where to go. At the last moment she lurched with one child in hand to miss being hit by the train. The other child was left standing on the tracks. He was killed instantly.

Ol’ Man Moses was given the job of picking up the remains of the dead child. The mainliner had hit the boy and carried his body hundreds of yards down the track. Tears of anger and sorrow came to Moses’ eyes and he said bitterly to himself, “If I were stationmaster, I would never have allowed this to happen.”

Many years later he became the stationmaster at this same depot in my hometown. He daily stood at the gate, remembering well that incident and his promise to himself. No one was permitted on the tracks after 7 to board the commuter train. No one would ever again be permitted to risk his life crossing the tracks when the mainliners were coming through.

### **Excuses, excuses**

Most who came to board the 7:05 commuter were on time and passed through the gate before 7 a.m. But there were others who came late, with their excuses. To them all, Ol’ Man Moses would say, “The train’s done gone.”

A housewife, late for the train, might come seconds after the gate was closed and plead: “I had

to get up early this morning and get my husband off to work. I had to get my three children ready for school and then go in the garden

night, and it took me longer than I thought to get dressed this morning. Please let me on the train." But to him as well, Ol'

in God's plan in our lives. There is a time ahead when the gate — our spiritual entrance, as it were, into the Kingdom of God — will be closed. Someone will be standing there, saying to those who did not take their spiritual preparation seriously enough: "It's too late, the gate is closed. You may not enter."

One of our favorite excuses has been popularized in a song: "I did it my way." Have you ever considered that this is an excuse? It is. God tells us in His Word, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14).

Perhaps the ones chosen for eternal life can be compared to the passengers who prepared and readied themselves to be standing at the gate by 7 a.m. to board the train for their destination. They followed all the rules.

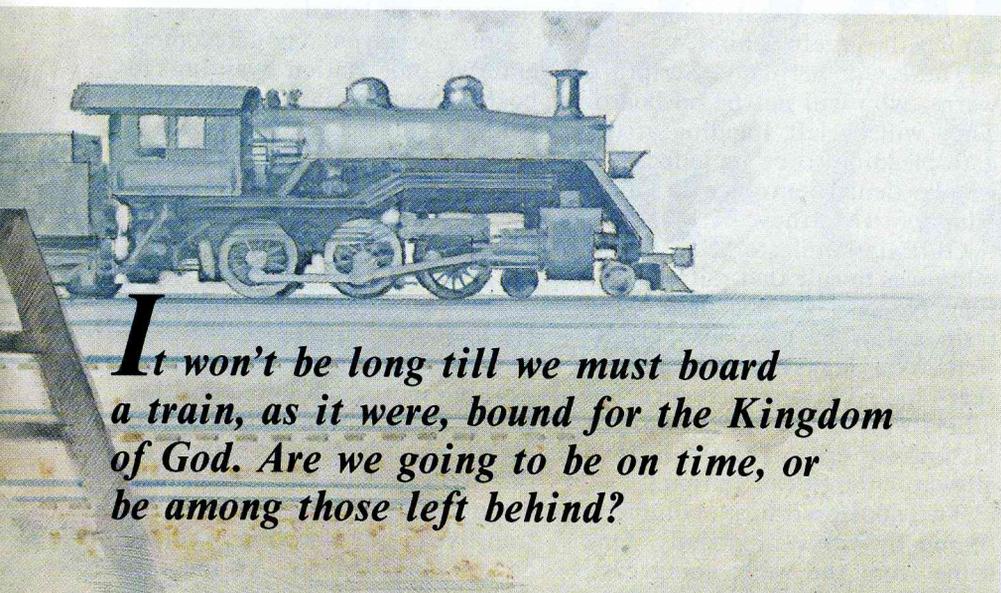
The others, late and offering excuses, say, in effect, "I did it my way." They feel justified, the exceptions to the rule — though late, they feel they deserve to be rewarded equally with those who were on time and ready.

But our human way is not good enough for eternal life. We must prepare and meet God's requirements to be accepted by Him into His Kingdom.

Adam and Eve had their excuses for disobeying God (Genesis 3:9-13). Aaron had his after making the golden calf idol (Exodus 32:21-24). Israel had excuses for not entering the land God promised them for their inheritance (Numbers 13:28-33). King Saul was rejected from being king over Israel because he had an I'll-do-it-my-way attitude toward following God's instructions (I Samuel 15:1-23) — he did not obey God (notice I Samuel 15:1-3, 7-9, 13-16, 19-23).

Jesus Christ spoke to another group of excuse makers in Luke 14. They, too, were invited to receive eternal life in God's Kingdom, but each wanted to do things his own way, and all were rejected. Their place was given to others (Luke 14:15-24).

Even some of God's greatest servants offered excuses at first, but they recognized their error,



***It won't be long till we must board a train, as it were, bound for the Kingdom of God. Are we going to be on time, or be among those left behind?***

and pick the ripe tomatoes. I got here as soon as I could. Let me board! I can see the train. It is still there!"

Ol' Man Moses would tell her: "The train's done gone. It is past 7. Your life is in jeopardy if I let you go across that track. The mainliner does not stop. It could take your life. And if the first one does not get you, another one will because it is coming from the other direction. I can't let you go out there."

Some came and said: "I left the hotel on time and gave the taxi driver a generous tip, but the traffic was heavy and he got me here late. It is not my fault that I am late. It is the taxi driver's fault."

Some would persist when denied permission to pass through the gate, saying: "But I can see the train! There it is — it has not left! I can make it before it leaves. Let me through!" But Ol' Man Moses would shake his head and say to all the latecomers: "You don't understand. The train's done gone."

One day a young lad on crutches came hobbling as fast as he could. He excused himself by saying: "You see, I am handicapped. I had an accident last

Man Moses said, "I'm sorry, but the train's done gone."

And so it went. Many came with their excuses, but Moses never opened the gate to allow any latecomers to board the 7:05 commuter train. Through the years he was stationmaster, many were left to watch the train leave while they stood behind that gate with Ol' Man Moses' words fresh in their minds: "The train's done gone."

#### **What is your excuse?**

Many times we are inclined to offer excuses for not doing what we should have done — when we are late, when we fail to plan ahead, when we don't keep our word — times we seek to justify ourselves to escape punishment or embarrassment or other negative consequences of our actions.

The Bible gives us many examples of people who brought excuses to God. But God accepted none of them. We need to see ourselves and our excuses as God does — as Ol' Man Moses saw the excuses of those who were late for their train. We need to resolve that we will never again give God an excuse for failure to do His will.

There is an element of finality

overcame and went on to serve God mightily (Jeremiah 1:4-7, Isaiah 6:5-8, Exodus 4:10-13).

God is merciful. There is still time for us to put away our excuses and prepare spiritually for the Kingdom of God. Thankfully for us, the train has not gone yet. But it will not be much longer before it does. Any who persist in offering excuses for disobeying God, thinking their own way is good enough, will surely lose their reward (Matthew 7:21-23). All excuses must be eliminated. The Christian life must be lived without excuses. We must do things God's way.

I hope that what I learned from that wise old stationmaster many years ago will help you in your quest for eternal life. He hoped that everyone would take getting to the train on time seriously and be there, ticket in hand, ready to board by 7 at the very latest. He hoped never to have to hear another excuse.

#### Penalties and rewards

One morning our local bank was robbed. The robber came to the gate just after 7 a.m., thinking to get on the train and escape. No one knew yet what he had done.

As usual, Ol' Man Moses was at the gate. It was closed and locked. The robber demanded that the old stationmaster open the gate. But Moses said, as he had so many times before, "No, the train's done gone."

The robber replied: "Don't give me that. I can see the train. Open the gate or I'll shoot you."

Again the stationmaster stated, "The train's done gone."

Seeing that Moses was adamant, the robber took out his pistol and shot my friend twice, killing him on the spot.

The robber then jumped the gate with his satchel full of money and ran across the tracks. The mainliner from the west was passing our station at that exact time. The robber, intent on his escape, likely did not see or hear the train boring down on him. The force created by the onrushing train threw the robber — now mur-

derer — off balance. He fell and then rolled onto the next set of tracks. Within seconds the speeding mainliner from the east came roaring through, instantly amputating both his legs, crushing the satchel and scattering the bank's money all over the station yard.

For the rest of his life, spent in prison with stumps where his legs used to be, I am sure the robber and murderer well remembered the stationmaster's last words: "The train's done gone."

#### Not much time left

In Deuteronomy 30:11-16, God tells us that His laws of life are not far off or hidden from us. It is up to us to determine not to offer excuses for sin — excuses that will lead only to our spiritual

destruction. It is God's desire that each of us choose the way of obedience to all His laws — the way that leads us to eternal life.

There is not much time left to prepare for Jesus Christ's return and the end of this age. Look into your life now, while there is yet time, to find what excuses you have for not doing God's will, and cast them out.

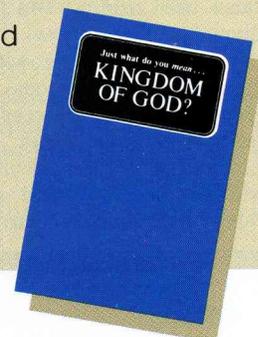
It is time to be sure you are ready for the return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

Be sure you are there, ready and on time to meet our returning Savior Jesus Christ, and not a moment late, to be told with the rebellious and disobedient, putting it in the words of the old stationmaster I knew and loved, "The train's done gone." □

**'uto·pi·an** /-pē-ən/ *adj.*, often *cap* **1:** of, relating to, or having the characteristics of a utopia; *specif* : having impossibly ideal conditions esp. of social organization **2:** proposing or advocating impractically ideal social and political schemes <~ idealists >  
**3:** impossibly ideal : VISIONARY

## ...OR IS IT?

Man has dreamed of living in the model society — one with lasting peace, with abundance and exciting opportunities for all. But man's governments, cultures and social experiments have failed to produce this utopian result. Is utopia impossible? No! Such a society is coming, but man is not going to bring it about — it's going to be done *to* him! Our free booklet *What Do You Mean . . . Kingdom of God?* explains what this world will be like and how it will come about. To request a copy, use the envelope in this issue or write to our address nearest you.



# LETTERS

## Thanks for *The Good News*

I want to take this opportunity to thank you and congratulate you and your staff for the sustained outstanding performance you have done and continue to do in getting the Gospel out to this sick and dying world while continuing to feed God's people with the spiritual food needed in this end time.

You and your staff have demonstrated a thoroughly professional approach to all aspects of communicating with the people of the world through your personal visits to heads of state, the *World Tomorrow* program (both on radio and television) and the printed media.

I know that getting the Gospel out in this end time, using the different media, requires long hours of study and research combined with willpower and dedication. This excellent capability, under God's guidance, has contributed directly to the overall successful accomplishments of the Worldwide Church of God. I can readily understand how you have earned the respect and admiration of heads of states, associates, friends and the congregation of the Worldwide Church of God. I am sure God is well pleased.

I am thankful to be a part of God's work and will do all I can to support you to the fullest extent possible. May God continue to lead His Church, through you, until Jesus Christ returns to restore the government of God on this earth. You are a tremendous inspiration to all of us. God bless you, Mr. Armstrong, and the Worldwide Church of God.

Charles F. Russell  
Seat Pleasant, Md.

Please find enclosed a small contribution. As a co-worker of your Church, I take this opportunity to thank you very much for your two excellent magazines, *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News*. They are the best in the field and, having read many books on spiritual subjects, I'm glad to say they are the most practical and most faith-inspiring of all.

Reader  
Gold Hill, Ore.

I have been reading *The Plain Truth* for about three years now. It has helped me so much in dealing with the way things are in the world today.

Recently I've been receiving your magazine *The Good News*. I love how this magazine is directed more to the individual's person-to-God relationship and his or her immediate surroundings. I

have learned a lot and am always very anxious to receive my next copies.

I have read a lot of your literature and come to understand what it means to tithe. I've had a part-time job now for about two months and have begun sending my contributions to *The Plain Truth*. It's very satisfying to do so, knowing the money I send is being spent in the best of ways, spreading God's Word. Thank you so much for what has happened to my life.

Reader  
Louisville, Ky.

## Article picked him up

Thank you for your initiative. Thank you for *The Good News*. Your article "Why God Is Not Real to Most People" [January] was exhilarating, especially the sentences: "You see, as I read the Bible, God was talking to me. But as I prayed, I was talking to HIM." Sometimes my Spirit quotient is low, and this article really picked me up.

Gerald F. Adamski  
East Detroit, Mich.

## Fathers and children

Although a member of God's Church since 1970, it is not often that I write to you. However, recent events in my life and that of our family — namely, the fact that our eldest daughter (age 13) has entered an "age of questioning," brought on mostly through pressures at school — prompt this.

Our girls are "A" students and I mistakenly thought the rest of their lives was likewise superior. But certain recent and strong desires to closely associate with the kids at school, through attendance at parties and dances, has shocked me to reality and forced me into some deep soul-searching. I have concluded that I have failed to be affectionate enough toward both our girls, primarily by allowing too much time for my own professional growth and advancement, all at their expense.

At this time I am setting new priorities to give them personal time each day. I have concluded that it will take work to create a desire in them to want to be with their parents, above competing pursuits.

When I arrived home tonight, the January issue of *The Good News* was waiting, and as I read and reread the article by Earl H. Williams, "Confessions of a Busy Father," heartfelt tears of remorse flooded my all-too-often emotionless person. He has deeply touched me and pro-

vided additional inspiration and motivation to correct this neglected aspect of our family life.

In fact, I am so deeply impressed by what Mr. Williams said and how he said it that I encourage him or another minister to pursue the subject in greater detail. I feel many dads in the Church could richly benefit from these precious insights.

I am so thankful — like Mr. Williams said so well — that God got our attention while there's still time. For the first time in literally years, I am elevating my family's interests and well-being above the less-important affairs.

I hope it will be possible for you to convey my sincere appreciation to Mr. Williams, and I am thankful that his own family life is more enriched as well.

Reader  
South Point, Ohio

## Wonderful to have understanding

I just finished reading your "7 Keys to Understanding the Bible" [December]. It is wonderful to have someone like you to help someone like me to understand the Bible. I never really understood about the Holy Days, but you made it so plain. I'm beginning to understand a lot more of the Bible through your books and magazines.

Mrs. Elmer Lampe  
Elsberry, Mo.

*Our booklet Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which? explains God's true Holy Days in detail. Readers who would like a free copy of this booklet should mail the literature request envelope in this issue, or write to our address nearest them (see inside front cover of this magazine for a list).*

## Which Bible version?

I am a Church member and have read and am rereading "How to Win Over Worry" [December]. The wording in Matthew 6:25, 34 is especially helpful because it is written in the modern idiom. Your article has been helpful in my present severe trial that I am undergoing.

I would appreciate your telling me what Bible translation you have used for this article.

Reader  
Waynesboro, Tenn.

*Unless otherwise noted, all Good News articles quote from the Revised Authorized (New King James) Version of the Bible.*

# What Is the Holy Spirit?

HOLY SPIRIT

Do you have God's Holy Spirit? Do you understand what God's Spirit really is, and why you need it?

This first in a brief series of studies about God's Spirit will begin to answer these crucial questions from your own Bible.

The method of study is easy. You simply look up and read in your Bible the scriptures you are directed to after each question. Comments following the questions will further elaborate on the verses just read. (This study is based on the Revised Authorized Version of the Bible, unless otherwise indicated, but you may use any translation.) Now let's begin this eye-opening study.

Most of traditional Christianity has come to believe that God is a "trinity" made up of three divine Personages — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

However, the Bible reveals that the Holy Spirit is the power and energy of the God Family, as well as the very nature, life and mind of God — *not* another spiritual entity!

Let's understand.

**1.** Does God's Spirit fill the entire universe? Psalm 139:7-8, Jeremiah 23:24. Is the Spirit of God the power by which God — the ultimate source of all power — created all things? Jeremiah 32:17, Psalm 104:30.

**2.** How did God utilize His Spirit of power to create all things? Psalm 148:1-5. (Notice the word *commanded* in verse 5.) Also read Psalm 33:6-9 and Genesis 1:1-3.

Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and fills the entire universe, much like air is everywhere present on earth. The Bible clearly shows that God's Spirit is the instrument or means by which the God Family creates. Jesus Christ, the *Logos* or "Word" of the God Family (John 1:1-3, 14), "spoke and it was done" by God's Spirit.

It was by the Spirit of God that the creative energy of God was transformed into the physical creation we see around us (Hebrews 11:3). And it was by the power of God's Spirit that He renewed the surface of the earth.

**3.** Does God sustain and rule His vast creation by His great power? Nehemiah 9:6, Hebrews 1:2-3, Psalm 66:7.

God sits at the controls of the entire universe,

so to speak, ruling and sustaining everything by the awesome power of His Spirit.

Many scriptures prove that the Spirit of God is not a personality, but rather the very *power* of God — the power by which God accomplishes His will.

(For absolute proof that the Holy Spirit is not a personage in a trinity, write for our free article "Just What Is the Holy Spirit?")

Now let's notice when God first offered human beings the opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit.

**4.** What kind of trees did God cause to grow in the Garden of Eden? Genesis 2:8-9. Which tree did God warn Adam not to eat from? Verses 15-17. What would happen to him if he ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Verse 17.

The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were literal trees, but they also had symbolic meaning.

The tree of life represented the Holy Spirit of God and eternal life. It also represented the way of God's government, which is the spiritual law of God.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented the way of Satan, which is diametrically opposite to the way of God's law. It pictured sin and its penalty — eternal death (Romans 6:23).

Had Adam and Eve partaken of the tree of life, they would have received God's Spirit. It would have imparted to them spiritual knowledge and understanding. It would have enabled them to understand the spiritual law of God — the way of life that leads to peace, happiness, contentment, success in life, cooperation and mutual concern for fellowman.

The Holy Spirit would have provided the power to develop the very character of God in them, and would finally have changed their mortal bodies into Spirit-composed members of the God Family! (More about this in next month's ministudy.)

**5.** But did Satan cleverly delude Eve into disbelieving and disobeying God? Genesis 3:1-6. Did Satan subtly imply that God was hiding knowledge from her she ought to have? Verses 5-6.

**6.** Was Adam deceived, or did he really know

better? I Timothy 2:14. Did he nevertheless choose the way of disobedience to God by partaking of the forbidden fruit with his wife? Genesis 3:6.

On the first Sabbath day, the member of the God Family who created the first humans, the one who later became Jesus Christ, instructed Adam and Eve in God's way — the way of His government, based on His law — the way that, if followed, would lead to true happiness.

Soon afterward Satan subtly deceived Eve into taking the forbidden fruit and giving some to Adam.

By taking that fruit, Adam chose to disobey God's command, and thus rejected the rule of God's government over them. Adam took to himself the authority to decide what is good and evil — what is right and wrong — what is righteousness and what is sin. He became totally self-reliant.

Thus Adam rejected revealed spiritual knowledge from God. His choice limited him to knowledge of the physical and material. He rejected the spiritual knowledge that would have produced a happy relationship with God and fellowman.

He rejected God's Holy Spirit, God's love, God's government and eternal life! Adam disobeyed the explicit command of his Maker and sinned, bringing the penalty of sin upon himself and his descendants, all of whom have also sinned (Romans 5:12-19, 6:23).

**7.** Were Adam and Eve denied further access to the tree of life and therefore God's Spirit? Genesis 3:22-24.

When Adam sinned, he cut himself off from God (Isaiah 59:2). And God cut him and his descendants off from access to the tree of life. The human family was cut off from the Holy Spirit, except for a special few whom God would individually call to serve Him, such as Noah, Abraham and the prophets (I Peter 1:10-11).

**8.** Who is the second Adam spoken of in the Bible? I Corinthians 15:45-47. Did God make the Holy Spirit and eternal life available again through Jesus Christ? Verse 22, John 1:4, 10:10, 7:37-39, I John 5:11-12.

**9.** But since Jesus' first coming, is it only those whom God the Father *calls* who may receive His Spirit and become one of His "first-fruits"? John 6:44, 65, Acts 2:38-39, James 1:18. Will the opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit and eternal life be given to everyone after Jesus Christ returns and establishes the rule of God over the earth? Isaiah 11:9, Joel 2:28-29.

Humanity, since Adam, was not offered eternal life until Jesus Christ, the second Adam, established His Church and began offering God's Spirit to those the Father would call to be

"firstfruits" of His plan of salvation before Jesus' Second Coming. Some of you, like Adam, are being offered the Holy Spirit and eternal life today, by a special calling from God the Father Himself!

**10.** Is the Holy Spirit clearly a gift from God? Acts 2:38, 10:45, II Timothy 1:6. Are repentance and baptism required steps to receiving God's Spirit? Mark 1:14-15, Acts 2:38, 5:32.

God will give His Spirit only to those who have demonstrated, both by attitude and actions, that they have repented and want to obey Him.

Repentance means to turn around and go the other way — to forsake all of one's own natural, carnal ways that have been contrary to God's law, and turn to God's way, which is the way of His law. To "believe the gospel" means to believe the message Jesus brought — the good news of the coming Kingdom of God, which includes belief on and acceptance of Him as personal Savior.

After belief and sincere, heartfelt repentance, the next step toward becoming a Christian is water baptism, as we learned in last month's ministudy.

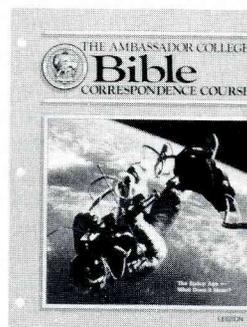
Baptism is an outward symbol of our repentance of our old sinful, disobedient life — our complete departure from our old sinful way of living — and of our willingness now to obey God in every way.

Once you have taken these steps, then you are unconditionally promised the Holy Spirit. God has bound Himself to perform His part if you first perform yours. God says: "You *shall receive* the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

It is an absolute promise of God to those He has called!

You can ask God thereafter to direct and empower you, through His Holy Spirit, to lead a new life in conformity with His revealed Word, the Holy Bible.

This study on the Holy Spirit will continue next month. □



## ENROLL IN FREE BIBLE COURSE

The short study you've just completed is a sample of the study method used in each monthly lesson of the eye-opening Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. You can enroll in this free course by writing to the *Good News* office nearest you. See inside front cover for addresses.

# Are You Letting GUILT Destroy You?

*Millions today are! Here's how to turn guilt into growth.*

By George M. Kackos

**H**e was exhausted and emotionally drained, and a tormenting thought kept racing through his mind: I fled — I denied Jesus!

What a horrible thing to do! he thought. I've betrayed Him just as He said I would. I watched as He stood before the council. I listened to the lies they told and did nothing to help! How can I ever live with myself?

The guilt was enormous — it penetrated the depth of his being and tortured him day and night. Over and over, it seemed he could hear the sound of the rooster's crow that brought Jesus' words flooding into his mind: "Assured-

ly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times" (Matthew 26:34).

Peter undoubtedly reached a point where he thought he could no longer stand the agony. In a deep sense of remorse and repentance and with a sincere desire to change, he cried out for forgiveness. He earnestly committed himself to fervently serve the God he had formerly denied.

His prayer was heard, and not many days later, on the day of Pentecost, he displayed his commitment by boldly proclaiming Jesus to be our Lord and Savior (Acts 2:36).

For Peter, his guilt bore good fruit. Rather than living the rest of his life mentally and spiritually crippled by guilt over this tragic mistake, he yielded his life to God

to use for a greater purpose. What about you? How are you being affected by the guilt you may bear from dark days gone by? Is it gnawing at you, incessantly troubling your mind? Or have you pushed it to a dusty cor-

Photo by Nathan Faulkner



ner of your mind in a futile attempt to ignore it?

Is it leading you to forgiveness and growth, like Peter, or is it causing you to feel worthless and rejected, or making you fear that punishment ominously looms over you? Tragically, unresolved guilt causes some, like Judas (Matthew 27:5), to suffer the ultimate destruction — death.

Let's be honest and face the facts. Guilt can have positive or negative influences on your life. The choice is up to you.

### Should you feel guilty?

Guilt results when one fails to perform to a standard of conduct. But sadly, many bear needless guilt because they are living by the wrong standards — the product of Satan's deception.

This treacherous and subtle fallen archangel has led man to lean to his own understanding rather than God's (Proverbs 3:5) — to determine for himself what moral code, if any, he chooses to live by. Satan has deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9)! Human traditions and vain intellectual reasoning have all but replaced God's laws, the true standards (Mark 7:7-13).

For that reason, many feel guilt

because they have merely fallen victim to circumstances beyond their control — not because of violation of a spiritual law.

For example, why should you feel guilty because of hereditary limitations you can't change? Is it your fault you may not be as healthy or as attractive as some others are? Should you feel guilty if you stand up against the negative influence of peer pressure? Why should you bear guilt if, after putting forth your best effort, you fail in business or a sporting contest? Should you be tortured by guilt if you reject vain, human traditions and try to live by righteous standards? Of course not.

On the other hand, you shouldn't go to the other extreme of so ignoring the prod of your conscience that you feel little or no guilt about violating God's clearly defined laws (I Timothy 4:1-2). Some have no qualms about lying and cheating. Others can burn with envy and jealousy and feel justified in doing so. Still others can lust, commit adultery, covet others' positions and possessions and not feel one tinge of guilt.

Do you get the point? Guard

yourself from reacting to the upside-down, false standards of man (Isaiah 5:20-21). Go to God's Word for the right standards (Isaiah 8:20, Matthew 4:4). Don't be victimized and deceived by faulty human reasoning — strive to live by the true, righteous principles of God.

Examine — question — probe yourself. Are your standards really God's standards? Or have you been subtly deceived by human traditions, faulty reasoning, wrong emotions, the well-intentioned advice of other people — all of which are influenced by Satan the devil (Ephesians 2:2)? You need to know!

### Guilt triggers repentance

Is there any real purpose for guilt? Why does God allow you to experience it?

Guilt tells you that something is wrong — that something needs to be changed and corrected. It lets you know you need God's forgiveness. Just like a fire alarm, it serves to warn and motivate you to take action that will bring positive results.

But do you? Do you put out the fiery flames of sin, or do you let them spread their destructiveness? The human tendency is to

# AVOID DESTRUCTIVE GUILT

"It's all your fault. You'd better change." Such accusations can make you feel guilty. But is that always desirable?

Not necessarily. The reason: Your guilt may be based on a false foundation laid by someone who is using guilt to manipulate you.

Let's face it. Guilt is a powerful motivation that can deeply affect your emotions and actions. Consequently, some try to instill guilt in you for their own selfish purposes. Their methods can vary from deliberate lies to unconscious exaggerations. For example, you make a small mistake, but you hear the words, "You're *always* making that *terrible* mistake!" (Proverbs 14:5).

Not everyone is this way. Some do speak the truth in love. But what happens when they don't? What happens

when they use deception and lies in an effort to make you feel guilty? Should you go on a "guilt trip"?

Many do. They allow themselves to be manipulated. Consider this situation: A man tells the truth and another man loses his job. This other man then makes him feel guilty for being truthful.

It shouldn't be this way. The man has done nothing wrong in God's sight. He is supposed to tell the truth whenever he speaks (Proverbs 12:17, 19). (Of course, there's a time to refrain from speaking altogether [Ecclesiastes 3:7], but you get the point: When you must say something, it should be the absolute truth, and you should not be guilty for saying it.)

King Ahab of Israel tried to make Elijah feel guilty for Israel's problems. But Elijah replied, "I have not

troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and you have followed the Baals" (I Kings 18:18).

Jesus was confronted by those who wanted Him to feel guilty for eating grain on the Sabbath. He resisted by pointing to God's teaching on the subject (Matthew 12:1-7).

This is the way you should be. If the guilt is false, reject it. Don't let it destroy you with feelings of inferiority and rejection. On the other hand, when you deserve guilt, accept it and change.

Besides this, be sure that you don't use false guilt to manipulate others. This way you, "speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ" (Ephesians 4:15). □

avoid taking action (Matthew 7:13-14).

What God wants — what you should want — is real repentance: “For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted” (II Corinthians 7:10).

Repentance involves being sorry for what you did — for what you are — for the wrong ways you think — for the wrong ways you act. But more than that, it means striving to change and to live according to God’s will, not your own.

Look at II Corinthians 7:11: “For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.”

This is proper guilt that produces positive changes in your life. Are you practicing diligence, being careful to not repeat the sin? Are you engaging in clearing yourself, struggling to overcome? Do you feel righteous indignation, learning to hate the sin? Are you developing a fear of sinning against your Creator? Do you have vehement desire, an intense will to change? Are you filled with zeal, submitting to God with enthusiasm? Do you feel vindication, a need to try to make up for past sin (even though you can’t do it yourself) by living righteously from now on?

When you are this way — completely repentant — God will forgive you (Jeremiah 36:3). Your life will be richly blessed: “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity” (Psalm 32:1-2).

King David experienced this transformation after his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah. At first, he ignored God’s law, and for months his spiritual blindness continued. Finally God sent Nathan to bring David to reality.

The words Nathan spoke penetrated David’s darkened mind (II Samuel 12:1-7) and the wall of self-justification crumbled into

guilt. His facade of false righteousness fell under the weight of God’s law.

David’s sorrow was overwhelming. He prayed for forgiveness and a right attitude (Psalm 51:1-12). God responded by granting him repentance, forgiveness and happiness (Psalm 32:1-11).

Think about this. You, like David, sin. You fall short of God’s glory. You stand guilty before God. But you don’t need to remain that way! You can be free of guilt and experience growth. Act on the following steps.

### **Admit your guilt**

Confess your sin. Admit to God that you failed to obey His will. Let Him know that you are sorry for your actions — call upon Him for the desire and power to change. Don’t merely feel sorry because you know you must suffer the penalty inflicted by your actions. That’s worldly sorrow. Even hardened criminals can feel that sorrow.

Hiding from your guilt doesn’t eliminate it — it merely postpones when you must face it (Luke 12:2, Numbers 32:23). In the meantime it keeps you from enjoying the many blessings that stem from a right relationship with God. “He who covers his sins will not prosper,” as Proverbs 28:13 says.

David expressed the right approach you should follow: “I acknowledged my sin to You [to God], and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin” (Psalm 32:5).

Admitting your guilt to God may not be easy. It may mean reliving painful experiences. To avoid the pain, many attempt to justify themselves by thinking that what they did wasn’t so bad, that the other person had it coming or that they were a victim of someone else’s influence. The excuses go on and on, but the fact remains. *You* sinned, and *you* are guilty. Covering it up is just self-deception!

Ask God to help you honestly

look at yourself (Psalm 19:12). Then admit your guilt — all of it. The pain may be intense, but it is temporarily necessary (Romans 8:18), and the outcome will be joyous if you apply the next steps in this process.

### **Change**

When you’re wrong, you must go beyond admitting it. You must change. Forsake your sin by eliminating it. Many fail here because they do not go beyond admitting their sins.

Jesus made it plain to the woman taken in adultery. Her sins were forgiven, but she was not to return to her sinful ways (John 8:10-11). To do so would have been a wrong use of God’s grace, His unmerited pardon: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? . . . Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts” (Romans 6:1-2, 12).

God’s Word is clear. You must stop sinning when seeking forgiveness. You must also submit yourself to God through baptism (Acts 2:38). For a deeper understanding of baptism, write for our free booklets *All About Water Baptism* and *Just What Do You Mean . . . Conversion?*

But what if you do slip and sin after true repentance? Is everything lost? Have you misused God’s grace? Not necessarily. As long as you are honestly trying to overcome sin on a continual basis, God will forgive you for stumbling under weakness or temptation. Conversion is a gradual process — developing the very character of God is a lifelong task.

So don’t despair when you sin. Simply ask God for forgiveness and more strength, then follow through by being obedient.

### **Throw away your guilt**

As a human you will experience many failures, even after conversion, in overcoming sin (Romans 7:14-25). God knows and accepts this. So should you. Remember: Don’t abuse God’s

grace by not fervently trying to change. But once your guilt brings you to repentance, discard it. Get rid of it. Why hold onto it? Why let it fill you with feelings of inferiority, depression and rejection?

After repentance, let unity with God replace guilt. Let your pursuit of God's Kingdom and God's righteousness motivate you (I John 1:9, Colossians 3:1-3).

Of course, if you sin again, guilt should return. But be careful that it doesn't so overwhelm you that it takes your focus off your positive relationship with God.

After you have truly repented, God forgives you. But you must also forgive yourself.

If you have surrendered your life to God, temporary setbacks should not leave you devastated by guilt: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

Again, don't discount the severity of your sin or guilt, but learn the lesson and move on from there to positive growth.

Now look at these steps: Admit your guilt. Change. Throw away your guilt.

What do you notice? That's right. The first letter of each step spells ACT, and that is what you must do to turn guilt into growth — you must act!

You must act by rejecting the wrong way of handling guilt — the way that denies guilt, that doesn't change when guilty, that holds onto guilt. This way bears bad fruit — the fruit of self-deception, stagnation, depression and rejection.

You must act by accepting the right way of handling guilt — the way that admits guilt, that changes when guilty, that throws away guilt upon repentance. This way bears good fruit — the fruit of forgiveness, truth, growth, joy.

Which fruit would you rather bear? You must make the choice. In your life, which will it be? □

## PERSONAL

(Continued from page 1)

campaigns. We had been able to live, very modestly, on that. But at the end of November that year, the salary was cut off. The Church conference treasury was empty! I *had* learned the lesson of FAITH. I trusted God implicitly to *supply every need*, as He has promised (Philippians 4:19). But I didn't yet realize how much we must "TEST the spirits, *whether* they are of God" (I John 4:1).

So when a former newspaper associate came to me with an urgent request that I join him, as advertising manager of a new morning newspaper he was starting, I *assumed*, foolishly and without making sure this offer was caused by GOD, that it was the answer to my petition to supply our financial need.

I had not yet learned, as I was to learn later, how to launch out in God's work *on faith*, knowing that God had called me. Of course, many try to launch *themselves* into God's ministry when GOD NEVER CALLED THEM. They are making a bigger mistake than I made in turning back to the advertising profession. In my case God had called me *from* the advertising profession into HIS WORK. He had ordained me, *put* me into His ministry. I had "put my hand to the plow," but did not realize Jesus' command never to turn back.

Of course I did not turn back from the Christian life — nor, for that matter, even consider for a minute that I was turning back from the ministry. I regarded this as only a *temporary* job. I thought God had sent it, to supply this need temporarily. I actually accepted the job on the condition that it was to last three weeks only, fully expecting the way would open to be back in the ministry within three weeks.

But, once on this newspaper job, there was no quitting. God did not open the way to get back into His ministry until a year and three months had passed — during which time I had realized my

mistake and prayed earnestly to be released from the newspaper job and restored to God's work. God let me learn the lesson, *by experience*, that His instruction to ministers: "Preach the word! *Be ready* in season and out of season" (II Timothy 4:2), meant "KEEP AT IT in season and out of season."

Once on this newspaper job, December, 1931 — in the midst of the Great Depression — there was no money to pay salaries. I had to work out a way of trading advertising for food, clothing, hotel and rooming-house accommodations for the 23 men on the staff.

We had frequently gone hungry before I was converted. Now we went hungry even more frequently. Then one day, it dawned on my mind that we, ourselves, were actually breaking God's financial law by not tithing!

All of a sudden God made me see His financial law as something *personal* — not merely a doctrine to accept impersonally. It meant *ME!*

That very day I took 10 percent of what we had — and it was not enough to buy food — added an extra offering and mailed it to the Church treasury.

That very afternoon food came for a completely adequate meal. I don't remember how, but I do remember that *the very day* I REPENTED for not having accepted tithing as a *personal obligation*, instead of a mere doctrinal *argument*, THAT VERY DAY FOOD CAME! God did not bring us immediate financial prosperity. For some years more, for our own good, we were forced to live in very poor economic circumstances. But *that very day* our financial condition started upward. Since that time I have known of the experiences of scores of other people. It was only a short time after that experience that God opened the way to bring me back into His active ministry. By this time I had learned *that* lesson, too. I have never left God's service, and never shall, as long as God permits me to live.

It was some months later that

the very man whom God sent with his truck to move us, together with what household furniture we had, back to the Willamette Valley in Oregon — where I was to start an evangelistic campaign in Salem — himself had an experience in tithing.

This young man already was tithing the *money* that he handled. He was a farmer, and suddenly realized that he was not selling his eggs, and had not been tithing them in any way. He brought us a tithe of all the eggs his hens had laid that day.

Believe it or not, that same day his hens went on an egg-laying spree. Yes, laugh if you will — those hens cackled, too — it actually *happened*. It was the off-season for eggs. But that very day they began to lay more eggs than was normal in the best egg-laying season!

It seemed incredible — BUT IT HAPPENED!

I have given you the facts, before, of the well-driller who was unable to get any business in 1933. He began to tithe — one single dollar of the only \$10 he had. Next day a man who had owed him \$50 he never expected to collect came and paid it — and he tithed \$5. Immediately he began to get more wells to drill than he could handle.

Almost daily, *some* television viewer, reader of *The Good News* or co-worker in this great work writes me a letter telling of a similar experience — beginning to pay God's TITHE, and beginning to PROSPER financially.

Now don't get the idea from this that in *every* case God is going to work some incredible miracle. Don't get the idea that if you TRY tithing, you are to expect some astounding thing to happen, or that you are going to fall heir to a million dollars the next day. Perhaps in most cases the increase in income is not immediately apparent at all.

But of this, you MAY BE SURE! Over the long haul, the 90 percent of income God allows you to keep for yourself will increase to *more* than the 100 percent formerly was. God PROMISES to bless

and prosper the tither! God KEEPS His promises!

God did not establish a binding LAW of tithing without a good REASON! Actually, there are many reasons. All of God's LAWS are for our GOOD.

Listen to God's Word to us: "Observe and obey all these words which I command you, *that it may go well with you and your children after you for ever*" (Deuteronomy 12:28).

It is not *good* for a person to *get something for nothing*, or for very little effort. This evil human urge to GET without *giving* — to receive without *paying* — is the very thing in human nature that produces criminals.

ALL God's spiritual LAW may be summed up in one word — LOVE. But Jesus magnified this into the two great laws — love to God and love to human NEIGHBOR. Love is the principle of GIVING. Jesus summed up the reason for it when He said, "It is *more blessed* to GIVE than to RECEIVE" (Acts 20:35). God knows and reveals that we receive a *greater* blessing by *giving* than by acquiring. GOD WANTS US TO HAVE BLESSINGS!

People really *want* blessings, but few know the way. Most people think the greater blessing comes from receiving — getting — taking — acquiring.

Today we Americans talk about "the American way." But the way of most Americans today is to try to *get* more than they *give*. Formerly employers took more in production from labor than they paid employees in wages. So labor organized. Today the labor-union principle seems to be to *get* more, in wages, than they *give* in production from their labor. Less work — more pay! Deluded labor unions seem to think this is for *their good*. They don't know GOD'S LAW. They know not that they are bringing a CURSE on themselves.

We talk, today, about owning property. But GOD actually *owns* all the earth. That includes the property on which *you* pay taxes. God says the EARTH is His — for *He created it!* God OWNS it. He

lets us occupy His earth, as temporary tenants. All wealth comes from the ground.

IT IS NOT GOOD FOR MAN TO TAKE ALL HE CONSUMES OUT OF GOD'S EARTH WITHOUT PAYING ANYTHING FOR IT! If you rent ground from a MAN who *thinks* he owns it, he charges you rent — up to 50 percent or more of what you produce from it. God set a LAW in motion — that we should pay HIM, not 50 percent, but *only* 10 percent, plus whatever offering we have in our hearts to *give*. Now a LAW is not a law without a *penalty*. God does not *force* you to tithe. But if you don't, there is a penalty! You lose the BLESSING that goes with honest stewardship. You come under a CURSE!

God says our NATIONS are under a CURSE today (Malachi 3:9) because we have *robbed God*. The man who does not pay God His tithe is a *thief* — and, worse than a criminal robbing a bank, he is *robbing GOD!* Yes, GOD SAYS SO — verse 8!

And one of the Ten Commandments is "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15). The man who does puts himself immediately *under the law* — under penalty of DEATH for *all eternity* — unless he *repents*, and pleads the blood of Christ for forgiveness and reconciliation to God!

Ignorance of the LAW does not excuse. You may say, "Well, I never *knew* all this." Well, you are without excuse, for you know it now — or you can know it if you'll check up IN YOUR OWN BIBLE!

But God is most merciful. The minute you really repent, *quit* breaking this law, begin keeping it honestly and go to Christ for forgiveness, then all is forgiven and God begins pouring out His blessing, just as He did on me.

Hundreds of our co-workers have written me, during the past many years, saying God had opened their eyes to His tithing law, and telling how they have been blessed. One even wrote that she, too, had started tithing eggs, and her hens, too, had immediately gone on an egg-laying spree! She had either heard me mention

that experience over the air or read of it in a former issue.

Of course I won't guarantee God will cause hens to start laying eggs faster every time. Probably it won't work out exactly that way — but He *does* promise a blessing (Malachi 3:10-12).

How do you pay your tithes to GOD? By putting them into GOD'S WORK where His Gospel is being preached — not merely MAN'S gospel *about* Christ, but the very same message Christ preached.

Most professing Christians have never heard the Gospel today! Jesus preached only one Gospel — that about the KINGDOM (government — rule) of GOD — of how God is going to RULE ALL NATIONS — of how we may, by being begotten *now*, be actually BORN INTO GOD'S KINGDOM at the Second Coming of Christ, being then GLORIFIED just as Christ is *now* glorified in the very FAMILY of God!

But most professing ministers of Christianity today deny this Gospel altogether!

WHAT does God *do* with His tithe? He uses it for HIS MINISTRY, to preach *HIS* message of REPENTANCE, FAITH IN CHRIST AND BEING BAPTIZED BY HIS SPIRIT INTO HIS FAMILY — His message of the KINGDOM OF GOD — the WORLD TOMORROW! It is the message of GOD'S WAY. It is the message of true salvation. It is the message of a changed and a fuller, happier LIFE — the message of ETERNAL life, God's gift through grace! He uses it to tell mankind THE WAY to happiness, joy, prosperity and eternal life in HIS KINGDOM.

But look at the CURSE! God's WAY has not been preached. The WORLD is unhappy, empty, sick, poverty-stricken, cursed with fears and worries, restlessness, frustrations, insanity, crime, violence, war — DEATH!

Even though our NATIONS are under a curse, *you*, as an individual, may come under GOD'S BLESSING! It's your BEST assurance of getting and holding a job — of *continuous* and *increasing* INCOME! □

# Easter

(Continued from page 3)

broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; *do this in remembrance of Me.*' Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.' "

Notice, it was "when the hour had come," that Jesus introduced the unleavened bread and the wine. There was a DEFINITE TIME — a definite hour — when He held this ordinance *as an example for us.*

Notice, too, He commanded them to observe it — "DO THIS"! And why? "In remembrance of Me," said Jesus. He instituted this New Testament way of keeping the Passover, on that tragic night, the very eve of His death.

In Matthew's account, the Bible shows that this ordinance was at the very time of the Passover, "as they were eating" (Matthew 26:2, 26). Jesus knew that His time had come. He was our Passover, sacrificed for us (I Corinthians 5:7).

The Passover had always been held on the eve of the 14th of God's first month, according to the sacred or Jewish calendar. It was the night of the final and last Passover supper that Jesus introduced these NEW TESTAMENT emblems — the unleavened bread and the wine — in place of the lamb that was always slain annually.

For a full explanation of the *original* Passover as God instituted it, write immediately for our free booklet *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which?* We also offer, free, a full-color calendar showing God's true annual Holy Days. Be sure to request it, too.

Remember, Jesus commanded, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Why? Because the Passover was commanded FOREVER.

The Passover was to be observed *annually*, along with the Days of Unleavened Bread. "You shall therefore keep this ordi-

nance in its season from year to year" (Exodus 13:10). Jesus set us an example (I Peter 2:21), observing this ordinance at the same time once a year (Luke 2:42).

Suppose the Israelites in Egypt had observed this ordinance at some other time than that set by God? They would not have been saved when the death angel passed by that night! God does things ON TIME. He has given us an exact time for this ordinance. Jesus instituted the New Testament symbols "when the hour had come."

## The ordinance of humility

In giving us their accounts, Matthew, Mark and Luke describe the taking of unleavened bread and wine. But John relates another part of this ordinance.

In the 13th chapter of John we notice that after the Passover supper was ended (verse 2), Jesus took a towel (verse 4) and began to wash His disciples' feet (verse 5). "So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, THAT YOU SHOULD DO AS I HAVE DONE TO YOU'" (John 13:12-15).

If any of you are wondering if this ordinance of humility is a *command* to you, then turn to Matthew 28:19-20, AV. Here Jesus said to these same disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them . . . *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded YOU.*" So they were to teach us to observe ALL things WHATSOEVER Jesus commanded them!

## Kept once a year in the apostolic Church

In I Corinthians 5:7-8, Paul tells the Corinthians: "Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. *Therefore let us keep the feast,*

not with old leaven . . . but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." And in the 11th chapter he gives the directions regarding this ordinance.

Some misunderstand verse 26, which says "as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup," by interpreting it "take it as often as you wish." *But it does not say that!*

It says "as often" as you observe it, "you proclaim the LORD'S DEATH till He comes." Even Jesus commanded, "This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me" (verse 25).

We do it in remembrance of THE LORD'S DEATH — a memorial of His death.

As you know, *memorials* are celebrated annually, once a year, on the ANNIVERSARY of the events commemorated. So we observe the memorial of Christ's death *annually*. And just as often as each year comes around, we are to "proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" by keeping this memorial.

Christ instituted this ordinance on the EVE OF HIS DEATH. It was the 14th of Abib, by God's sacred calendar, in the very beginning of the day. God starts days at sunset, not midnight. So, later that same day, after Jesus had gone out to Gethsemane, Judas Iscariot led the crowd to seize Jesus. Then He was crucified later that same day, in the daylight part of this same 14th of the month of Abib.

By following the example of Jesus in observing this sacred ordinance at the same time He did — the very same time the Passover was forever commanded to be observed — we continue to remember His death, annually, on the eve of the crucifixion.

Some always question the meaning of Paul in verses 27-29 in I Corinthians 11. The apostle is not speaking about a Christian being worthy or unworthy to take it. It is speaking of the *manner* in which it is done.

We take it unworthily if we take it wrongly, in the wrong manner. Once we learn the truth about its observance, and yet take

it at any other time than what God says, then we take it unworthily. We take it unworthily if we do not accept the body and blood of Christ.

So let's not take this most sacred ordinance to our condemnation, but take it *worthily* instead!

### "Easter" a mistranslation

Following the example of Jesus and the apostles, the early Church of God observed the Passover, and the Days of Unleavened Bread that immediately followed.

Notice Acts 12:3. The Holy Spirit of God inspired these

*You have been told  
that Easter marks the  
resurrection — that  
Jesus rose from the  
dead Sunday morning.  
These are fables.*

words: "Then *were* the days of unleavened bread." But in the next verse, in the Authorized Version, we read of "Easter."

We have just seen that "Easter" was injected into the church years after the time of Jesus Christ. This word "Easter" is a MISTRANSLATION.

The original Greek word is *pascha*, meaning PASSOVER. In every other place, exactly the same word is used in the original and always rendered PASSOVER. Many other Bible translations, including the Revised Authorized Version, faithfully and correctly render this verse in Acts as "intending to bring him before the people after Passover."

So this verse, instead of mentioning Easter, really proves that the Church, 10 years after the death of Christ, was still observing Passover.

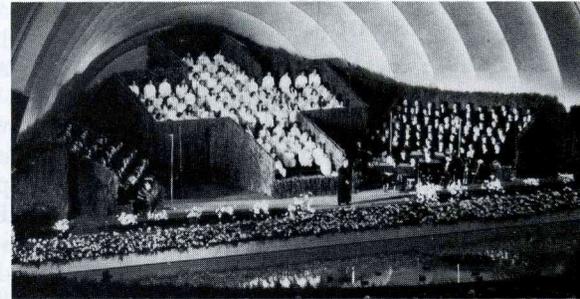
### What does "break bread" mean?

There are some denominations that read Acts 20:7 as a proof that the "Lord's Supper" should be

taken each Sunday *morning!* First notice that this was after the Days of Unleavened Bread (verse 6). Paul was preaching a farewell meeting, not on Sunday morning, but on Saturday night. It was after midnight (verse 7) that they broke bread because they were hungry. When they "had broken bread *and EATEN, AND TALKED A LONG WHILE, EVEN TILL DAY-BREAK,*" Paul departed (verse 11).

So this was just an ordinary meal!

The same expression "break bread" is found in Acts 27:34-35. "Therefore I urge you to take nourishment . . . *he took bread*



. . . and when he had *broken it HE BEGAN TO EAT.*" Also Acts 2:46: "And *breaking bread* from house to house, they *ATE THEIR FOOD* with gladness."

This could not possibly have been the "Lord's Supper" or, more properly, Passover, because Paul says that if we take it to satisfy our hunger we take it to our condemnation (I Corinthians 11:34). In that day, everyone "broke bread" at ordinary meals, because they did not have the kind of bread that we slice. Jesus broke bread because it was at the Passover supper, while eating a meal.

We need to return to the faith once delivered. Let us humbly and obediently observe this sacred ordinance as we are commanded, at the scriptural time, after sunset, the 14th of Abib according to the sacred calendar.

If you haven't as yet learned about the observance of this ordinance, write us immediately for our free booklet *How Often Should We Partake of the Lord's Supper?* □

## What Is Man?

“I am not an animal! I am a human being!” exclaimed John Merrick, the so-called “elephant man,” called this because he was sadly deformed by a physical debility that twisted his features to loosely resemble that creature.

Yes, John Merrick knew he was not an animal, but these days evolutionists are not so sure. They believe we are all animals, mere descendants of primitive life forms that also spawned the apes and other creatures on this earth by the process of evolution.

Are they correct? Is man an animal, or an immortal soul in a mortal body (as most religionists would argue)? Can we know?

Happily, the answer is yes, we can know, for the Bible plainly reveals the answers.

### The basic doctrine

Man is not an animal, nor an immortal soul housed in a fleshly body. He is, rather, a totally mortal being but with a spiritual component — the spirit in man, which gives him the power of conscious human mind and free will, and which couples with God’s Holy Spirit to form the converted Christian mind.

### The usual teachings of this world

The nonbiblical misconceptions about this subject form strong emotional attachments for scientists and religionists alike.

Many scientists, of course, believe in the unproven theory of evolution, and think man to be

merely the most advanced link in an unbroken chain of animal life that sprang spontaneously from chemical soup by blind chance.

Religionists, on the other hand, cling with equal vehemence to the belief that man is an immortal soul housed in an evil fleshly body, waiting to be freed at death and serve out eternity in blissful happiness in heaven or endless agony in hell.

Surprisingly, both theories are wrong. Of course, the theory of evolution does not even make the pretense of originating with the Bible. The proponents of the immortal soul theory, on the other hand, assume their belief has its roots in God’s Word. But they, too, are incorrect.

For, astoundingly, the belief in the immortal soul arose, not from sound biblical doctrine taught or written by the prophets or apostles, but from ancient, heathen Egypt. Then it was adopted by pagan Greek philosophers like Plato. Finally it infiltrated traditional Christianity through church “fathers” who themselves believed the teaching, but who had adopted it from pagan Greek philosophy — not from the Bible.

No wonder the apostle Paul

wrote for us to “beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men” (Colossians 2:8, Authorized Version)!

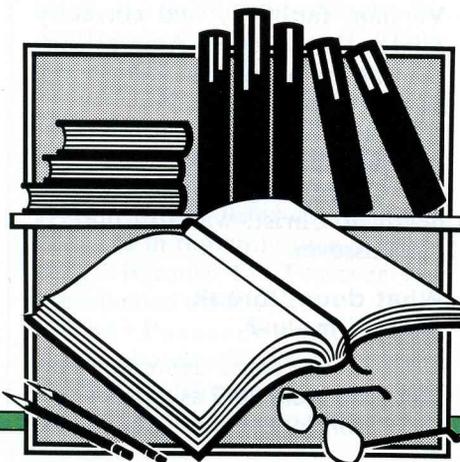
But we need not rest on the historical record alone, for the doctrine of the immortality of the soul falls shattered to the ground in light of the plain teaching of God’s Word.

### The Bible teaching

To be sure, the Bible does indeed use the word *soul* (never the phrase “immortal soul,” however). But the word *soul* is merely a translation in the Old and New Testaments of other words from both Hebrew and Greek. We must look to these languages and the context in which the words are used if we are to understand the words translated “soul” in modern versions.

To begin, notice that man “became a living soul,” according to Genesis 2:7 (AV). And observe that this verse does not say man *has* a soul, but that he *is* a soul. Further, the English word translated “soul” here and in other places is the Hebrew word *nephesh*, which means a “living, breathing creature”; it thus includes *both* animal and human life. The very same word, *nephesh*, refers to animals in Genesis 1:20-21, 24, 2:19 and 9:10, 12, 15, where it is translated “creature,” as well as in Genesis 1:30, 9:4, Leviticus 11:10, 17:11 and other scriptures.

Not only does the word translated “soul” in the Old Testament not imply immortality, nor even superiority to animals, but it is even used to represent *dead* bodies in Leviticus 21:1, 11, Numbers 6:6, 11 and elsewhere. And



twice in the same Bible chapter does God directly say, when speaking of human beings, "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4, 20)!

The Greek word translated "soul" in the New Testament is used in a similar sense, referring only to physical, mortal life (I Corinthians 15:45). Jesus Himself proclaimed that the soul can be destroyed in hell (Matthew 10:28). The apostle John shows men are not immortal souls with his statement that "no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:15), while Paul proclaimed man's mortality with the words "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), not immortal life in hell!

Clearly, the doctrine of the immortal soul is a myth, foisted upon the Christian world from paganism!

But more must be said about this important topic of what man is. For, although man is merely a mortal soul — a mortal, living, breathing creature like an animal — man is nonetheless clearly not a mere beast like a monkey or a goat or a horse. For man — unlike the animals who have been made each "after his [own] kind" (Genesis 1:25, AV) — is made in God's own "image" and "likeness" (verse 26), and is therefore after the God kind and with God's general appearance.

Also, and even more importantly, man has a spiritual component, the "spirit in man," which, when combined with the human brain, produces the human mind, with its unique self-awareness and capacity for free will and character development. As the book of Job says, "It is a spirit in man . . . that giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8, Jewish Publication Society translation).

Likewise, the prophet Zechariah confirms that God "forms the spirit of man within him" (Zechariah 12:1). And Paul declares that man has a "spirit"

within him — a human spirit that gives man his unique human mind: "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?" (I Corinthians 2:11).

But caution is in order here. It is tempting for some who have believed in the immortal-soul theory to conclude that the spirit in man is merely another term for the immortal soul and that the whole argument is simply one of semantics. Not so.

This spirit essence is *not* an immortal soul. The spirit in man is not the man. It is something *in* the man. It has no life of itself, for the life of a man is in the air he breathes and in the blood that circulates that breath through his body (Genesis 2:7, Leviticus 17:11). It does not of itself see or hear (for even a blind or deaf person, though deprived of one of his senses, is altogether human). And at death it has no consciousness of itself, for it sleeps (I Corinthians 11:30, 15:51, I Thessalonians 4:14).

Yet the spirit in man imparts the human qualities of mind to the man (read I Corinthians 2:9-12), and, like a tape in a tape recorder, forms a permanent record of the qualities of mind and character built by a man during his lifetime. And, much as a used tape is stored lifelessly on a shelf till activated for use in a recorder, so also does the spirit of man "return to God who gave it" after death, until the resurrection when life is again given to a person (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

But those whom God has called and chosen — and they alone — receive yet an additional component added to their makeup. It is not the spirit of man, for man has that naturally and automatically. But it is another spirit, the Spirit of God Himself, which is given to those who have been called and properly baptized with the laying on of hands (Acts 2:38)!

This Spirit begets us spiritually

much like a human is begotten physically in his mother's womb (I Peter 1:3). It joins with our own spirit (Romans 8:16-17) and provides both the fruits or qualities of God Himself in us *and* the ability to understand, not merely the things of men, but spiritual knowledge from God! (I Corinthians 2:11-12)!

And further, once we become converted and are filled with that Spirit, we have the seed and down payment of eternal life within us, which, unless rejected later by us, will indeed blossom into full eternal life at Jesus Christ's return (II Corinthians 5:1-5).

How incredible that we — mere humans — may have within us the mind of God and the very knowledge of God!

### Key verses

It helps understanding to remember the most important scriptures on a topic. Here are a few: Genesis 2:7 — man *is* a soul. Genesis 1:20 — the same word used as "soul" in Genesis 2:7 is here translated as "living creature." Ezekiel 18:4, 20 — souls can die. Job 32:8, Zechariah 12:1, I Corinthians 2:11 — there is a spirit in man. I Corinthians 2:11-12 — the spirit in man gives man the unique powers of human mind, and the Spirit of God in a man gives him a godly (spiritually enlightened) mind.

The incredible and true picture is now complete. Man is not an animal nor an immortal soul housed in a fleshly body, but is rather a totally mortal being, but with a spiritual component — the spirit in man, which gives him the power of conscious human mind and free will, and which couples with God's Holy Spirit to form the converted Christian mind.

Yes, John Merrick, the "elephant man," was right. Neither he nor the rest of us are animals, but rather human beings, made in the image of God with the hope of eternal glory! □

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# COMING

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