FEBRUARY 1985

The Good News
OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



What Is the True Gospel?

A Temple in Jerusalem?

Shocking Origin of Valentine's Day

Who Says Johnny Can't Read?

See Page 14

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OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

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How Mature Are You Spiritually?
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COVER: Real-life experiences build on what a child learns through reading. "The Delightful Literature of Childhood," beginning on page 14, explains how to promote vital reading skills. Photo by Hal Finch.

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PERSONAL FROM Herbert W. Armstrong

Conversion Is a Process!

How many times have you heard non-Christians, judging one who professes Christ, say in disgust, "Well, if that's Christianity, I don't want any part of it"?

How many judge GOD by the way they see professing Christians live? How many assume that one must live a perfect life before he can become a Christian?

How many say, "If I could only give up smoking, I'd become a Christian"?

How many think a Christian is supposed to be perfect, never doing anything wrong? Suppose you do see or hear about a Christian doing something WRONG. Does that mean he is a hypocrite — that he is *not* really a Christian, after all?

Is it possible for one to actually sin while he is a Christian, and *still remain* a truly converted Christian?

I suppose nearly everyone would reply in the negative. But here is a vital point *you need to* UNDERSTAND!

It's hard to believe — but TRUE! Few know just what *is* a Christian. Few know how one is converted — whether suddenly, all at once, or gradually. Does conversion happen *immediately,* or is it a process?

IT'S HIGH TIME THAT ALL OF US UNDERSTAND!

The TRUTH is that there is a sense in which true conversion does take place *at a definite time* — all at once. But it is also true that in another sense conversion is *worked out gradually* — it is actually a process of development and growth.

NOW NOTICE CAREFULLY!

When does one really become a Christian? It is when he receives God's Holy Spirit. In Romans 8:9, we read that *unless* we have the Holy Spirit of God, we are not Jesus Christ's — we are not true Christians.

There is a definite TIME when God's Spirit enters into one. At the *very moment* he receives the Holy Spirit, he is, in this first sense, converted. Yes, *all at once!* If he has Jesus Christ's Spirit, he is Jesus Christ's — he is a Christian! He has been begotten as a child of God.

But does that mean his salvation is complete? Is he now fully and finally saved? Is that all there is to it? Is he now, suddenly, *perfect?* Is it now impossible for him to do wrong?

NO! Far from it! But *WHY?* What's the answer? Why do so many misunderstand?

Here is the GOOD NEWS you need to know.

First, there are two conditions to becoming a Christian: REPENTANCE and FAITH. These two we, ourselves, must perform. Yet no one can, of himself, say: "O, now I see — I must repent. All right, I hereby repent." One does not just decide casually, as a matter of routine, to repent.

WHY?

Jesus Christ said that none can come to Him, except the Spirit of the Father draw him. God *grants* repentance. God calls one, and convicts the mind and conscience by His Spirit, working on the mind externally.

Usually a real struggle goes on within. The person has been shaken to know he has done wrong — he has sinned. He is not only sorry — he abhors himself! He is brought to real REPENTANCE, not only for what he has done, but for what he now sees that he is.

Yet he, himself, must make the decision. If he does repent, surrender to God and in faith accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior, then, upon performance of these TWO conditions, God promises to put within him the GIFT of the Holy Spirit. This is the very *life* of God — SPIRIT life. It imparts to him the very divine nature!

Then *what,* at that stage, has happened?

This new convert has only been *begotten* of God — not yet BORN. He has not received the full measure of God's Spirit Jesus Christ had — he is only a *spiritual babe* in Jesus Christ — he must now GROW spiritually, just as a newly conceived fetus in its mother's womb must grow physically large enough to be born as a human.

This new convert has now repented, in his mind, from the depths of his heart. HE MEANS IT, too!

In all sincerity, in his mind and heart he has *turned around to go the other way* — to live a different life. He is now a CHRISTIAN — he has received God's Holy Spirit. He really wants to do what is right — to obey God — to live GOD'S WAY.

Yet he finds he does not *do* this perfectly! Many, at this stage, become discouraged. Some

give up even trying to live a Christian life. And WHY?

Because of the false notion that a Christian is one who becomes PERFECT *at one fell swoop* — or, that one cannot become a Christian until he has broken all wrong habits, and *made himself* righteous.

It's vital to UNDERSTAND how true Christianity really works!

The newly begotten Christian must grow up, spiritually. What would you think of a human baby who became 6 feet tall all at once, without growing up? The growing-up process requires TIME. There is an instant when a person receives the impregnating Holy Spirit of God — when he first becomes a Christian. But he is only a spiritual infant. He must grow up spiritually.

The newly converted person, *in his mind and heart,* sincerely has about-faced! He has actually gained contact with GOD, and received God's Holy Spirit. God's own divine NATURE has now been conceived within him.

BUT THAT'S ALL — it is *merely conceived* — not yet full grown! And his human nature is still there — it has not been killed or removed!

Understand this!

We were all born HUMAN. We all have HUMAN NATURE. Few seem to know exactly what human nature is.

Human nature is a strong PULL — a tendency — and, like gravity, it is a *downward* pull. Like a strong magnet, it draws us in the way of SATAN — that is, a pull toward self-gratification and jealousy, envy and resentment and hatred toward others. It is the spirit of rebellion against authority, hostility toward God and the law of God.

That is human nature. It is within you. But how did human nature become that way? Adam and Eve were not created with that nature.

Originally God created the beautiful archangel Lucifer. He sealed up the sum of wisdom, knowledge and beauty. But one thing he lacked — the righteous CHARACTER to choose the right way and resist the wrong — to discipline the *self* in the way he ought to go, instead of the way of self-desire.

So Lucifer became Satan. He allowed pride and vanity, selfishness and greed, a lack of outgoing concern for others — the spirit of competition, opposition, strife, effort to acquire and to exalt the self — to enter his mind. He became perverted.

Satan, ever since the Garden of Eden, has beamed his now perverted thinking into the minds of unwitting human beings. So humanity has accepted Satan's nature and allowed it to become infused with human nature.

God's purpose in having created humanity — in having caused *YOU* to be born — is to reproduce Himself. And GOD, above all things, *is* PERFECT, RIGHTEOUS *CHARACTER!* God is able to create character within us — but it must be done as a result of our independent free choice. We, as individual separate entities, have our own part in the process.

What *is* perfect character? It is the ability, in a separate entity, to come to the KNOWLEDGE of the right from the wrong — the true from the false — and to CHOOSE the right, and possess the WILL to enforce self-discipline to do the right and resist the wrong.

Like muscle, character is developed, and grows by exercise. My name is Armstrong. I suppose I could make my arm stronger, and develop the muscle, by constantly bending it back and forth at the elbow. But if I pull, or push, against some heavy weight or resistance, the muscle will develop much faster.

Therefore God allows us to have this NATURE that exerts a heavy pull *against* that perfect, righteous character — to give us something to *strive against,* for THE VERY PURPOSE AND GOAL OF STRENGTHENING AND DEVELOPING RIGHT CHARACTER!

God's CHARACTER travels in the direction of His law — the way of LOVE. It is an outgoing CONCERN for others.

God has that character! He has an outgoing concern for you and for me. He GAVE His only begotten Son to reconcile us to Him, and make the JOYS of His character and everlasting life possible for us. He showers on us every good and precious gift. He even puts within us HIS DIVINE NATURE — *when* we repent and turn *from* the wrong way of this world, begin to resist it and turn to Him through faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior!

God's divine nature is the nature of love — of giving, serving, sharing, helping — of outgoing concern. It is the nature of humility.

Now when one is converted — has repented, and *turned from* Satan's and this world's false WAY — has at once received God's Holy Spirit — his HUMAN nature, as I said before, does not flee. It, too, remains. It *still* exerts a pull. We still live in THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD, and *it* exerts a pull. God still allows Satan to be around — and HE exerts a pull.

So we now have three pulls to resist — to overcome! We must now *overcome* these three — Satan, this world and our own selves. We have to battle against these three, in order to develop and strengthen RIGHT CHARACTER within us. God says plainly it is THE OVERCOMERS who shall be saved — who shall reign with Jesus Christ!

No human being is strong enough to do this BY HIMSELF! He must seek, and IN FAITH receive, the help and power of God. Even with God's power he will not overcome such forces easily, or all at once.

IT IS NOT EASY!

Jesus Christ plainly said the way to ultimate salvation is hard, difficult. It's a constant BATTLE — a struggle against self, the world and the devil. The creation of CHARACTER comes through EXPERIENCE — it takes time!

This development is a process. It is a matter of GROWTH — DEVELOPMENT. It requires, to become perfect, full and right knowledge of the very Word of

(Continued on page 22)

What Is the True Gospel?

What is the true Gospel that Jesus preached? Did Paul preach a different gospel to the gentiles? Here, at last, is made plain the truth about the Kingdom of God.

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Why should there be such perplexity — such *confusion* — in every phase of life today?

It should be the function of religion to point the way. Yet here, too, we find only confusion of tongues — hundreds of different religious denominations and sects, in a Babylon of disagreement.

Even in the professing Christian religion of the Western world, we find different sects and denominations preaching a variety of different GOSPELS!

Some designate their gospel as "The Gospel of Jesus Christ." Others call *their* gospel "The Gospel of Salvation." Still others profess to teach "The Gospel of Grace," some "The Gospel of the Kingdom."

WHY HAVE THEY LOST THE ONLY TRUE GOSPEL THAT GOD SENT BY JESUS CHRIST?

WHY?

How many Gospels are there?

Does it make any difference which gospel we believe?

Listen to the answer of the eternal God, as inspired in Paul's letter to the Galatians — the first chapter, the eighth verse:

"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any *other* gospel to you than what we have preached to you, *let him be accursed.*"

And it is made a *double* curse! For the next verse says, "So now I say *again,* if anyone preaches *any other* gospel to you than what you have received, *let him be accursed.*"

WHY, then, has the world lost sight of *that* Gospel? WHY do people believe *different* gospels today?

This is an astounding, incredible situation! It ought to shake you out of passive indifference. YOUR eternity is at stake! This is not an inconsequential, unimportant matter!

Jesus Christ said it is absolutely necessary to BELIEVE THE GOSPEL to be saved! Yet the *many* — the hundreds of millions — today do not even know what *that Gospel is!*

Again, His parting commission to His apostles, being sent out as His ministers to build His Church, was this: "Go into all the world and preach *the gospel*" (Mark 16:15). They were to preach THE GOSPEL.

Jesus then said, "He who BELIEVES and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (verse 16).

Notice! Jesus said, "He who BELIEVES." Believes *what?* Why, BELIEVES that which they PREACHED, of course — THE GOSPEL! Not *a* gospel. Not *any* gospel. THE Gospel!

On the authority of Jesus Christ, it is necessary to believe THAT PRECISE, IDENTICAL GOSPEL in order to be saved! And to BELIEVE the true Gospel, we must first come to KNOW exactly what it is!

Now with whom, and from where, and to whom, did the true Gospel originate? With Christ? No, not with Jesus Christ!

The message sent from heaven

God the Father had promised to send a messenger into this world from heaven, bearing a message from HIM — God the FATHER!

God had promised that in Malachi 3:1: "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me [and *that* messenger, as explained in Mark 1:2, was John the Baptist, preparing the way before Jesus Christ's first coming]. And the LORD, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, EVEN THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT, in whom you delight."

The very first sermon by which God had the Gospel preached to gentiles, when Peter was sent to

the house of the gentile Cornelius, recorded in the 10th chapter of the book of Acts, gives us very explicit directions for locating the one and only TRUE GOSPEL — the Gospel we must believe in order to be saved.

Open your own Bible! I want you to *read* this with your own eyes!

This is what the inspired Peter said, as recorded in Acts 10:36-37: "The word which GOD *sent* to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ — He is Lord of all — that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached."

Which Gospel did Jesus preach?

Notice carefully these points:

1) WITH WHOM did this message — this Gospel — originate? Peter said: "The word which GOD *sent*."

2) TO WHOM did God send it? Peter said "to the children of Israel."

Although now, 10 years later, this same Gospel was being opened up to gentiles of ALL nations, originally it was sent to the CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, and it was sent by GOD the FATHER. It did not originate with Jesus Christ, nor with Peter, nor with the apostle Paul. It *was sent* by God the Father of Jesus Christ!

3) THROUGH WHOM was it sent? Who was the divine Messenger who brought and preached the message? Peter said "through Jesus Christ."

Jesus Christ was the divine MESSENGER. Malachi called Him the Messenger of the COVENANT. That message, then, is the NEW Covenant message, for Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant, and Jesus Christ of the NEW, as affirmed by many scriptures. This message, then, is the NEW TESTAMENT GOSPEL.

Now, 4) WHERE was it first preached? To what geographical location shall we look for its beginning? Peter said it "began from Galilee." Yes, GALILEE, then, is the place where it was first preached. Not Jerusalem! Galilee!

When did Jesus begin to preach this particular Gospel in Galilee? Peter said "*after* the baptism which John preached." The true GOSPEL of the NEW Covenant, then, did not begin with John the Baptist. It began *after* John had completed his baptismal ministry.

Now these very *definite* directions lead us directly to the first chapter of Mark. The first verse tells us this is the record of the BEGINNING of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Then it relates the baptizing ministry of John, preaching, NOT the Gospel, but "a baptism of repentance," which prepares the way for the GOSPEL that the living God sent by Jesus Christ (verse 4).

And then we come to verses 14 and 15 (Authorized Version): "Now *after* that John was put in prison" — there is the exact TIME for the beginning of the preaching of the TRUE GOSPEL — "JESUS" — there is the divine Messenger THROUGH whom God sent it — "came into GALILEE" — THERE IS THE PRECISE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION.

So we now have the TIME, the Israelites residing there TO WHOM God sent the message, the PLACE and the MESSENGER — so whatever we find Jesus Christ preaching here IS THE ONE AND ONLY TRUE GOSPEL.

And what do we read? "Jesus came into Galilee, PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the KINGDOM OF GOD is at hand: REPENT YE, and BELIEVE THE GOSPEL."

Notice, Jesus said, "Believe *THE GOSPEL"!*

WHAT Gospel? The one He was proclaiming — "the gospel of the kingdom of God."

But, one may ask, don't we need to believe on Jesus? Of course. Other scriptures teach that. But at *this* particular time Jesus said we must believe *Him* — believe what He said — believe the Gospel of the Kingdom of God!

Some believed *on* Jesus, but did not *believe Jesus* — did not believe *what He* SAID (John 7:31, 8:30-31, 46).

What about the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

But if the one and only TRUE Gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, what about the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Is that a false gospel?

Not at all. Let's understand.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel He brought as God's Messenger — the Gospel He proclaimed is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is NOT man's gospel ABOUT the PERSON of Jesus Christ. It is JESUS CHRIST'S Gospel — the Gospel Jesus PREACHED — the Gospel GOD SENT by Him, and therefore it is also called, in Scripture, the Gospel of God. The Gospel of God is *God's* Gospel — His message — His good news that He sent *by* Jesus.

Also the Gospel *of* Jesus Christ is Jesus Christ's Gospel — the Gospel Jesus Christ brought from God — the Gospel He announced and proclaimed.

We hear a great deal today of the gospel of MEN about the PERSON of Jesus Christ — confining the message solely to the things ABOUT Jesus. As a result, *millions* believe *on* Christ *who do not* BELIEVE CHRIST!

But Jesus' Christ's *Gospel* IS HIS MESSAGE!

And *yet* it was not only His, but His FATHER'S who sent Him, as He Himself said. In John 12:49-50, Jesus said: "I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who *sent Me* gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that HIS command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, *so* I speak."

Yes, the Father SENT Jesus bearing a message, which is the good news of THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Jesus is God's Spokesman — the WORD that was made flesh and lived, and taught, on this earth! In John 14:24 Jesus said, "The word which you hear is NOT

MINE *but the Father's who sent Me.*"

And, descriptive of the religion of the Old Testament and the GOSPEL of the NEW, it is written in Luke 16:16, "The law and the prophets were UNTIL JOHN. *Since* that time the KINGDOM OF GOD has been preached."

What is the Kingdom of God?

And yet there are some in *this* modern day of religious confusion who believe the Gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD is not for this age — this New Testament time of grace.

They reject and therefore do not BELIEVE the true Gospel as Jesus commanded and thereby reject the very conditions to SALVATION, saying the Gospel of the KINGDOM is a gospel for some future age yet to come.

But as the apostle Paul said to the Thessalonians, I would not have you to be IGNORANT of the very Gospel that alone can bring us eternal life!

There was a definite TIME for the beginning of the Gospel — *since* John. The law and the prophets were UNTIL John. *Since* John's special preparatory ministry, the KINGDOM OF GOD is preached.

There was a definite TIME for this true New Testament Gospel to begin. And after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, saying, "The TIME is fulfilled," and preaching the Gospel.

And so now, exactly WHAT is that Gospel?

The English word *gospel* comes from the word *godspel,* and means GOOD NEWS. Daily, we read the NEWS of world happenings — mostly BAD news! We live in a troubled, chaotic world. And the very BEST news you can hear in this day, or any other, is the GOOD NEWS of the KINGDOM OF GOD.

But what *is* a KINGDOM? Primarily, it is a GOVERNMENT — a NATION and the GOVERNMENT that rules it. And especially in this biblical sense, there is the DUAL sense of the NATION, including all its subjects or citizens, and the GOVERNMENT by which it is ruled. Again — in BIBLE usage, a kingdom is often a family from a single parent grown into a NATION.

Four things are necessary to constitute a KINGDOM: 1) the TERRITORY, with its specific geographic location and definite boundary lines, with 2) a KING or supreme ruler or governing agent, ruling over 3) SUBJECTS or citizens *within* that territorial jurisdiction, with 4) LAWS and a form of GOVERNMENT.

If we leave out any one of these vital requisites, we do not have, and cannot BELIEVE, the true GOSPEL for this time.

We must know whether the Kingdom of God is here NOW, or coming later; whether its territory is THE EARTH, or up in heaven; whether it is a literal kingdom of human mortals, or a kingdom of immortals; whether it is literal or figurative, real or unreal.

And on many of these things, a great many people are ALL MIXED UP!

But now what about the Gospel of GRACE — the Gospel concerning SALVATION?

Born into the Kingdom

Notice, when Nicodemus came to Jesus secretly, as recorded in John the third chapter, Jesus said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the KINGDOM OF GOD" (verse 3).

Jesus was proclaiming the KINGDOM OF GOD — explaining a most important phase of it.

As Paul wrote to the church at Corinth in I Corinthians 15:50, flesh and blood — that is, a mortal human — cannot enter INTO the Kingdom of God.

The Church, then, cannot be the Kingdom of God, for it is composed of flesh-and-blood mortals. It is *not,* either, an ethereal something "set up in the hearts of men."

Jesus went on to show Nicodemus that we who are born of the flesh ARE flesh — just mortal flesh and blood. We were BORN that way — HUMAN — MORTAL.

But it is possible for us to be BORN AGAIN — next time, *not* as a mortal flesh-and-blood baby, but born of the SPIRIT. Then we shall *be* spirit — composed of spirit!

Now in the fourth chapter of John we read that GOD is a SPIRIT (verse 24). The Kingdom of GOD is composed of those BORN of GOD. And as I have explained previously, GOD is not a single person, but the Hebrew word for God, *Elohim,* portrays God as a FAMILY of persons — a *single* family, or *kingdom,* but composed of MORE than one person.

We have the mineral *kingdom,* the plant *kingdom,* the animal *kingdom.* The Bible reveals an angel *kingdom,* created by God and composed of spirit, not made of matter.

And then, high above all, is the very CREATING Kingdom — the GOD Kingdom or, in other words, THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

God is REPRODUCING HIMSELF! God created man in GOD'S IMAGE, so that man may become impregnated, BEGOTTEN and, by a resurrection, be BORN as an immortal, SPIRIT-COMPOSED person in the KINGDOM OF GOD.

The apostle Paul made very plain to the Corinthians that while mortal flesh and blood cannot inherit, or enter into, the Kingdom of God, that through the resurrection of those BEGOTTEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD during this mortal life, this MORTAL then *puts on* IMMORTALITY, and we, like the very God Himself, become IMMORTAL, INCORRUPTIBLE, actually, literally, BORN of God's Spirit INTO the very GOD FAMILY.

Conditions of entering

Now, HOW may we enter into that glorious KINGDOM?

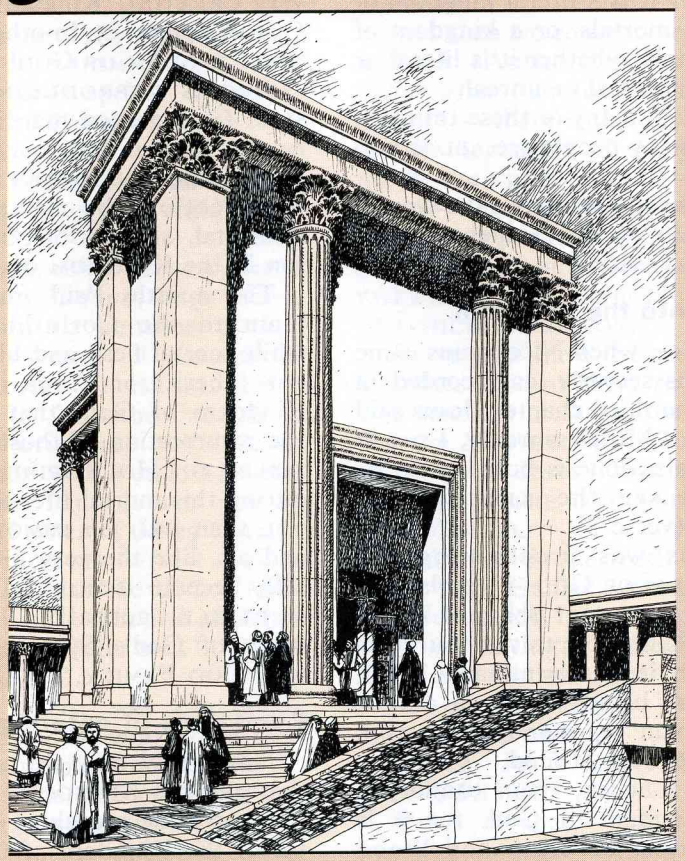
Jesus came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying "REPENT" and "BELIEVE THE GOSPEL."

Just TWO things *we* do — REPENT and BELIEVE. We must BELIEVE the Gospel, and that means also believing on JESUS CHRIST, the KING of the Kingdom of God and coming KING *of* kings over all the families and

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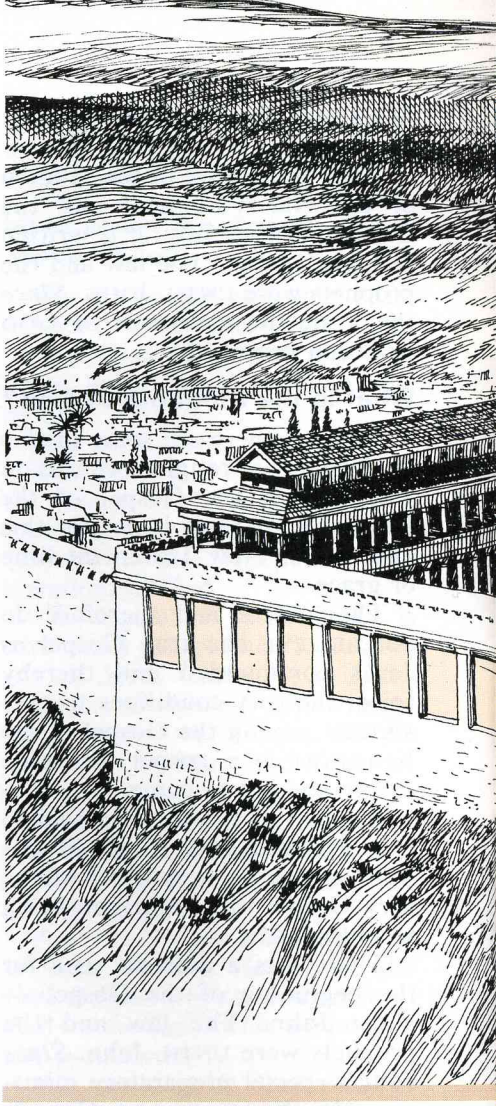
COMING

A Temple in Jerusalem?



Jews and Christians alike anticipate the construction of a temple in Jerusalem. But is a temple necessary to fulfill prophecy?

By Ronald D. Kelly



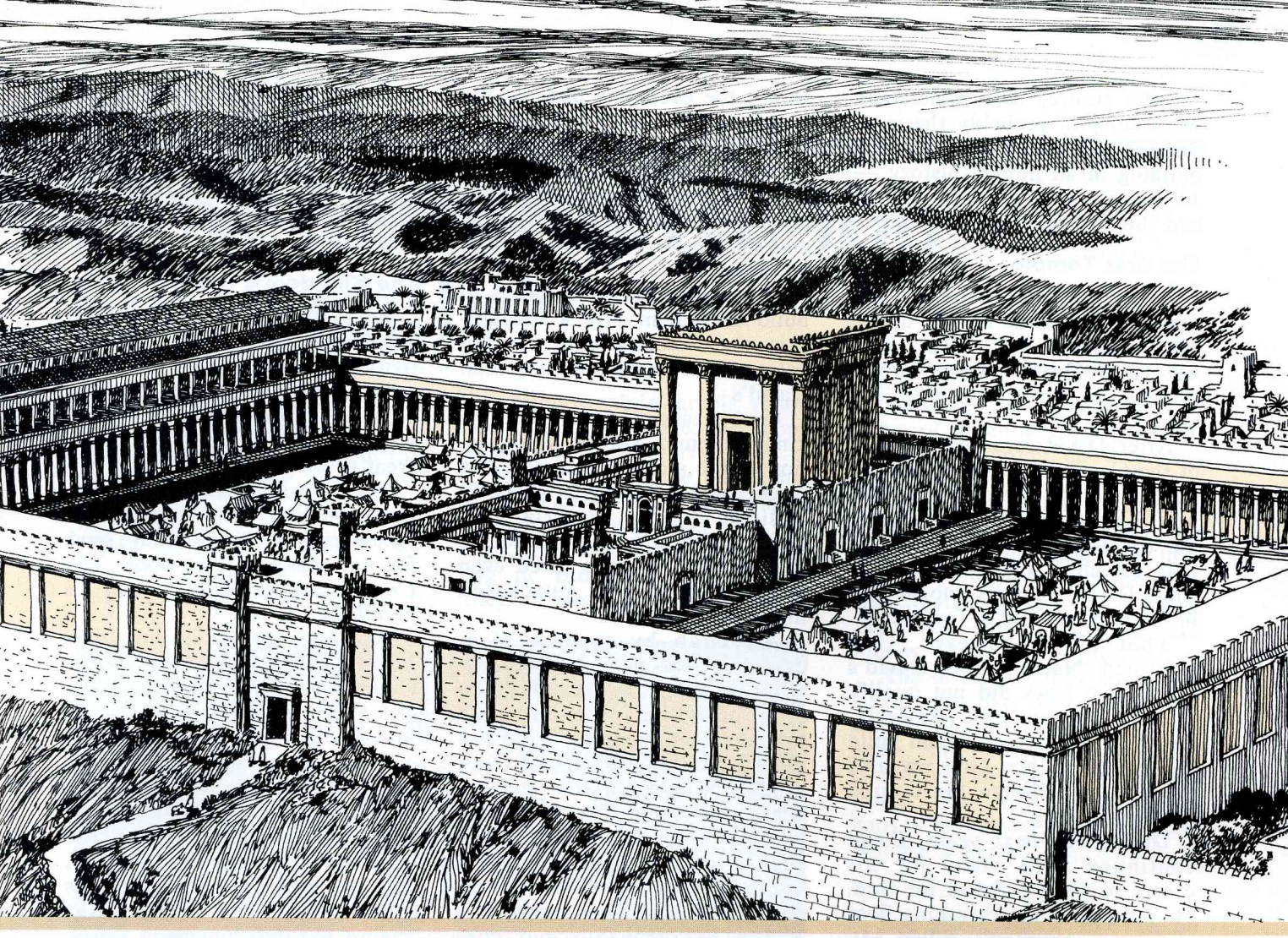
It was April, A.D. 69. The 29-year-old General Titus had command of the Roman army for the Judean campaign.

The Jewish war against Rome started in early A.D. 66. Gradually the Roman legions brought the rebellion under control. Now, in 69, the siege had caused famine.

Jerusalem's population had swollen by the thousands as refugees gathered in one last desperate struggle against the Roman armies. Some 25,000 Jewish fighters prepared to hold off 80,000 Roman troops from four legions.

The Roman 10th legion came up from Jericho on the east. The 12th came from the west. The fifth and 15th legions, under the personal direction of Titus, camped to the north on Mt. Scopus.

By the spring of A.D. 70 one of



Ancient Temple at Jerusalem, *in modern artist's renderings. New interest in constructing a temple has revived the millennia-old controversy over this crucial area.*

the greatest and most famous battles of all history was under way. Titus sent his major thrust into Jerusalem from the northwest. Within three weeks, the Romans had broken through the third and second walls and occupied much of the city.

The main body of Jewish zealots prepared to fight to the bitter end, barricading themselves in the natural fortress that was the Temple.

The hot summer months were filled with the agonies of war. Finally, in late August of A.D. 70, the Temple Mount fell to the Roman forces.

Apparently Titus had not intended to destroy the Temple. But one of his soldiers hurled a piece of burning wood into the sanctuary, setting the complex ablaze.

Describing the scene, the Jewish historian Josephus wrote: "One would have thought that the hill itself, on which the Temple stood, was seething hot, as full of fire on every part of it, that the blood was larger in quantity than the fire, and those that were slain more in number than those that slew them; for the ground did nowhere appear visible, for the dead bodies that lay on it."

Within days the Temple lay in ruins and most of Jerusalem was rubble. Sections of the Temple that had been overlaid with gold had melted in the destructive flames; soldiers and looters pushed stones aside to retrieve the melted gold. In the course of time, not one stone was left on another.

An era that began a thousand years before was at an end.

Now, more than 1,900 years later, there is revived interest in the construction of a Temple in Jerusalem. Some among the Jewish religious leadership believe a Temple must be built before the coming of the Messiah. Others don't think so.

Many fundamentalist Christians believe a Temple must be set up before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Some Christian organizations have contributed to a fund to participate in the construction of such a Temple.

What does the Bible say? Will there have to be a Temple in Jerusalem before the prophesied end-time events can take place? Must sacrifices be offered on the Temple Mount? Or will a physical building and sacrifices not be necessary until the Messiah has come and God's Kingdom is set up on earth?

The future holds some interesting possibilities.

Before studying the prophecies

Illustrations by J. Vance

for the future, let's understand the history of probably the most famous geographical area and building in all human history — Jerusalem, the Temple Mount and the Temple itself.

The first Temple

King Solomon constructed the first Temple in the middle of the 10th century B.C. But even before Solomon, King David desired to build a house for God.

After David returned the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, he said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains" (II Samuel 7:2). Thus David let it be known that he wanted to build a Temple.

That night, however, God informed Nathan that David's militaristic ways did not qualify him for the project. However, David's son Solomon would build the Temple. Then God revealed the plan and design He desired for the building.

During the next years, David continued with plans for his dream to build a house for God. He purchased the threshing floor of Ornan, commonly called Mt. Moriah, for the project site.

Interestingly, this is believed to be the same location to which Abraham brought his son Isaac to be sacrificed more than 1,000 years before David. In that case, you remember, God supplied a ram for the sacrifice after proving Abraham's obedience and faith.

Then David began to collect materials for the construction of the Temple. David wanted quality for the house of God, and perhaps wasn't sure young Solomon would obtain the finest materials and hire the best craftsmen.

David died at age 70, leaving Solomon with the responsibility to construct the Temple.

Construction under Solomon

To maintain peace in Israel, Solomon first honed his military strategy, assembling an imposing force of charioteers and horsemen — some 1,500 chariots and 12,000 horses. Then he set out to secure the economic basis of the kingdom. His copper mines and smelteries and his shipping and transport enterprises became famous. Camel caravans and ships provided a dazzling flow of goods and services. Taxes were also increased.

The wealth provided means to build Jerusalem into a magnificent city. Solomon built his own palace, much more imposing than David's.

Four years after he became king, Solomon started construction of the glorious Temple. The project was to last seven years. In addition to the material and laborers David had prepared for the project, Solomon hired even more workers and purchased more fine materials.

Although by modern standards, it was not an especially large building, the Temple Solomon built was, for its time, extremely impressive. The Temple was not designed to hold thousands of people at a time. It was a center of worship. The priests had carefully prescribed duties and rites to perform. Even the animal sacrifices were performed in front of the Temple — not inside it.

The workmanship and construction of the Temple were of the highest quality. The main walls were of hewn stone blocks quarried not far from the Temple Mount. Sturdy beams reinforced the walls. Finely carved horizontal beams were overlaid with ceiling planks and roof tiles.

Finely dyed fabrics adorned some walls and doorways. Flanking the main entrance to the Temple were two massive bronze pillars, six feet in diameter and some 30 to 40 feet high. These and numerous other bronze castings were produced by a technology advanced for that day. Bronze and gold utensils were used for rituals and sacrifices.

It didn't take long for the fabulous Temple to become a symbol of godly worship among the Hebrew peoples, and then its fame spread throughout the Middle East.

But the time of peace and prosperity that existed under Solomon was short-lived. After Solomon's death, Israel was torn by revolution. The northern tribes formed a separate nation, retaining the name Israel. The southern nation continued under the name of Judah.

The Kingdom's decline

By 721-718 B.C., the northern tribes were carried away into captivity in Assyria. Most of those people never returned to their homelands, but in later centuries migrated to Europe and other areas of the world.

For more information on where the so-called "lost" tribes of Israel are to be found today, send for our startling free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.

Not learning the lesson from Israel, Judah continued to reject God's ways, and between 604 and 585 B.C., they, too, were carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians.

In 604 the Babylonians took the first wave of captives from Judah to Babylon. Among the captives were Daniel and Ezekiel. For the next 19 years the Jews mounted a series of uprisings against the Babylonians in Judea. God's prophet Jeremiah faithfully carried out God's work during that time.

Zedekiah, who was to be Judah's final king, in desperation formed an unwise alliance with the pharaoh of Egypt, contrary to Jeremiah's warnings. Enraged, Nebuchadnezzar sent his armies against one fortified Jewish city after another. He set a siege around Jerusalem. It was then only a matter of time.

In the summer of 587 B.C. the Babylonians broke through Jerusalem's northern wall, swarming into the city. King Zedekiah fled toward Jericho, but was captured and brought before Nebuchadnezzar, just as Jeremiah had prophesied. The king's sons were killed before him and then his own eyes were put out. He was bound hand and foot and carried to Babylon, where he died.

The palace and the Temple

(Continued on page 24)

By John A. Halford

How Mature Are You Spiritually?

"Do you think they will be all right? It's such a long way." "How far are they going today?" "Well, it's a school bus, so other drivers should be especially careful."

The parents were trying to hide their anxiety. They were gathered around a bus that was soon to leave for summer camp. On that bus were their sons and daughters.

Some of the young people had not been away from home before. And here they were, preparing to drive from California to a summer camp on the other side of the country — on the other side of the world, it seemed.

The parents were glad that their children had such a wonderful opportunity. But in the last few minutes while the big yellow bus prepared to leave, the happiness gave way to worry.

Meanwhile, on the bus, confidence reigned. If any of the 40 or so teenagers on the bus were nervous, they certainly weren't showing it. But then, why should they? These kids were 14 or 15 years old. Some had even reached the dizzying heights of being 16 or 17! *They* could handle it.

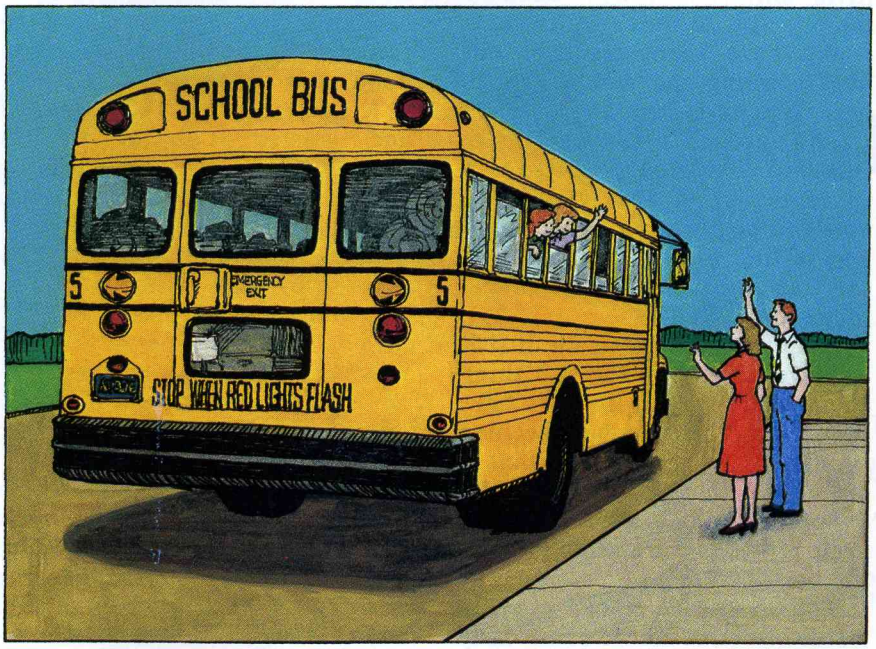


Illustration by Michael Jon Woodruff

Some of the teens made a dutiful last-moment appearance at the window to wave farewell to their tight-lipped fathers and tearful mothers. Then it was back to the more serious business of finding a place to sit with their friends in the tangle of tennis shoes, pillows and overnight luggage that filled the inside of the bus.

At last, with a loud blast of the horn and a cheer from inside, the accumulated result of nearly 700 years of parental care and child rearing was swept off down the freeway.

Our own daughters called us from Des Moines, Iowa, two days later. Yes, everything was fine. Yes, they were having fun. No, they hadn't gotten much sleep. No, they didn't have enough money. "Gotta go — bye!"

And of course, they arrived all right, just like they knew they would. That's so typical of teenagers, isn't it? They are so full of confidence and eager to try new things. They are amused and perhaps a bit embarrassed by their parents' concern.

Too much too soon

Teenagers don't like to be thought of as children. Physically they may be as tall as Mom and Dad. They have to pay full fare on buses and airplanes, and they deeply resent being offered the child's menu at a restaurant.

Mentally they are growing up, too. They stop being little children, believing and accepting without question everything they are taught. They begin to get their own ideas and form their own beliefs.

Wise parents recognize this. But a wise parent also realizes that teenagers are not quite as ready for the world as they think they are. Several more years of experience and education are needed to make the most of life's opportunities.

That is why we were worried as we watched the bus disappear. A lot can go wrong, even on a carefully planned bus trip. Our 14-, 15-, 16- and 17-year-old children

suddenly seemed small and vulnerable, and we couldn't help being concerned.

Just like God worries about us sometimes.

The Bible clearly shows that if we as physical parents are concerned for the welfare of our physical children, our Father in heaven is many times more concerned for the well-being of His spiritual sons and daughters (Hebrews 12:9, Psalms 103:13-14).

As parents, we have the responsibility to prepare our young people for their next 50 or more years of physical life. But God must watch over Spirit-begotten children in the first years of a life that must last forever.

So if it is dangerous for a physical child to try to shrug off his parents' care and go it alone before he is ready, how much worse is it to do that spiritually?

A lesson in humility

Are you in danger of becoming a spiritual teenager?

Jesus Christ once taught His disciples an important lesson in humility. They had been having one of their frequent arguments over which one of them was going to be the most important in God's Kingdom. Jesus called a little child over to Him and told the disciples, "Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

The little child, meanwhile, stood quietly by Jesus, waiting to see what He wanted. Jesus continued, "Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (verse 4).

What did Jesus mean? Was He saying that He wanted His Kingdom to be composed of immature, small-minded little people who just do what they are told and never think for themselves?

Not at all! He had already decided that those very men who had been quarreling would one day be working together in a major responsibility judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). But only if they qualified. The way they were acting, they would not even be in the Kingdom. They had to learn to humble themselves — like a little child.

The little fellow who came running over to Jesus showed an attitude of trust and obedience. He wasn't too self-important or too busy doing his own thing to come when he was called.

Learning to be childlike

As young people grow up, they begin to develop new priorities. That isn't necessarily bad. We should not expect a maturing teenager to continue to act with the naiveté and blind obedience of a 5-year-old.

But spiritually, we should all maintain the simple innocence of little children. Why? Because there is still so much to learn.

We have spent most of our lives learning the wrong way to live. We have had an excellent training ground — Satan's world. But once converted, God wants us to come out of that world. He needs to begin teaching us a new way of life, so that eventually we can teach others in the world tomorrow.

But first, we have to admit that we have not known the first thing about God's way of life. We have lived a way that may have seemed right, but we now realize that it led to death (Proverbs 16:25). When it comes to knowing what leads to life, we are as helpless as newborn babies.

The apostle Peter had to write words of correction to some early Church brethren who were bringing some of the old ways into their new lives. He encouraged them to, "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2). Newborn, breast-fed babies don't argue. They absorb as much as possible, hungrily and gratefully.

Don't lose the first love

This is usually the way people are when God first opens their eyes to His truth. They can't learn fast enough. With their voracious appetite, and guided by the Holy Spirit, they quickly put on spiritual weight.

But after a while, that appetite falls off. Some of the wonder has gone out of the new knowledge, and we start to become casual.

Do you remember the first time you did something you shouldn't have done on the Sabbath, after you knew better? You expected the roof to fall in. But it didn't. Nor did fire come down from heaven when you cheated a bit on your tithes. And the earth didn't open up and swallow you when you told a white lie.

Like a teenager, you find that you can wander farther and farther from home without getting into difficulties. Maybe you start once again to "do your own thing." The humble, "first-love" attitude fades. You begin to resent correction — you feel you don't need to be told.

King Saul, the first king of ancient Israel, is an example of a tragic slide into a wrong attitude. Though he was humble at first, Saul eventually became so independent that God rejected him from being king. When Saul was "little in his own eyes" (I Samuel 15:17), he was able to fill the position. But when he began to get overly self-confident and rely on himself, God could no longer use him.

Those God is training to be kings and priests in tomorrow's world must learn from King Saul's mistake. We are learning and developing a new way of life, and God wants us to remain humble and teachable. We must, in order that we may grow up properly and take our places in God's Kingdom and government.

During the last two decades Satan's world has fed us on a steady diet of "doing our own thing," "developing our own potential," "becoming our own man (or woman)" and carefully nurturing our *self*-esteem. To be "little in our own eyes" is not the way of the world today.

But it must be the way of those God has called to help in the world tomorrow. □



Valentine's Day

CHRISTIAN CUSTOM OR PAGAN PAGEANTRY?

"Will you be my valentine?" That question is asked by millions about this time of year. Why? Is there any religious significance to February 14?

By Herman L. Hoeh

Where did St. Valentine's Day come from?

You might suppose schoolteachers and educators would know. But do they?

How many of you were ever taught the real origin of Valentine's Day — were ever told in school exactly *why* you should observe the custom of exchanging valentines?

Teachers are all too often silent about the origin of the customs they are forced to teach in today's schools. If they were to speak out, many would lose their jobs!

Today, candy makers unload tons of heart-shaped red boxes for February 14 — St. Valentine's Day — while millions of the younger set exchange valentines. Florists consider February 14 as one of their best business days. And young lovers pair off — at least for a dance or two — at St. Valentine's balls.

Why? Where did these customs originate? How did we

come to inherit these customs? Isn't it time we examined why we encourage our children to celebrate St. Valentine's Day?

A Christian custom?

Many have assumed that the traditional Valentine's Day celebrations are all in connection with an early Christian martyr by the name of Valentine.

Nothing could be further from the truth!

Notice what one encyclopedia says about this idea: "St. Valentine's Day as a lovers' festival, the choice of a valentine and the modern development of sending valentine cards has no relation to the saint or to any incident in his life" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica,* article "Valentine, Saint").

Did you know that centuries before the birth of Jesus, the pagan Romans celebrated February 15 and the evening of February 14 as an idolatrous and sensuous festival in honor of one called Lupercus, the "hunter of wolves"?

The Romans called the festival the "Lupercalia." The custom of exchanging valentines and all the other traditions in honor of Lupercus, the deified hero-hunter of Rome, was also linked anciently with the pagan practice of teenagers "going steady." It usually led to fornication.

Today, the custom of going steady is thought very modern and advanced. It isn't. It is merely a rebirth of an old custom "handed down from the Roman festival of the Lupercalia, celebrated in the month of February, when names of young women were put into a box and drawn out by men as chance directed." That's the admission of the *Encyclopedia Americana,* article "St. Valentine's Day."

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* also points out that the custom of exchanging valentines arose from this "name drawing" during the Lupercalia. The "custom was introduced to England by the Romans and continued through the Christian era. In order to adapt the practice to Christianity the church transferred it to the feast of St. Valentine" (article "Greeting Card").



When Christianity became an official religion of the Roman Empire, there was some talk of discarding the pagan Lupercalia. But the Romans wouldn't hear of it! So it was agreed that the holiday would continue as it was.

When Constantine in A.D. 313 made Christianity an official religion of the Roman Empire, there was some talk in church circles of discarding this pagan free-for-all. But the Roman citizens wouldn't hear of it! So it was agreed that the holiday would continue as it was, except for the more grossly sensual observances.

It was not until the reign of Pope Gelasius that the holiday became a "Christian" custom. "As far back as 496, Pope Gelasius changed Lupercalia on February 15 to St. Valentine's Day on February 14" (Lavinia Dobler, *Customs and Holidays Around the World,* p. 172).

But how did this pagan festival acquire the name of "St. Valentine's Day"? And why do little children and young people still cut out hearts and send them to "sweethearts" on a day in honor of Lupercus, the hunter of wolves?

Why have we supposed these pagan customs, in honor of a false god, are Christian?

Who was the original "St. Valentine"?

Valentine was a common Roman name. Roman parents often gave the name to their children in honor of the famous man who was first called Valentine in antiquity. That famous man was Lupercus, the hunter.

But who was Lupercus — and why should he have also borne the name Valentine among the heathen Romans?

The Romans identified Lupercus with the Greek god Pan (*Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology,* Vol. II, article "Lupercus"). Pan was an Arcadian god of light. As such he was equivalent to the Phoenician sun-

god Baal. Baal — mentioned so often in the Hebrew Bible — was a title of Nimrod, "the mighty hunter" (Genesis 10:9).

The Persian author Rashid al-Din, in his *History of the Franks,* mentions that Nimrod extended his hunting expeditions even to Italy. The Apennine mountains of Italy also bore the name the Mountains of Nembrod or Mountains of Nimrod.

The hunter Nimrod pursued wolves in the Apennine mountains of Italy and acquired the title *Lupercus,* or "wolf hunter." Valentine's Day was originally a day set aside by the pagan Romans in his honor!

But why should Nimrod have been called Valentine by the Romans? And why should the celebration of this day have been anciently limited to the city of Rome before Pope Gelasius' time? What part did the site of ancient Rome play in the life of Nimrod?

Valentine comes from the Latin word *Valentinus,* a proper name derived from the word *valens,* meaning "to be strong, powerful, mighty." Any connection with Nimrod?

We read in the Bible that Nimrod was "the mighty hunter" (Genesis 10:9). It was a common proverb of ancient time that Nimrod was "the *mighty* hunter before the Lord." Nimrod was their hero — their strong man — their *valentine!*

But why do we associate hearts with a day set aside in honor of Nimrod — the *Baal* of the Phoenicians?

The surprising answer is that the ancient Romans acquired the symbol of the heart from the Babylonians. Nimrod founded Babel. He was the first lord of the Babylonians.

In the Chaldean tongue, spoken in Babylonia, the word for "heart" was *bal.* The heart — *bal* — became, because of similarity in sound, a symbol of Nimrod — the *Baal* or Lord of the ancient Babylonians!

Later, professing Christians in Constantine's day associated one of their martyrs named Valentine with festivities honoring Nimrod — the Valentine of the heathen. In this way pagan Romans were influenced to "embrace" the church while still continuing their pagan customs.

Why February 14?

But why should the early Romans have chosen February 15 and the evening of February 14 to honor Lupercus — the Nimrod of the Bible? (Remember that days in ancient times began at sunset the evening before.)

Nimrod — the Baal or sun-god of the ancient pagans — was said to have been born at the winter solstice. In the 21st century B.C., the winter solstice occurred on January 6. Semiramis I, who ruled as queen in that century, ordered Nimrod's birthday to be celebrated on the day we designate January 6.

The Eastern Orthodox churches still commemorate this particular day, but now call it by the name *Christmas* instead.

Later, as the solstice changed, Julius Caesar ordered the Roman world to celebrate this birth date on the new date of the solstice — on December 25 on his reformed calendar. This day was called the *Brumalia.* Today it is labeled Christmas.

It was the custom of antiquity for the mother of a male child to present herself for purification on the 40th day after the day of birth. The fortieth day after January 6 — Nimrod's original birthdate — takes us to February 15, the celebration of which began on the evening of February 14 — the Lupercalia or St. Valentine's Day.

On this day in February, Semiramis, the mother of Nimrod, was said to have been *purified* and to have appeared for the first time in public with her son as the original "mother and child."

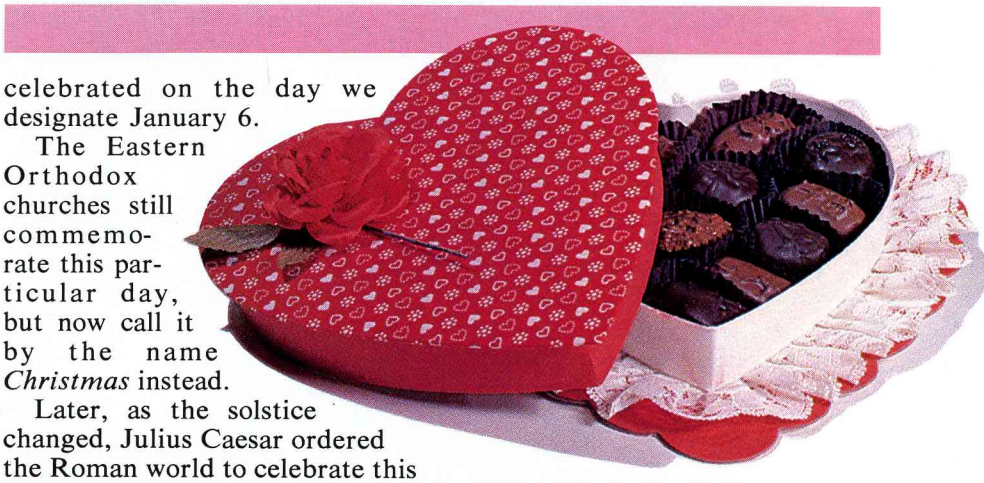
The Roman month February, in fact, derives its name from the *februa,* which the Roman priests used in the rites celebrated on the Lupercalia. The *februa* were thongs from the skins of sacrificial animals used in rites of purification on the evening of February 14.

This, then, is the origin of Valentine's Day.

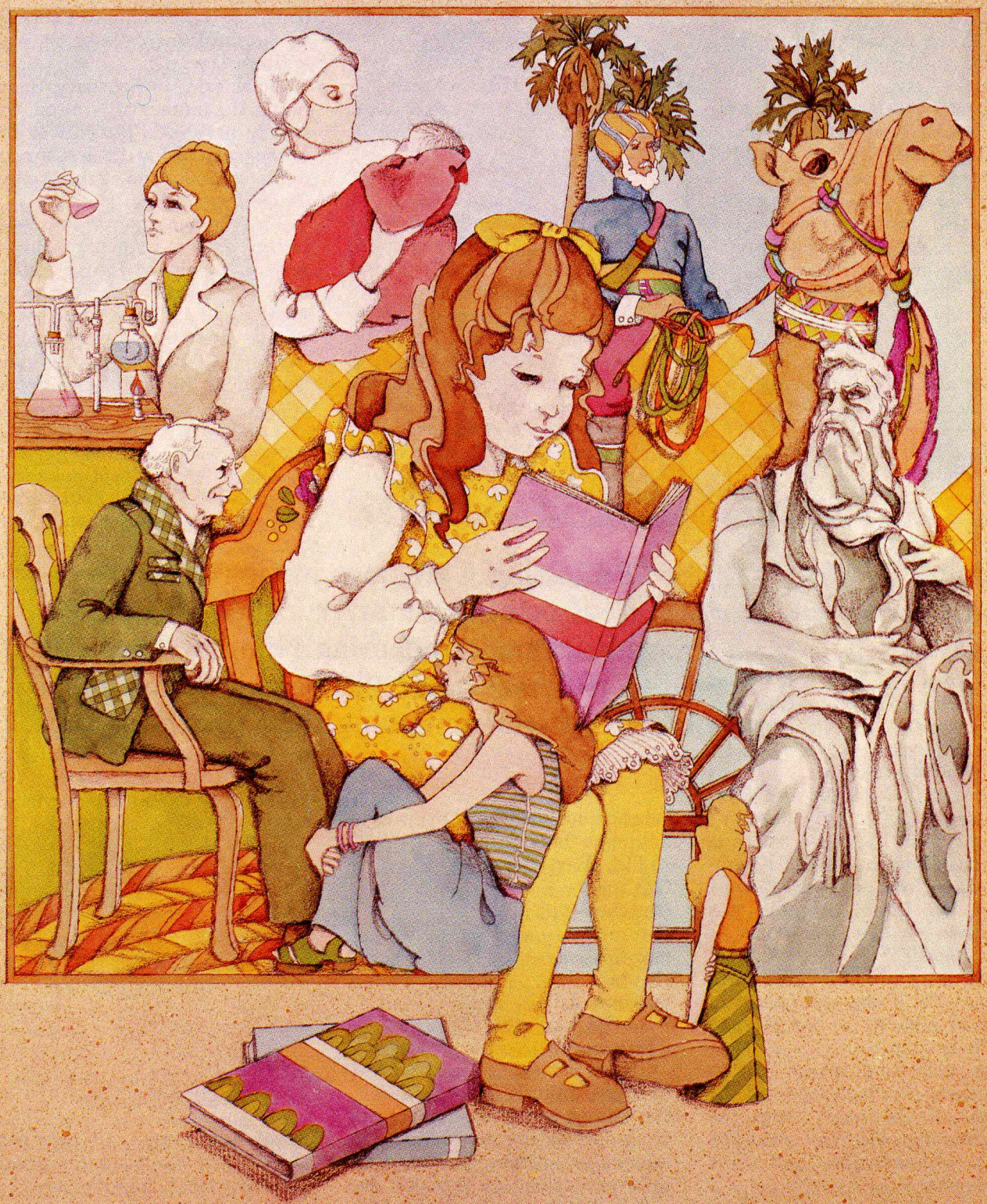
Why should we continue teaching children these pagan customs, derived from ancient and outdated pagan sex- and hero-worship? Why not teach them, instead, what history and the Bible really say?

You need to know exactly what the Bible *does* say about what days God's true people should observe. For more information be sure to request our free booklet *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which?* You may have a copy by writing to our address nearest you. □

Professing Christians in Constantine's day associated a martyr named Valentine with festivities honoring Nimrod. Thus pagan Romans could "embrace" the church while still continuing their pagan customs.



Photos: G.A. Belluche Jr, Hal Finch



You as a parent must whet your child's appetite for books. This article shows you how to select fine children's literature.

The Delightful Literature of Childhood

Our series of articles on early education continues. This issue, we focus on basic reading skills.

By Joan C. Bogdanchik

Does anything enthrall a small child more than the sound of his parents' voices? His parents are life to him, and their familiar voices provide him with much contentment and security.

Wise, observant parents use their voices generously around their child. They speak to him from the earliest moments after birth, and they caress him while doing so. They explain what they're doing. They describe what is happening around him. They tell stories.

The first literary delight that your child will meet is his storyteller — you!

Story time

Parents should tell many stories — short ones at first, then gradually longer ones. The stories can be about the baby, his parents, his home. They can encompass relatives. The stories will introduce the child to pets and other animals.

Dad and Mother should use well-modulated voices and point out the people and animals being told about. Parents should often show pictures to go along with their stories. They are thus giving their offspring the beginning of a lifetime pleasure.

Soon they can introduce their child to the wonderful world of written literature as well. At first, buy a picture book with few pages. The book may have no words at all, or just a few. It should be cloth bound and nontoxic.

The child will look at this book over and over. He will enjoy touching it, tugging at it and may even chew it as he plays with it and turns its pages. Certain pages will elicit long viewing. He will begin to love this book.

Another book can be added now. Others will follow over the months, gradually growing in size and words on each page. The child will begin to point out: "There's a mommy. There's a daddy. That's a dog."

But only one book at a time should be introduced. This helps instill appreciation and helps ensure that each book receives proper attention. The parent now teaches him how to appreciate books, that they are not to be put into his mouth and that they should be kept separate from his toys. They are little treasures that need special care.

You may give your child part of a shelf in your bookcase, or you may build one for him in his own room. It is important that he has some books of his own to refer to over and over.

Parents will now notice that their child will frequently choose books as an activity along with his toys, and often in preference to them. This will especially be so if parents regularly read to him.

Poetry, too

Young children enjoy nursery songs and lullabies, and they continue to find pleasure in these forms of literature as they grow. Even babies enjoy rhythm. But even without music, there is rhythm in poetry.

Soon your child will repeat the patterned words. His body will move to poems rhythmically. Poetry will become an important part of his life.

It is necessary to choose the right poems, of course. With such a wide variety available, it should be quite easy to select those right for your child.

Visit your library's children's room and browse through the anthologies and favorite poems, old and new. Select a wide variety. Have humorous ones on hand along with verses on assorted activities, seasons, events and occupations.

Poetry contains wonderful noises of a rainy day — smells of

Illustration by Seiko Kashihara

spring, summer, autumn — sounds of trains, animals, machines. Read lively, lovely rhymes to your child often. Many old poems use very exact words. They can tell a short story that piques your child's interest. Often a surprise awaits at the end.

The child makes discoveries. His senses become sharper. Many poems become part of a child for years. Include a few poems at story time. Practice reading them to yourself first for interesting vocal variations.

Your child will begin to have favorites that he will ask for regularly. The characters will be greeted as old friends. Expect that your child will start using expressions found in books and will blend them with expressions he learns from you.

Stimulating interest

Select some fine children's stories according to your child's interest. You stimulate his interest by activities you do with him and by places you take him, such as the playground, the zoo or the supermarket. Experiences add meaning to books. They enrich. Watch your child's understanding of vocabulary as you read.

But don't think you must stick to simple, skeletal constructions. Not at all! You must whet your child's appetite for books, not dull it. Watch his response when you read. Children draw different values from books.

In relating biblical narratives to your child, extend his vocabulary by adding more detail to the story each time you tell it. Name some plants that could have been in the Garden of Eden and find them in the parks. Explain what a flood is and what it does. Take him to a river or lake, or the sea. Thrill to the excitement of seeing a rainbow.

Children's first experiences with stories and pictures need much discussion and observation, even long after the story is told or read. Parents must keep aware of where their child is mentally.

Fathers need to pay special note, as so much of a child's mental growth takes place during the hours Daddy is at work. Therefore, many of his child's actions and attempts at communication may seem peculiar. But Father must work on understanding. This takes time, and a father must be prepared to take the time — and give the time.

Parents in the early years get to almost know their child's thoughts. This is a delightful privilege, and serious responsibility, of parenthood.

Allow your child to help select his books at the bookstore. Here is an opportunity to bring in other qualities you have been working on at home. Your child will, for instance, have to come with clean hands in order to touch those beautiful books. He'll have to speak to the salesperson to explain what he is looking for.

Read regularly

Set aside a regular time for reading each day. This time is so special — how a child looks forward to it! But you will also find it effective to sit and read a story to your child after morning's work, on hot afternoons and on rainy days.

Let your child choose his favorite story before you introduce anything new. Children love the familiar. Let him think about what is taking place, about the words and story sequence.

As you pore over the pages, you are doing a vital service to your child. You would be staggered at its implications and ramifications. You are giving him the first steps of effective reading — steps that can help his reasoning and critical thinking.

You may have thought that you should drill your child on long lists of words, or make reading a formal, serious chore. This is not so. You will only add stress to his life and stifle his enthusiasm in the process, often without realizing it!

No, instead talk, show (using encyclopedias to add to your own knowledge), read, play games with words and help your child enjoy participating. Combine real-life experiences with what he learns from books. This is so effective in the early years.

There may be times, while you are reading, when your listener becomes restless and tries to turn the pages to the end to speed up the process! When this happens, consider: Have you selected a wrong time or a wrong book? Perhaps you should save your reading for another time. If this occurs frequently, though, be sure to analyze the entire situation carefully. Something else may be the matter.

For, rightly done, your child and you will look forward to story time as one of the most enjoyable parts of the day. He will cherish it, as children are fascinated by the world of books. And, when books are rightly presented, children will often choose books over television.

Television, properly used, of course, can lead to further reading. Ideas presented in educational programs can interest your child to want to find out more through books.

But remember that not all books are received with equal relish. Know your child and his thoughts.

Maintain closeness

Before he enters school, be sure you have trained your child to differentiate between fact and fantasy. Through books a child will be transported to both reality and myth, and he needs to know, for example, the difference between the cuddly animals of his illustrations and the real ones at the zoo and park.

Definitely, he needs to know God's standards from the false. He will need to learn to discern, both in reading material and in life experiences. Prepare your child to face problems and teach him how to react with confidence and gentle humility, not to freeze in fear as some do, nor to respond as a superior know-it-all.

The early relationship between parents and child, and the example parents set, are vital. Can your child choose right from wrong, and do the right, because of what you have taught him and what he has seen you do?

Keep up and expand the emotional and intellectual closeness with your child, and foster his education by using the carefully selected, delightful literature of childhood. □

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Where and when did the custom of observing Lent get started?

Believe it or not, Lent was observed 4,000 years ago! The apostle Paul commanded the gentile-born Christians to cease observing it!

Many have supposed Lent is taught in the Bible. But they have not looked into the Bible to see what the Bible really says.

The Lenten season is a period of 40 days' penitence and abstinence, beginning on "Ash Wednesday." The word *Lent* comes from the old English word *Lencten,* referring to the spring of the year. The Lenten celebration was originally associated with the spring of the year, but today it begins in the winter.

How did this confusion originate? Here is the answer: "As long as the perfection of the primitive church [the inspired New Testament Church] remained inviolable," wrote Cassian in the fifth century, "there was no observance of Lent; but when men began to decline from the apostolical fervor of devotion . . . then the priests in general agreed to recall them from secular cares by a canonical indiction of fasting" (*Antiquities of the Christian Church,* Book 21, chapter 1).

Fasting, or abstinence from certain foods, was imposed after the days of the apostles by the authority of the priests. It did not originate with Christ. It entered the Christianity of the Roman world in the second century, at the same time that Easter did. Lent is always associated with the pagan Easter.

Lent is mentioned in the Old Testament. Lent seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz, the pagan Babylonian messiah. The month of June was named in honor of this false being. Forty days preceding the feast of Tammuz, usually celebrated in June, the pagans held their Lenten season. Ezekiel describes it vividly in Ezekiel 8:13-14:

"He" — God — "said to me, 'Turn again, and you will see greater abominations.' " Notice that God calls what the prophet Ezekiel is about to see an abomination. And what does Ezekiel see? "And to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz."

They wept for Tammuz, the false messiah of the pagans. That weeping preceded the pagan festival in honor of the supposed resurrection of Tammuz. Fasting was joined with weeping for a period of 40 days before the festival in honor of Tammuz.

The period of weeping and semifasting fell during springtime. That is why the word *Lent* means "spring." Lent is a continuation of the pagan springtime custom of abstaining from certain foods just before celebrating a fake resurrection. And God calls Lent an abomination.

That is why Jesus Christ and the true New Testament Church never observed it. Paul forbade Christians to observe any of these pagan days or seasons (Galatians 4:9-10).

Surely, some will say, the people today are sincere — but so were the pagans! They didn't know better. Observe what the great God says He will do to those who refuse to repent of this abomination:

"Is it a trivial thing . . . to commit the abominations which they commit here? . . . Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice" — of course they pray to God — "I will not hear them" (Ezekiel 8:17-18).

But what if Easter and Lent *are* ancient pagan festivals. Isn't it still all right, if we use them to honor Jesus Christ? That's the way people reason today. Let God answer that question.

God warned His people not to follow these customs of the heathen: "Take heed . . . that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods" (Deuteronomy 12:30-31).

It doesn't matter what *we* think, but it does matter what *God* thinks. He calls these pagan Easter and Lenten customs abominations. No wonder the apostles did not teach the early Church to observe these traditions.

Is it any wonder that Jeremiah was inspired to write: "Learn not the way of the heathen . . . for the customs of the people are vain" (Jeremiah 10:2-3, Authorized Version)?

Jesus left us an example of what we ought to do — and that example is not Easter or Lent! For more information, write for our free booklet *The Plain Truth About Easter.*

I have heard that Jesus Christ, between the ages of 12 and 30, was in a foreign nation. Where does the Bible say He lived during those years?

Jesus' home was in Nazareth until age 30. After Jesus' birth in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1), Joseph brought his family to Nazareth so that Jesus would be called a Nazarene — a resident of Nazareth (verse 23). If Jesus had spent most of His childhood years away from Nazareth, He would not most likely have been known as a Nazarene.

In Luke 4:16 we read, "So He [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up." This scripture could not say He was brought up in Nazareth if He had lived there only until the age of 12, and had spent the next 18 years somewhere else. □

LETTERS

Better and better

Thank you for the inspiring articles in the *Good News* magazine each month. Many readers have stated that they get better and better each month, and I agree. I look forward with great anticipation each month for mine.

Thank you for feeding your flock with solid food instead of milk.

I pray for your health and well-being every day, Mr. Armstrong, and am still behind you and the work completely and always will be.

Lena Shaw
Falls City, Neb.

Received their first issue

I just received my first issue of *The Good News* today. I can't tell you how I felt when I started reading it, because it is indeed speaking in a different language! Now I feel that I can really progress in my faith, my hopes, my dreams.

All my life I have known there was something very important that people didn't understand.

The subject was always so precious, I dreaded having it twisted or made light of, so dreaming and hoping was innermost, and studying always my favorite subject at heart.

Thank you again for sending me *The Good News.*

Norma Conlin
Syracuse, N.Y.

I want to say thank you for my first issue of *The Good News.* It is very educational and uplifting for me and many others I know who are also receiving this wonderful magazine along with *The Plain Truth.*

Nina Taylor
Honolulu, Hawaii

"Prove All Things"

I have been a member of God's Church for almost three years now. This is the first time I have written to you.

I just want to thank you for the tremendous opportunity to have a part in God's work. I want to thank you as well for *Youth 85* and the new feature, "Prove All Things," in *The Good News.* I am 30 years old, but being single and from a broken home (my parents were divorced when I was 6 and I was reared by my father), I get a lot of benefit from the information contained in *Youth 85.* The "Prove All Things" feature gives me a handy chain reference to put in my Bible to sharpen it and be truly "ready to give an answer."

Again, thank you for the work you are doing and for making it possible to be part of God's plan now. May God continue to be with you.

John Roser
Bristol, Pa.

Youth 85 *is a monthly, full-color magazine published by the Worldwide Church of God for youths aged 12 to 19.* Youth 85 *addresses young people from all walks of life in all parts of the world and offers helpful personal advice as well as articles on family relations, friendships, hobbies, careers, adventure and life in different countries. If you would like for your children to receive* Youth 85, *or if you would like to receive it yourself, just write to our address nearest you. A list of our addresses is on the inside front cover of this magazine.*

Bible references

In reading *The Good News* I appreciate articles referring to Bible passages without quoting them, but merely showing the intent or application of the references. This arouses my curiosity to the point that I just have to look them up. This makes me feel that I am working at obtaining my spiritual food rather than being spoon-fed as a baby.

Thomas Premo
Raleigh, N.C.

Losing a loved one

I would like to comment on the article "When a Loved One Dies," in the October-November issue, written by Arthur O. Suckling. He describes so well the stages one goes through. Only one who has experienced the death of a loved one truly knows the effects, understands and can be helpful to others.

I recently lost my husband of 45 years and the emotional effects are just as Mr. Suckling describes. It is even harder for an older person because one cannot be as active so as to keep occupied and help overcome grief.

I am sure most of us wonder why we go through such trials. Perhaps one reason is to be helpful to others — and certainly Mr. Suckling is through this article.

Bessie Pappas
Miami, Fla.

Church brethren set fine example

The article "Are You Expressing True Love?" by Jack R. Elliott [June-July], which stated, "People need to see a smile and receive a cheery greeting that somehow conveys interest in their welfare, with a willingness to stop and help when necessary," was clearly demonstrated to us and our neighbors when we recently moved to Loveland, Colo.

A few minutes after our arrival with a load of household goods, several cars drove up, brethren from the Worldwide Church of God got out, introduced themselves, extended a hearty welcome to Loveland and in a few minutes had unloaded our belongings for us.

The neighbors were absolutely astounded! The minute the men drove away they came to inquire: "Who were those men? Where did they come from? Are they family?" They had never seen the like before and were really impressed with this kind gesture.

Words are not adequate to express our thanks to the eight men who helped us unload, and to the three families from Colorado Springs, Colo., who assisted us when we loaded up.

Indeed, as the article stated, "This godless age makes goodwill difficult, but it is still vital to happiness." Thanks to our brethren.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee Thomas
Loveland, Colo.

Friend has her copy

Thank you very much for sending me another *Good News.* I really enjoyed the last one and I'm sure this copy will be just as interesting. The reason I haven't started reading it yet is because I'd have to wrest it from my friend.

Joanne Sollitt
Opotiki, New Zealand

Agrees with letters

Congratulations! You got me to write my first letter to any publication in my life. One point strikes me as I write this. As I read the letters from different subscribers of *The Plain Truth* or *The Good News* praising your articles for what they say and how they benefit their lives in relationship to God, I must admit this: After I read each letter, I find myself agreeing with the writer completely, saying, "That's right, Harriet," "Same with me, La Verna," "That's the way I used to feel, too, Jeffrey."

Closeness to God by His Spirit must cause these common reactions. There can be no other explanation. I know — "That's right, Frank."

Frank Dais
Green Bay, Wis.

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

Do You Understand Real Repentance?

What does it mean to repent? Is real repentance just an emotional feeling? Is it merely being remorseful over past mistakes?

There is actually much more to godly repentance than most people realize. Let's examine the Bible to learn and understand God's definition of real repentance.

1. How is sin defined in the Bible? I John 3:4. Has every human being sinned? Romans 5:12. What is the penalty of sin? Romans 6:21, 23.

Sin is "lawlessness" — the *transgression* of God's law of love. Since all who ever lived have sinned (with the exception of Jesus Christ), all have therefore earned the penalty of sin. That penalty is eternal death — complete cessation of life forever.

All who have not repented of their sins are on spiritual "death row," awaiting execution of a justly deserved capital punishment. That eternal penalty was earned by simply "doing what comes naturally" — sinning.

2. Has God, in His great mercy and love for humanity, provided a way by which we can avoid paying that ultimate penalty? John 3:16, Romans 5:8-10.

3. How can we have our sins blotted out by Jesus Christ's sacrifice — be forgiven of our transgressions of God's law, and be delivered from the penalty of eternal death? Acts 2:38, 3:19.

Acts 2:38 summarizes the initial steps of the salvation process in just one verse. And the first word of that crucial passage is *repent*. "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish," said Jesus (Luke 13:3, 5). So repentance is a vital step to salvation.

But what is real repentance in God's sight, as revealed in His inspired Word? What exactly does it involve — what must we *do* in order to repent?

The Hebrew and Greek words from which *repent* and *repentance* are translated mean to turn, to change direction. True repentance is exactly that. It is a complete about-face from disobedience toward God to obedience, love and cooperation with Him.

Real repentance is something far more than a temporary emotional experience or a human feeling of remorse. True repentance — the result of "godly sorrow" (II Corinthians 7:10) — involves a permanent change in our thoughts and deeds and natures.

But what, exactly, do we repent of?

Sin!

4. Is it the law of God to which sinners are to turn? Ezekiel 18:21-22.

To repent of sin, then, simply means to stop sinning and begin submitting to and obeying God's law of love.

As we learned in last month's ministudy, God's law shows the way to peace, happiness and joy. It is God's greatest gift to humanity, given to teach humans how to be happy, to lead into the full, abundant life, both in this life and for all eternity.

The multitude of worsening evils humanity suffers from today are not caused by the law of God, but by the breaking of it!

5. Should true repentance be a deep, moving and heartfelt experience? Joel 2:12-13.

God will not accept those whose "repentance" is merely an outward show, where there is no real change of attitude.

Notice what God says: "Turn to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. So rend your heart, and not your garments."

6. Is real repentance clearly toward God? Acts 20:21.

Sin is against God the Father. He is the lawgiver whose perfect law we have broken. To repent means to be so humbled and broken up at the thought of having rebelled against the living, holy God — so abhorrent of the deceitfulness, vanity and selfishness of our natures (Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 8:7) — that with godly sorrow we turn to God for mercy and forgiveness. We begin to obey God's law — we begin to live the way *God* wants instead of the way *we* want.

Some have thought that repentance is merely a matter of grasping God's truth intellectually, or some part of it, and being good enough to embrace and accept it. But that is not repentance. That is *self*-righteousness — sin (Isaiah

64:6, Luke 18:9-14) — something else to repent of.

All of us must ultimately come to see God as Job did, and to see ourselves as God does (Job 42:5-6).

By studying God's Word, we begin to understand that we all fall far short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and desperately need His forgiveness and help.

But how is it possible for a human to come to that kind of repentance? How can one start to change from self-centered love to God-love and begin showing love toward God and one's neighbor as directed by God's law?

The answer is that true repentance must come from God!

7. Does God's goodness and mercy lead one to repentance? Romans 2:4. And is God patient and loving in leading one to repentance? Same verse.

8. Is it God who grants repentance? II Timothy 2:25, Acts 11:18.

9. Did Jesus plainly say that no one can come to Him unless the Father draws him? John 6:44, 65.

In light of the above scriptures, we see that our call to real repentance comes from God, who puts within us the desire to come to Christ.

10. Does real repentance involve total, unconditional surrender to God, putting Him ahead of and above all else? Matthew 10:37, Luke 14:26.

"Hate" in Luke 14:26 means to love less by comparison, as the parallel account in Matthew 10:37 shows. Jesus is actually talking about giving one's life completely to God. No other person or concern is as important.

But surrendering to God is not a matter of giving up everything good, as so many have falsely believed. Repentance is positive. Not only does one escape the eternal penalty of sin, but God's way leads to innumerable blessings in this life.

Repentance emphatically does not mean we must give up the use or appreciation of material things. God wants us to prosper and be in good health (III John 2). What God is interested in is the attitude we have toward material things — whether we seek first, as our highest priority, His Kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

God wants us to give up only those things that are bad for us — that hurt us spiritually and physically. Repentance and conversion make possible the right use of God's material creation through the guidance of His laws and His Spirit.

11. Ancient King David is a chief example of one who deeply repented of his sins. Did David admit that he was guilty of committing sins? Psalm 51:9. Did he further admit that his heart (attitude and motivation) had not been right with God? Verse 10.

12. Did David thoroughly abhor his sin? Verses 2-3. Did he cast himself upon God's mercy? Verse 1.

David did not minimize his sin. He did not attempt to justify it. He did not try to explain it away. Nor did he blame it on others. Rather, he was aghast at what he had done and simply prostrasted himself before God and implored God's mercy and forgiveness.

David confessed what he had done — confessed, actually, what he was — and asked God to cleanse him spiritually (Psalm 51:2, 7). This is the same attitude we should have when we repent of our own sins.

13. How can you know if you are truly repentant before God? Matthew 3:8. What kind of attitude is God looking for? Isaiah 66:2, last part.

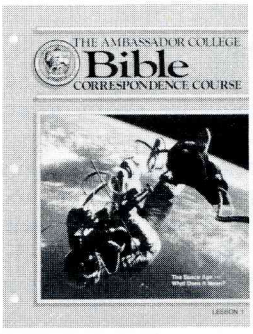
God's eyes are upon those who are of a meek and contrite spirit — those who tremble before His Word. God recognizes a repentant attitude, a broken spirit, a humble seeking for forgiveness and mercy. He will truly honor all who turn from deeds and motivations that His Word defines as sin.

Have you given up walking contrary to God and surrendered yourself completely to Him? Have you sized yourself up by means of the Ten Commandments, as magnified by the entirety of God's Word, and seen where you fall short? Are you willing to keep all of God's commandments from now on?

That is the kind of repentance God will accept — that is the way you must repent.

Real repentance requires a *permanent change of direction.* It is a total commitment to a course from which there is no turning back. It is not a temporary, spontaneous emotional response so prevalent today in religious revival meetings. You have learned that it is something much deeper and vastly more profound!

Have you really repented? □



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.

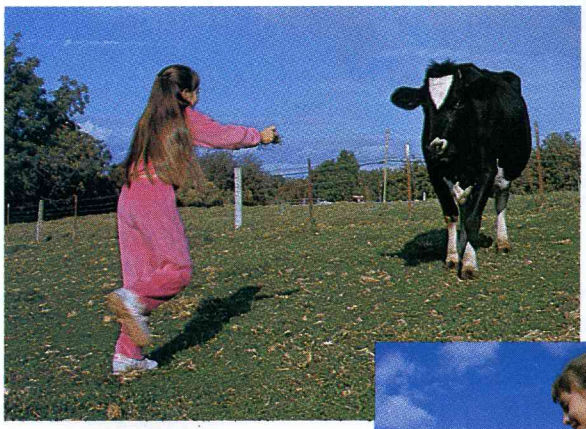
By Bernard W. Schnippert

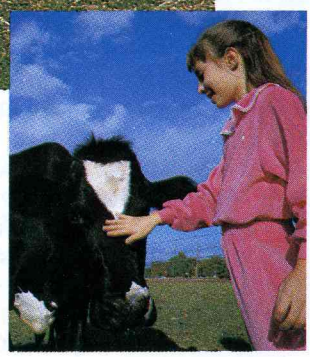
Little Gifts of Greatness

"Grass!" exclaimed my 9-year-old daughter, with flashing eyes and a buoyant grin.

Grass? you may be thinking. His daughter became excited about grass?

Well, not exactly. You see, she was not actually excited about the grass, but by what she intended to do with it.





But to understand that, we must back up a bit — back to the two weeks last summer when my family and I were able to share a rare but memorable vacation in the mountains of beautiful Wyoming.

Through a child's eyes

We live in the city most of the year. And not just any city, but Las Vegas, Nevada. Now, Las Vegas is well known for jet-set gambling action and star-studded nightclubs brimming with big-name entertainers. But it's not exactly known as the home of rural living or the springboard of the back-to-nature movement. So when we wanted a vacation and change of scenery, we went up north to the breathtaking outdoors of Wyoming, with its beautiful parks, lakes and mountains.

And grass!

And not just grass, but another commodity even more rare in downtown Las Vegas — cows. Now, I've seen lots of cows, and so has my daughter. But usually they were far off in a field, only to be looked at from a distance.

So when we camped a few nights at a ranch in Wyoming, my daughter just couldn't pass up the chance to see, pet and talk to the four penned-up cattle just a few yards from our campsite. And when she discovered that they would actually eat grass out of her hands if she pulled it from the ground and gave it to them, she became ecstatic with delight.

And so did I — from watching her and seeing the utter glee with which she attended to the task of feeding the lazy, cud-chewing bovines. For literally hours she would scuttle back and forth from the grass patch to the pen, passing handfuls of munchy grass to their waiting mouths.

Subtle joys

Now there was nothing especially unusual about those cattle — at least not to me. But my daughter certainly found them to be objects of great delight. And I must admit that I learned a lesson from her that day. The lesson is that our children have wonderful traits of love, concern, curiosity or affection that too often get overlooked by parents intent upon rearing future doctors, lawyers, presidents and first ladies.

That is, we are quick to see great and impressive talents like intellect or musical ability in our kids, but we often overlook the simple, more mundane qualities that compose the core of personality or character. These are qualities like curiosity, sharing with a friend or the affection and excitement of a child for an animal.

And yet, it is these subtle traits (I call them the "little gifts of greatness") that compose the central tiles in the mosaic of a child's character, and that at times can give a parent the greatest pleasure with the least effort.

After all, to see a child's outstanding music ability or athletic prowess requires encouraging the child, praising him and paying for lessons, while to enjoy the pleasant little personality quirks of our offspring requires only observation and appreciation.

Come to think of it, learning to appreciate the little gifts of greatness in our children makes us parents take the time to look, think, listen, share and appreciate.

Certainly, for a parent to admire the subtle joys of his offspring's gentle character traits is a refreshing change from the you'd-better-be-good and perform-or-else attitudes we sometimes fall into. After all, the ability of a parent to find in his child the same intrinsic worth that a child can find in a cow is important indeed.

It is right up there with grass. □

Photos by Nathan Faulkner

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 2)

God — because Jesus taught that we must *live by* EVERY WORD OF GOD.

The natural, unconverted mind cannot fully and rightly UNDERSTAND the Scriptures of God. The acquisition of this KNOWLEDGE, in itself, is a procedure requiring TIME. It is the DOERS of this Word, not hearers only, who shall be saved.

But can any man DO, immediately and all at once, this new way he now learns about? Can any man, all at once, break all habits he now sees are wrong? No, he finds he has a fight against acquired former habits.

He still has this PULL of human nature to overcome. This nature is a law working within him. The apostle Paul calls it the law of sin and death.

Paul was *converted*. Paul was a real Christian. He had repented, accepted Jesus Christ and received the Holy Spirit. With his MIND, he wanted with all his heart, and in real, intense sincerity, to DO God's *WAY!* But did Paul do it perfectly? Let him tell. LISTEN!

"For we know that the law is spiritual," he wrote, "but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. . . . now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:14-17).

He is speaking of human nature within him. He continues: "For to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. . . . O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (verses 18-24).

Then he thanks God — that GOD WILL — through Jesus Christ, and by the power of His HOLY SPIRIT. BUT *IT TAKES TIME!*

The truly converted Christian will find that he often stumbles, *under temptation,* and falls down — even as a physical child learning to walk often falls down. But the year-old child does not get discouraged and give up. He gets up and starts out again.

THE TRULY CONVERTED CHRISTIAN *IS NOT YET COMPLETELY PERFECT!*

GOD *LOOKS ON THE HEART* — the inner MOTIVE — the real *intent!* If he is trying — if he gets up whenever he falls down, and in repentance asks God's forgiveness and sets out to do his very best NOT TO MAKE THAT MISTAKE AGAIN — and to persevere with renewed effort and energy and determination to OVERCOME — God is rich in mercy toward that person in his striving to overcome.

The truly converted Christian stumbles, under temptation, *and falls down. But he does not get discouraged and give up. He gets up and starts out again.*

Speaking to CONVERTED CHRISTIANS, the apostle John writes: "These things I write to you, that you may not sin. And *if anyone sins* [even though he ought not], we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for OUR sins" (I John 2:1-2).

Yes, for the sins of converted Christians. Such people often are under heavier temptation than before conversion. They are STRIVING against sin — STRIVING to overcome. But they are not yet perfect. Sometimes they are caught off guard. They may actually sin.

Then they WAKE UP, as it were, and realize what they have done. They REPENT. They are filled with remorse — *truly sorry* for what they have done — disgusted with themselves and their actions. They go to God in humility and repentance and CRY OUT FOR HELP — for more power and strength from God to OVERCOME!

This is the WAY of the true Christian!

It is the way of a constant BATTLE — a striving against SIN — a seeking God in earnest, heart-rending prayer for help and spiritual POWER to overcome.

They are constantly GAINING GROUND. They are constantly GROWING in God's KNOWLEDGE, from the Bible. They are constantly rooting out wrong habits, driving themselves into RIGHT habits. They are constantly growing closer to God through Bible study and prayer. They are constantly growing in CHARACTER, *toward* perfection, even though not yet perfect.

Along with the apostle Paul, they say: "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on . . . Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but *one thing I do,* FORGETTING those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS" (Philippians 3:12-14).

But, someone may ask, what if one's life is cut off, and he dies *before* he has attained this perfection? Is he saved, or lost? The answer is that we shall never obtain absolute perfection in *this* life.

I said, earlier, that a person who is converted does receive the Holy Spirit at *a definite time — all at once!* Not the full measure Jesus Christ had — he is not at once full grown spiritually — only a spiritual babe in Jesus Christ. Yet he is then a changed, converted person — changed in mind, in attitude, in the *direction*

he has set himself to strive to travel.

Even though he has not yet reached perfection — even though he may have stumbled under temptation, and taken a spiritual fall — as long as, in his mind and heart, he is earnestly striving to travel GOD'S WAY, to overcome and grow spiritually — as long as God's Spirit is in him — as long as he is being led by the Spirit of God, he is a begotten CHILD OF GOD. If, anywhere along this life's journey, that life is cut short, ended, such a person will be resurrected.

It is only the one who deliberately QUITS and GIVES UP — who REJECTS God and God's way, and rejects Jesus Christ as his Savior — who turns FROM this direction of GOD'S WAY, *in his mind and heart* — in his inner INTENT — who deliberately and intentionally in his mind TURNS FROM Jesus Christ, who is lost.

If, once having been converted, having received God's Spirit and TASTED of the joys of GOD'S WAY, one deliberately rejects that way, makes the DECISION, not under stress of temptation, but deliberately and finally, NOT to go God's way, then God says it is IMPOSSIBLE to renew such a one to repentance. He would have to REPENT of that decision. But if he WILLFULLY made it, not in a time of temptation, but calmly, deliberately, willfully, then he just WILL NOT ever repent of it.

But anyone who FEARS he may have committed the "unpardonable sin" — is perhaps worried about it, and HOPES he *has not* committed it, and still WANTS to have God's salvation — no such has committed it — such a one MAY repent, and go right on to salvation IF HE WANTS TO!

If you have stumbled and fallen down, *DON'T* BE DISCOURAGED! Get up and press on ahead!

If you see a Christian do something wrong, DON'T SIT IN JUDGMENT AND CONDEMN — that's God's business to judge, not yours! Let's have compassion and mercy — we don't know the inner hearts of others — only GOD does! □

True Gospel

(Continued from page 5)

peoples of the earth. It means believing in Him as personal SAVIOR, as High Priest now and as coming KING.

But to repent is to completely CHANGE THE MIND in respect to SIN, and "sin is the transgression of the LAW" (I John 3:4, AV) — the law of GOD by which God RULES the Kingdom.

It means a total, complete CHANGE OF MIND AND OF LIFE. It means we REPENT of transgressing the rule, the will, the laws, of GOD. What did Jesus say to the young man who asked Him HOW to inherit eternal life? He said, "IF you want to enter into life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS" (Matthew 19:17).

He went on to show that He referred to the TEN COMMANDMENTS, God's great SPIRITUAL LAW, summing up, in principle, the WHOLE duty and way of righteous living.

It is a WAY OF LIFE, and a way *contrary* to human nature and to the ways and customs of this world!

It is the basic spiritual law and way of life of the KINGDOM OF GOD — the WAY to peace of mind, to world peace, to happiness, prosperity and JOY — the WAY to eternal life.

Kingdom of God to be preached TODAY

Yes, JESUS proclaimed and taught the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. But did He command His ministers, in BUILDING HIS CHURCH, to preach this same Gospel? Quickly let us notice the Scriptures.

Luke 9:1-2: "Then He called His twelve disciples together and . . . He sent them to PREACH THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

Luke 10:1-2, 9: "After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them. '. . . heal the sick who are there, and say to them, "The KINGDOM OF GOD has come near to you." ' "

In Jesus' prayer, so commonly called the "Lord's Prayer," He prayed, "YOUR KINGDOM COME" — then it wasn't here yet, and it isn't here yet, today — but He taught us to pray for it to COME, for His KINGDOM and that ALONE shall bring PEACE and HAPPINESS to this sin-sick, war-weary earth! "Your kingdom COME. YOUR WILL BE DONE *on earth* as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). The FATHER'S WILL.

What Gospel did the early evangelists preach, in first sending out the FAITH ONCE DELIVERED? How did the early Church carry out the commission?

Notice PHILIP preaching at Samaria! Acts 8:12: "But when they BELIEVED Philip as he preached the things concerning THE KINGDOM OF GOD and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized." Philip preached the things concerning THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

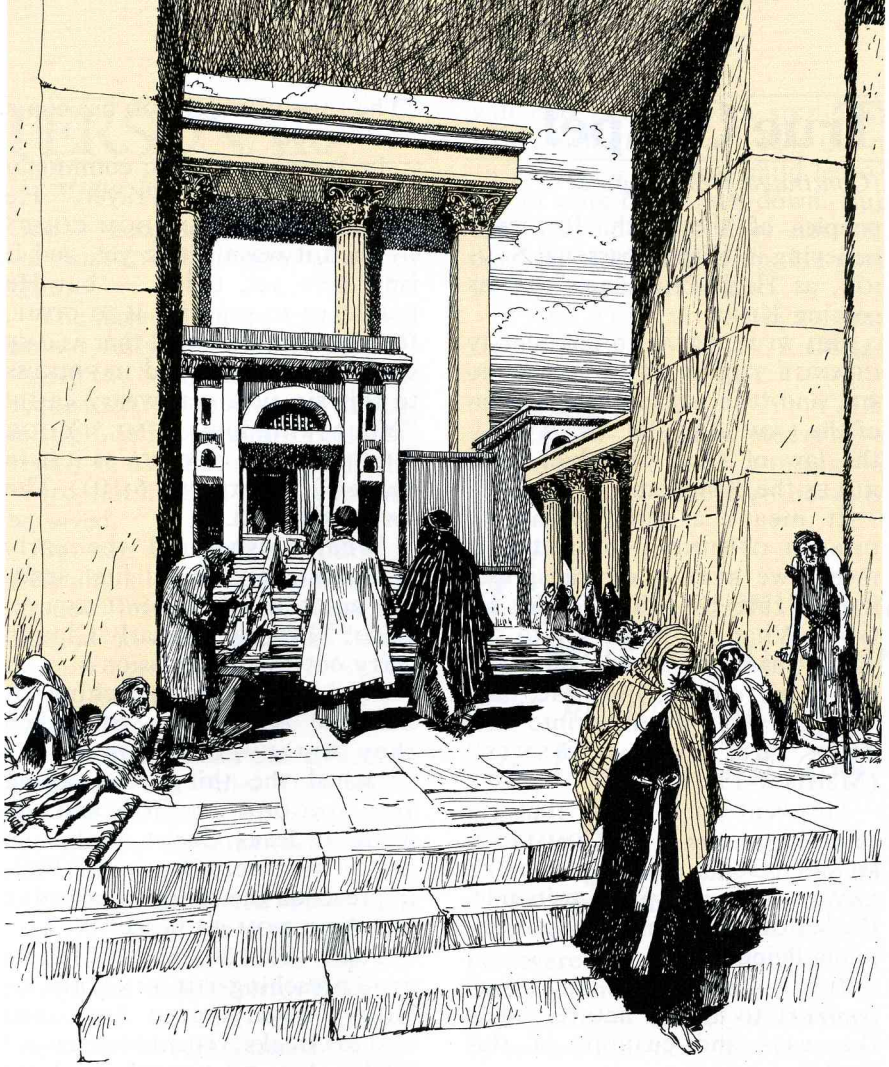
Paul? Acts 20:25, 21: "I have gone preaching THE KINGDOM OF GOD . . . testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and FAITH toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

And notice the Gospel Paul preached to GENTILES, *after* he had turned completely away from the Jews. Acts 28:30-31: "Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching THE KINGDOM OF GOD and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ."

And, lastly, WHAT GOSPEL did Jesus say should be preached TODAY?

Matthew 24:14, speaking of the PRESENT: "And this GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM will be preached in ALL THE WORLD *as a witness" — as a* WITNESS — "to ALL THE NATIONS, *and then the* END *will come*" — the end of this AGE.

That is the true Gospel proclaimed in *The Good News of the World Tomorrow* — proclaimed on the *World Tomorrow* broadcast on the air worldwide — "IN ALL THE WORLD." □



Temple history *is a complicated mosaic of rise and decline, glory and violence — and vital prophetic significance!*

Temple

(Continued from page 8)

area were plundered, looted and set ablaze. The glory of Solomon's Temple was over. It had stood more than 350 years.

Permission to return

The Jewish captivity in Babylon had been prophesied to last about 70 years.

In 539 B.C., the mighty Persian army under the command of Cyrus besieged Babylon. One night as the Babylonians drank and reveled, Cyrus quietly diverted the river Euphrates into irrigation channels, marched his army up the dry riverbed and in the early morning hours swarmed into the city, taking it in a few hours.

Persia became the dominant empire of the world, inheriting the captive Jewish peoples. But Persian policies were different from those of the Babylonians. The Persians permitted captive peoples to live in their homelands and worship according to their ancient traditions. Previously deported peoples were allowed to return to the areas from which they had been taken. By 538 B.C., Cyrus issued a decree permitting Jewish subjects of his empire to return to their country and begin rebuilding. Settlers began to straggle back to Jerusalem. Among them was a descendant of King Jehoiachin named Zerubbabel. He was to become governor and play an important role in the reconstruction of Jerusalem and a new Temple.

A second Temple

Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest, cleared the rubble off the Temple Mount. The first order of business was to erect an altar and reinstitute animal sacrifices. This was done and the Festival of Succoth (the Feast of Tabernacles) was observed on the Temple Mount.

It is important to note that a Temple was not at this time considered necessary for a sacrificial altar or for religious services.

Then Zerubbabel began building a Temple. Just as Solomon had done, he hired quality craftsmen and ordered building logs of cedar. Levites were given responsibilities at the project. Songs and religious ceremonies recalled the days of glory of the first Temple.

But the joys were short-lived. Because of many problems in the region, the work stopped.

After more than a decade, work began and ended at irregular intervals. By 515 B.C., the main edifice of a Temple was completed and dedicated. This second Temple was similar in size to the one Solomon built, but nowhere near the magnificent structure destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Because of prophecies uttered by Daniel, Ezekiel, Haggai and Zechariah, many began to look for the Messianic kingdom to be set up, and this second Temple seemed to play an important role. However, the years passed and the glory of the Temple as depicted by Ezekiel (see Ezekiel 40-48) was not realized. And there was no sign of the Messiah.

In truth, Ezekiel was not prophesying about this time of reconstruction at all, but foresaw the Temple that would be built after the coming of the Messiah — not before.

Then, in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, religious laxity and intermarriage with local peoples set the stage for a revival in Judea. In the land of Persia, a devout Jew named Nehemiah had been appointed to a high office in the Persian government. Upon hearing reports from Jerusalem of the sad state of affairs there, he obtained permission to lead an expedition to Jerusalem and complete the rebuilding process now long delayed. □

(To be continued)

Making the Bible Work for You

Combining meditation with Bible study can help make God's Word a more useful tool in your life.

By Earl H. Williams

The most powerful weapon of all in the Christian's arsenal is the Bible! God's Word contains more power than all the nuclear weapons in the world!

Look at the mighty capabilities of this supreme weapon:

"The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow [bone-chilling power], and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart [pinpoint accuracy]" (Hebrews 4:12).

Power, a cutting edge and accuracy — everything you need to win.

But are you using this super sword effectively to surmount your spiritual battles? Are you studying more but overcoming less?

You need to learn how to use the Bible more effectively — how to wield this powerful weapon more potently in your life. Read this article and make the power of God's Word part of your very being. You can actually write the Word of God on your mind!

The purpose of Bible study

Why do you study the Bible anyway? To feel spiritual? Because you have heard you're supposed to?

Let's examine the right reasons to study the Bible. The Bible says to study so "that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:17).

Bible study should arm and equip you with the principles of God's Word. These principles, actively working in your mind, imbue you with the power to successfully live God's way of life. And the method of Bible study we'll examine equips your mind like no other form of Bible study.

So just what is this method? It actually combines meditation and Bible study in one powerful spiritual weapon. We might call it "medistudy" — it packs an awesome one-two punch guaranteed to help you knock sin out.

Spiritual digestion

Bible study is the act of carefully and earnestly reading, rereading and comparing passages in the inspired Word of God. But how do we comprehend what we read? God's Holy Spirit guides us in understanding (John 14:26).

Sitting down to study the Bible is like eating a meal. The apostle Paul, in Hebrews 5:12-14, compared God's Word to milk and meat. Jesus Christ said that God's Word is the meat that produces eternal life (John 6:63).

But it is not enough just to eat. Eating only brings the food in. For the food to give us lasting strength, it must be digested. Many of us hurriedly eat — skim or rush through our Bible study — but do not stop and digest God's nutritious Word.

This leads us to the second



Photo by Hal Finch

needed element: meditation. Spiritual meditation is detailed concentration on a Bible principle and its application to our lives. When you immediately meditate after studying the Bible, you allow the acids and enzymes of God's Spirit to digest and assimilate the meat of God's Word. Paul explained the powers of God's Spirit this way: "For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (I Corinthians 2:10).

Through meditation, the principles of God's Word become a part of you. This is why David was able to say, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation" (Psalm 119:99).

The powerful weapon of God's Word will not just be between the covers of your Bible, but implanted in your mind. God promises, "I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33). Your part in this miraculous process is Bible study and meditation.

Now let's look at three ways in which to "medistudy." Notice II Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

In this verse Paul defined three major areas relating to Bible study and meditation: doctrine, reproof and correction (these two are similar) and instruction in righteousness (Christian living principles). Let's examine each of these areas.

Doctrine

What is doctrine? The word *doctrine* means a belief or teaching. A man once asked me if I had a book that contained all of the doctrines of the Worldwide Church of God. To his surprise, I handed him the Bible.

Yes, the Bible contains all the teachings of almighty God and of the Church of God. You need a thorough understanding of the doctrinal truths of God.

Satan corrupts and enslaves the minds of billions with his false doctrines (Revelation 12:9). Through doctrinal study and meditation, the truth will become part of you. The truth will break the chains of error and free you from deception (John 17:17).

Since the truth is the opposite of error, it is logical to use a comparison-contrast technique in your doctrinal study. First choose a doctrine — for example, the soul. The lie about the soul is one of the biggest Satan has told.

Think about everything your church, family and society have taught you about the soul. Write down your past concepts, such as the idea that the soul is immortal or that the soul and body separate at death, and the soul goes to heaven, hell or some other place. Bring all these false ideas out into the light.

Next, study God's Word on the soul. Get out your concordance and Bible helps. Look up all of the scriptures on the soul and write them down. You will find scriptures proving that the soul is mortal (Genesis 2:7). You will see that the soul dies (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). You will learn that the dead soul doesn't know anything — that there is no consciousness in death (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

Then contrast the truth you have just studied with the error of your former beliefs about the soul. The mortal soul *is* the person, whereas Satan's lie would have you believe that the soul is immortal and is captive inside the body, struggling to be free. The mortal soul dies at death; it does not waft off somewhere to its "eternal reward."

Contrasting ideas through meditation tends to solidify the truth and wash the error from your mind. When your hands are dirty, you put them under water and rub them against one another. Through this contrasting action the dirt is washed away and your hands are cleaned. In the same way, contrasting truth with error washes away the error from your mind "with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:26).

Now, impress the truth about the soul deep into your mind by comparing truth with truth. Meditate on the doctrine of the soul by comparing it to other doctrinal truths, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Corinthians 2:13).

Think about how the truth about the soul supports the truth about the resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29). That eternal life is God's gift to humanity, not something we already have (Romans 6:23), makes sense only in light of the fact that the soul is mortal. How can God mercifully destroy the wicked (Malachi 4:1, 3) instead of burning them forever, as Satan's falsehood about hell states, unless the soul is mortal?

The facets of God's truth fit with each other like pieces of a puzzle, together forming one beautiful picture. The clearer you see the whole picture the deeper the truth will be engraved in your mind. Combining meditation with Bible study will equip your mind with doctrinal truth.

Correction

Paul also said that Scripture is profitable for reproof and correction (II Timothy 3:16). To reprove means to make right that which is wrong. The Word of God contains the power to reprove and correct you of your most difficult problems.

Being creatures of habit, we are prone to repeat the same spiritual mistakes again and again. But applying God's Word to the past and to the future unlocks the Bible's power to correct, refine and improve our character.

The past is the key to the future — and the key to change. So think about and pray about a problem in your life that needs to be corrected.

Let's take, for example, revenge. In the past, perhaps, when someone wronged you, you tried to get even. But now you know, from the Bible, that getting revenge yourself is wrong.

Apply the sword of God's Word (Hebrews 4:12) to destroy this problem. Search for scriptures like Romans 12:17-21, which says: "Repay no one evil

for evil. . . . Do not avenge yourselves . . . 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay,' says the Lord. 'Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink.' "

Repent of returning evil for evil. Determine to stop taking your own vengeance and leave judgment and retaliation to God.

Now meditate on the future. Picture a realistic situation that tests your correction. See someone hurting you — mistreating you — your emotions coming to a boil. But instead of giving in to your vengeful nature, see yourself asking God for strength to do what is right. See yourself forgiving the offender. Watch yourself doing good toward the one who hurt you. Feel the rage of vengeance turn to the peace of love.

By studying, you learn the correct way to act. Through meditation, you, in a sense, experience the correct way to act. Now you can say with David, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11).

Instruction

We not only need to correct our past weaknesses, we also need to learn God's positive principles that produce the fruits of righteousness in our everyday lives.

Paul tells us that the Word of God is profitable for "instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). God's laws and principles are righteousness (Psalm 119:172). They instruct us in how to live the abundant life.

The Bible reveals the causes that will bring about the happiness and joy we all want in our lives. Therefore, a useful relationship to consider in instructional "medistudy" is that of cause and effect. Understanding the relationships between the causes and effects of a situation helps us tremendously to learn and live the ways of righteousness.

First, think of one area of your life that needs improving, in which you need instruction in righteousness. What about your marriage? Could it be happier?

Study God's Word for instructions on what causes happiness in marriage. Scriptures such as Ephesians 5:22-28 and Titus 2:4 teach husbands and wives to love one another. The effect of love — of giving — is a happy, sound marriage.

Next, meditate on the direct cause-and-effect relationship between giving love and a happy marriage.

Deeply reflect on the effect of giving to your mate. Picture in detail specific acts of giving that will cause your mate to be happy. See yourself sacrificing your wants to satisfy his or her needs and desires, giving the affection, the flowers, the notes, the little loving gestures of marriage that mean so much.

Now, with your mind's eye, watch the fruits — the effects — of your efforts blossom before you. Happiness and joy burst out all over your marriage. Your mind is now equipped to do the things that will cause your marriage to be happier.

Through meditation on God's Bible instructions, you equip your mind with the principles of righteousness. Applying these principles will produce the fruits of righteousness in your life.

Through meditation on God's Word, you equip your mind with the principles of righteousness. Applying these principles will produce positive fruits in your life.

As we have seen, "medistudy" arms and equips you with the mighty sword of the Word of God. But what gives you the ability and power to use this weapon? Is it the power of your mind alone? No! We do our part through studying and thinking reflectively, but we must depend on God.

The final factor

God's Holy Spirit gives us the power to use His Word in spiritual battle. Without God's Spirit, "medistudy" is in vain. The Holy Spirit is the key to understanding and using God's Word. Paul described the relationship between God's Word and the Holy Spirit in an interesting way. In analogy, he says the sword belongs to the Spirit, referring to "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17).

The Spirit activates and deploys the mighty sword of God's Word for our use. This supersophisticated spiritual guidance system brings the sword out of the silo of the mind, where it was put through meditation and study.

Speaking of the Holy Spirit's deployment, Jesus said that the Spirit would "bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26). Jesus Christ speaks to us today through the Bible.

Then the Holy Spirit guides the sword to the target. Jesus explained, "However, when it, the Spirit of truth, has come, it will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

(God's people understand that the Holy Spirit is not a person but, contrary to popular belief, the power of God. For more information, write for our free article entitled "Just What Is the Holy Spirit?")

God has given you this powerful spiritual weapon — His Word. Now you know how to "medistudy" — how to arm yourself with the Word, making it a part of your very being. You have access to the Holy Spirit to help you use the Word in battle. But you must decide to put forth the effort and time to study God's Word and write it on your mind through meditation. You must use the sword of the Word to fight and win.

It's up to you now. The sword is in your hands! □

Who and What Is God?

"Everyone knows His name," observed one wise man, speaking about God, "but no one seems to know *Him!*"

True words, those. And ironic words, too. For in a modern world packed with Bibles of every translation and description, and even having the Word of God on computer, millions have indeed heard God's name. But precious few seem to know much about the living God!

What a pity.

But we need not — we must not — remain in ignorance of this absolutely foundational principle of Christianity. We simply must know *who* the real God is and *what* He is like.

The basic doctrine

The Bible clearly reveals God's nature, to those who will listen and believe. God is the eternal, supreme Creator. He is one God, but at present a Family of two beings, the Father and Son, who are alike as the loving, kind, merciful rulers of all reality, and who have opened their Family to all those humans who will be saved.

The usual teachings of this world

Of course, the religionists of this world would not quickly agree with this definition. The non-Christian world has images of God — or of "gods" — that cover virtually every possible (or, rather, impossible) conception.

Some view God as an animal-like creature, or as the sun, or like a man but with six arms. Others think God is "everywhere," meaning He is in water or sand or the wind. Still others think of Him only as a force, a great beginning power that has no personality, form or shape.

Even Christians argue among themselves. Usually, though, in Christian circles, believers think God is a trinity — a three-in-one God that they admit is a "mystery." Further, they believe that this trinity is closed, that none shall ever enter within this sacred triumvirate of the God-realm.

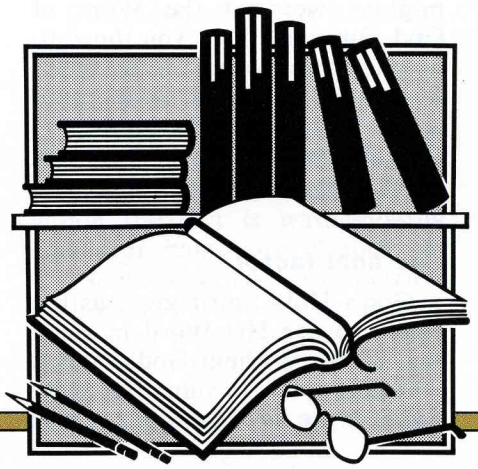
Some, especially those who fancy themselves as cosmopolitan and educated, don't believe God exists at all, or if He did, that He is now dead!

Which, if any, of these ideas is correct?

The Bible teaching

Probably the place to begin is with God's composition. We, of course, are human — that is, mortal and made of the elements. It is not so with God, for Scripture plainly says that "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24, Authorized Version).

We know from other verses that beings composed of spirit, including angels, for example, are on a higher level of existence than we, and that such spirit is not limited by the physical laws of nature to which humans are bound (John 3:5-8, Deuteronomy 4:12).



But, although composed of spirit like the angels, God is not a mere angel. No, He is in a class, quite literally, by Himself: "To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord Himself is God; there is none other besides Him" (Deuteronomy 4:35).

And not only is God in a class by Himself, but He is higher in rank than all other things, since He is the Creator of all things, and it follows that the creator is above the creation.

Notice this very point, made by the author of Hebrews: "He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:3-4).

Yes, time and again God confirms He is the only God, and a God above all else: "I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me" (Isaiah 45:5).

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last" (Revelation 1:11).

And, besides being a spirit, the only God and above all else, we find that God is both eternal (having no beginning or ending) and immortal (will live forever). Notice Deuteronomy 33:27, where God is called "eternal," or Deuteronomy 32:39-40: "Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand. For I lift My hand to heaven, and say, 'As I live forever. . . .' "

Of course, it is natural for

humans to want to see God or, if we cannot, to at least know what He looks like. Unless we can see at least a mental image of God, we cannot feel we know Him. Yet Scripture, contrary to the beliefs of many, says plainly and pointedly, "No one has seen God at any time" (John 1:18).

Clearly, the prospect of seeing God in the flesh is nonexistent. But we are not left in darkness, for the very one who said no one has seen God, the apostle John, also said in the same verse, "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He [Jesus Christ] has declared Him."

One way Jesus declared the Father was through Jesus' very presence on earth as a visible person. In response to Philip's request that He "show us the Father," Jesus said: "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:8-9).

We know from this verse and many others (such as Genesis 1:27) that the Father resembles human form, although He (like Jesus Christ, pictured in Revelation 1:13-16) is glorified in flaming brilliance, with hair white as snow, "eyes like a flame of fire," with "feet . . . like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace," and His face "like the sun shining in its strength."

Clearly, God is no rock or fish, no washed-out, pale stone statue dead on an altar, without any life whatsoever except for moss clinging to it through the centuries. He is like the sun, while retaining the general features found in humans.

Yet, such a powerful, brilliant, eternal, immortal, omnipotent being would be but a terror to us all if such a one were evil and wicked, a spiritual despot who wreaked havoc through the universe and only made humans to torment or to provide entertainment for His own fiendish schemes.

But our God is not such a God. No, He is the very opposite of that worrisome picture, so much so, that John, unable to find stronger words to describe God's goodness, says, merely, "God *is* love" (I John 4:8).

Love, then — and love is an outgoing concern for others — is God's greatest single attribute, His greatest quality. Yet, it is not God's only character quality, for, as the Bible shows, He is also full of "joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control," the fruits of His Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

And even that is not all, for it would require many more pages than this magazine can contain to quote verse after verse describing all God's attributes — God's loving forgiveness and mercy, His power, His zeal, His eternal, positive, immortal, immutable, unstoppable greatness!

Yes, our God is a good God, filled only with desire to do good for us. He would never hurt us. No, He would die before He hurt you, and, in fact, He has. Read about it in John 3:16!

In the face of such great news about God, it's hard to imagine what could be said further. But the best is yet to come. And that "best" is this: God is a Family — a Family *you can enter* as a full member and child!

The fact that God is a Family should not have eluded so many professing Christians for so long. The Scriptures abound with references to God the Father and God the Son. Yet most have simply chosen to ignore the plain meaning of these verses and instead interpret such words as merely symbolic.

A great block to understanding that God is a Family is found in the common misconceptions about the Holy Spirit (misnamed "Holy Ghost") being a person. Such a nonbiblical belief must be handled in detail elsewhere, but suffice it to say that such a belief chokes out the truth about the God Family by 1) adding a third person to the Godhead who has no assigned role as Father or Son, and hence does not fit the Family scheme (and thus diverts one's understanding from it) as revealed in the Bible, and 2) creates the familiar closed trinity that so many Christians believe in.

Such a belief contradicts the greatest truth of God, that you and I can enter the God Family as full members, on the God level and thus very God ourselves, under the authority of the Father and Son. This incredible truth is the plain teaching of God's Word (John 1:11, 12, II Corinthians 6:17, 18, Galatians 4:5-7, Romans 8:14-17, I Corinthians 15:35-55, John 17:20-26).

For more information on this vital subject, request our free reprint "Just What Is the Holy Spirit?" as well as our free booklets *The Incredible Human Potential* and *Your Awesome Future — How Religion Deceives You.*

Key verses

Although this is a large subject, it helps comprehension to remember, or even memorize, a few key verses. John 4:24 shows God is a spirit being. Isaiah 45:5 shows He is the only God. John 1:18 reveals that no one has seen God, but that the Son has declared Him. Revelation 1:13-16 describes God's glorified body that shines with tremendous brilliance. And John 1:11-12 conveys the astounding truth that we can enter the God Family.

Yes, this world knows God's name, but does not know *Him.* But those who will hear and believe the simple but exciting truths that flood from His Word can know both His name *and* who and what He is! □

COMING
IN THE GOOD NEWS

Let God Fight Your Battles!

If you're tired of struggling with fear and worry, take heart! God has promised to fight your battles.

There's a Hidden Enemy in Your Home!

He's among your family, causing strife daily. But before you can exile this enemy, you must recognize him.

How to Better Watch World Events

Prophecy is being fulfilled before our eyes in this age! Here's how to evaluate the news and news sources so that you can better understand the significance of world events.

Turn Your Guilt Into Growth

Guilt — it dogs you like a huge, ugly shadow, constantly accusing you and occupying your mind. But there's a way to turn guilt into a positive force in your life.

Rejoice in God's Sabbath

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). Christians are commanded to keep God's Sabbath holy, and this article explains how to do so.

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