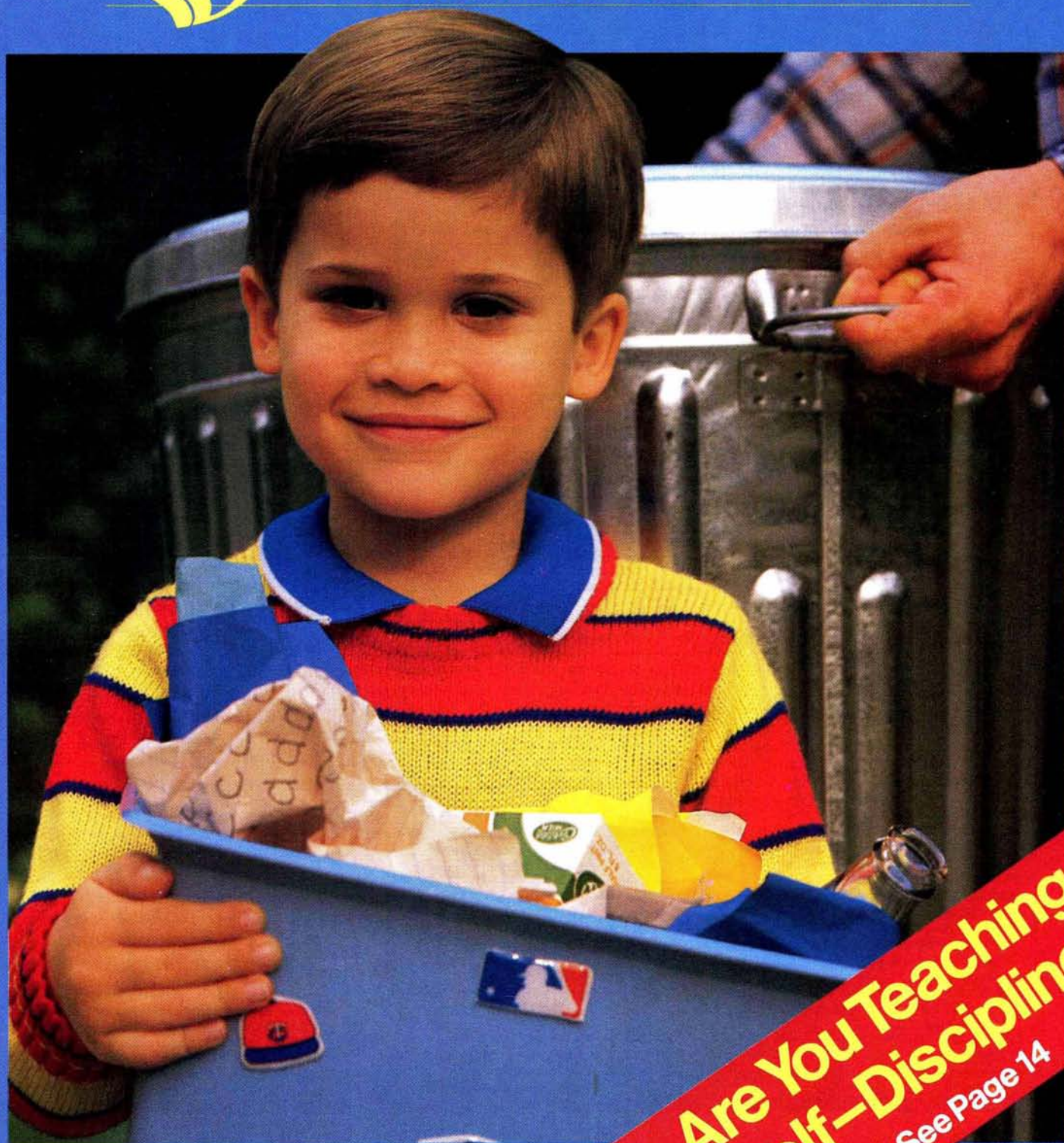


JANUARY 1986

# The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



**Are You Teaching  
Self-Discipline?**  
See Page 14



# The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

JANUARY 1986

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10



**Plant Good Seeds!**  
See page 25

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**COVER:** Without a right foundation of self-discipline, no child can mature properly. Parents can help their children develop this important character trait by applying the practical advice in the article beginning on page 14. Photo by G.A. Belluche Jr.

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PERSONAL FROM

*Robert H. Armstrong*

# The Blessings of Abundant Living

One of our Church executives and I have a disagreement. He is a very appreciative man. He's always counting his blessings.

"I'm the most blessed man on earth," he insists.

I flatly disagree with him. I tell him *I* enjoy that status. Like the apostle Paul, I feel that I have been the chief of sinners — yet God's marvelous grace has so richly abounded that it seems He has simply *lavished* on me every blessing that even the loving God can bestow!

Business associates, not quite comprehending the spiritual significance or real reasons, admit and marvel at the really happy and enjoyable life I have been granted. They *seek* the full joys of life. I did, too — once. And as long as I tried to GET and to TAKE them, I somehow never had them.

Back in my pre-conversion days in the magazine and newspaper world, I fought and strove energetically for that pot of gold at the end of the rainbow — the *money* that would buy happiness and all the "good things" of gracious living. I sought and struggled valiantly to attain the vanity-pleasing status of being considered "important" by important businessmen.

Yet, somehow, I never quite caught up with the end of that

rainbow. For a few years — in my middle and late 20s — I enjoyed considerable financial success — for a young chap under 30. I was making an income equivalent to perhaps \$375,000 a year in today's money value. Even so, I never seemed to get out of debt. My heart was set on material things and on plain vanity — and they just never seemed to *satisfy*. Neither, incidentally, did the brand of cigarettes whose advertising claims "they satisfy."

You say you couldn't imagine me smoking cigarettes? Well, I couldn't either — NOW 59 years later. I remember, now, with almost a pang of stomach sickness, the many times I sat at a banquet table, smoking a fine cigar. Why? Vanity. I was a "sheep." Others did. I followed. But did I ENJOY it? Never!

What an idiot I was! In my mouth the saliva flows freely on slightest provocation. A cigar in my mouth started the saliva glands flowing. I was forced to use the napkin for a cuspidor — and even then, it usually made me slightly sick at the stomach. Enjoy it? No!

Those were days of ambition and hustle and striving — but they also were days of frustrations, fears and worries, and an underlying sense of insecurity. Carnality and this world's ways simply *never paid off*!

Then two successive major business depressions, and circumstances beyond my control,

brought three successive total business failures. It was then that a Bible-believing woman, neighbor of my parents in Salem, Ore., convinced my wife that the Bible enforced observance of the seventh-day Sabbath in this New Testament time of grace! The facts of my outraged reaction at this "religious fanaticism" have been published many times.

I was unable to talk, reason, argue, cajole or threaten her out of her newfound conviction. I was literally angered into my first STUDY of the Bible — to *prove* to her that "all these churches couldn't be wrong" — and that the Bible commanded and enforced the observance of Sunday, in this New Testament period.

I sought, wrote for and obtained at the public library every book or booklet possible purporting to refute seventh-day Sabbath observance. I searched every nook and cranny of the New Testament to find the sanctification or command to observe Sunday. It was like hunting for the needle in the haystack — the needle that isn't there! Like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, I never found it!

Instead, I found that Jesus Christ always kept this day "as His custom was," and the apostle Paul kept it "as his manner was." I found where Jesus gave us an example that we should do as He did, and where we are commanded to walk in His steps — to walk as HE walked. Also that



it is "Christ IN us" who gives hope of glory (by His Holy Spirit), and that He is a changeless Christ — the *same* today as when He walked the earth in human flesh. I found that the New Testament *commands* Sabbath observance.

By the way, we have a booklet explaining in detail what I found on this question in the Bible. It is entitled *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?* I think you might find it interesting, as well as surprising and eye-opening. Your copy has already been paid for (you *can't* pay for your own) — and it *would* be a shame for your copy to keep on lying unused in our mailing area, wouldn't it? Remember, it's FREE, as Christ's Gospel is free, of course.

Well, Satan may have "opened" the eyes of Adam and Eve to evil — and then BLINDED the eyes of all of us ever since — but in that study the true Creator GOD *opened* my eyes to His TRUTH! There it was, staring at me in the Maker's own INSTRUCTION BOOK!

I didn't like it — at first.

"What would my business associates say?" was the question that came automatically to mind.

That's the question that chains *most* people to the darkness, the curses and frustrations of this world. They seldom give a thought to, "What would GOD say?" They ought to ask, "What is CHRIST *GOING* TO SAY, when I face Him in the Judgment?"

To me, God's truth meant GIVING UP! It meant giving up associates and friends — at least, so I supposed. It meant giving up MY OWN WAY! It seemed like GIVING UP everything I had ever held dear or lived for. It was like GIVING UP my very life.

But then, with God's BIBLE before me, I came to realize that Christ had bought and paid for my life — and it wasn't mine, anyway. God had made the giving up easier by repeated defeats — by reduction to economic poverty. I was only a "burned-out hunk o' junk," anyhow.

Finally, I did make the surrender — UNCONDITIONALLY! I told

God He could have my life, and if HE could make anything out of it, He could have it — I had made only a failure out of it! And I *did* mean that!

To me, it meant GIVING UP everything I had valued as worth living for. But, you know, we have to die to LIVE — to LOSE our lives in order to FIND THEM! Perhaps, then, I never expected to really ENJOY LIFE anymore. I had sought hard to ENJOY LIFE — and failed. So now I gave it up!

But, actually, that was precisely when I really FOUND IT!

THAT was when truly ENJOYING LIFE first began!

I remember many a happy, blessed, really ENJOYABLE hour spent in the bare kitchens of financially poor people, studying the Bible with them. It seemed as if the angels were there with us — as, indeed, they were! It was as happy as if the bare, poverty-ridden kitchen had been a gilded king's palace. No — that's wrong, it was *not* just as happy — it was a thousand times more so!

I began to learn that happiness did not consist of material possessions. Happiness is in the MIND. And somehow, I had found happiness — real, full, abundant, deep-down HAPPINESS! We didn't have money — but we had inherited the TRUE RICHES!

I was literally plunged into the very Work of God. I didn't seek it — God PUT me in, once I yielded wholly to be faithful to His Word. Having a part in God's own Work was the greatest joy I had known.

The *change* came early in 1927. Almost night-and-day Bible study continued. My wife was miraculously healed — even a dumbfounded doctor was forced to admit that. Then I was blessed with my first son. Years later, God tried me to see whether I would be willing to give *him* up. Struggling in prayer, I told God I was willing — not for a moment believing He would require it of me. But He did.

The first conversions through my preaching came in December,

1930. NEVER had I experienced such joy. Talk about THRILLS! I had experienced thrills at football games and worldly entertainments — but never *anything* like THIS!

Blessings piled up on blessings. God opened the powerful DOOR of radio — and the printing press — in the very smallest manner, at first. But the Work grew, and grew. More and more conversions followed — dozens, then scores, then hundreds, then THOUSANDS! I expect to have a lot of COMPANY in God's Kingdom, where we shall live FOREVER!

After 28 years of economic poverty — 21 of which had been spent in the joys of God's true blessings — God allowed even a measure of material blessings!

I have very little money in my own name in the bank — yet God enables me to enjoy all the material blessings today that are good for me. This, however, came only after I had learned NOT to set my heart on economic prosperity.

Best of all, we in this great Work have the matchless knowledge that we are HEIRS of GOD — and joint-heirs with CHRIST — to be BORN INTO GOD'S OWN FAMILY and share His honor and GLORY forever!

But meanwhile, our minds are free from fears and worries. There are never any frustrations! We have been given abiding FAITH, which never fails — and never will! We have ABSOLUTE SECURITY! We are allowed high position and authority in GOD'S Work, directed personally by the *living* Jesus Christ. I am privileged to work directly UNDER HIM!

We are kept BUSY. We are privileged to enjoy the physical BEAUTY of (we believe) the most beautiful college campuses in the world! We are privileged to ENJOY seeing the almost incredible transformation and character development spiritually, mentally, morally, emotionally and physically in hundreds of purposeful college students. We are privileged to lead them, counsel with them in their problems,

(Continued on page 21)



# Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?

## Part Three

# What Is the Mark of the Beast?

*Better be sure whether this brand is upon you! Without it, no man will be able to buy or sell! Without it, you may be tortured even to death! But with it, you shall suffer the SEVEN LAST PLAGUES OF GOD!*

By Herbert W. Armstrong

**S**ome used to say this mystic "mark" was the fasces on the Old United States dimes. During World War II many said it was Hitler's swastika. During the Depression New Deal many said it was Roosevelt's NRA!

No subject has been more intriguing and baffling to our generation. Thousands of sermons have been preached on it — by professed ministers and evangelists who themselves did not know what it is! Millions have been curious.

### Only text usually read

The average sermon on this



subject considers one text of Scripture only!

This is the sole passage ordi-

The Good News is publishing, serially, Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong's new booklet *Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?*

narly quoted by those trying to explain this mysterious mark:

"And he [the second "beast"] causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a MARK in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:16-17).

From this one passage the speaker customarily uses his imagination. One might reason that since you will not be able to buy or sell without this mysterious mark, and since we all wish to be able to buy and sell, therefore we ought to do all in our power to receive this mark!

But here is an additional passage of Scripture they neglect to

Illustrations by C. Winston Taylor



show you: "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.... And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues...."

"And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the WRATH OF GOD upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image" (Revelation 15:1, 6, 16:1-2).

If you do have the "mark of the beast," you will receive the seven last plagues of God, and those plagues will be terrible beyond description!

#### **How to tell what it is!**

There are many more references to this subject in the Bible. Instead of looking at one passage only, then turning away from God's own revelation of this mystery, and using human imagination and fancy to conjure up the many ridiculous conclusions being foisted upon a deceived public by men devoid of understanding, let us see what GOD says this MARK really is!

Make no mistake, God tells us plainly what it is! It is unmistakably, clearly revealed and explained in the Bible! But to find God's answer, we must have before us all of the scriptures referring to this subject!

First, from the text universally quoted (Revelation 13:16-17), notice this: The mark is something that will be very popular — something the majority of people will be in favor of, will seek — which custom will approve as right.

Everyone wants to be able to "buy or sell." In this scriptural usage the expression "buy or sell" more literally indicates being able to buy — not that stores or those from whom one might make purchases of the necessities of life would refuse to accept the

person's money, but that the one refusing the mark would actually not be able to buy, would not be able to earn a living, to earn a wage or salary, or to engage himself in business.

The mark of the beast, then, has direct bearing on ability to engage in business, or to hold a job and earn a living.

But let's look at all the facts God reveals on the subject of the mark — all the Bible scriptures bearing on it.

#### **What is the beast?**

First, then, the "beast" itself. The "mark" is the mark of the "BEAST." This is described in the first verses of this chapter:

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea," records John, speaking of his prophetic vision, "and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Revelation 13:1-2).

The identity of this weird beast was revealed in previous installments. We have clearly identified this wild animal — a composite wild animal with the strongest characteristics of the four wild animals that are symbolically described in Daniel 7 — as the Roman Empire.

Daniel 7 reveals that these beasts, or wild animals, symbolize civil GOVERNMENTS, or world empires. Daniel's first beast was like a lion, and it represented the Chaldean Empire of Nebuchadnezzar, called Babylon. His second beast, like a bear, pictured the Persian Empire; his third, with four heads, like a leopard, represented Alexander's Greco-Macedonian Empire and its succeeding four divisions after his death; and his fourth beast, unlike any existing wild animal, the Roman Empire, which swallowed up and absorbed all the others, and embodied the strongest phys-

ical and military characteristics of all its predecessors.

This beast of Revelation 13 had the mouth, the strongest part, of the lion; the feet, the strongest part, of the bear; the body of the leopard. It included, in the ONE empire it represents, the strength of ALL of Daniel's beasts.

It is the ROMAN EMPIRE.

Notice, the "dragon" gave this empire its seat and power, and great authority. Revelation 12:9 and 20:2 both tell us in plain words this "dragon" is Satan the devil.

This empire is, then, the political instrument of Satan in ruling and deceiving the world.

#### **WHOSE mark?**

Note this well! The mark is the mark of the BEAST — and the beast is the ROMAN EMPIRE. In Revelation 17 a later stage of this same wild beast is pictured, and there a "woman" — a great CHURCH — sits astride it, guides it, rules over it. But the MARK is the mark of the ROMAN EMPIRE — not the Roman Catholic Church.

That is fact No. 1. Keep that in mind.

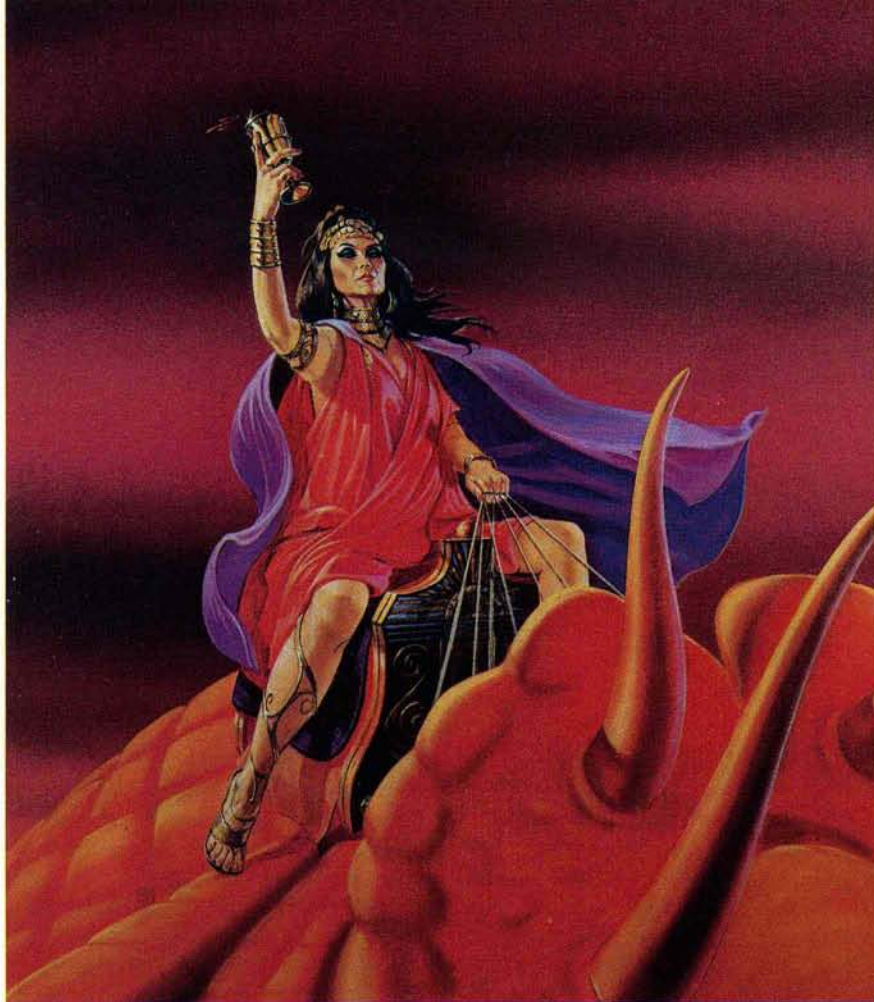
Now in Revelation 13:11 another beast is pictured. This beast had two horns like a lamb, but spoke as a dragon.

This second beast of Revelation 13 is also pictured in Revelation 17 as the harlot woman who rode the beast. This fallen woman or church is different from all other churches in one respect. She is organized as a civil government, as well as an ecclesiastical church. Nations of the world send ambassadors to her, the same as they do the capitals of other nations.

This church, just as the woman riding an animal guides and directs the animal — like, for example, a woman riding a horse — took over, exercised, wielded, all the power of the first beast — the Roman Empire. After A.D. 554, the church did do this for 1,260 years, as prophesied!

Notice, further, what is revealed in Revelation 13:15-16:





*The mark is the mark of the BEAST — the ROMAN EMPIRE. A “woman” — a great CHURCH — sits astride this wild beast, guides it, rules over it.*

“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all . . . to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads” (Revelation 13:15-16).

#### **The brand of Rome**

Now here is a deceived church — both herself deceived by, and therefore used by, Satan the devil, and also deceiving the world. Notice, this church does not actually herself kill these martyrs — she merely causes them to be killed. And she it is,

too, who CAUSES all under her domination to receive the dread MARK of the beast.

Notice carefully what the above text tells us:

1) “He” — the leader who originated human civil government, modeled after the government of the Roman Empire, in the church.

2) “Causeth” all to receive this mark. It is the church, not the civil government, which forces this brand on people.

3) It is the same power that caused the martyrdom of saints.

4) It brands on the people the mark of the “beast” — that is, the mark of the ROMAN EMPIRE, not the mark of the church.

5) This mark is received in the right hand, or in the forehead.

So the MARK is that of the Roman Empire, which this CHURCH did cause or shall cause the Western world to receive.

#### **TWO martyrdoms**

Next notice when these saints were killed. This will show us when the mark of the beast is enforced.

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Revelation 6:9-10).

Here we find pictured the martyrs of the Middle Ages already dead, at the time of this vision — which is the approximate present.

They know “Vengeance is MINE, saith the Lord.” They know God’s judgments against this persecuting, deceiving, false church, as described in Revelation 18, are to be the seven last plagues, poured out “in the presence of the Lamb” at the Second Coming of Christ. Read of it in Revelation 18.

These dead saints are pictured as crying out to ask “HOW LONG” before the Second Coming of Christ and the seven last plagues, which will avenge their martyrdom. History tells us that in the Middle Ages more than 50 MILLION were killed, many for the BIBLE faith and obedience to God instead of obedience to this church government of man and the devil.

Notice, now, what must again happen before the seven last plagues and the coming of Christ!

“And white robes [symbolizing righteousness and purity] were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled” (Revelation 6:11). Christ will not come to



take vengeance on this great false church UNTIL another great martyrdom has taken place!

Note it! There was one martyrdom. Those saints are already killed. Their resurrection will occur WHEN Jesus returns to earth — WHEN His judgments are poured out on this false BABYLON and her daughter churches!

But there is yet to be another universal persecution and martyrdom of saints, just prior to

— “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Now we see WHY these many millions were, and shall be, mar-

tyred! It was because they refused to receive this mark of the beast — refused to join in this worship of church and empire! They obeyed God rather than man! Their lives were governed by God. They were called out of this world — no longer any part of this world. They were the children, the heirs, the future citizens of His KINGDOM, not the kingdoms of men.

beast is something that was forced on people, on pain of being killed, more than a thousand years ago! The MARK of the beast was in full existence and enforcement more than a thousand years ago!

BUT, since it is those who have the mark of the beast who shall suffer the seven last plagues at Christ's coming, the dread mark is once again to be enforced! And those who refuse it are those who shall be MARTYRED in the coming GREAT TRIBULATION!

Now we begin to find real light shed on this baffling question!

### Warning of third angel

Soon, now, the time is coming when gross spiritual darkness will cover this earth — when no human will be permitted to preach Christ's true Gospel. We must work while it is day — the night is fast drawing on when no man can work for God.

At that time God shall send angels with His final warning to these apostate nations under sway of this great deceiving church as a final witness against them. Three such angel messages are foretold in Revelation 14.

Notice the final warning of the third angel: “If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his MARK in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God” — the seven last plagues, full force, unmixed with mercy (Revelation 14:9-10)!

This shows that although the MARK was branded on all but the martyrs more than a thousand years ago, it is STILL the brand of traditional Christianity today, and is ONCE AGAIN going to be enforced.

Once again those who refuse it shall be martyred. But those who receive it shall suffer the wrath of God without mercy!

You must soon choose whom you will obey — this coming Roman Empire resurrected by a United States of EUROPE, and ruled over by traditional Christianity — or whether you shall OBEY GOD! □

(To be continued)

## *Those who have the mark of the beast shall suffer the seven last plagues — those who refuse it shall be MARTYRED in the coming GREAT TRIBULATION!*

Christ's coming in vengeance against the forces of evil! Here are TWO universal martyrdoms!

This coming great martyrdom is THE GREAT TRIBULATION (Matthew 24:9, 21-22). This tribulation is not the wrath of God — the last plagues. It is the wrath of Satan (Revelation 12:12), inflicted at the behest of HIS apostate church by the coming “United States of EUROPE” and against the true people of God!

It is a persecution — a torturing — a martyring of the saints of God — the very elect who cannot be deceived (Matthew 24:24). Except those days of Great Tribulation be shortened, no flesh could be saved alive. But, FOR THE SAKE OF GOD'S PERSECUTED SAINTS those days shall be shortened.

God shall intervene. Christ shall “come quickly.”

### Mark then, and now

Now compare with these scriptures:

In Revelation 17, picturing this same church as the woman riding the beast, John writes: “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (verse 6). Also: Revelation 20:4

tyred! It was because they refused to receive this mark of the beast — refused to join in this worship of church and empire! They obeyed God rather than man! Their lives were governed by God. They were called out of this world — no longer any part of this world. They were the children, the heirs, the future citizens of His KINGDOM, not the kingdoms of men.

But — note it well! — they were, as God commands, subject to the government of MAN. They did not resist — they yielded themselves subject to the penalty. They were tortured — they were killed!

But they obeyed the government of God rather than man where there was conflict. And, at Christ's coming to rule the world as KING of kings, they shall all be lesser priests and kings under Him and rule the world!

Do you see what this plainly reveals? Those martyrs, more than a thousand years ago, were killed BECAUSE they would not worship the church, conform to its idolatry and pagan beliefs and customs, or worship the so-called “Holy Roman Empire” — and BECAUSE they refused to receive the MARK of the beast!

This means the MARK of the





# What Will It Bring?

*What do the next 12 months hold in store for this world?*

By Clayton D. Steep

**Y**ou see them on the newsstands every January. That's when certain publications prominently feature astrologers' predictions about what will happen during the coming year.

"So-and-so will be voted out of office." "This movie star will be married for the fifth time." "That investment tycoon will lose a fortune." "Hundreds will perish in a skyscraper fire." "A cure for

the flu will be discovered."

Prophetic utterances like these make exciting reading for many. But if, at the end of a given year, you would try to verify such forecasts, you would see how seldom they come to pass.

Still, it's human to want to know the future. Animals are aware of the present. And they retain certain impressions from the past. But they don't think in terms of tomorrow or next month or next year. Humans, on the other hand, have been given minds that can conceive of the future. We can conceive of it, but

we can't, of ourselves, know what it will be.

## **God reveals the future**

"No man knows what is to be," the Bible tells us (Ecclesiastes 10:14). No, "You do not know what will happen tomorrow" (James 4:14).

But there is a God in heaven for whom the future is no mystery! He alone has the ability to accurately know it all ahead of time.

"For I am God," He proclaims, "and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the

AP/Wide World Photos



beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done" (Isaiah 46:9-10).

That doesn't mean we humans are left in ignorance about the future, though. To the contrary, God has revealed to certain human beings of His choosing — His prophets — much vital information about future events. "Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

Many of His prophets, in turn, recorded in written form the prophecies they were given by God. We have them in the Bible.

One whole third of the Bible is prophecy. And most of it is about events that are yet to happen.

The purpose of these prophecies is to reveal — not to keep secret — the future. The key prophetic book of the Bible is even called the book of Revelation, that is to say, the book of revealing. Notice how it begins:

"The Revelation of [from, belonging to] Jesus Christ, which God [who alone knows all things about the future — see Matthew 24:36, Acts 1:7] gave Him" — for what purpose? — "to show His servants [those who obey God, who serve Him] — things which must shortly take place [in other words, future events]" (Revelation 1:1).

"Shortly" take place? What is meant by "shortly"? some have wondered. This brings us to a favorite argument of scoffers. They ridicule the validity of Bible prophecy by saying all those prophecies were supposed to take place at the time of the original apostles. And they never did. Therefore, the scoffers erroneously conclude, the prophecies have failed.

It is interesting that in scoffing, the scoffers are themselves fulfilling biblical prophecy (II

Peter 3:3-4)! They have overlooked the very thing God said not to overlook: that it was God who inspired the use of the word *shortly*. And to God, a few hundred years, even a few thousand years, in the working out of His plan, are but brief periods.

### Waiting and watching

God allowed the early apostles and Jesus' followers through succeeding ages to live in expectation that Jesus' return was near, even though that expectation at times caused them to be the object of ridicule.

Jesus could have said: "I shall return after (a certain number of centuries). Preach the gospel in the meanwhile." And then His Church would have known. But no, the time of His in-



and they began to refer to the "last days" as being yet future (II Timothy 3:1, 4:6-8, II Peter 1:15, 3:3-4).

Nor were they alone in history. For centuries there have been those who expected in their generation the end of the age and the coming of the Messiah to rule on earth. They publicly proclaimed it. They intensely wanted to see it happen. But in spite of the depth of their feelings, what they looked for did not come to pass — then.

The very *place* Jesus' feet shall touch when he comes back is clearly designated (Zechariah 14:4). Not so for the *time* of his arrival. Did you ever notice that?

Even Jesus' final words in the last prophetic book of the Bible, "Surely I am coming quickly" (Revelation 22:20), have had the effect of keeping His Church alert and watching.

This is for a purpose. Can you imagine how the morale of Jesus' followers would have been af-

**G**od revealed to His prophets much information about future events. They recorded the prophecies in the Bible. One third of the Bible is prophecy — most of it yet to happen.

tervention in world affairs was yet distant, and was not clearly revealed.

James, the brother of Jesus, referred to the "last days" as though his readers were then living in them (James 5:3). So did the apostle Paul (Hebrews 10:25, Romans 13:11-12). Paul left no doubt in two of his letters that he hoped to be alive at Jesus' return (I Corinthians 15:51-52, I Thessalonians 4:15-17). The apostle Peter wrote of "these last times" (I Peter 1:20, 4:7). John and Jude used similar expressions (I John 2:18, Jude 18).

It was toward the end of their lives that these men realized they would die before Christ came —

fect had they been aware that the "time of the end" was centuries, yes, almost two millennia off into the future? The human tendency to let down, to become complacent, lethargic, would have become overwhelming.

Jesus specifically wanted His people in all ages to be anticipating His return and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The reason is that attaining the Kingdom of God is the central purpose for human existence. Jesus said to seek that kingdom first — above anything else in life (Matthew 6:33). "Thy kingdom come," He told His followers to pray.

Could they all, living in the



midst of societies gone amok, have put their hearts into such a prayer as easily if they knew the outcome was thousands of years away?

Allowing His Church through the centuries to live in expectation of the imminent establishment of His Kingdom has been a prod and an encouragement from God that has given strength to withstand trials, persecution, even martyrdom.

And consider this: God's Kingdom, for all practical purposes, *did* arrive for each of God's people down through history, at the time of their deaths. The next thing they will be conscious of is God's Kingdom, when they are raised in the resurrection. The Kingdom was that close to them — it is that close to each of us today!

But how do we today know we are really living in the "time of the end"? We have the answer in Jesus' own words.

### The time of the end

Jesus unmistakably pinpointed our time in a lengthy prophecy recorded in Matthew 24.

His disciples had asked Him, "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (verse 3). What was Jesus' reply?

The end of the age will come, Jesus explained, when the good news of the Kingdom has been preached "in all the world as a witness to all the nations" (verse 14).

The Gospel or good news that Jesus was speaking of is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, which has been hidden from the world as a whole for most of 19 centuries. (If you would like to learn what Jesus' Gospel is, request our free booklet *What Is the True Gospel?*)

Jesus also identified the time of the end as our time when He

declared (verses 21-22) that world troubles would increase until human life would be in danger of extinction.

That is the time we are in now!

### What will happen in 1986?

Which specific events or occurrences fulfilling biblical prophecies will take place this coming year we cannot say, because God has not revealed this information. We do know, however, that we will see a continuation of the prophetic trends leading to the end of this age.

Watch for wars and rumors of wars, famines, disease epidemics and also earthquakes (Matthew 24:6-7). Look for more tension in the Middle East, and further movement toward a union of 10 nations in Europe with



see yet more, for the Scriptures warn us to expect "that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power" (II Timothy 3:1-5).

We can expect to see such conditions intensify, for "evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse" (verse 13). At times some of the prophetic trends may appear to go into "remission." Do not be deceived by appearance, however, for the trends fulfilling the sure word of prophecy always reappear more vigorous and intense than ever!

In the meanwhile, God's Work — the Work putting out the very publication you are reading at

**A**re you sick of all the evil in the world? You might as well prepare yourself to see yet more, for the Scriptures warn us to expect "that in the last days perilous times will come."

the blessing of a great religious leader. (Be sure to request and study our free booklet *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last*.)

Curses for transgressions of God's spiritual, civil, financial and health laws (the curses are enumerated in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28) will continue to take their toll in the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and other Israelitish nations. (If you have not yet read *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, be sure to request a free copy.)

Are you sick and tired of all the nonsense and corruption in the world? Prepare yourself to

this moment — will continue to grow in effectiveness and strength until the good news of the coming Kingdom of God has been preached in all the world as a witness to all nations (Matthew 24:14). The very existence of this Work is a sure sign that we are very close to the end of this age!

1986 is now upon us. We don't know exactly how many years remain, either for this age of human mismanagement and bungling or for any of us as individuals. But this all converted Christians can say for sure: By one whole year, "Now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed" (Romans 13:11). □



# What Does God Look Like?

*The Bible gives us a fascinating, clear picture!*

By Hugh Mauck

**W**hen God first created human life on earth, He said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). And God did just that: "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him" (verse 27).

But does that mean we really look like God? What, after all, does God look like?

Early man, say historians, believed God was the life or spirit of nature — that essence that exhibits itself as anger in thunder, movement in wind, weeping in rain, gentleness in the flow of rivers, mysteriousness in deep woods, restlessness of the oceans.

To at least one Christian group, God is a divine principle, a rule or code of ethics that governs good conduct, ruling over all as eternal spirit and infinite mind.

Evolutionists believe God is an ancient idea, a fictitious being created by primitive, ignorant humans to explain phenomena

they could not understand. People down through the ages have imagined God as looking like almost every conceivable kind of animal, combination of animals and combination of human and animal attributes.

It is time we get the facts —



time we learn what God tells us about Himself!

## **God tells us!**

We need not be confused about what God looks like. God tells us plainly in the Bible. God called our first ancestor, Adam, *man*. Eve was called *woman*. Together they were called *man* (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:22-23). They were not some lower, primitive form of human. Adam and Eve looked

like we do, although they were undoubtedly perfect physical specimens.

Later in history, when God, with two of his angels, appeared to Abraham, He appeared as a normal man (Genesis 18:1-3). Still later, when Ezekiel saw a

*People down through the ages have imagined God in hundreds of different shapes and forms. Some early people believed that God was the spirit or essence seen in nature.*

vision of God on His throne ("the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord"), God had "the appearance of a man" (Ezekiel 1:26-28).

## **The image of God**

From these scriptures, we can know God looks like a human. Many other scriptures tell how, whenever God appeared to humans, He always had the form and shape, size and features of a



normal man. But let's take a closer look.

God has one *face*. He talked face to face with Jacob and with Moses (Genesis 32:30, Exodus 33:11, Deuteronomy 34:10).

His *eyes* are always upon the land He personally cares for (Deuteronomy 11:12), even as His eyes are upon the righteous and His *ears* are open to their cry (Psalm 34:15).

Hebrews 4:13 says, "There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

God has a *body*. Paul tells us that, in the resurrection, our vile, physical bodies will be fashioned like Christ's glorious body (Philippians 3:21). Christ Himself said those who enter the Kingdom will have *two eyes, two hands and two feet* (Matthew 18:8-9), giving more clear indication of what God looks like.

God has a *mouth*, and we are to live by every word that proceeds from it (Matthew 4:4). God spoke to Moses (Numbers 12:8); occasionally He thunders with a mighty *voice* (Psalm 68:33). Zophar speaks of the *lips* of God (Job 11:5), and Isaiah tells us that when God becomes angry, "His lips are full of indignation, and His *tongue* like a devouring fire; His *breath* is like an overflowing stream" (Isaiah 30:27-28).

With His voice God laughs at those who try to outwit Him (Psalm 2:4) and at the heathen who plot against Him (Psalm 59:8).

God has a *nose*; He smelled the sacrifice Noah offered on the altar (Genesis 8:21), and with a blast from His *nostrils* He divided the Red Sea (Exodus 15:8).

God has *arms, hands and fingers* like we do, not hoofs, claws or paws. God has a mighty arm; strong is His hand, and His right hand is lifted high in glorious strength (Psalm 89:13). The Israelites did not gain possession of the promised land by their own sword or strength, but the right hand and arm of God gained it for

them (Psalm 44:3). Jesus Christ now sits at the right hand of the God on high (Hebrews 1:3), and all the host of heaven stand on His right hand and on His left (II Chronicles 18:18).

With His own fingers God wrote the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone for Moses (Exodus 31:18, Deuteronomy 9:10), and on two more tables after Moses broke the first set (Deuteronomy 10:1-2). The heav-



ens are the work of God's fingers (Psalm 8:3).

When God restores all things, the government shall be upon His *shoulder* (Isaiah 9:6).

God permitted Moses to see His *back* as He walked by in His glory (Exodus 33:18, 23), and David speaks of a time when God shook the earth, bowed the heavens and came down, when darkness was under His *feet* (Psalm 18:9). God also has a *waist* (Ezekiel 1:27).

Jesus Christ said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9), indicating that both God the Father and Christ have the same form and shape, and undoubtedly much the same looks and features.

### The human potential

Man is made in God's shape, form and image. By contrast, the creatures who serve God around His throne have multiple faces, wings and animal-like features (Ezekiel 1:4-10, 10:1-22). Satan, the former archangel Lucifer, now appears as a dragon or serpent (Revelation 12:9).

But why is man made in God's image, with a mind similar to God's? The incredible answer is

more fantastic than you have ever dreamed!

The truth is that humans have the stupendous potential to actually be born into God's own Family as immortal, brilliant, spirit-composed beings like God Himself as God's children!

At Jesus Christ's return, God's servants throughout history will be resurrected and, with true Christians still alive, will be changed in the twinkling of an

***God Himself reveals that He made humanity in His own image and likeness, with a similar mind. The Bible offers many specific details about God's form and appearance.***

eye into the exact form and composition God has now (I Corinthians 15:51-53, I John 3:2).

There will no longer be any confusion as to who or what God is or what His plan is! Everyone will see! No church, other than God's one true Church, understands this amazing knowledge. For more information, send immediately for our free book *The Incredible Human Potential* and our free booklet *Your Awesome Future — How Religion Deceives You*.

### God in all His glory

The book of Revelation reveals what the glorified Jesus Christ looks like now. This is the image we ourselves shall share if we overcome and endure to the end (Revelation 21:7).

Christ is "clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the *chest* with a golden band. His *head* and His *hair* were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters" (Revelation 1:13-15).

The apostle John was shown, in vision, God the Father sitting

Photos: Nathan Faulkner, Warren Watson



upon His throne (Revelation 4:1-11). God, the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9-14), is the ever-living God who inhabits eternity (Isaiah 57:15). He endures forever

(Psalm 9:7) and has eternal youth and strength (Isaiah 40:28-31).

In all these accounts and many more in the Bible, God is never pictured in any form or shape

other than the same image He, the Creator, gave to man. God truly made us in His own image, to someday soon share fully in His eternal glory and power! □



# Does Man Have God's Emotions?

God's purpose in creating human life is to reproduce Himself by adding spirit-born children to His Family (John 3:3, 6, 8). When God made us in His own image, He gave us the potential for the same basic emotions He Himself possesses: the ability to laugh when we are happy, to cry when sad, to become angry when sins mount, to be jealous when someone is unfaithful, to feel indignation when things are wrong and to love when we are loved.

Emotions are good: They give life its color and zest. The difference between us and God is that God controls His emotions, whereas, all too often, our emotions control us.

One major purpose God had in mind in creating us as humans subject to death, before giving us everlasting life as spirit beings, is to teach us to control our emotions. Obeying the Ten Commandments and keeping all the other laws God gave us is often little more than exercising proper control over our emotions — which, in turn, control our drives and actions.

## God's own emotions

God's strongest emotion is *love*. He *is* love (I John 4:8, 16). His every action is based upon love. God's whole philosophy is sharing Himself, along with everything in the universe, with those He loves.

Man's greatest emotion is also love, but man has perverted his love and turned it inward, following the "get" philosophy rather than God's "give" philosophy. Even the highest

forms of human love, such as the love of a mother for her child, are based on concern and care for one's extended self.

We love God because He first loved us (I John 4:19). The greatest commandment is that we love God with all our heart, mind and strength. The second greatest commandment is that we love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:29-31).

Hatred is the opposite of love — and God also expresses *hatred*. Solomon tells us there is a time to hate (Ecclesiastes 3:8). God hates evil and every manifestation of it — pride, deceit, violence, selfishness (Psalm 5:5-6, 11:5, 45:7).

God expresses *anger* when confronted with rebelliousness and evil. But God never loses control, and His anger works for positive purposes (Nahum 1:2, 6, Psalm 7:11, Judges 10:7, Jeremiah 30:24). Sin provokes God to anger (Deuteronomy 32:21).

Anger is not an emotion we must stifle and never use. God tells us there are times when we should be angry, but we should never let anger lead us to sin (Ephesians 4:26).

*Fear* is also an emotion God expresses, but not in the way humans fear. The wrong type of fear — faithlessness, paranoia and mere fear of punishment because we have sinned, for example — will keep us out of God's Kingdom (Revelation 21:8).

God cannot sin because He wills not to sin. In that sense He fears to do wrong or cause wrong consequences. This is a right emotion we

should possess (II Samuel 1:14). The human fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7, 9:10). God has pleasure in those who fear Him (Psalm 147:11).

God is a *jealous* God (Exodus 20:5, Deuteronomy 4:24). One of His names is Jealous (Exodus 34:14). The first two of the Ten Commandments forbid idolatry and express God's intolerance of unfaithfulness, which is what godly jealousy is. The Seventh Commandment states His intolerance of unfaithfulness to a marriage partner (Exodus 20:3-6, 14).

One of Elijah's strongest attributes was that he was jealous for God (I Kings 19:10). Jealousy has its right place among our emotions (II Corinthians 11:2). When rightly applied, it should provoke us to good works (Romans 11:11). The spirit of jealousy should never be competitive, but protective (Song of Solomon 8:6).

## Positive uses

God expresses *grief* (Genesis 6:6, Psalm 78:40, Hebrews 3:10); Jesus Himself wept (John 11:35). God expresses supreme *joy* (Matthew 25:21, 23, Luke 15:10, Galatians 5:22). He experiences *indignation* (Isaiah 34:2) and He knows *sorrow* (Isaiah 53:3). "Godly sorrow," says II Corinthians 7:10, "produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." God feels *concern* (Deuteronomy 5:29), exercises *patience* and offers *comfort* (Romans 15:5, II Peter 3:9).

God is *humble* and *merciful*, *passive* at times, *vengeful* at other times, but, above all, always in control of His emotions, as we should be, using them properly and for positive, right purposes. God always radiates the wonderful fruits of His Spirit, chief of which are love, joy and peace (Galatians 5:22-23). □

Photos by Hal Finch



# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## **How was it possible for Noah to make a ship large enough to carry the many species of animals safely through the Flood?**

Think for a moment. Would God assign a job like building the Ark to someone without being sure the person could get the job done?

Many people assume that the account of the building of the Ark is a myth. They conceive of Noah as a sort of old, bearded hermit who had little or no education, and who certainly must not have had proper tools to build a ship as large as the Ark.

True, Noah may not have had computers, gasoline-powered saws, hydraulic lifts, rivet guns or micrometers. But to assume that Noah had no nails, bolts, saws, axes or hammers, along with other needed tools and supplies and the necessary technical knowledge, is simply naive.

Most fail to grasp the tremendous size of Noah's Ark because they have not figured out its capacity based on the measurements given in the Bible (Genesis 6:14-16).

Bible commentators do not all agree as to the specific size of the cubit used in building the Ark. Some suggest an 18-inch cubit, others a 21-inch cubit. On the basis of a 21-inch cubit, *Peloubet's Bible Dictionary* states, "The ark would be 525 feet in length, 87 feet 6 inches in breadth and 52 feet 6 inches in height."

Some have calculated the displacement of the Ark would have been between 40,000 and 50,000 tons! It would have been the height of a 45-story building if it stood on end. Comparing this to the largest, most modern luxury liners of today, the Ark may well have been larger than Britain's *Canberra*, which has a displacement of 44,807 tons gross!

But there was an older Hebrew cubit that measured about 25

inches. This cubit would have made the Ark 600 feet long, 100 feet wide and 60 feet high. No small size! Its three decks (Genesis 6:16) would have contained an area of about 38 standard college basketball courts. Its volume would have been 3.6 million cubit feet. This is the carrying capacity of 25 trains, each one 52 freight cars long. Many think of the Ark as a small vessel, not realizing how large it really was.

How many animals were on the Ark? Notice that God told Noah there would be one male and one female of each unclean "kind" of animal and seven pairs of each clean "kind" of animal on the Ark (Genesis 7:2, 14). When the Bible speaks of a "kind" of animal, it is not speaking of what scientists today would identify as a "species."

Turn to Genesis 2:19-20 and notice an important point: "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field."

The number of Genesis "kinds" were so few that Adam was able to easily give them each a name that day. This shows that the original Genesis "kinds" were relatively few in number.

With regard to the animals, the Bible definition of "kind" is much broader than the evolutionary concept of "species." The Genesis "kind" more nearly equates with the biological definition of a "genus." Notice the facts presented in *The Genesis Flood*, pages 67 and 69: "It is unwarranted to insist that all the present species, not to mention all the varieties and subvarieties, were represented in the Ark."

God is a practical God. God's instructions to Noah were simple

and left a lot of planning on Noah's shoulders. Noah may already have had some experience in building large oceangoing ships.

With regard to adequate supplies of food and potable water, Noah had received instructions from God (Genesis 6:21). Eggs, for example, may have been obtained from many birds, milk from the cattle and goats, fresh meat from a variety of sources. And Noah could easily have stored fresh water in advance.

Remember also that plant life was reestablished quickly after the Flood (Genesis 8:11), and that Noah himself planted a vineyard (Genesis 9:20), indicating he had taken on the Ark cuttings and grains that could germinate with cultivation.

Most of those who scoff at the record of the Flood have never bothered to approach the problem as the Bereans did, willing to prove with an open mind "whether these things were so" (Acts 17:10-11). Had Noah assumed the task was impossible, and had he not worked for 120 years to accomplish it, where would we be today? The facts prove the task was not impossible, and that Noah succeeded as the Bible records.

The Worldwide Church of God publishes an attractive brochure entitled "In the Beginning — Answers to Questions From Genesis." This brochure examines dozens of the fascinating topics revealed in the first book of the Bible, including the creation week, the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, Abraham, angels and the beginning of the tribes of Israel.

It answers many common questions concerning this "book of beginnings." You may have a free copy of this brochure by mailing the request envelope in this issue or by writing to our address nearest you (see inside front cover for a list). □



# Self-Discipline Is Your Child Building It?

*Without this character trait, no child can mature properly.*

By Gavin N. Cullen

**H**ow would you react if you hired someone to build you a

new house and then found out the person was a fraud?

Let's say this person had no real training in building homes; he had merely worked as a common laborer for a while. He created a fancy title for his "construction company" and figured that was enough for him to get started in business.

You didn't find out about him until he started work on the foundations. You began to be concerned at the way he didn't seem

to be sticking to the plans. Even though he reassured you about what he was doing, you weren't satisfied.

What finally caused you to begin to look into the "builder's" qualifications was what you found when you slipped down to the building site and measured the foundations. Not only were the dimensions wrong, but the whole foundation was completely out of square. In no way were the foundations even beginning to turn out like the plan that you and he had decided upon.

As soon as you found out about





his lack of credentials, you went to great lengths to get out of the contract. There was no way you would have a man with so little competence build your home!

Now, all this sounds absurd. Maybe this specific scenario has never happened anywhere. But, a sad situation with particulars not unlike those in this example is happening repeatedly all over the world every day. Yet the situation is accepted as normal. It is not questioned. But it is having far more devastating consequences than having an unqualified builder construct a home. It is having a direct effect on the downfall of our society today!

The building being constructed is the character of children. The builders are parents, who either carry out the building plans formulated by almighty God or fail miserably in child rearing.

#### **A right foundation**

We may be aghast at the thought of an unqualified person building our home. Yet many are making terrible mistakes in molding the lives of their children. They do not heed God's clear instructions — they have no idea of what direction they are heading or should head with their offspring. Their child rearing "just kind of happens." The results are

disastrous — devastating to this society. Children are growing up without any self-discipline.

Some are unable to entertain themselves because they have spent countless hours being entertained in front of the television, incapable of learning in the classroom because they can't pay attention and concentrate, unfit to hold jobs when they leave school because they have not learned to accept and carry out responsibilities.

King Solomon, to whom God gave great wisdom, gained in-depth understanding regarding child rearing, and he recorded many of his observations in the book of Proverbs. In Proverbs 29:15 he pinpoints the crux of the problem we are addressing: "A child left to himself brings shame to his mother."

When parents do not know why their children do not turn out as well as they expected, this is often the main reason.

#### **Training necessary**

Just as a musician needs constant training and practice to become good enough to play in an orchestra, so a child needs constant training, based on the laws God reveals, to develop self-discipline. A child must be taught to carry out responsibilities —

whether schoolwork, chores around the home, controlling emotions or exercising the patience and diligence needed to learn a new skill.

For instance, a teenager who has never learned about punctuality, getting along with others and following instructions cannot just join the work force and expect to be able to work successfully for a full eight hours every day. He would find great difficulty in sticking out the often mundane assignments that regularly go with the job. He may not respect his superiors. He may not be concerned with doing quality work. A child develops his or her attitude toward work during the early years, and this takes work on the part of the parents.

Once again we can turn to the book of Proverbs for guidance. If we train our children in the way they should go, they will never depart from that way (Proverbs 22:6).

Let's look at several typical areas where children need to learn self-discipline. The principles here apply to all areas of child rearing in general.

#### **Work habits**

It is essential that children develop good work habits  
(Continued on page 27)

Photo by Hal Finch





# Elohim WHAT Adonai Yahshua IS Jehovah YHWH GOD'S Yahweh Iesous NAME? Theos

*Does it make any difference what names you  
use for the Father and the Son?*

By Keith W. Stump

**G**od's name is important!

We must not use it lightly or irreverently — but with a genuine sense of reverence and awe (Exodus 20:7).

But what is the name of the heavenly Father? What is the name of His Son, our Savior, the Messiah?

It is important that we know. For there is only one “name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Must we, as some claim, use only Hebrew names when speaking of the Father and the Son? Is salvation based on the pronunciation of God's name in a certain language, or on a certain set of sounds?

Are we unwittingly transgressing the Third Commandment when we say “Jesus Christ,” “God” and “Lord” — because these are not Hebrew names?

There is no need for confusion. Read on and understand!

## **Sacred names?**

The notion that we must use only God's Hebrew names is of

no ancient origin. Actually, the Hebrew-names teaching had its beginnings less than 50 years ago, in the late 1930s.

At that time, proponents of the idea began to claim that it is gross sin to say the name *Jesus Christ*, which is an Anglicized spelling of the Greek words *Iesous* and *Christos*. Likewise, they declared it a sin to utter the phrase *God the Father*, for the English word *God* was said to be linked etymologically with pagan worship.

The Deity's name, they alleged, must be spoken only in Hebrew. This is an important prerequisite for entering God's Kingdom, they claimed.

These same few teach that the sacred personal name of our heavenly Father is *Yahweh* (or, in its contracted form, *Yah*) and that the name of His Son is *Yahshua* the Messiah. The word *Elohim*, too, must be used instead of our equivalent English word *God*. They declare that when we pray or speak about the Father and the Son, we must use only these Hebrew names. It is wrong, they say, to translate the names of the Deity into English

or any other language. In other words, we may freely read and discuss the Bible as translated into the English language in all terms except the names of God or Jesus Christ. Then we must speak Hebrew. Using substitutes for the names *Yahweh* and *Yahshua*, we are told, could deny us salvation.

Are Hebrew names the only ones acceptable to God? Is He insulted by anything else?

## **The tetragrammaton**

First, let's examine the name *Yahweh*, said to be the personal name of the Heavenly Father.

In Exodus 3:15, the Creator introduced His name — YHWH — to Moses. (In many English versions of the Bible, YHWH is translated as LORD, usually printed in capital letters.)

Unrealized by many, the text of the Old Testament consists of consonants, no vowels. The original Hebrew of the Creator's name as written in the consonantal text of this verse is spelled simply YHWH, not *Yahweh*. YHWH is often referred to as the “tetragrammaton,” meaning the “four letters.” The name



YHWH is derived from a form of the Hebrew verb *to be*. It has the same meaning as the name I AM, mentioned in the previous verse (Exodus 3:14). Hebrew scholars say YHWH could mean "he exists" or "he causes to be." The English equivalents of this word would be "the Ever-living" or "the Eternal."

Though we cannot be absolutely certain what the missing vowels in YHWH should be, many scholars believe that YHWH was probably vocalized originally as *Yahweh*.

The Jews, thinking the name YHWH too sacred to be uttered, ceased to even pronounce it after the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Indeed, it was considered unlawful and blasphemous to utter it. When a Jew reciting orally came to YHWH in a scripture, he substituted the word *Adonai* (a Hebrew word meaning "Lord" or "Master") instead. The name of God, in other words, was written YHWH, but pronounced *Adonai*.

But one thing is certain. The pronunciation of the Hebrew word YHWH was *not* "Jehovah." This familiar but erroneous name is a comparatively recent invention, devised by Peter Galatin (the confessor of Pope Leo X) in 1520. Galatin interjected the vowels of the word *Adonai* (a-o-a) between the four sacred consonants YHWH, producing the hybrid monstrosity YaHoWaH, which later became "Jehovah" in some English Bibles. It is a totally artificial name, formed by adding alien vowels to the Tetragrammaton. It has no claim to legitimacy.

### Yahshua is Yahweh!

The first point that must be made in answer to those well-intentioned but misguided advocates of "sacred names" concerns their labeling the Father *Yahweh* as distinct from His Son *Yahshua* (which means "Yahweh is salvation"). They claim YHWH is the Father, and that the Son later had to be revealed.

The truth is that the YHWH of the Old Testament is the very

One who became Jesus or, in Hebrew, *Yahshua*! *Yahshua*, or Jesus, IS *Yahweh*!

Jesus was the Word (Greek, *Logos*, "spokesman") who was with God the Father from the beginning (John 1:1). The *Logos* was the Creator — "All things were made through Him" (verse 3). That *Logos* — the Creator — later became flesh and dwelt among us (verse 14). He then declared the Father (verse 18), whom no man had heard or seen before (John 5:37).

Notice further: In Deuteronomy 32:3-4, we read that YHWH (translated "Lord" in many Bibles in verse 3) is "the Rock." In I Corinthians 10:1-4, we discover that the Rock was none other than Christ. In John 8:58, Jesus reveals that He is the "I AM" of Exodus 3:14. In Hosea 13:4, YHWH says there is no savior but Him. YHWH, then, clearly is *Jesus* (Acts 4:12)!

Jesus (or *Yahshua*) was the God of the Old Testament. He was YHWH. (For a thorough proof of this point, request our reprint article "Is Jesus God?") With this understanding, one of the major tenets of the sacred names doctrine falls flat!

Now look at another major error in this false teaching.

### Evidence from Old Testament

Though the vast majority of the Old Testament was inspired in the Hebrew language, Daniel and Ezra wrote portions of their books in Aramaic or Syriac, the prevalent language spoken throughout the Persian Empire and elsewhere during their time. It had replaced Hebrew as the language of common speech of the Jews.

When these men of God referred to the Creator in those passages, did they use the old Hebrew names, or did they translate them into Aramaic?

Nowhere in the Aramaic passages do we find the names YHWH or *Elohim*. An examination of the manuscripts reveals that in dozens of places the writers rendered the Hebrew names for God into the Aramaic word

*Elah*. And it is just as proper that the Hebrew *El* and *Elohim* should be translated into the English word *God*.

Moreover, it should be noted that the name *El* was in use among the pagan Canaanites long before Moses penned the Pentateuch. In the cuneiform religious tablets excavated at Ras Shamra (the ancient Canaanite city of Ugarit in northern Syria), for example, *El* (*El the Bull*) is described as the head of the Canaanite pantheon, husband of Asherah and father of all the other gods. If it is a sin for us to use the English word *God* because pagan Druids used it to refer to their idols, then, by the same reasoning, it is also a sin to use the Hebrew words *Elohim* and *El*.

Also notice that the Hebrew word *Elohim* is used 240 times throughout the inspired Old Testament to refer to pagan, heathen idols (see Exodus 12:12, Deuteronomy 6:14 and Judges 11:24, for example). This usage shows that it is just as permissible to use the English word *God* today for both the Creator and for pagan idols.

### Apostolic example

But what about the New Testament books?

The original inspired language of the New Testament was Greek. Greek was virtually a universal language in the first century, widely understood by both Jews and gentiles.

Much of the New Testament was written by the apostle Paul, the apostle sent to the Greek-speaking gentiles who did not know Hebrew or Aramaic. When Paul wrote in Greek to Greek converts, did he pause in mid-sentence and switch from Greek to Hebrew to write *Yahweh* or *Yahshua* when faced with a sacred name?

Never!

Paul invariably used the Greek words for "God" (*theos*) and "Lord" (*kurios*). And he used the Greek name *Iesous* (Jesus). And so did the other writers of New Testament books, as



inspired by God's Holy Spirit. In 665 places in the New Testament, the apostles translated the Hebrew word YHWH into the Greek word *kurios*.

There is not one New Testament Greek manuscript with the names of the Deity written in Hebrew!

In the face of these clear facts, "sacred names" proponents have no choice but to deny the New Testament was originally written in Greek. They assert — wrongly — that the whole of the New Testament was originally written in Aramaic (some even say Hebrew), and only later translated into Greek. At the time of this alleged translation, they claim, the sacred Hebrew names were wrongly removed and pagan Greek names substituted.

The burden of proof is on them. The evidence?

There is none — for it is a totally false notion, devised out of necessity to justify a false premise!

The Aramaic version of the New Testament available today is clearly a later translation from the original inspired Greek. The only copies of the original New Testament writings that have been preserved are in Greek — none in Aramaic or Hebrew.

### More proof

Jesus said He came to reveal and declare the name of the Father to men (John 17:6, 26). Yet where do we find any discussion of its pronunciation? Where did Jesus say that Hebrew is the only name we must use? If *pronunciation* is so all-important, why did Jesus never say so?

Another point: Jesus prophesied that "many [deceivers] will come in My name" (Matthew 24:5). If the only proper form of his name is *Yahshua*, then Jesus' prophecy has utterly failed — and He is a false prophet! Have many come in the Hebrew name of *Yahshua*? No — hardly any. But many deceivers *have* come in the name of Jesus Christ, which Jesus in this verse clearly calls His name.

In other words, Jesus was say-

ing that false churches would use the true name. Jesus obviously is not concerned with the language in which His name is spoken; it remains *His name*. There is power and authority in Jesus' name — the only name by which we may be saved.

Consider further: In John 17:11, Jesus asked the Father to "keep through Your name those whom You have given Me." As we trace the history of the true Church through the ages, what name do we find it using? "The Church of God," or the equivalent name in the native language spoken by members of the Church at any particular time! We do not find through history the name "Church of *Yahweh*" or some other Hebrew form. Either it is acceptable to use the non-Hebrew word *God* — or the Father failed to answer Jesus' request!

Moreover, from apostolic times to our day, ministers of that one true Church, praying in the name of Jesus Christ, have performed mighty miracles of healing (Acts 3:6). There is power in the name of Jesus. His name is as sacred in one language as in another.

### What's in a name?

What does the word *name* really mean, anyway?

In Bible usage, a "name" signifies much more than merely a set of vocal sounds. Names convey meaning. They are given for a purpose. "Abraham," for example, means "father of many nations." "Israel" means "prevailer with God." And *Yahweh* means "the Eternal."

One's name summarizes one's authority, power, reputation and character. It is not merely a certain set of sounds or vocal vibrations that is important, but the meaning and power behind the name.

God's name has profound significance. The Hebrew text of the Old Testament contains many divine names (*sem* in Hebrew), each descriptive of some aspect of God's character. Among them is *El Shaddai*, "almighty God," as in Genesis 17:1, and *Elohe-*

*seba'ot*, "God of hosts," as in Amos 5:27. The meaning of each of them is infinitely more important than its mere sound in Hebrew. God's character remains the same — whatever the language may be.

Moreover, you need to understand that *Elohim* (God) is a family name (Ephesians 3:14-15)! It has a plural ending — allowing for more than one member in the one divine Family. We may also bear that name — the very name of God! We may enter the God Family by a resurrection. (Request our free booklet *Just What Do You Mean — Born Again?* for details.)

### Performance, not pronunciation

Salvation is not based on pronunciation! Those who would worship the sound of a name — treating it with superstitious and mystical reverence — make an idol out of that sound. Thinking they have some gift of greater knowledge, they actually miss the whole point and intent of the Scriptures, and engender needless strife and division.

Remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

Performance, not pronunciation, is of paramount importance to God. We honor His name by obeying Him, not by mouthing a certain sound.

Do not be misled by the naive and misguided "scholarship" of those who would make a "show of wisdom." Their teachings are not substantiated by the Word of God, but are based on a multitude of woefully misapplied scriptures. Speaking the names of God in Hebrew is *not* a prerequisite for salvation.

Take reassurance from the statement of the apostle Peter, who declared, "If you are reproached for the name of Christ [*Christos* in the original Greek], blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you" (I Peter 4:14). □



# WANTED: Opposite Grippers



By John A. Halford

**I**n his first epistle to the Christians at Corinth, the apostle Paul listed the ranks and positions of authority that Jesus Christ established in His Church:

“And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (I Corinthians 12:28).

Paul went on to explain that these positions were not just there for the asking. It is God who decides who does what in His

Church (verse 18). In order to avoid confusion (something God never creates — I Corinthians 14:33), not everybody could be an apostle, or a prophet, or even a teacher (verse 29).

Paul explained that God would not give just anyone the gift of healing, or even the ability to speak in tongues (verse 30). (Incidentally, speaking in tongues was not the confused babbling that goes on today in some churches whose members claim to “speak in tongues.” It was a systematic, orderly, God-given ability to speak and interpret foreign languages — a useful gift in the polyglot society of ancient Corinth. But even so, God did not

want everyone doing it. For more information, send for our free booklet *The Tongues Question*.)

But notice, Paul did not limit all the positions. For instance, and perhaps significantly, Paul did not say, “Are all helps?”

What is a “help”?

As you probably know, the epistle to the Corinthians, like most of the New Testament, was originally written in Greek. The word “helps” comes from the Greek word *antilepsis*, which is very interesting.

The first part, *anti*, is a prefix we still use today, as in *antiseptic*, *antiaircraft* or *anticlimax*. It means “against” or “opposite to.” The last half of the word, *lepsis*,

Illustration by Robert Gunn



means "to seize" or "to grip." It also has carried over into our language in words like *epileptic* — a person who suffers from violent seizures.

So Paul's word *antilepsis* means, literally, an "opposite gripping." What does that mean, and why is it needed in God's Church?

### Opposite grippers

Suppose you saw me struggling to move a heavy table. What would you do? If you wanted to help, you would move to the opposite side of the table, grip it firmly and lend your strength to the task of moving the table to where I wanted it.

That is the essence of "opposite gripping" — you assist others in getting their tasks accomplished.

Doesn't sound very grand, does it?

Remember that a position — any position that God gives you or allows you to have — is a position of service. A title or rank is never given just to glorify the individual. It is a commission to serve. An opposite gripper has a special opportunity to serve, for he or she is cast in the role of assistant.

In our world today, many people want to be assistants to those in high office. The motive is often not to serve, but to get.

Consequently, many sincere and well-intentioned men and women in positions of authority have their ability to serve greatly reduced because they have greedy, corrupt, selfish assistants. These "helps" want to share the power, but not the goals of their leaders.

It must not be this way in the Work of God. There is much to do, and if it is to be done and done well, the leaders need to be supported by those who really want to help. Thankfully, God has called the right people to provide that support.

For every name you may recognize in this magazine, there are dozens who type, edit, proofread,

photograph, make page layouts, print, package and in other ways get the magazine prepared so that you can read it. Thank God for them — I hesitate to think what this article would look like if you had to read my typing.

The Worldwide Church of God has hundreds of ordained ministers. These men often have assistants employed specifically to help them — driving, taking care of office work, helping with counseling and the many other areas in which a minister needs help. A ministerial "help" is not the most glam-



Each person  
God has  
called has a  
job! And the  
opportunities

to serve are there.

Look for them. Ask  
God for them. Then go  
to work and help.

orous job, but it is honorable and important work — helping those whom God is using to serve His people.

### You can be a help

But leaders are not the only ones who need help. There is an aspect of helping that you might not have thought of. Everyone God has called has a job — He has called no one just as a favor. He has something for each person to do!

It might not look that way sometimes. Perhaps it is easy to see how a handsome young college graduate or a clean-cut, prosperous, upper-middle-class family could have a part to play. But what about older people, handicapped people, those who do not have much education or money or those who are in prison? How are they useful? Listen to Paul, still

talking to the Corinthians: "But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary" (I Corinthians 12:20-22).

So every member is useful — everyone has an important part to play.

Let's take, for example, the proverbial little old widow. Maybe you are an elderly woman, in which case, no offense intended, ma'am, but you aren't going to be much use coaching the youth sports team. Nevertheless, the Bible shows that older women do have definite functions. Some specific examples are offering instruction and encouragement to younger women and sewing and providing for the poor. And of course, you have an important responsibility to pray.

There is much that older women can do. There is also a lot they can't do.

Their front lawn needs mowing, their plumbing may need repair and their roof may leak. They may have taken good care of their 1959 car, and they wouldn't dream of getting a new one. But they may not have a clue how it works, and they may not remember when to have the oil checked.

Enter the local opposite grippers. They know what they must do — they are experts in helping others get their tasks done. They mow the lawn, fix the roof, put oil in the car — noticing, also, whether the radiator water level is low or a windshield wiper blade needs replacing.

Incidentally, sometimes older people are too proud to let others help them like this. They suffer inconveniences, never letting on that the drains are blocked, the refrigerator has given up or that they are just plain lonely.

That is a selfish approach. Yes — selfish. You should be willing to let others serve you so that you can fulfill your responsibility. There is no shame in being



helped so that you, in turn, can help. But back to the opposite grippers. They are not only needed to help those in high positions. Anytime they seize a chance to help so that someone else can perform a function in the Work of God, they are fulfilling the function of *antilepsis*.

### Antilepsis in action

I saw a beautiful example of this in a congregation in Germany during the singing of hymns. One woman was in a wheelchair — it looked as if she had some degenerative disease. She was trying to hold up the hymnbook, but it was too heavy for her wasted muscles. A young man knelt beside her, gripped the opposite side of her book, and helped her hold it up. Thus he helped her to do her part.

Here's one more example, to help you get the idea: A longtime member of a congregation in California was paralyzed by a stroke. She had been an active and concerned member for years, and took seriously her responsibility to pray about all aspects of God's Work. She was the kind of person who made a daily impact before the throne of God in heaven.

The stroke left her blind and unable to move or talk. She needed intensive care for several months. But she knew, and her friends knew, that she could still be useful. They would talk to her each day about the needs of others, and with her limited ability to communicate, she let them know that she understood.

She could still pray — fervently, earnestly in her mind. She was willing to be useful even though she was totally dependent on others. Her friends knew her prayers were needed and seized the opportunity to help her to fulfill her part by doing what she could not do for herself.

Your opportunities to help might not be dramatic, but the opportunities are there. Look around for them. Ask God for them. Then go to work. We can't all be apostles, teachers or ministers. But everybody can be a help. □

## PERSONAL

(Continued from page 2)

serve them in many important ways. I am privileged to write this incredible GOOD NEWS for perhaps more than two million of you to read.

Say! Just what do you mean, my executive friend, that *you* are "the most blessed man on earth"?

Well, after all — that's the kind of "competition" where I can say I'm rejoicing in the

BLESSINGS that God showers on those who obey and trust Him, all this reminds me of the first chapter of Ephesians, Moffatt translation. I will have this ended by reproducing some of that for you — and I sincerely hope it applies to YOU, as it surely does to me.

Here it is:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who in Christ has blessed us with every spiritual blessing within the heavenly sphere! He chose us in him ere the world was founded,

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To me, surrendering to God meant GIVING UP everything I had valued as worth living for. Perhaps, then, I never expected to really ENJOY LIFE anymore. But, actually, THAT was when truly ENJOYING LIFE first began!

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knowledge we SHARE the rich blessings of the benevolent GOD!

I wish men of position, and growing success in the world, could realize the REAL SOURCE of true happiness — of real, enjoyable, interesting, happy and abundant LIVING!

Yes, I wish ALL PEOPLE, *everywhere*, could really *enjoy* life as much as we do.

I'm glad this man is privileged to enjoy life so abundantly. I rejoice that many others and their families are equally blessed. I'm grateful beyond words that scores, hundreds and *thousands* are now sharing in these same blessings, and will really *know* what I'm talking about!

And I rejoice in the sure knowledge that, in the very imminent future, Jesus Christ is going to return to this earth in all the supreme POWER and GLORY of the great GOD, and literally *force* this whole world to see the TRUE VALUES, and learn the way to all we enjoy now — and MORE!

SURE I'm happy — just brimful and running over with happiness. I've tried to share a little of it with our readers. Speaking of

to be consecrated and unblemished in his sight, destining us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ. . . . So richly has God lavished upon us his grace, granting us complete insight and understanding of the open secret of his will . . . May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, grant you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation for the knowledge of himself, illuminating the eyes of your heart so that you can understand the hope to which He calls us, the wealth of his glorious heritage in the saints, and the surpassing greatness of his power over us believers — a power which operates with the strength of the might which he exerted in raising Christ from the dead and *seating him at his right hand* in the heavenly sphere, above all the angelic Rulers, Authorities, Powers, and Lords, above every Name that is to be named not only in this age but in the age to come — *he has put everything under his feet* and set him as head over everything for the church, the church which is his Body, filled by him who fills the universe entirely." □



# LETTERS

## Answers to many questions

I thank all of you who publish *The Plain Truth*, *The Good News* and who are doing the Work of Jesus Christ.

I had many false ideas of what the Bible said, but after testing that which I thought was true by the Word of God, I was shocked. Casting off all I had learned over a 40-year span is not an easy thing to do, but it is being done by the grace of God.

My wife and family are really upset with me now. They tell me the same old tired stuff I have heard in the past. When I ask for proof from the Bible, so that I may learn the truth of God, the subject is either changed or dropped altogether.

May God bless your efforts and help you to reach others as you have me.

Reader

Tucson, Ariz.

I have been a subscriber to your *Plain Truth* and *Good News* for many years. I am 80 years old and quite active in my church. Your articles and references to the Bible have given me many answers to my many questions.

My pastors and members of our Bible classes are amazed at how well I seem to be informed, until I tell them I have found the answers in your magazines and special booklets. I have a good reason to believe that they have become subscribers, also. I hope they get as much enlightenment and pleasure as I do.

Alice Lindengrass  
Morrisville, Pa.

Thank you so much for all of the wonderful, informative books and papers that you have sent us, not to mention *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News*; they have been very helpful! As we are still learning about the true Church and have not been baptized yet — we would like to send our tithes to you. We know it's not a lot, but we hope it will help you. We know you will make good use of it.

Readers

Kannapolis, N.C.

I thank God for you and all the staff of *The Good News* who make it possible for those of us who want the meat of God's Word within reach.

I feel that in one sense of the word, *The Good News* is like a dictionary to the Bible. That is, *The Good News* helps us to understand word usage, events, happenings and inspired doctrine con-

tained in the Bible with plain words we can understand. For me, *The Good News* is a major key in properly digesting the Word of God.

David Little

Overland Park, Kan.

## Children excited about future

Thank you, Frank W. Nelte, for the uplifting and inspiring article in the September *Good News*. After reading "The World Tomorrow Is for Young People," I couldn't wait to share it with our daughter (age 8) and son (age 5).

Seeing our children's increased excitement and interest in their future compelled me to write and express my deep thanks for letting God use you. We pray that Julie and Caleb will choose obedience to God and, along with many other young people, choose the wonderful world that lies ahead!

Carol Froedge

Mayfield, Ky.

## Thanks for articles

My husband read, in the August, 1985, *Good News*, "Sweeten Your Marriage — With the Fruits of the Spirit." He is a changed person, willing to admit he was married to himself for 21 years, but insists now on living the marriage with the fruits of the Spirit and me his wife. He says that feels good. He agrees God is love.

Thanks — this article deserves a special award. God is love, love is energy and energy is power. Your article had power to change him.

Reader

Breaux Bridge, La.

I'm wondering how many people who are not married didn't bother to read "Sweeten Your Marriage." Everyone should read it! It contains valuable information for other human relationships as well. For example, selfishness is the No. 1 destroyer of all happy human relationships. Under each fruit of the Spirit are listed things we can do to improve friendships as well as marriages. Hopefully those with mates in the Church will reap the sweetest fruits in their marriages. The rest of us have the opportunity to reap that sweet fruit in friendships and family relations.

Janet Farnsworth

Winchester, Va.

Thanks so much for the August issue of *The Good News*. As always, it is jam-packed with good spiritual food for

our spiritual nourishment as well as our physical happiness and well-being.

Our hat is off to Earl H. Williams ("Sweeten Your Marriage") and as always to Clayton D. Steep ("Make Your Prayers Count!"). God is truly using these men mightily in writing timely, necessary, beneficial, growth-promoting articles. The ongoing marriage articles that have been in several issues by Mr. Williams should be required reading for everyone.

Mr. and Mrs. Milton Huston

Altadena, Calif.

Words cannot express the impact the article "Make Your Prayers Count!" had on me. What an insight! What an incredibly powerful God we serve — one who can handle awesome powers without abuse or misuse, one who wants to hear from us daily, one who desires the very best for us. With such a tremendously powerful, loving God watching over us, we should not have a worry in the world. There should never be a time when we think it is impossible to obey God. It is always possible to obey Him.

Teresa de Vlught

Kitchener, Ont.

John A. Halford's article "Tap the Power of the Universe!" (August) drove me to write and congratulate you. It was superbly written, carries weight, makes man shrink to less than nothing and at the same time fills him with awe, fear and respect for the great God, His office, government, laws and name.

Radcliff A.B. Mongbeh

Monrovia, Liberia

Mr. Halford, thank you very much for your free physics lesson in the August *Good News*. It was a heavyweight.

I always shunned physics as it seemed awfully hard. However, I must say that after reading your article about half a dozen times I finally was able to understand the principle or basics of the atomic bomb. More importantly, I now have a better understanding of the awesome power of God.

How scientists can make their students and themselves believe in evolution is beyond my comprehension, especially when they themselves teach that matter comes from matter. I thank God that I don't have the "intelligence" of a scientist, but an open, humble mind to believe in our Creator God.

Maria Cannizzaro

Montreal, Que.



# What Is a Real Christian?

What is a real Christian? Could you give the Bible definition?

Jesus described the very basis of real Christianity in what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. He pointed out certain characteristics that would clearly identify His true followers. Before we pick up the story in Matthew 5 and focus on several of these Christian characteristics in this brief study, you should first read all of Matthew 5, 6 and 7. Then be sure to look up and read every verse given in answer to the following questions.

1. What did Jesus say about the "poor in spirit"? Matthew 5:3. (The expression "kingdom of heaven" is more correctly rendered "kingdom of God.") Did He mean they would be lacking the Spirit of God? Romans 8:9, Luke 11:13.

No, Jesus was not suggesting they would lack God's Spirit. Rather, He went on to show that those who are truly humble, who are not filled with feelings of pride and superiority — who esteem others better than themselves (Philippians 2:3) — will be blessed because they will be in God's Kingdom.

2. What will the meek inherit in addition to being born into God's Kingdom? Matthew 5:5. Was Jesus meek? Matthew 11:29. Will a Christian exhibit this characteristic in the way he conducts his daily life? Ephesians 4:1-2.

There is a difference between being meek and being weak. Jesus was meek, but not weak! He endured abuse and injury with patience and without resentment. A meek person will not try to justify himself when he is wrong. Neither does he feel superior to others. He will not try to get even with others, seeking revenge.

3. What will a true follower of Jesus Christ — a real Christian — be "hungering and thirsting" for? Matthew 5:6. What is the Bible definition of righteousness? Psalm 119:172.

To "hunger and thirst" for righteousness is to be deeply motivated to obey God — to keep His laws, which He gave us in loving concern for our own good. Those who are truly hungering and thirsting for righteousness will be studying God's Word for true understanding. They will be willing to change when and where they see

they've been wrong, admitting their wrong beliefs, their mistakes and their sins. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God," wrote Paul to Timothy (II Timothy 2:15, Authorized Version). "Prove all things," said Paul to the Thessalonians (I Thessalonians 5:21, AV).

4. Who did Paul say are justified before God — the *hearers* or the *doers* of God's law? Romans 2:13. Did Paul make it plain that even though a Christian receives unmerited pardon of his or her sins by the grace of God through faith in Christ's sacrifice, a Christian is nevertheless required to keep God's law? Read Romans 3:31 and all of chapter 6.

5. Who did Jesus say will enter the Kingdom of God? Matthew 7:21. What did Paul plainly say was most important for a Christian to be doing? I Corinthians 7:19.

Notice that in order to enter God's Kingdom there is *doing* required — not just professing that Christ is our Savior! God is also very much concerned about our spiritual "works" after we become Christians. He makes it plain that we cannot enter the Kingdom of God by thinking Christ has "done it all for us."

6. Unless one has the love of God, can he really be a Christian? I Corinthians 13:1-8, 13. What are we if we lack the love of God? Verse 2.

7. Will God's love, which He imparts through His Spirit (Galatians 5:22), lead one to keep the Ten Commandments? Romans 13:8-10. In what way did God inspire John to confirm Paul's statement, showing us what God's love really is? I John 5:2-3. How is God's love perfected in a Christian? I John 2:5.

8. Is a real Christian one who strives to follow Christ by imitating His example and walking with Him? I Peter 2:21, I John 2:6.

9. Who is one of the first people recorded to have "walked" with God? Genesis 5:22-24. What else are we told about Enoch? Hebrews 11:5, last part. Will he be resurrected to eternal life at Christ's Second Coming? Hebrews 11:13, 39-40, I Thessalonians 4:14-16.

10. What other great patriarch walked with God, both before and after the Flood? Genesis 6:9. Did Noah find grace in God's sight? Verse



8. Was he clearly a faithful and righteous man who pleased God? Hebrews 11:7.

11. What was God's command to Abraham? Genesis 17:1-5. Why could it be said that he did indeed walk with God? Genesis 26:5, Hebrews 11:8-10.

12. Was Abraham God's friend? II Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, James 2:23. How can we become Christ's friends? John 15:14-15.

13. Did God specifically command His Church in the wilderness — His chosen nation of Israel (Acts 7:38) — to walk in His ways — that is, to keep His laws? Deuteronomy 5:32-33, 8:6, 10:12-13, 11:22.

14. Did God promise to walk with them if they would walk with Him? Leviticus 26:3, 12. Would He greatly bless them if they walked with Him? Verses 4-11.

15. But if God's people chose to walk contrary to Him — refused to obey Him — what did God say would happen to them? Leviticus 26:14-39, noticing especially verses 14, 23-24, 27-28.

To "walk with God" clearly means to keep His commandments and laws, and to do those things that are pleasing in His sight. It is the only way to be a real Christian!

16. What will a real Christian's attitude be toward the sinning society around him? I John 2:15-17, I Peter 4:1-4, Revelation 18:4. What will he be striving to live by? Matthew 4:4.

A real Christian will no longer be able to follow all the customs and practices of the society around. Where he or she formerly "went along with the crowd," thoughtlessly participating in various social activities and business practices of the world, he or she will now begin to question his or her life-style.

A real Christian will begin asking: "What is God's will? How does God say I should live?" and will begin saying, with Christ, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). And a real Christian will begin to diligently search the Word of God to learn His will, and follow it.

Of course, God's people must live in this world (John 17:15-16). And while striving to fully obey God, not being conformed to this world's ways (Romans 12:1-2), they should strive to "live peaceably with all men" (verse 18). And if a Christian has to disagree because of a biblical teaching, he or she does so without being disagreeable or self-righteous about it.

17. What further responsibility do Christians have toward the world? Matthew 5:14-16.

While "not of the world" in the sense that Christ meant in John 17:16, those men and women of God who have the Holy Spirit and a knowledge of God's truth and abundant way of life have a responsibility to be bright lights in

the world. God's people should be exhibiting the fruit, or characteristics, of God's Holy Spirit in their daily lives (Galatians 5:22-23).

They should be reaching out with friendliness and with a helping hand toward their neighbors and those they come in contact with every day. People not yet called of God will receive a witness as they see a portion of the mind and character of God in action through the example set by individual Christians.

18. What steps has a real Christian already taken to be recognized by God as one of His children? Acts 2:38. What has God bestowed upon him as a free and unearned gift because of his obedience? Same verse and Acts 5:32.

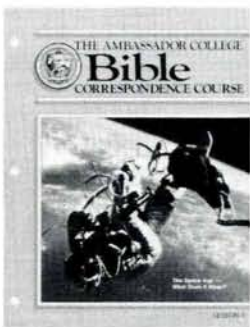
A real Christian has been conquered by God. His carnal, antagonistic attitude toward God (Romans 8:7-8) is broken. He has come to realize he has sinned against God, having broken God's holy law (I John 3:4). Therefore he has cried out to God and asked His forgiveness of those sins through the sacrifice of Christ, and for a lifting of the death penalty, which every sin incurs (Romans 6:23). Then he has obeyed the command to be baptized, indicating to God his deep desire to live by every word of God for the remainder of his life.

Because of his repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands of one of God's ministers, he has been given the Spirit of the Father and become a Spirit-begotten child of God. It is then that he becomes a real Christian!

19. Can one be a real Christian without having the Spirit of God? Romans 8:9-10.

20. What does God call the person who claims to "know" Christ, but refuses to walk in His ways — refuses to keep His commandments? I John 2:4. What will the one who says he is a Christian be doing? Verses 3, 5-6.

A real Christian has sincerely repented of his sins and is striving, with the power of God's Holy Spirit, to live by his Savior's teachings. He is seeking, in every aspect of his life, to do God's will as it is revealed in the Bible. And he is receiving the happiness and blessings that come from obeying God! □



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# Plant Good Seeds!

Anyone who has farmed or raised a garden knows the thrill that comes from planting seeds, watching them germinate, caring for the plants and then enjoying the tasty produce or beautiful flowers.



There are other ways — ways we may not realize — in which we plant seeds that also bear fruit.

## Our words have impact

Matthew 13 shows Satan to be a sower of seeds as well. He sows worthless tares in the grainfield where God has sown good seed (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43).

For the most part, Satan does his sowing by broadcasting negative thoughts and attitudes through the air. But sometimes, he uses human helpers. By moving someone to make a negative statement around others, Satan can plant a thought that can grow and grow until it chokes a person's spiritual growth.

Every one of God's people has had to fight bad attitudes and resist negative feelings at times of

discouragement or trials. During these spiritual battles, it's easy to slip and say the wrong thing around others.

Our words — even offhand remarks — can have a greater impact than we realize. Maybe our statements hit other people when they are weak. Their minds are fertile for the seeds to sprout and grow.

Human nature being what it is (Jeremiah 17:9), there is a certain amount of vain satisfaction in sharing tidbits of information with others — even derogatory remarks about friends, relatives, fellow employees — perhaps even God's Church. "Have you heard?" "Did you know?" "Guess what happened?" What might conversations such as these do to the dedication or spiritual strength of another?

Are you often in a pessimistic frame of mind, spewing negative comments to everyone to whom you talk? Perhaps you don't mean for your remarks to be taken seriously. Maybe you think about conversations later and repent of what you said.

But that doesn't erase the thoughts you have planted in another person's mind. Such statements can destroy optimism and peace of mind in others.

Christ said, "Woe to that man by whom the offense comes!" (Matthew 18:7). It is better that such communication never takes place.

Just as sowing bad seeds can

yield bad fruit, so planting the right kind of seed can produce good fruit.

The apostle Paul tells us we should "comfort each other and edify one another" (I Thessalonians 5:11). To edify means to build up. Much building up and encouraging can take place in our conversations with each other. Some people are just a joy to be around. They exude hope, faith and optimism and you feel uplifted after being around them. Are you this kind of person?

"Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad" (Proverbs 12:25, Authorized Version). Such a positive attitude plants good seed among others. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29).

## Speak positively

We all can become sowers of good seed by letting God's Spirit, with all its positive fruits (Galatians 5:22-23), guide us in all our conversations. Ask God to bless your conversations with others and help you be more aware of how what you say affects others.

A person surely increases his future reward in God's Kingdom when he sows good seed among others, helping them along toward their goal of eternal life. What a powerful and lasting effect our comments to others can have! "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit" (Proverbs 18:21).

Our words produce either death or life! Which will it be? □





# Just What Is 'The Curse of the Law'?

*Millions have been deceived into thinking  
God's law is a curse and that you are  
cursed if you keep the law. Read in your own  
Bible what the curse of the law really is.*

By Vince Szymkowiak

**"C**hrist has redeemed us from the curse of the law. Therefore we don't have to keep the law — Christ kept it for us."

Or so goes a familiar — but erroneous — argument!

This false argument takes the form of many Sunday sermons that, unfortunately, lead many professing Christians away from the truth (Jeremiah 50:6).

Let's examine the key Bible passage around which the whole question revolves, and see just what Paul meant.

## **What the Bible *doesn't* say**

The main verse in controversy is Galatians 3:13: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us."

First, let's notice what this verse does *not* say:

1) It does not say that if you keep the law you will be under some terrible curse. Just the opposite is true. Satan himself

knows that those who keep God's spiritual law will be richly blessed, and that breaking the law brings a curse upon mankind. Thus the archdeceiver of this world (Revelation 12:9) inspires deceived ministers (II Corinthians 11:13-15) to preach the diabolical lie that keeping God's law brings a curse.

2) This verse does not say we don't have to keep God's spiritual law. The same Paul who wrote Galatians also wrote, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Romans 7:12). Paul also said that it is not the hearers of the law who are just before God, but the doers of the law who shall be justified (Romans 2:13).

What, then, is the curse of the law?

## **The penalty for disobedience**

Simply stated, the curse of the law is the death penalty for disobedience. Romans 6:23 clearly states, "For the wages of sin is death." And James 1:15 says, "Sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." And what is

sin? Sin is the transgression, or disobeying, of God's law (I John 3:4)! Now back to Galatians 3:13. Christ became a curse for us in that He accepted the curse of disobedient mankind upon His shoulders.

In Old Testament times, sinners were put to death and sometimes hung on a tree in full view of the people as a testimony that sin brings the death penalty (Deuteronomy 21:22-23). By allowing sinful mankind to crucify Him, the sinless Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the curse (death penalty) of the law. As the latter part of Galatians 3:13 states, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree."

Keeping God's law brings great blessings, and Satan does not want mankind to be blessed. That is why he has deceived mankind into thinking that God's law, being a curse, was done away.

Stop and think for a moment: What curse befalls mankind for obeying the Ninth Commandment, the one against bearing false witness (Exodus 20:16)? A person who does not lie will have a clear conscience. He will not have to fear being caught in a web of lies and being punished or humiliated in front of others. He will actually be a blessing to other people because they will be able to trust in his word.

What about an individual who never steals (verse 15)? Here is a person who pays his taxes honestly and becomes, in a sense, a blessing to the government because he willingly submits to its laws. His clear conscience enables him to be at peace with himself because he is fair and just in all of his dealings.

Those who obey the commandment that states "You shall not commit adultery" (verse 14) reap many benefits. A couple's marriage will be preserved and they will grow closer together in mutual trust, love and admiration. The attraction that first characterized their relationship will deepen as the years pass. The romantic experience will be richly rewarding — so unlike the false so-called love relationships of so



many today. The children born to a couple who believe and obey this Seventh Commandment will be blessed with a stability and happiness that is rare in the 20th century.

### **Blessings produced**

Keeping all of God's laws brings to man the richest of blessings. Speaking of God's commandments, David said: "More to be desired are they than gold ... and in keeping them there is great reward" (Psalm 19:10-11).

God said of His people, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29).

Keeping God's laws brings spiritual blessings, as well. When we show our willingness to obey God, He blesses us with more understanding of His plan: "A good understanding have all those who do His commandments" (Psalm 111:10).

Ultimately, for those who accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment for their sins and continue in an obedient attitude, God will give them eternal life. It is not that lawkeeping earns salvation; on the contrary, eternal life is a gift from God (Romans 6:23). But God will not save one who is in rebellion against His commandments (Matthew 19:17).

No, God's law has not been done away. God's spiritual law, summarized by the Ten Commandments, is as permanent as God Himself. Those commandments, with all God's other laws, reflect God's very character. A major part of our becoming more like God is our willingness to keep and live by His holy, righteous, perfect law!

Our free booklet *The Ten Commandments* takes an in-depth look at God's basic laws and shows how you can apply them in your own life and reap the benefits. For a copy, just mail the request envelope in this issue or write to our address nearest you. □

## **Self-Discipline**

*(Continued from page 15)*

early. Respect for work and ambition can be taught from an early age by giving children responsibility for simple chores around the house.

A 3-year-old can be taught to help Mom keep his room tidy, empty the small wastepaper bin and help Dad clean the car. At first this instruction may create even more work for the watchful parents, but these habits can only be taught by parents who are prepared to work with their children. Obviously, as a child gets older, his or her reliability and sense of responsibility increases to where he or she can carry out work without supervision.

### **Teach them new skills**

One of the most effective ways of teaching self-discipline is to help children develop new skills. Musical instruments, sports or various hobbies can be fun and rewarding. Parents should, of course, consider children's abilities and interests, and tailor challenges and opportunities accordingly. Forcing a child into an activity for which he or she has no aptitude or interest does more harm than good.

To become proficient in music or sports, a child must spend many hours in study and practice. This teaches self-discipline.

A hobby such as sewing, cooking, floral art or gardening can help a girl develop skills for later years. Also, it teaches her the valuable lesson of sticking with something until it is finished, through all its ups and downs.

Similarly, a boy can learn the fundamentals of carpentry by building models or toys. Having his own vegetable patch may spark interest in science or agriculture. Learning to repair his own bicycle would help develop any aptitude toward mechanics.

All of these activities can be fun and challenging for children in helping them develop self-discipline. The important thing is for the parents to be involved, so

the child can learn the right lessons as obstacles arise. For a child to learn to apply himself, parents must be involved in all their activities.

### **Help them build confidence**

Low self-esteem is one of the most destructive elements in the lives of adolescents today. Because they have not learned to achieve, they have no identity of their own, so they turn to peers for strength. But the peers often have no more positive values or skills than they themselves do, and thus many do not have the chance to realize their full potential in life. From the beginning, it is difficult for an underachiever to develop a sense of worth.

The fact that a child has not learned any work habits or developed any talents and has no self-discipline contributes to juvenile delinquency. On the other hand, developing skills, talents and personal confidence in children dramatically decreases the potential for delinquency.

### **Instruct now**

Right instruction today beats experience tomorrow. Life's harshest teacher is the hard knocks of experience. Of course, our children must learn many lessons for themselves, but parents can lessen the burden.

A curse of our society, where unemployment is a major problem, is the lack of job experience available for youths. When they do get jobs, many are unable to hold them because they cannot apply themselves.

Proverbs 21:25 tells us that the desire of the slothful kills him. That's right. But a slothful attitude is developed over the years. If parents recognized their children's need for instruction, young people would need not suffer the traumas many do, both while they are children and later.

Self-discipline and character in our children form building blocks for tomorrow. Follow the instruction God gave to parents in Deuteronomy 6:7, and equip your children adequately for their entrance into adulthood! □



## PROVE ALL THINGS

# Have You Really Repented?

**M**y basketball coach was astounded! A player from our team had stolen the ball, but in his excitement he was headed toward our own basket!

"You're going the wrong direction!" the coach shouted. "Stop! Turn around! Go the other way!" he screamed.

But to no avail. The player didn't listen. He scored a goal — for the wrong team!

Just as this player was told to stop and turn around, God has told humans to stop and turn around spiritually, in the Bible doctrine of repentance.

But few understand what real repentance is. What a pity. Those who do not understand are doomed to continue in the wrong direction spiritually, and to ignore God's plain commands that we should repent (Mark 1:14-15, Acts 2:38, 3:19).

Such ignorance need not plague those willing to learn, however.

### The basic doctrine

To repent means to change from living our way to living God's way. Repentance comes when we see our sins, are deeply remorseful of them, stop sinning, resolve to obey God and, with His help, actually do obey Him.

### The usual teachings of this world

Most people hold impressions about this subject that are far afield from the simple Bible truth. Some see no need for repentance because they feel they

have not sinned. Others do not repent because they think all one must do is believe or accept the truth academically. Others confuse real repentance with temporary sorrow, remorse or simple emotion unaccompanied by any permanent change.

Clearly, such false beliefs cannot fulfill God's command.

### The Bible teaching

The English word *repent* is, of course, merely a translation from the original biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek. The words from which "repent" is translated mean to turn — to change direction. Such a change in direction requires one to first see that he is going the wrong direction, stop going the wrong way and finally to resolve to go God's way and obey God, with God's help.

But a person cannot even see that he or she is going the wrong direction until God opens the person's mind to see it.

This truth — that one cannot truly repent until God grants repentance — so strongly flies in the face of the teachings of this world that many simply cannot accept it. Nonetheless, the Bible

clearly states that it is not our own will, but the "goodness of God" that "leads" us to repentance (Romans 2:4). The Bible further states that repentance is something God must grant, as He did when He "granted to the Gentiles repentance to [eternal] life" (Acts 11:18). See also II Timothy 2:25.

God offers to grant one repentance when He calls a person to His truth, and we cannot be called to the truth unless God — by His and not our own initiative — decides to call us (John 6:44).

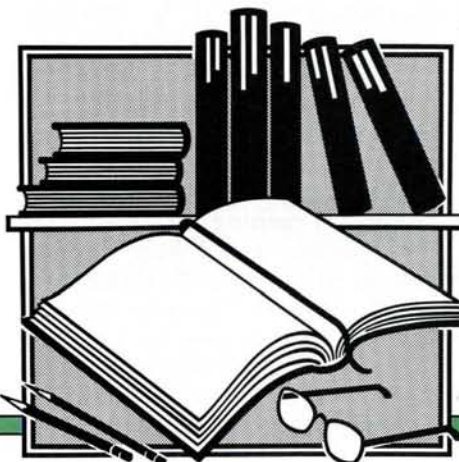
If you are reading this, understanding it and being convicted by it, then God is calling you and leading you to repentance, if you will follow His lead.

When God calls a person and begins to lead that person to repentance, He does so by showing the person that he or she has been living wrong — that is, by showing the person his or her sins. And since "sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4, Authorized Version), God shows the sins by opening one's mind to understand God's law, which defines His way of truth.

One who really understands God's law sees that he has not been living in accord with it, that he has been sinning and needs to repent — change.

Of course, all need to repent, for, as Paul says in Romans 5:12, "All have sinned" (AV). And the apostle John declares plainly that "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8).

This presence of sin in us demands repentance, for God does not promise to forgive our sins





unless we repent and are baptized, and the wages (result) of unforgiven sin is death (Romans 6:23)! See also Luke 3:9. Clearly, repentance is not a matter to be taken lightly.

Nonetheless, many do not see the need to repent because, like the self-righteous Pharisees, they do not see their sins (Mark 2:16-17). When one truly sees his sins in sharp focus, he will be deeply broken up about them. Hence, repentance is accompanied by serious emotion and sorrow.

Certainly King David was deeply remorseful at his sin with Bathsheba, and his state of mind is reflected in his psalm and prayer of repentance (Psalm 51). Other examples like that of Job (Job 42:5-6) could be cited.

Yet it must be stressed that although emotion usually accompanies repentance, bare emotion or sorrow unaccompanied by true change is not repentance!

Indeed, Paul addresses this issue squarely in II Corinthians 7:8-11, where he shows the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. He explains that worldly sorrow "produces death" because it is only the temporary sorrow of being caught, a type of self-pity, a fear of punishment or embarrassment. But the sorrow of God "produces repentance to salvation" because it causes a permanent change in behavior, and leads to a person's becoming totally "clear" from the reoccurrence of sin.

In fact, the change of behavior that accompanies repentance is the best proof of one's repentance. John the Baptist refused to baptize those who had not shown by their changed behavior that they had brought forth the true "fruits" of repentance (Matthew 3:7-8).

As Christ dogmatically stated, mere lip service — misnamed "belief" by some — is not sufficient for salvation: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,'

shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Repentance is not merely emotional sorrow, and neither is it penance. Penance is an act or acts designed to try to pay the penalty of sin for oneself, such as by doing some good work of charity. Although good works are necessary in a Christian's life, they do not forgive past sins or pay their penalty, for our sins are forgiven by grace and not works. The Bible simply does not teach the doctrine of penance, and penance is in no way even similar to repentance, which God's Word teaches and indeed commands.

Salvation requires obedience, and it therefore requires one to stop his old ways and begin obeying God — it requires repentance! And such repentance is toward God the Father, who is the author of His law and against whom our sins are directed (Acts 20:21).

Such repentance goes far beyond a mere outward verbal expression of belief, and even far beyond a few mechanical changes in behavior. It pierces deep into the heart and mind of the person, and embodies an unconditional surrender from living one's own way to truly living God's way of life. It requires putting Christ above all else in one's life (Luke 14:26-33), and hence in a symbolic sense sacrificing your own life (Romans 12:1-2).

Further, true repentance is not a once-and-for-all event, nor is it synonymous with perfection. To be sure, the repentance required before baptism is indeed a focused turn-around from our way to God's way — a massive spiritual reversal. Yet, even at baptism God does not reveal all of our sins to us at once, nor do we immediately overcome all our sins. We continue to see and battle them over time while we "grow" in God's grace and

knowledge of His ways (II Peter 3:18). As He reveals His law to us, and hence our sins (as we see how we fall short of that law), we must daily repent. We must see our sins, stop them, resolve to do right and follow through with God's help — continually. Indeed, we must grow spiritually for the rest of our lives.

But our obedience to God's law comes with help from Him. No one can obey God's law in its fullest spiritual sense, in heart and mind, without His help (Jeremiah 10:23). This is because the minds of humans are susceptible to the pulls and deceptions of Satan. Yet, the Spirit of God, which is given to those who have been properly baptized after true repentance, is more powerful than Satan and can and will give us the strength to obey!

### Key verses

Here is a brief summary of the key scriptures about this subject: Mark 1:14-15, Acts 2:38 — we are commanded to repent, which means to change from our way to God's way. Romans 2:4, Acts 11:18 — repentance must be granted by God, who calls according to His will. Romans 6:23 — the wages of sin is death. II Corinthians 7:8-11 — sorrow that produces true repentance is far different than mere worldly sorrow. Matthew 7:21 — qualifying for salvation requires obedience to God. Jeremiah 10:23 — we cannot obey God without His help. II Peter 3:9, 18 — spiritual growth is a process and doesn't happen all at once. Psalm 51 — repentance is often accompanied by deep emotion.

The importance of repentance cannot be overemphasized. It is a first step toward salvation. Have you repented? If not, then the words shouted by my basketball coach to the confused player are for you: "You're going the wrong direction! Stop! Turn around! Go the other way!" □



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