

THE
LANTERN



II Peter 1:19

OF THE SCATTERED FAITHFUL

“So we regard the words of the prophets as confirmed beyond all doubt. You’re doing well by paying attention to their words. Continue to pay attention as you would to a light that shines in a dark place as you wait for day to come and the morning star to rise in your hearts.”

(II Peter 1:19 - GWT)



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**Speculation or
Revelation?
Our Spiritual Priorities!
(See page 5)**

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All Scriptures used in *The Lantern* magazine are from the New King James version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

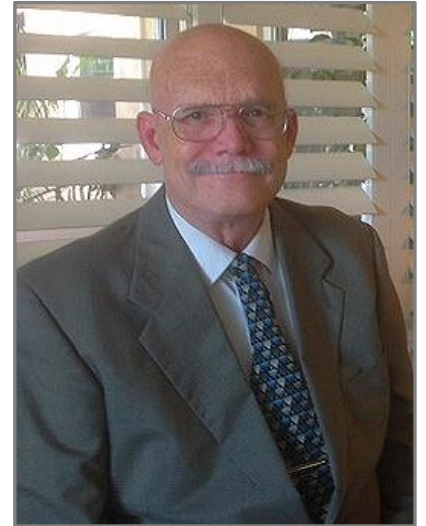
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Personal from the editor



How much do you love the TRUTH?

A lot has happened in God's Church since His end-time apostle (Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong), died in 1986. There are now hundreds of Church of God groups today, each having varying beliefs. They don't all speak the same thing! **"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (I Corinthians 1:10).** The Church has been GREATLY scattered!

I remember talking to a man several years ago who had been a Church member. He sincerely questioned why I still believed the doctrines taught by Mr. Armstrong. He made a point of stating, **"Mr. Armstrong is dead!"** It was his reasoning that since Mr. Armstrong was dead, what he taught (at least many of those teachings), died with him too. I said to this man, **"Yes, Mr. Armstrong is dead, but GOD ISN'T! THE TRUTH STILL REMAINS!"** Let's face it, the apostle Paul is dead too, so are the apostles Peter, John, and every other one as well. The **FACT** is this... The TRUTH OF GOD never had the ownership of an apostle, or any other person. Therefore, God's TRUTH cannot die with a person either, whether they be an apostle or otherwise! That also includes Mr. Armstrong! Obviously, what this man was thinking was absolutely flawed.

In the seventeenth chapter of John, we read: **"They [Christ's disciples], are not of the world, just as I [Jesus Christ], am not of the world. Sanctify [set apart], them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify [set apart] Myself, that they also may be sanctified [set apart], by the truth (John 17:16-19).**

Nelson's New King James Study Bible has this comment about **John 17:17: "People's opinions may vary, and experiences are notoriously untrustworthy, but God's Word always remains true."** No statement could ever be more correct! **GOD'S WORD IS ETERNALLY TRUE!**

How much do you love the TRUTH of God? Are you and I willing to stand up for the TRUTH FOREVER, no matter what the circumstances are? A great reward is ahead for those who do.

"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him My new name*" (Revelation 3:10-12).

Gary R. Liebold

GOD'S INVITATION

Do we, as God's people, understand that God issues a distinctive and reverent "invitation" to a small number of those carefully selected individuals (firstfruits), to be called now?

Gary Liebold

Recently my wife received an invitation to her High School class reunion, scheduled to take place this year.

Throughout our lives, we all experience special events that involve invitations sent out to family and friends, or to celebrate important occurrences in life. Wedding invitations. Baby or shower invitations. Birth announcements or even invitations to our class reunions. All of which mark important and meaningful events in our lives.

But there is a higher (HOLY, if you wish), invitation reserved for carefully selected individuals. Do we, as God's people, understand that God issues an invitation to a small number of persons called now? These are the ones God makes His heirs to salvation, His firstfruits, making their "calling and election sure" (II Peter 1:10), to "walk worthy" of their calling (Ephesians 4:1).

INVITATION: A CALLING FOR THE FUTURE

A person invited -- called -- at this time, is one of the few to whom God is offering the first opportunity for salvation. This person has

received a precious invitation, which is a "calling" to be part of His Church, to prepare to rule with Jesus Christ, and teach God's way in the world to come (Revelation 2:26-27, 3:21). Matthew 22:1-4 illustrates this principle: "And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage

A person invited -- called -- at this time, is one of the few to whom God is offering the first opportunity for salvation.

for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding... Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'" Clearly, we can see that God's

calling (**Galatians 1:6**), is an invitation to the grace of Christ -- a calling from darkness to light and an invitation to be a member of God's Church with all the responsibilities entailed and the hope of salvation. So that when we are called and chosen by God, we become part of the "called out" ones -- in the Church of God.

A RELATIVE FEW

As the parable of **Matthew 22** progresses, we read that many who received the wedding invitation from the king carelessly and thoughtlessly disregarded or disrespected the king and his special invitation, to which we see the king's lamentation in **Matthew 22:14**: "**For many are called, but few are chosen.**"

This doesn't sit well with worldly concepts, or theories, about what can be termed "the Christian Calling." Some feel God is now calling everybody to salvation, while others think that God only calls to salvation those who seek to be called, when they decide to "Give their hearts to the Lord." Still others believe that God only calls "good people," or those who try to obey God in a way they think they should. But these ideas and others like it are just not documented in the Bible. To put it simply, God is calling a relative few now. The truth about this subject is found in **John 6:44**, which reads, "**No man can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him**".

It's amazing! No one can be called unless God Himself chooses to call him, or her. In other words, this means that God does not call everyone currently. He chooses those He decides to call for His own purpose.

WHOM GOD CHOOSES TO CALL

We cannot help but wonder what reasons

God bases His decisions on concerning which persons to call or not. But upon study of the Bible, we know that God does state certain qualifications He is looking for and gives us examples to help answer our inquiries. The most expressive scripture on this question can be found in **I Corinthians 1:26-29**, where Paul writes, "**For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has**

No one can be called unless God Himself chooses to call him, or her. In other words, this means that God does not call everyone currently.

chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence."

It's obvious, then, that God picks those who are considered weak, insignificant, or even despised, in the eyes of the world. He does this so that those who are called are humble and give Him credit for their salvation. He wants those who consider themselves to be the leaders, or the elite of this world to learn in the future that God looks for a different kind of character when He chooses those who are to be leaders when Christ returns to set up His rulership over the earth.

But humility, or weakness as many today

(Continued on page 8)

Highlight...

OUR KENYAN BRETHREN

Erick Odhiambo



Currently, Church of God Scattered Faithful in Kenya has 53 persons attending church services, including 17 baptized members, 14 who are interested in and awaiting baptism, and 22 who are children below 17 years old. Most here came from the Worldwide Church of God, Global Church of God, United Church of God, and the Living Church of God. Our last church affiliation was the Living Church of God, but we left the Living Church of God over doctrinal issues. Since then, we have been renting a meeting place.

Normally, most of the Kenyan brethren, including myself, do have to travel to meet at our meeting place for both the weekly Sabbath and Fall Holy Days. We are all well, though there are a number of things happening in Kenya right now (drought, famine, deaths and mass actions/protests), that are challenging. Please join us in praying for Kenyan brethren at this time!

We here in Kenya have observed that overall, the Churches of God are simply dying off because they cannot grow in truth due to overriding doctrinal committee authority and corporate rules and laws, as well as the fear of losing more tithe payers. They are simply not humble enough to confess doctrinal errors. There are other reasons, of course, but for now, I will stick to the big issue and keep this article brief. However, following my walk in different Churches of God, I have to let you and the others know that the current Church of God Scattered Faithful brethren in Kenya are really supporting full affiliation, and agree with the Church's statement of faith and teachings, and have their hearts opened for God's TRUTH and words.

(Continued on page 8)

Speculation

Speculation

OR



REVELATION?

Our Spiritual Priorities!

Gary Liebold

Today, we see plenty of speculation in various corporate Churches of God. They usually label their speculation as -- "NEW REVELATION." True revelation is a revealing from God. Speculation is a theory or conjecture. Do we know the difference between the two?

What if an individual were to say to you, "I'm going to give you answers to some very important questions..."

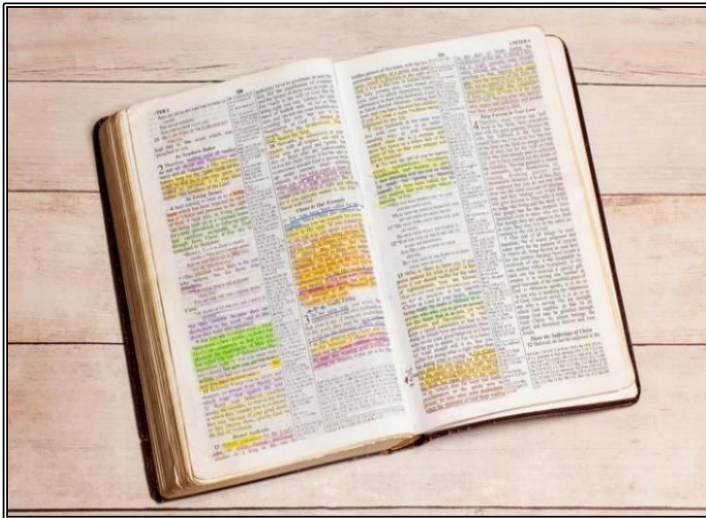
- 1) **WHERE** is the "Place-of-Safety" located, as referenced in Revelation 12:14?
- 2) **WHO** will be the two witnesses spoken of in Revelation 11:3?
- 3) **WHEN** will the Great Tribulation begin (Matthew 24:21)?"

Would those questions pique your interest? Would they possibly bring you to the edge of your seat or even give you an adrenaline rush? Well, if I had answers to those questions, I, too, would be on the edge of my seat. The fact is, I don't have the answers to those questions and neither does anyone else! Certain individuals might have some SPECULATION concerning those questions, but speculation is not the same as REVELATION from God. Revelation is a

revealing from God. Speculation is simply a (personal) theory, or conjecture. Sometimes, there are ministers who will make the claim, "**We have all of this prophecy!**", when in fact what they have on certain topics are speculations being mislabeled as "Revelations." **Can we discern the difference between the two?**

It's interesting -- through the years I have either personally met or have KNOWN OF -- TEN of

the TWO WITNESSES. Some are already deceased, while others are not. Obviously, those who are deceased cannot be one of the biblical two witnesses. Others are still living today. However, it is GOD who will decide “who is who,” not some man in the throes of guesswork! On this one topic alone there have been all sorts of **IDEAS**, but no revealing of prophecy from God!



FALSE TEACHERS

One minister, some time back, evidently believed that a man holding public office would be re-elected to that office in a consecutive second term. The minister also apparently believed this public leader was a “type” of a historical figure shown in biblical history. However, the man who held public office was **NOT** re-elected to a second consecutive term in office. Obviously, that minister should have been labeled a SPECULATOR. Hopefully, he originally told his members that he was just speculating or hypothesizing and did not state or imply he had “new revelation.” Sadly, I’ve seen men who will get something wrong, afterwards skip over it, and then just move onto the next so-called “revelation.”

The question is: Have there been TRUE PROPHETS of God in biblical history? ABSOLUTELY! There have also been false ones

too! **“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you [among God’s people], who will secretly bring in destructive heresies...” (II Peter 2:1).** Just calling oneself a “prophet” does not make it so! Could there even be false prophets today? YES! The apostle Peter told us that there would be!

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote the following in *Mystery of The Ages* (page 244-245 -- the original, hardbound edition). **“The prophets set in the foundation of the Church are those of the Old Testament, whose writings were used to form a considerable part of New Testament and gospel teaching and functioning. No prophets are mentioned as having either administrative, executive or preaching functions in the New Testament Church.”**

He also wrote in *The Good News of Tomorrow’s World* magazine, Personal from the Editor, February 1972, the following: **“...Thousands know that I, personally, have been called and chosen for a very definite commission in God’s service. But I have definitely NOT been called to be a PROPHET -- except as that word, Biblically used, does sometimes refer to a minister or speaker -- one who proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Emphatically I am NOT a prophet, in the sense of one to whom God speaks specially and directly, revealing personally a future event to happen or new truth, or new and special instruction direct from God -- separate from, and apart from what is contained in the Bible. And I never have claimed to be.”**

Mr. Armstrong knew he did not hold an office of a prophet, but after several decades of preaching Christ’s gospel message, in retrospect, he came to see that he was given the office of an APOSTLE! The word “APOSTLE” simply means **“one sent forth”** with Christ’s gospel message! He was given that

responsibility by Jesus Christ. He preached the gospel message to the world as one crying out in the wilderness of spiritual confusion, preaching the GOOD NEWS of the coming Kingdom of God! It was the very same gospel that Christ preached when He was here on this earth (**Mark 1:1, 14**).

Yes, there is **REAL PROPHECY** in your Bible! Mr. Armstrong often said, **“About a third of your Bible IS PROPHECY.”** He was given insight into the prophecies which could often even be corroborated historically, such as the past earthly empires found in the books of Daniel, and Revelation. **“...Now here we have described FOUR universal world empires -- the only four that ever existed! Revelation 13 and 17 show that, after the fall of the original Roman Empire, there would be ten revivals -- SEVEN of which would be ruled over by a gentile CHURCH -- the “daughter” of ancient BABYLON -- a church claiming to be Christian, but actually named by God “MYSTERY, BABYLON the great” -- or, more plainly, BABYLONIAN MYSTERIES!”** (Mr. Armstrong - *Mystery of The Ages*, page 301 -- the original hardbound edition)! That’s one example!

God’s word tells us what to look for in knowing which individual is expounding upon real prophecy (like an apostle such as Mr. Armstrong), opposed to those who would just CLAIM to be “prophets.” What happens when it’s discovered a man’s prophecies are false? **“And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' -- when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be**



afraid of him” (Deuteronomy 18:21-22). In other words, that “prophet’s” words were his own vain words and nothing more.

IS IT WRONG TO SPECULATE?

Again, prophecy in your Bible is VERY real!

(Daniel 2:28). However, one must discern (through God’s HOLY SPIRIT), the difference between SPECULATON and REVELATON!

The question is... Is it wrong to speculate? **NO**, not at all! But you yourself must know when you are speculating. Also, everyone around you

must know you are as well!

Yelling during a sermon doesn’t make a man’s words turn into revelation. Stating, **“We have all of this prophecy!”** (which can sound authoritative), doesn’t do it either. Every person must be able to DISCERN the difference between a man’s speculative thoughts and Christ’s revelatory thoughts. Good FRUIT is not proven through how many magazines are printed, how many television stations are broadcast from, or how many miles are traveled on a jet. It’s by what is spoken, by FRUIT, and by what is **TRUE!** The idea of “NEW PROPHECY” can seem very tantalizing and exciting. However, it’s worthless if it’s not from Christ. We must remember that Christ said, **“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...” (Matthew 6:33).** That is our **SPRITUAL PRIORITY!**

So, where is the “Place-of-Safety?” Who are the two witnesses? When will the Great Tribulation begin? Those are questions that God may not reveal until they happen! **We MUST discern the difference between SPECULATION and REVELATION!** ◆

God's Invitation...

(Continued from page 3)

would view it, is not the only characteristic that God seeks in an individual. God does look for many other qualifications as well. He seeks those with natural abilities and willing attitudes for the future jobs and positions in His Kingdom that he wishes us to occupy. For example, we can see in the Bible how people like Moses, Esther, David, and many others were used by God for specific purposes in accord with their natural abilities. Each person who is called and chosen by God, who is faithful and perseveres, or endures, to the end, will fill places, or offices (mansions) in His Kingdom based on those very abilities.

UNSPEAKABLE JOY

God's calling is His invitation to become part of the effort to prepare for the return of

Jesus Christ and His soon coming Kingdom! Only those God chooses to call will have this opportunity now -- no one is called unless God chooses them specifically (**John 6:44; 10:1-28; Matthew 13:10-17**). This special invitation opens our minds to God's truth and releases us from spiritual blindness. It can be exciting to be invited to a social event or party, but it is truly an unspeakable joy to be among the few now invited -- called -- by God to qualify for salvation and eternal life as children of God, ruling and teaching with Christ in the coming Kingdom of God!

THIS is the wonderful event -- our glorious future -- for which we have received that special invitation, or calling, from God the Father now. Let's treasure this invitation and work each day to make our calling and election sure (**Matthew 22:1-14**)! ♦

Our Kenyan Brethren...

(Continued from page 4)

Recently, we forwarded all the necessary documents to have the Church of God Scattered Faithful registered in Kenya to the relevant authorities, and we are waiting to receive a certificate from them. I will scan and send Mr. Liebold the certificate once it has been received. Other things will follow after the certificate has been received. They said they will notify us once they are done.

My main aim is how the Church of God Scattered Faithful can reach all the scattered Church of God members of Kenya and other African countries, and to help feed the flock here. The doors are open, and I believe that Church of God Scattered Faithful is doing this in the end-time. Jesus Christ said that the Good News of His

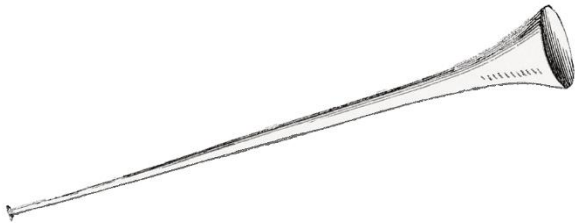
Father's coming Kingdom over the earth was to be published among all nations. "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (**Matthew 24:14 KJV**). ♦



SEVEN REASONS WHY CHRIST CAME TO EARTH

(Part 3)

Geary Whiting



The *Seven Reasons Why Christ Came to Earth* is a three-part series of articles presenting a subject that most worldly religions do not correctly understand. These worldly religious organizations are simply confused in their understanding of why Jesus Christ stripped Himself of His divinity to become human and live upon this earth.

Many religions believe that Christ had come to do away with the laws of the Old Testament, focusing instead upon what they believe to be teachings found only in the New Testament, and therefore saving the world from enslavement to what they term “a set of harsh rules.” This enables them to feel good about themselves and to be seen as “good” people with a minimum of effort. In other words, they believe that all you need to do is believe in Jesus and miraculously, you are saved! Let’s finish this subject of the REAL reasons why Christ came to this earth and work to glean proper understanding on this subject.

A REVIEW: THE PREVIOUS FIVE REASONS

In the November 2022 and February 2023 editions of *The Lantern* magazine, the previous articles (Part One - November 2022, and Part

Two - February 2023), concerning this subject covered five of the seven important reasons why Christ had to come to this earth. Before delving into the final two reasons, let’s review these first sets of reasons so we can have a complete picture of the subject.

The **first** reason explored in Part One of the series is that God sent Jesus Christ to live a perfect life to qualify to replace Satan as the current ruler of this earth. In **Luke 4:1-13**, we can read about how Christ overcame Satan to receive this qualification.

Second is the fact that Jesus Christ was sent to establish the New Covenant to introduce the gospel of God’s Kingdom to this earth. In the process of doing so, He clarified, or magnified, the law for us to understand God’s spiritual intent. (**Malachi 3:1**).

The **third** reason described in Part One of this series, is that Christ set an example for all of us to follow, in how He lived His life while living in this world. He observed and obeyed His Father’s commandments with their perfect, spiritual intent, living by them and teaching them when He was here. His entire life was filled with the spiritual, supernatural power of the Holy Spirit (**I Peter 2:21; I Corinthians 11:1**).

Next, in Part Two of this series, the **fourth** reason about Christ’s sojourn on this earth was that we learned He came as the “Spokesman” of God to reveal the Father -- the actual divinity of and characteristics of the Father -- to us. (**Ephesians 3:15; John 1:18; Matthew 11:27**). Christ provided examples to the disciples, and to us today, through the pages of the Bible, about what type of relationship we should be working toward with God the Father, even down to details such as how we pray and communicate with God the Father (**Matthew 6:9-15**).

The **fifth** reason Christ came to this earth, again found in Part Two of this series in the February 2023 issue, was to train the apostles. Jesus Christ came to this earth, chose disciples to

become apostles (ones sent forth), and trained them how to proclaim the gospel message (the good news of God's coming Kingdom), and to become the foundation of His Church! (**John 15:16; Acts 1:3; Ephesians 2:18-20**).

VI. SUFFER TO BECOME AN UNDERSTANDING PRIEST

When the children of Israel started out of Egypt, on the night of the 15th of Abib, they started on their own power, full of elation and confidence. But they did not get far until Pharaoh pursued them, and as Egypt is a type of sin, then surely Pharaoh must picture Satan and the army of Egypt, Satan's demons. Just as the Israelites went out with a high hand in great exultation and elation over their deliverance from bondage, so do we, as newly begotten Christians, start out our Christian life -- with a feeling of happiness and joy! But what happens next? Satan the devil immediately pursues after the newly begotten sons of God, and soon the new and inexperienced Christian can find he is down in the depths of discouragement and tempted to give up or quit.

But notice the message of God that He gave to the Israelites through Moses in **Exodus 14: 13-14...** "**Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord...The Lord shall fight for you!**" Yes, as was the case for the Israelites of old, we, too, are told to "stand still" and see the salvation of the Lord. He WILL fight for us! We ourselves cannot conquer Satan and sin, but He can! It is the risen Christ, our High Priest (**Hebrews 4:14**), who will cleanse us -- sanctify us -- deliver us, and who said He would never leave us nor forsake us (**Hebrews 13:5**).

DETERMINED FROM CREATION

So, let us take a moment and turn our thoughts now to the time of the foundation of this world nearly 6,000 years ago, the very time of humanity's creation. Adam and Eve, the first humans, almost immediately chose to sin and

rebel against God's way of life. It was then that Jesus Christ chose to die for humanity for He was "**slain from the foundation of the world**" (**Revelation 13:8**).

How incredible to think about what this means: Jesus lived with the thought of His impending death for thousands of years. It is almost impossible for us to even try to identify with some of His thoughts as He waited for the time to begin His mission. How difficult it must have been for Him to think about becoming human.

It is the risen Christ, our High Priest (Hebrews 14:4), who will cleanse us -- sanctify us -- deliver us, and who said He would never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

What was it like to become human? For us, it is a blessing since we go from being nothing to being something. But Jesus had to give up His existence as a member of the God Family, divest Himself of being spirit, give up His glory and power, and run the risk of failing. Saying farewell to the One who would become His Father must have been hard. A bond of closeness that had existed for eons was destined to be broken. For the Father, it meant giving up the only other member of the God Family and allowing Him to live a life of hardship and trial until He died in agony. This act itself was a deep expression of God the Father's love for us (**John 3:16**). What a humbling experience for the Creator to become a part of creation!

Let's not, for a moment, think it was easy. "**Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form**

of a servant and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8).

He willingly accepted death for us, looking to the future joy He would experience when we are in His Family enjoying the benefits of eternal life (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus knew that God would have no spiritual progeny unless His blood was shed first. Therefore, Jesus was prepared to do what no mortal human could. He had lived a perfect life. But, on this final day of His life, He endured ridicule and incredible punishment at the hand of Jews and Gentiles alike for very special reasons. First, He wants us in His Family! He wants us to live for eternity. He suffered and was forsaken by the Father for our sins. But that's not all. Jesus Christ was to become our High Priest, and to be able to do so with understanding and compassion since He first had to endure incredible suffering first.

OUR HIGH PRIEST AND CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION

So, we have a High Priest seated at the right hand of the throne of the Father, the Majesty on high. "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;*" (Hebrews 7:25-26)

Think of it -- humanity needed a perfect priest. Humanity needed a holy, uncorrupted priest, a sinless priest. Humanity needed a glorious priest who would offer His sinless life in our stead! "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their

salvation perfect through sufferings...

Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His brethren*, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining to God*, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted." (Hebrews 2:9-10, 17-18). Jesus Christ, our High Priest and Captain of our salvation, intercedes with the Father on our behalf (Hebrews 5:9-10). Because of His sacrifice to become human as we are human, He understands us completely. He gave His life to become our High Priest and advocate before the Father, allowing us, through Him, access to the Father. Christ, our High Priest, who gave everything for us!

VII. PAY THE PENALTY FOR OUR SINS

As we can see, Jesus Christ suffered greatly, as no man before or after has ever done, qualifying to become our High Priest by paying the penalty for our sins. Except for Jesus Christ, all human beings have sinned (Romans 3:23). Sin, the breaking of God's law, required the penalty of death: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

THE LAMB OF GOD

Jesus was perfect. He never sinned. Notice: "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps: *'Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth'*" (I Peter 2:21-22). Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God, willingly took on our sins and by His shed blood and death, suffered the penalty of sin for us.

In II Corinthians 5:18-21, we read, "Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has

committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

A SINLESS CHRIST

God took a sinless Christ and poured our sins into Him! Realize that this wasn't a trickle, or a drip -- it was a pour. Do we understand how powerful this is? That Christ paid the penalty for our sins? Without His sacrifice, where would any of us be? To repeat again - by the selfless gift of Christ's life for our sins, we now have direct access to the Father through prayer. What a priceless gift!

"Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). This is a wonderful message He has given to us. We now are Christ's ambassadors!

In I John 1:7-10, we are admonished; **"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we**

confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

...if we claim we have not sinned, we are lying and calling God a liar, for He, Himself, has said that ALL have sinned (Romans 3:23; I John 1:8).

If we confess our sins to God, He can be depended on to forgive us for every single wrong. It is perfectly proper for Him to do this for us because Christ died to wash away our sins. And not only is it proper, but it is also God's design and passion that this is

done. It pleased the Father to offer up His Son as a sacrifice for us. As a result of this knowledge, if we claim we have not sinned, we are lying and calling God a liar, for He, Himself, has said that ALL have sinned (**Romans 3:23; I John 1:8**). It's very straightforward. He says it -- and that's the way it is!

It is refreshing and exciting to know that Christ paid the penalty for our sins. We need to realize how very much we must be thankful for, and to have the confidence that everything is going to be all right for those who love God. **"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2).**

These seven reasons why Christ came to this earth are important for us to understand, especially as time goes on and things continue to get increasingly troubling. But we don't need to have anxious thoughts! We can rest assured that God will take care of His chosen people. How blessed we are to have knowledge of this! ♦

BIBLE STUDY

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A REAL CHRISTIAN

Is a Christian just merely one who believes in Christ? What exactly does it mean to be a REAL Christian according to scripture?

In the book of **Matthew**, chapters **5, 6 and 7**, Jesus gave us the very basis of real Christianity, clearly identifying His true followers. Before continuing, we suggest you read these three chapters first, in their entirety.

1. Jesus was showing in **Matthew 5:3** that those who are truly humble in attitude of mind, are blessed because they will be in God's Kingdom. Please note that He did not mean they would be lacking God's Holy Spirit by being "poor in spirit."

2. The meek in Christ are destined to inherit the earth (**Matthew 5:5**). A REAL Christian will exhibit himself in the way he conducts his life. Although a Christian will suffer trials or abuse, one should do so with patience and without resentment, not trying to justify the SELF when wrong.

3. A true follower of Christ will hunger and thirst for righteousness (**Matthew 5:6**). To hunger and thirst for righteousness is to be deeply motivated to obey God and to keep his laws, which He has given to us in loving care for our own good.

4. The apostle Paul shows us that the hearers and doers of God's law will be justified before God (**Romans 2:13**), and that through the unwavering pardon of our sins, by the grace of God through Christ, a Christian is still required to keep God's law (**Romans 3:31**). To enter God's Kingdom, "DOING," in addition to "HEARING," is expected. We cannot be part of the Family of God by simply thinking that God the Father and Jesus the Christ

have done all the work for us and there is nothing more for us to do in our lives.

5. God's love will lead a true Christian to want to keep and obey the Ten Commandments (**Galatians 5:22-25**). In **I John 2:5**, we read that by keeping the Word of God, the love of God is perfected in us. Unless we have the love of God (The Greek word for love is "agape," meaning God's love), we CANNOT be a real Christian.

6. A real Christian will strive to follow Christ - to imitate His example and "walk with" Him (**I Peter. 2:21; I John 2:6**). To "walk with" Christ means to obey God's commandments, and to do what is pleasing in His sight.

7. Of course, God's people must live in this world now, yet not be conformed to this world's ways (**Romans 12: 1-2**). However, true Christians have a responsibility to be a light to the world, exhibiting the fruit and characteristics of God's Holy Spirit within them (**Matthew 5:14-16; Galatians 5:22-23**).

A REAL Christian is one who has God's Holy Spirit (**Romans 8:9; Luke 11:13**). That individual doesn't just BELIEVE in Christ, but Christ LIVES in them! A REAL Christian has been conquered by God. The carnal attitude has been broken (**Romans 8:7-8**). After repenting from sin, baptism, and receiving God's Holy Spirit they will be striving with the help of that Spirit, to be walking with God, obeying His laws, and seeking to do His will in every aspect of their lives. Such is a true Christian! ♦

Excerpts From the Desk of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong...

For each continuing issue of our magazine, we will post various EXCERPTS from Mr. Armstrong's past writings, sermons, and Bible studies.

The Good News

Personal from Herbert W. Armstrong

May 1980

"Let God Fight Your Battles!"

BRETHREN, the world you live in today is a very *troubled* world. You not only have your own *personal* problems, but you also suffer from the deliberate OPPOSITION and ANTAGONISM of the world around you. It is time you considered how to conquer these troubles -- how to be FREE from them -- how to let GOD fight your battles instead!

Jesus Christ is the Deliverer

...DO YOU REALIZE THAT JESUS CHRIST, THE LIVING, RESURRECTED CHRIST, TO WHOM IS GIVEN *ALL POWER*, HAS A *PRESENT* MISSION TO PERFORM? Do you realize that His present mission is to FIGHT YOUR BATTLES FOR YOU -- DELIVER YOU -- to FREE you from all your fears, your TROUBLES *and even the circumstances that beset you?*

...Now think this over carefully, and ANSWER THIS! WHY do you fight your *own* battles, when HE -- the LIVING Savior -- is living in ALL POWER to fight them for you? He's REAL. He's DIVINE. Why do some of you brethren go on worrying, when He is right there in ALL THE POWER OF THE DIVINE CREATOR TO FREE you from all your worries?

WHY? There is one of two reasons. Either you have not fully KNOWN of this great, all-encompassing DIVINE SOURCE OF POWER that YOU can call on at will -- you have not REALIZED what ALL-CONQUERING HELP you can have -- or else you have, through lack of faith or neglect, FAILED to CALL ON that supernatural HELP in your times of need!

Brethren, CAN I open your eyes to see that God is a God of LOVE -- that God in all His supreme power wills above all things for you to PROSPER and BE IN HEALTH and to find the way to the HAPPY, FULL, ABUNDANT LIFE? That **Jesus Christ is a LIVING SAVIOR, to whom you can go AT ALL TIMES** -- a Savior to save you from your present, everyday fears and worries, adverse circumstances, troubles, sicknesses and trials, as well as to save you from eternal DEATH at the end?

...Notice what Scripture commands, "let us therefore *come boldly* unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and *find grace to help in time of need*" (Heb. 4:16).

God is Interested in your life now

...What *needless* pains some have been suffering. What NEEDLESS fears and worries *you* may have been carrying around. What WONDERFUL TIMES -- what HAPPINESS you may have cheated yourself out of, just because you have not REALIZED and taken advantage of the very PRESENT and all-powerful HELP of your

LIVING Savior!

Actually what is happening is that you may have found yourself faced with foes far more powerful than you. These foes may come in forms of troubles, of unforeseen circumstances, of worries, of sicknesses or even of other persons. These foes NEED not make your life unhappy.

...Once you UNDERSTAND, you will have to learn to TAKE GOD AT HIS WORD -- TO CALL UPON GOD IN PRAYER -- you will have to ASK GOD for what you need -- and you may have to learn how to PRAY. GOD ALMIGHTY will actually *intervene in your life* and help YOU fight YOUR battles for you.

Remember, God is no respecter of persons. He will not do more for one than another. He will do as much for YOU -- as for any person who ever lived. He will do as much for you -- if you obey Him and *rely* on Him -- as for any ancient king of Israel or Judah!

God Intervenes for a man

If some of *you* brethren try to solve *your* problem or overcome your bad habits or resist sin in nothing more than your *OWN* power and strength, you, too, will find yourself outnumbered, overpowered and doomed to defeat!

...The point I want you brethren to REMEMBER is that **YOUR battles are not really yours, but GOD'S. If you look to Him**, He makes them HIS battles, and HE fights them for you. How FUTILE for you to try to fight GOD'S battles for HIM.

God says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19)..." ◆

(Emphasis above, by editor of The Lantern magazine.)



COMING ARTICLES



II Peter 1:19

◆ **Our Job Now: A Life and Death Responsibility**

From all the billions of people inhabiting earth today, God is calling but a very few now (**Matthew 20:16; John 6:44**). Each one of us has a part to play in God's Plan that is extremely vital to the very success of that plan. That is how God designed it. We are essential to God's purpose, and the future of mankind.

◆ **In This Manner, Therefore, Pray...**

In Jesus Christ's prayer outline He gave His disciples an example of how to pray (**Matthew 6:9-13**). "**In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven...**" Jesus opened His prayer by praying to the Father. Does this mean we cannot directly address Christ in a prayer? Is speaking to Christ directly blasphemous? What did God's end-time apostle (Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong), teach on this subject? We should know!

◆ **Bible Study – What the World Tomorrow Will be Like**

After Jesus Christ returns to establish God's Kingdom on earth, people will begin to experience the blessings that come from obeying God's law of love. There will be cooperation leading to peace, joy, health, and abundance for all. The whole world will come to understand God's Master Plan for mankind!