

May 2024

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 - GW)

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LANTERN

OF THE SCATTERED FAITHFUL



II Peter 1:19

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VOL. III - NO. 2

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**Prophecy and the
Psalms
(See page 20)**

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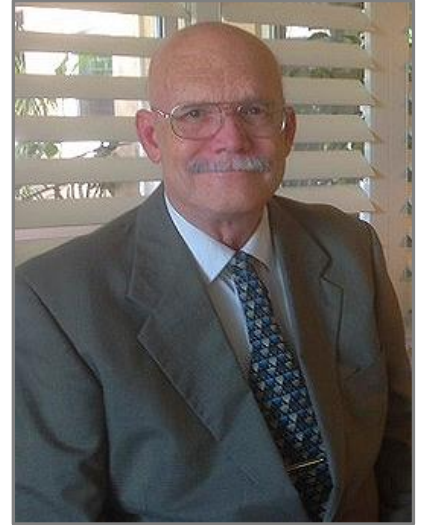
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Personal from the editor



WAITING WITH PATIENCE

When it comes to having **PATIENCE**, God expects His ELECT to be growing in this attribute of His Spirit! **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering [patience], gentleness, goodness, faith...”** (Galatians 5:22). Mr. Armstrong wrote the following in his booklet, **“What is Faith?”** (page 6).

“God's purpose in your life is to transform you from what you've been into the very image of His son -- into the very character of God Himself. Part of this character is the learning of PATIENCE!”

As we realize... God's people should be thinking like Christ and not the “world,” with its self-absorbed, GET philosophy. Does it really matter if we're growing in **patience** when applying that word to the Kingdom of God? Is it even possible for God's people to become weary while waiting for it? Ask yourself, have the words **“end-time,” “soon,” “it won't be long now,”** or **“time is short,”** become old worn-out clichés that have little meaning anymore?

If a member starts believing the day of Christ's return is **“far-off,”** that we have plenty of time, that's really nothing new. We're told in **II Peter 3:3-4**, of what would occur in the last days, just prior to Christ's return; **“knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”** However, in verse 9 we read, **“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering [patient] toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”** No, God is not slack concerning His promises, He's PATIENT toward us, not wanting any to perish. Keep in mind, God has been waiting for the Kingdom far longer than all of us put together!

Let's face it, some members in God's Church have been verbally and emotionally abused by men in the ministry, almost coming to the point of **“throwing in the towel,”** spiritually. They wonder, **“How can this happen in the Church of God?”** One leading minister would often say, **“My door is always open.”** Yet, sadly, people came to realize that those words were just empty ones! If you have been abused by the ministry, remember, the **ABUSE** came from fleshly MEN, not from the GREAT God. He still expects us to grow in patience, despite those shameful men (**Acts 20:29-30; Psalm 18:2-3; John 10:28; Philippians 4:13**). Please know, I WILL NEVER tolerate the **ABUSE** of the membership in the Church of God, Scattered Faithful. PERIOD!

As I've said many times before, it's important that we watch world events to know the timeframe we're in (**Luke 21:36**). However, watching without GROWING is of little value. God knows where we stand spiritually! All of us have probably known brethren who became weary while waiting for the Kingdom. Some have focused on the **hurts** that were caused by former pastors. Others have even chosen to go back into the “world” from which they came. But, be patient dear friends, there's a POSITIVE FUTURE ahead for those who continually **“HOLD FAST”** and never let go of God's TRUTH and vision. **“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)”** (Hebrews 10:23 - KJV).

Gary R. Liebold



***Soon the most spectacular wedding EVER to occur will take place -- The Church of firstfruits will marry Jesus Christ! "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."
(Revelation 19:7)***

Gary Liebold

Have you ever received a wedding invitation? Most likely yes, you have! Sometimes an invitation will begin with the words **"You are cordially invited..."** Other invitations will often REQUEST the honor of a guest's presence for the upcoming wedding of a bride and groom. The invitations sent to OUR wedding guests (for me and my fiancée, Karen), had these words printed: **"Mr. & Mrs. Harold W. Knorr request the honor of your presence at the marriage of their daughter Karen Ann to Mr. Gary Robert Liebold on the twenty-first of December,**

nineteen hundred and seventy-four at two-thirty in the afternoon."

In my mind, it seems just a short time ago we were saying our marriage vows. However, at the end of this year in December, my wife and I will be celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary. Soon after we married (within a few months), God began CALLING (drawing) us to Christ through His Spirit. We began attending the Worldwide Church of God just a few months after our wedding day.

While most people can identify with a physical wedding invitation, they can have a more

difficult time understanding what we might refer to as **“God’s invitation,”** or better yet -- His **“CALLING”** us, to Christ. As we read in **John 6:44**, **“No one can come to Me [Jesus Christ] unless the Father who sent Me draws him...”** God’s “calling” is much like receiving an invitation from Him, being invited now to be among the firstfruits of His salvation. See also, **John 6:65** and **Acts 2:39**. We’re being trained now, to serve humanity at a time when salvation will be opened to everyone. Currently, salvation is open only to a small few, a small spiritual harvest, not because God is a respecter of persons, but to fulfill His plan for mankind (**Acts 10:34; James 1:18; Revelation 14:4; Joel 2:28-29**).

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote the following on pages 229-230 of ***Mystery of the Ages***: **“It is only through Christ that sinning humanity may be reconciled to God the Father. They must first come to Christ. But no person can come to Christ except God the Father selects and, through his Holy Spirit, draws them. ...One cannot just “join” the TRUE Church of God. One is first selected and drawn by God the Father through his Spirit, brought to a complete heartrending repentance, and changed in his total life-style, and has also not only believed in and accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior, but also has believed Christ. ...So, once again, WHAT and WHY is the CHURCH? The Church is the called out (from this world) begotten children of God. It is the Body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:23). It is the spiritual organism that shall be the “Bride of Christ”-- after its resurrection to immortality. Then it shall be married to Christ! It is the spiritual TEMPLE to which Christ shall come at his second appearing” (Eph. 2:21).**

Just think of it, the time is coming when those now begotten of God, (the firstfruits), will no longer be physical, but SPIRIT! The Church of firstfruits will marry Jesus Christ. Perhaps millions or more righteous angels will attend

that wedding, an elegant, and glorious wedding, as we become the BRIDE OF CHRIST, coronated as KING-PRIESTS (**Revelation 1:6; 5:10**), during **“The Marriage Supper!”** That’s our future! **“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God”” (Revelation 19:7-9).** The coming marriage supper will likely (though God doesn’t say so specifically), be held in the very throne room of God in heaven. Through Ezekiel the prophet we see a beautiful vision of the very throne of God.



“Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month*, on the fifth *day* of the month, as I *was* among the captives by the River Chebar, *that* the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. On the fifth *day* of the month, which *was* in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was upon him there. Then I looked, and behold, a

whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness *was* all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also from within it *came* the likeness of four living creatures. And this *was* their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings” (Ezekiel 1:1-6).

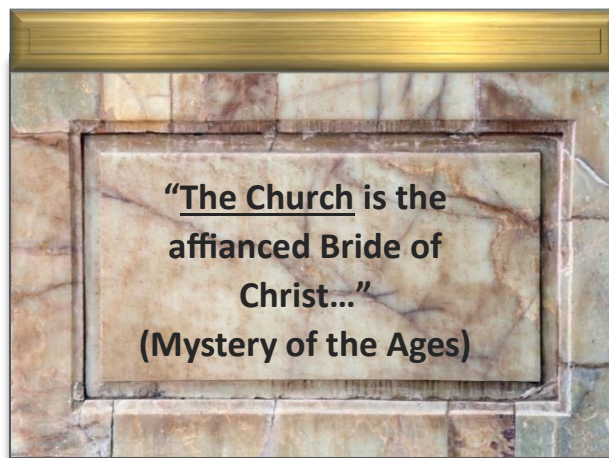
In the vision, Ezekiel could see an image of God the Father sitting on His throne. Standing before God were four living creatures. There is a further description of those living creatures in **verses 13-14...** “As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance *was* like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning.”

Verses 26-28 describe God’s actual throne... “And above the firmament over their heads *was* the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne *was* a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so *was* the appearance of the brightness all around it. This *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw *it*, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.”

The book of Revelation gives even more detail of the throne of God surrounded by four living creatures, twenty-four elders and millions upon

millions of angels. “And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, “Amen! Alleluia!”” (Revelation 19:4). “Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,” (Revelation 5:11).

The bride of Christ is now being selected in this age. Those who previously died in Christ, as well as the prophets of old and certain others of the Old Testament, will complete the bride of Christ. Others, who will be called later (following Christ’s return), will have the opportunity to be part of the family of God. However, there will only be one BRIDE that Christ will marry. These are the firstfruits of salvation (**James 1:18**). God promises a wonderful future ahead! “God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us” (Hebrews 11:40) (Those who previously died in Christ).

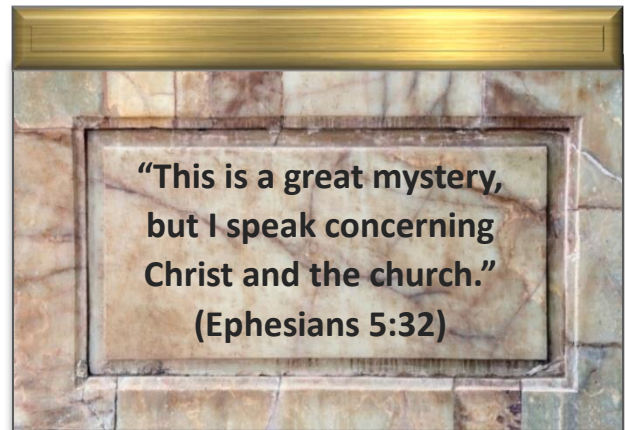


Mr. Armstrong wrote the following in *Mystery of the Ages* (page 240): “The Church is the affianced Bride of Christ to be married to the Son of God on his return, after the resurrection of those in the Church. After we have attained to the resurrection of the dead, as the wife of the Son of God, and members of

the God family, we shall be not only heirs and coheirs with Christ, but in a sense, co-saviors. The family of God will grow. As kings and priests, the Church in the resurrection will be co-rulers under Christ in restoring the government of God over all nations. But we shall also be, as priests, co-saviors with him in saving the world.” Currently, God’s Church is betrothed to Jesus Christ as His future bride, married to Him at His second coming! **“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 4:14-17) (ruling with Christ here on this earth -- Psalm 37:11; Revelation 5:10).**

The apostle Paul gives an example of our physical marriages in the Church and how those marriages are a “type” of our future marriage to Christ: **“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one**

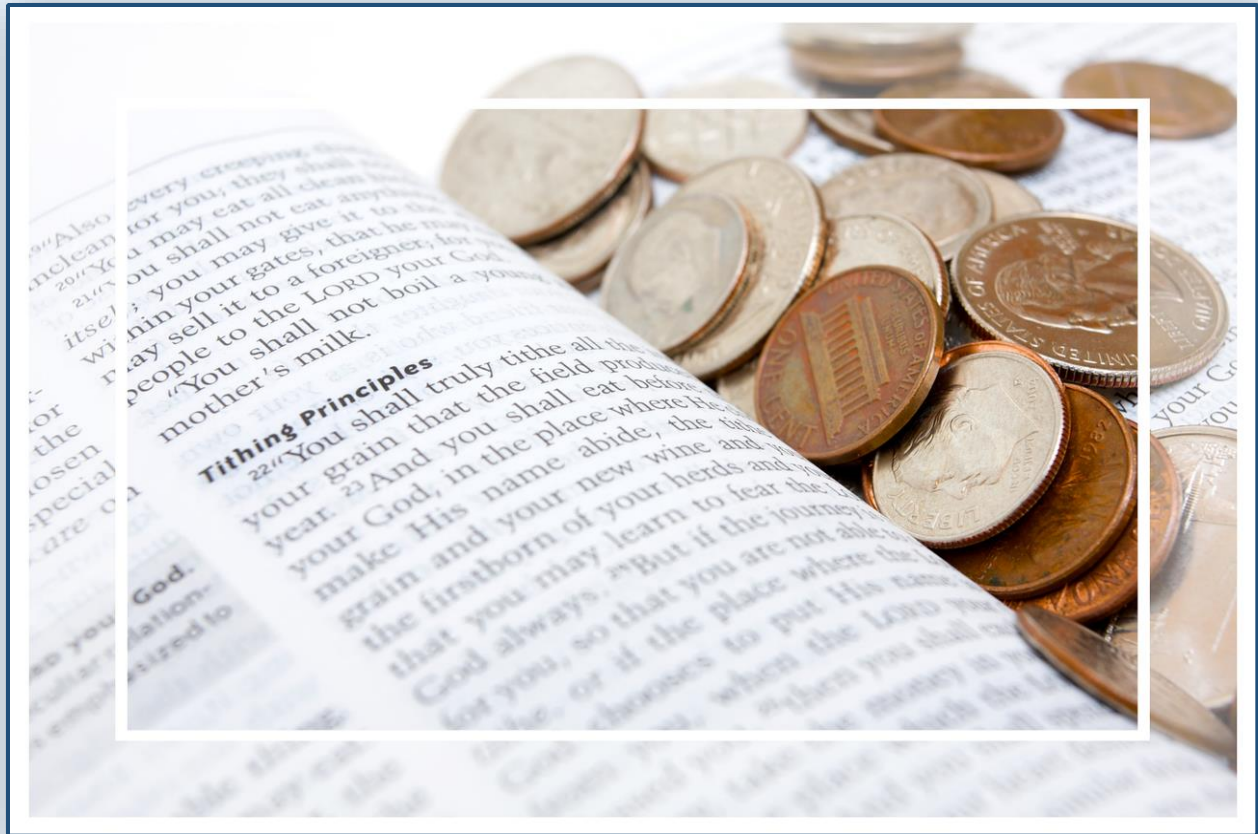
ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones ...



“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Ephesians 5:22-32). That’s why our marriages are so important today. They point to our future marriage to Christ, our bridegroom with His bride (the Church).

In the book of **Mark**, Jesus even referred to Himself as a “bridegroom.” **“And Jesus said to them, *Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days*” (Mark 2:19-20).** Jesus was with His disciples when He spoke those words. However, the time was coming that He would be taken away from them and crucified, later to return to His bride at His second coming. **“And in that day His feet [Christ’s feet] will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, *Making* a very large valley; ... Thus the LORD my God will come, *And* all the saints with You” (Zechariah 14:4-5).**

(Continued on page 30)



TITHING

THE RIGHT TRACK

There are many questions people ask about tithing. Why did God ordain tithing? And what, exactly, does it mean to tithe?

Geary Whiting

The word “**tithe**” is an old English word meaning “**tenth**.” With God’s principle of tithing, He only requires a tenth of our increase from us. Only a tenth! To put that in perspective, we must realize that everything belongs to God -- the ground, the trees, everything that grows and comes forth out of the soil belongs to God, just as you and I do. God gives it all to us, but He has, since creation, reserved for Himself ten percent, or a tithe. And

for a perfectly good reason. Did God wish to place an increased burden or taxation on us by instituting the tithing system? No!

We must not misunderstand God's love and wisdom! It isn't that God really needs a tenth of anything. He could have established some different system to care for and guide His people, but to have done so would have robbed us of the blessing that flows back to us if we are

faithful in tithes and offerings! Paying our tithes prospers us in many ways. It doesn't mean we necessarily become wealthy -- but that our actual needs are always supplied.

Tithe payers, if faithful and obedient to the Eternal, are not often found in want. God promises His children shall always have something to give, even with offerings **(Deuteronomy 16:16-17)**. "**Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account**" **(Philippians 4:17)**. It is only when we withhold and misappropriate the tithe and offerings that He fails to prosper us.

EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES

There are a lot of objections (or dare we say, excuses?), that have come up from people over the years concerning tithing. Here are just a few:

- **I can't afford to tithe.**
- **I have too many bills.**
- **That was for Old Testament times.**
- **We are no longer doing the work of Mr. Armstrong, so there is no longer a need to tithe.**
- **We must first prove this minister is a true minister of God. So, 5 years... 10 years... 20 years go by, and we're still trying to "prove" that this minister is a true minister of God.**

There is a question that could be posted to the last reason given above, and that is -- are you saving all of your tithe money year by year so that when you do find, or prove, that true minister, you are able to give a lump sum of all you have been holding on to, to do the right thing?

These excuses and objections really are unfounded! At Ambassador College, under the guidance of Mr. Armstrong, there was no such

thing as not paying tithes. In fact, we were instructed to pay a second tithe (for keeping God's Feasts each year), and a third tithe (for widows, every third year out of seven). And as you might expect, there were a lot of blessings that came from this obedience.



The Bent, Wrong Track

THE LOOSE CABOOSE OR THE RIGHT TRACK

There was a period in the late 1970's when Ambassador College, and much of God's Church, began going off-track. Doctrines and beliefs were being watered down by some ministers and members, and chaos and confusion began to ensue. Mr. Armstrong had to close the college to set it back on-the-track. At the time, there was a popular local restaurant nearby called "**The Loose Caboose.**"

By the time Mr. Armstrong reopened the campus in 1979, after putting it, and the Church, back on-the-track, a funny thing occurred. That restaurant had changed its name to "**The Right Track!**"

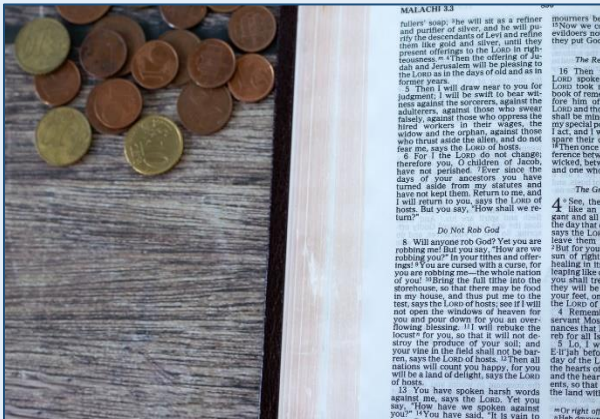


The Right Track

I was one of the original 300 students when the college reopened with the church (and the local restaurant), back on the right track! When the

name of the restaurant changed, it seemed to almost underscore the change in direction of the Church.

Just as there were many positive rewards that God gave His true Church under Mr. Armstrong's guidance, so, too there is a positive reward for giving God His tithe. God prospers the tithe payer and delivers him out of debt. Do you believe God can do for you what He did for wealthy Abraham? Or are you a doubter? Do you want His blessings, or to be deprived of them? Notice **Malachi 3:9**, a prophecy for today, "**Ye are cursed with the curse, yet ye rob Me, even this whole nation**" (Jewish Publication Society translation).



Malachi 3:8-10

So that there will not be any questions about what is expected regarding tithing, let us now refer to what Mr. Armstrong wrote in his article in the January 1979 *Good News* magazine, "**CHRIST NOW PUTS CHURCH BACK ON GOD'S FINANCIAL TRACK!**"

WATERING DOWN GOD'S TRUTH

"When the sons of God came to present themselves before the Eternal in the days of Job, "Satan came also among them." Satan is the author of fifth-column tactics -- gradually slipping inside the Church, boring *from within* to water down God's TRUTH and attempt to destroy His Church.

The biblical teaching on TITHING was adroitly maneuvered so that paying God's tithe, which IS HIS and which we OWE, was masqueraded as GIVING -- if we want to -- a 10th of WHAT IS "OURS" as one would give charity and alms to a beggar! Poor God! But PRAISE OUR HOLY GOD! He is master over Satan, who has been pulling out all stops to DESTROY God's Church and His Work!"

REMOVING THE CURSE

"I have been giving you AMPLE PROOF recently that the very FOUNDATION of God's Church is the apostles and prophets, with Christ as living HEAD. Also, that God's Church did originally, and MUST NOW, receive its teachings, practices and doctrines from Christ's chosen apostle. There is no other teaching or example in the New Testament!

To God's Church TODAY, one of the foundational prophets says very bluntly: "Will a man ROB GOD? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? IN TITHES AND OFFERINGS. *Ye are cursed with a curse* for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. BRING YE ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE, that there may be meat in mine house, and PROVE ME NOW HEREWITH, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there will not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:8-10).

Brethren, THAT IS NOT TEACHING FOR ANCIENT ISRAEL -- IT IS TEACHING FOR THE CHURCH! That was written 397 B.C. Both Israel and Judah had long been driven out as slaves and scattered. The Kingdom of Israel was taken captive and moved as slaves to Assyria 721 to 718 B.C. Judah was taken as slaves to Babylon 604 to 585 B.C. Malachi's teaching *never reached THEM* but God *has* seen to it that it has reached *US!*"

THE HISTORY AND TRUTH ABOUT TITHING

In the above *Good News* article from 1979, we can see that tithing began before the nation of Israel began. Mr. Armstrong continues, **“In Galatians 3:7, Abraham is the father (humanly) of the faithful. All the PROMISES God gave for eternal salvation for you and me are based on God's PROMISES to Abraham. Yet some 430 years before Israel was a nation, Abraham PAID tithes to Melchizedek, the ever-living High Priest (actually Christ). This was the foundation for making TITHE-PAYING a LAW in national Israel.**

Speaking of this, the apostle Paul writes, **“And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, PAID tithes in Abraham” (Hebrews 7:9). Not charitable giving of alms but PAYING what rightfully belonged to God. The historic account is in Genesis: “And Melchizedek king of Salem [peace] brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him [Abraham], and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he [Abram] gave him tithes of all” (Genesis 14:18-20).”**

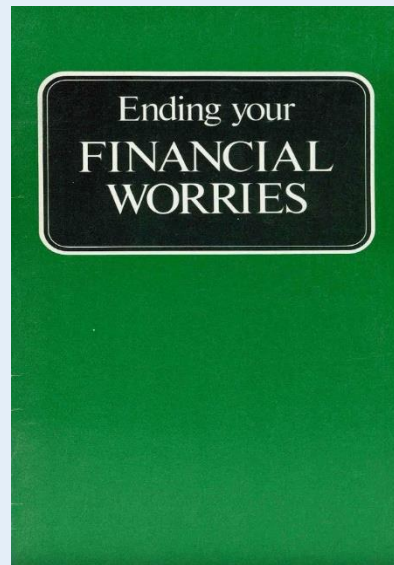
So now notice this teaching in **Hebrews 7**. Melchizedek was God’s Priest eternally. During the Levitical priesthood, God made the Levites priests in Israel. But now, Jesus Christ, (Melchizedek), is the High Priest and the ministry is no longer a Levitical ministry, but that of Jesus Christ, the living head of God’s Church.”

So, we can see that we give to Christ. We do what He says and what He commands us to do!

TITHING MAKES GOD OUR PARTNER

Mr. Armstrong often shared stories about people he encountered throughout his long life, as examples to us as we move forward in our

spiritual lives. In the booklet **“Ending your FINANCIAL WORRIES,”** written by Mr. Armstrong, he details this story.



“I know a man who started a small grocery business in a small city in the state of Oregon. This was during the great depression. He had practically no capital, had the poorest location in town, and

refused to sell tobacco. Others said he could never succeed. Thus handicapped, starting in the beginning of the worst depression the world ever knew, not many would have dared pay a whole tenth. This man decided he would be a faithful steward, take God into partnership, and trust the Lord with his business. He prospered from the start and was the only grocer in his town who weathered the storm of depression successfully.”

Mr. Armstrong continued to use this story as instruction in the booklet. He said, **“When God receives His portion of all your income, God becomes your partner, sharing in your profits. He causes His partners to prosper. And if you are in debt, take God into partnership first, and watch Him prosper you until finally you are out of debt. Remember the debt you owe God comes FIRST.”**

Another story Mr. Armstrong shared in this same booklet was about a large-scale vegetable farmer in Oregon.

“Let me tell you another experience,” Mr. Armstrong said. **“I was intimately acquainted with a large-scale vegetable farmer in Oregon.**

One day when I saw him, the Santiam river had overflowed its banks in the most destructive flood in years. Most of his year's crop, already planted and growing, was flooded."

Mr. Armstrong continued, "I was horror-struck. But he seemed not at all perturbed." The booklet continues to detail what the farmer had to say about the matter. "I'm thinking of two promises God has made me," he said, simply. "One, that ALL things work together for good to those who love the Eternal. The other, God has promised to protect and prosper the man who pays Him His tenth. I love the Eternal, I serve Him and keep His commandments, and I am honest and faithful in paying Him His tenth. Now I can't see, right now, how this apparent calamity can work for my good -- but I know it will, because God said so, and so I'm THANKING HIM and praising Him, instead of grumbling."

The conclusion of the story was as follows: "Well, the waters went down, and to everybody's astonishment this man's crops were not harmed at all - except one patch of late vegetables which it was not too late in the season to replant. That meant merely a little extra work. But the astonishing thing was this: His land and his neighbor's land were identical, joining on to each other, without even a fence. His neighbor neglected to pay God His tenth.



Both farms were equally flooded.

But the faithful tithe payer's crop was unharmed,

and the neighbor's was destroyed -- too late to re-plant. So many other farmers had their

crops destroyed that spring that there was a rise in price on the market, and my friend received a much larger than average income that year! God was his business partner!"

The Worldwide News – July 9, 1979

We can see this same principle in Malachi 3: 10-12, "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, And there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts; And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land," Says the LORD of hosts."

When God receives His portion of all our income, God becomes our partner, sharing in our profits. He causes His partners to prosper and succeed. He's a wonderful partner. And we must remember, we don't make God our business partner. On the contrary, it is God who has from the very beginning made every human

His partner in whatever we do to earn and produce revenue. And we are not giving God anything when we pay our tenth to Him. We are giving Him what is already His, to honor His laws, which are given for our own good.

GOD IS OUR SUPPLIER

If there is anything people are possessive of, it is the money they earn. Working hard for it, they want full freedom in deciding for themselves what they're going to do with it. A lot of people might say, "**What I earn is mine. I can do what I please with it.**" But is the money that we earn *really* our own? We merely applied certain energy in thinking and in physical action to that which God has already created and owned. And where did the energy that we applied come from? Did we create or supply that? No! We merely utilized what God created and supplied. God created even our thinking processes!

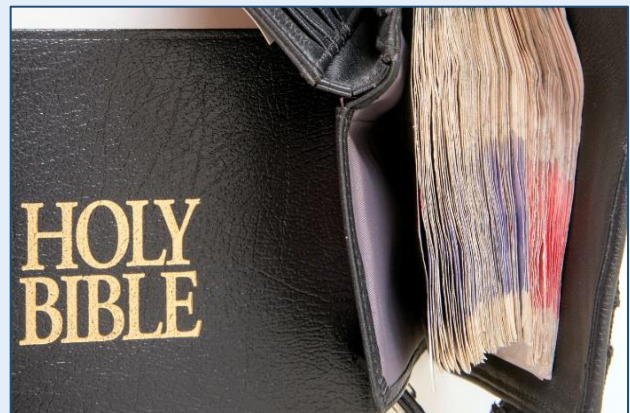
And so, God is not merely a Creator of the "long ago." He is the sustaining, directing, living ruler over ALL today. And so, it's a simple fact that it was God's labor of original thinking, planning, and creating, and of continuous sustaining and directing, that really produces all. Therefore, God's claim to ownership of all that we thought we produced or earned ourselves is valid. It is a prior claim to what we see as "ours." God Almighty says in **Psalm 24:1-2**, "**The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the waters.**"

God is a God of love. He knows our needs and is concerned about us, all of us. So therefore, God has made a law respecting that portion of his wealth that our thinking -- our labor -- has extracted and worked upon. Our wages, salary, profit, and income belong to God, not us. We probably have never thought of it that way or realized this before. This may seem like a new idea to us, but it's not an idea at all. It's a fact!

And so, God, the rightful owner of **our income**, has made a law respecting its disposal and its use.

God's law respecting what we earn is in fact a deal that He has made with us. He allows us to work on His earth, to use a part of the earth, what is in it or on it, its forces and energies, and to extract from it -- food, materials, supplies, metals, wood, oils, coal or whatever. When we sit down and really think, we should see that God supplies about nine parts of everything that man makes or produces. And man's thinking, planning, and working supply only about one part. But God does not take nine tenths of the proceeds of the income. He doesn't take even eight tenths, or seven, or three, or even two tenths. No, God is generous when we come to really understand.

God has reserved for His use only one little tenth of what is produced out of his earth through His forces and His energies, and with *our* brain that He devised and created, and with *our* hands and labor. God takes only one tenth. And after we have been honest in paying God's tenth to God's representative as God has directed, then -- and not until then -- God has decreed that the other nine tenths legally become ours. That is God's law!



So, to recap, God Almighty created not only matter, but all force and energy. He set them in

(Continued on page 30)

THE WISDOM OF ECCLESIASTES



When viewed for study purposes, the book of Ecclesiastes can often be an overlooked book.

Tucked in along with the Song of Solomon between the book of Proverbs and the prophetic book of Isaiah, this short book contains great wisdom, delivered by “the Preacher,” described as “the son of David, king in Jerusalem” (Ecclesiastes 1:1), pointing to King Solomon as the author. Solomon was the wisest, richest, and a most influential king in Israel’s history.

Geary Whiting

I wish my parents could have tutored and taught me about the book of Ecclesiastes. Reading through our Bible Hymnal, I noticed that there are SO MANY promises there. They tie right into what Solomon says in **Ecclesiastes**, and I noticed that these scriptures tell us that God will take care of us when trouble is near. So many promises and so much inspiration!

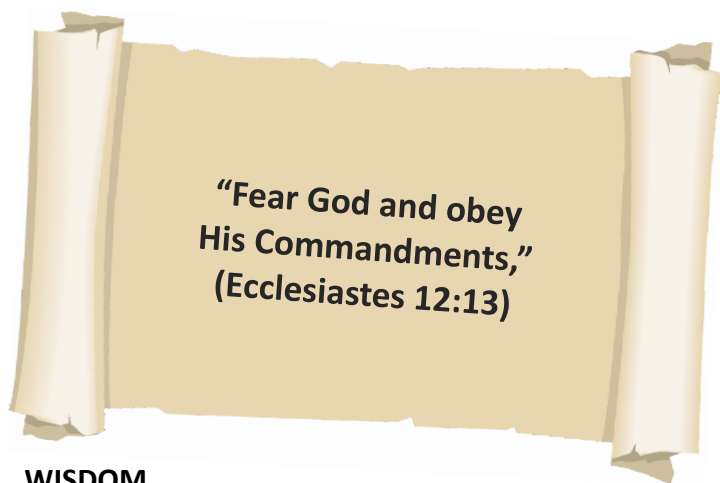
As I read **Ecclesiastes**, I realized that as fathers, mothers, and “hoary heads,” we need to have wisdom. In studying each of these chapters, I realize that in my own life, I have stories that relate to the subjects addressed in this book. I’m sure we all do. And even as we move ahead in our lives, and away from our mistakes and shortcomings, some things stay with us and can be bitter to revisit. We never forget some of the

things we do, and we think to ourselves: “**If only we knew then what we know now.**” But we never stop learning and hopefully, we will never stop teaching. **Ecclesiastes** is critical for both aspects.

A HISTORY OF ECCLESIASTES

While the English word “church” merely means “congregation,” it is translated from the Greek word ekklesia, from which such English words as “ecclesiastical” or “ecclesiastics” are derived. The word ekklesia simply means, “**CALLED-OUT-ONES.**” But the Septuagint uses the Greek word Ekklesiastes as the title for this book, which is derived from ekklesia. In Latin, the word Ecclesiastes translates as a “**Speaker before an assembly.**”

This difficult book displays a deep philosophy of one who sought to find peace apart from God, but later realized that only futility is to be found there. Solomon, who spent years searching for pleasures and wisdom without God, tells us in this book that he finally realized that God is everything and the only possible solution to life's puzzles. He looks at and describes life **"under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9)**, and tells us that nothing -- power, popularity, prestige, pleasure -- can fill the void in man's life but God Himself. Once life is approached from a godly perspective, it takes on meaning and purpose. When man turns from HIS will to GOD'S will he find true happiness. **Ecclesiastes 12:13** reads, **"Fear God and keep His Commandments,"** This will cause life to take on a real depth of meaning and purpose!



WISDOM ASKED AND ANSWERED

In **II Chronicles 1**, God asked Solomon what it was that he desired. Solomon asked for WISDOM. **"On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?" And Solomon said to God: "You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place. Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?"**

And God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life -- but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king -- wisdom and knowledge *are* granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who *were* before you, nor shall any after you have the like" (II Chronicles 1:11-12)."

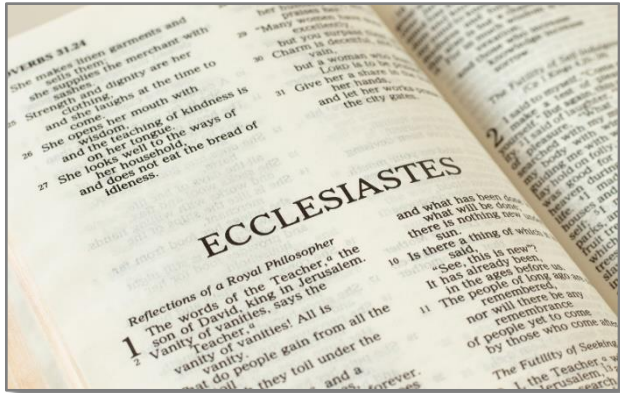
As we go through **Ecclesiastes**, we can see how God blessed Solomon. Solomon's prosperity allowed him to experience anything he wanted, to the fullest. He saw himself in how he dealt with the problems he experienced in his journey; he gained wisdom to rule the people and was able to share his wisdom in the written word.

Christ, too, learned through the difficult times in His life. With the things He suffered as our High Priest, He learned more fully the wisdom to judge rightly. **Hebrews 5:7-10** tells us, **"who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest *"according to the order of Melchizedek."*"**

So, we will see, when we study it, that **Ecclesiastes** is filled with wisdom, although there appears to be plenty of "negative" lessons to be learned in this book (with a series of things NOT to do). It shows the emptiness of trying to live our own life without considering the needs of others, nor considering God, our Maker. There is a positive side, however. If we can see how not to live, perhaps we will see what we ought to do and be spared the

headaches of a ruinous life. The headings of each chapter of **Ecclesiastes** are simple and concise, and the chapters are short, lending the book for our education, and for the teaching of young children.

CHAPTER ONE: THE VANITY OF LIFE



"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." So wrote King Solomon in the book of **Ecclesiastes (Ecclesiastes 1:2)**. Perhaps as no other man, Solomon understood the futility, uselessness, and emptiness of so many human endeavors. He realized that one of the greatest of human inclinations was to become intensely involved in activities which over the long run produce no tangible, lasting results. In other words, all the activities and pleasures he pursued, encompassing life itself, were meaningless.

Ecclesiastes 1:12-16: **"I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all *is* vanity and grasping for the wind. *What is* crooked cannot be made straight, And what is lacking cannot be numbered. I communed with my heart, saying, "Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained more wisdom than all who were before me in Jerusalem. My heart has understood great wisdom and knowledge.""**

CHAPTER TWO: PLEASURE AND WORK ARE MEANINGLESS

As the wisest man that ever lived, King Solomon explored the self to the fullest. Since he had the money, the position, and the time to indulge himself in all aspects of self, he learned some vitally important lessons in the process -- lessons we shouldn't have to learn by the same cruel teacher he discovered -- experience. Thinking back over his life, Solomon began his discourse like this: **"I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure"; but surely, this also *was* vanity. I said of laughter --"Madness!"; and of mirth, "What does it accomplish?" I searched in my heart *how* to gratify my flesh with wine, while guiding my heart with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what *was* good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives (Ecclesiastes 2:1,3)."**

Solomon was conducting an experiment. He wanted to know what the best way was to live, to get the most out of this life. He continued: **"I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. I made myself gardens and orchards... also I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me... Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor" (verses 4-10).**

**"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done... And indeed all *was* vanity and grasping for the wind."
(Ecclesiastes 2:11)**

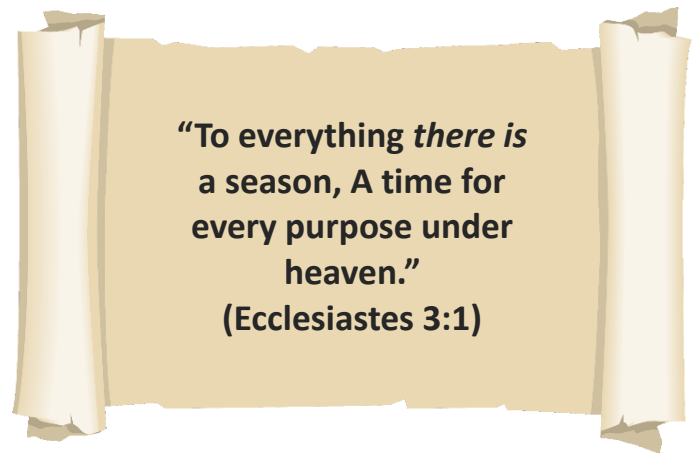
Solomon had it all! Money was no object. He possessed what practically all the rest of humanity wants. And there was nobody around to tell him: "No!" Solomon concluded, "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all *was* vanity and grasping for the wind. *There was no profit under the sun*" (verse 11).

The king continued his contemplations, "So I said in my heart, "As it happens to the fool, It also happens to me, And why was I then more wise?" Then I said in my heart, "This also is vanity" (verse 15). Solomon was thinking about his personal future -- about the impermanence of life and the continual striving to achieve real satisfaction through a feeling of total security and wellness by the things he built and planted, the things he bought and possessed. He found out, through hard experience, that all these activities meant little more than a vain pursuit "after the wind."



CHAPTER THREE: A RIGHT TIME FOR EVERYTHING

Perhaps the most famous verses of **Ecclesiastes** are found in **chapter 3**. Even songs have been written using these scriptures and meanings. Solomon starts the whole thought process off with these words in **Ecclesiastes 3:1**, "To everything *there is* a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:"



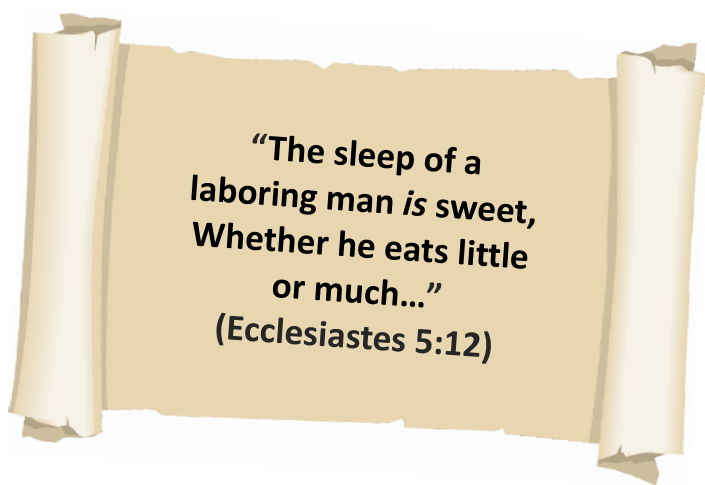
It is well worth the time to open our Bibles and read the entire chapter of **Ecclesiastes 3** with a thoughtful and meditative manner. Solomon concludes his thinking towards the end of the chapter. "I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end. I know that nothing *is* better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor--it *is* the gift of God. I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, And nothing taken from it. God does *it*, that men should fear before Him" **Ecclesiastes 3:10-14**.

CHAPTER FOUR: TROUBLE UNDER THE SUN

As we can see, each chapter is about a specific subject. The chapters are also short, making it easy to pick a subject to use as a teaching tool for starting conversations with children and young people. In **Deuteronomy**, there are scriptures where we are told that year after year, the children will keep the feasts and holy days with their parents. There comes a point where the children come to the father and ask, "What does all of this mean?" If we don't give them something to think about, something as full of wisdom as the book of **Ecclesiastes**, they'll never ask what it means.

Solomon provided an instruction book for all of us -- single people, parents, children, and seniors, too. In **Chapter 4** he summed up a great spiritual principle that all the richest men in the world (after they had basically lived their lives), would probably nod their heads in assent to. **"Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit" (verse 6 - KJV)**. Most likely, the upper-middle class or wealthy American enjoying affluence probably doesn't believe this principle, but it's true! And before they die, many of them will realize it.

Verse 13 tells us, **"Better a poor and wise youth Than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more."** Basically, Solomon reminds us again that wisdom is priceless in comparison with all the wealth and status the world might hold.



**"The sleep of a
laboring man is sweet,
Whether he eats little
or much..."
(Ecclesiastes 5:12)**

CHAPTER FIVE: HAVE RESPECT FOR GOD

Solomon goes on to say, **"The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, Whether he eats little or much; But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep. There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun: Riches kept for their owner to his hurt."** (Ecclesiastes 5:12-13). A man who works hard with his hands doesn't have to sample the world's best restaurants to be satisfied. He can get by with a simple meal and still get a good night's sleep. But what about the white-collar executive who is basking in a six-figure income or more? He is

often the most unsatisfied and unhappy of persons, lying awake at night constantly striving, plotting, planning, and trying to figure out how to obtain yet more. He suffers from the agonies of sleepless nights, ulcers, constant stress, and worries, continually struggling against intolerable odds -- striving for that one big break that means he finally has "enough."

Notice **Ecclesiastes 5:10 (KJV)**, **"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity."** No, satisfaction doesn't come through having "enough," lusting for more in the future. Happiness and satisfaction are NEVER fulfilled by simply having more things! But it doesn't have to be this way! There is a better way! There is a way by which we can obtain eternal dividends. There is a way we can assure our personal stake in eternity!

Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 reads, **"Here is what I have seen: It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage. As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor -- this is the gift of God. For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart."**

CHAPTER SIX: THE KING'S LIFE IS MEANINGLESS

Even as a powerful king, Solomon recognized that his physical life and accomplishments were basically meaningless. **"There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction. If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not**

satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say *that* a stillborn child *is* better than he -- for it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness" (Ecclesiastes 6:1-4).

He continues, "Though it has not seen the sun or known *anything*, this has more rest than that man, even if he lives a thousand years twice -- but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one place? All the labor of man *is* for his mouth, And yet the soul is not satisfied. For what more has the wise *man* than the fool? What does the poor man have, Who knows *how* to walk before the living? Better *is* the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind. Whatever one is, he has been named already, For it is known that he *is* man; And he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he. Since there are many things that increase vanity, How *is* man the better? For who knows what *is* good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?" (verses 5-12).

CHAPTER SEVEN: WISDOM IS BETTER THAN RICHES

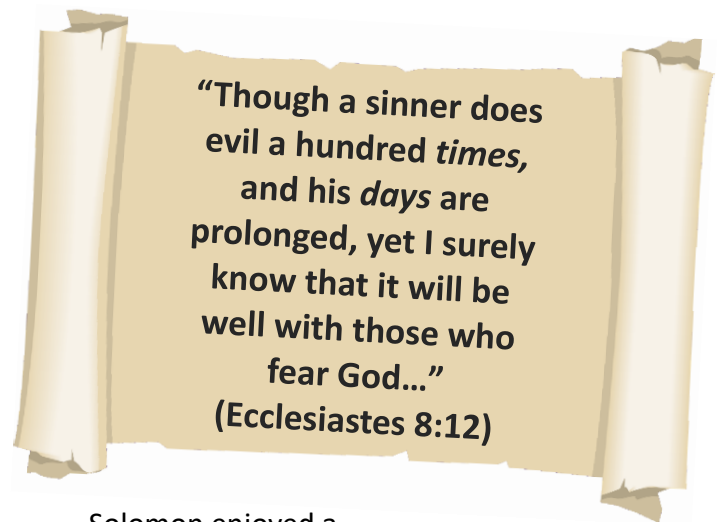
Sooner or later, all of us will have to rely on God for the necessities of life. But we should never worry. As Solomon pointed out in Ecclesiastes 7:14, "In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other..."

If we are blessed with some physical investments and assets now, be thankful for them. But make sure that we don't neglect to build an investment portfolio in heaven (with God), as well. These physical things may help for a while, but our treasure reserved in heaven will never let us down. We never have to worry about it being stolen (although we can lose it!). While it is reserved by God for us, it is steadily increasing in value. And if that investment in

heaven is the only major asset we have, don't worry. It is the best of all securities, guaranteed by God. We will have no long-term financial worries. And if we trust in God, we don't have to have an "anxious mind" about the short term, either.

CHAPTER EIGHT: IT IS BEST TO OBEY GOD

We must learn what God says about obeying authority. In Ecclesiastes 8:4-5, "Where the word of a king *is*, *there is* power; And who may say to him, "What are you doing?" He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful..."



**"Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God..."
(Ecclesiastes 8:12)**

Solomon enjoyed a balanced view of reality -- a truly mature outlook. Notice Ecclesiastes 8:12, "Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him." How true! This perspective on life rallies our sometimes-sagging zeal to fight on in the face of anguish and seeming futility.

Some people reading this article are single parents, some might be married to alcoholics, some mourn loved ones lost unexpectedly. How easy it is to feel depressed -- to feel like life has dealt us a raw deal and we fall into a "what's the use" attitude. Yet God counsels, "For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off" (Proverbs. 23:18 - KJV).

So, take heart amidst life's difficulties! Conflicts and trials force us back to God to learn wisdom, vision, determination, and faith. The lessons will last for all eternity if we're obeying God.



you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:7-9).

Knowing that we all have a common destiny, a predicted outcome, if you wish, Solomon was inspired to admonish us, **"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).**

CHAPTER TEN: BEHAVE WISELY

Chapter ten of Ecclesiastes is a chapter that provides contrast between the actions of the foolish and the actions of the wise. Several scriptures within this chapter describe instances of the foolish and how to handle various situations.

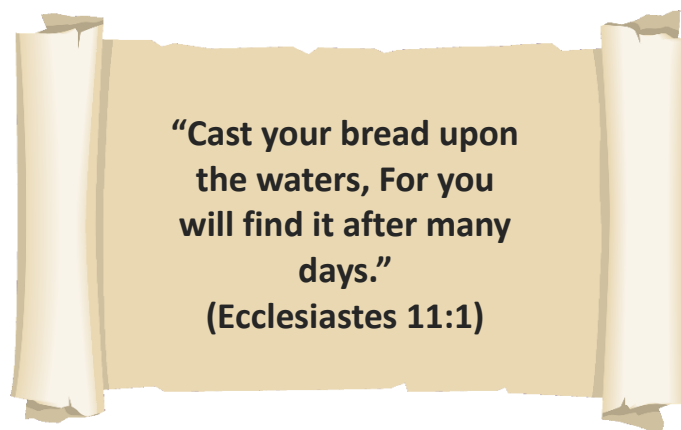
CHAPTER NINE: ALL HAVE A COMMON DESTINY

Have you ever heard of an old saying that goes like this: **"Time and chance happen to us all?"** If we are caught in the middle of an accident, a war, or a national disaster, perhaps God will have mercy on us and deliver us from our troubles. But again, He may choose, in His perfect wisdom, to let us live through such trials or allow us to die because of them.

But does this imply that God is in some way remiss to allow such things to occur? **Isaiah 57:1-2** reads, **"The righteous perishes, And no man takes it to heart; Merciful men are taken away, While no one considers That the righteous is taken away from evil. He shall enter into peace; They shall rest in their beds, Each one walking in his uprightness."** So, even death itself can be a haven from this world's troubles.

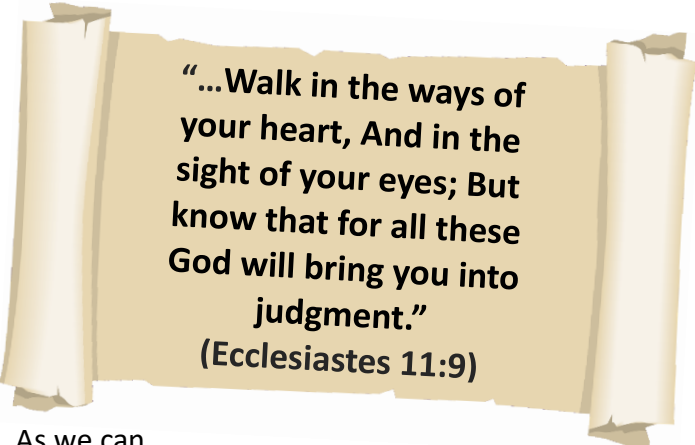
There is a command in **chapter nine of Ecclesiastes**, **"Go, eat your bread with joy, And drink your wine with a merry heart; For God has already accepted your works. Let your garments always be white, And let your head lack no oil. Live joyfully with the wife whom**

Witty statements make us smile as we read them, imagining visions of what Solomon uses as descriptions to get his point across to the reader. Simple statements, but meaningful ones, such as **Ecclesiastes 10:10, "If the ax is dull, And one does not sharpen the edge, Then he must use more strength; But wisdom brings success."** Let's look at **Ecclesiastes 10:11, "A serpent may bite when it is not charmed; The babbler is no different."** Now if this clever little verse doesn't inspire us to read this chapter and invite the wisdom of Solomon into our lives, what would?



CHAPTER ELEVEN: GENEROSITY WILL BE REPAID

There is value in diligence, with the thoughtfulness and care of others around us. **Ecclesiastes 11:1-2** instructs us to, **“Cast your bread upon the waters, For you will find it after many days. Give a serving to seven, and also to eight, For you do not know what evil will be on the earth.”** In other words, we may, and should, add others to our life as the need arises, being aware of those around us and caring generously for their needs to the best of our ability.



“...Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.”
(Ecclesiastes 11:9)

As we can see from the previous chapters of **Ecclesiastes**, man can be selfish and full of vanity -- vain pursuits. Again, thinking only, or mostly, of one's own self! Is that what God wants from us? Of course not. **Verse 9** perhaps says it best, **“Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.”**

God's people are to be givers. God will make sure that we are well taken care of if we are givers ourselves. When we serve other people, and we pick wise people to serve, God will give generously to us, and will repay whatever time we have spent imitating Him, the GREAT GIVER! So, remember to be kind, thoughtful, and generous to others. God will give back to us in His generosity.

CHAPTER TWELVE: COUNSELING FOR THE YOUNG

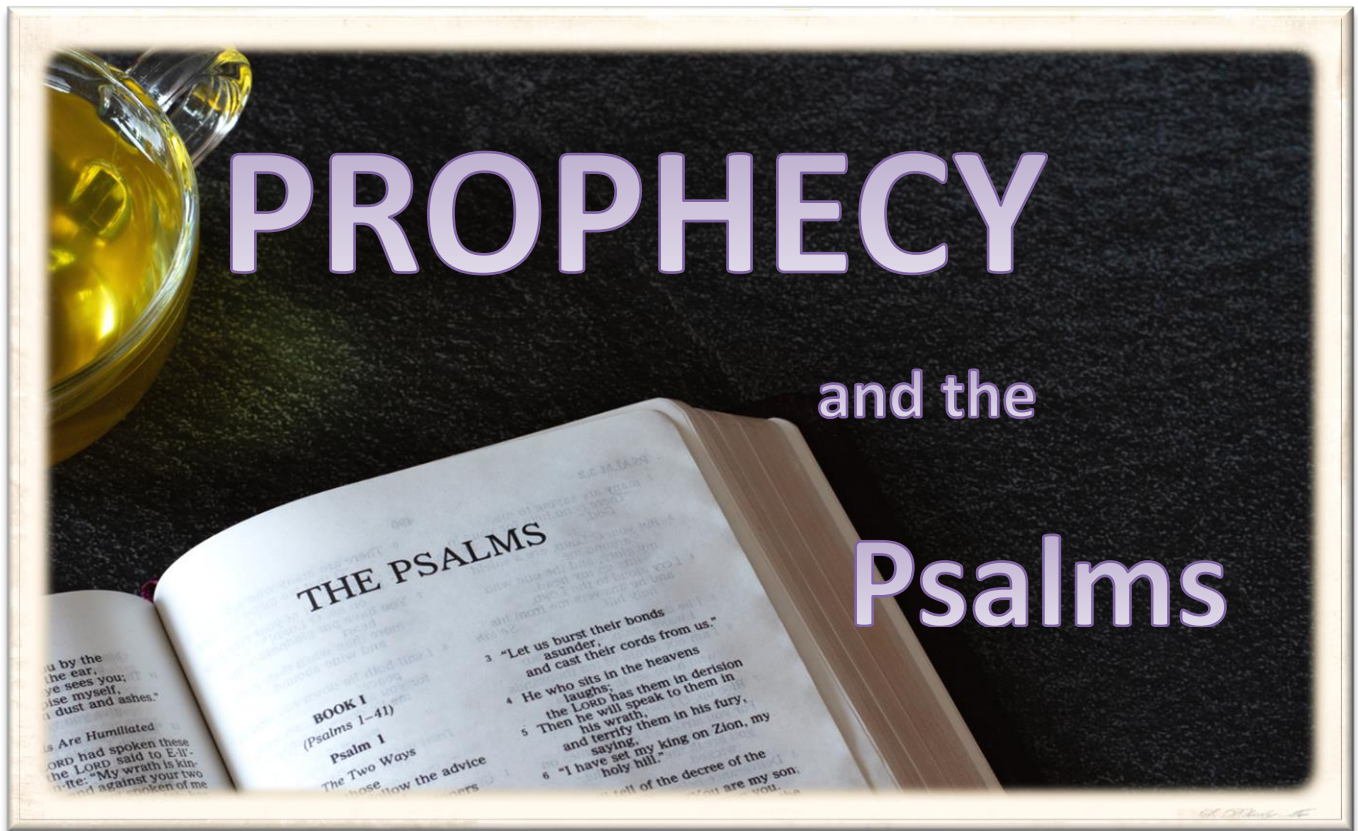
The final chapter of **Ecclesiastes** begins with a key verse that should resonate in our hearts and minds forever. **“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come...”** (**Ecclesiastes 12:1**). Those are very instructive words are for us to study and remember. Life is incredibly short, and we are only given these few years to learn how God wants us to live. He wants us to turn to Him for instruction -- to always remember and put Him first in our lives.

Again, **“Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, Or the golden bowl is broken, Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, Or the wheel broken at the well. Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it. “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “All is vanity.””** (**Ecclesiastes 12:6-8**).

Yes, this final verse contains great wisdom, delivered by Solomon, “the Preacher.” As the wisest and a most influential king in Israel's history, he delivered some powerful knowledge to those of us living today. **“And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out *and* set in order many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and *what was* written was upright--words of truth.”** (**Ecclesiastes 12:9-10**). Finishing the chapter, he writes, **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil”** (**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**).

This, indeed, can be described as the whole duty of man!

(Continued on page 31)



The book of Psalms is perhaps one of the most famous books of the Bible. It could be described as one of the Bible's most inspirational books because the expressions of faith, hope and praise to God contained within have brought encouragement, inspiration, and solace to people throughout the ages since the time the Palms were written.

Gary Liebold

Many would be surprised to learn that there is much more depth to the Psalms than most people realize. Beyond the prayers, poetry, and music, it contains a vital message for us today. The book of Psalms is also a book of duality -- of prophecy -- and conveys a powerful prophetic message for those who seek to understand.

To begin with, the Psalms were written over a 1,000-year period. Some of the Psalms date all the way back to the time of Moses (**Psalm 90**), while according to Jesus Christ and His apostles (**Luke 20:42**), most were written by King David, a man "...after Mine [God's] own heart," (Acts

13:22). Many others were written decades after David's death, right up to the Babylonian captivity and during the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (**Psalm 137**). The common belief is that Ezra compiled the Psalms and arranged them in their existing order. So, we can see that the **Psalms** are not entirely the prayers or songs of David, as many people believe.

Notice that in most versions of the Bible, the **Psalms** break down into FIVE separate books. The Midrash, an ancient and respected Jewish commentary, states, "**Moses gave Israel the five books of the Torah, and correspondingly David gave them the five books of the Psalms.**"

Each of the five books of the law, or Torah, (**Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy**), combine with the five books of **Psalms** to deliver a powerful message of prophecy -- the salvation of mankind!

The book of **Psalms** reveals a story-flow from creation to the resurrection and even beyond. The **Psalms** portray an inspirational message about people and events described in prophecy. The past human trials and triumphs of David and other personalities were more than just examples to us -- they were prophetic and transformed **Psalms** into powerful prophecy -- for our day and the great future ahead.



PSALMS 1-41

The first book of **Psalms** portrays the love of God for mankind -- the

beginning of salvation. These **Psalms** combine with **Genesis** to proclaim the beginning of God's plan for man. In many Bible editions, the first book of **Psalms** is often labeled "**The Genesis Book.**" **Genesis** is known as "**the book of beginnings,**" where God records where He presented two ways of life for Adam and Eve in the form of the two trees -- the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (**Genesis 2:9**). Those two ways were the way of "GIVE" and the way of "GET." In duality, the way of "give" is the way, or tree, of life, and the way of "get," the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or the tree of death. As we know, Adam and Eve rejected God's instructions in the Garden of Eden and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the results of which would affect them and their children for millennia.

The book of **Psalms** echoes the message of the two ways. The very beginning of the first book of **Psalms** describes that same parallel, "**Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly ... his delight is in the**

The first book of Psalms portrays the love of God for mankind -- the beginning of salvation.

law of the Lord" [and the tree of life, the give way] (**Psalms 1:1-2**). This first psalm, in the first of the five books of **Psalms**, explodes with meaning. God intended for humans to eat of that tree by living the "give" way. Had Adam and Eve done so, they would have blossomed and grown to be like that tree -- for we are what we eat. We are to be learning and living God's way is giving, for "**God is love**" (**I John 4:8**). Our destiny is to be born as God's literal children, and we must be striving for that goal every day we are alive.

On the other hand, **Psalms** also shows the tragic consequences of the "get" way. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil produces calamity, "**The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away ... For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish**" (**Psalms 1:4,6**). Adam and Eve chose the "get" way and as a result, they simply withered and became, just as the psalm says, dust. "**For dust you are, and to dust you shall return**" (**Genesis 3:19**). Adam's children still rush headlong into the way of "get" and into the inescapable consequences of that way, a way filled with inevitable destruction and misery (**Psalms 2:1-5**).

But this was not the end! A new beginning, a new hope, rises from the dust: Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul proclaimed in the New Testament, "**The first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven**" (I

Many prophecies are found in Psalms concerning Christ's first coming, the crucifixion, and the sacrifice of His very life to pay the penalty for our sins.

Corinthians 15:45,47).

Many prophecies are found in **Psalms** concerning Christ's first coming, the crucifixion, and the sacrifice of His very life to pay the penalty for our sins. Descriptions of these New Testament events can be found at length throughout the **Psalms**. For example, in **Psalms 22:7-8**, we read, "**All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!**" Reading further, in **verses 11-19**, "**Be not far from Me, For trouble is near; For there is none to help. Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me with their mouths, Like a raging and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.**"

All through His deep mental and physical anguish, Jesus Christ endured, driven by two pervading thoughts : His resurrection and our salvation. Of His resurrection, Jesus says, "**For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption**" (**Psalms 16: 10; Acts 2:27**). What will be the

ultimate result of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection? **Psalm 22:27** tells us, "**All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations shall worship before You.**" What an act of love -- what a beginning for humanity! Yes, the first book of **Psalms** contains powerful messages to US concerning our very beginnings, both physically and spiritually. A message of deep and abiding love for each of us by our God and Father. **The last verse of Book I in Psalms (verse 13) reads, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel From everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen."**



PSALMS 42-72

Book II of **Psalms** depicts God's special relationship with His Church. This book

parallels the book of **Exodus**, the second book of the law, in this message. In **Exodus**, we see that God calls His Church (ancient Israel) and leads them out of Egypt. The name "**Exodus**" means "**going out from.**" God called Israel to come out of Egypt just as He calls Christians to come out from this worldly society. **I Corinthians** shows us that the Israelites were even baptized in the Red Sea by God. "**all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,**" (**I Corinthians 10:2**).

Israel's potential was incredible -- it was designated to become a kingdom of priests -- a physical Holy Nation: "**And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...**" (**Exodus 19:6**). Does that potential sound familiar? Continue to read in **Exodus 19:7-8**, "**So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do..."**" As God's Spirit begotten sons, we are destined to become a Kingdom of Priests -- a Holy Nation spiritually! Our potential is also, indeed,

incredible! See I Peter 2:9, **“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;”** and Revelation 5:10, **“And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”**

First, God leads people to repentance and His ministers baptize them, then the Father begets them with His Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:38**). With the power of the Holy Spirit, God's people overcome Satan, themselves, and the world, qualifying for the coming Kingdom of God. Repentance and begetting with the Holy Spirit characterizes every truly converted person. Again, David, a man after God's own heart, deeply repented of his sins. But David, like you and me, knew that he needed the power of God's Spirit to overcome sin successfully. Read his prayer in **Psalms 51:10-11**, **“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.”** God's Holy Spirit was not poured out on ancient Israel as a whole -- the Holy Spirit has only been given to certain chosen servants, like David, and the prophets. Today, God's Holy Spirit is only given to the first fruits of salvation.

The writer of **Psalms 71** looks to Jesus Christ as the foundation of the Church: **“Be my strong habitation ... for You are my rock and my fortress” (Psalms 71:3 - KJV)**. Jesus Christ told Peter, **“...And on this rock I will build My church...” (Matthew 16:18)**. Jesus Christ is the rock upon which the Church stands (**I Corinthians 10:4, Ephesians 2:20**), an unbreakable foundation designed to last forever.



PSALMS 73-89

Mostly written by Levitical priests, the third section of

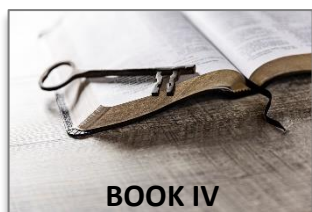
The third section of Psalms pictures the end of the age (the current world's system), the coming tribulation, and parallels the book of Leviticus in the law.

Psalms pictures the end of the age (the current world's system), the coming tribulation, and parallels the book of **Leviticus** in the law. The theme of Book III of **Psalms** is one of destruction. The book of **Leviticus** is filled with prophecies of the coming destruction of Israel in the Great Tribulation. For this nation's disobedience and rebellion, God prophesies, **“I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you ... I will break the pride of your power ... You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters ... I will lay your cities waste...” (Leviticus 26: 16,19,29,31)**.

In duality with the book of **Leviticus**, **Psalm 73** details the coming destruction of our society, **“Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors” (Psalms 73:18-19)**. The author of these Psalms continues, **“O God, the nations have come into Your inheritance; Your holy temple they have defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps” (Psalms 79:1; Matthew 24: 15)**. Some of the saints are martyred, **“The dead bodies of Your servants they have given as food for the birds of the heavens, the flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth” (Psalm 79:2)**. These scriptures refer to the coming end-time Great Tribulation.

The psalmist expresses desperation as destruction threatens all humanity, **“Remember how short my time is; for what futility have**

You created all the children of men? What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his life from the power of the grave? Selah” (Psalms 89:47-48). This is a time of what is called Jacob’s trouble (**Jeremiah 30:7**). Will man survive this darkest, most horrible period of human history? Book III of **Psalms**, with the prophecies of **Leviticus**, delivers a dirge of death and destruction. Prophetic events will take place on this earth, events written in the **Psalms** long before they happen. **Psalms** projects prophecy!



PSALMS 90-106

However, Book IV of **Psalms**, teamed with **Numbers**, paints a beautiful picture of

the Kingdom of God ruling this earth. The book of **Numbers** in the law parallels Book IV of **Psalms**. Together, they tell the story of the peaceful, prosperous reign of God's Kingdom on earth. The book of **Numbers** records Israel's journey through the wilderness, dwelling in tabernacles (temporary dwellings).

The duality of the above events recorded in these two books, **Numbers** and **Psalms**, correlates with our modern day keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles. Picturing the Millenium, the coming Kingdom of God, the Feast of Tabernacles is futuristic in its design (**Zechariah 14:16**). It challenges us to ponder our awesome destiny, our goal, or prime purpose in life, to become a part of God’s Family in the Kingdom of God! God commanded, **“You shall dwell in booths for seven days” (Leviticus 23:42)**. Living in temporary dwellings teaches us that our physical bodies are temporary and that we should seek eternal life in God's Kingdom. Moses, who led physical Israel to the physical type of God's Kingdom, the promised land, tells us about our eternal, spiritual dwelling place, **“LORD, You have been our dwelling place [tabernacle] in all generations” (Psalms 90:1)**.

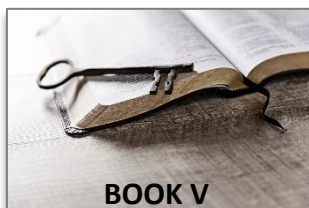
Book IV of Psalms, teamed with the book of Numbers, paints a beautiful picture of the Kingdom of God ruling this earth.

How long shall this age of the Kingdom last? **“For a thousand years...” (Psalms 90:4)**. The Feast of Tabernacles is a time of great rejoicing for us today, just as it was for ancient Israel! In the Millennium, the happiness, joy, and prosperity pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles will exist worldwide under the righteous rule of Jesus Christ. Obedience to the laws of God and His way of life will make the world tomorrow a literal utopia. We will then see the whole world rejoicing at the rulership of God, **“The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad!” (Psalms 97:1)**. Then God sets His hand, for the first time, to save the whole world, **“The LORD has made known His salvation; ... All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God” (Psalms 98:2-3)**.

**“The Lord has made known His salvation; ... All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”
(Psalms 98:2-3)**

The final verse of book four of **Psalms** expresses the joyous sentiment felt by all living in God’s Kingdom after the return of Jesus Christ, **“Blessed be the LORD God of Israel From everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, “Amen!” Praise the LORD!”**

(Psalm 106:48). This hasn't happened yet -- the ends of the earth haven't seen the salvation of God yet. But they will when God's Kingdom comes! By the end of the thousand years, the Family will be ready for the final step in God's Master Plan. Even greater joy and accomplishments lie ahead after the Millennium!



PSALMS 107-150

Book V of the **Psalms** celebrates the complete salvation of mankind, for the

millions of people who have died over the Millennia, not knowing the truth. **Deuteronomy** parallels Book V of **Psalms** in picturing the completed salvation for man. **Deuteronomy** literally means **"the second law,"** summarizing and completing the first four books of the law, just as Book V of **Psalms** concludes the plan of God. Concerning the message of **Deuteronomy**, the Jewish Publication Society states, **"The single theme of Deuteronomy is the concept of oneness and universality of God and the unity of mankind."** The total completion of God's Master Plan for mankind will finally be achieved when every person has had a chance to be in the Kingdom of God.

We might ask -- what about the countless millions who have lived and died deceived, not knowing the true God, not having a chance for salvation, not experiencing the blessings of God's Kingdom? Shall we pretend they never existed? No. We can be positive that God remembers them, everyone. He cannot forget. What a sight it will be -- to look at all those people! Everybody who has ever lived will be there, everyone. **"And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books"** (**Revelation 20:12**). See also, **Ezekiel 37:1-28**. God will

ultimately redeem all willing humans from the final enemy -- death (**I Corinthians 15:54-57**).

The above scenario depicts the final part of God's Holy Days and the last step of His great plan, the Last Great Day, which shows that physical Israel will be resurrected. **"Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, And gathered out of the lands, From the east and from the west, From the north and from the south. They wandered in the wilderness in a desolate way; They found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, Their soul fainted in them. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, And He delivered them out of their distresses"** (**Psalm 107:1-6**). Salvation will then be offered to all. But what about Satan -- the one who caused all the world's problems in the first place? What

Book V of the Psalms celebrates the complete salvation of mankind, for the millions of people who have died over the Millennia, not knowing the truth.

will finally happen to him? Satan, the king, and god of this present world, along with his demons, receives his punishment by judgment of the saints, **"To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment -- this honor have all His saints. Praise the LORD!"** (**Psalms 149:8-9**). Yes, we will judge Satan and his demons and send them to their final fate, never again to deceive mankind (**I Corinthians 6:3; Revelation 20:10**).

(Continued on page 31)



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WAVE SHEAF OFFERING

God's seven annual Holy Days reveal His plan for establishing His Kingdom, all seven of which are given in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus.

Gary Liebold

The third annual Holy Day Sabbath listed in **Leviticus 23** is the Feast of Firstfruits. God's Feast of Firstfruits, also called the Feast of Weeks (**Exodus 34:22**), Feast of Harvest (**Exodus 23:16**), and the Feast of Pentecost in the New Testament (**Acts 2:1**), reveals some of the first steps in God's Master Plan for mankind. God, the great planner, begins the year, and His plan, in the spring (**Exodus 12:2**), where He logically placed the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. These days are specially linked with the third annual Sabbath, Pentecost, through a special event called the wave sheaf offering. But what does all this picture in the plan of God?

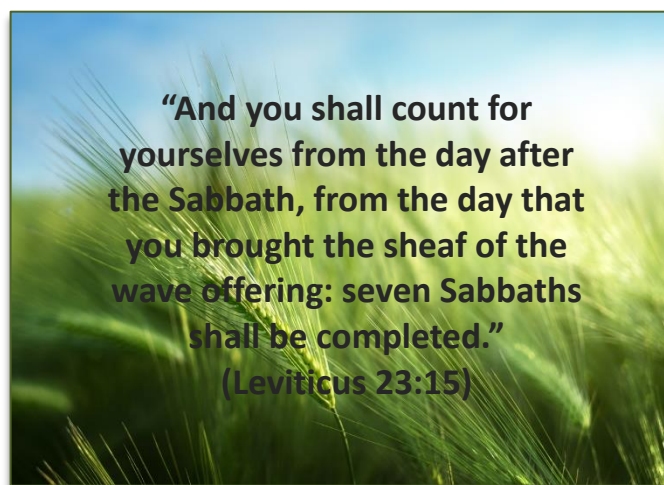
These events picture the hope of redemption from sin, which produces death (**Romans 6:23**). First, the Passover pictures the scourging and death of our Savior, Jesus Christ (**I Corinthians 5:7**), who paid the penalty for our physical and

spiritual sins, bringing redemption and a new lease on life. Then the Days of Unleavened Bread show us that now we must live this new life differently as we move forward in our lives. The establishment of the dates, or times, of God's Holy Days are tied to the harvest seasons in the land of Israel in both a physical and spiritual manner, especially concerning the mysterious mention of a celebration in **Leviticus 23:15** -- the wave sheaf offering. So just what is the wave sheaf offering, and what significance does it have towards the understanding of God's Holy Days and the establishment of the calendar dates for those Holy Days?

THE SPRING HARVEST

In ancient days, two harvests were reaped in Israel. In the spring through early summer season, the Israelites gathered a small harvest of barley or other grains. This harvest is called the firstfruits harvest. In the fall, the Israelites

reaped the year's second and biggest harvest. So, just when does this first spring harvest start? To understand precisely, we must go back to the Passover, which is followed by the Days of Unleavened Bread with its annual Sabbaths. The Israelites were not allowed to harvest any of the early grain crop until the day of the wave sheaf offering (**Leviticus 23:14**).



Notice **Leviticus 23:15**: “**And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed.**” Because seven weeks must be counted, this Holy Day is also known as the Feast of Weeks (**Deuteronomy 16:9**). Then, on the day following the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread, in a solemn ceremony of the Levitical priesthood (the rituals were mere substitutes and therefore not practiced today), the first sheaf of grain was cut and brought to the priest. The priest solemnly waved it before the Eternal to be accepted for the people.

Looking back, we can see that the wave sheaf offering was commanded back in the time of Moses. In **Leviticus 23:10-11**, the Eternal commanded Moses, “**Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the**

firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.” The high priest waved these firstfruits of grain (barley), on the morrow after the weekly Sabbath. This wave sheaf was always waved on what we call Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

THE MULTIPLE LAYERS OF MEANING TO THE WAVE SHEAF OFFERING

The Church today is pictured by the small firstfruits harvest. God commanded Israel to begin the firstfruits harvest on the morrow after the weekly Sabbath (“Sunday” today), during the Days of Unleavened Bread (**Leviticus 23:9-11**). The priest was to cut the first sheaf of grain, which represented Jesus Christ, the first emissary of a new world government in God’s coming Kingdom. As Jesus Christ told the Pharisees, “**Behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you**” (**Luke 17:20 - RSV**).

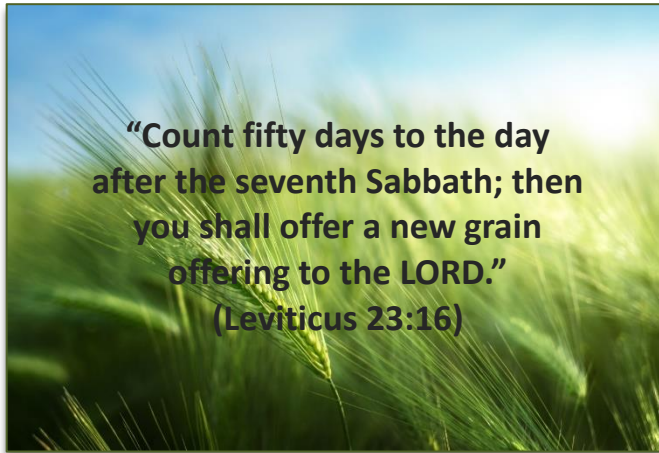
In the wave sheaf ceremony, when the priest waved the grain toward heaven, the priest was portraying the risen Jesus, the High Priest of our salvation

(**Hebrews 4:14-16**). The grain waved toward heaven pictured the resurrected, triumphant Jesus Christ ascending to heaven to the very throne of God. There, as High Priest, Jesus presented His own sacrifice to God (**Hebrews 10:10**). Jesus Christ,



the first of the firstfruits, paved the way and prepared the earth for the growth of God's Kingdom.

After Christ's resurrection, it was necessary that He be accepted by God. Through His shed blood, Jesus paid the death penalty for our sins. Here are some additional comments from the ***Ambassador College Correspondence Course*** on this subject:



"Because Christ was a holy sacrifice, and was the FIRST human being to be resurrected, He fulfilled the symbolism of the Wave-Sheaf Offering. The morning after He was resurrected, He had to go before God the Father to be accepted, just as the High Priest in the Old Testament had to wave the sheaf of barley to be accepted by God before the spring harvest could begin. When Mary met Christ in the garden, she couldn't touch Him because His sacrifice had not yet be accepted in heaven."

And so, the waving of this handful of grain by the priest signified the beginning of the spring harvest in ancient Israel. This offering was given with the expectation of being accepted by God as it was waved. Spiritually speaking, this wave sheaf was pointing symbolically to Jesus Christ and the events which followed His crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. After the wave sheaf was offered, the small spring harvest began. It ended with the annual Sabbath of the Feast of

Firstfruits (Pentecost). Spiritually, the small spring harvest began with Jesus Christ and will ultimately include us, the firstfruits. We can see that the depth of detail and symbolism God has instilled in His Holy Days is impressive!

THE IMPORTANCE OF COUNTING

Now notice what happened next, **"And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD." (Leviticus 23:15-16).** The New American Bible translates this more accurately, **"Beginning with the day after the sabbath, the day on which you bring the wave offering sheaf, you shall count seven full weeks, and then on the day after the seventh week, the fiftieth day, you shall present the new cereal offering to the Lord" (Leviticus 23:15-16).**

Let's read that again in **Leviticus 23:16: "You shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord."** The Feast of Firstfruits, (Pentecost), literally means **"count fifty."** In counting Pentecost, we start with the morrow after the Sabbath of the wave sheaf offering. Starting to count 50 days *beginning* with a Sunday, (the morrow after the Sabbath), we always arrive at a Sunday,



seven weeks later, the 50th day. But why does God require *us* to figure out when the Feast of Firstfruits comes? Why do we count 50 every year? Simply because the rest of God's plan depends on what God does through us.

So, to review, at the end of the fifty-day harvest of firstfruits is Pentecost, a commanded holy convocation. In New Testament it was held on what was called the Day of Pentecost, the count of which began on the day of the



waving of the wave sheaf offering and ending with the waving of the two (leavened) loaves of bread, which symbolized the firstfruits (**Leviticus 23:17**). Just as our counting is crucial to the determination of the exact day on which to hold Pentecost each year, so is our development critical to the establishment of God's Kingdom (**Romans 8:21-23**). God instructs us to keep that day holy, "**And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it-- it shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations"** (**Leviticus 23:21**). The Feast of Firstfruits, (Pentecost), is commanded for us to keep today, and is important and relevant to the future of this world.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER

Now we can understand more clearly how God's mind works and how intricately He has

woven all His Holy Days together to mirror His plan for mankind. Even what might seem to us to be archaic or just minute details, such as the wave sheaf offering, an offering that has tremendous meaning to God and is placed in His instruction book (the Holy Bible). During these Days of Unleavened Bread and the following Holy Day, Pentecost, we must understand what the Biblical wave sheaf offering pictures.

Depicting the resurrected Christ being accepted by God as the very first human to be born of God -- the first fruits of the first harvest of souls (**John 20:17; Romans 8:29; I Corinthians 15:20,23; Colossians 1:15,18**). The fulfillment of the wave sheaf offering occurs on Sunday, (the morrow after the Sabbath), during the Days of Unleavened Bread, leading to the determination of the date for Pentecost at any given year. We must remember that on the very day of Pentecost, God gave Israel His law (**Exodus 20**). God showed the Israelites the way to live -- the way that would produce the physical blessings of His Kingdom. God promised, "**And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:"**" (**Deuteronomy 28:2**).

In **I Corinthians 15:20-24**, we read, "**But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power."**

There is powerful meaning in the symbolism of the wave sheaf offering. Let's make sure we grasp it and weave that understanding into how we hold God's Holy Days dear to us! ♦

The Marriage Supper...

(Continued from page 5)

Ancient Israel was unfaithful to the marriage covenant made with the God of the Old Testament (**the one who became Jesus Christ! -- I Corinthians 10:1-4; Jeremiah 31:31-32**). To further expound upon this subject, we'll look at the 58 Lesson Correspondence Course (Lesson 19), originally published by the Worldwide Church of God. "...Under the old marriage covenant [with physical Israel], God wrote His laws on two tables of *stone*. The people could *see* the law with their eyes, but the law was *not within their hearts and minds*. The law was *not a part of them*. But under the terms of the New Covenant, Christ promises that He will make a marriage agreement only with those who are *now* having the principles of His Law

written in their hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit. ... It is then that Christ will marry His perfectly obedient Church."

The Father will celebrate the union of His Son to His Bride (the firstfruits), along with millions of angels. The Church (the bride) will be brought into the closest and happiest union in all the universe. **"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son," (Matthew 22:2).**

We see the time ahead that Christ will marry SPIRITUAL Israel, an extremely joyous time **Isaiah 54:5**. Christ's Bride will be radiant (**Daniel 12:3**). She will be dressed in fine linen, clean and white (**Revelation 19:8**), and the long-awaited MARRIAGE SUPPER will begin. It's a marriage that will last **FOREVER!** ♦

Tithing...

(Continued from page 11)

motion in the laws of physics and chemistry. He created the human mind, supplying even the energy that is used in thinking and acting. Yes, all has come from God. He is a supplier of everything we need to be successful, to live a full and rewarding life. And it is God who sustains and directs all the forces and energies in the world.

Jesus said, **"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."** And that, too, is a law. If our treasure is in this world's amusements and pleasures, if our money -- pardon me, I mean **GOD'S money** -- is being spent on our needs and even our selfish desires, then our whole heart and interest is in this world, this material world, and not in the kingdom of God. He also said, **"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these [material needs] shall be added unto you."** The way to grow spiritually and to enjoy the glorious happiness of God's grace is to pay God His tithe.

GOD IS SIFTING US NOW

Finally, the matter of attitude is all important. God loves a cheerful giver -- not one who gives grudgingly out of necessity (**II Corinthians. 9:7**). If a person merely "gives to get" -- simply as a legal necessity -- he cannot expect God to bless him. Nor could one expect God to bless a tithe payer if he employs fiscal foolishness in managing the remaining 90 percent of his income.

God is sifting out His people now. When God's leader (Mr. Armstrong) disappeared, the sifting began. He will sift out everything that does not have a solid foundation. Only unshakable things will be left. We ARE being sifted. And as typical throughout the history of Israel, when the leader disappears or is removed, the people are going to be sifted. God wants to see what we will do by ourselves. Are we praying? Do we hold fast to God's laws? Are we tithing? Are we going to stand firm? If we are tithing, if we are obeying God, our foundation WILL be secure. ♦

Ecclesiastes...

(Continued from page 19)

ECCLESIASTES SUPPLIES IMPORTANT ANSWERS

The book of **Ecclesiastes**, as we can see, is an extremely important part of one of God's essential, life-giving tools -- the Bible! Again, the chapters are short, but chock full of wisdom to help guide us, for ourselves as well as our children, during our lives. This is very important! When I think back on all the things that I have done, and the mistakes that I have made (and there have been plenty), there is one mistake that I will not be able to live down, because I felt like I betrayed the family name. To this day, I see that it showed a very foolish attitude in me.

So, I can say that when I go through the book of **Ecclesiastes** myself, I can find multiple fingers pointing at me. As we read this article, perhaps we will find out where we are coming up short. I hope this will be helpful to us all -- as

individuals and as parents. Remember, even though children may not understand much of the content for a long time, don't stop teaching. Don't stop reading. Don't stop moving them in the right direction and encouraging them. Follow God's example -- He is our Father; we are His children, and He never stops working with us!

Ecclesiastes creates the curiosity and supplies the answers to all the questions anyone -- young or old -- might have. Parents -- use this book to answer the questions about life your children might have. And the rest of us, we must use this book to answer our own questions! After all, despite what we might think, we don't know it all. Remember, after Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, tried everything, he summed it all up in **Ecclesiastes 12:13 - KJV**, "**Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.**" ♦

Prophecy and the Psalms...

(Continued from page 25)

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN A REALITY

The true brotherhood of all human beings will finally come to be reality, "**Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing - life forevermore**" (Psalms 133:1-3). We will be at one with God and at one with each other.

All mankind joins in chorus to praise God the Father, who now dwells with them on earth in the New Jerusalem, "**Praise the Lord! Praise**

God in His sanctuary ... Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!" (Psalms 150:1-6).

Again, the book of Psalms is more than just a book with chapters and verses about poetry, songs, or praise -- more than lessons about thanksgiving, confidence, and wisdom -- the book of Psalms is also a book about prophecy and world events to come, that can move our thoughts into reality and awaken us to the earthshaking events of God's master plan for humanity. The Psalms proclaim powerful prophecy, propelling us from the past and present, into future and beyond. Take time to read the books of Psalms again with a new eye to the entire meaning of the content contained within. There are powerful lessons for us to learn and hold dear! ♦

BIBLE STUDY

Born to Rule (Part 2)

The Bible reveals that we were born for an incredible purpose -- to ultimately help rule the universe with Jesus Christ after He returns to this earth! Just as surely as Prince William of the United Kingdom was born into the British Royal Family to be a king, once we are "born again" into the Family of God, we are destined to reign as an even greater, eternal ruling king.

God is in the process of expanding His Family by reproducing Himself through mankind. Physical human reproduction demonstrates the process by which God is doing so. Every human since Adam and Eve has started life from a tiny ovum fertilized by a life-giving sperm cell. Likewise, every Christian needs the impregnating spiritual life of God's Holy Spirit in our minds to grow and mature spiritually before being born again. **(John 3:3-8).**

1. Although Christians are now the children of God, they are only heirs -- ones who will, in the future, inherit the glory of God's Family and rule the earth with Jesus Christ at His return **(I John 3:1-2; Romans 8:14 - 17).**

2. The Spirit-begotten child of God must grow spiritually before being born of God, just as a newly begotten child must grow physically in its mother's womb until born **(II Peter 3:18, I Peter 2:1-2).**

3. When Jesus Christ returns to earth, the spirit-begotten Sons of God who have died through the ages will be resurrected, while those who are still alive will be instantly changed into SPIRIT. They will then be "born again" as members of God's own Family and will have eternal life inherent within themselves, just as Christ, their elder brother **(I Corinthians 15:50-53, 42-49; I Thessalonians 4: 15-17; Psalm .17:15).**

4. Jesus Christ compared a Christian who is born again (born as SPIRIT), with the wind **(John 3:8)**. The effects of the wind are easy to see, but the wind itself is invisible. So, too, we will be when we are born again.

5. After the resurrection, Jesus, with His Spirit-composed body, was able to manifest Himself, to appear and disappear at will **(Luke 24:36-37)**, and pass through walls **(John 20:19,26)**. One composed of spirit can transform himself into flesh and bone when necessary, and even eat if so desired **(Luke 24: 38-43)**.

6. After the resurrection, Jesus was glorified **(John 17:4-5; Hebrews 2:8)**. To be "glorified" means to be given power and brightness, as Christ's body appears today if we could see Him **(Revelation 1:13-16)**. Christ has a glorious, powerful Spirit face and body which radiates light as bright as the sun in full strength. God will glorify His Spirit-begotten children at the resurrection by giving them this same power and glory **(Romans 8:7; Colossians 3:4; Daniel 12:3)**.

The ultimate glory that spirit-begotten children of God are to receive at the resurrection will be so great it will make them shine as brilliant stars. These sons of God will then become part of God's great spirit Family **(Revelation 2:26; 3:21; 5:10)**. This glorious destiny is our awesome potential. We were born to rule! ♦

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.

What is Faith? (booklet)

Herbert W. Armstrong

(Pages 8-9)

This WORK a Living Example of FAITH

Why, this very Work we conduct is a direct answer to prayer! This Work -- *The WORLD TOMORROW* broadcast, *The PLAIN TRUTH* magazine and AMBASSADOR COLLEGE -- which now has grown to national and international scope and influence, started as small as any work could start -- literally from NOTHING.

It has been from the start 100 percent a *work of FAITH* -- and we had to really *learn* this lesson of faith before it had even started.

WHY People Lack Faith

And now, very briefly, WHY don't we *have* FAITH, and *how* may we get it, and how may it be *increased*? So many say, "Well, I have no impression—I have no *feeling, no conviction*—that I shall get the answer."

They want to wait until they get a certain CONVICTION, a certain FEELING, a sort of *assurance* they can FEEL—before they really believe they shall have the answer.

But THAT *is not faith!*

That is FEELING!

Your feeling, your convictions, your impressions, have absolutely not *one thing or the other* to do with FAITH. FAITH HAS ONLY TO DO WITH GOD'S WORD! The one question is, *Has God promised it in the Bible?* If He has, then probabilities, possibilities, feelings, convictions, impressions, *have nothing whatsoever to do with it.* God has a thousand ways we know nothing of, of answering and providing whatever He has promised. We don't need to see HOW *He is going to do it...*

God's GIFT

And let us remember, **FAITH is the GIFT OF GOD.**

So many think that everything else that comes from God is His *gift*, but the FAITH required to *receive* these things is something we ourselves must somehow work up, or strain and strive for. But we have to just relax and TRUST GOD, even for the FAITH by which we receive everything else! (Eph. 2:8).

In Revelation 14:12 is a description of the *true* Church of THIS DAY. Those in this Church have the FAITH OF JESUS. **Notice, the FAITH OF JESUS! It is not just *our* faith in HIM, but *His* faith -- the very faith with which He performed His miracles -- placed *in us* and *acting in us.***

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



COMING ARTICLES



II Peter 1:19

◆ The Crown of a King: The Attributes of Crowns

Our inheritance is to become Spirit, to rule eternally on this earth with Jesus Christ. If we have repented, been baptized, and have received God's Spirit, we are destined to become KINGS in God's Kingdom! **"Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day..." (II Timothy 4:8). "Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High..." (Daniel 7:27). True Christians will be called KINGS, "and [Christ] has made us kings and priests to His God and Father..." (Revelation 1:6).**

◆ The Seven Essentials for Rulership

When King Charles was Prince of Wales, he submitted to a difficult program designed by his father to fit him for the British throne. The sure knowledge of his certain future stiffened his resolve and helped him to stoically endure the constant glare of publicity, the antagonism to royalty from certain vociferous elements, the daily pressure of being a target for some crackpot assassin. Our training program, then, must be even more vital than was Prince Charles. The Bible outlines several areas God wants to develop in His children.

◆ Bible Study – Qualifying to Rule

In the previous two Bible studies, we learned that we were born to rule. It is our destiny, if we overcome and grow in God's character, to rule the earth with Jesus Christ during the Millennium and then afterward, to rule the rest of the universe for all eternity.