

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)

The Lantern

OF THE SCATTERED FAITHFUL



II Peter 1:19

MAY 2025

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The Fruit of the Spirit
(See page 23)

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

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Personal from the editor



BEING WRONG

What words would you say are among the most difficult words for people to say? I doubt if you would answer... **“I appreciate your friendship,”** or **“Hi! How have you been?”** Obviously, there could be a variety of answers to this question. However, for many people, the most difficult words to say are, **“I’m sorry, I was wrong!”** It’s hard to admit being wrong and goes against the “grain” so to speak, just saying these simple yet most difficult words. I remember a man, who once said to me, **“I CAN admit to being wrong. For example, the other day I thought I had made a mistake and then found out I was wrong!”** Of course, it was said in humor. In *Mystery of the Ages* (page 5), Mr. Armstrong saw the reality of our own human nature when he wrote, **“The most difficult thing for any human seems to be to admit being wrong...”**

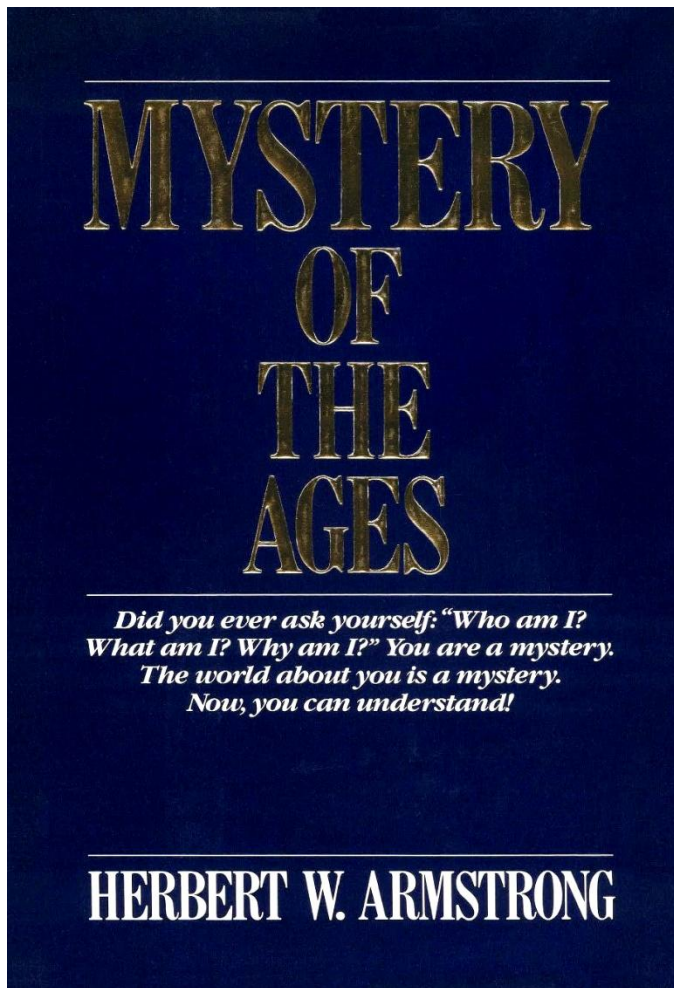
Do we realize that God would never have given any of us His Holy Spirit if we had refused to see where we were wrong in our thinking, and that we had been living by the world’s standards instead of His? Mr. Armstrong also wrote these words in *Mystery of The Ages* (page 5), **“No one can have the Holy Spirit, which alone can open the human mind to understanding of this Word of God, without a complete repentance and an implicit belief in Christ as well as believing what he says. Repentance can only follow admission of being wrong...”**

In **Acts chapter 2** we see that after true repentance and baptism, we are promised God’s Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands (**Acts 8:17-19**). Then Peter said to them, **“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission [forgiveness] of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38)**. At baptism, we were given a small “earnest” (down payment) of God’s Holy Spirit. **“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14 - KJV)**.


When God gives us His Spirit, we are expected to grow with it by producing good spiritual fruit. **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23)**.

In a matter of weeks, we’ll be observing the Feast of Pentecost. This day has so much to do with God’s Holy Spirit and with us, as Christ’s firstfruits. In his booklet, *Pagan Holidays -- or God’s Holy Days -- Which?*, Mr. Armstrong wrote the following... **“Passover symbolized Christ’s sacrifice for the remission of our sins, and the days of unleavened bread the putting away of sin. Pentecost pictures the first part of the spiritual harvest -- the calling out of the Church -- the called-out ones -- which, for the New Testament dispensation, began on Sunday -- Pentecost, June 17, A.D. 31. On that day the Holy Spirit came to dwell within flesh, as prophesied by Joel.”** What a tremendous blessing for us that God, in His mercy, called us at this time (**John 6:44**), and gave us an opportunity to be among the firstfruits of the Kingdom of God.

Gary R. Liebold



OVERVIEW SERIES: MYSTERY OF THE AGES



(PART TWO)

THE MYSTERY OF ANGELS AND EVIL SPIRITS

*Published in 1985, the book **Mystery of the Ages**, written by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, was published and released to simplify the main mysteries encompassed within the Bible that have eluded the understanding of mankind for centuries. This book examines these enigmas so they can be better understood, and so that the Bible will no longer be a such a mystery to us. Mr. Armstrong believed it was perhaps the most important book he ever wrote.*

Gary Liebold

M*ystery of the Ages* is a book we encourage all to read fully if you never have, or to reread again if you haven't read it in a while. As an aid, or supplement to this book, we are producing a series of overviews for the main seven chapters. These cover, one by one, seven great mysteries of the Bible. Please remember that these overview articles are not meant to take the place of reading the book for yourself, but to serve as a summary; and to serve as an encouragement to read and study it on our

own. As we read this book, we should compare it constantly with our own Bibles to see these truths with our own eyes. It will make a lot of sense as nothing ever did before.

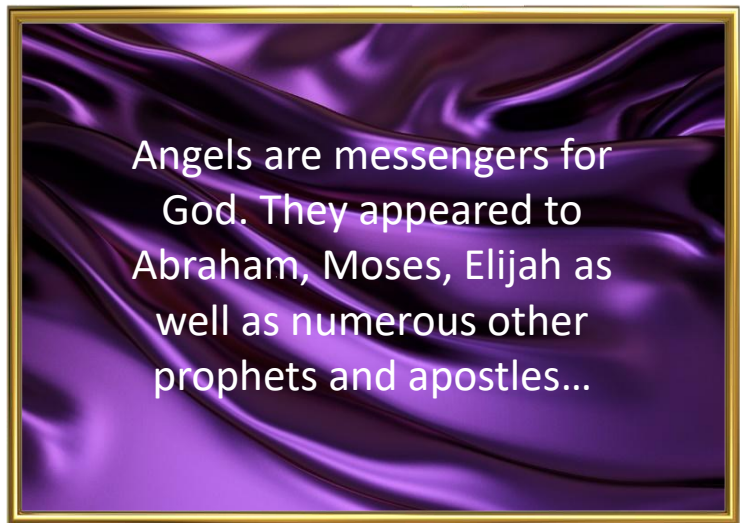
CHAPTER TWO: MYSTERY OF ANGELS AND EVIL SPIRITS

The November 2024 issue of *The Lantern* magazine contains two very comprehensive articles about elements of the subject covered in chapter two of *Mystery of the Ages*. These articles, titled "Angelic Watchers" and "Satan,

The Destroyer of Faith,” cover both basic types of spirit beings. The Great God, through the Word, Jesus Christ, designed and created these spirit beings, each of which were uniquely created -- millions or perhaps billions of them! Angels are individual spirit beings, each having a mind of greater capacity and ability than human minds, capable of having attitudes, purposes and intentions. They are invisible, composed completely of spirit, and were given immortal life. Angels, because they were created by God, are called “sons of God” (**Job 1:6**), but they were not spiritually BEGOTTEN nor BORN sons of God.

INVISIBLE AGENTS

God had angels specifically assigned to supervise and protect His Church and to look after His begotten children throughout all its history (**Acts 12:15; Matthew 18:10**). He has angels who continually walk through the earth to observe and report back to him the overall conditions on earth. “...**They are the eyes of the LORD, Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth**” (**Zechariah 4:10**). Continuing, God promises, “**For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways**” (**Psalm 91:11**). Twelve of God’s angels will be the gatekeepers in the new city of Jerusalem, one for each tribe of Israel (**Revelation 21:12**).



Angels are messengers for God. They made their presence known to Abraham, Moses, Elijah, as well as numerous other prophets and apostles, by manifesting themselves in human form before these individuals. Three of the angels were of high rank -- Michael (**Daniel 10:13**), Gabriel (**Daniel 8:16**) and Lucifer (**Isaiah 14:12**), who became Satan (meaning, adversary), and whom Jude identifies as an archangel (**Jude 9**). The archangel Michael is specifically assigned to protect and minister to the twelve tribes of Israel (**Daniel 10:21; 12:1**) and to the true Church of God today (**Revelation 12:7**).

God designed the potential of angels to be able to take over the entire universe and to improve and finish the billions of physical planets surrounding the uncountable stars and suns. He intended angels to have a vital part in the final creation of the endless universe.

THE PERFECT CREATION

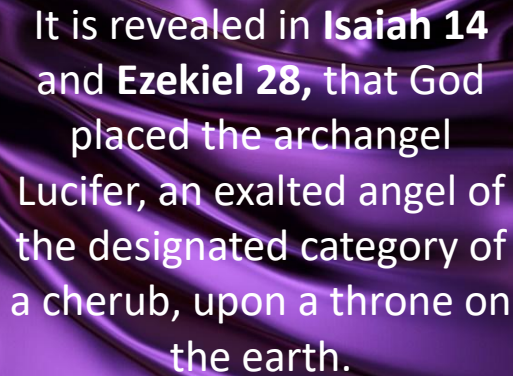
Genesis 1:1 reads, “**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**” The original Hebrew text describes this as a perfect creation. God reveals himself as the Creator of perfection, light and beauty, and every reference in the Bible describes the condition of every completed phase of God’s creation as “**very good,**” or in other words, **PERFECT**. This first verse of the Bible speaks

THE GREAT LUCIFER

It is revealed in **Isaiah 14** and **Ezekiel 28**, that God placed the archangel Lucifer, an exalted angel of the designated category of a cherub, upon a throne on the earth. When God placed these angels, (apparently a third of all the angelic hosts -- **Revelation 12:4**), on the newly created, and glorious earth, Lucifer was given rule over them. God intended him to rule the earth by administering the government of God. Lucifer was a super being of incredible beauty, dazzling brightness, wisdom, knowledge, and power, perfect as God created him (**Ezekiel 28:15**)! The name Lucifer means **“Shining star of the dawn,”** or **“Bringer of light.”** Satan and the angels under his authority on the earth eventually sinned. God created Lucifer with the power of choice and decision, or he could not have been a being of individuality and character.

When God created the earth and planets, what had been created was perfect as far as it existed. But it was not yet a finished or completed creation. God intended the angels to develop and improve the earth, to embellish and beautify it, and to add their own workmanship to the earth’s surface.

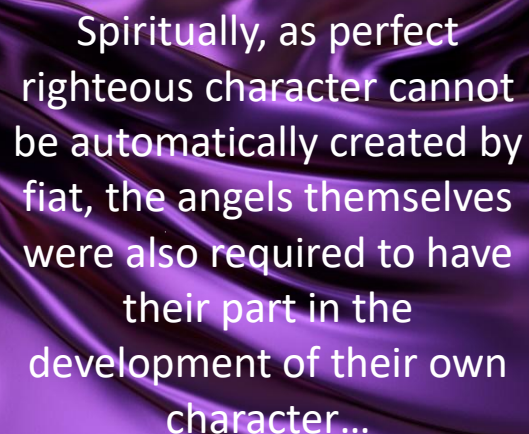
Spiritually, as perfect righteous character cannot be automatically created by fiat, the



It is revealed in **Isaiah 14** and **Ezekiel 28**, that God placed the archangel Lucifer, an exalted angel of the designated category of a cherub, upon a throne on the earth.

of the original physical creation, including the earth and the entire universe. God is a perfectionist! God also created in the spiritual sense as well. He created the angels, and He created them before He created the physical earth (**Job 38:4**). He said of all the angels, **“When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?”** (**Job 38:7**). This reveals that angels were created before the creation of the physical earth, and probably before the universe as well. The sun, stars, and the planets are all of material substance. Angels are individually created spirit beings, composed solely of spirit. They inhabited this earth before the creation of man, as evidenced by this same passage in Job.

We can see, then, that although God created the angels with the minds and the power to think, reason, and to make choices and decisions, there was one important quality that even God’s creative powers could not create instantly by fiat – CHARACTER! The same perfect, holy, righteous character inherent in both God and the Word! This is the kind of character that must be developed, by the choice and the intent of the individual in whom it comes to exist. But the key question here is, how did the angels use their minds once established here on earth?



Spiritually, as perfect righteous character cannot be automatically created by fiat, the angels themselves were also required to have their part in the development of their own character...

angels themselves were also required to have their part in the development of their own character. Their creation could not be finished until this character had been perfected.

However, despite the honor God placed upon him to be selected to rule the earth and the angels on it, Lucifer made the decision to rebel and try to invade God's heaven to take over the universe. **"For you have said in your heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High"" (Isaiah 14:13-14).**

Notice that although Lucifer was given a throne on this earth where he was a ruler, he wasn't content. He wanted more. He wanted to ascend into heaven and knock the Creator God off his throne to place himself in place of God, over the universe, becoming supreme God himself. Instead of developing holy, righteous character, he chose to indulge in dark and sinister feelings and desires and by doing so, condemn himself and others to lives of misery and anger.

ANGELS ON EARTH SINNED

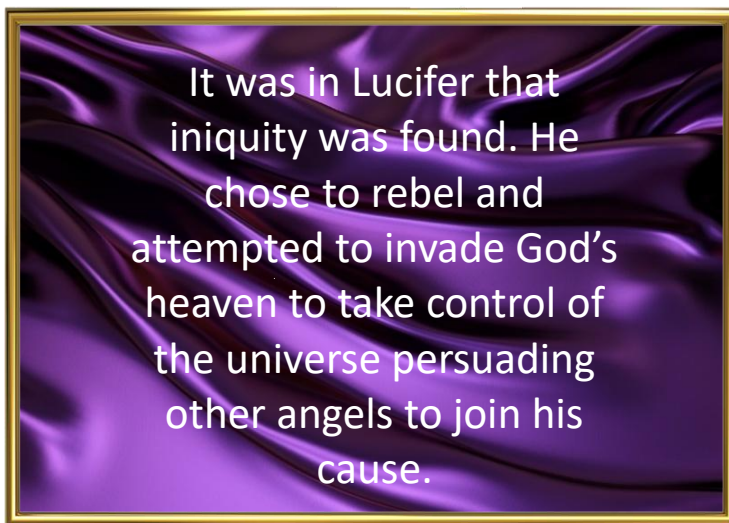
But what about the rest of the angels upon the earth? What caused them to sin, to turn to lawlessness? Certainly, the ordinary angels did



not persuade Lucifer, this great superbeing, to turn traitor. No, it was in Lucifer that iniquity was found. He chose to rebel and attempted to invade God's heaven to take control of the universe, persuading other angels to join his cause. It is not revealed how long it took him to sway the angels under him to turn traitor and follow him, but it's easy to deduct how Lucifer accomplished his mission to turn the angels from God to him.

He most likely used the same method still in evidence today in leading deceived humans into disloyalty, rebellion, and self-centered opposition against God's government. First, one or two are manipulated to feel envy, jealousy, or resentment over an imagined injustice and from there, being led into disloyalty. Then, one or two begin to stir up resentment, to foment unrest among the others.

Think how long it must have taken the soured and embittered Lucifer to turn millions of holy angels into resentment, bitterness, disloyalty, and finally open a vicious rebellion. It could have taken an untold number of years, and all before the first human was created. **Ezekiel 28:16-17** reads, **"By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God;**



And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground..."

Satan's rebellious rule was not a government based upon the principle of love -- of giving or outgoing concern for the good of others -- but it was based on self-centeredness, on vanity, lust and greed, on envy, jealousy, hatred, and even violence, darkness and destruction, instead of light and truth or ugliness instead of beauty.

So, this great being, knowledgeable, trained and experienced at God's own throne in heaven in the administration of the government of God, had rejected that government, corrupted his way, and revolted against God.

He led all his angels astray and into the sin of rebellion, and by this angelic sin, Lucifer became Satan the devil and his angels became demons. Sin is the transgression of God's law (**I John 3:4**). And God's law is the basis of God's government. We know these angels sinned and rebelled against the government of God and there is always a penalty for sin.

The penalty for the sin of the angels is different from the penalty for sin applied for man. It is not death, as it is for man. The penalty for these fallen angels can be found **Jude 6-7**, "**And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a**

similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

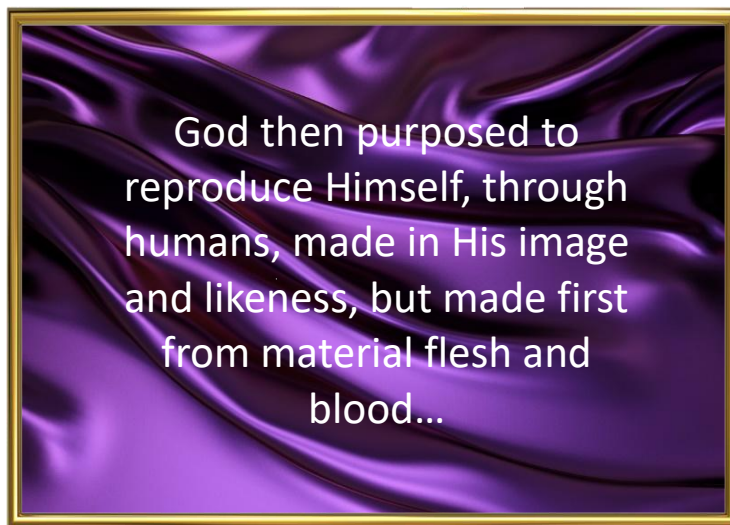
DESTRUCTION RESULTING IN THE RENEWAL OF THE EARTH

Lucifer, once the supreme masterpiece of God's creative power, became like a threatening monster, setting out to destroy God, his own maker, and try to assume all of God's powers to rule the whole universe. This action led to war among the angels (**Revelation 12:7-9**), leading to the earth becoming wasted and empty. God did not create it in such a state, a state of decay, for God is not the author of confusion (**I Corinthians 14:33**).

In **Genesis 1:2** we read, "**The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep..."** The words "**without form, and void**" are translated from the Hebrew words "**tohu**" and "**bohu**", which

could be better translated as either "**waste and empty,**" or "**chaotic, in confusion and in a state of decay."**

In other words, the earth, originally created perfect and beautiful, had now become chaotic, waste and empty, like our moon, except that the earth's surface was then covered with water. **Genesis 1:1** provides an account of the creation of the earth, depicting it as a perfect work. God is the author of life, of beauty, of perfection, while Satan has brought only darkness, ugliness, imperfection, and violence. **Verse 1** shows the creation of a perfect, if unfinished earth, while **verse 2** reveals the



result of the sin of the angels. If we continue to search throughout the Bible, we can see that David was inspired to reveal how God renewed the face of the earth. **“You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth” (Psalms 104:30).**

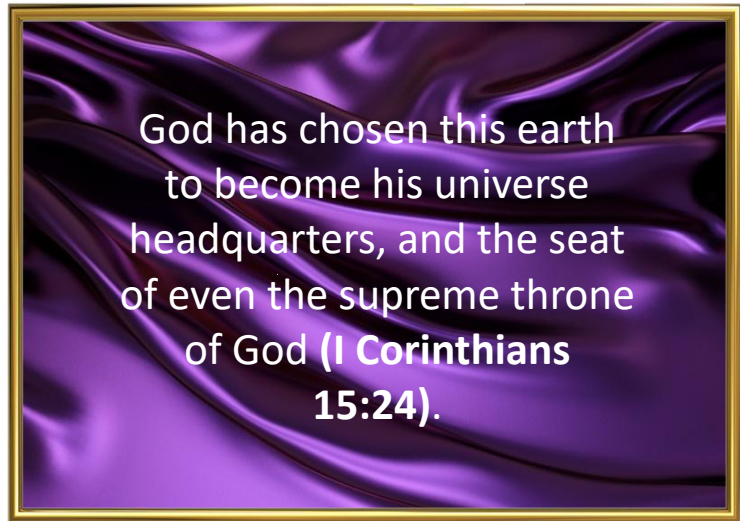
Here is another piece of the missing dimension in knowledge revealed in the Bible, but unrecognized by religion, by science, and by higher education. From **Genesis 1:2** onward, the remainder of this first chapter of the Bible is not describing the original creation of the earth. It is describing a renewing of the face of the earth, after it had become waste and empty because of the sin of the angels.

The earth had become chaotic, waste and empty, also described as being dark. **“...darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.”**

As Satan is the author of darkness, the rebellion of the angels had caused the darkness. God is the author of light and truth, and light displays and enhances beauty, as well as exposing evil. The verses that follow in this first chapter of the Bible describe the renewing of the face of the earth, bringing forth beautiful greenery, trees, shrubs, flowers, and vegetation followed by the creation of fish and fowl, animal life, and finally man.

HUMANS TO SUCCEED **THE FALLEN ANGELS**

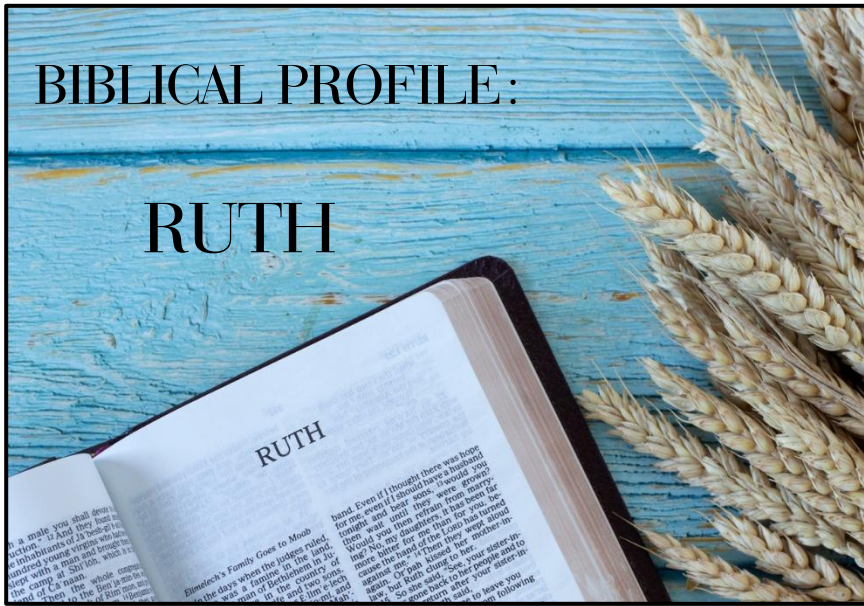
God then purposed to reproduce Himself, through humans, made in His image and likeness, but made first from material flesh and blood, subject to death if there is sin unrepented of, yet with the possibility of being



born into the divine family begotten by God the Father. God saw how this could be done through Christ, who gave himself for that purpose. That is why God put man on the earth! That is what caused God to do this most colossal, tremendous event ever undertaken by the supreme, almighty God ... to reproduce Himself! God’s supreme overall purpose is to create, and God intends to reign supreme over all his creation.

God has chosen this earth to become his universe headquarters, and the seat of even the supreme throne of God (**I Corinthians 15:24**). But Satan had overthrown the government of God on the earth, so now God purposed to restore his government over the earth through man, created in the image of God and finally to become part of the God family. We should heed Paul’s admonition not to be ignorant of Satan’s existence, or of his devices, nor let him get an advantage of us (**II Corinthians 2:11**).

God offers insight into His purpose for humanity, with holy angels aiding in the righteous development of humans who are destined to become part of His family. In the next issue of **The Lantern** magazine, we will continue with a summary of the third chapter within the book that describes the third mystery of the Bible -- **The Mystery of Man.** ♦



In the Old Testament, the book of Ruth is part of a collection of books known as “The Writings,” and considered one of five books called “The Festival Scrolls.” The book of Ruth was the assigned reading for the Feast of Weeks, which we more commonly call the Feast of Pentecost.



This book does more than recount the physical origins of the house of David -- by analogy,

it instructs true Christians in the steps leading to our ultimate destiny -- to be the Bride of Christ at His return. The book opens in Moab, where Elimelech, from Bethlehem, and his wife Naomi went to live due to a famine in Judah.

In Moab, Elimelech's two sons married Moabite women before all three men died. Naomi decided to return to her native land, with her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, planning to accompany her. However, only Ruth did. Being poor, Ruth went to glean in the fields of Boaz, Naomi's relative, during the spring harvest. Following Naomi's counsel, Ruth formally expressed her interest in marrying Boaz at the conclusion of the harvest. Although another kinsman had a prior claim, Boaz redeemed Ruth from this other kinsman and married her. The book closes with Naomi rejoicing in the children of Boaz and Ruth, and contains many analogies and lessons, several of which are instructive at the Pentecost season.

Ruth was an outstanding woman who walked away from evil and chose righteousness. In **Ruth 1:16-17**, Ruth pledged her willingness to abandon everything -- her homeland, her people, her religion -- her whole identity -- to follow Naomi. **“Entreat me not to leave you ... For wherever you go, I will go ... Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.”** Ruth's total commitment to a new identity and a new destiny -- symbolizes our baptism. After repentance and baptism, we promise to put our hand to the plow and never look back (**Luke 9:62**), showing real commitment that requires true repentance. Our commitment must be as strong as Ruth's.

In analogy, Boaz represents Christ, and Ruth, the Church at Christ's coming. Scripture reveals that the Church is the future Bride of Christ, just as Ruth became the bride of Boaz. Boaz readily took Ruth as his wife, because she had found favor in his sight, and he recognized Ruth's sterling character traits. He loved her, as Christ loves the Church. And these two produced a son, Obed, who was the father of Jesse, and Jesse was the father of King David (**Ruth 4:21-22**).

The analogy of Boaz redeeming Ruth from a kinsman points us to the fact that Christ must redeem us if we are to marry Him. Our redemption begins with Christ's death on Passover and is continuing (**Romans 5:8-10, 8:13**), with Christ liberating us from the law of the flesh through the resurrection so when we are transformed into spirit, we will be spirit-born Children of God, who wants us in His Family! This is our destiny, if we grow in character, as Ruth did, and endure to the end (**Matthew 10:22**).◆

MARY WORSHIP

RIGHT OR WRONG?

In many religions throughout the world, over many centuries, the subject of worshipping the mother of a designated deity can be found woven into their worship practices.

Geary Whiting

I recently read an article from Breitbart, an online news agency, which detailed a story that happened recently during the California forest fires near the Los Angeles area.

This article was written about a California family who felt that their faith was restored in the form of a statue that was found intact after their home was destroyed in one of the fires that rampaged through the area. A statue of what is called "The Virgin Mary."

Amid the smoking rooms of the house, which burned to ashes down to the foundation, this statue of Mary and one other were untouched, in perfect condition.

In the article I read, the family described how they sang songs and took the opportunity to pray because of this event.

The family also stated that they felt the statue was saved intact because they had dedicated their home to a concept called "The Sacred Heart of Jesus", and that the preservation of the statue was due to Jesus. They felt that they needed that statue of Mary to be able to pray.

This story made me think back to a book I have, titled *Babylon Mystery Religion* by Ralph Woodrow, and a section of that book about something called "Mary Worship."

Although it may sound strange to us, it has a significance for many of the main religions today and has played a role in the development of various traditions and rituals in some of the existing worldly churches. *Babylon Mystery Religion* provides an interesting study for us all by explaining a lot of the history of this subject.

"MOTHERS AND SONS" THROUGHOUT HISTORY

For example, in Egypt, one of the "gods" Egyptians worshipped was Horus, and his

Genesis 1:26 reads, "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..."

mother, Isis, is recognized to have been worshipped at an even higher level than her son. It is very common for the ancient religious monuments of Egypt to show depictions of the infant Horus seated on the lap of his mother, Isis. Furthermore, in Asia the mother of another chosen deity was known as Cybele, and the child as Deoius, with Cybele receiving the higher worship between the two. There are many more examples of this type of worship all around the world, all of which is really nothing more than paganism.

On top of these very real pagan “Mother Worship” examples, certain modern-day religions continue in the same vein by including the mother of Jesus Christ, Mary, in prayer and worship services. How on earth did this come to be, when we know that God stated in **Exodus 20:3** of His Ten Commandments that: **“You shall have no other gods before Me.”**

From the definition of the Hebrew word “Elohim” in **Genesis 1:1** (the Hebrew word translated as God), we know that God is a family, not a singular personage. Continuing, **Genesis 1:26** reads, **“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...”**

The only other component of the God family here is the Word, the one who would become Jesus Christ. **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.” (John 1:1-2).**

Nowhere do we see a mention of another member of the God family existing at the time of creation, or of anyone else who should be worshipped, including Mary, the mother of Christ.

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”
(John 1:1-2).**

So how did this widespread worship of Mary come to be, and is it even Biblically correct?

ANCIENT HISTORY OF “MOTHER WORSHIP”

As we saw above, the story of the mother and child was widely known across the ancient world, including Babylon, developing into established forms of worship in many nations. The Babylon worship of their “goddess” Semiramis (otherwise known as Ishtar), revolved around her claim to be the wife of the sun god (Nimrod), the idolatrous “queen of heaven,” and was a key element to the start of what is called “Mother Worship.”

The name Ishtar was pronounced in the same way that we pronounce the word “Easter” in English. She was worshipped in the spring with a feast day to celebrate fertility.

From Cybele and Deoius in Asia to Devaki and Crishna in India, and more, regardless of the names or places, these women represent the wife of Baal, who was often known as the “virgin queen of heaven.” When the children of Israel fell away from the teachings of God, they, too, took up with mother goddess worship. In **Judges 2:13** we read, **“They forsook the LORD**

and served Baal and the Ashtoreth's."

Ashtoreth (or Ashtaroth) was the name of the goddess that was known to the children of Israel.

The Bible clearly labels this goddess as the "queen of heaven" in **Jeremiah 44:17-19**, where the prophet Jeremiah strongly corrected them in vain for worshipping her. They ignored and rebelled against his warning. Even in the great city of Ephesus, the mother worshipped there was known as Diana. The temple dedicated to her in that city was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world! Not only at Ephesus, but throughout all Asia and in the rest of the world was this "goddess" worshipped (**Acts 19:27**).

**TRANSITION FROM
PAGAN TO
TRADITIONAL**

Since the time of Babel and continuing into our modern twenty-first century, many tenets of the false religion of Nimrod have infiltrated religions of the world!

Today these religions bear Christian names, but many practices are still pagan. These pagan systems were often carefully renamed with names which falsely seemed to honor God Himself! One of the best examples of the

As Christianity began to rise in popularity, many pagans were drawn to it, but their adoration for the mother goddess was so strong, they did not want to forsake her.

**In Judges 2:13 we read,
"They [the Israelites]
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movement of pagan beliefs and practices into modern "traditional" religions may be seen in the way that "Mother Worship" was allowed to continue, but in a slightly different form and with a new name.

As Christianity began to rise in popularity, many pagans were drawn to it, but their adoration for the mother goddess was so strong, they did not want to forsake her.

Page 16 of the book *Babylon Mystery Religion* states... **"Compromising church leaders saw that if they could find some similarity in Christianity with the worship of the mother goddess, they could greatly increase their numbers. But who could replace the great mother of paganism? Of course, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was the most logical person for them to choose. Why, then, couldn't they allow the people to continue their prayers and devotion to a mother goddess only call her by the name of Mary instead of the former names by which she was known? Apparently, this was the reasoning employed, for this is exactly what happened! Little by little, the worship that had been associated with the pagan mother was transferred to Mary." So, "Mother Worship" became "Mary Worship." What a shocking piece of religious history!**

“MARY WORSHIP”

“Mary Worship” was never intended to be part of the original Christian faith. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was obviously a dedicated, godly woman who was specially chosen by God to bear the human body of the Son of God, and yet neither any of the apostles or Jesus himself ever hinted at the idea of worshipping her.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, during the first centuries of the church, no emphasis was placed upon Mary whatsoever. Yet the worship of Mary eventually became an official doctrine at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Ephesus, a city where Diana was worshipped as a goddess since ancient times, became a part of the “Mother Worship” practice adopted by church leaders there. When Paul had come to Ephesus in earlier days, people were truly converted and destroyed their idols of the goddess (**Acts 19:24-26**). How tragic that the church at Ephesus in later centuries compromised and adopted a form of mother-goddess worship.

One astounding proof that “Mary Worship” developed straight out of the pagan “Mother Worship” is clearly seen from the fact that in pagan religions, the mother was worshipped as much (or more) than her son. True Christianity teaches that only Jesus Christ, and He alone of all earth’s beings, has ever lived a life free from sin; and He is to be worshipped -- never His mother.

We could travel the world over, and no matter if we peek inside a massive cathedral or a small village church, we could see that the statue of Mary occupies a prominent position. Contrary to Biblical scriptures, many religions suggest that Mary is more compassionate, understanding, and merciful than her son Jesus.

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mother.**

Certainly, this is opposite to the scriptures! Going right to the scriptures, Mary was shown to be a godly and virtuous woman -- a virgin -- and as such, she was just as much human as any other descendant of Adam’s family. **Romans 3:23** reads, “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**” with the only exception being Jesus Christ. Like everyone else ever born, Mary needed a savior and acknowledged this when she said about the child she carried, “**And my spirit has rejoiced in God my SAVIOR**” (**Luke 1:47**).

Can we understand the concept here? If Mary needed a savior, then obviously she was not a savior, or a “goddess” herself, and needed to repent, be forgiven, and redeemed just as all others who have ever lived. The divine, or holy, nature of Christ did not depend on his mother being a divine person. He is HOLY because He is the only begotten Son of God, His heavenly Father. This is a good point to remember. Mary is not as important as many religions make her out to be.

How do people in this modern era practice “Mary Worship” today? One of the most recognized practices involves the use of an instrument for prayers dedicated to Mary. These include perhaps the most well-known of

them all -- the rosary. The rosary consists of a chain with fifteen sets of small beads, with each set divided on the chain by one larger bead. The ends of this chain are connected by a medal bearing the imagined imprint or likeness of Mary, which in turn connects with short chain with a crucifix attached. The beads on the rosary are for counting prayers with each bead representing a prayer, and the prayers are repeated over and over around the chain while counting the beads.

The main prayer of the rosary is the "Hail Mary," which refers to Mary as being full of grace, blessed among women, and asking for her to "pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of death." Looking at this logically, doesn't it seem that memorizing prayers and repeating them over and over while counting rosary beads could easily become more of a "memory test" than a spontaneous expression of prayer from the heart? Jesus described repetitious prayer as a practice of heathens. He said, **"And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words" (Matthew 6:7).**

In this scripture, Jesus plainly told his followers NOT to pray in the manner of a repeated prayer over and over. Notice that right after giving this warning, starting in **verse 9**, He gave the disciples an outline of the RIGHT type of prayer (**Matthew 6:9-13**). Jesus provided His disciples with an example of prayer to demonstrate the contrast between acceptable and unacceptable forms of prayer, as well as the type of worship that is inappropriate ... "MARY WORSHIP!"

THE NEED TO KNOW THE TRUTH

Finally, why do we need to know these beliefs, the facts and history behind them? Simply

because we may find ourselves having to explain it someday if we are asked, as I had to explain it one time. Years ago, I had a friend that visited me who was a Catholic and had read this book, ***Babylon Mystery Religion***. After we had discussed it for some time and I had explained the meaning of the mother (and "Mary Worship"), he saw the hypocrisy and the ugliness behind the teaching and left his church, eventually becoming a converted member of the Church of God!

It's beyond valuable to have answers to these types of questions that people from some of these belief systems may bring up to us. And in the Millennium, countless people will have been a part of these superstitious religions, believing the teachings of "Mary Worship," and we will be responsible to teach them the right way. God's way! So, it is good to be prepared, to have the understanding, the history, and the knowledge of the components that make up this world's religions.

"And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words" (Matthew 6:7).

It is important to be ready to assist and educate others as we advance in our spiritual growth towards our future with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God.◆



STEADFAST PILLARS

The book of I Corinthians shows us that we as Christians are to remain steadfast and immovable as PILLARS! “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (I Corinthians 15:58).

Gary Liebold

In 1991, I sat down with a local elder at a nearby restaurant over coffee and expressed my concerns over the doctrinal changes taking place in the Worldwide Church of God. He had been a long-time member since the early 1960’s, and an honest, dedicated, and spiritually strong elder as well. Even though decades have gone by, I can still remember the last thing he said to me that evening. As we were standing outside, he asked, “Gary, do you see the pillars holding up this building?” I said,

“Yes!” He went on to say, “It only takes a FEW pillars to hold up and support a building. Make sure you always remain as a pillar.” I knew exactly what he meant. He wasn’t talking about a physical building; he was referring to something spiritual.

Obviously, though, not everyone has remained faithful over the years, many have completely compromised and fallen away. We also read in **II Thessalonians** about a spiritual falling away,

as prophesied. **“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first... (II Thessalonians 2:3).** The “sheep” have been SCATTERED! Sadly, some members disagree with several doctrines they once believed, while others have completely turned aside from everything they were taught. There’s a smorgasbord of ideas and opinions out there.

However, there ARE those who have remained loyal, not to an organization of men, but to God and His Truth. They are the “called, chosen and faithful,” who will be with Jesus Christ when He returns to this earth. **“...For He [Christ] is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:14).** We are instructed in **Jude 3** to contend (struggle) for the faith (truthfulness of God) that was once delivered to us. **“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”** Spiritual PILLARS will continue to uphold the TRUTH and not compromise!

DEFINITION OF A PILLAR

In the Bible, a pillar symbolizes stability, strength, and support, often representing the foundational truths and faith that uphold God’s presence in His Church. Pillars, in architectural terms, also refer to physical structures that support buildings, memorials, or monuments. The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines a pillar as a “slender, freestanding, vertical support or column, or one who occupies a central or responsible position.” In the *King James Bible Dictionary*, a pillar is described as “a structure used to support a building (**Judges 16:26,29**); as a trophy or memorial (**Genesis 28:18; 35:20; Exodus 24:4; 1 Samuel 15:12**, or as a place, (more correctly translated as a “monument,” or “trophy of victory,”) as in **II Samuel 18:18**.

The “plain of the pillar” in **Judges 9:6** is thought to be the “oak of the pillar,” as is found in the Revised Standard Version. This was otherwise known as the monument or stone set up by Joshua (**Joshua 24:26**).”

It’s clear from both a strictly physical definition as well as a spiritual definition, a pillar is an integral part of a support structure, either of a building, a community, or of the Church. Pillars are famous for being hard to destroy, and if constructed correctly, are sometimes thought to be immovable. All throughout the Middle East are archeological evidence of pillars still standing centuries after the buildings they supported are long gone. Let’s examine a few of these examples.

PILLARS PRESERVED THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES

There are several exciting examples of pillars still standing centuries after the structures they supported have been destroyed and, in many cases, vanished. First are the ruins of the ancient city of Persepolis, located in southwest Iran. Persepolis was the ancient capital of the Persian Empire during the Achaemenid era. Founded by Darius around 515 BC, the city stood as a monument to the vast power of Persian kings.



Ancient City of Persepolis



Persepolis

Today, it is among the world's greatest archeological sites, with the imposing remains of Persepolis standing about 50 miles northeast of the city of Shiraz. The ruins of Persepolis contain the remains of many ancient buildings and monuments, including the "Gate of All Nations", the "Hundred-Column Hall", the "Council Hall", and the "Tryptilion Hall." All are constructed of dark grey marble, with 13 soaring stone pillars still standing from the 100 original columns from Darius the Great's audience hall. Only these 13 have stood firm and unmoved through two and a half millennia of ravaging desert winds, sandstorms, and museum exhibit hunters!

Next is the stunning example of Herod the Great's castle complex, containing two lavish palaces enclosed in the thick walls of a fortress and supported by thick pillars. Built on the top of the barren, mountainous desert plateau of Masada (interestingly meaning "fortress, strong foundation, or support"), Herod's Palaces were located thousands of feet above the Dead Sea in Israel. It's considered to be one of the greatest archaeological sites in Israel and, perhaps, across the world.

Herod's complex at Masada included a synagogue, storehouses for provisions, and

deep cisterns to collect and store water. At one end of the complex was his private, residential palace that included two terraces, again supported by massive pillars, for hosting parties and feasts. At the other end was Herod's immense ceremonial palace where his throne room was located. Many of these pillars were set into the rock for added support. Archaeologists have carefully restored sections of the complex, exposing extensive columns (pillars), decorated with fresco and stucco designs.

Israeli archaeologist and former Israeli soldier Yigael Yadin was allowed the task of excavating the site of Masada from 1963-1965. These excavations fully revealed almost all the structures built by Herod the Great in the second half of the 1st century B.C., including the famous three-tiered 'Hanging Villa' on the northern peak. These palaces remain to this day as among the finest examples of Herodian architecture.

Then there are the many ancient ruins of buildings found throughout Greece. The magnificence of this ancient architecture is demonstrated by a structure in Athens, once the biggest temple in all of Greece. The building wasn't finished until the second century A.D.,



Herod's Masada Palace

under the reign of Emperor Hadrian, although it was started in the sixth century B.C. Its enormous size represented the strength and stature of the city of Athens. The area is a striking sight, recalling the grandeur of classical Greece, despite being partially destroyed throughout the ages but still having a few pillars that remain standing. It is located today in the middle of modern Athens.

Why did a few pillars of each of these impressive ancient structures remain standing and steadfast while others fell? Nobody really knows for certain. Even the best architect in the world could only offer an educated guess at whatever mysterious combination of fate and physical law was responsible. Yet what if we apply this same question, by analogy, to God's Church today? What if we compare the strength of a physical pillar to the resilience of a person today?

A PILLAR IS STEADFAST

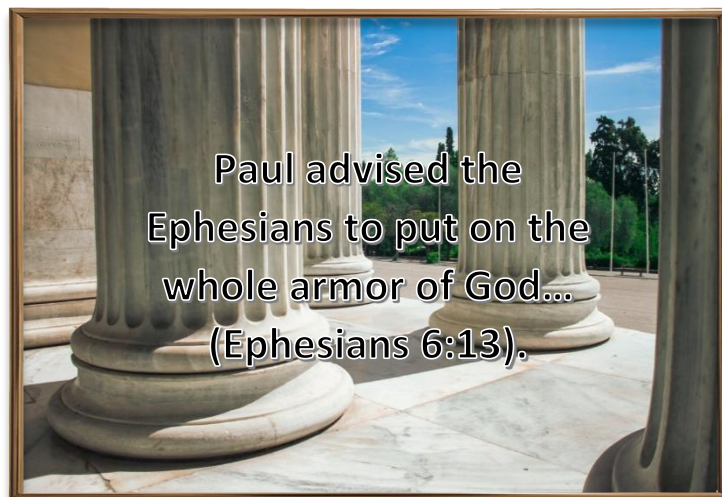
Just like physical pillars, what enables some spiritual "pillars" to remain steadfast and stable throughout the multitude of trials and tests through the years, while others collapse and fall away? We need to know the answer to this question! We should remember that Jesus Christ said, "**But he who endures to the end shall be saved**" (Matthew 24:13).

Only those who remain standing, who remain faithful, after every trial in their lives will be found worthy of entering God's Kingdom. Paul advised the Ephesians to put on the whole armor of God, that they might "...**be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all,**

to stand" (Ephesians 6:13). Thankfully for us, we can know the answer to this question.

God, the Architect of the universe, tells us in His Word, the Bible, just how we can remain steadfast to the end. First, we should understand more about what it means to be steadfast. In the *Miriam Webster Dictionary*, the word steadfast is defined as, "**firmly fixed in place: immovable; not subject to change; firm in belief, determination, or adherence: loyal...**" Furthermore, a synonym for steadfast is faithful. In this end-time, steadfastness is a rare commodity. One

reason may be that, especially in the Western world, people are today more comfort-oriented and self-centered than ever before. Many people feel that trials and adversities should be avoided at all costs.



Young people perhaps suffer the most from this avoidance type of behavior. Their attitudes and character are still forming, and they tend to absorb the behavior patterns of the world around them. Therefore, many young people adopt the approach that "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence."

For example, if schoolwork gets tough, they skip it or drop out. If a job poses a problem, they simply give up and look for another, often falling back on government sponsored unemployment payments while they haphazardly search for that supposedly easier job. If marriage becomes difficult, or their spouse makes too many demands, they escape through divorce. Yet, God wants us to persevere through the trials we face. Paul admonished us with the following... "**Brethren, let each one**



Caesarea, Israel

remain with God in that *state*, in which he was called" (I Corinthians 7:24). It's easy to run away from tough competition, unfriendly colleagues, and difficult assignments. Remember, though, that if steadfastness of character is hard to develop in this world, steadfastness of belief is just as hard to come by. Only by mastering the challenges we face can we build steadfast character like God's.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the young evangelist Timothy, he explained that every Christian is a soldier: **"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus ... You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Timothy 2:1,3).** A soldier may not turn his back on the enemy and flee the front; he must endure to the end of the battle. For those whom God calls, every soldier in God's Church, mastering hardship is a very real and educative process of the spiritual character-building process.

When we are baptized, we begin to understand that trials and hardship do not magically end, but that they serve a purpose in our Christian life. If we do overcome our trials, we will be able to understand their purpose and be able to handle them differently than we did before. With faith, we can depend on God's help to develop the character needed to remain

steadfast through his Holy Spirit and to become a spiritual pillar.

PILLARS SO STRONG THEY COULD STAND ALONE

Not all pillars that have been discovered in the ancient ruins from days long past have been found in correlation with buildings. Some pillars were designed and constructed to stand alone, serving as markers or reminders of rulers or historical events.

These pillars, instead of being support objects for an individual physical structure, served a more distinct, even educational, purpose as a support for a culture or a community. The discovery of these types of individual pillars preserved through ancient lands was not reserved for what we see as modern nations of the Middle East today. In India, a set of individual columns, called the Ashoka Pillars, are remarkable symbols of ancient Indian history, representing Emperor Ashoka's journey from a ruler known for his success in combat to one remembered for his teachings on morality, peace, and compassion.

These Pillars, built in the 3rd century B.C., stand across India today, each with its own unique story. The main principles inscribed on these pillars focus on non-violence, obedience to

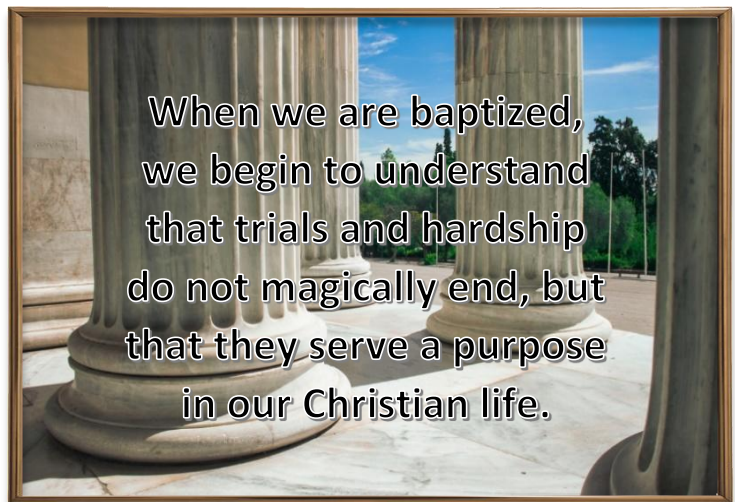
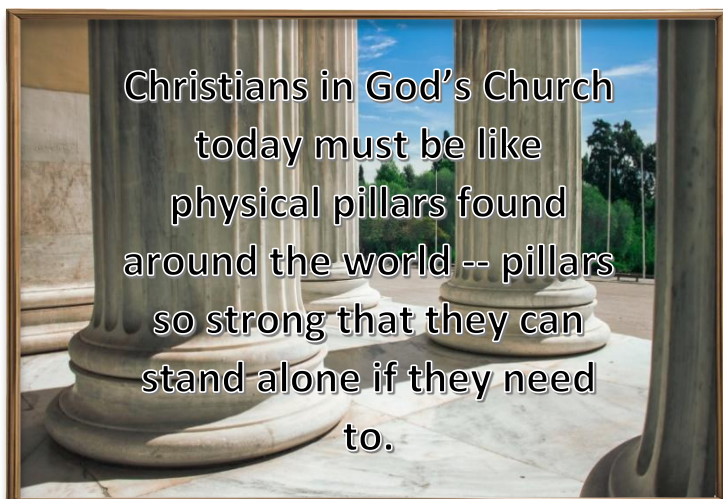


Ashoka Pillar, India

parents, respect to teachers and priests, kindness toward friends and neighbors, humane treatment of servants, and generosity towards all. Originally dotting the landscape in great numbers, these pillars faced the tests of time, weather, and human conquest.

In this modern, end-time world in which we dwell, we have seen God's Church practically destroyed after the death of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Leading ministers have compromised with either their own personal interpretations of the scriptures or have bowed down to preferences of their members to establish and, most likely, hold on to the revenue from these members. Church members themselves have been compromised or have just given up their hard-earned and personally proven belief in God's laws and doctrines. They have gone back into the world.

But with those scattered Christians who have held fast to God's truth, it has become more of an individual battle to stand fast without fellow church members living close by to offer daily or weekly human support. Christians in God's Church today must be like physical pillars found around the world -- pillars so strong that they can stand alone if they need to -- if built on a firm foundation.



God's plan provides that firm foundation of Christian steadfastness. Jesus Christ understands our human tendency to waver. He came to this earth as a human and knows we would collapse if left to ourselves. He was **"...in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews. 4:15).**

Christ offers us a blueprint, spiritual reinforcement so to speak, to shore us up and make us strong. We might have to stand, as a spiritual pillar, on our own, but if we hold our elder brother and Captain of our Salvation, Jesus Christ, close to us, we are never truly alone spiritually. Even standing alone in a distinct location, we are part of the fabric of God's Family. We are grounded in the foundation provided for us. God certainly wants to help us be steadfast and strong, to be able to be an individual pillar if needed, no matter what problems we face. We must constantly pray and study God's plan, to emulate Christ's example, not just admire it. God's Spirit will shore us up if we daily, fervently, ask God to renew His Spirit within us. God wants to create character within us as steadfast as His own.

PILLARS ASSAULTED BY THE ILLUSIONS OF THE WORLD

On a purely physical level, the Old Testament abounds in references to Baal worship.

Judges 2:11, for example, records that **“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals;”** Gideon, by contrast, threw down the altar of Baal (**Judges 6**). But damage had been done among Israel, and they were lured into a compromise and way of worship they never should have considered by the glitter of the surrounding nations and cities.

The ancient city of Palmyra, known as the legendary **"Bride of the Desert"**, once stood on an ancient trade route halfway between the Syrian coast and the Euphrates valley. A rich culture flourished within its walls and its trading partners reached international proportions, with camel caravans bringing goods from faraway Egypt, India, and Rome. Palmyra was a famous city, full of wealth and glamour, with their rituals and riches seductive to other nations and peoples. Their god Baal was worshiped by many ancient Near Eastern peoples.

Likewise, being born into this current chaotic world makes it hard for the average person to believe God with the kind of simple, unwavering faith Jesus wants us to have. Especially in the Western world today, the lure of wealth and instant gratification can be hard to resist. Like the trade routes of Palmyra made new and exotic goods available throughout the



limited landscape of the ancient world, online shopping companies make just about anything one could desire, available across our world today.

Almost any type of entertainment can be found, no matter if it is available in person, online, virtual reality, or the new, upcoming A.I.



(Artificial Intelligence) technology. The glitz and glitter of this modern-day world outshines anything our ancestors could imagine.

Even the leading figures we encounter in this world are, for the most part, lacking inspiration and integrity. These can include the boss at the office, television and music industry stars, and politicians and many others. Our experiences in the world with these personalities subtly influence concepts of God the Father in heaven as well as our personal outlook on life, behavior, and character development.





them emanates the Spirit of God, by which God is omnipresent and omniscient. God the Father is the divine Father of the God family, into which truly converted Christians shall be born."

God knows how difficult it is for us to remain steadfast in character and belief, which is why He offers us the gift of His Holy Spirit upon repentance and baptism. However, we must be willing to do our part and patiently strive for steadfastness. Look what Jesus promises: **"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God..."** (Revelation 3:11-12).

These pillars will never crumble or decay, because they are built upon a strong foundation that God the Father and Jesus Christ has supplied.

REMAIN STEADFAST AS A PILLAR IN GOD'S CHURCH

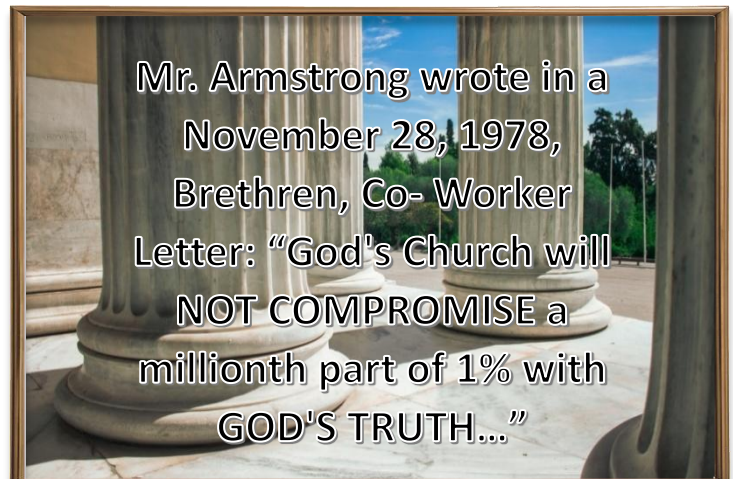
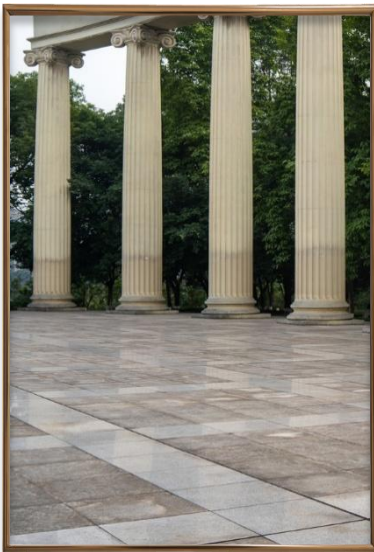
In the days of Elijah, there was a small group of people **"whose knees have not bowed to Baal"** (I Kings 19:18, Romans 11:4). **"Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace"** (Romans II :5). These undefiled people -- the people of God's Church,

Observing many, though not all, political figures shake our confidence. As Winston Churchill

once commented, **"A politician needs the ability to foretell what will happen tomorrow, next week and next year; he also needs the ability to later explain why none of it happened."**

Tragically, this

overall disillusionment with most of society's leading figures all too often affects our readiness to believe God. This is why some pillars of God's Church topple and fall. They simply forget who and what is God, and that He is there for us. In Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's book, ***Mystery of The Ages***, we find a summary of exactly who and what God is that can serve as a reminder to His people as we navigate this treacherous world around us. On page 57, we can read, **"God is Creator of all that exists. Both God and the Word (who became Christ) have existed eternally and before all else. From**



are the stones, the pillars with which God is building His Temple.

Mr. Armstrong wrote the following on November 28, 1978, Brethren, Co- Worker Letter... **“God's Church will NOT COMPROMISE a millionth part of 1% with GOD'S TRUTH as He reveals it to us who willingly accept it -- hunger and thirst for it! When a program of watering down starts, it grows with increasing momentum. A number who left God's true Church, following a man or men, have continued turning more and more from God's TRUTH, until they no longer keep the Sabbath or the Holy Days of God! Many of Jesus' disciples, who had learned from Him IN PERSON, and had fellowshiped with Him IN PERSON, went out of His fellowship. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:66-68) Jesus is IN His Church today. He will never forsake nor leave it. WILL YOU?”**

We are to remain steadfast and immovable forever (through God's Spirit), as PILLARS! **“Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a PILLAR in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 3:11-13).**

If we sacrifice our own selfish carnal desires for the wealth of possessions and experiences this world offers now and overcome our selfish pulls, we will very soon take our places as pillars in a Temple that will never waste away!



Although we might have had to stand as a pillar physically alone, isolated from others of like mind, we will no longer have to stand alone. We will have proven our strength and will be included as spiritual pillars in God's temple.

Those Christians who are **“called, chosen and faithful”** will gain entrance to and live forever in New Jerusalem (**Revelation 3:12**). What a glorious reward for those of us qualifying for God's Kingdom! We will be pillars in New Jerusalem and bear the names of God the Father, as well as Christ's new name. What is a pillar? A spiritual pillar is a leader in God's Work (**Galatians 2:9**).

The clear indication is that we will be top leaders in God's government. Finally, let's read one more paragraph written in the same Brethren and Co-Worker Letter from November 1978 of Mr. Armstrong... **“Stand steadfast. How much have you prayed so far today? How earnestly and fervently do you pray? You know God speaks of some who honor Jesus with their lips, "but their heart is far from me." Let us RENEW our dedication to Jesus Christ, the living Head of God's Church. We need to draw closer to Him -- for I now have to WARN YOU -- terrifying days are ahead!”** His words were true then and remain even more so today. Be steadfast like a physical pillar today -- so we can be a spiritual pillar in God's Kingdom forever! ♦

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

(PART TWO)



In the first part of this article, published in the February 2025 issue of The Lantern magazine, we covered crucial information concerning God's Holy Spirit and why we must use God's Holy Spirit -- not just have it!

Gary Liebold

While we may THINK about using the power of God's Spirit to overcome personal sins, we often neglect to apply it. Repentance, we learned, leads to the death of our selfish ways and totally yielding to God. This is the only way for God's Spirit to dwell in us and produce spiritual fruit (**Galatians 5:22-25**).

This one key act, repentance, unlocks the tree of life and all its wonderful fruits. Since repentance means change, we must change from our physical leaning carnal minds to a totally conquered and yielded mind. Selfish desires must be completely removed, for selfishness is the number one destroyer of personal happiness. For example, the apostle Paul repented and yielded his life to God, putting aside his carnal mind with all its ego and selfish ways. In **Galatians 2:20**, he wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..."

So, we must totally remove our selfishness for God to dwell in us through the Holy Spirit and do as the apostle Peter commanded in **Acts 2:38**, "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Our repentance of self and selfish desires must be a continual process, requiring a second by second, minute by minute vigilance of our thoughts. We must bring every thought under scrutiny, and if it breaks God's law, it must be removed (**II Corinthians 10:5**). By bringing a corresponding unselfish, lawful thought into our minds, we push out the sinful, unwanted, thoughts.

We need to repent, yield to God, and then get ourselves out of the way. Then, the tree of life will flourish in us through the power of God's Spirit and produce the fruits of the Spirit. There are a total of nine fruits of the Spirit listed in **Galatians 5**. The first five... love, joy, peace,

longsuffering (otherwise known as patience), and kindness have been covered at length in the first part of this article. So now, let's look at the final four fruits of the Spirit that will sweeten our lives -- goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

GOODNESS

Goodness is considered one of the most significant virtues. It is being generous and giving, helpful to our family, friends, and fellow man without restraint. Our greatest example, the one we should be striving to pattern our lives on, Jesus Christ, performed many good, even miraculous acts of kindness to others -- for example, healing the sick, feeding the multitudes, casting out unclean spirits, and more. In **John 14:11**, Jesus said, **“Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the very works' sake.”** While He was mainly referring to the miracles that He performed, the intent was to highlight that His acts were GOOD.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren in **I Corinthians 12:27**, saying; **“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members individually.”** Today, Jesus is not here to perform good works in person, but we of God's Church who comprise His Body can and should

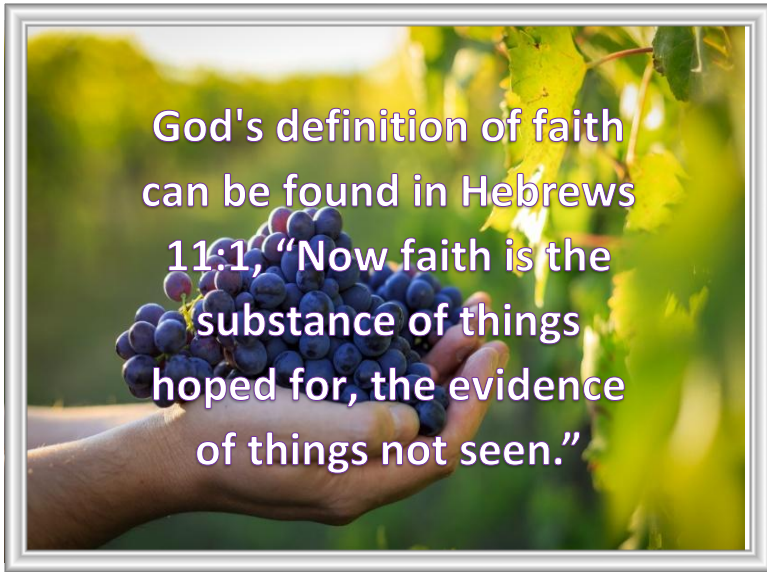


perform good works as He did. There are many things that we should all be doing to glorify God in our lives, but an easy way to start is perhaps to be a good neighbor.

One of the most beautiful parables taught by Christ that we probably all learned as children is the story of the good Samaritan (**Luke 10:30-37**). The story tells of a poor man attacked by thieves, who lay wounded and suffering by the roadside. He was ignored by others, but a compassionate Samaritan was not too “good” to help a fellow he had never seen before. Notice Jesus' instruction: **“Go and do thou likewise.”**

Just how good a neighbor are we? This is a vitally important factor in determining our ability to be a light to others and, additionally, in determining our own happiness. Let's go out of our way to be a wonderful neighbor. We should remember that Jesus said, **“It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35)**. Acts of goodness, of kindness, reflect the love of God in us through the utilization of the fruits of the Spirit. Put the love of God to work in our lives. Love is what we do, not just something we say or “feel inside.” If we ask Him,





make the mistake of confusing faith with emotion. They try to work up faith mentally, which to them means an emotional feeling. These feelings are not proof of true faith because they are physical sensations that can be seen, felt, heard, tasted, or smelled. REAL faith is a spiritual matter, not physical.

It takes our own personal faith to believe in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins, but that faith doesn't save us! It is only when the Holy Spirit comes into us that we receive the saving faith of Christ as a free gift from God, something we could

never earn. Jesus is the source of living, active, dynamic faith. And if Christ is in us through His Spirit, He imparts His own faith to us, which makes our spiritual obedience and ultimate salvation possible. James instructs us, in **James 1:6**, to: **"...ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind."** We should pray daily for greater faithfulness and for more of God's Holy Spirit, asking in faith!

GENTLENESS

Gentleness, sometimes referred to as meekness, is a great fruit in a small package. Gentleness is the smallest yet most potent fruit of them all for it is the spirit of humility. A truly meek Christian will realize their own smallness

God will inspire acts of goodness toward your family and others. Try to be understanding, patient and always ready to be of service, to perform good works, to others.

FAITHFULNESS

What is the biblical definition of FAITH? What, exactly, is the kind of faith we need to please God -- to live the obedient, overcoming Christian life outlined in the Bible and to be born as glorified children of God in His great ruling Family? This fruit of the spirit will give confidence and inspiration to us. Faithfulness is dedication and loyalty, but more than that, faithfulness incorporates the feeling of encouragement and reassuring. God's definition of faith can be found in **Hebrews 11:1**, **"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."** Faith is the substance and assurance of what we hope for before we receive it. It is the evidence that we shall receive what we do not yet see. This faith is based on the sure promises of God, which are recorded Biblically.

Faith is different from the concept of positive thinking, which involves trying to improve and overcome problems and trials through optimistic thoughts. People often



before the Almighty God. **Philippians 2:3** reads, *“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”* Truly, a demonstration of humility -- of gentleness.

Now to be clear, gentleness does not mean weakness. For example, God created man and woman in His own image (**Genesis 1:27**), but Peter expounded upon the details of God’s creation to call the woman a **“weaker vessel” (I Peter 3:7)**, while structurally, the man could therefore be thought of as the stronger vessel. Again, Peter specifies that the man, the husband, should give **“honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel.”** It takes a great deal of strength of mind, determination, thoughtfulness, and humility -- gentleness -- on the man’s part to accomplish this directive.

Think of it this way ... the wife could be compared to a delicate yet beautiful crystal vase that has esteem and value, while structurally, a husband could be compared to a cast-iron skillet. That skillet may be the workhorse of a kitchen, strong, and reliable, practically indestructible. But both items, and vessels, are equally valuable in God’s eyes. However, the man, the tough old cast iron



skillet, if you will, is required to show care, honor and esteem toward the woman, treating her with the gentleness one would show for valuable, easily breakable crystal glass. We can conclude from this analogy that no; gentleness is not weakness!

The world is anything but gentle today, and yet that is no reason not to develop the important and necessary fruit of gentleness that we will have if we have God’s Spirit. Jesus set us an example in all these characteristics of the fruits of God’s Holy Spirit. He was meek and humble. We will also be meek if we are following in His steps. Why not grow the fruit of gentleness, or meekness, on our vine?



SELF-CONTROL

Finally, self-control is the last fruit at the end of the vine, and it regulates the taste, growth and giving of all the other fruits. This fruit also controls and destroys our selfish tendencies, allowing us to develop more of God’s perfect, holy, and righteous character. These fruits of the Spirit will not automatically grow or be given to us ... it takes a lot of determined effort on our part, a lot of self-control to develop them. We must actively and consciously control our worldly minds every moment of our lives,



and then we must use God's Spirit by yielding to God's inspiration in producing all the fruits of the Spirit. **"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).** Self-control is more than just a self-correction after we have done something outside of God's law. It is being aware of His law, the Ten Commandments, and not just as they appear on paper or a simple, physical breaking of these commandments. Self-control also applies to the innermost thoughts and how the thoughts break the commandments.

For example, Jesus Christ said in **Matthew 5:27-28**, **"You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."** He makes it plain in this



one statement that the obedience to God's laws is more than just a physical obedience and requires a great deal of self-awareness and self-control. We must learn to control not just our day-to-day actions, but our innermost thoughts as well. This is true self-control.

THESE NINE FRUITS COMPLETE OUR CHARACTER

God called us out of this world and forgave our sins. He has begotten us with His Spirit, which allows us to bear fruits of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 details all these nine special attributes of such a called-out person, **"But the fruit of the Spirit is, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."**

The more these fruits of God's Spirit abound in our lives, the more precious our character becomes in God's sight. We need all nine fruits of God's Spirit to complete the development of holy, righteous character. Then the beauty of that character will be obvious to others too, an indication that something special sets such a Christian apart.

These fruits of God's Holy Spirit are expressed in many ways that are apparent to others, whether they are converted or not. They are evident in our attitude toward others, both in and out of the Church of God. How we help the needy, the sick and afflicted around us, are indications to whether we have the proper love which is motivated by God's Spirit. Let us examine all nine of these fruits carefully, in detail, and understand them clearly. These are things that we can see in our own lives, and if we have them, others can see them, too! If we live and work with the fruits of God's Spirit, then we, too, will hear Him say, **"...Well done, good and faithful servant; ... Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew 25:21).**◆

BIBLE STUDY

PENTECOST

God has a Master Plan for mankind that He reminds us of with His seven annual festivals. The third step in God's plan is called the Day of Pentecost, also known as the Feast of Firstfruits.

1) The Feast of Pentecost is a Holy Day, or Sabbath of rest, on which God's people are to assemble, commanded by God to be kept forever. The name "Pentecost" is a Greek word meaning "fiftieth" and is determined by literally counting fifty days from the morrow after the Sabbath that falls during the Days of Unleavened Bread. (**Leviticus 23:15-16**).

2) God established His festivals in conjunction with the two annual grain harvests in the land of Palestine. He used these harvests as a pattern for the two spiritual "harvests" of His master plan for mankind. God intends the spring festivals to illustrate to His Church that all those spirit-begotten children called now, are to become the firstfruits of salvation, the relatively small beginning of His spiritual harvest (**James 1:18**).

3) Jesus Christ was the first to be resurrected from the dead, therefore becoming the FIRST of the firstfruits of the spiritual harvest (**I Corinthians 15:20; Colossians 1:18**). After He was resurrected from the dead, He had to ascend to His Father in heaven to be accepted as a perfect sacrifice (**John 20: 17**), returning from heaven on that same day to appear to His disciples. He became the firstborn Son of God, the first human to complete the process of salvation and be "born again."

4) Jesus could not have become our elder brother and the captain of our salvation with just human strength, without possessing something we all must have to be born again as He was. He could not do any spiritual works, including

complete obedience to God, without having the Holy Spirit, which was directly given to Him from God. (**John 8:28; 14:10**). The Father "dwelt" in Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

5) Christ promised the same spiritual help to His disciples, to His loyal and faithful people. In **John 14:16-17**, Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as the "Spirit of truth", and in **verse 26**, He also portrays it as the "Helper." God's Spirit had been working with the disciples, but Christ promised to send it to be WITHIN them, as it had been within Him. He offers the same promises to us today.

6) **Acts 2:1-4** describes the day the disciples received God's Holy Spirit, thus becoming members of God's spiritual Church. It was on the day of Pentecost that God first sent His Spirit to begin His Church, to beget and strengthen the firstfruits that He was calling (**John 6:44**). Fifty days after Christ's sacrifice was accepted in heaven, the Holy Spirit came to the disciples just as He had promised.

The New Testament Festival of Pentecost is now a memorial that forever commemorates the founding of the Church of God, for it was on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31 that the firstfruits of God's spiritual harvest began to be prepared for reaping into His Family. God knows that to successfully put sin out of our lives and keep it out, our own human willpower and abilities are not enough. We need the spiritual strength of God's Holy Spirit to help us to obey God's law as the firstfruits of God's Great Master Plan. ♦

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

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

The Good News of Tomorrow's World
Personal from Herbert W. Armstrong
July 1969



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

How many judge GOD by the way professing Christians live? How many assume that one must live a *perfect* life, before he can become a Christian? How many say: "If I could give up smoking, I'd become a Christian."

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

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

NOW NOTICE CAREFULLY!

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

There is a definite TIME when God's Spirit enters into one. At the *very moment* he receives the Holy Spirit, he is, in this first sense, *converted*. Yes, *all at once!* If he has Christ's Spirit, he is CHRIST'S -- he is a Christian! The very *Life* of God has entered into (impregnated) him. He has been begotten as a child of God.

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

...The Christian must develop the righteous CHARACTER to choose the right way, and resist the wrong -- to discipline the *self* in the way he ought to go, instead of the way of self-desire and vanity. God's PURPOSE in having created humanity -- in having caused *YOU* to be born -- is to reproduce Himself.

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



COMING ARTICLES



II Peter 1:19

◆ Prophetic Events and the Feast of Trumpets

Jesus said His appearance would be accompanied by the sound of an incredible trumpet blast. The coming of Christ to this earth is pictured by the observance of the Feast of Trumpets. However, if we look at Biblical events preceding the return of Jesus Christ, we can see a series of prophetic events, the “last days” where man would experience the greatest time of trouble ever to occur -- the Great Tribulation.

◆ Bible Study – The Feast of Tabernacles

For God's people around the world, the Feast of Tabernacles is one of the happiest times of the entire year! In large part it's because God ordained the Feast to be family oriented. The Feast is a special, week-long opportunity for the entire family -- the individual, the physical family as well as the spiritual family -- to be together in celebration of the coming WONDERFUL WORLD TOMORROW.

◆ Rivers of Living Waters

In **John 7:38-39**, Jesus Christ said that if you drink of Him, **“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”** But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive...”. Jesus Christ was speaking of the Holy Spirit of God, describing it like living, sparkling water. The Holy Spirit of God is pictured in the Bible as living water. Not a still or stagnant pool of water, but moving, flowing, crystal clear living water!