

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

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**Science and the
Re-Creation**
(See page 16)

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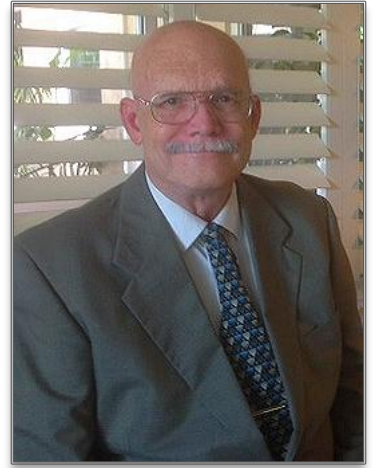
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Personal from the editor



GOD'S JEWELS

We have all known people in the past that we thought of as being "Spiritual POWERHOUSES." These people were unwavering in their beliefs. They defended the TRUTH of God, and they were willing to fight (spiritually) until their death. Some were elders, and others, deacons or lay-members. Yet today, some of these same individuals don't even remotely believe what they once so steadfastly upheld. While we don't sit in a condemning judgment of anyone, clearly there's only ONE set of TRUTHS (from God's perspective), not several different versions. **"...because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie" (II Thessalonians 2:10-11).**

"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:9-10).

The prophet Malachi foretold of a time when some of God's people would grow weary and lose their spiritual focus (**Malachi 3:14-15**), yet others would still retain their vision and keep the faith (**verses 16-17**).

(14) You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; What profit *is it* that we have kept His ordinance, And that we have walked as mourners Before the LORD of hosts?

(15) So now we call the proud blessed, For those who do wickedness are raised up; They even tempt God and go free.' "

(16) Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard *them*; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.

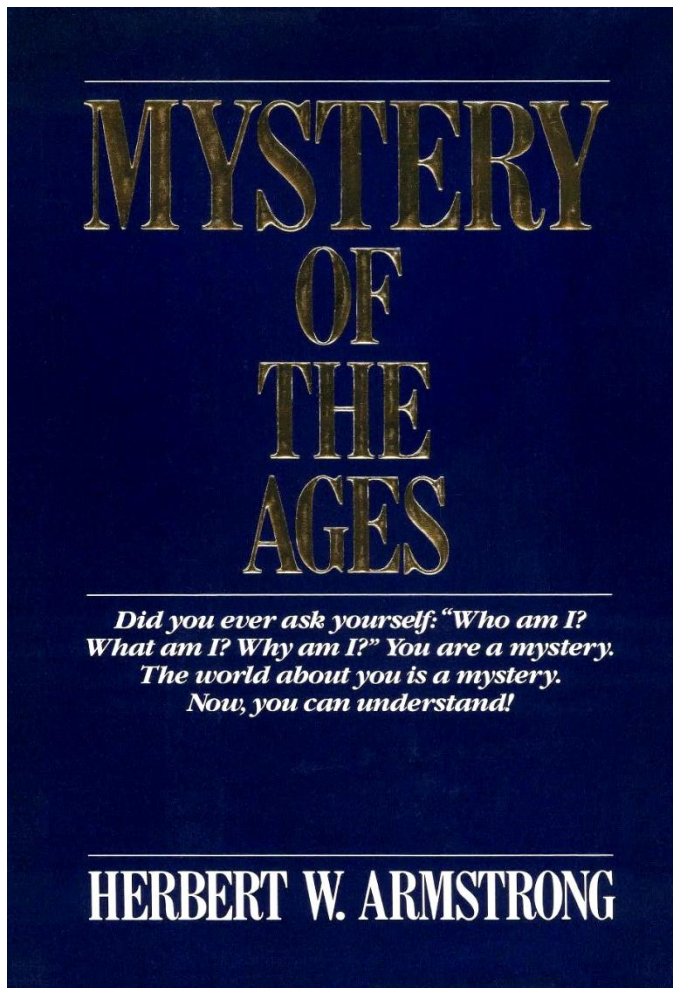
(17) "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him."

(18) Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him" (Malachi 3:14-18).

We should DESIRE to be one of God's "JEWELS" (His special treasure). The only way that can be done is to continue to serve Him LOYALLY and FAITHFULLY! **"But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God'" (Luke 9:62).**

We are getting ever closer to the end of the "race," and God wants each of us to be among the **"called, chosen and faithful."** These three words aren't OPTIONAL; they're REQUIREMENTS if we expect to be with Christ at His return. **"...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).** God's KINGDOM is well worth it!

Gary R. Liebold



OVERVIEW SERIES: MYSTERY OF THE AGES

(PART FIVE)

MYSTERY OF ISRAEL

As The Lantern magazine begins its fifth year in production, we will continue our overview series of Mystery of The Ages with the fifth main chapter of the book, “The Mystery of Israel.” The Lantern presents a series of overviews of all the main seven chapters covering the seven mysteries of the Bible that Mr. Armstrong expounded upon. Please remember that these overview articles are simply meant to serve as a summary, or encouragement to read the book and are not meant to take the place of reading it on your own. Remember, to get the most understanding out of the book or this article, we should compare it with our own Bible.

Gary Liebold

In summary, *The Lantern* magazine’s February 2025 issue gave an overview of the first chapter of *Mystery of the Ages*, exploring questions about who and what God is. The second installment in May 2025 featured the next chapter of *Mystery of the Ages* about angels and evil spirits. The mystery of man was examined in the third article published in August 2025, while the November 2025 issue

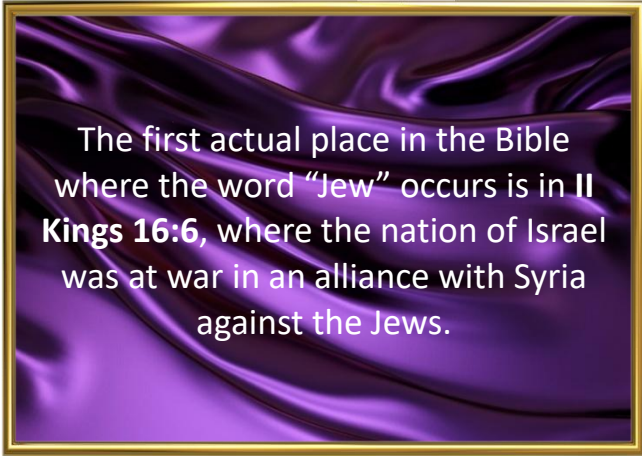
covered the fourth chapter, focusing on the mystery of civilization. Together, these form a continuous thread of understanding of the elements of God’s Master Plan for mankind, and how they all weave together. Let’s continue with the fifth main chapter in *Mystery of The Ages*: “The Mystery of Israel.”

ISRAEL CHOSEN FOR A PURPOSE

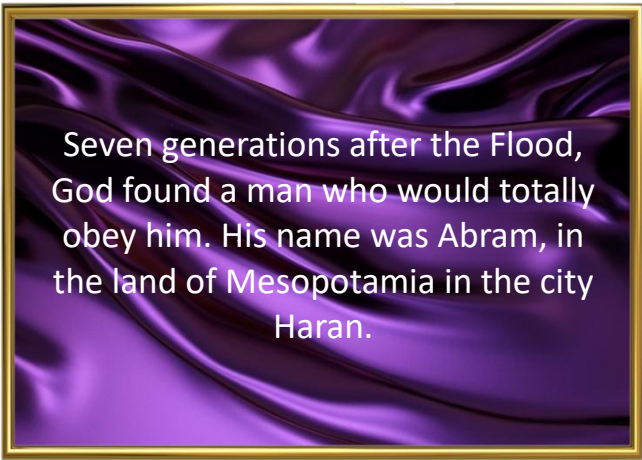
Do we ever think and reflect on how unusual it is that God should have raised up the ancient nation of Israel to be his chosen people? After all, God says he is not a respecter of persons. So then, is He a respecter of nations or have a favorite? Although this chosen nation of Israel was given only material and national promises because God's Holy Spirit was inaccessible to them, the Holy Bible is a book concerning the people of Israel. Throughout the Bible, other nations are only mentioned when they encountered Israel.

Another fact that is almost totally overlooked today by Christianity or by Judaism and not recorded or understood by historians is that the northern kingdom of Israel was not Jewish. The first actual place in the Bible where the word "Jew" occurs is in **II Kings 16:6**, where the nation of Israel was at war in an alliance with Syria against the Jews. The truly amazing truth about the nation of Israel is a mystery totally unknown by any religion -- by Christianity, or even by Judaism!

It's true that the nation of Israel was God's chosen people, but they were not chosen for special favors, like a "teacher's pet." They were chosen for a special purpose designed to prepare for the ultimate establishment of the Kingdom of God! It is an intriguing story! The significance of this chapter title, the "Mystery of Israel" is concerning God's purpose, or direction, for all peoples! We cannot



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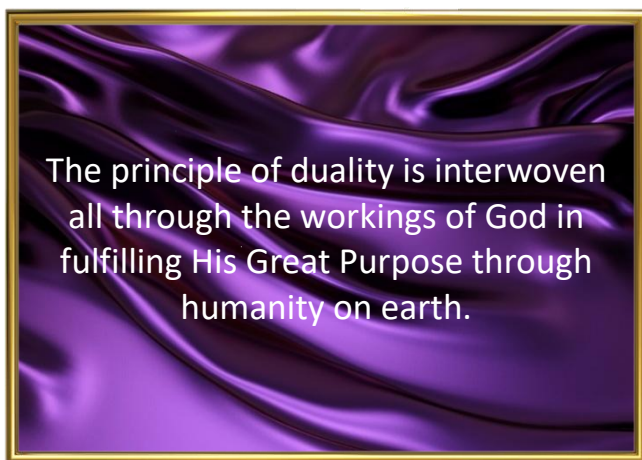
Seven generations after the Flood, God found a man who would totally obey him. His name was Abram, in the land of Mesopotamia in the city Haran.

understand the real purpose and incredible potential of man without this vital knowledge.

ABRAHAM: A MAN OF DESTINY

Seven generations after the Flood, God found a man who would totally obey him. His name was Abram, in the land of Mesopotamia in the city Haran. This man was to become a type of God the Father, and it was from him that the nation of Israel descended. Through this nation God raised up His prophets, and in due time, God's own Son, Jesus Christ. Although Abram, as he was originally named, was not seeking God, He chose to call and test Abram. Later in Scripture, Abram, who became Abraham, is called the "Father of the faithful." God was calling him for a very special purpose -- not to "give him salvation" or "get him into heaven", but because He had seen in this man obedience to God and the potential of leadership. God was calling him to be prepared for special service and ultimately a high position in the Kingdom of God.

Quoting from page 16 of "**The United States and Britain in Prophecy**," (1980 Edition), a book originally written by Mr. Armstrong more than 70 years ago, we read, "**To this man, Abram, God commanded: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation"" (Genesis 12:1-2).**" This command included both



a condition and a promise, dependent on obedience. Did Abram stop to argue and reason with God? Did he quibble, resist, or rebel? No, he certainly did not! The inspired Scripture account states simply: "So Abram departed." There was no arguing with God. There was no foolish questioning or human reasoning that God was all wrong. Just action. "Abram departed," just plain, unquestioned obedience.

So now, as God had started the whole world with one man, he started his own peculiar nation in the world from another man -- Abraham. As the world was started with one man who rebelled against God and rejected his rule, so God's own flesh-born nation was started with one man who obeyed God without question and accepted his divine rule.

DUAL PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

The principle of duality is interwoven all through the workings of God in fulfilling His Great Purpose through humanity on earth. Here again we see the principle of duality. Abram lived in the very center of this world's developing civilization, a world held captive and developing on Satan's pattern. God had chosen Abram to become the patriarch of his nation Israel, the congregation or Church of the Old Testament. There was the physical congregation of Israel under the Old Testament and the spiritual Church of God under the New Testament.

The word church, as originally written in the Greek of the New Testament, was "ekklesia," which means "called out ones." So, as Israel of the Old Testament was the physical ancestor and type of the Church of the New Testament, the nation Israel was called out by God from Satan's world and established by this man Abram, whose name he later changed to Abraham, as the father of God's nation, Israel! All the promises of God made were to Abraham and his descendants. We, too, must become like Abraham, and through Christ, one of His children, if we are to inherit the promise of eternal life in God's Kingdom.

Of His special, flesh-born nation, Israel, the Eternal said: **"This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare My praise" (Isaiah 43:21).** That prophecy shall soon be fulfilled! Abraham later regarded himself as a stranger, a sojourner and a pilgrim on the earth. This was not his world: **"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them" (Hebrews 11:13-16).**

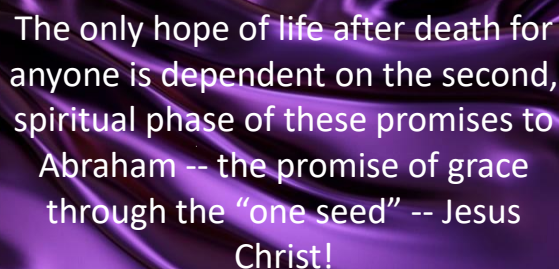
Duality runs all through the Bible, picturing the plan of God in working out His purpose here below. For example, there was the first Adam, flesh and blood and carnal; and there is Christ, the second Adam, spiritual and divine. There was the Old Covenant, purely material and temporary; and there is the New Covenant, spiritual and eternal. God made man from the dust of the ground as physical and mortal, but through Christ he may be begotten of God to become immortal, spiritual, and part of the

Kingdom of God. Also in duality, there were two phases to the promises God made to Abraham. One was purely material and national, while the other was spiritual and individual. The spiritual promise of the Messiah, and of salvation through him, is well known by the many Bible students and scholars, but the physical promise, the most amazing national and material promise to Abraham, has been almost entirely overlooked.

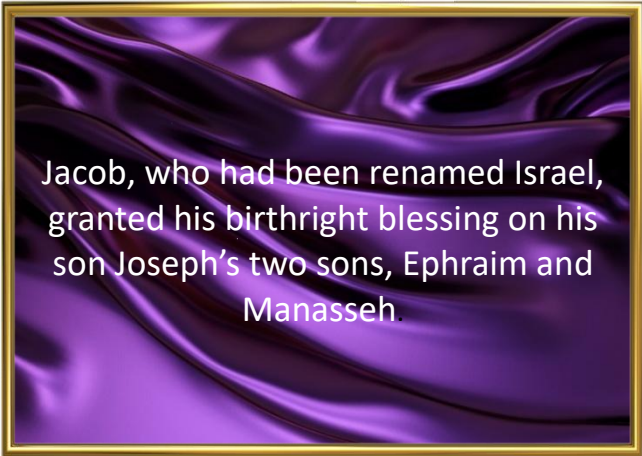
Again, notice how God first called Abram, and made a two-part promise to him: **"I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."** (Genesis 12:2-3). The first part of the promise was the national, material promise that his descendants would become a "great nation."

The second part of the promise was that **"... and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed."** This was the spiritual promise of grace. God gave Abraham promises both of physical abundance as well as spiritual grace.

The future of great nations rests on the promises the eternal God made to Abraham. The only hope of life after death for anyone is dependent on the second, spiritual phase of these promises to Abraham -- the promise of grace through the "one seed" -- Jesus Christ!



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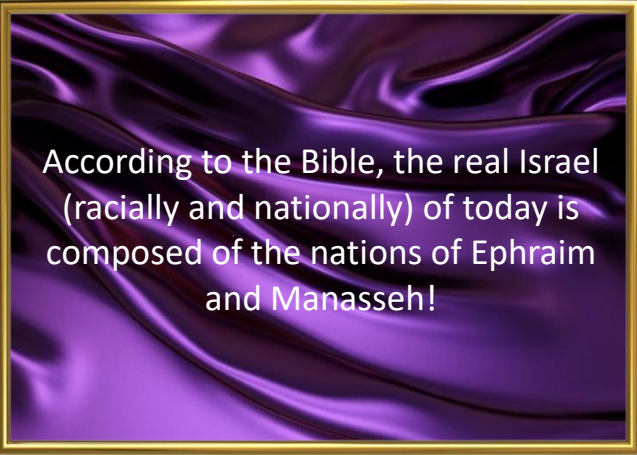
Jacob, who had been renamed Israel, granted his birthright blessing on his son Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS GIVEN THE NAME "ISRAEL"

In **Genesis 35:10**, we see where Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, had his name changed by God to Israel: **"And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel."**

Later in his life, in **Genesis 48**, Jacob, who had been renamed Israel, granted his birthright blessing on his son Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Jacob, who was blind at the time, crossed his hands and laid them upon the heads of the two sons. **"Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth" (Genesis 48:14-16).**

Notice that Jacob, Israel, did not give this blessing on just one of the sons, but on both. **"Let my name be named on them"** was an integral part of this blessing. It was the



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descendants of these sons, not the descendants of Judah, or the Jews, who were named ISRAEL. Clearly the name Israel was to be passed on to Ephraim and Manasseh! Jacob's name, which was changed to Israel, would become the very possession and property, the actual label, on the peoples of Ephraim and Manasseh!

So, according to the Bible, the real Israel (racially and nationally) of today is composed of the nations of Ephraim and Manasseh! Ephraim and Manasseh together received the right to the name Israel, and it was to become the national name of their descendants, who were never Jews!

One other point to notice is the significance of Jacob's crossed hands. Joseph noticed that Jacob's right hand was not resting upon the head of the firstborn, so he tried to remove it. **"And Joseph said to his father, 'Not so, my father, for this *one* is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head.'** But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!' "And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh" (Genesis 48:18-20). Here Jacob was prophesying as to the blessings of each of his descendants individually. It was the

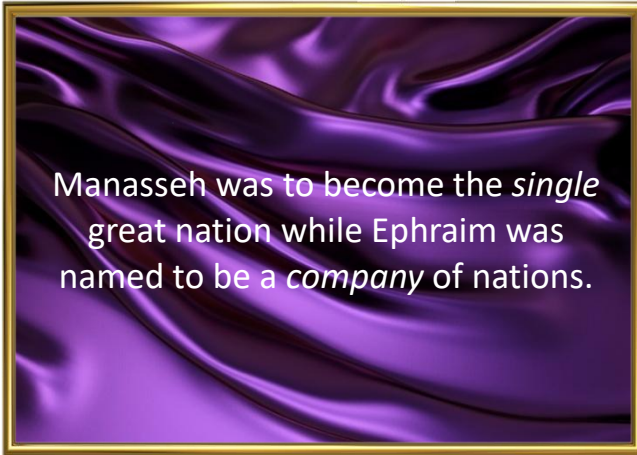
descendants of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were to be subdivided into two nations and to become the wealthiest and most powerful nations on earth.

EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH: **BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES**

Determining from the prophetic blessings passed on to Ephraim and Manasseh from their grandfather, Jacob, we can understand that they intended to inherit the birthright jointly and to remain together for a long time before finally separating. Jacob first passed the birthright on to the two sons of Joseph jointly, speaking of them both together in the first part of **Genesis 48**, before speaking of them separately. Manasseh was to become the *single* great nation while Ephraim was named to be a *company* of nations.

In his prophecy for these latter days, Jacob said, **"Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a well; His branches run over the wall" (Genesis 49:22).** In other words, Jacob pointed out that Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh together were to be a colonizing people in these days, encompassing the entire world.

Together Ephraim and Manasseh became a "multitude or nations", then they separated, according to Jacob's prophetic blessing. Manasseh remained with Ephraim (Britain) until the settlement of the New England colonies. The proof that the United States is Manasseh is



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overwhelming. As prophecy predicted, Manasseh was separated from Ephraim and became the greatest, wealthiest single nation of earth's history, and America alone has fulfilled this prophecy. Some people question how the United States could be Manasseh when a large part of the population have come from many nations besides England. The answer is simple: our forefathers were to be sifted through many nations. **Amos 9:9** reads, **"For surely I will command, And will sift the house of Israel among all nations, As grain is sifted in a sieve; Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground."**

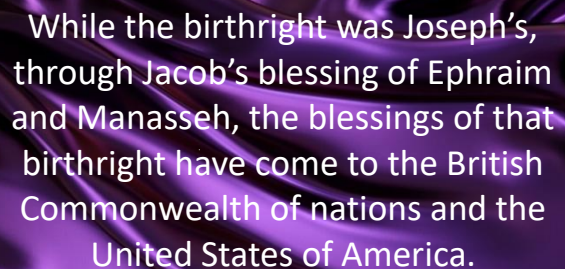
The original settlers making up the population of Manasseh did filter through many nations, with many others of Manasseh who have migrated into and through other nations, coming as immigrants to the United States after the New England colony had become the separate nation. Although not all foreigners who have emigrated in the past to America are of the stock of Manasseh, most likely many are. Remember, however, that Israel throughout the years always absorbed gentiles, who became Israelites through living in Israel's land.

The United States is known as the "melting pot" of the world, but instead of refuting a Manasseh ancestry, this fact confirms it. Manasseh was in fact considered to be a thirteenth tribe. Originally, there were twelve tribes of Israel, with Joseph as one of the twelve. But Joseph divided into two tribes with Ephraim and Manasseh, and Manasseh separated into an independent nation, a thirteenth tribe. Again, we see an instance of duality here with thirteen tribes and thirteen colonies!

So, while the birthright was Joseph's, through Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh, the blessings of that birthright have come to the British Commonwealth of nations and the United States of America.

PROPHECY FOR THE UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN

Now has God has bestowed on us such material blessings as never before came to any other nations! **Micah 5:7-15** speaks specifically about the **"remnant"** of Israel -- modern Israel today describing the wealth and dominance of this nation among all other nations, and then Micah details the coming downfall of the American and British Commonwealth peoples. The symbolism in **Micah 5:8-9** pictures the last generation of Israel as a great power: **"And the remnant of Jacob Shall be among the Gentiles, In the midst of many peoples, Like a lion among the beasts of the forest, Like a young**



While the birthright was Joseph's, through Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh, the blessings of that birthright have come to the British Commonwealth of nations and the United States of America.

lion among flocks of sheep, Who, if he passes through, Both treads down and tears in pieces, And none can deliver. Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries, And all your enemies shall be cut off." The enemies of Ephraim and Manasseh were defeated from the beginning of God's birthright blessing on America and Britain starting about 1803, through both World Wars, until the turning point of the Korean War at the end of 1950.

This prophecy shows that at the very time we were receiving God's blessings, we were a tremendous blessing to the other nations of the earth. During times of international hardship, programs such as the Hoover Program of World War I, which supplied food to nations facing

starvation after the war, and the Marshall Plan, which aided European cities in recovery following World War II, exemplify how Britain and the United States have contributed substantial assistance to countries in need.

It is our peoples who have been like a “lion” among the other nations of the earth, overcoming the threats of two great world wars to work toward the peace of the world and stability for all human life on this planet! There are no other people that even remotely fulfill this great prophecy but the American and British peoples.

However, because of our continuing descent into ungodly actions, God is going to bring upon our peoples such national disaster as has never struck any nation! Notice the prophecy in **Jeremiah 30:5-7**: **"For thus says the LORD: 'We have heard a voice of trembling, Of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, Whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man *with* his hands on his loins Like a woman in labor, And all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day *is* great, So that none *is* like it; And it *is* the time of Jacob's trouble..."** Again, in **Genesis 48:16**, we remember that when Jacob passed the birthright on to the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, he said, **“Let my name be named on them”** This shows that this most terrible of national calamities is to fall on Britain and America!

Other prophecies describe this time of trouble as greater than before. In **Matthew 24**, the apostles had asked Jesus when his Second Coming would occur. Jesus said: **“For then shall be Great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved [alive]; but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:21-22)**. Jeremiah described this time as **“Jacob’s trouble,”** but he also proclaimed deliverance from that

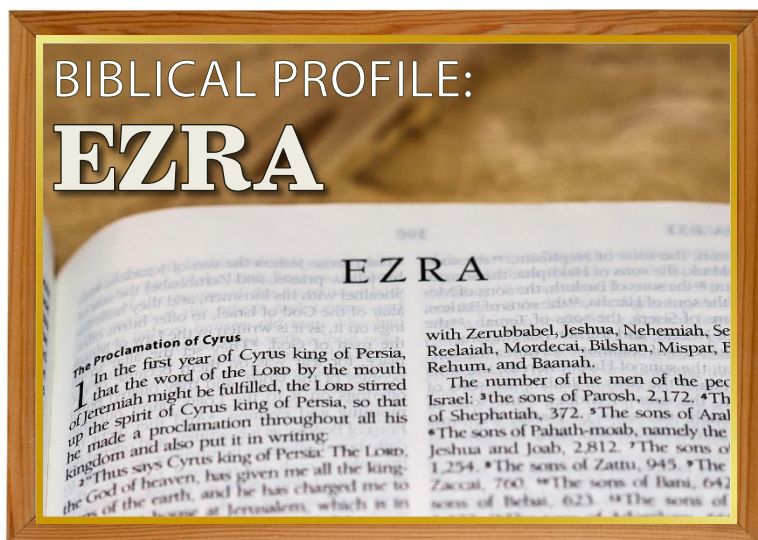
tribulation. **“For behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,' says the LORD. 'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it'" (Jeremiah 30:3).**

Continuing in **verses 7-9**: **“...And it *is* the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day,' Says the LORD of hosts, 'That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them. But they shall serve the LORD their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them.”**

This speaks of King David just before the resurrection of the just, at Christ’s coming. Christ’s Second Coming will end this world’s civilization and start the wonderful, peaceful, happy world tomorrow!

So, the Old Testament nation of Israel played a part in preparing for the coming Kingdom of God, which will restore the government of God upon all the earth. Everything God has done since the creation of the earth has been a progressive step in God’s overall purpose of reproducing himself through man! He is creating in man God’s own perfect, holy, and righteous spiritual character, to work with Jesus Christ to restore the Government of God over all the earth and to create billions of God beings to finish the creation of the universe. This nation, the spiritual nation of Israel, is God’s nation!

In the next issue of the Lantern magazine, we will continue to summarize Mystery of the Ages, covering chapter six, the Mystery of the Church. Once again, please remember that each of these articles are not meant to take the place of actually reading the book yourself, but to serve as an overview of each chapter concerning the mysteries of the Bible, and to be used as a tool to encourage us to read, or re-read, the book and study it on our own. ♦



In the Old Testament, Ezra is a significant figure who appears in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. He is traditionally credited as the author of both texts.

Many Biblical scholars believe Ezra was also the author of the Books of Chronicles and the Book of Malachi. He was instrumental in restoring the Jewish scriptures and religion to the people after their return to

Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity, and is regarded as a highly respected figure in Judaism today. Ezra, whose name means “help,” was a descendent of Aaron, the chief priest under Moses, and was related to Joshua, who became the High Priest of the rebuilt temple (**Ezra 3:2**). Appointed to be a priest and a scribe, Ezra was also a prolific writer. In addition to the book of Ezra, he contributed to both I and II Chronicles, as well as to the books of Malachi.

After King Cyrus of Persia captured Babylon in 559 B.C., he determined to honor the God who had granted him victory over the Babylonians. He proclaimed that God’s Temple in Jerusalem was to be rebuilt and issued an edict that the Jews who had been carried away as captives by the Babylonians could return to Palestine and rebuild the Temple (**Ezra 1:5**). About 50,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of two men, Zerubbabel and Joshua, the High Priest, but they soon met up with opposition from political enemies, and eventually had to stop the work. After the deaths of Zerubbabel and Joshua, the people eventually became corrupt concerning God’s law and the services in the Temple, even though it had been completed in the early months of 515 B.C.

In the seventh year of next king, Artaxerxes I, Ezra was sent to lead another group of exiles back to Jerusalem to teach the laws of God to the people living there. During Judah’s captivity, God raised up Ezra to lead His people in the right direction (**Ezra 7:10**). When Ezra discovered that Jewish men had been marrying foreign pagan women, he tore his garments in despair. He confessed the sins of Israel before God, then braved the opposition of some of his countrymen to purify the community by enforcing the dissolution of the sinful marriages. Some years later, Artaxerxes set Nehemiah, a Jewish noble in his service, as governor in Jerusalem with the task of rebuilding the city walls. Once this task was completed, Nehemiah had Ezra assemble the people in the Temple on the first day of the seventh month, on the Feast of Trumpets, and Ezra read to them from the book of the law. All the people and priests entered a covenant to keep the law and separate themselves from the other peoples.

Although Ezra is not one of the more widely known figures in the Bible, he played a vital role in the spiritual health of the God’s chosen people. Called “the father of Judaism” or “the second Moses” by some, Ezra was passionate about God’s Law. It was the foundation of his own life, and he used God’s Word to help revive the soul of the Israelite nation. The book of Ezra emphasizes his importance in the restoration of the nation’s physical and spiritual life. Ezra encourages us to stand up for our faith! He boldly spoke up for God’s Laws and helped lead the faith of the Israelites at an important time in their history. Ezra’s words about God’s perfect plan for His people should still resonate with us today. ♦



IMAGINE IT'S YOUR LAST YEAR

If we knew this was our last year to live, how would we live differently? What would we do with the knowledge of our impending finality? Do we approach each day of our lives with the thought that time is short, and nothing lasts forever? It would behoove us to remember that tomorrow is never promised to anyone!

Gary Liebold

It's easy to forget the value of every day, especially in the context of today's world full of continual distractions. For example, every day, 24 hours a day, telephones, television, and social media sites broadcast a host of content designed to pull a viewer in and keep them mesmerized for long periods of time.

If this were our final year, would we still prioritize trivial distractions and the accumulation of material possessions? No, we

should focus on what's important, such as our relationship with God, and the other meaningful relationships and experiences we have in our lives.

In the February 2024 *Lantern Magazine* article, "The Talent of Time," there is an interesting quote from "*A Treasury of Bible Illustrations*" that gives a good example of the importance of time and the need to use it wisely. It is entitled the "Wealth of Time," and reads as follows... **"If you had a bank that credited your account**

each morning with \$86,400, that carried over no balance from day to day, and allowed you to keep no cash in your account, and every evening canceled whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day, what would you do? Draw out every cent, of course. Well, you have such a bank, and its name is "TIME." Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it rules off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balances. It allows no overdrafts. Each day it opens a new account with you. Each night it burns the records of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against tomorrow. You must live in the present -- on today's deposits. Invest it to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success!"

In other words, if we break it down, if this was our last year to live, we would only have a total allotment of 8,760 hours, which totals 365 days, or 52 weeks, until we are down to a final 24-hour period (or 86,400 seconds) on our last day of life. This sounds like a lot of time until we realize that each of those figures will be lost forever and can never be expanded or regained. It is essential to reflect on how we allocate our time each day and to consider the significance of what is achieved over the course of a final year. Think about it -- if you knew it was your last year, how would you live differently?



PURPOSE

There are so many choices for us to make in life, depending on where we are in our lifespan. What might seem important to us in our youth changes in priority as we age. Some people carry a "bucket list" of activities they wish to do, places they wish to travel, or things that they want and desire. There's so much to attract us in this world that we can easily just go from day to day living our lives as they unfold and letting life "happen" to us. But how much will we really achieve or benefit from this type of lifestyle? What will that give us in the long run? Perhaps we'll experience momentary joys or feelings of happiness, but what lasting effects will we achieve?

Our lives have a special purpose and meaning that perhaps we don't even comprehend ourselves. **"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is"** (1 John 3:1-2).

When Jesus was on this earth, He spoke in a parable about servants who were given a number of "talents" (**Matthew 25**). One servant was given five talents. A second servant was



given two talents and the third individual was given one talent. The first two servants doubled their talents. The third servant did nothing with his talent except hide it (**Matthew 25:14-18**).

As we continue to read this parable, notice what happens when the “man traveling to a far country” (Jesus Christ), returns: **“After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord’” (verses 19-23).**

Take note of the fact that the last servant who had one talent did nothing with it. He didn’t increase his talent at all; it had remained hidden. **“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered**

seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is yours*.’ But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth’” (Verses 24-30).

That’s a very sobering parable. Are we growing the way God expects, using our talents and abilities to serve God, or do we disappear into our own little world and hide? Do we just let each day we are blessed with evolve by itself, or do we consider ways in which we can actively and faithfully serve God and His people?

If we are living as though this was our last year of life, we shouldn’t make excuses and just let the time slip away. **“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God...” (I Peter 4:17).** If each of us only had one year left to live, we would understand that our time is short, with no time left to hesitate,





procrastinate or hold back. Now is time to put forth every effort to increase our “talents” as wise servants. Our lives should be planned and purpose-driven if we are to live each day to its fullest! There is more to this life than living for the present. The Great God put humans here on this earth for a monumental, eternal purpose, a purpose not even understood by this world’s humanly devised religions. We are on this earth for a wonderful reason, which involves the answer to why we humans were made mortal and suffer through a wide range of emotions. Even when we die and are dead, we will not remain dead forever (**John 5:28-29**).

The key to achieving a fulfilling and balanced life is to realize the very purpose, the actual goal of life. If we are blessed to be called by God now, we should understand what we should be doing with our life now and prioritize everything around the key element of our Christian life that can help us achieve that ultimate purpose of life.

The ultimate first choice we should make every day of our lives, and the choice that we should prioritize if we knew it was our last year to live is the development of godly character!

God created man on the earth to build this perfect character in us, and He is infusing into us His very own spiritual holy, righteous and perfect character! On His own timetable and

method, He is developing us to become God as He is God, and to complete the creation of the unfinished universe! This is our purpose in life!

THE CRITICAL ELEMENT

God, through His calling (**John 6:44**), has offered us the opportunity to be a part of the Family of God forever. Clearly our loving Father in Heaven awaits the time when His begotten children will be born into the Family of God. That is His marvelous plan. However, God will not give eternal life to any of us who won’t put God’s way of life first in our lives now and work diligently on developing the character of God within us! This is the critical element for our future success in God’s Kingdom, the critical element we should never neglect in our lives now. **“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...” (Matthew 6:33).**

In the November issue of The Lantern Magazine, we have an article titled, **“Responsibility and The Work Ethic.”** Quoting from that article, we read, **“Brethren, God has such a wonderful future planned for us, and for all of mankind. We are given the opportunity to teach, along with Jesus Christ, a way of life that produces happiness. If we’re growing spiritually the way God intends, we too will hear the words that Christ spoke within His parable of Matthew 25:23: ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”**

The article continues... **“Scriptures throughout the Bible provide glimpses of the structure of the governmental responsibilities that God will set in place in the Kingdom of God. Famous men, men who were considered pillars of God’s true Church in their days, will have positions of leadership in God’s Kingdom under Jesus Christ, ruling from Jerusalem. Men like Abraham, Noah, Elijah, Job, and Joseph. King David and Daniel will be in leadership**

positions over the Israelite and Gentile nations respectively, with others such as Ephraim, Manassah, and even Paul serving under them. These men demonstrated the character traits of the willingness to work hard at all they did and to take responsibility for their actions, all within the scope of holding fast and following God. Developing and demonstrating the character of God while they were alive on this earth."

Notice that God intends to reward all these individuals with positions, "mansions," in His soon coming Kingdom according to how each of them overcame the perils of Satan, self, and society, and developed godly character while they were alive. Each of them had only a set, finite time to develop that special character God looks for in His people, and the same is true for us now.

Once more, we read from the article on Responsibility and The Work Ethic, **"We, too, have the opportunity to serve -- to work and be responsible in positions of leadership underneath the great men listed above -- if we continue to hold fast, endure the trials set before us, and work hard to overcome our innermost carnal, human natures. We are promised in John 14:2, *"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."*** It's clear that if we remove all our spots and wrinkles (Ephesians 5:25-27), if we demonstrate to God our determination to work and be responsible in our personal and professional lives, we can qualify for important positions in the worldwide government of God, to rule all nations for a thousand years. Look at it this way ... God has given us but a few short years to prove ourselves to Him. Like an employer, or manager, or boss, God is watching to see what we do with the talents and knowledge we've been given now. He knows that how hard we work now, how seriously we take our roles of responsibility in

this life, indicate to Him how we will perform in His Kingdom. Can't we imagine that God will choose the roles for us, the "mansions" of John 14:2, determined on what He sees in us today?"

In the wonderful future that lies ahead for us, we will be part of the God Family and as such, we can be excited for the creative, stimulating, and challenging work God provides for us for all eternity. We will be producing, ruling and sharing the same dedication and fulfillment God expressed at the creation of the heavens and the earth. God has not designed an eternity in retirement consisting of lounging around on a cloud playing a harp, being idle, bored and useless for us. God promises excitement and true happiness!



CHOICES

So now that we know what our purpose in life is designed to be, and what our future holds based on what we do with our lives now, we can look at choices in how we utilize our time to the maximum. Christians are admonished by the apostle Paul to use time wisely, **"...redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).**

Christian growth occurs during a set time span, and every person has the same 24-hour period as the next, whether president, farmer,

executive, teacher, or wife and mother. However, it's amazing how differently people choose to use their 24 hours every day with all the choices of activities available in these modern days.

For example, think about it: if we only had ONE YEAR to live, would we choose to spend that time remodeling our kitchen? Now, there's nothing wrong with remodeling a kitchen, unless we put it at the forefront of everything else, spending countless hours obsessing with the design and product choices or applications. But would it -- should it -- become our top priority with so little time left?

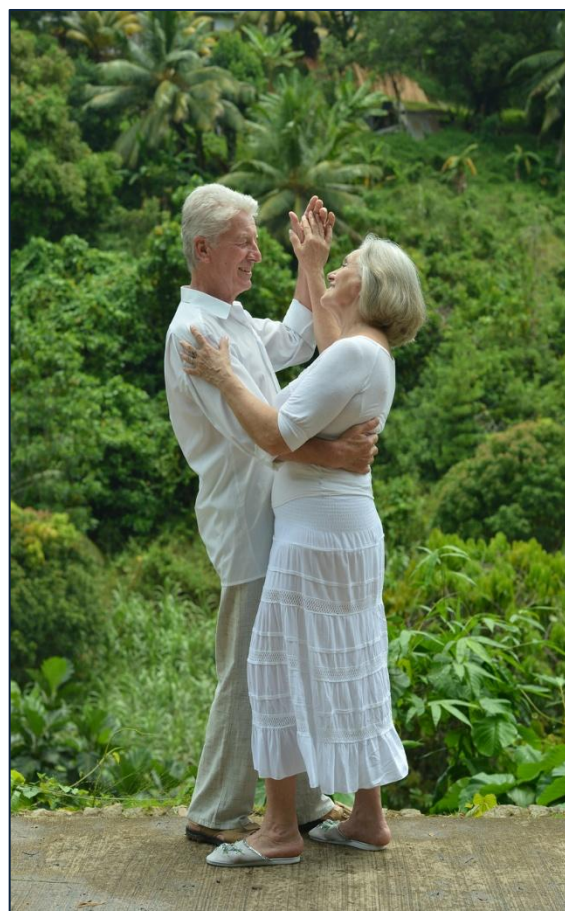
Again, thinking that we might only have that one year to live, would we binge-watch our favorite new television show on platforms like Netflix or Amazon Prime Video, once more spending untold hours in front of a media device and letting our brains be absorbed by someone else's life and drama? What about a new car? It's one thing if we have a vehicle to transport us where we need to go, but honestly, if we knew we only had one last year to live, would we hurry out to buy the latest shiny new vehicle to drive around? New car smells are wonderful, but how much do they offer us in comparison with a future with God?

Having one year left to live doesn't preclude other important duties, though. Unless one can afford it, we can't just chuck everything in our lives and sail around the world on a luxury catamaran (unless we're wealthy enough to do so)! We all have jobs, homes and families to maintain and spend time, quality time, with -- especially with our loved ones!

We cannot ignore these responsibilities, even with only a year left ahead of us. Proper management of time depends on proper management of yourself. You either use time profitably or you let it pass you by. You control what happens. And time wasted is irretrievable.

Whatever your difficulties with time management, God must come first. If He doesn't, then we really aren't serious about being a true Christian. To develop the type of character God wishes to see in us, we must spend time on certain steps to guarantee results.

We must take time for prayer because it is the source of godly power. We should also allot time for Bible study to gain the mind of God. After setting aside the proper time for this, then we should be sure to take time for our families and realize that each day is too short to let it pass without sharing time with those closest to you. After achieving these top priorities, we can use that last year to laugh, for it lightens life's burdens. We should take time to read because it's a gold mine of wisdom and experience.



(Continued on page 35)

SCIENCE AND THE RE-CREATION

Years ago, I had the opportunity of having coffee with a scientist I met while I was on the road going up to Marysville, Washington. One of the subjects we discussed was the age of the Earth. He told me he disagreed with the thought that the earth is only 6,000 years old and was very surprised when I agreed with him. Yes, science is right on this one! He looked at me in a funny way, knowing that I was a student of theology. Then, I asked him to let me explain.

Geary Whiting

I told the scientist I met, that the account of creation in Genesis is not the account of the ORIGINAL creation. It's a description of the *re-creation* of the earth! While **Genesis 1:1** says, **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,"** explaining that God did create the world, **Genesis 1:2** adds, **"The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep..."** The description of the earth in **verse 2** tells that over a period of years, perhaps multiple thousands upon thousands of years, the earth became full of chaos and confusion. The world was covered with water (remember, darkness

was on the dace of the deep)! God had to institute an actual re-creation of the earth to bring it back from the brink of destruction. So, I told him there are untold multitudes of time that are not being discussed between these two accounts of **Genesis 1:1** and **Genesis 1:2**! The earth, as scientists claim, IS over 6,000 years old!

The first two chapters of Genesis were not written as parables or poetry, but as a basic outline of creation in the form of simple, basic historical facts, facts that directly contradict the theory of evolution. The fact that God created a

single human being upon the earth -- man, Adam -- and then created a woman from Adam's side, Eve, destroys the evolutionist theory which believes that the populations evolved. Furthermore, the New Testament scriptures support the Old Testament creation account of Genesis. In **I Corinthians 11:8** we see, **"For man is not from woman, but woman from man,"** which, since we all have mothers, can only be referring to **Genesis 2:21-22**.

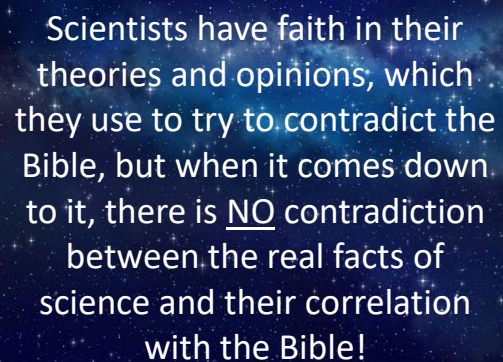
It's clear that the acceptance of the Biblical account of creation requires an important element of faith. **"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"** (**Hebrews 11:6**). This faith is an intelligent faith, supported by Biblical revelation. Of course, the scientists have faith in their theories and opinions, which they use to try to contradict the Bible, but when it comes down to it, there is NO contradiction between the real facts of science and their correlation with the Bible!

Given this perspective, I thought it would be helpful to review several scientific facts regarding the Earth's ancient age, and how scientists have ignored the meaning of the facts that they discovered to show that the earth is very old. By doing so, they created "scientific" theories to fit their discoveries. After all, scientists have long had a history of scoffing at religious truths. In their minds, why would mere theologians know more than acclaimed, accomplished scientists?

GEOLOGISTS AND THE FLOOD

Vocabulary.com defines a geologist as an expert in the field of geology, the scientific study of what the Earth is made of and how it was formed. Few people realize that geologists have uncovered amazing proof that the earth was practically destroyed by universal flooding, and that these same geologists refuse to accept the evidence they have discovered and have

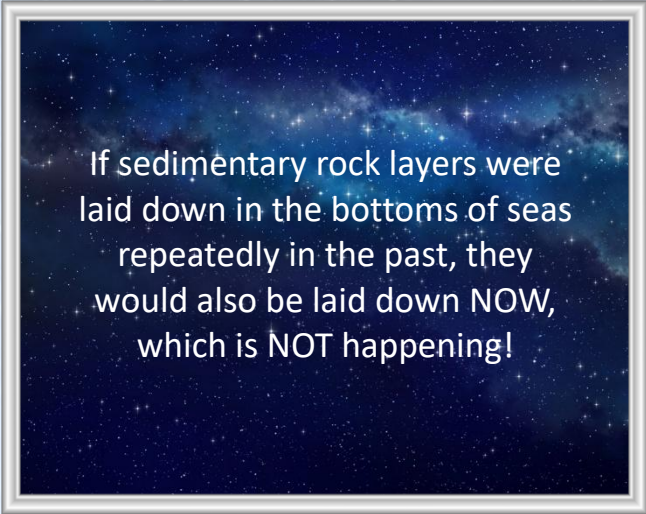
rejected the proof of any massive flooding. Geologists and evolutionists do not like to **"retain God in their knowledge"** (**Romans 1:28**), so they have invented theories about geological "ages" to present a creation without a Creator. **"Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts ... For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water"** (**II Peter 3:3-6**). Basically, evolutionists and geologists have fully ignored the true meaning of the scientific facts they have uncovered.



Scientists have faith in their theories and opinions; which they use to try to contradict the Bible, but when it comes down to it, there is NO contradiction between the real facts of science and their correlation with the Bible!

Geologists have long taught that the soil and rocks of the continents are gradually being eroded and washed into the seas. They believe that the strata of the earth (also known as sedimentary layers), were laid down slowly, which doesn't exactly square with a sudden catastrophe does it? No, it really doesn't.

These many geologists like to guess that hundreds, or even thousands of floods occurred repeatedly through eons of time. They assume such a process repeated time and again would enable the sedimentary layers of rock to become deeper. This theory refers to uniformitarianism, which according to the



If sedimentary rock layers were laid down in the bottoms of seas repeatedly in the past, they would also be laid down NOW, which is NOT happening!

Encyclopedia Britannica definition, explains that **"In geology, the doctrine (uniformitarianism) suggesting that Earth's geologic processes acted in the same manner and with essentially the same intensity in the past as they do in the present and that such uniformity is sufficient to account for all geologic change."** Simply stated, geologists refer to uniformitarianism as the doctrine that **"the present is the key to the past,"** which they believe is the foundation of evolutionary geology, teaching that a sudden destructive world-wide flood could never have occurred because one is not occurring now!

However, according to this theory, if sedimentary rock layers were laid down in the bottoms of seas repeatedly in the past, they would also be laid down NOW, which is NOT happening! Geologists know sedimentary rocks are not being laid down now in the vast bodies of water comprised by the oceans.

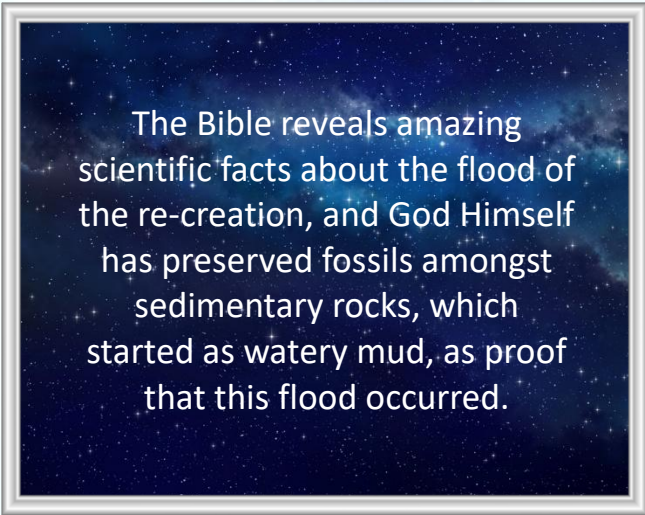
Something had to have happened in the past that is not happening now, a fact quite contrary to the theory of uniformitarianism that scientists profess to believe. Obviously, since sedimentary layers are not being laid down at present on the ocean bottoms, a sound mind can come only to the conclusion that at some time in the past they were laid down by the violent action of a world-wide event.

MUD AND THE FLOOD

There is a surprising way to be able to discover irrefutable proof that a massive flood occurred to wipe out all life on the earth. The truth is truly amazing! The Bible reveals amazing scientific facts about the flood of the re-creation, and God Himself has preserved fossils amongst sedimentary rocks, which started as watery mud, as proof that this flood occurred.

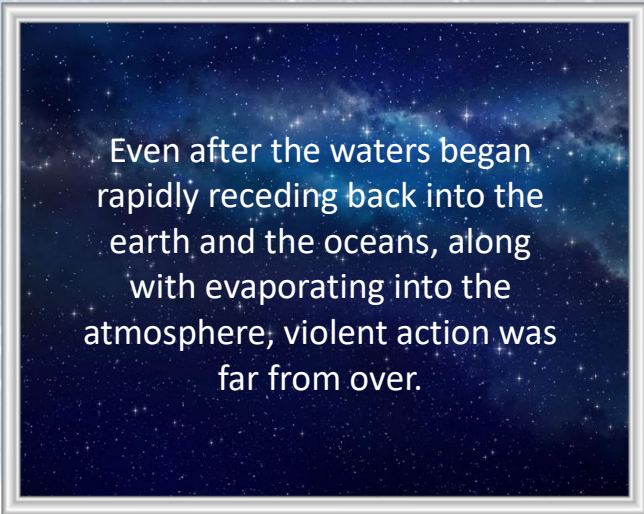
Before Lucifer rebelled and became Satan, he had dominion over the earth, which was inhabited by untold numbers of angels as well as physical plants and animals. Lucifer and the angels were tasked with preparing the earth for human habitation, but he and many other angels were not content with the role God had assigned them. As a result, a colossal battle of spirit beings took place -- the angels of God versus the forces of Lucifer -- which resulted in tremendous catastrophes throughout the universe and earth itself.

The chaos left upon the earth, the crown jewel of God's planetary creation, was devastating. The earth was a chaotic wreck, with the plants and animals destroyed and buried in mud resulting from flooding tidal waves over the entire surface of the earth. Geologists themselves call this the **"Time of Great Dying."** Just as in the case of the great flood described



The Bible reveals amazing scientific facts about the flood of the re-creation, and God Himself has preserved fossils amongst sedimentary rocks, which started as watery mud, as proof that this flood occurred.

in **Genesis 7**, not many have been able to realize the kind of devastating destruction a world-wide flood would bring upon the earth. Referencing the document, "*Exploring Ancient*



Even after the waters began rapidly receding back into the earth and the oceans, along with evaporating into the atmosphere, violent action was far from over.

History -- The First 2500 Years" (by Roy Schultz for the Social Studies Department of Imperial Schools at Pasadena, California), even after the waters began rapidly receding back into the earth and the oceans, along with evaporating into the atmosphere, violent action was far from over.

As described in **Genesis 7:24**, huge tidal waves and powerful currents swept across the continents, with the raging flood waters sweeping up the soil, plant and animal remains. Gigantic whirlpools would have gathered large numbers of plants and animals together and buried them under tons of mud and silt. There would have been no dry land anywhere. Birds flying above the water in a desperate attempt to survive would finally become exhausted and were drowned in the huge waves.

For months after the water level of the earth began to drop, these tidal waves -- having little resistance from submerged land masses-- would rage back and forth across the earth. As the flood waters were pulled forward over the continental land masses by the gravitational pull of sun and moon, similar materials such as

limestone or sandstone settled down to the bottom amongst the mud in layers. Then as the tides rolled back and forth, layer after layer was laid down as the result of sediment in the muddy waters, burying the remains of animal and plant life, as we can read in **Genesis 7:22** and **Genesis 8:13**.

When the Flood waters became calmer, great sheets of sediment, mud, and silt, including animal and plant remains, constantly settled down to the bottom of the waters in clearly defined layers, one on top of the other in rapid succession. Since sedimentary layers are not being laid down at present, on the ocean bottoms or on the continents, a sound mind can come only to the conclusion that at some time in the past they were laid down by the violent action of a world-wide cataclysmic event.

The very nature of the sedimentary rocks themselves proves that any such universal event was composed of tidal wave action of a world-wide flooding! God has preserved in sedimentary rocks as proof that this flood occurred. These facts prove that sedimentary rock layers have not been formed on ocean floors over eons of time, as the inventors of the false doctrine of uniformitarianism -- who themselves know better -- want us to believe.

If you didn't know better, you might wonder what other importance does the formation process of rocks have to do with proving the flood existed? Well, I recently spoke with a college young lady at a local coffee shop about her study major, evolution, and I brought up the subject of fossils and how fossils disprove evolution. So, let's start with one of the favorite subjects that scientists like to use to prove (but does NOT prove), their favorite evolution theory -- the existence of fossils.

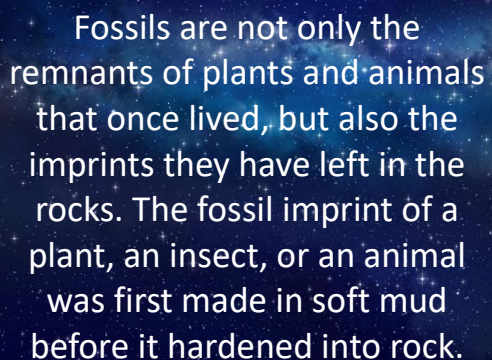
FOSSILS DISPROVE EVOLUTION

Again, one might ask what fossils, and the great

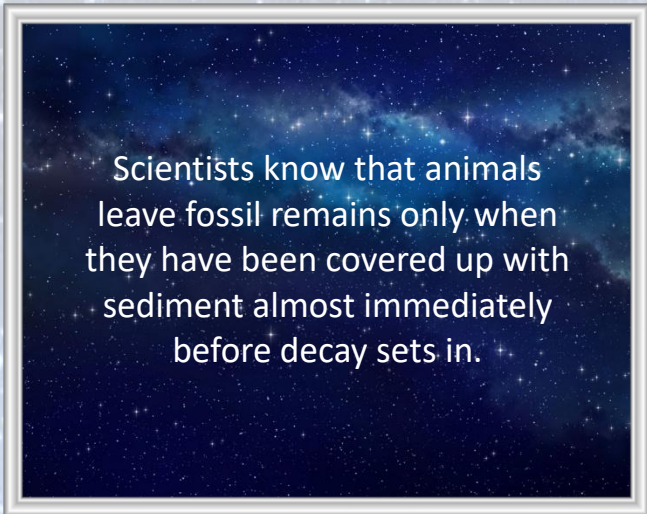
worldwide floods of Biblical times have to do with each other, and how these seemingly unrelated subjects combine to disprove evolution, so I will take some time to uncover the connection between floods and fossils! Fossils are not only the remnants of plants and animals that once lived, but also the imprints they have left in the rocks. The fossil imprint of a plant, an insect, or an animal was first made in soft mud before it hardened into rock. It is common knowledge that any animal which dies today quickly decays and rots into dust, not pressed into rocks that preserve their remains as fossils. That is why scientists cannot prove there are any fossils being preserved today.

In the development process of fossils, first, before an animal can be preserved as a fossil, it must be quickly covered up by a sudden catastrophe -- such as a flood, volcanic matter, or sudden freezing -- then it must be buried quickly, suddenly, to seal and preserve the animal's remains before air and oxygen can get in to cause decay.

Scientists know that animals leave fossil remains only when they have been covered up with sediment almost immediately before decay sets in. Both the burial of the organism and the hardening of the sediment must occur very quickly, or the inevitable decaying process



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will destroy the organism before it can become fossilized. In other words, without that monumental event occurring suddenly to seal these animals and plant life immediately, there would have been no fossils. So, the very existence of fossils disproves evolution, since the core belief of evolution is that things happen only in gradual time periods. But hold on to your hats ... there's more!

Evolutionists believe that fossilized organisms were gradually deposited in layers of sediment over hundreds of millions of years to give us a visual record of at least some of the stages of evolution from the first simple organisms to the most complex. However, behind the scenes, many so-called experts document inconsistencies in their evolution theory. For example, to be consistent with evolution, a fossil record should show how organisms slowly transform from one state into another through countless intermediate or transitional stages. These scientists have claimed that over one hundred million years were required for the gradual transformation of invertebrates into vertebrates, so it reasons that we would expect that the fossil record should show at least some of the progressive stages of this large-scale transformation. But it is now a generally recognized fact that the fossil record shows few if any clear or precise intermediate stages in the

evolution of an organism from one kind of organism into a distinctly different kind.

David B. Kitts, famed evolutionist and paleontologist, said in the *Oxford publication Evolution*, Volume 28, page 467: **“Despite the bright promise that paleontology provides a means of “seeing” evolution, it has presented some nasty difficulties for evolutionists, the most notorious of which is the presence of “gaps” in the fossil record. Evolution requires intermediate forms between species and paleontology does not provide them.”**

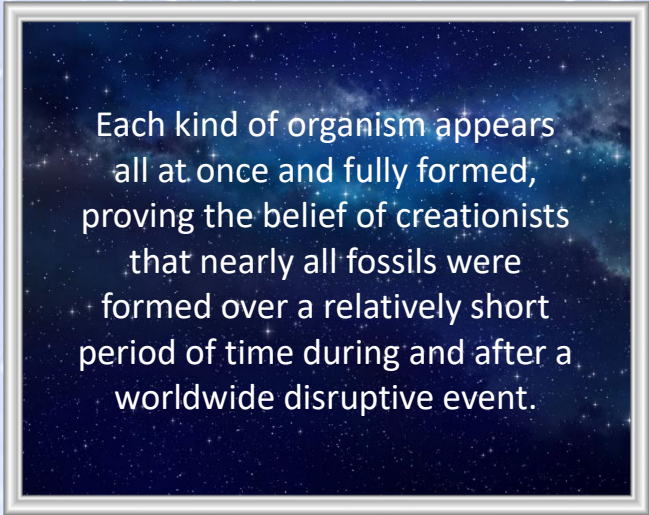
Likewise, David Raup, a paleontologist at the Field Museum of Natural History, reported that the lack of growth in the knowledge of the fossil record since Darwin’s time provides even less support for evolutionary transformations than ever before.

Another evolutionist, George Gaylord Simpson conceded in his book, *“The Meaning of Evolution”*, that the massive gaps (in fossil species data), are a universal phenomenon. When studying this subject, we can see that every paleontologist knows that nearly all categories of species appear in the recorded fossils suddenly and are not led up to be known as gradual, completely continuous transitional sequences. (*Major Features of Evolution*, 1953, p. 360).

Consistent with creation, the fossil records show no obvious transitional stages between distinctly different kinds of organisms. Each kind of organism appears all at once and fully formed, proving the belief of creationists that nearly all fossils were formed over a relatively short period of time during and after a worldwide disruptive event, and not an evolutionary sequence extending over millions of years. The **Genesis 1:2** biblical account of the flooding of the earth due to the catastrophic results of a Satanic rebellion, can be proved. The sedimentary rocks of the earth, rocks made when the silt serried out of the flood water,

were laid down in rapid succession in a very short time, not over the many eons of time, as evolutionary geologists claim. The fossils formed contained plant and animal life (such as the dinosaurs) that did not exist when the earth was re-created, and man was placed upon this earth.

The truth is that both the evolutionist and the geologist will not admit that a worldwide flood took place, although they cannot prove that evolution could possibly be true. We can plainly see that the scientists’ theories are simply not supported by the fossil record while the Biblical account of creation is!



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all at once and fully formed,
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GOD’S THRONE IN THE NORTHERN SKIES

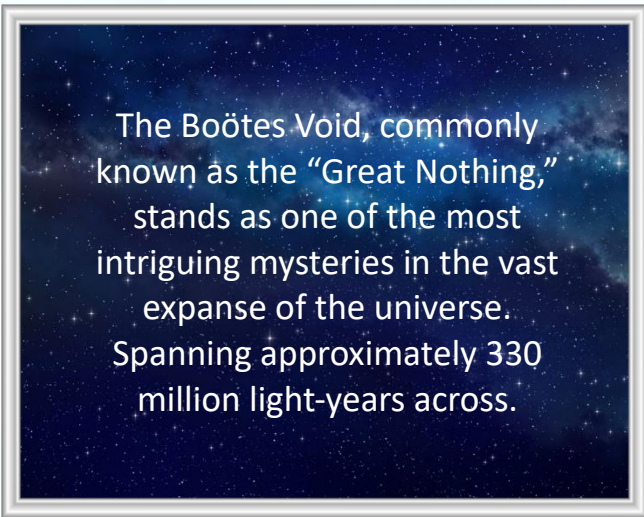
In yet again another field of science, astronomers have stumbled upon a tremendous hole in the universe that's got them scratching their heads about what's just *not* there. This cosmic blank spot, or void, has few to no stray stars, no galaxies, no black holes, not even mysterious dark matter. It is about one billion light years across nothing. That's an expanse of nearly six billion, trillion miles of emptiness.

Minnesota astronomy professor Lawrence Rudnick, a published author in the *Astrophysical Journal*, has stated **“Not only has**

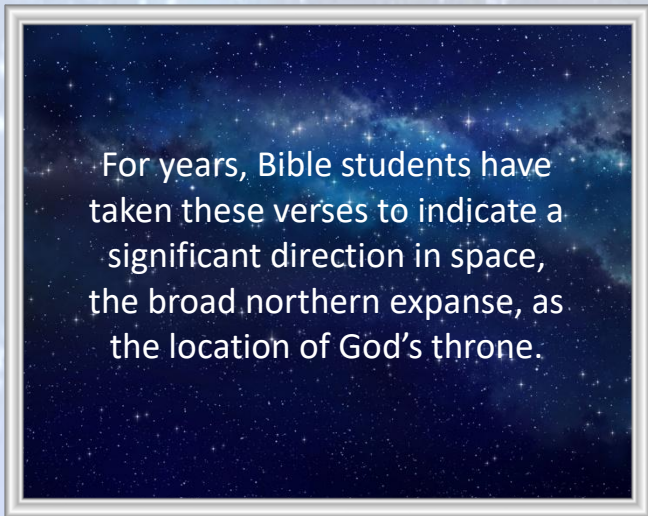
no one ever found a void this big, but we never even expected to find one this size."

Rudnick was examining a sky survey from the National Radio Astronomy Observatory, which essentially takes radio pictures of a broad expanse of the universe. He checked observations of cosmic microwave background radiation and found a cold spot in the northern area of the universe. Radio pictures indicated there was up to 45 percent less matter in that entire region, Rudnick said, and this drew his attention. The rest of the matter in the radio pictures could be explained as stars and other cosmic structures between earth and the void, which is about 5 to 10 billion light years away from the earth. The only explanation, Rudnick said, is that it's empty of matter. Many astronomers refer to this phenomenon as the Boötes Void.

The Boötes Void, commonly known as the "Great Nothing," stands as one of the most intriguing mysteries in the vast expanse of the universe. Spanning approximately 330 million light-years across and located in the vicinity of the Boötes constellation, a northern sky constellation best known for the bright star **Arcturus**, this spherical region of space challenges scientific understanding of cosmic structures. The void is not physically related to the stars in Boötes but appears in the same basic area of the sky. As astronomers began to



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For years, Bible students have taken these verses to indicate a significant direction in space, the broad northern expanse, as the location of God's throne.

map out the universe, this vast, nearly empty region emerged and was thus named the Boötes Void.

So, what on earth would an enormous empty void in space have to do with **Genesis 1** and the re-creation of the earth? Well, in **Job 26:7 (NIV)** we can read, "**He [God] spreads out the northern [skies] over empty space;**" and in **Isaiah 14:13**, we also see, "**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;'**" For years, Bible students have taken these verses to indicate a significant direction in space, the broad northern expanse, as the location of God's throne. We can also note that the motion of all other stars in the sky revolve around a stationary point (Polaris, otherwise known as "The North Star"), in the northern sky that results from the Earth's rotation. However interesting this is, there's still more to consider here.

Going back to **Isaiah 14**, we can see the context of the scriptures here has to do with the rebellion of Satan and a third of the angels. Reading further in **Isaiah 14:12-14**, "**How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the**

ground, You who weakened the nations! 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.'"

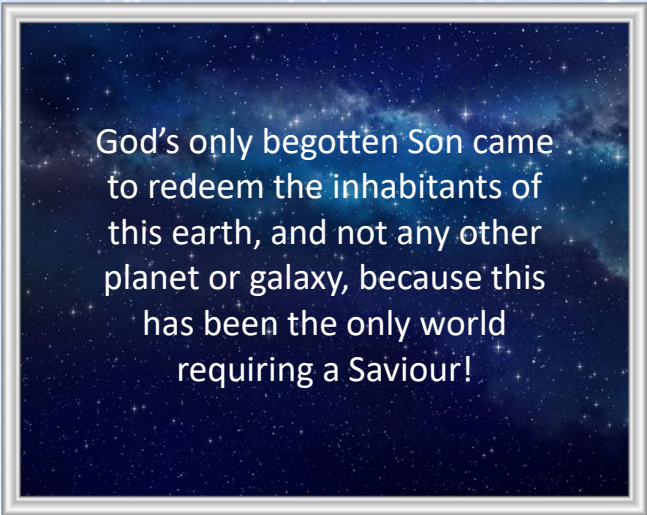
If you think about this logically, you can see that this rebellion of Satan would have involved a path, or corridor, that Satan forged in his attempt to reach God's throne (*Exploring Ancient History -- The First 2500 Years* by Roy Schultz). And as God's custom is when He deals with sin, He destroys it. He destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as Tyre, which remains empty to this day, so connecting all the evidence, it would make complete sense that the corridor of space Satan utilized in his attack on God would also have been emptied. God's throne remains in the northern skies, but the approach, the corridor to it would be void. This is clearly evidence from outer space, evidence that the throne of God is situated in the northern heavens, as we see in **Isaiah 14:13**. So you might find this very interesting. I know I do!

RE-CREATION DISPROVES EVOLUTION

Most scientists do not know or understand about how the Bible has been written and have just **never** put together any thought about the obvious, simple answer to the question of how old the earth is. They want so desperately to disprove the theologian calculation of a 6,000-year figure, which is the age of man, and don't mind if they overlook or warp the interpretation of scientific facts to do so. Famous evolutionist Thomas H. Huxley once said, **"Creation, in the ordinary sense of the word, is perfectly conceivable. I find no difficulty in conceiving that, at some former period, this universe was not in existence, and that it made its appearance in six days (or instantaneously, if that is preferred), in consequence of the volition of some preexisting Being"** (from *The Life and Letters*

of Thomas Henry Huxley). We need to understand that even more important than the knowledge of how to disprove evolution or how to prove a flood occurred during the re-creation of the earth is the knowledge of why God wants you to know the truth about the **RE-CREATION**! First, God wants you to know that He is Ruler and Creator. He is so vitally concerned about this planet because this is where He is reproducing Himself!

As this is the only world to be inhabited by human beings in all the history of the universe. God's only begotten Son came to redeem the inhabitants of this earth, and not any other planet or galaxy, because this has been the only world requiring a Saviour!



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Revelation 21:2 explains that the earth is where God's headquarters for the entire universe will ultimately be located! **"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."**

So, the next time we have a student or a scientist or anyone else who doesn't understand what the Bible describes in **Genesis 1:1** and **2**, we have an answer. And for those who really believe in evolution, we can stop them in their tracks from a simple thing called a **FOSSIL**! ♦

AVOIDING THE ATTITUDE OF THE LAODICEANS

The city of Laodicea was just an average place, filled with ordinary people, living ordinary lives -- just an ordinary Church. Yet Christ's warning to this Church stands as one of the most sobering messages in the Bible. The question we must ask ourselves today is: Could we become like the Laodiceans? To avoid this poisonous attitude, we must cultivate these FIVE KEYS.

Pollycap Ogalo

Around 60 A.D., the apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians, exhorting them to share his letter with the Laodiceans (**Colossians 4:16**). Paul counselled them to walk worthy of the Lord, bear good fruit, and put to death the works of the flesh. However, Christ's words in **Revelation 3:14-19** reveal that only a short time later, the Laodiceans had failed to hear Paul's message and had become spiritually lukewarm and blind to their true condition.

Could the attitudes of the Laodicean Church be ours today? After the death of Mr. Armstrong in 1986, the focus of the Church shifted, and the Church splintered into many groups, each claiming that they had preserved the truth. This is a far cry from the Church of God that Christ established through Mr. Armstrong. The lesson to us is clear: we cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of Laodicea, and to avoid this poisonous attitude, we must cultivate these FIVE KEYS.



BE HUMBLE

I Peter 5:5-7 tells us, "**...Yes, all of you be submissive to one**

another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time," Lucifer's downfall was pride, and it remains to this day one of Satan's greatest weapons against God's people.

Contrary to popular thinking, true humility is not a weakness. It is a strength under God's control. **James 4:10** promises that if we humble ourselves before the Lord, He will lift us up. **Micah 6:8** says, "**He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.**" Without humility, we cannot be taught, corrected, or changed, but with it, we can remain moldable in God's hands.



BE GRATEFUL

Gratitude acknowledges God as the giver of every blessing. A thankful heart disarms pride and keeps us focused on the true riches -- the knowledge of God's plan for His Family! Paul instructed, "**In**

everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (I Thessalonians 5:18)."

Ingratitude has become a signature hallmark of this age. Just like the Laodiceans, we can clearly see the attitude of ingratitude all around us. The condition of the Laodiceans is outlined in **Revelation 3:17**: "...I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'..." While ingratitude marks the end-time generation, gratitude sets God's people apart."



BE POSITIVE

Negativity, criticism, and complaining are subtle forms of rebellion, inspired by Satan. For

example, the Israelites murmured in the wilderness, and it displeased God (**Numbers 11:1**). They were punished with forty years of wandering in the wilderness before they reached the Promised Land.

The Christian outlook must be one of positive joy and encouragement. Paul exhorts, **"Rejoice in the Lord always..." (Philippians 4:4)**. God calls us to build up, not tear down and to shine as lights in a dark world. **Philippians 2:14-15** reads, **"Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,"** A positive, faith-filled attitude lifts others and strengthens the body of Christ!



BE COURAGEOUS

Revelation 21:8 lists the **COWARDLY** first among those excluded from God's Kingdom. Courage

is not the absence of trust in God's will. Courage enables us to endure trials, resist compromise, and remain faithful when the

world turns against us. Stephen was stoned for his faith, yet he prayed for his persecutors (**Acts 7**). David faced Goliath with five stones and total reliance on God (**I Samuel 17**). Paul himself wrote that God is the source of all power, **"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (II Corinthians 12:9)**. This power of God that we have to draw on makes us courageous. Courage rests in God's strength, not our own.



BE FAITHFUL TO THE END

God has promised salvation only to those who endure. **"But he who endures to the end**

shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13). Once we commit to God and put our hand to the plow, there is no turning back (**Luke 9:62**).

Faithfulness means perseverance in prayer, study, obedience, and commitment to God. The Church is not a social club -- it is training for God's Kingdom. Our calling is to become kings and priests, part of God's ruling family forever (**Revelation 17:14**).

The Laodicean Church thought itself strong, but it was weak. The same danger awaits God's people today. We cannot afford to be just ordinary members in an ordinary church in an ordinary town. We must be humble, grateful, positive, courageous, and faithful. These are the five keys that will keep us close to God and ready to endure to the end.

Mr. Armstrong's legacy reminds us of the seriousness of our calling. Let us ensure that when Christ returns, He will not find us lukewarm but ablaze with zeal. Faithful servants who will hear, **"Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew 25:21).** ♦



WORKING ON OUR SPIRITUAL FUTURE

In this life we are currently leading, most adult people in the world are primarily concerned with their own well-being and that of their loved ones, especially in the short term. They seek to grant themselves and their families ever more satisfaction by gaining more money. Before our calling, we too, followed the same paths. These behaviors are part of human nature. As far as we are concerned now, it should no longer be the same. Unlike the people of this world around us who see no future in this present life except old age and death, we have, thanks to God, the privilege of knowing that it is the springboard that leads us to spirituality, to true, eternal life.

Kennedy Athin'g

This way of behaving, modeled on this world around us, is nothing but vanity for us, since we know why we are here on this earth, it is now appropriate for us to overcome our bad human nature, as well as the ways of this world. This is what we must work on. We are simply earthen vessels, in which God has planted the seeds of His Holy Spirit, and which He has fertilized.

Since we now claim to belong to God, it is no longer a question for us to practice the same way of life as that of this society which surrounds us, and which is influenced by Satan. Just as the apostle John says in **I John 2:15-16**, this behavior is motivated by the pride of life, of this current physical life. **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone**

loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world.”

Although it is not unique to man, it is humility that we must now cultivate, and when it becomes part of our deep nature, this humility will make us grow in the eyes of God. Vanity, ambition and pride are no longer relevant for us. **“For who makes you differ *from another*? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive *it*, why do you boast as if you had not received *it*?” (I Corinthians 4:7).** This passage makes us understand that we are nothing apart from ourselves. All of us living on this earth have

received everything from God. We are nothing without Him.

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

The Bible tells us not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world. We should no longer worry about our physical future, nor worry about what we will eat tomorrow, but we are to trust in God, to obtain all these things, to work out our spiritual future, and to lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven. Are we doing this? **Colossians 3:1-3** teaches, **“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”**

We are potential children of God and being born into the Divine Family must now be our main concern, especially since, as it is written in **Luke 12:31**: **“Seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.”** Although we are no longer of this world, we still live in



this world, so therefore we should decide to live in it as God commands us. By practicing His justice, His laws and His ordinances, as well as good works when we have the opportunity and the possibility to do so, we can do good around us.



BROTHERLY LOVE

Practicing brotherly love, translated as “charity” in the Scriptures, must be our way of life. We must ask God to give us more love for our brothers and sisters in the faith, because Christ tells us in **John 13:34-35**, **“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”** The Apostle John, in his first Epistle, also insists particularly on the fact that we must love one another. **“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love”** (1 John 4:7-8).

Working for our salvation therefore also involves loving and respecting one another. **1 John 4:20-21** makes this clear: **“If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.”**

If we love and respect one another, we will not complain about anyone, we will help one another, we will be careful not to be a stumbling block for anyone, so that good

(Continued on page 35)



TRUE JUSTICE IS RIGHTEOUS JUSTICE

In the past few years, there has been a rise of corruption around the world within collective systems of law enforcement and justice. We have witnessed the weaponization of various justice departments against political opponents, as well as questionable actions and failures by signature law enforcement agencies against various citizens. This includes parents at school board meetings, senior citizens, and even actions against our former, and current President of the United States. As Americans, many have recently questioned if there remains any actual “justice” today.

Gary Liebold

In contemporary society, justice seems increasingly influenced by bias and partisanship. Last year’s trial of the former president of the United States in New York City brings to the forefront the dire necessity for fair and equitable judgement in an unbiased legal system.

Professor Alan Dershowitz, a renown legal scholar, was seated in the first row of the courtroom during this trial and stated in an interview on Fox Business News that he witnessed the judge act bizarrely and, what was disturbing him, inappropriately for any judge in any court of this land. Professor Dershowitz said, **“After the judge made a ruling**

that was unfair, Costello (a lawyer) raised his eyebrows, and I raised my eyebrow. I stared at the judge. The judge did something I had never seen in my 60 years of practicing law all over the world. The judge said, “I am going to strike your (the key witness), testimony, and not allow you to testify if you ever look at me that way.””

Professor Dershowitz said, **“As a result, the judge deprived the accused of his right to a defense under the Sixth Amendment. This was simply unbelievable!”** The presumption that the accused is entitled to a fair and equitable trial is ensconced in our legal system, which requires criminal cases to be overseen by an

unbiased judge and decided by an impartial jury. Bias, or prejudice, either inherent in the trial's structure or imposed by external events, can infringe on a person's right to a fair trial.

The American Standard, the presumptive "innocent until proven guilty," originates in Hebrew Law and is codified in both Talmudic Law and the Talmudic judicial system, as well as the American Civil and Criminal Law. Sadly, our nation's justice system seems to be succumbing to the weight of the egregious influence of partisanship. Witnessing the trial of a former president before a judge who has openly demonstrated extreme bias and malicious prejudice serves as a stark reminder to all of us of the critical need for fair and equitable judgement. Righteous judgement!

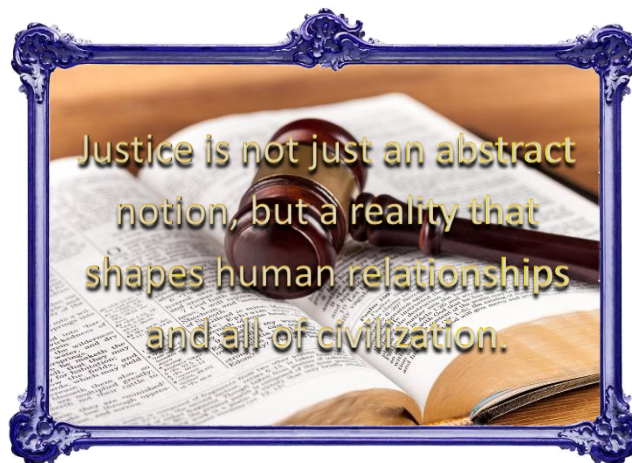
HOW DO WE DEFINE JUSTICE?

There are both legal and Biblical definitions of justice. In the legal definition of the word justice, there are multiple aspects within the single definition. For example, the *Justia Legal Dictionary* lists those layers of definition as **"The characteristic of treating others with fairness and impartiality; the philosophical concept of treating everyone fairly and in accordance with the rules; the process of applying and implementing law to ensure fairness, and the legal procedure in which everyone is treated fairly and without bias."** There's a lot to the legal definition, but we can see one thread runs through all the layers of that definition of justice, and that is fairness. Once again, with the knowledge of what justice is supposed to entail, do we see justice in the land today?

Meanwhile, there is also, and most importantly, justice as seen through the eyes of God and explained to us through the Bible. Biblical justice is rooted in the character of God and encompasses both the aspect of justice, which punishes wrongdoing, and a second aspect of justice, which seeks restoration towards those

who have been wronged. Biblical justice also emphasizes the practice of fairness, righteousness, and moral integrity, reflecting God's character and His Commandments. At the core of Biblical justice is the precious concept of righteousness, which involves not only adherence, but also a commitment, to obedience of God's laws. **Deuteronomy 16:20** states, **"Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God gives you"** (RSV).

Justice is not just an abstract notion but a reality that shapes human relationships and all of civilization. The call to **"...To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."** is emphasized in **Micah 6:8**, reinforcing the idea that true justice demands personal accountability. Since justice in the Biblical context is closely tied to the concepts of righteousness and integrity, it shows an alignment with understanding and developing Godly character and His expectations for human



behavior. This understanding emphasizes that justice is not merely about legalistic adherence to laws but involves a deeper commitment to God's laws in regards to honesty, ethical conduct, and fairness in all of our interactions. It calls for us, as Christians, to act in ways that uphold truth and moral principles, ensuring that our actions reflect the righteousness of God. Biblical justice requires that we as individuals should be held accountable for our

own wrongdoing. And when we do wrong, justice demands that we acknowledge our sinful behavior and repent, accepting the consequences, and attempting to correct the damage. The Biblical concept of justice doesn't pit mercy against justice but ties it all together. Biblical justice is loving, merciful, gracious, generous, and restorative. Every person who interacts with others should be concerned with justice, for true justice demands that we ask the question, "Is this fair?"

JUSTICE AND JUDGMENT

The words "justice" and "judge" have similar meanings because they have a common ancestry. They are derived from the same Latin term, *jus*, which is defined in dictionaries as "right" and "law." Although these words, justice and judge, have similar meanings from a shared root word, they are not quite the same. Judgment and justice are closely related concepts, but they have distinct differences.

Justice refers to the concept of fairness and moral rightness in the treatment of individuals within the legal system. It encompasses the idea that all individuals should be treated equally under the law, regardless of their social status or personal circumstances. Judgment (or the British, Old English equivalent, judgement) refers to the ability to form sensible opinions or make decisions based on evaluating information and facts. In today's modern society, the act of judgment is an integral part of the determination of justice within the actual legal system.

In most court cases, while a judge presides over the courtroom keeping things running smoothly and in good order in accordance with the law, a jury consisting of a set number of individuals exercises judgment based on testimony and facts laid before them. The current American legal system exists to ensure that individuals are treated equitably and in accordance with the law. However, judgment alone can lead to



injustice if not tempered by a commitment to fairness. Biblically, when we examine the subject of judgment within God's Word, we see that in **Matthew 7:1** Jesus Christ said, "**Judge not, that you be not judged.**" Yet just a few verses later in that same sermon on the Mount, He said, "**You shall know them by their fruits.**" (**Matthew 7:16**). The first statement is clear, but at the same time, the second implies that some form of judgment or assessment takes place in the mind of a Christian. On a purely physical level, one might ask what the real difference between these two concepts is, but this sermon by Christ addresses the spiritual level and concerns Christians making spiritual judgments on one another.

No Christian is capable of a spiritual judgment upon another because we are all blinded to some degree or another by our own shortcomings. Each of us have sinned and broken God's laws. Regardless of our accomplishments in this life, not one of us has the prerogative to sit in spiritual judgment of others. Indeed, Jesus Himself did not come to judge, or condemn the world. "**For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved**" (**John 3:17**).

There are several reasons why no man should sit in spiritual judgment of another. One important reason is expounded by the apostle Paul in **Romans 2**. The chapter begins with the

same thought as **Matthew 7:1**, “**Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things**” (**Romans 2:1**).

Does this mean that we never make judgments? And if so, how would justice ever prevail? The answer to that question underscores one of the toughest challenges to a Church member. It focuses on a fundamental quality of character essential to every begotten son of God. Discernment!

DISCERNMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO JUSTICE AND JUDGMENT

Discernment is the ability to recognize small details, accurately tell the difference between the various options, and make thoughtful judgements by using such observations. It often involves both rational thought and emotional insight. Simply put, discernment is the trait of judging wisely and objectively. Discernment is essential to justice.

We all use discernment in our everyday lives to one extent or another. For example, on a physical basis, we might decide whether to go to the park based on our discernment of the weather, or which pineapple or melon fruit is the best to purchase when shopping at the grocery store. When we work in our yards to beautify them, we choose plants based on our discernment of which will go best in a certain



area, depending upon their qualities and hardiness. We also make important decisions based on our discernment of what's wrong or right according to the law, such as a good decision to stop for a red light or a bad decision to run through a stop sign while out for a drive and we see no one is about. We make right and wrong choices based on discernment or the lack thereof at the time. These are basic examples of using discernment on an everyday basis.

The challenge to us as Christians is to *develop* the ability to discern. This is not an easy task. We must resist the natural inclination to point a finger at others and imagine the worst. Yet, at the same time, we must use discernment along with understanding God's will and make decisions aligned with our values and beliefs, as founded upon the Word of God. Christians have an obligation to use their minds wisely and develop their judgment to the point of discernment.

Paul found people of this mind when he visited Berea, “**These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so**” (**Acts 17:11**). Notice that these people were not cynical nor did they sit in condemnation, but they received the apostle Paul “**with all readiness**” of mind. They were open-minded with respect to all that he presented to them, and then they went about searching the scriptures to see if everything spoken and done was in accordance with the Word of God.

By exercising the sentiments expressed in **1 Thessalonians 5:21**, “**Test all things; hold fast what is good,**” the Bereans were using a form of judgment that is discernment. This type of discernment is precisely what was described by Jesus Christ when He said, “**You shall know them by their fruits.**” (**Matthew 7:16**). In

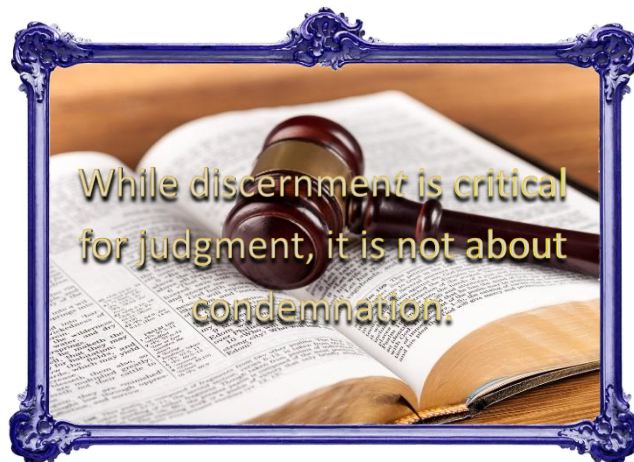
I Corinthians 2:14-15, we can also see discernment is illustrated as spiritual perception: **"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one.**

While discernment is critical for judgment, it is not about condemnation. From the New Testament we understand exactly that to accuse and condemn would be inconsistent with what God desires. The scriptural teachings are quite clear that we are not to use our discernment to condemn each other. But this does not mean that we are never to make judgments.

Wisdom is the ability to discern how, when and where to use the understanding of knowledge. We need the discernment that is born of wisdom to be able to make proper judgments in our lives. God tells us how we can gain wisdom in **James 1:5**: **"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."** Discernment is essential to judgment, and we need to ask God to give us wisdom, provide discernment, and guide us in our decisions and actions. The GODLY power of discernment will enable us to make the right decisions when we're faced with a problem. We'll be able to stop problems before they get out of control (**Isaiah 30:20-21**).

GOD'S JUDGMENTS PRODUCE RIGHTEOUS JUSTICE

God gives us discernment if we ask for it so that we can live our lives following His laws. We should remember that God makes judgments based on obedience to those laws. God's judgments are always demonstrated about sin, not personalities. With God, everything is done in righteous judgment. God is not a respecter of persons. **Romans 2:11** shows us, **"For there is no partiality with God."** There are many



examples of God's righteous judgment, leading to justice, in the Bible, including the judgement of many individuals throughout the Old Testament. Adam and Eve experienced God's judgment for their disobedience in the Garden of Eden; likewise, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were judged for their wickedness. Judgment came upon Pharaoh and Egypt which ultimately led to the release of the Israelites from slavery. Many others experienced God's judgment and resulting justice for their sins and rebellion against God. Even now, God has stated that judgement is upon us in the Church of God. **"For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"** (1 Peter 4:17).

Again, if we look at **Romans 2**, we can see more details about God's process of judgment upon mankind. **"For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them* in the day when God will judge the secrets of**

men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. (Romans 2:12-16).

If we follow God's example, all our judgments (spiritually speaking), should be made with God's righteousness, not our own self-righteousness. Our judgments concerning situations and actions of others we encounter should not be based on anything but the TRUTH of God alone. **"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (III John 4).** Study the writings of wise King Solomon in the books of **Ecclesiastes** and **Proverbs**. Study the lives of the men and women of the Bible and learn from their experiences, both good and bad, with an eye to the fact that God's judgments produce righteous justice, and ours ought to as well. Then we should exercise wisdom in our own lives, making and carrying out right decisions and judgments, always applying God's knowledge and understanding.

THE SPIRITUAL JUDGMENT OF MATTHEW SEVEN

To expound further on **Matthew 7:1-2**, where Christ warned us to **"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you..."** we can understand that this may seem confusing, perhaps a contradiction of other scriptures, such as many we have mentioned here in this article. However, as Mr. Armstrong once said, the Bible is like a jigsaw puzzle where the picture doesn't become clear until all the pieces are put together. This is a concept of judging leading to the application of justice we should understand.

In *The Defender's Study Bible*, we can read that what Jesus Christ is warning of here is referring to righteous, spiritual judgment, leading to condemnation or injustice. Only God has the right to make spiritual determinations, since only He has the full knowledge of a person's actions and motives. On the other hand, He has

commanded us to **"judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24)**. We should be able to recognize false teachers and from such turn away. Also, we should discern and rebuke these false brethren who are encouraging others to sin (**Ephesians 5:7,11**). In other words, we should be able to judge which is wrong, in either doctrine or practice, and avoid those who are involved. Yet we must not judge them with an eye toward condemnation -- God must do that. God tells us that to judge spiritually, we must be completely righteous. That's the message Christ gave those who accused the adulterous woman in **John 8:3-7**. Since we are only human beings, we can only form conclusions about what we see or hear, but Christ told us not to judge (spiritually) by these physical considerations: **"Do not judge according to appearance, but**



judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Righteous judgment means looking deep into a person's heart to perceive his innermost motives, but to achieve that insight is beyond the power of human beings, no matter how righteous we consider ourselves to be. Isaiah wrote in, **Isaiah 11:3-4**, **"His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked."** Righteous, spiritually minded judgment is beyond the

reach of mortal man. It is the reserved domain of the eternal God. Yet we must be aware of how God judges and how He determines true justice based upon those judgments, for we, too, will have that opportunity in His Kingdom. We will even be judging angels!

GOD'S LAWS WILL ESTABLISH TRUE JUSTICE IN HIS KINGDOM

We are training now, in this time of our lives, for the position God has in mind for us in His Kingdom if we remain **"called, chosen and faithful"** (Revelation 17:14). According to I Corinthians 6:2-3, **"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?"** God's Government -- based on God's laws -- will be the only standard of government and will have established judgment and true justice.

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace *There will be no end*, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9: 6-7). His Kingdom will be established forever, as will the throne of David, whose ultimate destiny will be to fulfill this prophecy... **"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth"** (Jeremiah 23:5).

God will continue His process of judgment resulting in righteous justice well into the future. In **Revelation 20:11-12**, we can read about God's Great White Throne Judgment.

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 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." This will be an awesome time!

In one of his last messages to the Church before his death, Peter said, **"For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"** (I Peter 4:17).

It is true that God is the judge of us all, but we, too, within the House of God, must exercise the discernment He has demonstrated and given to us to keep our individual lives close to Him. We must learn to discern right from wrong, to give others time to repent, to show love, and to have faith that God is fully aware of and working with us humans. To be able to learn to do all of this represents one of the toughest challenges for Christians of all times! The Bible tells us we are to discern between good and evil. We are to **"test the spirits"** (I John 4:1) and to **"Test all things; hold fast what is good"** (I Thessalonians. 5:21).

These scriptures, among many others, show us that we are to have our faculties trained to distinguish between right and wrong (**Hebrews 5:14**). In fact, we must do this if we are to obey God in all things. In our lives, we are to judge situations we're faced with, using the righteous judgment and the gift of discernment that God bestows upon us. All our judgments must be with righteousness, which comes from God, so all these judgments must be in line with God, resulting in true Godly justice for all. **Amos 5:24** shows us, **"Let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream."** ♦

Your Last Year...

(Continued from page 15)

Wisdom will take us a long way in God's Kingdom. Remember how it was the only thing Solomon asked from God! Reflection, or meditation, unclutters the mind and can steer our thoughts to God. Remember that above all else, taking time for God -- in any form -- is life's only lasting investment! True treasure! **"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21).**



MAKE IT MEANINGFUL

Let's take some time to really meditate on this

life God has given us. What are we doing now that really doesn't need doing? Eliminate the unnecessary! What are we doing that could be done just as well by someone else? Let's learn to delegate responsibilities and jobs if possible.

What are we doing that wastes our time or the time of others? Find out and then just stop doing it! Do we know that so many times, we abandon the things we postpone anyway, even though we might have the best intentions of doing them? We should choose only the things in life that are meaningful!

We can't afford to let time keep slipping away from us. It is our most valuable asset, and one that can't be recovered once lost. Let's be wise stewards of the precious talent of time we've been given and begin now to achieve the truly important values of life to the fullest, as if our time to do so is limited, as if we only have one last year to live. Once we make it a priority to develop the character of God, to be fully born of God, all else will fall into place! So, decide now -- think hard! What would you do if this was your last year? ♦

Our Spiritual Future

(Continued from page 27)

understanding reigns among us. Just as at the very beginning of our calling, we must continue to move against the "current" increasingly, in relation to this world around us. We can plainly see that, at present, love in the world is fading increasingly, with most people living and worrying only about themselves.

In the book of Micah, we read, **"The faithful man has perished from the earth, And there is no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; every man hunts his brother with a net. That they may successfully do evil with both hands--The prince asks for gifts, the judge seeks a bribe, and the great man**

utters his evil desire; So they scheme together. The best of them is like a briar; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge;" (Micah 7:2-4). This passage makes us understand that these behaviors of our society are prophesied for the end-time. This is the time we are currently living in, and soon, it will get even worse.

We need to be alert and aware of the world and circumstances around us, with our focus on our future in God's soon coming Kingdom. **Proverbs 14:15** tells us... **"The simple believes every word, But the prudent considers well his steps."** We need to have foresight and use our time wisely to plan for our future. Seeing the world as it should inspire us to work harder every day! ♦

BIBLE STUDY

PASSOVER IN GOD'S MASTER PLAN

The Great God of this universe created mankind for a special purpose! The Bible reveals that God is reproducing Himself in man, and that God made mankind to ultimately to be born as spirit members in His coming Family. God has a Master Plan by which He is fulfilling His awesome purpose for mankind. God reminds us of His plan using seven annual Festivals, the first step of which is the Passover.

1) Passover, the first of God's commanded annual festivals, is the beginning first step in God's great Master Plan of salvation for mankind. The original Passover was to be a yearly memorial (**Exodus 12:14**) to remind Israel of God's intervention in delivering them from slavery in Egypt (a type of sin). After Jesus' death, the Passover, celebrated with the new symbols of bread and wine, became a yearly memorial of His sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

2) God commanded in **Exodus 12:14** and **24**, that the Passover would be kept forever. Jesus Christ Himself kept the Passover and the other annual festivals, as He, the God of the Old Testament, was the One who originally gave them to Israel.

3) Jesus observed the Passover with His disciples on the night before He was crucified (**Matthew 26:17-20**). In addition of the observance of the Passover with the new symbols of bread and wine, Jesus also gave His disciples the foot washing ceremony as a new command to incorporate in the Passover service (**John 13:1-5**).

4) Jesus did not abolish the Passover -- He merely changed the symbols used. Instead of shedding the blood of the lamb and eating

the roasted body, we now use wine. The true Christian's faith in the blood of "Christ, our Passover" (**Luke 22:20; I Corinthians 5:7**), for the remission of sins is symbolized by the drinking of wine.

5) Now, instead of eating the sacrificial lamb, broken bread symbolizes our faith in the body of Christ, broken for our physical healing. Jesus Christ allowed His body to be literally ripped open in dozens of places by scourging, and He suffered this torture so we through faith may have the forgiveness of our physical sins (**I Corinthians 11:26**), the healing of our bodies when we are sick (**Isaiah 53:5; I Peter 2:24**), and the forgiveness of our spiritual sins through Christ's shed blood.

6) Christ plainly commands His disciples to wash each other's feet (**John 13:14-15**), and they were to teach the world to do so as well. (**Matthew 28:19-20**). Foot washing demonstrates the attitude of humility and service to others that Christ desires every Christian to have.

As Jesus Christ Himself commanded, true Christians today should be observing the Passover on the beginning of the 14th day of the first month of God's sacred calendar, in the evening, after sunset. ♦

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 Incredible Human Potential

Herbert W. Armstrong

(Pages 96-97)

GOD'S FESTIVALS PORTRAY THE MASTER PLAN BEING WORKED OUT HERE BELOW



God gave His annual festivals, with their seven annual holy days (Sabbaths), to His "Church" -- then called the congregation of Israel -- in the days of Moses!

They were intended to picture to the people of God, repeatedly every year, His master plan of redemption -- leading to the incredible HUMAN POTENTIAL!

These festivals were ordained to be kept forever! Jesus, the apostles, and the early Church of God, ALL OBSERVED THEM!

...They reveal a startling truth, otherwise obscured from human knowledge!

The human race began with Adam. But spiritual salvation and qualification for the transcendent human potential begins with CHRIST. The physical human creation began with Adam—but the SPIRITUAL CREATION begins with the second Adam!

It BEGINS with the forgiveness of sin -- following *real* repentance -- being *conquered* by God -- and the living FAITH that *believes* what Christ says!

Therefore the *first* of these festivals was *the Passover*. It pictures to God's people annually the shed blood of Christ – the "Lamb of God" sacrificed to pay the PENALTY of sin we humans have brought on ourselves, in our stead.

Then followed the festival of UNLEAVENED BREAD -- seven days in which no leaven may be eaten, or found in the houses of God's people. Leaven puffs up -- as does VANITY, the Epitome of sin. This festival lasts seven days, immediately following the Passover -- with the first and last of the seven being annual holy days (holy convocations).

These first festivals come in the spring -- the 14th through the 21st days of the first month of God's sacred year. They, with the feast of FIRSTFRUITS, (Pentecost in the New Testament) fall in the spring -- representing, as at Jerusalem, the FIRST, or early, GRAIN HARVEST. The feast of firstfruits (Pentecost) reminds God's people every year that they, prior to Christ's Second Coming, are merely the comparatively very small FIRST spiritual harvest...

...The remaining four festivals come during the autumnal harvest time -- picturing the MAIN spiritual harvest. These occur ... in the fall of the year. (**Emphasis** above, by the editor of *The Lantern magazine*)



COMING ARTICLES



II Peter 1:19

◆ The Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount

What do we think of when we hear the words, “Sermon on the Mount?” We might visualize Jesus speaking to His disciples as well as the many multitudes, or we think of Jesus describing the salt of the earth and the disciples being the light of the world (**Matthew 5:13-16**). Maybe we remember about Jesus’ teaching about how to pray and His giving a prayer outline, often referred to as “The Lord’s Prayer” (**Matthew 6:5-13**). All of this is found in the “Sermon on the Mount,” but the sermon also contains some very wise teachings that many often overlook: “The Beatitudes.”

◆ The Tribe of Dan

The Tribe of Dan, descendants from one of Jacob’s twelve sons recorded in the Bible, is one of the most mysterious and puzzling tribes of Israel. This tribe went all the way from receiving a divine inheritance from God to being completely omitted from the list of tribes sealed by God in **Revelation 7** among the 144,000. The history and journey of the Tribe of Dan, once so full of promise, is unlike any other of his brothers.

◆ Biblical Personality Profile: Hannah

The story of Hannah, found in **I Samuel 1-2**, is one of the most inspiring examples of faith, perseverance, devotion, and humility. Hannah is a significant figure in the Bible for several reasons. Her deep faith in God is evident in that despite years of barrenness, she continued to trust in God’s plan for her life. Hannah approached God in prayer with humility, shown by her willingness to make a significant personal sacrifice when she dedicated her son to God’s service.