

DECEMBER 1983

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



**FATHER SHOULD KNOW BEST-
But Does He?**

**Open Doors for Christ's Gospel!
John's Message for Today**

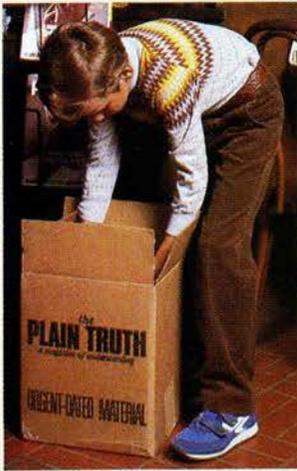
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14



**A Lesson
at the
Temple of Baal**
See page 10



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COVER: The father's responsibility to the family is literally a life-and-death matter. Do you know why? God's Word offers specific instructions to fathers of this generation. You can read about those instructions in the article beginning on page 7. Photo by Hal Finch.

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All my life I have had to deal with businessmen. I still do. Sometimes I wish I didn't.

In the business world there is one goal — PROFITS — and, universally, the end seems to justify the means.

Too often human nature overlooks the slogan of the Rotary Clubs: "He profits most who serves best."

Of course, even this slogan implies the profit *motive*.

For some years I was a member of the Associated Advertising Clubs of America, through the Advertising Division of the Chicago Association of Commerce. The Ad Clubs have the slogan: "TRUTH in advertising."

That slogan, too, sounds nice. Too bad it is not more often put to practice.

It seems to be the accepted custom for advertising copywriters to consider NOT the facts or what is TRUTH, but what they can say that will cause the public to buy. It would simply never occur to the average copywriter to ask what are the real *facts* about the service or the commodity he is pushing before the public.

Ad copy goes something like this: Any doctor will tell you that aspirin is aspirin. (There are not two or more *kinds* of aspirin. Iron is iron, tin is tin, calcium is calcium. Aspirin branded and sold by one company is practically the SAME as aspirin sold by all other companies.) So one company puts a higher price on its aspirin, and then the voice on the TV commercial says, "Our aspirin is THE BEST aspirin." Literally that is the truth — technically. Every other brand is "THE BEST" aspirin also,

because they are all exactly the same.

Then another pharmaceutical company adds two additional ingredients, and then says to the public: "Nine out of 10 DOCTORS recommend the ingredients in our brand. It is like a doctor's prescription — that is, a COMBINATION of ingredients."

This leads the viewer or listener or reader to assume that nine out of 10 doctors actually RECOMMEND this brand instead of aspirin. Notice, it does not literally SAY that at all. But it is deliberately misleading, because people will carelessly read that meaning into it.

Literally, every word may be true. Perhaps nine out of 10 doctors DO prescribe, for other purposes and with other combinations, these particular drugs — though not necessarily combined with aspirin.

But nine out of 10 doctors *do not* recommend this particular brand, though they might not disapprove it. So then company number one comes out with the statement that nine of 10 doctors do, *themselves*, TAKE aspirin — which may well be true. But this gives you an idea of the tactics used.

The operation of *The Plain Truth*, *The Good News*, the *World Tomorrow* broadcast and Ambassador College has become a large worldwide activity involving, now, an expenditure of millions of dollars annually. Consequently many business firms want to do business with us. Sometimes I have to wonder if they think that, because we speak the TRUTH of Jesus Christ, we are naive, inexperienced in business and "easy pickings."

Sometimes I think *they* them-

selves are a little naive for assuming this!

All too often great energy is expended in the attempt to convince us they are going to *serve us better* and *save us money*, when actually all that talk comes, *not* from a sincere concern about US, but solely from concern about the PROFIT they expect to GET from us.

I met a sales manager of a good-sized manufacturing firm once, who had that philosophy. Because he sent out his salesmen with one thought only — the PROFIT his company would make from their sales — he supposed that any salesman who came to his office had the same motive.

I may have written about this incident before, but it bears repeating. It was the sales manager of a Grand Rapids furniture factory. I was probably about 26 at the time. It was long before my conversion.

But even then I had quite a different concept of salesmanship than most salesmen. I actually believed in being completely honest about my product or service. I believed I always ought to be able to GIVE more than I received — that is, to sell only what was worth more *to the customer or client* than the money he paid. Of course, the money was worth more to *me*, so I figured it was a bargain for both of us.

But this philosophy was based on God's GREAT command to love our neighbors AS ourselves — that is, *as much as ourselves*.

God's great law does not oppose loving our own selves. It simply commands us to have equal love for the other fellow — *and that will be a LOT OF LOVE FOR OTHERS!*

Of course I don't now remem-

ber the exact words. But when I entered his office, the sales manager of this company said something like this:

"So you've come in here to try to sell me some advertising space so you can make a commission off of me. Well, I'm a hard nut to crack! Now let's see if you can crack me. Go ahead with your spiel."

Instantly I was righteously indignant. I was red hot! My fist came crashing down on his desk.

"My dear sir!" I snapped. "I came in here assuming yours is a reputable company. I supposed you were an astute businessman who wouldn't sell *your* product to any customer unless you believed it was worth more *to him* than the money he pays you. I assumed you wouldn't buy any advertising space unless I could show you it is going to *pay you!* And I came prepared to present the **FACTS** to demonstrate that! I didn't think you were a fool!"

"But if you are putting the philosophy you just expressed into practice — if you send out *your* salesmen with a 'spiel' you've taught them, intended to talk suckers into buying a worthless product, so *you* can make a profit — then, Mister, you haven't got enough money to buy a single inch of advertising space in any of my magazines!"

This was said with blazing fire, and it rather unnerved him.

"Well," he stammered, embarrassed, "won't you sit down?" He was ready to listen. I had made surveys, done research, analyzed his sales problem and I did have the facts and figures. I had assembled data for the writing of honest and truthful advertising copy that would lead to sales and profits for his company.

He did sign my contract on the dotted line. And the advertising did build business for his company and benefit *his* customers, besides.

WHY can't businessmen realize that honesty, **TRUTH**, intelligent service to customer or client benefit everybody concerned, and that they pay bigger dividends than misrepresentation, lies, de-

ception and the purely selfish motive?

Sure, it takes a little harder, conscientious **WORK**. It means putting your **MIND** to your customer's or client's problem with the motive of benefiting *him*. It follows the principle of **GOD'S LAW** — loving your neighbor *AS* yourself.

And what does **LOVE** mean? Love is an outgoing concern. It means, in business, simply, being *AS* concerned with the interests and welfare of the people you do business with as yourself, and applying your mind intelligently

God created and set
in motion **LAW**s that
determine success,
health, wealth and
happiness. Do you
actually **LIVE BY**
God's law in *your*
life — *your* business
— *your* profession?

and industriously as much to *his* interests as your own.

When I first joined a banker's magazine as advertising representative, one of these high-pressure, fast-talking salesmen was on the staff.

Actually, at the end of the first year, he had sold slightly more business than I. The publisher lauded his work.

"All right," I answered, "you just watch results from now on. Every man he sold space to probably woke up after he left and regretted being high-pressured into buying it. There was no intelligent thought or planning put into any of these many small ads he put in the magazine. They won't get results for the advertisers. He won't be able to renew a single contract.

"I had to work a little slower this year because I made surveys — I studied the selling problems of my clients and in most cases I

actually rendered the additional service of writing their copy for them. It has been getting **BIG RESULTS**. It is building the businesses of my clients. And they, in turn, are pleasing and satisfying *their* customers. Everybody benefits.

"My advertisers don't feel 'stung' or 'gypped' by high-pressure and deceptive sales talks. I have made warm friends of them. They will renew their contracts. They will keep on with us for years.

"This year, I will sell as many or more *new* advertisers as last year — and they will be **ADDED** to what I sold last year. Your high-pressure man will sell less this year than last, and he can't renew the people he sold last year."

It happened. He dropped out, for the publisher saw, in due time, that his methods were not making friends, but enemies — and, as Elbert Hubbard said, our enemies don't do business with us.

My sales philosophy was that a **CUSTOMER** is worth much more than a **SALE**.

In this world businessmen generally seem to assume that **GOD'S WAY** is some impractical, altruistic way that won't work. Too many seem to feel that they must lie, misrepresent, take advantage of every deal. They justify it by shrugging their shoulders and saying, "It's **BUSINESS!**"

But it's dirty, dishonest and **IMPRACTICAL** business! **IT DOESN'T PAY!**

I proved that, before God Almighty ever called me to conduct His business!

We try to conduct God's business **GOD'S WAY!** This **WORK OF GOD** is built on the **UNSELFISH** motive. We **GIVE** Christ's Gospel *freely* without money and without price! Our hearts are in serving others with deep-down and sincere outgoing concern for others.

And this **Work**, consistently, has continued to **GROW!** Do you know any worldly business, with the selfish **PROFIT** motive, that has grown as rapidly and consis-

(Continued on page 29)

John's Message for Today

As an elderly apostle, John confronted many of the same problems that face God's Church today. What can we learn from his mission and message?

By Greg R. Albrecht

For almost 40 years mankind has lived under the threat of the bomb.

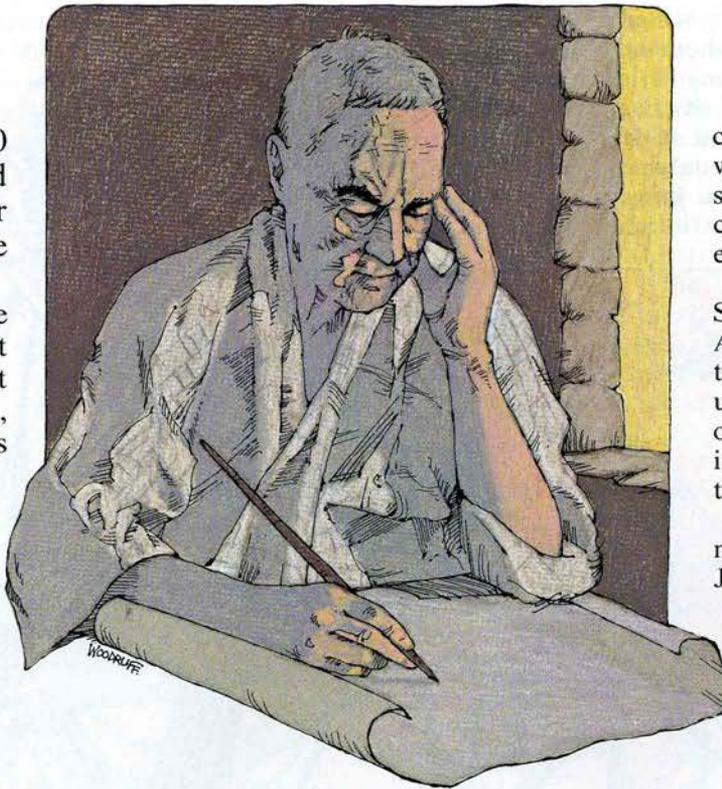
To what degree the hideous weapons that man has devised might be used is unknown, but the Bible reveals that mankind will not be completely destroyed.

Science fiction writers and others living in this 20th century, however, have wondered what it would be like to be the last person alive on earth.

The scenario is familiar — everyone else destroyed, everyone else gone, and you are the last, alone, without hope — the only human left alive, knowing that when your life ended, so would society and civilization.

At the end of the first century A.D., a situation comparable to that really occurred. An elderly yet imposing patriarch, having been banished to permanent solitary confinement, sat down at the table in his lonely room and began to write.

He paused, looked out the window, and he, too, must have felt very alone. Not only because of



cut off from all of this, he was deeply aware of the situation and of the legacy of truth that had been entrusted to him.

Inspired by God's Holy Spirit, he began to write. And what he wrote more than 1,900 years ago gives us today an insight, not only into history, but also into affairs and events that are soon to happen.

Enthusiasm and dynamism marked the apostle John's character. You can't help but feel his strength and energy as you read the words he wrote. Apart from the apostle Paul, John was the most prolific

his extreme isolation, but because he was the last of a vanishing breed.

This elder statesman of the Church of God was an apostle — the apostle John.

The background

The rest of the apostles were gone. The Church had deep problems. Within the scattered and diminishing Church were heresy and apostasy. False doctrines were being taught. From without was persecution from Roman authorities.

Although John was physically

New Testament writer. He wrote five books: the gospel of John, I, II and III John, and Revelation.

John was the only surviving apostle at the end of the first century. His age probably matched the year (in the early 90s) in which he wrote. Through his late 20s and early 30s, John had been the close personal friend of Jesus Christ; they were about the same age.

And now, around A.D. 90, he could look back to those years when Jesus Christ had been with them, through the perspective of 60 years of experience — 60

Illustrations by Michael Jon Woodruff

years of trials — 60 years of the history of God's Church. And he saw some incredible things.

Church problems

He saw within those 60 years a gradual erosion of the truth revealed by Jesus Christ. The truth held dear by the early Church and the early apostles had been "changed" and even rejected by former members of the Church.

John lived to see an age when some churches even refused to read his letters. (See III John and the example of Diotrephes.)

John was truly a spiritual and physical elder to those to whom he wrote and to those whom he served. He called them "my little children," conscious of the unique responsibility that God had given him in his spiritual and physical maturity. John knew that he had to give the Church

changed drastically through the first century. By the time John wrote, it is apparent that he was dealing with a primarily gentile church in terms of race and culture. And the gentiles had brought with them different problems: problems of liberalism, problems from pagan cultures, problems of a different nature than those of the Church's original members.

Law equals love

Against the background of these new influences in the Church, it is no coincidence that we find a number of references to the law in John's writing. It is also interesting that we find an almost equal number of references to "love."

To some, the words *law* and *love* seem to be contradictory. However, John showed that the two were one

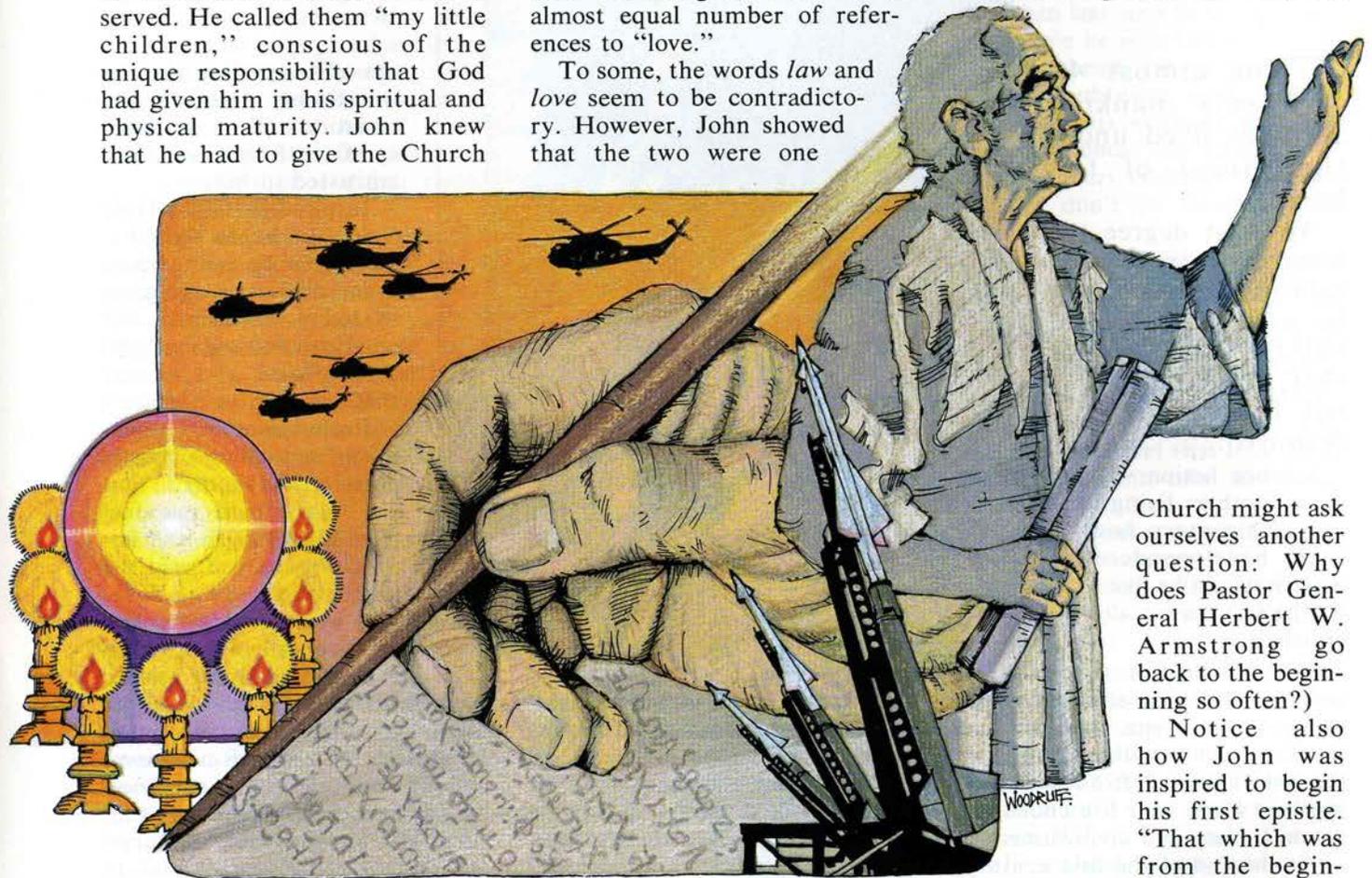
of writing by analyzing the way it begins.

This is true for the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and it is also true for the gospel and first epistle of John, who wrote with a more personal, more intense style than the first three.

Notice John 1:1. In John's advanced age, with the wisdom and experience of an apostle, it's interesting to see how he was inspired to begin his gospel.

"In the beginning was the Word..." (John 1:1).

Now that's an interesting introduction. Why would a man of such depth begin in such an elementary, fundamental way? (We of the present era of God's



Church might ask ourselves another question: Why does Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong go back to the beginning so often?)

Notice also how John was inspired to begin his first epistle. "That which was from the beginning...". Again,

he goes back to the trunk of the tree. John is reminding us to understand the foundation one more time, to go back into the Garden of Eden. To go back and reexamine the two trees, to take hold of the trunk of the tree.

John, like Mr. Armstrong, found it necessary to remind his

the truth about the heresies that were rife at that time.

The original Church of the early chapters of Acts was composed predominantly of Jews. This required Paul to address particular problems, as evidenced throughout Paul's epistles.

But the membership had

and the same. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (I John 5:3). The law of God is love. The two words are synonymous.

Where John begins

Often, we can tell a lot about the scope and direction of a piece

listeners and readers that they needed to take a look at the very beginning.

Inspired organization

So we know that the apostle John began his writings at the very beginning. But where did he go from there? How did John organize his work?

Notice John 20:30-31: "And truly Jesus did many other *signs* in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may *have life* [eternal life] in His name."

These verses reveal the inspired organization of the gospel of John. Let us examine briefly the three themes mentioned in these verses.

• *Signs and miracles.* There are seven miracles around which John organized the early chapters of his gospel:

Miracle/Sign	Passage in John
Changing of water into wine	2:1-11
Healing of the nobleman's son	4:46-54
Healing of the impotent man	5:1-9
Feeding of the 5,000	6:1-14
Walking on water	6:16-21
Healing of the blind man	9:1-11
Raising of Lazarus	11:1-44

• *Belief in Christ.* A second emphasis that John was inspired to include in his gospel is the teaching that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ. The signs and miracles help develop faith in us.

As Paul commented in Romans 10:17, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

• *Attaining eternal life.* The third emphasis is that of believing we might "have life." The "life" John is referring to is, as Mr. Armstrong has explained, not merely a physiochemical, temporary existence, but eternal life through Jesus' name.

The true Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed to John has to

do with our opportunity to be born into God's Family.

Then and now

All three of these themes — the power of God shown through signs and miracles, the belief in Christ and the goal of attaining eternal life — are still being taught during this Philadelphia era of God's Church. John was inspired to organize his gospel the way he did in order to teach and lead people who had lost faith, who had lost courage, who had lost a great deal even physically through the persecutions and

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trials that had come upon the Church.

Part of that needed encouragement from John came from his recording of seven of the ways in which Jesus Christ showed Himself able to supersede natural laws — to go above and beyond the problems we usually face in our day-to-day lives.

We in God's Church today need to understand that Jesus is still the Head of the Church and that we also can experience His help in many wonderful ways (John 10:28).

Remember the account in the last chapter of John when Christ, after His resurrection, met with the disciples on the shore? All of the disciples were saying, "It's all over." Discouraged, they said, "Let's go fishing." In their minds, the Work had folded; they were ready to go back to their former careers and vocations. Some of us may have seen this

same inclination in this era of God's Work.

Christ intervened and once again provided them with a catch of fish after they could catch nothing all night long.

(See Luke 5:1-10 for the first account of Christ helping His disciples become real "fishermen.")

Christ then cooked breakfast for the tired and hungry men. He built their belief and faith by showing them that He was the same Jesus whom they had seen perform many other miracles through the power of God's Holy Spirit.

Jesus had been crucified and resurrected, but He was the same Jesus, with the same power.

The seven miracles and signs recorded in the gospel of John are given to help us in a similar way. Studying these powerful, encouraging accounts, we remember the importance of faith and belief in a Christian's life.

The word *believe* appears 98 times in the gospel of John — an average of about four or five times a chapter. The lesson John was trying to communicate is clear: It's important to believe God, it's important to trust Him, it's important to have faith in Him.

The seven "I am's"

Another encouraging pattern in John — also found in a pattern of seven — concerns the ways that Christ identified and described Himself.

Christ taught us about seven different aspects of Himself using the words *I am*. Recall the passage in Exodus 3 where Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament, met Moses through the miracle of the burning bush and told him to return to Egypt to lead the nation of Israel.

Moses replied: "What do I tell the Israelites when they ask who sent me — a bush that keeps burning? . . . What do I say? What credibility do I have, how can I announce you, how can I tell them that you told me to come here?"

Jesus Christ said: "You tell them — I AM, that I AM has

sent you. The one who is self-existent. I am, I have been, I always will be.”

In the book of John we once again read about the I AM. Notice the seven “I AMs”:

<i>I AM . . .</i>	<i>Passage in John</i>
The bread of life	6:35
The light of the world	8:12, 9:5
The door	10:7
The good Shepherd	10:11, 14
The resurrection and the life	11:25
The way, the truth and the life	14:6
The true vine	15:1

A unique vantage point

One of the major problems that John saw overtaking that first-century Church was merely a fulfillment of one of Christ’s prophecies.

Christ had said in Matthew 24:12 that men’s love would grow cold. And men’s love in what was probably the third generation of Christians was growing cold.

That Church, two generations removed from Jesus Christ, had only heard of Christ’s teachings, miracles and ministry. The members were not eyewitnesses, as John had been. (Here, too, is a lesson for us: When Mr. Armstrong talks about the early history of this era, he does so from a unique vantage point.)

John was writing to many people who weren’t even born when he shared these experiences with Christ. They had lost that love, that dedication and that enthusiasm for God’s Church; some had begun to get entangled with the world.

Notice again the wording of I John 1:1: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with *our* eyes . . .”. When John says “we,” he is probably referring to himself and the other apostles. But all the other apostles were dead.

Perhaps a few remaining in the Church were old enough to remember some of these things that Jesus had taught, but John was an eyewitness. John had actually seen these things happen.

He never forgot the impact of Jesus Christ’s life.

In a similar way, we are able to share some of the early experiences of Mr. Armstrong through what he has said and written about them, especially the many miracles and healings. All these experiences have caused an impact in Mr. Armstrong’s mind. That impact has never left Mr. Armstrong.

That impact never left John, either. “I’ve seen Him,” John said. “I’ve heard Him and my hands have even handled the Word of life.” Yes, John was the close friend who was leaning on Christ’s breast at that last supper, the one who had so deeply felt and shared experiences with the Being who was here on earth in the flesh then and is now our High Priest in heaven.

Sin and forgiveness

Among the important concepts John bequeathed to us involved what we today would call “getting the Church back on track.” As already mentioned, John emphasizes that law and love are synonymous, and his concern that we understand this is evidenced when he says in his first epistle, “My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin” (I John 2:1). You’ve got to stop sinning, John said.

But notice his approach. John was also a realist. He knew that we are human. He did not condone sin, but he knew that we would sin because, even though converted, too often we succumb to our carnal desires. So continuing in I John 2:1, he says, “And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

What is Christ doing as our High Priest in heaven? He’s our advocate — He’s our go-between, interceding for us with God. “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5).

We know from other biblical references that Satan is coming before God’s throne as well, accusing us, bringing up our sins (Rev. 12:10, Job 1:6-12). Howev-

er, we can ask Jesus Christ to intervene on our behalf as our “defense attorney,” as our “propitiation” (I John 2:2).

Christ is the propitiation — the expiation. The Greek word refers to an Old Testament word that deals with the mercy seat covering the Ark of the Covenant. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled on the mercy seat. The blood was the expiation. The blood was the propitiation.

Don’t misunderstand. John is not saying you can sin and sin again and Christ is going to continue to be your defense. He won’t. But if you make a mistake and are truly repentant, Christ will continue to represent you before God.

John’s final exhortation

Let’s conclude this glimpse into the life and message of the apostle John with the last verse of his first epistle: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (I John 5:21).

Again, we have a reference to John’s age, maturity and wisdom in this final exhortation.

As subtle and insidious as the problems, temptations, persecutions and idols of John’s age were, this apostle was given the insight to perceive Satan’s influences. Satan has constantly been our adversary, our tempter, our foe. He places the glittering, appealing idols before us today, just as he placed them before the first-century Church.

Will we listen?

We know that when John took his pen in hand almost 1,900 years ago, he was writing not only to God’s people of his own day, but to true Christians throughout the ages. What will be the result of John’s admonishment to this era of God’s Church?

We are all aware that we are preparing for the world tomorrow and the glorious return of Jesus Christ. What remains to be seen is whether we will heed the message of the apostle — then *and* now. □

Father SHOULD Know Best- But Does He?

The future of humanity hinges on whether we as Christians obey God's instruction to fathers!

By David Hulme

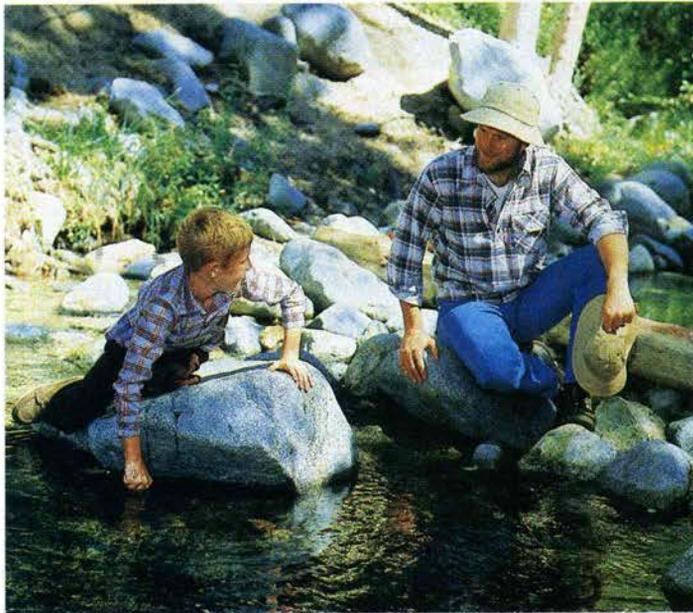
“Let me give you one piece of advice,” the older man said.

Through the window of the 747, Paris shone beautiful in the springtime sun. My traveling companion on the flight to New York had introduced himself as a businessman returning from West Africa, and we proceeded to talk for several hours.

But it was only when the discussion turned to families that the man saw fit to offer me his heartfelt wisdom: “Let me give you one piece of advice. Spend time with your children *now*.”

It is a common plea, I thought, that reflects a common problem: Most fathers, for whatever reasons, do not spend enough time with their children, and certainly not early enough. Many of us have made this mistake and have reaped the consequences.

However, the phenomenon of the father who, for whatever reasons, spends little time with his children is not cause for a mere passing regret before moving on to a more pleasant topic of conversation. The Bible tells us that



the world will face a time of terrible suffering largely because, believe it or not, most fathers are not being fathers now.

Does this seem like an overdramatization of the problem? Let's look at what the prophet Malachi had to say on the subject.

“The hearts of the fathers”

Describing our day, Malachi spoke of worldwide upheaval that would take place unless the fathers turn their hearts, concerns, emotions and intellects toward their children:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and

the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse [“utter destruction,” Revised Standard Version, margin]” (Mal. 4:5-6).

Here is a desperately serious warning for all of us. God says the end result of a father's lack of responsibility is, simply, utter destruction!

Just what is a father's family responsibility?

Fathers become fathers by taking up the reins of family leadership. Irrespective of modern opinions, the Bible teaches that a father is meant to be a loving authority figure, the head of his home, his wife and his children.

A father's responsibility in the home is vital — so vital that, in the absence of a father properly fulfilling his purpose, others try to fill the vacuum. The prophet Isaiah prophesied just what would happen when fathers in a society become ineffective:

“As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them” (Isa. 3:12).

Because husbands and fathers have abdicated their God-given responsibilities as leaders, guides and the ones who set and main-

tain standards, wives and children fill the void. The integrity God intended for the family unit is shattered.

Respect, untaught in the home, becomes a rare commodity, and "the child will be insolent toward the elder" (verse 5). The whole society is upset, confused as to where to turn for guidance.

One can scarcely open a newspaper or magazine without reading of some evidence of family disruption and disintegration. And God lays major blame exactly where it belongs, squarely on the father.

Paul wrote, 1,900 years in advance, a searing catalog of the sins of 20th-century humanity: "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, *disobedient to parents*, unthankful, unholy" (II Tim. 3:2).

This is the heritage of children in the absence of God's laws.

Fathers vs. mothers

The most stable and productive societies have been those in which men and women have understood their God-ordained functions in the family and have taken a moderate, balanced view of life and its responsibilities.

For centuries of Western history, the pendulum has swung back and forth between societies dominated by women and societies dominated by men. Both extremes produce wrong results, because neither is what God intended. Under the influence of Satan, the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2), we have chosen to rely on our own minds, instead of turning to God as the source of instruction.

God has ordained a healthy balance between male and female responsibilities in child rearing, but with the father in overall control. The guidance and nurturing of children by their mothers is absolutely vital, but under the right leadership of the father.

Let's take a closer look at the

role of fatherhood today, identifying the problems and understanding just how God has decreed that fathers should shoulder their responsibilities.

Fathers must be present

Possibly the No. 1 problem among fathers today is simply not being there — not spending time



How many fathers come home, invade the refrigerator or liquor cabinet and use the television set as a barrier between themselves and their offspring, while telling themselves they are at home with the family?

with children before they have grown up.

The cases of the executive always off on business, the workaholic who rises early and leaves before the children are up and comes home after they have gone to bed, the man who spends his afternoons and evenings having a "beer with the boys," only tell part of the story, however.

How many fathers, while not exactly committing the error of not being around, come home after a hard day, invade the refrigerator or liquor cabinet and use the television set as a barrier between themselves and their offspring, all the while telling themselves they are at home with the family?

How many fathers bring home a briefcase full of papers and disappear "not to be disturbed," hardly seeing their children during the week? And the weekend? Well, it's for relaxation on the

golf course with "the boys" — adults, that is, not children.

It is well known that the first two years of a child's life are critical in so many ways, and especially in forming right perceptions of male and female roles. Absence of either parent at this crucial time can produce severe emotional and behavioral problems in later life.

Children emulate their parents. They cannot emulate what they do not see.

Fathers must be leaders

Predating social scientists by hundreds of years, God long ago explained that a father should be neither harsh nor permissive.

Notice Ephesians 6:4: "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training [or, more accurately, "with discipline"] and admonition of the Lord."

Addressing Himself to fathers, God says, in effect: "Do not be so uncompromisingly harsh as to alienate, anger, discourage and frustrate

your children, but do raise your family with discipline, instruction and guidelines and in the recognition of God's governance of your lives."

Notice Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Jewish Publication Society).

There is an important difference between this translation and the Authorized Version's rendition of the verse. The JPS editors correctly included the word *even*, omitted in the King James Version. This omission permits a misunderstanding of the scripture.

The Jewish translation stresses that with right leadership and caring instruction by parents in agreement, a child reared in God's way will not depart from it, even in old age. In other words, the child's obedience will mature throughout life and up through old age. This verse cannot be used

to excuse delinquent behavior during the teenage and young-adult years.

Fathers must spend time

This world's economic and educational systems have removed father from the family for most of the child's waking hours.

In a study to determine how much time middle-class American fathers spend with their young children, microphones placed on the youngsters recorded their conversations. The average amount of contact with father was 37 seconds a day! Other studies showed a meager 90 minutes a week for children aged 6 to 10.

Sadly, much of the responsibility for guiding, instructing and disciplining children falls to the mother, who is usually more available during the day. But under such pressure, many mothers, unsupported by their husbands, allow their children to decide their own behavior well before they are capable.

The conspiracy against the family is completed by a social system that encourages even women with children to leave the home to seek outside work.

The long-term effects on children of this poverty of leadership in the home are everywhere to be seen in the explosion of the number of "latchkey" kids — young children entrusted with a house key because they regularly must come home from school to a locked, empty house — and the sad but all too common eventual effects of teenage drug abuse and juvenile crime.

Statistics from Canada show that one in every 10 children has an emotional or learning disorder. In Canada, too, young people up to age 19 account for 27 percent of first admissions to psychiatric hospitals and clinics.

But this kind of information has lost its shock value; it has become commonplace. We are

reaping the whirlwind of social disintegration. Devoid of the kind of leadership God requires of fathers, we daily prove that "a child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (Prov. 29:15).

Spare the rod . . .

To the father God says, "He who spares his rod hates his son,



The family should function harmoniously in love, mercy and discipline, as God's Kingdom in microcosm. How well fathers fulfill their responsibilities will partly determine their place in that Kingdom.

but he who loves him disciplines him promptly" (Prov. 13:24).

In a world that, in the name of love, increasingly decries spanking of any kind, it is significant that God says such sparing of the rod equals hatred, not love, of the child.

Now, by correction and discipline are we to understand severe physical punishment? Clearly not! First, we instruct our children on the behavior expected. We make sure they understand. If behavior does not improve, then it may be necessary to emphasize the rules by spanking in moderation.

Physical correction of wrong behavior should never be done in anger, but out of deep love. It should be accompanied by a reasoned explanation of why the correction is necessary and reassurance of the parents' love.

Balance and wisdom in disciplining our children are the key-

notes. A child corrected in this way, in love, will show real love and respect in return.

The Bible reveals, too, that there is a time limit on effective child rearing: "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Prov. 19:18, AV). "For his crying" is better translated "to his destruction." That is, if we do not correct our children, we are contributing to their eventual failure. We will not mold in them the pattern of life that guarantees God's blessings.

We are now experiencing "a generation that curses its father, and does not bless its mother" (Prov. 30:11). That predicament results from poor and inattentive training, where the father has not taken the initiative in rearing the children and, where he has taken the initiative, the mother has undermined his efforts.

An elect group

In Matthew 24:22, Christ spoke of an elect group being saved from such worldwide destruction as has never before occurred. That elect is the same group referred to in Malachi 4:5-6. They are the people who have been taught God's purpose for the family and who have responded positively. Because of their response, God says He will not "strike the earth with a curse," or "utter destruction."

The family, according to God's Word, should be an integrated unit functioning smoothly and harmoniously, in love, mercy and right discipline. It should be an embryo of God's Family — God's Kingdom in microcosm. How well fathers fulfill their responsibilities will partly determine their places in that Kingdom.

"The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child will delight in him" (Prov. 23:24).

Fathers, just how well are your hearts turned to your children? □



A Lesson at the Temple of Baal

*The ruins of an ancient desert temple
bear an important message for us today!*

By Keith W. Stump

The first view of the ruined city is unforgettable.

As you approach the ancient site, the narrow road begins to curve around low hills. Soon, a final turn — and there it is!

You suddenly look down on a spectacular array of pillars and walls stretching away across the desert — the ruins of fabled Palmyra.

What a city this must have been!

As you survey the extensive ruins basking in the burning desert sun, the imagination seeks to reconstruct the wealthy oasis city of ancient times: the colonnaded streets, richly decorated houses, spacious courtyards, bustling marketplaces.

For centuries, travelers gladly risked death in the sun-scorched, bandit-ridden wilderness just for a glimpse of these remarkable, out-of-the-way ruins.

Magnificent though they are, these time-scarred remains are but a pale reflection of the city's former grandeur. Palmyra — the legendary "Bride of the Desert" — once stood on an ancient trade route halfway between the Syrian coast and the Euphrates valley. A rich culture flourished within its walls. Its trade reached interna-

tional proportions. Camel caravans brought goods from faraway India, Egypt and Rome.

Today, the site is an expanse



long empty of human habitation, echoing only faintly the ancient fame, wealth and glamour of the city. Palmyra sits alone, desolate and forlorn, in the center of the modern country of Syria. It is separated from its nearest important neighbor by more than 100 miles of desert.

Baal worship

The original name of Palmyra was Tadmor. The name *Tadmor* appears for the first time in Assyrian inscriptions of the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (1115-1077 B.C.). Later, the Greeks and Romans renamed the oasis city Palmyra, "the place of palms."

The first known inhabitants of the city were Canaanites. Later came Aramaeans, who subsequently mixed with Arab stock.

With the collapse of the Nabataean treasure city of Petra early in the second century A.D., Palmyra became the chief commercial center in northern Arabia.

The city's golden age came under its queen, Zenobia. She briefly liberated her city from Roman rule, but was defeated by the Roman emperor Aurelian and taken captive to Rome in A.D. 272. After another revolt the following year, the city of palms was recaptured and destroyed by Roman legions.

Among the surviving remains of ancient Palmyra is its temple of Baal.

The god Baal was worshiped by many ancient Near Eastern peoples. *Baal* is the Canaanite word for "master" or "lord." The plural form of the word *Baal* — *Baalim* — is often used to refer to idols or gods collectively.

The Hebrews learned the worship of Baal from the Canaanites. The Old Testament abounds in references to Baal worship. Judges 2:11, for example, records that "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals." The judge Gideon, by contrast, threw down the altar of Baal (Judg. 6).

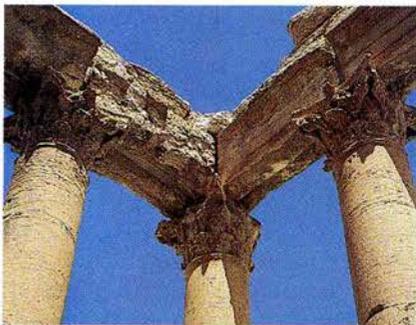
The wicked queen Jezebel introduced Baal worship on a grand scale at Ahab's court. The dramatic confrontation between

Elijah and her priests of Baal is recorded in I Kings 18. It was there that Elijah issued the challenge, "If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him" (verse 21).

But Baal worship persisted. Jeremiah later condemned the people of Judah for burning their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal (Jer. 19:5).

The temple of Baal

In ancient Palmyra, Baal was worshiped as Baal-Shamin, "Lord of the Heavens." He was the



equivalent of the Greek god Zeus. (The city also had a temple to Bel, patron god of Babylon.)

The temple of Baal in Palmyra was laid out during the time of Rome's emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14 to 37), but actual construction did not occur until many decades later. It was built about 350 yards north of the city's amphitheater.

In its heyday, Palmyra's temple of Baal was a magnificent structure. Even today, archaeologists agree that the temple is one of the most attractive and best preserved of all the monuments of the city. As a center of the worship of Baal, it was renowned far and wide.

The temple has a portico of six columns. An inscription on one of the pillars states that the temple was built "to the honor of Baal Shamin, Lord of Heaven and God of Fertility and of Storms and Rains." In front of the portico stands the altar (see photos).

The hidden inner part of the temple housed the image of the deity. This innermost sanctuary was open only to priests of Baal. One can mentally picture the priests attending to their various

duties: burning incense, sacrificing at the altar, bowing in prayer before the shrine and teaching disciples the ways of the mystery religion.

The cult of Baal was extremely popular. Its rituals included animal sacrifices, "sacred" prostitution and licentious dancing.

Symbol of false religion

Today, the temple of Baal lies abandoned and in ruins, as do temples of Baal throughout the Near East. No priests sacrifice on their altars, pray in their sanctuaries or instruct disciples.

But there is still a great lesson to be learned at the temple of Baal!

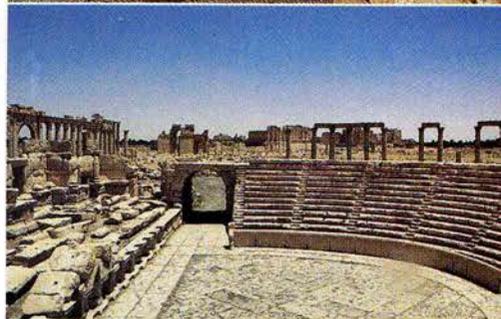
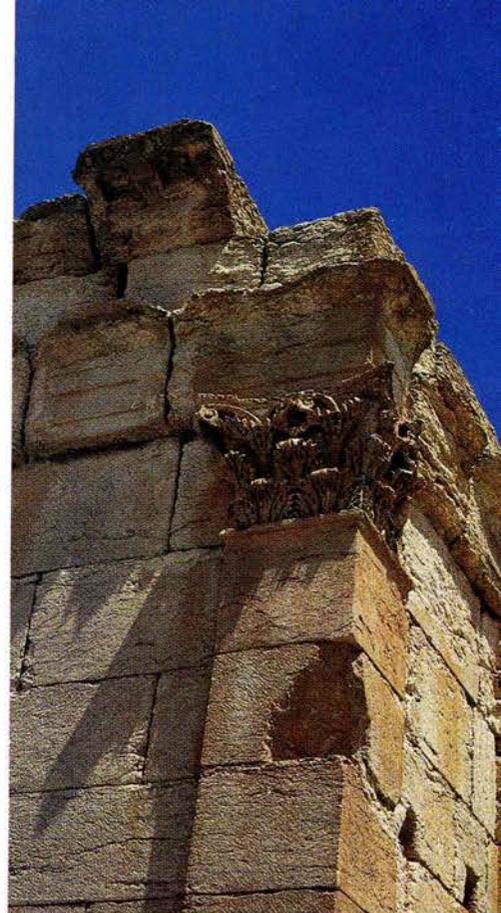
The temple of Baal at Palmyra symbolizes the ultimate fate of all false religion. This once-thriving temple, like the religion it served, today lies desolate and in ruins. Her antique splendor has faded with the centuries. Her pillars are eroded by the ravages of time. Her courtyards lie in disarray.

The ruins stand as mute testimony to the worthlessness and vanity of idol worship.

Like the desert surrounding the temple, the worship of Baal has proven barren and fruitless. Like ancient Babylon, birthplace of false religion, the temple has become the haunt of stray dogs and desert reptiles (compare Isaiah 13:19-22). Even the sign that today points the way to the temple is worn, scarred and defaced, like the stones of the temple itself.

Perhaps most significant, entrance to the inner shrine of the temple is today prevented by a strong door and large iron lock. One may look through the barred door, but may not enter. The way to false worship is obstructed, symbolizing the soon-coming time when the whole world will do what Israel did in the days of Samuel — they "put away the Baals . . . and served the Lord only" (I Sam. 7:4).

The locked temple of Baal also foreshadows the fate of Satan, the father of false religion, who himself will soon be bound by lock and key (Rev. 20:1-3).



The temple of Baal sits desolate, in the emptiness of the desert, a strong testimony to the utter futility of false religion.

New Temple under construction

The decaying temple of Baal stands in stark contrast to a different Temple, a Temple under construction even as you read these lines!

This new Temple will never decay and fall to ruins. It is being constructed of carefully chosen materials and engineered with unerring precision.

That Temple is God's true Church.

God is today preparing a chosen people who will constitute the spiritual Temple to which Jesus Christ shall return in power and



glory! This Temple — the Church of God — shall be more glorious than even the illustrious Temple of Solomon (Hag. 2:9).

The foundation for this Temple was laid millennia ago. Jesus Christ Himself is the living Head and chief cornerstone — the main foundation. His apostles, along with the prophets of old, form the remainder of the foundation (Eph. 2:19-20).

Each individual Christian, begotten with the Spirit of God, is a building block of this new Temple. A Christian's body is, in itself, a temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19). Taken together, these building blocks — members of the Church of God — form the superstructure of the spiritual Temple.

“You are God's building,” the

apostle Paul told the Corinthian church (I Cor. 3:9). In II Corinthians 6:16 he repeated, “You are the temple of the living God.”

In this new holy Temple, all parts will be “fitly framed together” (Eph. 2:21, Authorized Version) — properly joined and functioning together in harmony. There will be no structural weaknesses to ever threaten its collapse.

Eternal pillars

Moreover, in a special message to Christians of the end-time Philadelphia era of God's Church, Jesus Christ declares, “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God” (Rev. 3:12). These pillars will never crumble or decay.

Even now, in these latter days,

God is completing the construction of His spiritual Temple.

In the days of Elijah, there was a small group of people “whose knees have not bowed to Baal” (I Kings 19:18, Rom. 11:4). “Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. 11:5). These undefiled people — the people of God's Church — are the stones with which God is building His Temple.

The gentiles of old sacrificed to demons (I Cor. 10:20). By contrast, Christians today must themselves be living sacrifices to the true God (Rom. 12:1).

If we sacrifice now for God's great end-time Work, and overcome, we will very soon take our places as pillars in a Temple that will never waste away! □

“**T**hese things says
He who is holy
... I have set
before you an open door,
and no one can shut it”
(Rev. 3:7-8).

These words, spoken by Christ Himself, were preserved to point to God’s true Church in the closing days of this age.

Christ knew that His original Gospel message — the message that God’s government will be reestablished on this earth — would be rejected and vigorously suppressed within a half century of His resurrection.

Yet Jesus declared that, before His Second Coming, “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14).

The message goes out

Today, this prophecy is being fulfilled by a “little flock” — the small group of Christians who hold that promise of Revelation 3:7-8.

In countries all over the earth — on every inhabited continent — Christ’s original message of good news is heard, undiluted, on the *World Tomorrow* radio and television programs and through the personal evangelism of *Good News* Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong.

In addition to the spoken word, Christ’s Gospel and God’s way of life is authoritatively expounded monthly in seven languages, through the pages of *The Plain Truth*. Each month, more than six million copies of *The Plain Truth* — the only magazine that explains world events and social phenomena in light of God’s revealed truth — find their way into homes and offices worldwide.

“**THINK ON THIS!**” wrote Mr. Armstrong, who also serves as *Plain Truth* Editor-in-Chief, when the magazine’s circulation was growing into the millions during the late 1970s. “We are the *only* voice in the wilderness of today’s evils, frustrations, dis-



Open Doors for Christ’s Gospel!

Jesus declared that nothing could stop the good news of God’s Kingdom from being thundered worldwide in this end time. That prophecy is being fulfilled!

By Michael A. Snyder

couragements, with the world’s **ONLY HOPE** — and its one **SURE HOPE** of happiness, abundance and eternal life.”

Communicating the truth

The 20th-century preaching of Christ’s message presents a

unique paradox. In the first century A.D., the original apostles preached in Jewish synagogues, where existed practically the only available copies of the Scriptures. Except for a few circulating letters from the apostles, virtually none of what we have come to

know today as the New Testament was widely available.

This unavailability of God's Word continued for several centuries. Even if someone was lucky enough to have access to a copy of the Scriptures, odds were that he or she was unable to read it! Literacy rates were abysmally low for common folk up until modern times.

Today it is different. Today literacy rates are hundreds of times higher. Billions of people can read at least one language.

Further, unlike the situation in the first century, the Bible is widely available in hundreds of different languages and dialects. It is often referred to as the best-selling book of all time.

Unfortunately, most treat this precious book as an icon, placing it prominently on a bookshelf and allowing it to collect dust — only occasionally removing it to mark the date of births and deaths in their immediate family.

How tragic!

Thus the purpose of *The Plain Truth* — to authoritatively declare the causes and solutions of humanity's ills. *The Plain Truth* takes as its focal point the Bible, explaining and expounding long-forgotten truths that humanity knows little of.

It is only *The Plain Truth* that fully explains the relevance of the Bible in the light of today's confusing world events. Hence its title for a half century: *The PLAIN Truth*.

Many programs have been undertaken to enlarge the circulation and expose more people to Christ's message.

Circulation programs

Through a vigorous newsstand program originally begun in 1971, millions of *Plain Truths* have been picked up and read throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and elsewhere. More than 2.8 million *Plain*

Truths are distributed monthly this way. A significant portion of this distribution is done by volunteers from the Worldwide Church of God, the Church that publishes the magazine.

Through a number of programs, volunteers offer free sub-

One, lighted newsstand displays were placed in major airports and other transportation centers. This means that millions annually can pick up personal copies of *The Plain Truth* to read while riding on planes, buses and trains.

Two, hundreds of other outlets were obtained in supermarkets, allowing customers to pick up a free copy of the magazine while shopping.

Elson's gift stores, a prestigious gift store chain with outlets in major hotels throughout the United States, also prominently display free newsstand copies of *The Plain Truth*.

Many of these outlets are in hotels where major scientific, political, foreign policy and other conventions and meetings regularly take place. Thus, a whole new group of people — many of the "movers and shakers" of this human age — are exposed to Christ's full-strength message.

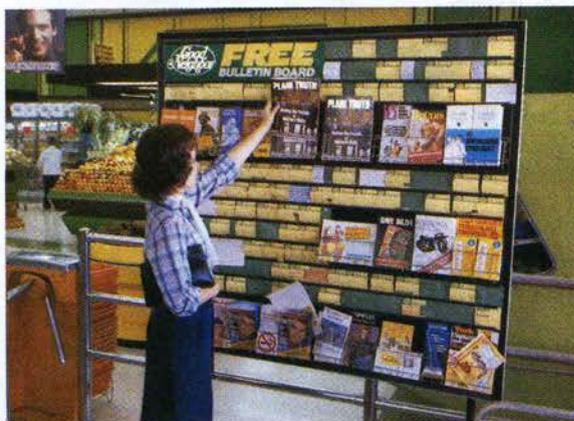
Newsstand programs are also expanding in Spanish, French and other editions. Today it is possible to pick up a copy of *The Plain Truth* at Piccadilly Circus in London, England; at the World Trade Center in New York City; at major hotels in Washington, D.C.; and at thousands of other locations worldwide.

Long suppressed, the good news of a soon-coming age of peace and prosperity thunders worldwide for the first time in 1,900 years.

Yes, with Christ's own unbreakable promise (Rev. 3:7-8), *The Plain Truth* will

continue to help fulfill what has become known as the great commission — delivering the message of the coming Kingdom of God to all the nations as a witness.

And no human power can stop it! □



Each month, more than six million copies of *The Plain Truth* expound Christ's Gospel worldwide in seven languages. Pictured here, *Plain Truth* newsstand distribution outlets located in supermarkets, gift stores and transportation centers.



scriptions for waiting rooms of doctors, dentists and other professionals and restock newsstands in grocery stores, department stores, airports and other places.

In the United States, two major programs were developed.

GO TO THE ANT

We can learn some big spiritual lessons from these tiny creatures!

By Rex J. Morgan

Most of us have at some time been startled to notice, in the kitchen or pantry, a mass of vigorous little black insects teeming all over some sugar, honey or jam that we have forgotten to seal.

Speedily, the busy creatures transport their newfound spoil along a bustling column from the sweet substance to a well-concealed hideout.

Ants! They come in several shapes, colors and sizes. Scientists estimate that there are about 10,000 different species of ants. Some bite or sting, others strip the leaves from trees. Some are harmless.

But one thing characterizes them all: They're always busy, industrious, active.

King Solomon draws our attention to this point in the book of Proverbs: "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest" (Prov. 6:6-8).

Let's do that. Let's take Solomon's advice and go to the ant to

see what we can learn from this assiduous little creature.

Harvester ants

The ants to which Solomon referred are the *harvester ants*, common in Palestine and the surrounding areas.

These ants gather seeds or grains, sort them, throw away any useless outside husks and store the food in long, underground chambers and galleries for winter use. After periods of wet weather, they bring the material out into the sunshine to dry.

If the seeds start to sprout or germinate inside the nest, the ants cut off the shoots to prevent further growth.

Some of these ants actually make a sort of biscuit from the seeds they collect. They put the seeds out in the rain until germination begins. They then dry the seeds again and chew them into a kind of dough, which they dry into biscuits.

So these ants certainly verify Solomon's statement in Proverbs 6:6-8. They store up their food at harvest time and use it in the winter — a good example for us to follow in planning ahead and "redeeming the time" (Eph. 5:16).

Each issue of *The Good News*, each of Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong's broadcasts and





God's Word draws important lessons from ants. Clockwise from far left, top, red ants "milk" aphids; fire ant (note stinger, which can deliver a fiery jab, at tip of tail); weaver ants build a nest; milkweed ant; worker ants.

telecasts, each sermon we hear (particularly the sermon-packed week we experience at the Feast of Tabernacles) comprise a spiritual harvest — a sudden abundance of spiritual food. Will we follow the example of the harvester ants and diligently gather all the spiritual seeds we can, storing them in our minds to use in future times of trial and stress?

Dairying and weaver ants

Two fascinating kinds of ants that typify resourcefulness are the *dairying ants*, found on every continent except Antarctica, and the *weaver* or *tailor ants* of Southeast Asia.

The dairying ant lives on the sweet juice secreted by small insects, particularly aphids and other plant lice. In many cases, such ants obtain this juice by stroking the insects with their antennae, in effect milking their insect "cows."

These ants even carry their tiny livestock from one plant to another to find the best feeding places. Some species spin silk to make shelters or barns for the smaller insects. Others take them into their nests, where they keep them and feed them so they serve up a continuing supply of juice during the winter.

Weaver or tailor ants form a leaf house by fastening living tree leaves together with silk threads. The threads are formed by the young ant larvae, which can secrete silk. The adults carry the larvae in their jaws and move them back and forth like tiny spools, gluing the leaves together with silky threads.

If the leaves are too far apart to start with, a number of ants join in chains to slowly draw the leaves together to make them ready for "sewing."

Ants that grow gardens

Believe it or not, various types of ants cultivate gardens in their

Photos: Peter Arnold, Inc.; Photo Researchers, Inc.

nests. They put leaves, flower petals or other plant materials on their gardens as fertilizer, and raise fungi for food.

A well-known group of fungus growers are the *leaf-cutter* or *parasol ants*. They are so named because they are often seen in processions, each carrying a piece of green leaf above its head. The ants cut the leaves and carry them back to their nests, where they chew them into a pulp, which they place like compost on their gardens.

These ants sow, manure and even prune and weed their crops — different kinds of fungi — before finally harvesting them.

Army ants

Reasoning humanly, it almost seems like some kinds of ants have evil human nature!

For instance, there are *slave-maker ants*, which take over the nests of other ants, kill the ones that oppose them and capture the others as slaves. *Kidnapper ants* barge into other species' nests or sometimes hide in the walls of their nests and then steal their young ones.

Carpenter ants damage people's houses by tunneling through the woodwork. *Pharaoh's ants* and *thief ants* invade houses, restaurants, hospitals and other buildings and eat stored food.

Probably the most fearsome of all ants are the *driver* or *legionary ants*, also known as *army ants*, which live in the tropical areas of Africa and America. These ferocious creatures travel in armies of multiple thousands and eat almost anything they find in their paths. For instance, African driver ants have been known to eat caged leopards in one night.

When these ants are on the move, hardly anything stops them — not even rivers. When a group reaches a river, scouts are sent out to look for the best place to cross — usually a bend where the current moves diagonally across the stream. The ants then wriggle together into a large ball and roll across the river.

The current keeps the ball roll-

ing, so that each ant is ducked only momentarily. As soon as the ball reaches the other side, the ants unscramble themselves and continue the hunt.

Can you imagine what would have happened if the army ants had had to gradually acquire this ability through evolution? How many would have died trying to learn how to cross a stream? The army ants confront evolutionists with a phenomenon that their theory cannot explain — you might say the army ants leave evolutionists all wet!

As Paul said in Romans 1:20, professing atheists are without excuse when they look at the things God has made, because these creatures clearly show the existence of God even though He is invisible. God equipped army ants with the instinct to be able to perform this feat right from the beginning.

As Job said, "But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you . . . the hand of the Lord has done this" (Job 12:7-9).

Learning from the ants

The amazing activities of the various types of ants stand as vivid evidence of the marvelous, intricate design and handiwork of a wonderful Creator God. But Solomon's proverb (Prov. 6:6-8) also points out some significant spiritual principles we can learn from these interesting little insects.

Let's notice the proverb again: "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise" (verse 6).

Are you a sluggard at times? If so, this instruction applies to you — and indeed, we all tend to lapse into laziness from time to time.

The next verses go on to show two ways we can learn from ants.

"Which, having no captain, overseer or ruler . . ." (verse 7). The first thing we need to consider is that ants are self-starters. They don't have to have leaders and supervisors constantly directing them. They live in organized communities called *colonies*,

which are started by *queens* but not ruled by these queens in any way.

The other members of the colony are males, whose only job is to mate with young queens, and *workers*. The vast majority of ants are workers — aptly named, because they work hard, and without any leader urging them on.

Do you need to always have someone on your back pushing you to complete your duties? Or do you, like the ant, have the initiative, resourcefulness and drive to accomplish things by yourself?

Spiritually speaking, God has established a system of leadership in His Church, and the direction provided by His ministry aids us all greatly in our spiritual development (Eph. 4:12).

But God requires us to put out plenty of our own effort, too. We can't qualify for God's Kingdom by holding onto our minister's or our mate's or anyone else's coat-tails!

Paul tells us, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). Peter said, "Be . . . diligent to make your calling and election sure" (II Pet. 1:10).

Do you constantly have to be urged, prodded, beaten and threatened into spiritual action? Do you feel inspired after hearing Mr. Armstrong speak, reading *Good News* articles or hearing Sabbath sermons, only to lapse into spiritual lethargy immediately thereafter?

Or can you stir yourself up through the power of God's Spirit working in you (II Tim. 1:6) to continue your spiritual activity, laboring diligently in your personal prayer and Bible study?

If you can't seem to get yourself going, perhaps you need to seriously consider the lesson of the ant.

Laziness is dangerous

Now notice Proverbs 6:8, which records how the ant "provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest" (Continued on page 29)

The Transfiguration— A Preview of God's Kingdom

By John A. White

The Transfiguration, recorded in Matthew 17, Mark 9 and Luke 9, is an enigma to many.

Yet this incredible event relates crucially to the soon-coming Kingdom of God, pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles!

Notice the account in Luke 9:28-36: "And it came to pass . . . that He [Jesus] took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. Then behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. . . . Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!'"

Why did Jesus, some six months before His death, take three of His disciples up to the mountain for this unusual experience?

First of all, let's understand what actually happened on the mountain. The disciples were shown a vision, as Jesus later affirmed (Matt. 17:9) — not a material reality, but a supernatural picture. We call this vision the Transfiguration because Jesus was changed in form or appearance, or *transfigured*.

The time setting

The disciples had begun to fully understand just who Jesus was

— the Messiah and the Son of God — only a short while before the Transfiguration. Jesus had begun to directly talk to them about His coming suffering, death and resurrection for us (Matt. 16:13-28).

"Assuredly, I say to you," He said, "there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (verse 28). In other words, Jesus promised that, even in this life, some of them would see Him in His glorified state.

The flow of events recorded in the gospels indicates that this spectacular vision occurred a short time before Jesus celebrated His last Feast of Tabernacles. Peter's comment during the vision seems to shed additional light on the time. As the glorified Jesus spoke with Moses and Elijah about His coming death and resurrection, Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles" (Matt. 17:4)

The Jews had a custom that they were not to construct booths for the Feast of Tabernacles until after the Feast of Trumpets. Therefore, though the Bible doesn't say when the vision took place, the narrative indicates that it possibly occurred on or immediately following the Feast of Trumpets, the Holy Day that pictures Christ's return in power and glory.

This is significant. Years later, when Peter recounted the Trans-

figuration in his second epistle, he wanted us to understand that the event was prophetic, not just a historical fact (II Pet. 1:18-19).

The Transfiguration only confirmed, in a dramatic way, what was already prophesied — that Christ is coming in tremendous power to change us by a resurrection from the dead and give us kingship "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (verses 10-11).



The Bible indicates that Christ will rule over all nations, crowned with glory and honor, at His Second Coming. At the Transfiguration, the apostles saw Christ's majesty as King of kings. It's interesting to note that the kings of ancient Israel were probably formally coronated on the Feast of Trumpets, the first day of the Hebrew civil year.

The Exodus connection

We can draw a parallel between the Transfiguration and another Old Testament event: the Exodus. When Christ, the God of the Old Testament (I Cor. 10:4) brought Israel out of Egypt, He

Illustration by Monte Wolverton

Letters



Wants to attend Feast

I have been what you so generously call a "co-worker" for over 20 years and I have never attended the Feast of Tabernacles. But the September issue of *The Good News* gave such a great description of it that I would like to know how I can be part of it.

Your beautiful letters, the articles in *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News*, your Sunday-night broadcasts and the numerous interesting booklets that are free have given me a sense of confidence and peace. I fear nothing and look forward to the beautiful world tomorrow.

Lillian Del Grande
Queens Village, N.Y.

God's calling

I have been receiving the *Plain Truth* magazine, the *Good News* magazine for the past two years and am now taking the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. I have never experienced such profound Bible teaching anywhere else.

It has always been my desire to speak to a representative from the Worldwide Church of God, but no one in this locality seems to be familiar with your wonderful Work.

In the August, 1983, issue of *The Good News*, under the title "Are You Being Called by God?" by Norman L. Shoaf, the last paragraph invites you to

talk to one of your representatives. Do you have a representative close to Allentown? I am 73 years of age but would be delighted to speak to someone from your Church.

Annabelle M. Koch
Allentown, Pa.

I have just read your article "Are You Being Called by God?" for the third time and would like to accept your offer of personal counsel.

I have resisted, many times, the urge to write this letter before (for many of the reasons mentioned in your article). I feel now that I must investigate your Work and these feelings.

Gordon Hancock
Pittsburg, Calif.

Willpower

I want to tell you how much I appreciate your *Good News* article on willpower [August].

Just today I was feeling down because of some problems I've been having. Being newly baptized, I guess I thought nothing could get me down, but it did.

Now I realize why. I didn't have the willpower I needed. I knew I had to study and ask God's help, but I didn't know an answer would come so soon!

I picked up the *GN* and started reading this article. The more I read the higher my spirit was lifted. It's wonderful to know God cares and can help solve any

problem we have if we'd only ask, even sometimes on the very same day. Now I have the willpower to get up and go for the goal! Thanks again.

Elizabeth Eisenhardt
Hattiesburg, Miss.

How much does God care?

The article "How Much Does God Care About You?" by Clayton D. Steep [August] moved me more than any I have read before! I was more than misty eyed when I finished. No words can come near to expressing my feelings while and after reading this.

Believe me, it will be one that I will reread many times. Please convey my deepest thanks to Mr. Steep for a job well done.

Delores Galloway
Olathe, Kan.

Every issue of *The Good News* is filled with articles inspired by God's Holy Spirit, and I'm grateful for each one. But after reading "How Much Does God Care About You?" I felt moved to sit down immediately and express my thanks to Herbert W. Armstrong, to the editors, to Clayton D. Steep and especially to our wonderful God, who inspired the article. It is one of the most uplifting and thought-provoking articles of recent memory.

John Burquist
Mobile, Ala.

allowed His servant Moses to see part of Himself in His glorified state (Ex. 33:18-23).

When Christ was about to bring mankind out of sin in a spiritual exodus, and about to found His New Testament Church, He again allowed His servants — in this case, the disciples who were to become the leading apostles — to see Him glorified. The event took on a powerful meaning. In the Transfiguration, the disciples had proof that the same One who had led ancient Israel would lead them and many others by His Spirit.

This spiritual exodus from sin was to be accomplished by

Christ's death or decease, of which He spoke to Moses and Elijah in the vision. It's interesting to note that the Greek word for decease is *exodos*.

Our transfiguration

Besides its references to the Transfiguration vision, the New Testament uses the word for transfiguration in two other instances.

Paul says in Romans 12:2 that Christians must present themselves to God and become transformed. The Greek word *metamorphoo*, used here, means to change form, to transfigure. As Moses' face was transfigured at

Mt. Sinai — it shone brightly after he had seen God (Ex. 34:29-35) — so we, too, must be spiritually transfigured by the renewing of our minds.

Every one of us will have a part in a transfiguration. Notice II Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed [transfigured] into the same image from glory to glory."

The Transfiguration must have greatly encouraged the disciples who witnessed it. For us who understand its significance in our present and future, it is a great encouragement, too. □

Study the Bible— Daily!

Do you find yourself having to struggle to achieve regular Bible study? Here are some helpful tips.

By Graemme J. Marshall

How does a housewife, with a couple of preschoolers always clinging to her skirt, do it?

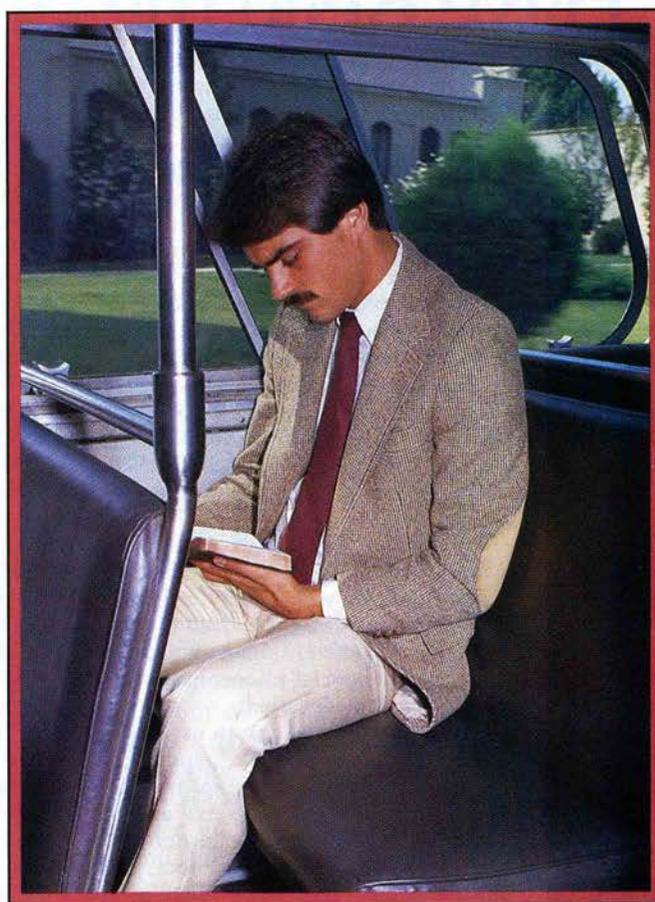
How does a busy worker, with only so many hours in a day, manage it?

How important is it, really, to study God's Word daily?

We live in an amazing age of technological, timesaving devices and advances, and yet, paradoxically, there still seems to be little time left to be alone with the Bible.

Our day is taken up with travel to and from work, school and homework hours, household chores and necessary shopping trips. Add to this the reading of daily newspapers, weekly magazines and books, further education courses, watching television, the wide array of other available entertainments plus keeping up with Church literature, booklets and articles.

By the time you get to the



Bible you can be suffering from information overload and a mind not disposed to study God's handbook for man.

How can you achieve daily Bible study in this busy rush of life?

Why study?

We should first consider this question: Why should you even

be motivated to study the Bible at all — what gain is there in it for you — what spiritual benefits are there in making Bible study a high priority?

There *is*, you may be sure, eternal gain in establishing and maintaining a habit of daily Bible study.

Here's why:

- Foremost, through Bible study you *gain the keys to salvation*. The Bible reveals the wisdom required to be righteous; obtaining this wisdom is a priority concern for Christians (II Tim. 3:13-17).

Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong, writing to members of God's true Church in the pages of *The Good News*, has noted this hallmark of God's way of life: "The Bible will be the authority that you obey, the authority that you look to for everything in your life."

- Bible study helps you *shun error and avoid seduction from God's truth*. Knowing what the Bible says is vital protection to keep true Christians on the right track — to keep the mind focused

Photo by G.A. Belluche, Jr.

on God's true knowledge (II Tim. 2:16-18).

• When you study the Bible, *the Holy Spirit is able to lead you* — to open your mind and enable you to understand spiritual truth. Through studying inspired Scripture, you allow God's mind and thoughts to influence your own (John 14:26, 16:13).

• You can *build your faith* by studying biblical examples of God's faithful servants. In this world of materialism, confident faith is a rich asset.

• Bible study helps you *resist the devil*. Christ quoted Scripture to ward off Satan (Matt. 4:4). Studying Scripture and memorizing key verses can likewise be your safety in resisting evil influences.

• You will gain *serenity, sanity and peace of mind* through studying the Bible (II Tim. 1:7). Is there an earthly price that can be put upon these priceless mental and emotional virtues? They are all gained through Bible study.

Once you have the motivation for studying the Bible daily, it becomes a matter of how to do it with the available time during each day.

Make time for study

True Christians are building spiritual character, and God must be a central part of that building program.

Christians must make salvation a daily priority. They must seek the Kingdom of God over all else (Matt. 6:33) and they must give

You May Have Read the Book, But...

How often it happens! Someone writes a book that becomes a best-seller. Then one of the major movie companies buys the film rights. A movie is produced and it, too, becomes a financial success.

Soon there are not only several million people who have read the original book, but several million more who have seen the movie.

Let's suppose that you've read such a book and a friend of yours has seen the movie with the same title. You discuss with him some of the major plots and the leading characters from the book. Your friend then tells you that the overall plot indeed turns out as you predict. However, many of the details along the way, he tells you, are different from what you with your knowledge of the book expected.

You then see the movie yourself. Some of the characters look different from what you had anticipated. Some scenes work out exactly as you expected; others catch you by surprise. Still, on the whole, the story unfolds as you expect it to.

Now what has all this got to do with you as a Christian?

Simply this: If you are trying to live God's way of life, then you are certainly studying God's Word, the Bible. God admonishes us, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15, Authorized Version).

So you, too, have read "the Book." If you are rightly dividing God's Word, you comprehend the major

By Frank W. Nelte

underlying themes. You understand the purpose for human life, you can separate true doctrines from falsehoods and you even know about many events that are prophesied to occur.

But never forget: You haven't yet seen the movie! You still don't know how all the details will work out.

This is the origin of the phrase, "You may have read the book, but wait till you see the movie!"

Now back to making a movie. Why are there such discrepancies between a book and its movie version?

In moviemaking the director is usually not the author of the book. So a film director will usually create an *interpretation* of a book from his particular perspective, taking the actors, scenery and special effects at his disposal into consideration.

Applying the analogy to us: God is the author of "the Book," and He is also the director of "the movie"! When we attempt to guess exactly how somewhat obscure prophecies will work out, we are, in effect, taking on a task that really belongs to the "director." And we put our interpretation on the script.

Don't second-guess God

In our desire to see God's perfect society replace "this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4), we are at times overly eager to figure out all the prophesied events ahead. Certainly, we are to pray that God's Kingdom will be established soon (Matt. 6:10), and we

are to sigh and cry because of today's wickedness (Ezek. 9:4).

But, although God has given us an overall picture of end-time events, there are details that God has not revealed. For instance:

When will Christ return? The Father has not let us know exactly (Matt. 24:36, 25:13).

Where will God's Church be "nourished" for 3½ years (Rev. 12:14)? While there are certain biblical indications, God has thus far not revealed the place with certainty.

Who will be the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3)? No doubt God is training people for these roles, but He hasn't revealed their identities.

How will we get to the place where we will be protected and trained during the Great Tribulation and plagues of the Day of the Lord? How will God take care of us once we are there? We don't know right now.

To these and similar questions God's Word answers, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God" (Deut. 29:29). This does not mean God has not revealed anything. He has, as the second part of this verse shows: "But those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever."

In God's own time

As God's Church needs to understand more details regarding the events ahead, God reveals that knowledge. "Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

of their time each day to pursue godly things.

It comes down to the simple fact that a Christian must make time for study. He just has to set aside some time each day to do it. *When* you study will depend on your personal needs and life-style, whether in the morning, during the day or at night. But study when your mind is fresh, not when you're sleepy and tired or when you have to think about something else.

What about young mothers

God always works through a human leader. And God is constantly giving His servant on earth today, Herbert W. Armstrong, understanding of more and more truths. He then uses Mr. Armstrong to communicate these truths to us. God sees to it that the things we need to know are available to us.

During the time of the ancient Chaldean empire, Daniel asked God for specific understanding. God gave Daniel this specific understanding in a vision. Daniel then prayed: "I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of You" (Dan. 2:23). To King Nebuchadnezzar Daniel explained that "there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets" (verse 28).

Yet, later in Daniel's life, after God had given him many prophecies for us today, Daniel himself said: "Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, 'My lord, what shall be the end of these things?' And he said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end'" (Dan. 12:8-9).

God gave Daniel understanding of the things Daniel needed to know. In some other matters God chose not to enlighten Daniel. The same applies to us today.

As we need understanding in certain prophetic matters, God will reveal it to His servants. So let's beware that we don't second-guess God. It is our responsibility to study the Bible diligently and learn as much from it as God allows us to understand.

Never forget: You may indeed have read "the Book," but just wait until you see "the movie"! □

busy with preschoolers all day? How can they find the time for personal Bible study?

The ideal marital situation is having a husband who responds to I Peter 3:7: "Husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel."

Such a husband realizes that his wife's time can be monopolized by young children and by the job of making a good home. He realizes that God made him provider and that, over and above the paycheck he brings home, he must also help supply her emotional and spiritual needs. It is, therefore, another responsibility of the husband to see that she has the time for study.

A husband can do this by helping his wife have spare time — by not leaving the care of the children up to her all the time and by not avoiding household responsibilities when it would be helpful for him to handle them.

When he has provided the time and opportunity for her, then it is her responsibility to see that she uses the time wisely.

What to study?

When we have both the motivation and the time set aside, then we are faced with the question of what to study, or how to reinvigorate study. How can we approach Bible study with an enthusiastic attitude?

Examine the following points. One or all of them may help you gain a fresh, excited approach to studying God's Word.

- *Read a new Bible.* You may have an old Bible that is trusty and faithful, but it also may be dog-eared, worn and have a too-well-read feeling. By starting with a new Bible you can gain new incentive and a fresh approach.

- *Study specific subjects* — like afflictions, patience, endurance, diligence, judgment and reward. You can gather information on Christian character traits with the assistance of concordances, dictionaries, topical Bi-

bles and Bible helps. These all list related scriptures together in reference to a particular topic. Use these study aids in balance, however — use them to study *the Bible*; don't study *them*.

- *Study people.* Read about the "pillars of faith" — Abraham, David, Ruth and Paul, among others. You will gain inspiration and encouragement from their Christian experiences.

- *Study God's answers to problems.* Seek God's approach on how to deal with your difficulties. Search the Scriptures to develop His mind and attitude in dealing with the problems of life.

- *Study God's nature, attributes and character.* Christians are training in this life to become spirit-born members of the Family of God. To be like Him, study what He is like as revealed in the pages of His Word.

- *Study the geography, customs and animals of the Bible.* Increase your knowledge of Bible history. You will then better appreciate the authors of the Bible, how they lived and why they wrote of the things they did the way they did.

The overall goal

Finally, what should be the overall goal of your daily Bible study?

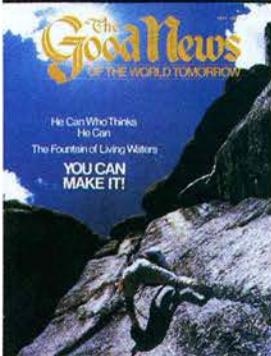
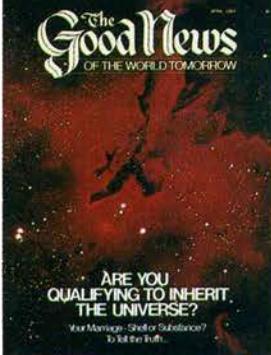
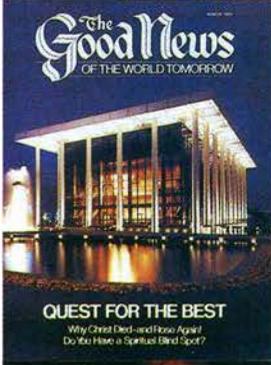
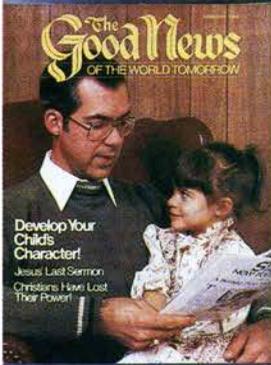
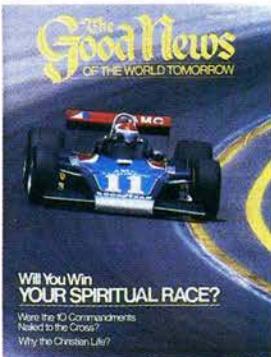
A good answer is to allow the mind of God to increasingly become *your* mind and character as you study God's Word. And as a byproduct, the vigor of your spiritual life will hinge on how regularly you study the Bible and on how much you accomplish when you study.

From your daily study you should gain an increasing delight. You should constantly gain new understanding from your daily search of God's Word. These pearls of truth should add zest, peace and a sense of purpose to your existence on earth.

Look upon it as a lost day — a neglected opportunity — if you have not had a rewarding, inspirational, exciting time studying God's Word, the Bible. □

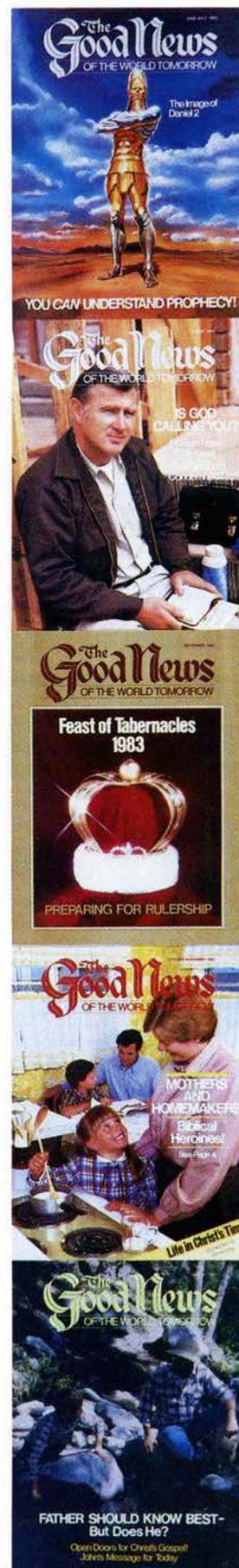
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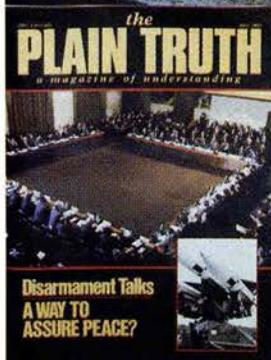
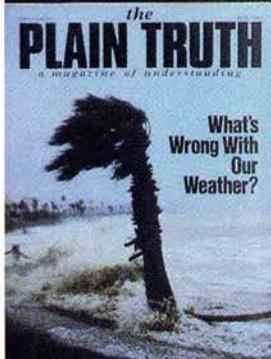
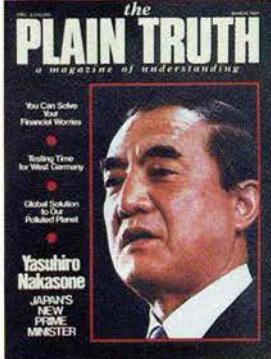
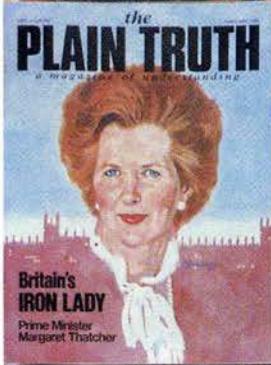
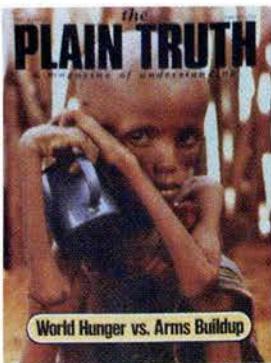
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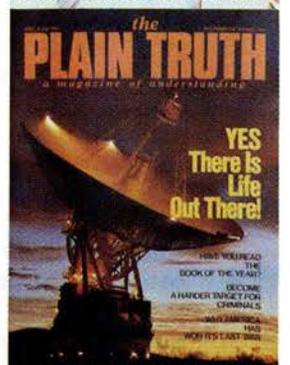
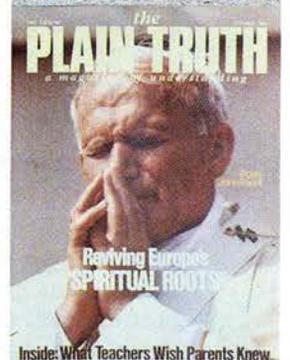
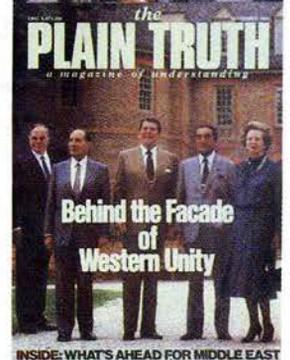
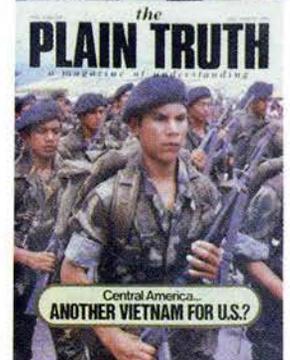
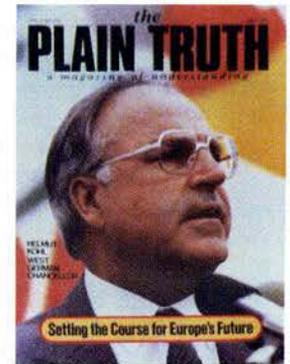
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PERSONAL

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tently and as long? Surely not many!

Do you actually LIVE BY the principles of God's law in your life — your business — your profession? Did you ever ask: WHY are there so many failures? — WHY so much unhappiness? — WHY DOES GOD — if there be a God — ALLOW IT? The answer is, simply, that God created and set in motion LAWS that determine success, health, wealth and happiness. They are THE WAY to peace, to happiness — to success, the ABUNDANT LIFE and to LIFE ETERNAL!

Businessmen could be *so much* MORE successful — and so MUCH happier — if they would follow and religiously and conscientiously apply GOD'S LAWS!

And YOU, in your private life — whether you are a farmer, laborer, business or professional man — whether you are a housewife, stenographer, saleslady or professional woman — will also find real contentment, satisfaction that is lasting, freedom from fears and worries, economic success, everything GOOD — *in no other way!*

There are phenomenal BLESSINGS that go with OBEDIENCE to GOD ALMIGHTY and His perfect laws — literally *living by* every Word of God — His BIBLE. And there are mountainous CURSES that accompany disobedience, and being conformed to the ways of this world.

God created laws to MAKE US HAPPY. He has made those laws accessible.

WHY does God allow so much suffering? Because He doesn't cram His religion down our throats. Because, for our blessing and good, He allows us to MAKE OUR OWN CHOICE, and mankind has deliberately *chosen* the curses!

Let's be *practical!* Let's surrender to GOD and HIS WAYS, and enjoy the phenomenon of SUCCESS, HAPPINESS, JOY and ETERNAL LIFE! □

THE ANT

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vest." The second lesson we can learn from ants is the importance of being conscious of the time. We need to be working diligently, building up a solid spiritual reserve for future use.

We know that we are now in the time of lull before a terrible global conflagration worse than any other that has ever struck mankind (Dan. 12:1). Right now, God's Word goes out virtually unhindered, and we can grow spiritually in relative peace and

Do you constantly have to be prodded into spiritual action? If you can't seem to get yourself going, perhaps you need to seriously consider the lesson of the ant.

prosperity. But things will not always be this way — God prophesies a soon-coming famine of His Word (Amos 8:11-12).

Like the ant, we need to be busily drinking in of God's Word and way of life, gathering spiritual food in this time of harvest and storing up spiritual meat for our sustenance in future times of persecution and trial.

Paul gives us the same admonition in Ephesians 5:15-16: "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." And the days will be even more evil in the future!

The next three verses of Proverbs 6, after the admonition to "Go to the ant," graphically show what will happen to people who are spiritually lazy — spiritual sluggards — at the end time: "How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep — so shall your poverty come on you like a robber, and your need like an armed man" (Prov. 6:9-11).

In Christ's parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1-

13), the wise virgins prepared ahead, building up and maintaining their supply of the oil of God's Holy Spirit. But the foolish virgins were spiritual sluggards. They all slumbered and slept while they should have been spiritually active and alert.

At midnight they woke up, but it was too late. They hadn't prepared in the "time of harvest," and had no store of spiritual character and strength to draw on. When the bridegroom came and the marriage was ready, they were shut out — a terrible price to pay for spiritual lethargy!

In Hebrews 2:3 we are

exhorted not to neglect "so great a salvation" that has been offered to us.

One way we can neglect the magnificent, awesome future God has in store for us is by sheer spiritual drowsiness and lethargy — by failing to give "earnest heed" to our spiritual progress (verse 1) — by failing to "gird up the loins of our minds" (I Pet. 1:13) and really work on building up our spiritual strength.

Don't neglect salvation

We need to be working hard now, really drinking in of God's Holy Spirit through regular Bible study, prayer, fasting and actively following the lead of that Spirit at work in us. We need to be disciplining our minds and establishing spiritual fruitfulness, spiritual depth and power, now, while there is time!

Now is the time to be laboring diligently, seeking God with all our might (Eccl. 9:10, John 9:4).

The tiny ants conduct their lives with diligence, industriousness, hard work.

So can we! Go to the ant, and be wise! □

“But where’s the evidence?”

In the Scriptures, God is quoted as promising, among numerous other incredible and very desirable blessings, healing of diseases, physical health, financial prosperity and wisdom to make right decisions. And the Bible claims that it is impossible for God to lie.

But how can you be sure? What evidence do we have?

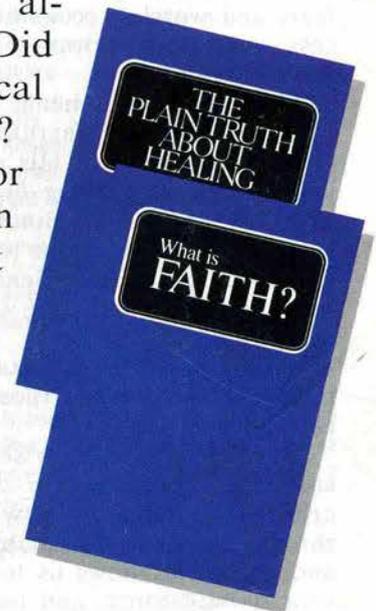
Your whole future hinges on the answers to these questions!

Our free booklet *What Is Faith?* explains the evidence many have overlooked. You may have a copy simply by writing to our *Good News* address nearest you.

And when you write, be sure to

also request our free booklet *The Plain Truth About Healing*. It answers the questions: Is the day of miracles past? Does God heal sickness and disease today upon believing prayer? Is healing always God’s will? Did God raise up medical science for our day?

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