

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1985

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



**Who or What Is the
Prophetic Beast?**

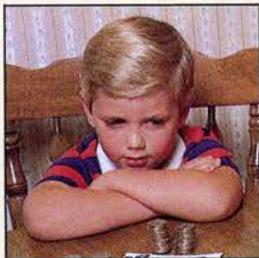
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OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

OCT.-NOV. 1985

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Teaching Children About Money
See page 19



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COVER: Bible prophecy speaks, symbolically, of a mysterious, world-dominating beast at the center of world-shaking events soon to change your life! Who is this beast, and what will happen on the world scene within the next few years? Beginning on page 3 is the first installment of Herbert W. Armstrong's new booklet *Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?* Illustration by C. Winston Taylor.

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PERSONAL FROM

Herbert W. Armstrong

The Way of Life That Causes Success

I was reminiscing with two of our executives on the high estimate I placed on myself in earlier life — in my 20s. “I was a very important individual in my own eyes then,” I mused. “You have no idea how far I’ve skidded backward since then.”

They laughed. “Well,” exclaimed one, “I wish you’d give us the formula of how to go backward like that!”

Reflecting on this bit of banter later, I decided seriously it *would* be profitable to write that formula for all our readers. For it is the formula for the only kind of success that is real and satisfying and lasting.

For as long as I was important in my own eyes, I was actually of no more importance than a paper bag filled with air. True, I was ambitious. I worked hard, studied hard, drove myself on relentlessly to achieve what I then viewed as SUCCESS. But actually, as I know now, it was a striving after wind — pure vanity — a swelled-up self-exaltation that was like a toy balloon that will burst when pricked with a pin.

The skidding backward began with the flash depression of 1920, which sent numerous big corporations, including my main customers, to the wall. It was a national flash catastrophe over which I

had no control. It left me, by 1922, a deflated, frustrated young man of 30. But not for long. I said: “I’ll bound back. You can’t keep a good man down.” Self-confidence returned. I began developing another business.

But by 1926, just when my new advertising business was beginning to accelerate, another nationwide occurrence, not of my making — or even my knowledge, at the time — wiped out that business.

Once again the SELF was deflated. The ego was punctured. I took a new look at myself. And what I now saw was pretty humiliating. I called myself a burned-out “hunk of junk.” At this point a soul-jarring experience and a new self-appraisal changed the direction of my life.

Events and experiences of earlier years now played their part in shaping a new life from this point on. The inflated ego and self-assured ambition had been aroused at age 16. But as far back as memory extends I had a passion for UNDERSTANDING.

I have written elsewhere of the experience, when 22, as the “idea man” for the editorial department of the country’s largest trade journal. In continual travel throughout the United States, I

was assigned not only to search out successful sales ideas and business management techniques, but also seek out the reasons for the success of the few, and the failure of the many.

On this assignment I pioneered in making surveys, based on the law-of-average principle, sampling public opinion, attitudes, consumer buying habits, facts about life — about failure and success — about mental states of



Ongoing achievement: Herbert W. Armstrong opens new mall area on Pasadena, Calif., campus of Ambassador College.

happiness or depression, about life itself as people lived it.

Now as I reflected back, I realized that the most “successful” people I had interviewed were the least happy. Bank accounts were full but lives were empty.

Now, having taken the count twice as a result of nationwide occurrences not of my making — now reduced to actual economic

Photo by Warren Watson

poverty — it became clear at last that, truly, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

This whole world, it became painfully clear, was operating on the “GET” philosophy. The philosophy of “I love *ME*, and I care nothing about *you*.” The way of competition, strife, taking, acquiring, amassing — of *being served* rather than serving. Actually, in economic poverty I found rest from the nerve-shattering *driving, striving* after that which NEVER SATISFIED when acquired!

I began to see that LOVE is not spelled “l-u-s-t” but rather is pointed in the opposite direction — LOVE is an *outgoing concern* for the one loved.

It became crystal clear that there are two overall philosophies or WAYS of life. One is the SELF-centered way. It is simply VANITY. It loves self only (which, as I had learned from a text on advertising psychology, *includes* that which you call YOURS — your wife and family, your club, your political party, your football team, your country in time of war). It includes not only love and greed toward SELF, but envy, jealousy and even hatred toward others.

I could see why so many marriages break up — or, at least, are unhappy. One confuses “falling in love” with the sex attraction that stimulates DESIRE — toward SELF. And when one does not GET what is wanted *from* the mate, resentment sets in. The mate is no longer part of one’s extended SELF. Resentment turns to bitterness, and bitterness to HATE.

Happiness is a funny thing — or *is it?* The more you GIVE, the more you HAVE. But the more you try to TAKE, the more miserable you become.

It became clear. One WAY of life is the SELF way — the INCOMING way — the GETTING way. The OPPOSITE WAY is the selfless way — the way of humility, getting rid of the SELF (which is your biggest enemy), the way of GIVING, serving, sharing.

In the summer of 1933 we were living in Oregon. I planned a

series of lectures in and near Eugene, Ore., to share this BASIC KNOWLEDGE of this right WAY OF LIFE with others. I was without money. But a man with whom I had come in contact, believing in this WAY, happened to be a member of a country school board. He offered me the use of a one-room country schoolhouse eight miles west of Eugene. There was no rent.

I *walked* out over the countryside, inviting neighbors to come to the series of lectures. There were only 35 seats, but attendance averaged 36 — an average of one standing.

That was a very small group of people, but the response was electric. Some of those lives became happier!

A little later an invitation came to lecture over radio. The response was entirely unexpected. There was then only one station in Eugene, KORE, owned by Frank Hill. He called me into his office, handed me a handful of letters. He suggested I plan a regular half-hour program — offering to contribute substantially by reducing the cost below cost of operation. The price was \$3 per half hour.

That was the start of the *World Tomorrow* program. It could not have started smaller. The station then broadcast on only 100 watts. But it was a NEW KIND OF EDUCATION.

Education as organized in this world is restricted primarily to the physical sciences, technologies and the professions — teaching how to earn a living, but not HOW TO LIVE. I saw the need of this broader kind of education IN THE HOME. Without any request from me, radio listeners volunteered to become contributors.

That was the start. As new co-workers volunteered to join with me, other radio stations were added. Growth was small. But I never would *solicit* contributions over the air. The radio program started on the air the first week in 1934. I managed to put together a homemade “magazine” called *The Plain Truth*, printed on a borrowed mimeograph, ready by

Feb. 1. This was offered, free, to radio listeners.

Little by little it grew. In 1947 Ambassador College was opened in Pasadena — with four students and a faculty of eight. It was a new type of campus education. We not only began teaching students how to earn a living — but also HOW TO LIVE.

And now, after another 38 years, I look back on a life that has been filled with happiness — because it has been devoted to SHARING this WAY to REAL SUCCESS with, first, about three dozen, then hundreds, then thousands and today into the HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS of people.

From that high estimate I placed on myself during my late teens and 20s, seeking STATUS and a recognition of IMPORTANCE, I skidded backward — all the way DOWN to self-abasement in economic poverty. In financial poverty I found THE WAY to true SUCCESS. I learned that setting one’s heart on money, material possessions or status only brings a CURSE. Financial success is seldom *true* success, because it is sought for its own sake.

There is a CAUSE for every effect. TRUE success may, and perhaps usually should, include financial success. Money is power, but usually it is used to CAUSE curses, not blessings and happiness. Money is good or evil depending on how it is used. If money is the end you seek, it will wreck you in the end. Self-centeredness, self-seeking — the GETTING, grasping way of vanity, jealousy, envy and greed — is a CAUSE that always produces a most UNHAPPY effect.

To HUMBLE the self, to be little in your own eyes, to be honestly and sincerely concerned for others — to get on the GIVING, helping, serving, sharing way — that is the WAY OF LIFE that CAUSES real success!

To have the SELF brought down to that junk pile was a painful experience. But not for long. Yes, I’m glad I skidded *backward* from self-esteem, ego and vanity and self-seeking. □

Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?

Bible prophecy reveals events of our time and world-shaking events soon to change your life. A major world-shaking event is foretold in the symbolic language of a mysterious, world-dominating, wild beast.

By Herbert W. Armstrong

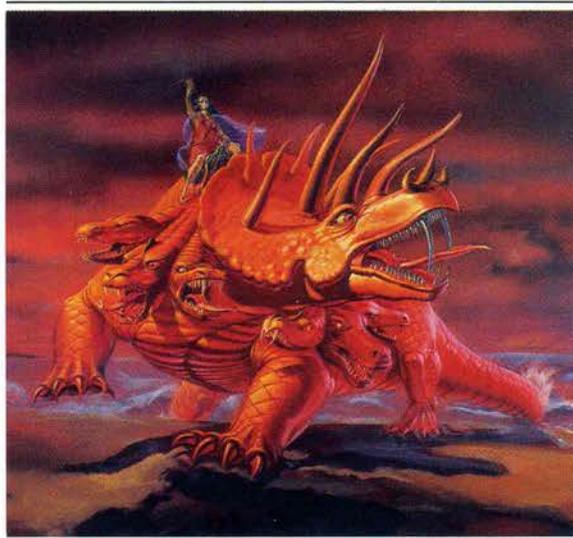
Who or what is the wild "beast" of the Apocalypse, or book of Revelation, chapters 13 and 17? What does Bible prophecy reveal about world events now leading to Armageddon and the end of this age?

This series of articles deals with governments and wars that will bring this world to its final end.

The Bible is God's book of history, prophecy and revealed knowledge of God's purpose and master plan for humanity from its beginning on into eternity.

But the Bible is primarily a book about the chosen nation of Israel, and other nations that have come into direct contact with Israel.

We know little concerning na-



tions, or whether there were nations on earth, prior to the great Flood. But soon after the Flood, Nimrod founded the city-states

Beginning this issue, The Good News is publishing, serially, Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong's newest booklet Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?

of Babylon, Nineveh and others. In due time such nations as Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, the Aramean states, Israel, Phoenicia and others developed in the Middle East. By the end of the seventh century B.C. King Nebuchadnezzar had founded the first world empire or union of nations.

The Bible does reveal the history, and prophecy from now of the system of gentile world empires starting with Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon on to the Second Coming of Christ, as well as the history and yet future prophecy

concerning Israel. This series of articles will cover the true significance of these two systems of nations, and what it means to us today, as well as what is prophesied for the imminent future.

First, then, who or what is the mysterious wild beast of Revelation 13 and 17? If you have his mark, you must suffer the seven

Illustrations by C. Winston Taylor

last PLAGUES! Is he a mysterious superman world dictator yet to appear? Is he the antichrist — or a government — or a church?

THE MOST important question of the hour is, What, or who, is the BEAST, the IMAGE of the beast and the MARK of the beast spoken of in the Apocalypse, or book of Revelation? Whatever this weird beast — whatever the baffling image — whatever the mysterious mark — it behooves you to find out!

For it is those of this very present generation who shall be worshipping this beast or his image, or shall have received his mark, who will suffer the unspeakable torture of the seven last plagues!

Ignorance will not excuse! "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," says the Eternal, in Hosea 4:6. And the illustration of Ezekiel's watchman shows that those who are unaware because they are not warned will suffer just the same (Ezekiel 33:6, 3:18). God expects the spiritual leader of His people to be His "watchman" (Ezekiel 33:7) and to warn the people.

The time is at hand! The plagues of God's wrath will soon be poured out, unmixed and undiluted — full strength — upon a heedless, God-defying world, and a careless, lukewarm, indifferent Christianity!

Who shall suffer the PLAGUES?

Listen! John in the Apocalypse, or book of Revelation, describes the last warning message: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture" (Revelation 14:9-10).

This amazing prophecy is most significant, because it is revealing in advance events immediately ahead of us at this present time.

Listen again! John, carried forward in vision into the terrible "day of the Lord," sees these plagues beginning to fall! "And

the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven last plagues . . . and the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image" (Revelation 15:6, 16:2)!

Every sign tells us these things will happen, plunging the world into the most frantic, frenzied state of anguish ever known, almost certainly within a matter of the next several years!

Those who suffer the wrath of almighty God are described as those who worship the beast or his image, or have his mark.

It is futile to try to imagine, as so many are doing, what the mark of the beast may be.

These prophecies are real. They are imminent. Because these and other prophecies have never been understood until now, even churches, theologians, evangelists have been ignoring prophecies in general and these imminent prophecies in particular. Too many are trying to speculate in their imaginations. But God says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8).

We can't work this out in our minds. We are face to face with a stern reality, not an imaginary fairy tale! There is only one way to learn the truth. That is to study carefully, cautiously, prayerfully, with an open mind yielded to and guided by the Holy Spirit, all the testimony of all the scriptures that bear on this question.

We cannot determine what the mark of the beast may be, until we have learned what, or who, the beast is!

For, of course, the mark is the beast's mark. Who, what then, is the beast?

The Bible DESCRIPTION of the BEAST

The beast, the image of the beast and the mark of the beast are all described primarily in the 13th chapter of Revelation.

Notice carefully this Bible description. The apostle John was

being given this message for you and me of this day. In the vision he saw "a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Revelation 13:1-2).

Now most of those who are teaching and preaching to others on these subjects overlook entirely this description. For this description will IDENTIFY the beast.

If the beast is some mysterious superman, or antichrist, soon to appear as world dictator, he will be a peculiar-looking individual indeed, for he will have seven heads, and ten horns! Have you ever seen a man with seven heads, and 10 horns growing out of one of his heads? And did you ever see a man who was like a leopard, and can you imagine a superman coming who will have the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion? And will he appear by coming up out of some ocean?

Now these, of course, are all symbols. The very word *beast* is a symbol. And our problem is to interpret the symbols, for they stand for real, literal things. But man cannot interpret biblical symbols. And when we know what the heads and the horns are, what the feet of the bear, the mouth of the lion and likeness to a leopard all mean, then we can know what, or who, the beast really is!

The point we want to stress is that the Bible interprets its own symbols!

If we want the truth, we must be guided solely by the Bible interpretation, not man's interpretations and imaginations.

And the Bible itself tells us what they represent!

In the seventh chapter of Daniel, we find exactly these same symbols described. Here again are the beasts, the seven heads, the 10 horns, and here also

is the lion, the bear and the leopard. And here the Bible tells us what these symbols represent.

God had given Daniel understanding in dreams and visions (Daniel 1:17). And Daniel had a dream and a vision (Daniel 7:1) in which he saw four great beasts (verse 3). And notice, as in Revelation, the beasts came up out of the sea.

The first was like a "lion" (verse 4), the second was like a "bear" (verse 5), the third like a "leopard" (verse 6) and the fourth was so



dreadful and terrible it could not be compared to any wild beast known to inhabit the earth (verse 7)!

Now there was only one head described on the lion, one for the bear, one for the fourth beast — but the

third beast, the leopard, had four heads — thus making seven heads in all! And out of this great and dreadful fourth beast grew 10 horns!

Now notice verse 16, latter part. Here comes the interpretation of the things! The question is, Will we accept this Bible interpretation of the seven heads, the 10 horns, the lion, the bear and the leopard?

"These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth," is the interpretation of verse 17.

And the word *king* is synonymous with *kingdom*, and used only in the sense that the king represents the kingdom over which he rules, for in verse 23 we read, "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth." Notice also the word *kingdom* is

used to explain the beasts in verses 18, 22, 24 and 27.

Now what do the 10 "horns" represent?

Notice verse 24: "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise."

Notice the 10 horns, or 10 succeeding kingdoms or governments, come OUT OF A KINGDOM,



not out of a man, or a superman. This alone makes plain that the beast is not some mysterious personal superman yet to come. Also that the beast is not a church as some claim, for no 10 kingdoms ever did, or will, come out of a church.

And since "king" in these prophecies only stands for the kingdom he represents, and since the words are used interchangeably, it follows that these 10 horns are 10 succeeding kingdoms growing out of the fourth kingdom, which was to rule the earth!

Identification of the kingdoms

These same four world-ruling gentile kingdoms are described in the second chapter of Daniel. King Nebuchadnezzar of the Chaldean Empire, who had taken

the Jews captive, had a dream, the meaning of which God revealed to Daniel.

The dream is described in verses 31-35. The king saw a great image. Its head was of gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, its legs of iron and its feet and toes were part iron and part clay. Finally, a stone, not in men's hands, but supernaturally, smote the image upon his feet and toes. It was broken in pieces and was blown away like chaff. Then the stone that



smashed it became a great mountain and filled the earth.

"This," Daniel says, beginning verse 36, "is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. . . . Thou art this head of gold. And after

thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise" (verses 36-40).

The interpretation of the stone smashing the image at its toes is found in the 44th verse: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

The stone is Christ and His world-ruling Kingdom. The inter-

pretation of the stone is given many places in the Bible. "Jesus Christ of Nazareth . . . is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner" (Acts 4:10-11).

And so we see that here are portrayed, symbolically, four universal world-ruling gentile kingdoms. They begin with the Chaldean Empire, which took the Jews captive to Babylon.

God had promised ancient Israel that if they would keep His commandments, be His obedient nation, they would grow into a multitude of nations — or an empire — that would dominate the entire earth. But for disobedience they were to be taken captive by gentile nations (Leviticus 26 and other prophecies).

Ancient Israel had been tried through the generations and centuries. They had disobeyed. Now they had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, who had raised up the world's first empire.

But as God revealed through Daniel in chapter 2, it was God who had turned this world empire over to this succession of gentile empires. They continue through four great universal kingdoms, and out of the fourth grow 10 succeeding governments. These carry to the time of the Second Coming of Christ and the setting up of the Kingdom of God to fill the whole earth and last forever.

The fourth beast

Plainly, here in Daniel 2 are described the same four universal world-ruling gentile powers that are described by Daniel's four beasts. And this dream-image identifies who they are. The first was Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, the Chaldean Empire, called "Babylon" after the name of its capital city, 625-539 B.C.

The second kingdom, which followed, then, we know from history, was the Persian Empire, 558-330 B.C., often called Medo-Persia, composed of Medes and Persians.

All ancient-history students know the third world kingdom

was Greece, or Macedonia under Alexander the Great, who conquered the great Persian Empire 333-330 B.C. But Alexander lived only a short year after his swift conquest, and his four generals divided his vast empire into four regions: Macedonia and Greece, Thrace and Western Asia, Syria and territory east to the Indus river, and Egypt. So these were the four heads of the third beast of Daniel 7.

And the FOURTH KINGDOM, which, developing from Rome, spread out and gradually absorbed one after another of these four divisions — "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly," was the ROMAN EMPIRE (31 B.C. to A.D. 476).

It had absorbed all the others, occupied all their territory, was greater and stronger than all. It included all the royal splendor of ancient Babylon, thus having the head — the strongest part — of the lion. It had all the massiveness and numerically powerful army of the Persian Empire — symbolized by the legs, the most powerful part of the bear. It was the greatest war-making machine the world had ever seen, and it also possessed the swiftness, the cunning, the cruelty of Alexander's army, symbolized by the leopard.

And thus, this fourth beast was unlike any wild beast of the earth. It was stronger, greater, more terrible, than any.

And so John, in Revelation 13, sees, not four beasts, but one beast. Not a leopard, but like a leopard — possessing all its cunning, cruelty and speed. But it also possessed the dominant characteristics of the two other most powerful beasts — the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion.

Daniel's fourth beast, the Roman Empire, had absorbed and therefore it included the three beasts before it. Thus it included all seven heads. And John's beast also has seven heads. It was Daniel's fourth beast, only, which had 10 horns and John's beast has 10 horns.

And so, if we are willing to be guided solely by the Bible de-

scription of this beast and to let the Bible interpret the symbols used to describe it, we come to the inevitable conclusion that the beast of Revelation 13 is the Roman Empire, of 31 B.C. to A.D. 476!

Of course, many man-imagined theories, widely taught and published, interpret this beast otherwise — some as a church, some as a mysterious, individual superman yet to come. But these theories will not stand the test of applying the Bible interpretation to all the symbols that describe this beast.

Nebuchadnezzar's image, by the two legs, describes the two divisions of the Roman Empire after A.D. 330 — West, with capital at Rome, and East, with capital at Constantinople.

John also pictures this beast, not as a church or as an individual man, but as a powerful government having a great army. For they worshiped the beast by saying, "Who is able to make war with him?" (Revelation 13:4).

The symbolism of the horns

Let us now notice the symbolism of the horns of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 and of the beast of Revelation 13.

The 10 horns symbolize the same thing — the 10 stages of government continuing out of the Roman Empire after its fall, A.D. 476. The ten horns "out of this kingdom [the fourth — the Roman empire, 31 B.C. to A.D. 476] are ten kings that shall arise . . . and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven [not *in* heaven], shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High" (Daniel 7:24, 27).

The 10 horns, then, are 10 kingdoms to arise out of the fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire. These kings, also called kingdoms, continue from A.D. 476 until the time when the stone — Christ and His Kingdom — smashes the image on its toes, and the kingdom is given to the saints.

Therefore, since in actual his-

(Continued on page 21)

Within the next several years, additional millions of people worldwide will become regular readers of the *Plain Truth* magazine. They will be talking about the unique and vital message of *The Plain Truth* and the *World Tomorrow* broadcast in their homes and at the office or factory.

Millions are already talking about *The Plain Truth*, and about the strong, straight-from-the-shoulder Bible articles appearing in this magazine, *The Good News*.

Millions have read booklets and articles showing the truth about the existence of their divine heavenly Father, the Creator, who gives them every breath they draw — and they have seen the utter ludicrousness of the evolutionary fantasy and other false teachings.

Many government leaders, educators, lawyers, judges, corporation executives and leading entertainment figures are numbered among those who have heard, who have read and who have wondered.

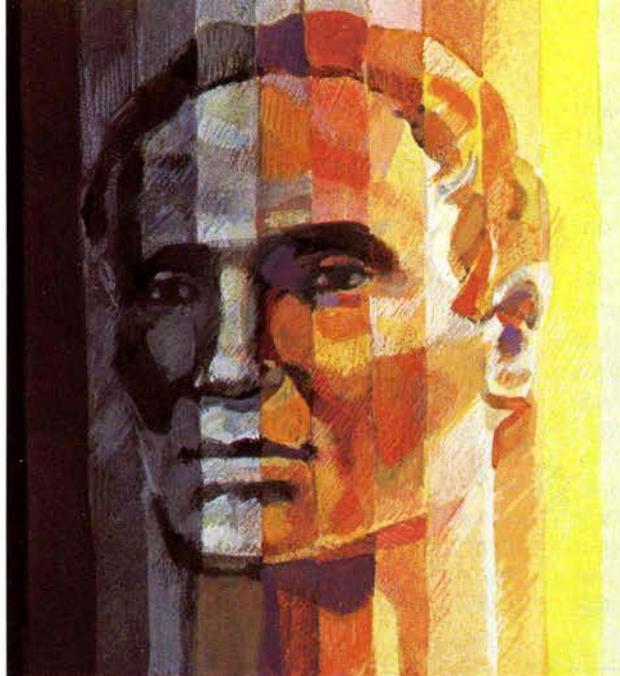
Already, the millions listen, and they read, and they talk.

Each year, they are joined by yet additional millions of humans, around the whole broad earth, being affected by this work!

Yes, they listen, and they read, and they talk — but what will they do?

What will you do?

God says: "So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear



ARE YOU WILLING TO CHANGE?

Your very life during the next few years depends upon your willingness to change!

Your eternity depends on what you do with revealed truth. Read and heed this article!

By Roderick C. Meredith

your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your

words, but they do not do them. And when this comes to pass — surely it will come — then they will know that a prophet has been among them" (Ezekiel 33:31-33).

What is it going to take to make you, personally, know that a servant of almighty God is speaking to you over the *World Tomorrow* telecast?

What is it going to take to make you heed and act on the knowledge you are receiving through *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News*?

How much will prophesied supernatural punishment have to affect you, personally, before you are willing to change your ways and obey God?

For that is the key, you know — your willingness to change.

Most thinking people are convicted by what they hear over the *World Tomorrow* telecast and read in the pages of *The Good News* — they know it is right. But they resist and resent having to change their human way of life!

Yet, in this age above all others, your willingness to change and accept and obey the truth God is revealing through His servants in these end times is the key to your very survival — now and forever.

Before much longer you will be able to see that this is not just a sentimental idea — it is a fact.

Your attitude — the key to survival

Down through the ages, every true servant of God has preached a message of change. This is simply because people have always tended to go the way of human nature — the way of vanity, selfishness, lust, hate and war.

Almost as if with one voice,

Illustration by Terry Smith

those faithful men of God have cried out about the national crimes and sins of their peoples — not only in righteous indignation or wrath, but out of deep, personal concern.

Ezekiel cried, “Why should you die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 18:31), and Jeremiah lamented, “For He [God] does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men” (Lamentations 3:33).

Great patriots all, they saw, with keen insight, the sickening excesses and sins of their people. They saw, through God’s special revelation, the prophesied punishments those people were bringing on themselves. And they urged their people, whom they loved and wanted with all their hearts to serve, to repent of their sins — to change.

They answered the cry of people who had myriad problems — people who said, “He’s only bad-mouthing the nation, and he never offers any solutions!”

They did offer solutions — vast, far-reaching solutions to world problems, and to the problems of individuals, by giving God’s own answer.

The answer is to repent — to be willing to change. For to repent not only means to be sorry — it means to be so sorry you are willing to quit doing that which is wrong and to turn around and go the other way.

True repentance involves a real change.

Preparing for Christ’s first coming, John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matthew 3:1-2).

Soon after, Jesus began His own ministry, preaching the Gospel of the coming government or rule of God. He proclaimed: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:14-15, Authorized Version).

Again and again, Jesus warned the people that the only way they could be saved was to repent of

the ways, habits and customs of the people around them and begin obeying God. He warned, “I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5).

As the New Testament Church began, the inspired Peter set forth the way to salvation: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

And again: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come



Do you resist having to change? Does it seem too difficult to you to change from your way of life to God’s way of life?

from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19, AV).

The very word *convert* is a chemical term meaning “to change.”

To be spiritually converted, a person must be genuinely, actively sorry and repentant for his past disobedience to the true God, and then he must change his way of life to conform to God’s will.

Haven’t you noticed that the articles in the *Good News* magazine constantly show you habits, customs and beliefs of this world that are contrary to the commands of God? What about the days you should keep holy? What about the reward — the true goal — of the Christian? What about the constant exhortations to obey the commandments of God — all of them? What about the instructions on how to live by every word of God?

Are you really doing something about this precious knowledge God is giving you?

Following is a letter — typical of many — from a man who knows he should change. Notice: “I greatly appreciate the litera-

ture you have sent me for the past two years. I have learned a lot of things and perhaps I have come close to giving my whole self to God. It’s too bad that I fell short. Since I am going to Oklahoma State University this fall, I think that your material that you have been sending me would go to waste. I can plainly see that the materialistic pull and social influence — especially my room-mates’ — would cause me to put it aside. As you may probably see, I am not too worried about God’s wrath. I put the matter aside and think, God will pull me through sooner or later.

“At least I know where to run when the times get bad. That is almost like getting something for nothing, isn’t it? I have no excuse. I have seen the truth and ignored it. At least you won’t find me in a campus demonstration. I’m not disenchanted and looking for an answer to man’s ills. I have found the answer through your work. I’m not confused. I’m just sinful. It’s a pity that your literature had to be wasted. I am just a typical human.”

Too “weak” to change?

Do you, too, resist having to change? Does it seem too difficult to you to change from your way of life to God’s way of life?

You need to realize that this is a wrong part of human nature that in itself needs to be repented of! God says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).

God is here describing the kind of nature you have!

You don’t like to change. You don’t like to have to admit that your religion or your ways may have been wrong.

Notice this striking description of the human mind in Professor James Harvey Robinson’s enlightening and popular book *The Mind in the Making*: “We are incredibly heedless in the formation of our beliefs, but find ourselves with an illicit passion for

them when anyone proposes to rob us of their companionship. It is obviously not the ideas that threaten themselves that are dear to us, but our self-esteem which is threatened. . . .

"The little word *my* is the most important one in human affairs, and properly to reckon with it is the beginning of wisdom. It has the same force whether it is *my* dinner, *my* dog, *my* house or *my* faith, *my* country and *my* God. We not only resent the imputation that our watch is wrong, or our car shabby, but that our conception of the canals of Mars, or the pronunciation of 'Epictetus,' or the medicinal value of salicine, or of the date of Sargon I, are subject to revision. . . .

"We like to continue to believe what we have been accustomed to accept as true, and the resentment aroused when doubt is cast upon any of our assumptions leads us to seek every manner of excuse for clinging to it. The result is that most of our so-called reasoning consists in finding arguments for going on believing as we already do."

Isn't that a classic illustration of the human mind — your mind?

Now notice what God says about the natural, fleshly mind of man: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). And in the previous verse, God says that "to be carnally minded is death."

So the Bible shows that the very key to your survival is your willingness to repent of your own ways and change your own ideas, customs and beliefs so that they really correspond with God's ways and teachings as revealed in your Bible.

God's truth brings responsibility

God has shown millions of you that this is His work — that Herbert W. Armstrong is His true minister. Over the *World Tomorrow* telecast and in the pages of *The Good News*, you are constantly challenged in plain, clear

terms to obey the Ten Commandments literally as God intended, to keep His days holy, to come out of this world's numerous pagan religious observances, customs and traditions.

But many of you just sit back and listen and say, "Well, I agree with Mr. Armstrong, but I don't see that there is anything I need to do about it."

But God says, "For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified" (Romans 2:13).

Again, God says, "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and

fruition in front of your very eyes? How are you going to feel when you have known about these things all the time — have known that you ought to begin to obey God and act on this knowledge He was freely revealing to you — but have just sluggishly or stubbornly refused to change your ways and come under His protection in time?

Are you going to react like the fellow who wrote us this letter? "I'm not a Christian. It takes a man to be one of them. I don't pray. I never prayed in my life. I had a chance to join a church but the way they put it across didn't seem right to me. I had a good chance to go the way of evolution but it didn't seem right.

"When the truth did come along I wasn't so dumb that I didn't recognize it. I help support this work financially because I believe in it 100 percent. But, please don't think that I pray. I can't humble

myself enough."

Shocking?

Yes. At least it should be if you can comprehend the stakes involved.

The God of your Bible states, "On this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word" (Isaiah 66:2).

You should surely know by now that we are not playing sentimental little games with you. We challenge you to prove what we say about world events and the fulfillment of biblical prophecies. For what we teach can be and does stand proved.

But simply knowing these things will do you or your loved ones no good whatever. For you must act on the truth. You must live by God's laws — all of them. You must change your approach and your very way of life to conform to the example and teachings of the true Jesus Christ of your Bible.

For the sake of life and eternity, will you exercise the courage and determination to make this change? □

What we teach stands proved. But simply knowing these things will do you or your loved ones no good. You must act on the truth.

does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

In the main, you regular readers of *The Good News* really know what it is that you should be doing. You know that you should begin acting on the vital knowledge you learn through God's work.

You know that even more precious knowledge of God's truth is available by studying the amazing free booklets we offer on many subjects.

You know that you can be fed even more of these important spiritual truths by taking and acting on the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course.

You know where the truth is available. You know that there is no one else on earth today who is really making the Bible plain — and the big major events in world happenings plain in their definite, prophetic significance.

Will you act while there is time?

How are you going to feel when things you've been reading about all along suddenly come to



What's So 'Hallowed' About Halloween?

*The name means "hallowed evening."
But is it really? Where did it come from?
What is it all about?
And is it really good for children?*

By Clayton D. Steep

Creepy goblins, ghosts and demons, witches on brooms, spiders and bats, dead men's bones, flickering jack-o'-lanterns, black cats, eerie costumes and parties.

What a weird festival this is!

And an increasingly costly and dangerous one, too. Each year following this strange celebration, gruesome accounts surface of the giving of booby-trapped "treats" to children: apples with concealed razor blades, candy bars with hidden

needles, cookies containing ground glass, bonbons laced with poisons. This is to say nothing of the cases, reported and unreported, of muggings and molestations that occur on the eve of "All Hallows."

In addition, there are those incidences of bodily harm inflicted accidentally during the course of Halloween festivities: the automobile driver failing to see the child dressed in black crossing the street at night, the burns from a flammable costume that is ignited by a candle in a jack-o'-lantern.

In many cases, extensive destruction is done to private and public property by vandalism.

Are these instances unrelated to the theme and purpose of this festival?

Is it good?

The Halloween period is big business. It is one of the three top candy-selling seasons of the year. Hundreds of millions of dollars sweeten the cash register tills in exchange for hundreds of millions of pounds of confections.

Greeting card companies, manufacturers and retailers of costumes and decorations take their share of the profits, too. For them it pays well to keep the Halloween "spirit" alive.

But in calculating the price of Halloween, we can't stop there. We must include the added cost — impossible to calculate — that all of those refined, chemical-laden "treats" ultimately exact in dental and medical bills.

Besides whatever physical harm children may suffer from Halloween, there is an as yet unmeasured damage inflicted on the child's standard of values. After all, are not children taught by Halloween to beg? Isn't it an attempt to get something for nothing? And what is "trick or treat" but extortion? "Give me something — or else!"

Impressionable minds cannot fail to see how richly it pays off, and then may expect the same to continue in the days and weeks that follow.

Still, every year millions of

people refuse to let these negative aspects stand in the way of their Halloween fun and frolic. Children and adults alike adorn themselves with bizarre and frightening costumes and engage in a hectic night of partying, merrymaking and general mayhem.

But just how did these strange goings-on get started anyway?

The origin of Halloween

It really is no secret that Halloween has been around for thousands of years. Centuries before the birth of Christ, ancient Druids performed mystical rites and ceremonies in honor of the dead on their "New Year's Eve" (October 31).

History books and encyclopedias openly describe this pagan origin. Even newspapers, as an item of curiosity, print articles at Halloween time explaining the pagan beginnings and their parallels to today's customs.

The point is, Halloween is pagan.

Still, most people, particularly those who are parents, will justify Halloween's observance by saying, in effect, something like this: "So what? So it was started by pagans. We aren't thinking about pagan gods today. We're just having fun. And it's great for the children. What difference does it make where it came from?"

Well, it doesn't make any difference unless . . .

Unless you care what God says on the subject! For if you accept the teachings of Jesus Christ and true Christianity, then it does make a great deal of difference. God's Word, the Bible, as we shall see, has a great deal to say about why you should *not* be involved with customs such as those centering on Halloween.

Let's be honest. One only has to look at Halloween costumes and decorations to see that they celebrate death, devils, witches and darkness. True Christianity stands for the exact opposite of these things! Christians are supposed to conduct themselves in a way that exemplifies light and life, not darkness and death.

The diametric contradiction

between these two approaches is noted by Ralph Linton in *Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*: "Among all the festivals which we celebrate today, few have histories stranger than that of Halloween . . . it commemorates beings and rites with which the church has always been at war." He then goes on to describe Halloween festivities as customs that were "once forbidden to good Christians."

Somewhere along the line, these alien pagan customs worked their way into what the world considers Christianity.

G.W. Douglas discloses in *The American Book of Days* the shocking fact that "the mystic rites and ceremonies with which Halloween was originally observed had their origin among the Druids centuries before the dawn of the Christian era in the celebration on the eve of the festival of Samhain [the lord of the dead — Satan]. . . . The early [medieval] Christian church adopted the eve and the day following and gave new names to them, as it did with many other Christian observances."

Writer Dorothy Wood of the *Wichita Beacon* stated the case clearly: "This ancient night of revelry for the devil and his cohorts has degenerated. . . . It's the Christians who are to blame. For centuries, they've been grabbing off all the old heathen festivals. The midwinter feast with its greens and feasting and drinking has become Christmas. The wild spring festival has become Easter, and the worshipers of Christ boldly use the old pagan symbols of fertility — chicks and rabbits and eggs. Now they've completely taken over Halloween."

God does not look at this lightly. He does not want His people to borrow pagan customs (Deuteronomy 12:29-31) with their inevitable detriment to the development of spiritual character. He plainly and directly commanded through the prophet Jeremiah, "Learn not the way of the heathen" (Jeremiah 10:2, Authorized Version).

Through Moses, God con-

demned as abominable all that has to do with witchcraft, necromancy (black magic) and other demonic works of darkness (Deuteronomy 18:9-12).

In view of this biblical condemnation, we should want to stay as far away as possible from whatever falls into these categories. Instead, all across the land, children — and adults — dress as witches, demons and other manifestations that honor the “lord of death” on his special night.

People do not seem to realize that Satan and his demons are the enemies of God, while Halloween purposefully honors Satan.

The apostle Paul summed up the proper attitude that true Christians should have and should teach to their children: “For you were once darkness [in the past — before becoming Christians], but now you are light

in the Lord. Walk as children of light [not dressed as demons, witches, zombies and other beings of darkness] (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), proving what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them [by letting your light shine]. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret [let alone to participate in them]” (Ephesians 5:8-12).

Counterfeit days

Few seem to realize that Halloween and the other religious “Christian” holidays are actually counterfeits that have been subtly introduced to take the place of the Holy Days God instituted. (For a complete explanation of the days God ordained, write for

a free copy of our booklet *Pagan Holidays — or God’s Holy Days — Which?*)

The Holy Days of God are listed in Leviticus 23. These are the days that were observed by Jesus, the apostles and the early New Testament Church. Shortly after the death of the apostles, however, the keeping of these days was discontinued by a developing great counterfeit religious system — a system that ultimately brought in its own sacred days adapted from heathen religions.

It seems that throughout history man has sought to replace that which God originally gave for man’s good with that which is inferior and a corruption of the truth. Halloween is a classic example of such a counterfeit.

Some of the feast days God established (see Leviticus 23:24, *(Continued on page 22)*)

Guy Fawkes Day

By John Ross Schroeder

In Great Britain, Guy Fawkes Day is celebrated every November 5.

This holiday has its origins in a religious conflict involving the banishment of Roman Catholic priests from England. In protest, several laymen plotted to blow up the Houses of Parliament when King James I was to open the new session.

Nearly 40 barrels of gunpowder were prepared and secreted in a cellar underneath the Houses of Parliament. Authorities discovered the plot and the conspirators were arrested and executed.

Guy Fawkes — an apparent ring-leader — had been chosen to set off the ill-fated explosion, hence the use of his name.

Guy Fawkes Day in England is reminiscent of Halloween celebrations. Marguerite Ickis tells us, “Guy Fawkes Day has many customs in common with a Halloween celebration in the United States” (*Book of*

Festivals and Holidays World Over, page 120).

Young people in England observe this holiday somewhat like Americans observe Halloween. *The Book of Days* tells us:

“English juveniles still regard the 5th of November as one of the most joyous days of the year. The universal mode of observance through all parts of England is the dressing up of a scarecrow figure, in such cast-habilliments as can be procured (the head-piece, generally a paper cap painted and knotted with paper strips in imitation of ribbons), parading it in a chair through the streets and at nightfall burning it with great solemnity in a huge bonfire. . . . The procession visits the different houses in the neighborhood. . . . One invariable custom is always maintained — that of soliciting money from the passersby, in the formula, ‘Pray remember Guy!’

‘Please to remember Guy!’ or ‘Please to remember the bonfire!’ [The common expression now is “Penny for the guy”]” (pages 549-550).

In times past, Guy Fawkes Day was celebrated by many of the adult generation. “In the old days the festival was celebrated heartily with bonfires and parades of masqueraders, who carried aloft ‘popes’ or ‘guys’ of straw” (Dorothy Gladys Spicer, *The Book of Festivals*, page 14).

But as Marguerite Ickis explains: “Today Guy Fawkes Day is mainly a holiday for children, who observe it by dressing up in funny costumes, having parades, lighting firecrackers and making straw dummies of Guy Fawkes” (*Book of Festivals and Holidays World Over*, page 120).

Like Halloween, Guy Fawkes Day has its religious overtones. *The Book of Days* informs us: “Till 1859, a special service for the 5th of November formed part of the ritual of the English Book of Common Prayer; but by special ordinance of the Queen in Council, this service . . . has been abolished” (page 549).

Guy Fawkes Day, like Halloween and many other days observed the world over, has no biblical basis as a religious holiday. To discover what Holy Days God approves of in the Bible, write for our free booklet *Pagan Holidays — or God’s Holy Days — Which?* □



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Should a Christian observe Christmas? How did Christmas originate?

Many readers have asked us whether Jesus Christ was really born on December 25. Did Paul, the other apostles and the early New Testament Church celebrate Christmas? What is the origin of the Christmas tree — of “Santa Claus” — of the mistletoe and the holly wreath?

Most people in the Western world have grown up practicing Christmas customs and assuming these customs are Christian, but never questioning why! It is time we learned the facts. The holiday now called “Christmas” is rooted in pagan antiquity.

Christmas was celebrated by the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians and Assyrians 2,000 years before Christ was born. Yet Christmas was not celebrated in Jerusalem, where Christ founded the inspired New Testament Church, until A.D. 385, more than three centuries after God’s true Church fled from the city. Why?

Did you know that the pagan Romans, long before the birth of Christ, called December 25 the *Brumalia*, or birthday of the new sun, after the winter solstice? Christmas was originally celebrated in honor of the pagan false messiah. It was idolatry. You can find every one of these facts in any good encyclopedia or reference book in your public library.

Though the Bible never tells us to observe Christmas and never records any such observance by the apostles or the early true Church, it does condemn the adoption of pagan practices and dressing up paganism in Christian clothes.

“Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen . . . for the customs of the people are vain” (Jeremiah 10:2-3, Authorized Version).

God warns His people not to borrow and use pagan customs or

festivals to worship Him: “Take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them [the heathen] . . . and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise’” (Deuteronomy 12:30).

If the eternal God had wanted us to keep Christmas, He would have clearly shown us so. But He warned His people not to worship Him by means of pagan customs and pagan feasts. “You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way” (verse 31).

It’s time you learned the truth about Christmas. You can have the astonishing facts about the origin and history of Christmas — about how it crept into the professing Christian world — about how the custom of trading gifts with one another started, instead of giving gifts to Christ — about the Christmas tree and many other shocking facts — by sending for a copy of our free booklet *The Plain Truth About Christmas*. No other booklet makes the truth about Christmas so simple. This is knowledge you desperately need — and preferably before December 25!

I’ve been trying to understand the Bible for a long time, but I’m more confused than ever. Can anyone understand the Bible on his or her own?

The Bible records an example of a man who sought to find God on his own and failed. Notice it in Acts 8:26-40. Philip, a deacon in the New Testament Church, met a man of Ethiopia, a man of great authority, sitting in his chariot on the road to Gaza. The Ethiopian was reading from the prophecies of Isaiah.

Notice what Philip asked him: “Do you understand what you are reading?” (verse 30).

The Ethiopian replied, simply, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” (verse 31).

Here was an educated man of

responsibilities and accomplishments, the treasurer of a queen’s wealth. But he realized that unless a minister helped him, he could not understand God’s Word.

Verse 35 shows that Philip gave him the instruction he sought: “Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.”

Jesus Christ revealed, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him” (John 6:44). God is not trying to draw everyone to Him now, but for those few He is calling, He has sent teachers — like Philip — to make the whole truth plain.

Notice what Paul wrote in Romans 10:13-15: “For ‘whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?”

Here is the key to understanding your Bible. First, you must determine who are the ministers God Almighty has sent. Listen to those who are God’s faithful, true servants. Listen with an open mind, willing to believe what you are taught out of your own Bible.

If you would like to begin a thorough study of the Bible, enroll now in the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. This is a unique Bible study course. The only textbook you need is your own Bible. This course provides an easy-to-follow, step-by-step study of the basic truths of God’s Word.

Send for your first lesson now. The entire course is absolutely free. Just mail the request envelope in this issue or write to our address nearest you (see inside front cover for a list). Don’t delay — do it now! □



**Rejoice in
God's Sabbath!**

*Many ask, "How should I keep the Sabbath?"
This article gives you basic principles that will enable you
to observe God's Sabbath as God intended.*

Jesus Christ said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

He didn't say it was made for the Jew, but for man — for all human beings everywhere on earth.

The Sabbath was made for man, and it was made when man was made — during creation week. Read the account in Genesis 2:2-3: "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which he had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

In Exodus 20:8-11, we read God's instruction about the Sabbath — the fourth of God's Ten Commandments: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

Sabbath a special sign

The Sabbath is special to God. It is a memorial of creation — a special sign identifying God as Creator and those who keep it as His people. Notice Exodus 31:14-17: "You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. . . . Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe

the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed."

Throughout much of their history, God's people, ancient Israel, rebelled against God and failed to observe the Sabbath. They ignored and trampled all over it.

Notice: "Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths . . . Yet the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness . . . and they greatly defiled My Sabbaths" (Ezekiel 20:12-13).

Because of this sin, the 10 tribes of the House of Israel went into captivity and lost their identity. They became known as gentiles, because they forgot God's Sabbath! (To learn where those "lost tribes" are today, write for our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.)

People punished for Sabbath breaking

God warned the people of Jerusalem that if they did not keep His Sabbath holy, He would destroy the city: "But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched" (Jeremiah 17:27).

The people did not listen. They continued to break the Sabbath. The result was the sacking and destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and the captivity of its citizens (Jeremiah 52:12-30).

After a number of years God brought some of the Jews back to Jerusalem. The people rebuilt the city and acknowledged the Sabbath. But even then, many began to break the Sabbath. God's ser-

vant Nehemiah "contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, 'What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath'" (Nehemiah 13:17-18).

Men make Sabbath a burden

Upon receiving Nehemiah's correction, most of the people repented and began observing God's Sabbath. However, human nature has a tendency to go to extremes. After the death of Nehemiah, religionists in their zeal to keep the Sabbath holy began to legislate in minute detail what a person could and could not do on the Sabbath. By contrast, God had given the people basic spiritual principles to apply in various situations.

"Not good enough," said the Pharisees, the leading religious party. "The people don't have the knowledge, understanding and wisdom to do that. We must tell the people what they may do and what they may not do."

The Pharisees did just that. They established 39 main categories of prohibited work alone. This was done to effect a norm for Sabbath observance that would be universal.

Speaking of the rabbis who enacted these rules, Rabbi Solomon Goldman in his book *A Guide to the Sabbath* says on page 28: "Uniformity, they believed, could be achieved, not by the enunciation of general principles, but by sharp and detailed demarcation of the areas of what is forbidden and what is permitted, by prescribing even for the remote contingency, by governing the apparently trivial circumstances of daily life and by strict definition of terms. Life

itself, they felt, 'consists of a multitude of minimal.' ”

However pure their motives and desirable their objectives, the rabbis by their strict legislation caused the Sabbath to become an institution of itself. They made the Sabbath a burden, not a blessing for man as God designed it.

Sabbath made to serve man

Christ said the Sabbath was made for you (Mark 2:27). You were not made for the Sabbath. It was made for you, to help you, to enable you to live a happier and more abundant life. It was not made to be a burden.

God did not intend for a human being to so fret and worry about breaking the Sabbath that he would fear to do anything on that day. That is why this article is not an encyclopedic compilation of dos and don'ts for every possible situation that might arise on a Sabbath.

Our Creator knew that we would need a period of rest from our normal duties every seventh day.

Each of us tends to become overly absorbed in our daily cares during the week. God foresaw this. He set aside the Sabbath as a

time when we can completely forget our routine work. Then we can spend more time on those activities that help us better understand our relationship with God.

From the very beginning, God intended His Sabbath to be a day of joy and delight, a special day of blessing and happiness!

What does it mean to "rest"?

God is concerned with two overall aspects of your life on the Sabbath. First, he wants your time to be free from responsibilities and activities. Secondly, he wants your mind free from thinking about those daily responsibilities and activities. This makes you free to properly worship God on this day.

Certainly we can physically rest more on the Sabbath. But the main emphasis is to rest from your normal toil and activities on this day. You should serve God with your mind on the Sabbath.

Those who can't or don't control their minds call the Sabbath "bondage." They eagerly wait for the end of the Sabbath so they can be about their ways and pleasures, which they have been

thinking about all day anyway. Once you are able, on the Sabbath, to get your mind and thoughts on God's purpose and God's ways, you will find out what a real delight and joy the Sabbath is. "Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord" (Isaiah 58:14).

How do you accomplish this? Devote the additional free Sabbath time you have to extra Bible study, extra prayer and extra meditation. This is the one day of the week when you don't have to worry about getting to the job, making payments, building fences, working out schedules, cleaning house.

Remember, we are to take care of all our responsibilities during the rest of the week. But the Sabbath is free time — free from all your daily cares and worries — free to be completely absorbed in God and His Word.

God's instruction

Notice God's positive instruction about the Sabbath: "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath [that is, don't trample on it], from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the

Before the Sun Sets

On the Sabbath God wants our minds freed from our regular daily duties, so we can nurture our spiritual relationship with Him and spend time in worship and fellowship with other true Christians, learning about God and His way of life.

So, along with the weekly Sabbath, God provides us with a day in which to prepare for it. Friday, the day preceding the Sabbath, is this preparation day.

God demonstrated to ancient Israel the function of the preparation day when He sent manna from heaven for their food. The Israelites were instructed to gather each morning only sufficient manna for that day. Any left to the next day would spoil.

But each Friday God miraculously

supplied two days' worth of manna for each person to gather, and kept the portion for the Sabbath day from spoiling.

Today we can apply this principle regarding the preparation day by gathering our food before the Sabbath begins. We should take care of purchases during the week, buying last-minute perishables on Friday if needed.

On the preparation day, double-check to see that you have all ingredients needed for the next day.

Preparing food

The Sabbath is a feast day, and one way we can rejoice is by enjoying delicious meals. But a day spent in food preparation is not a day devoted to extra time in prayer, Bible study

and fellowshiping. So what should you do? Early in the week, you could plan a menu for the Sabbath — maybe brunch, a snack and dinner. Then prepare as much of the food as you can on Friday or even earlier in the week.

Let's say you want to serve a roast, baked potatoes, a vegetable, salad, rolls and dessert for dinner. Cook the roast on Friday until almost, but not completely, done. Prepare the salad dressing and dessert and put them in the refrigerator. The rolls can be baked earlier in the week.

Then, on the Sabbath, pop the roast and potatoes into the oven to cook the potatoes and finish cooking the roast. While they are heating up, prepare the salad and vegetable and set the table. When you're done, warm the rolls in the oven for a few minutes.

Presto! You have created a feast for the Feast day. The preparation time involved on the Sabbath is kept

Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord" (verses 13-14).

Let's understand the principle of Isaiah 58:13-14. What are "your own ways," "your own pleasure," "your own words"?

1) *Your ways*. This means course of life, mode of action — that is, your employment, enterprises, finances, the serious business of making a livelihood.

You should not involve yourself in working at what you normally do during the week — those things by which you feed, clothe and care for yourself physically. This includes working around the house, sewing, cleaning, washing the car — all the things that pertain to your physical maintenance during the normal course of the week.

2) *Your pleasure*. Forsaking one's pleasure does not mean that the Sabbath is to be a rigorous day of abstinence. The principle is that we should avoid having our mind, time and energy taken up in hobbies, sports and pleasure seeking.

The Sabbath was not designed

for activities such as hunting, fishing, golfing, movies, television, boating — those things that take up our leisure time. This would also include the many time-consuming hobbies such as ham radio, woodworking and stamp collecting.

3) *Your words*. This is the spiritual application of the first two principles. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). We talk about what we are thinking. Our words show what is going on in our minds and hearts.

This is obviously the most difficult of all! We may cease doing our ways and our pleasures, but it is much more difficult to cease thinking or talking about them.

Again, we shouldn't become pharisaical. This doesn't mean you can't mention physical things. There is no such regulation as "You may not spend more than 30 seconds talking about cars on the Sabbath." You simply apply the principle by putting your mind on the positive purposes for which the Sabbath was made.

Sabbath begins at sunset

In order to keep the Sabbath

holy, we need to know when it occurs. Man begins his days at midnight. But God's days begin and end at sunset.

Notice Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31. In every case the evening precedes the morning. Furthermore, God Almighty commands us to celebrate His holy time from "evening to evening" (Leviticus 23:32). That is, from sunset to sunset.

Look at any basic calendar. You will see that Sunday is the first day of the week, and that Saturday is the seventh day of the week (that is, unless you have one of the newer calendars that deliberately attempt to do away with the Saturday Sabbath by making Monday the first day of the week and Sunday the seventh!).

The weekly cycle has not been broken since man was created. For further information on this important point, write for our free booklets *Has Time Been Lost?* and *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?*

God's Sabbath is the seventh day, which is called "Saturday" in the regular calendar. And since God's days begin at sunset, you should keep God's Sabbath beginning Friday evening at sun-

to a minimum, and the food is hot and delicious.

Not everything can be done before the Sabbath. Your family wouldn't appreciate coffee made with water boiled the day before, for instance! But anything that can reasonably be done before the Sabbath should be, so we can spend our time the way God wants us to spend it.

Household duties

The preparation day is also a time to make sure that weekly household duties are finished. Is your house in tip-top shape, clean and neat for the Sabbath? Is the furniture dusted and laundry done? Could you add fresh flowers or another special touch to make your house more beautiful for the Sabbath?

In your mind, walk

through the activities of the Sabbath ahead of time so you can prepare for what will need to be done. Sabbath clothes will need to be clean, pressed and ready to wear to church services. You may find it a good idea to set these out the day before so Sabbath time isn't wasted searching out clean, matching outfits. You might also want to assemble notepads, pens and children's toys and blankets Friday afternoon.

Before sundown, check that your car has sufficient gas for the trip, that train or bus tickets are purchased or that your ride to services is arranged. If you are unsure of the time and location of services, find this out on Friday and plan your departure time accordingly. See that everyone in the family knows what time you are leaving for

services so they can be sure to be ready.

Here is a word of caution: Friday is only one day. Don't try to do everything in the 24 hours before the Sabbath. Many household duties should be done during the week, leaving Friday free mainly for food preparation and last-minute errands, or you'll burn yourself out with preparation. Preparing a spotless house and elaborate meals is secondary to observing the Sabbath in good physical and mental condition.

And one final point: Avoid the tendency to frantically juggle duties until the sun dips below the horizon and then collapse into the Sabbath. Plan early in the week to accomplish duties before Friday sunset. You might find it helpful to finish preparations a half hour or so before sunset so that you can relax and make the most of the Sabbath from the moment it begins. — *By S. Hague* □

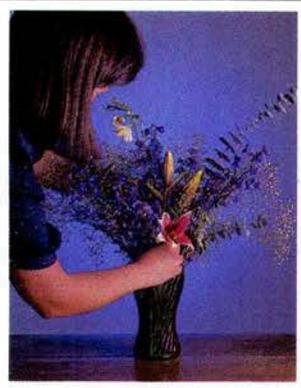


Photo by G.A. Belluche Jr.

set and ending Saturday evening at sunset.

The approximate time of the sunset may be found in most newspapers, in the weather forecast section. If this information is not available, the sunset may be determined by observing the light as it diminishes before the twilight approaches. Or, if you can see the sun, you would begin to observe the Sabbath when the sun is ready to fade away over the horizon on Friday evening.

Prepare for the Sabbath

In order that we may have our minds free from last-minute duties on the Sabbath, God has commanded that we prepare for it the day before.

Exodus 16:23-25 shows that we should do our heavy cooking, roasting or boiling on Friday, the preparation day prior to the Sabbath. God does not want us to clutter up His Sabbath with long hours of cooking.

Does that mean we cannot eat a

fine, sumptuous meal on the Sabbath? Not at all. The Sabbath is a feast day. But it does mean we should plan ahead.

Imagine that you want to prepare a nice roast for the Sabbath. But this may require cooking it for two or three hours. What should you do?

Here is one way to handle the situation: Cook it on Friday until it is nearly done — but not all the way. Then on the Sabbath you can simply warm it up. In this way as little time as possible will be required on the Sabbath, and the roast will not be dry.

The same holds true for any kind of baking. Baked goods can be prepared ahead of time, kept in the refrigerator and brought out on the Sabbath.

Elaborate salads and dressings and similar items should be prepared separately ahead of time and saved until the Sabbath.

Some things cannot or need not be done before the Sabbath. Obviously we would not normally

fry or scramble an egg on Friday, store it in the deep freeze and then thaw it out and eat it Sabbath morning.

Be careful, though, concerning the preparation day. Don't make the mistake of leaving daily duties such as housecleaning, baking, cooking, grocery shopping, house repairs or car washing until Friday, the preparation day before the Sabbath. If you do, you may find that the Sabbath will be a day of total collapse rather than a peaceful day of rest and relaxation with enough energy to communicate with God!

Friday is a day that prepares us for the Sabbath, not a day to catch up on what we should have been doing all week.

By using the preparation day properly we will be able to enter the Sabbath in a spirit of peace and rejoicing and worship toward God.

God's holy Sabbath is indeed a great joy, for those who understand and keep it! □

'...All Your Work!'

Properly keeping the Sabbath is a catalyst to a satisfying, well-organized life.

God created the Sabbath to be a delight (Isaiah 58:13-14). He gave us the day off from work — from even thinking or worrying about our jobs. You don't have to feel guilty about not working on this day; it's your time off.

But God in His wisdom knew that to really enjoy a stress-free day of rest, we would have to learn to efficiently organize our work time on the other six days of the week.

Prepare beforehand

Many of us, when we begin keeping the Sabbath, try to perform seven days of work in six days. This is not impossible, but the problem is we oftentimes try to cram two or three of those days into one day, Friday.

Friday is the preparation day, but those of us working five-day, 40-hour weeks don't have that whole day to use for Sabbath preparation. And try-

ing to hurriedly catch up on Friday afternoon with all the work we should have taken care of throughout the week is not the answer. Ending up a physical wreck every Sabbath from exhausting ourselves in a last-minute effort to prepare is not what God had in mind.

Avoiding the Friday-evening rush is mostly a matter of good planning. Begin by making a list of your major family and household responsibilities. Put everything on there — caring for the pets, vacuuming the carpets, washing the car, preparing the meals, mowing the lawn.

Now list under each family member's name his or her particular responsibilities. Make this a family activity. If you're single, it's just as important to be organized, so make out your list, too.

Next, number each responsibility in order of importance. If you end up with more responsibilities than time to do them, don't be too surprised. Go over your list again and see what

jobs can be eliminated or more efficiently done. Then schedule them throughout your six workdays.

Once you get your daily duties organized, the hours you have on Friday can truly be preparation time for the Sabbath and not just catch-up time for responsibilities you should have done earlier in the week.

It's wise to be flexible enough in your planning to allow for the unexpected. You can be sure that something will come up almost every week to disrupt your schedules.

A weekly paid holiday

God says in Exodus 20:8-9: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work." Obeying this command will make you more efficient in your everyday responsibilities. You will get more done each week than you thought possible.

The Sabbath is a gift to you from God — a paid holiday for you to enjoy each week. But to really be able to rejoice in that special day, be sure that you are fulfilling the last part of His command as well — all your work is to be done during the first six days of the week. — *By Dexter H. Faulkner* □

Teaching Children About Money

Good money habits take years to learn — bad money habits can lead to painful and costly problems. We have all made our share of errors!

Why not give your kids a head start? While you are keeping your family's financial



house in order, be sure to inculcate your good habits into your children. Teaching your children godly principles is one of your main responsibilities as a parent (Deuteronomy 11:19).

A graphic lesson

A friend of mine hit on a dramatic way to impress upon his children the value of money. His income was being sapped by high electricity bills because his children constantly left unneeded lights burning. His children were fairly young, but his simple method could be adapted for older children.

My friend gathered his children around the kitchen table one evening. On the table were

numerous stacks of coins. Each stack was labeled to represent different expenses: tithes and offerings, the mortgage, food, electricity, clothing, entertainment.

He explained that the coins represented the money he brought home from his job and that the stacks showed where the money he made went each month.

"Now each of the bills we make has to be paid," he said. "And if one of the bills is larger than we expect, we have to take money from one of the other areas to help pay for it."

His children nodded, keeping their eyes on the coins.

"One of the things we like to do most is go out and have a good time, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes," his small son answered. "We like to buy ice cream!"

"And we like to go to the movies," said his daughter.

"Right," my friend agreed. "But this month our electricity bill is bigger than we expected, because we leave lights on all over the house when we don't need them."

His children could see the inevitable coming.

"So you know what we have to do?" my friend continued. "We have to take money from somewhere else to pay the electricity bill. The only place where we have extra money is in our entertainment stack."

My friend moved coins, one at a time, from the entertainment

stack to the electricity stack until there weren't any left in the entertainment stack. His children's eyes widened each time he moved another coin, the chagrin on their faces deepening.

"Now," my friend announced, "our budget for this month is balanced. Maybe next month we'll have enough money to go out and have fun." His kids could tell he was on their side and was just as sad as they were.

After the family meeting was over, his children immediately began running all through the house, shutting off lights. From then on, they made sure no money was wasted on unneeded electricity. My friend's electricity bill went down and his kids learned an important lesson.

Teach sound principles

Children can learn many such lessons. On shopping trips, explain to them why you buy one product instead of another. Teach them the difference between necessity and luxury, quality and economy. Teenage children can be taught how to set up a budget, how to balance a checkbook and how to open a savings account. Show your children how to shop for a week's worth of groceries.

And don't forget to teach the importance of tithes and offerings. If they obey God's financial laws, your children will always have enough money for their needs.

Help your children develop the right attitude toward money while they are still young. Teach them sound principles. It will be one of the best investments you will ever make! □

LETTERS

"Why Trials and Troubles?"

Thank you, Mr. Armstrong, for your "Personal" on "Why Trials and Troubles?" (June-July). It could not have come at a better time for my husband and me. We have had many trials and troubles in the months of April and May — death, sickness and severe poison ivy. With everything that was happening to us, we believe trials truly do teach us to be patient.

Mrs. John Fields
Bruce, Wis.

June-July Issue

The articles in the June-July issue, such as "Is God Fair?", "What Worries You?" and "Are the Ten Commandments in Force Today?", really opened my mind to God. They helped me to understand how deeply God loves me and what I could do to respond to His love. My way of life is changing now and becoming meaningful. I would recommend the magazine to my friends and those who don't understand why they have come into this world.

James Tran
Alhambra, Calif.

"Prove All Things"

Greetings from England. I am writing to say congratulations — you are doing an excellent job! *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News* get better and better. I have just received the June-July *Good News* — in color, layout and content, a banquet of spiritual food.

I would like to draw your attention to the "Prove All Things" article, "The Resurrections." No one studying the Bible could deny the proof, but do you think the duality proof of the resurrection would give more punch to the article? I.e., we go to sleep every night and then awake; in winter nature dies and at springtime comes alive again.

I would be interested in your comments on these points. I have the greatest respect for your professional ability and all the team at headquarters, and wish only to add, if possible, something of value. All success to the work at Pasadena and around the world!

T.R.C. Coverdale
London, England

Indeed, for those with open minds, the natural world around us offers many proofs of God and helps us understand God and His truth. As Romans 1:20 states, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly

seen, being understood by the things that are made" — the things God has made teach us about Him. Unfortunately, even with abundant evidence of God available, most people choose to ignore their Creator and their responsibility to Him. "So . . . they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened" (verses 20-21).

Thanks so much for Bernard W. Schnippert's "Prove All Things." I really enjoy his putting key verses at the end of the articles; it gives a capsule summary and helps me in memorizing the pertinent verses to the subject.

Polly Edington
Thief River Falls, Minn.

A storehouse of spiritual goods

This letter comes with a long overdue "thank you" to the entire *Good News* team. From Mr. Armstrong's "Personal" to the "Prove All Things" column at the end, *The Good News* is a literal storehouse of spiritual goods ready to be devoured. It is evident that you all do work very hard to produce for God and your readers a top-quality magazine.

Kim W. Hodges
Orlando, Fla.

I am employed at a car dealership, and in one of our waiting areas, a customer left a copy of the May *Good News*. Being an admirer of Mr. Armstrong, I brought it home to read. An outstanding issue it is! After reading a few paragraphs to my wife, I feel she is interested in reading it. I hope to receive my first issue soon through the mail.

Michael Yohan
Mentor, Ohio

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff and writers of the *Plain Truth* and *Good News* magazines. The fine articles teach us how to cope with this world and also give us inspiration to strive to be better.

Greg C. Taylor
Petal, Miss.

I recently received my first copy of *The Good News*, which I loved reading! It is truly one of the best magazines I have ever read. Just as your sister magazine *The Plain Truth* guides my day, I'm sure *The Good News* will be just as important. I'm 16 years old, so my mom

said I should ask you to please send me a subscription to *Youth 85*. Thanks.

Denise Magretto
East Windsor, N.J.

Youth 85 is a monthly, full-color magazine published by the Worldwide Church of God for youths aged 12 to 19. Youth 85 addresses young people from all walks of life in all parts of the world and offers helpful personal advice as well as articles on family relations, hobbies, careers, adventure and life in different countries. If you would like for your children to receive Youth 85, or if you would like to receive it yourself, just write to our address nearest you. A list of our addresses is on the inside front cover of this magazine.

Enjoys broadcast

I enjoy the *World Tomorrow* program each Sunday very much. I wish that many more people would listen to it. It gives us a better education than we ever had in school. *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News* are getting better and better. I believe both the writers and the readers are becoming more inspired as we come closer to the end.

Kenneth H. Wadsworth
Pierson, Mich.

"Making the Bible Work for You"

It's a vital key to understanding! By my personal experience (having read *The Good News* for more than two years), every article has at least two or three lessons to drive home and bears evidence of having been carefully prepared by inspiration.

Nevertheless, the article titled "Making the Bible Work for You" by Earl H. Williams (February) was unique in a sense, in that a concrete understanding of this article is of prime importance in understanding and actually writing the Word of God on one's mind.

The tool of studying and meditating along ("medistudy," so to speak) is really an awesome one-two punch guaranteed to help knock sin out. In a nutshell, it is a vital key to understanding all other articles, especially when this article is itself understood in all its ramifications and applied effectively.

Meshach Igbineweka
Benin City, Nigeria

Correction: The first sentence of the photo caption on page 26 of the August Good News should read, "Peace treaty ceremony in Tokyo Bay."

Beast

(Continued from page 6)

tory there have never been 10 contemporaneous kingdoms that have continued out of the Roman Empire, side by side, down to the present time — and since there have been nine successive kingdoms ruling that territory, which we shall explain, from 476 to the present, therefore we know that the kingdoms represented by the horns are successive, not contemporaneous.

The deadly wound

Now let us return to our description of the beast in Revelation 13.

“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months” (Revelation 13:3-5).

The beast here symbolized is the one that included the royal splendor and kingly power symbolized by the mouth of the lion (Babylon); the ponderous strength symbolized by the feet of the bear (Medo-Persia); and the speed, cunning and cruelty of the leopard (Greece).

Since the interpretation of these symbols is found in Daniel 7, and since the fourth beast had 10 horns, the Bible interpretation of the beast of Revelation 13 is the fourth beast of Daniel 7 — the Roman Empire, of 31 B.C. to A.D. 476.

The beast described by John in Revelation 13 included seven heads, but the only head existing at the time John saw this nondescript beast (which included the most powerful characteristics of all the beasts symbolizing its predecessors) was that of the fourth beast of Daniel, containing the

seventh head, and also the 10 horns. So the specific “one of its heads” that was wounded to death (Revelation 13:3) was the seventh head of the Roman Empire — the head out of which 10 horns grew.

The 10 horns, as Daniel interprets, represent 10 successive governments out of the Roman Empire, which were to continue until the setting up of the Kingdom of God at the Second Coming of Christ.

The deadly wound, then, was the one administered to the Roman Empire, when, in its last decaying stages, the barbarians overran it, ending its government in A.D. 476.

Notice, the dragon gave his power to the beast. Who is the dragon? Some have said “pagan Rome.” But will we be guided solely by the Bible interpretation of its own symbols? Then, if we will, the dragon is a symbol that means Satan the devil.

Notice Revelation 12: “The great dragon . . . that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan . . . was cast out into the earth . . . the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath . . . and when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth . . .” (verses 9, 12-13).

“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan” (Revelation 20:2).

They worshiped the beast (Revelation 13:4). Therefore some conclude, from this one statement alone, that the beast must be the papacy, not knowing that the people worshiped the Roman Empire and its emperors!

Notice how they worshiped the beast — saying, “Who is able to make war with him?” The Roman Empire was the greatest war-making power the world had ever known. This beast killed by the sword (verse 10).

History is full of accounts of the worship of the Roman emperors, for paganism was a state religion. The following is from Robinson’s *Medieval and Modern Times*, an older college textbook, page 7:

“The worship of the emperor:

In a word, the Roman government was not only wonderfully organized . . . everyone was required to join in the worship of the emperor because he stood for the majesty and glory of the dominion . . . all were obliged, as good citizens, to join in the official sacrifices to the head of the state, as a god.”

But when the seventh head of this great beast received its deadly wound in A.D. 476, was that the end?

No, the prophecy says “his deadly wound was healed . . . and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months” (verses 3, 5).

The 10 horns represent 10 successive kingdoms to follow out of this kingdom. So, through the 10 horns growing out of this head (the Roman Empire of 31 B.C.-A.D. 476), the beast (for the 10 horns are part of the beast) continues until the Second Coming of Christ.

The text says one of his heads was wounded to death. The beast included the seven heads and the 10 horns. John sees the beast living in the days of its seventh head, the Roman Empire. And when that head of the beast had its deadly wound, his — the beast’s — deadly wound was healed. The horns now reign, one by one.

The Roman Empire in northern Africa was overrun by the Vandals, who sacked Rome in 455. Then in 476 Odoacer set up his government at Rome, called the Heruli. But it did not heal the deadly wound, for this was only a government *in* Rome. It was not a Roman government, but one of foreign barbarians. Then there was the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, 493-554, another foreign people who ruled in the territory. But they were driven out of Italy and disappeared.

These three kingdoms, sweeping into the Roman territory, filled the period known in history as the “transition age” (see Myers’ *Ancient History*, page 571). That is, a TRANSITION between the wound and the healing.

Now Daniel saw a “little horn”

coming up among these 10, before whom these first three were "plucked up by the roots" (Daniel 7:8). That leaves 7 horns to come.

And of the little horn, Daniel 7 says his "look was more stout than his fellows" (verse 20). The papacy dominated completely all the horns to follow.

It was the fourth kingdom (symbolized by the fourth horn), succeeding the fall of the Empire in 476, which really HEALED the deadly wound, and restored the empire.

The deadly wound healed

In A.D. 554, Justinian, emperor of the East, from Constantinople, set up his government through an Imperial Legate at Ravenna, Italy, and brought about what is known in history as the "Imperial Restoration" of the Empire.

Now, notice verse 5 of Revelation 13. Power was given to this beast, once healed, to "CONTINUE FORTY AND TWO MONTHS."

In the prophecies pertaining to the times of Israel's punishment, each day represents a year in the fulfillment (Ezekiel 4:4-6, Numbers 14:34). Thus, the healed beast is to continue 1,260 years.

Following the healing, in 554, came the Frankish kingdom (French), the Holy Roman Empire (German, then the Austrian Habsburgs) and Napoleon's kingdom (French). But when Napoleon was crushed in 1814, the healed beast continued no longer. "So closed," says West's *Modern History*, page 337, "a government that dated from Augustus Caesar [from 31 B.C.]" It went into abyss!

And from 554 to 1814, the duration of the "healed beast," was exactly 1,260 years!

At that time, eight of the horns having appeared and gone, the beast itself went into the nonexistent condition symbolized in Revelation 17:8 as the "bottomless pit."

But by the year 1870, Garibaldi had united the many little divisions in the peninsula of

Italy into one nation, and the kingdom thus established began the ninth horn, which culminated in the Fascist rule of Mussolini.

The "heads" the woman rode

We shall deal later more specifically with the 17th chapter of Revelation in this connection. But let us note in passing that the woman mentioned in this chapter never rode on any part of this beast of Revelation 13 except its last seven horns! She is the "little horn" of Daniel 7, whose "look was more stout than his fellows," and who caused the first three to be plucked up by the roots.

And since, in the 17th chapter of Revelation, the woman rode on all seven of the heads of the beast there pictured, and since she rode none of the heads but only the last seven of the horns of the beast of Revelation 13, it follows that the seven horns of the "healed beast" of the 13th chapter form the seven heads of the beast of the 17th chapter!

Notice, at the time John saw the beast, five are fallen, one is and one is yet to come (Revelation 17:10).

The five that are fallen are the five during the 1,260 years in which power was given, by religious authority, for the healed beast to continue.

The one that "is," is the kingdom that extended from Garibaldi to the downfall of Mussolini. It was not in any sense the power-wielding old Roman Empire, so during the stage of this ninth horn (Revelation 13) or sixth head (Revelation 17) John speaks of it as the beast that was, and is not, and shall arise once more out of the bottomless pit.

The seventh head with its 10 horns, in the 17th chapter of Revelation, will be, as the 17th chapter explains, the revival of the beast, the Roman Empire, "out of the bottomless pit" by a "United States of Europe," or federation of 10 European nations centered within the bounds of the old Roman Empire (Revelation 17:12-18).

This is beginning today!

(To be continued)

Halloween

(Continued from page 12)

27, 34) fall in the seventh month of the sacred calendar, at a period that varies slightly from year to year but centers on early October. Ancient Israel was ordered to observe these God-ordained days. But instead of keeping the feasts of God in the seventh month, King Jeroboam ordained his own feast one month later (I Kings 12:27-33).

This counterfeit festival, in the middle of the eighth month, was approximately equivalent time-wise to Halloween today!

A provable connection? No. But the point is, God rejected the inferior substitute that was made for something He had instituted — and rejected the whole people because they had rejected Him.

There is a lesson in that for us.

What could be better — for children and adults, too — than restoring the observance of God's Holy Days according to His instructions? Better than Halloween, Christmas, Easter or any of the other humanly devised false substitutes.

During the early part of October, while commercial advertisements begin to prepare people for yet another Halloween, the members of the Worldwide Church of God observe the Feast of Tabernacles, one of God's festivals. They enjoy themselves in good, clean fun at some of the most beautiful locations on earth, while rejoicing in light and truth, learning how to give and share — the exact opposite of the "get" mentality of death-oriented Halloween observance — and preparing themselves for the soon-coming world tomorrow.

Once a person properly keeps the days God has commanded, he realizes what cheap, inferior, meaningless substitutes are the religious holidays of the world. If you haven't yet experienced them, you're really shortchanging yourself and your children. You're missing something inestimably good! □

Are You Passing God's Test?

While in school we had to take tests periodically. But do you realize that every one of us is still being tested regularly? God is testing us every week.

What kind of grade is God giving you?

God's way of life is based on His spiritual law of love. It is love toward God and love toward fellowman. God's love is further magnified by the Ten Commandments. And one of these 10 is a test commandment.

There are many today who will admit that the Ten Commandments should be obeyed, except for one — the fourth. Most do not want to keep the Sabbath commandment!

Let's understand the truth about God's Sabbath day, and why it is so important that we pass this test commandment every week.

1. On which day of creation week did God rest? Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:11. Did God rest because He was tired? Isaiah 40:28.

God is composed of spirit and never tires. God created or "made" (Mark 2:27) the Sabbath by resting, whereas all else was made by working. By resting on the seventh day (Saturday), God set an example for man to follow.

2. Which member of the God Family made that first Sabbath? Colossians 1:13-16, Mark 2:28.

Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath because He made it. As other scriptures prove, Christ was the Lord God who revealed Himself to ancient Israel throughout the Old Testament. And God the Father created all things through Him. By ceasing to do any labor on the seventh day of creation week, Christ set apart that 24-hour period for a special and holy use.

3. For whom did Jesus say the Sabbath was made? Mark 2:27. Who would that include? Exodus 20:8-10, especially verse 10.

"The Sabbath was made for man," declared Jesus. Every seventh day from creation was singled out by God to be specially observed by mankind. The Sabbath was to benefit all who would live — if they would keep it.

4. How did Christ intend the Sabbath to benefit mankind? Deuteronomy 5:14, Exodus 23:12. (Notice the words *rest* and *refreshed*.)

The word *Sabbath* means "rest" in Hebrew.

Physical rest and mental relaxation after a busy week are obvious reasons for keeping the Sabbath. God knew humans would need periodic rest and change from work.

But the purpose for keeping God's Sabbath goes far beyond simply resting on this day. Man desperately needs this time each week to have close spiritual contact with God.

The Sabbath allows us time to think more about God, to pray to and worship Him (both in private and in fellowship with others) and to study the Bible to understand more about God's purpose for us.

5. Should we pursue our own interests and pleasures on the Sabbath? Isaiah 58:13. Will God bless the faithful Sabbath keeper? Verse 14, Isaiah 56:2-7.

God made the Sabbath holy time! Employment, shopping, mowing the lawn, home maintenance, hobbies, sports and other special interests are for the first six days of the week. Such activities take our minds away from God and the entire purpose for His Sabbath.

God promises to bestow blessings on us now and eternal life in the resurrection as His free gift if we repent of our sins and faithfully keep His Sabbath and other commandments.

6. Was observance of the Sabbath day to be a special sign of identification between God and His people? Exodus 31:13, 16-17. Did God also make Sabbath observance a separate covenant with His people? Verse 16.

God wanted ancient Israel to remember that He is Creator, Sustainer and Supreme Ruler over all His creation. So He singled out Sabbath observance as the one great sign by which they would always be reminded of who He is and who they were — His chosen people.

And so God doubly commanded Sabbath observance by making it a separate covenant with His people Israel *after* the covenant concerning His overall relationship with the nation (commonly called the "Old Covenant," which included the Ten Commandments) had been made. This special covenant was to be an everlasting agreement — the sign that would identify God's people of all generations.

7. Is a real Christian one who has become a

spiritual Israelite — one of Abraham's "seed" through Christ? Galatians 3:28-29, Romans 4:16, Ephesians 2:11-13, 19.

God made the special Sabbath covenant with Abraham's physical seed — the nation of Israel. It was to be obeyed throughout their generations. Today, regardless of race or national origin, all Spirit-begotten children of God — true Christians (Romans 8:9) — have become Abraham's spiritual descendants and therefore keep God's Sabbath. They have been set apart ("sanctified" — Exodus 31:13) by God.

However, most religious groups today who profess to keep God's seventh-day Sabbath do not keep *all* of God's commandments. Therefore they are not part of the Church of God. For more information, send for our free booklet *Where Is the True Church?*

Today, the Sabbath is a reminder of our Creator, who not only created the universe and man, but who is also creating His holy character in His people — character that will endure forever when they are born into His divine Family. Thus the Sabbath also reminds true Christians of God's purpose for man.

8. Was Sabbath keeping also a test to see if the Israelites would obey God? Exodus 16:4-5, 22-23.

How many do you know who keep God's Sabbath? It is obvious to the rest of the world when one keeps the Sabbath. But most people do not want to be identified as different from the world. Most professing Christians are willing at least to acknowledge that the other nine commandments should be kept, but the one commandment they reject and refuse to obey is the fourth! Therefore the Sabbath command is the crucial test of obedience, for it identifies those who have surrendered to God — who obey *all* of His commandments regardless of persecution or cost!

9. Did Jesus Christ keep the Sabbath? Luke 4:16, 31.

Jesus regularly attended religious services on the Sabbath day "as His custom was." He obeyed His own command to meet every Sabbath (Leviticus 23:3). This is the day He would naturally have observed, because He made the Sabbath and ordained that it be kept holy.

10. Was it the apostle Paul's custom to keep the Sabbath? Acts 17:1-2. Is there other proof that the early New Testament Church of God observed the Sabbath? Acts 13:13-15, 42, 44, 18:1, 4, 11.

There is no question that the early Church observed the seventh-day Sabbath. Those who are striving to obey God today will also be keeping the same day Jesus, Paul and the entire Church kept.

11. What is God's warning to Christians in

Hebrews 3:8-13, 16-19, 4:1-2? (Notice the use of the word *rest*.) Was rebellion, especially Sabbath breaking, the reason God did not allow an entire generation of Israelites to enter His "rest"? Ezekiel 20:12-13, 15-16.

The land of Canaan — the promised "rest" into which Israel finally entered (Joshua 1:13) — is spoken of in the Bible as a symbol of the Christian's spiritual "rest" (Hebrews 4:1) — of being born into the universe-ruling Family of God and living forever.

12. If Christians believe and obey God, will they enter their "rest" — eternal life in God's Kingdom? Hebrews 4:3, first nine words, and verse 11.

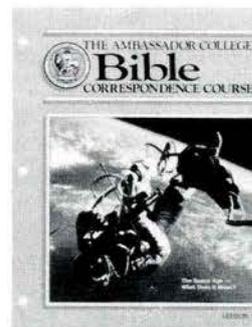
The equation is clear: Real belief in God equals active obedience (James 2:20-22). Those who really believe God will be keeping His Sabbath! God's Sabbath is not to be treated lightly or forgotten. We are commanded to "Remember the Sabbath day" (Exodus 20:8). It is a memorial of God's restoration of the earth and the creation of man, reminding us who the Creator is. And the Sabbath pictures the coming eternal rest that true Christians will enter when born into the Family of God.

13. Did God command the Israelites to meet together for worship on the weekly Sabbath? Leviticus 23:3. What are New Testament Christians admonished regarding the assembling of themselves? Hebrews 10:24-25.

Today's people of God attend weekly Sabbath services of the Worldwide Church of God in more than 50 nations around the world. Every Sabbath, they meet together to receive spiritual instruction from the Bible as taught by the ministry of God's Church (Ephesians 4:11-13).

God's people truly rejoice in His Sabbath and enjoy fellowshiping with each other on His Holy Days. They are learning what a pleasure and great blessing it is to keep God's Sabbath holy — the day that reminds us of the Creator God and His stupendous purpose for mankind!

(For information about God's Sabbath and Christian fellowship, request our free booklet *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?*) □



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'Blessed Are the Pure in Heart'

Right now you may be suffering from the worst type of heart disease! But there is a cure!

By Philip W. Shields

Dr. Christiaan Barnard and his 30-man surgical team electrified the world on December 3, 1967.

Some said it couldn't be done. Yet, 55-year-old Lewis Washkansky became a man with a new heart, the recipient of the world's first heart transplant. His diseased heart was replaced with a healthy heart from a donor mortally injured in an auto accident.

Today, heart transplants again excite the world as man-made mechanical hearts such as the Jarvik-7 are implanted with growing success. The world excitedly followed the mechanical-heart implants of Barney Clark in 1983 and William J. Schroeder in 1984.

Heart disease is a top concern today. More North Americans die each year from heart-related problems than from any other cause. That's tragic, but Christians know that Jesus Christ will return to earth very soon now and heal everyone suffering from any health problems. That miracle will be easy for Him!

But did you know that, right now, Jesus Christ is working to



correct a spiritual heart disease that is far more serious and widespread than any physical heart problem medical science has tackled? In fact, this disease involves *your* heart!

What is this spiritual heart disease? Before we can answer, we must understand what is meant by a spiritual heart.

What is the "heart"?

The Bible uses the metaphor of the heart to refer to the seat or

center of our affections, emotions and attitudes.

For instance, Proverbs 3:3, speaking of God's commands, directs, "Write them on the tablet of your heart." Matthew 6:21 tells us, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

A biblical reference to the heart, in other words, is a reference to our motives, our personal reasons for doing what we do.

What does God consider a healthy spiritual heart? Jesus Christ Himself answers this question in Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

A diseased spiritual heart, then, is an impure heart. Did you know that, among God's people, spiritual heart disease is the No. 1 killer? God cannot and will not allow anyone into His Kingdom with this deadly disease.

Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong has described a godly life as one lived with a giving attitude. The opposite way — the way of sin — produces a life that is lived in a selfish, getting attitude contrary to the way of God. The attitude behind our actions is sometimes more important than the actions themselves.

When God sent the prophet Samuel to anoint David as the

Photo by Bill Strode — Sygma/Humana

next king of Israel, He had to remind Samuel that knowing a person's attitude was paramount in choosing him as king. God told Samuel, "The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (I Samuel 16:7).

God right now is choosing human beings for future offices as kings and priests — positions in His spiritual government in the soon-coming Kingdom of God! (For more information on whom God is choosing and when they will take their offices, write for a free copy of our astounding booklet *Your Awesome Future — How Religion Deceives You.*)

God has not changed the way He decides who His kings and priests shall be. God is still looking upon the heart — upon our hearts! The condition of our hearts will determine whether we are chosen to reign with Jesus Christ beginning at His Second Coming.

An insidious disease

A person with a physical heart disease can seem healthy enough, for a time. His symptoms may seem mild — a little shortness of breath, a little pain in the chest.

In the same way, someone with spiritual heart disease can look or act all right for a while. He can seem fine on the surface. But God looks upon the heart, and God is not fooled. Eventually the spiritual malady becomes apparent. Eventually any spiritual heart disease, unchecked, will destroy the whole person.

In Deuteronomy 6:5-6, God tells us that He wants us to love Him with all our hearts. God wants us to have our affections, our hearts, locked into Him and His way of life — devoted completely to God and His way.

More than deeds required

Why are our motivations and attitudes so important to God? Why does our spiritual heart condition make so much difference to our whole eternity?

The answer goes back to one who was very great, but who

wrecked his potential — the arch-angel Lucifer. We can read the tragic story of this former cherub in Isaiah 14.

What caused Lucifer to turn against God in a spirit of assassination? What went wrong? What is the first thing mentioned?

Isaiah 14:12, Authorized Version, asks, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer! . . . For thou hast said *in thine heart*, I will ascend into heaven." The first thing that went wrong with Lucifer was spiritual heart disease! His whole attitude changed (Ezekiel 28:17). His hateful heart drove him to rotten actions.

God puts so much emphasis on our attitude because if our heart

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isn't set right, nothing else will be right, either.

In Matthew 15:19, Jesus makes it clear that every evil deed originates in an evil heart: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." The lesson is to clean up the heart, then proper deeds will follow.

Of course, we can have many impressive works to our names and yet still lose out. The deeds mean nothing if done from a wrong heart or motive. Job performed wonderful deeds — he "feared God and shunned evil" (Job 1:1) — but vanity and self-righteousness were also in his heart and had to be corrected.

I Corinthians 13:1-3 lists some pretty impressive actions and abilities. We might think that one

who has the faith to move a mountain, to give all he possesses to charity or to sacrifice his very life must be spiritual. Yet Paul says that it all counts for nothing if the heart isn't right. It profits nothing (verse 3)!

The religious leaders of Jesus' day never quite learned this. They thought all their good deeds by themselves earned them a great reward. But their attitude was wrong.

Their motivation was one of get or self. They wanted others to think well of them. They made long prayers for a show and pretense (Matthew 6:5), not because they truly wanted to talk to God. They were, in short, hypocrites who wanted people to think that they were righteous and special.

In Matthew 23:28 Jesus soundly condemned their motives: "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." They might have fooled some people, but they never fooled God, for God looks upon the heart.

We today can take a lesson from those religious leaders. Is our religion nothing more than an attempt to make ourselves look good to others? Remember, God is looking on your heart.

God's own heart

Mr. Armstrong has stated that the cause of all the world's problems is spiritual in nature. It is a problem of spiritual heart disease — of hearts set against God's way — unconverted and unchanged hearts.

Before we can help God establish His way of life on earth, we have to have a complete change of heart, spiritually, just as Lewis Washkansky and others did physically. Our hearts have to become like God's heart — perfect.

King David was called a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). I Kings 11:4, Authorized Version, says David's heart was perfect. What does this mean?

David made big mistakes. But when he did, his heart, or conscience, made him see his errors.

David's basic drive was to obey God. We read of David's murder of Uriah and his adultery with Bathsheba (II Samuel 11), but we also read of how badly David felt when the enormity of the sin was shown him (II Samuel 12:13).

From deep inside, David wanted to go God's way. Since he was still flesh and blood he sometimes failed, as we all do. But in his heart he wanted to totally obey and please God. God knew He could still work with David, even after he sinned, because David's heart was right.

By contrast, David's son Solomon had his heart turned by his many wives and concubines (I Kings 11:1-6), and his evil heart resulted in evil deeds, of which he apparently did not repent (verses 9-10).

A person with a pure heart wants to please God. He sees the intent behind God's laws. He doesn't want to see how far he can go in ignoring God's way — how many of God's commands he can get away with breaking — how close he can get to this world's evil ways and still be considered a Christian. Instead, he understands more fully every day that God's law is a positive principle to be applied, a way of life that produces every good.

That is why Jesus magnified God's law and said that a man lusting after a woman "has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). Even though a man might not physically commit the act, since his attitude is that of wanting to commit adultery, the lust becomes the same as the actual deed of adultery. Proverbs 23:7 says, "As he thinks in his heart, so is he."

What does God see?

When God looks on you, does He see a pure heart? What does your attitude say about you? How can you tell what your attitude and your heart are like?

Remember that we can fool even ourselves if we are not careful. Jeremiah 17:9 reminds us, "The heart is deceitful above all

things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Proverbs 28:26 states, "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool." Proverbs 21:2 tells us that "every way of man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts."

We need to know how to see what God sees when He looks at our hearts. To find out what God sees, we need to go to His Word. Hebrews 4:12 says God's Word is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

We can use God's Word as a mirror to show us where our hearts, motives and attitudes are falling short of the mark.

What is uppermost on our minds? If physical pursuits —

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our hobbies, job, car, home, material wealth — occupy first place in our minds rather than God's work and our Christian calling, we have a spiritually diseased heart. What do we talk about most? What fruits are we producing in our lives (Matthew 12:33)?

Maybe we do often fall short. But all is not lost.

When David came to full repentance after the incident with Bathsheba, he made some significant statements. In Psalm 51:1-9 he fully admitted the horror of his sins and begged God to purge him from them. We, too, need to come to full, deep, heartfelt repentance and ask God to clean us up.

In verse 10 (AV) David stated: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit

within me." Deep repentance involves a change of heart. Without a change of heart, we cannot truly please God.

To acquire a pure heart, we have to go to the source of all purity and righteousness — God Himself. We cannot make our hearts pure by ourselves. We need God's help through His Holy Spirit.

When it comes to purifying our hearts, God does not do repair surgery. He does a spiritual heart transplant! He wants us to have a brand new heart — a pure heart. That is accomplished by the gift of the Holy Spirit upon repentance, baptism and our decision to follow God's lead through the Holy Spirit.

In a physical heart transplant, both the patient and the surgeon have important roles to play. The surgeon has to be thoroughly skilled. The patient has to have a positive attitude and his body has to accept the new heart. Unfortunately, in many human heart transplants, the patient doesn't live long because his body rejects the new heart.

In the same way, we have to want the new, pure heart from God and accept it. We must let our new, godly heart lead us and give us new life.

Remember what Jesus said? "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

In one sense, once we are converted and have received our new heart — once we have God's laws written in our hearts and minds — we can already "see God" now. We can understand more about the way He thinks and operates (Job 42:5), and we can begin to think and operate that way ourselves.

But in the ultimate sense, we will literally see God in His coming Kingdom, when we are changed to divine spirit beings (I John 3:1-3). Notice especially verse 3: "Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

Blessed indeed are the pure in heart, for they, and only they, shall see God! □

The Christian Calling

“You are cordially invited to attend...” began an invitation to a formal dance I went to recently. It was beautifully printed, and went on to describe the elegant and enjoyable evening I was going to have.

I accepted. And the invitation was correct. I did indeed enjoy it.

A simple dance or party invitation is easy for us to understand. But many people today do not understand how God invites — calls — those He wants into His Church. They do not understand the Christian calling. That is, they do not understand whom God calls, or how, or why.

Such a lack of understanding is saddening, for those God now makes the heirs to salvation are commanded to “walk worthy” of their calling (Ephesians 4:1), and to make their calling “sure” (II Peter 1:10). How can we do this if we don’t even understand what our calling is?

Yet we need not remain in darkness about this vital and foundational subject. The Bible teaching is plain.

The basic doctrine

When God calls a person, He invites him into His Church to help the Church perform its great commission of preaching the Gospel to the world (Matthew 24:14), and to prepare to rule with Jesus Christ and teach God’s way in the world tomorrow (Revelation 2:26-27, 3:21). That is the main purpose for being called now.

A person called at this time is

also one of the relatively few to whom God is now offering the chance for salvation.

God alone decides who shall be called, by opening a person’s mind to understand His truth.

The usual teachings of this world

Most professing Christians feel that God is now calling everybody to salvation. Others think that God calls to salvation those who wish to be called, or those who seek to be called by deciding to “give their hearts to the Lord.” Still others feel God must surely call only the best society has to offer — the “good people” who try to obey God as they see Him.

A few feel that a person has not been called unless he has had some type of special religious experience such as “speaking in tongues.” Certain preachers must feel that they have the power to call people, since they tell people at tent meetings to come forward and profess Christ.

Amazingly, all these common teachings and impressions are proven false by the Bible.

The Bible teaching

Although many people use the biblical expression and profess to

having been “called” (e.g., “It has been two years since I was called to the Lord”), few have ever stopped to realize and understand what they are saying.

The New Testament was written in Greek, and the English is only a translation. Nonetheless the English word *call* well reflects the process described in the Bible. To be called is to be invited or hailed by God, much as a person might telephone a group of friends and invite them to a party.

Notice the illustration in Matthew 22:1-14. “The kingdom of heaven,” Christ said in a parable, “is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding” (verses 2-3).

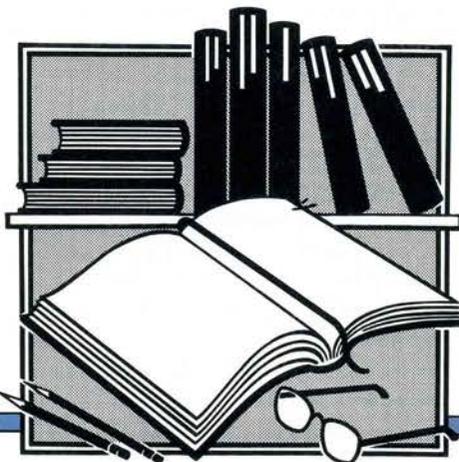
Quite plainly, then, God’s calling is an invitation. Galatians 1:6 says it is a calling — an invitation — to the grace of Christ. I Peter 2:9 says it is a calling from darkness to light.

Briefly, being called means that one is invited to be a member of God’s Church, with all the responsibilities that entails and the hope of salvation.

The Greek word translated “church” in the New Testament is *ecclesia*, which literally means “called-out ones.” Hence when we are called we become part of the “called-out ones” — that is, the Church.

And here another important point must be stressed: The common teaching that God is calling all now — that is, that He is now trying to save the world — is utterly false.

When asked by His disciples why He spoke in riddles, Christ said, “Because it has been given



to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (Matthew 13:11). That is, the disciples had been called to know the truth, but others had not been so called.

This is not to say that the others will never be called, just that they will not be called in this era or this lifetime. Those who are called now — a relative few — are called to help preach the Gospel as a witness (Matthew 24:14) and to prepare to be teachers and rulers in the world tomorrow under Christ, when God will begin to call humanity as a whole (Revelation 5:10).

The subject of the time of one's calling concerns the doctrine of eternal judgment. For more information, request our free reprint article "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?"

We have seen that God's calling is, in part, an invitation to salvation now with His Church. And we have also seen that not all are being called now.

But, then, who are now being called?

Christ makes the answer clear in John 6:44. Here, surely to the astonishment of the religious teachers of this world, Christ states, "No one can come to Me [that is, no one is invited or called] unless the Father who sent Me draws him."

No one can be called unless God Himself decides to call him or her. Astoundingly, this means that God does not call everyone — not those who wish to be, nor those who try to be, nor those who are talked into joining churches by well-intentioned but misguided preachers, nor just the "good" among people. Rather, He calls those *He* decides to call for His own reasons.

Notice how Paul states it in Romans 9, where he discusses this precise topic: "So then it [one's calling] is not of him who wills [he who wants to be called],

nor of him who runs [he who even tries in his own way], but of God who shows mercy" (verse 16).

Paul is not saying those not now called will not be saved, only that their chance for salvation is not in this age, but later.

Still, we cannot help but wonder upon what God bases His decision to call or not to call a certain person. God does state certain qualifications, and gives some examples from which we can glean answers.

The most poignant of scriptures on this question is I Corinthians 1:26-31, where Paul writes: "For you see your calling, brethren . . . God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things . . . and the things which are despised . . . and the things which are not."

Literally, then, God picks those who are foolish, weak and despised — in the eyes of this world, that is. He does so in order that those who are saved are humble and don't take the credit themselves. He does it so all can see that if God is able to save the weak now, He must surely be able to save the strong later.

To be sure, God looks for other qualifications as well — such as the natural abilities He wants for certain future jobs, and a willing attitude. Hence we see how Joseph and Moses and David and many others were used by God in accord with their natural abilities, and will fill places in His Kingdom that will utilize the same abilities.

Probably one of the most important questions asked by those who consider this topic is "Am I being called by God — how do I know?"

Notice John 10:1-28. In these verses Christ likens the true believers to sheep, with Himself as the shepherd. He says the true

sheep will know their spiritual shepherd because they will hear His voice and understand His words. See especially verses 3-6, 14, 26-28.

The point of the analogy is this: One whom God is calling will have his mind opened to understand when he hears God's truth. One who is not being called may hear the words, but, like a foreign language he does not understand, those words will not be mixed with understanding and belief.

God calls, then, by opening one's mind to understand and believe the truth when he or she hears it. Are you being called? You are if you are understanding and believing the truth. Such is the clear meaning of many verses, such as Isaiah 6:9-10, Acts 28:23-27 and Romans 11:8-10.

Of course, once God has opened the mind of a person to understand spiritual knowledge, He must bring that person into contact with the truth so he or she may hear the call.

Key verses

This topic is so fundamental and pierces through so many commonly held wrong beliefs that it is important to highlight a few important verses one may remember or mark in one's Bible: II Peter 1:10 — Christians are commanded to make their calling and election sure. Matthew 22:1-14 — God's calling is His invitation to become part of His work and prepare for salvation now. John 6:44 — no one is called unless God initiates the call. John 10:1-28 and Matthew 13:10-17 — God calls by opening our minds to understand the truth, and those not called are spiritually blinded.

Yes, it can be an enjoyable thing to be invited to a social gathering or party. But it is joy unspeakable to be among the few now invited — called — by God to fulfill the great commission and qualify for salvation and eternal life as children of God. □

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