

JUNE-JULY 1983

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

The Image of
Daniel 2



YOU CAN UNDERSTAND PROPHECY!

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COVER: The image from Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2) symbolized four world-ruling empires. Understanding the Bible's symbols is a major key to understanding Bible prophecy. See the article beginning on page 9. Illustration by C. Winston Taylor. Copyright © 1983 Worldwide Church of God.

Letters

Like Ambassador classes

I get the feeling, in reading the exciting articles in *The Good News*, of almost being in the classroom at Ambassador College and hearing the authors in person, the articles being so direct and penetrating and meaningful. Thank you for truly "feeding the flock."

Paul Nowlen
Jenkinsville, S.C.

March issue

I wish I had read "A Sure Test of Integrity — 'You Shall Not Steal'" before I went to the store yesterday. The checker charged me less than she should have and I said nothing. I'm so ashamed. Last night I read the article and I even talked with my 11-year-old son about the many ways we can steal.

Reader
St. Louis, Mo.

Thank you for "Sharing: Quest for the Best" by David Hulme, and also for the cover, the night view of the Ambassador Auditorium. We can thank God for the quality of each *Good News*.

Raymond Alexander
Albertville, Ala.

Information helps

I read the article on developing your child's character [February] and I really liked it. The information will help me out an awful lot, since I am raising a 2-year-old daughter all by myself.

I also read the article on "What God Says About Your Sex Life" and it made me see things a lot more clearly than I had before.

Valerie Ferguson
Santa Monica, Calif.

Blessed for tithing

I received my copy of *The Good News*, and in it I gladly read the articles on tithing [October-November]. I would like *Good News* readers to read my story about tithing.

Many years ago I worked hard as a janitor and earned \$50 a week. Then I read an article about tithing. This made me decide to start tithing 10 percent of my income to God.

Then things began to happen fast. In less than six months I got a good job that paid almost three times the salary I was earning as a janitor.

I'm certain that God blessed me financially. Also, at age 70 I have excellent health and never have to see a doctor.

Phil F. Meade
Pittsburgh, Pa.

How to Prevent Sin

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Do you realize that if it is wrong to *do* a certain thing, it is wrong to harbor THOUGHTS of that thing in your mind?

“All have sinned,” says the Scripture.

What *is* sin, anyway?

Satan ought to know — and he is the invisible influence who sways the course of this world.

Hollywood is considered by many as the world’s mecca of sin. The newsstands in Hollywood used to carry a very worldly booklet, written in a very light, breezy and satirical vein, titled *How to Sin in Hollywood*. It gave a definition of sin. The definition is expressive, and not far from the truth. Here it is:

“Sin is *thinking thoughts* you ought not to be thinking about things you ought not to be *doing* while you are *thinking* that kind of *thoughts*.”

God’s definition is, “Sin is the transgression of the law” (I John 3:4, Authorized Version) — the law of LOVE, as defined by the Ten Commandments.

Jesus said: “What comes *out* of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed *evil thoughts*, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness [all violations of the law — the Ten Commandments]” (Mark 7:20-22).

“ALL have sinned,” says the Scripture. And what man, especially what Christian, is there who has not time and again experienced the struggle against sin described by the apostle Paul?

“What I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. . . . For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice” (Rom. 7:15, 19). Who is there who has not LOST that struggle, perhaps many times?

Of course no man, of himself, can live above sin. “With men it is impossible,” said Jesus, “but with God all things are possible.”

And Paul continues (Rom. 8:4, 14) to show that the only DELIVERANCE from this “body of death” is through Jesus Christ and the indwelling power of God’s Holy Spirit — “that the RIGHTEOUS REQUIREMENT of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. . . . these are sons of God.”

Yes, but we have OUR part in it, too. And it all centers in the MIND.

REPENTANCE of sin means, literally, to *change* one’s *mind* in respect to sin. If we repent and are baptized, accepting Jesus Christ as Savior, the promise is we SHALL receive the gift of the Holy Spirit “and be renewed in the spirit of your *mind*” (Eph. 4:23). The presence of the Holy Spirit is the RENEWING of *the mind*.

How does sin actually happen? “Every man is *tempted*, when he is drawn away of his own lust [desire], and enticed. Then when lust [the desire IN THE MIND] hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin:

and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas. 1:14-15, AV).

The TEMPTATION is in the *mind*. When you *think* about the thing that tempts you — let your mind dwell on it — turn it over in your mind — whether it be a desire to GO someplace, to DO something or to HAVE something you know is wrong — that *thinking about it* finally conceives — leads to *action* — and breeds SIN.

You finally DO the thing you kept thinking about, wanting to do. If you keep thinking about it, after a while you’ll be UNABLE to resist it.

That’s why you’ve lost so many of these struggles against sin — you kept *thinking* about it, desiring it, wanting it.

The way to prevent sin is to let God’s Spirit fill the mind. “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2).

The way to put a thing OUT of the mind is to put an *opposite* thought IN the mind.

So often I have noticed parents of babies strive so hard to “shush” up the baby when it is crying. There’s either something causing pain, which should be removed, or something in the baby’s mind that is causing its crying or fretting. Just saying “shush!” or commanding the baby to stop fussing doesn’t usually get very good results.

We reared four children, and long ago I learned the trick of quieting the baby by *getting its mind on something else*. Instead of commanding it to stop crying,

(Continued on page 22)



What Was the Apostolic

Did Jesus' apostles change the Sabbath to a different day? Did they preach to Jews on the Sabbath and to gentiles on Sunday? You need to know what the Bible really says.

By L. Leroy Neff

Most Bible students know that God's command to keep the Sabbath holy was included in the Ten Commandments as given to ancient Israel.

Fewer realize that the Sabbath was observed by the faithful even before that.

But, most realize that the Jews observed this same Sabbath during the time of Christ. They also

probably know that Jesus kept the Sabbath.

Beyond that, some people are in confusion as to what happened concerning the Sabbath.

Some believe that when Christ was crucified, all the commandments were done away with, but all were then reinstated with the exception of the Sabbath command. It is commonly believed that the Sabbath was then changed to Sunday.

Some believe that for decades, maybe longer, the apostles observed two days of worship each week — a Saturday Sabbath with

Jewish converts and Sunday with gentile converts. They believe that, over the years, the Sabbath observance gradually died out, until only Sunday observance was practiced.

We need to know the truth and follow it! We need to know what God preserved in His Word for His people concerning this subject, which is increasingly important as we near the end of this age.

What was Christ's practice?

Just what does the Bible say? First, we should establish what



Sabbath?

Christ did, and whether that should have any effect on what happened later.

The Gospels clearly show that Christ observed the Sabbath. Many of the events during His ministry are recorded as having taken place on the weekly Sabbath.

Jesus continually showed the religious authorities of His day that they did not properly observe the Sabbath, as they had added to the biblical command many dos and don'ts of which God did not approve.

One plain text shows that Christ's custom or regular habit was: "So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read"

(Luke 4:16). About 60 years later, John, who was apparently the only original apostle still living, made a significant statement: "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked" (I John 2:6). John made this statement in the context of discussing obedience to God's commandments (verses 3-5). One of these commands concerned the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11). To walk as Jesus walked means to live the kind of life He lived.

Peter made a similar statement about 30 years after Christ's death, when he said, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (I Pet. 2:21).

Christ had told both John and

Peter to teach all nations to observe all the things He had commanded them (Matt. 28:20). Christ did not say that these commands, which He had taught the apostles for the three and one half years of His ministry, were changed at the cross 40 days before the time He gave them this commission in Matthew 28:20!

Why would these two apostles make such statements so many years after Christ was crucified, if everything was changed at the cross? If everything had changed, then Christ's example should have been avoided, rather than followed.

Some have the false concept that Christ lived a perfect life in our stead instead of living a perfect life and setting us an example

Photo by Photofle Ltd.

to follow. But Jesus Himself said that His followers should follow His example: "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). The apostles John and Peter were only reaffirming and reiterating this principle in these texts.

Did the Church follow Christ's example?

With that introduction to the subject of the apostolic Sabbath, what do we find in the actual history and epistles of the apostles? Was there a change?

To find out, we will first check all those passages in the history, which is recorded in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, and then the passages in the epistles that comment on this or related subjects. Nine places in Acts and one place in Colossians mention the Sabbath. We will examine each text.

Before we start this examination of Acts, it would be helpful to know who wrote the book and to whom it was first addressed.

The book of Acts was written by Luke, who also wrote the gospel called by his name. It was addressed to Theophilus (Acts 1:1), who was probably gentile, as his name is Greek rather than Jewish. Possibly Theophilus was a patron who supported or assisted Luke during the lengthy research, correspondence, discussion and writing necessary to compile this official history of the early Church and apostles.

The book was written no earlier than 30 years after the crucifixion, and possibly even later. By the time of the writing, the Church was scattered far and wide and included many gentiles. The number of Jews as compared to the number of gentiles in the Church at that time cannot be ascertained now, but we know that the audience to whom Acts was directed included Theophilus and many other gentiles. Luke undoubtedly wrote the book in a manner so that both Jews and gentiles would understand the meaning.

The Sabbath is first referred to

in Acts 1:12: "Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey."

This is the only place in the Bible referring to a "Sabbath day's journey." Isn't it strange that Luke would use such a term at the beginning of his book to describe the distance between the Mount of Olives and the city of Jerusalem? Why didn't Luke use a better-known term of distance measurement such as the Latin *mile* or the *furlong* (Greek *stadion* or *stadios*), which was used elsewhere in the New Testament?

His readers or hearers must have been familiar with what a Sabbath day's journey was!

Today, most people have not heard of this term. It was devised by the rabbis in accordance with their interpretation of Exodus 16:29. Even though the distance was not given by God as a maximum distance to walk on the Sabbath, it obviously was a term well-known to Christians during this period. Apparently they understood this term better than they understood the geography of Jerusalem.

The second place the word *Sabbath* is used is Acts 13:14: "But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down."

Would this possibly be some new Christian Sabbath? Obviously not, because it was the same one observed by the Jews of the synagogue. During Paul's sermon on this day we read about the Sabbath again (verse 27). It is obviously the same seventh day of the week, commonly called Saturday, and not the first day of the week, Sunday.

In verse 42, after the sermon and after the Jews had left the synagogue, gentile converts or proselytes remained: "And when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath."

Here was Paul's golden oppor-

tunity! The gentiles were asking him to preach more about Christ. Paul could have told them that they would not have to wait until the next Sabbath, but that he would meet with them the very next day, Sunday. That is, he would logically have done so if what many people believe to be true were true.

Instead we read, "And the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God."

This city of Antioch in Pisidia (now Turkey) was certainly mostly composed of gentiles. Since the Jews of the city rejected Paul and his teaching, Paul said, "Behold, we turn to the Gentiles" (verse 46). From that time on, if there was any change in the day of worship, it surely should be evident.

During the great Jerusalem conference of about A.D. 49, we find another reference to the Sabbath (Acts 15:21). Obviously, the Sabbath referred to was the same one the Jews observed, not some new Christian Sabbath.

Several of these texts have mentioned the Sabbath in connection with Jewish synagogue services. Some believe that this is the only reason Paul had anything to do with the Sabbath. They believe he was observing the day just to reach Jews. If that is the reason, then we should expect a drastic change in this next text, as the synagogue is not involved.

First European Christian converted on a Sabbath

"And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there" (Acts 16:13).

As a result of this Sabbath day's activities by Paul, Lydia of Philippi (Greece), probably a gentile, became his first European convert. If Paul had gone the next day, Sunday, this devout woman undoubtedly would have been working at her business of selling Thyatiran purple.

The eighth place in the book of Acts is found in chapter 17, verse 2: "Then Paul, as his custom was,

went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures.” Here we again find Paul preaching the crucified Christ to Jews in their synagogue on the Sabbath.

The last place in Acts is found in chapter 18, where there are several points we should notice. The events mentioned occurred in Corinth, a large, cosmopolitan city, a sort of crossroads of the world at that time. Since Paul was also a tentmaker, he lived with Aquila and Priscilla, who were tentmakers. At times Paul apparently worked at this trade when he was in the process of evangelizing or raising up new churches and did not yet have financial support from a local church.

Under these circumstances we read, “And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks” (verse 4). Notice that he did this every Sabbath. He probably worked six days (the 40-hour, five-day work week is a recent invention) and preached on the Sabbath.

After he was rejected by the Jews, Paul stayed in the city for another year and a half, undoubtedly continuing his practice of preaching on the Sabbath and working during the week. Because of this and others’ efforts, the church at Corinth was raised up. Two epistles were later addressed to this church.

We have now seen the nine places in Acts where the word *Sabbath* is used. At no place is there any hint of a change from Sabbath to Sunday. The Sabbath observed by Paul and the gentiles was the same day as observed by the Jews.

What does Acts say about Sunday?

It may come as a surprise to some, but there is only one reference to Sunday in all of the book of Acts.

Before quoting and commenting on this text, we should first understand something about the beginning and ending of a day according to the Bible. It is quite

different from present practice.

Today we view days as beginning and ending at midnight, following the Roman practice. God, however, starts the day with the evening (Genesis 1), at sunset (Lev. 23:32). In quite a number of places, even in the gospels, it is clear that in Jewish practice the day began and ended at sunset.

The Bible never uses the word *Sunday*. Instead, the term *first day of the week* is used. But Sunday and the first day of the week

commonly misunderstood to refer to the Eucharist, the Lord’s Supper or the Mass. This text should show the error of that assumption.

In this passage we read that the disciples broke bread before midnight (verse 7), and again before the break of day before Paul’s departure (verse 11). They did not have two Lord’s Suppers between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. The latter verse shows that after midnight, but before daybreak, they



are not exactly the same period of time. The first day of the week, according to the way God reckons days, starts at sunset Saturday evening, while Sunday starts about six hours later, at midnight Saturday night, according to the Roman practice.

With that short background we are ready to see the only text in Acts that mentions the first day of the week: “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight” (Acts 20:7).

What does it mean to break bread?

We need to understand what the term *break bread* means. It is

Ruins of a synagogue at Capernaum, just north of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus entered a synagogue and taught here on the Sabbaths (Luke 4:31-32).

“had broken bread and eaten.”

It should be obvious that this term refers to eating a meal, not partaking of a small piece of hard bread in a “Lord’s Supper” service.

Now back to verse 7. The activities mentioned here during the first day of the week started at sunset, before midnight, and continued to daybreak, at which time Paul departed.

What period of time was this, according to the time commonly used today? It started at sunset Saturday night, continued to midnight Saturday night and ended at about daybreak Sunday morn-

(Continued on page 21)

FIVE WAYS TO LOVE YOUR MATE

Part Two

God intends your loving cup of marriage to be brimful and running over with joy and pleasure. Here's how it can be.

By Earl H. Williams

How pleasurable is your marriage? Are you enduring a living death when you could be enjoying the many pleasures God makes possible in marriage?

Last month you were asked to rate the "LQ" (love quotient) in your marriage. Then we explored two ways to love your mate — with *agape* and with the love of belonging, which together form the commitment phase of marriage.

If you have been faithfully giv-



ing these loves to your mate, you have raised your LQ by two points.

There are three additional ways to love your mate and increase your LQ. This phase of marriage could be called the pleasure phase. Let's look at these three ways.

Lovers cherish each other

The Greek word *phileo* describes the love of cherishing. This word is used in the New Testament to designate brotherly love, fondness, affection and cherishing. This is the third way to love your mate.

The apostle Paul clearly de-

scribed *phileo* when he wrote, "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Rom. 12:10).

Cherish is the word we will use to describe *phileo*. *Cherish* means "to value highly, to hold in high esteem."

Physically, your mate should be the most valuable person in your life, and spiritually, the most valuable after God. You treat things of value with lots of attention and tender, loving care. If you do that with inanimate objects, shouldn't your mate receive even more cherishing?

As with all the forms of love,

Photo by Hal Finch

you cannot get *phileo*. You can only give love. You can cherish your mate — here is how.

Cherishing is sharing. In Romans 12:10 Paul described the love of cherishing as brotherly love. Brothers share. In biblical times married couples affectionately referred to each other as “sister” or “brother” (S. of Sol. 4:10, 8:1).

How much sharing do you do with your mate? Do you share more with friends than with your own wife or husband? Your whole life should be shared together in a pleasurable way.

Sharing is doing things together. Invite your mate to share a hobby. Together you could collect stamps, refinish old furniture, exercise or any number of enjoyable hobbies and projects. The main objective is that you have fun while sharing together.

Sharing is communicating with your mate. Wives often complain, “My husband doesn’t talk to me!” while husbands lament, “All she does is nag, nag, nag!” Such statements are signs that neither partner is communicating effectively.

Effective communication does not start with either listening or speaking. Surprised? Perhaps you thought it was all in listening and speaking. True communication, like true love, starts with giving — outgoing concern.

You must seek to understand (this is the *give* way) rather than to be understood (the *get* way). The emphasis should be placed on your giving. Seek to understand what your mate wants to share rather than to “get” your mate to understand you. This approach to communication will open many new opportunities for sharing.

Cherishing is touching. How often during the day do you touch your mate? Only at bedtime? Could you and your husband or wife be called the “untouchables”?

If this is the case, your marriage is missing a great deal of joy. Couples often touch too much when they are dating, but

appear to be handcuffed after they marry. Lovers love to touch. It sends the message, “I love you.” It tells your mate: “You are important to me. I cherish you.” The lack of touching conveys the exact opposite meaning.

Reach out and touch your mate. Weave touching into the daily fabric of your life. Give your mate a warm hug in the morning. Sit close together at home or in the car. Reach over and lovingly hold hands. Think about times you can touch your mate; then touch, touch, touch to your mate’s pleasure.

King Midas’ touch turned everything to gold, but the loving touch turns everything to love. Give your mate a touch and you will give *phileo*, the love of cherishing.

Lovers are romantic

Eros is the word used in Greek literature to describe romantic love. It is the love about which ballads and poems are written. *Eros* is the love that can light up your marriage and take it from boring, black-and-white silence to technicolor 3D, 50-mm excitement, in Dolby sound. Here, then, is the fourth major area in loving your mate.

You may be thinking, Romance is just a Hollywood production — surely God doesn’t want us involved with that mushy stuff. Well, here’s news for you — good news for your marriage. *Eros* — romance — is real.

God inspired a whole book of the Bible, the Song of Solomon, to describe the proper kind of romantic love in marriage.

The Bible also describes the love Jacob had for Rachel: “So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed but a few days to him because of the love he had for her” (Gen. 29:20). Only romantic love could make seven years seem like a few days. Jacob was euphoric — on cloud nine. He was high on *eros*.

Yes, romantic love is real, and you really need to give it to your mate.

In many cases, wives have little trouble understanding *eros*. Quite often, they are starving for romance. Husbands tend to ignore romance, and do not fulfill their wives’ needs. Wives desire romance. Romance must come before sex.

God wants you to give the pleasure of romantic love to your mate. Are you a fighter or a lover? If you have not been giving romantic love, you probably have been fighting. Now is the time to become a lover, not a fighter.

There are three keys to developing romantic love: climate, imagination and surrender.

The climate for romantic love

The climate in which romance is given is important. *Eros* is emotional and sensitive and requires a warm climate to flourish.

Project a warm, positive attitude toward your mate. Ask God to help you remove any negative feelings you may have had in the past (Eph. 4:31-32). You are making a new beginning in your relationship. Your giving of kindness will go a long way in producing a warm climate for romance.

Decor, a lover’s grooming, is an important part of the romantic climate. Since *eros* is sensitive to sight and scent, your grooming or the lack of it can turn your mate on or off.

Be clean. If you want to get next to your mate, make sure you are tidy. Wives, keep your hair neat and pretty. Husbands, shave those whiskers. It is difficult to go cheek to cheek with a cactus. Exercise personal hygiene and also use a little cologne or perfume to spice things up.

Dress neatly, even around the house. Wives, dress as appealingly as possible for your husbands. Husbands, dress to please your wives. Find out what your mate likes to see you in; then aim to please.

The “look of love” produces a romantic climate. Solomon spoke of the power of romantic eye contact when he wrote, “You have

made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes" (S. of Sol. 4:9, NASB).

Couples who are in love look at one another often. It has been said that "the eye is the mirror of the soul." It is also true that the eye is the mirror of love. Create a romantic climate with your mate through eye contact. Look warmly into your mate's eyes when you talk. In public situations, occasionally look for your mate, catch his or her eye and smile or wink. You will be sending the message "I love you" from your eyes to your mate's heart.

Nothing warms the romantic climate like the giving of affection. Our generation has been stripped of its "natural affection" (II Tim. 3:3, Authorized Version). We have become cold and aloof, even in our marriages. Take your marriage out of the ice age by giving warm affection to your mate.

Kissing has always been a symbol of affection and warmth. You should make kissing the official form of greeting your mate.

A kiss in the morning is a pleasant way to start the day. Kisses throughout the day are an excellent way to sustain your mate's affection all day long. Set a goal to kiss your mate 20 times a day — morning, noon and night.

Solomon's bride desired his kisses: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth — for your love is better than wine" (S. of Sol. 1:2). As wine makes the heart merry, so do the kisses of romantic love.

Little things mean a lot. In no other area of marriage can so little mean so much as in romance. Have you stopped doing the little things? Now is the time to start anew.

Use imagination

Romance is all in the mind! The imaginings of your mind can be a powerful tool in becoming more romantic toward your mate. Solomon said we are what we think (Prov. 23:7). If you think

romantically you will act romantically.

Jesus Christ, of course, spoke of the sinful effects on the mind that lusting after a person who is not your mate will have (Matt. 5:28). But have you ever thought about the other side of this scripture? Usually for every good there is evil and for every evil there is good.

It is obviously wrong to have lustful thoughts about someone else's mate, but it is good to have thoughts of desire toward your own mate. God told Eve that her "desire" would be toward her husband, and the same applied to Adam (Gen. 3:16).

Solomon instructs us to use our minds in this way: "Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well. . . . As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love" (Prov. 5:15, 19).

Even when your mate is out of sight, never let him or her be out of mind. Use your heart and imagination to create positive, pleasing thoughts about your mate (Phil. 4:8).

Think about your mate's attractive qualities. Hear his or her warm and reassuring voice. See that beautiful smile. Take mental stock of your mate's inner and outer beauty.

Proverbs 29:18, AV, says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." We can also say that where there is no vision, there is no romance.

Launch yourself into the future through your imagination. Think about how you will be romantic with your mate when you are together again. Visualize warm and thrilling romantic situations where you are actively giving love to your mate.

If you use your mind and imagination, your thoughts will reinforce your feelings and actions of romantic love.

Surrender

Surrender is another key to

developing romantic love. You must surrender and give this type of love to your mate.

We have seen that *eros* — romantic love — is real, and the need for it to be revived in your marriage has been made clear. You have been equipped with the principles and applications of romantic love. Now it is up to you.

Do not grieve the spirit of *eros*. Do not withhold the romantic love your mate so desperately needs from you.

Add another point to your LQ. Surrender and let love flow!

Lovers are lovers

The fifth way to love your mate is with sexual love.

How is your love life? God intended it to be pleasurable. You and your mate have the capacity to reach that high level of sexual enjoyment. Even if your sex life has been unfulfilling, you can change it for the better.

The place to start improving your sex life is with the application and giving of the other four loves. Sexual love has been placed last in this series of points because its success is dependent on the other areas. If you are to improve your sex life, first improve the rest of your marriage.

The prudish, Victorian approach to sex as being one of the necessary evils of life is wrong. The modern new morality is also wrong. To properly give sexual love to your mate, you need God's positive attitude toward sex.

God created sex, and He says that it is good in marriage (Gen. 1:27-28, 31).

God inspired Paul to write, "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4).

For "bed" Paul used the Greek word *koite*, which literally means cohabitation or coitus. The translators of the Authorized Version of the Bible were ashamed to use the word *coitus*, so they used *bed*,

(Continued on page 22)



You Can Understand Bible Prophecy!

What is prophecy? Why is it recorded in the Bible? How can we understand it?

By Raymond F. McNair

Everyone is interested in the future.

We want to know if it is going to rain, so we can take our umbrellas when we go out. Investors want to know what is going to happen on the stock market. Sports fans want to know whether their favorite teams will win the championships. Parents want to know how their children will turn out when they grow up.

And what about the big issues on the world scene today?

Scientists want to know how much longer our polluted environment can support life on earth. National leaders want to know if their governmental policies will produce progress or more problems. People in general want to know whether the world will at last find peace, or whether devastating hydrogen-bomb and chemical warfare will wipe all life from the earth!

Futurists postulate. Psychics have visions. Crystal-ball gazers and fortune tellers make predictions. But is there any one perfectly authoritative source of knowledge about the future?

Yes. Bible prophecy!

What is Bible prophecy? It is history written in advance. The Bible clearly forecast many of history's major events long before

Various symbols, such as the beasts of Daniel and Revelation, convey different meanings in Bible prophecy.

Illustrations by C. Winston Taylor

they happened. And the Scriptures plainly show as well that many cataclysmic events will occur in this very age!

About one third of the Bible is prophecy, and most of that prophecy pertains to this end time. Those who believe God's prophecies can take appropriate action and not be caught in the horrors soon to come to pass.

We need to examine the vital keys that unlock Bible prophecy. How can we know the meaning of these prophecies whose fulfillment will soon shake this whole earth?

The sure word of prophecy

When rightly understood and interpreted, Bible prophecy is an infallible guide to the future.

"We also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place . . . knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved [inspired] by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:19-21).

Note these important points:

- The Bible reveals God's "sure word of prophecy." God designed Bible prophecy to shine as a light, so we are not left in darkness about what is going to happen.

- No prophecy is of any private interpretation. What does this mean? First, no human should interpret the Word of God. Only God Almighty, who inspired the Bible, knows how to interpret — how to understand and explain — His Word.

Second, Bible verses must be coupled with each other to be properly understood. Everything the Bible says on any one subject must be viewed together to see the whole meaning.

- Bible prophecies were not the result of mere human thoughts or impulses. God directly moved or

inspired His prophets with His Holy Spirit.

God the great Revealer

God Almighty is not only the Creator and Ruler of the entire universe, but He is also the great Educator — the great Revealer. He and He alone can truly comprehend what will happen in this



God Almighty is . . . the great Educator — the great Revealer. He and He alone can truly comprehend what will happen in this planet's climactic future.

planet's climactic future.

All knowledge and understanding (including that of future events) resides with God: "Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite" (Ps. 147:5).

But how does God today reveal Himself to mankind? In the past, He revealed Himself through His holy prophets. Today He reveals future events through the prophecies of His written Word, the Bible. He enlightens His true servants so they can spread the news of coming events.

"Surely the Lord God does nothing [will not allow any major calamity to befall this earth], unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Moffatt translates this verse: "The Lord Eternal never does anything without telling his servants the prophets."

Many professing Christians fail to comprehend the simple fact that since God inspired His holy men to write the Bible, only He can truly understand, inter-

pret and reveal the truth about what they recorded.

This fact was illustrated in the experience of the prophet Daniel. God revealed various dreams and visions to Daniel, but told him:

"'But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase'" (Dan. 12:4).

Daniel says: "Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, 'My lord, what shall be the end of these things?' And he said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end'" (verses 8-9). Daniel recorded many marvelous prophecies, but did not understand what he wrote. God did not intend him to! But God does intend for us today, living in "the time of the end," to understand.

The last book of the New Testament, Revelation, is not "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," as many Bibles erroneously entitle it. The very first verse clearly reveals who inspired this book: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God [the Father] gave Him to show His servants — things which must shortly take place" (Rev. 1:1).

Jesus Christ is the Revelator, not John. Christ promised to show John and the other apostles "things to come" through the Holy Spirit they received on the day of Pentecost (John 16:13).

Though the book of Revelation remains a complete mystery to most, in that book (and in other books of the Bible) God reveals many detailed prophecies. He wants His people to understand those prophecies — that's why He called the entire book "The Revelation."

It is not God's will that mankind be ignorant of important events about to befall the earth. Ominous signs show that this world is hurtling toward a horrible catastrophe, but most people are oblivious to this. They prefer

to “eat, drink and be merry — for tomorrow we die”!

What, then, are the vital keys that will enable us to discern the signs of the times? How can we come to really understand the prophecies of the Bible?

Reverence God and His Word

The most basic key to understanding Bible prophecy is to reverence God and His Word, the Bible. Not many today really stand in awe of the great God and His holy Book.

God says, “But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isa. 66:2).

King David, a man after God’s own heart, said, “Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him” (Ps. 33:8). And, “My heart stands in awe of Your word” (Ps. 119:161). Furthermore, David said, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding [this includes understanding Bible prophecy] have all those who do His commandments” (Ps. 111:10).

We previously noted that the prophet Daniel was told to “shut up the words” and “seal the book” of his prophecies until “the time of the end.”

But when “the time of the end” arrived, it was not everyone who would understand: “Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand” (Dan. 12:10).

God will reveal His Word only to those who reverence Him — those who stand in awe of Him and the Bible.

Bible interprets itself

Another important key to understanding Bible prophecy is to remember that “no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation” (II Pet. 1:20). Only by letting God interpret His

Word — only by “rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15) — can we ever know what the prophecies mean.

The Bible was written in such a way that it is like a picture puzzle. All of a picture puzzle’s pieces must be put together, and in the right way, to reveal the picture. Likewise, we must get all



Ominous signs show that this world is hurtling toward . . . catastrophe, but most people are oblivious . . . They prefer to “eat, drink and be merry.”

the verses in the Bible and put them together in order to fully understand any particular passage in the Bible.

In other words, no man should privately interpret God’s Word. He should let it interpret itself by taking all of the verses on any subject and putting them together, “here a little, there a little” (Isa. 28:10-13).

Bible symbolism

Another important key needed to unlock Bible prophecy is an understanding of Bible symbolism. Many woefully misunderstand the Bible because they don’t know when the Bible is speaking literally and when it is speaking symbolically. When symbols are used, many misunderstand because they don’t let God interpret His own symbols.

What does a “woman” symbolize in Bible prophecy? In Revelation 17 we read of a “woman” called “the great whore” (verse 1). What does this “woman” depict in symbol?

Paul reveals that just as a husband is to love his wife, so “Christ also loved the church. . . . This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the [true] church” (Eph. 5:25-32).

This virgin Church is to be “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle . . . but that it should be holy and without blemish” (verse 27). This Church is also referred to in Revelation 19:

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give Him glory: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (verse 7).

Clearly, the true Church of God is described as a virgin woman to be married to Christ at His Second Coming.

Now we can begin to see the identity of the “woman” or “great whore” of Revelation 17. There are many false churches masquerading as Christ’s churches, but there is only one true Church — only “one

body” [of Christ] (Eph. 4:4).

Many do not realize that there are “false apostles” (II Cor. 11:13). “And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his [Satan’s] ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness” (verses 14-15).

Do Satan’s ministers have their own churches? Yes!

Revelation 17 depicts the whole false church system Satan has devised in order to deceive the whole world (Rev. 12:9). The “great whore” of Revelation 17 refers to a great church that has daughter churches, for she is called “THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS” (verse 5).

Even secular sources employ symbols similar to the Bible’s, as revealed by this quote from the *Encyclopedia Americana*: “While dangers were rife at Rome, a band of Roman missionaries carried Christianity to the distant English, and in England was founded a Church which owes its

existence to the zeal of the Roman bishop (the Pope). Success beyond all that he could have hoped for attended Gregory's pious enterprise. The English Church spread and flourished, a dutiful daughter of her mother-church of Rome" (article, "Papacy").

When the Bible uses a "woman" in symbol, it refers to a church. The true Church of God is compared to a virgin bride who will marry Christ, but the false church is called "the great harlot" and her daughter churches are called "harlots" (Rev. 17:1, 5).

The "woman" (false church) sits upon "many waters" (Rev. 17:1). What do the "many waters" represent? "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are [represent] peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues" (verse 15).

Revelation 12:15 informs us that the serpent (Satan — verse 9) sends out "water like a flood after the woman [the true church]" to try to destroy her. What does the "flood" depict in that verse?

This "flood" refers to peoples massed into an army; Jeremiah 46 uses this same symbolism. "The army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt" (verse 2) would come up like a flood of water: "Who is this coming up like a flood, whose waters move like the rivers? Egypt rises up like a flood" (verses 7-8).

Important Bible symbols

The Bible uses many different symbols to convey various meanings. Here are a few:

Serpent and *dragon* are symbols for "the Devil, and Satan" (Rev. 12:3, 9).

Stars are often used to symbolize angels: "The seven stars are [represent] the angels" (Rev. 1:20). (See also Job 38:7, where *stars* refers to the holy angels, and Revelation 12:4, where the term *stars* represents the fallen angels or demons.)

Candlesticks or *lampstands*

represent churches: "And the seven lampstands [candlesticks — Authorized Version]... are the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20).

Beasts often symbolize rapacious nations or kingdoms:

"And four great beasts came up from the sea... The first was like a lion... And suddenly another beast, a second, like a



Another important key... is an understanding of Bible symbolism... many misunderstand because they don't let God interpret His own symbols.

bear... and there was another, like a leopard... After this I saw... a fourth beast... Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which arise out of the earth" (Dan. 7:3-7, 17).

These four beasts also represent the four kingdoms these four kings ruled over: "The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth" (verse 23). (See also Daniel 8:3-10, 20-22 and Revelation 13:1-11, 14:9, 19:19-20.)

Mountains are often symbolic of nations in Bible prophecy: "'And I will repay Babylon and... Chaldea for all the evil they have done... ' says the Lord. 'Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain,' says the Lord" (Jer. 51:24-25).

Also in the book of Daniel we read, "the stone [Christ] that struck the image [representing four kingdoms] became a great mountain [kingdom] and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35). This represents the Kingdom of God, which Christ will establish at His Second Coming (see also

verses 36-45). "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains [big nations], and shall be exalted above the hills [smaller nations]" (Isa. 2:2).

Locusts are used symbolically to represent armies possessing modern military weaponry. "Then out of the smoke locusts came... And the shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads were crowns [or helmets] of something like gold... They had hair like women's hair..."

"And they had breastplates, like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails... And they had a king over them... whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon [destroyer]" (Rev. 9:3, 7-11).

What are these locusts? They symbolize some kind of military forces. They are armor plated, have "wings," make a great roar like that of modern jet engines ("like... horses running into battle") and have "stings in their tails" (perhaps representing the destructive firepower of modern weaponry).

Interestingly, during World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill used this same figure of speech ("locusts") to describe Hitler's three-million-man army as it invaded Russia June 22, 1942:

"I see advancing in hideous onslaught the Nazi war machine, with its clanking, heel-clicking, dandified Prussian officers, its crafty expert agents fresh from the cowering and tying down of a dozen countries. I see also the dull, drilled, docile, brutish masses of the Hun [German] soldiery plodding on like a swarm of crawling locusts." Winston

Churchill used the term *locusts* to describe the Nazi war machine, just as John had used similar imagery approximately 2,000 years earlier!

Prophetic time lapses

Understanding prophetic time lapses also helps illuminate prophecy.

Notice, for example, Isaiah 61. The first three verses of this chapter refer to Christ's commission during His first coming to this earth. But the latter verses of this chapter refer to events yet to be fulfilled, after His glorious Second Coming.

"So He [Christ] came to Nazareth. . . and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' Then he closed the book" (Luke 4:16-20).

Why did Christ stop reading in the very middle of the second verse of Isaiah 61?

He did not quote the rest of the second verse because that part of the verse was to be fulfilled about 2,000 years later, after His spectacular Second Coming to this earth to rule all nations as King of kings and Lord of lords. In other words, there was to be a prophetic time lapse of about 2,000 years before the last part of Isaiah 61:2 was fulfilled.

On the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31, the apostle Peter quoted from Joel 2:

"But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; your sons

and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My servants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The



The Bible mentions many of the modern nations, but generally does not use the modern names of those nations. Instead it uses their ancient, biblical names.

sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and notable day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass, that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:16-21).

Even though Peter quoted this entire section of Joel, it is clear that the miraculous phenomenon mentioned in Acts 2 only fulfilled the section of Joel's prophecy up to and including the phrase "I will pour out My Spirit in those days" in verse 18.

The events mentioned in Acts 2 did not include the prophetic fulfillment of verses 19 and 20, which mention "wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke."

There was to be a 2,000-year prophetic time lapse between the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in A.D. 31 and the terrible events of the soon-coming Day of the Lord, which will be a time of blood, fire and smoke, the sun being turned into darkness.

God has given many prophecies about various nations on this earth today. But why? So they, too, can hear and, if willing, heed and therefore escape the prophesied crises about to occur.

But most people on this earth do not grasp the meaning of many Bible prophecies (those directed against various nations) simply because they either misunderstand or reject another vital key of prophecy — the biblical identities of the various nations.

Identities of nations

The Bible mentions many of the modern nations, but generally does not use the modern names of those nations. Instead it uses their ancient, biblical names.

For instance, the English-speaking nations of this earth are repeatedly mentioned in Bible prophecy, but not under such names as Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia or New Zealand. Where are the

English-speaking, Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples mentioned in Bible prophecy? For a complete biblical explanation of the ancient origins of these peoples, request a free copy of our book, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.

Without this vital prophetic key, the biblical identity of the English-speaking peoples is lost.

Apply these keys

Only the upright in heart will be able to understand Bible prophecy: "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand" (Dan. 12:10).

If you will diligently apply these vital keys, then you, too, can understand the important prophecies being fulfilled now and those that will be fulfilled in the very near future.

You need to grasp the truths contained in biblical prophecy. By understanding and heeding these important prophecies, you may save yourself and your family from impending calamity! □

The Secret of Being a Good Provider

By David J. Albert

These are tough times. Even if one is blessed to have a good job — and many are not — it is still hard to make ends meet and properly provide for one's family.

I know because, like a great many of you, I have a family to provide for, including teenage daughters with constant needs. Especially, it seems, in the area of clothing!

They need, for instance, different types of clothing for different occasions, activities and seasons. And their needs are real, not just imaginary. They genuinely *need* — not just want or “think it would be nice to have” — regular, adequate clothing, food and shelter.

And I am the one God holds responsible to meet those needs.

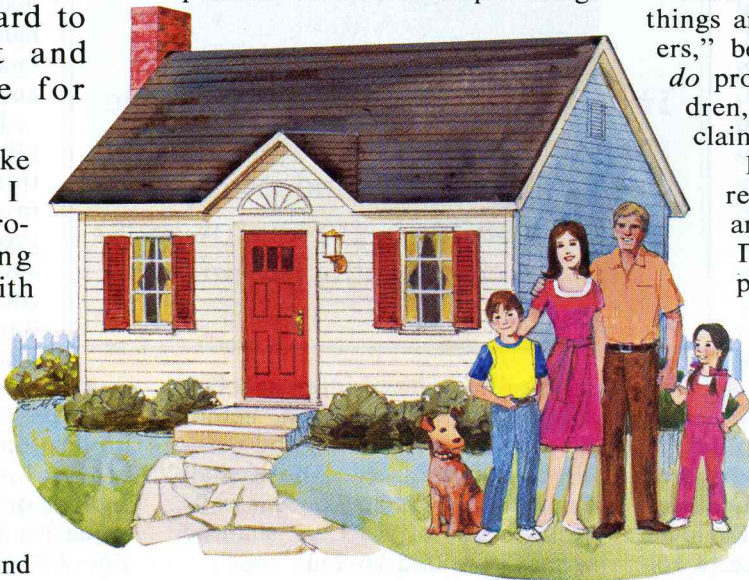
Providing is not optional

It seems amusing now in retrospect, but when the children were small, I'm afraid I thought that providing them an article of clothing was something akin to giving them a gift — something I did out of the goodness of my heart, a special act of kindness.

In time, like most fathers, I have learned that providing isn't occasional, it's continual. And providing isn't optional, it's

required! God's Word makes that emphatically clear.

Turn in your own Bible to I Timothy 5:8 and read God's plain instruction about providing:



“But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

Yes, providing is a plain requirement of Christian parenting. You cannot fail to provide for your family and claim to be a Christian.

A sobering responsibility

God knows, just as every wise parent knows, the terrible consequences of parental neglect: improper diet, inadequate wardrobe, substandard housing.

Add up these basic factors and include such things as a good education, balanced recreation and instruction in spiritual values,

and you have the forces that either enhance a child's long-term success or impede how far he will go in life.

Christians who fail to do these things are “worse than unbelievers,” because many unbelievers *do* provide well for their children, though they make no claim to Christianity.

Providing is a sobering responsibility, when fully and properly understood. To be unable to do so properly can be a course of deep discouragement and frustration.

How can you provide well for your family in these difficult times? You don't need to be discouraged, because there is a way you can meet this challenging Christian duty.

God our provider

With the nature and importance of the task of providing well in mind, turn now to Matthew 6 and see how all of this applies in our relationship with God.

In verses 25 to 30, Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, explains that God is the great provider even for little birds like sparrows, and clothes lilies more beautifully than kings are arrayed. Then Jesus helps us put things in proper perspective by asking, “Will He [the Father] not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”

Think about it. Will a loving God provide for dumb beasts whose only future is to return to

Illustration by Ron McKee

the dust from which they came, and yet neglect to care for His own begotten children who are destined to live forever in His Kingdom? Of course not!

Jesus knew well what we as humans sometimes have to learn from our own experience with the great God — namely, that He is a good provider for His children. As with us, so with Him, He must provide!

Have you ever thought of it that way? God doesn't require anything of us in this regard that He isn't prepared to do Himself.

Notice further, in verse 32, that like any good provider, God knows our needs. And He knows even before we ask (verse 8)! That is, God anticipates and expects our needs even before we do. He is a deeply involved parent who stands ready to meet our every need.

Of course, we have our own responsibility in having our needs met by God. In verse 33, Jesus explained that to qualify for these blessings, we must do our part by seeking first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness.

God is eager to bless us if we are coming into closer conformity to His will and His ways, as expressed by all of His commandments and laws. God cannot and will not bless us in disobedience and sin (Jas. 4:3).

The apostle John was inspired to write, "And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (I John 3:22).

This implies that we must be making diligent efforts in all areas of our lives, seeking to be industrious, hard-working and productive. Christ did not mean by these promises that all we have to do is sit back and let God do it all without any effort on our part. But once we are yielded and submissive to God's will, then these magnificent promises all begin to operate in our lives.

We also need to realize that these are times when God allows trials of our faith to teach us les-

sons. The fact that we may suffer such trials in no way nullifies God's promises.

God has promised to supply our needs, not all of our wants, and there are times when God may feel it is best for our character to suffer certain hardships to test and strengthen our character. Even God's own Son was not without such trials and suffering (Heb. 5:8, 12:2-6).

No parental neglect with God

Continue reading in chapter 7 of Matthew, and you will notice that this theme of God's providence is a main message of what is called the Sermon on the Mount, the central core of Jesus' teaching and instruction.

Beginning in verse 7, Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Then, verse 8, "For everyone who asks receives." Can we believe that in faith?

Now notice how Jesus reasoned from the human example we have been examining to explain the spiritual relationship with God: "What man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (Matt. 7:9-11).

Especially reflect on that phrase "how much more"! God is a better provider than even the best human parent. This key phrase is repeated again in Luke 11:13: "How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

God knows we have daily physical needs. Christ told us to ask God, "Give us day by day our daily bread" (Luke 11:3). We also have daily spiritual needs, such as the need for God's Holy Spirit. And God stands ready and willing to meet both types of needs. God won't let you starve to

death physically or spiritually! He'll never be guilty of parental neglect or abandonment.

David said in Psalm 37:25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread." No, God's people are not reduced to begging or asking for a handout in a soup line.

And the apostle Paul told the Philippians, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

God's servants today can just as boldly and confidently tell you the same thing based on their experiences. God will supply your needs as you look to Him in faith and yield your life more to His ways (Matt. 6:33).

The secret of providing

This, then, is the secret of being a Christian provider — the fact that God will provide for you so that you can provide for those under your charge. You can look to God just as they look to you. You can ask Him in faith to help you be a good provider, and He will supply all your need and theirs. He will not fail you or your dependents.

Thus there is no need for discouragement or doubt even in troubled times. David said, "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied" (Ps. 37:19). Our God will see us through.

So when you are faced with pressing and urgent necessities of daily living, go boldly, in confidence, to your heavenly Father and ask Him in faith to provide what you need. If you are a provider yourself of the needs of others, go to your Father and ask Him to help you fulfill this important Christian responsibility.

If you are willing to do so for your children, how much more is your heavenly Father ready, willing and powerfully able to meet your needs? Our God is a good provider! □

Why have the psalms of King David of ancient Israel consoled and elated thousands of people through the centuries?

Psalm 72:20 tells us: These scriptures record David's intensely fervent prayers!

David's psalms are enduring literary masterpieces, filled with David's moving, memorable statements to and about God: "The Lord is my shepherd" (Ps. 23:1). "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Ps. 19:1). "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Ps. 33:12).

Yet why do some consider these ageless classics irrelevant today? After all, David's prayers are no mere empty speculations of an armchair theologian. Those who've studied them know better.

The psalms of David unashamedly expose a real man's man, an earnest soldier-poet, a courageous giant-killer, a passionate leader who was plunged repeatedly into difficulties and disappointments (Ps. 18:4-5).

The psalms reveal a lion-hearted leader who, harried by painful physical and emotional distress, nevertheless turned setbacks into songs of praise to his Creator, emotion-etched expressions of faith in God's ultimate deliverance (Ps. 27:1).

We, too, can learn to pray as David prayed (Rom. 15:4) — to become, as he was, a person after God's own heart (Acts 13:22)!

David was tested

David knew bitter testing (Ps. 22:14). Here was a man projected into a life of turmoil, harrowing escapes, chilling scrapes with death and near-fatal encounters. He was a fugitive king, a bandit leader (I Sam. 22:2), a roamer of the badlands. It was undeserved, unfair and there wasn't a thing he could do about it.

This probing of his innermost character forced David to his

Vital Keys to Fervent Prayer

*Here's how your prayers
can be propelled by
urgency and zeal,
drawing you close to
God and producing
dramatic results
in your life!*

By K. Neil Earle

knees often (Ps. 55:17). David endured through thick and thin. He persevered tenaciously in prayer because he knew he must — he knew that God was, literally, his only hope (Ps. 56:1).

No false humility permeated David's prayers, no self-righteous pretense. God allowed His servant to fall into life-threatening situations again and again. David's needs were urgent and real! Utter sincerity spilled out as he pleaded for God's intervention:

"Make haste, O God, to deliver me! Make haste to help me, O Lord! . . . Let them be turned back because of their shame, who say, 'Aha, aha!' ["We have him now!"] . . . But I am poor and needy; make haste to me, O God! You are my help and my deliver-

er; O Lord, do not delay" (Ps. 70:1, 3, 5).

Do we look to man?

Why don't people pray like that today? Haven't we been subtly brainwashed by generations of so-called progress to seek man's help, not God's?

Miracle drugs, heart transplants, laser surgery, central heating and air conditioning, instant foods, womb-to-tomb socialism — all the amazing developments of the 20th century have bewitched us with man's powers and ingenuity (Jer. 17:5). We look to man to deliver us (Ps. 118:8).

How tragic! Even in the face of an ominously darkening world situation, mankind is still too trusting in human prowess to fall to its knees and supplicate the God of David for help (Rev. 9:21).

In fact, the last era of God's Church in this age is prophesied to fall victim to this tragic shortsightedness, the spiritual blindness that pushes God's awesome power to the back of the mind (Rev. 3:14-17).

Many of us in God's Church now are blessed with incredible affluence compared to the world average. Yet God warns, "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them" (Prov. 1:32, Authorized Version). No wonder

God allows trials, tests and hazards to befall even His people.

David understood: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all" (Ps. 34:19).

How may we of this generation recapture David's sense of urgent need, the fervency to power our prayers with zeal?

"Ask, and it will be given"

Try the self-imposed crisis of fasting. Fasting hurts (Lev. 23:27). It takes stamina and dedication. We are more aware that all power traces back to God. Solid time spent in meditating on these basics stimulates us to seek the God who sustains the whole universe (Heb. 1:3).

Studying Bible prophecy is

another way to rekindle a sense of urgency. Such descriptive passages as Deuteronomy 28:67, Ezekiel 5:12 and Revelation 16:20 can alarm us to the horrifying fate a heedless world is speeding toward.

This dying civilization's only hope is the good news of the world tomorrow. Our calling is to proclaim this to the nations (Matt. 24:14). We need to ask God, in fervent prayer, to mold us as future kings and priests so we can aid in the great reconstruction He is planning (Luke 21:36).

Reports of people in difficult circumstances also help jar complacency. We are reminded that "the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now" (Rom. 8:22).

Perhaps now we can deeply grasp why God allows trials — why our healing is sometimes delayed — why those suffering for years with diseases serve a vital role inside the Body of Christ (I Cor. 12:26).

Yes, sudden emergencies and fatal catastrophes sometimes overtake God's people. It spurs prayer and fasting, fervent spiritual wrestling on our knees, and it is this that slowly changes us into God's own image (Col. 4:12).

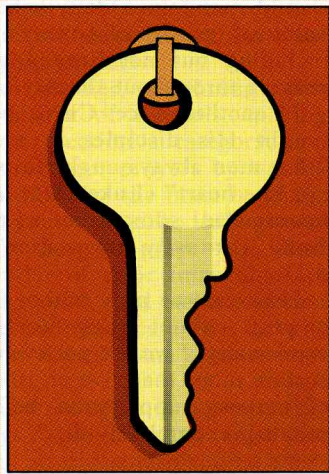
Sometimes people ask, "Why do we have to beseech God if He knows everything in advance?"

Remember, only God can give us what we all ultimately need: eternal life in spirit bodies (I Cor. 15:44), supernatural protection from the evils and accidents that could afflict us, miraculous healing when our loved ones are sick, the molding of our attitudes to bring them in line with God's happy and positive outlook, the special help to aid in "bringing every thought into captivity" (II Cor. 10:5), the peace of mind to break the shackles of discouragement and depression.

Is anything else more important? Yet why should God give us aid and support if we don't ask Him diligently (Heb. 11:6)?

Notice Luke 11:9-12: "And I

God's Work can be hindered by lack of interceding, believing prayer. Whenever God's people petition for divine help in time of desperate need, stand back! Colossal events transpire . . .



say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?"

But what if he asks for a scorpion, or doesn't ask at all? Why would any father feel obligated if a child doesn't politely but correctly press home a request?

Prayer is one of the main tools to help build God's character within us. If God does everything for us without our active cooperation,

then are we not denied free moral agency, no longer co-workers with God (I Cor. 3:9)?

We can change God's mind

Never underestimate the importance of prayer. We can change God's mind. Moses did (Ex. 32:9-14). So did Hezekiah (II Kings 20:5) and Ahab (I Kings 21:29).

Here's how it works: It is futile to petition God to do something inconsistent with His nature or against His will (Num. 23:19). He cannot be dissuaded from His overall purposes — the 7,000-year plan, the return of Christ, the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (Lev. 26).

Yet there are many areas within the parameters of God's plan where His mind is not fully settled (I Kings 22:20). Here we may exercise free choice, give suggestions, outline alternate plans and proposals to God Himself, press home specific needs.

Sound incredible? Not at all. Amos did it. Notice an important encounter between the fiery prophet and the great God he served. The background? God was trying to decide how best to punish Israel. He reacted to the advice of this dedicated man of God. Notice it in Amos 7:1-6:

"Thus the Lord God showed me: Behold, He formed locust swarms . . . And so it was, when they had finished eating the grass of the land, that I said: 'O Lord God, forgive, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, for he is small!' So the Lord relented concerning this. 'It shall not be,' said the Lord. Thus the Lord God showed me: Behold, the Lord God called for conflict by fire, and it consumed the great deep and devoured the territory. Then I said: 'O Lord God, cease, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, for he is small!' So the Lord relented concerning this. 'This also shall not be,' said the Lord God."

Amazing, isn't it? Amos' tender

concern changed God's mind twice and prevented great calamities from befalling Israel.

Finally, in Amos 7:8, God settled in His mind the final decision. Yet Amos had an influence, possibly a decisive one. God promised that Israel would revive after a horrible captivity (Amos 9:8).

The lesson is obvious. God

promises us healing, yet the timing depends upon God's purposes in our lives and our urgent persevering and wrestling (Luke 18:1).

God opens doors of broadcasting and television, by which this Work fulfills its commission to preach the Gospel to the world (Matt. 24:14). But the number

and effectiveness of the outlets may be affected by our burning interest to call God's attention to special needs in our area (Jas. 4:2).

It's the same with new co-workers and donors responding to the Work. God views prayer as part of our responsibility to beseech Him to more effectively

How to Plan Your Prayers

"What am I going to pray to God about?"

Have you ever asked yourself this question? You probably have, for most Christians have faced this problem at one time or another. Many people truly desire to pray, and they even set aside time to get on their knees before God. But they have a problem.

Although they start their prayers out well enough — the words literally pour out to God in heartfelt emotion — the torrent turns into a trickle in a few fleeting minutes. Although their hearts tell them to go on, their minds simply cannot think of things to say!

But don't despair if this happens to you. You are not alone in this dilemma. Even Christ's own disciples implored their Master, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

We all need to be taught how to pray, for the ability to pray is not instinctive. And in the case of a person who wants to pray but can't think of things to say, we have a perfect example of where, as Christ said in Matthew 26:41, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

But the weakness of our flesh is no excuse, in God's sight, to give up the battle for a better prayer life. No, we are com-

By Bernard W. Schnippert

manded instead to "pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17). That is, we should maintain a daily schedule or habit of good, solid praying time, including but not limited to silent prayers throughout the day.

In another place, Christ pointedly taught His disciples in a parable "that men always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1). And the apostle Paul admonishes us to "continue earnestly in prayer" (Col. 4:2).

How can we pray without ceasing or pray without losing heart or pray continually if we are not even able to sustain more than five or 10 minutes of earnest supplication before our minds go completely dry?

Make a prayer list

The problem is simple to define. We are not talking here about those "Christians" who ignore prayer altogether or really don't try at all. And we are not even addressing the mechanics of how to pray, such as what the best position is. No, we are talking about the simple problem of trying to pray

and yet not being able to think of any-

thing to say. And the solution is also a simple one, but one ignored by many: Ponder what to pray about ahead of time and then make a prayer list.

That's correct. Write down what you intend to pray about as you see a need or learn about a problem. Put your list in front of you when your prayer time comes. Even set aside time specifically to think of things to pray about.

But don't be haphazard. This will take some thought. Your prayers are important to you and to God, and they deserve to be properly planned.

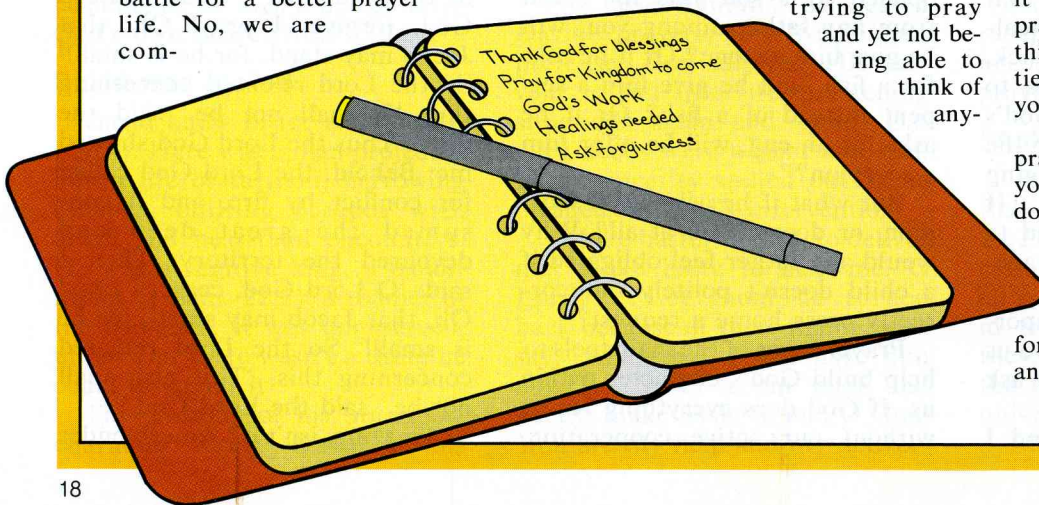
You wouldn't go before a king or ruler, or even your boss, without at least some mental preparation about what you were going to say. And, you wouldn't step up in front of an audience and speak to them for an hour without notes to remind you of your specific purpose and the points you wanted to cover.

Neither should you go before God without planning your prayer time in advance.

Making a prayer list will force you to think about your needs and the needs of others or of God's Work and God's Church. This is good because it means you will pray, when the prayer time arrives, about important things, and not merely about trivialities that drift across your mind while you're on your knees.

Also, it means you will not waste prayer time thinking through what you want to pray about and what you don't, for the list will serve as an automatic memory about who or what needs your prayers. (Remember the person you saw last week who needed prayers for an illness? What was his name, anyway?)

Also, by properly using your



bless His own Work (Jer. 48:10).

God's Work can be hindered by lack of interceding, believing prayer. Scripture is eminently clear: Whenever God's people are seriously and earnestly motivated to petition for divine help in time of desperate need, stand back! Colossal events transpire: "They

raised their voice to God with one accord and said: 'Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them . . . Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may

be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.' And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:24, 29:31).

There is fervency. There is

prayer list, you will be able to give proper priority to the items you need to pray about, praying about the most important things first, or the longest, or the greatest number of days.

But you will only realize these advantages of having a prayer list if you make your prayer list properly. Here are some suggestions.

Follow Christ's sample

The sample prayer given by Christ in Matthew 6:9-13 is, in a sense, an outline of how we should pray. That is, it lists the general subject areas our prayers should cover, and in the general order of priority we should follow. Therefore, in making a prayer list, you may wish to divide your sheet of paper into sections that correspond to Christ's sample prayer.

Of course, you should not view this prayer narrowly, but rather as including the broad areas you want to cover. Certainly, there is a place in your prayers for any item about which you want to pray.

Looking at Christ's prayer in Matthew 6, for example, we find that first He addressed God ("Our Father" — verse 9). You may want to set aside a small section of your prayer list to note different proper ways to address God.

Next, Christ praised God with the comment, "Hallowed be Your name." Clearly, part of our prayer time should be devoted to praising God for His greatness and goodness.

What do you have to praise God for? Instead of trying to answer that question while you are praying, sit down now and write as many things as you can think of for which you can and should praise your Creator. Include these on your list.

Next, Christ instructed us to pray that God's Kingdom would come (verse 10). Here is the place where you can pray about God's Work on earth.

Don't write down just "pray about the Work," though. Instead, write

down Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong's name and the names of God's ministers who have key responsibilities. Also, write down the locations of the worldwide offices and the various departments at headquarters in Pasadena, such as Postal, Editorial and the Television and Radio areas.

You should make it a challenge to write down as many things as possible in this section of your prayer list, because this should be an important part of your prayers.

In like manner, go through this sample prayer of Christ's, making each major section a category, and categorizing your prayers by writing them down under the main heading.

When you're done, go through and make sure that your prayers are listed in the order of their importance to God and to you. And make sure that you hit every major category, for why leave God out of some area of your life?

Special time spent in not only listing things to pray about, but also giving them priority and planning them will go far toward your goal of organizing your prayers to be the most effective they can be.

Some who use a prayer list have found ways to improve even further upon the above system.

Some Christians, for example, instead of using just a sheet of paper divided into sections for their prayer list, use a bound notebook with a separate page for each category. Others go a step further and use a loose-leaf notebook, so they can add or remove items as necessary. Some use note cards instead of paper or notebooks.

An advantage of this last method of using note cards is that from time to time you can rearrange your prayer cards so you will not fall into the habit of repeating the same old words in the same old way all the time.

Pitfalls to avoid

Writing down and planning your

prayers offers many advantages. There are a few pitfalls, though.

We just mentioned one — that of repeating the same prayer in the same words over and over. It is possible, in using a prayer list, to rely on it too much. It is possible to merely read it to God. Of course, He can read it Himself — He doesn't need you to do it.

Therefore, you should not use your list as a formal script for your prayers, but just to remind you, so you can pray from the heart yourself.

Another pitfall is thinking, even subconsciously, that you can pray only about what you've written down. Of course, this is not so. All of your prayers, every single day, should include any sudden thoughts and feelings from the heart, which are not planned in advance. However, you will probably find that such sudden flashes of thought and spiritual inspiration come more, not less, than they did when you had no game plan to follow.

Result: improved prayers

The difference between a powerful and spiritually charged Christian and a mediocre or wishy-washy one is, many times, merely a series of simple steps taken at the proper time and place. Certainly one of the most simple of those steps is that of making a prayer list. But if you do take this small step, you will find that your prayer life will take a giant leap!

If you begin now to write down a prayer list, you will find it an effective way of planning your communication with God and improving the power of your prayers. And instead of asking, "What am I going to pray about?" you will be asking yourself the question, "When am I going to get the time necessary to pray about all these things?"

Surely you'll agree that the second dilemma is far better than the first! □

zeal. There also is a powerful answer to prayer.

God's servants prayed fervently

Oh, how the great men and women of the Bible would condemn our "laid-back," mellow generation! This degenerate age has elevated noninvolvement to a cliché — "Do your own thing." Looking out for number one is a catch-phrase. "Stay cool" is the byword; if the pressure is on, detach yourself, do your thing to cool off, don't sweat it.

The great heroes of the Bible were anything but cool and detached. They were men and women of magnificently deep feelings and emotions, and splendidly unafraid to show them.

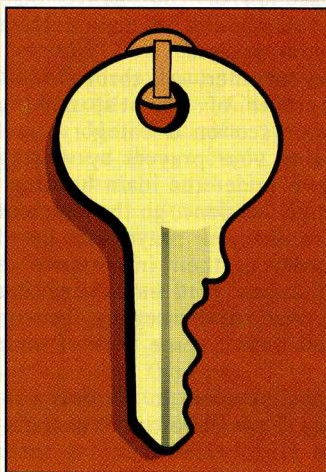
It is recorded seven times that Joseph wept. Moses fasted for 40 days and nights, so wrapped up was he in receiving God's revelations (Ex. 34:28). Joshua fell to the dust and lay on his face all day to depict his horror when Israel had lost God's favor (Josh. 7:6-10). Ruth left her homeland to follow Naomi, and would not hear of turning back from the God of Israel (Ruth 1:18).

Samuel cried all night at the news that God would reject unsteady King Saul (I Sam. 15:11). David fasted for men who had opposed him because, even in opposition, David saw their potential (II Sam. 1:12, 3:32). Anna the prophetess stayed at her post and served God with fastings when she was more than 100 years of age (Luke 2:36-37).

Jesus Christ petitioned God all night before He chose His 12 apostles (Luke 6:12-13), while the apostle Paul dictated corrective letters to young churches with tears streaming down his face (II Cor. 2:4).

Here is David pleading and respectfully bargaining with God, his only succour in the savage Judean wilderness. Note the sincerity, the all-or-nothing integrity that sped David's appeals to God via "special delivery":

Oh, how the great men and women of the Bible would condemn our "laid-back" generation! They were men and women of deep feelings and . . . splendidly unafraid to show them.



"O Lord my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:) let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust" (Ps. 7:3-5, AV).

The kind of prayer God's Church needs

Pretty bold, pretty direct, wouldn't you say (Heb. 4:16)? David marshals a strong argument for God's protection, saying, in effect: "If I've treated them like they're treating me, God, you can let them grind me in the dust. But I've done nothing

to them. In this matter I am innocent. Please help me!"

Proverbs 28:13 says, "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."

Regretfully, true friendship and openness are so rare today that people walk encased in shells, largely shut off from each other. This can carry over into our spiritual relationship with God. We can feel too out of touch with our emotions to even open up with our heavenly Father.

Yet I John 1:9 promises: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

We must confess our specific sins to God. We will not sense the relief that can be ours until we lay our cares on God's shoulders (I Pet. 5:7). God offers to forgive all our sins (Matt. 12:31).

David was specific, open and honest in his prayers. He knew that God intimately knew every detail of his life (Ps. 56:8). He'd might as well confess, come clean, on his knees before God. Even to honestly let off steam over his dishonorable, conniving enemies was better than self-deception. He knew that he couldn't fool God (Ps. 139:21-24).

By wrestling with his thoughts, attitudes and emotions in prayer and hammering his mind into godly reactions, David pleased God greatly. So can we, if we discern our gigantic spiritual need, if we grasp that only God can provide that need.

These are elements of fervent prayer, the kind of prayer God's people will need as we enter the final strenuous days of God's Work (II Tim. 3:1). Study the scriptures quoted here. There is a prayer to match every mood and outlook. Seek them out. Treasure them. Rise to the challenge in the book of James:

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (Jas. 5:16). □

Sabbath

(Continued from page 5)

ing! Otherwise, it would not have been the first day of the week, but some other day of the week.

Paul worked on Sunday!

Then what did Paul do, starting about daybreak Sunday morning? The next verses tell us that he journeyed on foot from Troas to Assos, which was a distance of about 18 to 20 miles! The day portion of Sunday was a workday to Paul, not a day of religious worship.

This passage in no way refers to religious services on the day part of Sunday. It only recounts unusual circumstances for Paul and the church at Troas during what is today commonly called Saturday night.

Outside of the four gospels, the 10th place that refers to the Sabbath is Colossians 2:16-17. This is a favorite text of some who claim the Sabbath was done away: "Therefore let no man judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."

Some interpret this text to say, "You shall not keep the Sabbath." But it says no such thing! It says that we are not to let men judge us about the things mentioned. Apparently, some people were judging the Christians at Colosse about these things. Who were the Colossians and what were they being judged about?

The people at Colosse were uncircumcised gentiles who had been converted to Christianity (verse 13). They had observed the religious holidays and rest days of the pagans. They now learned true Christian observance and customs. The people who were now judging or condemning them (verses 8, 18-23) had a false humility based on some form of asceticism or self-denial.

These opponents were criticizing the people in the Church for what the Church members were eating and drinking on "sab-

baths." These "sabbaths" are a "shadow of things to come" (verse 17). The weekly Sabbath is a memorial of creation and a picture of the millennial rest or seventh 1,000-year period in God's plan of salvation.

The translation in the Authorized Version of the Bible is misleading in verse 17 because of the added word *is*. In the Authorized Version this word is in italics, which means there is no equivalent word in the Greek manuscripts from which it was translated. The translators have added the word in the belief that this would make the meaning clearer. Exactly the opposite is true. The phrase should properly read "but the body of Christ."

Who is to judge?

What is the "body of Christ"? Chapter 1, verse 18, answers, "And He [Christ] is the head of the body, the church." In other words, the Body of Christ is that body of believers, the Church, who are doing the same work that the literal "body of Christ" did during His three-and-a-half-year ministry on earth almost 2,000 years ago.

In summary, these two verses say, "Don't let anyone else judge you in what you eat or drink on the Sabbath, but instead, let the Church judge!" The Colossians needed to look to the Church for such guidance, not religious ascetics who were judging or condemning them.

When we understand what Paul was writing about here, it becomes evident that these gentile Christians, who knew nothing of God's Sabbath, had now learned about the Sabbath days and, more important, were keeping them. If they were not, no one would have been judging them about how the Sabbaths were observed.

We have now seen the 10 places referring to the Sabbath, and one referring to the first day of the week. But there is one more text, and only one, that mentions the first day of the week. Here it is: "On the first day of the week let each one of you

lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come" (I Cor. 16:2).

Is this a Sunday-morning church collection?

Some people believe this is an example of taking up collections for the Church during Sunday services. Is that what this text says? The facts are surprising!

First, notice that this is a collection for the saints, not for the Church: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also" (verse 1).

Further, it was specifically for the saints in Jerusalem (verse 3). And Paul had already instructed the churches in Galatia (now a part of Turkey) concerning this same collection (verse 1).

This collection required someone to travel with the collection to Jerusalem. The collection also required "gatherings" (verse 2, Authorized Version), which were to be done before — not after — Paul arrived.

You will learn more about this special collection in Acts 11:27-30, Romans 15:25-28, II Corinthians 8 and 9 and elsewhere.

Putting all these details together, we see that there had been a famine in Judea and that the saints there were in need of food. Paul in this passage was instructing the people in the church at Corinth to satisfy this need by sending food in the form of fruit and vegetables.

When were they to do the labor and work of picking or gathering this food? On the first day of the week! The first day of the week, then, was a workday, not a day of religious worship and rest.

What is the "Lord's day"?

Some have assumed that the Sabbath was changed to the "Lord's Day," which they assume is Sunday. What does the Bible say on this subject?

The only place in the whole Bible where this day is mentioned is in Revelation 1:10: "I was in

the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet."

Notice that this does not specify what day is the Lord's Day, only that John was "in the Spirit" on this day. It does not say that he had all of the vision and wrote all of the material for this book on one day of the week. If that was the meaning, it would have been a monumental task for one day!

If he were talking about a day of the week, a 24-hour day, what day would he be talking about? If we let the Bible interpret the Bible, we should look at all the scriptures referring to the first day of the week. Do any of them say that God or Christ is Lord of that day? No!

If we look at all the scriptures about the Sabbath, we find that Christ was Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) and that God said the Sabbath was His holy day (Isa. 58:13). Therefore if we use the scriptures, rather than human reasoning, we could only conclude, if we are talking about a day of the week, that the Lord's Day is the Sabbath or Saturday.

But the apostle John was not talking in Revelation 1:10 about a day of the week. He was talking prophetically of the Day of the Lord (another term for "Lord's Day," meaning the same thing). The Day of the Lord is what a large part of prophecy, including much of the book of Revelation, is all about. It is the day of God's wrath, when He finally intervenes in the affairs of this world to humble the world and bring human beings to repentance.

From Revelation 6:17 to the end of the book we read about events during the Day of the Lord. It was that time period that John saw in vision. Therefore the Lord's Day is not Sunday!

Why not remember?

From all of these texts about the Sabbath, the first day of the week and the Lord's Day, one thing should be evident: The Sabbath was not a major issue during this time. There was no Sabbath question! The apostles and New Testament Church observed the

Sabbath instead of Sunday as a day of rest and worship. There was no change in the day of worship for the true Church during this time.

Obviously, a change has taken place during the last 1,900 years, but not in God's Church! The change took place later and was brought about by a different church only calling itself Christian and described in Revelation 17 and 18 as a "great harlot"!

We have seen that Christ kept the Sabbath. The early apostles kept the Sabbath, and taught both Jewish and gentile converts to keep the Sabbath. Elsewhere the Bible shows that the faithful kept the Sabbath from the time of Genesis 2:2-3 onward. We could also read in the prophecies that the Sabbath will be kept during the Millennium.

Since Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8) and God says "I do not change" (Mal. 3:6), why not keep God's Sabbath holy today? Why not "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8), even though the world, including a lot of religious people, has *forgotten*? □

Prevent Sin

(Continued from page 1)

attract its attention with some new object — get it interested in playing with that object (I have often used my fountain pen with excellent results) — and before you know it the child will forget all about its crying.

Try using this same method on yourself. But instead of material or worldly things, a mature person should use self-discipline and set his mind on spiritual things. Open your Bible. Put the study of some *spiritual* subject in your mind.

Next time you are tempted, try it. Pray over it. Ask God to help you. See how rapidly you begin to win the victory over temptation and sin, and how marvelous will be your spiritual and CHARACTER growth. □

MATE

(Continued from page 8)

and the Revised Authorized Version perpetuates this translation.

But God is not ashamed of this beautiful act of love. Neither were Adam and Eve, before Satan got to them in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:25).

You have a God-given responsibility to give sexual love and satisfaction to your mate. God commands husbands and wives to satisfy one another's sexual needs: "Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband" (I Cor. 7:3, NASB).

Your body actually belongs to your mate, and your mate's body is yours (verse 4). With that authority comes the responsibility to take care of your mate's body as if it were your own (Eph. 5:28). Never abuse your mate's body. Handle it with tender, loving care. You should never refuse to give sexual love to your mate or use it as a weapon or for leverage (I Cor. 7:5).

On their wedding night, as Solomon and his bride were in the very act of sexual love, God said to them — and He says to you and your mate tonight—"Eat, friends, and drink, until you are drunk with love" (S. of Sol. 5:1, New English Bible).

For more detailed information on this important area, write for Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong's free book, *The Missing Dimension in Sex*.

Increase your love quotient

What is your LQ? After studying these five ways to love your mate, your love quotient should be five points higher. If you give these loves, your marriage will become more contented and pleasurable.

Finally, listen to God's admonishment: "Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun... for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun" (Eccl. 9:9). □

MINISTRY

The Feast of Trumpets Shows Why Christ Must Return

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

FEAST OF TRUMPETS

The Feast of Trumpets is the fourth of seven annual festivals of God picturing His master plan for reproducing Himself.

You will recall from the previous ministudies in this series that God uses the spring and fall agricultural harvests of Palestine as symbolic types of His spiritual "harvests" of mankind.

God intends His spring festivals to illustrate to His Church every year that all those He has called to become His Spirit-begotten children since Christ's first coming are now the "firstfruits" (Jas. 1:18), the relatively small beginning of His eventual spiritual harvest of all mankind into His universe-ruling Family.

Then in the fall, the festivals of the much larger autumn harvest season picture God's calling of the rest of the billions of humanity to salvation and sonship in His glorious Family after Christ's return.

God begins His annual festivals with the Passover. As we observe this solemn occasion every year, we are reminded that Christ's Passover sacrifice (I Cor. 5:7) paid the penalty of our sins (Rom. 6:23).

Next, the Feast of Unleavened Bread reminds us of our continual need to put the "leaven" of sin (I Cor. 5:8) from our lives and to obey God.

Then the day of Pentecost, the final spring festival, is observed as a memorial of God's sending forth of His Spirit (Acts 2) to spiritually beget and strengthen the firstfruits of God's plan.

But the firstfruits cannot be reaped into God's Family unless they are "born again" (John 3:3-8) — resurrected and changed into spirit. And that resurrection will not occur until Jesus Christ comes again, which brings us to the fourth festival.

The Feast of Trumpets portrays a pivotal event in God's plan. It not only pictures the coming of Christ to resurrect the firstfruits

from the dead, it also pictures the terrible time of world war just ahead and the intervention of Jesus Christ to save the living from total annihilation and to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. Let's understand exactly how this festival fits into God's great master plan.

1. When is the fourth annual festival to be observed? Lev. 23:23-25. Is this another annual Sabbath of rest from one's regular work? Verses 24-25. Are God's people commanded to meet together before Him on this Holy Day? Verse 24.

The number *seven* in God's plan signifies completion and perfection. The seventh month of God's calendar contains the final four festivals, picturing the completion of God's great master plan for mankind. The festival that falls on the first day of this month marks the beginning of the final events in God's plan.

2. Was this festival to be a memorial of blowing of trumpets? Verse 24.

It is from this ceremony that the Feast of Trumpets draws its name. There is a great deal of symbolic meaning tied in with the blowing of these trumpets, especially with regard to the end time in which we're living.

3. Were trumpets blown to announce God's solemn feasts, as well as call God's people to assemble? Num. 10:1-3, 10. Was the trumpet also blown as an alarm of invading armies and impending warfare? Verse 9, Jer. 4:19-20, Ezek. 33:2-6.

Trumpets were used as an alarm of war. This terrifying sound filled the people of ancient Israel with fear, because they knew the horror of war was imminent. It is this warning of war that sets apart the Feast of Trumpets from God's other Holy Days.

4. Who was commissioned by God to blow these trumpets? Num. 10:8.

God's priests in the Old Testament were

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the sons of Aaron. Only they were to blow the trumpets. Today, Jesus Christ is our spiritual High Priest (Heb. 6:20). Therefore God's New Testament ministry is not required to blow trumpets on this feast day.

5. Has God commanded His "watchmen" — His ministers — to warn people of their sins? Ezek. 33:7-9. Are they to lift up their voices like trumpets? Isa. 58:1.

6. Was there to be a Work in these last days that would be preaching a special message to the world? Matt. 24:14. What is that message? Same verse.

7. When did Jesus say that God's coming Kingdom would be established — wasn't it in a time of world war? Verses 3, 6-8, Luke 21:31. Would man at this time have the power to destroy all human life from the face of the earth? Matt. 24:21-22.

The trumpet warning of world war is being sounded today!

God's faithful ministers are preaching the good news of the coming government of God, to be set up on earth at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

At the same time, they are warning the world that before God's government is restored, there must first come wars and rumors of wars as Jesus prophesied, ending in the most terrifying warfare this world has ever experienced.

8. What does the book of Revelation have to say regarding the blowing of supernatural trumpets shortly before the return of Jesus Christ? Rev. 8:1-2, 6.

The seventh seal, which covered the scroll or book of Revelation (Rev. 5:1-2), disclosed seven angels with seven trumpets representing seven consecutive colossal world events. These are to be physical punishments from God as warnings to the nations not to go further into national and personal sins.

The last three trumpet plagues (also called "woes") specifically picture three phases of catastrophic world war. At the third stage mankind will be saved from extinction by the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!

(For a detailed explanation of these trumpets and other events in Revelation, write for a free copy of *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last!*)

9. Will those who turn to God be pro-

TECTED from these trumpet plagues? Rev. 3:10, 7:2-3, 12:6, 14. Is it for the sake of these "elect" that Christ will intervene in world affairs to cut short the time of great age-end trouble and rescue mankind from nuclear annihilation? Matt. 24:22.

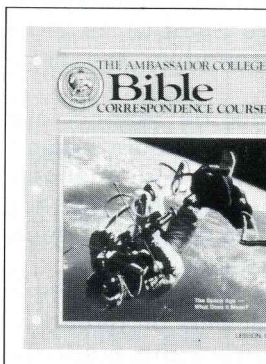
The "elect" of God include the firstfruits of His great master plan. They are the ones God has called out of this world to be among the firstfruits harvest of the divine Family He is creating.

10. Did Jesus promise to send His angels to gather His elect at the blast of a great trumpet? Verses 30-31. Is the sounding of this trumpet the time of the resurrection of the dead in Christ? I Thess. 4:16-17, I Cor. 15:51-52, Rev. 11:15, 18. Is this trumpet the seventh and final one of the seven introduced in Revelation 8? I Cor. 15:52.

11. What will those in the first resurrection then do? Rev. 20:6.

God's Festival of Trumpets is both a solemn day and a time of rejoicing. On the one hand, it pictures terrifying world events culminating in warfare that will threaten the extinction of all life on this planet. But, on the other hand, to those firstfruits who have voluntarily placed themselves under the government of God in God's Church now, this is also a day of great rejoicing.

At the sound of the seventh trumpet, when Jesus Christ returns, the saints — the firstfruits of God's plan — will be born into the Family of God! God will then have reaped the smaller spiritual harvest of human beings into His Family. They will then begin to help Christ rule the earth and reap the much greater spiritual harvest during and after the Millennium. The last three festivals, to be covered in the final three studies of this series, picture the details of how this will be accomplished. □



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Can You Find Your Master's Crib?

How much do you hunger for the spiritual buffet of God's Word, the Bible?

By Jerold W. Aust

When supper is on, few people have to be coaxed to the table!

Besides simply partaking of the life-giving sustenance that food provides, it's enjoyable to eat a delectable, sumptuous meal.

And yet, speaking of the life-giving spiritual buffet that God makes available to humans through His law and way of life, God says:

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: 'I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me; the ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.' Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward" (Isa. 1:2-4).

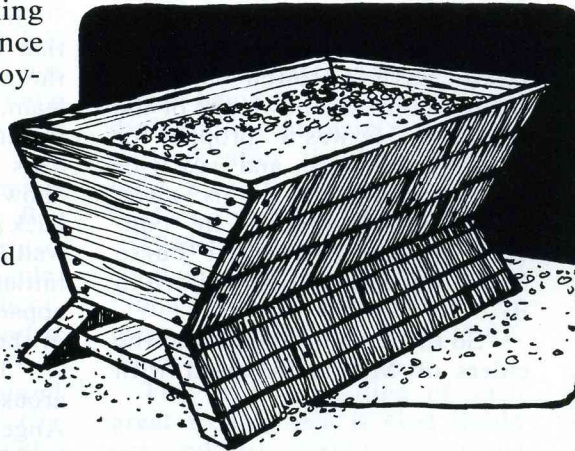
Notice the striking comparison! Even the donkey, which many people consider to be a stubborn or stupid animal, knows where its nourishment comes from. But God's nation had turned its back on the very source for its existence!

"Where there is no vision . . ."

Israel could not find its mas-

ter's crib! Just how ignorant should we consider the poor donkey, after all?

God reveals to us that "Where



there is no vision [revealed perception], the people perish" (Prov. 29:18, Authorized Version).

Humanity today possess God's Word in writing, the Bible. That book contains the keys that, if kept, would produce fantastic blessings beyond people's wildest imaginations. Yet few understand God's Word — few, indeed, even try to!

That is not the case for true Christians, God's called and chosen people. We know God has opened our minds to understand His holy truth, and He expects us to be sufficiently grateful to study His words of life!

Out of the Bible we can consume spiritual nutrition that will stabilize and sustain the weakest of souls through the tempestuous times ahead — and those times surely are coming.

To whom do you go when confronted with a fiery trial? Do you stumble on blindly, wondering how such a thing could happen to you, and become more and more confused and disillusioned? Do you find yourself turning to this world for solace?

Or do you, as God encourages, turn to Him and His revealed truth for answers, encouragement and confidence?

God's words, found in our Bibles, are like golden kernels of grain teeming with extremely nutritious, mouth-watering values. When "eaten" (and we have to, after all, "hunger and thirst for righteousness" — Matthew 5:6), these kernels supercharge us with satisfying spiritual energy. This is the highest form of energizing that humans can enjoy (John 6:57, 63).

The covers of your Bible are like crib sides holding those life-giving grains of goodness. God wants us, then, to turn to His crib for daily sustenance.

This world will not. The world is blinded to God's truth, though millions may have Bibles (albeit many covered with dust) in their homes. We dare not be of that number — we dare not be like blinded modern-day Israel and the world at large.

Of course, God desires that Israel and all mankind come to know Him (Rom. 11:25-28, I Tim. 2:4). And, thankfully, all will in due time, according to the

Illustrations by Michael Jon Woodruff

schedule ordained by God (Isa. 29:18).

But for our day, God has allowed Satan to keep the world blinded to its incredible human potential (Matt. 13:10-17), although He has revealed it to us for His holy purpose.

We are called to a great commission, to publish and broadcast God's good news to an apathetic, dying world. Qualifying for salvation requires that we be involved in fulfilling this commission (Ezek. 3:17-21, Mal. 4:5-6, Matt. 28:18-20). And we must know where our master's crib is, and be partaking of it regularly and in sufficient quantities!

Balaam's iniquity

The apostle Peter illuminated an Old Testament example that will help us see why we must dine daily from our master's spiritual crib.

Peter wrote of wicked people who "have forsaken the right way [they had followed it once!] and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the

madness of the prophet" (II Pet. 2:15-16).

Balaam can be seen as a type of blinded Israel and this world, in terms of spiritual malnutrition and starvation. He, at best, fed on the corncocks or chaff. He made his own decision. And his example was recorded for our admonition today (I Cor. 10:11).

Numbers 22 finds Old Testament Israel still in their wanderings, not having entered into the promised land. Balak, king of the nation of Moab, was justifiably nervous; he knew of Israel's previous conquests. So Balak opted to hire a diviner, Balaam, to pronounce a curse on Israel and relieve him of his problem.

Balaam was a pagan high priest, the head of the false religious system of his day. He offered a mixture of paganistic ritual with a touch of true, though blurred, knowledge of the true God. He was a "prophet for profit," as it were, and was willing to commercialize his office. Reasoning humanly, he concluded that God must curse Israel, since the nation had evil in it.

"So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with

the diviner's fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak. And he said to them, 'Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the Lord speaks to me.' . . . And God said to Balaam, 'You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed' " (Num. 22:7-8, 12).

Balaam, who claimed to be a servant of the true God, should already have known that what he was doing was sin. But instead, he received the messengers and asked God what he should do! When God stated that he should not go, he refused the king's bribe, only to be presented with another. He failed this test, too, however.

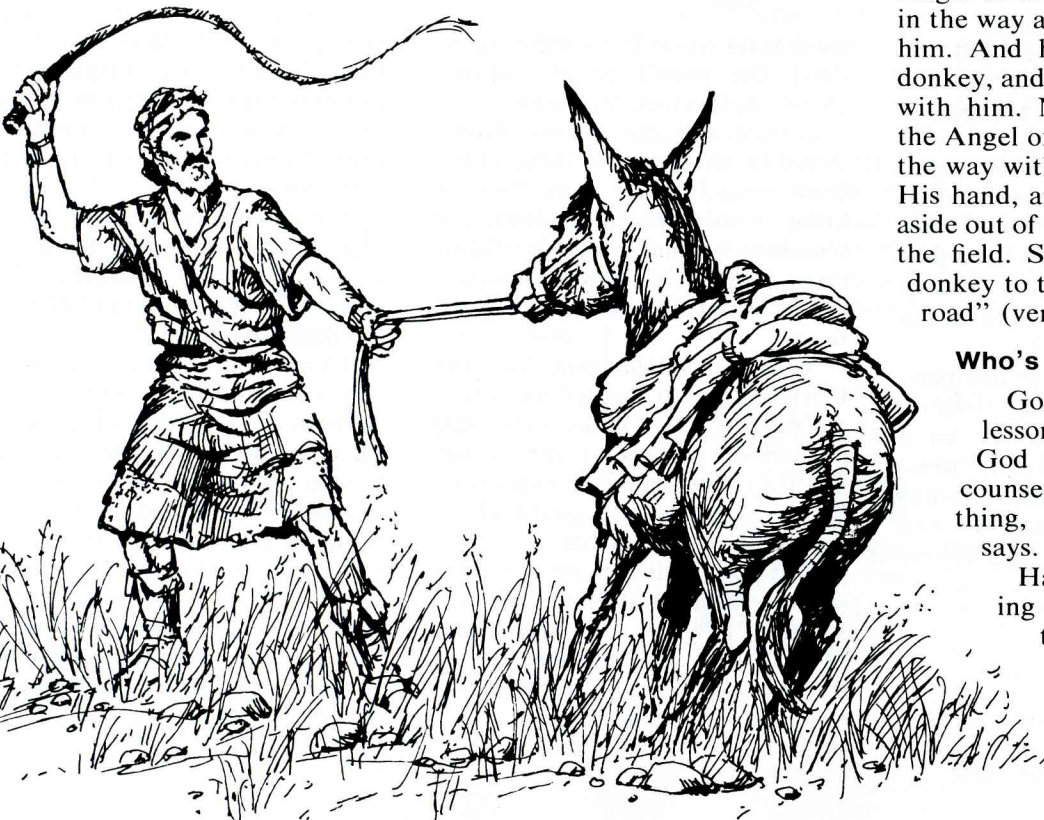
God had already made it clear that Balaam should not go with the men to curse Israel. But Balaam, who wanted his own way instead of God's, asked again! This time God said He would allow him to go if the men came back once again. But rather than wait for the men, Balaam took the initiative and went on his own, apparently even rising very early in the morning (verses 15-21).

"Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the Lord took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. Now the donkey saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road" (verses 22-23).

Who's the real donkey?

God has an enlightening lesson for us here. Though God is patient, when He counsels us to do or not do a thing, He means what He says.

Had Balaam been feeding from the true master's crib, we would not have this account, nor would we read of his



demise. God instructed Balaam not to go with the king's aides because Israel's future was planned by God.

The story continues with Balaam's donkey twice more attempting to preserve both their lives, and Balaam striking the animal. Finally God caused the donkey to speak. It asked, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" (verse 28).

Doesn't this strike you as a little strange? After all, a beast of burden doesn't speak every day, let alone reason. Stranger still, though, is that Balaam didn't even question this unique phenomenon!

Instead, he retorted in a spoiled way: "Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!" (verse 29). Odd way to put it, one might think, seeing God's angel had his sword drawn to kill Balaam!

Balaam's donkey had steered his master correctly. It was Balaam, the stubborn, two-legged donkey, who was the less pliable, the less wise, the less obedient. And then God opened the blinded eyes of the defunct diviner.

What an awesome revelation! There before him stood the mighty, resplendent angel of the Lord, sword drawn, ready to end Balaam's life. The angel said: "The donkey saw me and turned aside from me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live" (verse 33).

The whole point is that Balaam did not learn — he did not repent. First God compelled him to prophesy blessing on Israel (Num. 24). Finally God avenged Himself and Israel by taking Balaam's life (Num. 31:1-8).

What we are to live by

Jesus, while correcting Satan during the greatest battle ever fought, focused our obligation to Him by stating, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

And why not? After all, we are made incomplete. Man needs God's Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:9-14). In this life, we are susceptible to Satan's broadcasting, to do evil that leads to death. Before conversion we were servants to unrighteousness, but are now servants of God (Eph. 2:1-6).

So we must avoid Satan's corn-cobs and chaff, the lighter and fluffier "passing pleasures of sin" (Gal. 3:1, I John 2:15-17, Heb. 11:25). God has given us the bread of His life, His words to guide and sustain us. He desires us to feed on His provender.

God's crib

The Bible you read and study is your master's crib! It contains the words leading to eternal life, provided you obey them.

Though the golden grains of life are both free and plentiful, they'll be of no use to us until we decide to ingest them, helping us to walk after the Spirit (Rom. 6:17, 8:1). We must feed from God's crib while there's time.

Christ warned, "The night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). Satan's wrath will be great upon this earth (Rev. 12:12, Amos 8:11-12).

This will be a time of such great trouble that if God would not send Jesus Christ to intervene in man's affairs, no flesh would be saved alive (Matt. 24:21-22). This horrible period in world history will reach into the lives of every man, woman and child on earth (Luke 21:25-26, Rev. 6:3-11, Rev. 3:10).

That means we dare not waste one precious minute.

Study to survive

Jesus Christ exhorts us to study to survive: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15).

Christ warns: "Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have

learned them, and that from childhood [Paul was here speaking to Timothy] you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God [that's you and me] may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every work" (II Tim. 3:13-17).

Yes, the apostle Paul was exhorting the evangelist Timothy to study to be able to survive. But God uses this same exhortation for us "on whom the ends of the ages have come" (I Cor. 10:11). We are the elect of God. He has opened our eyes to see and our eyes to hear, and He expects that we heed what we see and what we hear from Him.

We know who our master is. We know what constitutes His spiritual crib. We know our master will never hinder our dining freely from His provender. Who, then, can stop us from spiritual maturation?

God won't. Satan can't. Only you and I can stop our rapid and healthy growth "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

So God lovingly and mercifully instructs us, with all mankind: "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, 'though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword'; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken" (Isa. 1:16-20).

Time is short. Don't be like Balaam. Eat daily from your master's crib, and reap everlasting life! □

By Selmer L. Hegvold

When young people are caught up in the serious problems from which this society suffers — hostility toward parents and other people, drug and alcohol abuse, illicit sex, crime, depression and other psychological problems — what is the cause?

There is a cause for every effect. What, then, is the cause of the tragic and frustrating situations in which many children find themselves?

Often, parents just don't seem to know. They can't figure it out. They blame circumstances or the school systems or modern entertainment or their children's peers. Or father blames mother and vice versa.

But all the blaming doesn't halt the almost universal plague of juvenile delinquency.

Who is to blame for the vast majority of troubles with which young people are faced? It's the parents themselves, just as surely as they are the cause for the

begettal, birth and existence of their children!

God's earnest appeal

Through the prophet Hosea, God voiced a stern warning that almost all parents in this world have carelessly ignored. Yet this warning reveals a key that could unlock the door to almost unbelievable blessings in all parent-child relationships:

"Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children" (Hos. 4:6).

There it is! When parents themselves forget God and God's law, children lose out on the blessings that come from learning of and living God's way.

It's human to reason that young people are only running their course. Some parents tell themselves, "They're only doing what I did when I was young!"

God's Word tells us that we are living in an age when evil influences will grow worse and worse (II Tim. 3:13). The weapons now exist that could erase all life from the earth, and morality is at an all-time low. Jesus said that if God does not intervene in this world soon, no humans will even be left alive (Matt. 24:22)!

Don't kid yourself — this is not "just another generation." We are living in the worst time in all history. How can a child wisely make his way in society if left to his own devices? Young people without guidance only cause their parents so much grief, says God (Prov. 29:15).

Yet there is a source of spiritual understanding that reveals the causes of — and the solutions to — the problems with which young people are confronted. That source is God's Word.

We know God's way

Fortunately for us, God has



given us, as His people, the knowledge of His way of life, which produces every happiness we could desire. Do you treasure God's instruction to you as a Christian in your own life? How much of that instruction have you diligently and wisely passed on to your children?

God says to parents, "These words which I command you today shall be in your heart [your thoughts and mind]; you shall teach them diligently to your children" (Deut. 6:6-7).

Inspired Solomon stated, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

And Proverbs later says: "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. . . . Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul" (Prov. 29:15, 17).

Time is running out — it is later than you think! God knows this even if you don't. "Chastise your son, while there is still hope of him, and do not let him run to ruin" (Prov. 19:18, Moffatt). If you don't correct the errors of

your child's ways early in his life, you will ruin him. So says God.

God holds parents responsible

God holds you as a parent responsible. "Even a child is known by his deeds, by whether what he does is pure and right" (Prov. 20:11). A child's actions reveal his upbringing, right or wrong.

God tells us that He will discipline us as little children. So you, if you truly love your child, will chasten him when he goes wrong. God realizes that punishment and correction are not pleasant at the moment, but they provide necessary reinforcement to spiritual instruction (Heb. 12:5-11).

There is a cause for the effect you see in your children — for their good or bad conduct. You are that cause. If you are training and disciplining them in love, as God directs, then your children's conduct and happy, fulfilled lives will be a joy to you. If not, you and your children will reap serious problems.

And you need to not only train and discipline them in love, but spend much time with them every

day, so they can share your closeness and your godly character.

Success for parents who trust in God

God says to parents who will turn to Him in obedience, drinking in of His biblical instructions: "Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is His reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed" (Ps. 127:3-5).

Teach your children while there is hope — while there is time. Teach them to obey God's Word and to stand in awe of God.

God will not — cannot — then withhold His blessings from you and your children. He has promised. Neither will Hosea's prophecy come to pass in your family. God then will not "forget your children"!

You and your children will be blessed with health, joy and happiness, and with outstanding accomplishments in everything you set your hands to do.

Do it with all your might (Eccl. 9:10)! □

Photo by G.A. Belluche Jr.



What is the Reward of the Saved?

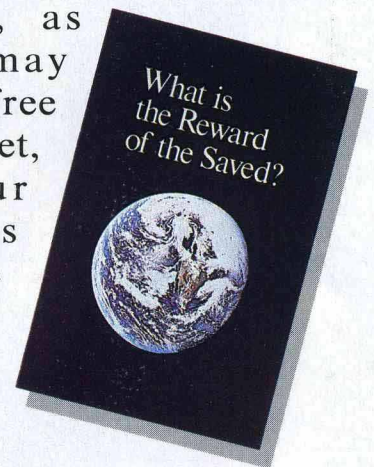


Did you ever look into your Bible to see whether it really does say you will ever go to heaven when you are saved? This question concerns your eternity! And yet millions simply accept what they have heard all their lives — they never prove for themselves just exactly what the future holds.

Our booklet *What is the Reward of the Saved?* examines what the Bible reveals concerning the what, how, where and when of salvation. Have our departed loved ones gone

to heaven? Will we go to heaven, if we're saved? What does it mean to be saved, and when does it occur? Ex-

actly what are we promised as a reward? Here's the truth, straight from the Bible, as shocking as it may seem! For your free copy of this booklet, just write to our mailing address nearest you. See the inside front cover for our addresses.



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