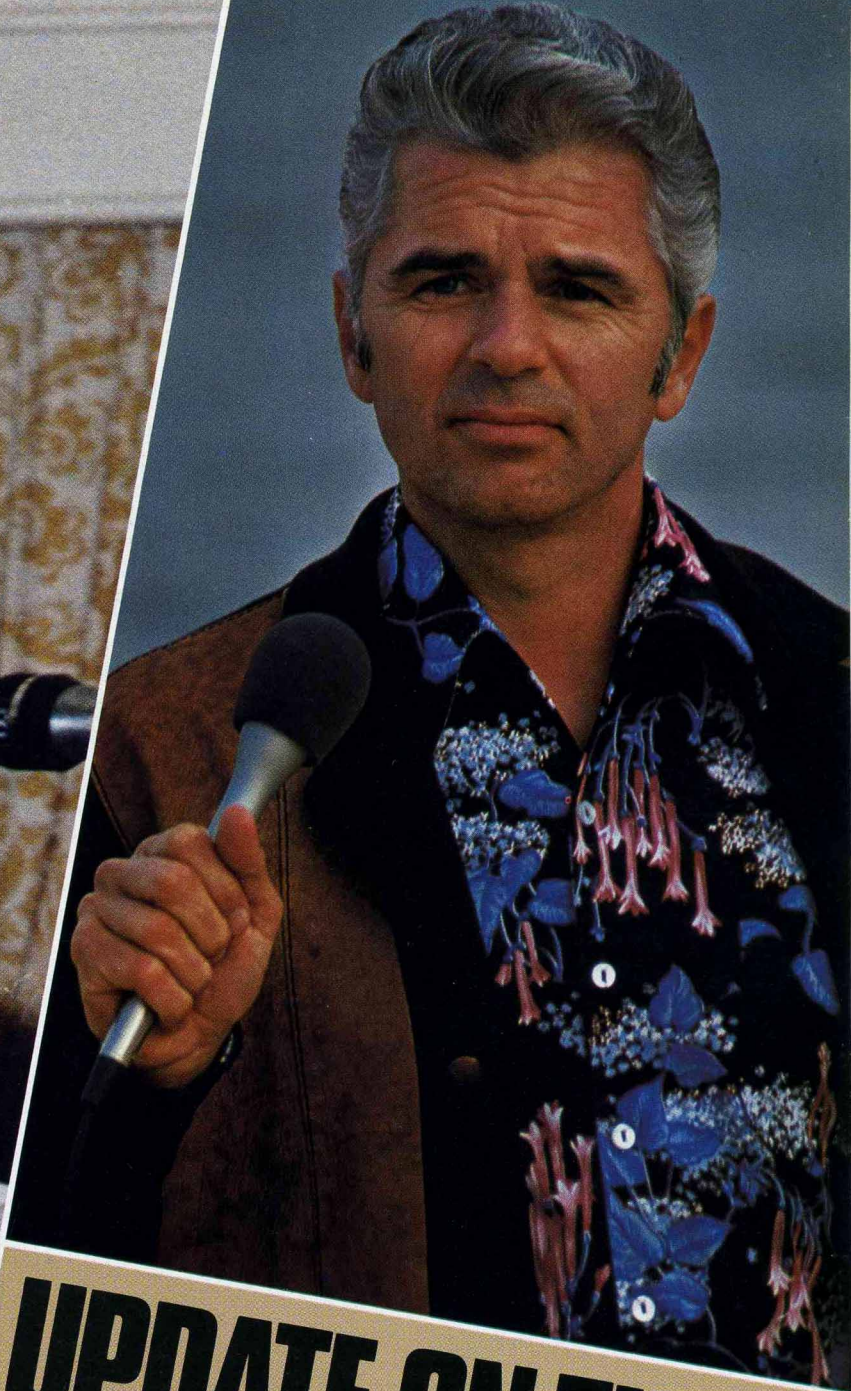


GN

The Good News



UPDATE ON THE ARMSTRONGS

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Vol. XXV No. 6

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ABOUT OUR COVER

Herbert W. Armstrong speaks at Kiwanis Club luncheon in Nassau, the Bahamas, prior to personal appearance campaign; Garner Ted Armstrong (right) gives commentary for TV broadcast near the Suez Canal. Both of the Armstrongs' trips are covered in this month's Update.

Left, GN photo; right, Scott Crawford — GN.

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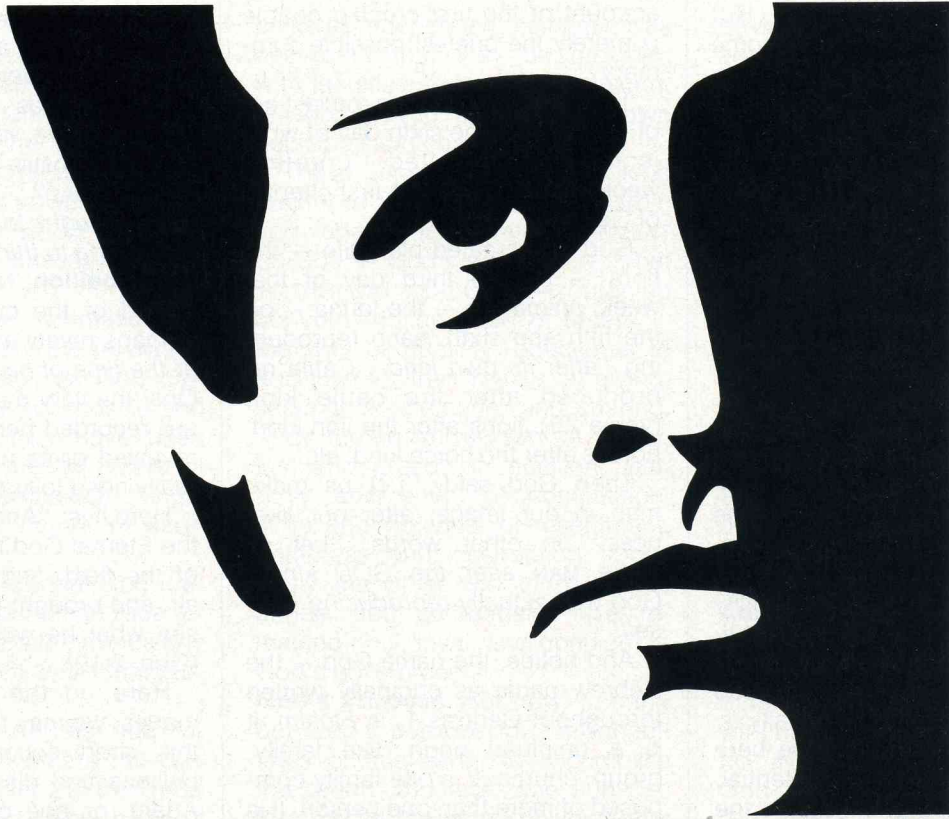
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HUMAN NATURE

DID GOD CREATE IT?

Here is a bombshell of truth almost no one has understood. The world's evils are attributed to human nature. Why, as the Bible says, is the heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? Did God create in us a nature that "is enmity [hostile] against God"? Are babies born with this selfish, evil nature?

by Herbert W. Armstrong

I overheard one say: "Just look at that beautiful, sweet little baby — and to think it's filled with all that evil, despicable human nature!"

But was it?

Think of this paradox! How can it be explained? The human mind can produce wonders. We have sent succes-

sive teams of men to walk on the moon. We have returned them safely through the earth's atmosphere. Yet these marvelous human minds cannot solve our problems here on earth — cannot bring the world PEACE! *WHY?* All the violence, war, crime, corruption, dishonesty, and immorality is

blamed on HUMAN NATURE. But where did HUMAN NATURE come from? Did the Creator instill it within us from creation? Were we born with it? And please understand that in this article I am speaking of human nature in its evil spiritual phase — of vanity, lust, greed, envy, competition, strife, rebellion against authority, and hate.

The answer requires a knowledge of the composition and nature of the human mind — accessible only by revelation. *WHY* does such wonderful MIND power work so much evil?

Did an all-loving, all-merciful, almighty GOD deliberately plague the human race He created with an in-born nature of vanity, lust, and greed — with a heart of hostility against God, of deceit, envy, jealousy, and hatred?

Adam at Creation. Few indeed know *what* a human being really is, HOW we humans came to be here on earth, the real human potential, *where* we are going, or *what* is the WAY.

In preceding installments in *The Plain Truth*, I have shown what *caused* God to create man, *why* we came to be put on earth, the real PURPOSE for human life, the AWESOME human potential. Yet we humans seem to be cursed with this evil human nature!

In this article I want to show what is the real source of this evil nature — *why* the human mind works as it does. The Bible is our source.

So first, let's see what is revealed about the first man, Adam, and his nature *at the time of his creation*.

The Bible reveals only the most brief high points of human history for the first two thousand-plus years — a third of all the time from the creation of man to now! Only eleven chapters are devoted to the history of all that span of time. The

account of the first created couple is merely the briefest possible summary.

The first humans were the last act of creation on the sixth day of what is commonly called "creation week," recorded in the first chapter of Genesis.

God had created plant life — the flora — on the third day of that week, animal life — the fauna — on the fifth and sixth, each reproducing "after its own kind." Cattle reproduced after the cattle kind (verse 25), lions after the lion kind, horses after the horse kind, etc.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." In other words, "Let us make MAN *after the GOD kind!*" God was actually *reproducing Himself!*

Ahd notice, the name God — the Hebrew name as originally written throughout Genesis 1, is *Elohim*. It is a uniplural noun, like family, group, church. It is ONE family composed of more than one person. It is like one team, one church, but each composed of multiple persons. The God to whom Jesus prayed is the FATHER of the FAMILY that is GOD. God IS a FAMILY — but ONE family, ONE GOD.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them." WHY? Because human reproduction is the type of God's reproducing Himself. And physical reproduction requires both male and female.

But continue: "And God blessed them . . ." Did He *bless* them by creating in them an evil sinful nature, utterly unable to be subject to God's *right* way of life? But continue this passage: ". . . and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28).

"And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (verse 31). If the first humans — as God had created them — were VERY GOOD, could it include a hostile and evil nature that was very BAD?

That ought to give every reader something to think about!

No Rebellion. Now what does this record of the creation of the first humans reveal as to Adam's nature *at the time of his creation*? I repeat: Only the very most brief high spots are recorded here. The little that is revealed gives us, however, all we really need to know.

Here it is: "And out of the ground the Eternal God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them . . ." (Gen. 2:19).

Here, in the briefest of summaries, we may see clearly whether this short account reveals a rebellious and disobedient nature in Adam, or one of compliance and obedience.

Absolutely NO REBELLION is indicated here. We find, instead, the response that Adam gave names to all cattle, to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field.

This incident reveals Adam's attitude and nature *as he was created*, PRIOR TO his temptation by Satan (which is recorded in chapter 3). Notice carefully. Absolutely NOTHING in the account of this pre-temptation incident indicates in Adam the presence of an evil, hostile, rebellious attitude or nature. It does not reflect a heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, as human nature is described (Jeremiah 17:9), nor a carnal mind that is enmity (hostile) against God and which "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

**Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." In other words, "Let us make man after the God kind!"
God was actually reproducing Himself!**

Nor, on the other hand, does it reveal a nature filled with the Spirit of God. Adam had not yet been confronted by Satan, had not disobeyed, nor had he taken of the "tree of life" to receive the indwelling LOVE and POWER of God's Holy Spirit, which would have imparted the DIVINE NATURE (II Peter 1:4).

So prior to the temptation by Satan, we have only the revelation that Adam's NATURE, as God created him, was *not* evil, hostile and diabolical. There may have been the physical and mental nature of self-preservation and such things. But *NOT* the evil nature of SELF-centeredness.

We need to realize that God created Adam and the human race for a PURPOSE. We need to have clearly in mind, at this point, WHAT that purpose is.

A Super King. Angels had inhabited this planet before the creation of man (II Peter 2:4-6). These angels had *sinned*. God had set over them a king — Lucifer, a super archangel — to govern them with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:11-17).

This super king, Lucifer, was, of all created beings, supreme in created perfection (Ezek. 28:12, 15). But, remember, holy and righteous CHARACTER is something that *cannot* be created in one *instantaneously by fiat*. It must be *developed* in an independent entity through a process in which one comes to recognize the right way from the wrong, to *choose* the right and reject the wrong even against self-desire.

The great Lucifer and the angels who followed him (apparently a third of all angels) were originally created as holy beings, composed of spirit, immortal. But in order that they have personality and individ-

uality as independent beings, it was necessary that they be provided with faculties for knowing, thinking, reasoning, and making their own decisions and choices.

These angels followed their king Lucifer in the decision to turn *from* and rebel *against* the GOVERNMENT OF GOD — God's WAY OF LIFE. That is THE WAY of LOVE — outgoing concern for the good of others — the way of humility, obedience to and love for their MAKER, of giving, serving, cooperating, and sharing. They turned to THE WAY of vanity, lust and greed, of rebellion, jealousy and envy, of competition, strife and violence, of resentment, bitterness and destruction. Obviously the other two thirds of the angels and archangels have remained holy, loyal, and obedient to God's government.

God's Purpose. But now, to carry out God's purpose for the inhabitants of this earth, to accomplish the grand and awesome PURPOSE throughout the entire universe that could have been theirs, GOD IS REPRODUCING HIMSELF THROUGH HUMAN BEINGS!

The super archangel Lucifer was the supreme pinnacle of God's creative power in a created being. When he turned to rebellion, it left ONLY GOD Himself who could be utterly relied on NEVER to deviate from God's WAY — God's GOVERNMENT. It is impossible for God to sin — because he WILL NOT! It now became God's purpose to reproduce Himself through human beings.

That required *the development* in human beings of God's own holy, righteous CHARACTER. It was necessary, for this purpose, that man be composed of physical matter, that he CHOOSE God's government, reject Lucifer's (now Satan's) self-centered rebellious way, and strive to overcome it. God's PURPOSE in

having put humans on earth can be achieved only by man coming to choose God's GOVERNMENT as God's way of life — to reject with utter finality Satan's way, completely overcoming it.

So God created MAN out of physical matter. God created in man a MIND like God's, though of course inferior, because it was composed of physical brain, empowered with intellect by a spirit (essence) in each.

Although the holy and righteous CHARACTER to be developed within man must actually come from God, each human must make his own decision. He must make his own choice to reject Satan's WAY, and to obey God's government.

Adam's Choice. Adam was compelled, therefore, to make the choice. God purposely allowed Satan opportunity to confront Adam with his way of rebellion. But He did NOT allow Satan to get to Adam *first*. God Himself instructed Adam in GOD'S WAY — the way of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD based on the LAW OF GOD, just as Lucifer and his angels had been first instructed in the ways of THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

Then God allowed Satan to confront Adam. Satan got to Adam through his wife. Satan subtly deceived Eve into DISBELIEVING what God had taught them. Adam followed her in choosing rebellion and rejecting God's rule and government over them. They took to *themselves* the knowledge of what is good and what is evil — deciding for themselves right from wrong.

Then, something happened to the minds of Adam and Eve — the eyes of both of them were opened (Gen. 3:7). The spirit and attitude of rebellion had entered their minds. Their minds (hearts) now had become perverted — deceitful and desperately wicked.

Holy and righteous character is something that cannot be created in one instantaneously by fiat. It must be developed in an independent entity through a process.

And THAT EVIL IN THEM CAME FROM SATAN, NOT FROM GOD! They were NOT created with this evil nature.

But how did humanity, today, come to have this evil attitude we call "HUMAN NATURE"? Did the children of Adam and Eve inherit it from them? Or, was it passed on by heredity?

Let me give you an example of heredity. God put Adam to sleep and removed one of his ribs, out of which He made Eve. Do all men today find themselves short one rib by heredity? Of course not. *Acquired characteristics are not passed on by heredity.*

Evil Nature by Heredity? Adam and Eve chose *and acquired* the "nature" or attitude of sin from Satan. It was not passed on by heredity. Jesus Christ called their second son "righteous Abel."

Then how *do* we humans come to have (universally) this evil attitude we call human nature today?

It's partly explained in the apostle Paul's second letter to the Corinthian church. He said he desired to present that church "as a chaste virgin to Christ. BUT I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:2-3).

Satan was still around when Paul wrote. (The reason is explained elsewhere.) The people at Corinth had not received this evil nature *by heredity*. Rather, the apostle feared lest they (in this NEW Testament time) should be beguiled into evil attitudes *in the same manner* as was the original mother Eve — directly by Satan.

Eve did not have a mind that was evil *before* Satan came along and confronted her. But Satan, by subtilty, deceived Eve. Eve's children were not born with this evil nature.

Nor were the people of the Corinthian church. But Paul feared lest Satan, still around after some 4,000 years, pervert Corinthian minds directly, as he had done to Eve.

Satan was still around when Christ was born. He tried to destroy the Christ child by having Him murdered. Satan was still around when Jesus was thirty and baptized. And he tried to destroy Jesus spiritually then, in the temptation. As Satan destroyed (spiritually) Adam, he tried to destroy the "second Adam." Satan is still around TODAY!

But the wily Satan has succeeded in deluding many, if not most, of the best minds into believing he is a nonexistent myth. The best minds, unsuspecting, are deceived (Rev. 12:9).

Here is a truth you, the reader, need to know!

Satan's Wavelength. To the church at Ephesus, God said through the apostle Paul (Ephesians 2:1-2): "And you [who]... in time past... walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience..."

GRASP IT! Satan is here called "the prince of the power of the AIR!" I could not have understood that 60 years ago. I did not then realize how communication by sound and by picture can be broadcast instantaneously *through the air*.

In past articles I have stressed the point that Satan, the former great archangel cherub Lucifer, was the most perfect and powerful being that God could create as an individual being. He was perfect as originally created. But he is composed of spirit, and thus he is invisible to human eyes.

This great and powerful being, even though evil, has power literally to surcharge the air around this earth. HE BROADCASTS!

Wherever you are as you read these words, chances are there are voices and perhaps music *in the air* around you. A radio or TV set tuned to the right wavelength would make them audible to you.

The spirit in every human being is automatically tuned in on Satan's wavelength. You don't hear anything because he does not broadcast in words — nor in sounds, whether music or otherwise. He broadcasts in ATTITUDES. He broadcasts in attitudes of SELF-centeredness, lust, greed, vanity, jealousy, envy, resentment, competition, strife, bitterness, and hate.

In a word, the selfishness, hostility, deceitfulness, wickedness, rebellion, etc. that we call "HUMAN NATURE" is actually SATAN'S NATURE. It is Satan's ATTITUDE. And broadcasting it, surcharging the air with it, Satan actually NOW WORKS *IN* the unsuspecting all over the world today! That is *HOW* Satan deceives the whole world today (Rev. 12:9; 20:3). Being invisible, Satan is not seen by people.

This prince of the power of the air — this god of this world — IS THE REAL SOURCE OF WHAT WE HAVE COME TO CALL "HUMAN NATURE"!

Here is the real CAUSE of all the world's evils!

But it seems *nobody* understands it, and therefore the world does nothing about it — except to go along with it, blaming human nature and supposing it was GOD who created us with an evil nature. Actually, it is Satan's nature.

Spirit Communication. Let me give you an illustration of how we can be swayed, influenced, and driven Satan's wrong way by his broadcasting through the air. When

Adam and Eve chose and acquired the "nature" or attitude of sin from Satan. It was not passed on by heredity. Jesus Christ called their second son "righteous Abel."

God wanted to cause captive Jews in ancient Babylon to return to Jerusalem to build the second temple, He put it in the mind of Cyrus, king of Persia. The Persian Empire had taken over the rule of empire from Babylon. Following is the explanation of how God moved Cyrus to do what God wanted.

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia . . . the Eternal stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom . . ." (Ezra 1:1) that a contingent of Jews return to Jerusalem.

God did not speak to Cyrus in words or direct communication, as He talked with Moses and God's prophets. God reached Cyrus *through Cyrus' spirit*. God stirred up his spirit, causing him to want to do it. God did cause King Cyrus to know that in issuing this proclamation he was doing it according to the will of God.

Utilizing this same principle, Satan, prince of THE POWER OF THE AIR, stirs the spirits of humans, injecting into them attitudes, moods, and impulses of selfishness, vanity, lust, and greed, attitudes of resentment against authority, of jealousy and envy, of competition and strife, of resentment and bitterness, of violence, murder, and war. People do not recognize the source of these attitudes, feelings, motives, and impulses. As I said, they do not SEE the invisible Satan. They hear no audible voice. They do not know the attitude comes from Satan (Rev. 12:9). But they come to FEEL such attitudes, impulses, and desires. That is how Satan DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD.

Self-Centered Attitude. People will feel depressed and won't realize why. But those unaware of this phenomenon, with this self-centered attitude being broadcast and

injected into their unsuspecting minds from earliest childhood, do, to a greater or lesser degree, absorb it until it becomes their normal attitude. It becomes habitual. It does not, of course, exhibit the *same degree* of effect in all minds — one person will become more evil than another. But the natural tendency is there. They come to have it *naturally*. It becomes their very NATURE. And we call it "human nature."

All this is an outstanding example of just *how subtle* Satan is! The finest and most brilliant human minds have been deceived by it. Thus the WHOLE WORLD has been swayed by Satan into what I often term, simply, the "GET" way of life — the way that has become HABITUAL and NATURAL which we term "HUMAN NATURE."

Few realize how many passages in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, warn us about Satan and his subtlety. But first, before I take you to more of these, let us follow on through this 2nd chapter of Ephesians.

In chapter 1 of this letter to the church at Ephesus, the apostle Paul gives thanks and praise to God who has blessed "us" (the converts at Ephesus *and* Paul — all Christians) with every spiritual blessing within the heavenly sphere. God had chosen us before we were born — before the foundation of the world — predestinated to be called to spiritual salvation. God has richly *lavished* on us His grace. He shows that we being called in this time — this New Testament "church age" — are the *first* to be called to this glorious grace (emphasizing that this is NOT the time God is trying to save the world, but only those predestined to be called NOW). Paul has heard of their faith and never ceases to give thanks for it. He prays for their eyes to be opened

fully to the awesome human potential — the supreme greatness of their divine heritage.

I urgently suggest the reader carefully read this first chapter in the Moffatt translation. As translated by Moffatt I think it is one of the most beautiful, uplifting, and inspiring pieces of literature I have ever read.

Power of the Air. Now the highlights of chapter 2: You Christians at Ephesus were spiritually dead, but Christ has given you the impregnation of eternal life. You are now spiritually alive. In the past you lived according to the way of this world (the SELF-centered way), according to the PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR. In II Corinthians 4:4 Satan is called the god of this world, who has blinded the minds of those who do not believe in Christ and His truth. NOT that they inherited this spiritual blindness — but that *Satan* blinded those living in that generation *directly*.

But here in Ephesians 2 Satan is referred to as the PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR! Notice the word *POWER* — the POWER of the air. Then it calls him the SPIRIT (being) that NOW — the time when they were living — actually was WORKING in those of the world who were not obedient — that is, the world in general. The Phillips translation in modern English renders this: "You [then] drifted along in the stream of this world's ideas of living, and obeyed its unseen ruler [who is still operating in those who do not respond to the truth of God]."

Emphatically this shows Satan is the UNSEEN one who, unrealized by the people, is actually swaying their minds, leading them in what I term the "GET" way.

The Phillips translation continues (verse 3): "We all lived like that in
(Continued on page 22)

Eve did not have a mind that was evil before Satan came along and confronted her. But Satan, by subtlety, deceived Eve. Eve's children were not born with this evil nature.

We invite you, our readers, to send in your questions on biblically oriented prophetic, doctrinal, historical and Christian-living topics. While we cannot promise that all questions will be answered in print, we will try to cover all those that are of general interest as space permits. Send your questions to the appropriate address listed on the inside front cover, care of The Good News.

QUESTION: "What does the Bible mean when it says we should fear God? Does it mean that we should be afraid of Him?"

**Netita R.,
Washington, D.C.**

ANSWER: The term "fear" as used in the Bible can encompass a sense of awe, respect and reverence for God, as well as fear of the consequences of disobeying Him. The Bible says that this fear is only the *beginning* of wisdom (Prov. 1:7). When we are "babes in Christ," just coming into a knowledge of God's truth, we may be mainly motivated by fear of the punishment God will bring on those who don't keep His laws (Rev. 20:14-15). But as we grow in understanding, we will be motivated more by love for God and love for our neighbor than by fear of retribution. A mature Christian knows very deeply that Christ has paid the penalty for his sins, and that as soon as he repents of any new infractions he is justified, free of guilt. He has nothing to fear from God, and is free to develop a relationship on a higher level; to become, like Abraham, a "friend of God" (James 2:23). As it says in I John 4:18: "... Perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love."

Q: "I Timothy 2:9 reads: 'In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety' My question is, why the

terms 'shamefacedness' and 'sobriety'? Why should women be ashamed and sober?"

**M. M.,
Lenoir, North Carolina**

A: You quoted I Timothy 2:9 from the King James Version, which is written in somewhat archaic language and therefore misleading in this particular passage. Translated directly from the Greek, verse 9 reads: "In like manner also the women in seemly guise with modesty and discreetness to adorn themselves . . ." (*The Englishman's Greek New Testament*). The Revised Standard Version renders this verse: "Also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel . . ." So this verse is referring to modest and sensible attire, and has nothing to do with being "ashamed" or "sober." Checking several translations and possibly a concordance or other Bible help is sometimes necessary in order to determine the true intent and meaning of an unclear passage. For more on this subject, write for our free booklet *How To Study the Bible*.

Q: "What is a 'solemn assembly'? For instance, how can one keep the Feast of Tabernacles and 'rejoice,' and at the same time be 'solemn'?"

**B. M.,
Greenwich, Connecticut**

A: In Leviticus 23:36 the last great day of the fall festival is called a "solemn assembly" in the King James translation. This is the eighth and final day of the Tabernacles period. The Hebrew word translated "solemn assembly" is *atzereth*, meaning literally "assembly" (see Brown, Driver, Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 783). It can perhaps be translated "closing festival" (see *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, by J. H. Hertz, Soncino Press, p. 524).

The same expression is used of the last day of the spring festival (Unleavened Bread) in Deuteronomy 16:8. The last days of the spring and fall festival periods are

especially important because they "close out" the feasts.

Therefore, we see that the term "solemn assembly," as translated in the King James Version, is somewhat misleading. One of the meanings of the word "solemn" at the time of the King James translation (the seventeenth century) was "sacred" or "having a religious character, associated or connected with religious rites or observances" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. 10, p. 391). The King James translators probably had this meaning in mind when they translated *atzereth* as "solemn assembly." In more modern English the word should probably be rendered "sacred assembly." *The New English Bible* translates *atzereth* as "sacred assembly" in Leviticus 23:36 and "closing ceremony" in Deuteronomy 16:8. Rotherham, in *The Emphasized Bible*, translates "a holy convocation" for Leviticus 23:36. The Hebrew term is intended to indicate *importance* rather than solemnity in the modern sense of that term.

The last days of these two major festivals are Sabbaths or "high days." They are days of rejoicing, closing out the festivals before the attendees return to the relatively mundane pursuits of everyday life for another six months.

Q: "In some of your booklets that deal with prophecy of the future, you seem to indicate a belief that the end of the age and Christ's return will occur within five to ten years from now. Many sources claim Adam was created in 4004 B.C. Since God marked out a 6000-year period before Christ's millennial rule, would this not put Christ's return date some time in the year 1996?"

**Cory H.,
Seattle, Washington**

A: There has been much speculation about the precise time of Jesus' return to this earth. World conditions would seem to indicate that we are living near the close of an age. Many of man's global prob-

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

lems seem to have reached the point of no return. Environmental destruction, the capacity for total war, rapid and continuing economic breakdown, and the moral and social problems of modern society amount to strong evidence that Christ must soon intervene to save man from himself (Matt. 24:22, Moffatt).

But we cannot know just when Christ will return. No man knows the day or the hour of that momentous event (Matt. 24:36). We cannot set dates for the fulfillment of major prophetic events, since such dates are not revealed in biblical chronology. And there is even a great deal of disagreement among scholars and experts as to the exact dates for key *past* events such as the creation and Noah's flood.

Q: "You mentioned the 'Great White Throne Judgment' in a recent GN article. I've often wondered about innocent little babies who never grew to adulthood, and also about the billions of people who never have heard of Jesus Christ. Could you send me some literature explaining what happens to people like this when they die?"

**Jerry S.,
Green Bay, Wisconsin**

A: We are sending you our free booklet *After Death — Then What?* and the reprint article "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?" which explain how these people will be resurrected and given an opportunity for salvation.

Q: "Some scriptures indicate that at the time of the end true Christians will be persecuted and even put to death (Rev. 13:7; Matt. 24:9). On the other hand, there are verses (notably Psalms 91:7-11 and Revelation 3:10) which promise that there is a way for true Christians to escape the trials and tribulations of that day. How can these apparently contradictory scriptures be reconciled?"

**Ken B.,
Chicopee, Massachusetts**

A: Psalms 91:7-13 reads: "A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand; but it will not come near you. You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your habitation, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent. For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot."

These verses, like many in the Psalms, are written in a poetic literary style. They express praise for God's deliverance, which is described in somewhat hyperbolic language. But by no stretch of the imagination can this psalm be taken as a definite promise of God to *always* protect every individual Christian.

As Hebrews, chapter 11, vividly describes, many righteous people have been martyred in the past (Heb. 11:35-38). And many of the righteous will be killed in the future (Rev. 6:9-11). Tradition indicates that all of the original apostles (with the possible exception of John) died violently at the hand of persecutors. Even Christ Himself was crucified.

Revelation 3:10, part of the message to the church at Philadelphia, states: "Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell upon the earth." While it is obvious that this verse cannot be applied universally to every single Christian, it does appear to have a definite application to "the crisis at the close." Even then, however, no individual Christian has a "carte blanche" promise for personal, physical safety.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 states that "time and chance" happen to us

all. If we are caught in the middle of an accident, a war, or a national disaster, perhaps God will have mercy on us and deliver us from our troubles. But again, He may choose, in His perfect wisdom, to let us live through such trials or allow us to die as a result of them.

But does this imply that God is in some way remiss to allow such things to occur? Isaiah 57:1-2 reads: "The righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart; devout men are taken away, while no one understands. [But] the righteous man is taken away from calamity, he enters into peace; they rest in their beds who walk in uprightness." So even death itself can be a haven from this world's troubles.

But where does this leave the average Christian hoping for some form of security to hang on to in this unstable time? Notice Paul's personal example. He experienced a great number of devastating personal trials (see II Cor. 11:23-28), but he never lost faith. He had his mind set on the *only* really definite promise of salvation recorded in Scripture — *the promise of the resurrection*. He was able to say: "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him . . . that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:8-11).

Paul valued being a Christian, and being able to preach the message Christ had given him, over and above his own life. He knew that whatever happened to him physically, he would eventually be resurrected to immortal life. This kind of salvation is what Christians today ought to be pinning their hopes on, rather than some type of physical deliverance which may or may not materialize. □

HAS THE NEW COVENANT BEEN MADE YET?

Millions of professing Christians are basing their religious lives on a careless assumption! They assume that the New Covenant — in all its terms and conditions — is now and has been in full force and effect since the first coming of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. But scripture after scripture in your Bible proves just the opposite is true.

by Garner Ted Armstrong

There exists a fully certified cashier's check with *your name on it!* The date is the day of your baptism. Printed on the check is: "Pay to the order of _____." You can write your name in the blank space. The payment is not in numbers after a dollar sign or even in pounds or escudos; it's in *eternal life!* This is one check that cannot and will not bounce; it's absolutely guaranteed. The signature on the bottom line reads *Jesus Christ of Nazareth!* This particular signature is not inked in the usual blue or black pigment, but in the royal red blood of your Savior.

The Blood of the Covenant. The Bible is a legal document. It could be likened to an unsigned check with your name on it as the payee. Not just any signature of an ordinary corporate financial officer will do: *only one* will deliver the goods — in this case, everlasting life in the family of God.

True Christians who have really repented, have been properly baptized and who now possess the gift of God's Holy Spirit as a result of their repentance (Acts 2:38; 5:32), have already claimed that heavenly certified check signed in the precious blood of Christ.

Jesus Christ — the Messiah — is called, in the Bible, "the messenger

of the covenant" (Mal. 3:1). Those few (Luke 12:32) who now accept the terms and conditions of this New Covenant, when they hear its message preached, may rightfully claim that heavenly certified check written in blood.

On the occasion of Jesus' last Passover with His disciples as a flesh and blood human being, He said: "This cup is the *new testament* [or *covenant*] in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20). Matthew's companion account says: "For this is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). (The words "testament" and "covenant" are closely related in the English Bible.) The apostle Paul called this supreme sacrifice "the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13:20; see also 10:29).

Is this New Covenant — in all its terms and conditions — in full force and effect today? To understand the answer, let's go back to Genesis and begin with that book of your Bible where the word "covenant" is mentioned for the very first time.

The Noahic Covenant. This particular agreement is the predecessor of all other covenants that would be made centuries later with Noah's progeny. Notice it in Genesis 9: "And God spake *unto Noah . . . I establish my covenant with you*, and with your seed [descendants] after you . . ." (verses 8-9). A "covenant" is an agreement between two or more parties, whether spoken or written. It is a contract, or a compact. It may be confirmed by a written document, an oral promise, a handshake, or an understanding between two parties. Usually (as all the biblical covenants *later* were) it is confirmed or documented *in writing*.

What was the covenant God

made with Noah? Verse 11: "And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." Never again would God allow a flood of global proportions to envelop this earth. That is the agreement God entered into with Noah and all his descendants.

In some cases a covenant contains a *convenient reminder* — in the form of a sign or symbol — of the terms and conditions of the original agreement. What theologians term the "Noahic Covenant" provides for this type of stipulation. "And God said, This is the token [or sign or symbol] of the covenant . . . I do set [or appoint — this wasn't the first visible operation of the sun's refraction] my bow [rainbow] in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant . . . and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh" (verses 12-15).

When God sees a rainbow it reminds Him of the original agreement He contracted with Noah and his progeny millennia ago.

Another Important Covenant. Many generations removed from Noah, God began to make a series of important covenants with Abraham, whom He had called out from among his own people (Gen. 12:1-4). I won't go into *all* aspects of God's covenants with him. You can obtain that information by writing for our two free booklets titled *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy* and *What Is the Reward of the Saved?* Suffice it to say here that Abraham and his progeny (through Isaac) were promised first the land of Canaan

(Palestine or the Promised Land), and then that original promise kept being expanded until it encompassed the *whole world* (see Rom. 4:13).

Notice now the *terms and conditions* of the most important of God's covenants with Abraham — it is the only one that bears a specific date: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect [upright, margin]. And I will make *my covenant* [my agreement, my promise] between me and thee . . . and thou shalt be a father of many nations . . ." (Gen. 17:1-4).

Abraham's part of this dated contract was to be spiritually mature before God by keeping all of His commandments, statutes and laws, as he later absolutely proved he was (see Gen. 26:5). God's part of the agreement was to give Abraham and his posterity a great inheritance (Gen. 17:5-6, 8).

This Abrahamic covenant was like the one that God contracted with Noah in that it also contained a clause providing for a token or sign perpetually confirming the original agreement. In this case the token was circumcision of all the male children (verses 10-14).

Abraham was promised an inheritance that far transcended his own physical life: it had to do with the very inheritance of future history — both spiritually and physically. The spiritual aspect is thoroughly explained in the two free booklets *What Do You Mean Salvation?* and *What Is the Reward of the Saved?* The physical part of the promised inheritance is fully expounded in the booklet *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*.

A Mysterious Passage of Scripture. In Exodus the fourth chapter

is an enigmatic set of verses that have long puzzled Bible scholars. "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him [Moses], and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah [Moses' wife] took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his [Moses'] feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So he [God] let him [Moses] go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of *the circumcision*" (verses 24-26).

Max Dimont, in his book *Jews, God and History*, pretty much has the right explanation: "Scholars still debate why Moses' son was not circumcised at birth. It is as if by an afterthought God realizes He has entrusted the exodus of the Jews [Israelites] from Egypt to someone who has not observed the Jewish rite of circumcision, and now he wants to kill Moses. . . . It is Zipporah, the wife of Moses, who quickly performs the operation to appease God's wrath" (p. 39, pocketbook edition).

Moses (a direct descendant of Abraham through Levi), who was to be the messenger of the Old or Sinaitic Covenant and who is called its *mediator*, had a son who did not have the token of the promises to the Fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the twelve patriarchs) evident in his flesh. The why of it is obvious from the content of these verses. Moses had trouble with his family. God's instructions had been rather clear: "And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath *broken my covenant*" (Gen. 17:14).

The Old Covenant. Moses led the people through the exodus and the nation of Israel was born. In the 19th chapter of Exodus, the terms and conditions of the Old (or Sinaitic) Covenant are spelled out to the

children of Israel through Moses. The terms were very simply stated: ". . . IF ye will obey my voice in-deed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine" (verse 5).

Moses talked the whole thing over with the elders of the people (verse 7) and everybody readily agreed to the conditions. Ancient Israel said as with one voice: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (verse 8).

In the twentieth chapter God spoke the Ten Commandments to the people and they were later delivered to Moses in codified form on two tables of stone. (It should be mentioned here that every one of these Ten Commandments was in full force and effect from the time of Adam — *long before* the days of Moses. Ancient kings of Egypt knew that it was a great sin to break them centuries before their codification on Mount Sinai. We have an article available on the subject. Write for the free reprint "Were the Ten Commandments in Force Before Moses?")

Civil codes were then given in chapters 21 through 23. Finally, in chapter 24, the Sinaitic Covenant is *formally ratified*. After all the activity that took place in chapters 20 through 23, "Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord [the Ten Commandments, chapter 20], and all the judgments [chapters 21 through 23]: and all the people answered *with one voice*, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said *will we do*" (Ex. 24:3).

The agreement was then put in writing: "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord . . ." (verse 4).

Ratified in Blood. An elaborate ceremony then followed to commemorate the mutual agreement between God and the people.

Young men slit the throats of young bullocks and blood gushed out into large basins. Then Moses "took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people . . . [and they repeated their promise yet once again] All that the Lord hath said *will we do, and be obedient*" (verse 7).

"And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the *blood of the covenant* which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (verse 8). In this case, the token of the covenant was the blood of animals.

It was a bloody spectacle with the people standing with blood splashed on their garments, their faces, and in their hair. But they learned the lesson: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and *without shedding of blood is no remission*" (Heb. 9:22).

Apostasy and Revival. Throughout their history ancient Israel *never did consistently* keep the terms and conditions of the Old Covenant. It had hardly been ratified a week when they broke it the first time (Ex. 32). A pattern was set that eventually ended with all twelve tribes dispersed in captivity to Gentile nations.

There were temporary revivals when a righteous king would inherit the throne. One of the most noteworthy of these occurred in the days of Josiah: an actual *renewal* of that original Sinaitic Covenant was made in his reign. "And the king . . . made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments . . . with all their heart . . . to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to [entered into, margin] the covenant" (II Kings 23:3).

For a short time the House of Judah reaped the benefits and blessings promised in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. But the peoples' promises were all-too-soon forgotten. For most of their history the nations of Israel and Judah broke God's covenant and suffered sporadically from military conscription, loss of their property, loss of their homes, partial destruction of their cities, limited captivities,

famine — all the attendant evils and curses that automatically occur when a nation transgresses God's law on a wholesale basis. Call it hazards and benefits; blessings and cursings. God says: "If you will keep my covenant I will bless you; but if you will not, all these curses shall come upon you." These are the inevitable results God built into His great law — the cornerstone of which is the Ten Commandments.

Time Element of the New Covenant. The book of Jeremiah permanently preserved for posterity God's thoughts on this whole troublesome chain of events, this vicious cycle that seemed to repeat itself time after time. And Jeremiah recorded God's *eventual remedy* as

"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts."

well: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel [the lost ten tribes] and the house of Judah [basically the Jewish people] with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict [why? — because they consistently broke the Old Covenant and threw God's laws to the ground]; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord" (Jer. 31:27-28).

But *when* will all this building and planting occur? *What is the true time element?* Let's read further.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that *I will make a new covenant* with the house of Israel,

and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I [brought] . . . them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant *they brake* [continually], although *I was an husband unto them*, saith the Lord" (verses 31-32).

(The Old [or Sinaitic] Covenant was in a very real sense a marriage agreement between God and His wife — the nation of Israel. God as the husband was their Protector and Provider. In return for the many benefits He bestowed upon her, she as a nation was to be an obedient and faithful wife. This beautiful biblical analogy is carefully analyzed in our free booklet titled *Why Marriage!*)

Verse 33: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

The key to the vital time element is found in verse 34: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall *all know me*, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

There are *no* nations today that *know God*. Instead, this *whole world*, with all of its nations, lies in utter wickedness (I John 5:19), being deceived by a great fallen archangel called Satan the devil (Rev. 12:9).

Obviously, these passages in Jeremiah speak of a *time yet future* — they are cast *in a millennial setting*. Many companion prophecies speak of the very same time — a wonderful utopian setting with Jesus Christ of Nazareth ruling this whole world (see Jer. 32:38-41; Ezek. 36:25-35; 37:21-26; Isa. 2, 11; Micah 4; Rev. 20; etc.).

Millions erroneously believe that the New Covenant of which Jeremiah spoke is *already in full force* and *effect* on this earth today. But many clear prophecies in the Bible tell us *otherwise!*

Today instead of wholesale repentance, turning to God's law and

reaping the benefits, people by and large *react* to the preaching of the true gospel exactly as prophesied in the book of Ezekiel.

"And thou, son of man [the person preaching the gospel], be not afraid of them . . . though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions . . . thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious . . . But the house of Israel will not hearken [listen] unto thee; for they *will not* hearken unto me [God]: for all the house of Israel are *impudent and hardhearted*" (Ezek. 2:6-7; 3:7).

If the gospel is not greeted with outright rebellion, then it is received with unbelievable lethargy. "Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against [of, margin] thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another . . . Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. And they come unto thee . . . and they hear thy words, but *they will not do them*: for with their mouth they shew much love, but *their heart goeth after covetousness* . . . for they hear thy words, but *they do them not*" (Ezek. 33:30-32).

This is the national feedback! Does this sound like total repentance on a national scale and the humble acceptance of the terms and conditions of the promised New Covenant? Or is it apparent that the broad majority of the people *during the Church Age simply will not* listen and heed?

Millions *suppose* this "Christian dispensation" is a "New Covenant" time — a time characterized by New Testament beliefs and teachings, which they *assume* have replaced and set aside *all* "Old Testament" beliefs and teachings.

Millions assume the time of the "New Covenant" began with Christ's human ministry on the earth. They carelessly assume that all "Christianity" is under the terms and conditions of the *New Covenant today*, which, they erroneously *think*, frees them from any obligation to *obey God!*

They believe the Bible says the New Covenant has been made with

the Church! But did you read, carefully, that 31st chapter of Jeremiah? The Bible clearly speaks of a time when Christ will confirm the terms and conditions of His covenant (of which He is called the Mediator) — that of writing the laws of God in the spiritual tables of the *hearts* of human beings — in their "inward parts," with human *nations*, including the *Jewish* people!

The House of Judah is clearly identified, and that *never* refers to the New Testament Church!

Thus, the ratifying of the New Covenant, to the peoples for whom it is proposed, is to occur after the second coming of Christ, with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah — *and*, as other scriptures show, even with Gentiles who, when called and converted, become "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"!

Make no mistake! The Sinaitic Covenant is waxing old (Heb. 8:13). A New Covenant is being confirmed between Jesus Christ and those in whom He places His Spirit — the laws of God *are being* written on the fleshly tables of the hearts of those who obey His command to repent and be baptized! But that is by *invitation*, today — and not a global, worldwide phenomenon!

Millions who assume *this* is the age of that "New Covenant" have never studied the Bible carefully to see how it clearly shows Christ has completed *only the first half* of His ministry; the ministry of *confirming the covenant with many for one week* — meaning a full seven-years' ministry! He was cut off (crucified) in the *midst* of the week (Dan. 9:27), after fulfilling only the *first half* of His ministry of *confirming* (stating the terms and conditions, explaining, proposing, etc.) the covenant with *many!* His truly *big* ministry is *yet ahead!*

This is *not yet God's TIME* to convert the whole world. He simply is *not* writing His law on the fleshly tables of the hearts of all the peoples of either Israel or Judah. Today is *not* the only day of salvation. You will find that absolutely proved in scripture after scripture in our free booklet *After Death — Then What?* and reprint article "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?" □

THE ONE SIN THAT CAN'T BE FORGIVEN

The unpardonable sin. Even the words seem ominous, black, terrifying. Is there a sin so bad it can never be forgiven? Many a struggling Christian, pondering his eternal fate, has been frightened by the term "unpardonable sin." The Bible does speak of a sin which cannot be repented of, hence cannot be forgiven. But, like many other biblical teachings, it is often misunderstood. In a recent *Plain Truth* article, Herbert Armstrong wrote, "Anyone who fears he may have committed the unpardonable sin — is perhaps worried about it and hopes he has not committed it, and still wants to have God's salvation — no such has committed it." If you'd like to know more about what the Bible says on this subject, write for the free booklet *What Do You Mean — The Unpardonable Sin?* (See addresses on inside front cover.)

What do you mean—
"The
Unpardonable
Sin"?

WHAT IS REAL HUMILITY?

You've heard of the humble carpenter of Nazareth. And you've also heard of people who live in monasteries and profess to specialize in humility. But just what is true humility — and, more important, how can you personally acquire it?

by L. Leroy Neff

Christ said that it will be the "poor in spirit" who inherit God's Kingdom (Matt. 5:3). He also said: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (verse 5).

We see from these two important verses found in the well-known Beatitudes that meekness and humility are major requirements for Christians. The teaching of Jesus Christ as expounded and explained in Christ's sermon on the mount in Matthew 5, 6 and 7 lists these essentials *first!*

But there is a general lack of understanding as to what true humility really is. There is a kind of Christian posturing labeled "humility" that is rather prevalent today, but it is not really true humility at all.

What Humility Is Not. Some people think that to be humble is to have a lack of drive or zeal. Some believe that only the poor are humble. Such poor people are sometimes proud of their poverty and lack of industry. But this is not true humility.

There is another kind of false humility which is really "pseudo-spirituality." It is sometimes accompanied by an affected or quavering voice and religious-appearing manner. Such trappings also have nothing to do with true humility.

A person unfamiliar with the Bible may not comprehend what real humility is. Such an individual may look upon those who are apparently pious, sanctimonious or religious as being humble. In Colossians 2, there are several verses which warn

against this kind of false humility. Such people who have it are said to be "vainly puffed up" (verse 18), which is the exact opposite of true humility.

People with this kind of pseudo-humility may observe certain prohibitions or practice asceticism (verse 21). These practices are based on the ideas and concepts of men rather than the commandments of Almighty God. But none of these outward indications are evidence of true humility.

What Is True Humility? True godly humility is a product of the working of the Holy Spirit in one's life. It results from a close relationship with the Almighty Creator God.

Christ taught about one facet of humility using a child as an example. He said: "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:4). Jesus showed that we need to have the demeanor and frame of mind as found in a properly reared infant. That is, a childlike attitude without pretensions: guileless, teachable, responsive and eager to learn.

David referred to this characteristic of little children when he said: "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child" (Ps. 131:2). A young child that has been lovingly cared for will be without guile and have an open-eyed willingness to learn.

But humility goes deeper than this. Genuine humility is a proper evaluation of one's self, compared to God and Christ. The word "humility" comes from the Latin word *humilis*. From this same word we derive our English word "humus" or earth. When we see ourselves in proper perspective, we will see that we are mortal, made of dust. We should come to recognize that we are now imperfect, weak, earthy. We have great potential — we can become sons of God — but for now we are prone to error and weak-

ness. We are but one breath or one heartbeat away from death.

God "knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more" (Ps. 103:14-15). But we humans tend to become self-centered in our orientation and to forget how fragile and short-lived our existence is. We need to realize our mortality very deeply. From God's point of view, all peoples are but dust. We need to understand, then, how weak and insignificant all of us are compared to the greatness of God.

Worm's-Eye View. We ought to compare our lives with the perfect life of Jesus Christ. David had this "worm's-eye view" of himself (Ps. 22:6). If we see ourselves from this perspective, we won't have an inflated opinion of ourselves.

One of the main problems in viewing ourselves honestly is that we like to compare ourselves with others, and in the evaluation the other person usually comes out second best. The Bible warns us about comparing ourselves with others and says that such people who do so "are not wise" (II Cor. 10:12).

The Bible also tells us that we are not to think of ourselves more highly than we should (Rom. 12:3). Rather, we should esteem others better than ourselves, putting their welfare ahead of our own (Phil. 2:3). If we really do these things, we will have no reason to feel exalted and self-important.

Moses summed up how God tested ancient Israel (and how He is working with true Christians today): "And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments, or not. And he *humbled* you and let you

hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. 8:2-3).

One of the main reasons that God put the fledgling nation of Israel through all these tests and trials was to find out whether or not they would obey Him in all circumstances. When He let them go hungry for awhile, and then fed them with manna, He taught them that there is more to life than just physical sustenance and that even physical sustenance comes from God. They were to learn to acknowledge God as the source of all life lest they come to consider themselves self-sufficient, not heeding God's providence.

Moses also warned in this same chapter that when physical goods are plentiful and all of our needs are taken care of, then we should be careful to remember who gave us this prosperity. When we forget God and His blessings — when our hearts are lifted up (verse 14) — we no longer will have proper humility.

Each of us must develop true humility. But will our humility come the hard way as a result of God causing or permitting traumatic circumstances to come our way? Or can we learn from the mistakes of those who have finally, through many trials and difficulties, developed this essential trait?

God can bring us down by serious illness, severe trials, persecution or grinding poverty. That is the hard way to learn humility. An easier way is to come to that same attitude by seeing, hearing and learning from the experiences of others.

Traumatic Experiences. Moses was a man that Scripture tells us was "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). How did Moses become so meek and humble?

He had been reared in the household of Pharaoh, receiving a royal upbringing and the best education the land of Egypt offered. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, after growing into manhood he had a prominent and successful position as a general in the Egyptian army.

Moses may well have been filled with vanity and self-importance during this period of his life. In due time, he became concerned about his brethren and murdered an Egyptian who was oppressing one of the Israelites. Moses was found out in his crime and was forced to flee into the desert, where he lived in exile for 40 years. He no doubt had plenty of time to reminisce about his past great accomplishments and to regret his mistakes.

At age 80 he saw the burning bush in the wilderness and, possibly for the first time in his life, had a personal encounter with the Almighty God. Time, circumstance and experience wrought a profound effect. The cumulative impact of his trials, tests and experiences, culminating in his meeting with Almighty God, matured him and produced genuine humility.

Oftentimes, people who have lived long and have benefited from their experiences become more mature, more mellow. They have a better perspective of life and what it is all about, which results in a deeper humility.

Job was another man of antiquity who at one time had great power, authority and influence. But all of this was taken away suddenly. He endured great suffering and agony for many months. Finally, after God talked to him personally, he also came to have this rare attitude of true humility. After this contact with the true Creator God, he said: "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6). He, too, came to properly evaluate his own place in the universe.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was one of the most powerful

rulers of ancient times. He was proud, arrogant and ruthless. But God brought him down to a condition which few men have ever experienced. He lost his sanity and became like a wild animal for seven long years.

When his wits returned and he was able once again to assume personal control of the great Babylonian Empire, he said this about his debasing and humiliating experience: "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (Dan. 4:37). Nebuchadnezzar had also finally been able to properly evaluate himself, a thing he could not do before he had been struck down. After a lifetime of pride and arrogance, he now had some humility.

There are many other examples in the Bible of people who were vain and puffed up, but who went through experiences that finally humbled them.

Read and Learn? In a sense, humility can't be learned entirely from a book. It is something God develops in us through day-to-day experiences which exercise and develop His Holy Spirit. But by being receptive to God's Spirit and ever mindful of biblical examples, we can avoid having to learn humility by the school of very hard knocks. Will it be necessary for God to teach us through traumatic experiences, the hard way? Or can we learn an easier way: from the mistakes of others, from the multitude of scriptures on this subject and the guidance of His Spirit in our minds day by day?

If we want to be in God's Kingdom, we need to acquire true humility. Only those who are teachable, who have this personal realization of their own worth compared to God's greatness, will inherit God's Kingdom that is soon going to be established on this earth. □

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG PROCLAIMS GOSPEL IN NASSAU

"We are in the Bahamas announcing that the Kingdom of God is coming," stated Herbert W. Armstrong emphatically on the opening evening of a three-night personal appearance campaign in the capital city of Nassau, February 20-22. The campaign concluded a week of meetings and speaking engagements that included audiences with the governor-general and prime minister of the subtropical archipelago located southeast of the tip

of Florida. Mr. Armstrong spoke the first two nights and Clarence Bass, regional director for the Caribbean area, spoke the third. The meetings were held in the Crown Ballroom of Loew's Paradise Island Hotel, and altogether over 1500 were in attendance for the three nights.

The first evening Mr. Armstrong spoke for an hour and 15 minutes developing the theme he has used in other overseas speaking engagements. He spotlighted man's problems and traced their origin using the biblical record.

"Our first parents did not believe what God began to teach them from the day they were created," he said. "God said to Adam and Eve, 'You are mortal and you will die if you go the wrong way.' But Satan said, 'Now you know better than that! . . . How do you know?

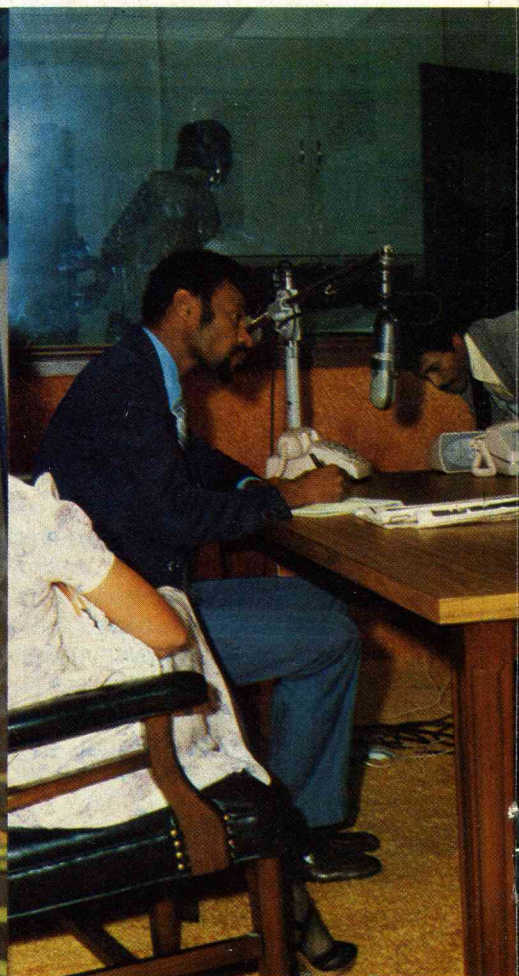
You only have God's word,' and so they began to doubt.

"Jesus came 4,000 years later. There were many who believed on Him, but few believed what He said. After 3½ years of teaching on earth, there were only 120 who really believed Jesus and still followed Him."

The next evening he elaborated further on his theme and emphasized that the impending return of Christ is the only answer to man's dilemmas.

On the third evening, Kingsley Mather, preaching elder for the Nassau Church, and Mr. Bass shared the rostrum. Mr. Mather spoke on child rearing, and Mr. Bass followed up with a lecture on family relations.

A full week of activities preceded the campaign. Stanley Rader, who



accompanies Mr. Armstrong on his travels, felt that these activities were very successful in giving Mr. Armstrong and the upcoming campaign maximum publicity.

"Mr. Armstrong's first official activity upon arriving was a press conference which was attended by the two leading daily papers, a weekly paper and a representative of the Bahamian national broadcasting station. The result of the interview was front-page coverage the following day in both dailies."

Tuesday, February 17, Mr. Armstrong was received by the governor-general, Milo B. Butler. Mr. Rader said that "Mr. Butler insisted on holding a luncheon in Mr. Armstrong's honor on Friday at the governor's mansion and was delighted to accept Mr. Armstrong's invitation to attend the opening night activi-

ties on Friday evening." The next day, Mr. Armstrong was received by Prime Minister Lynden O. Pindling. The prime minister informed Mr. Armstrong that he was a long-time listener to *The World Tomorrow* radio program. "We discussed our hopes for a permanent Ambassador International Cultural Foundation project in the Bahamas," said Mr. Rader.

After meeting the prime minister, Mr. Armstrong spoke for half an hour to the Nassau Rotary Club. The following day he addressed the Kiwanis Club.

On Wednesday evening, Mr. Armstrong was honored at a dinner arranged through the acting cultural-affairs officer for the Bahamas, Kayla Lockhart Edwards. According to Mr. Rader, "There were many people from the elite of Nassau so-

ciety who attended the dinner, including people in government, in the local university and in industry. Mr. Armstrong stayed only a few minutes after the reception. I had the privilege of addressing the group of about 250 people for about 10 minutes, explaining again our intended role in the life of the Bahamian people and our presence during that immediate week." □

BUSY WEEK: *Herbert Armstrong speaks in Nassau about God's plan of salvation (left) and meets Sir Milo B. Butler, governor-general of the Bahamas (right). In center, Stanley Rader (answering a question) and Osamu Gotoh, who work with and accompany Mr. Armstrong on his travels, take part in a radio interview.*

GN Photos



GARNER TED ARMSTRONG INTERVIEWS SADAT

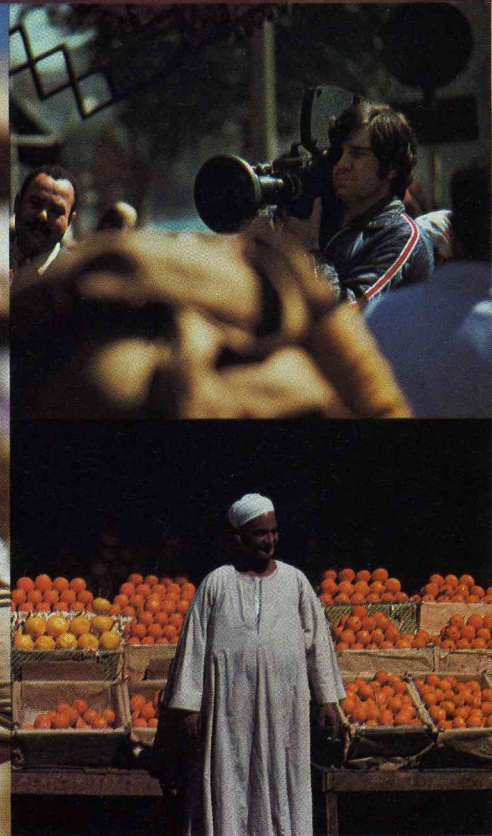
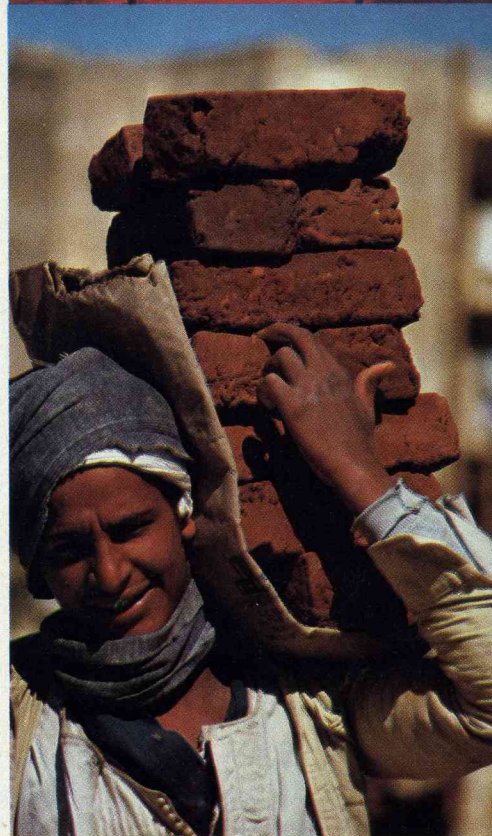
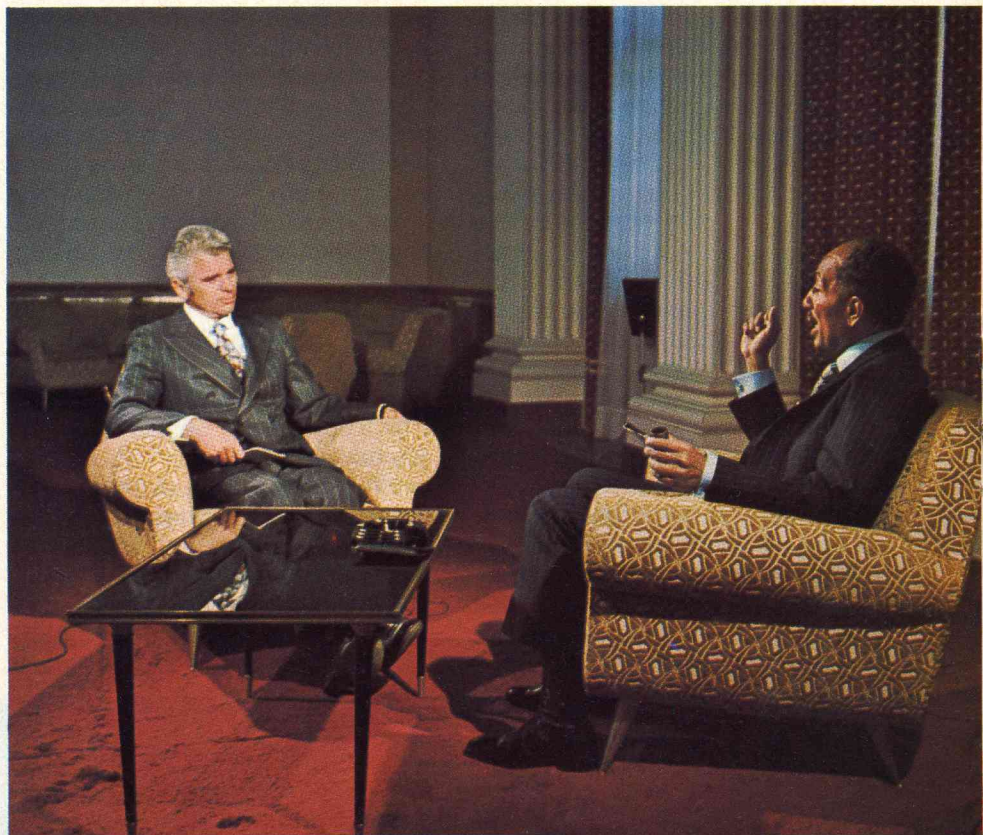
On March 6, Garner Ted Armstrong interviewed Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat. The one-hour interview — since excerpted on nationwide television in the United States and Canada — was the highlight of a six-day trip to Egypt by Mr. Armstrong.

The visit to Egypt began on March 3 with an interview with the Egyptian President's wife, Jehan el-Sadat. "I found her to be a very gracious and charming lady," reported Mr. Armstrong afterwards. "And I feel she is genuinely concerned with the plight of the people of her country. She is actively engaged in various programs to help educate the impoverished and illiterate of the country, such as providing sewing machines and various forms of vocational training for some of the women. And she is using her name and office to sponsor hospitals and medical programs."

The interview with Mrs. Sadat took place in the presidential palace located on the bank of the Nile in downtown Cairo. "The room in which we conducted the interview featured a collection of gifts which had been received by the president and first lady of Egypt," observed Mr. Armstrong. "On a glass shelf in a position of prominence in the room was a piece of Steuben glass which had been presented to President Sadat by my father almost two years before."

The interview with President Sadat on March 6 took place on the outskirts of Cairo. Mr. Armstrong spent a full hour with the president and consumed two full reels of videotape.

The day before seeing the president, Mr. Armstrong inspected the Suez Canal. "We went to the city of





Ismalia, just north of the Great Bitter Lakes," said Mr. Armstrong. "We also toured the canal at a narrower point where, only a pistol shot away, we could see the fortifications of the famous Bar Lev line, breached by Egypt in the 1973 war."

Working behind the scenes with Mr. Armstrong was a seven-man television crew and our director of Arab Affairs, Adli Muhtadi. Arriving two weeks in advance of Mr. Armstrong, the crew crisscrossed Egypt, filming some 15½ hours of videotape and using 6,000 feet of film.

The crew covered all aspects of Egyptian life — cities, schools, social services, religious activities, village life, farming, industry and housing construction. They toured important sites throughout Egypt such as the Aswan High Dam, the Suez Canal, and historical sites in Luxor and around Cairo. They also recorded interviews with leading businessmen, educators and government officials. These included Dr. Mustafa Khalil, chairman for the Committee on the Future of Political Action in Egypt, and a former Deputy Prime Minister; Dr. Aisha Rateb, minister of Social Affairs; Hamed el-Sayeh, chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Bank of Egypt; and Dr. Osman Badran, minister of Agriculture.

Altogether Mr. Armstrong felt that he and the television crew had collected material for "very fine, in-depth television documentaries on Anwar el-Sadat, the nation of Egypt and current difficulties in the Middle East." □

SCENES AND BEHIND THE SCENES: The interview with President Sadat (top left) on the outskirts of Cairo was the high point of an extensive survey of Egypt. For two weeks the TV crew crisscrossed the country shooting scenes of Egypt — old and new. Specially designed video pod (lower right) enabled crew to transport modern electronic equipment wherever needed.

Scott Crawford, Lyle Christopherson (upper right) — GN

NO! YOU CAN'T EARN YOUR SALVATION!

Does salvation come by works of law? If so, no one will ever be saved!

by Brian Knowles

One of the greatest continuing debates in the ecclesiastical world has been the question of "law versus grace." Are Christians saved by the keeping of various laws — or are they saved by grace apart from any law-keeping?

Let's put it another way — must Christians deliberately *break* biblical laws in order to demonstrate that they are not "under law"? For example, should the Church of God trample on the Sabbath day in order to show that it is not under the Old Covenant?

Not Without Law. The apostle Paul made a very significant statement to the Corinthians: "To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those under the law I became as one under the law — though not being myself under the law — that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law — *not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ . . .*" (I Cor. 9:20-21).

The statement about not being "under the law" can be taken one of two ways: Paul was not under the Mosaic law code, or Paul was not under the *penalty* of the law of God. But whichever way you understand it, one thing remains clear: Paul was "not without law toward God"! Paul was not *antinomian* — against law. He had a strong sense of what was lawful and what was not. In Paul's mind there was legal activity

before God and there was also illegal conduct.

And what did Paul say his sense of legality was based upon? The "law of Christ." Exactly what is meant by the law of Christ? Did Jesus come to undermine the Mosaic law and replace it with some better legal system? Not at all. Christ said: "Think *not* that I am come to destroy the law . . ." (Matt. 5:17, KJV).

Therefore, *nothing* Christ said or did destroyed the law as it was

Christians are told that they must not sin. They must not, therefore, break divine law. Paul said: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies . . ." (Rom. 6:12).

given to Israel under Moses. What, then, did Jesus come to do in relation to the Mosaic law? Matthew 5:17 continues: ". . . I came not to destroy but *to fulfill*." Jesus came to magnify (Isa. 42:21) and to fulfill the law — *not* to destroy it. But just *how* did Jesus fulfill the law?

A New Commandment. Jesus said to His disciples: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love

for one another" (John 13:34-35).

Was this "new" commandment merely an incidental platitude? Or was it an all-encompassing principle which defines *how* the law was to be fulfilled?

Christ elaborated on the meaning of the great law of love in responding to a subtle question by a lawyer: "'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?' And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is *like it*, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend *all* the law and the prophets'" (Matt. 22:36-40).

How was the second commandment like the first? What was the common denominator? *Love!* Love in two directions: love toward God and love toward neighbor.

Jesus taught that those who were able to perfectly love everyone — including God — would be able to fulfill the whole intent of the entire Old Testament!

Paul agreed with this when he told the Romans that "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). Those who are capable of loving perfectly and consistently will have no need of some formal written law code defining legal human relationships because, as the first part of this verse says, "*Love does no wrong to a neighbor . . .*"

Paul taught that Christians should "Owe no one anything, except to love one another; *for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law*. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall

not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet, *and any other commandment, are summed up* in this sentence, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' " (verses 8-9).

Those with whom "the love of God is shed abroad" in their hearts (Rom. 5:5) are not going to commit adultery with someone else's wife. They will not steal or murder. They will do nothing to hurt another human being. They will go far beyond the mere letter of the law in avoiding offense.

They will fulfill the thrust, meaning and intent of the great moral law of God — the Decalogue — by walking in love toward all men.

Is this not *how* Jesus Himself *fulfilled* the law? Did He not love perfectly? Did He not lay down His life for His friends — for all of mankind? Is there any *greater* love than that? No. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Jesus never once sinned! He was absolutely perfect in His moral conduct for 33½ years of human life.

Meaning of Sin. Sin is defined as "the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4, KJV). Or, as it can be rendered: "Sin is lawlessness." If there is no law for Christians, then how can there be sin? Sin does not exist without a law to define it as such (Rom. 5:13; 7:7-8). Paul said that "By the law is the *knowledge* of sin" (Rom. 3:20). The law *identifies* sin for what it is. For example, the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," defines the meaning of "lust." Lust is an inordinate or illegal desire for something or someone to which or to whom you are

not entitled (Ex. 20:17; Rom. 7:7).

Christians are told that they must not sin. They must not, therefore, break divine law. Paul said: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies . . ." (Rom. 6:12).

The apostle John said: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not . . ." (I John 2:1, KJV).

But some professing Christians will claim that Jesus and Paul *did away with* the need to keep the law — i.e., the Ten Commandments.

The road to salvation is a straight and narrow one. It goes directly through Jesus Christ — no one else (Acts 4:10-12). He is the one and only way. He is the door to eternity.

They claim that since we are under "grace," there is no need to consider oneself obligated to keep the moral law.

They will quote Paul's statement that "Christ is the end of the law" (Rom. 10:4). But the English word "end" may be defined as "the result of an activity; the goal, ultimate intention or purpose for the attainment of which an agent does something; a final cause" — *not* just the cessation of an object or event (*Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*). The Greek word translated "end" is

telos. It can mean the "end or goal toward which a movement is being directed, *outcome*" (Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 819). In this sense, Christ could be considered the *outcome* of the law rather than the termination of it. Paul spoke of Christ being "formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). Those who keep the law form Christlike character. Those who are led by the Holy Spirit take on the divine nature (II Peter 1:4).

John wrote decades after the death of Paul that "He who says 'I know him' but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps his word, in him truly *love* for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him: he who says he abides in him *ought to walk in the same way in which he walked*" (I John 2:4-6).

Christians are to be imitators of Christ (I Cor. 11:1). They are to mimic His attitudes and His lifestyle. And Jesus never sinned. He kept the law perfectly — including the commandment regarding the Sabbath day.

Of course, we know that we are not truly capable of imitating Christ perfectly. We know that "all have sinned and *fall short of* the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Anyone who claims never to have sinned is a liar by God's definition (I John 1:8, 10).

Justification. And since we have all sinned — and do sin — we know that salvation *cannot possibly* come as a result of law-keeping! It must come by some other method. Paul explains: "Since all have sinned

and fall short of the glory of God, they are *justified by his grace* as a gift. . . . he justifies him who has faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:23-26).

Grace may be defined simply as free, unmerited, undeserved pardon for past sins. Christians are made righteous — justified — by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and by faith in that sacrifice.

If justification came through works of law — any law — then we all stand condemned. The law condemns us to death because the wages of sin is eternal death (Rom. 6:23). Since no one but Christ Himself ever kept the law perfectly, none can be saved by law-keeping. All it takes is *one* slip to qualify a person for the label "sinner."

Therefore, Christians are the recipients of the gift of God — justification through faith and grace. We are all under grace. We are all pardoned as a result of the goodness and mercy of God and the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ.

License to Sin? But does this condition of being "under grace" give us license to throw away the law? Are we now entitled to break the law with impunity simply because we are the recipients of God's grace? Does this condition allow us to practice our own arbitrary brand of "situation ethics" in which we become the creators of our own fluctuating moral standards? Paul's answer is clear: "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" (Rom. 6:1-2.)

Christians are not now licensed to trample on any of the Ten Commandments simply because they are the recipients of God's grace. Paul made that point abundantly clear. He said again for emphasis: "What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!" (Verse 15.) Rather, we are to be "obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching" (verse 17).

The Purpose of Law. Christians must have *standards!* They are very much under law to God. There is legal and illegal activity. There is a need for obedience. The Decalogue is a starting place for defining sin. It is a standard which Christ, in the

Sermon on the Mount, magnified and expanded. He expounded a number of laws contained in the Decalogue in their full, spiritual intent. He taught ramifications that went far beyond the mere letter!

But no Christian can ever be saved by his "works of the law"! Why so? Because no Christian can ever keep that law perfectly — even with the Holy Spirit — because "the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). Even the mighty apostle Paul was guilty of sin at the very height of his ministry. He spoke of the "sin which dwells in my members" (Rom. 7:23). He considered himself a "wretched man." He knew that his physical, fleshly body was merely a vehicle of death because of its sinfulness. He agonized about his own moral failures by saying: "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from *this body of death?*" (Verse 24.)

How could he be saved from the penalty of his own sins? What could be done? Who would save him? "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Verse 25.)

The road to salvation is a straight and narrow one. It goes directly through Jesus Christ — no one else (Acts 4:10-12). He is the *one* and only way. He is the door to eternity for every Christian. He said: "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life*" (John 14:6).

The way to salvation is *not through law*. The law condemns us all to eternal death. The way into the Kingdom is through Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He alone is the Savior.

But Christians today, like Paul before them, are still under law to God! We are *not* excused from obedience because we are under grace. We must, with divine help, still keep the laws of God to the best of our ability — always striving for perfection (Matt. 5:48). The law governs human interrelationships. Obedience to law ensures an orderly, peaceful community. The law protects. The keeping of law produces character! It develops the necessary *habit* of obedience. But it *cannot* save you — only Christ can do that.

God's way is not "law versus grace" — it is grace *with* law! □

THE JESUS MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW

Did you know that many, if not most, of the popularly accepted beliefs about Jesus Christ are mistaken? Consider these little-known facts: Jesus was a hardy, masculine individual who worked for years as a carpenter before beginning His ministry. He did not break the civil laws of His day and didn't urge others to do so. He had brothers and sisters, owned a home and paid taxes. Jesus clearly taught that He came to uphold and magnify the law of God, not to do away with it. And, as surprising as it seems, Jesus did not teach that heaven is the reward of a Christian. If you want proof, or would like to know more about the real Jesus of Nazareth, write for the free booklet, *The Real Jesus*. (See inside front cover for the address nearest you.)



The
Real
Jesus

THE BIBLE IN A CHANGING WORLD

SEX ON THE JOB

A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* (January 29, 1976) decried the sexual harassment many career women suffer at the hands of bosses and clients. These women charge that no matter how circumspect their behavior, they are forced to put up with unwanted sexual advances on the job. If they refuse to play along with these offers, they risk dismissal or ruin their chances for promotion or advancement.

Men, too, can suffer such harassment, but usually it is the other way around — men are the ones who normally hold the power to coerce underlings into unwanted relationships.

The Bible records one such on-the-job incident in Genesis 39:1-20. Joseph, son of Jacob, had been sold into slavery by his brothers. In Egypt, he advanced to the position of trusted ruler of Potiphar's household. But Potiphar's wife demanded that he also perform certain after-hours services on her behalf. Not wanting to betray his master's trust, he refused — but was framed with a rape charge, dismissed from his job and thrown into prison.

The Bible is explicit in its instruction in this area. If employers and employees followed the plain teachings of Scripture there would be no such problem. First of all, Exodus 20:14, one of the Ten Commandments, is an injunction against adultery. And I Corinthians 6:18 contains an admonition against fornication (RSV: "immorality"). Christ Himself taught that to even *look* at a woman to "lust after" her mentally was as bad as actually carrying out an act of adultery (Matt. 5:27-28). Christ had many women followers and disciples whom He taught. He interacted with them on a daily basis, but He always treated them with respect and dignity (see Luke 10:38-42; 8:1-3; John 4:1-39; 8:3-11; 12:1-8). If all men and women

were to treat their associates on the job as Christian brothers and sisters in accordance with God's laws, then the problem of sex on the job would immediately disappear.

THE BIBLE AND BIRTH CONTROL

In a world teeming with four billion people — a world which is expected to add a minimum of two billion more by the end of this century — more and more leaders and planners are coming to the conclusion that worldwide birth control of some sort is a moral and physical imperative. With the earth's resources and food-producing capability already feeling the strain, it's obvious that drastic steps will soon have to be taken to stem this growing tide of humanity. Either birth rates will be reduced by timely introduction of family planning methods, or death rates will inevitably rise as famine, malnutrition, disease and war take their toll on the human race.

But family planning efforts face almost overwhelming ideological and religious hurdles in many areas of the world. Both Islam and Roman Catholicism ban the use of artificial birth control methods. Although debate among Roman Catholic clerics rages on in the U.S., the Pope still reflects the traditional Catholic position.

Those who argue against birth control often cite the case of Onan recorded in Genesis 38. God destroyed Onan for refusing to "raise up seed" by his brother's wife. But his sin was his refusal to obey his father, *not* the fact that he practiced a form of birth control (see Gen. 38:8-9).

Others reason that sex is acceptable only for procreation. However, this argument is destroyed by Paul's instructions to the Corinthians in verses 3 to 5 of I Corinthians 7: "The husband must give the wife her conjugal dues, and the wife in the same way must give the hus-

band his . . ." (Moffatt). The word "conjugal" here means "sexual" or "marital."

Paul continues: "Do not withhold sexual intercourse from one another, unless you agree to do so for a time, in order to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again. You must not let Satan tempt you through incontinence" (Moffatt). So withholding sexual intercourse except for procreation is a direct violation of these instructions.

And the idea that the Roman Catholic-approved "rhythm method" of birth control (abstinence from sex during fertile days of a woman's monthly cycle) is "natural" while other methods are "artificial" is not logical either — especially when one considers that most methods of birth control attempt to accomplish the same end result. That is, they prevent the union of the male sperm with the female ovum. Rhythm or abstinence simply removes this process one step further backward in the sequence of sexual events. While some might argue that rhythm is natural, one could wonder how "natural" this approach is in the light of the apostle Paul's enjoiner *not* to withhold sexual relations.

Also pertinent to the question of birth control is Paul's admonition in I Timothy 5:8: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." How does one adequately provide for his own if he has no way of controlling the number of bodies he has to feed, house and clothe? Nowhere in the Bible does God command us to "step out on faith" and have more children than we can properly support or educate.

In the light of such scriptures, it would seem almost un-Christian for the average couple in today's society *not* to use some viable method of family planning. (For more information on the purposes of sex, write for our free booklet *Is Sex Sin?*) □

HUMAN NATURE

(Continued from page 5)

the past, and followed the impulses and imaginations of our evil nature . . . like everyone else." This "nature" has been *acquired* from Satan. It was not inherited from our parents. It was not created in us by God. That which has become *habitual* and therefore *natural* becomes a NATURE within us.

Such nature is NOT hereditary, but an *acquired* characteristic. This very passage shows the AUTHOR of this "nature" to be Satan, NOT GOD. The next words in the Phillips translation are: "being under the wrath of God by nature." It would make no sense at all for God's wrath to be on us BECAUSE OF WHAT GOD PUT WITHIN US. Adam was NOT created with this "EVIL nature." Adam acquired it from Satan. Lucifer (Satan) was created PERFECT. He acquired it by false reasoning. These Ephesians, in their generation, had acquired it from Satan. But now, IN CHRIST, through His grace, Christ had given them LIFE, who *were* spiritually dead because of this acquired evil nature.

Effect on Converted Christians.

But how about the converted Christian? His spirit, like all others, is tuned on Satan's wavelength. The same tendency, just as if this evil nature were inherent in him from birth, is present. Satan has been injecting it since early childhood. But the true Christian has repented of that WAY. He has REJECTED it. He has turned from it. He has accepted and turned to GOD'S way — the way of GOD'S GOVERNMENT!

The passage in Ephesians 2 explains it. People generally, in the world, are spiritually dead. They have gone along with the rest of the world in the self-centered way. As the Phillips translation renders it,

they have "drifted along on the stream of this world's way of living." They have "obeyed its UNSEEN ruler [who is still operating in those who do not respond to the truth of God]."

I have quoted from the Phillips translation, not because it is a more accurate or dependable translation, but because it brought out the meaning more clearly in this particular passage.

Conversion *does not disconnect* Satan's wavelength. The tendency to become resentful over real or fancied wrongs or injustices from others, the tendency to try to get the best of others, may still prove a temptation. THESE are the things the converted Christian must strive to *overcome!*

When Jesus spoke of OVERCOMING, He referred to overcoming these WAYS of Satan, which are contrary to GOD'S way. The Christian must, as Peter was inspired to write, GROW in grace and in the KNOWLEDGE of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We read in James 4: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." This is speaking of resisting these very self-centered thoughts, attitudes, tendencies, and ways which Satan injected into us from childhood and is constantly broadcasting and injecting into unsuspecting minds through the spirit in man.

However, no man is IMPELLED to respond to and obey these impulses being broadcast by Satan. Satan has no power to FORCE anyone to think or do wrong. But the unsuspecting automatically do without fully realizing what is taking place in their minds. They drift along.

Evil Nature Acquired. The passage in II Corinthians 4:4 adds clar-

ity to the entire thesis that this evil spiritual nature in humans has been *acquired*, individually by each person, from Satan.

Before I became familiar with radio, I could not have understood HOW Satan injects this evil attitude into humans. He is a SUPER POWERFUL spirit being. He was set on a throne as king over the earth. He himself, by his own reasoning processes, *acquired* this evil nature. God did not create it in him (Ezek. 28:15). Though disqualified now to administer the GOVERNMENT OF GOD over the earth, he must remain here UNTIL his successor has qualified AND been inducted into office. There is a REASON why Christ has not YET come to take over that office, remove Satan, and *restore* the government of God.

Before Jesus Christ could qualify to restore the GOVERNMENT OF GOD and RULE all nations, He had to withstand Satan's most severe temptation. You'll read of that supreme struggle in the 4th chapter of Matthew. Jesus had to — *in human flesh* — reject Satan's way and teach and prove OBEDIENT to the GOVERNMENT OF GOD — so He can RESTORE it on earth!

It was immediately after that — after Christ QUALIFIED to restore the GOVERNMENT OF GOD to earth — that Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD, and saying, The time is fulfilled (Mark 1:1, 14-15). It was never fulfilled until that titanic struggle in which Jesus resisted Satan, conquered him, and showed His MASTERY over him.

Now notice something you probably never realized before:

I have said repeatedly THIS IS NOT THE TIME GOD IS TRYING TO CONVERT THE WHOLE WORLD. He is calling only a comparative VERY FEW, now.

The spirit in every human being is automatically tuned in on Satan's wavelength. You don't hear anything because he does not broadcast in words, nor in sounds.

WHY? WHY does not God call everyone on earth NOW?

Are those of us called NOW getting a real SPECIAL deal?

Well, THINK OF THIS: We, now called, *must resist Satan*, who will PULL OUT ALL STOPS to attack and DESTROY those of us called NOW!

All others are drifting along SATAN'S WAY ANYWAY. Sure, he broadcasts to sway *everyone* to his SELF-centered way, contrary to GOD'S WAY. But he has the whole world already going his way. But those of us who have turned from his way are fighting to OVERCOME his way, and turning to GOD'S way — the WAY of God's GOVERNMENT — are the ones Satan HATES. He seeks specially to destroy us! Without God's protection and restraining power over Satan, we could never make it!

We Must Withstand Satan. Few, even among professing converted Christians, realize the vital and SUPREME NEED to be conscious and constantly aware of Satan's efforts to get to us, who already have turned *from* Satan's way and *to* the WAY of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

Few actively heed what God, through Paul, said later to the Ephesians: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against POWERS, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [wicked SPIRITS] in HIGH PLACES" (Eph. 6:10-12).

There is a reason WHY God allows those predestinated to be called NOW to have to withstand Satan and his REBELLION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

It is necessary — in order for us

to QUALIFY to become rulers (under Christ) in the KINGDOM OF GOD — that we NOT ONLY reject Satan's false way but *strive against* it until we OVERCOME IT, relying all the while on GOD for the power to do so.

As we, from earliest childhood growing up, *acquired* Satan's nature, so, through conversion and the struggle of OVERCOMING, we rid ourselves of it. We ACQUIRE, instead, the DIVINE NATURE. Peter wrote that we become "PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE" (II Pet. 1:4). We most certainly were not born with it.

So, Lucifer ACQUIRED that satanic nature by his own reasoning and choice. Humans have ACQUIRED Satan's nature from childhood and call it "human nature." But converted Christians, who reject Satan's way and OVERCOME it, turning to GOD'S WAY, BECOME PARTAKERS OF — i.e., ACQUIRE — the DIVINE NATURE. But for God's PURPOSE, it was necessary that we first know and totally REJECT Satan's way and accept GOD'S GOVERNMENT.

When God does set out to CALL EVERY HUMAN ON EARTH to spiritual salvation, Satan will be BOUND a thousand years, unable to broadcast his impulses and attitudes. The world will be at PEACE! Those called then will not have to battle what we do now.

But *why*? There has to be a reason!

Qualify to Rule. To those of us being called, now, Jesus said: "And he that overcometh [Satan and his own self], and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron . . ." (Rev. 2:26-27).

When Christ comes to RULE, as the KING of kings and LORD of lords, we who are called now will rule with

and under Him, as He restores the GOVERNMENT OF GOD to this earth.

Notice again: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). Those who shall reign WITH Christ, when He comes to restore the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, MUST OVERCOME (and that includes overcoming SATAN), EVEN AS JESUS DID!

Now does this apply equally to those who shall be converted *after* Christ comes, during the millennium?

The answer is *NO!* These two quotations (above) are found in Jesus' message to the seven CHURCHES that span this CHURCH AGE! They do NOT apply to those called later! Do they apply *only* to the era of Thyatira and Laodicea? No, they apply to ALL the church age. These seven messages DO apply to *seven successive church eras*. BUT they *also* apply to the WHOLE CHURCH through ALL eras. In other words, the Ephesus characteristics DOMINATED in the first era, and the Laodicean will dominate in the last, but SOME of these characteristics are found in EVERY era. The messages apply to the WHOLE church (and so I have said and written for 49 years) but certain characteristics predominate in the various eras.

But GET THIS CRUX POINT! Jesus had to QUALIFY to RULE the earth. God's WHOLE PURPOSE IS TO RESTORE THE GOVERNMENT of GOD on earth and set up the KINGDOM OF GOD. Jesus had to resist and overcome the temptations — very special ones — of SATAN. Are WE to rule *without* any such qualifications? *Of course not!* Those who are to rule with and under Christ when He restores the GOVERNMENT to the earth MUST QUALIFY — must turn FROM

The whole world has been swayed by Satan into what I often term, simply, the "get" way of life — the way that has become habitual and natural, which we term "human nature."

Satan's WAY TO GOD'S WAY, that is, to the GOVERNMENT of GOD. We must root out — root and branch — Satan's ATTITUDE and WAY, and so thoroughly that we shall make it IMPOSSIBLE ever to turn again to Satan's way — IMPOSSIBLE TO SIN (I John 3:9).

Those called to spiritual salvation after Christ comes will not have to battle Satan.

God's Government Restored. Notice, Matthew 25 and Revelation 20:

First, Matthew 25, beginning verse 31: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Christ is coming in all the supreme POWER and GLORY of the Creator GOD! He is coming to RESTORE THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD over the WHOLE EARTH — over ALL NATIONS! One SUPER WORLD GOVERNMENT! He will restore the throne of David at Jerusalem.

Continue: "And before him shall be gathered all nations" (verse 32). He is coming to RULE the WORLD — to RESTORE the GOVERNMENT OF GOD! Every government is founded on a basic LAW.

The law of God is unlike any man-made law of any human government. It is a SPIRITUAL law (Rom. 7:14). And it is a HOLY law (Rom. 7:12). It is A WAY OF LIFE — *God's way!* When people are governed in that way of life, there will be PEACE, HAPPINESS, JOY, ABUNDANCE!

But that basic LAW of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD is also the law of the Christian WAY of life. Sin (spiritually) is the transgression of that law (I John 3:4).

Christ is coming also to call ALL PEOPLE to spiritual salvation and eternal life. That is when God will seek to spiritually save THE WHOLE WORLD — and NOT TILL THEN!

Continue: "And he shall separate

them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:32-34).

The nations before the king on his throne are the nations of this world. Those called to salvation during the church age and previously (prophets, etc.), will have been resurrected to meet Christ in the air, as He descends to earth on His return (I Thes. 4:16-17). They will be ruling with Christ, already being immortal, composed of spirit (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21). They, with Christ, will compose the Kingdom of God.

Government and Kingdom. It is necessary, here, to explain the difference between the GOVERNMENT OF GOD and the KINGDOM OF GOD. The GOVERNMENT of God was established on earth IN PRE-HISTORY OVER THE ANGELS.

But the KINGDOM of God is BOTH the GOVERNMENT of God and the FAMILY of God. Those now being saved spiritually will, in the resurrection, INHERIT the Kingdom of God. They shall have been BORN of God — born into the divine FAMILY of God. They shall be married to Christ. Of this divine spiritual marriage will be begotten and born spiritually children of God all during the thousand years commencing with Christ's return to earth as KING.

Now let's notice the 20th chapter of Revelation:

The apostle John is recording what he saw in vision: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old

serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:1-2).

When Christ comes again to earth in supreme POWER and GLORY, He shall already have been crowned with many crowns. The coronation ceremony will have taken place in heaven (throne of God the Father) before His return. Christ then shall have been qualified AND inducted into office. I have said before, Satan must remain on earth swaying the nations his way UNTIL Christ, the successor, has both qualified AND been inducted into office.

Immediately on Christ's return, Satan shall be BOUND.

Continue: "And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (verse 3).

Those resurrected then shall reign over all nations with Christ — and a thousand years of PEACE on earth will ensue.

Imagine what it shall be like with Christ and resurrected saints forming the KINGDOM OF GOD, ruling with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD over all living humans who shall be left alive. Satan will be restrained from broadcasting. Christ will be ruling with God's way of life.

Satan Loosed. But now notice! Verse 7: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth . . . to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (verses 7-8).

Grasp it! These are people at PEACE! They have not been inoculated with the satanic NATURE we now call "human nature." They

We who have been called in this "church age" have been called to qualify as rulers with and under Christ in the Kingdom of God, restoring the government of God.

shall have been living happily in PERFECT PEACE. Now Satan once more BROADCASTS. Remember these nations are HUMAN. Satan is INVISIBLE to them. But notice the CHANGE come over them as soon as Satan is loosed and able again to sway humanity:

Verse 9: "And they [the human nations] went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city. . . ." Immediately "HUMAN NATURE" shall have entered into them! Immediately they shall have been filled with envy and jealousy against the saints of God, filled with wrath and violence! But God will not allow them to destroy. They shall have been *told* — have been warned about Satan. ". . . And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone . . . and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Great White Throne Judgment. After this shall occur the "Great White Throne Judgment" — the resurrection of *all humanity* from the time of Adam to Christ's coming who had not been in the first resurrection or called by God. In this judgment is to be "the book of life," meaning many, perhaps most, shall then find spiritual salvation and eternal life. In the time of their judgment, Satan will be GONE!

Up to now, God has called VERY FEW to spiritual salvation, contrary to general tradition and opinion in the "Christian" world!

From Adam to Noah we have the record of only Abel, Enoch, and Noah — some 1,900 years! From Noah to Christ, there was Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, prior to calling the children of Israel out of Egypt. God NEVER offered spiritual salvation (eternal life) to

the Old Testament nation of Israel, but only to the prophets and those called to SPECIAL DUTY.

From Adam to Christ, NONE were called to spiritual salvation *except those called to perform a SPECIAL MISSION.*

From Christ to now, only a VERY MINUTE PORTION of humanity has been called, and they for the SPECIAL MISSION of THE GREAT COMMISSION — "Go ye into all the world and preach the GOSPEL" (of the KINGDOM OF GOD).

We who have been called in this "church age" have been called to qualify as rulers with and under Christ in the Kingdom of God, restoring the GOVERNMENT OF GOD; in other words, to develop the holy, righteous CHARACTER of God. But OUR PART in the GREAT COMMISSION is the assignment God has given as the means of preparing us for rulership with and under Christ when He comes — and that is now soon!

Little Children and Human Nature. This article began with the question of whether this evil "human nature" is born in a sweet tiny baby. Let me now, before I conclude, quote three passages from the Bible.

"And they brought unto him [Jesus] also infants, that he would touch them. . . . Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for *of* such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:15-16). The evil nature which some erroneously have supposed was born in babies is the nature of Satan's kingdom, but "of such" — *these babies* — is the Kingdom of God.

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say

unto you, Except ye be converted, *and become* as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:1-3).

"Jesus said, Suffer *little* children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).

We humans start out at birth all right. But soon we begin to absorb and ACQUIRE the selfish, self-centered attitude broadcast by Satan. But Satan's kingdom of angels — now turned to demons — rejected the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, and it was thus removed from earth.

GOD'S PURPOSE in having created and put HUMANS on earth was to develop in them GOD'S own holy and righteous character. God wants a people who will REJECT and overcome Satan's WAY OF LIFE and turn to THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD — which is GOD'S WAY OF LIFE.

That GOVERNMENT OF GOD exists at this time on earth only through those that are doing God's Work. Satan is angry. He hates it! He subtly tries to inject into minds under that government of LOVE a hostility that MISrepresents it as a harsh and cruel government of Satan.

But I repeat, LUCIFER was created by God "*perfect* in all his ways, until iniquity was found in him." He *acquired* the nature of rebellion and evil by false reasoning. Adam *acquired* it from Satan. The Ephesians (Eph. 2:1) acquired it from Satan — as has all humanity, *except* Jesus Christ. But now, IN CHRIST, through His grace, we may ACQUIRE the DIVINE NATURE (II Pet. 1:4).

God's GREAT PURPOSE is to RESTORE THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD to this earth, in and through the KINGDOM OF GOD!

We CAN, by Christ's grace, CHANGE "human nature" and eradicate it entirely from us, replacing it with the divine nature! □

We are to acquire, instead, the divine nature. Peter wrote that we become "partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4). We most certainly were not born with it.

GUILT

CHRISTIAN MOTIVATION OR SPIRITUAL NEUROSIS?



We have all, at one time or another, experienced feelings of guilt. The intensity of these guilty feelings runs the gamut from a temporary pang of conscience over running a stop sign to an obsessive fear that we may have committed the "unpardonable sin." But whatever degree of guilt we feel, the way we handle it can have a far-reaching effect on our Christian lives.

by Ivan L. Sell

Must a Christian constantly carry around a burden of guilt? Is that what it takes to be properly "humble" before God? Is guilt necessary to be "meek"?

Guilt feelings are basically negative. They often make us feel hopeless and despondent and we try the best we can to get rid of them. We remind ourselves that God is merciful, loving and willing to forgive. After all — there are multitudes of scriptures assuring us that is the case.

But we also remember all those other verses exhorting us to perfection and warning of punishment for sin. Yet perfection seems so elusive. Although we strive to obey God's will in our lives, it appears that we inevitably slip up somewhere, some time. And the old guilt feelings return again.

What Is Guilt? Is there anything positive about feeling guilty? What is guilt, anyway? How does the Bible define it?

There are three Greek words in the New Testament translated "guilt" in the English. These words are *hupodikos* ("liable to judgment"), *opheilo* ("to be obligated, to owe") and *enochos* ("guilty, deserving of punishment"). Interestingly enough, not one of them implies or refers to a feeling of guilt. They refer to legal, moral, or theological states or conditions, but *not* to emotions.

Guilt is the "judicial verdict" by which God condemns the sins of every man and demands repentance of the sinner. Every person has sinned and come under the

death penalty: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

We know that it is only through Jesus Christ that this state of guilt can be removed from us (Acts 13:38-39): "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." By His death in our stead we are "justified," or declared "not guilty" before God.

Despite the fact that Christ's death frees us from the penalty of sin, from judgment and punishment, many people continue to suffer from feelings of guilt. This is an *emotion* we have all experienced. And we know what a devastating effect it can have — depressing, futilizing, paralyzing. It afflicts us in three ways: 1) loss of self-esteem; 2) fear of punishment; and 3) feeling of rejection.

Guilt vs. Self-Esteem. Of course, we can cite many negative scriptures about the failings of human nature, "works of the flesh," etc. But let's look at some positive scriptures showing God's esteem for us although we are not *now* perfect. Let's look at a few scriptures which discuss the extreme worth of the individual Christian in God's eyes.

Hebrews 2:6-8: "What is man, that thou [God] art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou *crownedst him with glory and honour*, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put *all things in subjection under his feet*. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left *nothing* that is not put under him."

God didn't create us to be objects of contempt, the recipients of guilty verdicts, or guilty feelings. Rather, he created us out of love for a great purpose, a great destiny. He created us, works with us, forgives us, cherishes us because He wants us to become His sons — members of His family. This transcendent purpose is explained in our free booklet *Why Were You Born?* Be sure to write for a copy.

1 John 3:1-2: "Behold, what manner of *love* the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the *sons* of God. . . ."

As a potential son of God, a Christian can certainly walk humbly before God and still have a clear realization of his *great* worth to God, for true humility is not a matter of seeing how worthless we can feel, but realizing how much greater God is. True humility is God-oriented and positive ("God is greater than me"). False humility, on the other hand, is self-centered and negative ("I am worthless"). It overlooks our God-ordained purpose for existing.

Yes, we do fall short; we do sin. But even then God doesn't discount or depreciate our individual worth and potential. He doesn't write us off as a total loss. Neither should we!

Is God Out To Get You? Country-music stations in the United States have been playing a tune called "God's Gonna Get You for That." And, unfortunately, that title reflects the common concept most people possess about God's nature. However, as the apostle Paul explains, it is a totally unbalanced outlook.

After describing his daily battle with "the flesh" and admitting his frequent defeats, Paul went on to say in Romans 8:1-2: "There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Naturally, we should fear the consequences of disobeying God and falling away from His truth. But when we repent of our mistakes, we need not fear divine retribution. God isn't out to "get even" for our sins. He doesn't plan to "settle the score." The score was settled by the sacrifice of Christ: God forgives *by forgetting* — not by planning revenge!

Yet how many of us, because of false inbred societal concepts, sometimes fear God as a cruel, vengeful Being, waiting to strike out at us for our slightest weakness? I have heard people say: "I hope God won't kill my child for what I did." They are mentally inflicting a most cruel punishment upon themselves because of guilt feelings, not

realizing God's great capacity for compassion and forgiveness. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live . . ." (Ezek. 33:11).

Feelings of Rejection. A third facet or result of guilt is the feeling of being rejected.

Now, it is possible for sin to separate a person from God. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear," said the prophet Isaiah to the people of Israel (Isa. 59:2). Those sins stood in the way because the people were unrepentant. Ancient Israel had no intention of changing her evil ways. The nation rejected God and His ways as a whole. Consequently, God was left with little choice but to eventually reject Israel — after centuries of longsuffering — and send her into captivity.

But Christians are under a better covenant, a better relationship with God (Heb. 8:6). They have the blood of Christ to blot out past sins (Heb. 9:14) and the Spirit of Christ to enable them to do His will (Heb. 10:16). Christians may slip up — but they don't intend to make sin a way of life. They aren't rejecting God wholesale — and therefore God doesn't reject them.

What are we to do if we sin in weakness and under temptation? "If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Reflecting on God's great mercy and compassion, the apostle Paul was moved to ask: "Who [or what] shall separate us from the love of Christ?" His answer: *Nothing* "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39). Not even the sin which "so easily besets us" (Heb. 12:1).

The Scriptures make it evident that a converted Christian doesn't need to continually experience the emotion of guilt with its attendant feelings of loss of self-esteem, punishment and rejection.

Of course, we are not speaking here of those who would "turn grace into license, and continue in

sin that grace might abound" (Jude 4; Rom. 6:1). We are referring to sincere Christians who are striving to mortify the deeds of the flesh and become a new person in Christ Jesus — those very ones who, even like the apostle Paul, will find themselves occasionally being overcome by the weaknesses of the flesh. What emotions, then, *should* we experience as Christians when we slip into sin?

Worldly Sorrow. The apostle Paul, in II Corinthians 7, drew a clear distinction between "godly sorrow" and "the sorrow of the world."

Upon closer analysis, we could safely say the "sorrow of the world" is indeed the masochistic emotion of guilt. We could contrast differing emotions in these different "sorrows" and realize just how destructive the "sorrow of the world" really is. It does indeed lead to death. A Christian can strangle himself to death spiritually with these wrong emotions.

Godly sorrow leads to *change*, while the "sorrow of the world" consists of destructive guilt feelings which tear a person down but don't contribute to positive action or repentance. *Worldly* sorrow involves continually (even long after repentance and forgiveness) focusing concern onto yourself and your past mistakes. It involves a refusal or inability to forgive yourself.

There comes a time when you've just got to dump your guilt. You can't carry it around like a cross all your life. "Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead" (Phil. 3:13).

Deep — sometimes neurotic — feelings of guilt are manifest in worldly sorrow, but real repentance is totally lacking. Some of the symptoms are superficial changes for the wrong reasons and spiritual stagnation due to guilt-paralysis.

Godly Sorrow. On the other hand, *godly* sorrow leads to change or repentance because a person accepts God's forgiveness — and forgives himself. He doesn't feel compelled to consider himself worthless or rejected by God. Rather, he focuses on God, His *grace* and his own future "good

works." His motivation for change is to do God's will, to love and help his fellowman, and in so doing to promote his own spiritual growth. The result is genuine repentance and a deep change of heart.

King David of ancient Israel understood these principles when he prayed this prayer in Psalm 32: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to thee, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'; then thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin" (verses 1-5).

As Christians we must be extremely careful to avoid creating unnecessary and harmful emotions of guilt in ourselves or in others. We need to recognize guilt as a legal standing before God as a result of our shortcomings and sins, necessitating repentance and forgiveness. But it doesn't need to be an abiding emotion after God's grace has been extended. It is vital that we understand and appreciate God's great capacity for mercy and forgiveness, and learn to forgive ourselves as Christ forgives us.

Paul cautioned the Corinthian Church to *forgive* and *comfort* a repentant sinner lest he be "swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" (II Cor. 2:7). Chronic feelings of guilt, instead of motivating us to overcome, can be like a boa constrictor — squeezing the life out of us. They can terrify and paralyze and futilize. So let's remember God's great mercy and be on guard against this destructive "sorrow of the world." □

CORRECTION

In the answers to "Test Your Bible Knowledge" (April GN, page 23), we mistakenly said that Deuteronomy 10:4 and Deuteronomy 4:13 were the only scriptures that specifically designate the number of commandments given as "ten." An additional scripture verifying the number is Exodus 34:28.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE

Many hundreds have written asking if we have representatives in their areas to counsel with them personally and to answer their questions.

The answer is yes, we do.

The Worldwide Church of God stations personal representatives (most are ordained ministers) in the United States and British Commonwealth and many other areas of the world. These men will visit you, if invited, directly in your own home.

So if you have spiritual matters to discuss or questions to ask about biblical topics such as repentance, baptism, etc., please feel free to write us and request a private appointment. Worldwide mailing addresses are as follows:

- United States: P.O. Box 111, Pasadena, California 91123 (Or simply dial this toll-free number in the *continental* U.S.: 1-800-423-4444. Readers in California, Alaska and Hawaii may call 213-577-5225 collect.)
- United Kingdom, Europe, India, and Africa: P.O. Box 111, St. Albans, Herts., England
- Australia: G.P.O. Box 202, Burleigh Heads, Queensland 4220 (Or dial this number: 075-35-4233 — reverse the charges.)
- Canada: P.O. Box 44, Station A, Vancouver, B.C.
- South Africa: P.O. Box 1060, Johannesburg 2000 (Or dial this number: 011-216406.)

Other areas of the world should check the inside front cover (staff box) for the address of our office nearest you.

Drugs

Your article on "Drugs — Who Needs Them?" (March GN) was the best, most understandable article written on the subject that I have read. I could especially relate to it because of my past involvement with drugs.

Tim W.,
Fairland, Indiana

The British Home Secretary

An article by one of your associate editors ("As in the Days of Noah," March GN) refers to "British Home Secretary Sir John Hill" and in the next paragraph mentions Mr. Hill's warning. In the United Kingdom we understand our Home Secretary to be Mr. Roy Jenkins. Perhaps you could clarify this mystifying situation.

T.A.H.,
Cornwall, England

• *The sentence should have read: "A report to the British Home Secretary by Sir John Hill read . . ."*

Immortal Soul?

May I thank you for your free literature and at the same time ask you to discontinue their remittance to my address. I have never read anything so disgusting and so low in intellectual level as your arguments. For example: "The idea of the immortality of the soul came from the pagan Greeks." The truth 2 x 2 equals 4 also comes from pagan intelligence. Did you ever read the reasoning of Aristotle for the immortality of a soul? I am deeply disappointed in your message.

Josef S.,
Buffalo, New York

• *Yes, we've read Aristotle, but didn't find his arguments very convincing. Have you read a copy of our free booklet "Do You Have an Immortal Soul?"*

Christ's Parents

In your March GN, page 23, letters from the teenagers, you said: "Christ's parents trusted him enough at the age of twelve to allow

him to travel alone on an out-of-town trip (see Luke 2:41-51). They didn't worry until they hadn't heard from him for three days." In your writing you have tried to turn the meaning of the scripture around, and make it say just the opposite of what it does. First of all, they did not think he was alone. They thought he was with his kinfolks. Second, it was not three days before they became concerned about him. The scripture plainly says after they had gone "a day's journey."

J.P.,
Star City, Arkansas

• *We inadvertently gave the time it took Christ's parents to become concerned as three days instead of one. But this passage still graphically demonstrates what great trust Jesus' parents placed in Him, to allow Him to move about the crowded city of Jerusalem alone during the festival season, and to start on his way home by Himself. They were not overprotecting Him by any stretch of the imagination. Very few parents of twelve-year-old boys would allow them this much leeway. So we believe the point we made is still valid in spite of the minor inaccuracy.*

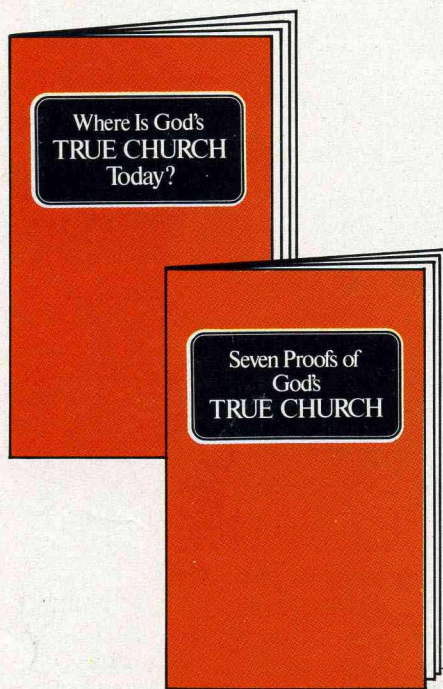
The Way of Giving

I enjoy the *Good News* and am sorry I don't have the means to pay for it, but I am on a tight income. Thank you.

Helen M.,
Salt Lake City, Utah

• *No one should ever feel they are taking advantage of us by requesting all the free material which is offered on the program or by receiving our free publications each month. We want to give this vital material to everyone who is sincerely interested. Those who are able to give do so that this message can go freely to the world. This Work is supported financially by freely given tithes and offerings and even "widow's mites" (Mark 12:41-44). But God does not expect anyone to give something he doesn't have (II Cor. 8:12).*

How to recognize the church Jesus Christ founded



When it comes to your church, only one thing really matters. Is it the church Jesus Christ founded? If not, then according to the Bible it's not leading you to eternal life, or any of the other benefits Christ promised His followers. When Christ said, "I will build my church," He knew there would be innumerable imitators. "Many will come in my name," He said, "and will deceive many." But the Bible gives us numerous signs which identify the true church. For example:

- The church understands God's awe-inspiring plan for mankind
- It keeps the same days Christ observed
- It manifests the fruits of God's Spirit
- It bears the correct name
- The true church has a commission

These and other signs identifying the church Christ founded are fully explained in two booklets that are yours for the asking: *Where Is God's True Church Today?* and *Seven Proofs of God's True Church*. For your free copies, write to *The Good News*, Pasadena, CA, 91123. Or, if you live outside the United States, see inside front cover for the address of our office nearest you.

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