**The Ultimate Resource**

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"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3: 16~ 17 NKJV)

*An Amazing Fact: Commander William R. Anderson and his crew of 116 were the first to reach 90 degrees north ... under the ice. The trip, dubbed "Operation Sunshine,” was made possible by a new technological marvel, the USS Nautilus, the world :') first nuclear-powered submarine. Under hundreds of feet of ice, the Nautilus' nuclear reactor not only powered the vessel but enabled the crew to have the filtered air and water needed to reach their destination. Moreover, unable to surface for direction, they traversed the dangerous waters using a new invention called the gyrocompass. On August 3, 1958, at i1:15 p.m., Anderson announced, "For the world, our country, and the Navy-the North Pole.” The ultimate vessel in the world had enabled humans to accomplish what had been deemed the impossible: reach the geographic underside of the North Pole.*

**Part 1: What Is the Bible?**

God's people are something like nuclear submarines, submerged in the murky waters of a world steeped in sin and darkness. And just as water shouldn't infiltrate the hull of a ship, so the world shouldn't infiltrate His church. On our long, often-dark journey through these troubling waters, the Bible is as crucial to us as the gyrocompass was to the USS Nautilus. Without the clear guidance of the Scriptures, we would be aimlessly lost. Never has there been a time in history when we have had more of the Word of God available to us and more commentaries to dissect, critique, and explain it. As an example, I have a "pocket PC" with multiple versions of the Bible, along with Bible dictionaries and inspired commentary-I can even listen to the Bible and watch Bible videos with it. Moreover, the internet offers a broad spectrum of free Bible software and even free electronic *Bibles*. But the old saying "familiarity breeds contempt" is true. Despite the proliferation of Bible resources,' people today are more biblically illiterate than ever. But why, especially when we so desperately need God's Word in our lives? So in this essay, I want to instil within you a craving for Scripture and revive your awe of God's Word. If you've never understood why we have the Bible, i want to paint a rich picture for you that will inspire you to open the Bible up and dive into its pages.

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**A Little History**

People have not always used books to store and communicate information. In the beginning, the messages of God to humanity were communicated orally. God spoke to Adam face to face in the garden of Eden, thus Adam received revelation straight from the Creator. In turn, Adam shared this knowledge with Seth, and Seth passed it down to Lamech, who passed it on to Noah. Though sin had infected the world, Adam and his descendants possessed minds fashioned from the hands of God-more powerful and sophisticated than any supercomputer. Prior to the Flood, when lives were measured by hundreds of years, humans had a vast capacity to remember virtually everything said, heard, and seen. (Today we would call it photographic memory.) Yet following the Flood, something different started happening: Lifespans began to dramatically shorten. The earth's environment radically changed, and subsequently, lifestyles began degenerating. In short, the ability of men to remember God's oracles had become severely impaired. By the time of Moses, after years of His people being held in bondage in a pagan-infested nation, God saw that it was necessary to codify His messages to humanity. As a result, Moses became God's first scribe, and Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and probably the book of Job, were written during Moses' days in the wilderness. Transcribed and copied on paper, leather, or clay tablets, the first collections of Scripture were all written out by scribes. (Of course, the original print of the Ten Commandments was written by the finger of God in stone.) These rare copies, each written out by hand, were treated like precious treasures. To have Scripture was such a privilege; it's something we can't appreciate today. Then, more than 500 years ago, Johann Gutenberg developed the printing press, enabling the mass production of Bibles.

**The Sword of Christ**

The Word is a powerful weapon. Every time Jesus was tempted in the wilder- ness, He quoted from Scripture, saying, "It is written." It's evident from this and other exchanges that Jesus had memorized considerable amounts of Scripture: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that 1 might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119: 11). And He used this mastery and His application of the Word to fight off Satan's attacks. As with Jesus, so with us; that is, we must use the Bible to fight off temptation. Revelation 19: 11 declares, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True." Obviously, this passage is a picture of Christ and the Word itself. The passage continues, "And in righteous- ness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. He clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God." Who is the mysterious rider on the white horse? Jesus or the Word? Perhaps there isn't even a difference in that the Word is the expression of Christ. Jesus is the Word. Does the Word of God make war? Jesus answers, "1 came not to bring peace but a sword." The Bible is a weapon that we can use to invade the devil's territory. In Revelation 13 we learn that the beast received a deadly wound by the sword.

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What is that sword the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. And Ephesians 6: 17 affirms, "the sword of the- Spirit, which IS the word of God'<+our primary weapon against the enemy.

**The Light of God**

 We live in a very dark world. Even if you stood outside on the equator in the middle of a desert underneath a clear blue sky at noon, it would be utterly dark compared to heaven. It's so dark here that we can't navigate our way around without clear direction from God. The Bible presents that direction. It is the light that illuminates our path. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119: 105). Furthermore, "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light" (Proverbs 6:23). A few years ago, i experienced absolute darkness. I like caving, so once while in Virginia, I went to explore a place that advertised itself as the "Endless Caverns." Of course, the cave isn't endless, hut it does go hundreds of feet below ground. As my tour guide and I were making our way down into the abyss, she said, "If you want to know what absolute darkness is ...?? and then she shut off the lights. The absolute black was surreal; it looked the same whether I had my eyes closed or open. After a tittle while sitting there in total darkness, I took out my keychain that had a little LED light. When I turned it on, it was as though someone had switched on one of those giant spotlights at the grand opening of a new store. That little bit of light made such a tremendous difference when compared to the abject darkness within the bowels of the earth. "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you co v, ell to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts" (2 Peter I: 19 NKJV~ see also Psalm 43:4).

**An Enduring Truth**

Psalm 119:89 proclaims, "For ever, 0 Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." In a world full of uncertainty, Scripture does not change, no matter what happens on earth or in heaven. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:8). Honey is an animal by-product that never goes bad. Sure, It might crystallize, but unlike some food preserved in vinegar, honey will never spoil. It is a natural preservative that can be reconstituted simply by warming it in hot water. Frankly, it's quite a miraculous feat. The Bible says, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm i 19:103). The Word of God, the law of the Lord, is sweeter than the honeycomb. In Ezekiel 3:3, God instructs the prophet, "Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness." The Frenchman Voltaire was a skeptic who didn't think Christianity would last long and that the Bible would S0011 be an extinct form of literature. How ironic that in the exact spot where Voltaire made that bold prediction sits a Bible ware- house-churning out Bibles! It doesn’t matter how often it's attacked, the Bible is "an anvil that has worn out many hammers." Jesus assures us, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). And Jesus Himself is that Word, and like Him, the Bible is the same yesterday, today, and forever. My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips" (Psalm 89:14).

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**Words of Life**

The words in the Bible are not just words. You might see black and maybe red than that. It is a message that is made of spirit and life with an unexplainable inherent potency and vitality. "It is the Spirit who gives I life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63 NKJV). When you read the Word with an open heart, it comes alive. It's real, and it's unlikely that anyone could ever open it-with sincere desire-and never get something out of it. A.W. Towser said, "A loving Personality dominates the Bible walking among the trees of the Garden and breathing fragrance over every scene. Always a living Person is present speaking, pleading, loving, working and manifesting Himself." When people read God's Word with their hearts sincerely seek- ing to hear what the Spirit is saying, it becomes a living testament from Christ. . Sometimes we get caught up in what Jesus looked like. We see pictures, and we begin to form our impression of His physical appearance. But is anyone exactly sure what color His eyes were? Or how tall He was, or how much He weighed? Does it even matter? The essence of Christ that changed the world was His Words. Soldiers were sent to arrest Jesus, and they came back saying, "Never [a] man spake like this man" (John 7:46). It's the Word that changed everything, and that Word is Christ. Moreover, Christ is eternity; thus the only book that will make a restful pillow when you're dying is the Bible. Every other book will be like stone.

**Food for the Soul**

Most people do not miss too many meals. If we miss one, we're not going to miss the second because we get very hungry. My question is, do you hunger for God's soul food? "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, 0 Lord God of hosts" (Jeremiah 15: 16). During a check-up, a doctor might ask you about your appetite. Why? Because a lack of appetite could mean something serious is wrong with you. It's a sign of bad health. Likewise, it could be a sign of bad spiritual health if you have no appetite for the bread of life. "It is written; Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Some people have no craving for the Bible because they have spoiled their spiritual appetites by eating the wrong things. "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance" (Isaiah 55:2). After an evening of typical television, most people have no hunger for the Bible. A mom usually won't allow her children to gorge on candy just before dinner. "Don't eat that; it will ruin your appetite!" Naturally, she wants them to fill up on a nutritious meal, not empty calories. Likewise, many people have no appetite for God's Word because they gorge on entertainment junk food. People also develop a taste for what they eat. As much as r travel, I still never cease to be amazed at what strange foods people relish. On one Pacific island, they eat a pounded root extract called saguaro, and to me it is just so bland. Yet they salivate just thinking about it. Everybody has their favourite peculiar food, include me.

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And that's because we eat it. It is a part of our lives and culture. We force broccoli down our kids' gullets hoping they'll develop a taste for - it. In fact, I eat something now that I hated as a kid. You might be saying, "Doug, I have no appetite for the Bible." Read it anyway, and as you read it, you'I1 eventually start developing a taste for it and ultimately crave it. "Neither have 1 gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23: 12).

**Harmonious and Accurate**

The- Bible is a miracle in so man) ways. Though written over a period of 1,600 years 1~ly about 40 different authors-s-on three different continents, speaking four different languages-it's completely harmonious. Written by kings and peasants, with a wide spectrum of education in between, it delivers one message and one voice. Moreover, in Revelation you'll find reference to Genesis, and in Genesis you'll find a reference to Jesus. It overlaps constantly. It's like gazing into the electrical room of d skyscraper and seeing thousands of little wires crisscrossing everywhere connecting every function in the building. It's also a miracle of accuracy. Sin entered the world because man doubted God's words; we shouldn't make the same mistake today by doubting the accuracy of the Bible, especially with so much proof on its side. For instance, Daniel prophesied the correct sequence and time of the Babylonian fall from power, along with the rise and fall of the Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman empires. He also correctly predicted that Rome would be split up into 10 separate nation states. Consider on the next page some of the amazing Bible passages that perfectly foretold the first coming of Jesus and their fulfilments. The Dead Sea scrolls testify to the fact that these prophecies were written well before Jesus was born. Not only that, they all came to pass. The accuracy of the Bible is miraculous. Why neglect it when it is so precise regarding the first coming of Jesus? Don't you think we can trust the prophesies regarding the second corning?

**The word Is Proven**

President Woodrow Wilson said, "I am sorry for men who do not read the Bible every day. I wonder why they deprive themselves of the strength and the pleasure." That's what happens when you read about God supernaturally intervening in the affairs of men to accomplish His redemptive purposes. The greatest testimony to the Bible is the way it changes lives. I never cease to marvel at the transformation in people when they pick up a Bible. These people's lives were a total mess, but when they started reading the Bible, they turned around. I know that feeling, because it happened to me. Drug abusers become clean, marriages are restored, and alcohol and gambling addicts are freed. Why? It was the Word. It's the anchor of our souls and the bread that comes down from heaven. Christ said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." We need to learn to love that bread, more than the unhealthy food this world has to offer. The Bible says, "Love Me and keep My commandments." You can't obey Jesus if you don't love Him. You can't love Him if you don't know Him. And you will never know him unless you take time to know him.

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The Bible is the primary way that God reveals Himself to fallen humanity. Maybe you are studying your Bible, but you're just picking up a few crumbs that fall from the children's table. Maybe you're not studying at all. Whatever you do to increase your time in the Word is going to create a positive blessing for you spiritually.

 But you need to choose to do it. If you join a health club, it's going to cost you some- thing. It will cost you time and money' that you can't spend, elsewhere. You'll have to give up something, but it will be worth it. It's the same with the Bible. Don't neglect His Word in preference for such trivial, passing things like television. God is saying to you, "Do you really want to know Me? My promise is, 'You'll find Me when you search for Me with all of your heart.' “He’s not very far away-however far away your nearest Bible is. If you really want to get to know God better, ask Him for help. The devil is never more afraid than when you drop to your knees and pick 1If1 God's Word.

 If you're not part of a weekly Bible study group, I'd like to encourage you to join one. Just take an hour, once' a week, to get together with others of like faith and read the Word of God together. It will do wonders for your spiritual health. Not only is it a great means of strengthening and fortifying your own soul, but it has tremendous evangelistic potential because you've got friends and neighbours whom you could bring. Yes, it's a cold and dark world out there, and it's easier to get lost in it than it would be under the North Pole in a nuclear submarine. But God has given LIS never-failing gyrocompass in His Word, and if we read it--with a desire to follow it and know the God who inspired it-we will have a sure guide, one that will never let us go astray, and one more powerful and effective that all the nuclear sui marines in the world.

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**Part 2: How do you study the Bible?**

A man once dreamed that he was walking through the desert one night when he heard a voice that told him to fill his pockets with the stones at his feet. The voice then said, "Tomorrow you will be both glad and sad." So the confused man took a handful of pebbles and stuffed them in his pocket. The next morning, he examined the pebbles and discovered that the stones were real y precious gems. He was happy and sad-happy he had obeyed and picked up so e gems, but sad that he had not picked up more The Bible is filled with priceless riches, but unless we open it and mine its pages, we will be without true wealth. "The law or Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver" (Psalm 119:72~ see also Proverbs 8: 10, 11). Without my own study of the Bible, 1 might still be lost, perhaps confused by the teachings of some New Age cult. It was the Bible that turned me into a Christian, which is a miracle considering that r was from a Jewish family full of cynicism about Christianity. I'd been taught evolution and believed that the Bible was full of fiction, fantasy, and fables. Yet in a cave, all alone, r picked up the Bible and this dynamic, powerful book changed my life. The Word of God needs to be part of our lives. This will never happen unless you make the decision to reserve regular time with the Lord in study and prayer. But how do you study the ways of God? It's one thing to own a Bible; it's quite another to read it.

How do you go about *studying* it?

Is it really a locked book, filled with hidden codes? Do you need to have a degree or be a theologian to get its secret meanings? The answer is an emphatic "no!" And I say that because I'm exhibit A-living proof that you don't need to be a great professor of religion to grasp the Word. When I first started reading the Bible, I was a high school dropout. Comparatively uneducated, not a great reader, and faced with a King James Bible, T was nevertheless able to understand what I read. God was able to speak to me through His Word, even though I didn't get everything straight the first time. Eventually, it became clear. And today, even after many years of studying, I am still blessed with new light when I read my Bible. To help you, I've outlined some basic principles that have proven useful to me in studying the Bible. These simple concepts helped me to become an avid student of God's message. I have no doubt that if you apply these principles, you too will be able to understand much more, and your life will never be the same.

**Ask the Author**

Before you read the Scriptures, you should pray. A short but sincere prayer before you read is worth more than a long meandering prayer. The Bible is a di- vine book requiring divine guidance to understand it. The Lord says, "The word is Spirit and life" (John 6:63). God's Spirit inspired the writing; God's Spirit needs to inspire the reading. We're also told that spiritual things are "spiritually discerned." That might seem like common sense, but most people try to read the Bible with their own feelings as the interpreter. They want the Bible to tell them what they want to hear; they want it to say what they want it to say. That won't work-imposing ourselves on what we need rather than allowing god’s spirit to impose on us what we need to understand. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of”

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the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, b<..' cause they are spiritually discerned" (] Corinthians 2: 14). James 1:5 explains, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." We can expert God to give us wisdom while we're reading, especially when we with an carne-a heart ask for His help. ]fyou want to understand a book, who better to ask than the author? Sometimes you might read a passage in a book and ask yourself, "What did the writer mean by that?" Unfortunately, you can't call most authors to ask what they meant. But you can ask God. He can grant you perfect understanding: because He wrote it.

**Again and Again**

John Bunyan, author of Pilgrim s Progress, said, "Read the Bible and read 1\ again. Do not despair of help to understand something of the will and the mind o] . God as if they are fast locked up from you. Neither trouble yourself though you may not have commentaries and expositions. Pray and read and read and pray. for a little from God is better than a great deal from man." Bunyan wrote one of the best-selling books of all time, but he was technically an uneducated man in the sense that he didn't have a lot of formal training. HI! didn't have a Ph.D. But he became a brilliant man through the devoted reading of Scripture. He read passages over and over again until they finally made sense. That's exactly what happened with me. (Though I still have a long way to go ill unpacking all the gifts found in God's Word.) When a solider in some distant land gets a love letter from his girlfriend 01 wife, does he read it only once? I don't think so. No, he pulls out that piece 01 paper and with longing reads it over and over again. He might even smell it and figuratively- wrap himself up in her words of love and encouragement. He will search every word, every nuance, reading between the lines just to understand what his beloved was truly saying. The Bible is a love letter from God to us; should w treat it with less heartfelt interest?

**Be Willing**

Jesus said in John 7: 17, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." One of the biggest keys to understanding God's message is having the willingness to accept and a ,t on what you read. It is important to ask, "Lord, help me apply the things I hay \ read in your Word to my life." Approaching God with a cynical curiosity will most likely lead to confusion and frustration. I have a theory that there are some things God does not allow us to understand because we are responsible for what we understand. Jesus said, "1 have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). If we aren't walking in the light He has already shone on our path, why should He give 1I. more? It would just make us more culpable on the day of judgment. Sometimes it can be hard to have that willingness to do what the Bible says, so you might even need to pray for God to make you willing. If nothing else, pray that He will make you willing to be made willing. Our carnal natures are in rebellion against God. Our sinful natures make us want to do sinful things, and we might nul h", th<:lt p"'GPr to surrender to what the Word of God tells us.

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During tile tmal Illness ofW.C. Fields, someone walked into hrs hospital room and found him reading the Bible. Because Fields was not exactly known for piety, the person asked, "Bill. what are you doing?" "Looking for loopholes," he replied. That's exactly the wrong attitude! You must approach the Word of God with a heart willing to obey its precepts. That will get you on the right road, as it put me on the right road. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1 :22). The biggest battle in comprehension we all face is a willing heart. Get your heart right with God, and your mind will always follow.

**Let It Speak for Itself**

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2: 15). Sometimes we over-spiritualize basic things in the Bible, never letting the words just plainly speak for themselves. Of course, there are many spiritual symbols in Scripture, but when the Bible says, "He woke up in the morning," some people might agonize over this phrase, trying to squeeze some spiritual abstract meaning out of a straightforward verse. It's important to get the factual record of what happened. Don't bring pre- conceived ideas to prove \\ hat you already believe. Instead, let the Bible speak for itself. You can identify people with this attitude when they say, "I know I'm right. I've just got to find a verse to prove it." And they'll start reading the Bible not to hear what God says, but searching for proof texts to support their position. And if they can't find a supporting verse they generally twist something to make it fit-like the man who puts together a jigsaw puzzle with a hammer in one hand and scissors in the other. It's possible to completely butcher the Bible and different verses, rearranging, cutting, and pasting passages to torture God's Word until it declares that water flows uphill. So be careful. Again, we need to approach the Word with a humble, willing heart-s-and open to what the Bible says even if what it says isn't exactly what we want to hear.

**Understand the Context**

With the exception of Proverbs, the Bible is not a series of isolated one-liners. Some people "study" by jumping from one verse to another, leading them to some flawed doctrinal conclusions. So when you read a verse, you should also read a few verses before it and a few verses after it. Sometimes that's all you need to do, but you might also have to read the entire chapter. Occasionally, to get the complete context, you'll need to read the whole book. Trust me, it's worth the investment.

1. It always helps to know the historical, geographical, and cultural context. I remember, for example, reading Jesus teaching about honoring your father and mother, but then He mentions "Corban" (Mark 7: 11). I thought, "Who or what is Corban?" Well, I had to do a little background study to find out that in their culture, children could dedicate their wealth to the temple in- stead of using it to support their parents in their old age. It was a rite that en- abled them to dodge the fifth commandment. because their wealth was now technically God’s property. That’s were a little extra research paid off big.

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2. Also consider the *language*. sometimes when things are translated from one language to another, there's a potential to lose context and information. There are little nuances of meaning that can't always be exactly translated from one language to another. Though you don't need to know the original language to be able to understand the Bible, sometimes taking a little time to look up the original meanings of words can be very helpful to enhance comprehension. An example would be the word translated as "bottomless pit" in Revelation 20: 1. In English, when we hear "bottomless pit," we conjure up pictures of a deep well that starts in Kansas and goes straight through the earth coming out in Mongolia. But looking at the original word in Greek, "abussos," it paints a different picture of a place of deep spiritual darkness where fallen angels are imprisoned (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6). .

As you mature in Your Bible study, don’t be afraid to check maps, .dictionaries, commentaries, and concordances. They can help you Immense y in getting the gist of each passage and help you grasp the meaning in ways that will astound and amaze you. Of course, as Bunyan said, you don't need these to understand what God is saying. (Also keep in mind that Bible commentaries represent the interpretation of various scholars. While these are often very helpful, they are not inspired.) For centuries people built beautiful houses with only hand tools. But now power tools make the job easier. So just start where you are, with whatever tools you have handy. If you do, I guarantee your hunger will grow and you'll find a little Bible study library growing up in your home or on your computer.

**Don't Jump to Conclusions**

When arriving at truth in Bible study, you need to get the testimony of several verses. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Corinthians l3:l). This applies to Bible study very well. Some will read one verse in the Bible and create an entire doctrine based on that one verse alone, without much justification. For instance, I often get asked about a passage in 1 Corinthians 11 regarding women not cutting their hair and praying with their heads covered. This isolated verse can be difficult to understand. Why then build a belief system out of it, especially when no other verse even hints at that subject? You've got to be careful about building a doctrinal monument around that one verse, as it might have just been a cultural tradition or custom. Isaiah 28: 10 teaches, "For precept must be upon precept ... line upon line; here a little, and there a little." A good reporter will interview as many witnesses as possible when writing about some major event. Likewise, running to and fro through the Bible, comparing Scripture with Scripture, will work to help you learn for yourself what the truth really is. You need to look at all the relevant verses deal- ing with a subject and compare them with each other. This is crucial. You won't he embarrassed if you study the Bible that way. Some of the popular false teachings today are based on one or two nebulous and misunderstood verses. Proponents of these odd teachings keep going back. again and again, to these few verses until they've managed to build an enormous following even though they neglect the weight of evidence from hundreds of other I verses that, if carefully studied, would contradict the very' teaching that they are so passionately promoting.

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 **Avoid Private interpretations**

'Knowing this first that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1 :20, 21). Sometimes, we'll hear someone say something like, "This is what 1 think this verse means," or even, "I feel in my heart it could mean this" or some other warm fuzzy sentiment. Be very careful when you hear these kinds of subjective statements. It's often an indication of people not letting the Bible speak for itself. Additionally, people who don't study with others often develop eccentric beliefs Of course, God can speak to you alone through His Word, but almost without exception people who don't fellowship with other believers and don't bounce their interpretations oil stable Christians can come up with some very bizarre ideas. They become a law unto themselves, forgetting that in the multitude of counsel .here is safety (Proverbs 11: 14).

In Acts 20:30, Paul warns, "And of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things:" meaning warped teachings, "to draw away disciples after them." Sometirnes these independent teachers want simply to be unique to gather a following around them, so they feel compelled to come up with an exotic doctrine md say they have a special revelation from God that no one else has. But please 'remember, in Acts 17: j 0, 11, were told about the people of Berea: "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming hither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those n Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." If you do that, diligently studying the Word of God with other Bible-based followers of Jesus, you will be safe.

**Where's the Beef?**

Dwight Moody said, "Sin will keep you from the Bible or the Bible will keep our from sin." The church is struggling today in the face of a biblical illiteracy pandemic. It's so important now to be personally grounded in the Word because false teachings are only going to multiply as the clock of earth's history winds rapidly down. In the end, the devil and his minions are going to be quoting from the Bible lore than ever. He'll wave it around and point to it and he won't hide from it. For many, the superficial, shallow, breezy approach to Bible doctrine will not prepare rem to defend their faith against the devil's clever deceptions. He already has his people out there, sharpening their arguments and twisting Scripture to their ends. The milk of the Word is certainly okay for starters. Peter tells us that "[as] new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter: 2). It's clear that God can work with you wherever you are at, but growing saints rust graduate from milk to meat. That's why we need to dig deeper for solid food. How long have you been receiving milk? When are you going to get ready for the real meat of the Word? "And 1, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto yee were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (1 Corinthians 3: 1, 2).

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Stop delaying and get studying; there's a lot nourishing meat in God’s word waiting to be assimilated.

**The Time Is Now**

During the bloody Civil War battle of Shiloh, Sam Houston, Jr., son of the famous Texan, was shot square in the back and knocked to the ground. When later found by a chaplain, he discovered he was only bruised from the bullet. The lead ball had been stopped by his mother’s Bible, which Houston carried in his, knap' sack, the bullet was found still lodged in its pages, stopping near the scripture', that proclaim, "0 God: Thou art my help and deliverer" (Psalm 70:5). As we enter the last days, it will not be enough to have our Bibles in our pockets or in our backpacks-we must have the contents lodged in our hearts Remember, we can live holy lives when we have His Word written in our heart- (Psalm 119: II). There might be a day coming when your Bibles will be taken away and all you're going to have is what you've stored in your heart. You might be brought before judges to defend your faith. They probably won't hand you a Bible. yet you're going to need to know how to give an answer for what you believe. When the devil tempted Christ, Jesus didn't have a backpack full of scrolls He had the Word of God in His heart, and the Holy Spirit brought remembrance III Him. He said, "It is written," and we will be able to say the same as long as we are willing to open up the Word now and dive right in. That's what I believe God wants for His people today. He wants them to be able to stand before anyone, anywhere, and, as Peter said, "be ready always to give ' an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). And those answers are found in just one place, the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God.. , the Bible embracing the Bible is really the same thing as embracing Jesus. Christ is the Word incarnate. Likewise, Jesus wants His Word to be animated in our lives. So take it with your hands, read with your eyes, store it in your heart, walk it w itl) your feet, tell it with your lips, and live it in your life-starting today! "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

-Matthew 4:4 NKJV

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**1**. **Is There Anything Left You Can Trust?**

In these morally challenged times-when billions are embezzled through corporate fraud. When trusted, spiritual leaders prove false; when lying in politics seems to be the norm; when those you depend on the most often hurt you the deepest-Is there anything left you can trust? Yes! You can fully trust the Bible! Why? Just take a look at the evidence... .

***1. What does the Bible claim about itself?***

1 he Bible says. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 timothy 3.16). "Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). ***Answer:*** It claims to be inspired. It was written by men who were guided by the Holy Spirit. It cannot be broken or proved untrue.

***2. How did Jesus demonstrate His confidence and belief in Scripture?***

Jesus said, "It is written: 'Man shall not Jive by bread alone'" ... "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'" ... "For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve'" (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17: 17).

***Answer:*** Jesus quoted Scripture when meeting the temptations of Satan. He also stated that the Word is truth (John 17: 17). Jesus often quoted Scripture as authority for the truth He was teaching.

***3. Do Bible prophecies confirm inspiration?***

The Bible says, "1 am the Lord ... new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them" (Isaiah 42:8, 9). "I am God ... Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done" (Isaiah 46:9, 10).

***Answer:*** Bible predictions of things to happen in the future confirm the inspiration of Scripture as they come to pass. Notice the following examples of fulfil1ed Bible prophecies:

A. Four world empires to arise: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome (Daniel chapters 2, 7, 8).

B. Cyrus to be the warrior to capture Babylon (Isaiah 45: 1-3).

C. After Baby Ion's destruction, it would never be inhabited again (Isaiah 13: 19, 20; Jeremiah 51:37).

D. Egypt would never again have a commanding position among the nations (Ezekiel 29:14, 15; 30:12, 13).

E. Earth-shaking calamities and fear toward the time of the end (Luke 21:25, 26).

F. Moral degeneracy and decline of spirituality in the last days (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

***4. Can we expect scientific statements made in the Bible to be accurate?***

The Bible says, "The entirety of your word is truth" (Psalm I J 9: 160). "The Spirit ... will guide you into all truth" (John 16: 13).

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**Answer**: Yes, the Bible IS true, The Holy Spirit, who guided the Bible writers always speaks the truth. Here are a few Bible statements that have been confirmed by science:

A. "He hangs the earth on nothing" (Job 26:7). This scientific fact is from Job. The Bible's oldest book.

B. "He ... sits above the circle of the earth" (Isaiah 40:22), The Bible said the earth is round centuries before man found out.

C. "To establish a weight for the wind" (Job 28:25). Long before scientists knew. God said air has weight.

D. "In Him [Jesus] all things consist" (Colossians 1: 17). The word "consist “here literally means "hold together" or "cohere." Many Bible translations put it "hold together," This is the answer to the nuclear physicists' worrisome question about the atom. The real mystery of the atom does not involve its benumbing mega-power, but rather, "Why doesn't the atom fly apart?" Scientific knowledge says it should, but it doesn't. Some scientists are wondering, what puzzling power, completely unknown to them, is holding it together. The Bible says that mysterious power is the Creator, God Himself.

5. **Are biblical health principles tuned to the twenty-first century mind?**

**Answer:**

A. Cover body waste with dirt (Deuteronomy 23: 12, 13). The Bible provision of Moses' day that body waste would be buried outside the camp was thousand- of years ahead of its time. When human waste is not properly buried, disease- can be quickly spread to untold thousands through the water supply or not washing one's hands. This Bible fact continues to save millions of lives.

B. "Nor let us commit sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 10:8). The words "SC:-'II,II immorality" denote all kinds of immoral sexual conduct (see Leviticus I X rot a comprehensive list). When the clear counsel of the Bible is followed people have little or no problems with sexually transmitted diseases such as Syphilis, Gonorrhoea or AIDS. Additionally the temptation to abort unwanted pregnancy would be essentially non-existent.

C. Leave alcoholic beverages alone (Proverbs 23:29-32). If this extremely effective Bible solution were implemented, just think what it would mean:

1. Millions of alcoholics becoming sober, respectable citizens.

2. Millions of families reunited.

3. Millions of broken homes mended.

4. Multiplied thousands of lives saved by sober driving.

5. Thousands of government, business, and professional leaders making clear-minded decisions,

6. Billions of dollars available for humanitarian use.

Note: God not only tells us how to succeed with joy amid today s harrowing problems, but He also gives us the miraculous power to do it (1 Corinthians 15:57: Philippians 4: 13; Romans 1: 16). Bible health principles are relevant and desperately needed, but few are listening. (For more on health, see Study Guide 13.)

6. Are the historical statements of the Bible accurate?

The Bible says, "I, the Lord, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right" fl~~:~h ;1,•10\

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Answer': Yes, Bible historical statements are accurate. What God says In His book is true. Sometimes, temporarily, evidence may not be found to substantiate certain historical facts from the Bible, but in time the evidence surfaces. Note the following:

A. For years sceptics said the Bible was unreliable because it mentions the Hittite nation (Deuteronomy 7: 1) and cities like Nineveh (Jonah 1: 1, 2) and Sodom (Genesis 19:1), which they denied ever existed. But now modem archaeology has confirmed that all three did, indeed, exist.

B. Critics also said that Bible-mentioned kings Belshazzar (Daniel 5: 1) and Sargon (Isaiah 20: 1) never existed. Once again, it has now been confirmed they did exist.

c. Sceptics also said the Bible record of Moses was not reliable because it mentions writing (Exodus 24:4) and wheeled vehicles (Exodus 14:25), neither of which they said existed at the time. They, of course, know better today.

D. At one time the 39 kings of ancient Israel and Judah who reigned during the divided kingdom were authenticated only from the Bible record, so critics charged fabrication. But then archaeologists found cuneiform records that mentioned many of these kings and, once again, the Bible record was proved accurate. Critics have repeatedly been proved wrong as new discoveries confirm biblical people, places, and events. It will always be so.

***7. One of the greatest miracles of the Bible is its unity. Please ponder the following amazing facts:***

A. The 66 books of the Bible were written:

1. On three continents.

2. In three languages.

3. By about 40~ different people (kings, shepherds, theologians, an army general, fishermen, priests, and a physician).

4. Over a period of about 1,500 years.

5. On the most controversial subjects.

6. By people who, in most cases, had never met.

7. By writers whose educations and backgrounds varied greatly.

B. Yet, though it seems totally inconceivable,

1. The 66 books maintain harmony with each other.

2. Often new concepts on a subject are expressed, but these concepts do not undermine what other Bible writers say on the same subject.

C. Talk about astounding! Ask people who have viewed an identical event to each give a report of what happened. They will differ widely and will virtually always contradict each other in some way. Yet the Bible, penned by 40 writers over a 1, 500-year period, reads as if authored by one great mind. And, indeed, it was: "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). The Holy Spirit "moved" them all. He is the real Bible Author.

The four Gospels do sometimes differ in the way they report the same event, but they complement each other.

***8. What evidence of Bible inspiration is found in the lives of people?***

The Bible says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5: 17).

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**Answer**: The changed lives of those who follow Jesus and obey Scripture constitute the most heart-warming proof of Bible inspiration. The drunkard becomes sober: the immoral, pure; the addicted, free: the profane, reverent; the fearful, courageous: and the rude, kind.

An American skeptic was visiting an island whose natives were originally cannibals. When he spotted an old man reading the Bible, he ridiculed him for reading a book "full of myths which had already been exposed." The native s riled at him and said, "My friend, be grateful we do believe this book. Otherwise, we would be serving you for dinner." The Bible really does change people, and this amazing fact confirms its inspiration.

***9. What evidence for Bible inspiration emerges when we compare Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah with New Testament happenings in the life of Jesus?***

The Bible says, "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He [Jesus] expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27). "For he [Apollos] vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ" (Acts 18:28).

**Answer:** The Old Testament predictions of the Messiah to come were so specific and so clearly fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth that both Jesus and Apollos used these prophecies to prove to the Jews that Jesus was, indeed, the Messiah. There are more than 125 of these prophecies. Let's review just 10 of them:

**Prophecy Old Testament New Testament**

 **Scripture Fulfilment**

1. Born in Bethlehem Micah 5:2 Matthew 2: 1-6

2. Born of a virgin Isaiah 7: 14 Matthew 1: 18-23

3. Of David's lineage Jeremiah 23:5 Revelation 22:16

4. Betrayal by a friend Psalm 41:9 John 13:18, 19,26

5. Sold for 30 silver coins Zechariah 11: 12 Matthew 26'14-16

6. Crucified Zechariah 12:10 John 19: 16-18,37

7. Lots cast for His clothes Psalm 22:18 Matthew 27:35

8. No bones broken Psalm 34:20; Exodus 12:46 John 19:31-36

9. Buried in rich man's tomb Isaiah 53:9 Matthew 27:57-60

10. Year, day, hour of His death Daniel 9:26, 27; Exodus 12:6 Matthew 27:45-50

Dr. Peter Stoner, former chairman of the departments of mathematics, astronomy, I and engineering at Pasadena College (California), worked with 600 students for seveeral years applying the "principle of probability" to the prophecies of the Messiah's I coming. They chose just eight from the many available and finally decided the I chances of all eight being fulfilled in one man in a lifetime is one in 1,000,000,000 I. ,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. What would the odds be on the more than 125 prophecies of the Messiah? It couldn't just happen!

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***10. What great advantage does a person have who accepts the Bible as God's inspired word?***

The Bible says, "I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts" (Psalm 119: 100). "You ... make me wiser than my enemies" (Psalm 119:98).

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are ... My thoughts [higher] than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9).

**Answer:** A person who accepts the Word of God will soon know the answers to many complex challenges that secular scholars may never figure out. For example, the Bible teaches:

A. God created the earth and all living organisms in six literal, 24-hour days (Exodus 20: 11; Psalm 33:6, 9).

B. A worldwide flood destroyed every living thing except the sea life and what was inside Noah's ark (Genesis chapters 6, 7, 8).

c. The different languages of the world began at the Tower of Babel (Genesis "11:1-9).

God, who has always existed and knows everything, shares the above three truths with us, recognizing that we could never figure them out on our own. We know only "in part" now (l Corinthians 13:9). And God's knowledge is "past finding out" (Romans 11:33). According to the chronology of the Bible, the earth's age is thousands of years, not millions. This confounds evolutionists, but it shouldn't. The Bible indicates that God created Adam and Eve as full grown. The couple was only one day old on their second day of life, but they were mature. Couldn't He have-do the same thing with the earth? Of course! Man's measuring instruments cannot allow for apparent age. In such cases, they are not trustworthy. Believe the Bible, and you will always be ahead of the speculation of secular scholars and the worldly-wise.

***11. What recent happenings have brought the power and appeal of the Bible into sharp focus?***

Answer: The increasing number of natural disasters and the rise of worldwide terrorism are signs predicted by the Bible. The Bible predicted that at the end of time, "On the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring" (Luke 21:25). The Asian tsunami of December 26, 2004, is just one example. Over 250,000 people were reported dead or missing in what was one of the deadliest natural disasters of modern history. A year later, Hurricane Katrina ripped through New Orleans. The hurricanes and water disasters since then remind us of the prophetic power of Jesus' words that there would be "waves roaring."

The Bible also predicted that "nation would rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom" (Matthew 24:7). After the devastating attack on the twin towers on 9/11, people have realized that no nation on earth is secure against those who wish to harm it. The on-going conflicts in the Middle East and the continuing war against terrorism have brought people back to the Bible.

Some people have questioned the Bible because it speaks of the world being created instead of "evolving." Jesus predicted that "when the Son of man comes, will he really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). The faith-shattering dogma of evolution, however, is now being discredited. We must remember that it is nothing more than an unproved, shaky theory. We will mention three items only: 1. Robert Gentry's DVD Creation s Tiny Mystery has unsettled many evolutionists with its apparent clear evidence of instant creation. 2. Molecular biology's recent demonstration that the single cell is vastly and irreducibly complex makes the accidental origin of life in a single cell an absurdity. 3. The widely different ages now being assign. If to the Grand Canyon layers by current scientific measurements, as opposed to those assigned previously, make evolutionists and their prior measurements seem reckless, and irresponsible. The atheistic theory of evolution that humans and apes came from common ancestors scorns the concept that people were created in the image of God It denies the existence of God, totally disavows Jesus as Savior, negates the Bible and ridicules the truth of an eternal home in heaven. The collapse of evolution and the fulfillment of Bible prophecy are to establish your faith in the Word of God. Don't be fooled by the devil's tactics!

***12. Why does the Bible have such universal appeal?***

The Bible says, "Your word is a ... light to my path" (Psalm 119: 105). "The things I have spoken to you ... that your joy may be full" (John 15: 11). "In the image of God ... He created them" (Genesis 1 :27). "Let your light so shine before men v that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). "I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:3).

**Answer:** Because it answers life's most puzzling questions:

**A. Where did I come from?** God created us in His image. We did not accidentally emerge as nondescript globs from some primeval slime. We are Sons and daughters of God, the Mighty King (Galatians 3:26). We are so precious to God that when Adam and Eve sinned, He gave His Son to die and pay the penalty for our sins so we could be free. He wants to restore us to His image and then, shortly, take us back to Eden, the home Adam and Eve lost.

**B. Why am I here?** Our aims for life today should be to discover the Bible's wonderful answers to life's puzzling problems and to accept Jesus' offer to restore us to His image (Romans 8:29).

**D. What does the future hold for me?** There is no guesswork about the future. Jesus will come very soon to take His people to the fabulous home He has prepared for them in heaven. There, with supreme joy and happiness, people will live forever (John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:3,4).

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. I'm offended that the Bible gives such repugnant, graphic descriptions of sin in recording the lives of some Bible characters. Is this really necessary?***

**Answer:** Yes. It is one of the great facts that give credibility to the Bible. Most biographies skip or soften the bad and often overstate the good. Telling it like it is gives people confidence the Bible can be trusted; it doesn't cover up. Further, Satan's strategy is to convince people they are such great sinners God cannot or will not save them. What joy sweeps over such people when they are shown Bible cases of people like them (and worse) whom God delivered from sin and justified (Romans 15:4)!

***2. Is the entire Bible inspired? Many believe only parts of it are*.**

**Answer:** The Bible has the answer: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteous-

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ness" (2 Timothy 3.16). The Bible does not simply contain the word of God. Rather, it is the Word of God. The Bible is the information and operations manual for a human life. Ignore any of it and you will have unnecessary difficulties and problems.

***3. The Bible is an ancient book with old-fashioned wording and concepts. Don't you feel it is unsafe to rely on something so far removed from our enlightened day?***

***Answer***: No. Its age is in its favor. That is, in fact, one of the proofs of its inspiration. The Bible says, "The word of the Lord endures forever" (1 Peter 1:25). The

Bible stands as a rock. It is God's book-His Word. It cannot be destroyed. Men and even entire nations have burned, banned, and tried to discredit and destroy the Bible, but instead they discredited themselves. They are gone, and their attacks on the Bible are forgotten. Yet the Bible remains a best-seller, in constant demand. Millions would die for it, if necessary. Its message is God-given and 100 percent up-to-date.

Before you study it, pray and ask God to open your heart as you read.

***4. Some of the most brilliant people in the world, who have carefully studied the Bible, believe no one can understand it. If the Bible is truly God's book, shouldn't everyone be able to understand it?***

***Answer***: Bright people who can understand and explain virtually anything are often quickly stopped in their tracks when they read the Bible. The reason is that spiritual things "are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2: 13, 14). The deep things of the Word will never be understood by a secular mind, no matter how brilliant.

Unless one honestly seeks an experience with God, he cannot understand the things of God. The Holy Spirit, who explains the Bible (John 16: 13; 14:26), is not understood by the carnal, secular mind. On the other hand, the humble, even uneducated Christian who studies the Bible receives amazing understanding from the Holy Spirit (Matthew 11:25; 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10).

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***5. The Bible is full of errors. How can you believe it is inspired?***

***Answer:*** The overwhelming majority of so-called errors in the Bible have been demonstrated to be simply errors of judgment or lack of understanding on the part of those who make the complaint. They are not errors at all, but simply truth misunderstood. The inspired Bible:

1. Will always tell you the truth.

2. Will never mislead you.

3. Can be fully trusted.

4. Is reliable and authoritative, not only in spiritual matters but also in other mat- ters it addresses, including history and science. Satan is always digging up some supposed flaw in Scripture, which is not surprising. He found fault even with God and heaven. Copyists may have miscopied in some cases, but no such supposed happening or any other alleged error affects the truth of God's Word. Doctrine is built not upon one Bible passage, but upon the total of God's comments on any subject. We are unaware of any alleged error of any kind that would affect the truthfulness of the content of Scripture. Some things in Scripture are yet difficult to reconcile. There will always be room for doubt to those who prefer to doubt. We believe that even alleged errors, not yet fully explained, will (as in the past) soon be exposed as false alarms. The harder people work to undermine the Bible, the brighter its light shines.

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**Did God create the Devil?**

Most people in the world are being deceived by an evil genius bent on destroying their lives--a brilliant mastermind called the devil, or Satan. BIIJ this dark prince is much more than what you might think ... many say he's Just a devious mythical figure, but the Bible says he's very real, and he's deceiving families, churches, and even nations to increase sorrow and pain. Here are the bibles’s amazing facts about this prince of darkness and how you can overcome him’

***1. With whom did sin originate?***

"The devil has sinned from the beginning" (l John 3:8). "That serpent of old called the Devil and Satan" (Revelation j 2:9).

**Answer:** Satan, also called the devil, is the originator of sin. Without the Scriptures the origin of evil would remain unexplained.

**2. What was Satan's name before he sinned? Where was he living at That time?**

"Bow you are fallen from heaven, 0 Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Isaiah 14: 12). "And He [Jesus] said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven'" (Luke 10:18). "You were on the holy mountain of God" (Ezekiel 28: 14).

**Answer:** His name was Lucifer, and he was living in heaven. Lucifer IS symbolized by the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14 and as the king of Tyrus in Ezekiel 2R.

**3. What was the origin of Lucifer: What responsible position did he hold? How does the Bible describe him?**

"You were ~created" (Ezekiel 28:] 5). "You were the anointed cherub who covers" (Ezekiel 28: 14). "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty .... Every precious stone was your covering.... The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. ...

You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you" (Ezekiel 28:12, 13, 15).

**Answer**: Lucifer was created by God, as were all other angels (Ephesians 3:9). Lucifer was a "covering" cherub, or angel. One great angel stands on the left Side or God's throne and another on the right (Psalm 99: 1). Lucifer was one of those highly exalted angel leaders. Lucifer's beauty was flawless and breath taking. His wisdom was perfect. His brightness was awe-inspiring. Ezekiel 28: 13 seems to indicate that his throat was specially prepared to make him an outstanding musician. Some think he led the angelic choir.

***4. What happened in Lucifer's life that led him to sin? What blasphemous sin did he then commit?***

"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor" (Ezekiel 28: 17). "'For you have said in your heart: ... 'I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; ' I will be like the Most High'" (Isaiah 14:13, 14).

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 **Answer:** Pride, jealousy, discontent, and spit-exaltation arose In his life. Lucifer decided to attempt to unseat God and then demand that all worship him. It was treason of the worst kind.

**Note:** .Why is worship such a big thing? Worship is the key factor in the, ongoing warfare between God and Satan. People 'were created to be happy and fulfilled only when they worship God solely. Not even unfallen angels of heaven are to be worshiped (Revelation 22:8, 9). Satan sought worship in the beginning. Centuries later; when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness, worship was still the central issue (Matthew 4:8-11). In these last days, God is calling upon all people to worship Him (Revelation 14:6, 7). This so infuriates Satan that he will try to force people to worship him or else be killed (Revelation 13: J 5).

Everybody worships somebody or something: power; prestige, food, pleasure, p'0ssessions, one’s own opinion, etc. God says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before .me" (Exodus 20:3). And unless we worship Him only, He counts us against Him (Matthew l 2:30). This news is shocking, but true. If anything or anyone other than God receives first place in my life, I am-unknowingly perhaps-worshiping and supporting Satan. Does God have first place in my life, or am i unconsciously elevating Satan? It is a sobering question, isn't it?

***5. What happened in heaven as a consequence of Lucifer's rebellion?***

"And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:7-9).

**Answer:** Lucifer' won the support of one-third of the angels (Revelation 12:3, 4) and caused an insurrection in heaven. God had no choice but to cast out Lucifer and his angels. This was the greatest battle, by far, ever fought. Lucifer's aim was to usurp God’s throne, even if it might eventually lead to murder (John 8:44). After his expulsion from heaven, Lucifer was called Satan (adversary) and devil (slanderer), and his angels were called demons.

***6. Where is Satan's present headquarters? How does he feel about people?***

"And the Lord said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it" (Job 2:2). "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time (Revelation 12: 12). "Your adversary the devil walks about like a roaming lion, seeking whom he may devour" (l Peter 5:8).

**Answer:** Contrary to popular opinion, Satan's headquarters is the earth, nO.t hell. God gave Adam and Eve dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26). When they sinned, they lost it to Satan (Romans 6: 16), who then becan1e ruler, or prince, of the earth (John 12:31). Satan bitterly hates humans, who were created in God's image. He ca~'t touch God. So, instead, his venom is directed against people who are God's children. He's a hateful, vicious murderer whose aim is to destroy you and thus hurt God.

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***7. When God created Adam and Eve, what one thing did He forbid them to do? What was to be the penalty for disobedience?***

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2: 17).

**Answer:** They were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 'The penalty for eating of the tree was to be death.

***8. What medium did Satan use to deceive Eve? What lies did Satan tell her?***

"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" ... "Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3: 1, 4; 5, emphasis added).

**Answer:** Satan used a serpent-the wisest, most appealing animal God made--to deceive Eve. Some think the serpent originally had wings and flew (Isaiah 14:29; 30:6). Remember, it did not crawl until God cursed it (Genesis 3: 14). Satan's lies were: (1) you won't die, and (2) eating the fruit will make you wise. Satan, who invented lying (John 8:44), mixed truth with the lies he told Eve. Lies that include some truth are the most effective of all. It was true they would "know evil" after sinning. In love, God had withheld from them the knowledge of heartache, grief, suffering, pain, and death. Satan, as he does today, made the knowledge of evil appear attractive. Satan told lies to misrepresent God's character because he knew that no one would ever turn away from such a loving God unless he misunderstood His character.

***9. Was eating a piece of fruit such a bad thing? Why were Adam and Eve removed from the garden?***

"To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4: 17). "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). "He who sins is of the devil" (I John 3:8). "Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." ... "So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life" (Genesis 3 :22, 24).

**Answer:** Yes, eating of the fruit was a sin because it was a direct rejection of one of God's few requirements. It was open rebellion against God's law and authority. By rejecting one of God's commands, Adam and Eve allied themselves with Satan, God's enemy, and thus brought separation between themselves and God (Isaiah 59:2). Satan hoped the couple would sin and then eat of the tree of life, and thus become immortal sinners. But God removed them from the garden to prevent such a tragedy.

***10. What amazing facts does the Bible reveal regarding Satan's methods to hurt, deceive, discourage, and destroy people?***

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THE BIBLE SAYS SATAN

**Answer:** Satan uses every conceivable approach to deceive and destroy people. His demons can appear and pose as righteous people, even clergymen. And Satan will appear as a glorious angel of light with power to call fire down from heaven.

He will impersonate Jesus. But you have been warned, so don't fall for it. When Jesus comes, every eye will see Him (Revelation 1:7). He will remain in the clouds and not even touch the earth (1 Thessalonians 4: 17).

***11. How powerful and effective are Satan's temptations and strategies?***

He convinced: One-third of the angels (Revelation 12:3-9); Adam and Eve (Genesis 3); All but eight people in Noah's day (1 Peter 3:20). He will make the lost feel saved (Matthew 7:21-23). Almost the entire world will follow him (Revelation 13:3). Few will be saved (Matthew 7:14; 22:14).

**Answer:** Satan's success rate is so astoundingly high that it seems almost unbelievable. He deceived a third of the angels. In Noah's day, all but eight people were deceived. Before Jesus comes the second time, Satan will appear as an angelic being, posing as Christ. His deceptive power will be so great that our only safety will lie in refusing to go see him (Matthew 24:23-26). If you absolutely refuse to look and listen, Jesus will protect you from deception (John 10:29). (For more on Jesus' second coming, see Study Guide 8.)

***12. When and where will the devil receive his punishment? What will that punishment be?***

"So it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire" (Matthew 13:40-42). "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone" (Revelation 20: 10). "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). "Therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth. In the sight of all who saw you .... You ... shall be no more forever" (Ezekiel 28: 18, 19).

**Answer:** The devil will be cast into the sin-destroying fire on this earth at the end of the world. God will deal with sin and the devil.

**Note:** It is not possible to adequately describe the sadness and anguish the Father and Son will feel when Satan is cast into this fire. They were closer to him than any other being. How painful this will be not only for those cast into the fire, but for God who created them to begin with.

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***13. What is it that forever settles the horrible problem of sin? Will Sin ever rise up again?***

"As J live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Romans 14:11; see also Philippians 2:10,11; Isaiah 45:23). "Affliction will not rise up a second time" (Nahum 1:9).

**Answer:** Two crucial happenings will settle the sin problem: First, all beings in heaven and earth, including the devil and his angels, will of their own free choice kneel and publicly confess that God is truthful, fair, and righteous. No questions will remain unanswered. All sinners will openly admit that they are lost because of their determined refusal to accept God's love and salvation. They will admit that justice demands they must die. All will confess that they deserve eternal death.

Second, sin will be purged from the universe by the total and final destruction of sin, sinners, the devil, and his angels. God is positive on this point: Sin will never again arise to mar God's universe.

***14. Who makes the final, complete eradication of sin from the universe a certainty?***

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil"(Hebrews 2: 14).

**Answer:** Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus made the eradication of sin a certainty.

***15. How does God the Father feel about people?***

"The Father Himself loves you" (John 16:27; see also John 3: 16; 17:22, 23).

**Answer:** The Father loves people as much as the Son does. Jesus' key aim in life was to demonstrate His Father's character in His own life so people would know how loving, warm, and caring the Father really is (John 5: 19).

**Satan Misrepresents the Father**

Satan misrepresents the Father as unfeeling, aloof,' exacting, stern, and unapproachable (the devil's own traits). He even labels his own ugly, calamitous acts as "acts of God." Jesus came to wipe this slander off His Father's name and demonstrate that our heavenly Father loves us more than a mother loves her child (Isaiah 49: 15). Jesus' favorite theme was God's patience, tenderness, and abundant mercy.

**The Father Can Hardly Wait**

In order to make people supremely happy, our heavenly Father has prepared a fabulous eternal home for them. Our dreams here are no match for what He has waiting! He can hardly wait to welcome His people on the glad homecoming day just ahead. Let's get the word out! And let's be ready. The countdown has already begun.

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SG 2 DID GOD CREATE THE DEVIL?

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. Was the fruit that Adam and Eve ate an apple?***

***Answer***: We do not know. The Bible does not say.

***2. Where did the concept originate that portrays the devil as a red, half-man and half-beast with horns and tail? .***

***Answer***: It came from pagan mythology and pleases the devil. He knows thinking people reject monsters as fable and so will be led to deny his existence. Those who do not believe in a devil are the first to be captured by his wiles.

***3. God said to Adam and Eve, "In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Why didn't they die that day?***

***Answer***: The Bible speaks of two deaths: (1) The "first" death we all die (Hebrews 9:27). (2) The "second" death the wicked die in hellfire at the end of time (Revelation 21: 8): The difference is that there is no resurrection from the second death. It is eternal.

**Jesus Died the Second Death for Every Person**

When Adam and Eve sinned, they immediately would have died the second death except for the fact that Jesus stepped forward and offered to die the second death on Calvary for every person. His supreme sacrifice spared them (Hebrews 2:9).

**When Adam Sinned, His "Undying" Nature Became a "Dying" Nature**

Regarding the first death, the literal rendition of the word "die" in Genesis 2: 17 is "dying thou shalt die," which is noted in the margin of most Bibles. It means that Adam and Eve would enter into the process of dying. Before sinning, the couple possessed an undying, sinless nature. This nature was perpetuated by eating of the tree of life. At the moment of sin, their natures changed to dying, sinful natures. This is what God had predicted. Because they were barred from the tree of life, decay and deterioration-leading ultimately to death-began immediately. The grave became a certainty. The Lord stressed this later when He said to them, "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19).

**4. But since God created Lucifer, isn't He really responsible for his sin?**

Answer: Not at all. God created Lucifer a perfect, sinless angel. Lucifer made a devil of himself. Freedom to choose is a cornerstone principle of God's government. God knew Lucifer would sin when He created him. If at that point God had refused to create him, He would have been repudiating that prime principle of free choice.

**"Freedom to Choose" Is God's Way**

So, knowing full well what Lucifer would do, God still created him. The same facts apply to the creation of Adam and Eve. And, closer to home, these facts apply to you and me. God knows before we are born how we will live, but even so, He permits us to live and choose whether to endorse His government or Satan's. God is willing to be misunderstood and falsely accused and blamed for ages, while taking the time to allow every person to freely choose whom he will follow.

**Only a Loving God Would Risk Granting Full Freedom for All**

This glorious crucial gift of freedom could come only from a just, open, loving GOD. It is an honor and joy to serve such a LORD and friend.

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**Choose to Serve God**

The sin problem will soon end. In the beginning, everything was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). Now "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (l John 5: 19). People everywhere are choosing to serve God or Satan. Use your fantastic, God-given freedom to choose to serve the Lord.

***5. Why didn't God destroy the devil when he sinned, and thus end the sill problem?***

***Answer***: Because sin was something completely new in God's universe, and inhabitants did not understand it. Probably even Lucifer himself did not fully comprehend it at first. Lucifer was a brilliant, highly respected angelic leader. His approach was doubtless one of great concern for heaven and the angels. It possibly ran something like this: "Heaven is good, but it would be improved with more angel input. Too much unchallenged authority (as the Father and Son have) tends to blind leaders to real life. Angels should not be required to take orders. We should give orders. God knows my suggestions are correct, and He is feeling threatened. We must not permit our noble leaders who are out of touch to jeopardize the very existence of heaven. They will listen if we move in unison. We must not be weak; we must ad Otherwise, we will all be ruined by a government that doesn't appreciate us."

**One- Third of the Angels Joined Lucifer (Revelation 12:3, 4)**

Lucifer's arguments convinced many angels, and one-third joined him. If God had destroyed Lucifer immediately, some angelic beings who did not fully understand God's character may have begun to worship God through fear, saying, "Lucifer may have been correct. Be careful. If you differ with God, He may kill you." So nothing would have been settled. Instead, the problem would have been heightened.

**God Accepts Only Loving, Voluntary Service**

The only service acceptable to God is cheerful, voluntary service prompted by love. Obedience for any other reason is unacceptable.

**God Is Giving Satan Time to Demonstrate His Principles**

Satan claimed he had a better plan for the government of the universe. God is giving him time to demonstrate its principles. The Lord will abolish sin only after every soul in the universe is convinced that Satan's government is unfair, hateful, ruthless, lying, and destructive.

**The Universe Is Watching This World**

The Bible says, "We are made a spectacle [margin says "theatre"] unto the world, and to angels, and to men" (1 Corinthians 4:9). The entire universe is watching H. we each play a part in the controversy between Christ and Satan. As the controversy ' ends, every soul will fully understand the principles of both kingdoms and will have chosen to follow either Christ or Satan. Those who have chosen to ally with sin and Satan will be destroyed with him, and God's people will be taken to the eternal safety of their heavenly home.

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**3. Rescue from Above**

Picture the horror of being stranded in an ocean with hungry, deadly sharks closing in! Then imagine how grateful and relieved you'd feel to be plucked to safety. The truth is, every person on the planet is lost in an ocean fraught with danger. We urgently need rescue, not from a boat or helicopter, but from our Heavenly Father. God loves you, so much that He sent His Son to save you. You've undoubtedly heard all this before, but are you sure you really understand what it's all about? What does it really mean to you, and can it really change your life? Read on and find out!

***1. Does God really care about me?***

This is what He says: "Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you" (Isaiah 43:4). "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3).

**Answer:** God's never-ending love for you and me is far beyond our understanding. He loves you as though you were the only lost soul in the universe. He would have given His life for you or me even if there had been no other sinner to redeem. Try never to forget this fact. You are precious in His sight. He loves you.

***3. How has God demonstrated His love for us?***

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9, 10).

Answer: Because He loved us so deeply, He was willing to see His only Son suffer and die rather than be separated from you and me for eternity. We will not be able to understand it, but He did it-just for you, just for me!

***3. How could He love someone like me?***

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

**Answer:** Certainly not because I earned it or deserved it. Not one of us has earned anything except the wages of sin, which is death (Romans 6:23). But God's love is unconditional. He loves the' thieves, adulterers, and murderers. He also loves the selfish, the hypocritical, and the profane blasphemer. But, greatest of all, He loves me! And because He knows that my sins can lead only to misery and death, He wants to save me from my sins. That's why He died.

***4. What does His death do for me?***

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be

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***11. How can I be certain that the commandment-keeping mentioned of God's people in the Bible is not legalism?***

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14: 12). "And they [the saints] overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death" (Revelation 12: 11).

***Answer:*** Do not mistake obedience for legalism. Legalism is trying to earn salvation by good works. The saints are identified in the Bible as having four characteristics: (1) keeping the commandments, (2) trusting the blood of the Lamb, (3) sharing their faith with others, and (4) choosing to die rather than to sin. These are the true marks of the person who is in love with Christ and who has made a life commitment to follow Him.

***12. What significant act seals the love relationship with Christ, and what does it symbolize?***

"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." ... "That the body of sin might be done away with" (Romans 6:4, 6). "I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2).

***Answer:*** Baptism symbolizes three significant events in the life of the true believer: (1) death to sin, (2) birth to a new life in Christ, and (3) marriage to Christ for eternity. This spiritual union will grow stronger and sweeter with time, as long as love continues -to grow. As in any marriage, the loss of love can turn a paradise into hell. When love disappears, the home is held together only by the mechanical, forced duty of the marriage law. Likewise, when the Christian ceases to love Christ supremely, his religion exists only as restrictive compliance to a set of rules.

***13. How can I be certain that the faith and love of my marriage to Christ will continue to increase?***

"Search the Scriptures" (John 5:39). "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5: 17). "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" ~ (Colossians 2:6). "I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31).

***Answer:*** No love affair can prosper without communication. Prayer and Bible study are absolutely essential to keep this relationship growing. His Word constitutes a love letter that I must read daily to nourish the spiritual life. Conversing with Him in prayer deepens the devotion and opens my mind to a more thrilling and, intimate knowledge of His concern for me. Daily I am amazed to discover details of “His incredible provision for my happiness.

**God Seals Our Spiritual Marriage**

To seal our spiritual marriage for eternity, He has promised never to forsake me (Psalm 55:22; Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5), to take care of me in sickness or in health (Psalm 41 :3; Isaiah 41: 10), and to provide for every need that could possibly develop in my life (matt 6:25-14). Just as I received Him by faith and found His

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 RESCUE FROM ABOVE

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promises all-sufficient, I keep on trusting Him for every future need, and He never lets me down.

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. How could one Man's death pay the penalty for the sins of all mankind? i have lived a terrible life of sin. 1 am afraid God would have to do something very special to atone for someone so evil.***

***Answer***: Romans 3:23 tells us that "all have sinned." Because "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23) and since "all have sinned," therefore "something special" is required for every person who has been born. Only One whose life is equal to all mankind could die for the sins of the race. Because Jesus is the Creator and Author of all life, the life He laid down was equivalent to the lives of all people who would ever live. Not only did atonement have to be made by One whose life could stand for all other created beings, but the One who died the atoning death had to be able to rise from that death. Why? In order to administer the benefits of the atonement to all who would apply for it in faith. "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

***2. If 1 accept Christ and His forgiveness and then fall again, will He forgive me again?***

***Answer***: We can trust God to forgive us again if we are sorry for our sin and confess it. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

***3. How can 1 approach God in my sinful condition? Wouldn't it be better for me to have a priest or minister pray for me?***

**Answer:** Since Jesus Christ lived in the flesh and was" tempted as we are" (Hebrews 4: 15), we have a God who can understand and who desires to be merciful to us. Hebrews 4: 16 tells us we can "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy." We may approach God directly through Jesus Christ, without an intermediary; and trusting in His mercy, we may "boldly" come to Him in Jesus' name (John 14: 14). 1 Timothy 2:5 reads: "For there is one God and one Mediator ,between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."

***4. Is there anything I can do to help God save me?***

***Answer***: No. His plan is wholly of grace (Romans 3:24; 4:5); it is "the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). It is true that as God grants us grace through faith, He also gives us the desire and strength to obey Him. This results in compliance with His laws. So, even this obedience results from God's free grace. Obedience-the service and allegiance of love-is the true test of discipleship and a natural fruit of faith in Jesus Christ.

***5. If God forgives my sin and restores me to His family, will that eliminate any future punishment for my sins, or will 1 still be required to do some kind of penance***

***Answer:*** the scripture says there is therefore no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (romans 8:1). Christ paid the full penalty for our transgres-

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**Answer:** God will cleanse the earth from sin and sinners, and will make a perfect new earth, and the holy city will be its capital. Here the righteous will live in joy, peace, and holiness throughout eternity. God promises that sin will not rise up again See Nahum 1:9. (For full information on hell, see Study Guide 11.)

***7. What refreshing, thrilling promises does God make to the people who enter his new kingdom?***

***Answer:***

A. The Lord, in person, will live with them (Revelation 21:3).

B. They will never become bored. There will be pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11).

A. There will be no more death, pain, tears, sorrow, sickness, hospitals, operations, tragedy, disappointment, trouble, hunger, or thirst (Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 33:24; Revelation 22:3; Isaiah 65:23; Revelation 7:16),

B. They will not get tired (Isaiah 40:31).

C. Every saved person will be physically whole in every way. The deaf will hear, the blind will see, the dumb will sing, and the lame will be able to r (Isaiah 35:5, 6; Philippians 3:21).

D. Jealousy, fear, hatred, falsehood, envy, impurity, cynicism, filth, worry and all evil will be forever shut out of God's kingdom (Revelation 21: ,'! ) 27; 22: 15). People will no longer be burdened with the worries and the car that drive them to distraction. There will be no more nervous breakdown Time will become eternity, and the pressures and deadlines of earth will gone forever.

***8. How will the new earth differ from our earth today?***

***Answer:*** ~ A. Vast seas as we know them today will be gone (Revelation 21: 1). The oce and seas cover three-fourths of the earth's surface today. This will not be U case in God's new kingdom. The whole world will be one huge garden of surpassed beauty, interspersed with lakes, rivers, and mountains (Revelation 22:1; Acts 3:20, 21).

B. The deserts will become gardens (Isaiah 35:1, 2).

A. The animals will all be tame. None will prey upon others, and a little chi will lead them (Isaiah 11:6-9; Isaiah 65:25).

B. There will be no more curses (Revelation 22:3).

A. There will be no more violence of any kind (Isaiah 60: 18). This precludes crime, storms, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, injury, etc.

B. Nothing defiling will be found in the new earth (Revelation 21:27). There will be no cigarette butts, tobacco juice, drunkards, taverns, alcoholic beverages, brothels, lewd pictures, or any other wickedness or impurity of any kind. '

***9. Will there be children in God's kingdom? If so, will they grow up?***

"The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets”, (Zechariah 8:5). "And you shall go out and grow ... like stall-fed calves" (Malachi 4:2).

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 SG 4 A COLOSSAL CITY IN SPACE

**Answer:** Yes, there will be many boys and girls in the holy city (Isaiah 11:6-9), and these youngsters will grow up (Malachi 4:2). We have degenerated much in stature, intellect, and vitality since Adam, but all of this will be restored (Acts 3:20, 21).

***10. When reunited with loved ones in heaven, will the saved know each other?***

"Then I shall know just as I also am known" (1 Corinthians 13: 12).

***Answer:*** The Bible clearly teaches that righteous loved ones who have died will be raised to join the righteous living in God's kingdom (Isaiah 26: 19; Jeremiah 31:15-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). And the Scriptures also teach that people in God's new kingdom will know each other, just as people recognize each other on the earth today.

***11. Will people in heaven be real, with flesh and bones?***

"Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.' But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.’... But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, 'Have you any food here?' So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.... And He led them out as far as Bethany, and ... while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:36-39, 41-43, 50, 51). "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1: 11). "The Lord Jesus Christ ... will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body" (Philippians 3:20, 21).

***Answer:*** After His resurrection Jesus proved to His disciples that He was flesh and bones by having them feel Him and by eating food. This same Jesus of flesh and bones ascended to His Father and will come again to the earth. The righteous will be given bodies just like the body of Christ and will be real people with flesh and bones throughout eternity. The difference will be that the heavenly body will not be subject to death, decay, or deterioration. The teaching that the saved in heaven will be ghosts who float on mist clouds and do nothing but play harps has no foundation in the Scriptures. Jesus did not die on the cross to provide any such trivial and foolish future for those who accept His love and nobly follow His way of life. Most people have no interest in such an ethereal existence and, therefore, have little or no desire to enter God's heavenly kingdom-often preferring it only because they fear hell. If only all people everywhere could learn the truth about God's holy city and new earth, millions would begin to understand His love and would turn to Him with all their hearts. A person who misses out on God's kingdom has made the supreme blunder of a lifetime.

***12. How will the righteous spend their time in the heavenly kingdom?***

"They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and

***Answer:*** The righteous will build their own homes in the new earth. (Each will also have a city mansion built by Christ-John 14:1-3.) They will plant vineyards and eat the fruit from them. The Bible is plain. Real people do real things in heaven, and they will thoroughly enjoy it all.

***13. In what other thrilling activities will the redeemed be engaged?***

***Answer:***

A. Sing and play heavenly music (Isaiah 35:10; 51:11; Psalm 87:7; Revelation 14:2, 3).

C. Worship before God's throne every week (Isaiah 66:22, 23).

D. Enjoy never-fading flowers and trees (Ezekiel 47: 12; Isaiah 35:], 2).

E. Visit with loved ones, patriarchs, prophets, etc. (Matthew 8: 11; Revelation 7:9-17).

E. Study the animals of heaven (Isaiah 11 :6-9; 65:25).

F. Travel and explore without ever becoming weary (Isaiah 40:31).

G. Listen to God sing (Zephaniah 3: 17).

H. Realize fondest ambitions (Psalm 37:3, 4; Isaiah 65:24).

I. Greatest joy of all-the privilege of being like Jesus, traveling with Him, and seeing Him face to face (Revelation 14:4; 22:4; 21:3; 1 John 3:2).

***14. Can feeble human language really describe the glories of the heavenly home?***

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

***Answer:*** Not even in its wildest dreams can the heart of man begin to comprehend the marvels of God's eternal kingdom. All that Adam lost will be restored (Acts 3:20, 21 ).~ 15.

***15. Is this kingdom being prepared for me personally?***

"Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22: 17). "To an inheritance incorruptible ... reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4). "1 go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).

***Answer:*** It is prepared for you personally. The invitation from the Lord is to you personally. If rejected, friend, you will have no one to blame but yourself.

***16. How can I be assured of a place in that great and glorious kingdom?***

"Behold, 1 stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20). "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22: 14). "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1: 12). "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (l John 1 :7).

***Answer:*** The Bible makes it plain. It is simple. Give your life to Christ for cleansing from sin. When you do this, He also gives you power to do His will and keep His commandments. This means, of course, that you will begin to live as Christ lived and

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will overcome all sin. "He who overcomes shall inherit all things" (Revelation 21:7). In short, a person is prepared for heaven when he has heaven in his heart.

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. How can heaven be a happy place when the saved think of loved ones who are lost?***

***Answer:*** The Bible says that God will "wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 21:4). Surrounded by the beauty and joys of the new earth, God's redeemed people will forget the tragedies and heartaches of the past; "the former shall not be remembered or come to mind" (Isaiah 65: 1 7).

***2. The Bible says, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (l Corinthians 15:50). How, then, can the redeemed be flesh and bones?***

***Answer:*** Here Paul re-emphasizes what he told us in verses 35-49, that our resurrected bodies will be different from our present bodies. Man's corruptible body isn't fit to enjoy the perfect kingdom of heaven. When man sinned, his nature and body were changed. Therefore, when he enters the bliss of Eden restored his body will be changed and adapted to the perfection of heaven. "Flesh and blood" is simply a figure of speech referring to the body of man on this earth (see Matthew 16: 17; Galatians 1: 16; Ephesians 6: 12), and therefore should not be limited to bald literalness. Christ, in His resurrected body, declared that He was truly "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39). And according to Philippians 3:21 we will have bodies like His.

***3. Is the apostle Peter in charge of the gate of the holy city?***

***Answer***: No! The Bible says in Revelation 21: 12 that the new Jerusalem-the holy city of God-has J 2 gates, and at the gates are 12 angels. No reference is made in the Bible to any of the apostles as guardians of the gates.

***5. Is the holy city really big enough to hold all the saved people of all ages?***

***Answer***: If the city were to be crowded and each saved person given only 100 square feet of ground space, there would be room for 39 billion people in the city, which is many times the present population of the world. Many statisticians believe that if all the people who have ever lived were saved, there would be plenty of room for them in the city. The Scriptures make it clear, however, that only a few will be saved (Matthew 7: 14). So there will be more than enough room in the great city.

***5. Sometimes I wonder if the reward is worth the sacrifice. It seems that Satan is about to overwhelm me at times. Does the Bible offer me any encouragement?***

***Answer***: Yes. In fact, the apostle Paul must have been thinking of someone like you when he wrote, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8: 18). Just one glimpse of that eternal kingdom will cause the worst trials and persecutions of earth to pale into insignificance, and the redeemed will cry out: "Hallelujah, heaven is cheap enough!"

***6. Will little babies who die be saved in God's kingdom?***

***Answer***: We do not have a specific Bible answer to this question, but many choose that infants will be saved on the basis of Matthew 2:16-18. There the

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Bible tells of wicked king Herod slaying all the male babies in Bethlehem who were, two years old or younger. The Old Testament foretold this tragic, cruel incident, and God told the mothers to stop crying because their children would one day be restored to them. "Refrain your voice from weeping, they [the slain children] shall come back from the land of the enemy ..., Your children shall come back to their own border" (Jeremiah 31: 16, 17). This is an obvious reference to the resurrection.

***7. Do I understand correctly that heaven, the home of the saved, will be right here on this earth?***

***Answer***: That is correct. Although the holy city is now in God's dwelling place. He is going to move it to this earth. The holy city will be the capital of the new earth, and God will move His throne here (Revelation 21 :2, 3; 22: 1, 3) and live with the righteous right here on this earth throughout eternity. And where the Lord abides. that is heaven. God's plan is to restore to man what Adam lost: the glories of a perfect life on a perfect planet. Satan and sin interrupted God's plan, but the plan will be carried out. We can all share in this new kingdom-and we must! It's too much to miss. (For additional information on this subject, see Study Guide 12.)

***8. Why do so many teach and believe that the home of the saved is a misty place with ghostlike inhabitants who float on clouds and do nothing but play harps?***

***Answer***: This teaching originated with the devil, the father of lies (John 8:44). His anxious to distort God's loving plan and present heaven as an unreal, "spooky" place so people will lose interest or become skeptical of God's Word altogether. Satan well knows that when men and women fully understand the Bible truth regarding the home of the saved, his power over them is broken, because they will begin making plans to enter that kingdom. This is why he works so hard to becloud the issue and spread falsehood regarding that heavenly home.

**5. Keys for a Happy Marriage**

As you've probably heard, nearly half of all marriages now end in divorce, leaving bitter spouses and confused children in their wake. Don't let this happen t you! Whether your marriage is going through tough times or is experiencing marital bliss, or even if you're not yet married but considering it, here's some free but proven advice to help your marriage last. It's straight from God, the one who created and ordained marriage! If you've tried everything else, why not give God a chance

Follow the keys in this guide, and you can secure your home.

**Seventeen Rules for a Happy Marriage from God's Great Book**

***1. Establish your own private home***.

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

***Comment***: God’s rule is specific. A married couple must leave father and mother and establish their own home, even if finances require that it be a one room apart

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ment. Husband and wife should decide together on such policies as these. Then she should inform her relatives and he, his. They must remain firm no matter who opposes. Thousands of divorces would be avoided if this rule were carefully followed.

***2. Continue your courtship.***

"And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins'" (1 Peter 4:8). "Her husband ... praises her" (Proverbs 31:28). "She who is married cares ... how she may please her husband" (1 Corinthians 7:34). "Be kindly affectionate to one another ... in honor giving preference to one another" (Romans 12: 10).

***Comment:*** Continue (or perhaps revive) the courtesies of courtship in your married life. Successful marriages do not just happen; they must be developed. Don't take each other for granted, or the monotony that results will destroy your marriage. Keep love growing by expressing love for one another or it will die, and you will drift apart. Love and happiness are not found by seeking them for yourself, but rather by giving them to others. So spend as much time as possible doing things together if you would get along well. Learn to greet each other with enthusiasm. Relax, visit, shop, sightsee, eat together. Don't overlook the little courtesies, encouragements, and affectionate acts. Surprise each other with little gifts or favors. Try to "out-love" each other. Don't take more out of marriage than you put into it. Divorce itself is not the greatest destroyer of marriage, but rather, lack of love. Given a chance, love always wins.

***3. Remember that God joined you together in marriage.***

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife .... So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matthew 19:5, 6).

***Comment:*** Has love almost disappeared from your home? The devil (that notori- ous home-breaker) is responsible for this. Don't forget that God Himself joined you together in marriage, and He intends for you to stay together and be happy. He will bring happiness and love into your lives if you will obey His divine rules (commandments). "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). Don't despair. God, who places love in the heart of a missionary for a leprous savage, can easily give you love for each other if you will let Him.

***4. Guard your thoughts-don’t let your senses trap you.***

"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). "You shall not covet your neighbours’ wife" (Exodus 20: 17). "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). "Whatever things are true, noble,.,. Just ... pure ... lovely, of good report ... meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

***Comment:*** The wrong kind of thinking will destroy your marriage. The devil will trap you with thoughts like these: "Our marriage was a mistake." "She doesn't understand me." "I can't take much more of this." "We can always divorce if necessary." "I'll go home to mother." "He smiled at that woman." Stop thinking thoughts

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ing with anyone who) suggests impurity or unfaithfulness. Thoughts uncontrolled are like an automobile in neutral on a hill. Anything can happen, and the result is always disaster.

***5. Never retire for the night angry with each other.***

"Do not let the sun go down on your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26). "Confess your trespasses to one another" (James 5: 16). "Forgetting those things which are behind" (Philippians 3: 13). "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

***Comment***: To remain angry and upset over hurts and grievances (big or little) is exceedingly dangerous. Unless quickly solved, even little problems become set III your mind as convictions and attitudes adversely affecting your whole philosophy of life. This is why God says to let anger cool before retiring at night. Be big enough to forgive and to say with sincerity, "I'm sorry." After ail, no one is perfect, and you are both on the same team, so be sportsmanlike enough to honestly admit a mistake when you make it. Besides, making up is a very pleasant experience, with unusual powers to draw marriage partners closer together. God suggests it! It works!

***6. Keep Christ in the center of your home.***

"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Psalm 127:1). "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:6). "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

***Comment:*** This is the greatest rule. It really covers all the others. Put Christ first! The real secret of true happiness in the home is not diplomacy, strategy, and untiring effort to overcome problems, but rather, union with Christ. Hearts filled with Christ's love can never be very far apart. With Christ in the home, marriage will be successful. The gospel is the cure for all marriages that are filled with hatred, bitterness, and disappointment. It prevents thousands of divorces by miraculously restoring love and happiness. It will save your marriage, too, if you are willing.

***7. Pray together.***

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). "Pray for one another" (James 5: 16). "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally" (James 1:5).

***Comment:*** Pray aloud for each other! This is a wonderful rule that succeeds beyond the wildest dream. Kneel before God and ask Him for true love for one another, for forgiveness, for strength, for wisdom-for the solution to problems. God has given a personal guarantee that He will answer. The praying person is not automatically cured of all of his faults, but he will have a heart that wants to do right. No family ever breaks up while sincerely praying together for God's help.

***8. Agree that divorce is not the answer.***

"What God has joined together. let not man separate" (Matthew 19:6). “whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immortality, and marries another,

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commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9). "For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives" (Romans 7:2).

***Comment:*** The Bible is clear. The ties of marriage are meant to be indissoluble and indestructible. Divorce is permissible only in the case of adultery. But even then it is not demanded, only permitted. Forgiveness is always better than divorce, even in the case of a moral fall. Marriage is for life. God so ordained it when he performed the first wedding in Eden. Thoughts of divorce as a solution will destroy any marriage. This is one reason Jesus ruled it out. Divorce is always destructive and almost never a solution to the problem. Instead, it creates much greater problems, so it should never be considered. Tom, frustrated, unhappy, twisted lives almost inevitably follow divorce, and even success in life itself is often thwarted. God instituted marriage to guard people's purity and happiness, to provide for their social needs, and to elevate their physical, mental, and moral nature. Its vows are among the most solemn and binding obligations that human beings can assume. To lightly set them aside results in removing one's self from God's favor and blessing.

***9. Keep the family circle closed tightly.***

"You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20: 14). "The heart of her husband safely trusts her .... She does him good and not evil all the days of her life" (Proverbs 31:11, 12). "The Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously" (Malachi 2: 14). "Keep you from the evil woman .... Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids.... Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? ... So is he who goes in to his neighbours’ wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent" (Proverbs 6:24, 25, 27, 29).

***Comment***: Family intimacies must never be shared with others-not even with parents. It is a great sin and a tragedy to break this God-given rule. A third person to sympathize or listen to complaints is a tool of the devil to estrange the hearts of husband and wife. Solve your home problems privately. No one else (except your minister or marriage counselor) should ever be involved. Always be truthful with each other, and never keep secrets from each other. Tell no jokes at the expense of your spouse's feelings. Vigorously defend each other, and strictly exclude all intruders. And as for adultery (in spite of what some marriage counselors say), it always hurts you and everyone else involved. God, who knows our mind, body, and emotional structure (and knows what helps or hurts us) says, "Thou shalt not." And when He says, "Don't," we had better not. Those who ignore His rule will pay the supreme penalty. So if flirtations have begun, break them off at once, or shadows may settle over your life that cannot be lifted.

***10. God describes love; make it your daily goal to measure up.***

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:4- 7)

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***Commen***t: Please reread the above Scripture passage carefully. This is God's true description of love. How do you measure up? Love is not a sentimental impulse, but a holy principle that involves every phase and action of life. With true love, your marriage cannot fail. Without it, it cannot succeed.

***11. Remember that criticism and nagging destroy love.***

"Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them" (Colossians 3: 19). "Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman" (Proverbs 21: 19). "A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike" (Proverbs 27: 15). "Why do you look at the speck [ splinter] in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank [whole board] in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3). "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself' (1 Corinthians 13:4).

***Comment:*** Stop criticizing, nagging, and fault finding. Your husband or wife may lack much, but nagging won't help. Don't expect perfection, or bitterness will result. Overlook faults, and hunt for the good things. Don't try to reform, control, or compel your partner-you will destroy love. Only God can change people. A sense of humor, a cheerful heart, kindness, patience, and affection will banish two-thirds of your marriage problems. Try to make your spouse happy rather than good, and the good will take care of itself. The secret of a successful marriage lies not in having the right partner, but rather in being the right partner.

***12. Do not overdo in anything; be temperate.***

"Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things" (1 Corinthians 9:25). "Love ... does not seek its own [selfish advantage]" (1 Corinthians 13 :4, 5). "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection" (l Corinthians 9:27). "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3: 10). "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled" (Hebrews 13:4). "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts, and do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin" (Romans 6: 12, 13).

***Comment:*** Overdoing will ruin your marriage. So will underdoing. Work, love, rest, exercise, play, worship, meals, and social contacts must be carefully balanced in your marriage, or something will snap. Overwork and the lack of sleep, proper food, or exercise make a person critical, intolerant, and negative. Constant over eating is a great evil that strengthens the lower nature and dulls the conscience. Sexual abuses destroy a love for holy things and weaken vitality. Marriage gives no license to sexual excesses. Degrading, twisted, or intemperate sex acts destroy love and respect for one another. A temperate sex life is recommended by the Bible (1 Corinthians 7:3-7). Social contacts with others are absolutely essential. True happiness cannot be found in isolation. We must learn to laugh and enjoy wholesome, good times. To be overly serious is dangerous. Overdoing or underdoing in any thin weakens the mind, body, conscience, and the ability to love and respect one another.

"don’t let intemperance wreck your marriage.

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***13. Respect each other's personal rights and privacies.***

"Love suffers long and is kind. ... love does not envy. ... does not behave rudely, does not seek its own [in selfishness]. ... does not rejoice in iniquity .believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Romans 12: 10).

***Comment:*** Each spouse has a God-given right to certain personal privacies with- out explanation. Do not tamper with each other's wallets or purses, personal mail, and other private property unless given permission. The right to privacy and quietude when preoccupied should be respected. Your husband or wife even has a right to be wrong part of the time and is entitled to an "off-day" without being given the third degree. Marriage partners do not own each other and should never try to force personality changes. Only God can make such changes, and we shall all answer personally to Him on this matter (Romans 14: 12). Perfect confidence and trust in one another-no checking up on each other-is absolutely essential for happiness. Spend less time trying to "figure out" your spouse and more time trying to please her or him. This works wonders.

***14. Be clean, modest, orderly, and dutiful***.

"In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel" (1 Timothy 2:9). "She ... willingly works with her hands She also rises while it is yet night, And provides food for her household She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness" (Proverbs 31: 13, 15,27). "Be clean" (Isaiah 52: 11). "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). "If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). "Do not become sluggish [slothful]" (Hebrews 6: 12).

***Comment:*** Laziness, disorder, dirt, and slovenliness are the devil's weapons to destroy your respect and affection for one another, and thus ruin your marriage. Neat, modest attire and clean, well-groomed bodies are essential for both husband and wife. The meals should be wholesome, attractive, and served on time. The home should be clean and orderly, because this brings peace, calmness, and satisfaction to all. A lazy, shiftless husband who does not provide for his household is a curse to his family and an insult to God. Carelessness in some of these seemingly small matters is destroying homes by the thousands.

***15. Determine to speak softly and kindly.***

"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15: 1). "Live joyfully with the wife whom you love" (Ecclesiastes 9:9). "When I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13: 11).

***Comment***: Force yourself to speak softly and kindly to your spouse. Silence, when one is attacked, is often the best method to cool wrath. Decisions made when angry, tired, or discouraged are unreliable anyway, so it's best to relax and let anger cool. And when you do speak, let it always be quietly and lovingly. Harsh, angry words crush your spouse’s desire to please you.

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***16. Be reasonable in money matters.***

"Love does not envy [is not possessive]. ... does not behave rudely, does not seek its own [selfish advantage]" (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5). "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

***Comment:*** All possessions and income in marriage should be "ours," not "yours" and "mine." Wives who don't work outside the home should receive a regular amount for groceries, clothing, and other budgeted items. It should be cheerfully provided instead of grudgingly released under protest. Wife and husband both should have small, equal sums (whenever possible) to spend as desired without giving account. A miserly husband usually angers his wife into being a spender, just as a wasteful husband makes a wife stingy. Showing confidence in your companion's managing ability will usually make him or her more business-like.

***17. Talk things over and counsel together freely.***

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up" (1 Corinthians 13:4,5). "He who disdains instruction despises his own soul" (Proverbs 15:32). "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Proverbs 26: 12).

***Comment:*** Few things will strengthen your marriage more than counseling together on all major decisions. Changing a job or purchasing a home, an automobile. a boat, furniture, clothing (major items at least), and all other items that require money involve both husband and wife, and the opinions of both should be considered. Talking things over together will avoid many blunders that could ruin your marriage. If, after much discussion and earnest prayer, opinions still differ, the wife should submit to her husband's decision. Scripture is clear on this. (See Ephesians 5:22-24.)

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. Which marriage partner should be the first to confess after a quarrel?***

***Answer:*** The one who was in the right!

***2. Could you suggest a rule for a meddlesome mother-in-law?***

***Answer***: Yes! Be quiet and mind your own business! (See] Thessalonians 4: 11.)

In fact, this rule applies to all in-laws. Many a marriage that might have been a litt1 heaven on earth has been changed into hell by in-laws. The duty of all in-laws is to leave the newly established home strictly alone.

***3. My husband is a godless man, and I am trying to be a Christian. His influence is terrible. Should I divorce him?***

***Answer:*** No! Read '1 Corinthians 7:12-14 and 1 Peter 3:1, 2. God gives a specific answer.

***4. When my husband displeases me, I won't sleep with him. He says I am wron***g. ***Am I ?***

Answer yes God gives a definite answer to this question in Corinthians 7:4, 5

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***5. My wife ran off with another man. Now repentant, she wants to return home. My pastor says I should take her back, but God forbids this, doesn't He?***

***Answer***: No. No, indeed! God permits divorce for adultery, but does not command it. Forgiveness is always better and is always in order. (See Matthew 6: 14, 15.) Divorce will seriously mar your life and the lives of your children. Give her another chance! The golden rule (Matthew 7: 12) applies here. If you and your wife will turn your lives over to Christ, He will make your marriage supremely happy. It is not too late.

***6. What can I do? Men are always attempting familiarities with me.***

***Answer:*** Be very careful of your conduct. God says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Perhaps your conduct around men-a suggestive smile, immodest clothing, off-color jokes, or a "too relaxed" and comfortable attitude-encourages their advances. There is something about Christian reserve and dignity that keeps a man in his place. Christ said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5: 16). When Christ really shines from your life, you will have little trouble with evil men and their advances.

***7. Can you tell me simply and plainly what God's counsel is to one who has fallen but is truly repentant?***

***Answer***: Long ago Christ gave a pointed and comforting answer to one who had fallen into immorality but was repentant. He said, "Go and sin no more" (John 8: 11). His counsel still applies today.

***8. Isn't the "innocent party" in a divorce sometimes partially guilty also?***

***Answer:*** Certainly, Sometimes the "innocent party," by lovelessness, inattentiveness, self-righteousness, unkindness, selfishness, nagging, and downright coldness, can encourage evil thoughts and actions in his or her spouse. Sometimes the "innocent party" may be equally as guilty before God as the "guilty" one. God looks upon our motives and judges accordingly. "For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

***9. Does God expect me to live with a physically abusive spouse?***

***Answer:*** Physical abuse can be life threatening and is a serious problem that demands immediate attention. The spouse and family members who have been physically abused must find a safe environment in which to live. Both husband and wife need to seek professional help through a qualified Christian marriage counselor.

**6. Written in Stone**

Centuries ago, God wrote His law in stone, and you're still supposed to keep it today! It's absolutely true that violating any part of God's law always brings negative consequences. As crime overruns our cities, doesn't it make sense that for peace and safety we need to obey the laws of the land? Well, this same principle applies with God’s law- the ten commandments- in our own lives too!

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AMAZING FACTS

They aren't called the ten suggestions, ten recommendations, or the ten great ideas Since so much is at stake, you should take a few minutes to seriously' consider your responsibility.

***1. Did God Himself really write the Ten Commandments?***

"He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God." ... "Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tab lets" (Exodus 3] : 18; 3 2: 16).

***Answer:*** Yes, the great God of heaven wrote the 1en Commandments on tables stone with His own finger.

***2. What is God's definition of sin? "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4).***

***Answer:*** Sin is breaking God's Ten Commandment law. And since the law of (rod is perfect (Psalm 19:7), its principles cover every conceivable sin. It is impossible ' to commit a sin that is not condemned by at least one of God's Ten Commandments. The commandments cover "man's all [the whole duty of man]" (Ecclesiastes 12: 13). Nothing is left out.

***3. Why did God give us the Ten Commandments?***

"Happy is he who keeps the law" (Proverbs 29: 18). "Keep my commands; For length of days and long life and peace they wil1 add to you" (Proverbs 3: 1, 2).

***Answer A:*** As a guide for happy, abundant living. God created us to enjoy happiness, peace, long life, contentment, accomplishment, and all the other great blessings for which our hearts long. God's law is the road map that points out the right paths to follow in order to find this true, supreme happiness. "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). "1 would not have known, sin except through the law. For 1 would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet'" (Romans 7:7).

***Answer B***: To show me the difference between right and wrong. God's law' like a mirror (James 1:23-25). It points out wrongdoing in my life as a mirror point out dirt on my face. The only possible way for a person to know if he is sinning for him to carefully check his life by the mirror of God's law. Hope for this mixed' up, sinking generation is found in God's Ten Commandment law. It tells where " to draw the line!

"And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes [commandments] .for our good always" (Deuteronomy 6:24). "Hold me up, and I shall be safe, and I shall observe Your statutes continually. You reject all those who stray from Your statutes" (Psalm 119:117,118).

***Answer C:*** To protect me from danger and tragedy. God's law is like a strong cage at the zoo, which protects us from fierce, destructive animals, It protects us from impurity, falsehood, murder, idolatry, theft, and many other evils that destroy life, peace and happiness. All good laws protect, and God's law is no exception.

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***5. Can God's law (the Ten Commandments) ever be changed or abolished?***

"It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail" (Luke 16: 17). "My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips" (Psalm 89:34). "All His precepts [commandments] are sure. They stand fast forever and ever" (Psalm 111:7, 8).

 GOD IS THE LAW IS

GOOD Luke 18:19 1 Timothy 1 :8

HOLY Isaiah 5:16 Romans 7:12

PERFECT Matthew 5:48 Psalm 19:7

PURE 1 John 3:2, 3 Psalm 19:8

JUST Deuteronomy 32:4 Romans 7:12

TRUE John 3:33 Psalm 19:9

SPIRITUAL 1 Corinthians 10:4 Romans 7:14

RIGHTEOUSNESS Jeremiah 23:6 Psalm 119:172

FAITHFUL 1 Corinthian 1:9 Psalm 119:86

LOVE 1 John 4:8 Romans 13:10

UNCHANGEABLE James 1:17 Matthew 5:18

ETERNAL Genesis 21:33 Psalm 111:7, 8

"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (l John 2:3).

***Answer D:*** It helps us to know God.

Special Note: The eternal principles of God's law are written deep in every person's nature by the God who created us. The writing may be dim and smudged, but it is still there. This means, of course, that you cannotfind true peace unless you are willing to live in harmony with your inner nature, upon which God has written these principles. We were created to live in harmony with them. When we choose to ignore them, the result is always tension, unrest, and tragedy-just as ignoring the rules for safe driving leads to serious trouble.

***5. Why is God's law exceedingly important to me personally?***

"So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty" (James 2: 12).

***Answer:*** Because the Ten Commandment law is the standard by which God examines people in the heavenly judgment. How are you measuring up? It is a life-or-death matter!

***Answer:*** Absolutely not! The Bible is very clear on this point. If the law could have been changed, God would have immediately made that change when Adam and Eve sinned instead of sending His Son to die in the sinner's behalf to pay the penalty of the broken law. This was impossible.

The commandments are revealed principles of God's holy character that will always be true as long as God exists. Notice on the above chart that God and His law have the same characteristics. Do you see what this means? The Ten Commandment law is God's character in written form-written so we can comprehend it. It is no more possible to change God's law than to pull God out of heaven and change Him. Jesus came to show us what the law (which is a pattern for holy living) looked like when made up in human form. God's character can never change Neither can HIS law, for it is His character in human language.

***6. Did Jesus abolish God's law while He was here on earth?***

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law .... I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ... Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5: 17, 18).

***Answer:*** No, indeed! Jesus specifically asserted that He did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill (or keep) it. Instead of doing away with the law, Jesus magnified it (Isaiah 42:2]) as the perfect guide for right living. For example, Jesus pointed out that "You shall not murder" condemns anger "without a cause" (Matthew 5:21;- 22) and hatred (l John 3: 15), and that lust is adultery (Matthew 5:27,28). He says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14: 15).

***7. Will people who knowingly continue to break even one of God’s commandments be saved?***

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). "He will destroy its sinners from it" (Isaiah 13:9). "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2: 1 0).

***Answer:*** The Ten Commandment law is the guide we must use in finding our way to God and holy living. If I ignore even one of the commandments, I am neglecting part of the divine pattern, or blueprint. If only one link of a chain is broken, its entire purpose is undone. The Bible says that when we knowingly break any command 01 God, we are sinning (James 4: 17), because we have refused His will for us. Only those who do His will can enter the kingdom of heaven. Of course, God will forgive anyone who genuinely repents and accepts Christ's power to change.

***9. Can anyone be saved by keeping the law?***

"By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight" (Romans 3:20). "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

***Answer:*** No! The answer is too plain to miss. No one can be saved by keeping the law. Salvation comes only through grace, as a free gift from Jesus Christ, and we receive this gift by faith, not by works. The law serves only as a minor to point out sin in our lives. Cleansing and forgiveness from that sin come only through Christ.

***9. Why, then, is the law an absolute essential for perfecting Christian character?***

"Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all [whole duty]" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20).

***Answer***: Because the full pattern, or "whole duty," for Christian living is contained in God's law. Like a 6- year-old boy who made his own ruler, measured himself, and told his mother that he was 12 feet tall, our own standards are never safe. I cannot know whether I am a sinner unless I look carefully into the perfect standard-God '8 law-mirror. Millions who have cast out devils, prophesied, and done many wonderful works in Jesus’s name will be lost (Matthew 7:21-23) because they did not bother to check their lives with his great law-pattern. Hence, they think they are righteous

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and saved when, instead, they are sinful and lost. "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2:3).

***10. What enables a truly converted Christian to follow the pattern of God's law?***

"I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts" (Hebrews 8:10). "I can do all things through Christ" (Philippians 4:13). "God did by sending His own Son ... that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Romans 8:3, 4).

***Answer:*** Christ not only pardons repentant sinners, but He restores in them the image of God. He brings them into harmony with His law through the power of His indwelling presence. "Thou shalt not" then becomes a promise that the Christian will not steal, lie, murder, etc., because Jesus lives inside and is in control. God could not change His law, but He made a blessed provision through Jesus to change the ~inner so he can measure up to that law.

***11. But isn't a Christian who has faith and is living under grace freed from keeping the law?***

"For sin [breaking God's law-l John 3:4] shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin [break the law] because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!" (Romans 6: 14, 15). "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31).

***Answer:*** No! The Scriptures teach the very opposite. Grace is like the governor's pardon to a prisoner. It forgives him, but it does not give him freedom to break one single law on the statute books. The forgiven person, living under grace, is under double obligation ~to keep the law. A person who refuses to keep God's law, saying that he is living under grace, is mistaken. He is living under disgrace.

***12. Are the Ten Commandments of God Reaffirmed in the New Testament?***

***Answer:*** Yes, and very clearly so. Look the following over very carefully.

**The Law of God in the New Testament**

1. "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve" (Matthew 4:10).

2. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5 :21). "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising" (Acts 17:29).

3. "That the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed" (1 Timothy 6: 1).

4. "For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works.'" "There remains therefore a rest [keeping of a Sabbath, margin] for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as G0f. did from His" (Hebrews 4:4, 9, 10).

5. "Honor your father and your mother" (Matthew 19: 19).

6. "You shall not murder" (Romans 13:9).

 7. “you shall not commit adultery” (matt 19:18)

8. "You shall not steal" (Romans 13 :9).

9. "You shall not bear false witness" (Romans 13 :9).

10. "You shall not covet" (Romans 7:7).

**The Law of God in the Old Testament**

1. "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3).

2. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image-any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exodus 20:4-6).

3. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain" (Exodus 20:7).

4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your cattle, or your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11).

5. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (Exodus 20: 12).

6. "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13).

7. "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14).

8. "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20: 15).

9. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (Exodus 20: 16).

10. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's" (Exodus 20: 17).

***13. Are God's law and Moses' law the same?***

***Answer:*** No, they are not the same. Study the following notes and comparison carefully.

***Note***: Moses' law contained the temporary, ceremonial law of the Old Testament. It regulated the priesthood, sacrifices, rituals, meat and drink offerings, etc., all of which foreshadowed the cross. This law was added "till the seed should come, " and that seed was Christ (Galatians 3: 16, 19). The ritual and ceremony of Moses' law pointed forward to Christ s sacrifice. When He died, this law came to an end, but the Ten Commandments (Gods law) "stand fast forever and ever" (Psalm 111:8). That there are two laws is made crystal clear in Daniel 9:10, 11.

***Special Note:*** Please note that God's law has existed at least as long as sin has existed. The Bible says, "where there is no law there is no transgression [or sin]" (Romans 4: 15). So God's Ten Commandment law existed from the beginning. Men broke that law (sinned-l John 3:4). Because of sin (or breaking God's law), Moses' law was given (or “added”- Galatians 3:16, 19) till Christ should come and die. Two separate laws are involved: God’s law and Moses’s law.

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**Moses’ Law**

., Called "the law of Moses" (Luke 2:22)

• Called "law ... contained in ordinances" (Ephesians 2:] 5)

~ Written by Moses in a book (2 Chronicles 35: 12)

• Placed in the side of the ark (Deuteronomy 31 :26)

•. Ended at the cross (Ephesians 2: 16)

• Added because of sin (Galatians 3: 19)

• Contrary to us, against us (Colossians 2: 14)

• Judges no one (Colossians 2: 14-16)

• Carnal (Hebrews 7: 16)

• Made nothing perfect (Hebrews 7: 19)

**God's Law**

• 'Called "the law of the Lord" (Isaiah 5 :24)

• Called "the royal law" (James 2:8)

• Written by God on stone (Exodus 31: 18; 32: 16)

• Placed inside the ark (Exodus 40:20)

• Will stand forever (Luke 16: 17)

• Points out sin (Romans 7:7; 3:20)

• Not grievous (1 John 5:3)

• Judges all people (James 2:10-12)

• Spiritual (Romans 7:14)

• Perfect (Psalm 19:7)

***14. How does the devil feel about the people who pattern their lives after God's Ten Commandments?***

"And the dragon [the devil] was enraged with the woman [true church], and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God" (Revelation 12: 17). "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God" (Revelation 14:12).

***Answer:*** The devil hates the people who uphold God's law because the law is the pattern of right living. And if you decide to follow the pattern outlined in God's law, you will feel the devil's wrath upon you at once and with all fury. It is not surprising that the devil hates and bitterly opposes all who uphold God's law. But it is shocking and astounding to hear religious leaders denying the binding claims of the Ten Commandments while at the same time upholding the traditions of men. No wonder Jesus said, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:3, 9). And David said, "It is time for You to act, 0 Lord, for they have regarded Your law as void" (Psalm 119: 126). Christians must wake up and restore God's law to its rightful, exalted position. It is folly for this undisciplined generation to presume that it can break the laws of the living God with impunity.

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**Your Thought, Questions Answered**

***1. Doesn't the Bible say the law was (or is) faulty?***

***Answer:*** No. The Bible says the people were faulty. God found "fault with them" (Hebrews 8:8). And in Romans 8:3 the Bible says that the law "was weak through the flesh." It is always the same story. The law is perfect, but the people are faulty, or weak. So God would have His Son live within H is people "that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Romans 8:4) through the indwelling Christ.

***2. Galatians 3:13 says we are redeemed from the curse of the law. Can you explain this?***

***Answer:*** The curse of the law is death (Romans 6:23). Christ tasted "death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9). Thus He redeemed all from the curse of the law (death) and in its place provided eternal life.

***3. Don't Colossians 2:14-17 and Ephesians 2:15 teach that God's law ended at the cross?***

***Answer***: No, these passages both refer to the law containing "ordinances," or Moses' law, which was a ceremonial law governing the sacrificial system and the priesthood. All of this ceremony and ritual foreshadowed the cross and ended at Christ's death, as God had intended. Moses' law was added till the "Seed should come," and that "Seed ... is Christ" (Galatians 3: 19, 16). God's law could not he involved here, for Paul spoke of it as holy, just, and good many years after the cross (Romans 7:7, 12).

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***4. The Bible says, "love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10). The Bible also, in Matthew 22:37-40, commands us to love God and to love our neighbors. and ends with the words, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. " Do these commands replace the Ten Commandments?***

***Answer***: No, the Ten Commandments hang from these two commands like our 10 fingers hang from our two hands. They are inseparable. Love to God makes keeping the first four commandments (which concern God) a pleasure, and love toward our neighbor makes keeping the last six \ which concern our neighbor) a joy. Love fulfills the law by taking away the drudgery and by making law-keeping a delight (Psalm 40:8). When we truly love a person, honoring his or her requests becomes a joy. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14: 15). It is impossible to love the Lord and not keep His commandments, because the Bible says, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (l John 2:4).

***5. Doesn't 2 Corinthians 3: 7 teach that the law written and engraved in stone "was to be done away"?***

***Answer***: No. The passage says that the "glory" of Moses' ministration of the law was to be done away, but not the law. Read the whole passage of 2 Corinthians 3:3-9 again carefully. The subject is not the doing away with the law or its establishment, but rather, the change of the location from the law from “tables of stone” to the “tables of the heart.” Under Moses’s ministration the law was on stones. Under the Holy

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Spirit's ministration, through Christ, the law is written upon the heart (Hebrews 8: 10). A rule posted on a school bulletin board becomes effective only when it enters a student's heart. Christ's ministration of the law is effective because He transfers the law to the heart of the Christian. Then keeping the law becomes a delight and a joyful way of living because the Christian has true love for both God and man.

***6. Romans 10:4 says that "Christ is the end of the law." So it has ended, hasn't it?***

***Answer***: "End" in this verse means purpose or object, as it does in James 5: II. The meaning is clear. To lead men to Christ-where they find righteousness-is the goal, purpose, or end of the law.

***7. Why do so many people deny the binding claims of God's law?***

***Answer***: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the" law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Romans 8:7-9).

***8. Were the righteous people of the Old Testament saved by the law?***

***Answer***: No one has ever been saved by the law. All who have been saved in all ages have been saved by grace. This "grace ... was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Timothy I: 9). The law only points out sin. Christ alone can save. Noah "found grace" (Genesis 6:8); Moses found grace (Exodus 33: 17); the Israelites in the wilderness found grace (Jeremiah 31:2); and Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and many other Old Testament worthies were saved "by faith" according to Hebrews 11. They were saved by looking forward to the cross; we, by looking back to 'it. The law is necessary because, like a mirror, it reveals the "dirt" in our lives. Without it, people are sinners but are not aware of it. However, the law has no saving power. It can only point out sin. Jesus, and He alone, can save a person from sin. This has always been true, even in Old Testament times (Acts 4: 10, 12; 2 Timothy 1 :9).

***9. Why worry about the law? Isn't conscience a safe guide?***

***Answer***: No! A thousand times, no! The Bible speaks of an evil conscience, a defiled conscience, and a seared conscience-none of which is safe. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14: 12). God says, "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool" (Proverbs 28:26).

**7. The lost Day of History**

 Did you know there is a very important day that almost everyone has forgotten about? It's astounding that only a few people are aware of it, because it's one of the most significant days in all of human history! It's not only a day in the past, but the present and future. Furthermore, what happened on this neglected day can have a profound effect on your life.

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***1. 0n what day did Jesus customarily worship?***

"So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read" (Luke 4: 16).

***Answer:*** Jesus' custom was to worship on the Sabbath.

***2. But which day of history has been lost?***

"The seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God" (Exodus 20: 10). "Now when the Sabbath was past, ... Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen" (Mark 16:], 2).

***Answer:*** A little detective work is required. Many people believe that the Sabbath is the first day of the week (Sunday). But this text shows that the Sabbath is the day that comes just before the first day of the week. According to Scripture, the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week (Saturday).

***3. Who made the Sabbath and when?***

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." ... "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Genesis 1: 1; 2:2, 3).

***Answer:*** God made the Sabbath at the time of Creation, when He made the world. He rested on the Sabbath and blessed and sanctified it (set it apart for a holy use).

***4. What does God say about Sabbath-keeping in the Ten Commandments, which He wrote with His own finger?***

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your cattle, or your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11). "Then the LORD delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God" (Deuteronomy 9: 10).

***Answer:*** In the fourth commandment of the 10, God commands us to observe th seventh-day Sabbath as His holy day. God knew people would forget His Sabbath. so He began this commandment with the word "remember." He has never commanded anyone anywhere to keep any other day as a weekly holy day,

***5. But haven't the Ten Commandments been changed?***

Jesus says: "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle or the law to fail" (Luke 16: 17). God says: "My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips" (Psalm 89:34). Notice, the Ten Commandment- came from His lips. Exodus 20: 1 says, "And God spoke all these words, saying ... ' [the Ten Commandments follow in verses 2-17]."

***Answer:*** no indeed! It is utterly impossible for any of God’s moral law ever to change. All Ten Commandments are binding today.

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***6. Did the apostles keep the Sabbath?***

"Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures" (Acts 17:2). "Paul and his party ... went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down" (Acts 13: 13, 14). "And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there" (Acts 16: 13). "And he [Paul] reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18:4).

***Answer:*** Yes, the book of Acts makes it clear that Paul and the early church kept the Sabbath.

 ***8. Did the Gentiles also worship on Sabbath?***

***God commanded it:*** "Blessed is the man ... Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath." ... "Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LORD, ... Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant-Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer ... for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56:2, 6, 7, emphasis added).

***Apostles taught it***: "So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath." "On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God" (Acts 13 :42, 44, emphasis added). "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18:4).

***Answer:*** The apostles in the early New Testament church not only obeyed God's Sabbath command, but they also taught the converted Gentiles to worship on Sabbath. Never once do they refer to Sunday as a holy day.

***8. But wasn't the Sabbath changed to Sunday at Christ's death or resurrection?***

***Answer***: No, there is not the remotest hint that the Sabbath was changed at Christ's death or resurrection. The Bible teaches just the opposite. Please carefully review the following evidence:

**A. God blessed the Sabbath**. "The LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exodus 20: 11). "Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Genesis 2:3).

**B. Christ expected His people to be still keeping the Sabbath in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed.** Knowing full well that Jerusalem would be destroyed by Rome in A.D. 70, Jesus warned His followers of that time, saying, "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath" (Matthew 24:20, emphasis added). Jesus made it clear that He intended for the Sabbath to be kept even 40 years after His resurrection. In fact, there is no intimation anywhere in the Scriptures that Jesus, His Father, or the apostles ever (at any time, under any circumstances) changed the holy seventh-day Sabbath to any other day.

**C. The women who came to anoint Christ's dead body kept the Sabbath. Jesus died on "the day before the Sabbath" (Mark 15:37, 42), which is now called Good Friday.** The women prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body, then rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment” (luke 23:56) only “when the Sabbath was past” (mark 16:1) did the women come

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"on the first day of the week" (Mark 16:2) to continue their sad work. They found Jesus "rose early on the first day of the week" (verse 9), commonly called Easter Sunday. Please note that the Sabbath "according to the commandment" was the day preceding Easter Sunday, which we now call Saturday.

**D. Luke, the author of Acts, doesn't refer to any change of the day of worship. There's no biblical record of a change.** In the book of Acts, Luke says that he wrote his gospel (the book of Luke) about "all" of Jesus' teachings (Acts 1 :1-3). But he never wrote about Sunday-keeping or a change of the Sabbath.

**9. Some people say the Sabbath will be kept in God's new earth. Is this correct?**

"'For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,' says the LORD, 'So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,' says the LORD" (Isaiah 66:22, 23).

***Answer:*** Yes, the Bible says the saved people of all ages will keep the Sabbath in the new earth.

***10. But isn't Sunday the Lord's day?***

"Call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD" (Isaiah 58: 13). "For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Matthew 12:8).

***Answer:*** The Bible speaks of the "Lord's day" in Revelation 1: 1 0, so the Lord does have a special day. But no verse of Scripture refers to Sunday as the Lord', day. Ratner, the Bible plainly identifies Sabbath as the Lord's day. The only day eve blessed by the Lord or claimed by Him as His holy day is the seventh-day Sabbath.

***11. Shouldn't 1 keep Sunday in honor of Christ's resurrection?***

"Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Romans 6:3-6).

***Answer:*** No! No more than you would keep Friday in honor of the crucifixion. Christ gave the ordinance of baptism in honor of His death, burial, and resurrection. The Bible never suggests Sunday-keeping in honor of the resurrection (or for any other reason, for that matter). We honor Christ by obeying Him (John 14: 15)-not by substituting man-made requirements in place of His.

***12. Well, if Sunday-keeping isn't in the Bible, whose idea was it anyway?***

"He ... shall intend to change times and law" (Daniel 7:25). "Thus you t..~ •. ~ ~n,.1o +1 .• 0. r>A1'Y'I1'Y'I'3"r11'Y'1pnt of ~on f'of nf'o f'fff'rt hv vour tradition." "And

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(Matthew 15:6, 9). "Her priests have violated My law." "Her prophets plastered them with untempered mortar, saying, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' when the LORD had not spoken" (Ezekiel 22:26, 28).

***Answer:*** In the early centuries, because of hatred against the Jews, misguided men suggested that God's holy day of worship be changed from Saturday to Sunday. God predicted it would happen, and it did. This error was passed on to our unsuspecting generation as gospel fact. Sunday-keeping is a tradition of uninspired men and breaks God's law, which commands Sabbath-keeping. Only God can make a day holy. God blessed the Sabbath, and when God blesses, no man can "reverse it" (Numbers 23:20).

***13. But isn't it very dangerous to tamper with God's law?***

"You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2). "Every word of God is pure .... Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:5, 6).

***Answer:*** God has specifically and positively forbidden men to change His law by deletions or additions. To tamper with God's holy law in any way is one of the most fearful and dangerous things a person can do.

***14. Why did God make the Sabbath anyway?***

**A. Sign of Creation**. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8, 11).

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**C. Sign of redemption and sanctification**. "Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them" (Ezekiel 20: 12).

***Answer:*** God gave the Sabbath as a twofold sign: (1) It is a sign that He created the world in six literal 24-hour days, and (2) it is also a sign of God's mighty power to redeem and sanctify men. Surely every Christian will love the Sabbath as God's precious sign of Creation and redemption (Exodus 31:13,17; Ezekiel 20:12, 20). It is a great insult to God for people to trample upon His Sabbath. In Isaiah 58:13,14, God says all who would be blessed must first get their feet off His Sabbath.

***15. How important is Sabbath-keeping?***

"Sin is lawlessness [transgression of the law]" (1 John 3:4). "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). "Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2: 10). "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21). "He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9).

***Answer:*** It is a matter of life and death. Sabbath-keeping is enjoined in the fourth commandment of God's law. The deliberate breaking of anyone of the Ten Commandments is a sin. Christians will gladly follow Christ's example of Sabbath-keeping. Our only safety is to diligently study the Bible, "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). We must have positive scripture support for every Christian practice we follow.

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***16. How does God feel about religious leaders who ignore the Sabbath?***

"Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy ... and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them." "Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them" (Ezekiel 22:26, 31).

***Answer:*** While there are religious leaders who keep a false sabbath in ignorance, those who deliberately do so offend God. In hiding their eyes from God' true Sabbath, religious leaders have caused others to profane it. Millions have been misled on this matter. God cannot treat it lightly. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for pretending to love God while making void one of the Ten Commandments by their tradition (Mark 7:7-13).

***17. Does Sabbath-keeping really affect me personally?***

"If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14: 15). "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4: 17). "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22: 14).

***Answer:*** Yes, by all means, the Sabbath is your Sabbath. God made it for you, and if you love Him you will keep it, because it is one of His commandments. Lov without commandment-keeping is no love at all (1 John 2:4). You must make a decision. You cannot avoid it. No one can excuse you. You yourself will answer befor God on this most important matter. God asks you to love and obey Him now! And keeping the Sabbath is the best decision that you can possibly make. On th Sabbath, you can cease your regular activities like work and shopping and spend time with the Creator of the Universe. Worshipping God with other believers, visiting the sick, spending time with family, walking in nature, or reading spiritually uplifting materials are all good ways to keep the Sabbath holy. After the stress of si days of work, God has given you the gift of the Sabbath to feed your soul. You need to trust that He knows what's best.

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. But isn't the Sabbath for the Jews only?***

***Answer:*** No. Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27). It is not for the Jews only, but for mankind-all men and women everywhere. The Jewish nation did not even exist until 2,500 years after the Sabbath was made.

***3. Isn't Acts 20:7-12 proof that the disciples kept Sunday as a holy day?***

***Answer:*** According to the Bible, each day begins at sundown and ends at the next sundown (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; Leviticus 23:32) and the dark part of the day comes first. So Sabbath begins Friday night at sundown and ends Saturday night at sundown. This meeting of Acts 20 was held on the dark part of Sunday, 0 on what we now call Saturday night. The New English Bible (© The Delegates 0 the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1961, 1970. Used by permission) begins Acts 20:7 like this: "On the Saturday night meeting and it lasted until midnight,

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Paul was on a farewell tour and knew he would not see these people again before his death (verse 25). No wonder he preached so long! (No regular weekly service would have lasted all night.) Paul was "ready to depart on the morrow." The "breaking of bread" has no "holy day" significance whatever, because they broke bread daily (Acts 2:46). There is not the slightest indication in this Scripture passage that the first day is holy, nor that these early Christians considered it so. Nor is there the remotest evidence that the Sabbath had been changed. Incidentally, this meeting is probably mentioned in the Scripture only because of the miracle of raising Eutychus back to life after he fell to his death from a third-floor window. In Ezekiel 46: 1, God refers to Sunday as one of the six "working days."

***3. Doesn't 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2 speak of Sun day school offerings?***

***Answer:*** No, there is no reference here to a public meeting. The money was to be laid aside privately at home. Paul was writing to ask the churches in Asia Minor to. assist their poverty stricken brethren in Jerusalem (Romans 15 :26-28). These Christians all kept Sabbath holy, so Paul suggested that on Sunday morning, after the Sabbath was over, they put aside something for their needy brethren so it would be on hand when he came. It was to be done privately or, as La Santa Biblia (a Spanish translation) says, "at home." Notice also that there is no reference here to Sunday as a holy day. In fact, the Bible nowhere commands or even suggests Sunday-keeping.

***4. But hasn't time been lost and the days of the week changed since the time of Christ?***

***Answer:*** No! Reliable encyclopedias and reference books make it clear that our seventh day is the same one that Jesus kept holy. It is a simple matter of research.

***5. But isn't John 20:19 the record of the disciples instituting Sunday-keeping in honor of the resurrection?***

***Answer:*** On the contrary, the disciples at this time did not believe that the resurrection had taken place (Mark 16:14). They had met there "for fear of the Jews" and had the doors bolted. When Jesus appeared in their midst, He rebuked them "because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." There is no implication that they counted Sunday as a holy day. Only eight texts in the New Testament mention the first day of the week; none of them imply that it is holy.

***6. Doesn't Colossians 2:14-17 do away with the seventh-day Sabbath?***

***Answer***: Not at all. It refers only to the Sabbaths which were "a shadow of things to come" and not to the seventh-day Sabbath. There were seven yearly holy days, or festivals, in ancient Israel which were also called Sabbaths. These were in addition to, or "besides the Sabbaths of the LORD" (Leviticus 23:38), or seventh-day Sabbath. These all foreshadowed, or pointed to, the cross and ended at the cross. God's seventh-day Sabbath was made before sin entered, and therefore could foreshadow nothing about deliverance from sin. That's why Colossians chapter 2 differentiates and specifically mentions the Sabbaths that were "a shadow." These seven yearly Sabbaths which were abolished are listed in Leviticus chapter 23.

***7. According to Romans 14:5 the day we keep is a matter of personal opinion, isn’t it?***

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***Answer:*** Notice that the whole chapter is on judging one another (verses 4, i () A 13). The issue here is not over the seventh-day Sabbath, which was a part of the great moral law, but over other religious days. Jewish Christians were judging Gentile Christians for not observing them. Paul is simply saying, "Don't judge each other. That ceremonial law is no longer binding."

**The Ultimate Deliverance**

It's no fairy tale-one day, you can be free from all the hurt, hunger, aloneness, crime, and chaos infecting the world today. Doesn't that sound wonderful? But it's not going to be some charismatic earthly leader who's going to deliver you. no, He's much more superior than that! Jesus is coming soon, but there are a lot dl popular misconceptions regarding just how He's coming. So take a few minutes to understand what the Bible really says about the second coming so you won't be left behind!

***1. Will Jesus return to this earth the second time? Can we be positive? "Christ ... will appear a second time" (Hebrews 9:28). "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again" (John 14:3).***

***Answer:*** Yes! In Matthew 26:64, Jesus testified under oath that He would come back to this earth again. Since the Scripture cannot be broken (John I 0:35), this is proof positive. Believe it just as it reads. It is Christ's own personal guarantee.

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***2. In what manner will Jesus return the second time?***

"Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like man- ner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1 :9-11).

***Answer:*** The Scriptures promise that Jesus will return to this earth in the same manner that He left at His ascension-in a visible, literal, bodily, personal manner. Matthew 24:30 says, "They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." He will come in the clouds literally, as a personal being with a body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:36-43, 50, 51), and His coming will be visible. Scripture is clear on these facts.

***3. Will the second coming of Christ be visible to all men or only to a select group?***

"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him" (Revelation 1:7). "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:27). "For the Lord Himself will descend with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first”(1 Thessalonians 4:16)

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SG 8 THE ULTIMATE DELIVERANCE

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***Answer:*** Every man, woman, and child living in the world when Jesus returns will see Him at His second coming. The staggering threefold (Luke 9:26) brightness of His coming will stretch from horizon to horizon, and the atmosphere will be charged with brilliant glory like lightning. No one will be able to hide. Every living soul will be forced to .face Christ. Christ left no loophole for doubt or misunderstanding. This will be a loud, dramatic event where even the dead are raised.

***Note***: Every person will know about the second coming! Some people use 1 Thessalonians 4: 16 to point to a secret rapture, but it's one of the noisiest verses in the Bible. The Lord shouts, a trumpet blasts, and the dead are raised! Nor is the second coming a spiritual coming into the heart at conversion. It does not take place at a man's death, nor is it figurative-to be manifested by better world conditions. These theories are all of human origin. The second coming will be a literal, world- wide, visible, personal appearance of Christ in the clouds to bring this world to an end and to reward or punish all men and women.

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***4. Who will come with Jesus at His second coming, and why?***

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory" (Matthew 25 :31).

***Answer:*** All the angels of heaven will come with Jesus at His second coming. As the cloud nears the earth, Jesus will send His angels, and they will quickly gather together all of the righteous people in preparation for the trip back to heaven (Matthew 24:31).

***5. What is the purpose of Jesus' second coming to this earth?***

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22: 12). "1 will come again and receive you to Myself; that where 1 am, there you may be also" (John 14:3). "And that He may send Jesus Christ, ... whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things" (Acts 3 :20, 21).

***Answer:*** Jesus is coming back to this earth to reward His people as He promised and to take them to the beautiful home He has prepared for them. He will restore to His people all of the joys and glories of Eden that Adam and Eve lost by sinning. His second coming will bring an end to this present age of evil.

***6. What will happen to the righteous people when Jesus comes the second time?***

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven ... And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17). "We shall all be changed ... and the dead will be raised incorruptible. For ... this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). "We also eagerly wait for ... the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body" (Philippians 3:20, 21).

***Answer:*** The righteous dead will be raised from their graves, given perfect, immortal bodies like that of Christ, and caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord. Then the righteous living will also beGIVEN BODIES LIKE Christ and will be caught up

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to meet the Lord in the air. And Jesus will take the righteous to heaven with Him Note that Jesus does not touch the earth at His second coming. The saints meet H 1111 "in the air." So God's people will ignore any report that Christ is in Baltimore, New Orleans, Los Angeles, etc. False christs will appear and do miracles on the earth (Matthew 24:23-27), but Jesus will remain in the clouds above the earth at H 1\ second coming.

***7. What will happen to the wicked people when Jesus comes again?***

With the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11 :4). "And at that day the slain of the LORD shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth" (Jeremiah 25:33).

***Answer:*** The wicked will be slain by Jesus.

***9. How will Christ 5' second coming affect the earth itself?***

"And there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth." "Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found" (Revelation 16: l8, 20). "1 beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of the LORD" (Jeremiah 4:26). "The LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste." "The land shall be entirely emptied" (Isaiah 24: 1 , 3).

***Answer:*** The earth will be seized by a great earthquake at the coming of the Lord This earthquake will be of such a devastating nature that it will leave the world in " state of total destruction.

***9. Does the Bible give specific information regarding the nearness of Christ \- second coming?***

***Answer:*** Yes, it does! And Jesus Himself said, "When you see all these things. know that it is near-at the doors!" (Matthew 24:33). The Lord placed signs all along the way from His ascension to His second coming. They are listed below. Study them carefully.

**A. The Destruction of Jerusalem**

Prophecy: "Not one stone shall be left here upon another that shall not be thrown down." "Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" (Matthew 24:2, 16): Fulfillment: Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70 by the Roman warrior Titus.

**B. A Great Persecution, or Tribulation**

Prophecy: "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world" (Matthew 24:21).

***Fulfilment***: This prophecy points primarily to the long period of tribulation that took place during the Dark Ages and was instigated by the apostate church. It lasted more than 1,000 years. Over 50 million Christians were slain for their faith in this terrible tribulation period. One writer says the apostate church "has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind." W.E.H. Lecky, History a/the Rise and Influence of the spirit of rationalism in Europe, (Reprint; New York: Braziller, 1955) Vol. 2, pp. 40-45.

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**C. The Sun Turned into Darkness**

Prophecy: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened" (Matthew 24:29). ***Fulfillment:*** This was fulfilled by a day of supernatural darkness on May 19, (780. It was not an eclipse. Timothy Dwight says, "The 19th of May, 1780, was a remarkable dark day. Candles were lighted in many houses; the birds were silent and disappeared, and the fowls retired to roost.... A very general opinion prevailed, that the Day of Judgment was at hand." Quoted in Connecticut Historical Collections, compiled by John Warner Barber (2nd ed.; New Haven: Durrie & Peck and J.W. Barber, 1836) p. 403.

**D. The Moon Turned into Blood**

Prophecy: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD" (Joel 2:31). Fulfillment: The moon became as red as blood on the night of the "dark day," May 19, 1780. Milo Bostick in Stone's History of Massachusetts says, "The moon which was at its full, had the appearance of blood."

**E. The Stars Fall from Heaven**

Prophecy: "The stars will fall from heaven" (Matthew 24:29).

***Fulfillment:*** The great star shower took place on the night of November 13, 1833. It was so bright that a newspaper could be read on the street. One writer says, "For nearly four hours the sky was literally ablaze." Men thought the end of the world had come. Look into this. It is most fascinating, and a sign of Christ's coming. (Peter A. Millman, "The Falling of the Stars," The Telescope, 7 [May-June, 1940] 57.)

**F. Jesus Comes in the Clouds**

Prophecy: "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30). Fulfillment: This is the next great event. Are you ready?

***10. How may we know when we have reached the very last days of earth ~ history? Does the Bible clearly describe the world and its people in the last generation?***

***Answer:*** Yes, indeed it does. Look at the following specific signs of the last days. You will be amazed. And these are just a few of many, many positive signs that show we are in the closing days of earth's history.

**A. Wars and commotions**

"But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass" (Luke 21 :9). Wars and the ravages of civil distress are affecting thousands worldwide. Only Jesus' soon coming will bring an end to the pain and destruction of war.

**B. Unrest, fear, and upheaval**

"And there will be ... on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity. Men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke 21:25, 26).

This sounds strangely like an editorial from a current newspaper- a perfect picture of the world today- and there is a reason: we are the people of the very last

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days of earth's history. The tense atmosphere- present in the world today should not surprise us. Christ foretold it. It should convince us that His coming is near.

**C. Increase of knowledge**

"Until the time of the end ... knowledge shall increase" (Daniel 12:4). The Information Age makes this one all too obvious. Even the most skeptical mind must admit that this sign is fulfilled. Knowledge is exploding in all directions. It is said that 80 percent of the world's total knowledge has been brought forth in the last decade and that 90 per cent of all the scientists who have ever lived are alive today.

**D. Scoffers and religious sceptics who turn away from Bible truth**

"Scoffers will come in the last days" (2 Peter 3:3). "They will not endure sound doctrine .... They will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Timothy 4:3, 4). It is not difficult to find scoffers today in fulfillment of this prophecy. Even religious leaders are denying the plain Bible teachings of Creation, the Flood, the divinity of Christ, the second coming of Christ, and many other vital Bible truths. Psychiatry and the traditions of pseudo-intellectuals have replaced the Bible in many religious circles. Secular educators teach our youth to scoff at the Bible record of these great truths and substitute evolution and other man-made, false teachings for the plain, simple facts of God's Holy Word. A recent poll discovered that only two percent of American student ministers believe in the literal second coming of Christ.

**E. Moral degeneracy-s-decline of spirituality**

"In the last days ... men will be lovers of themselves, unloving, without self-control, ... despisers of good, ... having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3: 1-5). America is in the midst of a tremendous crisis. People from all walks of life are saying so. Suicide is becoming a popular solution to human problems. Divorce rates are climbing wildly, with nearly one marriage in two ending in the divorce court. The current immoral generation-with its obsession with sex and filth, with its increasing church membership but decreasing true spirituality-is plain and positive fulfillment of God's Word. For a real shock, see how many of the last-day sins listed in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 you can find depicted in any issue of your Sunday newspaper. Nothing short of the coming of the Lord will stem the tide of evil that is now engulfing the world.

**F. Craze for pleasure**

"In the last days ... men will be ... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of' God" (2 Timothy 3: 1-4). The world has gone crazy for pleasure. Only a small percentage of the citizens of our large cities attend church services regularly, but they jam pleasure resorts by the thousands. America is spending billions each year for pleasure and only peanuts" (in comparison) for God. Pleasure-mad Americans waste billions of hours in front of the TV set in direct fulfilment of 2 Timothy 3:4

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**G. Increasing lawlessness, bloody crimes, and violence**

"Lawlessness will abound" (Matthew 24: 12). "Evil men and impostors wil1 grow worse and worse" (2 Timothy 3: 13). "The land is filled with crimes of blood, and the city is full of violence" (Ezekiel 7:23).

It is all too obvious that this sign is fulfilled.

Crime and lawlessness are increasing with shocking rapidity. Most people in large cities do not answer their doorbells after dark. The wisest statesmen of our time are concerned for the survival of civilization because crime sweeps forward seemingly beyond control.

**H. Natural Disasters and upheaval**

"There will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences" (Luke 21: 11, 25). Earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, etc., are increasing at an unprecedented rate. One-third of the people of the world are hungry, and thousands die daily of starvation. All these things are further proof that we live in earth's last hours.

**I. A special message to the world in the very last days**

"This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). The great, solemn, last warning message of Christ's second coming is now being presented in more than 900 languages and dialects. Nearly 95 percent of the world's population has access to this message. Before Jesus' second coming, every person in the world will be warned of His soon return. People will be lost only if they reject the warning message.

**J. A turning to spiritism**

"In latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spir- its" (1 Timothy 4: 1). "They are spirits of demons" (Revelation 16: 14). People today, including a vast number of the heads of nations, seek counsel from psychics, channelers, and spiritualists. Spiritism has invaded the churches, as well, with the false teaching of the immortality of the soul. The Bible teaches that the dead are dead. (See Study Guide 10 for more on this subject.)

**K. Capital-labor troubles**

"The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord." "Be patient. ... for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (James 5:4, 8). Trouble between capital and labor is predicted for the last days. For fulfillment, consult your newspaper.

***11. Just how near is the Lord's second coming?***

"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see these things, know that it is near-at the doors! Assuredly, I say this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened (Matt 24:34)

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***Answer:*** The Bible is very specific and plain on this point. The signs have al- most all been fulfilled. We cannot know the exact day and hour of Christ's return (Matthew 24:36), but we know that He is coming soon. God has promised to finish things very quickly now and cut the work short (Romans 9:28). Christ is coming back to this earth for His people very soon. Are you ready?

***12. Satan is telling many falsehoods regarding the second coming of Christ and, with lying wonders and miracles will deceive millions. How can I be certain I will not be deceived?***

"For they are spirits of demons, performing signs [miracles]" (Revelation 16: 14). "For false Christ and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (Matthew 24:24). "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

***Answer:*** Satan has invented many false teachings about the second coming and is deceiving millions into believing that Christ has already come or that He will come in some non-biblical manner. But Christ has warned us of Satan's strategy, saying, "Take heed that no one deceives you" (Matthew 24:4). He then exposes Satan's plans and falsehoods so we will be forewarned, and He reminds us, "See, I have told you beforehand" (Matthew 24:25). For example, Jesus stated specifically that He will not appear in the desert or come to the seance chambers (verse 26). There is no reason to be deceived if we learn what God's book teaches about Christ's second coming. The acid test is this: What does the Bible teach about it? People who know what the Bible says about the second coming will not be led astray by Satan. A II others will be deceived.

***13. How can I be certain to be ready when Jesus comes back?***

"He one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37). "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1: 12). "I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts" (Hebrews 8: 10). "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

***Answer:*** Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20). Through the Holy Spirit and my conscience, Jesus knocks and asks to come into my heart so that He can change my life. If I unreservedly turn my life over to Him, He will erase all my sins of the past (Romans 3:25) and give me the power to live a godly life (John 1: 12). As a free gift, He bestows upon me His own righteous character so I can stand unafraid before a holy God when my life is changed by Jesus. Then doing His will becomes a pleasure. It is so simple that many doubt its reality. But it's true. My part is simply to give my life to Christ and let Him live within me. His part is to work the mighty miracle within me that changes my life and prepares me for His second coming. It is a free gift. I need only to accept it.

***14. Of what great danger does Christ solemnly warn?***

So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Matt 24:44 but take heed to yourself, lest your heart be

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weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly" (Luke 21 :34). "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:37).

***Answer:*** There is great danger in becoming so busy with the cares of this life or so entranced by the pleasures of sin that the coming of the Lord may slip up on us as the Flood did on the world in Noah's day, and we will be surprised, unprepared, and lost. This will be the experience of millions. How is it with you? Jesus is coming back very, very soon-in our present day. Are you ready? Nothing else matters.

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. Isn't the great tribulation yet to come?***

***Answer***: It is true that a terrible tribulation will cover the earth just before Jesus returns to deliver His people. Daniel describes it as "a time of trouble, such as never was" (Daniel 12: 1). In context, though, the "great tribulation" of Matthew 24:21 refers to the awful persecution of God's people during the Dark Ages. Millions were slain for their faith at that time.

***2. Since the Lord is coming "as a thief in the night, " how can anyone know any- thing about it?***

***Answer***: The answer is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4: "For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief." Notice, the day of the Lord comes as a thief to the unprepared, but not to those who are called "brethren."

***3. When will Christ set up His kingdom upon the earth?***

***Answer***: After the great 1,000-year period of Revelation 20. The 1,000-year period begins at the second coming of Christ, when Jesus takes the righteous from this earth to heaven to live and reign with Him "a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4). At the close of the 1,000 years "the holy city, new Jerusalem" (Revelation 21 :2) comes down from heaven to the earth with all the saints (Zechariah 14: 1,4,5) and the wicked dead of all ages are raised to life (Revelation 20:5). They surround the holy city to capture it (Revelation 20:9), and fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. This fire purifies the earth and bums up all traces of sin and sinners (2 Peter 3: 10). Finally the fire goes out (Isaiah 47: 14), leaving only ashes (Malachi 4:3). Then God creates a new earth (2 Peter 3: 13; Isaiah 65: 17; Revelation 21: 1) and gives it to the righteous, and "God ... will dwell with them, God himself will be with them and be their God" (Revelation 21:3). Perfect, holy, happy beings, restored once again to the perfect image of God, will at last be at home in a sinless, spotless world as God originally planned. Only the most foolish person would choose to miss this. (For more information on God's beautiful new kingdom, see Study Guide 4. For more on the 1,000 years, see Study Guide 12.)

***4. Why don't we hear more preaching and teaching today regarding Christ's second coming?***

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***Answer:*** The devil is responsible. He well knows that the second cormng I. the "blessed hope" (Titus 2: 13) of the Christian, and that once understood, it change- the lives of men and women and leads them to take a personal, diligent, active part in spreading that good news to others so that Christ's coming may be hastened. This infuriates Satan, so he influences those who have "a form of godliness" (2 Timothy 3 :5) but deny "the power thereof" to scoff, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning" (2 Peter 3:3, 4). Those who deny, ignore, or make light of Christ's sec- ond advent (as a literal, soon-coming event) are specifically fulfilling Bible prophecy-and doing the devil a very great service.

5. But wasn't Jesus speaking of the secret rapture when He said ill Luke J 7:3(), "One will be taken and the other left"?

Answer: No. There is not the slightest indication that the event is secret. Jesus was describing Noah's flood and the destruction of Sodom. (See Luke 17:26-37.) He told how God spared Noah and Lot and destroyed the wicked. He says specifically that the flood and fire "destroyed them all" (vs. 27, 29). Plainly, in each case, a few were taken to safety and the rest were destroyed. Then He added, "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (v. 30). To illustrate, Jesus continued. "Two men shall be in the held; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (v. 36). There is nothing secret about it. "Every eye will see Him" (Revelation 1 :7). At His second coming, Christ publicly and openly takes the righteous up into the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17) and slays the wicked (Isaiah 11:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:R). That's why Luke 17:37 speaks of the bodies of the wicked and mentions the eagles (or vultures) gathered around them. (See also Revelation 19:17, ]8.) The wicked who are left behind at Christ's coming are left dead. (For more on the secret rapture, write for our book on the subject.)

**9. Purity and Power!**

Are you tired of hurting your loved ones and wounding your conscience? Do you live .in constant regret for your past mistakes? Have you ever wished you could take a bath and come out clean inside and out? Then we have great news for you ... you can! God has a plan that can totally wash all your sins away and super- charge your character-preposterous? Not at all! Christ says, "We are buried with him by baptism" (Romans 6:4). When you accept Christ, the old life dies and the Lord promises to forget all our sins! Not only have that, He can help you overcome every sinful habit in your life. Did you know the cross is mentioned 28 times in the Bible, but baptism is mentioned 97 times? It must be pretty important then, and no wonder I because it signifies a new life with the haunting, sinful past buried and forgotten forever. Read the Bible's amazing facts on this incredible subject ... you'll never be the same!

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***1. Is baptism really essential?***

 "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe wil1 be condemned" (Mark 16: 16).

***Answer:*** Yes, indeed! How could any language or words make it plainer?

***2. But the thief on the cross was not baptized, so why should I be?***

"For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14).

***Answer:*** Neither did he restore what he had stolen, as the Lord specifically directs in Ezekiel 33: 15. God holds us accountable for what we can do, but He also recognizes the limitations of "dust." He will not require a physical impossibility. Could the thief have come down from the cross, he immediately would have been baptized. Every person who is able should be baptized.

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***3. There are many ordinances called baptism. Isn't anyone of these acceptable, provided a person is sincere and earnest about it?***

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5).

***Answer:*** No! There is only one true baptism. All other so-called baptisms are counterfeits.

Note: The devil s "buffet" plan for baptism says, "Take your pick. The method of baptism doesn't matter. It is the spirit that counts. " But the Bible says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). It also says, "Obey the voice of the LORD which I speak to you" (Jeremiah 38:20).

***4. How was Jesus baptized?***

"Jesus ... was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting" (Mark 1 :9, 10).

***Answer:*** By immersion! Notice that after the ordinance, He came "up out from the water." Jesus was baptized "in the Jordan," not on the bank, as many believe. John always found a place to baptize where "there was much water" (John 3:23), so it would be deep enough. The Bible commands us to follow Jesus' example (1 Peter 2:21). Any baptism other than immersion breaks this command. The word "baptism" comes from the Greek word "baptizo." It means "to dip under or submerge or immerse." There are eight different Greek words in the New Testament used to describe the application of liquids. But among these various words-meaning to sprinkle, to pour, or to immerse-only the one meaning "to immerse" (baptizo) is used to describe baptism.

***5. But didn't the disciples or the apostles change the method of baptism?***

"Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away" (Acts 8:38, 39).

***Answer:*** No! Please notice that Philip, a leader in the early church, baptized the treasurer of Ethiopia by immersion precisely as John baptized Jesus. And the apostle Paul warned that any who teach contrary to what Jesus taught should be “accursed.”

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(Galatians 1:8). No person-no matter how godly is authorized to change God's words and commands.

***6 Since Jesus. and the disciples baptized by immersion, who introduced these other so-called baptisms which exist today?***

" And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

***Answer:*** Misguided men introduced other forms of baptism in direct contradiction of God's Word. Jesus says, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition'?" "Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition" (Matthew 15:3, 6). Worship that follows human teaching is "vain." Just think of it! The sacred ordinance of baptism has been changed and made of little consequence during truth's hazardous journey through the centuries. No wonder the Bible exhorts us to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

***7. What must a person do to prepare for baptism?***

***Answer:***

**A. Learn God's requirenents.** "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28: 19,20).

**B. Believe the truth of God's Word**. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16: 16).

**C. Repent of and turn away from his sins and experience conversion.** "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3: 19).

***8. What is the meaning of baptism?***

"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Romans 6:4-6).

Answer: It represents the believer following Christ into His death, burial, and resurrection. The symbolism is perfect and filled with deep meaning. In baptism the eyes are closed, hands are folded, and breath is suspended as in death. Then comes burial in the water and resurrection from the watery grave to a new life in Christ. When raised from the water, the eyes open and the candidate begins breathing again and mingles with friends-a complete likeness of resurrection. The great difference between Christianity and every other religion is simply the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. In these three acts is made possible all that God desires to do for US. To keep these three vital acts alive in the minds of Christians until the end of

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ism of death, burial, and resurrection in other forms of baptism. Only immersion fulfills the meaning of Romans 6:4- 6.

***9. But a person shouldn't be baptized until he is certain he will never slip and fall, should he?***

"My little-children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2: 1).

***Answer:*** This is like saying a baby should never try to walk until certain that he will never slip and fall. A Christian is a new-born "babe" in Christ. This is why the experience of conversion is called "the new birth." The ugly, sinful past no longer exists for a child of God. A person's sinful past is forgiven and forgotten by God at conversion. And baptism symbolizes the burial of that old life. We begin the Christian life as babies, rather than adults, and God judges us on our attitude and the trend of our life, rather than on a few slips and falls that we may experience as immature Christians.

***10. Why is baptism an urgent matter for a converted sinner?***

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22: 16).

***Answer:*** Baptism is a public testimony that the repentant sinner has been forgiven and cleansed by Jesus (1 John 1:9) and that his sinful, traitorous past is behind him. No incriminating evidence against a person exists after conversion. Men and women today stagger and struggle along under heavy loads of guilt and sin. This contamination and burden is so devastating to the human personality that people will go to almost any length to achieve a sense of forgiveness and cleansing. Many have been driven to the psychiatrist's couch, where human beings earnestly attempt to assist other human beings. But the real help is found in coming to Christ, who says to all who approach Him, "I will; be thou clean" (Matthew 8:3). Not only does He cleanse, but He crucifies the old nature of sin within you. Burial in the water of baptism symbolizes the burial of the ugly corpse of the old sinful life. The ordinance is of utmost importance because it publicly represents the most stupendous provisions ever made for people.

***11. How long does it take to prepare for baptism?***

***Answer***: That depends on the person. Some grasp things more quickly than others. But in most cases, preparation can be made in short order. Here are some Bible examples:

**A. Ethiopian treasurer** (Acts 8:26-39)-baptized same day he heard truth.

**B. Philippian jailer and his family** (Acts 16:23-34)-baptized same night they heard truth.

**C. Saul of Tarsus** (Acts 9:1-18)-baptized three days after Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus.

**D. Cornelius** (Acts 10: 1-48)-baptized same day he heard truth.

**At conversion, God:**

1. Forgives and forgets our past.

2. Miraculously transforms us into new spiritual beings.

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3. Adopts us as His own sons and daughters. Certainly no truly converted person would want to delay baptism, which publicly pays tribute to JESUS" for working all these miracles.

***12. How does God feel about the baptism of a converted person?***

***Answer***: He said at His Son's baptism, "This is My beloved Son, in whom 1 am well pleased" (Matthew 3: 17). So, today, God is well pleased when a person is baptized by immersion in harmony with His command. Those who love the Lord will always strive to please Him (1 John 3 :22; 1 Thessalonians 4: 1). Is God pleased with your baptism?

***13. Can a person experience true baptism without becoming a member of God \ church?***

***Answer***: No! God clearly outlines this. Notice the steps:

**A. All are called into one body**. "You were called in one body" (Colossians 3: 15).

**B. The church is the body**. "He is the head of the body, the church" (Colossian- 1: 18).

**C. We enter that body by baptism**. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12: 13).

**D. God's converted people are added to the church.** "The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

***14. Notice four things that baptism does not do:***

**First:**

Baptism itself does not change the heart of man; it is a symbol of the change that has taken place. A man might be baptized without faith, without repentance, and without a new heart. He might even be immersed after the example of Jesus, but he would simply come up a wet sinner instead of a dry one-still without faith, without repentance, without a new heart. Baptism cannot make a new person. Neither can it change or regenerate anyone. It is the transforming power of the Holy Spirit that changes the heart in conversion. One must be born of the Spirit as well as born of water.

**Second:**

Baptism does not necessarily make a person feel better. It doesn't necessarily t change his feelings. Some people are disappointed because they do not feel different after baptism. Salvation is a matter not of feeling, but of faith and obedience.

**Third:**

Baptism does not remove temptations. The devil is not through with a person when he is baptized. But Jesus is the helper of every believer. He says, "1 will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). No temptation will come without a way of escape. This is the promise of Scripture (1 Corinthians 10: 13).

**Fourth**:

Baptism does not guarantee salvation. It is not a magical rite. Salvation comes only as a free gift from Jesus Christ when one experiences the new birth. Baptism is a symbol of true conversion and unless conversion precedes baptism, the ceremony is meaningless.

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**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. Is it ever proper to be baptized more than once?***

***Answer***: Yes, Acts 19: 1-5 shows that the Bible endorses rebaptism in certain cases.

***2. Should infants be baptized?***

***Answer***: No one should be baptized unless he (1) knows the truth of God, (2) believes it, (3) has repented, and (4) has experienced conversion. No baby could possibly qualify here. No one has a right to baptize a baby. In fact, to do so completely disregards God's direct commands regarding baptism. Misguided men in the church years ago decreed that unbaptized babies are lost, but this is scripturally untrue. It defames God as an unjust tyrant who would destroy innocent infants who died, simply because unworthy parents failed to have baptism administered. Such a teaching is tragic beyond words. It is bad enough to sprinkle babies and call it baptism. It is infinitely worse to hold to the unscriptural concept that babies are lost eternally because careless parents failed to do their duty.

***3. Isn't baptism just a matter of personal opinion?***

***Answer***: Yes, but not your opinion or mine. It's Christ's opinion that matters. Christ says baptism is important to Him. "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5). To refuse baptism is to refuse the direct counsel of God (Luke 7:29, 30).

***4. How old should one be to qualify for baptism?***

***Answer***: Old enough to understand the difference between wrongdoing and right- doing, and to make an intelligent decision [Q surrender to Christ and follow Him. Many children are ready for baptism at 9 or 10 years of age, some at 7 or 8. And some are not ready' at 12 or 13. No age level is specified in the Bible, because children have different levels of experience and understanding. Some are ready for baptism earlier than others.

***5. Can baptism in and of itself save you?***

***Answer***: No. But refusing baptism can cause one to be lost, because it means disobedience. Salvation is for "to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5 :9).

***6. Isn't baptism of the Holy Spirit all that is necessary?***

***Answer***: No. The Bible shows in Acts 10:44-48 that water baptism is necessary, even when the baptism of the Holy Spirit has preceded it.

***7. Shouldn't we be baptized in Jesus' name only?***

***Answer***: In Matthew 28: 19, we are told to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These are Jesus' words, and we consider them very sacred. In the book of Acts, we find the new believers were baptized in the name of Jesus. Identifying Jesus as the Christ and Messiah was present truth for the people of that day; therefore, it was crucial for them to be baptized in His name. We believe it is very important for today as well. Combining the testimonies of Matthew with the book of Acts, we baptize people in the name of the Father, and the Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Following this method prevents exalting one Scripture above another.

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ne does not know it; they are brought low, and he does not perceive it" (Job 14: 12,21). "Nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:6).

***Answer***: No, the dead cannot contact the living, nor do they know what the living are doing. They are dead. Their thoughts have perished (Psalm 146:4).

***9. Jesus called the unconscious state of the dead "sleep" in John 11:11-14. How long will they sleep?***

"So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more" (Job 14: 12). "The day of the Lord will come… in which the heavens will pass away" (2 Peter 3: 1 0).

Answer: The dead will sleep until the great day of the Lord at the end of the world.1n death humans are totally unconscious with no activity or knowledge of any kind.

10. What happens to the righteous dead at the second coming of Christ? "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:] 2). "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, ... And the dead in Christ will rise ... And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17). "We shall all be changed-in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye ... and the dead will be raised incorruptible .... For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (l Corinthians 15:51-53).

Answer: They will be rewarded. They will be raised, given immortal bodies, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. There would be no purpose in a resurrection if people were taken to heaven at death.

11. What was the devil’s first lie on Earth? "Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die'" (Genesis 3:4). "That serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan" (Revelation 12:9).

Answer: You will not die.

12. Why did the devil lie to Eve about death? Could this subject be more important than many think?

Answer: It is one of the pillars of the devil's teachings. He has worked powerful miracles down through the ages through people who claim to receive their power from the spirits of the dead. (Examples: Magicians of Egypt-Exodus 7:11; Woman of Endor-l Samuel 28:3-25; Sorcerers-Daniel 2:2; A certain slave girl-Acts 16: 16-18.)

A Solemn Warning

In the end-time Satan will again use sorcery-as he did in Daniel's day-to de- ceive the world (Revelation 18:23). Sorcery is a supernatural agency that claims to receive its power and wisdom from the spirits of the dead.

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**Posing as Jesus' Disciples**

Posing as godly loved ones who have died, saintly clergymen who are now dead, Bible prophets, or even the apostles or disciples of Christ (2 Corinthians 11: 13), Satan and his angels will deceive billions. Those who believe the dead are alive, in any form, will most assuredly be deceived.

***13. Do devils really work miracles?***

"For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles" (Revelation 16: 14, KJV). "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (Matthew 24:24).

***Answer***: Yes, indeed! Devils work incredibly convincing miracles (Revelation 13: 13, 14). Satan and his angels will appear as angels of light (2 Corinthians •11 : 14) and, even more shocking, as Christ Himself (Matthew 24:23, 24). The universal feeling will be that Christ and His angels are leading out in a fantastic worldwide revival. The entire emphasis will seem so spiritual and be so super-natural that only God's elect will not be deceived.

***14. Why will God's people not be deceived?***

"They received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17: 11). "If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

***Answer***: God's people will know from their earnest study of His book that the dead are dead, not alive. Spirits of the dead do not exist. Therefore, God's people will reject all miracle workers and teachers who claim to receive special "light" or work miracles by contacting the spirits of the dead. And God's people will likewise reject as dangerous and false all teachings that claim the dead are alive in any form, anywhere.

***15. Back in Moses' day, what did God command should be done to people who taught that the dead were alive?***

 "A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones" (Leviticus 20:27).

***Answer:*** God insisted that mediums and others with "familiar spirits" (who claimed to be able to contact the dead) should be stoned to death. This shows how God regards the false teaching that the dead are alive.

***16. Will the righteous people who are raised in the resurrection ever die again?***

"But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, ... nor can they die anymore" (Luke 20:35, 36). "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

***Answer:*** No! Death, sorrow, crying, and tragedy will never enter into God's new kingdom. "So when this corruptible has put on in corruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory'" (1 Corinthians 15:54).

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***17. Belief in reincarnation is expanding rapidly today is this teaching biblical"?***

"For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing .... Nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6).

***Answer:*** Almost half the people on earth believe in reincarnation-s-a teaching that the soul never dies but is instead continually reborn in a different kind of body with each succeeding generation. This teaching, however, is contrary to Scripture.

**The Bible Says**

After death a person: returns to dust (Psalm 104:29). knows nothing (Ecclesiaste 9:5), possesses no mental powers (Psalm 146:4), has nothing to do with anything Oil earth (Ecclesiastes 9:6), does not live (2 Kings 20: 1), waits in the grave (Job 17 11), and continues not (Job 14:1,2).

**Satan's Invention**

We learned in questions 11 and 12 that Satan invented the teaching that the dea I are alive. Reincarnation, channeling, communication with spirits, spirit worship, and the "undying soul" are all inventions of Satan, with one aim-to convince people that when you die you are not really dead. When people believe that the dead an: alive, "spirits of devils, working miracles" (Revelation 16: 14) and posing as spirits of the dead will be able to deceive and lead them astray virtually 100 percent of the time (Matthew 24:24).

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. Didn't the thief on the cross go to paradise with Christ the day He died?***

***Answer***: No. In fact, on Sunday morning Jesus said to Mary, "I have not y t ascended to My Father" (John 20: 17). This shows that Christ did not go to heaven at death. Also note that the punctuation of the Bible is not inspired, but was added by men. The comma in Luke 23:43 should be placed after the words "today" rather than before, so the passage should read, "Verily I say unto thee today, shalt thou b with me in paradise." Or, "I'm telling you today-when it seems that I can save no one, when I myself am being crucified as a criminal-I give you the assurance to- day that you will be with me in paradise." Christ's kingdom is set up at His second coming (Matthew 25:31), and all the righteous of all ages will enter it at that time (I Thessalonians 4: 15-17) and not at death.

***2. Doesn't the Bible speak of the "undying," "immortal" soul?***

***Answer***: No, the undying, immortal soul is not mentioned in the Bible. Th word "immortal" is found only once in the Bible, and it is in reference to God (1 Timothy 1: 17).

***3. At death the body returns to dust and the spirit (or breath) returns to God. Bu! where does the soul go?***

***Answer***: It goes nowhere. Instead, it simply ceases to exist. Two things must b I combined to make a soul: body and breath. When the breath departs, the soul ceases to exist because it is a combination of two things. When you turn off a light, where does the light go? It doesn’t go anywhere. It just ceases to exist. Two things must combine to form the light: a bulb and electricity. Without the combination a light is

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impossible. So with the soul; unless body and breath are combined, there can be no soul. There is no such thing as a disembodied soul.

***4. Does the word "soul" ever mean anything other than a living being?***

***Answer***: Yes, it may mean also (1) life itself, or (2) the mind, or intellect. No mat- ter which meaning is intended, the soul is still a combination of two things (body and breath), and it ceases to exist at death.

***5. Can you explain John 11:26, which says, "whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die"?***

***Answer***: This refers not to the first death, which all people die (Hebrews 9:27), but to the second death, which only the wicked die and from which there is no resurrection (Revelation 2: 11; 21: 8).

***6. Matthew 10:28 says, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. " Doesn't this prove that the soul is undying?***

***Answer:*** No, it proves the opposite. The last half of the same verse proves that souls do die. It says, "but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The word "soul" here means life and refers to eternal life, which is a gift (Romans 6:23) that will be given to the righteous at the last day (John 6:54). No one can take away the eternal life that God bestows. (See also Luke 12:4, 5.)

***8. Doesn't 1 Peter 4:6 say the gospel was preached to dead people?***

***Answer***: No, it says the gospel "was" preached to those who "are" dead. They are dead now, but the gospel "was" preached to them while they were yet living.

***8. What about tire souls crying out from under the altar in Revelation 6:9, 10? Doesn't this show that souls do not die?***

***Answer***: No. This cry was figurative, as was the cry of Abel's blood (Genesis 4:10). The word "soul" here means people (or living beings) who had been slain for their faith. Surely no one believes that souls who die literally lie under the altar, nor do people believe that the righteous beg God to punish their enemies. Rather, the righteous beg for mercy for their enemies, as Christ did on the cross (Luke 23:34).

***9. Doesn't the Bible say Christ went and preached to lost souls in hell between His crucifixion and resurrection?***

***Answer***: No, the Bible passage in question is 1 Peter 3:18-20. The preaching was done "by the Spirit" (verse 18) in Noah's day-to people who were then living (verses 19, 20). The "spirits in prison" refers to people whose lives were in bondage to Satan. (See Psalm 142:7; Isaiah 42:6, 7; 61:1; Luke 4:18.)

**11. Is the Devil in Charge of Hell?**

Well? Does God really keep the devil on His payroll-is he the chief superintendent of hell measuring out the punishment of the lost? Nearly the entire world holds to a very unbiblical view about hell, and you owe it to yourself to know what the bible really says about it. Don’t be fooled because what you think about

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Hell certainly affects what you think about God's character! Take a few moments to get the amazing facts you need to know today!

***1. How many lost souls are being punished in hell today?***

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished" (2 Peter 2:9, KJV).

***Answer:*** There is not one single soul in hellfire today. The Bible says that God reserves, or holds back, the wicked until the day of judgment to be punished.

***2. When will sinners be cast into hellfire?***

"So it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire" (Matthew 13:40-42). "The word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

***Answer***: Sinners will be cast into hellfire at the great judgment day at the end of the world--not when they die. God would not punish a person in fire until his case was tried and decided in court at the end of the world. Nor would God burn a murderer who died 5,000 years ago 5,000 years longer than one who dies and deserves punishment for the same sin today (Genesis 18:25).

***3. Where are sinners (who have died) now?***

"The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth-those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28, 29). "That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction?" "Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb" (Job 21:30, 32, KJV).

***Answer:*** The Bible is specific. Both the wicked and the righteous who have died are in their graves "sleeping" until the resurrection day. (See lesson # 1 0 for more information on the state of man in death.)

***4. What is the end result of sin?***

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "Sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1: 15). "God ... gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16).

***Answer:*** The wages (or punishment) for sin is death, not everlasting life in hellfire. The wicked "perish," or receive "death." The righteous receive "everlasting life."

***5. What will happen to the wicked in hellfire?***

"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which bums with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

***Answer:*** The wicked die the second death in hellfire. If the wicked lived forever being tortured in hell, they would be immortal. But this is impossible because the bible says God “alone has immortality” (1 timothy 6:16). When Adam and Eve

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were driven from the Garden of Eden. An angel was posted to guard the tree of life so that sinners would not eat of the tree and "live forever" (Genesis 3:22-24). The Teaching that sinners are immortal in hell originated with Satan and is completely untrue. God prevented this when sin entered this earth by guarding the tree of life.

**The Bible is clear, the wicked are obliterated**. The Bible says the wicked suffer "death" (Romans 6:23), will suffer "doom" [destruction] (Job 21 :30), "shall perish" (Psalm 37:20), will "burn" up (Malachi 4: 1), "shall be destroyed together" (Psalm 37:38), will "vanish away" (Psalm 37:20), "shall be cut off' (Psalm 37:9), "shall be slain" (Psalm 62:3). God will "destroy" them (Psalm 145:20), and "fire shall devour them" (Psalm 21 :9). Note that all of these references make it clear that the wicked die and are destroyed. They do not live forever in misery.

***6. When and how will hellfire be kindled?***

"So it will be at the end of this age. The Son of man ... will cast them into the furnace of fire" (Matthew 13:40-42). "They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them" (Revelation 20:9). "The righteous will be recompensed on the earth, How n1uch more the ungodly and the sinner" (Proverbs 11 :31).

***Answer:*** At the end of the world, God Himself will kindle hellfire. As the holy city comes down from God out of heaven (Revelation 21 :2), the wicked attempt to capture it. At that time, God will rain down fire from heaven upon the earth, and it will devour the wicked. This fire is Bible hellfire.

***7. How big and how hot will hellfire be?***

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2 Peter 3: 10).

***Answer:*** Hellfire will be just as big as this earth because it will be the earth on fire.

This fire will be so hot as to melt the earth and burn up all "the works that are in it." The atmospheric heavens will explode and "pass away with a great noise."

***8. How long will the wicked suffer in the fire?***

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22: 12). "And then He will reward each according to his works" (Matthew 16:27). "And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not ... do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few" (Luke 12:47, 48).

***Answer:*** The Bible does not tell how long the wicked will be punished before receiving death in the fire. God does specifically state, however, that all will be punished according to their deeds. This means some will receive greater punishment than others, based upon their works.

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Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.

(Isaiah 47: 14),

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.” “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Revelation 21:1, 4).

***Answer":*** Yes, indeed, the Bible specifically teaches that hellfire will go out and that there will not be left "a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before!" The Bible also teaches that in God's new kingdom a11 "former things" will be passed a Nay. Hen, being one of the former things, is included, so we have God's promise that 1t will be abolished. h Go a Torturer? If God tortured His enemies in a fiery horror chamber throughout eternity, He would be more vicious and heartless than rnen have ever been in the worst of war atrocities, An eternal hell of torment would be hell for God also, who loves even the vilest sinner.

***10. What will be left when the fire goes out?***

'" 'For behold, the day is Coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall bum them up,' says the LORD of hosts, 'That will leave them neither root nor branch.' H "'You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,' says the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 4: 1, 3).

***Answer:*** Notice the verse does not say the wicked will bum like asbestos, as many today believe, but rather like stubble, which will be burned up. The little word "up" de- notes completion. Nothing but ashes will be left when the fire goes out. Tn Psalm 37: 1 0, 20, the Bible says the wicked will go up in smoke and be completely destroyed.

***11. Will the wicked enter hell in bodily form and be destroyed both soul and body?***

"It is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell" (Matthew 5:30). "Rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20).

***Answer:*** Yes. Real, live people enter hell in bodily form and are destroyed both soul and body. The fire from God out of heaven will fall upon real people and blot them out of existence.

***12. Will the devil be in charge of hell fire?***

"The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20: 10). "I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you .... You... ‘shall be no more forever" (Ezekiel 28:18, 19).

***Answer:*** Absolutely not! The devil will be cast into the fire, and it will turn him into ashes.

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***13. Does the word "hell" as used in the Bible always refer to a place of burning nr punishment?***

***Answer***: No, the word "hell" is used 54 times in the Bible: and in only] 2 cases ioes it refer to "a place of burning." The word "hell" is translated from several different words with various meanings, is indicated below:

**In the Old Testament**

31 times from "Sheol," which means "the grave."

**In the New Testament**

10 times from "Hades," which means "the grave." 12 times from "Gehenna," which means "the place of burning." 1 time from "Tartarus," which means "a place of darkness."

**54 TIMES TOTAL**

***Note:*** *The Greek word "Gehenna" (mentioned above) is a transliteration of the 'hebrew "Ge-Hinnom," which means the "Valley of Hinnom." This valley, which lies immediately south and west of Jerusalem, was a place where dead animals, garbage, and other refuse were dumped. Fire burned constantly, as it does at modern sanitation dump sites. The Bible uses "Gehenna" or the "Valley of Hinnom" as 1 symbol of the fire that will destroy the lost at the end of time. The fire of Gehenna was not unending. Otherwise it would be still burning southwest of Jerusalem today. Neither will the fire of hell be unending.*

***14. What is God's real purpose in hellfire?***

"Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20: 15). "For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more." "The enemies of the LORD ... shall vanish. Into smoke they shall vanish away" (Psalm 37: 10, 20).

***Answer***: God's purpose is that hell will destroy the devil and all sin and sinners md make the world safe for eternity. One sinner, if left on this planet, would be a deadly virus forever threatening the universe. It is God's plan to blot sin out of existence for all time.

**Eternal Hell Would Perpetuate Sin**

An eternal hell of torment would perpetuate sin and make its eradication impossible. An eternal hell of torment is not part of God's great plan at all. Such a horrible theory is slander against the holy name of a loving God. The devil delights to see our loving Creator pictured as such a monstrous tyrant, and he alone can benefit from such teachings.

Eternal Hell a Man-made Theory The "eternal hell of torment" theory originated not from the Bible, but from misguided people who were (perhaps inadvertently) led of the devil. And, incidentally, while a fear of hell may get our attention, our salvation is the result of learning to love and obey Christ.

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15. Isn’t the work of destroying sinners foreign w God's nature?

"As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die?''' (Ezekiel 33: 1 I). "For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them" (Luke 9:56). "For the LORD will rise up that He may do His work, His awesome work, and bring to pass His act, His unusual act" (Isaiah 28:21).

***Answer:*** Yes, the work of God has always been to save rather than destroy. Th. work of destroying the wicked in hellfire is so foreign to God's nature that the Bible calls it His "strange act." God's great heart will ache at the destruction of the wicked. Oh, how diligently He works to save every soul! But if one spurns His love and clings to sin, God will have no choice but to destroy the sinner with his sin when He rids the universe of that horrible, malignant growth called "sin" in the fires or the last day .

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***16. What are God's post-hell plans/or the earth and His people?***

"He will make an utter end of it. Affliction will not rise up a second time" (Nahum 1 :9). "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind" (Isaiah 65: 17). "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shal1 be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain" (Revelation 21:3, 4).

***Answer:*** After hellfire goes out, God wid create a new earth and restore it to His people-with all the beauties and glories of Eden before sin entered. The horrors of sin and the past will be forgotten. Pain, death, tragedy, woe, tears, sickness, disappointment, sorrow, and all sin will be banished forever.

**Sin Will Not Rise Again**

God promises that sin will never rise again. His people will be fi lIed with perfect peace, love, joy, and contentment. Their lives of complete happiness will be far more glorious and thrilling than mere words could ever describe. The real tragedy of hell is in missing heaven. A person who fails to enter this magnificent kingdom has made the saddest choice of a lifetime.

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. Doesn't the Bible speak of "eternal torment"?***

***Answer***: No, the phrase "eternal torment" does not appear in the Bible.

***2. Then why does the Bible say that the wicked will be destroyed with unquenchable fire?***

***Answer:*** Unquenchable fire is fire that cannot be put out, but which goes out when it has turned everything to ashes. Jeremiah 17:27 says Jerusalem was to be destroyed with unquenchable fire, and in 2 Chronicles 36: 19-21 the Bible says this fire burned the city "to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah" and left it desolate. Yet we know this fire went out, because is not burning today.

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***3. Doesn't Matthew 25:46 say the wicked will receive "everlasting punishment"?***

***Answer:*** Notice the word is punishment, not punishing, Punishing would be continuous, while punishment is one act The punishment of the wicked is death, and death is everlasting.

***4. Can you explain Matthew 10:28: "Do not fear those who kill the body but can- not kill the soul"?***

***Answer***: The word "soul" has three meanings in the Bible: (1) a living being- Genesis 2:7, (2) the mind-Psalm 139:14, and (3) life-l Samuel 18:1, which here refers to eternal life that God guarantees all who reach His kingdom. No one can take this away. The last part of Matthew 10:28 says both soul and body will be destroyed in hell.

***5. Matthew 25:41 speaks of "everlasting fire" for the wicked. Does it go out?***

***Answer***: Yes, according to the Bible, it does. We must let the Bible explain itself. Sodom'and Gomorrah were destroyed with everlasting, or eternal, fire (Jude 7), and that fire turned them "into ashes" as a warning to "those who afterward would live ungodly" (2 Peter 2:6). These cities are not burning today. The fire went out after everything was burned up. Likewise, everlasting fire will go out after it has turned the wicked to ashes (Malachi 4:3). The effects of the fire are everlasting, but not the burning itself.

***6. Doesn't the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 teach an eter- nal hell of torment?***

***Answer***: No, indeed! It is simply a parable used to emphasize a point. Many facts make it clear that this is a parable. A few are as follows:

A. Abraham's bosom is not heaven (Hebrews 11:8-10, 16).

B. People in hell can't talk to those in heaven (Isaiah 65: 17).

C. The dead are in their graves (Job 17:13; John 5:28,29). The rich man was in bodily form with eyes, a tongue, etc., yet we know that the body does not go to hell at death. It is very obvious that the body remains in the grave, as the

Bible says.

D. Men are rewarded at Christ's second coming, not at death (Revelation 22: 11, 12).

E. The lost are punished in hell at the end of the world, not when they die (Matthew 13:40-42).

The point of the story is found in verse 31 of Luke 16. Parables cannot be taken literally. If we took parables literally, then we must believe that trees talk! (See this parable in Judges 9:8-15.)

***7. But the Bible speaks of the wicked being tormented "forever," doesn't it?***

***Answer***: The term "for ever," as used in the Bible, means simply a period of time, limited or unlimited. It is used 56 times in the Bible in connection with things that have already ended. (To check in a concordance, look up the word "ever.") It is like the word "tall," which means something different in describing men, trees, or mountains. In Jonah 2:6, "forever" means "three days and nights." (See also Jonah 1: 17.)

In Deuteronomy 23:3, this means "10 generations." In the case of man, this means "as long as he lives" or "until death." (See 1 Samuel 1:22, 28; Exodus 21 :6; Psalm 4R'14 ) so the wicked will burn in the fire as long as they live, or until death. This fiery punishment for sin will vary according to the degree of sins for each individual,

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thing---the earth in its totally dark, disorganized form before God made order of it Jeremiah, in describing this earth during the 1,000 years, used virtually the same terms as these in Genesis 1 :2: "without form and void," "no light," "no man," and "black" (Jeremiah 4:23,25,28). So the battered, dark earth with no people alive will be called the bottomless pit, or abyss, during the 1,000 years, just as it was in the beginning before Creation was completed. Isaiah 24:22 also speaks of Satan and his angels during the 1,000 years as "gathered in the pit" and "shut up in the prison."

***8. What is the chain that binds Satan? Why is he bound?***

"An angel ... having ... a great chain in his hand ... laid hold of ... Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ... and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 20: 1- 3) .

***Answer:*** The chain is symbolic-a chain of circumstances. A spirit being cannot be confined with a literal chain. Satan is "tied down" because he has no people to deceive. The wicked are all dead and the righteous are all in heaven. The Lord con- fines the devil to this earth so he cannot roam the universe hoping to find someone to deceive. Forcing the devil to stay on the earth, alone with his demons for a thousand years with no one to deceive, will be for him the most galling chain ever forged.

**Review the Events Occurring at the Beginning of the 1,000 Years:**

A. Devastating earthquake and hailstorm (Revelation 16: 18-21; Revelation 6:14-17).

B. Second coming of Jesus for His saints (Matthew 24:30, 31).

C. Righteous dead raised to life (1 fhessalonians 4: 16, 17).

D. Righteous given immortality (l Corinthians 15:51-55).

E. Righteous given bodies like Jesus (1 John 3:2; Philippians 3:21).

F. All righteous caught up into the clouds (l Thessalonians 4: 16, 17).

G. Living wicked slain by the breath of the Lord's mouth (Isaiah 11 :4).

H. Wicked in graves remain dead until the end of the 1,000 years (Revelation 20:5).

I. Jesus takes righteous to heaven (John 13 :33, 36; 14: 1-3).

J. Satan bound (Revelation 20: 1-3).

***9. Revelation 20:4 says there will be a judgment in heaven during the 1,000 years. What for? Who will participate?***

"I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them ..., And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4). "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? '" Do you not know that we will judge angels?" ( l Corinthians 6:2, 3).

***Answer:*** The righteous of all ages (and probably even good angels) will participate in the judgment during the 1,000 years. The cases of all who are lost, including the devil and his angels, will be reviewed. This judgment will make details regarding the lost clear to each saved person. In the end, all will see that people are shut out of heaven only if they did not really want to live like Jesus or to be with Him.

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**Review the Events and Conditions During the 1,000 Years:**

A. Earth in battered condition from huge hailstones and devastating earthquake (Revelation 16: 18-21; 6: 14-17).

B. Earth in total blackout/bottomless pit (Jeremiah 4:23, 28).

C. Satan and his angels forced to stay on the earth/bound (Revelation 20: 1-3).

D. Righteous in heaven participating in the judgment (Revelation 20:4).

E. Wicked are all dead (Jeremiah 4:25; Isaiah 11:4).

During the 1,000 years, every soul who has ever lived on earth will be in one of two places: (1) on the earth, dead and lost, or (2) in heaven, taking part in the judgment. The Lord invites you to be in heaven. Please accept His invitation.

***10. At the close of the 1,000 years the holy city, New Jerusalem, will come down from heaven to this earth. Who will come with it? Where will it settle?***

"Then I ... saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God .... And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men'" (Revelation 21:2, 3). "Behold, the day of the LORD is coming." "And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two.... Thus the LORD my God will come and all the saints with You." "All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem" (Zechariah 14:1, 4, 5, 10).

***Answer:*** The new Jerusalem will settle where the mount of Olives now stands. The mountain will be flattened to make a great plain, upon which the city will come to rest. All of the righteous people of all ages (Zechariah 14:5), the angels of heaven (Matthew 25:31),~plus God the Father (Revelation 21:2,3) and God the Son (Matthew 25:31) will return to earth with the holy city for Jesus' special third coming. The second coming will be for His saints; the third, will be with His saints.

**Jesus' Three Advents**:

A. First coming, to Bethlehem in a manger.

B. Second coming, in the clouds at the beginning of the 1,000 years to take His people to heaven.

C. Third coming, with the holy city and all righteous people at the close of the 1,000 years.

***11. What will happen to the wicked dead at this time? How will this affect Satan?***

"The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished." "When the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations" (Revelation 20:5, 7, 8).

***Answer:*** At the close of the 1,000 years (when Jesus comes the third time) the wicked will be raised. Satan, loosed from his bonds, will then have an earth full of people (all the nations of the world) to deceive.

***12. What will Satan do then?***

"Satan will ... go out to deceive the nations ... of the earth ... to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the

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breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city" (Revelation 20:7-9).

***Answer:*** Satan, true to his nature, will immediately begin lying to the people left on the earth-the wicked from all ages. He will probably claim that the city is really his, that he was unjustly deposed from the heavenly kingdom, that God is power- hungry and ruthless, and that God is getting ready to wipe them all off the face of the earth with a devastating, inescapable fire. He will convince them that, if they unify, God does not have a chance. With the entire world against one city, the victory will appear certain. The nations will then unite and marshal their armies to surround the new Jerusalem. (F r more information on the origin of Satan, see Study Guide 2.)

***13. What will interrupt Satan's plan to capture or destroy the city?***

"Fire came down from God out of heaver and devoured them. The devil, who -deceived them, was cast into ... the lake which bums with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 20:9, 10; 21 :8). "'The wicked ... shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,' says the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 4:3).

***Answer:*** Fire will suddenly come down from heaven (not up from hell, as many believe) upon the wicked and all will be turned into ashes, including the devil and his angels (Matthew 25 :41). This fire that destroys sin and sinners is called the second death. There is no resurrection from this death. It is final. Notice that the devil will not be tending the fire, as is commonly believed. He will be in it, and it will put him out of existence. (For full information on this fire, sometimes called hell, see

Study Guide 11. For information on death, see Study Guide 10.)

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***14. When the wicked are burned up and the fire goes out, what glorious, thrilling event will take place next?***

"Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth" (Isaiah 65: 17). "Look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3: 13). "He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new'" (Revelation 21 :5). "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God" (Revelation 21 :3).

***Answer:*** God will create new heavens and a new earth, and the new Jerusalem will be the capital city of the earth made new. Sin and its ugliness will be gone forev- er. God's people will at long last receive the kingdom promised to them. "They sha11 obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35: 1 0). Too fabulous to describe! Too glorious to miss! Too near for us to be unsure! God has a place prepared there for you (John 14: 1-3). Plan to live in it. Jesus is waiting for your consent. (For full information on heaven, see Study Guide 4.)

**Review the Events at the Close of the 1,000 Years:**

A. Third coming of Jesus with His saints (Zechariah 14:5).

B. Holy city settles on mount of Olives, which becomes a great plain (Zechariah 14:4, 10).

C. The Father, angels, and all of the righteous come with Jesus (Revelation 21: 1- 3; Matthew 25:31; Zechariah 14:55).

D. Wicked dead raised; Satan loosed (rev 20:5,7)

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E. Satan deceives entire world (Revelation 20:8).

F. Wicked surround the holy city (Revelation 20:9).

G. Wicked destroyed by fire (Revelation 20:9).

H. New heavens and earth created (Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1) .. •

J. God's people enjoy eternity with Christ on the new earth (Revelation 21 :2-4).,

**The 1,000 Years of Revelation 20**

**Events during 1,000 years**

1. Earth tom up, desolate, and dark.

2. All wicked are dead on earth.

3. Satan bound to this earth.

4. Righteous judging in heaven.

**1st Resurrection**

**Events at Beginning of the 1,000 years**

1. Devastating earthquake and hailstorm.

2. Second coming of Jesus for the saints.

3. Righteous dead raised to life.

4. Righteous given immortality.

5. Righteous given bodies like that of Jesus.

6. All righteous caught up into clouds.

7. Living wicked slain by the Lord's presence.

8. Wicked already in their graves remain dead.

8. Jesus takes righteous to heaven.

9. Satan bound.

**2nd Resurrection**

**Events at Close of the 1,000 years**

1. Third coming of Jesus with the saints.

2. Holy city descends onto the mount of Olives, which becomes a great plain.

3. Father, angels, righteous come with Jesus.

4. Wicked dead raised and Satan loosed.

5. Satan deceives all nations. They surround the holy city.

6. Wicked destroyed by fire.

7. New heavens and earth created.

8. God's people enjoy eternity with Jesus.

***15. Can we know how soon Jesus will return for His saints?***

"So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near-at the doors!" (Matthew 24:33). "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near" (Luke 21 :28). "For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth" (Romans 9:28). "For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them" (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

***Answer:*** Jesus said when the signs of His coming are being fulfilled rapidly, as

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***Are health principles really a part of true Bible religion?***

"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2).

***Answer:*** Yes. In fact, the Bible rates health right near the top of the list in importance. Man's mind, spiritual nature, and body are all interrelated and interdependent. What affects one affects the other. If our bodies are misused, our minds and spiritual natures cannot become what God ordained they should.

***2. Why did God give health rules to His people?***

"And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive" (Deuteronomy 6:24). "So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you" (Exodus 23:25).

***Answer:*** God gave health rules because He knows what is best for the human body. Automobile manufacturers place an "operations manual" in the glove compartment of each new car because they know what is best for their product. God, who made our bodies, also has an "operations manual." It is called the Holy Bible. Ignoring God's "operations manual" results in disease, twisted thinking, and burned- out lives, just as abusing a car (against the manufacturer's counsel) results in serious car trouble. Following God's rules results in "salvation [saving health]" (Psalm 67:2) and more abundant life (John 10: 10). These great health laws are like a wall or fence to keep out the diseases of Satan. God tells us what these rules are so we can avoid the devil's traps.

***3. Do God’s health rules have anything to do with eating and drinking?***

"Eat what is good" (Isaiah 55:2). "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or what- ever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

***Answer:*** Yes, a Christian will even eat and drink differently-all to the glory of God-using only "that which is good." If God says a thing is not fit to eat, He must have a good reason. He is not a harsh dictator, but a loving Father. All His counsel is for our good always. The Bible promises: "No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Psalm 84: 11). So if God withholds a thing from us, it is because it is not good.

***Note****: No person can eat his way into heaven. Eating even the food of angels will not entitle people to paradise. Only acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior can do that. Ignoring God's health laws, however, may cause a person to be lost, because it will ruin his judgment and cause him to sin.*

4. What did God give people to eat when He created them and provided a perfect diet? "And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed ... every tree whose fruit yields seed." "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat" (Genesis 1:29; 2: 16).

Answer: The diet which God gave people in the beginning was fruit, grains and nuts. Vegetables were added a bit later (Genesis 3:18)

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***5. What items are specifically mentioned by God as being unclean and forbidden?***

***Answer***: In Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, God very clearly points out the following groups as being unclean. Read both chapters in full.

A. All animals which do not have a split hoof and chew the cud (Deuteronomy 14:6).

B. All fish and water creatures that do not have both fins and scales. Nearly all fish are clean (Deuteronomy 14:9).

C. All birds of prey, carrion eaters, and fish eaters (Leviticus 11: 13-20).

D. Most "creeping things" (or invertebrates) are also unclean (Leviticus 11:21-47).

***Note****: These chapters make it clear that most animals, birds, and water creatures people ordinarily eat are clean. There are, however, some very notable exceptions. According to God's rules, the following animals are unclean and are not to be eaten: cats: dogs, horses, camels, eagles, vultures, hogs, squirrels, rabbits, catfish, eels, lobsters, clams, crabs, shrimp, oysters, frogs, and many others*.

***6. But I like pork. Will God destroy me if i eat it?***

"For behold, the LORD will come with fire ... and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many. Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves ... eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse, shall be consumed together" (Isaiah 66: 15-17).

***Answer:*** This may be shocking, but it is true and must be told. The Bible positively states that all who eat "swine's flesh," the mouse, and other unclean things that are an "abomination" will be destroyed with fire at the coming of the Lord. When God says to~ leave something alone and not eat it, we should by all means obey Him. After all, the mere eating of a piece of forbidden fruit by Adam and Eve, a sinless couple, brought sin and death to this world in the first place. Can anyone say it doesn't matter, when God so clearly shows it does? God says men will be destroyed because they "chose that in which I do not delight" (Isaiah 66:4).

***7. But didn't this law of clean and unclean animals originate at Sinai? Wasn't it for the Jews only, and didn't it end at the cross?***

"Then the LORD said to Noah, ' ... take with you seven each of every clean animal ...; two each of animals that are unclean '" (Genesis 7: 1, 2).

***Answer:*** No, indeed! The Bible has ample evidence that there were clean and unclean animals from the very dawn of Creation. Noah lived long before any Jews existed, but he knew of the clean and unclean, because he took into the ark the clean animals by "sevens" and the unclean by "twos." Revelation 18:2 refers to some birds as being unclean just before the second coming of Christ. The death of Christ had no altering effect whatever on these health laws, since the Bible says that all who break them will be destroyed when Jesus returns (Isaiah 66: 15-17). The Jew's stomach and digestive system in no way differs from that of a Gentile. These health laws are for all people for all time.

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***8. Does the Bible forbid the use of alcoholic beverages*** ?

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise" (Proverbs 20: 1). "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper" (Proverbs 23:31,32). "Neither fornicators, nor drunkards ... will inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:9, 10).

***Answer:*** Yes, the Bible clearly forbids the use of alcoholic beverages.

***9. Does the Bible condemn the use of tobacco and other harmful substances?***

***Answer***: Yes, the Bible gives six reasons why the use of tobacco and harmful substances are displeasing to God:

A. The use of harmful substances injures health and defiles the body. "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (I Corinthians 3: 16, 17).

B. Nicotine is an addictive substance that enslaves people. Romans 6: 16 says that we become servants to whomever (or whatever) we yield ourselves. Tobacco users are servants of nicotine. Jesus says, "You shall worship the LORI) your God, and Him only you shall serve" (Matthew 4: 10).

C. The tobacco habit is unclean. "Come out from among them and be separate. says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6: 17). It is really preposterous to think of Christ using tobacco in any form, isn't it?

D. The use of harmful substances wastes money. "Why do you spend money for what is not bread?" (Isaiah 55:2). We are God's stewards of the money given us, and "it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2).

E. The use of harmful substances weakens our ability to discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit. "Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2: 11). The use of harmful substances use is a fleshly lust.

F. The use of harmful substances shortens life. Recent scientific findings con- firm the fact that the use of tobacco often shortens the life span by as much as one-third. This breaks God's command against killing (Exodus 20: 13). Even though it is slow murder, it is still murder. One of the best ways to postpone your funeral is to quit using tobacco.

***10. What are some of the simple, yet very important, health laws found in the Bible?***

**Here are 11 Bible health rules:**

**A. Eat your meals at regular intervals, and do not use animal fat or blood.** "Feast [eat] at the proper time" (Ecclesiastes 10: 17). "This shall be a perpetual statute ... you shall eat neither fat nor blood" (Leviticus 3: 17).

***Note:*** *Recent scientific studies have confirmed the fact that most heart attacks result from a high cholesterol level in the blood-and that the use of "fats" is largely responsible for this high level. It looks like the Lord knows what He is talking about after all, doesn’t it?*

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SG 13 GOD'S FREE HEALTH PLAN

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**B. Don't overeat**. "And put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite" (Proverbs 23:2). In Luke 21:34, Christ specifically warns against "carousing" (overeating) in the last days. Overeating is responsible for many degenerative diseases.

**C. Don't harbor envy or hold grudges**. These evils disrupt body processes. The Bible says that envy is "rottenness to the bones" (Proverbs 14:30). Christ even commands us to clear up grudges that others may hold against us (Matthew 5:23, 24).

**D. Maintain a cheerful, happy disposition**. "A merry heart does good, like medicine" (Proverbs 17:22). "As he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Many diseases from which people suffer are a result of mental depression. A cheerful, happy disposition imparts health and prolongs life.

**E. Put full trust in the Lord.** "The fear of the L0RD leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction" (Proverbs 19:23). Trust in the Lord strengthens health and life. "My son, give attention to my words; ... For they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh" (Proverbs 4:20, 22). So health comes from obedience to God's commands and from putting full trust in Him.

**F. Balance work and exercise with sleep and rest.** "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work" (Exodus 20:9, 10). "The sleep of a laboring man is sweet" (Ecclesiastes 5: 12). "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (Genesis 3: 19). "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late" (Psalm 127:2). "For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? Even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity" (Ecclesiastes zZz, 23).

**G. Keep your body clean**. "Be clean" (Isaiah 52: 11).

**H. Be temperate in all things**. "Everyone who competes for the prize is temper- ate in all things" (1 Corinthians 9:25). "Let your gentleness [moderation] be known to all men" (Philippians 4:5). A Christian will completely avoid all things that are harmful and will be moderate in the use of things that are good. Habits that injure health break the command "You shall not murder." They murder by degrees. They are suicide on the installment plan.

**I. Avoid anything harmful to the body** (1 Corinthians 3: 16, 17). Here is a sur- prise for some. Medical science has confirmed the fact that tea, coffee, and soft drinks that contain the addictive drug caffeine and other harmful ingredients are all positively damaging to the human body. None of these contain food value except through the sugar or cream added, and most of us already use too much sugar. Stimulants give a dangerous, artificial boost to the body and are like trying to carry a ton in a wheelbarrow. The popularity of these drinks is due not to flavor or advertising, but to the dose of caffeine they contain. Many Americans are sickly because of their addiction to coffee, tea, and caffeinated soft drinks. This delights the devil and wrecks human lives.

**J. Make mealtime a happy time**. "Every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor-it is the gift of God" (Ecclesiastes 3: 13). Unhappy scenes at mealtime hinder digestion. Avoid them.

K. HELP THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED. “loose the bonds of wickedness,… undo the heavy burdens,… share your bread with the hungry, and… bring to your house

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the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, .. you cover him, .. YOUI healing shall spring forth speedily" (Isaiah 58:6-8). 'J his is too plain to rnisunderstand: when we help the poor and needy, we improve our own health.

***11. What solemn reminder is given to those who ignore God's rules?***

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

***Answer:*** The answer is too plain to miss. Those who break God's rules regarding the care of the body machine will reap broken bodies and burned-out lives just as one who abuses his automobile will have serious car trouble. And those who continue to break God's laws of health will ultimately be destroyed by the Lord (1 Corinthians 3: 16, 17) God's health laws are not arbitrary. They are natural, established laws of the universe like the law of gravity. Ignoring these laws always brings certain disastrous results. The Bible says, "a curse without cause shall not alight [come]" (Proverbs 26:2). Trouble comes when we ignore the laws of health. God, in mercy, tells us what these laws are so we may avoid the tragedies that result from breaking them.

***12. What fearful, shocking truth about health involves our children and grandchildren?***

"You shall not eat it, that it may go well with you and your children after you" (Deuteronomy 12:25). "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me" (Exodus 20:5).

***Answer***: God makes it very plain that children and grandchildren (to the fourth gen- eration) pay for the folly of parents who ignore God's health rules. The children and grandchildren inherit weakened, sickly bodies when mother and father defy God's rules for their lives. Is this what you want for your dear children and grandchildren?

***13. What more fearful, sobering fact does God's Word reveal?***

"There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles" (Revelation 21 :27). "'But as for those whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads,' says the Lord GOD" (Ezekiel 11:21).

***Answer:*** Nothing defiling or unclean will be permitted in God's kingdom. All filthy habits defile a person. Use of improper food defiles a person (Daniel I :8). It is sobering, but true. Choosing their "own ways" and that in which God does not delight will cost people their eternal salvation (Isaiah 66:3, 4, 15-17).

***14. What should every sincere Christian endeavor to do at once?***

"Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (2 Corinthians 7: 1). "Everyone who has this hope in Him [Christ] purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:3). "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14: 15).

***Answer:*** Sincere Christians will bring their lives into harmony with God's rules at once because they love him. They know that his rules greatly add to their happiness and protect them from the devil’s diseases (Acts 10:38). God’s counsel and rules are always for our good, just as good parent’s rules are best for their

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children. And once we know better, God holds u accountable. "To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4: 17).

***15. But I'm worried because some of my evil habits have bound me so tightly. What can I.do?***

"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1: 12). "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:] 3).

***Answer:*** Take all of these habits to Christ and lay them at His feet. He will joy- fully give you a new heart and the power you need to break any evil habit and be- come a son or daughter of God (Ezekiel 11: 18, 19). How thrilling and heart-warming it is to know that "with God all things are possible." (Mark 10:27). And Jesus says, "the one who comes to Me I will by no means rast out" (John 6:37). Jesus is ready to break the shackles that bind us. He longs to set us free, and will, if only we will permit it. Our worries, evil habits, nervous tensions, and fears will be gone when we do His bidding. He says, "These things r have spoken to you, ... that your joy may be full" (John 15: 11). The devil argues that freedom is found in disobedience, but this is a falsehood (John 8:44).

***16. What thrilling promises are given about God's new kingdom?***

"And the inhabitant will not say, "I am sick" (Isaiah 33:24). "There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain" (Revelation 21 :4). "They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

***Answer***: The citizens of God's new kingdom will obey His health laws, and there will be no sickness or disease. They will be blessed with eternal vigor and youth and will live with God in supreme joy and happiness throughout all eternity.

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. 1 Timothy 4:4 says, "Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be re- fused. " Can you explain this?***

***Answer:*** This Scripture passage (verse 3) refers to meats "which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving" by His people. These meats, as we have already discovered, are the clean meats listed in Leviticus chapter 11 and Deuteronomy chapter 14. Verse 4 makes it clear that all creatures of God are good and not to be re- fused, provided they are among those created to be "received with thanksgiving" (the clean animals). Verse 5 tells why these animals (or foods) are acceptable: they are "sanctified" by God's Word, which says they are clean, and by a "prayer" of bless- ing, which is offered before the meal. Please note, however, that God will destroy people who try to "sanctify themselves" while eating unclean foods (Isaiah 66: 17).

***2. Matthew 15:11 says, "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth." How do you explain this?***

Answer: the subject in Matthew 15:1-20 is eating without first washing the hands (verse 2). The focus is not eating but washing. The scribes taught that eating any

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food without a special ceremonial washing defiled the eater. Jesus said the ceremonial washings were meaning less. In verse 19, He listed certain evils – murders, adulteries, thefts, etc. Then he concluded, “These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man" (verse 20).

***3. But didn't Jesus cleanse all animals in Peter's vision, as recorded in Acts IO?***

***Answer:*** No! In fact, the subject of this vision is not animals, but people. God gave Peter this vision to show him that the Gentiles were not unclean, as the Jews believed God had instructed Cornelius, a Gentile, to send men to visit Peter. But Peter would have refused to see them if God had not given him this vision, because Jewish law forbade entertaining Gentiles (verse 28). But when the men finally did arrive, Peter welcomed them; explaining that ordinarily he would not have done so, but "God has shown me that J should not call any man common or unclean" (verse 28). In the next chapter (Acts 11), the church members criticized Peter for speaking -with these Gentiles. So Peter told them the whole story of his vision and its meaning. And Acts 11: 18 says, "When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life'"

***4. What did God make the hog for, if not to eat?***

***Answer:*** He made it for the same purpose that He made the buzzard - as a scavenger to clean up garbage. And the hog serves this purpose admirably.

***5. Romans 14:3, 14, 20 says: "Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat .• , "There is nothing unclean of itself." "All things indeed are pure." Can you explain this?***

***Answer:*** Verses 3 through 6 are a discussion of those who eat certain things versus those who do not. The passage does not say either is right, but rather counsels that neither pass judgment on the other. Instead, let God be the Judge (verses 4, 10-12). Verses 14 and 20 refer to foods that were first offered to idols (and were thus ceremonially unclean)-not to the clean and unclean meats of Leviticus chapter 11. (Read 1 Corinthians 8: 1, 4, 10, 13). The point of the discussion is that no food is "unclean" or "impure" just because it has first been offered to idols, because an idol is "nothing in the world." (1 Corinthians 8:4). But if a person's conscience bothers him for eating such food, he should leave it alone. Or even if it merely offends a brother, he should likewise abstain.

***6. Are health laws and eating and drinking really important to me personally? If I love the Lord, isn't that enough?***

***Answer:*** They are a matter of life versus death, because these laws involve obedience. "He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Love to Christ is involved here because He says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14: 15). When we truly love the Lord, we will gladly obey Him without dodging or making excuses. This is the supreme test.

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**14. Is obedience legalism?**

People might feel like they can get away with violating a traffic law or cheating on their taxes, but God and His laws work much differently. God sees every- thing we do, hears everything we say, and He really does care about how we behave. While the Lord offers forgiveness for our sins, there still are deadly consequences for breaking God's law. Amazingly, some Christians say any attempt to obey God's law amounts to legalism. Yet Jesus said if you really love God, you 'II do what He asks. So is obedience legalism? Take time to read this Study Guide carefully eternal consequences are at stake!

***1. Does God really see and take note of me personally?***

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"You-Are-the-God- Who-Sees" (Genesis 16: 13). "0 LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; you under- stand my thought afar off. You ... are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, 0 LORD, You know it altogether" (Psalm 139:1-4). "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Luke 12:7).

***Answer:*** Yes, God knows each one of us (every person on earth) better than we know ourselves. He takes a personal interest in every human being and carefully watches all that we do. Not one word, thought, or deed is hidden from Him.

***2. Can I be saved in His kingdom without obeying His Word, as found in the Holy Bible?***

"Not everyone who "says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).”If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19: 17). "He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9).

***Answer***: No! Scripture is very clear on this point. Salvation and the kingdom of heaven are for those who obey the Lord's commands. God does not promise eternal life to those who merely make a profession of faith or are church members or are baptized, but rather to those who do His will, which is revealed in Scripture. Of course, this obedience is possible only through Christ (Acts 4: 12).

***3. Why does God require obedience? Why is it necessary?***

"Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7: 14). "But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate me love death" (Proverbs 8:36). "And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive" (Deuteronomy 6:24).

***Answer:*** Because there is only one narrow path that leads to godlikeness, and thus to His kingdom. All roads do not lead to the same place. The Bible is the map and guidebook with full instructions, warnings, and information on how to safely reach that kingdom. To disregard any part of it leads away from God and His kingdom. The universe OF God is a universe of law and order. Natural, moral and spiritual

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laws are involved. Breaking any of these laws always has certain fixed results. If the Bible had not been given, people would sooner or later have discovered (by trial and error) that the great principles of the Bible exist and are true. These Bible principles are written in our nervous systems, glands, and minds. When ignored, they result in shattered nerves, disease, and unhappiness of every kind. So the words of the Bible are not merely advice which we can accept or ignore without consequences. The Bible tells what these consequences are and explains how to avoid them. A person cannot live any way he wishes and still become godlike any more than a builder can ignore the blueprints for a house without running into trouble. This is why God asks all to follow the blueprint of the Holy Scripture. There is no other way to become like Him and thus be fitted for a place in His kingdom. And there is no other way to true happiness.

***4. Why does God permit disobedience to continue? Why not destroy sin and sinners now?***

"Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14, IS). "As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Romans 14:11).

***Answer:*** God will not destroy sin and sinners until all people everywhere are at last fully convinced of God's justice, love, and mercy. All will finally realize that God, by requiring obedience, is not trying to force His will upon us, but rather is trying to keep us from hurting and destroying ourselves. The sin problem is not settled until even the most cynical and hardened sinners are convinced of God's love and confess that He is just. It will take perhaps a major catastrophe or worse to convince some, but the horrible results of sinful living will finally convince all that God is just and right.

***5. Will God actually destroy the disobedient?***

"God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment" (2 Peter 2:4). "All the wicked He will destroy" (Psalm 145:20). "In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1 :8).

Answer: No question about it. The disobedient, including the devil and his angels who sinned, will be destroyed. This being true, surely it is high time to abandon all fuzziness regarding what is right or wrong. It is not safe for us to depend on our notions and feelings of right and wrong. Our only safety is depending on God's word. (See Study Guide 11 for details on the destruction of sin and sinners and Study Guide 8 on Jesus' second coming.)

***6. I want to obey all of God's rules. How can I be certain I will not overlook one?***

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find" (Matthew 7:7). "Be diligent [study] to present yourself approved to God, … rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). “if anyone wills to do his will, he shall know”

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concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God" (John 7: 17). "Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you" (John 12:35). "As soon as they hear of me they obey me" (Psalm 1 8:44).

Answer: God leaves no room for doubt. He promises to keep us from error and lead us safely to all truth if we: (l) pray earnestly for guidance, (2) sincerely study God's Word, and (3) follow truth as soon as we are shown.

***7. Does God count me guilty for disobeying Bible truth that has never been made clear to me?***

"If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your, sin remains" (John 9:41). "To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to' him it is sin" (James 4: 17). "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you" (Hosea 4:6). "Seek, -and you will find" (Matthew 7:7).

***Answer:*** If I have had no opportunity to learn a certain Bible truth, God does not hold me accountable. But the Bible teaches that I am responsible to God for all the light (knowledge of right) I have and all I can have! Many people who refuse or neglect to study, seek, learn, and listen will be destroyed by God because they have "rejected knowledge." To play ostrich in these exceedingly crucial matters is fatal. It is my responsibility to hunt diligently for truth.

***8. But God isn't particular about obedience on every point and in small details, is He?***

"Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt ... shall see the land ... be- cause they have not wholly followed Me, except Caleb ... and Joshua, ... for they have wholly followed the LORD" (Numbers 32:11, 12). "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you" (John 15:14).

***Answer***: Indeed, He is particular. God's people in Old Testament times learned this the hard way. Those who left Egypt for the promised land of Canaan were a multitude in number. Of this group, only two (Caleb and Joshua) fully followed the Lord, and they alone entered Canaan. The others died in the wilderness. Jesus says we are to live by "every word" of the Bible. There is not one word too many or one word too few. They are all important.

***9. When I discover new truth, I wait until all obstacles are removed before embracing it. This is best, isn't it?***

"Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you" (John 12:35). "I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments" (Psalm 119:60). "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). "As soon as they hear of me they obey me" (Psalm 18:44).

***Answer:*** No, once you are clear on a Bible truth, it is never best to wait. In fact, procrastination is the devil's most dangerous trap. It seems so harmless to wait, but the bible teaches that unless a person acts immediately upon light, it quickly turns to darkness. Obstacles to obedience are not removed while we stand and wait; in-

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shall I keep Your Jaw continually, forever and ever. And I will walk at liberty, for I seek 'four precepts" (Psalm 119:44,45).

***Answer:*** No. True freedom means freedom "from sin" (Romans 6: i 8), or disobe- dience, which is breaking God's law (l John 3:4). Therefore, true freedom comes only from obedience. The citizens who obey the law have freedom. The disobedient are caught and lose their freedom. Freedom without obedience is like the false free- dom of the drifting balloon or the driverless car. It leads to confusion and anarchy. True Christian freedom means freedom from disobedience. Disobedience always hurts a person and leads into the cruel slavery of the de viI.

***14. When I believe God requires a certain thing, should I obey even though I do***

***not understand why He requires it?***

"Please, obey the voice of the LORD .... So it shall be well with you, and your soul shall live" (Jeremiah 38:20). "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool" (Proverbs 28:26). "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man" (Psalm 118:8). "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9)."How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD?" (Romans 11 :33, 34). "I will lead them in paths they have not known" (Isaiah 42: 16). "You will show me the path of life" (Psalm 16: 11).

***Answer:*** Most assuredly! We must give God credit for being wise enough to re- quire some things of us we may not understand. Good children obey their parents even when the reasons for their commands are not clear. Simple faith and trust in God will cause us to believe that He knows what is best for us and will never lead us in any wrong path. It is folly for us, in our ignorance, to question God's leadership, even when we may not fully understand all His reasons.

***15. Who is really behind all disobedience, and why?***

"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning." "In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God" (1 John 3:8, 10). "Satan ... de- ceives the whole world" (Revelation 12:9).

Answer: The devil is responsible. He knows that all disobedience is sin and that sin brings unhappiness, tragedy, alienation from God, and eventual destruction. With bitter hatred he tries desperately to lead every person into disobedience. You are involved. You must face the facts and make a decision. Disobey and be lost, or accept Christ and obey and be saved. Your decision regarding obedience is a deci- sion regarding Christ. You cannot separate Him from truth, because He says, "I am ... the truth" (John 14:6). "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve" (Joshua 24: 15).

***16. What glorious promise regarding a super-miracle does the Bible give God's***

***children?***

“He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (philippians1:6)

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***Answer:*** Praise God! He promises that just as He worked a miracle to bring us the new birth, He will also continue to work needed miracles in OUI lives (as we gladly allow Him) until we are safe in His kingdom.

**Our Thought Questions Answered**

1. ***Will any be lost who truly think they are saved?***

***Answer:*** Yes! Matthew 7:21••23 makes it clear that many who prophesy, cast out evils, and do many wonderful works in Christ's name will be lost but will think they are saved. Christ said they are lost because they did not do "the will of My father in heaven" (verse 21). Those who refuse to obey God will end up believing a lie (2 Thessalonians 2: 11, 12) and thus think they are saved when instead they are the lost. •

1. ***Since there is only one right way, what will happen to sincere people who truly link they are right when they are wrong?***

***Answer:*** Jesus says that He will call them to His true way, and His true sheep will ear and follow (John 10: 16, 27).

***3. Aren't sincerity and zeal enough***?

***Answer:*** No! We must also be right. The apostle Paul was sincere and zealous when he persecuted the Christians before his conversion, but he was also wrong Acts 22:3, 4; 26:9-11).

***4. Isn't it a scientific impossibility that God can see everyone at the same time?***

***Answer:*** So was Noah's Flood (it had never before rained-Genesis 2:5, 6), but it happened anyway. Conjuring up "scientific" reasons for disobedience is the favorite pastime of the class mentioned in Romans 1 :22, who "professing to be wise, they became fools."

***5. What will happen to people who haven't received light?***

***Answer:*** The Bible says that all have received some light. "That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world" (John 1 :9). Each person will be judged according to how he follows available light. Even the heathen have some light and follow the law, according to Romans 2:14,15.

***6. I have asked God to give me a sign if He wants me to obey. This is safe,***

***isn't it?***

***Answer:*** No! It is not. Jesus said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign" (Matthew 12:39). All teachings should be checked by the Bible, and if in harmony with God's Word, should be accepted and followed (Isaiah 8:20; 2 Timothy 2: 15). People who won't accept the plain teachings of the Bible would not be convinced by a sign either. As Jesus said, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

***7. Hebrews 10:26, 27 seems to indicate that if a person will fully commits just one sin after he knows better, he is lost. Is this correct?***

***Answer:*** No! anyone can confess such a sin and be forgiven. The bible is speaking here not of one single act of sin but of a presumptuous continuation in sin and a

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 refusal to surrender to Christ after one knows better. Such action grieves away the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30) and hardens a person's heart until one is "past feeling" (Ephesians 4: 19) and lost. The Bible says, "Keep back Your servant also from pre- sumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression" (Psalm 19: 13).

***8. Doesn't a person have to be educated to understand the Bible?***

***Answer:*** No! Even the simple can understand it if surrendered to the Lord (Psalm 19:7; 119: 130; Matthew 11:25).

**15. Who Is the Antichrist?**

 Who, or what, is the antichrist? Evil alliance, or sinister individual? Some say his appearance is still in the future. Others say he appeared long ago in the days of ancient Rome. But the Bible indicates that he is alive today! The Bible prophecies teach this antichrist power will play a crucial role in the final events of earth's history. Do you know who he is? Are you sure? You need to be, for you can't understand last-day events until you understand this evil power. Be prepared for one of the most intriguing Study Guides yet!

***1. As the chapter begins, Daniel sees four beasts coming up out of the sea. In prophecy, what does a beast represent? What does the sea represent?***

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"The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth" (Daniel 7:23). "The waters ... are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17: 15).

***Answer:*** Beasts represent kingdoms or nations. Water represents multitudes of people or large populations.

***2. The four beasts of Daniel 7 represent the four world kingdoms (verses 17, 18). Babylon, the first kingdom (Daniel 2:38, 39), is represented as a lion in Daniel 7:4. (See also Jeremiah 4: 7; 50:17, 43, 44 for Babylon pictured as a lion elsewhere.) What do the "eagle's wings" mean? What do the 'jour winds" of verse 2 represent?***

"The LORD will bring a nation against you ... as swift as the eagle flies" (Deuter- onomy 28:49). "Thus says the LORD of hosts: ... a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the farthest parts of the earth. And ... the slain of the LORD shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth" (Jeremiah 25:32, 33).

***Answer:*** The wings of eagles represent speed. (See also Jeremiah 4:13; Habakkuk 1 :6-9.) Winds represent strife, commotion, and destruction. (See also Revelation 7:1-3.)

***3. What kingdom does the bear represent (Daniel 7:5)? What do the three ribs in its mouth symbolize?***

***Answer:*** Read Daniel 8. Notice that the beasts in chapter 8 parallel those in chapter 7. Daniel 8:20 specifically names Medo-Persia as the kingdom that precedes the rough goat, or Greece, of verse 21. It is the second world kingdom- the same answer as the bear of Daniel 7. The empire was made up of two groups of people. The Medes came up first (represented in Daniel 7:5 by the bear coming up on one e), but the Persians eventually became stronger (represented in Daniel 8:3 by the- n's second horn which grew "higher," or taller). The three ribs represent the three principal powers conquered by Medo-Persia: Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt.

***Greece, the third kingdom (Daniel 8:21), is represented by a leopard with four wings and four heads (Daniel 7:6). What do the heads represent'! What do the four wings represent?***

***Answer:*** The four heads represent the four kingdoms into which the empire of Alexander the Great was divided when he died. The four generals who headed these Seas were: Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus. The four wings (instead of two like the lion) represent super-speed, which was true of Alexander's conquests (Jeremiah 4:11-13)

***The Roman empire, the fourth world kingdom, is represented by a horrible monster with iron teeth and 10 horns (Daniel 7: 7). What do the horns represent'!***

***Answer:*** The 10 horns represent the 10 kings or kingdoms into which pagan Rome vas eventually split (Daniel 7:24). (These 10 kingdoms are the same as the 10 toes of the im-

VISIGOTHS spain

ANGLO-SAXONS england

FRANKS france

ALEMANI germany

BURGUNDIANS switzerland

LOMBARDS italy

SUEVl portugal

HERULI rooted up

OSTROGOTHS rooted up

VANDALS rooted up

ige described in Daniel2 :41-44.) Roving barbari- ill tribes swept in upon the Roman empire and carved out land niches for their people. Seven those 10 tribes developed into the countries of modem Western Europe, while three were uprooted and destroyed. The next section will discuss those kingdoms that were rooted up.

***6. In the Daniel 7 prophecy, what happens next?***

"I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words" (Daniel 7:8).

Answer: The "little horn" power appears next. We must identify it carefully be- cause God takes more space describing it than the other four kingdoms combined. Why? Because the biblical characteristics identify it as the anti christ of prophecy and history. There must be no mistake in making this identification.

***7. Are there clear points of identification?***

***Answer:*** Yes, God's Word gives us nine characteristics of antichrist in Daniel 7 so we can be certain of his identity. And even though some may find these truths painful, we must be honest enough to accept them as His revealed will. Now let's discover what these nine points are:

**A.** The "little horn" or kingdom "came up among them"-the 1 0 horns which were the kingdoms of Western Europe (Daniel 7:8). So it would be a little kingdom somewhere in western Europe.

**B.** It would have a man as its head who would speak for it (Daniel 7:8)

**C**. It would pluck up uproot three kingdoms

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 **D.** It would be "diverse" or different from the other ten kingdoms (Daniel 7:24)

**E.** it would make war with and "wear out” or persecute the saints (Daniel 7:21, 25),

**F.** It would emerge from the pagan Roman Empire the fourth world kingdom (Daniel 7:7,8).

**G.** God's people (the saints) would "be given into his hand" for "a time and times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:25).

**H.** It would "speak great words against" or blaspheme God (Daniel 7:25). In Revelation 13:5, the Bible says the same power speaks "great things and blasphemies.”

**I.** It would "think to change times and laws" (Daniel 7:25). Don't forget all these identification points come directly from the Bible. They are not some human opinion or speculation. Historians could tell you quickly what power is being described. These points can fit only one power the papacy. But in order to be certain, let us carefully examine all nine points, one by one. There must be no room left for doubt.

***8. Does the papacy fit these points?***

***Answer:*** Yes, it fits every point perfectly. See items A through I next:

**A**. **It "came up among" the 10 kingdoms of Western Europe.** The geographical location of the papal power was in Rome, Italy the very heart of the territory of Western Europe.

**B. It would have a man at its head who speaks for it.**

The papacy meets this identifying mark because it does have one man at the head (the pope) who speaks for it.

**C. Three kingdoms were plucked up to make way for the rise of the papacy**. The emperors of Western Europe were largely Catholic and supported the papacy in its growth and authority. Three Arian kingdoms, however, did not support the papacy-s-the Vandals, Heruli, and Ostrogoths. So the Catholic emperors decided they must be subdued or destroyed. Here is how Dr. Mervyn Maxwell, a theologian and historian, described the results in volume 1, page 129, of his book God Cares: "The Catholic emperor Zeno (474-491) arranged a treaty with the Ostrogoths in 487 which resulted in the eradication of the kingdom of the Arian Heruls in 493. And the Catholic emperor Justinian (527- 565) exterminated the Arian Vandals in 534 and significantly broke the power of the Arian Ostrogoths in 538. Thus were Daniel's three horns- the Heruls, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths plucked up by the roots. '" It is not difficult to recognize that the papacy fits this point.

**D. It would be "diverse" or different from the other kingdoms.**

The papacy clearly fits this description, also. It came on the scene as a religious power and was totally different from the secular nature of the other 10 kingdoms.

**E. It would make war with and persecute the saints.**

That the church did persecute is a well-known fact. The papacy clearly admits doing so. Much supportive evidence exists. Even conservative historians claim the church probably destroyed at least 50 million people over matters of religious conviction. We will quote here from two sources:

1. “that the church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of hi tory" (\V. L H. Lecky, History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, Volume 2, p. 40.)

**2.** In the History of the inquisition of Spain, D. Ivan Antonio Llorente provides these figures from the Spanish Inquisition alone:

• 31,912 persons were condemned and perished in the flames.

• 241,450 persons were condemned to severe penalties.

**F. It would emerge from the fourth kingdom of iron--the pagan Roman Empire.**

We are quoting two authorities or this point:

**1.** "The mighty Catholic Church was little more than the Roman Empire baptised. ... The very capital of the old Roman Empire became the capital of the Christian empire. The office of Ponrifex Maximus was continued in that of the pope." (Alexander Clarence Flick, The Rise of the Medieval Church, pp. 148, 149.)

**2.** "Whatever Roman elements the barbarians and Arians left ... [came] under the protection of the Bishop of Rome, who was the chief person there after the emperor's disappearance. The Roman church in this way privily pushed itself into the place of the Roman World-Empire, of which it is the actual continuation." (Adolf Harnack, What is Christianity", New York: Putnam, second edition, revised, 1901, pp. 269, 270.) So, once again, the point fits the papacy.

**G. God's people (the saints) would "be given into his hand" for "a time and times and half a time"** (Daniel 7:25).

Several things need-clarification in connection with this point:

**1.** A time is a year, times is two years, and the dividing of time is a half-year. The Amplified Bible translates it: "Three and one-half years." (The Amplified Bible, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1962.)

**2.** This same time period is mentioned seven times (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Rev- elation 11:2,3; 12:6,14; 13:5) in the books of Daniel and Revelation: three times as a time. times. and half a time; twice as 42 months; and twice as 1,260 days. Based on the 30-day calendar used by the Jews, these time periods are all the same amount of time: 312 years = 42 months = 1,260 days.

**3.** One prophetic day equals one literal year (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34).

**4.** Thus, the little horn (antichrist) was to have power over the saints for 1,260 prophetic days or 1,260 literal years.

**5.** The rule of the papacy began in A.D. 538, when the last of the three opposing Arian kingdoms was up- rooted. Its rule continued until 1798 when Napoleon's general, Berthier, took the pope captive with hopes of destroying both Pope Pius VI and the political, secu- lar power of the papacy. This period of time is an exact fulfillment of the 1 ,260-year prophecy. The blow was a deadly wound for the papacy, but that wound began to heal and continues healing today.

**Prophetic Time**

**Time = 1 year**

**Times = 2 years**

**1/2 Time = 1/2 year**

**6.** This same period of persecution is mentioned in Matthew 24:21 as the worst period of persecution God’s people will ever experience. Verse 22 tells us it was so devastating that no one soul would have survived if God had not shortened it. But God did shorten it. The persecution ended long

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before the pope was taken captive in 1798, It is plain 10 see that this point, likewise, fits the papacy.

**H. It would speak "pompous [great} words" of blasphemy '"against the most High [God]."**

Blasphemy has two definitions in Scripture:

**2.** Claiming to forgive sins (Luke 5 :21).

**3**. Claiming to be God (John 10:33).

Does this point fit the papacy? Yes! Let's first look at the evidence for it claiming to forgive sins: "Does the Priest truly forgive the sins, or does he only declare that they are remitted? The Priest does really and truly forgive the sins in virtue of the power given to him by Christ." (Joseph Deharbe, S.J., A Complete Catechism of the Catholic

Religion, New York: Schwartz, Kirwin & Fauss, 1924, p. 279.) The papacy further undermines Jesus by setting up a system of confession to an earthly priest, thus bypassing Jesus, our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1; 8:1,2) and only Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). Next consider the evidence for it claiming to be God: "We [the popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty." (Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter "The Reunion of Christendom" (dated June 20, 1894) trans. in the Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII, New York: Benziger, 1903, p. 304.) Here is another: "The pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ, Himself, hidden under the veil of flesh." (Catholic National, July 1895.) It's obvious this point, likewise, fits the papacy.

**I. It would "intend to change times and law."**

In a future Study Guide we will deal with the "times" of this point. It is a major topic and needs separate consideration. But what about changing the "laws"? The Amplified Bible translates "laws" as "the law." The reference is to changing God's law. Of course, no one can really change it, but has the papacy attempted to do so? The answer is "yes." In its catechisms, the papacy has omitted the second commandment against veneration of images and has shortened the fourth commandment from 94 words to eight and divided the tenth commandment into two commandments. (Check this for yourself. Compare the Ten Commandments in any Catholic catechism with God's list of the commandments in Exodus 20:3-17.) There is no doubt that the little horn power of Daniel chapter 7 (the antichrist) is the papacy. No other organization could possibly fit these nine points. And incidentally, this is no new teaching. Every Reformer, without exception, spoke of the papacy as antichrist. (R. Allen Anderson, Unfolding the Revelation, p. 137.)

**Words of Care and Concern**

Lest some should think that we are attacking fellow Christians by identifying this little-horn power, please keep in mind that the prophecy is aimed at a system and not individuals. There are sincere, devout Christians in all churches, including the Catholic faith. Daniel chapter 7 is simply a message of judgment and correction upon a large religious institution which compromised with paganism, like so many other churches that arose after her.

**Prophecy Reveals Faults of All Faiths**

Other prophecies point out the faults of protestant and Jewish faiths. God has true people in all religions. His true people (no matter what their faith) will always humbly accept the correction of the lord and will not shut their ears and hearts against

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him by self-defensiveness. 'We should be very thankful that God's W()rJ speaks with impartial honesty on every subject.

***9. Wasn't Daniel told to seal up his book until "the time of the end" (Daniel 12:4}!***

***When will Daniel's prophecies be opened to our understanding?***

***Answer:*** In Daniel 12:4, the prophet was told to seal parts of the hook till "the time of the end." In verse 6 an angelic voice asked, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?" Verse 7 says, "it shall be for a time, times. and half a time. The angel assured Dame] that the section of the book dealing with end-time prophecies would be opened after the end of the I 260-year period of papal control which was, as we learned earlier in this Study Guide, 1798. So the time of the en ~ began in the year 1798. Obviously, the book of Daniel contains crucial messages from heaven for us today. We absolutely must understand it.

***10. Many Christians today have been tragically misinformed regarding the antichrist. To believe an untruth about the antichrist could easily cause a person to be deceived and lost. What should a person do when new Bible teachings are encountered?***

"These were 1110re fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17: 11).

***Answer:*** When a new Bible teaching is encountered, the only safe procedure is to compare it carefully with Scripture to see if it is in harmony with God's Word.

**Concluding Remarks**

Many momentous prophecies from the Bible books of Daniel and Revelation will be featured in upcoming Amazing Facts Study Guides. God has given these prophecies to:

A. Reveal earth's closing events.

B. Identify the participants in the final phase of the battle between Jesus and Satan.

C. Clearly reveal Satan's sinister plans to ensnare and destroy us all.

D. Present the security and love of the judgment; God's saints will be vindicated'

E. Uplift Jesus-His salvation, love, power, mercy, and justice.

**Major Participants Will Appear Repeatedly**

Key participants in the closing war between Jesus and Satan will appear repeatedly in these prophecies. These include: Satan, Jesus, the United States, the papacy, Protestantism, and spiritism. Jesus repeats and expands His messages from the prophets to make certain His warnings of love and protection come through with clarity and certainty.

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. I always thought antichrist was a person rather than an organization. Am i wrong?***

***Answer:*** Here is the evidence that the antichrist is an organization-the papacy. The words “eye of a man” in Daniel 7:8 however do point to a leader. Revelation 13:18 speaks of a man with a number being involved. In Daniel chapter 8, Greece is represented by a goat and its leader, Alexander the Great, is symbolised by a horn.

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The same is true of antichrist. The organization is the papacy. The pope in office is its representative. The prophecy of Daniel chapter 7 is not saying that popes are evil and that Catholics are not Christians. There are many warm, loving Catholic Christians. The system, however, is called antichrist because it has usurped Jesus' authority and attempted to change His law.

***2. Do you think it is wise or Christian to pass laws to enforce Christianity?***

***Answer:*** No. The Bible is clear that all should have freedom to choose the direction they wish to go in matters of conscience (Joshua 24: 15)-even if they choose to deny God and be atheists. God permitted Adam and Eve to choose to disobey even though it hurt both them and Him. Forced worship is not acceptable to God. Forced worship is the devil's way. God's way is loving persuasion. History shows that virtually every time the church passed laws to enforce its beliefs, persecution and murder of others resulted. This is a lesson we can learn from the Middle Ages history of the little horn.

***3. Perhaps I have misunderstood, but my concept has always been that antichrist would be an evil being who openly opposed God. Is this concept incorrect?***

***Answer:*** We usually consider the word "anti" to mean "against." It can also mean in the place of' or "instead of." Antichrist is guilty of assuming the prerogatives of rod. It claims:

A. Its priests can forgive sins-which only God can do (Luke 5:21).

B. To have changed God's law by dropping out the second commandment (on worshiping images) and splitting the tenth into two parts. God's law cannot be changed (Matthew 5: 18).

C. That the pope is God on earth.

**Satan's Original Plan**

Satan's original plan (in heaven) was to assume God's position and authority. His m was to oust God and rule in His place. (See Study Guide 2.) When Satan was rejected from heaven, his aim did not change, but rather intensified. Through the centuries he has endeavored (using various human agencies) to discredit God and make over His position.

**Antichrist Appears to Be Spiritual**

Satan aims to replace God in these last days by deceiving people into following antichrist, who appears spiritual and holy. The main purpose of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation is to expose Satan's traps and strategies and lead people to anchor in Jesus and His Word for safety.

**Antichrist Will Deceive Many**

Most people will follow the antichrist (Revelation 13:3), thinking they are following Christ. Only the very elect will be safe (Matthew 24:23, 24). They will be 'e because they test every spiritual teaching and leader by Scripture (Isaiah 8:20). Religious deception is everywhere today. We cannot be too careful.

***Doesn't the Bible say in 1 John 2:18-22 that there are many antichrists?***

***Answer:*** Yes, there have been many antichrists down through history who have marked against the kingdom of God. However, there is only one entity that specifically fulfils all the prophesied characteristics of the antichrist. In Daniel chapters

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7 and 8 and in Revelation chapter 11, you will find at least 10 identifying traits of the antichrist These 10 identifying marks can be fulfilled in only one entity the papacy.

***5. In prophecy, does the symbol "beast" mean "beastly" characteristics?***

***Answer:*** Not at all. God uses the symbolism of a beast to signify a ruler, nation, government, or kingdom. It is His way of depicting governments in prophecy. We do this ourselves to some degree: We have depicted Russia as a bear, the United States as an eagle, etc. The symbol "beast" is not a demeaning, disrespectful term. It is synonymous with "animal" or "creature." Even Christ is portrayed as a Lamb- by John the Baptist (John 1:29) and the apostle John (Revelation 5 :6, 9, 12, 13). The term "beast" is utilized by God to give us a message about nations and leaders, good and evil.

**16. Angel Messages from Space**

 Angels are real! Sometimes called cherubim or seraphim, these powerful ministering spirits appear all through Bible history. Often they are seen protecting and guiding God's people, and sometimes punishing evil-but one of their most important missions is to reveal and explain prophecy. Did you know God has said something special through His angels to the stressed out people of our hectic world? In Revelation 14, God reveals some awesc.me last-day messages coded in the symbolism of three flying angels. So significant are these messages, that when they are completed, Jesus returns! This Guide will give you an eye-opening overview, and the following eight guides will present the incredible details. Hold on to your seat God’s personal message to you is about to be explained!

***1. Why are we studying Revelation? Isn't it sealed?***

***Answer:*** There are six crucial reasons to study Revelation:

**B. It never has been sealed** (Revelation 22: 10). The age-long controversy be- tween Christ and Satan, plus the devil's strategies and last-day devious plans, are exposed in Revelation. Satan cannot easily trap people who are aware of his lying deceptions in advance, so he hopes people will believe that Revelation is sealed.

**C. The very name "Revelation" means "unveiling," "opening," or "revealing"**-the complete opposite of being sealed. It always has been wide open.

**D. Revelation is Jesus' book in a unique way. It begins, "The Revelation of Jesus**

**Christ."** It even gives a word picture of Him in Revelation 1:13-16. No other book of the Bible reveals Jesus and His last-day instructions and plans for His work and His people as does Revelation.

**E. Revelation is primarily written for and geared to the people of our day-j ust before Jesus' return** (Revelation 1:1-3; 3:11; 22:6, 7,12,20).

**F. A special blessing is pronounced** upon those who read Revelation and heed its counsel (Revelation 1:3; 22:7)

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 **E. Revelation describes God's end-time people** and church with startling clarity. It makes the Bible come to life when you see the last-day events depicted in Revelation taking place . It also tells precisely what God's church must be preaching in the last days (Revelation 14:6-14). This Study Guide will give an overview of that preaching so you will recognize it when you hear it.

Note: Before proceeding further, read Revelation 14: 6-14.

**2. God commissioned His church to take the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). How does He symbolize this sacred work in Revelation?**

"Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach .... And another angel followed, saying ... Then a third angel followed them, saying ... " (Revelation 14:6, 8, 9).

***Answer:*** The word "angel" literally means "messenger," so it is fitting that God uses three angels to symbolize the preaching of His three-point gospel message for the last days. God uses the symbolism of angels to remind us that supernatural power will accompany the messages.

***3. What two crucial points does Revelation 14:6 reveal about God's message for the last days?***

"Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth-to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6).

***Answer:*** The two crucial points are: (1) that it is "the everlasting gospel," and (2) that it must be preached to every person on earth. The three angels' messages stress the gospel, which makes it plain that people are saved by faith in-and acceptance of-Jesus Christ alone (Acts 4: 12; Mark 10:26, 27). Since no other way to salvation exists, it is evil to claim that there is some other way.

**Satan's Counterfeits**

Satan's counterfeits while many, include two very effective ones: (1) salvation by works, and (2) salvation in sin. These two counterfeits are uncovered and revealed in the three angels' messages. Many, without realizing it, have embraced one of these two errors and are trying to build their salvation upon it-an utterly impossible feat. We also must stress that no one is truly preaching the gospel of Jesus for the end time who does not include the three angels' messages.

***4. What four distinctive points does the first angel's message cover?***

"Saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water'" (Revelation 14:7).

***Answer:***

**A. Fear God**. This means we should revere God and look upon Him with love, trust, and respect-eager to do His bidding. This keeps us from evil. "By the fear of the LORD one departs from evil" (Proverbs 16:6). Solomon, the wise man also said ,”Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all [whole duty]” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

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**B. Give glory to God.** We fulfill this command when we obey, praise, and thank God for His goodness to us. One of the major sins of the last days is thankfulness (2 Timothy 3: 1, 2).

**D. The hour of His judgment is come.** This indicates that everyone is account- able to God, and it is a clear statement that the judgment is now in session. A number of translations say "has" come instead of "is" come. (Full details of the judgment are given in Study Guides 18 and 19.)

**E. Worship the Creator**. This command rejects idolatry of all kinds-including self-worship-and totally repudiates evolution, which denies that God is Creator and Redeemer. (Many books and radio talk shows today overstress self-esteem, which leads to self-worship. A Christian's self esteem is in Christ, who makes His children sons and daughters of the King of heaven.) The gospel includes the creation and redemption of the world by the Lord God of heaven. Worshiping the Creator includes worshiping Him on the day He set aside as a memorial of Creation (the seventh-day Sabbath). That the reference in Revelation 14:7 is to the Sabbath is made clear by the fact that the words "made the heavens and the earth, the sea" were lifted right out of the Sabbath commandment (Exodus 20:] 1) and used here. (See Study Guide 7 for more information on the Sabbath.) Our true roots are found in God alone, who made us in His image in the beginning. Those who do not worship God as Creator-no matter what else they may worship-may never discover their real roots.

**5. What solemn statement does the second angel make about Babylon? What does I the angel of Revelation 18 command God's people to do?**

 "And another angel followed, saying, 'Babylon is fallen'" (Revelation 14:8). "I II saw another angel coming down from heaven .... And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, 'Babylon the great is fallen. '" .. , "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people'" (Revelation J 8:1,2,4).

***Answer:*** The second angel solemnly states that "Babylon is fallen," and the voice from heaven urges all of God's people to come out of Babylon at once. Unless you know what Babylon is, you could easily end up in it. Think about it. Could you possibly be in Babylon now? (Study Guide 20 gives a clear presentation of Babylon.)

***6. Against what does the third angel's message solemnly warn?***

"Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyo.ne wor- ships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God'" (Revelation 14:9, 10).

***Answer:*** The third angel's message warns people against worshiping the beast and his image and receiving the III ark of the beast in their foreheads or hands. The first angel commands true worship. The third angel tells of the awesome consequences connected with false worship. Do you know for certain who the beast is? And what is his mark? Unless you know positively who the beast is and what his mark is, you may end up worshiping him without realizing it. (Study Guide 20 provides full details regarding the beast and his mark. Study Guide 21 explains his image.)

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***7. What four-point description does God give ill Revelation 14: J 2 of His people who accept and follow the three angels' messages?***

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation J 4: 12).

**Answer:**

**A. They are patient, persevering, and faithful to the end-**a big order for a "do it now" generation. God's people reveal Him by their patient, loving conduct.

**B. They are saints**, or holy ones, because they are fully on God's side.

**C. They keep the commandments of God**. These people of God happily obey His Ten Commandments and all other commandments He has given them. Their first aim is to please Him, whom they love (1 John 3 :22). (Study Guide 6 gives more information on the Ten Commandments.)

**D. They have the faith of Jesus**. This also can be translated "faith in Jesus." In either case, God's people fully follow Jesus and fully trust Him.

***8. What happens immediately following the teaching of the three angels' messages to all people?***

"Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown" (Revelation 14:14).

***Answer:*** Immediately after the teaching of the three angels' messages to every person, Jesus will return in the clouds (His second advent) to take His people to their heavenly home. At His appearing, the great 1 ,OOO-year blackout of Revelation chapter 20 will begin. (Study Guide 12 tells about the 1,000 years. Study Guide 8 gives the details of Jesus' second coming.)

***9. In 2 Peter 1:12, the apostle speaks of "present truth." What does he mean?***

***Answer:*** Present truth is an aspect of the everlasting gospel that has particular urgency for a certain time. Examples are:

**A. Noah's message of the Flood** (Genesis 6 and 7; 2 Peter 2:5). Noah was a preacher of righteousness. He taught God's love as he warned of a coming flood that would destroy the world. The Flood message was "present truth" for that time. Its urgent cry was "get into the boat." And it was so important that it would have been immoral not to preach it.

**B. Jonah's message to Nineveh** (Jonah 3:4). Jonah's "present truth" was that Nineveh would be destroyed in 40 days. Jonah also uplifted the Savior, and the city repented. To omit, however, the 40-day warning would have been unfaith- ful and unforgivable. It was present truth. It fitted that time in a special way.

**C. John the Baptist's message** (Matthew 3:1-3; Luke 1:17). John's "present truth" was that Jesus, the Messiah, was about to appear. His work was to present the gospel and prepare people for Jesus' first coming. To have omitted that first-coming element of the gospel for his day would have been unthinkable.

**D. The three angels' messages** (Revelation 14:6-14). God's "present truth" for today is contained in the three angels' messages. Of course, salvation through Jesus Christ alone is central to these messages. However, the "present truth" of The three angels also has been given to prepare people for Jesus’ second coming and to open their eyes to Satan’s brilliant and highly convincing deceptions. Unless people understand these messages, Satan will indeed capture and

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destroy them. Jesus knew we needed these three special messages, so in loving kindness He has given them. They must not be omitted. Please pray earnestly as you examine them point by point in the next eight Study Guides. Some of your discoveries may be almost shocking. But all will be satisfying. Your heart will he tremendously stirred. You will sense Jesus speaking to you! After all, they are His messages.

***10. Who does the Bible say will come to give a "present truth" message before the great day of the Lord?***

"Behold, 1 will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD" (Malachi 4:5).

***Answer:*** Elijah the prophet. There is something significant about Elijah and his message, as we shall see in the next few questions.

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***11. What did Elijah do that caused the Lord to focus on him?***

***Note:*** Please read 1 Kings 18: 17-40 before answering this question.

***Answer:*** Elijah urged the people to make up their minds whom they would serve (verse 21). The nation was almost wholly idolatrous. The people had forsaken the true God and His commandments. There was one prophet of God, Elijah, and 450 heathen prophets of Baal (verse 22). Elijah suggested that both he and the idolaters build altars and place wood and a bull on them. He then suggested they ask the true God to reveal Himself by setting fire to His altar. The heathen god did not answer, but the true God of Elijah sent fire from heaven and burned up Elijah's sacrifice.

**The Message Demanded a Decision**

Elijah's message came at a time of deep spiritual crisis and national apostasy. It came with such power from heaven above that it stopped "business as usual" and drew national attention. Elijah then insisted that people decide whom they would serve, God or Baal. Deeply moved and fully convinced, the people chose God (verse 39).

***12. The Elijah message has a twofold application. It applies to a "present truth" message to prepare people for Jesus 'first advent and a "present truth" message to prepare people for Jesus' Second Advent. Who did Jesus say preached the Elijah message to prepare people for His first advent?***

"There has not risen one greater than John the Baptist." "And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come" (Matthew 11: 11, 14).

***Answer:*** Jesus called John's preaching to prepare people for His first advent "Elijah," or the Elijah message. John's message, as in Elijah's day, made truth very clear and then insisted on a decision. The Bible says of John the Baptist, "He will go ... in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1: 17).

***13. How do we know the prophecy has a second application to our time-just before the Second Advent?***

"I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD" (Malachi 4:5). "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD" (Joel 2:31)

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***Answer:*** Please take note that two events will occur before the coming of "the great and awesome day of the LORD" mentioned in Joel 2:3]. One, the coming of the Elijah message. And two, the tremendous signs in the heavens. This helps us locate both events. The dark day occurred May 19, 1780. That same night, the moon appeared as blood. Matthew 24:29 includes one more sign---the falling of the stars, which took place November] 3, 1833. From this, we know the end-time Elijah message must begin sometime near or after 1833-before the coming of the great day of the Lord.

**Second Elijah Message After Sky Signs**

It is obvious that John's "Elijah message" does not apply to the second "Elijah message" because God's great sky signs appeared over 1,700 years after John preached his message. The Elijah message of Joel 2:31 had to begin after those sky signs in 1833 and must prepare people for Jesus' Second Advent. The threefold "present truth" message of Revelation 14:6-14 fits perfectly. It began around 1844 and is preparing people worldwide for Jesus' Second Advent (verse 14), which will take place after the threefold message has reached every person on earth. (Details on the 1844 date are given in Study Guides 18 and 19.)

**The Message Demands a Decision**

Elijah insisted evil be met head-on and that all decide whom they would serve. So it is with God's threefold message for us today. A decision must be made. God's threefold message unmasks Satan and his plans. It clearly reveals God's love and His requirements. God is calling people today back to true worship-worship of God alone. To knowingly serve and worship anyone or anything else in this crucial day amounts to disloyalty and will result in eternal death. God miraculously reached hearts in Elijah's day (l Kings 18:37, 39) and in the days of John the Baptist. He will do the same in these last days as people respond to the three angels' messages (Revelation 18: 1).

***14. What other wonderful blessing will the preaching of the Elijah (or the three angels') messages bring?***

"Elijah ... will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers" (Malachi 4:5, 6).

***Answer:*** Praise God! The Elijah message, or three angels' messages, will bring family members together in a loving, close, joyous, heavenly relationship. What a blessed promise!

***15. The word "gospel" means "good news." Do the three angels' messages of Revelation chapter 14 provide good news?***

***Answer:*** Yes indeed! Let's review the good news we have found in this overview of the three angels' messages:

A. Every person will have an opportunity to hear and understand the last-day gospel. Not one will be passed by.

B. The devil's brilliant, powerful plans to trap and destroy people will be revealed to us, so we need not be ensnared.

C. Heaven's supernatural power will accompany the spreading of God’s message in these last days.

D. God’s people will be patient. He calls them “saints.”

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E. God's people will have the- faith of Jesus.

F. God's people will, out of love, obey His commandments.

G. God loves us so much that He has sent a very special message to prepare us for Jesus' second coming.

H. God's message for these last days will bring family members together in love and unity.

I. The major emphasis of the three angels' messages is that salvation has been provided for everyone through Jesus Christ alone. He gives His righteousness to cover our past and miraculously imparts His righteousness to us daily so we will grow in grace and truly become like Him. With Him we cannot fail. Without Him, we cannot succeed.

**A Further Word**

Points of the three angels' messages that will be explained in upcoming Study Guides are:

A. God's judgment hour has arrived!

B. Come out of fallen Babylon,

C. Don't receive the mark of the beast.

Much more good news will be revealed as you prayerfully study these subjects in the next eight Study Guides. You will be surprised and gladdened at some things, shocked and saddened at others. Some points may be very hard to accept. But since Jesus sent a special message from heaven to help and guide each one of us personally in these last days, surely nothing could be more important than to hear it, understand it fully, and follow it.

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. Will every person on earth be reached with the three angels' messages before Jesus returns? With billions of people now living, how can this be possible?***

***Answer:*** Yes, it will happen because God promised it (Mark 16: 15). Paul says the gospel went "to every creature under heaven" in his day (Colossians 1 :23). Jonah, by God's grace, reached the entire city of Nineveh in less than 40 days (Jonah 3:4- 10). The Bible says God will finish the work and cut it short (Romans 9:28). Count on it. It will happen-very quickly.

***2. Did Moses and Elijah actually appear with Jesus at the transfiguration (Matthew 17:3) or was it only a vision?***

***Answer:*** The event was literal. The Greek word "horama," translated "vision" in verse 9, literally means "what had been seen." Moses was raised from the dead and taken to heaven (Jude 9), and Elijah was later translated without seeing death (2 Kings 2:1,11,12). These two men, who had been on earth and suffered terribly from the onslaughts of the devil and the rebellion of God's people, understood what Jesus was passing through. They came to encourage and remind Him of all who would be translated into His kingdom without seeing death (like Elijah) and raised to life from the grave to enter His kingdom (like Moses) because of His sacrifice for our sins.

1. ***Why did John say he was not Elijah (John 1:19-21) when Jesus said that he was (Matthew 11:10-14)?***

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***Answer:*** The answer comes from Luke 1:3- 17. The angel who announced John's coming birth said, "Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shal1 call his name John. '" He will be great in the sight of the Lord.... He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (verses 13-17). When Jesus referred to John as Elijah, He was referring to his life, spirit, power, and work being like that of Elijah. The same is true of the Elijah message of these last days. The emphasis is on the message, not the man. So John was not Elijah in person, but he was presenting the Elijah message.

***4. Is it possible for someone to be preaching Jesus' full end-time truth for today without including the three angels' messages?***

***Answer:*** No! The three angels' messages must be included. In the book of Revelation, Jesus Himself reveals or stipulates His end-time message (Revelation 1: 1) and says clearly that His people must keep on following what He has revealed in the book (Revelation 1 :3; 22:7). So faithful end-time clergymen must be preaching Jesus' messages from the book of Revelation. This, of course, includes preaching His special three-point message of Revelation 14:6-14. Notice that Jesus calls these messages the "everlasting gospel" in verse 6. He also says they must be taken a every person on earth before He returns for His people. Here are three solemn thoughts:

A. No one is truly preaching Jesus' "everlasting gospel" unless he includes the three angels' messages.

B. No one has the right to call his messages the everlasting gospel if he omits the three angels' messages.

C. The three angels' messages prepare people for Jesus' second coming (Revelation 14: 12-14). Unless you hear, understand, and accept Jesus' three-point end-time messages, you may not be prepared for His second coming.

**Special Messages for the End-time**

Jesus, who knows what we need, gave us three special messages for the end-time. e must understand and follow them. The next eight Study Guides will make these messages clear to you.

***Luke 1:17 says the Elijah message was to turn "the disobedient to the wisdom the just.” What does this mean?***

***Answer:*** "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1: 17). The just have the wisdom to t their salvation upon faith in the Savior. "Nor is there salvation in any other, for re is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" .ts 4: 12). John's message was to make this crystal clear to all. A faith that is anred to anyone or anything other than Jesus Christ can never save people from sin lead to a changed life. People must hear and understand this great point of truth. s truth is also the very heart of God's three-point Elijah message for today.

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**God drew the Plans**

 About 3,500 years ago, on the grand summit of Mr Sinai, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. Most people don't know that at the same time, the Lord gave Moses the blueprints for one of the most mysterious structures ever built the sanctuary. It must have been important, because the Israelites could not enter the Promised Land until it was completed. This unique portable temple represented God's dwelling place among His people, and its services showed the nation of freed slaves a three-dimensional panorama of the plan of salvation. A careful look into the secrets of the sanctuary will crystallize your understanding of how Jesus saves the lost and leads the church. The sanctuary is also a key to understand several prophecies. This awesome Study Guide lets you explore the sanctuary and discover it-, hidden meanings. An exciting adventure awaits you!

***1. What did God ask Moses to build?***

"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that 1 may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

***Answer:*** The Lord asked Moses to erect a sanctuary-a special building that would serve as a dwelling place for the great God of heaven.

**A Brief Description of the Sanctuary**

The sanctuary was an elegant, tent-type structure (15' x 45 '-based on an 18-inch cubit) where the supernatural presence of God dwelt and special services were con- ducted. The walls were made of upright acacia (wooden) boards, set in silver sockets and overlaid with gold (Exodus 26: 15-19, 29). The roof was made of four layers of coverings: linen, goat's hair, ram's skin, and badger skin (Exodus 26: 1,6-14). It had two rooms: the holy place and the most holy place. A thick, heavy veil or curtain separated the rooms. The courtyard-the area around the sanctuary-was 75' x 150' (Exodus 27: 18). It was fenced with fine linen cloth supported by 60 pillars of brass (Exodus 27:9-16).

***3. What did God expect His people to learn from the sanctuary?***

"Your way, 0 God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God?" (Psalm 77: 13).

Answer: God's way, or plan of salvation, is revealed in the earthly sanctuary. The Bible teaches that everything in the sanctuary or connected with its service was a symbol of something Jesus would do in saving us. This means we cannot fully comprehend the plan of salvation until we understand the symbolism connected with the sanctuary. Thus, the importance of this Study Guide can hardly be overstated.

***3. From what source did Moses obtain the blueprints/or the sanctuary? Of what was the building a copy?***

"Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man, ”there are priests…who serve the copy and shadow of the

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heavenly things, as JV10ses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, 'See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain. '" (Hebrews 8: 1, 2, 4, 5).

***Answer:*** The sanctuary blueprints and full specifications for its construction were given to Moses by God. They were a copy of the original sanctuary in heaven, which was the pattern for Moses' sanctuary.

***4. What furniture was in the courtyard?***

***Answer***:

A. The altar of burnt offerings where animals were sacrificed was located in the courtyard, just inside its entrance (Exodus 27: 1-8). This altar represented the cross of Christ. The animal represented Jesus, the ultimate sacrifice (John 1:29.).

B. The laver, located between the altar and the entrance of the sanctuary, was a large washbasin made of brass. Here priests washed their hands and feet before offering a sacrifice or entering the sanctuary (Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8). The water represented cleansing from sin, or the new birth (Titus 3:5).

:. ***What furniture was in the holy place?***

***Answer***:

A. The table of shew bread (Exodus 25:23-30) represented Jesus, the living bread (John 6:51).

B. The seven-branch candlestick (Exodus 25:31-40) represented Jesus, the light of the world (John 9:5; 1:9). The oil represented the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4: 1-6; Revelation 4:5).

C. The altar of incense (Exodus 30:7, 8) represented the prayers of God's people (Revelation 5: 8)

***4. What furniture was in the most holy place?***

***Answer:*** The Ark of the Covenant, the only piece of furniture in the most holy ace (Exodus 25: 10-22), was a box or chest of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Standing atop the chest were two angels made of solid gold. Between these angels was the mercy seat (Exodus 25: 17-22), where the supernatural presence of God dwelt. This symbolized God's throne in heaven, which is likewise located between two angels (Psalm 80: 1).

***What was inside the ark?***

***Answer:*** The Ten Commandments, which God wrote on tables of stone with His III finger, and which His people will always obey (Revelation 14: 12), were inside ~ ark (Deuteronomy 10:4, 5). But the mercy seat was above them, which signified it as long as God's people confessed and forsook sin (Proverbs 28: 13), mercy would be extended to them through the blood which was sprinkled on the mercy seat the priest (Leviticus 16:15,16). The blood of the animal represents Jesus' blood It was shed for us to bring us forgiveness of sin (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:22).

***Why did animals need to be sacrificed in the Old Testament sanctuary services?***

And according to the law all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). “for this is my

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blood of the new covenant, which IS shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

***Answer:*** The sacrificing of animals was necessary to help people understand that without the shedding of Jesus' blood, their sins could never be forgiven. The ugly, shocking truth is that the punishment for sin is eternal death (Romans 6:23). Since all of us have sinned, all of us should die. When Adam and Eve sinned, they would have died at once except for Jesus, who stepped forward and offered to give His perfect life as a sacrifice to pay the death penalty for all people (Revelation l3 :8). After sin, God required the sinner to bring an animal sacrifice (Genesis 4:3-7). The sinner was to kill the animal with his own hand (Leviticus 1:4, 5). It was bloody and shocking. And it indelibly impressed the sinner with the solemn reality of sin's awful consequences (eternal death) and the desperate need of a Savior and a substitute. Without a Savior, no one had any hope for salvation. The sacrificial system taught, through the symbol of the slain animal, that God would give His Son to die for their sins (I Corinthians 15:3). Jesus would become not only their Savior, but also their substitute (Hebrews 9:28). When John the Baptist met Jesus, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). In the Old Testament, people looked forward to the cross for salvation. We look backward to Calvary for salvation. There is no other source of salvation (Acts 4: 12).

***9. How were animals sacrificed in the sanctuary service, and with what meaning?***

"Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him." "He shall kill it on the north side of the altar" (Leviticus 1:4, 11).

***Answer:*** When a sinner brought a sacrificial animal to the door of the courtyard, a priest handed him a knife and a basin. The sinner laid his hands on the animal's head and confessed his sins. This symbolized the transfer of sin from the sinner to the animal. At that point, the sinner was considered innocent and the animal guilty. Since the animal was now symbolically guilty, it had to pay sin s wage-death. By slaying the animal with his own hand, the sinner was thus graphically taught that sin caused the innocent animal's death and that his sin would cause the death of innocent Jesus.

***10. When a sacrificial animal was offered for the entire congregation, what did the priest do with the blood? What does this symbolize?***

"Then the anointed priest is to take some of the bull's blood into the Tent of Meeting. Then the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil" (Leviticus 4: 16, 17).

***Answer:*** When a sacrifice was offered for the sins of the entire congregation, the blood was taken by the priest, who represented Jesus (Hebrews 3: 1), into the sanctuary and sprinkled before the veil which separated the two rooms. The presence of God dwelt on the other side of the veil. Thus, the sins of the people were removed and symbolically transferred to the sanctuary. This ministry of the blood by the priest foreshadowed Jesus’s present blood-ministry for us in heaven. After Jesus died on the cross as our sacrifice for sin, he arose and went to heaven as our priest to

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minister His blood in the heavenly sanctuary {Hebrews 9: 11, 12). The blood ministered by the earthly priest represents Jesus applying His blood to our record of sins in the sanctuary above, showing that they are forgiven when we confess them in His name (J John J :9).

***11. Based Oil the sanctuary services, in what two major capacities does Jesus serve His people? What fantastic benefits do we receive from His loving ministry?***

"Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

***Answer:*** Jesus serves as the sacrifice for our sins and as our heavenly Priest. Jesus' death as our sacrificial lamb and substitute, and His continual powerful ministry as our heavenly Priest, accomplishes two incredible miracles for us:

A. A complete life change called the new birth, with all the sins of the past for- given (John 3:3-6; Romans 3:25).

B. Power to live right in the present and future (Titus 2: 14; Philippians 2: 13). These two miracles make a person righteous-which means a right relationship exists between the person and God. There is no possible way for a person to be- come righteous by works (his own efforts), because righteousness requires miracles which only Jesus can accomplish (Acts 4: l2). A person becomes righteous by trusting Jesus to do for him what he cannot do for himself This is what is meant~ by the biblical term "righteousness by faith." I ask Jesus to become the ruler of my life and trust Him to work the needed miracles as I cooperate fully with Him. This righteousness, which is miraculously accomplished for me and in me by Jesus, is the only true righteousness that exists. Every other kind is a counterfeit..

***12. What six sublime promises does the Bible give us about the righteousness of- fered to us through Jesus?***

A. He will cover our past sins and count us as guiltless (Isaiah 44:22; 1 John 1 :9).

B. We were created in God's image in the beginning (Genesis 1 :26, 27). Jesus promises to restore us to God's image (Romans 8:29).

C. Jesus gives us the desire to live right and then grants us His power to actually accomplish it (Philippians 2: 13).

D. Jesus, by His miracles, will cause us to happily do only the things that please God (Hebrews 13:20,21; John 15:11).

E. He removes the death sentence from us by crediting us for His sinless life and atoning death (2 Corinthians 5:21).

F. Jesus assumes responsibility for keeping us faithful until He returns to take us to heaven (Philippians 1 :6; Jude 24). Jesus is ready to fulfill all these glorious promises in your life. Are you ready? Kneel down now and ask him to take control of your life. He will not fail you.

1. ***Does a person have any role at all to play in becoming righteous by faith?***

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Diagram here

***8. What event and date were to mark the starting point for the 2,300-day and 490- year prophecies (DanieI9:25)?***

***Answer:*** The starting event was a decree from Persian King Artaxerxes authorizing God's people (who were captive in Medo-Persia) to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city. The decree, found in Ezra chapter 7, was issued in 457 B.c.-the seventh year of the king (verse 7)-and was implemented in the autumn. Artaxerxes began his reign in 464 B.C.

***9. The angel said that 69 prophetic weeks, or 483 literal years (69 x 7 = 483), added to 457 B.C. would reach to the Messiah (Daniel 9:25). Did it?***

***Answer:*** Yes, indeed! Mathematical calculations, show that moving ahead 483 full years from the fall of 457 B.C. reaches the fall of A.D. 27. The word "Messiah" means "anointed" (John 1 :41, margin). Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost (Acts 1.0:38) at His baptism (Luke 3:21, 22). His anointing took place in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3: 1), which was A.D. 27. And to think the prediction was made more than 500 years before! Then Jesus began to preach that "the time is fulfilled" (referring to the 483 years which were to reach to the Messiah). He thus audibly confirmed the prophecy (Mark 1: 14, 15; Galatians 4:4). So Jesus actually began His ministry by clearly referring to the 2,300-day prophecy, stressing its importance and accuracy. This is awesome and thrilling evidence that:

A. The Bible is inspired.

B. Jesus is the Messiah.

C. All other dates in the 2,300-day/490-year prophecy are valid. What a firm foundation on which to build!

***10. We have now considered 483 years of the 490-year prophecy. There is one prophetic week, or seven literal years, left (Daniel 9:26, 27). What happens next? When does it happen?***

***Answer:*** Jesus is "cut off' or crucified "in the midst of the week," which is three and one-half years after His anointing-or the spring of A.D. 31. Please notice how the gospel is revealed in verse 26: "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. He “who did no sin” (1 peter 2:22) was crucified for our sins

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Corinthians 15:3; Isaiah 53 :5). Jesus' priceless life was lovingly and willingly offered to save us from sin. Hallelujah, what a Savior! Jesus' atoning sacrifice is the very heart of Daniel chapters 8 and 9.

***11. Since Jesus died after three and one-half years, how could He "confirm covenant with many" for the full final seven years, as the prophecy in Daniel 9:27 mandates?***

***Answer:*** The covenant is His blessed agreement to save people from their sins (Hebrews 10: 16, 17). After His ministry of three and one-half years ended, Jesus confirmed the covenant through His disciples (Hebrews 2:3). He sent them first to ~ Jewish nation (Matthew 10:5, 6), because His chosen people still had three and the half years remaining of their 490-year opportunity to repent.

***12. When the 490-year period of final opportunity for the Jewish nation ended in the fall of A.D. 34, what did the disciples do?***

***Answer:*** They began preaching the gospel to other people and nations of the world (Acts 13:46). Stephen, a righteous deacon, was publicly stoned in A.D. 34. From that date onward the Jews, because they rejected Jesus and God s plan, were longer God's chosen people or nation. Instead, God now counts people of all nationalities who accept and serve Him as spiritual Jews. They have become His chosen people-"heirs according to the promise." Spiritual Jews do, of course, in- Ide Jewish people who individually accept and serve Jesus (Galatians 3:27-29; romans 2:28, 29).

***13. After A.D. 34, how many years of the 2,300-year prophecy remained? What is e ending date for the prophecy? What did the angel say would happen on that the (Daniel 8:14)? ~***

***Answer:*** There were 1,810 years remaining (2,300 minus 490 = 1,810). The end- s date for the prophecy is 1844 (A.D. 34 + 1810= 1844). The angel said the heavenly sanctuary would be cleansed, or the heavenly judgment would begin. (The earthly sanctuary was destroyed in A.D. 70.) We learned in Study Guide 17 that ~ heavenly Day of Atonement, or judgment, was slated for the end time. Now we know that the beginning date is 1844. God set this date. It is as certain as the A.D. 27 te for Jesus to become the Messiah. God's end-time people must be announcing (Revelation 14:6, 7). You will be thrilled and gratified to learn the details of the judgement in Study Guide 19. In Noah's day, God stated that the Flood judgment would occur in 120 years (Genesis 6:3)-and it happened. In Daniel's day, God used that His end-time judgment would begin in 2,300 years (Daniel 8: 14)-and it happened. God's end-time judgment has been in session since 1844.

**Meaning of the Atonement**

The English word "atonement" originally meant "atonement;" that is, a state being "at one" or in agreement. It denotes harmony of relationship. Perfect harmony originally existed throughout the universe. Then Lucifer, a brilliant heavenly angel (as we learned in Study Guide 2), challenged God and His principles of government. One-third of the angels of heaven joined Lucifer's rebellion (Revelation 12:3, 4, 7-9).

**This rebellion against God and His loving principles is called sin in the Bible** Isaiah 53:6; 1 john 3:4). It brings heart ache, confusion, chaos, tragedy, disappoint-

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ment, sorrow, betrayal, and evil of every kind. Worst of all, its penalty is death (Romans 6:23)-from which there is no resurrection-in the lake of fire (Revelation 2] : 8). Sin spreads faster and is more lethal than the most deadly type of cancer. It put the universe itself in jeopardy.

**So God 'cast Lucifer and his angels out of heaven (Revelation** 12:7-9), and Lucifer received a new name-"Satan," which means "adversary." His fallen angels are now called demons. Satan seduced Adam and Eve, and sin thus came upon all humans. What a horrendous tragedy! The devastating conflict between good and evil had begun, and evil appeared to be winning. The situation seemed hopeless.

**But, no! Jesus, God's Son**--deity Himself-who was more than equal to all the people who would ever live on earth, agreed to sacrifice His life to pay the death penalty for every sinner (1 Corinthians 5:7). By accepting His sacrifice, sinners would thus be freed from the guilt of sin (Romans 3:25). This glorious plan also included Jesus entering a person's life when invited (Revelation 3:20) and changing him to a new person (2 Corinthians 5: 17). It provided power from Jesus to resist Satan and to restore every converted person to the image of God, in which he was created (Genesis 1 :26, 27; Romans 8:29).

**This blessed atonement offer** includes a plan to isolate sin and destroy it-including Satan and his fallen angels, plus all who join him in rebellion (Matthew 25 :41; Revelation 21: 8). Further, the full information regarding Jesus and His loving government and Satan and his diabolical dictatorship will be taken to every person on earth so all can make an intelligent, informed decision to align either with Christ or Satan (Matthew 24: 14; Revelation 14:6, 7).

**The case of every person will be examined in the heavenly courtroom** (Romans 14:10-12), and God will honor the choice of each individual to serve either Christ or Satan (Revelation 22: 11, 12). Finally, after eradicating sin, God's plan is to cre- ate new heavens and a new earth (2 Peter 3: 13; Isaiah 65: 17), where sin will never again rise (Nahum 1 :9), and give it to His people as their home throughout eternity (Revelation 21: 1-5). The Father and Son will then dwell with their people in perfect joy and harmony forever.

**All of this is included in the "at-one-ment."** God has informed us of it in His Word and demonstrated it in the Old Testament sanctuary services, especially the Day of Atonement. Jesus is the key to the atonement. His loving sacrifice for us on Calvary makes it all possible. Getting rid of sin in our lives and in the universe is possible only through Him (Acts 4:12). No wonder heaven's three-point final message to the world calls upon us all to worship Him (Revelation 14:6, 7).

***14. Why do some Bible interpreters detach the last week (or seven years) of the 490 years allotted to the Jewish nation and apply it to antichrist's work at the end of the world's history?***

***Answer:*** This question is a good one-"Why would anyone remove the last seven years of the 490 years allotted to the Jewish nation and place it at the end of the world’s history?"

Let us review the facts:

**A. There is no warrant or evidence whatever** for inserting a gap anywhere between any of the years of the 490 year prophecy. It is continuous, as were the 70 years of exile for God’s people mentioned in Daniel 9:2.

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**B. Never in Scripture does a specific number of time units** (days, weeks, months, years) comprising a stretch of time mean anything but continuous or consecutive time units. The burden of proof is on those who claim that any part of any time prophecy should be detached and counted later.

**C. A.D. 27 (the year of Jesus' baptism) was the starting date** for the last seven years of the prophecy, which Jesus emphasized by beginning at once to preach, "The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1: 15).

**D. At the moment of His death on the cross** in the spring of A.D. 31, Jesus cried out, "It is finished." The Savior here clearly refers to the predictions of His death made in Daniel chapter 9, such as:

1. "Messiah" would be "cut off' or crucified (verse 26).

2. He would "bring an end to sacrifice and offering" by dying for all as the true Lamb of God (verse 27; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 15:3).

3. He would "make reconciliation for iniquity" (verse 24).

4. He would die in "the midst of the week" (verse 27).

There is no biblical authority or evidence for detaching the last week, or seven years, of the 490 years allotted to the Jewish nation and applying it to the work of antichrist near the end of the world's history. More serious, detaching the last seven years from the 490-year prophecy so distorts the true meaning of many prophecies in the books of Daniel and Revelation that people simply cannot correctly understand them. This is why God condemns private interpretation of prophecy, such as this seven-year gap theory. Such interpretations always lead people astray.

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

1. A little horn power appears in both Daniel chapter 7 and Daniel chapter 8. Are ***they the same power?***

***Answer:*** The little horn power of Daniel 7 symbolizes the papacy. The little horn power of Daniel 8 symbolizes both pagan and papal Rome.

***2. The "two thousand and three hundred days" of Daniel 8: 14 translated literally from the Hebrew reads "two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings." Does this mean 1,150 days, as some contend?***

***Answer:*** No, the Bible clearly shows in Genesis 1 :5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31 that an evening and a morning equal a day. There was no event in history at the end of 1,150 days that would fulfill this prophecy.

***3. What part does "choice" play in a Christian's life?***

***Answer***: It is a major key to success. God's way has always been freedom to choose (Joshua 24:15). Though He wants to save every person (l Timothy 2:3, 4), He still permits free choice (Deuteronomy 30: 19). God permitted Satan to choose to rebel against Him. He also permitted Adam and Eve to choose disobedience. Righteousness is never a locked-in, programmed provision that takes me to heaven no matter how I live and even if I do not want to go. Choice means I am always free to change my mind. Jesus asks me to choose Him (Matthew 11:28-30) and to reaffirm my choice daily (psalm 86:3). If my daily choice is for him, he will change me and make me like him and eventually take me into his blessed new kingdom. But

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please remember, I am free to turn and go another direction at any time. God will not force me. My daily choice to serve Him is thus imperative.

***4. Many believe that the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes is the little horn power of Daniel S. How can we be certain this is not true?***

***Answer:*** There are many reasons. A few of them are as follows:

C. Antiochus Epiphanes did not become "exceeding great," as the prophecy mandates (Daniel 8:9).

D. He did not rule at the "latter time" or near the end of the Seleucid kingdom as the prophecy requires (Daniel 8:23) but, rather, near the middle.

c. Those who teach that Antiochus Epiphanes is the little horn count the 2,300 days as literal days instead of prophetic days-each equal to a year. This literal time period of a little over six years has no meaningful application to Daniel chapter 8. All attempts to make this literal time period fit Antiochus Epiphanes have uniformly failed, which is an embarrassment to its proponents.

D. The little horn still exists at the "time of the end" (Daniel 8: 12, 17, 19), while Antiochus Epiphanes died in 164 B.C.

E. The little horn was to become "exceeding great" in the south, the east, and Palestine (Daniel 8:9). Although Antiochus Epiphanes did rule Palestine for a while, he had almost no success in Egypt (south) and Macedonia (east).

F. The little horn throws down the place of God's sanctuary (Daniel 8: 11). Antiochus Epiphanes did not destroy the temple in Jerusalem. He did profane it, but it was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. Neither did he destroy Jerusalem, as mandated by the prophecy (Daniel 9:26).

G. Christ applied the desolating abominations of Daniel 9:26 and 27, not to the past outrages of Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 B.C., but rather to the immediate future when the Roman army would destroy Jerusalem and the temple in His own generation in A.D. 70 (Luke 21:20-24). In Matthew 24: 15, Jesus specifically mentioned the prophet Daniel and said that his prediction of Daniel 9:26, 27 would be fulfilled when the Christians would see (in the future) the abomination of desolation "stand in the holy place" in Jerusalem. This is too clear to misunderstand.

H. Jesus clearly related the destruction of Jerusalem to Israel's final refusal to accept Him as the King and Savior (Matthew 21:33-43; 23:37, 38; Luke 19:41- 44). This relationship between rejecting the Messiah and the destruction of the city and temple is the crucial message of Daniel 9:26, 27. It is a message announcing the consequences of Israel's continued rejection of the Messiah- even after being given an additional 490 years of loving probation. Applying the prophecy to Antiochus Epiphanes, who died in 164 B.C., long before Jesus' birth, completely destroys the meaning of Daniel chapters 8 and 9-the most important time prophecy of the Bible.

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**19. Case Closed**

The jury is in, the verdict read ... case closed! Few thoughts could be more sobering. The day is fast approaching when every person who has ever lived II have their lives reviewed before the all-knowing eyes of God (2 Corinthians 0). But don't let this alarm you-take heart! Millions have already found the judgement message in this Study Guide to be very good news! On four occasions en the book of Revelation mentions the great judgment, it brings forth praise i thanksgiving! But did you know that the Bible mentions judgment more than a thousand times? Almost every Bible writer refers to it, so its importance cannot be reemphasized. In the next few minutes, you're going to get a real eye-opener in s neglected subject. (Note: There are three phases of judgment ... watch for them you study this lesson!)

***The angel Gabriel gave Daniel the prophecy of the 1844 heavenly judgment. e first phase of the judgment is called the pre-advent judgment because it takes place before Jesus' second coming. What group of people will be considered in the phase of the judgment? When does it end?***

The time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4: 17). 'He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy till; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him) be holy still. And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, o give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:11, 12). (See also Timothy 3: 15.)

***Answer:*** It ends just before the second coming of Jesus. Those (living and dead) o claimed to be Christians-"the house of God"-will be considered in the pre advent judgment. {The 1844 date is established in Study Guide 18.)

***Who presides at the judgment? Who is the defence attorney? The judge? The user? Who are the witnesses?***

The Ancient of Days was seated.... His throne was a fiery flame." "The court judgment] was seated, and the books were opened" (Daniel 7:9, 10). "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2: 1). The Father ... has committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22). "The devil ... the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down" (Revelation 12:9, 10). "These things says the amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God" Revelation 3: 14). (See also Colossians 1: 12-15.)

***Answer:*** God the Father, the Ancient of days, presides in the judgment. He loves L very much (John 16:27). Satan is your only accuser. In the heavenly court, Jesus, o loves you-your best friend-will be your attorney, judge, and witness. And promises that judgment will be "made in favor of the saints" (Daniel 7:22).

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***3. What is the source of evidence used in the pre-advent judgment? By what standard will all be judged? Since God already knows everything about every person, 'why have a judgment?***

"The court [judgment] was seated, and the books were opened" (Daniel 7: 10). "The dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were writ- ten in the books" (Revelation 20: 12). "[They] ... will be judged by the law of liberty" (James 2: 12). "We have been made a spectacle [theatre] to the world, both to angels and to men" (1 Corinthians 4:9).

***Answer:*** Evidence for court comes from books in which all details of one's life are recorded. For the faithful, the record of prayer, repentance, and forgiveness of sin will be there for all to see. The records will prove that God's power enables Christians to live changed lives. God is pleased with His saints and will delight in sharing the evidence of their lives. The judgment will confirm that there is "no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8: 1).

The Ten-Commandment law is God's standard in the judgment (James 2: 10-12). Breaking His law is sin (1 John 3:4). The righteousness of the law will be fulfilled by Jesus in all of His people (Romans 8:3, 4). To claim that this is impossible is to doubt Jesus' word and His power.

The judgment is not to inform God. He is already fully informed (2 Timothy 2: 19). However, the redeemed people will be coming to heaven from a world that has been degraded by sin. Both the angels and the inhabitants of other un fallen worlds would certainly feel uneasy about admitting anyone to God's heavenly kingdom who might start sin all over again. Thus, the judgment will open to them every detail and answer every question. Satan's real aim has always been to discredit God as unfair, ruthless, unloving, and untruthful. This makes it even more important for all beings in the universe to see first-hand how extremely patient God has been with sinners. The vindication of God's character is the prime purpose of the judgment (Revelation 11:16-19; 15:2-4; 16:5,7; 19:1,2; Daniel 4:36, 37). Note that the praise and glory are given to God for the way He handles the judgment.

***4. What portion of a person's life is considered in the pre-advent judgment? What will be confirmed? How will rewards be decided?***

"God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). "Let both [wheat and tares] grow together until the harvest." "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend" (Matthew 13:30, 41). "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22: 12).

***Answer:*** Every detail of life will be reviewed, including secret thoughts and actions. For this reason, this first phase of the judgment is also called the investigative judgment. The judgment will confirm who will be saved of those who claimed to be Christians. It will doubtless also confirm as lost those whose names are not judged in the pre-advent judgment. Although we are saved by grace, rewards will be given based on works, deeds or conduct-which prove the genuineness of a Christian's faith (James 2:26, Matthew 7:21-23)

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 **Second Phase of the Final Judgment**

***What group' is involved in the heavenly judgment during the 1,000 years of Revelation chapter 20? What is the purpose of this second phase of the judgment?***

'Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? ... Do you not know that we shall judge angels?" (1 Corinthians 6:2, 3). "And I saw thrones, and they sat III them, and judgment was committed to them" (Revelation 20:4).

***Answer:*** The "saints," or righteous people of all ages who Christ takes to heaven he cloud at His second coming, will be participating in this second phase of the judgement. Suppose a family discovered that their much-beloved son who was murdered was in heaven. But the murderer was. Doubtless they would need some answers. s second phase of the judgment will answer all the questions of the righteous life of every lost person (including Satan and his angels) will be carefully renewed by the righteous, who will then totally agree with Jesus' decisions regarding reward for each one. It will become obvious to all that the judgment is no arbitrary matter. Instead, it simply confirms the choices which people have already made serve either Jesus or another master (Revelation 22: 11, 12) . (For a review of the 00 years, see Study Guide 12.)

**Third Phase of the Final Judgment**

***When and where will the third phase of the final judgment take place? What v group will be present at this phase of judgment?***

And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem.... Thus the LQRD my God will come, and all the saints with You" "All Ie land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem" Zechariah 14:4, 10). "Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming own out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21 :2). "Now when the thousand ears have expired, Satan will ... go out to deceive the nations ... to gather iem together to battle" (Revelation 20:7, 8).

***Answer:*** The third phase of the judgment will take place on the earth at the close he 1,000 years of Revelation chapter 20-after Jesus' return to earth with the y city. All the wicked who have ever lived, including the devil and his angels, be present. At the close of the 1,000 years, the wicked dead of all ages will be ed (Revelation 20:5). Satan immediately launches a powerful propaganda cam- ~n to deceive them. Amazingly, he succeeds in convincing the nations of earth they can capture the holy city.

***What happens next?***

They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints id the beloved city" (Revelation 20:9).

***Answer:*** The wicked surround the city and prepare to attack.

***What interrupts their battle plan, and with what results?***

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead

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 ***5. What important lessons can we learn from our study of the judgment?***

***Answer***: Notice the following five points:

A. God may seem to take a long time before He acts, but His timing is right. No lost person will ever be able to say "I didn't understand" or "I didn't know."

B. Satan and evil of all kinds will ultimately be dealt with by God in the judg- ment. Since the judgment is God's work and He has all the facts, we should stop judging others and let God do it. It's a serious matter for us to take over God's work of judging. It's usurping His authority.

C. God leaves us all free to decide how we will relate to Him and who we will serve. However, we must be prepared for serious consequences when we decide contrary to His Word.

D. God loves us so much that He has given us the books of Daniel and Revelation to make these end-time issues clear. Our only safety lies in listening to Him and following His counsel from these great prophetic books.

E. Satan is determined to destroy every one of us. His deceiving strategies are so effective and so convincing that all but a very few will be ensnared. Without Jesus' resurrection power in our lives daily to protect us from the devil's traps, we will be devastated by Satan.

**20. The Mark of the Beast**

A tattooed number, a computer chip under the skin, or something more subtle? It's one of the most misinterpreted prophecies in all of the Bible-yet it is so important to correctly understand this subject. But in studying the mark of the beast, we must address some very sensitive issues, naming names and being specific. This is not a popular thing today, but we must be firm because God loves His people and He wants them to know the truth. This message is not ours, but Jesus'. And with eternal death facing those who receive the mark, it would be a crime to not help Him deliver this message. This lesson should probably be prefaced with a warning: "THE DEVIL DOES NOT WANT YOU TO READ AND COMPLETE THIS STUDY GUIDE." Please read Revelation 13: 1-8,14:9-12, and 16-18, and pray for the Holy Spirit to grant you an honest and understanding heart before embarking on this study adventure.

***An Urgent Reminder***

We learned from Study Guide 2 that a terrible conflict is in progress between God and the devil. It has raged through the centuries since Lucifer, heaven's most powerful angel, rebelled against God. With the angels who joined him, he attempted to overcome God and seize control of the universe. God and the loyal angels had no choice but to eject Lucifer and his angels from heaven. Lucifer, who became known as the devil and Satan, was infuriated. His determination to destroy God and control the universe has grown with every passing year. Amazingly, he has won the support of the vast majority of earth's people in his rebellion. The Lord also asks for people's LOYALTY AND SUPPORT, BUT HE LEAVES ALL FREE TO CHOOSE. SOON EVERY PERSON ON EARTH will have aligned with either Satan or God. The final battle between Satan and God is just

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bad, and it is described in the book of Revelation. This book points out that God an emblem, or mark, which will identify His people. Satan also has an emblem, mark that will identify those who support him. As usual, Satan will work through earthly power (symbolized in Revelation by a beast) to impose his mark. This daily Guide will reveal the beast's mark, which every lost person of the end time I receive. Unless you know what his "mark" is, how will you avoid receiving it?

***In order to know what the "mark" is, we must first identify the beast. How does Bible describe the beast?***

***Answer:*** Revelation 13: 1-8, 16-18 provides 11 identifying characteristics. They listed next: ,. Rises from sea (verse 1). Composite of the four beasts of Daniel chapter 7 (verse 2). Dragon gives it power and authority (verse 2). I. Receives a deadly wound (verse 3).

• Deadly wound healed (verse 3).

• Strong political power (verses 3, 7).

 Strong religious power (verses 3, 8).

l. Guilty of blasphemy (verses 1, 5, 6).

 Wars with and overcomes the saints (verse 7).

• Rules for 42 months (verse 5).

., Has mysterious number-666 (verse 18).

So some of these points have a familiar ring? Certainly! We encountered many of n earlier when we studied about the antichrist in Daniel chapter 7. The "beast"

**Revelation 13 is simply another name for the "antichrist," which we learned n Daniel 7 is the papacy**. Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation often cover the e ground as prior prophecies, but each time new features are added that help :e the prophecies certain. So expect to learn some new things about the antichrist and this Study Guide. Now let's consider, one by one, the 11 points that describe beast. -

• It would rise from the sea (Revelation 13: 1). The sea (or water) in prophecy refers to people, or a populated area (Revelation 5). So the beast, or antichrist, would arise from amid the established nations of then-known world. The papacy, as we all know, arose in western Europe, so it, this point.

**Word of Explanation**

l harmony with God's command to honor all people (1 Peter 2: 17), we pause : to recognize the papacy for its many good deeds and activities. Its hospitals, manages, care for the poor, homes for unwed mothers, and care for the aged appreciated universally. It can honestly be lauded for many things. But like all r organizations, it has also made mistakes. God pinpoints some of its errors in elation. The Lord, who blesses and comforts, must sometimes chasten and correct. Please ask His Spirit to speak to you as you study this crucial topic. It would be a composite of the four beasts of Daniel chapter 7 (Revelation 13:2).

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Study the comparison below to see how it all fits together:

 **DANIEL CHAPTER 7 REVELATION CHAPTER 13**

**Babylon**  Lion like beast (verse 4) "Mouth of a lion" (verse 2)

**Medo-Persia** Bearlike beast (verse 5) "Feet of a bear" (verse 2)

**Greece** Leopard like beast (verse 6) "Like unto a leopard" (verse 2)

**Rome** Ten-horned beast (verse 7) "Having ... ten horns" (verse 1)

The four beasts of Daniel 7 are depicted as part of antichrist, or the beast, because the papacy incorporated pagan beliefs and practices from all four empires. It clothed them in spiritual garb and spread them to the world as Christian teachings. Here is one of many supporting statements from history: "In a certain respect, she [the papacy] has copied her organization from that of the Roman Empire, has preserved and made fruitful the philosophical intuitions of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, borrowed from both Barbarians and the Byzantine Roman Empire, but always remains herself, thoroughly digesting all elements drawn from external sources." (Andre Retif, The Catholic Spirit, trans. by Dom Aldhelm Dean, vol. 88 of The Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism, New York, Hawthorne Books, 1959, p. 85). This point definitely fits the papacy.

C. The beast must receive its power, seat (capital), and authority from the dragon (Revelation 13:2). To identify the dragon, we go to Revelation chapter 12, where God's end-time church is pictured as a pure woman. In prophecy, a pure woman represents God's true people or church (Jeremiah 6:2; Isaiah 51 :16). (In Study Guide 23, we will present a detailed study of God's end-time church of Revelation chapter 12. Study Guide 22 explains Revelation chapters 17 and 18, where fallen churches are symbolized by a fallen mother and her fallen daughters.) The pure woman is portrayed as pregnant and about to deliver. The dragon crouches nearby, hoping to "devour" the baby at birth. However, when the baby is born He evades the dragon, fulfills His mission, and then ascends to heaven. Obviously the baby is Jesus, whom Herod tried to destroy-by killing all the babies in Bethlehem (Matthew 2: 16). So the dragon represents pagan Rome, of which Herod was a king. The power behind Herod's plot was, of course, the devil (Revelation 12:7-9). Satan acts through various governments to accomplish his ugly work-in this case, pagan Rome.

We will quote just two supportive references from history, though there are many:

2. "The Roman Church ... pushed itself into the place of the Roman World-Empire, of which it is the actual continuation .... The Pope ... is Caesar's successor." (Adolf Harnack, What is Christianity? trans. by Thomas Bailey Saunders, New York: Putnam, 2nd ed., rev., 1901), p. 270.) 2. "The mighty Catholic Church was little more than the Roman Empire baptised. Rome was transformed as well as converted. The very capital of the old Empire became the capital of the Christian Empire. The office of Pontifex Maximus was continued in that of Pope." (Alexander Clarence Flick, The Rise of the Mediaeval Church, reprint: New York, Burt Franklin, 1959, pp. 148, 149). So this point also fits the papacy. It received its capital city and power from pagan Rome.

D. It would receive a deadly wound (Revelation 13:3).

The deadly wound was inflicted when Napoleon's general, Berthier, entered, Rome and took Pope pius vi captive in February of 1798. Napoleon decreed that at the death of the pope, the papacy would be discontinued. The pope died in France

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August of 1799. "Half Europe thought ... that with the Pope the Papacy was ad." (Joseph Rickaby, "The Modem Papacy," Lectures on the History of Religion, lecture 24, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1910, p. 1). So this point also fits the papacy.

E. The deadly wound would be healed, and the entire world would give homage to the beast (Revelation 13:3). Since its healing, the strength of the papacy has grown and increased until today e is one of the most powerful religio-political organizations and influence-centers the world. Malachi Martin, consummate Vatican insider and intelligence expert, reveals the following in his best-selling book The Keys of This Blood (New York, non & Schuster, 1990). Page numbers are in parentheses:

**ABOUT THE POPE:'**

He is as determined to be world ruler as was Constantine in his day (49). He is protected by four governments (120). He is the best-known person of the 20th century (123). He is personal friends with the leaders of 91 countries (490). People of -: a . world seem to him ready for strong worldwide moral government with control 50). Sixteen thousand journalists covered his American visit (490).

ABOUT THE PAPACY:

The American ambassador says the Vatican is unmatched as a "listening post" ~O). The Vatican knows by Saturday what will happen on Monday anywhere in the world (439). Papal structure is prepared for worldwide rule now (143). **Obviously, ~ wound is healing and the eyes of the nations are upon the Vatican, so this point also fits the papacy.**

F. It would become a strong political power (Revelation 12:3, 7).

See item E above. \

G. It would become a very powerful religious organization (Revelation 13:3, 8).

See item E above.

H. It would be guilty of blasphemy (Revelation 13:5,6).

The papacy is guilty of blasphemy because her priests claim to forgive sins and r popes claim to be Christ.

I. It would war with and persecute the saints (Revelation 13:7).

The papacy did persecute and destroy millions of saints during the Dark Ages.

T. It would reign for 42 months (Revelation 13:5).

The papacy reigned for 42 prophetic months, which equals 1,260 years-from). 538-1798. Points H through J also clearly fit the papacy. We touched on them only briefly; re because they were covered thoroughly in Study Guide 15, question 8, items E, and H.

K. It would have the mysterious number 666 (Revelation 13: 18). This verse says, "It is the number of a man," and Revelation 15:2 says it is "the number of his name." What man do you think of when you think of the papacy? Naturally, we all think of the pope. What is his official name? Here is a Catholic quote: "The title of the pope of Rome is Vicarius Filii Dei" (English: "Vicar of: Son of God"). ("Answers to Readers' Questions," Our Sunday Visitor, Nov. 15, 14.) Malachi Martin, in The Keys of This Blood, uses the same title for the pope on pages 114,122. A footnote for revelation 13:18 in some Douay [catholic] versions

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of the Bible says, "The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number." Notice the chart at right, which shows what happens when we total up the Roman numeral value of the letters of the name. Again, the papacy fits the identification point. The beast with the "mark" is the papacy. No other power in history could possibly fit these divine descriptive points. Now that we have positively identified the beast, we can discover its mark, or symbol of authority. But first, let's look at God's sign of authority.

2. What is God's mark, or symbol, of authority? "I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that 1 am the LORD who sanctifies them" (Ezekiel 20: 12). "It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth" (Exodus 31: 17). "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the, righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also" (Romans 4: 11).

 V 5

 J 1

 C 100

 A 0

 R 0

 I 1

 U 5\*

 S 0

112

 F 0

 I 1

 L 50

 1 I

 I I

53

 D 500

 E 0

 I 1

501

 Totals 112

53

501

666

\*V and U each equal five in Roman numerals.

Answer: God is saying in the texts above that He gave us His Sabbath as a glorious sign of His power to create and His power to sanctify (convert and save) us. In the Bible, the words seal, sign, mark, and token are used interchangeably. (Compare Genesis 17: 11 with Romans 4: 1 I and Revelation 7:3 with Ezekiel 9:4.) God's sign, the Sabbath, represents His holy power to rule as Creator and Savior. Revelation 7: 1-3 says it will be written upon the foreheads (minds- Hebrews 10: 16) of His people. It will signify that they are owned by Him and have His character. Hebrews 4:4-10 confirms this by saying that when we enter His rest (receive salvation), we should keep His seventh-day Sabbath holy as a symbol, or mark, of salvation. True Sabbath keeping signifies that a person has surrendered his life to Jesus Christ and is willing to follow wherever Jesus leads. Since the symbol, or mark, of God's authority and power is His holy Sabbath day, it seems likely that the symbol, or mark, of God's challenger-the beast-might also involve a holy day. Let's see if it does.

3. What does the papacy say is her symbol, or mark, of authority?

Answer: Notice the following section from a Catholic catechism: "Question: Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?

"Answer: Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her-she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority." (Stephen Keenan, A Doctrinal catechism [FRS No. 7.], [3rd American ed., rev.: New York. Edward Dunigan &Bro., 1876], p. 174.]

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So the papacy is here saying that it changed Sabbath to Sunday and that virtually churches accepted the new holy day. Thus, the papacy claims that Sunday as a y day is the mark, or symbol, of her power and authority.

***Did God predict such a change in Scripture?***

***Answer***: Yes! In describing the antichrist in Daniel 7:25, God said it would "think .hange times and laws."

**A. How has the papacy tried to change God's laws?** In three different ways: In its catechisms it has (1) omitted the second commandment against veneration of images, and (2) shortened the fourth (Sabbath) commandment from 94 words to just eight. The Sabbath commandment (Exodus 20:8-11) clearly specifies Sabbath as the seventh day of the week. As changed by the papacy, the commandment reads: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." Written thus, it can refer to any day. And, finally, she (3) divided the tenth commandment into two commandments.

**B. How has the papacy attempted to change God's times?** In two ways: (1) It has changed the time of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day. (2) It has also changed God's "timing" for the beginning and closing hours of the Sabbath. Instead of counting the Sabbath day from sundown Friday night to sundown Saturday night as God mandates (Leviticus 23:32), it adopted the pagan Roman custom of counting the day from midnight Saturday night to midnight Sunday night. God predicted these "changes" would be attempted by the beast, or antichrist.

Notice the following section from a Catholic catechism:

***Question:*** Which is the Sabbath day?

***Answer:*** Saturday is the Sabbath day.

***Question:*** Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

***Answer:*** We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church is transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." (Peter Geiermann, The Convert’s catechism of Catholic Doctrine, St. Louis, B. Herder Book Co., 1957 ed., p. 50.). Here is another Catholic statement: "The Church is above the Bible; and this is transference of Sabbath observance from Saturday to Sunday is proof positive of t fact." (The Catholic Record, London, Ontario, Canada, Sept. 1, 1923.) .he papacy is saying in these references that its successful change of Sabbath observance to Sunday worship is proof that its authority is greater, or "above," Scripture. How could anyone dare attempt to change God's holy day?

Answer: We ask the papacy, "Did you really change Sabbath to Sunday?" It re- ~s, "Yes, we did. It is our symbol, or mark, of authority and power." We ask, "How did you even think of doing that?" It's a pertinent question. But the question the papacy officially asks Protestants is even more pertinent. Please read it carefully: You will tell me that Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, but that the Christian Sabbath has been changed to Sunday. Changed! but by whom? Who has authority to change an express commandment of Almighty God? When God has spoken and I, Thou shalt keep holy the seventh day, who shall dare to say, Nay; thou mayest work and do all manner of worldly business on the seventh day; but thou shalt keep y the first day in its stead? This is a most important question, which I know not 'tV you can answer. You are a Protestant, and you profess to go by the Bible and the bible only; and yet in so important a manner as the observance of one day in seven

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the week. ... Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament-absolutely not. There is no scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week." -Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, author of The Baptist Manual, in a paper read before a New York ministers' conference held Nov. 13, 1893.

**CATHOLIC:** "You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we [Catholics] never sanctify." -James Cardinal Gibbons, The Faith of Our Fathers, 16th edition, 1880, p. 111.

**CHURCH OF CHRIST**: "Finally, we have the testimony of Christ on this subject. In Mark 2:27, he says: 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.' From this passage it is evident that the Sabbath was made not merely for the-Israelites, as Paley and Hengstenberg would have us believe, but for man ... that is, for the race. Hence we conclude that the Sabbath was sanctified from the beginning, and that it was given to Adam, even in Eden, as one of those primeval institutions that God ordained for the happiness of all men." -Robert Milligan, Scheme of Redemption, (St. Louis, The Bethany Press, 1962), p. 165.

**CONGREGATIONALIST**: "The Christian Sabbath [Sunday] is not in the Scriptures, and was not by the primitive church called the Sabbath." =Dwight s Theology, Vol. 4, p. 401.

**EPISCOPAL**: "Sunday (Dies Solis, of the Roman calendar, 'day of the sun,' because dedicated to the sun), the first day of the week, was adopted by the early Christians as a day of worship .... No regulations for its observance are laid down in the New Testament, nor, indeed, is its observance even enjoined." -"Sunday," A Religious Encyclopedia, Vol. 3, (New York, Funk and Wagnalls, 1883) p. 2259.

**LUTHERAN:** "The observance of the Lord's day [Sunday] is founded not on any command of God, but on the authority of the church." -Augsburg Confession of Faith, 'quoted in Catholic Sabbath Manual, Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 10.

**METHODIST:** "Take the matter of Sunday. There are indications in the New Testament as to how the church came to keep the first day of the week as its day of worship, but there is no passage telling Christians to keep that day, or to transfer the Jewish Sabbath to that day." -Harris Franklin RaIl, Christian Advocate, July 2, 1942.

**MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE**: "The Sabbath was binding in Eden, and it has been in force ever since. This fourth commandment begins with the word remember,' showing that the Sabbath already existed when God wrote the law on the tables of stone at Sinai. How can men claim that this one commandment has been done away with when they will admit that the other nine are still binding?" -D. L. Moody, Weighed and Wanting, p. 47.

**PRESBYTERIAN**: "Until, therefore, it can be shown that the whole moral law has been repealed, the Sabbath will stand .... The teaching of Christ confirms the perpetuity of the Sabbath." -T. C. Blake, D.D., Theology Condensed, pp. 474, 475.

**PENTECOSTAL:** “Why do we worship on Sunday? Doesn't the Bible teach us that Saturday is the Lord’s Day?’ … Apparently we will have to seek the answer from other source than the New Testament.”-David A. WOMACK, “Is Sunday the Lord’s Day?” The Pentecostal Evangel, Aug. 9, 1959, No. 2361, p. 3.

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tongues" (Revelation 17: 15). Therefore, the earth represents the opposite. It meal that this new nation would arise in an area of the world that had been virtually u populated before the late 1700s. It could not arise among the crowded and struggling nations of the Old World. It had to come up in a sparsely populated continent.

***5. What is symbolized by its two lamb-like horns and absence of crowns?***

***Answer***: Horns represent kings and kingdoms, or governments (Daniel 7:2 8:21). In this case, they represent the United States' two governing principles: ci-and religious liberty. These two governing principles have also been labelled "republicanism" (a government without a king) and "Protestantism" (a church without a pope). Other nations since ancient times had taxed people to support a state religion. Most had also oppressed religious dissidents. But the United States establish something entirely new: Freedom to worship as you wish without government interference or control-and with government protection. Absence of crowns signifies republican form of government, rather than a monarchy. Lamb-like horns denote; innocent, young, no oppressive, peace-loving, and spiritual riation. Jesus is referred to as a lamb 28 times in Revelation. So this new government was trying to undo His principles. No other power on earth could possibly fit the characteristics and time slot of the lamb-homed beast, except the United States.

***Special Note***: How we wish we could stop right here in Jesus' description oft United States-but we can't, because He didn't. What comes next is jolting and d: quieting. The United States is truly a great country-with its freedom of conscience press, speech, and enterprise; the protection it provides; its golden opportunities; sense of fair play; its sympathy for the underdog; and its strong Christian orientation. It is not perfect, but even still a host of people from other countries hast to become American citizens every year. If the United States' doors were open wide, a vast portion of the people of the world would move to the United States once-to "heaven on earth" as they perceive it. Sadly, this richly blessed coun1 will change drastically in the days just ahead, precipitating unparalleled heartache and woe for God's people. We report it with reticence and deep concern.

***6. What does it mean when the prophecy in Revelation 13:11 says the Unit States will speak "as a dragon"?***

***Answer:*** As we learned in Study Guide 20, the dragon is Satan, who WOI through various governments of the earth to establish his evil kingdom and cru God's church by persecuting and destroying His people. Satan's aim always l been to usurp God's power and throne and to force people to worship and obey hi (See Study Guide 2 for details.) So "speaking as a dragon" means that the Unit States (under the influence of Satan) will, in the end time, force people to worsl contrary to conscience or be punished.

***7. What specifically will the United States do that will cause it to speak as dragon?***

***Answer***: Notice the four crucial points:

**A. "Exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him"** (Revelation 13: 1 The United States will become a persecuting power that will force people go against their conscience, as did papal Rome-which is portrayed in the first half of Revelation chapter 13.

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**B. "Causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed"** (Revelation 13: 12). The United States will lead the nations of the world in forcing worship of, and allegiance to, the papal antichrist. The issue is always worship. Who will you worship and obey? Will it be Christ your Creator and Redeemer, or antichrist? Every soul on earth will finally worship one or the other. The entire approach will appear to be deeply spiritual. Incredible miracles will be wrought (Revelation 13:14, 15) which will deceive billions (Revelation 13:3*). Those who refuse to join this movement will be considered divisive, stubborn, radicals and un- patriotic. Jesus labels Protestant America of the end time a "false prophet" (Revelation 19:20; 20: 1 0), because it will appear spiritual and trustworthy but instead will be satanic in its conduct.* All this may seem impossible, but Jesus' words are always totally reliable and true (Titus 1 :2). He foretold the rise and fall of the four world empires and the antichrist (Daniel chapters 2 and 7) at a time when such predictions seemed outlandish and incredible. But all came to pass precisely as predicted. His warning to us today regarding prophecy is, "I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29).

**C. "Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live" (Revelation 13:14).** The United States will make an image to the beast by legislating religious practice. It will pass laws requiring worship and force people to either obey them or face death. This action is a copy or image of the church-state combination that the papacy utilized at the height of her power during the Middle Ages, when millions were slain for their faith. The United States will combine civil government and apostate Protestantism in a "marriage" that will support the papacy. It will then influence all the nations of the world to follow its example. Thus, the papacy will gain worldwide support.

**D. "And cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed"** (Revelation 13: 15). The United States, as head of this international movement, will next influence the nations of the world to impose a universal death sentence upon all who refuse to worship the beast or his image. Another name for this worldwide coalition is "Babylon the Great." (See Study Guide 22 for more information.) This worldwide alliance will, in the name of Christ, substitute the policeman's power for the Holy Spirit's persuasion and will force worship.

***Over what specific issues will force be utilized and the death sentence passed?***

"He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13: 15-17).

Answer: The final points of contention will be worshipping and obeying the beast and receiving its mark- Sunday as a holy day- versus worshipping and obeying Christ and receiving his mark-his holy seventh day Sabbath.

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A MAZING FACTS STUDY GUIDES

Study Guide 20.) When the issues become clear and people are forced either to worship on Sunday and break the Sabbath or be killed, those who then choose Sunday rather than Sabbath will be, in essence, worshipping the beast. They wil1 have chosen to obey the word of a creature, a man, instead of the word of their Creator, Jesus Christ. Here is the papacy's own statement: "The church changed Sabbath to Sunday and all the world bows down and worships upon that day in silent obedience to the mandates of the Catholic Church." Hartford Weekly Call, February 22, ] 884.

***9. Could a government really control buying and selling?***

***Answer***: During World War II, buying was controlled for some items (such as sugar, tires, and auto fuel) by requiring ration stamps. Without stamps, money was worthless. In this highly computerized age, a system based on your Social Security number could easily be set up. Unless you agreed to cooperate with the worldwide coalition, your number, when punched in before a purchase, could show you dis- qualified. We do not know precisely how all this will come about. But we can be positive it will happen because in Revelation 13: 16, 17, God says it will.

**Two Emerging Powers**

Revelation chapter 13 is clear. Two superpowers will emerge in the end time: the United States of America and the papacy. The United States of America will support the papacy by leading a drive to force the people of the world to worship the beast (papacy) and receive its mark or else face death. The next two questions will evaluate the strengths of these two superpowers.

***10. How strong and influential is the papacy today?***

***Answer:*** It is by far the strongest religio-political power in the world. Virtually every leading country of the world has an official ambassador or state representative at the VaticanNotice the following facts:

A. The papacy is so influential and powerful that nearly every major country consults with it before making major policy moves. Its "large diplomatic corps maintains relations with more than 100 nations." U.s. News and World Report. October 30, 1978, p. 24.

C. It takes the credit for the demise of communism, saying that Mary, Jesus' mother, guided the pope's strategy that brought down communism. "Hand- maid or Feminist," Time, December 30, 1991, pp. 64,65.

D. The aim of the Pope is to unify the Christian world under the leadership of the papacy. Pope John Paul II made more than 40 world trips to lay the ground work for this goal. Gene H. Hogberg, The Plain Truth, November/December 1989, pp. 24,25.

E. The worldwide response has been almost overwhelming. During the Iraqi cri- sis, the pope and the American president sometimes discussed world affairs weekly by phone. U.s. News and World Report, August 13, 1990, p. 18.

F. On June 7, 1982, former President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II met for 50 minutes at the Vatican and structured a plan to eliminate communism. The United States shipped tons of modem communication equipment to Po- land (the starting place) to help spread necessary information to the masses. "The Holy Alliance," Time, February 1992, pp. 28, 31, 35.

G. Gorbachev said, “Everything which took place in eastern Europe in recent years would have been impossible without the pope’s efforts and the enor-

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mous role, including the political role, which he played in the world arena." Mikhail Gorbachev, Toronto Star, March 9, 1992. The papacy, which formerly referred to Protestants as "heretics," is now calling them "separated brethren" and graciously suggesting that all work and pray together r peace and God's presence. Millions of Protestants are deeply impressed. In fact, several Protestant denominations have had official dialog with the papacy to try to settle the differences that caused the Reformation .

***. How strong and influential is the United States today?***

***Answer***: The United States is regarded as the world's number one military power and center of influence. Note the following:

**A. "[The United States is] the planet's sole remaining superpower**." "The U.N. Obsession," Time, May 9, 1994, p. 86.

**B. "There is no prospect in the immediate future of any power to rival the United States."** Charles Krauthammer, "The Lonely Superpower," The New Republic, July 29, 1992, p. 23.

**C. Yassir Arafat labeled the United States "the new Rome" because, as old Rome was the undisputed superpower of its age, the United States is now number one**. Newsweek, August 12, 1991, p. 33.

**D. "America's power will now determine all major global events**." Jim Hoagland, "Of Heroes ...," The Washington Post, August 21, 1991, p. A-23. When a Marxist group overthrew the government of Ethiopia, the United States as asked to negotiate. When Boris Yeltsin took office as president of the newly dependent Russia, he visited the United States first. Former U.S.S.R. President .ikhail Gorbachev turned to the United States in his crisis. When Kuwait was invaded, its government called on the United States. In 1990, the U.S.-led war against iraq rallied the support of almost the entire world. A National Public Radio correspondent called the American president the "president of the world." We now have a highly unusual world structure with a single power, the United States, at the apex "the international system." Krauthammer, The New Republic, p. 23. ~.

***It is clear that the influence and power of both the United States and the papacy are escalating with rapidity. What other factors could possibly help set the age for a worldwide law to execute those who refuse to violate conscience?***

***Answer***: We cannot name them with certainty, but a few looming possibilities are : follows:

A. The activity of terrorists.

B. Riots and escalating crime and evil.

C. Drug wars.

D. A major economic- crash.

E. AIDS and other epidemics.

F. Nuclear threats from radical nations.

G. Political corruption.

H. Gross miscarriage of justice by the courts.

I. Welfare abuse.

J. Increasing taxes.

K. Pornography and sickening immorality.

L. Appalling global disasters.

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close when God rains fire down from heaven upon the wicked and destroys them (Revelation 20:9). (Study Guide 12 explains the 1,000 years in detail.)

**What Does the Word "Armageddon" Mean?**

Armageddon is a symbolic name for the "battle of that great day of God Almighty" between Christ and Satan in which all the nations of the world will be involved (Revelation 16: 12-16, 19). The "kings of the east" are God the Father and God the Son. "East" in the Bible symbolizes God's heavenly kingdom (Revelation 7:2; Ezekiel 43 :2; Matthew 24:27). In this final battle, virtually the entire world will unite (Revelation 16: 14) to fight against Jesus, the Lamb, and His people (Revelation 17: 14; 19: 19). Their aim will be to wipe out all who refuse to worship the beast and accept his mark (Revelation 13: 15-17).

**Delusion Follows Rejection**

People who refuse to accept God's three-point message for the last days (even though they know it is true). will become strongly deluded so they will believe a lie (2 Thessalonians 2: 10-12). They will begin to sincerely believe they are upholding God's great kingdom when they endeavor to destroy God's people. They will perceive the saints to be hopelessly deceived fanatics who are dooming the entire world by their refusal to cooperate in the counterfeit revival.

**Jesus' Second Coming Halts Battle**

The battle itself will be worldwide. Governments will simultaneously try to destroy God's people, but God will intervene. The symbolic river Euphrates will be dried up (Revelation 16: 12). Water represents people (Revelation 17: 15). The drying up of the river Euphrates means that the people who have been supporting the beast (Satan's kingdom) will suddenly withdraw their support. The beast's support will thus dry up. Its coalition of allies (Revelation 16:13,14) will fall apart (Revelation 16:19). Jesus' second coming will halt this battle and save His people (Revelation 6:14-17; 16:18-21; 19:11-20). Battle Resumes after 1,000 Years after the 1,000 years, Satan will come right out in the open as the leader of the forces against God and His people. He will resume the battle against God as he tries to capture the holy city. Then Satan and his followers will be destroyed by fire from heaven. (See Study Guides 11 and 12.) Every follower of Satan will be destroyed. Every follower of Jesus will enter His eternal kingdom.

***3. The Bible says, "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2). Do you think that will be literally fulfilled in our time? .***

***Answer***: Yes. The end-time coalition of world governments and religions will finally lose all sympathy for God's people, who refuse to join the counterfeit revival or adopt its symbol (Sunday worship). They will feel that the wonderful miracles ac- companying their revival prove its validity-miracles such as the sick being healed or notorious God-haters, immoral movie stars, drug lords, and well-known criminals being converted. The coalition will insist that no one be permitted to wreck this worldwide revival which is drawing all religions. Everyone will be urged to lay ASIDE PERSONAL FEELINGS and “fanatical teachings” (the Sabbath for example) and join with the rest of the world in its sincere revival for peace and brotherhood.

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Everything other than the revival will be considered minor, Those who do not agree o cooperate will be considered disloyal, unpatriotic, anarchists and, finally, dangerous fanatics who must not be tolerated, In that day, those who kill God's people will feel they are doing God a favor.

***As I study the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, it seems apparent that the real enemy is always the devil. Do you agree?***

***Answer***: Absolutely! You are 100 percent correct! Satan is always the real enemy Satan works through earth's leaders and nations to hurt God's people and thus bring heartache to Jesus and the Father. We so easily forget that Satan is the enemy. He’s the one responsible for all evil. Let's blame him and be careful how we judge and condemn people or organizations who hurt God's people and church, They are sometimes uninformed or even totally unaware that they are harming anyone. But hat is never true of Satan. He is always fully aware. He hurts God and His people intentionally.

'***. How would the death of the pope or the election of a new president affect the -rophecy of the United States in Revelation 13:11-18?***

***Answer***: The prophecy will be fulfilled no matter who is pope or president. A new 'resident or a new pope may temporarily speed up or slow down fulfillment, but the final outcome is assured by Bible prophecy. . Are the lamb-horned beast of Revelation 13:11-18 and the "false prophet" of revelation 16:13 the same power?

Answer: Yes. In Revelation 19:20, where God mentions the destruction of the antichrist beast, He also refers to the destruction of the false prophet. In this passage, God identifies the false prophet as the power which "wrought miracles" before re beast and "deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that .orshiped his image." This is a very clear reference to the activities of the lamb- orned beast, which are described in Revelation 13: 11-18. In this Study Guide we have identified the lamb-homed beast as the United States of America. So the lamb- horned beast and the false prophet are obviously the same power.

**22. The “Other" Woman**

Every marriage must rely on trust-and likewise in our union with Christ, we J must remain faithful to Him and His Word. Revelation speaks about the true ride of Christ, but there is another woman who is trying to seduce believers away from God's Word. Revelation contains a shocking message about Babylon, the other woman. Babylon is fallen, and Christ's people must escape her charms or perish! thus begins the second part of the three angels' message. Here you will learn the very real identity of spiritual Babylon and learn how to avoid being hypnotized by er fatal beauty! What could be more important? -

***How does Jesus describe Babylon in the book of Revelation?***

"I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters." "And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,

THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:1,3-5).

***Answer:*** In Revelation 17: 1-6, Jesus describes Babylon as a harlot dressed in red and purple. She is seated upon a scarlet-colored beast, which has seven heads and 10 horns and sits on many waters.

***• 2. Who is the symbolic pure woman of Revelation chapter 12?***

***Answer***: A pure woman, clothed with the sun, is depicted in Revelation 12: 1-6. We learned in Study Guide 20 that this pure woman symbolizes God's pure church which is faithful to her lover, Jesus. We will study Revelation chapter 12 in depth in Study Guide 23.

***3. What does a harlot represent in Bible prophecy?***

"Cause Jerusalem to know her abominations." "You trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot" (Ezekiel 16:2, 15).

***Answer***: As a pure woman symbolizes a pure church which is faithful to Jesus, . so an impure woman represents an impure, or fallen, church which is unfaithful to Jesus (James,,4:4).

***4. Can we identify the harlot (church) that is called "Babylon the Great, the Moth- er of Harlots" in Revelation chapter 17?***

***Answer:*** Yes, it is widely known that there is only one church which claims to be the mother church-the great Roman Catholic Church. A prominent Catholic priest, John A. O'Brien, said: "That observance [Sunday keeping] remains as a reminder of the Mother Church from which the non-Catholic sects broke away." (John A. O'Brien, The Faith of Millions, Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1974, p. 401.)

**The points used in Revelation 17 to describe mother Babylon and the beast she rides clearly fit the papacy:**

**A. She persecuted the saints** (verse 6). (See Study Guides 15 and 20.)

**B. She was dressed in purple and scarlet** (verse 4). The popes often wear the royal color of purple at important functions, and red is the color of the robes of Catholic cardinals.

**C. The seven heads of the beast** (verse 3) upon which the woman is seated are seven mountains (verse 9). It is well known that Rome, the world headquarters of the papacy, is built upon seven hills or mountains.

**D. The beast is guilty of blasphemy** (verse 3), a point which also clearly fits the papacy. (See Study Guides 15 and 20.)

**E. She ruled "over the kings of the earth**" (verse 18). Alexander Flick says that by the 13th century, the the pope was “at least in theory…the ruler of the whole world in temporal and spiritual affairs.” (the rise of the mediaeval church, New York: Burt Franklin, 1959, pp. 575, 576.) This point could fit no other

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earthly-kingdom or government. The papacy is described in Revelation 17 too clearly for doubt.

*Note: Many leaders of the Reformation (Huss, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, delanchthon, Cranmer, Tyndale, Latimer, Ridley, and others) taught that the papacy s the power here involved. (George Eldon Ladd, The Blessed Hope,* Grand Rapids, 111: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1956, pp. 32-34.) '.

***What is the literal meaning of the word "Babylon," and what is its origin?***

"Let us build ... a tower whose top is in the heavens." "And the LORD said ... let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." "Therefore its name is called Babel [confusion, margin]; because there the LORD confused the language" (Genesis 11 :4, 6, 7, 9).

***Answer:*** The words "Babel" and "Babylon" mean "confusion." The name Babylon originated at the Tower of Babel, which was erected after the Flood by defiant pagans who hoped to build it so high that no floodwaters could ever cover it (verse 4). that the Lord confounded their language, and the resultant confusion was so great ley were forced to halt construction. They then called the tower "Babel" (Babylon), r "confusion." Later, in Old Testament days, a worldwide pagan kingdom named Babylon arose which was an enemy of God's people, Israel. It embodied rebellion, disobedience, persecution of God's people, pride, and idolatry (Jeremiah 39:6, 7; 0:29,31-33; 51:24, 34, 47; Daniel chapters 3 and 5). In fact, in Isaiah chapter 4 God uses Babylon as a symbol of Satan himself because Babylon was so hostile and devastating to God's work and His people. In the New Testament book of revelation, the term "Babylon" is used to signify a religious kingdom that is an enemy of God's spiritual Israel-His church (Revelation 14:8; 16:19) .

***Who are the harlot daughters of the mother Babylon described in Revelation17:5?***

***Answer***: They are some of the churches which originally protested the false teachings of mother Babylon and left her during the great Protestant Reformation. But, later, they began to mimic the principles and actions of the mother and thus became fallen themselves. No woman is born a harlot. Neither were the symbolic Protestant daughter churches born fallen. Any church or organization that teaches and follows Babylon’s false doctrines and practices could become a fallen church or daughter. o Babylon is a family name which embraces both the mother church and those of other daughters, who are also fallen. ,

 ***In Revelation 17, why is mother Babylon pictured as riding upon the beast? "hat does the beast represent?***

***Answer***: In Revelation 13: 1-10, Jesus portrays the papacy as a combination of lurch and state. (For more information, see Study Guide 20.) In Revelation chapter 7, Jesus depicts the church (the harlot) and state (the beast) as separate entities, rough related. The woman is astride the beast, which signifies that the church is in control of the state.

***What other powers unite with the papacy in fulfilling end-time events?***

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of

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the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that gr cat day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16: 13, 14).

***Answer:*** The dragon of Revelation 12:3,4 and the false prophet of Revelation 13: 11- 14; 19:2.0 form an alliance with the beast of Revelation 13: 1-10 or the papacy.

A. The dragon of Revelation chapter 12 represents Satan working through pagan Rome. (See Study Guide 20 for more details.) In these last days it includes non-Christian religions such as Buddhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, the New Age, secular humanism. etc.

B. The false prophet represents apostate Protestantism centered in America, which will take the lead in urging and influencing worldwide worship of the beast. (See Study Guide 21.)

C. The beast is the papacy. (See Study Guide 20.)

D. These three powers: Non-Christian religions and governments, Roman Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism will become allies in Armageddon=-the final war against God, His law, and His loyal followers. This coalition is called "Babylon the great" by Jesus in Revelation 18:2.

***9. How will organizations with such diverse backgrounds be able to effectively unite?***

 "These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast" (Revelation 17: 13).

Answer: Revelation 16: 13, 14 says "unclean spirits like frogs" which are "spirits of devils" will unite them through the miracles they will work. Spiritism-the belief that the dead are alive and can contact the living-will be the tenet which will weld all together. Satan and his angels-posing as the spirits of dead loved ones, prophets of old, angels of heaven (2 Corinthians 11: 13, 14), and even Christ Himself (Matthew 24:24)-will convince the world that their cause is guided from heaven itself. (See Study Guide 10.) Incidentally, all three entities believe that the dead are alive:

**A. Catholicism** prays to Mary and other dead saints and believes these saints bless their followers with miracles.

**B. Non-Christian** religions are virtually all based on belief in and worship of spirits of the dead. The New Age stresses "channeling"-supposed talking to the spirits of the dead.

C. **Apostate Protestantism** believes that the dead are not dead but, rather, alive in heaven or hell. Thus they are highly susceptible to deception by demons who pose as spirits of the dead.

***10. For what sins does God indict Babylon?***

**A. "Babylon the great is fallen**" (Revelation 18:2).

Answer: To fall means to turn away from Bible truth and true worship of the true God (2 Peter 3: 17).

**B. "And has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spir**it." "By your sorcery all the nations were deceived" (Revelation 18:2, 23).

***Answer:*** Here God is indicting Babylon for (l) conferring personally with devils have inviting evil spirits into its midst through spiritism, and (2) for deceiving virtually the entire world through lying, demonic spirits.

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D.

**C. "The habitants of the earth were made drunk" from the wine of abomination 'and fornication found in her cup** (Revelation 17:2.4; 18:3).

***Answer***: The word "abomination" in the Bible symbolizes lies (Proverbs 12:22). Babylon's wine, which contains false teachings, disorients and benumbs those who rink it and makes them spiritually drunk.

**E. "The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her"** (Revelation 18:3).

Answer: The church is the bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7, 8) and must love ad be loyal only to Him-which Jesus said means keeping His commandments 'ohn 14: 15). The papacy is censured here for turning away from her husband, sus (James 4:4), and forming illicit relationships with civil governments (union of lurch and state) for her support.

**E. Trafficking in the "souls of men"** (Revelation 18: 13).

**Answer:** God here denounces Babylon for treating people as merchandise rather ran as precious children of God. r. What are some of the false teachings contained in Babylon's wine that make tople spiritually drunk and confused?

***Answer:*** Amazingly, some of the most prominent doctrines of Protestantism to- ly are not found in the Bible at all. They have been brought into the Protestant iurches by the mother church of Rome, who received them from paganism. A few ~ these false teach i ngs are that:

**A. The law of God has been amended or repealed.**

 God's law can never be changed or repealed (Luke 16: 17). Study Guide 6 cites irrefutable evidence.

**B. The soul is immortal.**

The Bible mentions "soul" and "spirit" 1,700 times. Not once is either referred to as immortal. People are mortal (Job 4: 17), and none receive immortality until Jesus: second advent (1 Corinthians 15:51-54). (See Study Guide 10 for more information.) .

**C. Sinners burn eternally in hell.**

The Bible teaches that sinners will be completely consumed (put out of ex- istence), both soul and body, in the fire (Matthew 10:28). An eternal hell of torment is not taught in the Bible. (See details in Study Guide 11.)

**D. Baptism by immersion is not necessary.**

Baptism by immersion is the only baptism recognized by Scripture. (See Study Guide 9 for further information.)

**E. Sunday is God's holy day.**

The Bible teaches, without question, that God's holy day is the seventh-day Sabbath-Saturday. (For details, see Study Guide 7.)

*Note: These false teachings, once believed, tend to bring "confusion" (which is tat the term "Babylon" literally means) and make understanding Scripture much ire difficult.*

**Sobering Thought**

It's sobering to think that some might unknowingly be drinking Babylon's wine. Perhaps this is all new to you. If so please ask God to guide you (matt 7:70). Then search the scriptures to see if these things are so (acts 17:11). Promise that you will follow where Jesus leads, and he will not permit you to end up in error (john 7:17).

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***12. Who will be 011 the Lord’s side in the battle of Armageddon?***

***Answer***: In this final battle, the angels of heaven (Hebrews I: 13. 14; Matthew 13:41. 42) and God's people-the remnant (Revelation 12: 17 )-will be allied with Jesus, who leads the armies of heaven (Revelation 19: 11 -16) against Satan and his supporters. God's remnant is composed of those who refuse the falsehoods of Babylon. (See Study Guide 23.) They are known for: (I) their love of Jesus (] John 5 :2, 3), (2) their loyalty to and faith in Him (Revelation 14:12), and (3) their firm obedience to His Word and commandments (Revelation 12: 17; .john 8:31, 32).

***13. What will be Satan's strategy in this .final conflict between God's truth and Satan's lies?***

***Answer***: Though Satan hates God and His Son, he rarely admits it openly. In fact, he and his demons will pose as holy angels and as devoted Christian clergymen (2 Corinthians 11: 13-15) What he presents as evidence for his side will seem so righteous, spiritual, and Jesus-like that nearly everybody on earth will be deceived and follow him (Matthew 24:24). He will doubtless use the Bible, as he did when tempting Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4: I-II). Satan's logic is so persuasive that it deceived one-third of the angels of heaven, Adam and Eve, and (at the time of the Flood) everybody on earth except eight people.

***14. What is God's counter-strategy?***

 "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

***Answer:*** God always counters Satan's lies with Bible truth. When tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Jesus repeatedly quoted Scripture (Matthew 4: 1-11). Through His remnant people, God will tell the truth about the unbiblical nature of Babylon the great. He will make it clear that Babylon is presenting a false gospel (Galatians 1 :8-12) which has opened the door wide for billions to be deceived and lost. God's countermovement is outlined in the great three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6- 14, which we are examining in nine of the 27 Study Guides in this series. These three fantastic messages expose and warn against Satan's lies and counterfeits and call people to worship God and obey Him, not only in spirit but in Bible truth as well.

***15. Will God's end-time messages of warning and hope be effective?***

"After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory" (Revelation 18: 1).

***Answer: In*** Scripture, angels represent messengers or messages (Hebrews 1: 13, 14). God's end-time appeal is symbolized by a mighty angel whose power is so great that the entire world is lightened with God's truth and glory. This final, God-given message will go to the inhabitants of the entire world (Revelation 14:6; Mark 16: 15~ Matthew 24: 14).

***16. What final, urgent appeal will Jesus make to those who are in Babylon?***

***Answer:*** He will say: “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” Rev 18:4-5

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***Answer:*** The 10 kings symbolize the nations of the world. The 10 toes of the image of Daniel chapter 2 and the 10 horns of the monster beast of Daniel chapter 7 symbolized the 10 kingdoms of Europe. However, the meaning is broadened in Revelation chapters 11 through 18 to mean all "the kings of the earth" or "all nations." (See Revelation 16: 14; 18:3.)

***6. What does the symbolism of "frogs" mean in Revelation 16:13, 14?***

***Answer***: A frog captures its prey with his tongue, which may symbolize the counterfeit gift of tongues that is sweeping the world today. Please remember that miracles, including the gift of tongues, prove only one thing-supernatural power. But the Bible informs us that supernatural power can be from either God or Satan. It further explains that Satan, posing as an angel of light from heaven (2 Corinthians 11: 13-15), will utilize supernatural miracles so effectively that almost the entire world will be deceived and follow him (Revelation 13 :3). At present, he is using the counterfeit gift of tongues to weld together churches and religions of all kinds-including pagans and spirit worshipers. Each of these feels that the gift of tongues is proof of authenticity.

**We Must Test the Spirits**

The Bible warns that we must test the spirits (1 John 4: 1). If they do not agree with the Bible, they are counterfeits (Isaiah 8: 19, 20). Further, the true gifts of the Holy Spirit are never given to one who deliberately and knowingly disobeys God (Acts 5:32). There is a true gift of tongues. It is a miraculous enabling to fluently speak foreign languages previously unlearned and unknown by the speaker (Acts 2:4-12). God uses this gift when needed to present His end-time message to those of other languages. It 'Vas needed at Pentecost because I 7 language groups were in the crowd and His disciples probably knew only one language.

***7. Will the New Age movement playa major role in the final end-time conflict between good and evil?***

***Answer:*** Without a doubt! It is strongly involved with the occult, psychic phenomena, and spiritism. Spiritism will certainly be a major factor in the closing drama of earth. Combined with the supernatural power of the counterfeit gift of tongues and allied with the end-time worldwide coalition of churches, spiritism will sweep the globe. The New Age belief in spirit communication and reincarnation is simply old-time paganism in new garb. Its belief in an immortal, undying soul that can communicate with earth-people is the same old falsehood Satan told Eve in Eden: "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). (See Study Guide 10 for details on death.)

***8. It's obvious that God reveals activities of the antichrist or papacy in Daniel chapter 7 and Revelation chapters 13, 17, and 18. Is the antichrist mentioned elsewhere in Scripture?***

***Answer***: Yes, the beast or anti christ power (or its activities) are referred to in at least nine prophecies of the Old and New Testaments: Daniel 7; Daniel chapters 8, 9; Daniel 11; Revelation 12; Revelation 13; Revelation 16; Revelation 17; Revelation 18; and Revelation 19. Surely, when God stresses the same power nine different times. He wants us to listen.

***9. Did Satan’s kingdom called “Babylon” originate at the tower of Babel?***

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***Answer:*** No, it originated when Satan rebelled against God in heaven. In fact, the prophet' Isaiah symbolizes Lucifer at the time of his fall from heaven as the king of Babylon (Isaiah 14:4, 12-15). God has looked upon Satan's kingdom as Babylon from the very beginning of sin. Satan's avowed aim is to conquer God, wipe out God's kingdom, and establish his own rebellious kingdom of Babylon universe-wide. Jesus said there are only two sides (Matthew 7:13, 14). Every soul on earth will finally line up on the side of either Jesus or Babylon. It is a matter of life md death. Those who serve and support Jesus will be saved in His heavenly kingdom. Those who support Babylon will be destroyed by fire. And there is very little time left for decision making. This is why heeding Jesus' end-time warning against 3abylon is so extremely crucial and urgent.

***In Revelation 16:12, what is meant by the waters of the Euphrates River being fried up tq prepare the way for the kings of the east?***

***Answer***: Before the ancient kingdom of Babylon was captured by the Median general Darius, the water of the river Euphrates, which passed underneath the walls if the city, was diverted into a man-made lake bed. This diversion permitted Darius' army to capture the city at night by entering from underneath the walls through the empty riverbed. In the prophecies of Revelation, "water" symbolizes people Revelation 17: 15). Thus, the waters of the river Euphrates refer to the followers of 'Babylon the great," whose support dries up when they turn against Babylon with intent to destroy her (Revelation 17: 16). This drying up of support for "Babylon the great" assures victory for the kings of the east, the heavenly Father and Son.

**23. The Bride of Christ**

 he Bible says there is but one body, or church, into which Jesus calls His end-time people-the bride of Christ. To some, this is unnerving, as there are thousands if different churches today that call themselves Christian. Virtually everyone claims to be God's church, yet they each differ widely in biblical interpretation, faith, and practice. It's quite impossible for the honest seeker of truth to investigate the claims If each one. However, we can be thankful that Jesus has solved this dilemma for us by describing His church in such detail that you can easily identify it! That description, vivid and powerful, is found in Revelation 12 and 14, and it will thrill you with mazing truths that will help you in the end-times. Please read Revelation 12:1-17 before beginning your journey of discovery into these transforming truths. .

***By what prophetic symbol does Jesus represent His true church?***

"I have likened the daughter of Zion to a lovely and delicate woman" (Jeremiah 6:2). "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (rev 19:7,8)

Answer: we learned in study 22 that Jesus symbolizes his pure true church (Zion) as a pure woman and an apostate church as a harlot. A few other texts

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which also utilize this symbolism are 2 Corinthians 11 :2~ Ephesians 5:22. 23: and Isaiah 51: 16

***2. In Revelation 12:1, Jesus symbolizes His church as a woman "clothed with the sun," with "the moon under her feet, " and wearing "a crown of twelve stars. "***

***What do these symbols mean?***

***Answer*** A: The sun represents Jesus, His gospel, and His righteousness. "For the LORD God is a sun" (Psalm 84: 11). (See also Malachi 4:2.) Without Jesus there is no salvation (Acts 4: 12). More than anything else, Jesus wants His church to overflow with His presence and glory.

***Answer B***: "The moon under her feet" represents the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so the sacrificial system was help- ful spiritually only as it reflected light from the Messiah to come (Hebrews 10:]).

***Answer C:*** The "crown of twelve stars" represents the work of the 12 disciples, which crowned the early years of the New Testament church.

***3. Next, the prophecy states that the woman is in labor, about to deliver a baby who would one day rule all nations with a rod of iron. She then delivered the "male Child," and later He was taken up to God's throne in heaven (Revelation 12:1, 2,***

***5). Who was this baby?***

***Answer***: The baby was Jesus. He will one day rule all nations with a rod of iron (Revelation 19:13-16; Psalm 2:7-9). Jesus, who was crucified for our sins, was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9-11). His resurrection power in our lives is one of Jesus' essential gifts to His people (Philippians 3: 10).

***4. Revelation 12:]., 4 introduces "a great red dragon" who hated the "male child" and tried to kill him at birth. You may remember this dragon from Study Guide***

***20. Who was the dragon?***

***Answer***: The dragon represents Satan, who was cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9) and who was working at the time of Jesus' birth through the pagan Roman empire. The ruler who tried to kill Jesus at birth was Herod, a king under pagan Rome. He killed all the male babies of Bethlehem, hoping that one of them would be Jesus (Matthew 2: 16).

***5. What is the meaning of the "seven heads" and "ten horns" of the dragon, and of "the third part of the stars of heaven " being cast to the earth?***

***Answer A***: The "seven heads" represent the seven hills or mountains upon which Rome was built (Revelation 17:9, 10). We have now encountered a beast with seven heads and 10•horns three times in our Study Guides (Revelation 12:3; 13:1; 17:3).

***Answer B:*** The "ten horns" represent the governments, or nations, that support the major powers in their oppression of God's people and church. During pagan Rome's tenure (Revelation 12:3, 4), they represented the 10 barbarian tribes that supported the papacy in eventually bringing down the Roman Empire (Daniel 7:23, 24). These tribes later became modem Europe. In the last days, they represent all the nations of the world united in the end-time coalition (Revelation 16: 14; 17: 12, 13, 16) which will support "Babylon the great" in her warfare against God's people.

Answer C. “the part of the stars of heaven” are the angels who supported Lucifer in his insurrection in heaven and who were cast out with him (rev 12:9; Isaiah 14:12).

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**A Review and Summary**

Thus far, the prophecy has covered the following Bible facts:

1. God's true church appears, symbolized as a pure woman.

2. Jesus is born into the church.

3. Satan, working through King Herod of pagan Rome, tries to kill baby Jesus.

4. Satan's plan is unsuccessful.

5. Jesus' ascension is pictured.

***6. What did Satan do after he failed in his plan to destroy baby Jesus?***

***"He persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child" (Revelation 12: 13).***

***Answer***: Since he was no longer able to attack Jesus personally, he aimed his fury md persecution at God's church and His people. Six Identifying Points In Revelation chapters 12 and 14, Jesus gives us six descriptive points to use in identifying His end-time church. Watch for them as you study the remainder of this Study Guide.

***7. What did the woman (church) do to protect herself, and what is the "wilder- less" spoken of in Revelation 12:6, 14?***

***Answer*** A: Verses 6 and 14 say, "The woman fled into the wilderness," where she was protected for "a time, and times, and half a time" (or 1,260 literal years) from the wrath of Satan-who was then working through papal Rome. The "two wings" represent the protection and support God gave the church during her time in the 'wilderness" (Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32: 11). The time spent in the wilderness s the same 1,260-year period of papal prominence and persecution (A.D. 538 to 798) that Jesus repeatedly mentioned in prophecy. One prophetic day equals one literal year (Ezekiel 4:6).

***Answer B***: The term "wilderness" refers to the solitary places of earth (mountains, caves, forests, etc.) where God's people could hide in seclusion and thus escape total annihilation (Hebrews 11 :37, 38). And hide they did the Waldenses, Albigenses, Iuguenots, and many others. God's people (His church)would have been obliterated if they had not fled and hid in the wilderness during this devastating persecution why the papacy. In one 40-year period, "from the beginning of the order of the Jesuits, 1 the year 1540, to 1580, nine hundred thousand were destroyed. One hundred fifty thousand perished in the Inquisition in 30 years." (Albert Barnes, Notes on Daniel, comment on Daniel 7:25, p. 328.) At least 50 million people died for their faith during this 1, 260-year time period. God's church did not exist as an official organization during this 1,260-year time period. From A.D. 538 to l798 it was alive but not identifiable as an organization. When it came out of hiding after the 1,260 years, it still had the same doctrine and characteristics as the apostolic church, which entered le "wilderness" in A.D .. 538.

***Note: We have now discovered our first two identification points for Jesus' end-time church:***

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*II. It would arise and do its end-time work after 1798*.

There are many loving, genuine Christians in churches that were officially in existence before 1798. But none of these churches can be God's end-time church into which Jesus is calling all His people, because Jesus' end-time church had to arise after 1798. This means that most of the popular Protestant churches cannot be God's end-time church because they existed officially before 1798.

***8. In Revelation 12: J 7, God calls His end-time church the remnant. What does the word "remnant" mean?***

***Answer***: It means the last remaining portion. In reference to Jesus' church, it means His church of the ***very last days, which is identical in doctrine to the apostolic church.***

***9. In Revelation 12:17, what additional two-point description did Jesus give of His end-time remnant church?***

***Answer***: It would keep all the Ten Commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment (John 14: 15; Revelation 22: 14). It also would have the "testimony of Jesus," which the Bible tells us is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19: 10). (See Study Guide 24 for a full explanation of the gift of prophecy.)

***So here are Jesus' next two points of identification for His end-time remnant church:***

***III***. It will keep God's commandments, including His seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

***IV***. It will have the gift of prophecy. Remember that while hosts ofsincere Chris- tian people are found in churches that do not keep the Sabbath or have the gift of prophecy, none of these churches can be God's remnant end-time church into which Jesus is calling all last-day Christians, because God's end-time church will both keep God's commandments and have the gift of prophecy.

***10. What final two points of identification for God's remnant does the book of Revelation provide?***

***Answer***: The final two points of the six are: (5) It will be a worldwide missionary church (Revelation 14:6), and (6) It will be preaching the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-14, which are briefly summarized next.

**A. God's judgment is in session. Worship Him**! God's end-time church must be preaching that the judgment began in 1844. (See Study Guides 18 and 19.) It also calls upon people to "worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Revelation 14:7). How do we worship God as Creator? God wrote the answer in the fourth commandment. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8, 11). So the first angel's message commands all to worship God as Creator by keeping holy His seventh-day Sabbath, which He gave to us as a memorial of Creation.

**B. Come out of the fallen churches of Babylon**.

C. Don’t worship the beast or receive his mark, which is Sunday as a holy day. Beware of all counterfeits.

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***Here are the final two identification points:***

V. Gods end-time church will be a worldwide missionary church.

F. It will be preaching and teaching the three-point message of Revelation 14:6-14. Now let's review the six points that Jesus gives us for identifying His end-time remnant church:

1. It would not exist as an official organization between A.D. 538 and 1798.

2. It would arise and do its work after 1798.

3. It would keep the Ten Commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

4. It would have the gift of prophecy.

5. It would be a worldwide missionary church.

6. It would be teaching and preaching Jesus' three-point message of Revelation 14:6:14.

***11. Now that we have established Jesus' six identification points for His end-time remnant church, what does Jesus tell us to do, and with what results?***

***Answer***: "Seek, and ye shall find" (Matthew 7 :7). Jesus hands you these six specifications and says, "Go find my church." He promises that those who seek for heavenly things will find them.

***12. How many churches fit these six specifications?***

***Answer***: Jesus gave such distinctive and clear specifications that they fit only one church. Jesus did not give vague generalities such as "There will be many good people in my church" and "There will also be some hypocrites." How many churches would those two points fit? All of them. Those two points also fit the comer grocery store and downtown civic clubs. They would fit everything, and thus mean nothing. Instead, Jesus gave such pointed, specific, highly descriptive points that they fit one church and only one church-the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Let's double-check the specifications.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Church**:

1. Did not exist as an official organization between A.D. 538 and 1798.

2. Arose after 1798. It began to form in the early 1840s.

3. Keeps the Ten Commandments, including the fourth-God's holy seventh-day Sabbath.

4. Has the gift of prophecy.

5. Is a worldwide missionary church, working in nearly all countries today.

6. Teaches and preaches Jesus' great three-point message of Revelation 14:6-14.

Jesus asks you to take these six specifications and check for yourself. It is easy.

You cannot miss.

*Note: Please remember that there are many loving Christians in churches which these points do not fit, but no such church can be God's end-time remnant into which He is calling all His people for today*.

***13. After one of Jesus' children heeds His loving warning call and comes out of Babylon (Revelation 18:2, 4), what does Jesus ask him to do next?***

 “ye are called in one body” (Col 3:15) he is the head of the body, the church: (Col 1:18)

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***9. Of what perilous end-time danger does Jesus warn us?***

"There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24).

***Answer:*** God warns us of false Christs and false prophets who will be so extremely convincing that they will deceive all except the very elect of God. Billions will be deceived and lost.

***10. How can I determine whether a prophet is true or false***?

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:20).

***Answer:*** Test their teachings and conduct by the Word of God, which is the Bible.

If they teach and behave contrary to Scripture, they are false prophets and "there is no light in them."

***11. Are certain types of false prophets specifically named and condemned in the Bible?***

***Answer***: Yes. Deuteronomy 18: 10-12 and Revelation 21:8 speak against the fol- lowing types of false prophets:

A. Charmer-one who casts spells or uses charms.

B. Observer of times-astrologer.

C. Sorcerer-one who claims to contact spirits of the dead.

D. Consulter with familiar spirits-medium, or channeler.

E. User of divination-fortune teller.

F. Enchanter-same as a charmer.

G. Necromancer-another name for sorcerer.

H. Witch-female psychic.

I. Wizard-male psychic.

*Note: Most of these false prophets claim to have contact with spirits of the dead. The Bible clearly states that the dead cannot be contacted by the living. (Study Guide 10 contains more information on death.) The supposed spirits of the dead are evil angels, or devils (Revelation 16: 13, 14). Crystal balls, palm reading, leaf deciphering, astrology, and talking with the supposed spirits of the dead are not God sways of communicating with people. The Scriptures teach plainly that all who become involved with such things are an abomination (Deuteronomy 18: 12). And worse, those who continue involvement will be shut out of Gods kingdom (Galatians 5: 19-21; Revelation 21 :8; 22: 14, 15).*

***12. Is a true prophet's work primarily to serve the church or to serve unbelievers?***

"Prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe" (1 Corinthians 14:22).

***Answer***: The Bible is clear. Although a prophet's message may sometimes edify the public, the primary purpose of prophecy is to serve the church.

***13. Does God’s end time church have the gift of prophecy?***

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***Answer:*** In Study Guide 23, we discovered that Jesus gives a six-point description of His end-time church. Let's review these six points:

A. It would not exist as an official organization between A.D. 538 and 1798.

B. It would arise and do its work after 1798.

C. It would keep the Ten Commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

**D. It would have the gift of prophecy**.

E. It would be a worldwide missionary church.

F. It would be teaching and preaching Jesus' three-point message of Revelation 14:6-14. .' r

It is important to remember that God's end-time remnant church must fit all six of Jesus' descriptive points. This means that the gift of prophecy must be included. It will have a prophet.

***14. When you join God's end-time church, which has all of the gifts, how will it affect you?***

"That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of de- ceitful plotting" (Ephesians 4: 14).

***Answer***: It will anchor you spiritually. You will no longer be uncertain and un- settled in your beliefs.

***15. The apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12:1-18, likens the gifts that Jesus gave the church to parts of the body. What part of the body best represents the gift of prophecy?***

"Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spoke thus: 'Come, let us go to the seer'; for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer" (1 Samuel 9:9).

***Answer:*** Since a prophet is sometimes called a seer (someone who can see into :he future), the eyes would best represent the gift of prophecy.

***16. Since prophecy is the eyes of the church, a church without the gift ofprophecy would be in what condition?***

***Answer***: It would be blind. Jesus referred to the subsequent dangers when He mid, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15: 14).

***17. Must God's remnant church have all the gifts that Christ gave?***

***Answer:*** Yes. The Scripture plainly teaches that God's end-time remnant church will "come behind in no gift," which means it must have all of the gifts, including the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 1 :5-8) . ./ Apostles .

./ Prophets

./ Evangelists

./ Pastors

./ Teachers

18. Revelation 12:17 points out that God’s end time remnant church will “have the testimony of Jesus Christ” revelation 19:10 says that “the testimony of Jesus

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Her book Education is considered an authority in its field. It has been used by a secular university as a textbook. It is so perceptive and relevant that it was once pla-giarized by the minister of education of a certain nation, who published it under his own name. Dr. Florence Stratemeyer, a former professor of education at Columbia University, said the book contained "advanced educational concepts" and "was more than fifty years ahead of its time." Dr. Clive McCay, former professor of nutrition at Cornell University, said of her writings on health: "In spite of the fact that the works of Mrs. White were written long before the advent of modem scientific nutrition, no better overall guide is available today." Newscaster Paul Harvey said she "wrote with such profound understanding on the subject of nutrition that all but two of the many principles she espoused have been scientifically established." Her book The Desire of Ages, on the life of Christ, has been labeled an "English masterpiece" by Stationers Hall in London. It is heartwarming and uplifting beyond description. She said on the subject of intelligence that a person's IQ could be increased-long before experts agreed. She said in 1905 that cancer is a germ (or virus), which medical science began to endorse only in the 1950s. Ellen G. White is said to be the fourth- most-translated writer of all time. Her book on Christian living, Steps to Christ, has been translated into more than 150 languages and dialects. (For a free copy of this inspiring book, please write to Amazing Facts.)

***22. Did Ellen White have visions?***

***Answer***: Yes, many of them. They lasted from a few minutes to six hours. And they meet the Bible standard for visions as outlined in the answer to question seven of this Study Guide.

***23. Are Ellen White's words intended to be part of the Bible, or an addition to the Bible? 4***

***Answer:*** No! Doctrine comes from the Bible alone. As an end-time prophet, her rim was to stress the love of Jesus and His imminent return. She urged people to serve Him and accept His righteousness as a free gift. She also directed people's attention to the Bible prophecies for the end time-especially Jesus' three-point message for' the world today (Revelation 14:6-14)-and urged that they share these messages of hope quickly and worldwide.

***24. Does Ellen White speak in harmony with the Scriptures?***

***Answer***: Yes! Her writings are saturated with Scripture. Her stated and obvious purpose was to point people to the Bible. Her words never contradict God's Word.

***25. How can I accept Ellen White as a true prophet, since I do not know what she wrote?***

***Answer***: You can't, until you read what she has written. However, you can know has she (1) meets the tests of a prophet, (2) did the work of a prophet, and that (3): Today’s true end-time church must have a prophet. We urge you to get one of her looks and read it. (An inexpensive paperback copy of The Desire of Ages may be purchased from Amazing Facts, Inc.) As you read it, ask yourself if it draws you to Jesus and if it is in harmony with the Bible. It was written for you. We think you will find it absolutely enthralling.

***26. What three point command does Paul give us regarding a prophet?***

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***Answer:*** "Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21). The apostle Paul says that we should not despise or "tune out" a prophet. But rather, we should carefully test what the prophet says and does .by the Bible. If a prophet's words and behavior are in harmony with the Bible, we should heed them. This is what Jesus asks of His end-time people today.

***27. How does Jesus regard the rejection of the words and counsel of a true prophet?***

***Answer***: Jesus counts the rejection of a true prophet as rejecting the counsel of God (Luke 7 :28-30). Further, He clearly states that spiritual prosperity hinges upon believing His prophets (2 Chronicles 20:20).

***28. Do true end-time prophets originate new doctrine, or does doctrine come strictly from the Bible?***

***Answer***: True end-time prophets do not originate doctrine (Revelation 22: 18, 19). The Bible is the source of all doctrine. However, true prophets do:

A. Reveal exciting new facets of old-time Bible doctrines that were not obvious until pointed out by the prophet (Amos 3 :7).

B. Lead God's people to a closer walk with Jesus and a deeper study of His Word.

C. Help God's people understand difficult, unclear, or unnoticed portions of the Bible so that they suddenly come to life for us and bring great joy.

D. Help protect God's people from fanaticism, deception, and spiritual stupor.

E. Help God's people understand end-time prophecies which, verified by every- day news events, suddenly take on new meaning.

F. Help Gods people sense the certainty of Jesus' soon return and the end of the world.

For a deepening love for Jesus, a vibrant new excitement about the Bible, and a fresh understanding of Bible prophecies-listen to God's end-time prophet. You will find life taking on glorious new dimensions. Remember, Jesus says He will bless His end-time church with most-helpful prophetic messages. Praise the Lord! He is doing everything heaven can think of for His end-time people. He intends to save His people and take them to His glorious eternal kingdom. Those who follow Him are guaranteed entrance to heaven (Matthew 19:27-29).

***Note****: This is the ninth and final Study Guide on the subject of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14: 6-14. Three fascinating Study Guides on other crucial subjects remain*.

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. What happens when a church does not have a prophet?***

***Answer***: "Where there is no vision [prophecy], the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he" (Proverbs 29: 18). When a church does not have a prophet to counsel, guide, and lead it back to Jesus and the Bible, the people will flounder in a disoriented manner (Psalm 74:9) and eventually perish.

***2. Do you think additional true prophets may appear between now and Jesus’s second coming?***

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***Answer:*** Based on Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32), it certainly appears possible. There also will be false prophets (Matthew 7: 15; 24: 11, 24). We must be prepared to test prophets by the Bible (Isaiah 8: 19, 20; 2 Timothy 2: 15), heeding their counsel only if they are genuine and rejecting them if they are counterfeit. God knows when prophets are needed to wake people up, warn them, and turn them to Jesus and His Word. He sent a prophet (Moses) to lead His people out of Egypt (Hosea 12:13). He sent a prophet (John the Baptist) to prepare people for Jesus' first coming (Mark 1:1- 8). He also promised prophetic messages for these end-time days. God sends them to point us to the Bible and its crucial end-time prophecies; to strengthen, encourage, and assure us; and to make us like Jesus so we will be "blameless" when the Master returns. Without the help of a prophet, many will be lost through backsliding, sleeping spiritually, and being too busy. So let's welcome prophetic messages and praise God for sending them for our personal good.

***3. Why do most churches today not have the gift of prophecy?***

***Answer***: Because God normally sends prophets to His church only when it is keeping His commandments. Notice how Lamentations 2:9 puts it: "The law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the Lord." Please review the following texts: Ezekiel 7:26; Jeremiah 26:4-6; Ezekiel 20: 12-16; and Proverbs 29: 18. These verses verify that when God's people disregard His commandments, He sends no prophet. When they begin to obey His commands, He sends a prophet to assist, encourage, and guide. So when God's remnant church for the end time emerged keeping His commandments, it was time for a prophet. And God sent one-right on schedule.

***4. What can I do to make the gift of prophecy meaningful to me?***

***Answer***: The way to make the gift of prophecy meaningful is to study it for your- self and follow it prayerfully so Jesus can guide and preserve you and prepare you for His coming. "I thank my God always ... that you were enriched in everything by Him, ... even as the testimony of Christ [spirit of prophecy] was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1 :4-8).

***5. Which of these two-the gift of prophecy or the gift of tongues-will play the major role in God's end-time remnant church?***

***Answer***: The gift of prophecy will play the leading role. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 it is listed as second in importance of all the gifts, while the gift of tongues is listed last. A church without the gift of prophecy is blind. (See question 16 in this Study Guide.) Jesus solemnly warns His end-time church of the danger of blindness and urges them to anoint their eyes with heavenly eye salve so they will be able to see (Revelation 3: 17, 18). The eye salve represents the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20, 27; John 14:26), who gives all gifts to the church (l Corinthians 12:4, 7-11). Heeding the words of God's prophet will help His end-time remnant people clearly understand the Bible and will prevent uncertainty and confusion.

6. I BELIEVE “in the Bible and the Bible only” as the source of doctrine and guidance for Christian living. Therefore, I reject all modern day prophets

***Answer:*** You are correct in believing in the Bible as the source of Christian doctrine. However, please remember that the Bible clearly points out that:

A. The gift of prophecy will exist in God's church until the end of time (Ephesians 4:11,13).

B. Jesus' end-time church will have the gift of prophecy (Revelation 12: 17; 19: 10; 22:9).

C. To reject a prophet's counsel is to reject God's counsel (Luke 7:28-30).

D. We are commanded to test prophets and follow their counsel if they speak and live in harmony with the Bible (1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21). People who base their faith on "the Bible only' must follow its counsel regarding prophets. True prophets wil1 always speak in harmony with the Bible. Prophets who contradict God's Word are false and should be rejected. If I fail to listen to and test prophets, I am not basing my faith upon the Bible, which mandates doing so.

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**25. In God We Trust?**

Do you trust God ... really? The truth is, a lot of people might say yes, but they don't act like it. And worse, because they don't trust Him, they might actually steal from Him! "Come on!" you say, "No one would steal or embezzle money from God." But God's shocking message to His people is, "you have robbed Me!" (Malachi 3 :8). Real records prove that billions of people steal from God, and as amazing as it may seem, they use that stolen money to subsidize their own reckless spending! Yet many are unaware of their larceny, and in this Study Guide, we'll show you how to avoid that same ***mistake and how to prosper financially through real faith in God.***

***1. According to the Bible, what portion of our income belongs to the Lord? "And all the tithe of the land ... is the LORD'S" (Leviticus 27:30).***

***Answer***: The tithe belongs to God.

***2. What is the "tithe"?***

"I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance." "The tithes of the children of Israel ... I have given to the Levites as an inheritance" (Numbers 18:21,24).

***Answer:*** The tithe is one-tenth of a person's income. The word "tithe" literally means "tenth." The tithe belongs to God. It is His. I have no right to keep it. When I tithe, I am not making a gift; I am simply returning to God what is already His. Unless I am returning one-tenth of my income to God, I am not tithing.

***3. Where does the Lord ask His people to bring the tithe? "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse" (Malachi 3: 10).***

***Answer***: He asks us to bring the tithe into His storehouse.

***4. To what does the Lord refer when he speaks of his storehouse?***

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***Answer:*** The sin God cannot forgive is "blasphemy against the Spirit." But what is "blasphemy against the Spirit"? People have many differing beliefs about this sin. Some believe it is murder; some, cursing the Holy Spirit; some, committing suicide; some, killing an unborn child; some, denial of Christ; some, a heinous, horrible, extremely wicked act; and others, worshipping a false god! The next question will shed some helpful light on this crucial matter.

***2. What does the Bible say about sin and blasphemy? "Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men" (Matthew 12:31).***

***Answer***: The Bible clearly says that all kinds of sin and blasphemy will be for- given. So none of the sins listed above is the sin that God cannot forgive. No single act of any kind is the unpardonable sin.

Sounds Contradictory

Yes, it sounds contradictory, but both of the following statements are true:

B. Any and every kind of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven.

C. The blasphemy or sin against the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven. Jesus Made Both Statements Jesus made both statements in Matthew 12:31, so there is no error here. To harmo- nize the statements we must discover the work of the Holy Ghost. By the way, the word "ghost" comes from "ghost," the Old English word for "spirit."

***3. What is the work of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit?***

"He [the Holy Spirit] will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:8, 13).

***Answer:*** The work of the Holy Spirit is to convict me of sin and to guide me into all truth. The Holy Spirit is God's agency for conversion. Without the Holy Spirit, no one feels sorrow for sin, nor is anyone ever converted.

***1. When the Holy Spirit convinces me of sin, what must I do to be forgiven?***

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

***Answer:*** When convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, I must confess my sins in rrder to be forgiven. When I confess them, God not only forgives me but He also .leanscs me from all unrighteousness. God is waiting and ready to forgive me for my and every sin I may commit (Psalm 86:5), but only if I confess and forsake it. ;.

***What happens if I do not confess my sins when convicted by the Holy Spirit? "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Proverbs 28: 13).***

***Answer***: If I do not confess my sins, Jesus cannot forgive my sins. Thus, any sin hat I do not confess is unpardonable until I confess it, because forgiveness always allows confession. It never precedes it. Terrible Danger of Resisting the Holy Spirit

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"Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse" (Nehemiah 13: 12).

***Answer:*** In Malachi 3: 10, God refers to the storehouse as "mine house," which means His temple or church. Nehemiah 13:12 further points out that the tithe is to be brought to the temple treasury, which is God's storehouse. Other texts that refer to the storehouse as the temple treasuries, or chambers, include 1 Chronicles 9:26 (see margin); 2 Chronicles 31:11,12 (see margin); and Nehemiah 10:37,38. In Old Testament times, God's people brought 10 percent of all their increase-including crops and animals-to the storehouse.

***5. Some have thought that tithing was part of Moses' system of rites and ceremonies (hat ended at the cross. How does the Bible help us understand that this is not so?*** "And he [Abram] gave him a tithe of all" (Genesis 14:20). And in Genesis 28:22, Jacob said; "And of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

***Answer:*** These passages reveal that both Abraham and Jacob, who lived long before Moses' day, tithed their income. We can therefore conclude that God's plan of tithing preceded Moses' law. ~. But didn't Jesus abolish the plan of tithing? "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone" (Matthew 23:23).

***Answer:*** No! On the contrary, He endorsed it. Jesus was rebuking the Jews for remitting the more important matters of the law-"justice and mercy and faith"- even though they were meticulous tithers. He then plainly told them they should continue tithing, but should also be just and merciful and faithful.

***7. For what was tithe used in Old Testament days?***

"I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting" (Numbers 18:21).

***Answer:*** The tithe in Old Testament days was used for the income of the priests. The tribe of Levi (the priests) received no portion of land for crop-growing and business operations, while the other 11 tribes did. The Levites worked full-time taking .are of the temple and ministering to God's people. So God's plan was that the tithe support the priests and their families.

***8. Did God change His plan for tithe usage in New Testament days?***

"Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel" (l Corinthians 9: 13, 14).

***Answer:*** No! He continued it. His plan today is that tithe be used to support those who work solely in gospel ministry. If all people tithed and the tithe were used

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strictly for the support of gospel workers, there would be more than enough money to reach the entire earth very quickly with God's end-time gospel message.

***9. What startling proposal does God make to people who feel uncertain about tithing?***

"'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse ... And try Me now in this,' Says LORD of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it'" (Malachi 3: 1 0).

***Answer:*** He says, "try Me now" and see if I will not "pour out for you such blessing" too big to receive. This is the only time in the Bible that God makes such a proposal. He is saying, "Give it a try. It will work. I promise you." Hundreds of thousands of tithers the world over will gladly testify to the truth of God's tithing promise. They have all learned the truth of the words: "You can't out give God."

***10. When we tithe, who really receives our money?***

"Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he [Jesus] receives them" (Hebrews 7:8).

***Answer:*** Jesus, our heavenly High Priest, receives our tithes.

***11. What test did Adam and Eve fail, which all of us must pass if we would inherit His heavenly kingdom?***

***Answer***: They took things that God said were not theirs. God gave Adam and Eve the fruit of all the trees in the garden of Eden except one-the tree of the knowledge of good and evrl (Genesis 2: 16, 17). The fruit of that tree was not theirs to eat. They were to leave it alone. Eve said they were not even to touch it (Genesis 3:3). But they did not trust God. They ate the fruit and fell-and the long, horrendous, wrenching sojourn in sin began. To people today, God gives His riches, wisdom, and all of the other assets and blessings of heaven. Everything is ours-except one-tenth of our income, which is His (Leviticus 27:30). But as with Adam and Eve, He does not take it by force. He leaves it within our reach but warns, "Don't take that. It is holy. It is mine." When we knowingly take God's tithe and appropriate it for our own use, we repeat the sin of Adam and Eve and thus display a tragic lack of trust in our Redeemer. God does not need our money, but He deserves our loyalty and trust.

**Make God Your Partner**

When I return God's tithe, I make Him a partner in everything I undertake. What a fantastic, blessed privilege: God and I-partners! With Him as my partner, I have everything to gain and nothing to lose. It is an awesomely dangerous venture to take God's own money, which He has earmarked for the saving of souls, and use it for our own personal budgets.

***12. In addition to the tithe, which belongs to God, what else does God ask of His people?***

"Bring an offering, and come into His courts" (Psalm 96:8).

Answer: the Lord asks us to give offerings for his work as an expression of our love for him and our thanks giving for his blessings.

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***73. How much shall J give to God as offerings?***

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity. For God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

***Answer:*** The Bible does not specify a set amount for offerings. Each person de- .ides (as God impresses) how much to give and then gives it cheerfully.

***14. What additional Bible principles does God share with us regarding giving?***

***Answer:***

A. My first priority should be to give myself to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5).

B. I should give God my very best (Proverbs 3 :9).

C. God blesses the generous giver (Proverbs 11 :24, 25).

D. It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

E. When stingy, I am not rightly using my God-given blessings (Luke 12:16-21).

F. God returns more than I give (Luke 6:38).

G. I should give in proportion to how God has prospered and blessed nle (1 Cor- inthians 16:2).

H. I should give as I am able (Deuteronomy 16: 17).

We return tithe to God, to whom it already belongs. We give offerings. Offerings re voluntary and should be given joyously.

***5. What does the Lord own?***

***Answer:***

B. All the silver and gold in the world (Haggai 2:8).

C. The earth and all its people (Psalm 24: 1).

D. The Lord owns the world and everything in it (Psalm 50: 10-12). But He permits people to use His great riches. He also gives them the wisdom and power to prosper and to accumulate wealth (Deuteronomy 8: 18). In return for furnishing everything, all God asks is that we return to Him 10 per cent as our acknowledgement of His great investment in our business affairs-plus offerings as an expression of our love and gratitude.

***6. How does the Lord refer to people who do not return His 10 percent and give offerings?***

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:8).

***Answer:*** He refers to them as robbers. Can you imagine people stealing from God?

***7. What does God say will happen to those who knowingly continue to rob Him In tithes and offerings?***

"You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation" (Malachi 3:9). "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6: 1 0).

***Answer:*** The curse of God will rest upon them. They will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

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***18. God warns us against covetousness. Why is it so extremely dangerous?***

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:34).

***Answer:*** Because our hearts follow our investments. If my focus is on accumulating more and more money, my heart becomes covetous, grasping, and proud. But if my focus is on sharing and helping others and blessing God's work, then my heart becomes caring, loving, liberal, and humble. Covetousness is one of the 20 terrible sins of the last days that will shut people out of heaven (2 Timothy 3: 1-7).

***19. How does Jesus feel when we rob Him of His sacred tithe and love offerings?***

"Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart" (Hebrews 3:10).

***Answer***: He probably feels much as a parent whose child steals money from him. The money itself is not the big thing. It is the child's lack of integrity, love, and trust that is deeply disappointing.

***20. What thrilling points does Paul stress about the stewardship of the believers in Macedonia?***

***Answer:*** Paul had written the churches in Macedonia asking them to please lay aside some funds for God's people in Jerusalem, who were suffering terribly from an extended famine. He told them he would pick up these gifts when he came to their cities on his next visit. The thrilling response from the churches in Macedonia, described in 2 Corinthians chapter 8, is most heartening:

A. Verse 5-As a first step, they rededicated their lives to Jesus Christ.

B. Verses 2, 3-Though in "deep poverty" themselves, they gave "beyond their power" to give.

D. Verse 4 -They urged Paul to come and pick up their gifts.

E. Verse 9~-Their gifts followed the sacrificial example of Jesus.

Note: If we truly love Jesus, giving sacrificially for His work will never be a burden, but rather a glorious privilege that we will perform with great joy and satisfaction.

**21. What does God promise to do for those who are faithful in returning tithes and giving offerings? –**

"'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, i and try Me now in this,'" says the LORD of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,' says the LORD of hosts; 'and all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,' says the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 3:10-12).

. ***Answer:*** God promises to prosper His faithful financial stewards, and they will be a blessing to those around them

**Consider the Following Ways God Blesses:**

A. God promises that your nine tenth will go further with his blessing than your total income would go without it. If you doubt this ask any faithful tither.

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B. Blessings are not always financial. They may include health, peace of mind, answered prayers, protection, a dose-knit and loving family, added physical strength, ability to make wise decisions, a spirit of thankfulness; a closer relation- ship with Jesus, success in soul-winning, an old car kept running longer, etc.

C. He becomes your partner in everything. No one except God could ever struc- ture a plan so utterly fantastic.

**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. I don't tithe because I don't like the way my church is using God's money.***

***Answer***: Tithing is a command of God. Tithe is holy money that belongs to the Lord (Leviticus 27:30). When you tithe, you tithe to Him. God is big enough to take .are of the money you give for His church. Your responsibility is to tithe. Leave it to God to deal with those who misuse His funds. ?

***I am frustrated because financial difficulties have made it impossible for me to give more than a very small amount beyond my tithe. With gospel needs so great, i feel guilty.***

***Answer***: The size of your gift is not important if you are doing the best you can. Jesus said that the poor widow of Mark 12:41-44, who gave only a pittance (two mites), gave more "than all they which have cast into the treasury" because the tithers gave "of their abundance; but she ... did cast in all that she had." The Lord measures our gifts by the amount of sacrifice we make and by the attitude or spirit with which we give. Jesus counts your gift very big. Give it with joy and know that Jesus is pleased. Read 2 Corinthians 8: 12 for encouragement.

r. ***Doesn't stewardship involve more than the proper handling of my money?***

***Answer:*** Yes, stewardship involves the proper handling of every talent and blessing that I receive from God, who gives me everything (Acts 17:24, 25). In fact, it involves my very life! Faithful stewardship of God's gifts to me also includes my time spent:

A. Doing the work that God has assigned me (Mark 13:34).

B. Actively witnessing for Christ (Acts 1:8).

C. Studying the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2: 15).

D. Praying (1 Thessalonians 5: 17).

E. Helping those in need (Matthew 25:31-46).

F. Daily surrendering my life anew to Jesus (Romans 12: 1, 2; 1 Corinthians 15 :31).

'***, Don't you feel that some preachers are paid too much money?***

***Answer***: Yes, without doubt. The seemingly arrogant flaunting of riches by some clergymen today is reducing the influence, of all ministers. It brings reproach upon re name of Jesus. It causes hundreds of thousands to turn away in disgust from re church and its ministry. Such leaders will face an awful day of reckoning in the judgement, 1inisters of God's End-Time Remnant Church However, no minister in God's end-time, remnant church is overpaid. After internship all ministers receive virtually the same salary (varying only a few dollars

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 monthly) regardless of their job title or the size 01 their church. In many cases, spouses work in the public marketplace to supplement the pastors' incomes.

***5. What if I cannot afford to tithe?***

***Answer:*** God says if we put Him first, He will see to it that our needs are all met (Matthew 6:33). His mathematics often work just opposite to human conception. Under His plan, what we have left after tithing will go further than all of it would without His blessing. Actually, we cannot afford not to tithe!

**26. A Love that Transforms**

Being in love changes everything. For instance, a young lady was reading a large book for her university's English literature course. She found the whole thing very boring and could barely stay focused when reading it. But then she met a striking young professor on campus, and they quickly fell in love. Soon after, she realized her beloved was the author of the book she had struggled with. That night she stayed up and devoured the entire book, exclaiming, "This is the best book I have ever read!" What changed her perspective? Love did. Likewise, many today find Scripture boring, oppressive, and unappealing. But that all changes when you fall in love with the author. See how in this heart-warming Study Guide!

***1. Who is the author of Scripture?***

"The prophets have inquired and searched carefully ... searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow" (1 Peter 1: 10, 11). .

***Answer:*** The God of the Bible (even the Old Testament) is virtually always Jesus Christ. Jesus created the world (John 1: 1-3, 14; Colossians 1: 13-17), wrote the Ten Commandments (Nehemiah 9:6, 13), was the God of the Israelites (1 Corinthians 10:1-4), and guided the writings of the prophets (l Peter 1:10,11). So, Jesus Christ is the author of Scripture.

***2. What is Jesus' attitude toward the people of earth?***

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16).

***Answer:*** Jesus loves us all with an indescribable, unfailing love that passes understanding.

***3. Why should we love Jesus?***

"We love Him because He first loved us" (l John 4: 19). "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

***Answer:*** We should love Him because He loved us enough to die for us-while we were yet his enemies.

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***4. In what respects are a successful marriage and the Christian life similar?***

"And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3 :22).

***Answer:*** In a good marriage certain things are imperative, such as faithfulness to one's spouse. Other things may not seem major, but if they please a spouse they are necessary. If they displease, they should be discontinued. So it is with the Christian life. The commands of Jesus are imperative. But in Scripture Jesus has also outlined for us principles of conduct that please Him. As in a good marriage, a Christian finds it sheer joy to do the things that make Jesus, the One he loves, happy. He also avoids things that displease Him.

***5. What does Jesus say are the results of doing the things that please Him?***

"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love .... These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:10,11).

***Answer***: The devil claims that to follow Christian principles is drab, dull, demeaning, and legalistic. But Jesus says it brings fullness of joy (John 15: 10, 11) and a more abundant life (John 10: 10). Believing the devil's lies brings heartache and deprives people of life that is "really living."

***6. Why does Jesus give us specific principles for Christian living?***

***Answer***: Because they:

B. Are for our own good always (Deuteronomy 6:24). As good parents teach good principles to their children, so Jesus teaches good principles to His children.

A. Set for us a safeguard from sin (Psalm 119: 11). Jesus' principles protect us from entering the danger zones of Satan and sin.

c. Show us how to follow in Christ's footsteps (1 Peter 2:21).

D. Bring us true happiness (John 13: 17).

D. Give us an opportunity to express our love for Him (John 15:10).

D. Help us be the right example to others (1 Corinthians 10:31-33; Matthew 5: 16).

E. ***According to Jesus, how should Christians relate to the evil of the world and to worldliness?***

***Answer:*** His commands and counsel are clear and specific:

A. Don't love the world or the things of the world. The things of the world that are not of God are: (1) the lust of the flesh, (2) the lust of the eyes, and (3) the pride of life (1 John 2: 16). All sin falls into one or more of these three categories. Satan uses these three avenues to lure us into love of the world. When I begin to love the world, I become an enemy of God (1 John 2:15,16; James 4:4).

A. I must keep myself unspotted from the world (James 1 :27). ,

***What urgent warning does God give us regarding the world?***

***Answer***: Jesus warns Christians, "Do not be conformed to this world" (Romans 2:2). The devil is not neutral. He presses every Christian constantly. Through Jesus Philippians 4: 13), I must firmly resist the devil's suggestions, and he will flee from le (James 4:7). The minute I permit the "squeezing” of any other factor to influence my conduct, I imperceptibly begin slipping into apostasy. Christian behaviour

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is not be decided by the feeling and conduct of the majority, but by Jesus' words from Scripture,

***9. why do we need to guard our thoughts?***

"As he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23 :7).

***Answer***: We must guard our thoughts, because thoughts dictate behavior. God wants to help us bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). But Satan desperately wants to bring "the world" into our thoughts. He can do this only through our five senses-especially sight and hearing. He presses his sights and sounds upon us all and, unless we consistently refuse to look at or listen to what he offers, he will direct us into the broad way that leads to destruction. The Bible is clear. We do become like the things we repeatedly see and hear (2 Corinthians 3: 18).

***10. What are some principles for Christian living?***

"Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

***Answer:*** Christians must separate themselves from all things that are not true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. They will avoid:

A. Dishonesty of every kind-cheating, lying, stealing, being unfair, intent to deceive, slander, and betrayal.

B. Impurity of every kind. This includes fornication, adultery, incest, homosexu- ality, perversion of all types, pornography, profanity, filthy conversation, off- color jokes, social dancing, degenerate songs or music, and most of what is shown on television and in movie theaters.

C. Places where we would never invite Jesus to accompany us, such as night- clubs, taverns, gambling casinos, racetracks, etc. Let's take a few minutes to enlarge upon the dangers of popular music, dancing, television, videos, and the theater. .

**Music and Song**

Many types of secular music (rap, country, pop, rock, heavy metal, adult contemporary, and dance music) have been largely captured by Satan. The lyrics often glorify vice and destroy a desire for spiritual matters. Researchers have discovered some interesting things regarding the power of music: (1) It enters the brain through the emotions, thus bypassing reasoning powers. (2) It affects every function of the body. (3) It can alter pulse, breath rates, and reflexes without the person realizing it. (4) Syncopated dance rhythms alter moods and create a mild hypnosis in the listener. Even without lyrics, the music itself has power to debase a person's feelings, desires, and thoughts. Secular rock musicians openly admit this. Rolling Stones leader Mick Jagger said: "You can feel the adrenaline going through your body. It's sort of sexual." (Newsweek, "Mick Jagger and the Future of Rock," Jan. 4, 1971, p. 47.) John Oates of Hall and Oates stated that "Rock 'n' Roll is 990/0 sex." (Circus MAGAZINE Jan 31. 1976 p. 39.) Would "such music please Jesus? Converted pagans from overseas tell us that our modern secular band music is the same kind they

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used in witchcraft and devil worship! Ask yourself: "If Jesus came to visit me, what music would I feel comfortable asking Him to listen to with me?" Any music you are not sure of should be abandoned. (For an in-depth analysis of decadent, secular music, we recommend Drums, Rock and Worship by Karl Tsatalbasidis, which can e purchased from Amazing Facts.) When we fall in love with Jesus, He changes our musical desires. "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our rod: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord" (Psalm 40:3). God has provided for His people plenty of good music that inspires refreshes, elevates, and strengthens the Christian experience. Those who accept the devil's degrading music; a substitute are missing one of life's choicest blessings.

**Dancing**

Dancing inevitably leads away from Jesus and spirituality. When the Israelites danced around the golden calf, they forgot God (Exodus 32: 17-25). When the daughter of wicked Herodias danced before King Herod, John the Baptist was beheaded Matthew 14:2-12). Notice these shocking statistics: A Catholic priest in New York lid that three-fourths of the girls who have confessed adultery to him put the blame 1 dancing. Other priests have said that three- fourths is too low; they estimate nine- months. Remember, if Christ can participate in an activity with you, you are safe. If it, stay away from it.

**V, Videos, and the Theater**

Do the things you watch on television and videos or in the theater appeal to your were or to your higher nature? Do they lead you into a greater love for Jesus, or for e world? Do they glorify Jesus, or satanic vices? In our day even secularists and non- christians are speaking out against many of the TV and film productions. Satan has captured the eyes and ears of billions and, as a result, is rapidly turning the world into a cesspool of immorality, crime, terror, and hopelessness. One study said that without TV here would be 10,000 fewer murders per year in the United States, 70,000 fewer rapes, «l 700,000 fewer assaults." (Newsweek, "Violence, Reel to Reel," Dec. 11, 1995, p. '.) Jesus, who loves you, asks you to take your eyes off Satan's thought-controllers id put them on Him. He says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved" (Isaiah 45:22).

 ***What clear-cut list does Jesus give us that we could use as a guide for watch-g television?***

"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, un- cleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5: 19-21).

***Answer:*** Scripture is too clear to misunderstand. If a family should ban all TV programs that exhibit or condone any of the above sins, there would be very little to itch. If Jesus came to visit you, what TV shows would you feel comfortable asking m to view with you? All other shows are probably unfit for Christian viewing.

***In this day of determined, independent thinking, many feel totally capable making spiritual decisions without input from anyone, including Jesus. What does Jesus say about such people?***

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***Answer***: Listen to Jesus' unequivocal statement : "You shall not at all do as we are doing here today-every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes" (Deuteronomy 12:8). "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 16:25). "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise" (Proverbs 12: 15). "He who trusts in his own heart [mind] is a fool" (Proverbs 28:26).

 ***What solemn warnings does Jesus give us about the example and influence of our lives?***

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). Let no man "put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way" (Romans 14: 13). "None of us lives to himself" (Romans 14:7).

***Answer:*** We all expect leaders, people of influence, famed athletes, and other widely known figures to set a good example and use their influence wisely-e-re pay a so-called "debt to society." But in today's world, we are often disillusioned at the repugnant and irresponsible actions of prominent individuals. Jesus clearly states in Romans 1: 14 that Christians, who represent Him and His kingdom, do indeed owe something to others. And He solemnly warns that Christians who disregard their influence and example, and thereby lead people astray, will not enter His kingdom.

***14. What are Jesus' principles of conduct regarding clothing and jewelry?***

***Answer:***

**A. Dress modestly**. See 1 Timothy 2:9. Remember that the world is brought into our lives through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2: 16). Immodest dress involves all three and is off-limits for a Christian.

**B. Lay ornaments and jewelry aside**. "Pride of life" is the big problem here. Jesus' followers should look different. Their appearance witnesses and sends light to others (Matthew 5: 16). Jewelry draws attention to and exalts self. In the Bible, it is a symbol of backsliding and apostasy. When Jacob and his family rededicated their lives to the Lord, they buried their jewelry in the earth (Genesis 35:1, 2, 4). When the Israelites were about to enter the promised land, the Lord commanded them to remove their ornaments (Exodus 33:5, 6). In Isaiah chapter 3, God clearly says that in wearing jewelry (bracelets, rings, earrings, etc., as listed in verses 19-23), His people were sinning (verse 9). In Hosea 2:13, the Lord says that when Israel forsook Him, they began to wear jewelry. In 1 Timothy 2:9 and 1 Peter 3:3, Paul and Peter both inform us that God's people will not adorn themselves with gold, pearls, and costly array. Please notice that Peter and Paul did speak of the ornaments God wants His people to wear: "A meek and quiet spirit" (1 Peter 3:4) and "good works" (1 Timothy 2:10). Jesus sums it up by symbolizing His true church in Revelation 12:1 as a pure woman clothed with the sun (Jesus' brightness and righteousness) and the apostate church as a harlot bedecked with gold, precious stones, and pearls (Rev 17:3,4). God asks his people to separate from Babylon (Rev 18:2,4) and all it stands for- including the jewels that draw attention to

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self-and instead clothe themselves with the righteousness of Jesus. When we fall in love with Jesus, it is a sheer joy and pleasure to live His lifestyle.

***'5. How do conduct and obedience relate to salvation?***

***Answer***: Obedience and Christian conduct are the proof, or evidence, that I have seen saved by Jesus Christ (James 2:20-26). The fact of the matter is that unless one's lifestyle changes after conversion, the conversion most likely was not genu- ne. A converted person will find his greatest joy in discovering Jesus' will in everything and in joyously following where He leads.

**Beware of Idolatry**

The first epistle of John talks of Christian conduct. At its close (1 John 5:21), Jesus warns us through His servant John to keep ourselves from idols. The Master is re- erring to anything that interferes with or lessens my love for Him-such as music, fashion, possessions, adornment, evil forms of entertainment, etc. The natural fruit, r result, of a true conversion is to follow Jesus happily and adopt His lifestyle.

***6. Should we expect everyone to look with favor upon the Christian lifestyle?***

***Answer:*** No. Jesus said that the things of God are foolishness to the natural man because they are not spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2: 14). When Jesus refers) conduct, He is laying down principles for those who are seeking to be led by His spirit. His people will be grateful and will joyously follow His counsel. Others may not understand or approve.

***7. How would a person who rejects Jesus' standards for Christian conduct view heaven?***

***Answer***: Such a person would be miserable in heaven. He would complain that there were no nightclubs; no liquor, no pornographic material, no prostitutes, no sensual music, no lewd books, no profanity, and no gambling. Heaven would be tell" for those who have not formed a true love relationship with Jesus. This is why Christian standards make no sense to them (2 Corinthians 6: 14-17).

***~. How can I adopt and follow these Bible guidelines without appearing pharisaical, judgmental, or legalistic?***

***Answer:*** Everything we do should be with one thought in mind: to express love id esteem for Jesus (1 John 3:22). When Jesus is lifted up and shown to people John 12:32), they will be drawn to Him. Our key questions should always be, "Will is honor Jesus? Would I listen to this, sing this, do this, watch this, drink this, buy is, read this, say this, or go there if Jesus were here, in person, with me?" Jesus is with you and me (Matthew 28:20), and He sees everything we do. I must sense Jesus' presence in every facet and activity of life. When I consciously spend time with Him, become like Him (2 Corinthians 3: 18). Then when people are with me, they will respond as they did to the disciples of old: "They marvelled; and they took know 1- 1ge of them that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4: 13). Christians who live like at will never become pharisaical, judgmental, or legalistic. In Old Testament days, od's people were in almost constant apostasy because they chose to live as their heathen neighbours rather than follow the distinctive lifestyle God outlined for them Deuteronomy 31: 16; Judges 2: 17: 1 Chr 5:25; Ezekiel 23:30). It is true yet today. No one can serve two masters (matt 6:24). Those who cling to the world and lifestyle will be slowly moulded by Satan to adopt his feelings and desires and, thus,

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be programmed to be lost. Those who follow Jesus' principles for Christian conduct will- be changed into His image and prepared for heaven. There is no middle ground.

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**Your Thought Questions Answered**

***1. I know what God would have me to do, but I just don't feel that I'm ready to begin doing it. What do you suggest?***

***Answer***: Begin doing it at once! Never depend on feelings. God guides through the words of Scripture (Isaiah 8:20). Feelings often lead astray. The Jewish leaders felt they should cru r- ify Jesus, but they were wrong. Many will feel saved at Jesus' Second Advent, but they will, instead, be lost (Matthew 7:21-23). The devil influences feelings. If i depend on my feelings, he will lead me to destruction.

***2. I'm troubled. I want very much to do a certain thing. I realize, however, that because of its appearance, some might feel I am doing evil. What should I do?***

***Answer***: The Bible is clear. It says, "Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). And the apostle Paul said that if his eating of flesh foods of- fended somebody, he'd never touch those foods again (1 Corinthians 8:13). He also said that if he ignored the offended person's feelings and continued eating flesh foods, he would be sinning.

***3. It seems to me that churches list too many things I must do and too many things I must not do. It drives me up the wall. Isn't following Jesus what really matters?***

***Answer***: Yes, following Jesus is what matters. However, following Jesus means one thing to one person and something quite different to another. The only safe way to know what following Jesus means is to discover what Jesus says in the Bible on any question regarding right doing. Those who lovingly follow Jesus' commands will one day soon enter His kingdom (Revelation 22: 14). Those who follow man-made rules will go astray and could be led away from His kingdom (Matthew 15:3-9).

***4. A few of God's requirements seem unreasonable and unnecessary to me. I can't understand why they are important. What do you suggest?***

***Answer***: Children often feel that some of their parents' requirements (e.g. "Don't play in the street") are unreasonable. But in later years, the child will thank the parents for the requirement. We are "children" in dealing with God, because His thoughts and actions are as high above ours as the heavens are above the earth (Isaiah 55:8,9). We need to trust our loving heavenly Father in the few areas we may not understand and stop "playing in the street," if He so requires. He will never with- hold anything good from us (Psalm 84: 11). When I am truly in love with Jesus, I will give Him the benefit of the doubt and do His will even if I do not always understand why. The new birth is the key. The Bible says when I am truly born again, overcoming the world will not be a problem because a converted person will have the faith and trust to happily follow Jesus in everything (1 John 5:4). Refusing to follow Him because I am not clear on His reasons displays a lack of trust in my Savior.

***5. What will I benefit from Jesus' loving principles, laws, and commands?***

Answer: Absolutely! Every principle, rule, law, or command of Jesus provides unbelievably outstanding blessings. The biggest lottery win in history pales into in-

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significance when compared to God's rich blessings to His obedient children. Here are just a few benefits that come from following Jesus' rules:

I. Jesus as a personal friend.

2. Jesus as a partner in business.

3. Freedom from guilt.

4. Peace of mind.

S. Freedom from fear.

7. Indescribable happiness.

8. Longer life.

9. Assurance of a home in heaven.

10. Better health.

10. No hangovers.

Talk about riches! The true Christian receives benefits from his heavenly Father that even the richest people on earth can never purchase.

***6. In regard to standards and lifestyle, do I have a responsibility to lecture other people about them?***

***Answer***: The best rule for us to follow is to be concerned about our own lifestyle. 'Examine yourselves," the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 13:5. When our lifestyle is 1S it should be, our example serves as a silent witness and we don't need to lecture anyone. Of course, parents do have a special responsibility to help their children understand how to follow Jesus.

***7. What are the greatest dangers for Christians today?***

***Answer***: Among the greatest dangers are divided loyalties. Many Christians have two loves that divide the heart: love for Jesus, and love for the world and its sinful practices and pleasures. Too many, it seems, wish to see how closely they can follow he world and still be considered Christians. It won't work. Jesus clearly warned that to one "can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). T

 ***But isn't it legalism to follow these Christian rules of conduct?***

***Answer***: Not unless a person is doing it in order to be saved. Salvation comes only .s a miraculous, free gift from Jesus. Salvation by works (or conduct) is no salvation at all. However, following Jesus' standards of conduct because I have been saved and love Him is never legalism.

'***, Are Christian standards involved with Jesus' command to let our lights shine?***

***Answer***: Assuredly! Jesus says a true Christian is a light (Matthew 5: 14). He also aid, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and lorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5: 16). You don't hear a light; you see it. 'eople will see a Christian's light shine by his conduct, dress, diet, conversation, at- tude, sympathy, purity, kindness, and honesty (Jesus' standards). They will inquire bout his lifestyle and, thus, often be led to Christ.

o***. Aren't Christian standards cultural? Shouldn't they change with the times?***

***Answer***: Customs may change, but Bible standards endure. "The word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:8). The church must lead, not follow. It must not be programmed by culture, humanism or the trends of the day. We are not to bring the church down to erring human standards, but rather, up to Jesus’ standards. When a

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church lives, speaks, looks, and behaves like the world, who would ever go to it for help? Jesus sends a clarion call to His people and His church, saying, "Come out from among them and be separate .... Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6: 17). Jesus' church is not to imitate the world, but rather to repudiate it. The "world" has ravaged billions. The church must not join in its mayhem. The church must stand tall and with a gracious but firm voice call people to listen to Jesus and come up to His standards. When a hearer falls in love with Jesus and asks Him to control his life, the Savior will work the miracles needed to change him and safely escort him to God's eternal kingdom. There is no other way to heaven.

***11. Surely not all dancing is evil. Didn’t David dance before the Lord?***

***Answer***: True, not all dancing is evil. David leaped and danced before the Lord as an expression of praise for His blessings (2 Samuel 6: 14-16). Also, he was dancing by himself. David's dance was similar to that of the lame man who leaped for joy after being healed by Jesus (Acts 3:8-10). Such dancing, or leaping, is recommended by Jesus to those who are being persecuted (Luke 6:22, 23). Dancing with those of the opposite sex (which leads to immorality and broken homes) and lewd dancing (such as strippers) are the kinds condemned by the Bible.

***12. What does the Bible say about people condemning and judging each other?***

***Answer***: "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged" (Matthew 7: 1, 2). "Therefore you are inexcusable, 0 man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things" (Romans 2: 1). How could this be clearer? There is no excuse or justification for my judging anyone other than myself. Jesus is the Judge (John 5:22). When I pass judgment on others, I usurp Christ's position as judge and become a miniature antichrist (1 John 2: 18)-a solemn thought, indeed!

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AMAZING FACTS STUDY GUIDES

**27. No Turning Back**

When a skydiver steps to the edge of the aircraft door and leaps away from the plane, he knows there is no turning back. He's gone too far, and if he should forget to strap on his parachute, nothing can save him and he will certainly plummet to a frightening death. What a tragedy! But there is something even worse that can happen to a person. Indeed, it is far worse to come to the point of no return in your relationship with God. Yet millions are approaching this point and have no idea! Is it possible that you're one of them? What is the awful sin that could lead to such a fate? Why can't God forgive it? For a clear and penetrating answer, yet also full of hope, take just a few minutes with this fascinating Study Guide.

***1. What is the sin that God cannot forgive?***

All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. Matt 12:31

***Answer***: The sin God cannot forgive is "blasphemy against the Spirit." But what is "blasphemy against the Spirit"? People have many differing beliefs about this sin. Some believe it is murder; some, cursing the Holy Spirit; some, committing suicide; some, killing an unborn child; some, denial of Christ; some, a heinous, horrible, extremely wicked act; and others, worshipping a false god! The next question will shed some helpful light on this crucial matter.

***2. What does the Bible say about sin and blasphemy?***

"Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men" (Matthew 12:31).

***Answer:*** The Bible clearly says that all kinds of sin and blasphemy will be for- given. So none of the sins listed above is the sin that God cannot forgive. No single act of any kind is the unpardonable sin.

**Sounds Contradictory**

Yes, it sounds contradictory, but both of the following statements are true:

B. Any and every kind of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven.

C. The blasphemy or sin against the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven.

**Jesus Made Both Statements**

Jesus made both statements in Matthew 12:31, so there is no error here. To harmonize the statements we must discover the work of the Holy Ghost. By the way, the word "ghost" comes from "ghast," the Old English word for "spirit."

***3. What is the work of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit?***

"He [the Holy Spirit] will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:8, 13).

***Answer:*** The work of the Holy Spirit is to convict me of sin and to guide me into all truth. The Holy Spirit is God's agency for conversion. Without the Holy Spirit, no one feels sorrow for sin, nor is anyone ever converted.

***1. When the Holy Spirit convinces me of sin, what must I do to be forgiven?***

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

***Answer***: When convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, I must confess my sins in order to be forgiven. When I confess them, God not only forgives me but He also cleanses me from all unrighteousness. God is waiting and ready to forgive me for my and every sin I may commit (Psalm 86:5), but only if I confess and forsake it.

***;. What happens if I do not confess my sins when convicted by the Holy Spirit?***

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

***Answer***: If I do not confess my sins, Jesus cannot forgive my sins. Thus, any sin hat I do not confess is unpardonable until I confess it, because forgiveness always allows confession. It never precedes it.

Terrible danger of resisting the Holy Spirit

Resisting the Holy Spirit is terribly dangerous because it so easily leads to the rejection of the Holy spirit, which is the sin God can never forgive. It is passing the point

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***5. In the parable of the sower (Luke 8:5-18), what is meant by the seed that fell by the wayside and was eaten by fowls?***

***Answer***: The Bible says, "The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke 8:11,. 12), Jesus is pointing out that when we understand what the Holy Spirit is asking us to do regarding some new light from the Scripture, we must act at once. Otherwise, the devil has the opportunity to remove that truth from our minds:

***~. How can the Lord say "I never knew you." to the people He is addressing in Matthew 7:21-23? I thought Gad knew everybody and everything!***

***Answer***: God is referring here to knowing someone as a personal friend. We get know Him as a friend when we commune with Him daily, follow Him gladly, and freely share with Him our joys and sorrows as with an earthly friend. Jesus also says" 'You are my friends if you do whatever I command you" (John 15:14). The people being addressed in Matthew chapter 7 have rejected His Holy Spirit. They have embraced a theology of salvation in sin or salvation by works-neither of which needs Jesus. They are self-made people who did not take time to become acquainted with Jesus. Hence, He explains that He did not really get acquainted with them or know them as His personal friends.

***: Can you explain Ephesians 4:30?***

***Answer:*** The verse says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." Paul is here clearly implying that the Holy Spirit is G personal being, because only persons can be grieved. Even more important, he is affirming that the Holy Spirit of Christ can be: grieved away by my rejection of His loving appeals. As a courtship can be ended forever by the repeated refusal of one party to the other's wooing, so our relationship with the Holy Spirit an end permanently by our persistent refusal to respond to His loving appeals.

**, Parting Word**

This is the final Study Guide in our series of 27. Our loving desire is that you have been led into the presence of Jesus and have experienced a fantastic new relationship with Him. We hope that you 'will walk closer to the Master every day and 'ill soon join that joyous group who will be translated into His blessed kingdom: His appearing. If we do not meet on this earth, let us agree to meet in the clouds on that great day, Please call or write if we can further assist you in your journey heavenward.