

*THE
DRAMATIC EVENTS
OF
EARTH'S FINAL
HOURS*

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By
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NO EYE HAS SEEN,
NO EAR HAS HEARD,
NO MIND HAS CONCEIVED
WHAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE
WHO LOVE HIM.

First Corinthians 2:9
New International Version

Unless otherwise mentioned, all
Biblical quotations are taken
from the King James Version.

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PREFACE

History has never witnessed an event more powerful, more awesome, or more completely overwhelming than the events soon to take place on the earth. It is not the purpose of this book, however, to frighten or to cause anyone undue anxiety about future events. On the contrary, it is my sincere prayer that this book and the knowledge it bears of the future from the pages of the Holy Bible will bring great comfort to each reader even as we see the troubles of this world and the problems in society steadily becoming worse.

Many questions arise concerning the subject of earth's final hours. What, exactly, is going to happen? To what extent will mankind be able to control these events? Will there be war? Will there be any survivors? When will these events take place? How devastating will they be? Will the earth continue to exist, and, if so, what will the world be like afterward?

Mankind is groping for answers today, answers that make sense, answers that satisfy and comfort. This book was written to supply these answers and to give the reader an understanding of the purpose of his life on this earth. Above all, the intention is to answer the inevitable question of what can and should the individual do to prepare for the troublous times ahead.

In a simple, easily understandable style this book explains the final, imminent events of earth's history as they are detailed in Bible prophecy.

Chapter 1

CREDIBILITY

Unknown to the vast majority of mankind, preparations are being made today for the last great battle of earth's history. Today, strategy is being laid, weapons are being produced, and the propaganda that is required to condition the masses of earth is being spread in great abundance. Yet so subtle is this total preparation that its effect on the minds of men goes largely unnoticed from day to day.

In order to gain a thorough understanding of the events that will take place during earth's final hours, one must, of necessity, undertake an extensive study of the Bible because original information on final events is found in the Bible and in almost no other place. One can never have a good understanding of these events unless he understands the principles and philosophy of the Bible. The information and detail available from Scripture form a story in future reality that greatly surpasses in power and grandeur the best in fictional imagination.

Many prophecies concerning events of recent history have been fulfilled precisely as the Bible predicted thousands of years earlier. These prophecies have been fulfilled so accurately that in some cases skeptics have claimed that the Bible account could not possibly have been written before the event occurred.

One example of this Biblical accuracy is the astounding fulfillment of the prophecy of Revelation chapters eight and nine. In fairly recent times the noted Bible scholar and historian, Josiah Litch, after an ex-

tensive study of this prophecy, published* two years before the event occurred that the Ottoman Empire would fall in August of 1840. Although he was ridiculed, he continued studying prophetic Scripture. A few days before the event happened, he announced the exact day, August 11, 1840. When the Ottoman Empire fell on that date, precisely as scheduled in Bible prophecy, many people were deeply moved, and great interest was generated in studying the Word of God.

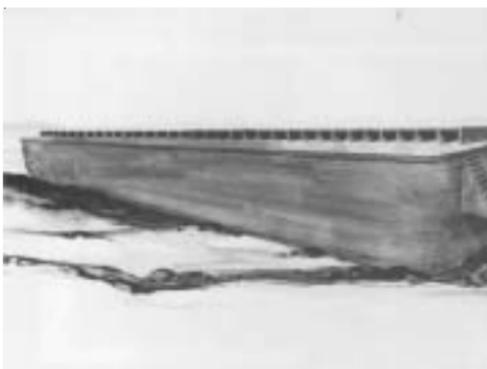
As one studies and realizes the accuracy of prophecy in the Bible, he begins to understand that this Book is indeed the Word of God. He begins to understand that what God promises He will do, He will indeed do, and what God says will happen will indeed happen.

The archeologist's spade has uncovered vast quantities of evidence that substantiates Biblical history, yet nothing has ever been found, when interpreted correctly, that shows the Bible to be in error.

One of the most convincing pieces of evidence that the Bible is true is the following sequence of events relating to Noah's ark, the huge ship that brought Noah and his family safely through the flood and finally came to rest in the mountains of Ararat in Eastern Turkey. Genesis, chapter eight, verse 4 (Bible verses are usually designated like this: Genesis 8:4.) relates: "And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat." If the Genesis account of the flood is true, then perhaps the ark is still up there near the top of the mountain. Is it there today? Has anyone ever seen it?

George Hagopian, an Armenian who grew up in the foothills of Mount Ararat, has seen it. When he was a boy, he and his uncle climbed the mountain and saw the huge ship lightly covered with snow. As he related his story, his narrative was recorded. The recording of Mr. Hagopian's testimony was subjected to analysis by a Psychological Stress Evaluator, an electronic instrument capable of detecting the presence of micro

tremors in the human voice that are prevalent whenever a person lies. This instrument is so accurate that its analysis is accepted as legal evidence. The analysis of Mr.



Noah's Ark as described by George Hagopian*

Hagopian's interview shows that he was telling the truth completely! He had indeed seen the ark of Noah; he had personally walked on the huge ship, which he described in detail.¹ The Bible says the ark landed in the mountains of Ararat. Mr. Hagopian has seen it there, and his testimony has been verified.

Many others have also seen the ark resting near the top of the mountain. Just before the Russian Revolution, a group of Russian army pilots was stationed near Mount Ararat. One day while flying over the mountain, two of them spotted the ark and examined it as well as they could from the air. Upon returning to base, they reported their discovery. Their commanding officer, seriously interested in the reported sighting, had the pilot take him to the ark so he could see it for himself. He then sent a report to the Russian government, and the Czar promptly ordered two special companies of soldiers to investigate. They took complete measurements and made detailed drawings of the ark. Many photographs were taken, and maps showing its exact location were made. This report was then sent to the

*Rene Noorbergen, *The Ark File*, Pacific Press Publishing Assn., Mountain View, CA, 1947, p. 157

¹Rene Noorbergen, *Secrets of the Lost Races*, BobbsMerrill Company, Inc., Indianapolis-New York, 1977. pp. 74-91.

Czar, however, shortly thereafter, the Russian government was overthrown by the atheistic communists, who have never made the report public and who probably destroyed it.²

Here is more evidence that the Bible is God's book. The place where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea has been discovered. Chariot wheels, human bones, and other artifacts have been found along the path they took through the Red Sea. Here is a picture of a gold-plated chariot wheel from one of pharaoh's chariots. Since coral does not adhere to gold, the gold on the wheel was preserved in excellent condition. However, the wheel cannot be moved, because the wood beneath the gold has long since rotted away, and any attempt to move the wheel would destroy the very thin layer of gold. This picture is from the www.arkdiscovery.com/red_sea_crossing.htm web site, and can be seen in color on that site. This site also has a map and pictures where the crossing took place.



When most people read the Bible, much of what they read they do not understand. The greatest understanding is achieved by investigating individual subjects separately rather than by simply reading as one reads a novel. The Bible is not written in chronological order as many assume. The Bible itself tells us the most effective way to study. Isaiah, chapter twenty-eight, verse 10 (Isaiah 28:10) tells us: "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." In order for

²Rene Noorbergen, *The Ark File*, Pacific Press Publishing Assn., Mountain View, CA, 1974, pp. 83-87.

one to gain the greatest understanding, he must build more advanced precepts upon more fundamental precepts. One cannot understand the complex without first understanding the simple. The last part of the verse, "Here a little, and there a little," refers to the distribution throughout the Bible of verses pertaining to a specific subject. When all the verses that pertain to a particular subject are collected and studied in the proper sequence, a clear understanding of that subject results.

This process is much like creating a mosaic, a picture made up of many small variously colored stones. One small colored stone by itself depicts little, but all the colored stones properly arranged form a complete, clear picture, with each stone contributing a small bit of information. Similarly, one verse on a given subject might not convey much information, but when twenty or thirty verses on a subject are considered together and in the proper order, a complete picture, full of detail and easily understood, is the result. The Bible can actually interpret itself by showing clearly what a particular verse means when considered with all the other verses on the subject.

God has given us an important clue as to just how to interpret the Bible. Titus 1:2 says that God cannot lie: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." In the Old Testament, in Numbers 23:19, essentially the same statement is made: "God is not a man, that He should lie." Since God cannot lie, and the Bible is God's book, can there be any contradictions anywhere in the Bible? What is a contradiction? If one statement is true and another statement contradicts it, the second statement cannot be true. If two verses apparently contradict each other, and one of them is true, then the other is apparently not true. But God cannot lie; therefore there can be no contradictions anywhere in the Bible. If two verses seem to disagree, there is an error in interpretation of one of them. An apparent contradiction may arise from an in-

accuracy in translation. More often, apparent contradictions are the result of insufficient understanding on the part of the reader. Such conflicts resolve with further study. Examples of apparent contradiction will be brought out in following chapters, where many of the difficult verses are discussed. Incidentally, no matter how difficult it may seem to resolve certain apparent contradictions, every verse can be interpreted to agree with every other. There are no contradictions in the Bible.

Here, then, is the key to correct interpretation of the Bible: everything read from the Bible must be interpreted in such a way that there are no contradictions anywhere. When all apparent contradictions are resolved, we have great satisfaction in knowing that the understanding gained is correct. This method of interpreting the Bible, so that there are no contradictions anywhere, is the method used throughout this book.

Unfortunately, many people twist the meaning of various verses to try to make the Bible say something that it does not say. They try to change the Bible to conform with their ideas instead of changing their ideas to conform with the Bible. This situation is referred to in 2 Peter 3:16, that speaks of various verses "which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [twist], as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

The fact that the Bible was written by men bothers some people, and they become concerned about the validity of what they read. The men who wrote the Bible were special messengers or prophets of God. They wrote only what they were instructed to write by God, as 2 Peter 1:21 tells us. "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." Most of the prophecy in the Bible, perhaps ninety-five per cent, has already been fulfilled, and it has been fulfilled with such precision that one is forced to the conclusion that only

God could have given the information. Many of these prophecies were given thousands of years before the actual events occurred.

Many people claim that the Old Testament was for the Jews and that we, today, are not required to abide by its teachings. However, 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Verse 15 refers to the Scriptures as the Holy Scriptures. What Scriptures are these verses talking about? The word "Scripture" means holy writings, and it refers to the Bible, but more specifically, in this case, to the Old Testament since the New Testament had not yet been completed. The apostle Paul was, at that time, in the process of writing some of the books that make up the New Testament. Paul is therefore validating all of the Old Testament Scripture. In John 5:39 Jesus himself authenticated the Bible, again specifically the Old Testament, by declaring: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." And in John 10:35 Jesus said that the Scriptures cannot be broken.

We saw in 2 Peter 1:21 and 2 Timothy 3:16 that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." God, therefore, told His prophets what to write. Consider some pertinent passages in the Old Testament. Second Samuel 23:2: "The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." Ezekiel says over and over again as do many other Bible prophets, "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying . . ." Chapter eighteen of Ezekiel starts this way, as do many other texts. Jeremiah 30:1,2 says, "The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book." The Lord told Habakkuk, "Write the vision, and make it plain." (Habakkuk 2:2). Thus, the Bible was written by men whom God had

chosen as His prophets. These men wrote exactly what God told them to write.

The Bible was written during a period of about 1500 years by some forty different prophets, yet the parts form a harmonious whole. This unity of the Scriptures would be impossible for men to achieve by themselves without Divine inspiration. In many books written today an author sometimes even disagrees with himself in the same book.

One of the greatest promises God makes to those who diligently seek Him with all their hearts is found in Proverbs 28:5. "They that seek the Lord understand all things."

Two more of God's great promises to those who take the time and put forth the effort to understand the Bible are found in Psalms 119. Verse 130 says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." The Bible is not difficult to understand if it is studied properly. In verses 98 and 99 we read: "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation."

Think of that: wiser than your enemies; having more understanding than all your teachers. Those who understand and abide by the true message of the Bible have an enormous advantage over those who do not understand.

Chapter 2

THE DEVIL, SATAN

Who is the devil, and where did he come from? What is he doing now? How much effect does he have on men and women? What is he trying to accomplish on the earth, and why? What will eventually happen to him?

Our only possible hope of finding the answers to these and other questions about the devil is the Bible. As we shall see, the devil is a real being with a real personality and with a real purpose to accomplish.

The first in our series of Bible texts giving information about the devil is Ezekiel 28:11-13. Here Ezekiel begins with the familiar phrase that tells us that what follows is a message directly from God. “Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God. . . .” Wait a minute! According to this, the king of Tyrus was in the Garden of Eden that God prepared for Adam and Eve at the end of creation week. When Ezekiel received this message from God, probably in the year 588 BC, Tyre was a city on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The king of Tyrus, therefore, could not possibly have ever been in the Garden of Eden.

The story of the Garden of Eden is given in Genesis 2:8 through 3:24. There are only four persons mentioned: God, Adam, Eve, and the devil, Satan, who

masqueraded as a serpent. Then, after Adam and Eve had been expelled, God stationed angels to guard the garden. The king of Tyrus was certainly not there. What, then, is God talking about in Ezekiel 28 when He said that the king of Tyrus was in the Garden of Eden?

Hebrews 13:2 gives us some insight into this Scripture. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Angels are a higher order of life than we are, and we see from this text that they have the ability to appear as human beings. Indeed, angels have the ability to appear as other forms of life also. As we will see shortly, Satan was originally a holy angel in Heaven and therefore has this ability to imitate other life forms. He masqueraded as a serpent in the Garden of Eden.

Satan, you see, was masquerading as the king of Tyrus in the verses in Ezekiel we are considering. With this in mind, return to Ezekiel and realize that what is being said is being said directly to the devil himself. Ezekiel 28:11-19: "¹¹Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, ¹²Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus [the devil], and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." Satan is full of wisdom and exceedingly beautiful. Actually he is the most beautiful and the most intelligent being that God ever created. His intelligence might be as much as a thousand times greater than human intelligence. He is so much smarter than human beings that he is easily able to deceive us.

Continuing in Ezekiel, "¹³Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold." Satan, the most beautiful being that God ever created, clothed with a robe encrusted with many precious gems, must have really been glorious. Continuing: "The workmanship of thy taberets and

of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.” Satan is a created being, just as the angels and all mankind are created beings.

“¹⁴Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so.” Satan was above all the other angels; his position was second only to that of God Himself. God not only created Satan the most beautiful and most intelligent being in all the universe, but also gave him the highest position. “Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.” Satan could visit throughout the entire universe and was free to come and go in God’s throne room, the holy mountain of God, into the presence of God Himself.

Did God create the devil? The Bible tells us that God is love, that He is meek, gentle, kind, and totally honest and just. Would a god like this create a devil? Verse 15 says, “¹⁵Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created. . . .” God, therefore, certainly did not create the devil, but He did create the perfect, holy angel who later became the devil.

How did this transformation come about? Consider what might happen to a human being if he or she were extremely beautiful. Consider what might happen if he or she were not only beautiful, but also highly intelligent. Consider also what might happen if this person attained a high position in the business world or in politics. It does not take much imagination to see that he would become intensely proud of his beauty and intelligence. He would begin to feel superior and would ever desire greater power, wealth, and prestige. He would become increasingly self-centered and self-seeking as his greed and pride grew. This experience has happened over and over again on the earth to people who were not even the most beautiful or the most intelligent. This is what happened to Satan.

You see, Satan himself was responsible for his transformation into the devil by the development of his

pride, greed, arrogance, and self-seeking ambition. The rest of verse 15 says, "till iniquity was found in thee." God created a perfect, holy angel, and that angel became the devil.

The question is sometimes asked, "Why did God create this angel who became the devil?" When God created beings with free will, He knew that sooner or later one of them would begin to experience pride and selfish ambition just as Satan did. If Satan had not been created, the experience that happened to him would have happened to another angel. Why God created beings with free will, beings who can disobey if they choose, will be explained later.

Iniquity is another word for sin. Throughout the Bible the word "sin" appears over and over again. An understanding of the exact meaning of this word is fundamental to our understanding of the entire Bible. God has given us the definition of sin in 1 John 3:4: "Who-soever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." In common parlance a person who breaks a law of the state is called a criminal. When a person breaks God's law he is called, not a criminal, but a sinner. Sin is breaking the law of God.

Satan became proud of his beauty and intelligence. He forgot that everything he had was a gift from God, and instead of being thankful for the multitude of blessings God had given him, he wanted more and more. As we shall see shortly, he even became dissatisfied with the second position in heaven; he wanted the first. But the only position above Satan's was God's. Yes, he wanted God's position, God's authority, and God's power.

Continuing with Ezekiel 28:16, "By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned. . . ." What merchandise? What was Satan trying to sell, and to whom? Satan's desire for God's throne became stronger and

stronger until he was totally controlled by his ambition. But Satan had a problem! What was he going to do about God, who occupied the first position? Satan's plan was to discredit God before all the beings in the universe. He claimed that God and His government were arbitrary and unjust. He said that beings as superior as holy angels did not need the law of God, which, he claimed, was an unjust law that restricted their freedom. He also said that it was impossible to keep from breaking God's law. This merchandise, the propaganda of rebellion, was spread far and wide in the universe as Satan attempted to discredit God, His laws, and His government in the eyes of the angels and all other intelligent forms of life. Satan reasoned that if he could turn the entire universe against God, then God, because of His kind, meek, and gentle nature, would step down and he could take over.

Continuing with verse 16, "¹⁶Therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire." Verse 17 explains that Satan became proud: "¹⁷Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty." Satan, being the most beautiful of God's created beings, became proud of his perfect beauty. "Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness. . ." He became proud of his gigantic intelligence. He felt that he was vastly superior to the other beings that God created; he felt no gratitude to God, who had given him this great honor and great ability. Continuing with verse 17, "I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. ¹⁸Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic." Satan's propaganda and rebellion became increasingly more vile and disruptive. "Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee."

This verse tells us that the devil does not have everlasting life and therefore is not going to be in charge of hell throughout all eternity. Instead, as verse 18 says, he is going to be destroyed by fire and will be ashes upon the surface of the earth. Verse 17 says that certain people will observe this event taking place. How this will all come about will be explained in detail in chapter five. Continuing with verse 19, “¹⁹All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.” The devil is not going to live forever. He is going to die. Ultimately he will be ashes upon the surface of the earth.

Isaiah 14:12-17 adds more detail about this rebellion of Satan in heaven. Lucifer, which means “Shining One” or “Brilliant One” was Satan’s name before he started his rebellion. “¹²How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! ¹³For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” Here is where we are told that Satan wanted God’s power and authority; he wanted to be God.

The term “stars of God” refers to the angels. We here on earth refer to our outstanding personalities as stars: movie stars, the star pitcher, and so on. Because the angels are such outstanding beings, they are referred to as the stars of God, and Satan said that he would exalt his throne above them. Continuing with verse 15, “¹⁵Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. ¹⁶They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; ¹⁷That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prison-

ers?" Here we find that Satan is the ultimate cause of all the trouble on the earth. He causes trouble among people and wars among nations.

We have seen so far that Satan, the most beautiful and most intelligent being that God ever created, was given the highest position of authority in heaven, second only to that of God Himself. He began feeling vastly superior to all other life in the universe. He even began feeling superior to God. He wanted God's throne and all His power and authority. He wanted to be God Himself.

How could Satan have dared to feel this way? How could Satan have ever hoped to succeed in taking over the throne of the universe from God? Since God is all powerful and infinitely superior to the beings He created, why did Satan with his superior intellect not realize that he could never get away with such a scheme? It was because of God's perfectly beautiful personality. God is so kind, so gentle, so gracious, so understanding, and so loving that He does not exalt Himself above His creatures. Even though God's power and ability are limitless, even though His knowledge and wisdom know no bounds, He always presented himself as a kind and understanding father to His creatures. Satan mistakenly assumed that the meekness, kindness, gentleness, and understanding that God always showed were signs of weakness, and he convinced himself that he would be successful in his rebellion.

God tried to make Satan realize the consequences of the path he had chosen. He explained to Satan in great detail what the outcome of his folly would be, but Satan's pride and self-seeking ambition prevented him from understanding. The uppermost thought in Satan's mind was to accomplish what he had set out to do.

The question is often asked: Why did not God simply get rid of Satan as soon as he began to cause trouble? God could have used His power to eliminate Satan, and

he would have ceased to exist. Why did God not do this?

God did not immediately get rid of Satan for basically two reasons. First, if He had, heaven would have ceased to be a place of perfect tranquility and happiness and would instead have been transformed into a police state. All the angels would have been afraid of being destroyed themselves. Instead of being happy they would have been fearful of doing something God did not like. God created beings with intelligence and free will because He wanted their companionship. He wanted them to be free, free to choose the correct way. If He had eliminated Satan, His creatures would have felt that they had to serve an arbitrary God by threat of force instead of from love. No longer would they have been companions to God, and no longer would God have been a companion to them. Love and companionship simply cannot be forced. Had God created a race of automatons programmed to love and obey Him, He would not have had companionship.

For example, could a lonely person find the love and companionship he wants by buying a little windup doll that would repeat over and over again, "I love you; I love you; I love you"? Of course not. Love, companionship, and devotion are meaningless if they are forced or if they are the automatic result of pre-programmed instinct. Love must be the result of free will. Love, companionship, and devotion are meaningful only if the person bestowing the love has a choice not to love. When a father comes home from work in the evening and his small daughter comes running out of the house and jumps up and puts her arms around his neck and says, "Oh Daddy, I love you," the father is pleased and happy about his daughter's actions because they were spontaneous. She was not forced to act that way. She expressed her love because she wanted to, because she had missed her father during the day and wanted companionship with him. God feels the same way about

His creatures. They must have a choice, or their love, devotion, and companionship would mean nothing to Him.

The second reason why God could not immediately get rid of Satan is that if He had, from then on doubts would have existed in the minds of all God's intelligent beings. Satan's accusations had raised the all-important questions: Could it be that God's law is unjust and unnecessary? Could it be that holy angels of such high intelligence do not need the law of God? Could it be that it is impossible to obey God's law? If God had eliminated Satan immediately, He would have appeared to the other angels to be unjust and arbitrary; for they would not have understood the nature of the controversy, and these doubts would never have been dispelled.

In order to handle the situation which Satan had caused in heaven, God had to give him an opportunity to show whether his accusations were valid or not. And so, the earth was created by God for this purpose. Here Satan is being permitted for a time to demonstrate to all the intelligent beings that inhabit the far-flung reaches of God's vast creation whether his accusations against God are valid or not. Satan is being permitted to show whether or not it is true that intelligent beings do not need God's law. He is being permitted to show whether or not keeping God's law is impossible. And he is being permitted to show whether or not God is arbitrary and unjust in His dealing with the situation.

In 1 Corinthians 4:9 we are told that this is exactly the purpose for which this earth was created: "For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." The word "spectacle" is translated from the Greek word *theatron*, which means "theater." The earth, therefore, is the theater of the universe where Satan is being permitted to work his wiles for a time in order to prove whether he was telling the truth or not when he spread his propaganda and started his rebellion against

God in heaven. God must permit this. If He does not, doubts will always exist in the minds of angels and men as to whether Satan was right or not. As the final result of the drama taking place on this earth, all of God's creation — men, angels, and other forms of intelligent life throughout the vast reaches of space — will thoroughly understand the nature of this great controversy and the importance, indeed the necessity, of obeying God's law; for they will witness the trouble, misery, pain, and death that are the natural consequences of disregarding the law of God.

We are all on this stage. The entire universe is intently watching what is taking place here. This drama is the center of attraction, and we are the actors. We are all acting either for Satan on the one side or for God on the other. We are never alone. The eyes of the universal audience are everywhere. Hebrews 12:1 tells us that, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about [surrounded] with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." You can go into the darkest, innermost closet and shut the door, and yet the eyes of the universe are watching what you are doing. Scientists spend millions of dollars trying to communicate with intelligent life in the universe. Yet all they have to do is simply speak the word and they are heard, as the universe watches with pity the antics of the actors on this stage of earth.

The earth is the only wicked place in the entire universe. All the intelligent beings on all the other planets throughout the vast universe of God live in peace and happiness, free from fear, misery, pain and death; for they all obey the law of God. Only on earth is the law ignored, as men lie, kill, steal, cheat, and commit every abomination imaginable.

It may be difficult for modern man to admit even the possibility that beings are observing the earth from millions of miles in space. One must realize that, com-

pared with life elsewhere in the universe, life on earth is extremely primitive. Our methods are primitive; our knowledge is primitive; our machines are primitive. God has arranged it thus in order to keep the trouble we suffer on earth from spreading to other habitations in space. It is easy to feel that we have reached the pinnacle of wisdom and knowledge and difficult to accept the thought that we are being observed by vastly superior beings. The following texts from 1 Corinthians 3:19,20 and Isaiah 55:8,9 are enlightening. “¹⁹The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. . . . The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.” “⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Our world is indeed the stage of the universe where everyone throughout God’s vast creation can observe what happens when a society of beings disregards God’s law, the Ten Commandments. The universe is appalled at what it beholds!

When the rebellion became unbearable, Satan and his angels had to be expelled from heaven. In Revelation 12:7-9 we read, “⁷And there was war in heaven: Michael [Christ] and his angels fought against the dragon [Satan]; and the dragon fought and his angels, ⁸And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. ⁹And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Satan’s angels are the angels that he deceived into following him in his rebellion against God.

Notice that Satan and his angels [devils] were not cast out of heaven to hell; they were cast out to the earth, which is where they are right now! Jesus says in Luke 10:18, “¹⁸I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”

Additional texts that show that Satan resides on the earth are found in the book of Job. Chapter one, verses 6 and 7 describe a great council meeting in heaven where the leaders from other worlds throughout the vast reaches of space had assembled. Originally God gave dominion of our world to Adam, but as a consequence of Adam's sin Satan usurped his position and attended this great council meeting in heaven as the representative from earth. "6Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." During this council meeting, the Lord asked Satan where he had been. Job 1:7 says, "7And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

Sometime later there was another council meeting, described in Job 2:1,2, where the Lord again asked Satan where he had been. "1Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. 2And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou?" Satan's reply was the same as in the previous meeting. "And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

It is interesting that God allowed a war to take place in heaven. Heaven is generally thought of as a place of perfect tranquility and happiness; and it was, until Satan and his angels began to disobey God's law. The war in heaven was the natural consequence of sin. War in heaven is unthinkable; nevertheless God allowed it to happen. God could have used His unlimited power to expel Satan and his angels to the earth, but in His infinite wisdom, He chose not to. Instead He allowed the war to occur in order to help His creatures understand the disastrous effects of disobeying His law. The holy angels who had remained loyal fought the war and

expelled Satan and his angels. In other words, each angel, as he chose the side on which he would fight, made a total commitment either to God or to Satan.

How many angels are there? Hebrews 12:22 says that there are “an innumerable company of angels.” Revelation 5:11 tells us that, “the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.” There are so many angels that, like the sands of the sea, they cannot be numbered. Satan was able to deceive one-third of these angels into joining him in this battle against God. Revelation 12:4 tells us that one-third of the angels fell with Satan. “⁴And his [the dragon’s, Satan’s] tail drew the third part of the stars [angels] of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.” Thus Satan has plenty of evil angels, or devils, to help him in his purposes here on earth.

If there are so many evil angels on the earth, why is it not possible for us to see them? It has already been shown that sometimes angels masquerade as human beings, and when they do they are then visible. However, angels, who are a higher order of being than we, have the ability to remain invisible. As a Scriptural example of an angel’s power to remain invisible, the amusing story of Balaam and his donkey comes to mind. Balaam was about to do what God did not want him to do, and in Numbers 22:21-34 we read:

“²¹And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. ²²And God’s anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. ²³And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. ²⁴But the angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. ²⁵And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she

thrust herself into the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. ²⁶And the angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. ²⁷And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff."

God now made it appear as if the ass were speaking. ²⁸"And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? ²⁹And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee. ³⁰And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. ³¹Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. ³²And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me: ³³And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive. ³⁴And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again."

Here is a case in which a man was not able to see the angel until the angel wanted to be seen. Satan and the evil angels are all over the earth, but human beings, under most circumstances, cannot see them. They do, however, make themselves visible at various times and under various circumstances. God's holy angels are also here on the earth as guardian angels for the true Christians, who serve the Lord as the Scriptures require, and

they also remain invisible. We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. (Hebrews 12:1).

One of the most important keys to understanding the Bible is found in Revelation 12:9, which tells us that we have all been deceived by the devil. "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Satan deceives everyone in the world. Everyone. Nobody is exempt from Satan's deceptions.

Everyone you talk to or get information from is deceived by the devil. When you watch television, you are watching and listening to people who are deceived, and who are passing their deceptions on to you. If you go to school, you receive instruction from teachers who are deceived. If you go to college, you are taught by professors who are deceived. When you read the newspapers or the news magazines, you are reading the opinions of authors who are deceived by Satan. The only hope we have of penetrating this wall of lies and deception that Satan has built around us is the Bible, the standard for truth in our world. Remember that God cannot lie. (Titus 1:2).

How do you deceive someone? If you always tell a person the truth, will you be able to deceive him? No — you must lie to him in order to deceive him. Does Satan therefore lie? In John 8:44, Jesus says, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." There is no truth at all in Satan; he is a liar. Satan therefore deceives the entire world by lying. He is the grand master of subtlety and deceit. His lies are, for the most part, so subtle that human beings do not recognize them as lies; they accept them as truth. Thus they are deceived. Satan, however, does use the truth to deceive; for if a person were told

something that is completely false, he often would be smart enough to recognize the lie. On the other hand, if some of what he is being told is the truth, he is less likely to detect the part that is false; he will accept the lie and be deceived.

Consider how this process of deception works to make people believe so many lies that they are unable to accept the truth. The truth, in fact, seems so strange to them that they immediately put it out of their minds as being completely wrong. What happens when a person is raised in an atmosphere of lies? Suppose, for instance, to use an actual example from history at the time of Columbus, that when a person is a small child he is told that the earth is flat. All during his childhood his parents, teachers, and friends always refer to the earth as flat. In college his professors tell him that the earth is flat. Then, should someone come along and tell him that the earth is not flat, but round like a globe, contrary to what everyone else has told him, what would he think? He would think that the person telling him the truth was totally in error. He would not be able to accept the truth, for the truth would seem so strange and impossible to him. This point is of extreme importance; for until we realize that we have been raised and educated in an atmosphere of lies and are largely deceived, we will not be able to accept the truth.

This is the situation in which mankind finds itself here on earth. We have been told Satan's clever lies from birth. They have been so ingrained in us; they so deeply affect how we think and act that, for many, accepting the truth is almost impossible. Satan deceives the whole world, for he is much more clever than any man. Man does not stand a chance against him without the grace, the power, and the Word of God.

One of the most successful of Satan's deceptions is the promulgation of the belief that he and his angels are not here on the earth, but in hell. As has been shown, the Bible makes it clear that Satan and his evil angels

are here with us on the earth right now and that they are indeed real personalities, real beings, engaged in a life-and-death struggle. Satan does not want us to realize this, for our ignorance on this point makes us much more susceptible, much more vulnerable to his lies and deceptions.

Why does Satan work so hard to deceive the world? We read in Revelation 12:12: “¹²Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” He is angry, “having great wrath.” Why? Because he knows that he has only a short time left. He knows that he is going to die, and he knows that he will be ashes on the surface of the earth. (Ezekiel 28:18).

Consider what must be going through the mind of Satan, the most beautiful and the most intelligent being of all God’s creation, who was the manager of the entire universe, second only to God Himself. As a result of the war in heaven, Satan was cast out of heaven to the earth. He lost his exalted position in heaven and is now on the earth with the angels he deceived into following him, and he knows that he is going to die. Satan, naturally, does not want to die. He remembers the beauty of his heavenly home. He remembers the glory of the unfallen worlds. He remembers the delightful companionship he enjoyed with God and with all the host of heaven before he sinned. He remembers the glory he had as he stood beside the throne of God. And he knows he has but a short time left; he knows he is going to die. This is why he is angry. He is angry because he lost the war; he is angry because he lost his position and everything else he had in heaven; and he is angry because he does not want to die. He will do anything in his power to prolong his life, and the angels who were cast out of heaven with him will help him in his purposes because they do not want to die

either. James 2:19 tells us that Satan and his host of devils tremble as they contemplate the fate that they will one day experience. “¹⁹Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”

How can Satan and his evil angels prolong their lives? God must wait for a specific event to develop here on earth before He can bring to a close this drama of the ages and end the suffering, misery, pain, and death so prevalent in our world. Most of the events and situations that occur on earth, therefore, are designed by Satan for only one purpose: to keep him alive. If Satan can prevent this one event from occurring, or delay its occurring, he can prolong his life. The destiny of the world is at stake as mankind, ignorant of these facts, rushes headlong to destruction. Satan's plans for keeping himself alive as long as possible include a supreme effort on his part to keep people from learning and understanding the Bible. He and his angels expend enormous amounts of energy deceiving the people of earth in order to keep them from understanding the truth about him and about this great controversy that he has created. The situation for which God is waiting and the plan behind Satan's efforts to continue living will be explained in great detail in following chapters.

So serious is this deluge of lies and deception that God has warned us to be constantly on the alert. First Peter 5:8 tells us to “⁸Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” An adversary is an enemy. Satan is our enemy, and his deceptions turn many away from the truth.

The devil has been able to lead dedicated church members, for instance, gradually to compromise the pure truth of the Bible. The devil, working through human agents, brings about a slight change in doctrine, and the people, not wanting to cause trouble, fail to protest. They accept the change even though they may

not like it, simply to keep peace. Of course, after a short while the change doesn't seem so bad, and the devil is ready to institute another tiny change. After twenty or so years of this, if the people of the church wake up to what is being done to them, they will find themselves not a little out of line, but way out of line. This subtle tactic could be called "patient gradualism." We must always be alert, for the devil never rests. Remember, he does not want to die. He is fighting for his life.

Satan uses people to achieve his ends, but he has no love for the people he deceives into serving him. In fact, Satan looks with utter contempt upon the inhabitants of earth, for they are far inferior to him in intelligence, physical strength, and stature. Also, the fact that man was created in God's image rankles him.

We get a further understanding of the extent of our deception in 2 Corinthians 4:4, which explains that Satan "hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Satan makes it impossible for unbelievers to see and understand the truth of God. Satan blinds them to the truth and then substitutes his lies and deceptions. Unless a person makes an earnest effort to find, understand, and accept the truth, Satan will so completely confuse him that truth will seem as foolishness to him.

Proverbs 16:25 tells us that "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Why does the wrong way seem to be the right way? The way seems right because Satan has deceived men into thinking that what is wrong is right. The way seems right when we believe the lies that Satan has spread so profusely throughout the world. The devil is the grand master of subtlety and deceit, for he knows perfectly how to deceive human beings without their realizing it. Satan makes his lies sound reasonable and true. In order to know the right way, we must accept exactly what God tells us in the Bible no matter

how strange it may seem. We must disregard our feelings and believe only what the Bible says, for God, remember, cannot lie. We have to realize that our intuition cannot be relied upon to lead us correctly, for the wrong way often seems right to us.

Just as man's wisdom is foolishness to God, man in his pathetic ignorance treats the things of God as foolishness. First Corinthians 2:14 says, "¹⁴The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him."

Take a look at some other verses of Scripture that warn us of Satan's almost overwhelming power to deceive. In Matthew 24:24 Jesus Himself warns that "²⁴There 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." Jesus is warning here that false christs will appear performing miracles and that even true Christians will almost be deceived. It is hard for the human mind to imagine this almost overpowering deception.

One of these false christs will be Satan himself. For every truth of the Bible, Satan has, or will have, his counterfeit in the world. He has given the world counterfeits that are so close to the genuine, so close to Bible truth that millions of people are fooled and deceived. He has used this technique very successfully in the past, is using it today, and will use it in the future to deceive the entire world. Satan is going to counterfeit the return of Christ, and millions will be deceived because they have not studied the Bible enough to be able to detect the counterfeit. They have instead listened to pastors and ministers who preach the propaganda that is preparing the world to accept the devil's greatest counterfeit.

Remember that Satan is the most beautiful and the most intelligent being that God ever created. Human eyes have never beheld an angel in all his glory, and when Satan walks the streets of the cities and towns of

earth, performing miracles and claiming to be Christ, practically the entire world will fall down and worship him. Satan will raise his hands in blessing the people, and the people will prostrate themselves before him, worshipping him, believing that he is Christ. Almost everyone will be hypnotized by the overwhelming glory, beauty, and power that the devil will display. He will repeat in a soft, comforting voice many of the words that Jesus spoke when He was on earth. He will heal the sick and perform other miracles and great works, claiming that he is Jesus Christ. His demonstration will be thoroughly convincing to virtually everyone on earth. In chapter five the return of Jesus is covered in detail; if we know exactly how Christ will return, we will not be fooled as the devil wants us to be.

Consider 2 Corinthians 11:14,15. “¹⁴And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” Here we see that Satan will have his ministers standing in the pulpits of the churches of the world preaching his very cleverly designed counterfeits of the true message from God. Our world is inundated with lies from the devil, and as we see here, his lies come from places from which we would not expect them. The devil puts his agents into positions where people naturally put their trust, and then it is relatively easy for him to deceive them. People trust their ministers and readily believe what their ministers tell them. From Satan’s ministers, standing in the pulpits of most of the churches of the world, comes the propaganda required to condition the people of earth to accept his counterfeits of Bible truth so that they will believe his impersonation of Christ returning to earth. “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, **WHICH DECEIVETH THE WHOLE WORLD**: he was cast

out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” (Revelation 12:9).

Of course not all ministers are Satan’s agents. Satan puts his ministers wherever he can and in as many places as he can. How, then, can we know whether a particular minister speaks the truth or not? Isaiah 8:20 tells us, “²⁰To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” The test is the Bible. If they teach anything that disagrees with the Bible, we see that there is no truth (light) in them. When a minister teaches a doctrine that disagrees with the Bible, you will know that he is not on the Lord’s side but is working for Satan. Of course these false ministers claim to be preaching according to the Bible, but it is the responsibility of each of us to search the complete Scriptures for ourselves to see if what they say is correct, remembering that there can be no contradictions in the Bible.

Matthew 7:21-23 talks about dedicated church members whom Satan has been able to deceive so extensively that God cannot save them and take them to heaven. They think they are serving the Lord, and they work diligently doing many wonderful works; but it is all in vain because they have gotten too far from Bible truth. “²¹Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

What better way for Satan to keep people out of Christ’s true church than to create the confusion of some 500 false religions (denominations)? When Christ was on earth 2000 years ago, He established his true church — one church, not 500 different churches. Most people give up in despair their attempt to find the right one.

They convince themselves that it does not matter which one they attend, but God will never accept any of Satan's counterfeit religions.

One of the most powerful deceptions that Satan uses against the inhabitants of earth is the tactic of psychological group pressure. If he can get a group of people to believe one of his lies, he will use that group to pressure others into accepting the lie. It is extremely difficult for one person to stand up for the truth when nearly everyone else is against it. Most people are not strong enough to resist the pressure to conform. People reason that if the majority believes something, it must be right; yet the Bible indicates that everyone is deceived. When the Bible tells us something that most people disagree with, we must have the faith to accept what the Bible says regardless of the tremendous pressure that Satan can bring to bear, for the Bible is true.

Another tactic of Satan is to put his agents into positions of leadership and authority in various organizations, churches, and government, and have them appear to be true Christians. These agents can lie and do practically anything else necessary to further Satan's cause, and the people seem unable to realize what is taking place.

Consider next the pain, suffering, and sickness in the world. The Bible says that God is loving, gentle, meek, and kind. Would a god like this cause pain and unhappiness to His creatures? No, of course not. Then where do all the disease germs come from? Where do all the things that cause pain and discomfort such as poison ivy, mosquitoes, etc. come from? These things are not as God created them. God never put thorns on the rosebush or on the berry bushes. When God created the earth, it was the ultimate in beauty. There was nothing to cause pain, discomfort, or suffering.

Isaiah 11:6-9 describes how all of God's creatures will relate to one another in His new earth, which He has not yet created. These are the same conditions that

existed in the beginning before sin destroyed the paradise of Eden. “⁶The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. ⁹They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

Genesis 1:31 tells us that “³¹God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” Everything was in perfect harmony with everything else. None of God’s creatures ever hurt another or made another unhappy.

Where, then, did these obnoxious things come from? Where do the diseases from which mankind suffers come from? Why do animals and human beings hurt and kill one another now when they did not do this originally? Why does the lion eat other animals now instead of straw like the ox, as it did before?

Consider the experience of the apostle Paul. A dedicated soldier of truth for the Lord and writer of many of the books of the New Testament, Paul had a physical infirmity. In 2 Corinthians 12:7, he tells us where his infirmity came from. “⁷And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.” Paul says that his problem was from Satan. He also says that he was given the problem so that he would not become proud because of the abundance of God’s revelations to him. God revealed to Paul the whole truth concerning Satan’s rebellion, and it is easy to see that this privilege might have tended to make

Paul proud. You see, God did not afflict Paul, but He allowed Satan to do so.

Another text that shows that the devil is the cause of pain and suffering is Luke 13:11. “¹¹And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.” Here a woman is described who was paralyzed in a bowed-together position, probably with arthritis, for eighteen years. Did God do this to that poor woman and make her suffer for eighteen years? Of course not. God is the ultimate of love and kindness. In Luke 13:16, Jesus explains who did do this to the woman. “¹⁶And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?” You see, Satan afflicted this woman just as he afflicted Paul and just as he causes sickness and suffering in our world today. Satan is the one who causes all disease and suffering in our world.

Satan does not have the ability to create. This is one of the reasons why he became jealous of God. Satan cannot create, but he can and does tamper with what God created. Satan tampers with the biological information contained in the genes of the living cells and causes mutations to occur, which in turn cause variations in God’s creatures. Thus Satan has changed beneficial types of life into the types that annoy or cause damage and sickness. He changed the lion, for instance, which in the beginning ate straw like the ox just as it will do in God’s new earth, into a beast that now kills other animals. As we behold the earth today and everything in it, we are looking at what God created as defiled and changed by the devil. Even human beings have been greatly changed since creation.

Why does God tolerate such a thing? The earth as it came from the hands of the Creator was beautiful beyond description. All nature was one harmonious whole, without dissension among any of God’s crea-

tures. There was no sickness, no pain, no misery or trouble of any kind. All the animals trusted one another, and they trusted Adam and Eve. Adam could call to the animals of the forest and they would immediately come to him. He could call to the birds of the air and they would gladly come and sit on his finger or on his shoulder. All nature was in perfect harmony with itself and in perfect harmony with God.

But when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, Satan claimed dominion over the earth. God must allow him to have his own way, even though God thoroughly detests all the evil and trouble, because one of the purposes of this drama on earth is to make the entire universe understand completely the vile nature of sin (which, you will remember, is the transgression of God's law, the Ten Commandments. 1 John 3:4). The purpose of this drama is to show that men cannot "do their own thing" without causing misery, pain, death, and destruction. The purpose of this drama is to show the abominable things people will do when they disregard God's law. So God allows Satan the free run of the earth to cause all kinds of havoc. God must allow this; for if He did not, Satan could accuse God of restricting his actions. Then when things got worse on the earth, Satan could claim that it was God's fault because He restricted Satan's actions. God must allow Satan to run his own show in this theater of the universe as he sees fit; otherwise all this misery and unhappiness on the earth will have been in vain, and the great controversy would remain unsettled.

Why do you suppose Satan has changed God's creation in such a degrading way? One of the reasons is to discredit God. Often when there is sickness or death, when there is a flood, an earthquake, a tornado, or a hurricane, God is blamed for it. The devil is responsible for all the misery, suffering, pain, and death, and the whole world blames God for having created the earth in such a condition. But in spite of the fact that the

devil has changed God's creation so extensively, much of its original beauty remains.

Are you beginning to understand Satan a little? Satan is the arch-deceiver, the arch-liar. He has the entire world believing that God's personality and character are like his. The Bible makes it very clear that God is loving, gentle, meek, kind, longsuffering, and totally just. But Satan has mankind convinced that God is exactly the opposite. In the minds of men Satan has transferred his personality to God, and God is blamed for everything that Satan does. Satan degenerates the wonderful creation of God by his mutations and then deceives the human race into believing that God created all the ills of this world.

Today, when people get sick, they try to understand why God makes them suffer. When one of their loved ones dies, they accuse God of taking him. Yet these people say that they love God. How can a person love someone who does such terrible things to him? You see, most people do not even know the God they claim to love. If God were the way they think He is, their relationship to Him would be a pretty sick one. The next chapter will discuss who God is and what His personality and character are really like.

Ephesians 6:12 says, "¹²For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." No, we do not wrestle with men. Our real enemies are the devil and his numerous evil angels. Remember, the devil and his angels are engaged in a fight to the death. We are engaged in a war for our total mind, soul, and, body. Yet most people are completely unaware of this fact.

Satan does not want to die, and he will do everything in his power to prevent from occurring the situation for which Christ is waiting before returning to this earth. The devil will play dirty. He will use every foul trick imaginable. He will put forth the most believable

of lies. The entire human race is expendable to Satan in his efforts to prolong his life.

If you can imagine the meanest, most despotic, sadistic, arrogant, ruthless, self-centered, unjust, totally depraved personality possible, you might get some idea of Satan's personality. And remember, he is the most intelligent being of God's entire creation. He has been so subtle in his lies and deception that he has fooled the entire population of earth, the actors in this theater of the universe.

Chapter 3

THE SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

Jesus, who walked this earth so long ago, who had very little of this world's goods and very few of this world's comforts, had a glory that was far beyond human comprehension. The wonderful, touching, sometimes sad, but finally triumphant story of Jesus has thrilled the hearts of millions down through the ages. To many, His life is an enigma. To most, the reasons behind His part in this drama of earth are beyond understanding.

The story of Jesus is told in the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each writer describes the same series of events from a different perspective. Born in a manger among the animals, Jesus lived his life as a member of the lowest economic class of society. He made no attempt to gain status or to advance to a privileged worldly position. His life was wholly dedicated to the service of mankind. Nevertheless, He had access to a power far beyond human comprehension, which He used to heal the sick, the lame, and the blind. He never used this power for Himself, either to help Himself, to protect Himself, or to advance in worldly status. Finally, He suffered a most painful, ignominious death on a cross, as an insulting crowd mocked and ridiculed Him.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was

made.” Who is the Word? These verses, John 1:1-3, tell us that the Word is God, that all things were created by the Word, and that nothing was created except that which the Word created. Who is the Word? In verse 10 we see that “¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.” The Word, who is God, was in the world; He visited our earth and walked among men, but most did not know him.

Verse 14 adds a little more information to help us identify the Word. “¹⁴And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Here we see that the Word is the only begotten of God the Father. The Word, who is God the Creator, came to earth as a human being and dwelt among us. He lived and worked among the people, but they did not know who He was. The world did not recognize then, and indeed does not recognize today, who He is.

Matthew 3:17 tells us who the only begotten of the Father is. Speaking of Christ's baptism, this verse tells of “¹⁷a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” John 3:16-18 also shows that Christ is the only begotten of the Father: “¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

The Word, therefore, is Jesus Christ, since He is the only begotten of the Father. Furthermore, the texts we read in John, chapter one, told us that the Word is God, the Creator of all things throughout the vast reaches of limitless space. Yes, Jesus Christ is the great Creator God of the universe. In the beginning was Jesus Christ, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God.

“All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” Why did Jesus, the great, all-powerful Creator God of the universe, come to earth as He did, without status and without position, and allowed the people whom He created to treat Him so shamefully and finally to crucify Him?

Consider what Jesus says about Himself in John 10:30: “³⁰I and my Father are one.” Jesus Himself tells us in this verse that He is God. When Philip, one of Christ’s disciples asked to see God the Father, Jesus answered him: “⁹Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” (John 14:9).

Did Christ’s disciples recognize Him as God? Consider the events related in John 20:19,24-29, that occurred at evening on the day of Christ’s resurrection from the grave. “¹⁹Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. ²⁴But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. ²⁶And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. ²⁷Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. ²⁸And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. ²⁹Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” Indeed His disciples did recognize Him

as God. They regularly called Him Lord, and Thomas said to Him, "My Lord and my God."

One of the many prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the birth of Christ as a baby in Bethlehem is found in Isaiah 9:6. "6For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Jesus Christ has many names in the Bible; those mentioned here definitely indicate that He is God: "The mighty God, the everlasting Father."

Matthew 28:18 tells us of the unlimited power that Jesus has at His command. "18And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." If Jesus has all the power, no other person or being has any power other than that which Jesus allows. Jesus Christ is the all-powerful, almighty Creator God of the universe.

In Colossians 1:16,17 we are again told that Christ created all things. "16For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Christ created everything. The word "consist" means hold together. Not only was it by Christ's power that all things were created, but it is by His power that all things hold together and continue to exist. Every breath we take and every beat of our hearts is a gift from Christ, for it is by His power that we continue to live, moment by moment.

It is interesting to notice here that Christ created things that are visible and things that are invisible. Second Corinthians 4:18 comments on this: "18While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal [temporary]; but the things which are not seen

are eternal.” In other words, the earth and the things that we can perceive with our senses are temporary and will shortly pass away. We cannot perceive Christ’s permanent creation, which will last forever, and most people are not even aware of it.

Consider two other texts that show that Christ is the Creator. Hebrews 1:1,2 says, “¹God, who at sundry [various] times and in divers [different] manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ²Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.” The second text, Ephesians 3:9, mentions Jesus by name as the Creator. “⁹And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.”

One very perplexing question comes up as to how many Gods there are — one, or more? The answer to this question is that there is one God, who is so far above human realization as to be incomprehensible. God is infinite, and the human mind simply does not have the ability to ponder infinity. You can try, for instance, to think of the largest possible number. But no matter which number you come up with there is always an infinite number beyond the one you thought of. God realizes our difficulty here, and for that reason He has manifested Himself to us as three distinct individuals, to whom we can more easily relate. The Bible speaks about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Since everyone is familiar with the concept of a father, it is easy for us to think of God as a father. Likewise we are all familiar with the concept of sons, and it is easy for us to think of God as a son. The Holy Spirit is admittedly a little more difficult for us to comprehend since He manifests Himself to us as a supernatural being. Thus there is one God who presents Himself to us as these three distinct personalities.

In chapter two we saw that the earth as originally

created was a place of indescribable beauty and of harmony and companionship among all of Christ's creatures. Consider again Isaiah 11:6-9, which describes the world as it came from the hand of Christ the Creator: "6The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. 9They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

When Christ created the earth, there was no pain or suffering of any kind. Trouble was unknown throughout the vast realms of His creation. The earth was perfect, beautiful, and glorious. It was a masterpiece from the hand of the Master Himself, and Adam and Eve, along with all the creatures of earth, enjoyed a happiness far beyond anything we can imagine today. It is not Christ's desire that there should be any of the trouble, misery, and misfortune that we know in the world today. We shall see that all this trouble and misery will come to an end one of these days.

Several years ago a spectacular movie, *The Ten Commandments*, achieved considerable popularity. Although not quite accurate Biblically, this movie told the story of Moses and the Israelites in Egypt; their escape from a tyrannical Pharaoh through the waters of the Red Sea, that God parted for them; and their journey through the desert wilderness to Mount Sinai, where God gave His Ten Commandment law in a tremendous, awe-inspiring demonstration of His wonderful power. During their sojourn in the wilderness God led His people by day with a pillar of cloud and at night by a pillar of fire to give them light. This story is summa-

rized in Nehemiah 9:11-15. “¹¹And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters. ¹²Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. ¹³Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: ¹⁴And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant: ¹⁵And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them.”

With this story of Moses and the Israelites in mind, consider 1 Corinthians 10:1-4: “¹Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ²And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³And did all eat the same spiritual meat; ⁴And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”

Christ, therefore, was the one who led the children of Israel as they came out of Egypt, and who separated the waters of the Red Sea so that the people walked across on the dry sea bottom. For forty years in the wilderness, Jesus Christ led the people by a pillar of fire at night and by a pillar of cloud by day. For forty years He gave them food from heaven, called manna. It was Jesus Christ Himself who was at the top of Mt. Sinai and who gave His Ten Commandment law to the people amidst an awesome demonstration of divine power.

Moreover, as 1 Peter 1:9-11 shows, all the proph-

ets of the Old Testament were instructed what to write by Jesus Christ. ⁹“Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: ¹¹Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” The Spirit of Christ, the verse says, was in the prophets of the Old Testament.

God, you will remember from Exodus 3:13,14, spoke to Moses from the burning bush when He commissioned him to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. At that time Moses asked God His name, and God answered that His name is I AM. ¹³“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? ¹⁴And God said unto Moses, ***I AM THAT I AM***: [This is like saying, “I am that John” or “I am that Bill.”] and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, ***I AM*** hath sent me unto you.”

Later, in New Testament times, as Jesus was talking with the Jews, He gave this same name, ***I AM***. ⁵⁸“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58). The next verse says, ⁵⁹“Then took they up stones to cast at him.”

Why did they want to stone Him? The Jews knew the implication of what He had said. They were very familiar with the name, I AM, for God, since from the burning bush that is what He said His name is. The Jews knew that Jesus had just used the name I AM for Himself; they knew that He had said that He is God. Since they could not accept the fact that Jesus Christ is God, they took up stones to stone Him for blasphemy. Jesus Christ, you see, was in the burning bush speaking

with Moses.

The fact that Jesus Christ is the great, all-powerful, almighty, Creator God of the universe is established in Scripture. Most Christians recognize Christ as the one and only Savior. The following three texts show that He is. Philippians 3:20 says, “²⁰For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Next consider John 4:42: “⁴²And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.” These verses speak of Christ as the Savior, implying that there is no other. Finally, Acts 4:12 tells us specifically that there is no other Savior: “¹²Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Here is what Christ, the Savior, the all-powerful Creator God of the universe, says about Himself in the Old Testament in Isaiah 43:10,11. “¹⁰Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. ¹¹I, even I, am the Lord; and **BESIDE ME THERE IS NO SAVIOR.**” Since there is one and only one Savior, it is the Lord Jesus Christ who is speaking here. These verses give us some idea of the tremendous power and authority that Jesus has at his command.

Most people do not understand that the Christ of the New Testament is the Lord, Jehovah, of the Old Testament. The verses just quoted, Isaiah 43:10,11, show this clearly. Jesus is referred to as the Word in John, chapter one, because He has been the One who has spoken with mankind down through the ages. The words of the Lord in the Old Testament, with very few exceptions, are the words of Jesus Christ. Usually, when the words “Lord” or “God” appear in the Bible they are

referring to Christ.

Remember that Jesus said that all power was given to Him in heaven and in earth. Consider another passage that illustrates the unlimited power of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 55:8-11, Christ tells us: “⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: ¹¹So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

Up to this point we have been considering the divine nature of Christ, and we have seen that He is the great, unlimited, all-powerful, infinite Creator God of the vast reaches of the universe. We have seen that He is the Lord of both the Old and New Testaments, and we have seen that He is the Creator of everything in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible. “¹³All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” (John 1:3). Next we should direct our attention to Christ as he walked this earth as a man two thousand years ago.

If you could have chosen the circumstances of your birth, what would you have arranged? Would you have chosen to be a millionaire's son and live in plush surroundings? Or would you have chosen to be a king's son to enjoy the pomp and ceremony with people bowing to you because you are the prince? We would all choose the best for ourselves. To most people, the best would be the easiest, most pleasure-filled life that they could imagine. And how about looks? Would you choose to be beautiful so that everyone would admire you? Would you choose to be handsome so that you

could find romance easily and be envied by others?

Isaiah 53:1-9 describes how the Lord, Jesus Christ, the Creator of the universe, came to earth. He is the only one who ever had a choice as to how He would be born. Notice as we read that this chapter, written about 540 years before Christ's birth in Bethlehem, is a prophecy that describes the details of Christ's life exactly as they occurred later. "1Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? 2For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." This verse refers to Christ's birth as a baby and to his subsequent growth into manhood, "For he shall grow up . . . as a tender plant." Jesus was born in a manger among the animals (Luke 2:7) because there was no room for Him in the inn. His birth was, without a doubt, the lowliest possible birth, a far cry from the halls of a king's palace that Christ could have chosen if He had wanted to.

Continuing in verse 2, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Christ came to this earth in a manner exactly the opposite of the way a human being would have come if he had the choice. The great Creator God of the universe chose to come to earth in a body that was not handsome. The word "comeliness" means handsomeness or attractiveness. Jesus had "no beauty that we should desire him." He came to earth as a man who was not particularly handsome. There was nothing about His appearance to set Him above anyone else.

Verse 3: "3He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Jesus had no position of advantage. He was certainly acquainted with grief and had all the problems of being poor.

Why did the Lord of Glory, in His infinite wisdom,

choose to come to this world as He did? Why did He choose the life here on earth that would be the most difficult for him?

Verse 4: “⁴Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” Satan made the people believe that God had forsaken Jesus. This does not mean that God the Father actually smote Jesus, but He permitted Him to be smitten. In many instances, the Bible talks about God’s doing certain things that seem inconsistent with His character of love. If God allows something to happen, He accepts responsibility for it, and thus He says in the Bible that He did it. Remember that God must allow Satan to run his own show here in this theater of the universe; otherwise the traumatic experiences of earth would all be in vain.

Verses 5,6: “⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Because Jesus came to earth as He did and because He chose to suffer the consequences and punishment for our sins, each one of us now has the opportunity to inherit, after this life is over, a life more beautiful and glorious than the human mind can even begin to imagine. He suffered the ultimate penalty so that we might understand the hideous results of breaking God’s law. This is certainly the ultimate in love, that a man give up everything and lay down his life for his friends.

Verse 7: “⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”

Throughout all the horrible trials and the unbelievable suffering that the Lord endured, He never once opened His mouth to complain. He accepted the worst

that Satan and the world could do to Him.

Satan and his angels were busy in the judgment hall to destroy human feeling and sympathy. The very atmosphere was heavy and polluted by their influence. The chief priests and elders were inspired by them to insult and abuse Jesus in a manner the most difficult for human nature to bear. — E. G. White, *Early Writings*, Review and Herald Publishing Assn., Washington, D.C., p. 169.

He was spat upon, ridiculed, mocked, beaten with the whip and with the Roman scourge, a terribly cruel whip-like device having strands of rawhide with sharp pieces of metal attached to the ends. The sharp metal pieces cut and tore into His flesh.

Verse 8: “⁸He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”

As Jesus went from judgment hall to judgment hall, the people scorned Him, laughed at Him, and mocked Him. They spat in the face of the King of Glory, the face from which they will one day flee, asking that the mountains and rocks fall upon them to hide them from His overpowering glory. (Revelation 6:16). He was treated as cruelly as the evil mob could devise: a crown of thorns, lashes with a whip, and finally a brutal death on the cross. He was “cut off out of the land of the living” for our transgressions, our sins, that we might have eternal life.

Verse 9: “⁹And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.”

He died among the criminals, between two thieves also on crosses, and was buried with the rich, in Joseph’s new tomb (Luke 23:53), exactly as Scripture had predicted many years earlier. He was crucified even though

He had done nothing wrong. His life was perfect. Notice that verse 9 says that He was murdered because He had done no violence! He was crucified because there was no trace of deceit found in Him! The world could not then, and indeed cannot now, tolerate truth, holiness, and perfection.

The events recorded in Matthew 20:20-24 greatly influenced the frame of mind of the disciples during the last supper in the upper room before the crucifixion. These verses relate that two of the disciples had arranged to have their mother ask Jesus for the top positions when He established His eternal kingdom. “²⁰Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons [James and John], worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. ²¹And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. ²²But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. ²³And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. ²⁴And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.”

Because James and John had asked for the two highest positions, the ten others were angry and sullen, and there was considerable animosity among all of them. This animosity among the disciples is also mentioned in Luke 22:24. “²⁴And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.” Thus, the atmosphere that pervaded the upper room during the last supper must have greatly saddened the Lord, especially since He knew that the hour of His crucifixion was fast approaching. No one did much talk-

ing. Each of the disciples was engrossed in his own selfish thoughts of how to get the highest position in the kingdom.

It was customary in those times for the host to provide a servant to wash the guests' feet as they arrived. The roads were dusty, and the people wore sandals. It was refreshing to sit down and shed some of the dust and dirt from a long trip. When Jesus and His disciples arrived at the upper room, where they were to eat the last supper, there was no servant to wash their feet. This situation added to the uneasiness of the disciples. One of them should have volunteered to wash the others' feet, or at least to wash the Lord's feet. But no, they were all angry with one another, and in miserable dispositions.

Then, ³Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; ⁴He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. ⁵After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." (John 13:3-5). The great Creator God of the universe knelt down and washed His sullen disciples' dusty feet, although it was beneath the dignity of any of them to wash His. Most of His disciples were shocked as the Lord took the position of a lowly servant and washed their feet. John 13:6-8 shows that Peter reacted strongly and did not want Jesus to serve him in such a manner. ⁶Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? ⁷Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. ⁸Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." How many people today would humiliate themselves by washing someone else's feet? Why, this would be unthinkable, would it not? Yet this was not beneath the dignity of the great Creator God of the universe. As

Jesus washed away the disciples' sullen dispositions, they began to understand a little more of His purpose on earth and of His enormous sacrifice.

Notice what Jesus says in John 13:12-15: “¹²So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? ¹³Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.”

Washing one another's feet helps us to overcome pride and arrogance and to maintain humility in our daily lives. We have nothing about which to be proud. Did we obtain our beauty or our intelligence by any effort on our part? Jesus says, “⁵Without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5).

According to His commandment, foot washing, called the Ordinance of Humility, is practiced by Christ's true people. The men go to one room for this service and the ladies to another.

The great Creator God suffered through His ordeal on earth and endured the pain and misery of the cross. What must He have been thinking while He hung on the cross as the vile mob mocked and ridiculed Him? What must He have been thinking as the cruel spikes through His hands and His feet sent constant pain throughout His body? Psalms 22:1-8, 14-18, written about 1,030 years before the crucifixion, is a prophecy describing Christ's thoughts during His time of supreme agony: “¹My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me and from the words of my roaring? ²O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.”

Jesus felt completely alone as He suffered and died on the cross with the weight of the sins of the world on His heart. God the Father was right there with Christ,

but Christ did not know it. The holy angels were there also, watching with horror their beloved Lord suffering the most agonizing death. They could not believe what was happening. Tears filled their eyes, and they longed to show the wretched mob the enormity of their folly. They longed to free Christ from the cross and from the multitude of insults, but they were under strict orders not to interfere. Christ must endure this ordeal alone; for if the Father or any of the angels interfered, the plan of salvation would be destroyed and all Christ's suffering would have been in vain. Satan tried his best to make Jesus break just one of God's laws. Satan and the evil angels did everything in their power to try to force Jesus to sin. If Jesus had committed even one sin, Satan would have won, and he and his evil angels could continue to live. By such severe torture, Satan hoped to induce Christ to give up His purpose instead of His life. If the Father or any of the holy angels interfered, Satan could claim the victory. No, Jesus must endure the cross alone, and He felt this loneliness deeply.

Verse 3: "3But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." Christ, in His hour of deepest anguish, praised the Father. Human beings with the slightest provocation often curse God.

Verses 4-6: "4Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. 5They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. 6But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people."

Jesus felt as low and dejected as it is possible to feel. These were the people whom He had created, whose lives were sustained by Him. Someday these people will realize the enormity of their guilt. Can you imagine the pain and suffering and humiliation of Christ as he hung naked on the cross? Why would the great Creator allow Himself to be subjected to such misery?

Verses 7,8: "7All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8He

trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.” The mob kept up a constant stream of insults. It seemed as if they could not say things vile enough to their Creator.

As Jesus hung there for six hours, unable to move — for if He moved, the pain became excruciating — his arms and body ached from the nails in His flesh and from having been in the same position for so long. He says in Psalms 22:14-18, “¹⁴I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. ¹⁵My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. ¹⁶For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. ¹⁸They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”

The accuracy of this prophecy of Christ's anguish during His ordeal on the cross is borne out by the actual events. His hands and His feet were indeed pierced, and the soldiers divided His clothes among them and cast lots for His robe, exactly as prophesied in Psalms 22.

It is very difficult for the human mind to comprehend the cross. We cannot begin to imagine the glory, honor, love, and respect the Lord enjoyed before He came to this earth as a man. We can never completely understand the infinite sacrifice Jesus made for us so that we might enjoy life throughout all eternity. As we study, however, we begin to comprehend dimly why the great Creator God of the universe would come and suffer as He did, allowing the creatures whom He created to treat Him so vilely and to crucify Him.

All the heavenly host love and admire Christ to a degree that is far beyond human understanding. They enjoy His companionship. They long to be in His company and listen to Him talk. They love Him, not be-

cause they have to, but because of His perfectly beautiful character. He is kind, loving, gentle, and understanding toward all of His creatures. For His created beings, it is the greatest honor and pleasure to be in His company. As they witnessed the scenes at the cross, they were horrified. They could not believe what was happening. Tears flowed from their eyes as they helplessly watched their beloved Lord suffer a slow, agonizing death. The universe was witnessing with horror the utter depravity that results when people disregard the law of God. As death finally put an end to the unbearable agony that the Lord had suffered, the entire universe, with one exception, finally realized the hideous nature of sin. That one exception, of course, is the earth. The people of earth do not understand. One day, however, they too will understand.

There was one man who perhaps understood a little of the enormous sacrifice that God made on our behalf. All his life, Abraham had dearly wanted a son by Sarah, his wife. God had promised him that one day He and Sarah would have a son, who would be the heir to all the promises God had made to him and who would also be the progenitor of Christ. Well beyond her child-bearing years, Sarah was still childless. Finally, when Abraham was one hundred years old and Sarah ninety, God made it possible for her to bear a son, and Isaac was born. Abraham dearly loved this little boy, whom he had longed for. Isaac gave him great joy and happiness.

When Isaac was a young man, God asked Abraham to do something very strange. As described in Genesis 22:2, God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. “²And he [God] said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” Abraham was shocked. Notice how God emphasized the fact that Abraham dearly loved Isaac, by saying,

“thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest.” Nevertheless, Abraham obeyed God, and went to offer his son for a burnt offering in the land of Moriah, where two thousand years later God’s dear Son would be offered on a cross for the sins of the world.

Verses 3-12: “³And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. ⁴Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. ⁵And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. ⁶And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. ⁷And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? ⁸And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. ⁹And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. ¹⁰And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. ¹²And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”

In spite of his great love for his son, Abraham loved God more; he put God first, ahead of his son. As Abraham was about to perform the heart-wrenching act of putting his own, dearly beloved son to death as an offering, he perhaps understood a little of how God

would feel some two thousand years later as He sacrificed His dear Son on the cross of Calvary. At the cross, however, there was no voice to stay the hand of death, no voice to ease the intense suffering of our precious Lord. Christ, the great Creator of the vast realms of limitless space, poured out His life for us.

At Christ's death, the very elements seemed to protest the savage treatment He had received at the hands of His depraved murderers. As the earth quaked violently, the rocks rent, and lightning, like the voice of doom, struck terror into the hearts of the mob, they finally began to gain a slight realization of the magnitude of the vile deed they had just committed. A Roman officer exclaimed, "⁵⁴Truly this was the Son of God." (Matthew 27:54).

Let us now turn our attention to the exact nature of Christ as a human being on earth. Notice that Christ came to earth, not in modern times when life would have been easier for Him, but in earlier times without the comforts and conveniences we enjoy today.

Romans 8:3 tells us that Jesus came to earth in human flesh. "³For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Christ clothed His divinity with humanity and laid aside the prerogatives of God to walk this earth as a man, as a human being, exactly like us.

Hebrews 2:14 also tells us that He came to earth in exactly the same flesh as other men. "¹⁴Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

Jesus Christ came to this earth as a human being, in the same flesh as other men, as these texts show. He was a man, a human being, exactly like us. He was tempted to do evil and break God's law in all the ways that we are tempted. In fact, Satan tempted Jesus to a

much greater degree than any other man was, or ever will be, tempted, for Satan knew that his own life hung on the question of whether or not he could entice Christ to sin. Satan, you will remember, claimed that it was impossible to live a perfect life without breaking the law of God. Jesus came to earth with all our human weaknesses to show the universe that it is indeed possible to live without breaking the law. He succeeded in spite of the fact that Satan and his evil angels had enormous pressure on Him tempting Him to sin. Finally, Satan gave Jesus an ultimatum, forcing Him to choose between preserving His life or breaking one of the Ten Commandments. Christ, of course, chose to die rather than to sin.

In Hebrews 4:15 we see that Christ was tempted exactly as we are, in every way exactly as we are. ¹⁵“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Jesus was tempted to do everything that we are tempted to do, without exception. He was tempted to curse God when trouble came. He was tempted to lie, tempted to steal, and tempted to commit adultery. This might come as a surprise to some, but this is exactly what this verse says. He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” In spite of the fact that Christ was tempted in every way that other men are, He never gave in to temptation; He never sinned. His character was perfectly pure and not tainted with the slightest propensity toward evil, for He thoroughly understood the vile nature of sin. Many times Satan came to Him, tempting Him, but each time He instantly put the thought of sin out of His mind. He never broke the law of God.

Does this mean that Christ was unable to sin? Does this mean that He had some ability or advantage that the other people of earth do not have? Many people claim that Christ could not have sinned even if He had wanted to. They claim that somehow He was shielded

from sin and was unable to break the law of God. If this is true, why then did Satan waste so much time and put forth such great effort trying to make the Lord sin? Satan knew that Jesus had the freedom to sin.

When Christ came to this earth, He did not reserve for Himself one advantage over other men. He came to earth as a human being and had no power or ability that other men do not have. But, you say, He performed many miracles such as healing the sick and bringing the dead back to life. This is true, but consider 1 Peter 2:21, which tells us that Christ is our example. “²¹For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.” Christ is our example, and, therefore, could not have reserved for Himself any advantage over other men. A simple illustration will make this point clear. Suppose a man has a little pet dog. This little dog always eats his dinner from a bowl on the floor. One evening this fellow looks at his little dog eating his dinner from the bowl on the floor and says, “That is no way to eat your dinner. I am going to show you how to do it. See, we use a knife, fork, and spoon, and we sit on a chair at the table.” Well, this is ridiculous because the man has more ability than the dog, and therefore has an advantage over the dog. The dog does not have the ability to eat his dinner from the table with a knife, fork, and spoon; therefore the man simply cannot be an example for the dog. Likewise, if Christ had reserved for himself one ability or advantage over us, He could not be our example.

Since Jesus had no advantage over other men, and since other men have the freedom to commit sin, Christ also had this freedom and could have sinned. This is a sobering thought. Christ came to earth with all our human weaknesses including the freedom to commit sin, for which the penalty is death, and put Himself at the mercy of Satan, the evil angels, and wicked men. Suppose Christ had sinned. Suppose Christ had broken one

of the Ten Commandments. What would have happened? What would have been the destiny of mankind? The results are too horrible to contemplate.

How, then, did Jesus perform His many miracles during His sojourn in this world if He did not reserve for Himself one advantage over us? By His perfect faith and close companionship with God the Father. It was God the Father who performed the miracles. Jesus, Himself, tells us this in John 14:10. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, **HE DOETH THE WORKS.**" But, you say, we just read that Christ is the great Creator God of the entire universe. This is true, but He laid aside all the prerogatives of God and clothed His divinity with humanity. He gave up all that He had in heaven, lived in our world as one of us, and died a most humiliating and ignominious death on a cross in order to show the universe what happens when people ignore the Ten Commandments and to make it possible for us to enjoy the wonderful experiences of eternity. The extent of Christ's sacrifice for us is far too great for the human mind to fully comprehend.

Again, why did the Lord Jesus Christ give up so much to come to our world as a human being? The answer is the love He has for all His creatures throughout the vast realms of limitless space. He sacrificed Himself so that the universe would thoroughly understand the repulsiveness of sin. John 3:16 tells us, "¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Everything that God does is motivated by love, a love so pure and so noble that it puts others' welfare above His own. In Christ's dealings with mankind down through the centuries, His prime motivation has been the love He has for His creatures. Christ loves each one of us with a love so deep and so broad that we will never be able to understand it

fully. John 15:13 tells us that “¹³Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” To sacrifice one’s life for another is truly the ultimate in love. Christ made it possible for each one of us to inherit an eternal life of unimaginable joy and happiness. He would like very much to see each one of us accept His sacrifice and follow Him as the Bible specifies. “⁹The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9).

To us on the earth it seems as if Christ is very far away, and does not care in the least about the things that happen here. In reality He and the entire universe are intently interested in what is taking place on earth; and every time one of His creatures suffers pain or trouble, it brings sadness to His heart. Luke 12:6,7 tells us that God is even concerned with the little birds and that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. “⁶Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? ⁷But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.” Christ, you see, is paying the closest attention to this drama of earth. He is deeply concerned with each one of us and is familiar with the smallest detail of our lives. He understands our problems and troubles, for He Himself endured much more than we will ever be required to bear.

Christ tells us in Isaiah 49:16, “¹⁶Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.” At the cross Christ engraved us upon the palms of his hands, and we are continually before Him. He is deeply concerned about us. He cares about us. He knows and loves each one of us personally; and when we turn from His love, rebel against His love, and break His commandments, He feels a bitter disappointment.

Christ’s hands and feet will bear the scars of His

ordeal at the cross throughout all eternity. The people who have obeyed and followed the Lord Jesus will have new bodies in perfect condition, without spot or blemish, but the Lord Jesus Christ will always wear the scars of earth. Zechariah 13:6 tells us that after this ordeal of earth is over for all of us, and those who are saved from the earth are in heaven, someone will come to Jesus and ask Him about these scars. “⁶And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.”

The Lord Jesus Christ, the great Creator of heaven and earth, the all-powerful King of the universe, will forever be the Servant of mankind as He was on earth. When the redeemed of earth arrive in heaven, Christ Himself will come forth to wait on them and serve them dinner. Luke 12:37 says, “³⁷Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” Their first dinner in heaven will be served by the Lord Jesus Christ. How will they feel as the hands that were wounded for them now reach out to offer them the food of heaven and a glorious life in eternity?

The character and personality of Jesus Christ is perfection. His character is exactly the opposite of Satan's. Satan is the most vile being who has ever lived; Jesus is the most kind, the most loving and gentle.

Jesus says in Revelation 3:20,21, “²⁰Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. ²¹To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.” Jesus stands at the door of our hearts and knocks. How long has He been standing there? All our lives He has been standing there knocking and waiting patiently for

each one of us to open the door. The fact that He says that He will come in and sup with us indicates that this is to be no fleeting visit, but a lifetime of companionship. Figuratively, if we open the door and invite the Lord Jesus in for supper, then He will come forth to serve us supper in heaven.

In Jeremiah 29:13 Jesus says, “¹³And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” Here the Lord promises to be found of us if we will, with all our hearts, search for Him and for His truth. We are the ones who must open the door and invite the Lord to come in, and we must do so with all sincerity, with all our hearts. We cannot cling with one hand to the Lord and with the other to the world. We must be willing to discard the lies and propaganda of this world and with all our hearts accept His truth from the Bible. We must, with all our hearts, be willing to discard the pleasures of sin. We must, with all our hearts, be willing to follow Him as the Bible specifies regardless of the hardships doing so may cause us, regardless of what ministers and teachers may claim.

There are those who will read this and declare it to be nonsense and foolishness. This is unfortunate, for in 1 Corinthians 1:18,19 we read, “¹⁸For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

Finally, in Proverbs 1:24-33, Christ gives us a warning and a promise: “²⁴Because I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; ²⁵But you have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: ²⁶I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; ²⁷When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. ²⁸Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but

they shall not find me: ²⁹For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: ³⁰They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. ³¹Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. ³²For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. ³³But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

Chapter 4

WHAT HAPPENS AT DEATH

What is going to happen to you when you die? Will you go to heaven? Or perhaps to another place — such as hell? or purgatory? There have been many articles written about people who have experienced “death” momentarily and have told about the beautiful “life” they had and the glorious things they saw while they were “dead.” Did these people get a glimpse of heaven? Were these people really dead?

Surely God has told us in the Bible what we can expect when we die. Consider some of the many verses that talk about death. Matthew 27:52: “⁵²And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.” Acts 13:36: “³⁶For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.” The words “saw corruption” mean that his body decayed after he was laid in his grave. First Corinthians 15:51 tells us that “⁵¹We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Psalms 13:3 says, “³Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.” First Kings 11:43: “⁴³And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.” The expression “slept with his fathers” is used many times in the Bible to indicate that a person had died.

Notice that these verses on death have one thing in

common: they speak of death as sleep. Many other verses in the Bible also refer to death as sleep. Could it be that death is like sleep and that when a person dies he does not go anywhere? Even the Lord Jesus referred to death as sleep. In John 11:11-14 He spoke of the death of Lazarus as sleep. Lazarus, whom Jesus knew quite well, was sick. When Mary, Lazarus' sister, sent word to Jesus and asked Him to come, He delayed his departure for two days. His disciples became worried that Lazarus might die before Jesus arrived. Then Jesus told them that Lazarus was asleep, and the disciples thought that since he was sleeping he would get well, for sleep is beneficial for a sick person. However, they did not realize that Jesus had referred to his death. ¹¹“These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. ¹²Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. ¹³Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. ¹⁴Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.”

Do the dead go somewhere when they die? Do they watch what is happening here on the earth after they are dead? Psalms 146:3,4 says, ³“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. ⁴His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” Here we see that in death the body returns to the earth, to the dust from which it came, and the person's thoughts perish. The dead have no thoughts. Isaiah 38:10,11 says, ¹⁰“I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. ¹¹I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.” Certainly if a person went to heaven when he died, he would see the Lord, but this verse says that the dead do not see the Lord, nor men. The dead, therefore, are not watching people on earth.

They are not watching what is taking place on earth or anywhere else, for they are asleep in their graves and their thoughts have all perished.

King David, for example, did not go anywhere when he died except to his grave. Acts 2:29,34 tells us, “²⁹Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. ³⁴For David is not ascended into the heavens.”

Ecclesiastes 9:5,6,10 is an exceptionally clear text concerning death. “⁹For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. ⁶Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. ¹⁰Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

The dead do not know anything. In death there are no thoughts, no knowledge, no wisdom, no emotions, no work nor device, and certainly no consciousness, for without thoughts there can be no consciousness. Death is exactly like a very deep sleep; consequently the Bible frequently refers to death as sleep. When a person dies, he is simply in the grave, where he will remain until the resurrection. He has no thoughts; he is unconscious, exactly as if he were in a very deep sleep.

Just as a person has no knowledge of anything prior to his birth, he will have no knowledge or consciousness of events after he is dead. He simply ceases to exist. His body and mind decay, and he ceases to exist. This might sound like a morbid finality to life, however, death is not the end. The apostle John tells us that everyone who has died, regardless of whether he has been good or bad, will be resurrected. Everyone will be awakened from the sleep of death. John 5:28,29 says: “²⁸Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which

ALL that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ²⁹And shall come forth." Notice who will hear the Lord's voice: "ALL that are in the graves." The dead are not in heaven or in hell; they are in their graves, where they will all remain until they hear the voice of the Lord at the resurrection.

Here, then, is another reason why the Bible speaks of death as sleep. Death as we know it is only temporary. Just as a sleeping person eventually awakes, everyone will be awakened from death at the resurrection.

Death is a very deep sleep. In death there are no thoughts, no knowledge, no wisdom, no emotions, and no consciousness. If you are very tired when you go to bed at night, you fall asleep quickly; you sleep very soundly and awaken the next morning to the sound of the alarm clock or perhaps the light of day. How long did it seem from the moment sleep came until the alarm clock rang? It seemed but a fraction of a second, did it not? Death is exactly the same. From the moment we close our eyes in death until we are resurrected, we will not be conscious of any time passing. Regardless of how long we have been dead, when we open our eyes to behold the Lord in all His glory at the resurrection, it will seem as if only an instant has passed. The dead are not conscious of the passing of time. In fact, if a man died suddenly so that he could not have realized what happened, during the first few moments after his resurrection he will not even realize that he had been dead.

What about the prevalent belief that when a wicked person dies he goes to hell, to everlasting fire, to be punished for his wickedness? As we read in the previous chapter, the Lord Jesus loves us dearly. Would a God whose love for us far exceeds the bounds of human understanding require those that He created to endure the pain of everlasting fire throughout all eternity? Would a God of love require a mother in heaven to witness her son writhing with pain in the fires of hell

throughout all eternity? This would certainly not bring happiness to the mother in heaven, where there is to be no sorrow or pain. A God of love would certainly never require such a thing. This lie that people will suffer in an ever-burning hell is an example of the erroneous propaganda that floods this entire world. Satan deceives the world into believing this lie to make mankind think that God has a personality like his own. Satan always tries to make people believe that God is responsible for the evil that he himself has caused.

Consider a few more Bible verses that further emphasize the fact that death is exactly like a deep sleep. Psalms 115:17 says, ¹⁷“The dead praise not the Lord.” If a person who was in the habit of praising the Lord in this life were to go to heaven after he died, there in the presence of God he would surely praise Him. He does not praise the Lord, of course, for he has no consciousness. He is asleep in his grave. Psalms 6:5 says, ⁵“For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?” Surely if a person who had been righteous during his life on earth went to heaven when he died, he would remember the Lord as he had on earth; for he would be there with the Lord. After he dies, a person cannot remember the Lord because he is totally unconscious. This verse also implies that the dead do not give thanks to the Lord. Certainly a righteous person would thank God for taking him to heaven. He doesn’t, however, because he is unconscious, asleep in his grave. In Job 17:13, Job says, ¹³“If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.” Job also knew of the resurrection. In Job 19:25-27 he says, ²⁵“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: ²⁶And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: ²⁷Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” Job says here that after he dies and his body decays, he shall, in his flesh, in his body, see God in the latter day

at the resurrection. It makes little sense to expect that when a person dies he goes to heaven or to hell and then climbs back into the grave to be resurrected.

Many question the concept of a resurrection from death, even though the Bible describes it, indicates that it has happened before (Moses was resurrected shortly after his death), and shows that the Lord Himself is no longer in the tomb. God put us together once, and He can do it again. In fact, the blueprints and details of our bodies are recorded in the computer banks of heaven so minutely and so accurately that on the resurrection day the thought patterns in our brains will be reconstructed exactly as they were at the moment of death so that our thoughts will continue right where they were when we died. If a righteous person dies in the middle of a prayer to God, he will arise from death finishing that prayer. If a person dies in the process of cursing God, he will arise from death with that same curse on his lips.

There are some verses in the Bible that, on casual reading, would seem to contradict what we have studied so far about death. Let us consider them.

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is found in Luke 16:19-31. ¹⁹There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: ²⁰And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, ²¹And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²²And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; ²³And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. ²⁵But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy

lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou are tormented. ²⁶And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. ²⁷Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house: ²⁸For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. ²⁹Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. ³⁰And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. ³¹And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

This story seems to contradict the other verses we have covered, that show death to be exactly like a deep sleep. What is the problem? We have seen that there can be no contradictions in the Bible. What, then, is the meaning of this story?

Jesus used many stories to illustrate various lessons that He wanted the people to understand. These stories are called parables. A parable is a symbolic story that is used as an aid in teaching. Jesus used parables to help us to understand various aspects of life on earth and our relationship with God and to show us the way we should live. The story of the rich man and Lazarus is one of these parables, and in fact most of the King James Bibles have the words, "Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus" printed at the top of the page on which this story is found. At least one ancient manuscript also refers to this story as a parable in the text. This parable is the last of a series of parables that Jesus told on this occasion.

Why did Jesus use this particular parable, that speaks of hell, where people are tormented, and of Abraham's bosom, where people are happy? The belief was popular in that day, just as it is in our day, that

when people died they went either to heaven or to hell, and Jesus used this mistaken belief as a setting for His story, which was designed to induce people to repent and turn away from their evil ways. The people also believed that Abraham had a position of special influence in heaven, much as some today believe Saint Peter guards the gates of heaven. Abraham and Peter are asleep in their graves awaiting the resurrection. The point of His story was that if they would not hear Moses and the prophets, they would not hear one returning from the dead to warn them to repent. Indeed, Jesus returned from the dead, and many, many people ignore His messages. They do not hear the messages of Moses and the prophets, and they do not hear the messages of Jesus.

We have just read a number of texts in which the prophets describe death as sleep and tell us that in death we have no thoughts or consciousness, that our emotions all perish, and that there is “no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave.” If the people would study and heed what the prophets wrote, they would realize that death is exactly like sleep.

There is another apparent contradiction in the Bible concerning death that must be considered. Luke 23:42,43 describes Jesus' assurance to the thief on the cross that he would be saved. “⁴²And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. ⁴³And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” These words were spoken on Friday afternoon just before Jesus died. It appears that in this verse Jesus is telling the thief that that day (Friday) he would be with the Lord in paradise; thus, this verse seems to contradict the other verses showing death to be a sleep. However, consider John 20:17, where Jesus, talking with Mary on Sunday morning after His resurrection, said, “¹⁷Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and

your Father; and to my God, and your God.” So, on Sunday morning Jesus made the statement that He had not yet been to paradise, to God the Father. How, then, could He have told the thief on the cross that he would be in paradise on Friday evening with Jesus when He Himself would not be there? Where was Jesus after He died on the cross? He was asleep in the grave, just as the Scriptures say, until His resurrection on Sunday morning. Jesus Himself said in Matthew 12:40 that He would remain in the grave until his resurrection: “⁴⁰For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Where, then, is the problem? Since Luke 23:43 is the verse that stands in contradiction with the other verses we have considered, there must be some problem with this one. The difficulty can be resolved easily. The original Greek text was written without punctuation. Punctuation was added later by the translators. The problem with this verse is the placement of the comma before the words “To day.” If the comma is placed after the words “To day,” the verse says that Jesus on that day promised the thief that he would be with Him in paradise after the resurrection. This verse would then agree with the other verses of Scripture concerning death. It should therefore read, “Verily I say unto thee today, that thou shalt be with me in Paradise.” Jesus promised the thief “today” a place in paradise after the resurrection. Remember that the entire Bible must agree with itself; this is one of the methods God has given us so that we might know when we have these difficult verses interpreted correctly. Remember also that the original text had no punctuation and that the problem is with the comma, that was put there by a translator who did not understand.

We have seen that the dead are asleep and go nowhere except the grave; neither have they any thoughts or emotions or knowledge. This is the truth that God

tells us in the Scriptures. Why, then, do most people believe that the dead do go someplace, either to heaven, hell, or purgatory?

We learned in chapter two that Satan deceives the entire world. The belief that death is another life does not originate from God; it comes from the devil. Satan wants people to believe this lie because then they are much more susceptible to his other deceptions.

Consider, for instance, a hypothetical case. A girl who has been very close to her mother is deeply grieved at her mother's death. One night just as the girl is about to fall asleep, she sees her mother standing at the foot of her bed. She is overjoyed to know that her mother is not really dead. She listens intently to what her mother has to say about the wonderful life after death.

Another person attends a séance, where a spirit medium, probably with a crystal ball, seemingly contacts the spirit of someone who has died. Perhaps the dead person materializes and talks to the client himself, giving advice and describing the wonderful life after death.

As we have seen, the dead are unconscious and know nothing. Who, then, is masquerading as these dead people? In chapter two we found that Satan is an evil angel and that he has many other evil angels on earth with him helping him to accomplish his purposes and deceptions. In Hebrews 13:2 we saw that angels have the ability to imitate other life forms and that at times they appear as human beings. They can imitate anyone perfectly, and this is what they do when they appear as someone who has died. The girl in our example heard a voice exactly like her mother's voice, but it was not her mother's. She saw a form exactly like her mother's form, but it was not her mother's. Her mother is dead; and the dead are sound asleep, without thoughts, consciousness, knowledge, emotions, or wisdom. This form was either Satan or one of his angels masquerading as her mother. Since the girl believes that she is seeing and listening to her mother, she will believe what her

“mother” tells her. She is wide open for Satan’s lies and deceptions under these conditions. She is told that life after death is wonderful and that she need not worry about anything.

Suppose before her death the girl’s mother habitually lied, stole, and committed adultery and the girl knew about her wickedness. When the “mother” tells her how wonderful life after death is, the girl will believe that lying, stealing, and committing adultery are permissible regardless of what the Bible says about these things. After such an experience it is unlikely that the girl will ever understand the truth. Satan has essentially locked her in error by this deception.

When people see visions of Mary, the mother of Jesus, for instance, they are seeing the devil or one of his demons masquerading as Mary. Mary is asleep in her grave awaiting her resurrection as we have just read from the Bible. Seeing a vision like this can be overwhelmingly deceptive. We must realize that God cannot lie to us. What the Bible says is the truth. Mary is asleep in her grave and cannot appear to anyone.

Similarly, the happenings at a séance are tricks of Satan or his evil angels. A Christian should never visit such a place, not even out of curiosity. The deception that the dead are not really dead is often too overpowering.

Many of the world’s more sensational publications print stories about visits from the dead and about other spiritualistic experiences. These publications do Satan’s work and help to propagate his lies about the state of the dead. When a person supposedly comes back from the dead with a story of a wonderful life hereafter and it is widely publicized, many people believe these stories rather than the Bible. They believe that no matter how they live and no matter what they do, they will experience a wonderful life when they die. After the resurrection, life indeed will be wonderful for the people who follow Christ the way the Bible specifies, but not

for the wicked.

Consider again the very clear description of the state of the dead in Ecclesiastes 9:5,6,10. ⁵“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. ⁶Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. ¹⁰Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

If a man suffers a blow to his head and is knocked out, he knows nothing; for he is unconscious. How ridiculous to believe that if he is hit a little harder and is killed, he knows everything! Our only hope against the deceptions of the devil is complete faith and trust in the Word of God, interpreted so that there are no contradictions anywhere.

Two more concepts that are poorly understood by most are the soul and the spirit. Many believe that at death their soul or spirit goes somewhere and continues to live apart from their body. Genesis 2:7 shows that a soul is a living human being. ⁷“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Souls, therefore, are human beings. Ecclesiastes 12:7 describes the process of death. ⁷“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” What is meant by “spirit” in this verse? The word “spirit” is a translation of the Hebrew word *ruach*, that means “breath.” *Ruach* is translated “breath” twenty-eight times in the King James version. One of these verses is Genesis 6:17. ¹⁷“And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life [*ruach*], from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.” The spirit in Ecclesiastes 12:7,

then, is the breath of life. When a man loses this he dies.

By way of analogy, suppose a man constructs a box from several boards and some nails. After the box is built, he pulls out all the nails, puts them in a pile, and places the boards in a stack. What happened to the box? It did not go anywhere; it just ceased to exist. This is exactly what happens to a soul at death; it just ceases to exist. By the hand of God a soul is made from the dust of the ground and the breath of life. At death the breath leaves, the dust goes back to the ground, and the soul simply ceases to exist, exactly as the box ceased to exist. At death the soul does not go anywhere: it is not immortal; it simply ceases to exist.

Consider a few other verses that show that soul means "human being." Joshua 11:11 is part of a description of a battle. "¹¹And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them: there was not any left to breathe." This verse describes people who died in the battle. These souls were not immortal, for they were utterly destroyed. Since they were utterly destroyed, they could certainly not go anywhere.

Acts 27:37 says that there were 276 people on board a particular ship. "³⁷And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls." Acts 2:41 tells us that 3,000 people joined the church in one day. "⁴¹Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

Finally Revelation 16:3 tells us, "³And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea." We see here that not only human beings are souls, but also all the animals and fish in the sea. Every living entity of the animal kingdom is a soul. Dogs, cats, horses, cows, men, and women are souls, and here on earth none of them is immortal; they are all subject

to death.

Consider a few verses that talk about the spirit. You will recall that Ecclesiastes 12:7 showed that a person's spirit is his breath. James 2:26 says, "²⁶For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." In this case the word "spirit" is translated from the Greek word *pneuma*, that means breath or wind. We get our English word "pneumatic" from this word. Pneumatic means pertaining to air, or operated by air, as in pneumatic tires (tires with air in them) or pneumatic drill (a drill operated by air pressure). So here again we see that man's spirit is his breath.

The King James translation of the Bible was the work of a large group of scholars. When a disagreement arose as to how to translate a particular word, the translators would vote on which meaning should be used. They would then put the meaning that the majority wanted in the main text and put the alternate meaning in a margin, that ran down the middle of the page between the two columns of text. This marginal reference is usually printed in the more expensive copies of the King James Bible.

If you have a King James version with the marginal references, you will notice that by the word "spirit" in James 2:26 there is a small number. Now, look in the margin under chapter two until you see that small number. This is the alternate translation of the word "spirit" and it is "breath."

Next consider Job 27:3. "³All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils" The nose (nostrils) is a rather strange place for the spirit to be if the spirit is what most people think it is. Again, the Hebrew word *ruach*, meaning breath, is used. The marginal reference for the word "spirit" in this verse also shows that the alternate translation is breath: "That is, the breath which God gave him."

We have seen here that human beings and animals are souls and that their spirit is simply their breath. In

death, a person's soul ceases to exist, for his breath (spirit) leaves him. He quits breathing, and his body goes back to dust. Death is exactly like a very deep sleep.

With few exceptions, every time the word "spirit" is used in the King James version it is the translation of words that mean breath or wind. One of the qualities of breath and wind is intangibility. Thus the Hebrew and Greek words that mean breath or wind are sometimes used to refer to other things that are of an intangible nature. These words are used, for instance, to refer to the Holy Spirit. In the original languages of the Bible the words for Holy Spirit literally mean "Holy Wind." Likewise in the original languages the words that refer to unclean spirits literally mean "evil wind." A few times the word "spirit" refers to a person's mind.

The only two texts where the word "spirit" is not translated from a word meaning breath or wind are found in the gospels of Matthew and Mark. Both instances refer to the appearance of Jesus to His disciples after His resurrection. The disciples thought they had seen a spirit. In these two cases "spirit" is translated from a word that means apparition or phantom, or ghost.

Next, consider the words "immortal" and "immortality" as they occur in the Bible, and see whether such a thing as an immortal soul is mentioned anywhere. In the King James version, the only occurrence of the word "immortal" is in 1 Timothy 1:17: "¹⁷Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." This is the only time in the entire Bible the word "immortal" appears, and it applies to God, not to man.

Notice in Genesis 2:17 what God said when instructing Adam not to eat the fruit of one particular tree in the Garden of Eden. "¹⁷But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." God told Adam that he would die. Now, notice what Satan

told Eve in Genesis 3:4. “⁴And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.” — a direct contradiction of what God had said. Whom did Adam and Eve believe? As we know, they believed the devil. Whom do men believe today when they claim that when a person dies he is not really dead but is living somewhere else? Isn't it strange, when God has spoken so plainly, that men still choose to believe the devil's lies?

Romans 3:23 tells us that we have all broken the law of God. “²³For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 6:23 tells us that those who break God's law earn wages, which is death. “²³For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” With these two texts in mind, notice that Ezekiel 18:4 tells us that “⁴the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Since we have all sinned, broken God's law, we are all subject to death. There is no such thing as an immortal soul, for all the souls who have sinned are mortal and are subject to death.

Next, we shall consider each verse in which the word “immortality” is used in the King James version. First Timothy 6:14-16 says, “¹⁴That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: ¹⁵Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; ¹⁶Who only hath immortality.” Only God has immortality. God is the only immortal being; He is the only one not subject to death. If only God has immortality, then no other being is immortal. Man has no immortal soul or immortal spirit, for only God is immortal. If the evil people live in hell for all eternity they would be immortal. We see here that this is not the case.

Romans 2:6,7 tells us that God “⁶will render to every man according to his deeds: ⁷To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.” We do not have eternal life now, but we are to seek for immortality by

well doing. Second Timothy 1:10 tells us that Jesus Christ “¹⁰hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” Jesus has made it possible for us to gain immortality someday, although we do not have it now.

First Corinthians 15:51-54 tells us when immortality will be granted to some. “⁵¹Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be changed, ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump [trumpet]: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

The last trumpet signifies the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth. It is then that immortality will be granted to the righteous men and women.

We have just looked at every Bible verse that contains the words “immortal” and “immortality.” The term “immortal soul” is not found in the Bible, for there is no such thing at the present time. The immortal soul doctrine is straight from the devil. He has been preaching this lie since the Garden of Eden, and mankind has been believing it ever since.

The word “hell” in the King James Old Testament appears thirty-one times and is **ALWAYS** translated from the Hebrew word *sheowl*, which means “the grave.” The word *sheowl* is translated “grave” thirty times. Hell is simply the grave.

Chapter 5

THE GRAND FINALE

During the climax to this drama of earth, the most fantastic, the most dramatic, the most profound series of events of all time will take place. You will never read a novel or see a movie more powerful, more thrilling, or more awesome than the events of the final scenes of earth's history.

The word "millennium" means a period of one-thousand years. Though this word is not mentioned in the Bible, it is often used to refer to a particular thousand-year period, that is mentioned several times, and to the events associated with it.

The millennium will occur at the end of time, at the end of the earth as we know it, not many more years from now. To some people the events associated with the millennium will be their most thrilling experience; to all others they will be the most terrifying.

God never does anything concerning this earth without first revealing His plans to us. Throughout the world's history, God has given warnings of impending situations. Amos 3:7 says, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." The prophets, in turn, reveal the messages to the people.

God warned the people who lived before Noah's flood that He was going to destroy all life on the earth by a flood of water. Noah preached for 120 years, trying to warn them, but none would listen. Instead, they continued their evil and violence so detestable to God.

Likewise, as the world rapidly approaches the final

events of this earth's history, many today are inclined to disregard the abundant warnings and advice God has given us concerning these last-day events. In this they also make a fatal error.

Revelation 20:5 speaks of a resurrection from death after the millennium, the thousand-year period, comes to an end. ⁵“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” (The last five words of this verse actually belong in the next verse.) “The rest of the dead” implies, of course, that some of the dead were resurrected prior to this resurrection.

John 5:28,29 tells a little more about these resurrections. ²⁸“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ²⁹And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” Notice who will hear the Lord's voice: all that are in the graves. No matter how evil a person has been, he will hear the Lord's voice and will come forth from the grave. Everyone who has ever died will be resurrected from death in either one or the other of these resurrections; for as these verses show, there is to be a resurrection of the righteous and a resurrection of the wicked. Which one is which?

Revelation 20:6 answers this question. (The first five words quoted here are from verse five. These words should be in verse six.) ⁶“This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” Those who rise in the first resurrection at the beginning of this thousand-year period are the righteous; they will be with the Lord during the thousand years. The wicked rise in the second resurrection at the end of the thousand years. This verse also speaks of a second death, that will not affect the righteous. The wicked, therefore, will die a

second time. They will die a death from which there will be no resurrection.

Thus far we have seen that there is to be a specific thousand-year period, that is marked at the beginning by the resurrection of the righteous and at the end by the resurrection of the wicked. Many other profound events occur both at the beginning and end of this thousand-year period. First Thessalonians 4:13-18 shows that the beginning of the millennium is also marked by the return of the Lord, Jesus Christ. It is at His presence that the righteous dead are raised. ¹³“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [dead], that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus [the righteous dead] will God bring with him. ¹⁵For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep [dead]. ¹⁶For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump [trumpet] of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

The apostle Paul tells us here that he is conveying a message from God; in verse 15 he says, ¹⁵“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord.” God, therefore, tells us that Christ Himself will come back to this earth with a shout and with trumpets, and at that time the righteous dead of all ages will be resurrected. At that time also, the righteous living will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. Notice that the Lord comes with a shout and with trumpets. Many think that the Lord will return to this earth secretly, but as these and other verses show, His coming will be any-

thing but secret; His arrival is to be announced by trumpets, as is customary upon the arrival of a king.

Satan, the devil, will not be idle during the years just preceding the return of the Lord. The devil will do his best to deceive people and keep them ignorant as to how Christ will return. Just as he tries to counterfeit every other Bible doctrine, Satan plans to counterfeit Christ's return at the opportune time. Matthew 24:23,24 tells us, "²³Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. ²⁴For 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." These verses warn us of an overwhelming deception, so convincing that even the righteous will nearly be deceived. This overwhelming deception occurs when Satan himself impersonates Jesus Christ! There is much confusion in the world today as to how the Lord will return. Satan has people believing his lies in order to make them more likely to be deceived by his impersonation of Christ. Satan, however, will not be permitted to counterfeit exactly the manner of Christ's return; therefore, those who take the time to study and understand exactly how Christ is to return will recognize the counterfeit when it appears.

Human eyes have never seen a sight such as the one Satan will present. Remember that he was originally an angel in heaven; he is the most beautiful and the most intelligent being that God ever created. Human beings will be dazzled when Satan walks the streets of the cities and towns of this world in all his splendor and glory. He will speak softly, in a pleasant, melodious, soothing voice, and will say many of the things Jesus said many centuries before. Satan will raise his hands in blessing the people, and the people will prostrate themselves before him, worshiping him, believing that he is Christ. He will heal the sick and will perform many miracles just as Jesus did. Verse 24 tells us

that Satan "shall shew great signs and wonders." The devil's miracles, his appearance, his dazzling brilliance, and his pleasant manner will be almost more than even Christ's elect can withstand, and they will very nearly accept this overpowering deception. Almost the entire human race will fall down and worship the devil, believing that he is Christ.

Consider some of the other verses that show the manner in which the Lord Jesus Christ will return to this world. Matthew 24:26,27 warns us, "²⁶Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. ²⁴For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." During a severe thunderstorm when lightning flashes it lights up the entire area with its brilliant flash, and the sound of thunder can be heard for miles. Christ says His return will be like that. It will be impossible for anyone to miss the return of the Lord. It will be anything but secret.

Acts 1:9-11 describes the scene when the Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven: "⁹And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men [angels] stood by them in white apparel; ¹¹Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." When Jesus left the earth, a cloud received Him as He ascended. Since He will return in the manner in which He left, He will, therefore, come in the clouds of heaven. This is exactly what Revelation 1:7 says. "⁷Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

Jesus comes in the clouds of heaven, and how many

eyes will see him? **EVERYEYE** shall see him. If people proclaim that Jesus has returned and you have not seen Him for yourself coming in the clouds of heaven with all the holy angels blowing trumpets, then you will know that it is an impostor or that Satan, perpetrating his grand delusion, is masquerading as Christ. Notice that this verse tells us that the people who crucified Christ will also see Him return in all His glory. There is to be a special resurrection of those who participated in the crucifixion of Jesus so that they can witness His return in all His power and glory. How do you suppose these people will feel when they see the Lord whom they crucified returning?

Christ indeed will return in all His glory, for Matthew 16:27 tells us, “²⁷The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” Satan, who, you will remember, is an angel, will dazzle the world with his glory when He counterfeits the Lord’s return; and he is only one angel. What will the effect be on the people of earth when Christ returns in all His glory with His angels in all their glory? Words cannot describe the scene; the power and glory of the heavenly host will be overwhelming. It will be impossible for anyone to miss the return of the Lord. Notice also in this verse that Christ will reward the people of earth at this time for their works, whether good or bad.

Revelation 8:1 tells us that there will soon be silence in heaven: “¹And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.” Why do you suppose there will be silence in heaven, which is usually bustling with activity? Matthew 25:31 answers this question: “³¹When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” When Christ returns to this earth, He brings all the holy angels with Him. Heaven, therefore, is completely empty; this is the reason for the silence. Chap-

ter ten explains prophetic symbols and will show that in Bible prophecy one day represents one year of actual time. The time period, therefore, represented by the half hour of this verse is about one week. (One-half hour is one-48th of a day; one-48th of a year is approximately one week.) Heaven will be empty for about one week of actual time. This is the time that Christ and all the holy angels will spend in coming to the earth from heaven, gathering all the righteous people, both dead and alive, and then returning to heaven again.

In order to find out how many angels Christ brings with Him, consider Revelation 5:11: “¹¹And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.” Ten thousand times ten thousand is one hundred million, but there are thousands of thousands more. Hebrews 12:22 says, “²²But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.” There are so many angels that they are beyond numbering, and they will all be coming with Jesus when He returns to the earth.

“³⁰And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Matthew 24:30,31).

One day a small cloud will appear in the east. The cloud will be quite some distance from earth when it first appears. As the earth rotates on its axis, everyone will be able to see the cloud, just as everyone sees the sun. Gradually the cloud gets closer and closer, larger and larger. Soon it becomes apparent that this is no ordinary cloud, for inside the cloud can be seen a brilliant

light. When the cloud is quite close, it appears as if it will cover the entire earth. The mighty sounds of the trumpets and the shouts of the angels are now heard as the sky is filled with the indescribable glory of Christ and His heavenly host. The righteous dead from all ages are resurrected, and the righteous living are caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They, in their new, glorious, immortal bodies, join the overwhelming splendor in the sky.

Everywhere one looks, the dazzlingly glorious angels are seen, as the power and glory in the sky completely overwhelm the people of earth. The people who have rejected Christ and who have disobeyed His laws see the Lord Jesus Himself with a power and glory that defy description, surrounded by His glorious holy angels, and they finally realize what they have done. They finally realize that they have foolishly thrown away everything that really matters. They call to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the glory of Christ, as Revelation 6:15-17 describes: ¹⁵“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: ¹⁷For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” Indeed, who but the people who have accepted Christ and obeyed Him and who have longed to see Him return? It will be impossible for anyone to miss the return of the Lord, for it is anything but secret.

As Christ raises the righteous dead, He gives them new bodies. Philippians 3:20,21 says, ²⁰“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” Christ had a real, physical body after

His resurrection; and this verse tells us that when the righteous are raised they too will be given a body, not one made from the dust of the ground, but a glorious body like the body of Jesus. First Corinthians 15:51-54 tells us that these righteous dead who are raised will also be given the gift of immortality. ⁵¹Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be changed, ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." The word "corruption" here refers to the decay of our bodies at death. The righteous, both living and dead, are given new, immortal bodies when the Lord returns.

One of the most beautiful promises in the entire Bible is found in John 14:1-3: ¹Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many mansions: If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Christ promised that He was going away to prepare mansions for His people. Notice that these are not just houses or apartments that He prepares; they are mansions. Have you ever wanted to live in a mansion on a hill with a lovely view? Jesus also promises that He will return to this world to receive the people throughout all ages who have loved Him and served Him as the Bible specifies.

When Christ left the earth after His crucifixion, He went to heaven. This is shown in Hebrews 9:24: ²⁴For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven

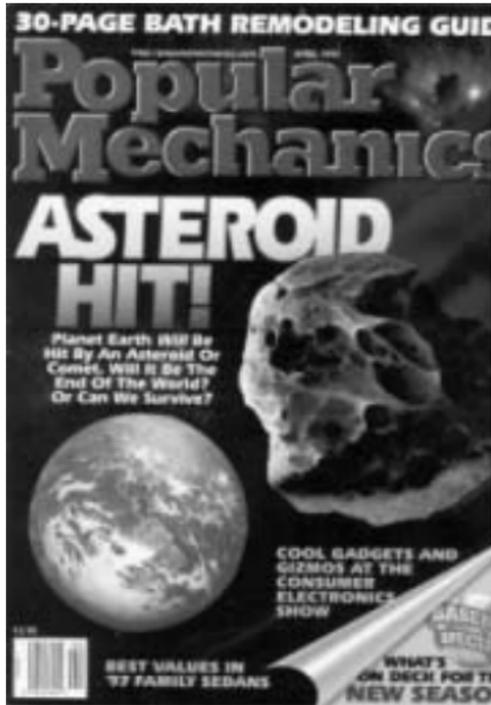
itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” When He left the earth Christ went to heaven and prepared a city for His people, as Hebrews 11:16 says: “¹⁶But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.” Verse 10 says, “¹⁰For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” The next chapter will describe this glorious city and the fantastic life the righteous will enjoy throughout eternity.

First Peter 1:3,4 tells us that this city, the inheritance of the righteous, is reserved for them in heaven. “³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.” When Jesus comes back to earth, He gathers the righteous, who meet Him in the air. First Thessalonians 4:16,17: “¹⁶For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump [trumpet] of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Christ does not set foot on the earth at this time. He takes the righteous back to heaven, where their inheritance is reserved for them and where they reign with Him a thousand years, as Revelation 20:6 says: “⁶Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

What do you suppose Satan will do when he realizes that Christ is returning to earth in that little cloud in the east?

Reports in the news media predicting that an aster-

oid will hit the earth in the near future are increasing. On the cover of the April 1997 edition of Popular Mechanics magazine there is a colorful picture of a large asteroid headed straight for the earth. The headline says, "Asteroid Hit!" And then below the headline in smaller type we read, "Planet Earth Will Be Hit By An Asteroid Or Comet. Will It Be The End Of The World? Or Can We Survive?" Many other publications have similar pictures and are talking about this event. Movies are being made about an asteroid hitting the earth.



Asteroids are millions of rocks in orbit around the Sun generally between the orbits of the planets Mars and Jupiter. They range in size from small boulders to hundreds of miles in diameter. The largest asteroid is Ceres, about 640 miles in diameter. The impact speed of an asteroid as it hits the earth could be more than 150 thousand miles per hour. If a large asteroid hit the earth traveling at this speed it would cause catastrophic damage.

It does not take much imagination to realize that the devil will convince the world that the little cloud is an asteroid, and that our only chance for survival will be to launch the nuclear intercontinental missiles at it to try to break it up before it hits the earth. What a welcome for the Lord. A salvo of nuclear missiles. This

will be the Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty that is mentioned in Revelation 16:13,14, and Satan is preparing the world for this battle in news media articles and movies. ¹³“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. ¹⁴For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” This “battle of that great day of God Almighty” is **NOT** the battle of Armageddon. Armageddon is discussed in chapter seventeen. The unclean spirits of devils are lying propaganda that prepares the world to fight against Christ as He returns.

What about the wicked people who have rejected the Lord, broken His Ten Commandment law, and blasphemed His name? What happens to them after the righteous are taken from the earth?

Consider Revelation 6:14: ¹⁴“And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” This describes a world-wide earthquake of such magnitude that the entire surface of the earth is drastically changed. Can you imagine how the wicked must feel at this time as the earth literally comes apart at the seams? Also, in their sinful condition they cannot stand the overwhelming power and glory of Christ and all His holy angels, who literally cover the sky. Luke 21:25-27 tells us that the wicked are so terrified that their hearts fail them for fear. ²⁵“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. ²⁷And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud

with power and great glory.”

This earthquake is further described in Revelation 16:17, 18,20,21: “¹⁷And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. ¹⁸And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. ²⁰And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. ²¹And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.” The entire topography of the earth’s surface will be drastically changed by this world-wide earthquake: mountains will be leveled, and islands will sink into the sea. In addition to the earthquake, there will be the hailstones about the size of a basketball, weighing about 95 pounds each. This artillery from the skies and the violent world-wide earthquake will demolish everything on the earth’s surface, from buildings and houses to cars and other machinery. Everything on the earth will be totally destroyed.

It is with great sorrow that God must destroy those who will not repent of their sins. Second Peter 3:9 tells us that “⁹The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” God wants every one of us to realize the vile nature of sin. He wants us to realize the importance of obeying the Ten Commandments. He wants to be able to save everyone; but if the sinner will not separate himself from sin, he cannot be saved.

Consider next Jeremiah 25:30-33: “³⁰Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they

that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. ³¹A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh [which is what He is doing today]; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. ³²Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. ³³And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.”

Why will the slain, that this text says are all over the earth, not be gathered or buried? The wicked will all be slain at this time by the mighty convulsions of nature during the world-wide earthquake. The righteous have been taken off the earth to meet the Lord in the air and are thus spared the trauma of remaining here during this time. The wicked are not buried, simply because there is no one left on earth to bury them.

Jeremiah 4:23-27 tells us that this cataclysmic destruction of everything on the earth occurs at the return of Christ. “²³I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. ²⁴I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. ²⁵I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. ²⁶I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger. ²⁷For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.”

The earth was without form and void. These are exactly the same words used in Genesis 1:2 to describe the earth before anything was created on it. We see, therefore, that the destruction is total. Everything on the surface of the earth is destroyed. There remain no people, no birds, no animals. All the cities are broken

down — the houses, the buildings, the freeways. The heavens above are black, without the sun, moon, and stars to give their light. Because of the cataclysmic convulsions of the earth's surface, hot volcanic ash and dust are driven skyward by the tremendous pressures released from beneath the earth as volcanic mountains disintegrate. This process spreads a blanket of dust and ash in the upper atmosphere all around the earth. The sun, moon, and stars do not shine because their light cannot penetrate this thick blanket of volcanic dust and ash. When does all this occur? Verse 26 tells us: "at the presence of the Lord." After the righteous are taken off the earth, calamity follows; yet, as verse 27 says, this is not the end, for many other events must occur.

We had a sample of what volcanic ash can do when Mt. St. Helens blew up and covered the entire northwestern United States with a cloud of volcanic ash so thick no light from the sun, moon and stars could be seen. In the middle of the day it was like midnight.

Ezekiel 32:7,8 also talks about God covering the sun with clouds "⁷And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. ⁸All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD."

Isaiah 24:1,3-6 also describes the earth during this time and shows that the earth will be completely empty, without man or beast: "¹Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. ³The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word. ⁴The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. ⁵The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. ⁶Therefore hath the

curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.”

The few men left are the righteous who have been taken off the earth before these convulsions of nature occur. These verses tell us that God makes the earth empty, utterly empty. Verse 5 tells us why this has to happen: because men have “transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.” We will see shortly that a large organization has made an attempt to change God’s Ten Commandments as this verse says, and most of the world obey their changed ten commandments. Many live today as if there were no laws to follow, completely without morality. They cater to their every desire with abandon in their mad scramble to seek pleasure and have fun. One day these people will realize what they have done, but then it will be too late.

This description of the earth continues in Isaiah 24:18-20: “¹⁸For the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. ¹⁹The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. ²⁰The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.” We see here that the physical violence occurring at this time shakes the very foundations of the earth. One can imagine the earth as it travels in its orbit around the sun, reeling to and fro, staggering like a drunkard, as enormous forces act upon it.

Again we can read in Isaiah 13:9,10 that the sun, moon, and stars will not shine upon the earth: “⁹Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners [those who do not obey God’s Ten Commandments] thereof out of it. ¹⁰For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their

light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." Verse 9 clearly says that the wicked, the sinners, those who have not obeyed God's Ten Commandments, will be destroyed by the terrible convulsions of the earth as nature itself seems to rebel against the wicked.

Second Peter 3:10 tells us: "¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." We see here that the Lord will come unexpectedly, just as a thief comes unexpectedly. Since the wicked rarely give thought to things concerning God and the Bible, other than to blaspheme God and take His name in vain, they have little idea of the nearness of the Lord's return; when He comes, the wicked will be shocked as they behold with stark terror the destruction of the world around them. This verse also tells us again that the earth and all the works therein will be destroyed.

Zephaniah 1:2,3 also tells us that God will completely empty the earth: "²I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. ³I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks [idols] with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord." All life, even to the fish in the sea, will be destroyed at the presence of the Lord.

Many refuse to believe what we have just learned about the condition of the earth during the millennium. For that reason we have considered nine Bible texts that describe the complete destruction of the surface of the earth, from the mountains and the islands to the fish in the sea. God tells us things over and over again to help impress the truth upon our stubborn minds. God has told us what will happen, and He means to carry it out. In Jeremiah 4:28 He says: "²⁸For this shall the earth

mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.”

We have seen that at the return of Christ, the righteous are taken off the earth to meet Him in the air. The wicked are all slain and are as dung upon the ground. But what happens to the devil and his evil angels, who are with us on the earth, at Christ’s return? Revelation 20:1-3 gives us the answer: “¹And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, ³And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.” So Satan and his angels are cast into the bottomless pit where they will remain for this thousand-year period. Where is this bottomless pit? What is it?

Genesis 1:2 describes the earth as being without form and void before God created its features. Jeremiah also describes the earth as being without form and void after the earthquake and other violent convulsions of nature destroy everything and change the topography of the earth’s surface. The earliest translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew, the Septuagint translation into Greek, produced probably around the second century B.C., uses the Greek word *abussos* in Genesis 1:2 to describe the earth in its primordial condition, and also in Jeremiah 4:23 to describe the earth in its destroyed and broken-down condition after Christ’s return. *Abussos*, therefore, is the Greek word that is used to describe an empty earth. We get our English word “abyss” from this Greek word.

This same Greek word, *abussos*, is translated “bottomless pit” in Revelation 20:1,3. The bottomless pit is simply this earth in the broken-down condition that re-

sults from the world-wide earthquake, the giant hailstones, and other catastrophic events that accompany Christ's return at the beginning of the millennium.

But what about the great chain in Revelation 20:1 that is used to bind Satan? As an aid to understanding this language, let us consider a situation in which a similar expression could be used today. Suppose you had made plans for an important event and during the event, when you are totally engrossed, a friend calls you to go somewhere with him. Perhaps you answer your friend, as many would do, that you are all tied up and cannot get away at this time. Are you really all tied up with cords or a chain? Of course not, but this is a common saying we use to indicate that the circumstances in which we find ourselves will not permit us to do anything else. We are tied up by a chain of circumstances and are not free to do other things. This is exactly what the great chain is in the angel's hand. Satan is bound on this earth by the great chain of circumstances that the Lord has prepared at this time. Satan and his evil angels are restricted to this planet, the surface of which has been completely destroyed. There is no light from the moon or the stars, and there is no light from the sun to warm the cold and barren surface. This desolate earth is Satan's prison for one thousand years. He no longer has anyone to tempt and deceive. He and his devils have nothing to do but to contemplate the ruin and havoc they have wrought for the past six thousand years on earth, and before that in heaven. But this is not the end, for verse 3 says that Satan will be set free from his prison for a little while at the end of this thousand-year period.

Let us review now the events that mark the beginning of the millennium, this thousand-year period which, according to the Bible, is due to start in the very near future:

1. The Lord, Jesus Christ, returns to the earth.

2. The righteous dead are raised and given new, immortal bodies.
3. The righteous living are caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They are also given new, immortal bodies.
4. The surface of the earth is completely desolated.
5. The wicked are slain, and their bodies lie as dung all over the earth.
6. Satan and his evil angels remain on this desolate earth which is their prison for one thousand years.

During this thousand-year period, the righteous remain in heaven, the wicked remain dead, Satan remains bound on earth by this chain of circumstances, and the earth rests from the traumatic events associated with Christ's return. What will the righteous be doing in heaven for this period?

First Corinthians 6:2,3 speaks of this period: “²Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life.” We are told here that the saints shall judge the world. But who are the saints? First Corinthians 1:2 shows that the saints are the righteous, the true Christians. “²Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” Revelation 14:12 says that saints are people who keep the commandments of God. “¹²Here is the patience of the saints:

here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Saints are the true Christians, the righteous, those who obey God’s Ten Commandments, and they will judge the world, the evil people and the evil angels, during this thousand-year period in heaven. The lives of all the wicked down to the smallest detail will be opened before the righteous in heaven, and they will judge the wicked.

The following hypothetical case is possibly typical of situations that will occur. A man and woman had been very happily married on earth. They went to church every week, spread the good news of the salvation of Christ, helped other people, donated money to the poor, and in general appeared to live the kind of lives one would expect Christians to live. At the return of the Lord, only the woman was resurrected from death and taken to heaven. One of the first things she will do after she meets Jesus is to look for her husband. When she cannot find him, she asks Jesus why her husband is not here. Jesus then takes her by the hand and leads her over to the books of record, where He looks up her husband’s name and allows her to read every detail of her husband’s life. She then agrees that Christ’s judgment was correct. She concurs that because of her husband’s sins recorded in the book, the Lord could not save him.

Of course there will be tears at this time and great disappointments as the righteous all wonder why their friends and loved ones were not saved. This is one of the reasons why the righteous will judge the wicked. Christ will answer every question. He will show everyone exactly why it was impossible to save their friends and loved ones who would not turn from their sins and who would not accept the Savior, His love, and His sacrifice for them.

The events that mark the end of the millennium are even more amazing than those at the beginning. The fantastically beautiful city of God, that Christ prepared

for His righteous people and that was their home for their stay in heaven, is now transported to the earth. Revelation 21:2 describes the descent of this Holy City to earth: “²And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” The huge city, that covers an area of approximately 118,750 square miles, like a gigantic space ship comes down to rest on the earth on the site of the present city of Jerusalem. A great plain is prepared to receive the city as it settles to earth.

All the righteous people from earth inside the Holy City of God return to the earth, which they left one thousand years earlier. As at the beginning of the millennium when the righteous were resurrected at the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, so it is now that at the presence of the Lord the wicked are resurrected. Revelation 20:5 tells us: “⁵But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” After the resurrection of the wicked, all the people who have ever lived on the earth are alive at one time, the righteous inside the Holy City, and the wicked outside.

As one looks out over the vast multitude of the lost, the people of all ages can be seen, from Cain, who killed righteous Abel, and the mob that crucified the Lord, to most of the people of today. The wicked come forth from their graves in exactly the same pitiful condition in which they went into their graves. They do not get new perfect bodies as do the righteous at the beginning of this thousand-year period. In chapter four we saw that the blueprints and details of each individual are so minutely and accurately recorded in the computer banks of heaven that on the resurrection day the thought patterns in our brains will be reconstructed exactly as they were at the moment of death. If a man died cursing God, he will arise with that same curse on his lips, right in front of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. If a man died suddenly so that he could not have realized what hap-

pened, during the first few moments after his resurrection he will not even realize that he had been dead. The dead, remember, are not conscious of any time passing; their thoughts have perished, and they are unconscious, asleep in their graves.

Revelation 20:3 told us that after the thousand years are over, Satan must be “loosed a little season.” Verse 7 says, “⁷And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.” Satan is no longer bound because now he has the wicked of all ages to work with, and he begins to deceive them immediately. He does not let them know that he is the devil, and he tells them that by his power he resurrected them from death.

As the righteous inside the city observe the pitiful condition of the wicked, the wicked look inside and see the unbelievable glory and beauty everywhere. Remember that the surface of the earth is still completely desolated at this time, and the contrast between the beautiful city and the desolate earth is striking. Naturally the wicked want this beautiful city for themselves. Satan deceives them into believing that they can take the city, and they begin to build the necessary weapons of war. This takes some time, of course, since they have to reconstruct the factories, steel mills, and other facilities with which to build the weapons.

The period of time during which this transpires will be one hundred years. This is shown in Isaiah 65:20 “²⁰There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” This verse is in the middle of Bible texts that talk about the new earth. We will consider these texts later.

Revelation 20:7,8 says, “⁷And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, ⁸And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather

them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.” Remember that Satan knows that he is going to die and that he does not want to die. He never gives up, and this war is his last-ditch effort to defeat Christ and preserve his own life.

Finally, when all the missiles and other weapons of war are finished and the massive army of the wicked is assembled, “they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed [surrounded] the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.” (Revelation 20:9). Satan’s army surrounds the city and prepares to attack. At the moment the attack is to begin, Christ appears high above the Holy City in all His glory with the two tables of stone, the Ten Commandments, in His hands. The wicked stop in their tracks, overwhelmed by the majesty and glory of Christ, and the attack is halted. “¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” (Revelation 20:12).

The method Christ uses to open the books of record and display to everyone the contents is a movie of everything contained in the books. Christ shows the people of earth, both the wicked and the righteous, a movie of the entire history of the earth from creation to these final scenes, a panorama in living color across the whole screen of the sky, in three dimensions and quadraphonic sound. This is the movie that the actors of all ages were making as they lived their lives and played their parts on the stage of this earth, the Theater of the Universe. As we watch this drama, we will be appalled to discover the extent of the lies and deception that this world accepts as truth.

We will see creation, as Christ molded and fashioned the details of our world. We will see the beautiful Garden of Eden, where no creature hurt or destroyed another. We will witness the advanced civilization of

the men who lived before the flood. Men were giants at that time as Genesis 6:4 indicates: “⁴There were giants in the earth in those days.” Before the flood people lived nearly one thousand years, and possessed an intelligence many times greater than our intelligence today. The claim that man evolved from simple life forms and is getting better and better will be exposed in this movie as another of Satan’s detestable lies. We will see that mankind has not gotten better; mankind has gotten very much worse.

We will watch as Noah builds the ark, trying in vain to make the people understand that the world would soon be destroyed by a flood. We will hear their ridicule and witness their terror as they realize that the flood has come. We will see Noah’s ark come to rest on the mountains of Ararat, where it is today. All history, in every detail, will be presented.

We will see Christ as He lived His life on earth and will ourselves feel the anguish and tribulation, the joy and happiness, the sadness and disappointment, and finally the pain and suffering of the cross that our Lord felt as we live His life with Him moment by moment on the screen. We will witness the tender compassion He had for the multitudes, as He healed the sick, the blind, and the lame. The scenes of Christ’s trials will be shown in vivid detail. Those who crucified Christ will watch themselves commit their terrible acts of abuse toward the great Creator of the universe, unable to turn away from the heart-wrenching scenes. Imagine how they will feel as they finally realize the enormity of their folly.

We will witness the terrible persecution of Christians by the papacy during the Dark Ages and listen as the reformers, Luther, Wesley, Calvin, and others, begin to raise the shades of darkness from the earth.

We will see the ravages of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and every other brutally oppressive dictator who has satu-

rated the earth with blood.

Have you ever done things in your life you would like to forget? If you are among the wicked at this time, you will watch yourself commit each sin that you ever committed, and you will be painfully aware that everyone else is watching also. All the wicked will watch themselves committing the things that they would like to forget. All the double-dealing, all the cursing, all the lies, all the crooked business deals, all the adulterous relationships, and all the murders will be shown with crystal clarity, and everyone will witness these acts. The wicked will long to turn from the scenes being displayed, but their sins and the vivid reality of the presentation are such that they cannot.

The righteous inside the city, however, will be spared the humiliation of witnessing their sins in this drama, for Acts 3:19 tells us that the righteous have had their sins blotted out of the record: “¹⁹Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” Also in Ezekiel 18:21,22 we read: “²¹But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. ²²All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.”

The intrigue behind the politics of this world will be seen and understood by all, as the payoffs to the politicians and their subsequent betrayal of the people are clearly presented. We will see and understand completely the intrigue and duplicity behind the wars of earth, and we will see exactly who was responsible for these wars. The wicked will be painfully aware that all their secret deals, all their foul deeds, all their selfish, greedy schemes, have been seen and understood by everyone. The politicians of all ages will see all their lies exposed to public scrutiny. There will be no secrets at this time, for all the depravity of the wicked

will be clearly revealed and comprehended by all. Luke 12:2,3 tells us: “²For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. ³Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.”

The movie will also show how the false churches and false religions have operated to keep the truth of God from the people. The false pastors and false ministers and priests will watch themselves deceiving the people who looked to them for truth.

Immediately after the movie is over, the wicked will be struck with an overwhelming conviction of guilt. Every crime that has ever been committed will have been revealed and explained, and the wicked will be thoroughly convicted. Because of this enormous guilt and because of the majestic glory of Christ, the vast multitude of the wicked will fall to their knees and confess their wickedness before the Lord, as Romans 14:11 describes: “¹¹For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” The wicked will bow to Christ outside the Holy City, and the righteous will bow before the Lord inside the city. Even Satan himself, along with all the evil angels, will fall to his knees and confess that Christ is right, and that he, Satan, has been in the wrong. Christ will be totally vindicated from all the accusations that Satan made. Notice here that the vote will be unanimous. There will not be one dissenting vote anywhere in the entire universe.

Satan, the evil angels, and the wicked bow before Christ, not because of a change of character, for they are as rebellious as ever, but because they are overwhelmed by their guilt. They are criminals who have been caught red-handed, and all their crimes have been exposed to the understanding of everyone. Words at this

time will be useless. There will be nothing left for them to do but acknowledge defeat.

When the wicked arise from their knees, Satan will rush into the multitude and again try to convince them that they can take the city, but they, realizing that it is hopeless, will turn on Satan with all their vengeance. The wicked know who Satan is now because it was revealed in the movie. Moreover, consider what will happen when one of the wicked looks over the multitude and sees the man who had an adulterous affair with his wife. He knows it happened because he saw it in the movie. He will immediately rush over to take vengeance. Or, consider that another sees the thief who stole from him. The result of the movie, the result of all the wicked knowing who did what to whom, is that they will turn on one another with fierce and uncontrolled fury and will tear one another to pieces, taking vengeance and blaming others for their hopeless predicament. The weapons that were to be used against the New Jerusalem are now turned and used against the wicked. The scene will be one of total misery, grief, and brutality as these lost souls, without restraint, engage in an orgy of blood. Revelation 14:20 describes the scene: “²⁰And the winepress was trodden without [outside] the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.” The one thousand six hundred furlongs of this verse is a distance of about 184 miles. As the vast multitude of the lost engage in this fierce carnage, the blood will become as deep as a horse’s bridle for the distance of 184 miles from the city in all directions. The ghastly scene positively defies description.

So, what happens to the wicked? They destroy each other. This ghastly scene of unbelievable carnage is one of the reasons sin will never arise again in the universe. As the righteous behold the behavior of the wicked and the acts they thought their loved ones could never do,

they are thoroughly disgusted. These impressions will remain with the righteous throughout eternity. God does not have to kill the wicked, and the righteous have no feelings of resentment toward God.

Since many believe that God is going to destroy the wicked in the end, let us consider a few more Bible texts that confirm that the wicked will destroy each other. Ezekiel 38:21 says, “²¹And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man’s sword shall be against his brother.” Isaiah 9:19 says, “¹⁹Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother.” And Psalms 34:21 says, “²¹Evil shall slay the wicked . . .”

Consider the battle for a moment. With modern weapons of destruction, the field of battle would be a blazing inferno, especially in the very close combat that this situation will produce. Modern flame throwers can inundate large areas. Incendiary bombs and shells cause great havoc with fire so hot everything burns that can burn. Also, Satan would not be above using atomic weapons in his preparations to attack the beautiful city of God. The wicked will use these weapons against each other, and these also will contribute to the inferno that will be the battlefield at this time.

Jesus describes this scene in Matthew 13:41,42: “⁴¹The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; ⁴²And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” Referring to this battlefield, where the wicked turn all their weapons upon each other, as a furnace of fire is quite an accurate description of what will take place. The wailing and gnashing of teeth refer to the final battle. The wicked wail and gnash their teeth as they fight against each other.

Revelation 19:20 also mentions this fire: “²⁰And

the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.” Later chapters will explain who the beast, his image, and the false prophet are and what the mark of the beast is.

Brimstone (sulfur) is reminiscent of war and especially gunpowder. Brimstone is one of the ingredients of gunpowder. This again refers to the battle where the wicked destroy each other.

It is with tears in His eyes that God must watch the destruction of those who have not turned from their lives of sin. As we have seen, 2 Peter 3:9 tells us that “⁹The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” God does not want to see any of us destroyed, but if the sinner will not turn from his sins and repent, he must be destroyed, for the thought of sin existing throughout all eternity is totally unacceptable to everyone elsewhere in the universe.

Satan, the devil, dies also at this time. Since Satan is the one who caused all the trouble in the first place, the wicked and the evil angels take vengeance on Satan and attack him. Satan’s manner of death is so clearly described in Ezekiel 28:2-10 that there can be no question about it. These verses clearly show that he will be attacked by the wicked — “strangers” in these verses. These verses, in fact, tell us that someone, one of the wicked, or one of the evil angels, actually slays Satan. As we saw in chapter two, Satan was masquerading as the king of Tyrus at that time. These verses, also mention what we learned in chapter two that Satan wanted to be God.

“²Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus [Satan, the devil], Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in

the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: ³Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: ⁴With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: ⁵By thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches: ⁶Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; ⁷Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. ⁸They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. ⁹Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee. ¹⁰Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.”

“⁹Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God?”

Satan, mortally wounded, suffers on after all of the other wicked have perished. He lives long enough to witness the total disaster he has caused. He sees the total futility of his life; he realizes that he has been a total failure, to be remembered as such by the righteous and the holy angels throughout eternity. One can imagine Satan, furious and in a panic, totally out of control, knowing that he is shortly going to die, shouting his last insults and obscenities against Christ. This final horrible memory of the hideous results of sin that the righteous will carry with them throughout eternity could possibly be one of the most important in protecting the universe from sin forever.

Finally, after all the wicked including Satan and his evil angels are all dead, the mess outside the walls of the city is appalling, with blood and corpses as deep

as a horse's bridle. The gruesome scene is all around the city and extends for 184 miles from the wall of the city in all directions.

The last part of Revelation 20:9 tells us what God does to clean up this mess. "and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." This fire will completely burn up the remains of the wicked. Revelation 20:14,15 refers to the destruction of the wicked as the second death: "14And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." The second death is like the first death except that there is no resurrection from the second death. The people who die in this battle will not be resurrected again. They cease to exist. They become as if they had never been. When Romans 6:23 speaks about death being the penalty for sin, it means this second death. "23For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Revelation 21:7,8 says: "7He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." The wicked do not live forever; they do not burn throughout all eternity in hell, for if they did, they would be immortal and have everlasting life. As we learned earlier, this is not the case.

Psalms 37:10 describes the complete destruction of the wicked: "10For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." Verse 20: "20But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." The wicked will be totally and completely destroyed.

The only thing left of the wicked will be ashes on

the surface of the earth, as Malachi 4:1-3 shows: “¹For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. ²But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. ³And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.” The wicked will not live for eternity. They will die the second death, from which there is no resurrection. They will be ashes on the surface of the earth. As Psalms 37 says, the wicked shall not be. They will simply cease to exist.

Even Satan himself will be ashes on the surface of the earth: “¹⁸Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. ¹⁹All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.” (Ezekiel 28:18,19). Satan himself will cease to exist. He and his evil angels will be ashes, along with the wicked outside the walls of the Holy City.

These verses say that the people are astonished at Satan. Satan has always masqueraded as someone else. He also masquerades as the Holy Spirit. It is not until the movie that Satan's mask is removed, and the people are astonished to find out who the devil has been masquerading as. Who do you think Satan is masquerading as today?

There is an apparent contradiction in the Bible concerning this lake of fire and how long the wicked will be burned. Revelation 20:10 says: “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brim-

stone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” If the devil and the wicked are burned up and are ashes on the surface of the earth, how can they be tormented day and night for ever and ever?

The wicked being tormented day and night for ever and ever refers to the fact that the wicked and their deeds will be remembered throughout eternity by the righteous, by the holy angels and by everyone else in the universe. They have all watched what has happened here on the earth and in the movie, and they will remember everything they saw. The wicked will be figuratively tormented by these memories. Also, the books of record will be available for the righteous to read whenever they want.

Moreover, the meaning of “forever” in the Bible does not have the usual meaning we generally give to it. In order to understand how the Bible uses the word “forever,” consider Exodus 21:6. This verse deals with a servant who chooses to serve his master, that is, work for the same employer, for the rest of his life. It was customary in Old Testament times, when there were no banks or loan companies, that a man needing to borrow money would indenture himself to his financier in order to repay the loan. If the man liked working for the financier, and if the financier liked the man, they would make an agreement to continue their employer-employee relationship. Exodus 21:6 tells them what should be done: “⁶Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.” This really was not as cruel as it sounds. Women get their ears pierced today to wear jewelry and think nothing of it. This was simply a method of sealing a contract. The point here, however, is the term “for ever.” Since the servant cannot serve his master after he or his master is dead, the term “for ever” in this instance means

until the death of one of them.

Consider another example of the use of “forever” in the Bible. Jonah 1:17 says: “¹⁷Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.” As Jonah was reflecting on his experience, he said in Jonah 2:6: “⁶I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.” Jonah said here that he was in the belly of the fish for ever. In this case it is obvious that “for ever” means three days and three nights.

In Jude, verse 7, we read that Sodom and Gomorrah suffered the vengeance of eternal fire. “⁷Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” How long does this eternal fire last? Sodom and Gomorrah today are near the southern end of the Dead Sea and are obviously not burning. The eternal fire lasted until the cities were burned up and there was no more fuel to support the fire. Second Peter 2:6 tells us that Sodom and Gomorrah were turned into ashes and thus have ceased to burn. “⁶And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample [example] unto those that after should live ungodly.”

These terms such as “forever” and “eternal” in the Bible are used to signify a continuance of action until that action naturally comes to an end. The meaning, therefore, of “forever” and “eternal” is derived from the way they are used. Even today, we have English words that derive their meaning from the way they are used. For instance, consider the word “tall.” When “tall” refers to a man, it means about six feet. When “tall” describes a tree, it means perhaps one or two hundred feet. And when “tall” describes a mountain, it might

mean fifteen thousand feet or more. “Forever” is used in the Bible in this same way. We derive its meaning from the way it is used. When “eternal” and “forever” refer to God, they have the meaning we generally associate with them; they mean without end.

Second Thessalonians 1:7-9 tells us again that the wicked will be destroyed. ⁷“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, ⁸In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁹Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” We see from this text that the wicked will be punished with everlasting destruction. In other words they will be destroyed forever. The fire that will bathe the earth will destroy Satan and his evil angels and all the wicked people from all ages so that they will be ashes on the surface of the earth. They will not live forever — they will be utterly destroyed, and their destruction will be everlasting, as this text says.

The Bible makes it clear that God is a god of love. He loved us so much that He came to earth as a man and allowed the creatures whom He created to put Him through the agonizing torment and death of the cross so that we might understand in this life how loathsome sin is and the extent of the evil deeds that people do when they disregard the law of God. Would a god like this torture the wicked throughout all eternity, as most people believe? In the next chapter we will discover that our life throughout eternity in God’s new earth will never be marred by sadness or tears. If the wicked are to be tormented in an ever-burning hell, consider how someone might feel in heaven knowing that a loved one is writhing in the flames of hell for all eternity. How could that person be happy knowing that? This idea that the wicked are going to burn throughout eternity is one of Satan’s lies designed to discredit God and

to make us despise God. This lie was devised to make us think that God's personality and character are like Satan's. When the wicked are destroyed, they are dead. They are as though they never existed. The wages of sin is death, not eternal life. (Romans 6:23).

Since God is a god of love, how does He feel about the destruction of the wicked? Ezekiel 18:31,32 tells us to: ³¹“Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.” God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but He must rid the universe of sin and sinners or else the situation we have on earth — the misery, the pain, and the sorrow — would exist forever. God must allow the destruction of the wicked in order for His people to have a happy, peaceful, and trouble-free life forever. If the sinner clings to sin, he will be destroyed with it. The choice is his.

After sin and sinners are destroyed from the earth, life will be joyful and happy beyond our loftiest imaginings. Revelation 21:4,5 tells us, ⁴“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. ⁵And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.” In God's new earth trouble will be unknown. All creation will once again be in perfect harmony.

As the earth is bathed in the lake of fire, all traces of sin and degradation will be destroyed. The fire will completely sterilize the earth, insuring that all the disease germs, parasitic worms, viruses, and other forms of life that cause pain, suffering, and unhappiness that Satan mutated from God's created creatures will be destroyed. The earth will be thoroughly cleansed and

thoroughly sterilized from the curse of sin.

Then the righteous inside the Holy City have the great honor and privilege of watching as Christ recreates the earth into a Garden of Eden so beautiful it surpasses the grandeur of the first Garden of Eden. God's people will be speechless as they behold Christ's masterpiece of design and creation. They will then be free to leave the Holy City to travel throughout the beautiful new earth.

Isaiah 11:6-9 gives some idea of the beauty and harmony of the new creation: "6The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. 9They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Christ's entire creation will be in perfect harmony. The animals that kill on earth now will be as baby animals, as pets, in the new earth. Nothing, not even man, will ever hurt anything again. Life will be a symphony of happiness forever.

Will this problem of sin and disobedience to God's law, the Ten Commandments, ever arise again in the universe? Nahum 1:9 says that the affliction of sin will never occur again. "9What do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time." Throughout all eternity, no one will ever again break one of God's Ten Commandments. Because of the drama that has taken place on the earth, everyone will thoroughly understand the vile nature of sin. Everyone will thoroughly understand what happens when a society of people disobeys God's law, and no one will want the misery and pain of the experi-

ence of earth again. Throughout all eternity, therefore, all creation will live in perfect harmony because all creation will perfectly obey the law of God.

As drastic as the events of the millennium sound, it is not necessary for anyone to suffer the experience of the wicked and watch the earth crumble around him. Isaiah 55:6,7 says, “⁶Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: ⁷Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Christ wants everyone to realize what he is doing and to turn from his wicked way. If he will do this, Christ will forgive his sins and abundantly pardon. As we have seen, there is no other hope for the wicked.

The situation on earth today is similar to the situation on the SS Titanic before it sank. The Titanic was the largest and grandest luxury ocean liner ever built up to that time. It was on its first voyage across the Atlantic Ocean when it hit an iceberg. After they spotted the iceberg in the fog, the crew tried to turn the ship; but they were too close, and the iceberg tore a long, narrow slit in the side of the ship below the water line. Because of the length of the slit, the crew could not isolate the leak with the water-tight doors, and it soon became apparent that the ship would sink. Unfortunately the ship was not carrying enough lifeboats for everyone to be saved.

Since the ship did not hit the iceberg directly, there was no shock of impact, and the people on board were not aware that anything was wrong. They were eating, dancing, and enjoying the elegance and comfort of the huge liner. Over the public address system the captain broadcast an urgent warning to abandon ship, but the people refused to believe that the ship was sinking. After all, this grand liner was supposed to be unsinkable. Over and over again came the warning, but the people continued to enjoy their dancing and feasting. They thought

that someone was trying to play a joke on them. A few people heeded the call and left the ship in lifeboats, but the others simply could not believe that there was anything wrong. The rooms were warm and comfortable; the food was delicious; the music was superb. Life seemed to be at its best, and many of the lifeboats left with only a few people in them.

Finally, as the ship continued to take on water, some of the guests noticed that the chandeliers were not hanging straight anymore — the ship was listing slightly. An explosion from deep in the bowels of the ship finally made the people realize that there was, indeed, trouble, and they panicked. They hurried to get what few belongings they could and then rushed to the outside, only to find that there were not enough lifeboats.

The ship was now listing badly; many explosions could be heard as sea water reached the boilers; and it was apparent that time was running out.

Just as most of the people on the Titanic refused to believe that the ship was going to sink, the people of earth today refuse to believe the events soon to transpire on the earth. Today, Christ is giving us the urgent warning that this ship of earth is sinking — fast. There is only one way for the people of earth to save their lives. There are only a few years left. What will we do about it? Christ made it possible for us to enjoy the indescribable life in His new earth, but if we wait until probation closes it will be too late.

Second Corinthians 6:2 tells us, “²Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Christ is calling everyone to follow Him and to obey His Ten Commandments. Now is the time to find your salvation, for there is coming a time when the Word of the Lord will be taken from the earth. God tells us in Amos 8:11,12: “¹¹Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: ¹²And they shall wander from sea to sea,

and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.”

Christ says in Proverbs 1:24-33, “²⁴Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; ²⁵But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: ²⁶I also will laugh at your calamity I will mock when your fear cometh; ²⁷When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. ²⁸Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: ²⁹For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: ³⁰They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. ³¹Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. ³²For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. ³³But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

“²²But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.” (Proverbs 2:22).

“The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.” — E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, Pacific Press Publishing Assn., Mountain View, CA, 1950, p. 678.

Chapter 6

LIFE IN ETERNITY

Jesus tells us in John 10:10, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” While it is true that those who accept Jesus as their Savior and follow Him as the Bible specifies have a much happier and more abundant life on earth, the life that is waiting for them in the new earth defies description. The best in science fiction does not even hint at the fantastically advanced civilizations that exist throughout the universe, all in complete harmony with the government of God. Those who are saved from the earth will share in this glorious life forever.

First Corinthians 2:9 says, “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” Our minds cannot even begin to conceive of the wonders that God has in store for His people after the trials of earth are over. As we consider the various Bible texts that describe the life style throughout eternity of those who will be saved, we get at best only a small peek through the keyhole, but this peek is enough to allow us to realize that life will be far beyond our loftiest imaginings. This life in eternity will be worth any sacrifice we have to make in order to be ready when the Lord returns.

In the last chapter we saw that God is going to create a new earth after the lake of fire sterilizes this present world. Revelation 21:1 says, “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.” The

seas of the earth today are what remains of the flood during Noah's time. Originally there was no vast expanse of water on the earth, and in God's new earth there will again be no vast expanses of water. There will be many lakes and streams to water a beautiful verdant countryside, but no vast oceans.

Revelation 21:2 describes the Holy City of God, like a giant space ship from heaven, coming down to the earth. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The Holy City of God is adorned in a dazzling beauty and glory that defy description.

Today, the earth is the stage, the theater of the universe, where the tragedy of sin is being revealed; but then, throughout all eternity, after God creates the new earth from the ashes of the old, the Glory of the universe will be centered here. Today God rules from heaven; but after sin and sinners are destroyed, He will make His home and His throne on the new earth. This world will be the center of God's government and the home of the righteous throughout eternity. Verse 3 says, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." The word "tabernacle" means tent, and it signifies the home of God on earth with those who are saved from all ages. Yes, this world, where the great Creator God of the universe, Jesus Christ, was brutally murdered by those whom He created, will be Christ's throne throughout all eternity. The next verse tells us that there will be no unhappiness or problems of any kind in this new earth. Everything will be perfect. "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."

In verse 5 God assures us that these promises are

true. "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful." God's promises must come to pass, for God cannot lie.

Verses 6,7: "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Those who overcome this world and the evil and sin therein will have a very close companionship with God throughout all eternity, for they will be the sons of God. But the wicked will not even see the breathtaking beauty of the new earth.

Verse 8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Notice that even those who are fearful will be excluded from the Holy City, for fear is a result of not believing and trusting God. When one puts his whole faith and trust in God, of what is there to be afraid?

In vision, the apostle John is shown the details of God's Holy City, which he records for us in Revelation 21:10 through Revelation 22:5. "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Words simply cannot do justice to a description of the dazzling beauty of this city, as light in a symphony of color is refracted from the facets of the many gem stones of which the city is built.

Verses 12-16: "And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the

twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.”

We see here that the Holy City is square and has three gates on each side. The measure of the city is 12,000 furlongs, a distance of about 1378.4 miles. It was customary to speak of the size of a city by its perimeter. If it is the perimeter that is indicated here, the sides of the city would be about 344.6 miles, and the city would have an area of about 118,750 square miles. This is about the size of the state of New Mexico.

The height of the city is also 344.6 miles, for “The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.” Think of that: skyscrapers hundreds of miles high! Impossible, you say? Remember, this is a city built by God Himself. The Holy City is huge by earthly standards, and there will be plenty of room in the city for all the righteous.

The wall surrounding the city, according to verse 17, is 144 cubits. “And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.” The exact length of a cubit is not known. A cubit was the distance from a man’s elbow to the tips of his fingers with his hand outstretched, a distance of around eighteen or nineteen inches. There are many indications that angels are larger than men, and therefore the cubit according to the measure of an angel would be somewhat longer. Based on the measure of a man, the 144 cubits is probably a distance of about 210 feet. John does not say whether this

is the height of the wall or the thickness, but probably it is its height.

When men build cities, they use bricks, stones, and concrete. The city of God is built of pure gold and the most precious gem stones, as indicated in verses 18 through 21. "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several [each] gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." God's city is constructed from all manner of precious stones, and as the light plays on the surface of these gems, dazzling colors are refracted in all directions. The streets are of gold so pure and burnished that they appear to be as glass.

The Lord God will dwell inside the city with the righteous. Verse 22 says, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

The city will have a source of light from God, and will not need the sun, although the sun and moon will still be in the sky. Verse 23: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Today we all get tired and must have sleep in order to be refreshed and to be able to handle the situations and problems of the next day. In the new earth, however, people will never get tired! They will never need to sleep, for they will always feel alert and energetic. Since it will never be necessary for the people to sleep,

there will be no night in the Holy City. Verse 25 says, "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there."

Once again, in verse 27, the fact that those who have rejected and ignored the law of God will never enter the Holy City is emphasized. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Next, in chapter 22, verses 1 and 2, the fantastic tree of life is described, that bears twelve different kinds of fruit, one kind each month. This, of course, is unlike any tree we have on the earth today. "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

Verses 3-7: "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads [minds]. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Those who are saved from the earth will have a very close association with God, for they will see Him face to face and will reign forever with Him in the new earth, which will then be the throne of the universe. We also see in this verse that "there shall be no more curse." This, of course, is a reference to the fact that after sin and sinners are destroyed, no one will ever again break any of

God's laws, the Ten Commandments.

At the return of the Lord the righteous, both dead and alive, will be given new, immortal bodies, that will be just like the body of Christ when He rose from the dead. Philippians 3:20,21 says, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

Let us now consider just what kind of body Jesus had. Luke 24:36-43 describes the scene in which Jesus came and stood in the midst of the disciples after His resurrection. "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." (How many people today believe that they will be spirits after they die?) Continuing in verse 38: "And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

Jesus said here that He was made of flesh and bones, He had hands and feet, and the disciples could handle Him and touch Him. He was definitely not a spirit; He had a real body. Likewise, as we read in Philippians, the righteous will have real bodies with flesh and bones and hands and feet, just as Jesus did. Continuing with verse 40: "And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands, and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them." Jesus, you see, had a real body. He had a stomach and digestive system, for He ate some of the food the disciples were eating. The righteous will not be spirits; they will be real people, with real bodies, just like Jesus'.

Revelation 2:7 says that the righteous will eat the

fruit of the tree of life. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Also, when they get to heaven, Christ will serve them dinner as Luke 12:37 describes. "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." The people, therefore, must also have stomachs and digestive systems just as Jesus has. They have real, physical bodies. They are not spirits.

Isaiah 35:5,6 tells us, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart [deer], and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." Everyone who is saved from the earth will have a perfect body with no trace of crippling or disease. They will have eyes, ears, tongues; they will be able to run and jump; they will be able to sing — all with their real, physical bodies, that will be in perfect condition. The only one who will have a body that is marred from the earth will be the Lord, Jesus Christ, who will continue forever to bear the scars in His hands, feet, and side from His ordeal on the cross.

Isaiah 65:17-19 gives us a little more information. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." Everyone will be completely happy forever with never an unhappy moment. Verse 17 says that the former things will not be remembered. The unpleasant details of life on the earth will be forgotten, but the lessons that prevent the

reappearance of sin, that were learned in this theater of the universe, will never be forgotten. It is, in fact, to insure that these lessons are never forgotten that Jesus carries His scars from the earth. After the resurrection of the righteous, a man will come to Jesus to ask Him about His wounds, as described in Zechariah 13:6. "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Everyone will always remember what happened when a society of people disobeyed God's law, but nothing will be remembered from the earth to mar the perfect happiness of God's people throughout all eternity. Also, the books of record will be available for anyone to look at whenever they desire.

Consider next some of the activities the redeemed will enjoy in the new earth. Isaiah 65:21 says that "they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them." After Christ recreates the earth into the breathtakingly beautiful new earth, the righteous will leave the Holy City, New Jerusalem, and will roam all over the new earth. Each will look for a beautiful spot that particularly appeals to him; all will build themselves houses to live in. Perhaps one might find a beautiful, gently rolling meadow, covered with grass and flowers, but no weeds, with a stream, clear as crystal, flowing through. There he will build his dream-house. The redeemed will plant gardens and will eat the food they grow. On earth today, many times when we plant things they do not grow as they should, or birds and insects eat the fruit. In the new earth everything that is planted will be perfectly healthy and will produce abundantly. There will be no harmful insects to eat the plants, and no disease will attack them. Verse 22: "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

The people will have work to do, but it will not be drudgery. It will be like a hobby; it will be work that they particularly like to do and that will give them great pleasure.

Have you ever wished that everything you tried to do would turn out to be a complete success? If so, your wish will come true in God's beautiful new earth. Isaiah 65:23 says, "They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." The people will not labor in vain; everything they do will turn out perfectly. Everyone will be a success at everything he sets his hand to do, and he will do it easily without any trouble. It is hard for us to imagine a life like this, for everything we do is fraught with mistakes and trouble. Life on the earth today is so imperfect that our minds simply cannot grasp the perfection and quality of life in heaven or on the new earth.

Many think that the expression we just read, ". . . not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble" refers to bearing children. This is not correct, for there will not be two sexes for the redeemed. In God's new earth everybody will be the same sex. Jesus tells us in Mark 12:25, "For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven."

Each of the saved will be able to talk to God face to face anytime he wants to, and the Lord will answer immediately. Today, because of our rebellion against God, we do not enjoy this close association and companionship with Him. Verse 24 says, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Even before the righteous can call for the Lord, He will answer them. What a wonderful life this will be — to be able to have a conversation, face to face, with the Creator of the universe anytime we want to!

And through all eternity, all the animals will be our

pets; nothing, not even man, will ever again hurt anything or cause any unhappiness. "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." (Verse 25). What a tragedy it would be for us to miss out on this glorious life with God in His new earth! It is worth any sacrifice we might have to make to be right with the Lord and ready when He returns.

First Corinthians 13:12 tells us, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." On earth today we see through a glass darkly, that is, we cannot perceive the indescribable life in heaven and the new earth; but after the resurrection of the righteous, the dark glass will be removed from our eyes and we will behold the Lord and the inhabitants of the universe face to face. Now we know in part. Now our knowledge is severely limited, and we have just the slightest peek through the keyhole at the future paradise; but then we will know the inhabitants of the universe as well as they know us today. Today they are the audience; they are watching and examining in detail all the events on earth, and they know us better than we know ourselves.

Isaiah 66:22,23 gives us more information on the activities of the righteous who are saved from the earth. "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that, from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." Once each week on the Sabbath day, which is Saturday, the entire population of earth will go to the New Jerusalem to worship the Lord, and once each month at the new moon the people will gather at Jerusalem to eat the fruit of the tree of life, that produces a different kind of fruit each month.

The redeemed will have a country home, that they will build themselves, and they will have a city home, the mansion that Christ prepared for them. During the week the people will live in their own houses, that will be scattered all over the globe, but they will be able to travel to the Holy City with ease, for they will not be limited by the physical laws that limit us today. In fact, those who are saved from the earth will be able to travel wherever they want to, even throughout God's vast universe.

How long will God's new earth last? Every once in a while we hear scientists speculate about how the planet Earth will end. But what does God say about this? Ecclesiastes 1:4 tells us that the earth will continue throughout all eternity, for it is to be the throne of God. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever." Proverbs 10:30 says, "The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the [new] earth."

Chapter 7

**THE NEARNESS OF
JESUS' RETURN**

This chapter presents some of the most convincing evidence that the Bible is really what it claims to be: God's instruction book for us as we live out our part in this drama of earth. The prophecies presented here have come to pass down through the ages, and everyone who has read even a little history will know that these events have happened exactly as the Lord so long ago said they would.

God gives us plenty of warning about the future and shows us the details of major events before they happen. He does this not only to let us know where we stand in the stream of time, but also, as He tells us in Isaiah 48:3-5, to help us to overcome our stubborn unbelief. "I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee."

As we consider the prophecies of this chapter, we cannot help but come to the realization that the end of the earth as we know it is very near. No one knows exactly when this will be, but Jesus admonishes us to know approximately when the end will come. In order to confuse the issue, Satan has been busy during the last hundred years or so announcing, through his prophets, specific dates for the time of the end. Since his predictions have repeatedly proven to be false, the people

of the world understandably now hold prophecies and predictions up to ridicule. Thus Satan has effectively discredited true Bible prophecy, and most people reject the truth even when it is presented to them from the pages of Scripture.

In this chapter we will consider some of the Biblical prophecies that deal with events of modern times. Many of these prophecies have been fulfilled in our lifetime and are indeed being fulfilled today, but most of the people of the world know nothing about them.

In the second chapter of Daniel we find the great outline prophecy of the ages, which describes historical events beginning with the Babylonian Empire in the seventh century B.C. and ending with the return of Jesus Christ in the very near future. An outline is a list of important points. Public speakers use outlines as a memory aid, and as they speak they fill in the details. Likewise, this outline prophecy of Daniel lists important historical events, the details of which are filled in by other prophecies in the Bible.

Daniel 2 begins with events associated with a dream that God gave Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar had subjugated the Jewish nation and had taken many prisoners, one of whom was Daniel. Daniel was at this time a young man of great promise and ability. After being educated in the Babylonian schools, he became one of the highly respected members of the Babylonian court.

The king was greatly troubled by his dream; yet he could not remember it when he awoke, as Daniel 2 relates: "And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was

troubled to know the dream. Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dung-hill. But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof. The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain."

Daniel was sought because he was considered one of the wise men by reason of his education. Continuing with verse 14, "Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made

the thing known to Daniel. Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions." These companions of Daniel were three young Hebrew boys who had been taken captive with him. The four young men promptly prayed for "mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven."

God showed the dream and its explanation to Daniel, who promptly thanked the Lord with the prayer that begins in verse 20.

Armed with the knowledge that the king desired, Daniel made arrangements to see the king to explain his dream and its meaning. Verse 24: "Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation. Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar [a Babylonian name given to Daniel upon his arrival at Babylon], Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?"

Daniel then derided the wise men for not being able to tell the king what he wanted to know. Verse 27: "Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; But there is a God in heaven

that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these." Here we see that the dream was a prophecy from God of what was to take place in the latter days. The king's dream is actually a continuous outline of history down to the time when Jesus returns.

Daniel's description of the king's dream begins with verse 29: "As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart. Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, and his breast and arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

This is the dream that, understandably, had troubled the king. He had seen an enormous image towering over him. What did it mean? Remember, verses 28 and 29 told us that this is a prophecy of what should come to pass hereafter," extending down to the "latter days."

Daniel proceeded to give the king the interpretation of his strange dream. Verse 36 says: "This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof be-

fore the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.” King Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon are represented by the golden head of the giant image.

Verses 39, 40: “And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.”

The breast and arms of silver represent the next kingdom to take over after the fall of Babylon; the belly and thighs of brass represent the third kingdom to appear on the stage of history. The fourth kingdom is not only powerful, but also cruel and brutal, as indicated in verse 40.

The Bible gives us all the information we need to determine the identity of these four kingdoms. We can, moreover, turn to secular history for confirmation, for both secular history and archeology completely verify Bible prophecy.

In order to determine the identity of the kingdom that followed Babylon, consider the events of Daniel, chapter five. Belshazzar was the king of Babylon at that time. (Many confuse the name of this king with the Babylonian name given to Daniel, which was Belteshazzar; the king's name has no “t” in it.)

Verses 1-4: “Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes,

his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein." These were the holy instruments of the temple of God in Jerusalem. They were not to be defiled as the king was about to do. "Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." Not only did the king and his assembly defile the holy vessels, but with them they praised all their idol gods made of common materials by men's hands, all in defiance of the God of heaven.

Verses 5, 6: "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote." Imagine how the king and his guests must have felt to see that mysterious hand write those letters in brilliant, flaming, white-hot fire on the plaster of the wall opposite the king. The next verse tells us what effect the hand with its letters of fire had upon the king. "The king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." The king's knees knocked together as he reacted to this awesome event with a fear that cut him to his heart.

Verses 7-9: "The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished." The

king had a premonition that his hour had come, and he was becoming more and more anxious to find out what the letters of fire meant.

Verses 10-16: "Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation. Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewery? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing: And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom."

As Daniel was listening to the king, the letters of fire on the wall were as brilliant as when the hand had first written them. The words continued to burn brightly on the wall, and into the consciences of all.

Verses 17-31: "Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he

should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old." (Peres is a form of the word "upharsin." Peres is singular; upharsin is plural.)

"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Those words of final judgment struck terror in the king's heart. His hour had come. He died in rebellion against God, and in 539 BC the kingdom of Medo-Persia succeeded Babylon on the stage of history, precisely as Nebuchadnezzar's dream had foretold. That this was a dual power is indicated by the two arms of silver. Thus, the first kingdom, Babylon, the kingdom of gold, was succeeded by the kingdom of silver, Medo-Persia.

In order to discover the identity of the next kingdom, the kingdom of brass, consider Daniel 11:2. "And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia." In this war with Greece, the Medo-Persians were defeated, and in 331 BC the Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great became the third kingdom, the kingdom of brass, of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

The identity of the fourth kingdom can be found in Luke 2:1. This was the power that ruled the world during Christ's sojourn on earth. "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." Caesar Augustus was one of the Emperors of the Roman Empire, the fourth kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the kingdom of iron. The Roman Empire gained prominence about the year 168 B.C.

Let us now return to the prophecy of Daniel 2 and consider what happened after the Roman Empire disintegrated, about the year 476 A.D. Verse 41: "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters'

clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."

Here we see that there will not be a fifth world empire, no matter how much effort mankind puts forth to bring it about. Many have tried to weld an empire together, but to no avail. Kings and rulers have tried war. They have tried giving their daughters in marriage to kings of other nations in order to build a bond between them, just as verse 43 predicted — "They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men." None of their efforts succeeded. Today men are trying conspiracy and subversion to beguile the nations of earth to surrender their sovereignty under a one-world government, but the nations will remain divided until the return of the Lord.

From this prophecy we can also deduce that the United Nations will never be able to gain the whole world and rule everyone. Today there is a massive effort to weld the nations of earth together under the United Nations, but all this will fail. All the United Nations and the conspiracy behind it will do is to bring on the worst time of trouble the world has ever seen. This time of trouble is described in Daniel 12:1. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." There will never be another world empire until Christ sets up His kingdom in the New Earth.

The ten toes of the image represent the nations of modern Europe today. These are the residue of the breakup of the Roman Empire, and prophecy says, "they shall not cleave one to another." No amount of political intrigue can unite these nations and hold them together in another empire. The men who today are using all their wealth, power, influence, and authority to try to join the nations of the world together are simply wasting their time. Neither the United Nations, nor the European Union, nor war, nor money, nor conspiracy, nor subversion, nor anything else will be able to accomplish what Bible prophecy says will not happen.

It is interesting to note that God uses the most precious metal, gold, to represent Babylon. The next kingdom is represented by silver, still a precious metal but of lesser value than gold. The brass and the iron continue the descending value trend of the metals. And, finally, to represent our time, God has chosen to use clay, a most ignoble substance, mixed with the iron. Why does God choose to represent our day as clay, the basest of substances, and the earliest kingdom of the prophecy by gold? Many think it should have been the other way around; but contrary to what we would like to believe, man is not getting better; he is getting very much worse.

Verses 44 and 45 tell us that in the days of these nations of modern Europe, the Lord Jesus will return to this earth to gather His people, and to put an end to the intrigues and politics of man forever. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream

is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”

According to this prophecy, which has been precisely accurate so far, Christ will come back to earth in the days of the modern nations of Europe. This prophecy of the image in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream is a time chart of history beginning in 605 B.C. with Babylon, the head of gold, and ending with the coming of the Lord in the very near future. We can readily see that most of the events of this prophecy have already transpired, and that they have happened precisely as the Bible said they would. All that is left is for Christ to come and initiate the events that occur at the beginning of the millennium. In view of the accuracy of the events foretold by the giant image, how foolish for mankind to scoff at Biblical truth! How foolish for people to continue to disregard the law of God! Soon the words “Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting” will burn in their consciences as did these words of fire on King Belshazzar's palace wall.

Today we are at the twilight of earth's history. The curtain is about to fall on the final scenes of this drama of the ages being played out here in this Theater of the Universe.

Besides the prophecy of Daniel, chapter 2, which we have just studied, there are many other verses and prophecies in the Bible that point to the Lord's soon return. Jesus' disciples themselves wondered about the end of the world, and, as described in Matthew 24:3-8,11-13, they asked the Lord about it. “And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” Jesus warns us in these verses not to be deceived when many come and claim to be Christ. To-

day there are several people who make this claim. These are, with one exception, leaders of bizarre cults. We have seen in chapter five that Satan himself will counterfeit the Lord's return with such brilliance and glory that nearly all the people of earth will be deceived and will bow down and worship him.

Verses 6,7: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." Christ tells us that there will be wars and rumors of wars. For the past several decades the world has had almost continual war and terrorism. Tensions among nations and among races driven by powerful Satanic forces continue to mount as the world moves farther and farther from the peaceful ideal most people desire.

Continuing in verse 7: "And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers [different] places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." For some time now, earthquakes have been increasing in frequency until today it seems as if a destructive earthquake occurs every few months somewhere in the world.

Verses 11-13: "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Today, there are many persons who claim to be prophets. Are these the false prophets Jesus warns us about? One of the Biblical tests of a true prophet of God is that the prophet must be 100% accurate. A true prophet of God is not permitted even one false prophecy, for if the message of the prophet came from God, how could it be in error? Needless to say, of the prophets in the world today not one has a perfect record; they all make errors, and are, therefore, not prophets of God. These false prophets are a sign of the end; they do, indeed, deceive many.

Christ also tells us here that iniquity shall abound. Iniquity is another word for sin or wickedness. We have seen crime of all kinds increase alarmingly in recent years. As Jesus predicted, many have fallen away from the Biblical standard, influenced by the vast majority, who pay no heed to the laws of God. Group psychological pressure is a very persuasive tactic used by Satan to draw people away from the truth. Christ says in this text that in the last days this group pressure will be the reason many will ignore the law of God and pursue their own selfish desires. When most of the people do things that are wrong, others accept these acts as normal, and they do them too with a relatively clear conscience. Most people follow the crowd. They assume that whatever the majority does must be right, but because of Satan's deceptions the majority cannot be relied upon to choose the correct way. Often, when someone wants to break away from the group and quit doing things that are wrong, he is ridiculed and embarrassed. In most cases the dissenter is unable to withstand ridicule and thus ends up conforming to the group.

Television programs and computer games are influencing the people of the world toward violence and toward a complete disregard of the Ten Commandments. The pornography on the internet will be the reason millions upon millions of people will be destroyed when the Lord returns.

Jesus continues in Matthew 24:36, saying that no one knows exactly when He will return: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." But in Matthew 24:32,33 He makes it clear that we have a duty to know approximately when He will return. "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Just as when we see the new leaves begin to form on the trees in the spring we know

that summer is near, when we see all the events that the Bible tells us will occur in the last days, we should know that Christ's return to this earth is imminent. The wicked will not be aware of these signs of the end. For them the day of the Lord will come unexpectedly and will take them by surprise, as we see in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." A thief, of course, comes unexpectedly.

One of the prophecies that is being fulfilled right now, in our time, is found in James 5:1-6. "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. [Sabaoth means hosts; thus: Lord of Hosts.] Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you."

These verses are addressed to the rich men of the earth. They are not speaking to people with a few thousand dollars in the bank but to those with perhaps many billions of dollars. Wealth of this magnitude was not achieved honestly, for as verse 4 indicates, these people have withheld the workers' wages by fraud. They have acquired their wealth by dishonest means, and verse 3 tells us that their riches shall be a witness against them. That these verses are referring to the rich men of our

day is indicated by the words "for the last days" in verse 3. Eventually, just before the end, the people of the world will finally discover how these rich men have been defrauding them. They will finally understand the details of the methods and operations of these rich men. The people will be furious and will demand that these rich be brought to task for their deeds. The gold and silver of the rich will, indeed, be cankered; it will be used as evidence against them, as the text predicts.

How have these rich withheld the wages of laborers by fraud? The following scenario will illustrate, in simple form, one of the means the rich use for withholding the wages of the people in order to vastly increase their wealth and power. This scenario is an approximation, for many of the details that exist to confuse the masses have been left out in the interest of simplicity, but the general mechanism behind the operation is retained. The details that have been left out are the policies and procedures the rich have had instituted in order to make their overall operation seem so complicated that the average man has difficulty understanding it. With the smoke screen of these policies and procedures removed, their operation is quite simple. Our setting is the United States; but the same situation is found in many other nations throughout the world, for the same conspiracy operates in nearly all countries today.

It is necessary to understand that the Federal Reserve Bank, which figures prominently in this scenario, is not owned by the United States government as many believe. The central bank, the Federal Reserve Bank, is a private bank, owned by some of the richest and most powerful people in the world, the same people referred to in the prophecy. This bank has nothing to do with the government other than the connection that allows the operation described below. The Federal Reserve Bank has a total, government-enforced monopoly in money. Before we had the central bank, each individual

bank competed with other banks; the customers, the consumers, got the best deal. Not any more.

We all know that today the United States government borrows money and operates under astronomical debt. Why is this? Common sense dictates that a policy of such enormous debt will sooner or later destroy the organization that practices it, for the interest on its debt must increase beyond its income, making payoff impossible.

Now to our scenario. Here, roughly, is how the operation proceeds. Suppose the United States government wants to borrow a billion dollars. The government issues a bond for this amount, much as a water company does when it wants to raise money for a new pipeline or a new dam. The government delivers this bond for the billion dollars to the Federal Reserve Bank. The Federal Reserve Bank takes the bond and writes an order to the Department of Printing and Engraving to print the billion dollars' worth of bills. After about two weeks or so, when the bills are printed, the Department of Printing and Engraving ships the bills to the Federal Reserve Bank, which then writes a check for about two thousand dollars to pay for printing the billion dollars' worth of bills. The Federal Reserve Bank then takes the billion dollars and lends the billion dollars to the United States government, and the people of the country pay interest at an exorbitant rate each year on this money that came out of nothing. The owners of the Federal Reserve Bank put up nothing for this money.

We see, therefore, that when the United States government goes into debt one dollar, a dollar plus the interest goes into the pockets of the owners of the Federal Reserve Bank. This is the largest, the most colossal theft ever perpetrated in the history of mankind, and it is so slick, so subtle, and so obfuscated by propaganda from the news media that the victims are not even aware of what is happening! And how is the principal and interest paid on this "debt?" Wages are with-

held, "kept back by fraud," from the paychecks of the workers, exactly as this amazingly accurate prophecy of James 5:4 indicates.

The Constitution of the United States gives to Congress the power to coin money. If the U. S. Congress coined its own money as the Constitution directs, it would not have to pay the hundreds of billions of dollars of interest that it now pays each year to the bankers for the national debt, for money that came out of nothing. Incidentally, according to the Communist Manifesto the personal graduated income tax and the central bank are two of the ten steps required in order for a country to be subverted by communists.

Since the people who own the Federal Reserve Bank are the same people who totally control the United States government from behind the scenes, you can perhaps understand one of the reasons they want the country to go so astronomically into debt. You can perhaps understand one of the reasons for the wars they get the United States into. You can perhaps understand one of the reasons for all the foreign aid programs, welfare programs, and all the other unconstitutional programs designed to spend the United States into bankruptcy. These people have amassed fortunes of hundreds of billions of dollars using the Federal Reserve operation and other schemes equally underhanded. They have enough money to buy and sell virtually anybody they want. They have enough money to buy and sell virtually any government they want. These people are without a doubt the most powerful in the world.

Our economy would be many times stronger and we would not be on the verge of losing our freedoms as we are today if the Federal Reserve Bank did not exist; for without the central bank, the rich would not have the virtually unlimited wealth that they today enjoy and use to compromise the politicians, reporters, and academicians so necessary to their present operation.

Who in the world has the amounts of money the United States borrows? What country or organization in the world has trillions of dollars available to loan to the United States. Obviously there are none. Virtually all the money the United States borrows is counterfeit money, printed by the Federal Reserve Bank.

The prophecy of James 5:6 tells us that these rich condemn and kill the just. How is this accomplished? One way is by the phony wars these people arrange for the nations of the world. The Vietnam and Korean Wars are probably the best examples, for many of us realized these were phony because the United States government supplied both sides of these wars through the many and varied foreign aid programs to communist nations and placed so many restrictions on the U. S. military that they could not win. The brilliant strategist and general, Douglas MacArthur, was fired for wanting to win the Korean War; remember? Finally the United States government gave the communist enemy in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos everything it wanted across a negotiating table, after the deaths of over 58,000 American soldiers. The surrender of the United States then resulted in the deaths of several million natives of the area by the most brutal and inhuman means that the communist butchers, who wanted to eliminate all opposition to their oppressive regimes, could devise. Virtually every war of this century was pre-arranged for the world by these rich for their own benefit. Thousands upon thousands of men were killed in these personal wars of the rich.

No wonder Jesus said in Matthew 19:24 that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Nevertheless, the rich can also be saved to enjoy a beautiful life in God's new earth if they, like anyone else, will repent of their sins, accept Christ, and follow Him as the Bible specifies.

The people of the world, however, will soon discover and understand this conspiracy of the rich. Second Timothy 3:9 says: "But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men." Chapter 13 will show more details of who is behind these rich men and their wars.

Another amazing prophecy which indicates that we are near the time of the end of the world as we know it is found in Daniel 12:4. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." The increase in man's knowledge in these last days, the time of the end, has been no less than astounding, and the sophisticated computers and machinery that this knowledge has produced has made it possible for people to travel large distances with ease. Giant airliners and automobiles on modern freeways accommodate people by the millions as they run to and fro. It seems that in the larger cities the heavy traffic never ceases. When a modern jumbo jetliner arrives at a terminal it disgorges a veritable crowd of people as another crowd waits to board to go somewhere else. The angel speaking to Daniel saw our time clearly and gave these two very obvious signs of the end so that we all might realize that time is, indeed, running out. Incidentally, the fact that Daniel's book is no longer sealed, so that we now understand it, is another sign that we are living in the time of the end.

Knowledge has been increased today beyond the wildest imaginings of people of only a few years ago, and technology continues to increase exponentially, from complex computers to machines capable of traveling to the moon and other planets.

Incidentally, you will remember that the name of the first moon lander was Eagle, and that the words which were transmitted to earth by the astronaut when the lander touched the moon's surface were, "The Eagle has landed." Now consider the interesting prophecy of

Obadiah 1:4. "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord."

The close-up photographs of the planets man has been able to take from unmanned space vehicles are sharper and clearer than many snapshots taken on earth. Unfortunately, however, many people use much of this tremendously increased knowledge and the resulting technology to aid them in their wholesale violation of God's commandments.

Not only has our technical knowledge been greatly increased in these last days; our knowledge of the Scriptures has also increased dramatically over the past century, so that today we understand more of the Bible than at any time in history.

Nahum 2:4 gives us another amazing prophecy of the last days, that perfectly describes a part of our world today. "The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings." From the mention in verse 3 of the Lord's preparation, we know this text refers to the last days. The chariots of verse 4 are the cars of today, that indeed do rage in the streets. In the course of a day's time there are many accidents throughout the world, especially in the large cities, as the cars jostle one another in the broadways. Nahum never saw a modern automobile, but in vision he was shown one of our modern freeways at night. He, of course, had never before seen headlights or tail-lights. He knew they were not torches, but they gave off a brilliant light and since he was at a loss as to how to describe them, he said that they seemed like torches. He was amazed at the speed of the "chariots" and described them as running like lightning. Sometimes, in other language versions of the Bible, the word "chariots" is rendered "cars." This is true, for instance, in the Spanish Bible: "chariots" is translated *carros* — cars.

Nahum 2:3 could be a reference to modern military equipment. "The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken." The chariots with flaming torches could refer to the modern battle tank with its powerful flame-throwers and to modern rockets and other weapons.

Jesus tells us in Luke 21:11 that there will be great signs in heaven to mark the course of time to the end. "And great earthquakes shall be in divers [different] places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven."

Revelation 6:12,13 tells us what these great signs in heaven are. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."

Have these signs occurred as yet? Many believe that they have not and look for them far in the future; these people are mistaken, for the signs have indeed occurred in precisely the order listed in these verses. The most intense earthquake ever recorded occurred on Sunday, November 1, 1755, having its epicenter near Lisbon, Portugal. This earthquake was so extensive that it was felt thousands of miles away in North America, in Africa, and in Asia Minor. Estimates of the loss of life during this catastrophe have been placed as high as ninety thousand. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* reports that "The main shock lasted six to seven minutes, an unusually long duration. Within six minutes at least 30,000 people were killed, all large public buildings and 12,000 dwellings were demolished."

The next event referred to in this prophecy is the dark day. This occurred on May 19, 1780. That morning the sun rose in a clear sky, but shortly an eerie dark-

ness covered the sky so that by about noon the sun was completely obscured, and the day became as dark as midnight. Toward evening, the sun again became visible through the blackness and produced an eerie light. That night when the full moon arose it did not give its light but was as if it were a drop of blood in the sky. Scientists have never been able to explain the cause of this dark day or the blood-red moon. Joel 2:31 says, "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come."

Finally, on November 13, 1833, the last of these three great signs occurred; the stars literally fell from heaven. This was the date of the most dramatic, the most intense meteor shower ever recorded. So many meteors were visible at one time that they were described as being as thick as rain drops in a storm. So many thousands were visible at one time that they lit up the night sky to the extent that one could actually read standard sized print. Astronomer Denison Olmsted described the event in *The American Journal of Science and Arts* the following year: "The reader may imagine a constant succession of fire balls, resembling sky rockets, radiating in all directions from a point in the heavens, a few degrees south-east of the zenith, and following the arch of the sky towards the horizon. . . . The balls, as they traveled down the vault, usually left after them a vivid streak of light, and just before they disappeared, exploded, or suddenly resolved themselves into smoke. The spectator was presented with meteors of various sizes and degrees of splendor: some were mere points, but others were larger and brighter than Jupiter or Venus; and one, seen by a credible witness before the writer was called, was judged to be nearly as large as the moon. The flashes of light although less intense than lightning, were so bright as to awaken people in their beds. One ball that shot off in the north-west direction, and exploded a little northward

of the star Capella, left, just behind the place of explosion, a phosphorescent train of peculiar beauty.”

Matthew 24:29,30 tells us very plainly that these signs in the heavens will occur shortly before the return of the Lord. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” The tribulation spoken of in this text was the terrible persecution of Christians that took place during the Dark Ages. Almost immediately upon the cessation of the persecution, the Lisbon earthquake occurred, ushering in these great signs of the end, exactly as Jesus prophesied.

God told us that He would put these signs in the heavens and the earth as landmarks in the march of prophetic time down through the ages in order to identify the time of the end. These events were dramatic and awe-inspiring, and men could not help but recognize their significance. As a result, many thousands turned to the Word of God with an interest as keen as that of believers during the time of the apostles.

Consider next a prophetic text that describes the condition of the people of the world just before Christ's return, and compare it with what we see in society today. Second Timothy 3:1-5 says, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

What an amazingly accurate prophecy! One would be hard-pressed to describe more accurately the general condition of the people of the world today. We see here that men are lovers of themselves only, having very little regard for the well-being of others. In fact, society today has degenerated to the point where, as has happened many times, a woman can be attacked on a busy street in broad daylight, and no one comes to her aid.

The argument is sometimes heard that people have always been this way. Those who claim this are, in reality, ignorant of history, for as time progresses, the stature and character of the human being continue to become more base. Remember that the prophecy of Daniel, chapter two, shows that mankind is getting worse instead of better, with the more noble metal, gold, representing the earlier civilization, and clay representing our time today.

People today are covetous, as the text indicates. Their thoughts are continually of themselves and how to get ahead in the world, how to get more money, how to get a better car or a larger house. People today use any means, no matter how immoral, to accomplish their purposes. They use others to their own advantage in their mad frenzy to get to the top or to find pleasure and to have fun.

The next characteristic of men in the last days mentioned in this text is that they are boasters. We can see this throughout society, as people are very anxious for others to know of the great things they have done; but God tells us in Proverbs 27:2 to "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."

Are people proud today? They strut around, feeling superior to those who have less. They are proud of their new cars, their fine homes, and especially their educations, for today in our humanistic society "education" has been made a god.

Blasphemers are mentioned next, and today it seems as if many are unable to get through even one sentence without taking the name of the Lord in vain. Their speech has been given over to utter abandon as their foul phrases mock the very principles of truth and decency.

Are children disobedient to parents today, as the prophecy indicates? In the government schools, there is a distinct effort made to alienate the youth from their parents and to lower the standards of morality. Children today are taught that their parents are of the old-fashioned generation and are far behind the liberality and knowledge of modern times. As a result, the youth seem to have many ways to show their rebellion and contempt for their parents and for the traditional values of the past.

Are people unthankful today as this prophecy indicates? Indeed, they are. The Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 8:18, "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." How many remember to thank God for the many blessings and advantages He has given them? Most people today are totally unthankful and unholy, without ever a thought of God except to blaspheme His name.

Verse 3 mentions that in the last days men will be without natural affection. This refers not only to the alienation of children from parents but also to the homosexuality abounding in our world; those who practice this sin even demand respectability. Leviticus 18:22: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." This sin is just one more of the many signs that the end of the earth is very near.

Trucebreakers are mentioned next. In our present world, the politicians of various nations sit around conference tables working out agreements, very few of which are honored. Of twenty-five summit agreements between the United States and Russia, the communists

dishonored twenty-four And during the last few years even the United States has been breaking treaties. Virtually every one of these treaties made with the communists is harmful to the United States. Why then does the United States continue to make treaties and agreements with the communists? Because of the traitors, mentioned in verse 4, who have virtually total control of the U. S. government.

“Incontinent” means without self control. In these last days, the people of earth are indeed without self control; they have thrown off all restraints and cater to every appetite and desire.

That men are fierce is evident from the cruelty and brutality so prevalent in the world today. Since the United States surrendered to the communists in Vietnam, the communists have slaughtered over two million human beings in that area. The communists built the Berlin wall to keep from losing more of their people to the west; When people tried to escape from the horrors of communism they were machine-gunned in the back or blown to bits in the mine fields near the wall. Just because the wall has been torn down does not mean people are improving. The wall was torn down to facilitate setting up the New World Order, the one-world government under the United Nations.

Several years ago during the Red Guard calamity in Red China, the human carnage was so severe that the many bodies floating down the Yangtze River were a grim reminder of the total, merciless brutality men are capable of when they deny God and His commandments.

Verse 4 mentions traitors as one of the important signs that the end is near. Why would a country supply its enemy with all kinds of aid and materiel? Why did the United States give aid in the forms of money, food, machinery, highly sophisticated computers and technology, factories, nuclear reactors, and scientific and industrial instruments to an enemy who has vowed to

“bury it,” as it has done for the communist menace in the world? Why does the U. S. government continually propagandize its people through the mass media and the schools that the communists are actually pretty good fellows and not really our enemy any longer? Why did the United States disband all the committees in Congress whose duty it was to protect the country from internal subversion and treason? Why has the United States agreed to treaties with its enemies that greatly reduce its military strength to below that which it allowed the communist enemy to have? Why does the United States frequently and unilaterally disarm itself? Why did the United States give its Panama Canal to the communist government of Panama and Red China, and in addition pay them billions of dollars to take it? Why does the government place young girls in combat units to weaken greatly the armed forces and undermine further the morality of American youth? Why, unless traitors have taken over control of the United States government? God tells us that these traitors in government and the disastrous effects they are having in the world are very important signs of the final days of earth.

“Heady” means stubborn and headstrong. “Highminded” means conceited. These characteristics of men are widespread throughout the world today.

“Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” In these last days it seems as if people work very hard at having pleasure. All week they think about and plan what they will do on the weekend to have fun. They spend vast sums of money on their selfish pleasures, going deeply into debt. They ignore God and His business, which is by far more important than the inanities people become involved in. But God said this would happen in the last days.

Verse 5 tells us that in these last days people will have a form of godliness, but their godliness will not be from the great Creator God of heaven. Today there

are some 500 different religions in the world, each teaching a different message. The religious world today is in total confusion; all the denominations have a form of godliness and claim to be teaching the truth. God advises us to turn away from churches that do not teach obedience to His Ten Commandments and that do not have the truth of the Bible.

Second Timothy 4:3,4 is another text that predicts the religious confusion we have in the world today. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Because the people have itching ears, that is, they want to listen to preachers who will tell them what they want to hear instead of the truth, they reject the true Bible doctrine and are turned unto lies. Since these 500 different religions disagree among themselves, logically all but one must be wrong. "Not enduring sound doctrine," they are "turned unto fables"; most of these churches even claim that it is not necessary to obey the law of God any longer!

In an effort to make their ideas of the Bible agree with modern "science," many churches today teach something called "Christian evolution." How many books, magazines, and newspapers refer over and over again to the many millions of years during which mankind was "evolving?" Schools teach evolution to explain the origin of life, but God calls it and other erroneous scientific theories vain babblings and false science in 1 Timothy 6:20. "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called."

Continuing with 2 Timothy 3:7, we see that in the last days men will be, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Today this prophecy is being fulfilled perfectly, for as men strive to gain higher educations and advanced degrees they fill their

minds with so much of the propaganda and deceptions of this world that by the time they obtain their degrees they are unable even to recognize the truth when they encounter it. Most people, as they go through school and college, rarely question whether the material they are being taught is true or not. They rarely question whether their textbooks contain facts or propaganda. Most just accept without question the material presented. In fact, college students are often under so much pressure they do not have time to consider whether what they are learning is true or not. The gullibility of students who accept blindly everything presented brings to mind Proverbs 14:15. "The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going." Schools and colleges are, in fact, being used in these last days to completely change the character of American society. God tells us in 1 Corinthians 3:19, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." People who go to school for many years think they are gaining wisdom and knowledge, but they are actually being led away from the truth as this verse indicates and are learning the foolishness of the world.

Finally in 2 Timothy 3:13 we see that trouble and strife will continue to increase until the end. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Today it seems that men would rather lie than be truthful with one another, as they deceive and are in turn deceived. Even leaders of nations lie to their people with impunity.

In Matthew 24:37-39 Christ says that the people of the world just before He returns will be the same as they were before the flood of Noah's time: "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

The eating and drinking mentioned here is a reference to gluttony. In the prosperous nations today virtually everyone is overweight. The marriage and giving in marriage is a reference to the sexual promiscuity we see throughout society today. In the Bible, the marriage ceremony was the sexual act itself, as shown in Genesis 24:67 "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife;" After the first relationship, to have sex with another person is adultery.

Before the flood, people were going about their daily business of doing whatever they wanted without ever giving thought to the warnings of Noah. Likewise, most of the people in these last days do their own things without giving a thought to the Ten Commandments or the many warnings given about end-time conditions and the events soon to take place.

Just how was it in Noah's day? Genesis 6:5 says, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." The evil in the world today rivals the evil of Noah's time. Verses 11 and 12 declare that "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." As was discussed previously, in many parts of the world today the most inhuman forms of violence and torture abound. Today, as in Noah's day, the earth is indeed filled with violence, and evil men corrupt their way upon the earth to the extent that those who practice the most disgusting perversions demand that society recognize them as normal.

In Luke 17:28-30, Christ also tells us that as people were in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, so they will be in the last days. "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot

went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." The people of that time were going about their daily lives, not giving a thought to their moral condition or what was about to happen, exactly as the people of today ignore God's law.

Consider what was going on in Sodom. Jude 7 says, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." These conditions are very similar to the conditions of our day. Adultery and fornication are so prevalent in society today that they are accepted as normal. The "strange flesh" of the verse is a reference to homosexuality, that is not only prevalent today, but is boasted of by many who practice it.

A further description of the conditions in Sodom is given in Genesis 19:1-13,24,25. "And there came two angels to Sodom at even [evening]; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

"But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after

him, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof."

Though Lot was wrong to offer his daughters to the men of Sodom in order to protect his visitors from the homosexuals of the city, he did so because of the hallowed custom that a host must protect his house guests by any means available. That he did this in direct disobedience to the law of God is an indication of the dullness of his moral sense as a result of his having lived among the homosexuals and the other supremely wicked people of the city.

Continuing with verse 9, "And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door. And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground."

Homosexuality abounds in our day just as it did in the days of Lot. Jude 7, you will remember, told us that Sodom and Gomorrah were set forth as examples for

us. Needless to say, these examples are totally ignored today as men and women seek to practice a perversion that the Lord finds abominable. Leviticus 18:22 says, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." And Leviticus 20:13 says, "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them." These conditions in society today are a sure sign that the end is very near.

Another sign of the last days is the preaching of the gospel in all the world. Jesus says in Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Missionaries have roamed this entire globe preaching the Gospel of Christ's kingdom. The Gospel, in fact, is being preached even in places where one would not expect it to be. Recently a report was carried out of Red China by one of the people who managed to escape. This report told of a minister who had two Bibles. When the police came to confiscate all the Bibles in the area, the minister kept one at the risk of his life. If he is caught he will suffer a most brutal death, for the communists, in order to terrorize the people into obedience, make examples of those who disobey. This minister has a large congregation that meets secretly to copy pages from his old, worn out Bible so that the people may have the privilege of reading a few precious pages of Scripture. Today the Gospel of the kingdom goes everywhere in the world via radio, the internet, and the World Wide Web. This Gospel of the kingdom has indeed been preached in all the world. The end is very near.

The fact that there will be scoffers in the last days who pursue their own pleasures is shown in 2 Peter 3:3-5. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since

the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water." Notice that these people are willingly ignorant of these things. As these verses say, they have chosen ignorance as they go about their business, assuming that the earth will continue for a long time yet. Often one reads "predictions" by scholars and scientists about conditions fifty, or a hundred, or five hundred years from now.

Joel 3:9-11 describes the United Nations today. "Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about." Assemble yourselves, let the weak say I am strong. In the assembly of the United Nations today the weak nations, some so tiny they can scarcely be called nations, act as if they are strong and mighty, having as much a vote in the General Assembly as the United States. The weak indeed do say, "I am strong." Notice that this assembly is referred to as being heathen. The United Nations was organized by the communists and is run by communists, who profess atheism. What is interesting here is that immediately following these events, verse 13 describes the end of the world and the return of the Lord. "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great." Even the United Nations today is a sign of the end.

Finally, the New World Order menace is described in Jeremiah 25:32. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth." Evil shall spread from one nation to another like a horrible cancer. This evil is communism under

its new name, the New World Order. Communism was founded in Bavaria, Germany, on May Day, May 1, 1776. From there it spread to Russia, where it gained a base of operation, and has since spread its hideous tentacles throughout the entire world, just as this verse predicted. When the news media tells you that Communism has collapsed it is a lie. Red China is going strong and is producing the missiles and atomic weapons needed to wage global warfare, using technology given to them by the traitors in the United States' government. The people in charge of the countries that "were" Communist are still Communists. Notice that the very next verse describes the destruction of the world at the return of Christ. "And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." The presence of the communist menace in the world today and its facade the New World Order is another of the many signs that the end is very near.

Christ said, "When ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors." (Mark 13:29).

Chapter 8

THE LAW OF GOD

The universal law of God, the Ten Commandments, is the basis, the constitution, the foundation on which the entire universe operates, with one exception — the earth. It is the perfect obedience to this law in heaven and throughout the vast universe of creation that guarantees the absence of trouble of any kind. Only on earth is God's law ignored, and the beings of the universe are appalled as they behold the moral depravity to which mankind has fallen as a result.

How could one person hurt another if everyone lived his life according to the Ten Commandments? A person must break at least one of God's Ten Commandments in the process of hurting another individual in any way. The Ten Commandments, the law of God, far from being negative as they first appear to be, are in reality ten promises that God makes to us. They are ten positive promises that life will be free from fear and trouble of all kinds if everyone obeys.

Satan wants us to believe that the Ten Commandments restrict our freedom so that we will resent God and ignore His law. He wants us to believe that we can experience true happiness only by doing as we wish, without restrictions of any kind. People want to have fun, to do their own thing, to live the carefree, happy life. The trouble is that when people do this they hurt others and thus make others unhappy. There is only one way for everyone to be happy, and that is through perfect obedience to the law of God. This is the lesson that the entire universe has learned from its observation of the earth. This is the lesson that intelligent be-

ings in the universe have come to understand as they watch with dismay man's inhumanity to man. And this is the lesson the people of earth must learn for God to be able to save them.

A simple example from daily life will illustrate why God's commandments are so necessary and will help us to understand that God's law is the source of freedom. In the United States there are laws that prohibit driving on the left-hand side of the road. Because of these laws, everyone drives on the right-hand side. Suppose these laws did not exist and that it were permissible to drive on either side of the road. You can imagine the problems that would occur with cars coming toward each other at sixty miles per hour in the same lane! Accidents would be inevitable, and people would not be really free to drive on the road. You see, it is because of the law prohibiting driving on the left-hand side of the road that we are free to use the road in comfort and in safety. It is because of this law that we are free to travel at a high rate of speed on the highways, for we can be reasonably sure that the driver traveling in the opposite direction will stay on the other side of the road.

Hosea 4:1,2,6 accurately describes the general condition of society in the world today, the result of disobedience to the law of God. "1The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. 2By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. 6My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee . . . seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."

By restricting certain actions that are detrimental to the happiness and welfare of others, the Ten Commandments, if universally obeyed, produce a maximum of freedom and happiness for everyone. Today, for in-

stance, many people have had the unpleasant experience of returning home only to find that their home had been broken into and all their valuable possessions had been either stolen or broken. If everyone obeyed the law of God, this could not happen. People would not even have to lock their doors.

The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus 20:3-17. Verse 1 says, "And God spake all these words, saying. . ." What we are about to read are words that God, Himself, spoke to the people.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 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.
5. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord

thy God giveth thee.

6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

The next verse, Exodus 20:18, says, "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off." We saw in chapter three that it was Christ who gave the Ten Commandments from the top of Mt. Sinai.

During an awesome display of divine power, the Lord Jesus Christ spoke these Ten Commandments in person from the top of Mt. Sinai, which was covered by clouds with a brilliant fire evident inside. When Christ spoke the law from the top of the mountain it must have been as if He had used a million-watt public address system; the earth and the mountains trembled as He spoke. Never has the world witnessed such a tremendous display of divine power and glory as at this time, and it never will again until the Lord returns.

The people were understandably afraid during this overwhelming event and said to Moses in verse 19, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." God used this awesome demonstration of His power to impress upon the people that, unlike the pagan gods of Egypt, He, indeed, is a real, living God, having tremendous power and authority.

A covenant is a contract, or a promise. Because the law of God is His promise to us, God often refers to His law as His covenant. Deuteronomy 4:12,13 refers to the Ten Commandments in this way: "And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire [on top of Mount Sinai]: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude: only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." Thus the Ten Commandment law is God's covenant, His promise, His contract with His people.

How long will God's covenant be in effect? Many today claim that there is a new covenant that has nothing to do with the Ten Commandments and that God's law is not now in force. They claim that the law was "nailed to the cross," and that we are no longer required to keep the law. There are, however, many texts in the Bible showing that the law is permanent and that it will never be done away with. Consider Psalms 89:34: "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." God tells us that he will neither break his contract with us nor change it. It will last throughout all eternity, exactly as it was written with the finger of God. Isn't it strange that most people want to throw out the only words God himself wrote in the Bible?

Consider also Psalms 111:7-9. "The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. ⁸They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. ⁹He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name." We see here that each one of the Ten Commandments will stand fast for ever and ever. God's law is permanent. He will never change or annul any of the Ten Commandments.

Those who ignore the law of God bring a curse upon themselves. Jeremiah 11:3 says, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel; Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the

words of this covenant.”

Everything that God does is perfect; His law is no exception, as Psalms 19:7,8 shows: “⁷The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” Why change something that is perfect? Why would God change or annul His perfect law? The answer is that He would not.

Many claim that the law was only for people of Old Testament times and that for us today it is no longer binding. Psalms 111:7-9, which tells us that the law will be in force forever, should be sufficient to make us realize that God will never repeal or change the Ten Commandments in any way. Nevertheless, there are also New Testament texts that show that the law is still in effect today and that we are required to obey it.

Second Timothy 3:15-17 says, “¹⁵And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly [thoroughly] furnished unto all good works.” As was mentioned in chapter one, when these verses were written there was no New Testament. These verses refer directly to the Old Testament, telling us that all the Scripture in the Old Testament is given by inspiration of God and is to be used today for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. Notice also that verse 15 tells us that these Old Testament Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation. That is, the Old Testament Scriptures contain the wisdom and the knowledge so necessary to us for salvation, including Exodus 20:3-17 — the Ten Commandments.

These verses emphasize that ALL Scripture, ALL the Old Testament is given by inspiration of God, and must not be neglected, for it is just as important as the New Testament. Many ministers boldly tell us today that the Old Testament is no longer applicable, that it was only for the Jews. Whom will we believe and obey, God or the ministers?

Jesus says in Matthew 24:35 that "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Jesus Christ gave the Ten Commandments from the top of Mount Sinai during that awesome display of divine power. The Ten Commandments are His words, and He says here that they will never pass away. He says also in John 10:35 that "the scripture cannot be broken." The word "broken" in this verse is translated from the Greek word *luo*, that means "to loosen." The Scripture, specifically the Old Testament, cannot be loosened. The Ten Commandments, therefore, cannot be loosened. They are just as binding on us today as they were when they were first given, and we are required to abide by every one of them.

Jesus also said in Matthew 4:4 that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Directly out of the mouth of God came the Ten Commandments, and Jesus said that we should live by every word of them.

Furthermore Jesus stated clearly in Matthew 5:17,18 that He did not come to change either the law or the prophecies of the Old Testament. "17Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. 18For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Jot is *iota*, the ninth letter of the Greek alphabet, and a tittle is a small part of a letter comparable to the serif on many printing styles. Jesus said here that the law will stand just as He wrote it with His own finger on the two tables of stone. Those who claim that

He nailed the law to the cross, thus releasing us from obedience, are twisting the meaning of these and other verses. Jesus fulfilled the law by perfectly obeying the law, just as He would have us to do.

Chapter three of Romans has quite a lot to say about the law, and there is much confusion in the religious world as to just what is meant. Nevertheless, in total agreement with the verses we have just covered, which show that the law will never be changed or abolished, Romans 3:31 indicates that the law is as valid today as when God wrote it with His own finger. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." A law that is established is certainly not abolished!

Romans 2:12 says that "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." Thus, those who are ignorant of the law and break God's commandments will perish. Those who admit to the law and yet break God's commandments will be judged by the laws that they have broken, and, of course, found guilty. They will also perish, for Romans 6:23 tells us that "the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Will Christ give the gift of eternal life to someone who would continue to break the Ten Commandments throughout eternity? Can you imagine an unrepentant idolater in heaven or in the new earth? Can you imagine an unrepentant thief or liar in heaven or in the new earth? God will never take anyone to heaven if that person would ever break one of the Ten Commandments after he got there.

Many claim today that they love the Lord. What exactly do they mean by this, and how do they go about loving the Lord? First John 5:3 gives us a definition of love and tells us what the love of God is. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." The love of God, you see, is the keeping of His Ten Commandments. This

is how we are to show our love to our Creator. Nevertheless, most of the people who claim to love the Lord are not keeping all of His commandments.

There are quite a few verses in the Bible which indicate that our keeping the law is of utmost importance. Some of these verses speak rather bluntly, without mincing words. First John 2:3,4 has an interesting comment on those who say they know the Lord but do not obey His law. ³“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” God says that these people who claim to love Him yet do not keep all His commandments are liars. Strong language, to be sure. These people undoubtedly think that they know the Lord, but they are instead blinded by Satan’s deceptions. If they really knew the Lord they would be obeying His commandments, as this verse indicates. Perhaps God uses strong language like this to wake us up so that we might understand and realize that obeying the Ten Commandments is of utmost importance.

Consider Proverbs 28:4: “They that forsake the law praise the wicked.” No matter how often one might go to church, no matter how much one might say that he loves the Lord, if that person ignores God’s law, he is praising the wicked, as this verse says. He, himself, is wicked, for wickedness is the breaking of the law of God.

This definition of the wicked can be found in Psalms 119:155. “Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.” Psalms 119:53 also tells us that the wicked are those who ignore God’s law. “Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.”

Another verse that uses strong language with respect to obeying God’s law is Romans 8:6,7. ⁶“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷Because the carnal mind is enmity

against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” The definition here of a carnal mind is one who rejects the law of God, and as verse 6 says, “to be carnally minded is death.” Those who claim that the law is no longer in effect, those who claim that the law has been nailed to the cross are at enmity with God. There are many people in the world today who claim they are Christians, yet they ignore one or more of God’s Ten Commandments; they are therefore carnally minded. There is no such thing as a Christian with a carnal mind. Conversely, there is no such thing as a Christian who willfully disregards any of the Ten Commandments. The Bible definition of sin, you will recall from chapter two, is given in 1 John 3:4: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” Thus, there is no such thing as a Christian who willfully sins.

It was Christ who gave the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai in a display of divine power that shook the mountains. Christ also is the only Savior. With these facts in mind consider James 4:12: “There is one lawgiver who is able to save.” There can be no doubt that Christ Himself gave us the Ten Commandments, and in John 14:15 He says, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” How can the many who claim that they love Jesus also claim that they are no longer required to abide by His law? Christ said that he will never change His law and that it will remain in effect forever.

Finally, in 1 John 3:8 we see that anyone who is breaking any of God’s Ten Commandments is of the devil, regardless of how strenuously he claims to be a Christian and regardless of how many good works he does. “He that committeth sin is of the devil.”

Why is it that so many people consider it normal to disregard the law of God? According to Revelation 12:9, everyone has believed the lies the devil has spread in profusion in this world. They have accepted Satan’s lies

as the truth, and the wrong way seems to them to be the right way. Because we have all believed the devil's lies, we cannot trust our feelings. What we feel is right may not be right. God has graciously warned us about this in Proverbs 16:25: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." We must understand that God will not lie to us; we must accept exactly what the Bible says, regardless of our feelings, regardless of our beliefs, regardless of what our ministers tell us, and regardless of whether the way seems right to us. To do otherwise will be fatal, as Proverbs 16:25 clearly indicates.

Because of the intense psychological group pressure that the devil brings to bear on each of us, it is difficult for one person to defy the majority, to go against that which is commonly accepted as truth and obey God as the Bible specifies. Satan uses each one of us to help deceive others. When one person does something wrong, it is easy for others to follow his example and do the same thing. The more people Satan can deceive into believing a lie, the easier it is for him to deceive others. When we are part of the group that follows feelings and beliefs rather than what the Bible plainly says, the wrong way seems right and is the easiest. God does not want us to be confused. He wants us to understand thoroughly what He requires of us. If we will accept exactly what He tells us, we will not be confused. We are confused when we listen to ministers and teachers explain away the clear commands of God. We are confused when we follow what seems right to us though it disagrees with Scripture.

Since sin is defined in 1 John 3:4 as the breaking of God's law, the law is the vehicle that points out our sins, as Romans 3:20 says. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." In other words, if there were no law there would be no sin. In Romans 7:7 Paul says, "I had not known sin, but by the law." What law is Paul referring to in this verse? There can be no doubt that he is refer-

ring to the Ten Commandments, for he mentions the Tenth Commandment: “For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”

Thus, sin and the law, the Ten Commandments, are intimately connected, for sin is the breaking of the law. (1 John 3:4). Yet many today claim that the law is no longer in effect! By so claiming, they say that they do not sin, for Romans 4:15 tells us that “Where no law is, there is no transgression.” Now most people who know anything about Christianity at all believe that Christ died to save us from our sins. But if the law is no longer in effect, then we have no sins. If we have never sinned, we do not need to die. Why, then, do we need Christ as our Savior? First John 1:10 says that “If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” Therefore, by claiming that the law is no longer in effect, they claim that they have not sinned; and by claiming that they have not sinned, they call the Lord a liar.

Many who claim that the Ten Commandments are no longer in effect also talk about sin and readily admit that they are sinners. These people are obviously confused, for we have just seen that we must have the law for sin to exist.

We all need the Savior, for every one of us has broken the Ten Commandments, as Romans 3:19 says: “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” Everyone is guilty. Everyone has sinned. Everyone has broken God’s law, for the law is still in effect regardless of how many people claim it is not. Romans 3:23 also shows that all the world is guilty before God: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Since sin is the transgression of God’s law and since we all have broken the law, the law must still be in effect. We are all under the law.

Romans 6:23 tells us that “the wages of sin is death.” Since everyone has sinned, everyone deserves to die, for that is the penalty for breaking the Ten Commandments. The death which this verse mentions is the second death, where all the wicked will be destroyed. The first death is only a sleep, as we saw in chapter four. The rest of verse 23 says, “But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The only way for any of us to inherit eternal life is by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. If from this moment on we never broke another of God’s laws, we would still need the grace of Christ to be saved for our past sins. He paid our penalty for us so that we would not have to. If, however, we continue to ignore the law of God, we will end up in the lake of fire, which is the second death, from which there will be no resurrection.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.” (Exodus 24:12). “And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.” (Exodus 31:18). “And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.” (Exodus 32:16).

The Ten Commandments were written by God with His own finger. The Ten Commandments, found in Exodus 20:3-17, are the only words in the Bible the Lord Himself wrote. Yet these are the very words that many say are no longer in effect!

There is a well-known axiom in mathematics that states that things that are equal to the same thing are equal to each other. With this in mind consider: What is truth? Psalms 119:142 tells us that, “Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.” Verse 151 says, “. . . all thy commandments are truth.” Christ’s law = truth.

John 14:6 says that Jesus, Himself, is the truth. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Also, then, Christ = truth.

Therefore, since Christ's law = truth, and Christ = truth, then Christ = His law. This illustrates that the Ten Commandments represent the very character of Christ and can never change because Christ can never change. Hebrews 13:8 shows this clearly, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

We have seen that Jesus did not come to abolish the law. He came, in fact, to magnify the law, as Isaiah 42:21 says. "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable." Satan, you will remember, claimed that the law was unjust and that it was impossible for anyone to live without breaking the law. Jesus removed this stigma from the law and made it honorable by perfectly obeying the law under the most trying circumstances, proving that perfect obedience is indeed possible. The law has been made honorable, for we now know that the law is necessary for the general welfare and happiness of every member of God's creation. Not only did Jesus make the law honorable, but He also magnified the law, as this text says.

How did Jesus magnify the law? He magnified the law so that it includes even the thought of sin. First John 3:15, for example, says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." The Sixth Commandment to do no murder has been magnified to include hatred toward another person. Generally, one must hate another in order to murder him, and Jesus says here that even the thought is enough to convict a person of breaking the law even though the actual act has not taken place.

The First Commandment, which says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," has been magnified in

a rather startling way. In society today people have many other gods, some of which are rather surprising. Anything that is put before the Lord and His purposes is another god before the Lord. Consider Philippians 3:18,19. ¹⁸“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” “Whose god is their belly.” The fact that most people are considerably overweight testifies to the fact that they love to eat, and Satan has made it easy for them to serve their god with all the varieties of gourmet food available.

Christ magnified the law even to the extent of declaring that whenever anyone breaks one of the Ten Commandments, he is guilty of breaking all of them. James 2:8-12 says: ⁸“If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: ⁹But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” Which law is James talking about here? There can be no doubt that he is talking about the Ten Commandments since he quotes the Sixth and Seventh Commandments in verse 11. ¹¹“For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. ¹²So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” If we break one of the Ten Commandments, we are guilty of breaking them all. If a person, for instance, does not keep the Sabbath day holy according to the Fourth Commandment, he is guilty of murder, adultery, theft, and of breaking all the other commandments.

James refers to the law, the Ten Commandments, as the royal law and the law of liberty — royal because this law is from the great Creator God, the King of the

universe; the law of liberty because, if everyone were to obey the law as beings do everywhere else in the universe, the result would be liberty. In fact only by universal obedience to the Ten Commandments can everyone have liberty, freedom, and happiness.

James 2:12 also indicates that we will be judged by the law of liberty, the Ten Commandments. Those who advocate that the law is no longer in effect will have to face this law in the final judgment. For those who ignore the law, the judgment will be a traumatic experience, fraught with fear and terror.

Christ magnified the Seventh Commandment in His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:27,28. “²⁷Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: ²⁸But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” To commit adultery, it is only necessary for one to look upon a woman, or a picture of a woman, with the thought of adultery in his heart. The world accepts adultery and fornication as normal today, but they are an abomination to God. No fornicator or adulterer will ever see the kingdom of God unless he turns from this sin. Remember, a person does not have to commit the act to be guilty of breaking the Seventh Commandment. The lustful look is all that is required to convict him of sin. Far from abolishing the law or nailing it to His cross as many claim, He indeed magnified the law. The law, you see, is more binding than ever.

Luke 16:18 describes Christ’s further magnification of the Seventh Commandment. “Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.” Divorce is an abomination to God. God, however, permits divorce if one of the marriage partners has been unfaithful, as shown in Matthew 19:9: “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall

marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” Incidentally, the Bible uses the terms “fornication” and “adultery” synonymously, as this verse shows. Jesus used the word “fornication” to describe an adulterous situation.

In modern society there is general acceptance of immoral behavior; indeed immoral behavior is considered to be normal today. Schools and colleges have done much to drastically lower the moral standards of the people by means of co-ed dormitories and sex education courses. Sex education courses in the government schools teach children virtually everything there is to know about sexual relationships, but rarely make mention of moral standards. These courses, in fact, strongly encourage the children to become promiscuous. Television and the movies have done their parts to debase the old-fashioned morality by continually displaying people breaking every one of the Ten Commandments. Modern rock music, with songs that explicitly describe drug experiences and sex acts, has been extremely damaging to the morals of society. Rock is pornography in musical form.

Pornography on computers and on the internet is a disgusting cesspool of evil that billions are falling into today. The most vile scenes are portrayed. Pornography on the internet is one of the biggest factors in corrupting the morals of society. Every time a person looks at pornography on the internet he commits adultery.

This erosion of moral standards has led to the term “new morality,” a term that is used to imply that immoral behavior is now all right and acceptable. The “new morality” is nothing more than the old immorality that God so thoroughly condemns. Here is seen an example of how people are gradually led away from truth and the responsibility of obeying God’s law. God’s law has not changed, nor has God’s requirement for each one of us to obey that law.

Moses, who was raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, made the choice between a life of sin in the royal court of Egypt and a pure life of obeying God's commandments. Hebrews 11:24-25 says that "²⁴by faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; ²⁵Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Moses knew of the fantastic reward of the righteous, and, realizing that the pleasures of the court of Egypt could in no way compare with the joy and happiness of the righteous throughout eternity, he chose to go with God. Verse 26 says, "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

Because of Jesus' answer to the lawyer in Matthew 22:35-40, many claim that there are now only two commandments that we should keep. "³⁵Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, ³⁶Master, which is the great commandment in the law? ³⁷Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Jesus said here that the greatest commandment is to love God. Is He saying then that we no longer have to obey the Ten Commandments? Hardly. First John 5:3 tells us that to love God is to keep His commandments. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." We show our love to God by keeping His law. If we love God, will we do what He asks? Of course we will. We will not take His name in vain; we will not worship idols; we will have no other gods before Him; and we will remember to keep His Sabbath day holy. And if we love our fellow man, we will not lie to him;

we will not steal from him; we will not kill him; and we will not commit adultery with his wife. Love, you see, is keeping the commandments of God. Love, as Jesus said in Matthew 22:40, sums up the law and everything the prophets wrote. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Because Jesus tells us that loving the Lord with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our might is the first and great commandment, and that loving our fellow man as ourselves is the second great commandment, many conclude that the law is no longer in effect. Yet these same commandments of love are found in the Old Testament, the first in Deuteronomy 6:5: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," and the second in Leviticus 19:18: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

If Jesus' commandments in the New Testament to love the Lord with all our being and to love our neighbor as ourselves release us from the obligation to obey the Ten Commandments, why did not these same commandments in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 release the people in Old Testament times from the obligation to obey the law? Deuteronomy 7:9 shows that the people in Old Testament times were expected to keep the Ten Commandments just as we are in New Testament times. "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." A thousand generations extends well past our time today. We are all required to obey every one of the Ten Commandments.

Many say that the Ten Commandments were "nailed to the cross" — that is, abolished. Can this be true? When one considers the many verses which emphasize the permanence of the Ten Commandments, it is obvious that the claim that they were abolished can-

not be valid, for the entire Bible can have no contradictions. The Bible does say, however, that some law was abolished! Since the law that was abolished cannot be the Ten Commandments (for Psalms 111:7-9 says that they stand forever), it must be some other law. There were, in fact, four different types of laws that God gave to the Israelites in Old Testament times:

1. The great universal moral law, the Ten Commandments
2. The religious ceremonial laws
3. The health laws
4. The civil laws

Colossians 2:14-17 discusses the laws that were abolished. ¹⁴“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; ¹⁵And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. ¹⁶Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: ¹⁷Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” Notice that these laws which Christ nailed to His cross were against us and contrary to us. Are the Ten Commandments contrary to us? Are they against us? Certainly not. We saw that the Ten Commandments are God’s promise to us of eternal peace and happiness. They are God’s precious promises to us that we will live in freedom and safety forever. How could they possibly be against us? Verse 16 refers to meat offerings, drink offerings, and other religious ceremonial practices, that the newly converted Christians were not observing. Colossians 2:17 says that these laws and the various days and ceremonies connected with them “are

a shadow of things to come.” In other words, something later in time was casting a shadow that was represented by these laws and ceremonies.

Hebrews 10:1-10 discusses this shadow system of laws further. “¹For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.”

Is there anything in the Ten Commandments about sacrifices? Verse 2: “²For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.” Here the fact that these sacrifices ceased to be offered is mentioned. Therefore the laws that were nailed to the cross were the religious ceremonial laws requiring the sacrificing of bulls and goats for the remembrance of sin, as verse 3 says. “³But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. ⁴For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. ⁵Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.”

It is the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross that takes away the sins of all those who will accept and obey Him. All those animal sacrifices were substitutes for Christ's sacrifice on the cross and represented Christ's death. (The heathen religions required sacrifices also, but these were always to appease a mean and angry god.) The New International translation of the Bible says in Hebrews 10:1: “The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming — not the realities themselves.”

Once Jesus died on the cross, the animal sacrifices ceased, as we saw in verse 2. Verses 6-8 say: “⁶In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. ⁷Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. ⁸Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offer-

ings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law." Notice that those sacrifices were required "by law."

There is no mention in the Ten Commandments of sacrifices. The law spoken of here is definitely the religious ceremonial laws, that did require animal sacrifices. Verses 9,10: "9Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Christ took away the first, the animal sacrifices, and established the second, His sacrifice for everyone, once for all as verse 10 says. For us to continue to offer sacrifices now, after the Lord's death, would be a sacrilege, saying in effect that the Lord did not die for our sins. These verses in no way imply that God's Ten Commandment law was taken away, for as Psalms 111:7-9 says, God's commandments, His covenant, will stand forever.

First Corinthians 5:7 tells us that Christ is our sacrificial Lamb, our sacrifice for our sins. "7Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."

That Christ's death on the cross brought to an end the animal sacrifices is shown in Matthew 27:50,51. The temple contained two special rooms, the Holy place and the Most Holy place, separated by a thick, heavy curtain, called the veil in this text. "50Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." The instant Jesus died on the cross the veil of the temple was torn in two with such force that it startled the priest who was just about to slay the lamb for the evening sacrifice. The startled priest dropped the knife and the lamb escaped, as the true Lamb of God died on the cross for us. With the veil

torn in two, the Most Holy place, that was not to be seen by anyone except the high priest, and then only on one day each year, was completely exposed, dramatically indicating the end of the sacrificial services.

That these sacrifices would come to an end was predicted by the angel Gabriel in Daniel 9:27, some 550 years before Christ died on the cross. “²⁷And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.” As we shall see later, when a day is mentioned in Bible prophecy, a period of one year of actual time is represented. This week is actually a seven-year period that started at the time of Christ’s baptism. Christ’s ministry on earth from His baptism to His death was three and one-half years. At His death in the middle of this prophetic week He caused the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.

Here is a description of the four types of laws God gave to ancient Israel.

1. The great universal moral law, the Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandment law is God’s constitution for the government of heaven and the entire universe. The Ten Commandments have been in effect ever since God was and will be in effect throughout all eternity, as long as God exists.

2. The religious ceremonial laws

God planned from the beginning that the religious ceremonial laws would cease at the cross, because Christ, the true Lamb of God was sacrificed. The animal sacrifices all pointed forward to Christ’s death on the cross. “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the obla-

tion to cease, . . .” (Daniel 9:27) For us to offer animal sacrifices today would be a sacrilege, saying that Christ did not die for our sins.

3. The health laws

These are laws that God gave us to keep us healthy and free from disease. The physics of the human body have not changed since these laws were given. The health laws are just as much a benefit for us today as they were for the ancient Israelites. Consider Exodus 15:26: “. . . If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, and will do that which is right in his sight, and will give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, that I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that heals you.” If people perfectly obeyed God and kept the health laws today they would NEVER be sick.

4. The civil laws

These were the laws governing the civil penalties for crimes within the theocracy of Israel. Many of our civil laws today are based on these laws to some degree. God does not require these to be strictly adhered to today, because the theocracy is no longer in existence, but they should be used to guide us in setting up our governments. When someone is convicted of murder, for instance, the murderer should be put to death swiftly in order to discourage others from this sin. “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed. . . .” And “. . . blood defiles the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.” (Genesis 9:6, Numbers 35:33). The laws that said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth were a part of the civil laws.

In addition to these four types of laws that were given by God, there were other laws that the people were expected to obey. These additional laws originated, not from God, but from the Pharisees, who continually hounded Jesus, tempting Him and trying to catch Him in a wrong saying or a wrong act. These laws were known as “the tradition of the elders” and resulted from Jewish misinterpretation of God’s laws. These Jewish additions to the law resulted in the development of hostile attitudes over the centuries. They are mentioned in Matthew 15:2. “Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.” Here we see that one of these laws was that people must wash their hands before eating. Some of these laws were rather ridiculous. For instance, there was a law that a person could not carry a handkerchief in his pocket on the Sabbath day because that was bearing a burden; but if the handkerchief were pinned to his clothes, it now became part of his raiment and was not a burden.

Christ disobeyed these distorted and incorrect man-made laws, that were enmity; this is why the scribes and Pharisees accused Him a number of times of sinning. Jesus, of course, never sinned. He never broke any of the laws of God. These traditional laws of the elders are mentioned in Ephesians 2:15. “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” Notice how Jesus abolished these laws: in His flesh. Jesus abolished these laws “in his flesh” while He was yet alive on earth simply by ignoring them.

The belief that the Ten Commandment law has been abolished leads people to take liberties that they are actually not free to take, for what they are doing is calling evil good and putting lies for the truth. Isaiah 5:20,21,24 warns about this. “²⁰Woe unto them that call

evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! ²¹Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! ²⁴Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel." God knew that men would twist the meaning of the Scriptures and claim that His law was abolished. He, therefore, warned mankind against doing this. His warning is severe, for as we have seen in chapter five, the wicked must be destroyed when He cleanses the universe of sin.

Men claim not only that the law is no longer in effect, but also that the world did not have the law before God gave it from Mt. Sinai. Romans 4:15 says, "For where no law is, there is no transgression." In other words, if the law does not exist, it is impossible to break the law. But we know that Adam and Eve committed sin, the transgression of the law. The law, therefore, was known to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The story of Joseph in Egypt also shows that the world had the law some 430 years before God repeated it from Mt. Sinai. Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officers. Genesis 39:7-9 relates: "⁷And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. ⁸But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; ⁹There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" How did Joseph know that adultery is sin? He knew because of the Seventh Commandment, that says "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

The law, in fact, existed in heaven long before the earth was created. Ezekiel 28:16 shows that Satan sinned in heaven before he was cast out to the earth. "By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned." In order for Satan to have broken the law in heaven, the law must have existed at that time. God's law existed before He created the first intelligent being, for it is a transcript of His character and the foundation of His government.

Jesus, in Matthew 19:17-19, said to one who asked Him what he must do to be saved, "¹⁷If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." To be sure which law Jesus was talking about, he asked Him, "Which?" There can be no doubt that He was talking about the Ten Commandments, for Jesus quoted from the second table of the law. "¹⁸Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, ¹⁹Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Clearly, then, Christ expected people to obey His Ten Commandments in order to be saved. What do you suppose Christ's answer would be today if we were to ask Him what we must do to be saved?

Are we required to obey the law today? Is it still in effect today? Hebrews 4:9-11 affirms that it most definitely is in force today by showing that we are expected to keep holy the Sabbath day according to the Fourth Commandment. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." The word "rest" is translated from the Greek word *Sabbatismos*, that means "a keeping of the Sabbath." Hebrews 4:9 therefore would be more correctly translated, "There remaineth therefore a keeping of the Sabbath to the people of God." Hebrews 4:9 in the New International version says, "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God." That this verse is speaking of the seventh day is evident from

verses 10 and 11, that speak of God's resting from His works of creation on the seventh day Sabbath. ¹⁰For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. ¹¹Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Notice here that verse 11 tells us to enter into that rest, that Sabbatismos, that keeping of the Sabbath day. Verse 11 also indicates that those who will not obey will fall into unbelief. The seventh day is Saturday. Saturday is God's holy Sabbath day. Later we will see who changed the day to Sunday.

In symbolic prophecy a woman represents a church. A harlot symbolizes a false church, and a virtuous woman symbolizes Christ's true church. This can be shown by considering the last part of Isaiah 51:16: ". . . that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people." Zion, therefore, was God's true church at that time. Jeremiah 6:2 tells us, "I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman." God's true church of Old Testament times had one daughter, a beautiful and delicate woman. This woman, this daughter of Zion, that is mentioned numerous times in the New Testament, is Christ's true church today. Consider 2 Corinthians 11:2. Paul, speaking to the true church in Corinth, says, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Zion, God's true church of Old Testament times, had one daughter, the true church of the Christian era.

With this in mind consider Revelation 12:17, that describes Christ's true church at the end of time. Notice that God's true church, His true people, will be keeping all of His commandments. "And the dragon [Satan] was wroth [mad, angry] with the woman [the true church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and

have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” The remnant of her seed refers to the people of the true church in the final days. These are they which keep all of God’s Ten Commandments. Revelation 14:12 again mentions these people who keep all of God’s commandments. “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

We have seen that God expected His people to keep His law in heaven and, beginning with Adam and Eve, on earth. We have seen that during the final days of earth’s history, God’s true church will be faithfully keeping the Ten Commandments. How long, then, will God’s Ten Commandment law be in effect? Will it ever be repealed? Isaiah 66:22,23 tells us that the Sabbath commandment, the Fourth Commandment, will be in effect in God’s new earth, which He has not as yet created. “²²For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. ²³And it shall come to pass, that, from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.”

Many claim that they are not required to keep the law because they are living under the new covenant. Does the new covenant release people from the responsibility of obeying God’s law? As we have seen, God refers to His Ten Commandments as His covenant. If there was a requirement for a new covenant, something must have happened to terminate the old. A covenant is an agreement, a promise, a contract between two parties. A contract is terminated when either party violates his part of the agreement. What do you suppose happened in the case of God’s covenant with His people?

Jeremiah 31:31-33 explains why God required a new covenant. “³¹Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: ³²Not according to

the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord.” Who broke God’s covenant? The people. This is why it was necessary for God to make a new covenant with His people. And what is this new covenant? Verse 33 continues: “³³But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

God’s covenant, both old and new, is His law, His Ten Commandments. As we saw previously, God cannot terminate His law, for to do so would mean chaos, as this drama of earth is showing so clearly.

The term “Israel,” which means “ruling with God,” in these verses and in many other texts refers to God’s true people. This term is appropriate to describe God’s true people, for they will indeed rule with Him in the new earth, which will then be the throne of the universe. In the Old Testament, the Israelites were the chosen people of God, but in the New Testament, a different group of people is referred to as Israel. Galatians 3:28,29 says, “²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” The Israelites were the seed of Abraham, to whom God gave the promise of inheritance. Today, the true Christians are Israel and are Abraham’s seed and heirs to eternal life.

Because the Jews had continually betrayed their trust, the honor of being God’s chosen people was taken from them when Jewish probation expired in 34 AD. The period of Jewish probation is described in Daniel 9:24: “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and

to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity." This seventy-week period, which is 490 years of actual time (see chapter ten), is the period of time that God granted to the Israelites to finish their transgressions and to quit sinning. They never did quit sinning, however, and therefore they lost the honor of being God's chosen people.

Jesus indicated this in the parable found in Matthew 21:33-41,43. ³³"Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: ³⁴And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. ³⁵And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. ³⁷But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. ³⁸But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. ³⁹And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. ⁴⁰When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

The nation to which Jesus gave the kingdom of God after He took it from the Jews was His church, as is shown in Acts 15:13,14. ¹³"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: ¹⁴Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."

The stoning of Stephen in 34 AD marked the end of the 490-year period that terminated the role of the Jewish nation as Christ's chosen people. After a speech that summarized the history of the Israelites, Stephen said to the Jews, as described in Acts 7:51-60, "51Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. 54When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. 57Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 59And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

On other occasions Jesus indicated that the honor of being God's chosen people would be taken away from the Jews. In Matthew 23:31-38 He said, "31Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. 33Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? 34Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in

your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: ³⁵That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. ³⁶Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. ³⁷O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! ³⁸Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Today the Jews still remain desolate, devoid of the special honor of being the chosen people.

At the trial and crucifixion of Christ, the Jews condemned their children as well as themselves, as described in Matthew 27:25: "Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children." In Matthew 8:11,12 Jesus indicates that people from all over the world will be accepted into the true church, but the Jews will be cast out. ¹¹"And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Of course the Jews can come individually to Christ and receive salvation, but as a nation they are no longer the true people of God.

Today, the true church is witnessing to all people of the world who will listen, including the Jews. First Corinthians 14:21 says, ²¹"With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord."

Israel, as we have seen, means "ruling with God" and always refers to God's true people, both in the Old Testament and in the New. This is also shown in Galatians 3:7,8. ⁷"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. ⁸And

the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Israelites are the heirs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and if a person follows Christ the way the Bible specifies, he is an Israelite today and a member of Christ’s true church. Modern Biblical Israel consists of Christ’s true church and has nothing whatsoever to do with the modern nation of Israel in Palestine.

Galatians 3:28,29 also shows that we are all equal in God’s sight, for neither race, nor nationality, nor sex can elevate one individual above another in the sight of God. However, John 1:12,13 tells us that by receiving and obeying the Lord Jesus Christ and His law, we can become sons of God. “¹²But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

The fact that God required a new covenant because His people broke the old is also mentioned in Hebrews 8:7-10. “⁷For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. ⁸For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.” Here, again, we see that the people were at fault and did not obey the requirements of God’s first covenant. Verse 9 continues: “⁹Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. ¹⁰For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” Again we see from this New Testament text that God’s new covenant is

His law, written, not on tables of stone as was the first covenant, but on our minds and in our hearts. His law, you see, will always be with us. To ignore the Ten Commandments is to throw away your gift of a beautiful life throughout eternity in God's new earth.

Understanding God's covenants is easy. God's covenant with His people has always been his Ten Commandment law, and indeed will always be His Ten Commandment law. His first covenant was simply the Ten Commandments written on tables of stone, and His new covenant is His Ten Commandments written in our minds and in our hearts. Romans 8:3 tells us why the people could not keep the first covenant: "3For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Even though the people promised with all their hearts that they would keep God's law ("And all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do." Exodus 24:3), the power and deception of Satan were too much for them. They did not keep the law.

Christ came to earth exactly as any other human being, not reserving for Himself any advantage over others, and showed that the Ten Commandments could indeed be kept, even under the most trying circumstances. Thus He condemned sin in the flesh. If we follow Christ, relying on His grace and on His strength, we can reach the point where we will never again break God's law, as Romans 8:4 says. "4That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Many twist the meaning of this verse to try to show that they are no longer required to obey, but verse seven makes it very clear that those who do this are wrong. "7Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Anyone who claims that he is not subject to the law of God, there-

fore, has a carnal mind and will be unable to understand.

Those who twist the Scriptures so that they seem to indicate that the law of God is no longer applicable are in direct disobedience to God. Deuteronomy 4:2 says, “²Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.” In order to show from the New Testament that the Ten Commandments were neither abolished, nor nailed to the cross, nor in any way changed from the way God originally gave them, let us consider some of the verses of the New Testament where the commandments are quoted, beginning with Matthew 15:3,4: “³But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? ⁴For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.” Christ quoted the Fifth Commandment. If the law were abolished, why did Jesus chastise the scribes and Pharisees for not obeying this commandment?

Mark 7:7-10 also relates that Jesus quoted the Fifth Commandment, indicating that the law is still in effect. “⁷Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. ⁸For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. ⁹And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. ¹⁰For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death.”

When someone came to Jesus asking what he must do to be saved, Jesus stressed the importance of keeping the Ten Commandments. This story is found in Luke 18:18,20. “¹⁸And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus

answered and said, “²⁰Thou knowest the commandments. . . .” There can be no doubt about which law He was referring to, for Jesus quoted some of the Ten Commandments: “Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.” If the law were abolished, why did Jesus tell this man to obey the commandments? A few weeks later Jesus died on the cross. If the law were to be nailed to the cross, why would Jesus have told this ruler to keep the commandments? Why would He give him instructions that would be applicable only for a few weeks? It does not seem reasonable that the man should keep the commandments while Jesus was alive, and then after Christ’s death on the cross, be relieved of the responsibility of obeying the law, does it?

After Christ’s death and resurrection, Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:1-3 that to obey the Fifth Commandment is right. “¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. ²Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; ³That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” If the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross and are no longer in effect, why did Paul say that keeping the Fifth Commandment is right?

In Romans 13:8-10 we also read that the law is fully in effect after the cross. “⁸Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” Many people use this verse to try to show that the law has been abolished, claiming that all that is necessary is to love. However, they seem not to understand that love is obedience to the Ten Commandments, for if you love your neighbor, you will not commit adultery with his wife; you will not kill him; you will not steal from him; you will not lie to him; and you will not covet his possessions. Paul says exactly this in the next verse. “⁹For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there

be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ¹⁰Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Notice carefully that Paul says love is the keeping of the law. What law? The law from which Paul quoted in the previous verse — the Ten Commandments.

James 2:8-12 refers to the Ten Commandments as the royal law and the law of liberty. “⁸If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: ⁹But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. ¹¹For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. ¹²So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” James quoted the Sixth and Seventh Commandments, showing that the law he refers to is the Ten Commandments. God’s universal moral law is very much in force right now, today; and, as these verses indicate, we shall all be judged by this law.

Remember that Jesus magnified the law when he said that even the thought of sin was enough to convict one of breaking the law. Revelation 22:14,15, while indicating that the law is still in effect, magnifies the Ninth Commandment. “¹⁴Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. ¹⁵For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” Notice that not only those who lie will be excluded from the holy city of God, but also those who love the lies.

How about fictional stories in books, movies, and on television? Are these true? Staying away from everything that is not true may seem to be a harsh require-

ment, but when one realizes that Satan uses these fictional worlds of fantasy to make sin more alluring, he understands that God is simply giving us advice that will make it easier for us to overcome sin and keep His law. Consider, for instance, women who watch the adultery in soap operas as it is glorified day after day. Is it any wonder there is so much infidelity in marriage today? Virtually every novel, movie, and television play displays people continually breaking the law of God and nearly always in such a manner as to glorify these sins. In modern movies and television “good” people are ridiculed and made fun of; the “heroes” of today are often the bad guys.

The increase of violence in the world today is greatly encouraged by the violence in the movies and television programs. Violent computer games are training the youth today to become killers.

In addition, the unprecedented concentration of lying propaganda in the books, movies, television, and the news media of today constitutes a distinct hazard to our understanding the things of God and the situation on this planet. Television documentaries, that people tend to accept as fact, are often far from the truth. Satan deceives the entire world, and some of his most powerful weapons are novels, movies, and television. God knows exactly what he is talking about when He advises us to stay away from everything that is not true. He is only giving us the advice we must have to be able to resist temptation, overcome sin, and enter God's beautiful holy city. Proverbs 22:3 says, “³A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.”

First Corinthians 6:9,10 also refers to the Ten Commandments and indicates that they are still valid. “⁹Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰Nor thieves, nor cov-

etous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” Notice in verse 9 that God tells us to “be not deceived.” Satan will continually try to delude us in regard to the importance of obeying God’s law. He makes God’s law seem unimportant and breaking it of no consequence. But in Galatians 6:7 we are told: “⁷Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Finally, as we have seen, Hebrews 4:9-11 shows that the Fourth Commandment is still in effect. “⁹There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. ¹⁰For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. ¹¹Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” The word “rest,” remember, was translated from the Greek word *Sabbatismos*, and it means “a keeping of the Sabbath.” That this verse is speaking of Saturday, the Sabbath, the seventh day, is also evident from verse 10, that speaks of God’s resting from his works of creation on the seventh day.

The chart on page 212 gives all ten of the commandments as they appear in the New Testament.

Admittedly, in the minds of men, the law of God has been changed, but as we have seen, God certainly did not change it. Daniel 7:25, written probably in the year 552 BC, predicted that some man or power would arrive on the scene of history who would exalt himself even above God and would change God’s times and God’s laws. “²⁵And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws.” The Catholic Douay version of the Bible says, “He shall think himself able to change times and laws.” The New International version has for this verse: “He will ... try to change the set times and the laws.”

Indeed, he did try. In trying to change the times of God, this power tried to change the day that is to be

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1st

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (Matthew 4:10)

2nd

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. (1 John 5:21, Acts 17:29)

3rd

That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. (1 Timothy 6:1)

4th

There remaineth therefore a keeping of the sabbath to the people of God. (Hebrews 4:9, see text)

5th

Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. (Ephesians 6:2,3)

6th

Thou shalt not kill (Romans 13:9)

7th

Thou shalt not commit adultery. (Matthew 19:18)

8th

Thou shalt not steal. (Romans 13:9)

9th

Thou shalt not bear false witness (Romans 13:9)

10th

Thou shalt not covet. (Romans 7:7)

kept holy from the Sabbath day of the Fourth Commandment, the seventh day of the week which, is Saturday, to Sunday, the first day, a change that nearly the entire Christian world has accepted. This power is clearly identified in the pages of the Bible and will be discussed in following chapters.

One of the changes in the law that this power tried to effect was the complete deletion of the Second Commandment, that forbids the use of statues and idols in the worship service. Deuteronomy 4:14-19 says that God specifically kept Himself hidden from the view of the people so that they would not try to make an image of Him. ¹⁴“And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. ¹⁵Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: ¹⁶Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, ¹⁷The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, ¹⁸The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: ¹⁹And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.”

The fact that man changed the laws of God is also referred to in Isaiah 24:5. This verse, you will remember, explains that the reason the earth is in such a pitiful condition is because man changed God’s law. ⁵“The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.” If the law were nailed to the cross or otherwise canceled or annulled, why is this verse in the Bible? How could people

transgress the Ten Commandments if there are no Ten Commandments? We see here that the Ten Commandments will be in effect when Christ returns.

The law of God is firmly established throughout the universe, and the Bible makes it clear that the law of God will continue throughout all eternity. Those who ignore the law, regardless of the many excuses they put forth to justify their actions, do so at the peril of their own lives. In the fifth chapter, *The Grand Finale*, we saw that after the sin of this world is destroyed, no one will ever again break one of God's Ten Commandments. God will not save anyone who cannot come to the realization that there can never be an excuse for breaking His law.

The seriousness with which God views breaking the commandments by those who know better is shown in the following texts. These verses are severe, for God wants to impress on our minds that neither He nor anyone else in the universe will ever tolerate sin after this drama of earth is ended. We must understand that sin is detestable, repulsive, and loathsome to God and to the other beings who inhabit the universe and that we should feel the same way towards sin ourselves.

Hebrews 10:26: ²⁶“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” In other words, if one who understands that it is wrong to commit a sinful act continues to sin, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross will not cover those sins, and the sinner will be required to pay for those sins with his own life at the second death in the lake of fire. Because most people foolishly ignore the law today, others feel that the law is no longer important. Keeping God's commandments not only shows our love to God, but is also a matter of life or death.

Hebrews 6:4-6: ⁴“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, ⁵And

have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, ⁶If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” These verses say again that when those who know better commit sin they not only condemn themselves, but also put the Lord to shame, for it embarrasses the Lord when one known as a Christian commits a sin. It was the spirit of rebellion that caused the murder of Christ at the cross, and it is that same spirit of rebellion that is manifested today by people who disregard the Ten Commandments. Hebrews 6:6 says that these people are guilty of crucifying the Lord afresh.

The episode of King David’s sins of adultery and murder is recorded for us in the Bible to illustrate that God will forgive even a premeditated sin if the sinner is heartbroken with grief and sorrow because of his sin and so thoroughly repents that he never repeats the sin. David’s grief because of his sins and his fear that God’s Holy Spirit would be taken away is noted many times in the Bible. God spared David’s life in spite of these sins because he was thoroughly convicted and truly sorry. He never repeated these sins; and because of his extreme sorrow for having broken God’s laws, he will be saved and not have to suffer the second death. Likewise, if a person who commits a willful sin is as sorry for that sin as was David, the Lord will probably forgive and save him if he never commits the sin again.

In order to understand how abhorrent it is to God for a righteous person to return to his life of sin, consider Proverbs 26:11. ¹¹“As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.” Second Peter 2:22 says, ²²“But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

Notice in Numbers 15:22-29 that God provided a substitute to die in place of the sinner when a person sinned ignorantly. ²²“And if ye have erred, and not ob-

served all these commandments, which the Lord hath spoken unto Moses, ²³Even all that the Lord hath commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day that the Lord commanded Moses, and henceforward among your generations; ²⁴Then it shall be, if ought be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour unto the Lord, with his meat offering, and his drink offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a sin offering. ²⁵And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord, and their sin offering before the Lord, for their ignorance: ²⁶And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them; seeing all the people were in ignorance. ²⁷And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering. ²⁸And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. ²⁹Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.” Notice how the word “ignorance” is stressed in these verses.

Now consider that the person who sinned willfully in Numbers 15:30,31 would not be forgiven but would be cast out from among his people. ³⁰“But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. ³¹Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.” The sacrifices of the people, which represented the sacrifice of Christ on

the cross, were accepted if their sins were done either in ignorance or without premeditation. If, however, a person planned to break one of God's laws and then went ahead and did so, there was no sacrifice for that sin; the person had to bear his own punishment, which, of course, is death.

Many times when a person committed a sin fully knowing what he was doing, God did not wait until the second death to administer justice. Consider Numbers 15:32-36. ³²“And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. ³³And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. ³⁴And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. ³⁵And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. ³⁶And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses.” God would not then, and, indeed, will not now tolerate the breaking of His law. The penalty is still the same — death. The penalty is only deferred for a little while.

Consider also 2 Samuel 6:2-7. The people were moving the Ark of the Covenant, the beautiful gold-overlaid chest in which the two tables of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments, were stored. In this case the people were not moving the Ark according to the instructions God had given, for God had said not to touch the Ark. ²“And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubim. ³And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave [drove] the new cart. ⁴And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah,

accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. ⁵And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. ⁶And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. ⁷And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God." Why did God take the life of Uzzah? To make the people then and us today realize the utmost importance of obeying God. This episode shows that ALL of God's instructions without exception are to be obeyed.

Nadab and Abihu were wicked priests serving in the temple in the wilderness. Notice the events of Leviticus 10:1,2. "¹And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. ²And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." God had personally kindled the fire that was to be used for the tabernacle service. These two men knew better than to use other fire, and they paid the price for sin.

These verses seem extremely harsh to us today, but only because sin seems so acceptable. Because of the great mercy of God to the repentant sinner, many assume that they can do what they want to and God will continue to forgive them for breaking His laws; but that is not the case. We live in a world where virtually everyone sins continually, and it is very difficult for us to realize that this behavior cannot be tolerated. There are no words to describe adequately God's total abhorrence of sin. These verses which we have just been considering are in the Bible to help us to understand that sin is totally unacceptable to God and that there can never be an excuse for breaking God's laws. God has used these

extreme measures in order to make us understand that He means exactly what He says.

We saw earlier that everything God does is motivated by love. The verses we have just been considering seem to contradict that statement. First Corinthians 10:11 tells us, “¹¹Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [examples]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” God made examples of these people so that we in these last days might understand the seriousness of the situation here on the earth. God made examples of these men in order to teach us the importance of obedience. When He tells us to keep holy the Sabbath day, He means exactly that. He does not mean any other day, and He does not mean to keep it holy in any other way than is specified in the Fourth Commandment. Because of the deaths of these people, many have come to realize that the commandments and the Word of God are not open for debate. It, therefore, was an act of mercy on the part of God to take the lives of those who ignored His instructions and commands, for many people will be saved because of their examples.

Likewise God’s destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha for the homosexuality and other sins of the people was an act of love and mercy to people living after this event. These people were made examples for us in these last days. Jude 7 says: “⁷Even as Sodom and Gomorrha and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

Consider again the admonition against the sin of homosexuality in Leviticus 18:22: “²²Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.” Leviticus 20:13: “¹³If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.”

Incidentally, commands and instructions from God that are not covered directly in the Ten Commandments must also be obeyed, for if they are not, the person disobeying them is actually breaking the First Commandment to have no other gods before the Lord. When we disobey God, the reason for the disobedience becomes our god, as does anything we put before Him.

Jesus Himself in John 9:41 gives us an indication that premeditated sin will not be forgiven. ⁴¹“Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” If a person breaks one of the Ten Commandments in ignorance, he is not knowingly committing a sin. God will forgive his sin if when he knows better he stops breaking the law. This is shown in Acts 17:30. ³⁰“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”

Exodus 34:6,7 shows that God will in no way clear those who are guilty. ⁶“And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ⁷Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” These verses stress the virtually unlimited mercy of God to forgive a person's sins if he truly turns away from breaking the Ten Commandments, and they also stress that God will in no way save the willful sinner.

Even among those who have never formally been taught the requirements of God's law, many will be lost, for they have rejected the light and truth that they have been given. Every person who lives in the world has had some truth, for John 1:9 tells us that Christ “lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” To illustrate, most people know in their heart that it is wrong to commit murder or adultery, or to lie, or to steal. When

people do these things they know to be wrong, they also are guilty of willfully and knowingly breaking the Ten Commandments.

These verses, which show that God will not tolerate premeditated sin, are in the Bible to help us to understand the strict requirements of God's law. There is no way man can twist the meaning of what God commands so that he can do what he wants to do without paying for his folly with his life. No matter how many people claim that the law is no longer in effect, no matter how many people regularly break God's law, sin can never be justifiable.

The true Christians who preferred to lose their lives during the persecutions by the Roman Empire and during the Dark Ages by the papacy rather than break the law of God understood the supreme importance of obedience. They understood that even the threat of death is no excuse for sin, for the penalty for sin is the same regardless of the circumstances under which sin is committed. These true Christians understood that the death they would suffer at the hands of evil men would only be temporary and that they would inherit eternal life in heaven and in God's new earth for their strict obedience to the Ten Commandments. Satan is fighting for his life on this planet, and he deceives the entire world in an effort to prolong his life. He makes it seem as though sin is not very important, and he makes people believe that God in His great mercy will forgive their sins no matter how many times they habitually break His law. We must realize how detestable sin is and accept what the Bible says regardless of our feelings, regardless of what other people claim, and regardless of what other people do if we expect to be saved to enjoy the priceless life in God's eternity.

However, no matter how bad a person has been, if that person will turn away from his sins, he can be saved, as Ezekiel 18:21-28 shows. "21But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep

all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. ²²All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. ²³Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

“²⁴But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

“²⁵Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? ²⁶When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. ²⁷Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. ²⁸Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.” Remember that the term “Israel” refers to Christ’s true church and His true Christians today.

James 5:19,20 is a comforting text, that should be considered. “¹⁹Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; ²⁰Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” When the sinner repents of his sins, studies to gain the required understanding from the Bible, and then joins the Lord’s army of true Christians in the war against the evil and deception of this world by teaching others the truth, converting them from the error of their ways, then he saves lives; and God will cover a multi-

tude of sins, both his and the sins of those whose lives he has saved.

If a person has apparently understood God's requirements and has committed premeditated sin as David did, God is yet willing to save him if he is truly heartsick for his sin and will dedicate his life to obedience to the Ten Commandments and to helping others find and understand God's truth.

There is, however, one sin that God cannot forgive — the unpardonable sin. This sin is mentioned in Matthew 12:31,32. "³¹Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. ³²And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is the sin that God will not forgive. What is this sin? In order to answer this question, consider one of the functions of the Holy Ghost in our world. John 14:26 tells us that the Comforter is the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit. (The Greek word *pneuma* is sometimes translated "spirit" and other times "ghost"; the Holy Spirit and Holy Ghost are the same.) "²⁶But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

With the understanding that the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, consider John 16:7-13. "⁷Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. ⁸And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹Of sin, because they believe not on me; ¹⁰Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; ¹¹Of judgment, because

the prince of this world is judged. ¹²I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. ¹³Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

Notice here that it is the Holy Spirit that reproveth the world of sin; and it is the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth if we will allow Him to. How does the Holy Spirit reprove the world of sin? By means of our consciences. Suppose a man has been married for quite some time and has been faithful to his wife. Then he commits adultery with some young woman. Do you suppose his conscience will bother him? Of course it will. It may bother him to the point where he can barely stand it. Nevertheless, he again commits adultery with this girl; and again his conscience bothers him, but not quite so much this time as before. If he continues the practice, he will eventually reach the point where his conscience does not bother him at all.

What has happened here is that the Holy Spirit was reproveth him of his sin and trying to guide him into the truth that he should not be doing this. Finally, however, he had grieved away the Holy Spirit so that now he has no more conscience and no more guidance to repent. The man never repents and is therefore lost. God cannot save him. He has grieved away the Holy Spirit, as Ephesians 4:30 tells him not to do. ³⁰“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

Many claim that the Ten Commandments do not appear in the New Testament. We have seen that they, indeed, do appear in the New Testament. In addition, even the original tables of the law appear in the New Testament. Consider Hebrews 8:1,2,5: ¹“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; ²A minister of the

sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. ⁵Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.” We see here that there is a tabernacle in heaven, the true tabernacle, of which the one on earth was a model.

Exodus 25:21 tells us that God told Moses to put the two tables of the law in the Ark of the Covenant. ²¹“And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.” Next, Hebrews 9:3,4 says, ³“And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; ⁴Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.” Thus, we see, that the two tables of the covenant, the Ten Commandments, that God wrote with His own finger, were kept inside the Ark of the Covenant in the tabernacle.

Now consider Revelation 11:19, in which John describes a vision God gave him of the tabernacle in heaven. ¹⁹“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.” There it is, the Ark of the Covenant with the two tables of the Ten Commandments inside! The law of God, therefore, is preserved in heaven, far beyond the reach of man to change it.

Today many people follow the traditions of their churches instead of the law of God. In fact, one of the largest church organizations in the world today claims that not only the Bible is to be followed, but also the tradition of the church. Jesus had something to say about traditions in Matthew 15:3,8,9. ³“But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? ⁸This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth

me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. ⁹But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Christ says that it is in vain for a person to worship the Lord by following the traditions and commandments of men. There is only one way to serve the Lord, and that is by totally obeying His commandments, without exception.

Many, however, are not doing this. They go about doing good, helping the poor, and in general building a reputation for being born-again Christians. Some even at times miraculously heal the sick and cast out devils; but if they are not keeping the Ten Commandments, they are not going to be saved, as Matthew 7:21-23 shows. ²¹"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Notice who will enter into the kingdom of heaven. Those that do the will of the Father in heaven. There will be no commandment breakers in heaven or in the new earth.

How can some of these so-called Christians whom these verses say will be lost heal the sick and perform miracles? Since Satan is responsible for all disease, he knows what can be done to heal a person. The devil, therefore, heals the sick during religious ceremonies in order to deceive people into believing that these ceremonies have the blessing of God even though the people performing the healing do not keep all of His commandments. This is one of the means by which Satan deceives people into believing that it is not really necessary to obey God. Galatians 6:7, you will remember, tells us to ⁷"Be not deceived; God is not mocked."

When should a person start to obey God's commandments? Second Corinthians 6:2 tells us that the

time is now. “²Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” We never know how long our lives will last. For us to miss out on eternity would be tragic. Waiting until you have had time to indulge the pleasures of sin before you repent could be fatal.

Notice that each of us will have to stand before the great Creator God of the universe, Jesus Christ, to receive our rewards. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, “¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” Each will receive a reward for his works, whether they are good or bad. As we know, this reward is either the final death in the lake of fire or life in the new earth forever.

If a person loves the Lord, he will keep His commandments. “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” (1 John 5:3). “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Romans 13:10).

Now that we understand that the Ten Commandments are as much in effect today as when they were given by God from the top of Mt. Sinai in an awe-inspiring demonstration of divine power, let us review them once again.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. (Exodus 20:3)

Anything we put before God is condemned by the First Commandment. Neither wife, nor husband, nor children, nor material things, nor ambitions, nor appetite should be placed before God. When we disobey God, the reason for our disobedience becomes our god.

2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in

heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. (Exodus 20:4-6)

The Second Commandment condemns making statues of anything that God has made in heaven and in earth. God knew that because of the powerful but undetected Satanic influences in this world, many would be compelled to bow down to them. God, therefore, says not to make them in the first place.

3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. (Exodus 20:7)

This commandment is broken by nearly everyone. In cursing they irreverently use the name of the Lord, which is, of course, taking His name in vain. It is indeed strange that atheists do this also.

4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 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)

We are commanded to put aside our secular activities on God's Holy Day. This commandment is discussed in detail in chapter twelve.

5. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. (Exodus 20:12)

The requirement for children to obey their parents has not been changed in the least. However, the government schools today are changing the attitudes of the youth concerning this requirement, sometimes subtly, sometimes more brazenly. Notice that there is no time limit on this commandment. Children are to honor their parents all their lives and to take care of them when they are unable to care for themselves any longer. This requirement seems anachronous in our world today; nevertheless, it is just as binding as when it was first given, as are all ten of the commandments.

6. Thou shalt not kill. (Exodus 20:13)

This commandment should really be translated, "Thou shalt not murder." No individual is ever justified in taking another person's life regardless of the circumstances. We have seen that hate toward another person is an infraction of this commandment. This commandment, however, does not prohibit our killing the mosquitoes and other forms of life that cause trouble and carry disease. These life forms, you will remember, are the result of Satan's mutations of beneficial forms of life that God created.

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14)

Jesus magnified this law, as described in Matthew 5:27,28. He taught that whoever looks on a woman to

lust after her has committed adultery. This, of course, includes the women in the television shows, movies, magazines, and the pornography on the internet. Satan has cleverly designed the fashions of today so that they emphasize sex. The bikinis and tight-fitting clothes fashionable today are designed by the devil to encourage the lustful looks that break the Seventh Commandment.

Also, Jesus says that for a man to marry a woman who is divorced, unless she was divorced because her husband was unfaithful, commits adultery. "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." (Matthew 5:32).

8. Thou shalt not steal. (Exodus 20:15)

This commandment is very plain, but many do not seem to realize what constitutes stealing. If one works for a company that has a copying machine, for instance, and he wants to make a copy of a personal document, is it all right for him to do so? If it is all right for him to make just one copy, how about two, or three, or three thousand? Where do you draw the line? We must draw the line, you see, before even the first sheet of paper is stolen. Total honesty, without exception, is the only honesty acceptable to God.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. (Exodus 20:16)

Again, total honesty is the only honesty acceptable with God. Not even a little white lie is permissible, for any lie, no matter how insignificant or how tiny, constitutes breaking this Ninth Commandment. The way to keep from lying is to live in such a way that you have nothing to lie about.

We saw in Revelation 22:15 that anyone who loves lies is also breaking this commandment and will not be admitted to God's kingdom. Lies include fiction in all forms — stories, novels, jokes, movies, and television programs — that are cleverly designed by Satan to cause men to sin.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. (Exodus 20:17)

Your neighbor is any other human being. Suppose your neighbor has a new car, that you greatly admire. He gives you a ride in it and demonstrates it for you, and you have a great desire to have a car like that. You therefore go down and purchase one for yourself. Your desire for a car like your neighbor's was not coveting, for there was nothing unique about that car, and you could buy one for yourself. If, however, you did not have the money to buy a car like your neighbor's and you desperately wanted his car, you would be coveting and sinning according to the Tenth Commandment. If your neighbor had restored an antique car and you wanted that one, you would be coveting, since his car is unique. You could not go down and buy another for yourself. This example illustrates the difference between coveting and simply wanting. If a person wants anything in particular that is uniquely his neighbor's, that is coveting and a sin according to the Tenth Commandment.

God's requirements are unchangeable. If we expect to get out of this world alive, we must realize that the Ten Commandments are the rules by which we must live. In this world, we serve either God or the devil. Romans 6:16 says, “¹⁶Know ye not, that to whom ye

yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

Consider next some of the texts which illustrate the fact that we must obey what the Bible says regardless of how many people argue against it.

Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Those who are willfully breaking the Ten Commandments yet think they are getting their prayers through are fooling themselves. For God to hear our prayers, we must be obedient to His commandments. Satan, however, regularly answers the prayers of those who are breaking the law in order to deceive them into believing that though they are not obeying the Ten Commandments they are still in God's favor. Satan is an expert at providing all kinds of spiritual highs for counterfeit Christians.

Proverbs 12:15: "¹⁵The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." The wrong way seems right to a fool because of Satan's deceptions. Fools believe the lies of the devil instead of the Word of God.

Proverbs 16:25: "²⁵There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Finally we see in Ecclesiastes 12:13,14 that our foremost duty in this world is to reverence God and obey His commandments. "¹³Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Do not think that because everyone else disobeys God's Ten Commandments you are free to do so also. God's high standard of morality is the same today as it has always been. His law is as much in force today as when He spoke it from the top of Mount Sinai.

The only people who will be saved are the ones who can come to the realization that there can never be an excuse for breaking God's law. After this drama of earth is over, throughout eternity no one will ever again break one of the Ten Commandments, the law of God.

Chapter 9

GRACE AND WORKS

How, exactly, does God decide who is to be saved to enjoy the beautiful experiences in His new earth for all eternity and who is to die the second death in the lake of fire when He cleanses the universe of sin? There is considerable controversy in the world as to the relative importance of grace and works. Since one is saved by grace, many claim that works are not important. Others claim that works are important. Still others maintain that people were saved in Old Testament times by works and in New Testament times by grace. What is the relationship between grace and works?

Before we can discuss grace we must have the precise Bible definitions of the words “righteousness” and “justification.” The definition of “righteousness” is found in Psalms 119:172: “¹⁷²My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.” The Ten Commandments define righteousness. If a person is righteous then he is keeping all ten of the commandments.

Deuteronomy 6:25 tells us that righteousness is keeping the commandments. “²⁵And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us.”

And Isaiah 51:6 tells us that these Ten Commandments, this righteousness shall never be abolished. “⁶. . . my righteousness shall not be abolished.”

Every time the New Testament refers to righteousness it is referring to the Ten Commandments, the definition of righteousness. Every time the Old Testament refers to righteousness it is referring to the Ten Com-

mandments.

Paul mentions this righteousness of the law in Romans 8:4 “⁴That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Righteousness is keeping and obeying all ten of the commandments.

Every time the word “justified” is used in the Old Testament it is translated from the Hebrew word *tsadaq*, that means “made righteous.” Every time the word “justified” is used in the New Testament it is translated from the Greek word *dikaioo*, that means “be righteous.” When we are justified, we are righteous. If a person is justified he is righteous, and he is keeping all ten of the commandments. Justification is, of course, the opposite of condemnation.

There are several meanings of the word “grace” as it is used in the Bible. In many texts “grace” denotes unmerited forgiveness for sins. Ephesians 2:8,9 is one of these texts and tells us that the only way a person can be saved is by this grace of God. “⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.” No amount of good works can excuse us from the penalty of death for the sins we have committed. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23). Eternal life is a gift of God. He, by His grace, forgives us for our sins, and excuses us from the penalty of death when we choose to follow Him according to the Bible.

Another definition of “grace” is found in 2 Corinthians 12:9. Here we can see that grace is the power or the ability to keep the commandments. “⁹And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. It is grace that gives us the power or the ability to obey the Ten Commandments.

By ourselves, without God's grace, God's power to keep us from sinning, it is totally impossible for us to obey the law. Paul sums up the human condition pretty well in Romans 7:18,19 "18For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." It is totally impossible for us, by ourselves, to keep God's Ten Commandments and be righteous. We need God's help, God's grace, if we are going to be able to keep the Ten Commandments.

Because our perception of righteousness is dulled by our constant exposure to sin and the deceptions of Satan, even our best works are far inferior to the righteousness God desires of us. Isaiah 64:6 says: "6But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." There is, therefore, no possible way a person can be saved by his works. Only by grace are we saved.

Should we then continue in sin, continue to break the law of God so that His grace may abound? Will God freely supply us with abundant grace if we continue to disobey Him? Romans 6:1,2 says: "1What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

Since we are saved only by grace, are works important? Is salvation automatic when a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ? Acts 16:31 says: "31Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Should we infer that everyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved?

What does "believe" mean in this text? Is it sufficient to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ exists? Is it sufficient to believe that He came to earth and died for our sins? Is it sufficient to believe that through faith in

Him we shall be saved? Apparently there is more to it than that.

We saw in Matthew 7:21-23 that there will be many so-called believers who will not be saved. “²¹Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” The people described in these verses obviously believe. Why will they not be saved by grace?

These “believers” obviously think they are doing many good works, but, clearly, they are doing the works of the devil. Why are these people not aware that they are displeasing God? Because Satan has tremendous power to produce euphoria by giving people many religious feelings and experiences. Satan gives these people his spirit and makes them believe it is God’s Holy Spirit that they have. This euphoria is so intense that those who are thus deceived often feel that Bible verses that point out their errors cannot be correct. Satan also readily answers prayers, making people think their lives are well pleasing to the Lord when, in fact, their lives are an abomination to God.

How will the Lord determine whose sins should be forgiven and whose should not? How will the Lord determine on whom He should bestow His grace? In the controversy over grace and works Satan subtly implies that either one or the other is the way a person is saved, but the Bible clearly shows that grace and works have a very important relationship to each other.

There are many verses in the Bible that show the importance of works. In Revelation 22:12 Jesus says, “¹²Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Jesus

says in Revelation 2:23 that He “²³will give unto every one of you according to your works.” Romans 2:5,6 says: “⁵But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; ⁶Who will render to every man according to his deeds.” Matthew 16:27: “²⁷For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” Everyone will receive a reward at the return of Christ, a reward that is determined by his works. Works, therefore, are vitally important, according to these verses.

As we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, we will all have to face the things we have done in this life. Revelation 20:12 tells us that we shall all be judged by our works. “¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

We will all be judged by what we do. James 1:22-25 tells us to be doers of the work. “²²But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. ²³For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: ²⁴For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. ²⁵But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” Notice that whosoever does the work of the Lord, which, of course, includes obedience to the Ten Commandments, the law of liberty, shall be blessed.

Romans 2:13 specifically mentions the work of doing the law of God. “¹³For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Does this verse say that obeying the law makes a man just, thereby saving him? Of course not, for we

have seen that there is only one way a person can be saved, and that is by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. How will the doers of the law be justified? By their act of obeying the law? No, but they have shown by their good works and by their obedience to the law through the grace of God that they are worthy of salvation.

What kind of work is acceptable to the Lord? Revelation 22:14 says: “¹⁴Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Obeying the Ten Commandments is a work acceptable to God. Continuing in verse 15: “¹⁵For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” The word “commandments” in this text obviously means the Ten Commandments, for the first, second, sixth, seventh, and ninth are specifically referred to. Blessed are those who keep the commandments of God, for commandment-breakers will surely be lost.

One of the reasons there is so much controversy concerning the subjects of grace, works, and justification is that there are verses that apparently contradict as to whether a person is or is not justified by his works. The following verses make the statement that a person is not justified by his works:

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians 2:16).

For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. (Romans 4:2).

The following verses, that seem to contradict, tell us that we are justified by our works:

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. (James 2:21,24).

For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. (Romans 2:13).

We saw previously that every verse must agree with every other verse in the Bible, for there can be no contradictions. Therefore these verses that apparently contradict must be interpreted so that they agree.

Remember that justification is the opposite of condemnation. This can be shown in Matthew 12:37, where Jesus says, “³⁷For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

When we consider the verses which say that a man is justified by his works with the understanding that by “justification” is meant “not condemnation,” then these verses say that a person is not condemned by his good works. For example, when the words “not condemned” are substituted for “justified” in James 2:24 we have: “Ye see then how that by works a man is not condemned.” The thought in these verses which say that a person is justified by his works is that good works do not condemn a person.

When we consider the verses which say that a man is not justified by his works, we find that the emphasis is on the fact that he is condemned by his past sins and that his present good works cannot erase that past condemnation. As we have seen previously, the statement in Galatians 2:16 that says “by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” shows that present obedience to the law cannot save a man from condemnation for having broken the law previously. He was condemned before he did his good works and he was con-

demned after he did his good works because only by the grace of God can condemnation be removed.

The term “justified by works” has an additional connotation. It implies a general feeling of pride and self-confidence that a person is obeying the Ten Commandments and doing good works. It implies that a person can live a holy and just life apart from God. It implies self-justification and self-satisfaction. Thus the idea of salvation by works is a false doctrine.

Romans 3:20 tells us that the purpose of the law is to point out sin. “²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” We see here that the law can make no one just; it can only condemn.

Considering the emphasis that God puts on works, we should not take lightly our obligation to obey His law and to work to enlighten others to do so. Not heeding the warnings given in these many verses as to the vital importance of obedience and good works can lead only to grief and regret.

In the judgment, we will have to face the deeds of our lifetimes. Second Corinthians 5:10 tells us that we will be judged by our works. “¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” Those who have done good works will not be ashamed to witness their deeds, but those who have evil works to face will long to run away and hide both from themselves and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who have repented of their evil works will have their sins blotted out and will not have to face their wicked deeds, as Ezekiel 18:21,22 says. “²¹But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. ²²All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.”

Is our salvation a sure thing? Can we afford to sit back and relax with the assurance that all we have to do is believe? First Peter 1:17 says: “¹⁷And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.” Philippians 2:12 tells us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. “¹²Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” Why fear and trembling if all we have to do is believe? Because believing, you see, includes believing what the Lord has said and what He has told us to do. It means believing the complete message of the Bible, and it means believing and understanding the importance of the law of God. It means believing what the Bible says regardless of what ministers tell us it says. It means believing, as the Bible tells us, that we are all susceptible to being deceived by the devil. Most do not realize the nature or the power of their formidable enemy, the devil.

If salvation is a sure thing and automatic, why does 1 Corinthians 10:12 tell us to take heed, to be careful lest we fall? “¹²Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” Consider 1 Peter 4:18: “¹⁸And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” If salvation is sure and automatic as soon as a person believes, why does this verse indicate that the righteous are scarcely saved? The devil is certainly able to bring many temptations that cause many to fall. And many who do fall will not be able to recover from the fall into sin and will not be able again to obey the Lord.

You are saved by grace, but God judges you by your works to determine whether you are worthy of His grace or not; your works determine your worthiness for salvation. By your works you show the Lord whether or not you are safe to save, for God will not

take anyone to heaven who would ever break any of the Ten Commandments after he got there. God will never grant salvation to anyone who continually and willfully ignores His law. The only thing we can take to heaven from this earth is the character we developed while we were here, and that character must be one that will never commit another sin.

In order to show more clearly the relationship between grace and works, consider the following hypothetical case. Suppose a man lived a perfect life with the exception that long ago, when he was a child, he told a lie. Never again did he sin. He went about doing good, giving money to the poor, giving Bible lessons, and doing everything just perfectly. Does this man still need the Savior? Does he need the grace of God? Certainly he does, for the penalty for his one lie, the sin he committed long ago, is death. He needs the Savior as much as any hardened criminal does, for his lifetime of good works cannot save him. His lifetime of good works cannot erase the condemnation he received as a result of his one sin. We are all saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, but this grace in no way relieves us of the responsibility of obeying the Ten Commandments. If we continue to ignore the law of God, He must judge us unworthy of His grace, and we will have to pay the penalty of death for our sins ourselves.

How does faith fit into this picture of grace and works? Galatians 3:11 says: “¹¹The just shall live by faith.” Is faith the same as grace? Is it the same as belief? The classical definition of faith is found in Hebrews 11:1. “¹Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The margin reference gives “confidence” as a synonym for “substance.” Faith is having confidence that the things hoped for really do exist. Faith is having confidence that God is real and that someday soon He will return in all His power and glory to gather His true people from the earth. This text says also that faith is the evidence of the things

of God that we cannot see, but that certainly do exist. Faith, therefore, is more than belief; it is an understanding that the things of God do, indeed, exist. As we study and gain this understanding, we realize that the evidence of God is all around us: in the prophecies of the Bible so precisely fulfilled, in the precision of the vast universe of countless stars and galaxies, in the sustenance of all forms of life, most so complex they defy description. The just, the righteous, shall live by faith, which is this understanding, this confidence, this evidence of our relationship to God.

This same statement of faith appears in the Old Testament, showing that the righteous in ancient times were to live by faith also. "The just shall live by his faith." (Habakkuk 2:4).

When one gains this understanding of the things of God, he will want to do many good works for the Lord. James 2:21,22 tells us that faith is made perfect by works. "21Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" Verses 24,26: "24Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. 26For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Without good works, you see, we lose our faith. We lose our understanding and confidence in the things of God.

What kind of works is expected of us? We read earlier that good works include obeying the law of God. John 15:1,2,4,5 tells us that there is much more expected of us. Jesus says, "1I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 4Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth

forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” What is this fruit the Lord is talking about? What kind of fruit does an orange produce when its seeds are planted? The fruit of a true Christian is more true Christians. We, therefore, are not only required to abide by God’s law, but we are also required to learn, to gain understanding, and then to help others to find God’s truth. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

As one gains faith and an understanding of the seriousness of the drama being played out on this stage of earth, he begins to realize that his whole life should be dedicated to the work of God. Romans 12:1 says: “¹I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Present your bodies a living sacrifice; this is your reasonable service. This means to dedicate the remainder of your life to working for the Lord. This means to forsake selfish pleasures, to forsake having fun, in order to help save some from perishing in the lake of fire. First John 2:15-17 tells us to “¹⁵Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

When we think of the millions of people who will perish forever in the lake of fire because no one came to them with the truth, how can we spend our time trying to have fun? James 5:19,20 says: “¹⁹Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; ²⁰Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall

hide a multitude of sins.” When we consider the millions of people who need this truth, we see that there is much work to do. Or are we just concerned about our own salvation? Or are we not even concerned at all?

Notice in Matthew 12:36,37 that we will also be judged by our words. ³⁶“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. ³⁷For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” As we stand before the judgment to face our life’s record, we may want to disclaim our guilt. Remember that everything we do is done before the eyes of the vast audience of the universe and that angels are faithfully recording every detail of our lives on earth. Ecclesiastes 5:2,6 says: ²“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. ⁶Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands.”

The following texts indicate that we will be judged even by our thoughts. Psalms 94:11 says: ¹¹“The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.” Proverbs 15:26 says that ²⁶“The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.”

Here is more evidence that grace is divine assistance and power given to man for his attainment of a pure Christian character. God, in His unsurpassed love for us not only grants us unmerited forgiveness for our sins, but also gives us the ability to do the work that He requires of us. When the apostle Paul asked the Lord to heal him of a physical infirmity, God told him, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul again indicates that the grace of God enabled him to labor abundantly for the Lord. “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me

was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:10).

So, we are saved by grace, for it is the grace of God that gives us the power to do the good works that God requires. Grace gives us the power to overcome sin, to obey His Ten Commandments, so that we are worthy of salvation.

We are told in Ecclesiastes 12:13,14 that keeping God’s Ten Commandments is the whole duty of man. ¹³“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” This we must do in order to prove ourselves worthy to live among holy angels and other beings who have never broken God’s law. Salvation requires much more than just believing. It requires believing and obeying everything God has told us to do. Not our feelings, but the Bible, including all ten of the Commandments, is the gauge to use in measuring the acceptability of our works. Good works, not works that we think are good, but works that are good according to the Bible, are necessary to show God that we are worthy of His grace and salvation. Regardless of what pastors, ministers, or other people say, we must believe what the Bible tells us, for it is the only infallible authority. To do otherwise would be extreme folly.

Chapter 10

PROPHETIC SYMBOLS

The Bible in many places is written in code or symbols, especially the prophecies that foretell future events. The use of codes and symbols is one of the methods God has chosen to preserve the Bible, for if certain powers which have existed had been aware that the Bible was talking about them, they would have done their best to destroy every trace of the Word of God. They would have persecuted Christians with much more vigor than they did, and many millions more of God's true people would have died at the stake or suffered other agonizing torture and death. Only those who take the time and put forth the effort to learn these codes and symbols are blessed with a thorough understanding of the Bible.

That God would choose to give His Word to us in symbols is not really so strange; the secular world often uses symbols to convey information. For instance, suppose you picked up an evening newspaper in the United States and saw a political cartoon on the editorial page that depicted an elephant kicking a donkey. You would understand that the Republicans had defeated the Democrats in the recent election.

God tells us plainly and clearly in the Bible what each symbol means, and when we are familiar with His prophetic symbols, we will be able to understand prophecy just as clearly as if it had been written in plain text. God has not kept an understanding of the Bible from those who sincerely, with all their heart, want to know and understand.

The first item to consider in understanding God's symbols is the meaning of the word "day" in Bible prophecy. Numbers 14:34 tells us, "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years." Ezekiel 4:6 also mentions that a day represents one year. "I have appointed thee each day for a year."

Thus we see that when "day" is used in Bible prophecy, a year of actual time is meant. The prophetic year consists of twelve months of 30 days each, or 360 days, and represents 360 years of actual time. That the prophetic year contains 360 days can be shown quite clearly in the book of Revelation, since one particular period of time is mentioned in four different verses. Revelation 12:6 and Revelation 12:14 both speak of the same period of time, as is obvious from the context. Verse 6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." (A score is 20). Clearly, this time period is 1260 days, or 3 ½ years of 360 days each. Now notice verse 14: "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." Since this time period is 3 ½ years, the word "time" in verse 14 is therefore one year, "times" is two years, and "half a time" is one-half year. Revelation 11:2,3 shows that the prophetic month contains 30 days. "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." Here again we have this same period of 1260 days that is mentioned in verse 2 as 42 months. Forty-two months of 30 days each is exactly 1260 days,

or $3\frac{1}{2}$ 360-day years.

The prophetic year will be discussed further in the study of prophecies that directly relate to this 1260-day time period. (For those who think it strange for prophecy to use a 360-day year instead of the actual 365.25 days, consider that in calculating interest before the proliferation of computers many banks used a 360-day year consisting of twelve months each having thirty days.) When this 360-day prophetic year is used and when the prophetic day is taken as one year of actual time, we will see that the time prophecies of the Bible that have already been fulfilled have occurred precisely on schedule. You will remember from chapter one that before the event occurred Josiah Litch was able to pinpoint the day on which the Ottoman Empire would fall. He did so by applying this rule of prophetic prophecy that a day represents a year of actual time, and that the prophetic year, consisting of twelve months of thirty days each, contains 360 years of actual time.

Many beasts are described in the prophecies of the Bible. What do these represent? Daniel 7:17 tells us that "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." Verse 23 says, "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth." A beast, therefore, represents a king or a kingdom or a nation — some political entity.

The secular world also uses beasts symbolically to represent various nations. A bear, for instance, represents Russia; a lion represents England; and an eagle represents the United States.

Horns also represent kingdoms, as Daniel 7:24 indicates. "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise." God also uses horns to symbolize nations; in so doing He can show that one nation follows another in chronological sequence. For instance, a beast that grows several horns signifies a power followed by several other powers.

The symbol of heads is also used in various places in the Bible to represent kings and kingdoms. One of the best illustrations of this symbol will be discussed in the following chapter.

Jeremiah 25:32,33 shows that winds represent war and strife. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth."

While remembering the prophecy of Daniel 2, that the Medes and Persians would attack and subdue the city of Babylon, consider Jeremiah 51:1,11. "Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind. Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it." Thus we see that "wind" in Bible prophecy represents war and strife.

Water is used to represent people, the "sea" of humanity. Revelation 17:15 shows this clearly. "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

Some of the prophecies of the Bible describe a beast with wings. Wings indicate speed and swiftness in battle. This is shown in Habakkuk 1:6-8. These verses describe the Chaldeans (Babylonians), who are represented in prophecy as a winged lion. "For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle

that hasteth to eat." The fact that wings are used in Bible prophecy to indicate speed and swiftness in battle will become more apparent when we discuss some of the prophecies that use the symbol of winged animals.

The final and very important symbol of prophecy that we will consider is a woman. God uses a woman to represent a church. A pure, virtuous woman represents Christ's true church. A harlot represents one or more of the many counterfeit churches. Isaiah 51:16 says, "And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people." Zion, therefore, is a term applied to God's people, especially in Old Testament times. Notice in Jeremiah 6:2 that Zion had one daughter. "I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman." This daughter of Zion is Christ's true church today, which is represented by a beautiful and delicate woman to indicate a church of utmost purity. Christ's true church is referred to in 2 Corinthians 11:2 as a virgin. "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Revelation 12:17 describes this true church, that keeps all the commandments of God. In this instance the devil, Satan, is extremely angry at the true church. "And the dragon [Satan] was wroth [mad, angry] with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

On the other hand, Revelation 17:5 describes a harlot, who represents a false church and is the mother of numerous false churches. "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

Thus we see that a woman in Bible prophecy represents a church.

The following chart summarizes the basic keys to understanding Bible prophecy.

PROPHETIC SYMBOLS

SYMBOL	MEANING
Day	Year
Beasts, Horns, Heads	Kings, Kingdoms, Nations
Wind	War, Strife
Water	People
Wings	Speed
Pure woman, Virgin	Christ's true church
Harlot	False church

Chapter 11

THE MYSTERIOUS 666

The Bible mentions the number 666 in Revelation 13:18, and it specifically says that it is the number of a man. “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.”

There is much confusion and speculation today concerning this mysterious number. Many believe this to be the number of the antichrist. Still others believe that this number is somehow associated with the sinister mark of the beast. Who is the man who bears this number? Is he the antichrist? When will he appear? What are the devastating effects his presence is expected to have on the earth? Is he already in the world? Will this person choose to remain unknown, or will his presence be announced and his work done openly? Or, will he masquerade as some holy person that the whole world looks up to, thinking he is working for God instead of the devil? An essence of evil surrounds the term antichrist, and evil rarely works openly. Instead, evil usually wears a facade of righteousness to cover its real character in order more easily to deceive.

In order to answer all these questions, we will continue with the prophecy found in Daniel 7, which should be quite meaningful now that we have an understanding of the various prophetic symbols that are used. This prophecy adds considerable detail to the great outline prophecy of King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel, chapter two.

Daniel 7:1-8,15-21: “In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his

head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea." With our understanding of prophetic symbols, we can readily see that this text depicts war among the inhabitants of earth.

Continuing with verse 3: "³And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse [different] one from another." Here we see that as a result of the wars, four separate nations appeared on the stage of history, each one different from the others.

Continuing with verse 4: "⁴The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. ⁵And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. ⁶After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. ⁷After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse [different] from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. ⁸I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things."

With our knowledge of prophetic symbols, it is easy to see that as a result of military conquest, four powerful nations or empires arose successively on the stage of history. The first was represented by the lion, the king of beasts. The wings symbolized the rapid conquest of this power as it defeated one nation after an-

other to assemble its empire. The second is represented to be a cruel power at whose hands many lost their lives as it devoured many nations.

The third beast had four wings, indicating extreme swiftness, and four heads, representing the four leaders or kings who divided the empire among themselves and took power concurrently.

The fourth power is represented by a beast such as is not known on earth, signifying an extremely cruel and powerful empire. The ten horns, or nations, succeed this cruel power, and then the little horn with eyes and a mouth arrives on the scene.

Continuing with Daniel 7:15: “¹⁵I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. ¹⁶I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.”

As Daniel was witnessing this procession of history, he did not understand, and asked one of the angels standing by to explain the vision to him. The angel's explanation is found in verses 17 and 18: “¹⁷These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. ¹⁸But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.”

In order to put Daniel at ease, the angel reassured him that the saints, the true Christians, the true people of God, will finally rule the world with their Lord Jesus Christ. This assurance corroborates the prophecy represented by King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel, chapter two.

Continuing with verse 19: “¹⁹Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse [different] from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; ²⁰And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the

other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. ²¹I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.”

Here we have more information about the little horn, that had eyes and a mouth and grew to be more stout than the others. The power that is represented by the stout horn made war against three of the ten nations, represented by the ten horns, and completely defeated and uprooted them so that today there is no trace of these nations. We see also that the power represented by the stout horn made war against the saints, God's true people, and prevailed against them. This power put to death many millions of true Christians, as we shall see.

The angel continues in verse 23 to explain the vision to Daniel: “²³Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.”

Now we can identify these four empires. The angel told Daniel that this extremely cruel beast represented the fourth kingdom on earth. Daniel received this vision during the reign of Belshazzar, king of Babylon. Babylon, therefore, is represented by the first beast, the lion with wings. As we remember the sequence of empires represented by Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image with the head of gold, we see that Medo-Persia was the second kingdom, represented by the bear; Greece was the third, represented by the leopard.

It is interesting to note that the leopard with four wings [that symbolize speed] represents the Grecian Empire. Under the reign of Alexander the Great, this Grecian power marched its army over 25,000 miles during a two-year period as it conquered virtually the entire known world. Alexander's troops ranged as far as India and China. Thus, to indicate very great speed

of conquest, the symbol of four wings is used instead of just two wings as on the first beast, the lion. In the political intrigue that followed Alexander's death, his young son, heir to the throne, was murdered, and four of Alexander's generals divided the kingdom among themselves. The four heads on the leopard represent these four generals. Ptolemy took the southern section of the empire, consisting of Egypt, Palestine, and part of Syria; Cassander took Macedonia and Greece; Lysimachus received the northern part, consisting of Thrace and a large part of Asia Minor; and Seleucus received the eastern part of the empire.

The Roman Empire was the fourth kingdom, represented by the last beast with ten horns in this prophecy.

Continuing with Daniel 7:24: "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse [different] from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

The ten horns of this terrible beast represent the nations or kingdoms into which the Roman Empire disintegrated, seven of which are the ancestors of the modern nations of Europe. These ten nations were the Anglo-Saxons (English), the Franks (French), Suevi (Portuguese), Visigoths (Spanish), Burgundians (Swiss), Alemanni (Germans), Lombards (Italians), Ostrogoths, Heruli, and the Vandals in northern Africa.

After these ten nations were established, another power, represented by the stout horn that had eyes and a mouth, arose. This power subdued and completely uprooted three of the ten nations.

The verses just read give numerous clues to help us to identify the power represented by the stout horn. It is

important that we understand who this power is, and for this reason God has given us many identifying points. Let us now consider some of the points of identity of this power.

(1). Daniel 7:24 states that the stout horn power would arise after the Roman Empire and after the emergence of the other ten horns, or nations, following the disintegration of the empire.

(2). This power is different from the other ten kingdoms. Daniel 7:24 says, "He shall be diverse from the first." We have a clue in verse 25 as to just how this power differed from the other kingdoms. This power made an attempt to change the law of God and the times of God. The Catholic Douay translation of the Bible says that "he shall think himself able to change times and laws." This power has published the changed law and admits to changing a time of God, and nearly the entire Christian world follows the dictates of this power rather than the times and laws of God. Since this power thought itself able to change God's times and God's laws, it must be a religious power. The other ten powers were political. That is the difference mentioned in verse 24.

(3). This power went to war with three of the ten kingdoms and defeated them. Daniel 7:24 says, "He shall subdue three kings." The reason for this war was that the three defeated nations would not accept the religious doctrine of the stout horn; the other seven nations, under pressure, accepted its dictates. The three defeated nations were the Ostrogoths, Heruli, and the Vandals. Verse 8 says they were plucked up by the roots; there is no trace of these nations today. They have been completely uprooted, as this prophecy foretold.

(4). This power speaks blasphemous words against God. Daniel 7:25 says, "He shall speak great words against the most High." The first beast of Revelation 13 also represents this stout horn power, as we will see shortly. Revelation 13:5 says, "And there was given unto

him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.” What is blasphemy? We can find the definition of blasphemy in John 10:30-33: Jesus said, “³⁰I and my Father are one. ³¹Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. ³²Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? ³³The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” For a man to claim he is God is blasphemy.

Another definition of blasphemy is found in Mark 2:7: “⁷Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?” For a man to claim to be able to forgive sins is also blasphemy.

This power, therefore, must claim either that its leader is God or that it can forgive sins, or both. Did a religious power arise shortly after the breakup of the Roman Empire that makes either or both of these claims?

(5). The stout horn power kills the saints of God. Daniel 7:25 says, “²⁵And shall wear out the saints of the most High.” This power is a cruel, persecuting power that has put to death millions of Christians who wanted to worship God according to the Bible. This power made its own doctrine and required that people follow its laws. If a person worshiped God as specified in the Bible, he was in danger of severe persecution, such as being burned at the stake. During the Saint Bartholomew’s Massacre in August, 1572, an estimated 70,000 Christians were put to death in one night, and this power boasted about it in its various writings.

(6). This power attempted to change the times of God. Daniel 7:25 says, “And think to change times and laws.” In some of its publications this power admits to having changed the day of worship, and virtually the entire Christian world follows its dictates rather than the Bible.

(7). He would attempt to change the laws of God.

(Daniel 7:25). We shall shortly compare the Ten Commandments as found in the Bible with the Ten Commandments as published by the stout horn. The changes will be readily apparent.

(8). Finally, this power reigned supreme for 1260 years. Daniel 7:25 says, "And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." As was shown previously, the word "time" in this verse is a year, "times" is two years, and the "dividing of time" is one-half year. The 360-day prophetic year, you will remember, consists of twelve months of 30 days each. The three and one-half years mentioned in this verse, therefore, are this 1260-day time period. Since one day in Bible prophecy represents one year of actual time, we arrive at the 1260-year period for the stout horn power. Revelation 12:14 shows us that God's church had to go into hiding during these 1260 years in an attempt to avoid the severe persecution that this power inflicted on the true Christians. "¹⁴And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

A woman in Bible prophecy, you will remember, represents a church. The serpent is, of course, the devil. Since the woman is hiding from the face of the devil, the woman in this verse must represent God's true church. Revelation 12:6 repeats essentially the same thing but shows clearly that this time period is 1260 prophetic days, or years of actual time. "⁶And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." A score is twenty; threescore is sixty. This time period under consideration, therefore, is established to be 1260 years.

Additional points of identity are found in Revelation 13:1-10,18. As we consider these verses, it will become apparent that the first beast of Revelation 13

represents the same power as the stout horn of Daniel 7.

Revelation 13:1-10,18: ¹“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. ²And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. ³And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. ⁴And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? ⁵And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. ⁶And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. ⁷And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. ⁸And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. ⁹If any man have an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. ¹⁸Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six (666).”

(9). Notice here that this beast rises out of the sea. Revelation 13:1 says, “I . . . saw a beast rise up out of the sea.” Water, you will remember, is the symbol for many people, the sea of humanity. The ninth point of identity of this power, represented by the stout horn in

Daniel 7 and the first beast of Revelation 13, is that it arises in a populated area of the world. We saw that when the Roman Empire fell, it disintegrated into ten nations, represented by the ten horns of the terrible beast of Daniel 7. It was among these nations, the heavily populated area of Europe, that this power, the stout horn, arose.

(10). This power received a deadly wound. Revelation 13:3 says, "I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death." Exactly 1260 years after this power defeated the three nations represented by the three uprooted horns on the head of the terrible beast of Daniel 7, the stout horn power received its deadly wound, and the world believed that this was the end of this power.

(11). But, as Revelation 13:3 says, "His deadly wound was healed." This power recovered from its wound and regained much of its former strength.

(12). Virtually the whole Christian world follows the dictates of this power as Revelation 13:3,4 says. "All the world wondered after the beast. And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" Indeed, who is like the beast? He is completely different from all other powers, as this verse and Daniel 7:24 say. This power is known by practically everyone today, and it is a major factor in world events. According to prophecy, this power will very shortly exert much more control over the people of the world than at present.

(13). This power is a world-wide, well-known church, for Revelation 13:8 says that "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written" in the Lamb's Book of Life. People worship this power and obey its dictates rather than God's requirements as found in the Bible. This power effectively changed God's requirements in the minds of most, and the people of the world obey (worship) this power rather than God.

(14). The last point of identity of this power that we will consider is the number 666. Revelation 13:18 tells us that this is the number of a man. “¹⁸Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.” It was customary in Roman times to speak of a person’s number. This number was obtained by adding the values of the Roman numeral letters in a person’s name.

Can you identify this power from the preceding fourteen points of identity from the pages of the Bible? What great religious power arrived on the scene of history shortly after the fall of the Roman Empire? Which great religious power defeated the Vandals, Ostrogoths, and the Heruli? Which great religious organization wielded enormous power over “all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” during the Dark Ages? Indeed, which great religious power was about the only large religious organization that existed during the Dark Ages? Which great religious power persecuted and put to death many millions of Christians, God’s true people, during the Dark Ages? Which great religious power attempted to change God’s times and God’s laws? Which great religious power spoke great, blasphemous words against God? Which great religious power commits blasphemy when it claims to be able to forgive the sins of the people? Which great religious power does practically the entire world “wonder” after, and follow, and obey?

Please understand that these prophecies are speaking about an organization, and not about specific individuals within the organization. At the present time true Christians are to be found in all churches, but God has an urgent message for His people who find themselves within this organization. This vitally important message from God will be covered toward the end of this chapter and also in chapter sixteen.

Anyone who is moderately familiar with history

should easily be able to understand that the power symbolized by the stout horn with eyes and mouth in Daniel 7 and the first beast of Revelation 13 is the Roman Catholic Church.

Let us review again these fourteen points of identity and fill in the historical details that prove beyond any doubt that the power referred to is the papacy.

The chart on page 266 summarizes these points and gives the verses in which they are found.

(1). The ten nations that arose after the breakup of the Roman Empire were fairly well established when the papacy appeared on the stage of history, exactly as Daniel 7:24 foretold.

(2). Daniel 7:24 also foretold that the papacy would be different from the other nations. The papacy was a religious power, actually a union of church and state, whereas the other nations were political powers.

(3). Daniel 7:8,20,24 says that the papacy would subdue three of these nations. Because the Vandals, Heruli, and Ostrogoths had religious beliefs that were different from those of the papacy, considerable pressure was put on these nations to conform with papal doctrine. History shows that when they would not change their beliefs and accept papal doctrine, the papacy was instrumental in defeating them in battle, uprooting them so that there is no trace of these three nations in the world today.

(4). Has the papacy spoken great words of blasphemy against God, as Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 13:6 predict? Blasphemy, you will remember from John 10:30-33 and Mark 2:7, is committed when a man claims to be God and also when a man claims to be able to forgive sins. Consider some quotations from Catholic literature:

We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty. — Pope Leo XIII, in an encyclical letter dated June 20, 1894, *The Great Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII*, p. 304. New York: Benziger Brothers.

POINTS OF IDENTITY OF THE PAPACY FROM THE BIBLE

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Arises after the other 10 nations | Dan 7:24 |
| 2. Differs from the first 10 nations | Dan 7:24
Rev 13:4 |
| 3. Subdues three kings | Dan 7:8,20,24 |
| 4. Speaks great words and blasphemy against God | Dan 7:25,
Rev 13:6 |
| 5. Wears out the saints of God | Dan 7:25,
Rev 13:7 |
| 6. Changes the times of God | Dan 7:25 |
| 7. Changes the laws of God | Dan 7:25 |
| 8. Reigns supreme for 1260 years | Dan 7:25,
Rev 13:5 |
| 9. Rises out of a populous area | Rev 13:1 |
| 10. Receives a deadly wound | Rev 13:3 |
| 11. Is healed of deadly wound | Rev 13:3 |
| 12. Is followed after by the whole world | Rev 13:3 |
| 13. Is world-wide, well-known church | Rev 13:8 |
| 14. Has 666 for his number | Rev 13:18 |

All names which in the Scriptures are applied to Christ, by virtue of which it is established that he is over the church, all the same names are applied to the Pope. — *On the Authority of Councils*, Bellarmine (R. C.), book 2, chap. 17 (Vol. II, p. 266), ed. 1619.

Let us consider some of the names applied to Christ in the Scriptures and see if they could possibly apply to the pope: Almighty God, Creator, Savior, Christ, Lord, King of kings, Most Holy, and Reverend. What could be more blasphemous than for a man to claim any of these titles? “And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God. . . .” (Revelation 13:6).

The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the Vicar of God. . . . The Pope is of such lofty and supreme dignity that, properly speaking, he has not been established in any rank of dignity, but rather has been placed upon the very summit of all ranks of dignities. . . . The Pope is called most holy because he is rightfully presumed to be such. . . . The Pope alone is deservedly called by the name “most holy,” because he alone is the vicar of Christ, who is the fountain and source and fullness of all holiness. . . . He is likewise the divine monarch and supreme emperor, and king of kings. . . . Hence the Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions. . . . Moreover the superiority and the power of the Roman Pontiff by no means pertain only to heavenly things, to earthly things, and to things under the earth, but are even over angels, than whom he is greater. . . . So that if it were possible that the angels might err in the faith, or might think contrary to the faith, they could be judged and excommunicated by the Pope. . . . For he is of so great dignity and power that he forms one and the same tribunal with Christ. . . . The

Pope is as it were God on earth, sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief king of kings. . . . The Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws. — Translated from Lucius Ferraris, *Prompta Bibliotheca*, art. “Papa,” (Pope) II, Vol VI, pp. 26-29.

What could possibly be more blasphemous than that last quote?

Bishops and priests being, as they are, God's interpreters and ambassadors, empowered in His name to teach mankind the divine law and the rules of conduct, and holding, as they do, His place on earth, it is evident that no nobler function than theirs can be imagined. Justly, therefore, are they called not only Angels, but even gods, because of the fact that they exercise in our midst the power and prerogatives of the immortal God.

In all ages, priests have been held in the highest honor; yet the priests of the New Testament far exceed all others. For the power of consecrating and offering the body and blood of our Lord and of forgiving sins, which has been conferred on them, not only has nothing equal or like to it on earth but even surpasses human reason and understanding. --- *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests*, trans. by John A. McHugh and Charles J. Callan (1958), p. 318. New York: Wagner, 1934.

Just as the Bible predicted nearly two thousand years ago, the papacy “opened his mouth in blasphemy against God.” (Revelation 13:6).

(5). Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 13:7 foretold that this power would put Christians to death. Has the papacy done this? Indeed it has. The number of persons whom the papacy put to death during the Dark Ages because they wanted to worship God according to the

Bible and because they would not obey the papal dictates is not known exactly, but some estimates run as high as two hundred million.

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 history. — W. E. H. Lecky, *History of the Rise and influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, (reprint: New York: Braziller, 1955), Vol. 2, pp. 40-45.

Consider a few more quotations from Catholic literature:

We have always defended the persecution of the Huguenots, and the Spanish inquisition. — *The Western Watchman*, December 24, 1908.

The absurd and erroneous doctrines or ravings in defense of liberty of conscience are a most pestilential error — a pest, of all others, most to be dreaded in a state. — Pope Pius IX, Encyclical letter, August 15, 1854.

Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to our said lord (the Pope), or his aforesaid successors, I will to my utmost persecute and oppose. — The Oath of Allegiance to the Pope, Josiah Strong, *Our Country*, Ch. 5, pars. 2-4.

When she [the Catholic Church] thinks it good to use physical force, she will use it. — *The Western Watchman*, December 24, 1908.

In order to show the horror of the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, the following is quoted from *The Great Controversy*, by E. G. White, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California, 1950, pages 272,273.

But blackest in the black catalogue of crime, most horrible among the fiendish deeds of all the dreadful centuries, was the St. Bartholomew Massacre. The world still recalls with shuddering horror the scenes of that most cowardly and cruel onslaught. The king of France, urged on by Romish priests and prelates, lent his sanction to the dreadful work. A bell, tolling at dead of night, was a signal for the slaughter. Protestants by thousands, sleeping quietly in their homes, trusting to the pledged honor of their king, were dragged forth without a warning and murdered in cold blood.

As Christ was the invisible leader of His people from Egyptian bondage, so was Satan the unseen leader of his subjects in this horrible work of multiplying martyrs. For seven days the massacre was continued in Paris, the first three with inconceivable fury. And it was not confined to the city itself, but by special order of the king was extended to all the provinces and towns where Protestants were found. Neither age nor sex was re(s)pected. Neither the innocent babe nor the man of gray hairs was spared. Noble and peasant, old and young, mother and child, were cut down together. Throughout France the butchery continued for two months. Seventy thousand of the very flower of the nation perished.

“When the news of the massacre reached Rome, the exultation among the clergy knew no bounds. The cardinal of Lorraine rewarded the messenger with a thousand crowns; the cannon of St. Angelo thundered forth a joyous salute; and bells rang out from every steeple; bonfires turned night into day; and Gregory XIII, attended by the cardinals and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, went in long procession to the church of St. Louis, where the cardinal of Lorraine chanted a *Te Deum*. . . . A medal was struck to commemorate the massacre, and in the Vatican may still be seen three frescoes of Vasari, describing the attack upon the admiral, the king in council plotting the

massacre, and the massacre itself. Gregory sent Charles the Golden Rose; and four months after the massacre, . . . he listened complacently to the sermon of a French priest, . . . who spoke of that day so full of happiness and joy, when the most holy father received the news, and went in solemn state to render thanks to God and St. Louis.' " — Henry White, *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew*, Ch. 14, par. 34.

We can easily see that the papacy had no hesitation in putting people to death for not obeying its dictates. Indeed, the day is coming when it will again use force over the consciences of men.

(6). How did the papacy change the times of God, as predicted in Daniel 7:25? By its own admission it is the one who changed the day to be kept holy from Saturday, God's Sabbath day of the Fourth Commandment, to Sunday, the old pagan day of worship on which people paid allegiance to the sun god. Consider again some quotations from Catholic sources:

The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. — *Catholic Mirror*, official organ of Cardinal Gibbons, Sept. 23, 1893.

Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act. And the act is a **MARK** of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters. — C. F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons.

The observance of Sunday by the protestants is an homage they pay in spite of themselves to the authority of the [Catholic] Church. — Mgr. Louis Segur, *Plain Talk About the Protestantism of Today*, Boston: Patrick Donahoe, 1868, page 225.

If the Bible is the only guide for the Christian, then the Seventh-day Adventist is right in observing the Saturday with the Jew. . . . Is it not strange that those who make the Bible their only teacher, should inconsistently follow in this matter the tradition of the [Catholic] Church? — Bertrand L. Conway, *The Question Box Answers*, The Columbus Press, 1910, pp. 254,255.

Question: How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days?

Answer: By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which protestants allow of, and therefore they fondly contradict themselves by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church.

Question: How prove you that?

Answer: Because by keeping Sunday they acknowledge the church's power to ordain feasts and to command them under sin. — Henry Tuberville, *An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine*, New York: Edward Dunigan and Brothers, 1833, p. 58.

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*, 3rd. American edition, revised; New York: T. W. Strong, 1876, page 174.

(7). Did the Catholic Church change God's laws as Daniel 7:25 predicted? The chart on page 274 compares

the Ten Commandments as found in Exodus 20:2-17 with the Ten Commandments as commonly published in Catholic catechisms.

The Catholic Church completely deleted the Second Commandment, that prohibits the making and worshipping of statues. They also changed the Bible's Fourth Commandment, which is now their third, by removing all the instruction that tells us how to keep the Sabbath Day holy. They removed the statement that says that the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. In order to have ten, they divided the Bible Tenth Commandment and made part of it their ninth.

Thus, we see that the Catholic Church has, indeed, changed the law of God just as Bible prophecy said it would nearly one thousand years before it happened.

(8). The papacy reached undisputed power in 538 AD by defeating the Ostrogoths, the last of the three nations represented by the three uprooted horns, and then, as Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 13:5 indicate, reigned supreme for 1260 years before it received its deadly wound.

(9). The papacy appeared in the populous area of Europe exactly as the Bible predicted in Daniel 7:24 by the stout horn arising among the other ten horns and in Revelation 13:1 by the beast rising out of the sea.

(10). At the expiration of the 1260-year period in 1798, the Catholic Church received its deadly wound, as Revelation 13:3 predicted. General Berthier, one of Napoleon's generals, was sent to Rome in that year to take the pope prisoner. The pope died in exile in France the following year, and the French would not permit the election of another pope. People proclaimed, "The papacy is dead," as once again Bible prophecy was perfectly fulfilled, precisely 1260 years after the papacy defeated the three nations who would not fall into line with its doctrine.

It is interesting that one year earlier, the order was given to take the pope captive, but the officers who

COMPARISON OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS
as found in the Bible with the Ten Commandments
as changed by the papacy

THE TEN
COMMANDMENTS
As originally given by God

1st
Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

2nd
Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or 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: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

3rd
Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

4th
Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 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.

5th
Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

6th
Thou shalt not kill.

7th
Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8th
Thou shalt not steal.

9th
Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

10th
Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

THE TEN
COMMANDMENTS
As commonly found in
Roman Catholic Catechisms

1st
I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.

2nd
Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

3rd
Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

4th
Honour thy father and thy mother.

5th
Thou shalt not kill.

6th
Thou shalt not commit adultery.

7th
Thou shalt not steal.

8th
Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

9th
Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.

10th
Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.

were sent for this task felt sorry for the pope and left him in Rome. God's time for taking the pope prisoner was 1798, not a year earlier in 1797.

(11). Obviously the deadly wound was healed exactly as Bible prophecy foretold in Revelation 13:3, for the papacy is very well respected throughout the entire world today. The deadly wound was healed on February 11, 1929, when Cardinal Gaspari and Mussolini, the leader of Italy during the Second World War, signed a concordat that made the pope a king again. Today he is the sovereign ruler of Vatican City, a separate country that is not a part of Italy or the city of Rome. This papal country masquerades as a church, and because of this it has been able easily to infiltrate practically every political entity in the world. What an intelligence gathering system this papal country has with its subjects telling priests everything they want to know in confessionals! The papacy is a deadly enemy of the United States, as we shall see in chapter 13. The papacy, through her facade of religion, has been able to thoroughly infiltrate the United States government. As a result, the United States will soon lose her constitution and become a tyrannical, persecuting power according to Bible prophecy.

(12). Revelation 13:3 says, "All the world wondered after the beast." Many nations of the world send ambassadors to the Vatican, a separate country in the city of Rome, just as they do to any other nation. When the pope travels to other countries he is given a tumultuous welcome, and millions upon millions flock to see him. The whole world does indeed follow after the beast.

(13). The Bible predicted in Revelation 13:8 that the papacy would be a world-wide, well-known church. This prophecy has indeed come true. But Revelation 13:8 also says that the whole world would worship the papacy with the exception of those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Worship entails obedience. When the people of the world obey the dictates and

laws of the papacy, they are worshipping the papacy. Satan, through his agency the Catholic Church, has deceived virtually the entire world into observing a pagan holy day, that the papacy by its own admission has set up instead of God's holy Sabbath day of the Fourth Commandment.

Christ says, "If ye love me, keep MY commandments." (John 14:15).

Also: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9).

And finally: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16).

(14). Revelation 13:18 says that his number is 666. What is the pope's title? Let us again consult Catholic literature.

The title of the Pope of Rome is Vicarius Filii Dei. — Our Sunday Visitor, Nov. 15, 1914, p. 3.

The letters inscribed in the pope's mitre are these: Vicarius Filii Dei, which is Latin for Vicar of the Son of God. — Our Sunday Visitor, April 18, 1915, page 3.

Thus, the official title of the pope is Vicarius Filii Dei, Vicar of the Son of God. (A vicar is a substitute in office.) A person's number was obtained by adding the numerical values of the letters in his name, that is, the values of the letters in the Roman numeral numbering system. If the letter had no value, the value of zero was assigned. For example, the value of I is one; the value of V is five; and the value of X is ten. There was no "U" in the Latin alphabet; the letter "V" is the correct letter. (This is the reason why sometimes inscriptions on older public buildings use a "V" instead of "U" —

for instance, PVBLIC LIBRARY.) The values of the letters of this name, Vicarius Filii Dei, add up to 666, exactly as predicted in Revelation 13:18!

No other power that has ever existed has precisely fulfilled every one of these fourteen points of identity

as does the papacy. No other power has ever existed that even comes close to fulfilling these fourteen points of identity from the pages of the Bible. There have been many attempts made to throw the onus of this prophecy away

V =	5		
I =	1		
C =	100		
A =	0	F =	0
R =	0	I =	1
I =	1	L =	50
V =	5	I =	1
S =	0	I =	1
	<u>112</u>		<u>53</u>
			<u>501</u>
	Vicarius		112
	Filii		53
	Dei		<u>501</u>
			666

from the pope and the Catholic Church, such as fitting the nations of empire into a different sequence than history shows. Many ingenious schemes have been devised to show that this number, 666, applies to other men, but these schemes are an obvious attempt to sidestep prophecy.

Consider the final verses of our prophecy in Daniel 7. Speaking of the stout horn with eyes and mouth in verses 26 and 27: “²⁶But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. ²⁷And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” We see here that the Catholic Church is to be consumed and destroyed and that dominion will be given to the true

Christians, including those who lost their lives at the hands of this ruthless power.

Here again is shown that all earthly powers will be destroyed and that Christ and His kingdom will reign forever.

The title "vicar" means a substitute in office. Who is Christ's substitute in office here on earth? Is it the pope, as they claim? Consider John 16:7, where Jesus says, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." The Comforter, therefore, is the Vicar of the Son of God. John 14:26 tells us who the Comforter is: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

The Comforter is the Holy Ghost. He is the Vicar of the Son of God. He, not the pope of Rome, is Christ's substitute in office. For a man to claim this position is blasphemy.

There are other verses in the Bible that describe the papal power. Because the early Christians in Thessalonica thought that Christ's return was imminent, they were told in 2 Thessalonians 2:3,4 that the return of Christ was yet far away, that the people would corrupt the pure Christian doctrine and fall away from the truth, and that the pope would appear before the return of the Lord. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

Many who do not understand that these verses refer to the pope believe that the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem before this sinister person appears and that

the Lord's return is therefore far in the future. We have seen by the prophecies that we have studied thus far that this is not the case. The climax of this earth's history is very near.

Continuing with 2 Thessalonians 2:7-11, the faithful were told that evil had already started its sinister work at that time. "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [hinders] will let [hinder], until he be taken out of the way." The verb "to let" is an old English verb that means "to hinder." It was pagan Rome that was hindering or preventing the arrival of papal Rome. Continuing with verse 8: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

Notice here that in order for a person to understand the truth, he must love the truth. He must, in fact, love and search for truth with all his heart; otherwise he will receive strong delusion so that he will believe lies.

The strong delusion that God sends to those who do not love and search for the truth with all their heart is the propaganda of the devil and his angels. If a person does not love the truth above all else, God does not shield him from the deception of the devil.

The vast majority have fallen away from the truth, and nearly everyone believes the lies so prevalent in our world today. This is especially true in the churches of today and is commented on in 2 Timothy 4:3,4: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned

unto fables.”

In other words, people who do not love the truth — those who have itching ears — will find teachers who will tell them what they want to hear instead of Bible truth. They will go to church and listen to comfortable sermons. During the week they can have fun and do as they wish. The people have itching ears; the false teachers turn them to fables — lies.

In the end, however, this papal power will be destroyed, as Daniel 7:11 prophesies. “I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.” The burning flame, of course, refers to the destruction of all the wicked by fire just before God creates the new earth. God will not save anyone who continues to ignore His Ten Commandments.

The Catholic Church is generally thought of as the Mother Church. It makes this claim itself:

“I acknowledge the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church for the mother and mistress of all churches.” — Art. 10, Creed of Pope Pius IV. Double Bull of Pope Pius IV, Nov. 13 and Dec. 9, 1564, trans. in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, New York: Harper, 1919, Vol. 1, p. 99.

With this in mind, and with the knowledge that an immoral woman in Bible prophecy is the symbol of a false church, consider Revelation 17:1-6: “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.”

You will remember that water represents humanity. “Many waters” in this verse, therefore, refers to many nations upon which this prostitute sits. In other words this false church is world-wide, having its orga-

nization in many nations. Continuing with verse 2: “With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

Fornication in this verse is referring to spiritual adultery, the defiling of the pure doctrine of the Bible with pagan practices and beliefs. Here we see that the nations of the earth have willingly accepted this harlot’s doctrine. Fornication also refers to the illicit union of the church and the state (nation) in which the church uses the police power of the state to enforce its doctrine.

Continuing with verse 3: “So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.”

The cup filled with abominations and filthiness of her fornication and the wine mentioned in verse 2 represent the false, pagan doctrine that this church teaches. Verse 2 indicates that the entire world is drunk on this wine of Babylon. Practically the entire world has believed the lies and deceptions that the false churches have put forth as Bible truth. The world is so intoxicated on this “wine of Babylon” that people will hardly even listen to the truth. No wonder God warns us in 1 Peter 5:8 to be sober and not drunk on this wine of Babylon. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

Don’t misunderstand here. The Catholic Church is *NOT* a Christian religion. It is a strange combination of all the old pagan religions with a Christian facade. Just because they claim to be a Christian church does not make it so.

Continuing with Revelation 17:5, “And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” Notice that Babylon is a name that the Bible gives to the harlot that represents this mother church. The word “Babylon” means “confusion,” What better term to describe the religious situation in the world today? This harlot, Babylon, is the mother of harlots; she has spawned many other churches that teach much of the same doctrine that this mother church teaches.

Notice that the design on the Vatican 100-Lira coin displays a woman holding a cup in her hand with the symbol of the sun god in the cup. This is a rather graphic fulfillment of the prophecy in Revelation 17:4. It strongly implies that they know they are the great harlot of Revelation 17.

Remembering that the papacy slaughtered millions of God’s true Christians, continue with verse 6: “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”

How many denominations are there of Christ’s true church, the one that He Himself established? Ephesians 4:4-6 tells us that there is one — and only



one — true church. “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

The 500 or so church denominations we find in the world today are not of God, and they do not serve God. What better way for the devil to keep people out of Christ's church than to have some 500 denominations, each claiming to be the true church? It is easy to see why those searching for the truth would give up in despair. Satan is clever enough to make sure that when a person gets into one of his counterfeit churches, that person feels as if he were in God's church. Satan provides all kinds of spiritual "highs" to make people believe that their experiences are from God. How thoroughly Satan has deceived the people of the world! How complete is their deception at the hands of this master liar and his ministers!

This is not to say, however, that people in these many false churches will not be saved if with all their heart they are following the Lord to the best of their knowledge. John 10:14-16,26-28 tells us that Christ has many of His true people scattered throughout all denominations. "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Jesus tells us here that His sheep hear His voice and know Him. When they hear the truth, they will abandon the false churches and join Christ's true church so that they can more readily follow the Lord as the Bible requires. Those who are not of the Lord's flock will not respond to the truth, to the Shepherd's call, and will remain in the false churches, refusing to abide by the truth. They will continue to ignore the law of God. They will continue to

believe a lie.

The vitally important message from God to His true Christians in all the false churches is found in Revelation 18:1-5. Christ tells His true people in all the denominations to come out of them, to have nothing more to do with them. "After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, 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." God says, "Come out of her my people,"

Again in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 God strongly pleads with His true people to come out of Babylon, to come out of the papacy and all the daughter Sunday-keeping churches and be separate. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

In these final days of earth's history, the devil and the Catholic Church have even managed to infiltrate the church organization that was God's true church. Satan has been able to place his people as leaders in this organization and, to a large extent, ministers in the pulpits, so that now no church denomination is following God as the Bible specifies.

God's true people are now starting to meet in small groups in people's houses, just as they did shortly after Christ was crucified. Romans 16:5 mentions one of these church groups meeting in a house. "Likewise greet the church that is in their house." Please understand that the people constitute God's true church and not any organization or building. When Christ was on earth the denomination at that time was the Jewish organization, and the Jewish people were God's true church, but after they crucified Christ the true church consisted of true Christians and not the Jewish organization.

Some of the small groups of true Christians today, who keep all the commandments of God, publish magazines and books, and put out audio and video tapes that contain the accurate truth of the Bible, and some even have radio and television programs that proclaim the truth. Some have even started small independent church congregations and meet in a separate church building. It is the responsibility of each of us to study the Bible continually so that we will understand enough to be able to locate a group of people who are God's true church. We will see that just before the end, the entire world will be arrayed against the small groups of people that make up God's true church in an attempt to put them to death!

The papacy, devised by the devil, is designed to meet the wants of all people. "It is prepared for two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world — those who would be saved by their merits, and those who would be saved in their sins. Here is the secret of

its power.” — E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 572, 1911, Pacific Press Publishing Assn.

Chapter 12

THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT

We have seen that one of the major reasons the earth was created was to illustrate to the universe the utter depravity that results when people disregard the law of God. We saw that each of the commandments is extremely important and that when a person breaks any one of the Ten Commandments he is guilty of breaking all of them.

The Fourth Commandment, the Sabbath commandment, has been chosen by God for a very special purpose, and God has given the Fourth Commandment great significance. The Fourth Commandment will also play a key role in events just before the end. Today, however, practically the entire Christian world ignores this commandment. Many cannot understand the reasoning behind the Fourth Commandment as they can with some of the others; and so, since nearly everyone else breaks the Fourth Commandment, they simply disregard it also. It does indeed seem strange that so many people who claim to believe what the Bible says do not follow this clear command of God.

Psalms 111:7-9 tells us clearly that all of the Ten Commandments, God's covenant, will continue to be in effect forever. "The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name." The Fourth Commandment, the Sabbath commandment, will therefore stand fast for ever and ever. This commandment is in effect today, and God

requires strict obedience to this commandment today as well as to all the others.

The Sabbath commandment, which is the Bible's Fourth Commandment, is found in Exodus 20:8-11:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 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.

God has instituted a special day of the week on which we are to put aside our secular activities and concern ourselves only with fellowship with Him. The Sabbath day is to be a day of pleasant companionship with God, much like the first Sabbath in the Garden of Eden.

Consider how Adam and Eve must have cherished that first Sabbath day. Can you imagine how they must have felt as they first

1996		APRIL					1996
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
	1	2	3	4	5 Good Friday	6 Sabbath	
7 Easter	8	9	10	11	12	13 Sabbath	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 Sabbath	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 Sabbath	
28	29	30					
1st day	2nd day	3rd day	4th day	5th day	6th day	7th day	

opened their eyes and beheld the beautiful world that God had just created? Adam and Eve were created as

adults, having mature, intelligent minds, but as yet they had had no experience. As yet they had gained no practical knowledge of the world in which they were placed. They looked at the beauty and grandeur that surrounded them and must have wondered, "Where am I? What is all this? Where did I come from?" So, Adam and Eve spent the first Sabbath day in close companionship with God as He answered their questions and taught them about the beautiful world He had prepared for them. They must have greatly enjoyed their companionship with God on that first Sabbath day.

Today, as the entire earth groans under the curse of sin, we need this close companionship with God even more than did Adam and Eve, for our minds have been so dulled by our close association with sin and by the multitude of Satan's lies that we have accepted as truth that we are extremely slow in recognizing the truth God would have us to understand.

Saturday, the seventh day of the week, is the Sabbath day. The day to be kept holy has been changed for the world, not by God, but by a worldly power claiming the prerogatives of God. The many Bible texts which we will examine in this chapter will show clearly that God still requires us to obey the Fourth Commandment and to keep His Sabbath day holy.

Christ, of course, understood the importance of keeping the Sabbath day holy, and He loved the close companionship with God that makes this day so precious. He had a custom of attending church, the synagogue, on the Sabbath day, as described in Luke 4:16. "And 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 for to read."

We are told in 1 Peter 2:21 that Jesus Christ is our example, and that we should pattern our lives after His. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." Since Christ's custom was to keep

the Sabbath day holy and to worship God on the Sabbath day, and since He is our example, we should follow in His steps and also obey the Fourth Commandment.

First John 2:3-6 tells us in rather forceful language that we should follow Jesus' example. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." As these verses indicate, no one can know the Lord without obeying all of His commandments. Those who say they do and are not keeping all ten of the commandments are liars. If they truly knew the Lord they would want to keep the Ten Commandments, including, of course, the Sabbath commandment. If a person claims to be a Christian he "ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

Acts 13:42-44 records an instance in which Gentiles were extremely interested in the message of the gospel being preached in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day. "And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God." Notice that these verses describe Sabbath observance after Christ's resurrection. If the Sabbath day had been changed, if the Sabbath commandment had been nailed to the cross, why did not these devoted followers of Christ know anything about it? Paul was among them, preaching to them. If the law had been nailed to the cross or otherwise abolished, surely he would have

known about it and would have told them. No, the Sabbath commandment was never abolished; it is, in fact, in total harmony with the grace of God, as these verses clearly indicate.

Another instance in which the people were keeping the Sabbath day holy according to the Fourth Commandment is found in Acts 16:13: "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither." Sabbath-keeping was practiced everywhere among Christians of the New Testament.

Paul, in fact, as well as Christ, had a custom of keeping the Sabbath day holy according to the Fourth Commandment and of worshiping God on the Sabbath day. Acts 17:2 relates: "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures." If the day to be kept holy had been changed to Sunday, the first day of the week, why did not Paul abide by the change and observe Sunday?

Acts 18:4,11 tells us that Paul kept the Sabbath day holy according to the commandment during the year and six months that he preached the gospel to both the Jews and Gentiles at Corinth. "And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." He was certainly not persuading them on the Sabbath day to keep Sunday holy instead! Verse 11: "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." Since he was keeping every Sabbath day holy, the Word of God that he was teaching must have included the Fourth Commandment. This year and six months Paul spent in Corinth preaching the word of God includes 78 Sabbath days that he kept holy.

Near the end of his life Paul could make the statement that he had done nothing against the customs of the Jews. Therefore, throughout his entire life, he faith-

fully kept each Sabbath day holy. Acts 28:17 relates: "And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans." If we are to keep Sunday holy instead of the Sabbath, why did Paul disobey his Lord and not abide by this change? Simply because the change was not made by God but occurred hundreds of years later by the decree of the pope.

Those who advocate Sunday-keeping can not find one verse in the Bible that states that Paul or the other disciples had a custom of worshiping on Sunday. Rather these verses we have just been considering and others show that the Commandments received on Mount Sinai, written by the finger of God on two tables of stone to show their permanence, are still in effect.

The fact that Saturday is the Sabbath day is shown by the events immediately following Christ's death on the cross. The Jews had names for only two days of the week. The other days were numbered. The Jewish week was as follows: First day, Second day, Third day, Fourth day, Fifth day, Preparation day, and the Sabbath day. Friday was called the Preparation day because that was the day on which the people prepared for the Sabbath. They cooked their food, cleaned their houses, and finished other business and household chores so that they would be free to spend the Sabbath day with the Lord. That the Preparation day preceded the Sabbath is shown in Mark 15:42. "And now when the even [evening] was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath. . . ." Mark 1:32 indicates that "even" is evening at sunset. "And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils."

The days as God instituted them in creation week began in the evening and ended at evening the follow-

ing day. This is shown in the first chapter of Genesis, where the days of creation are described successively as “the evening and the morning were the first day,” etc. The Sabbath is observed from sunset Friday night to sunset Saturday night, according to Leviticus 23:32: “From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.”

Both history and the Bible show that Christ was crucified and died on Friday. Many celebrate Good Friday in commemoration of Christ’s death and Easter Sunday in commemoration of His resurrection. The following verses make it abundantly clear that the Sabbath day, which falls between Friday (the Preparation day) and Sunday (the First day), is Saturday.

Luke 23:50-Luke 24:3. “And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them; he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.”

This is truly amazing. The Sabbath was so important to the followers of Jesus that they would not even embalm the body of Christ, their Lord, on the Sabbath, but waited until the first day of the week (Sunday morning). The women did not have sufficient time to pre-

pare spices and ointments and return to the sepulchre to embalm Christ's body before the sun set on Friday evening, when the Sabbath began. They waited in accordance with the Fourth Commandment until the Sabbath ended at sundown Saturday night. Since it was then too dark to see, they had to wait until Sunday morning. If the Sabbath had been changed as the day of worship, these devoted followers of Christ knew nothing about the change.

Some claim that the Sabbath of Luke 23:56 was not the weekly seventh-day Sabbath, but one of the special yearly Sabbaths that the Jewish people celebrated. John 19:31 shows that the Sabbath day during which Christ rested in the tomb was both the regular weekly Sabbath and also one of the yearly Sabbaths. "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, for that sabbath day was an high day, besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." The term "high day" was used to denote the occurrence of both the weekly Sabbath and a special yearly Sabbath on the same day. The Sabbath after the crucifixion, therefore, was both the weekly Sabbath and also one of the yearly Sabbaths.

Some people claim that because of changes in the calendar, we cannot be sure which day is the Sabbath. There was a major change made in the calendar in October, 1582, but this change did not interrupt the weekly seven-day cycle. In order to correct for certain errors that had crept in over the centuries, ten days were

1582		OCTOBER					1582
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	
<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	
<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	
<i>31</i>							

dropped from that particular month. Thursday was the fourth, and Friday was made the fifteenth. Actually, we change our calendars every four years by adding an additional day to February and call that year leap year. These changes do not interrupt the normal sequence of the days of the week. The calendar has never been changed in such a way as to disrupt the normal sequence of the weekly cycle.

As further evidence that Saturday is God's holy Sabbath day, let us ask the power that attempted to change the day of worship which day is the Sabbath:

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 transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday. — Peter Geiermann, *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (1957 ed.), p. 50.

Which is the most commercial day of the week? Festivities generally begin on Friday night as many go out to dinner and a movie or nightclub to celebrate the end of the work week and the beginning of the weekend. On Saturday much of the weekly shopping is done. Do you think this happens by accident? With a knowledge of how the devil works in this world, we can understand that the fact that God's holy Sabbath day is the most commercial day of the week is an additional indication that Friday evening and Saturday are the Sabbath.

Ecclesiastes 3:14 tells us that what God does shall be forever. "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before

him.” When God, therefore, blessed and sanctified the Sabbath day, as described in Genesis 2:2,3, it would remain blessed and sanctified forever. “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.” Will the Sabbath day be changed? According to these verses, it will not. The Sabbath is the day that God blessed and sanctified and shall forever remain the day that we should keep holy.

Consider again the verses of Deuteronomy 4:12,13, that clearly tell us that the Ten Commandment law is God’s covenant. “And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.” God tells us in Psalms 89:34 that He will never break or change His covenant, His law. “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.” God’s covenant, including the Fourth Commandment, will last throughout all eternity.

Let us review again from Galatians 3:28,29 the fact that the term “Israel,” that means “ruling with God,” refers to Christ’s true people. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” The true followers of Christ, those who obey His Ten Commandments, are referred to as Israel. True Christians are the children of Israel today.

The following verses, therefore, when they mention Israel, are referring to Christ’s true followers today as well as to the Israelites led by Moses. Exodus

31:13-18 indicates that the Sabbath is a sign between God and His people — forever. “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a *PERPETUAL* covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.”

Notice that these verses say the observance of the Sabbath is a perpetual covenant. “Perpetual” means never ending, continuing forever. The Sabbath, indeed, continues forever, for we saw that God will never change His Ten Commandment law.

Notice also that the Sabbath is the sign between God and His people forever. You could be keeping all the other commandments except the Fourth, and people would not particularly notice; but when you go to church on Saturday morning with your Bible under your arm, everyone knows. It is indeed a sign between God and His people.

We saw in Isaiah 24:1,3-5 that one of the reasons the earth is to be completely destroyed when Christ returns is that the people have changed the law and continue to break the everlasting covenant. “Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and

turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." Regardless of the fact that the papacy's change in the law of God has been accepted by the vast majority of the Christian world, one must realize that God still requires strict obedience to the Fourth Commandment as well as to the others.

Those who worship on Sunday refer to Sunday as "the Lord's day." Where did this term come from? The Bible certainly never calls Sunday the Lord's day. In Revelation 1:10 John says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet." Is John speaking about Sunday here? We saw that it was the custom of the early church to observe the Sabbath day as the Lord's day, and indeed, this verse is referring to God's holy Sabbath day.

In Isaiah 58:13,14 God tells us that His day is the Sabbath day: "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath [from trampling on God's Sabbath], from doing thy pleasure on *MY HOLY DAY*; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." What did God call His Sabbath day? He called it "My Holy Day." The Lord's day is the Sabbath day, as these verses plainly show.

Ezekiel 20:12,20 shows not only that the Sabbath is the Lord's day, but also that the Sabbath was specifically given to be a sign between God and His true

people. ¹²Moreover also I gave them **MY SABBATHS**, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. ²⁰And hallow **MY SABBATHS**; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.” Notice how God repeats “My Sabbaths.” The Sabbath day is the Lord’s day regardless of how many make the claim for Sunday.

God’s Ten Commandment law, His covenant, will exist forever. Isaiah 66:22,23 tells us that those who are saved to enjoy life in God’s new earth, that He has not as yet created, will assemble to worship God on each Sabbath day. “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. and it shall come to pass, that, from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.” The New English Bible translates verse 23 as, “Month by month at the new moon, week by week on the sabbath, all mankind shall come to bow down before me, says the Lord.” At each new moon the redeemed of earth will gather in the holy city, New Jerusalem, to eat the fruit of the tree of life, which yields a different fruit each month (Revelation 22:2); and on each Sabbath day they will assemble before God in New Jerusalem for worship. If it is no longer necessary to observe the Fourth Commandment, why will the saved continue throughout eternity to worship God on the Sabbath day in His new earth?

Satan and the Catholic Church have spread this Sunday lie far and wide in the world and have many thousands of priests, ministers and other people preaching this counterfeit with great power. Those who believe this lie and repeat it to others are unwittingly Satan’s tools of indoctrination. We must all understand that God means exactly what He says when He tells us to “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”

We saw earlier that the devil, Satan, is planning to masquerade as Christ. He will do this shortly before the end. When he does this, he will appear as a glorious angel, and he will dazzle the people of earth into believing that he is Christ. Then, in his assumed character as Christ, he will claim to have changed the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, Saturday, to Sunday, the first day and will command everyone to keep Sunday holy instead of the Sabbath. Then he will claim that those who insist on keeping Saturday, the Sabbath, holy are blaspheming his name. This will be an overwhelming deception that will deceive virtually everyone on earth.

In the New Testament we are told in Hebrews 4:9-11 that the Sabbath commandment remains in force. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." The word in the Greek that is translated "rest" in these verses is *sabbatismos*, and it means "a keeping of the Sabbath." Hebrews 4:9 therefore would be more correctly translated, "There remaineth therefore a keeping of the Sabbath to the people of God." This verse in the New International Version of the Bible says, "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God."

Let us now examine every text in the Bible that mentions the first day of the week. The term "first day of the week" is mentioned only eight times in the Bible, all of them being in the New Testament. Most of these verses emphasize the fact that Christ's resurrection occurred on the first day of the week, the third day after His crucifixion. The following four texts relate that the women returned to anoint the body of Christ on the first day after having rested on the Sabbath day according to the Fourth Commandment.

“In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.” (Matthew 28:1).

“And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.” (Mark 16:1,2).

“And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.” (Luke 23:56-Luke 24:1).

“The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.” (John 20:1).

Mark 16:9 tells us that Jesus appeared first to Mary after His resurrection on the first day. “Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.”

John 20:19 describes a gathering of the disciples on the first day of the week. “Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week [the days ran from sunset to sunset], when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.” The disciples were not gathered here to worship or to commemorate Christ’s resurrection, as some people claim; they were gathered for fear of the Jews, as the verse plainly states. The Jews were still inflamed over the evil business of the crucifixion, and the disciples feared for their lives because of their close association with Jesus. Jesus came to comfort them and

tell them not to be afraid.

Another meeting on the first day of the week is described in Acts 20:7. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech UNTIL MIDNIGHT." Here Paul preached to the people after sunset on Saturday and continued until midnight. The Jewish days, remember, ran from sunset to sunset, and the Sabbath day ended at sunset Saturday night. The first day of the week, of course, began at sunset Saturday night, which is when Paul started to preach. In our modern reckoning of the days of the week, Sunday starts at midnight, which is when Paul ENDED his preaching. So, you see, according to this verse Paul did NO preaching on Sunday. Many refer to this verse as an example of a Sunday religious meeting in the New Testament, but as we have seen, Paul stopped preaching just as Sunday was beginning, at midnight.

Some claim that the phrase "to break bread" in Acts 20:7 refers to the Lord's Supper or Communion service, and that the people were celebrating this service on this first day of the week in honor of the Lord's resurrection. 1 Corinthians 11:26 shows that a celebration of the Lord's Supper is not a memorial to His resurrection, but to his DEATH. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's *DEATH* till he come."

Even if Paul did hold a Sunday meeting, would that change the fact that the Sabbath day remains blessed and sanctified? Sunday-keepers have Wednesday meetings, but that doesn't change the day they observe. Religious meetings are held every day of the week during evangelistic series. Holding meetings on various days does not change the fact that we are to remember God's Sabbath day to keep it holy.

These first-day meetings, in any case, do not establish a precedent since the early Christians actually were

accustomed to meeting, breaking bread (eating dinner), and hearing the Word daily as reported in Acts 2:46. “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” The word “meat” in this verse means “dinner.” The people were simply visiting one another daily to share the good news of the Gospel.

Another text that mentions the first day of the week is 1 Corinthians 16:1,2. Paul was collecting money to help the Christians in Jerusalem, the majority of whom were poor due to oppression and persecution by the Jews at that time. “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” Notice that the word “day” is in italics in many editions of the King James translation of the Bible. These italicized words are words that the translators added and that were not in the original text. The word “day” was therefore not in the original text. It was the custom of the Jewish people to do their bookkeeping after the Sabbath was over at sundown Saturday night, and Paul was simply instructing each person individually to set aside his offering at the first of the week so that he could collect the offerings quickly on his way to Jerusalem.

We have just considered every Bible verse that mentions the term “first day of the week.” Notice that in these verses concerning the first day, and in fact the entire Bible, there is no commandment, instruction, injunction, mandate, precept, or even a suggestion that Sunday should be kept holy. There is certainly no clear command from God, as there was on Mt. Sinai when the Fourth Commandment concerning the Sabbath day was given. There is no precedent for Sunday observance anywhere in the entire Bible.

Proverbs 30:6 says: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." If you are going to take the position that Sunday is the day to be kept holy, you will have to add to the Scriptures, for the Bible emphasizes the importance of Sabbath observance. Christ said that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law."

You see, therefore, that the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath commandment, will always be in force and will never be changed. Hebrews 13:8 and Malachi 3:6 give us additional evidence that Christ will not change the law, for these verses tell us that Christ will never change. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." "For I am the Lord, I change not."

Have you wondered why people who worship on Sunday think nothing of going to the store or to the restaurant after church? Have you ever wondered why they go to ball games or wash their cars on Sunday? Why do Sunday-keepers engage in so many secular activities on the day they claim they are keeping holy?

That one should not buy and sell on the Sabbath is shown, not only in the Fourth Commandment itself, but also in Nehemiah 13:15-22. "In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusa-

lem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so gain, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day.”

The reason that those who worship on Sunday ignore the instructions contained in the Fourth Commandment as to how to keep the day holy is that they are obeying the Catholic commandment instead of God’s commandment. Using the chart on page 306, compare again the Fourth Commandment in the Bible with the third commandment as published by the Catholic Church. Remember, that the Catholic Church deleted the Second Commandment; consequently their third corresponds to the Bible’s Fourth.

God, you see, has given us instructions as to how to keep the Sabbath holy. The papacy did not do this. The papacy, therefore, tried to change not only the day, but also the way it is to be kept. Those who obey the papacy and keep Sunday often engage in secular activities because the Catholic commandment does not specify how to keep the day holy.

Romans 6:16 tells us: “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

First John 5:3 tells us that love of God is keeping His commandments. “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” We show our love to God by keeping

COMPARISON OF THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT

as found in the Bible with the Sabbath
Commandment as changed by the papacy

BIBLE

CATHOLIC

4th

3rd

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 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.

Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

His commandments, especially the Fourth Commandment, for it is the sign between God and his people.

That there would be a massive falling away from the truth of the Bible and from God's commandments was predicted in 2 Timothy 4:3,4. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their

ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” Because the people have itching ears, that is, they will listen only to what they want to hear, they have provided themselves with ministers who will preach only what pleases them. Satan has made sure that there would be plenty of church denominations from which to choose. Today, in the many churches of the world, one can find just about any type of sermon he wants. The time has, indeed, come when people do not endure sound doctrine. They have turned their ears from the truth and are turned unto lies.

Wickedness was defined in chapter 8 as commandment-breaking. The prophecy of Daniel 12:4,10 tells us that the wicked will not be able to understand. “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.” Do you understand God’s Sabbath truth? Do you understand the importance of obeying all ten of the Commandments?

Jesus says in Matthew 4:4 that “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Directly out of the mouth of God came these words from the top of Mount Sinai: “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. . . .”

Jesus warns us in Matthew 7:13,14 that most of the people will be lost. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Most of the people will be lost because they insist that they know best. They blatantly refuse to accept the clear Bible message. “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.” (Proverbs 12:15).

Sunday-keeping did not come from the Bible.

Sunday-keeping is a tradition of the papacy. In fact, the Catholic Church claims that tradition takes precedence over the Bible. In Matthew 15:3,8,9 Christ specifically warned against following tradition. "But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." In Colossians 2:8 we find another warning against accepting tradition as doctrine. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." The Phillips translation of the New Testament renders this verse beautifully: "Be careful that nobody spoils your faith through intellectualism or high-sounding nonsense. Such stuff is at best founded on men's ideas of the nature of the world, and disregards Christ!"

Will God hear a sinner pray? If someone habitually lies, will his prayers get through? Will God hear the prayers of a murderer? How about someone who continually breaks the Fourth Commandment? Proverbs 28:9 tells us that those who disregard the Ten Commandments will not be able to get their prayers through. In fact, the prayers of someone who willfully breaks any of the commandments is an abomination to God. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." We have seen that Satan answers prayers, and provides all kinds of spiritual "highs" for those who disregard the Ten Commandments. He answers the prayers of sinners, including those who break the Fourth Commandment, making it appear that the answers are from God. After all, if God is answering a person's prayers when that person is breaking some of the Commandments, why should he change? Acts 5:29 says, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

How strongly does God feel about our keeping His Sabbath day holy? The answer to this question is found in Numbers 15:32-36. While reading these verses, keep in mind that God never changes. He is the same today as He was at the time that these verses describe. “And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses.” The penalty for the sin of breaking the Fourth Commandment is still the same — death. The penalty is only deferred for a little while. Remember that “all these things happened unto them for ensamples [examples]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” (1 Corinthians 10:1).

When God tells us to “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” He means exactly what He says. There is to be no debate, no argument, no trying to justify keeping Sunday instead. All we have to do is obey, for if we do not, we will pay for our sin in the lake of fire when God cleanses the universe of sin and sinners.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

What will those who have ignored the Fourth Commandment say to God when they have to face the record of a lifetime of ignoring His law? At that time the words of the Bible will burn in their minds as regret overwhelms them for having rebelled against God and His laws. Let us consider again the verses of Matthew

7:21-23, that describe many who think they are worshipping God in the proper way, but who will actually be lost because they ignore the law. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *DOETH* the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

These verses tell us of Sunday-keepers who are going about "doing good," saying how much they love the Lord, and who are generally very pious. But it is all in vain if they do not keep God's Saturday Sabbath and the Ten Commandments, for in Nahum 1:9 God tells us that after this drama of earth is ended, no one in the entire universe will ever again break God's law. "What do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end: affliction [sin] shall not rise up the second time." There will not be any Commandment breakers in heaven.

"But in *VAIN* they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9).

Christ says, "If ye love me, keep *MY* commandments." (John 14:15).

Those who worship on Sunday are among those to whom Christ directs His message in Proverbs 1:24-33. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:

They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

Among the many Sunday-keepers are those who are the true sheep of Jesus. Though they are breaking the Fourth Commandment in ignorance, when they hear the message about the Sabbath day they will follow the Lord. Jesus tells us in John 10:14-16,26-28 that He is the shepherd and His sheep follow Him. “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” Christ’s true followers, when they hear the truth about the Sabbath, will come out of the false churches and follow Him. They will begin to keep His Sabbath day holy. Christ says “other sheep I have which are not of this fold.” This refers to His true people in all the churches, and He has a special message for them in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their

God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Come out from among them; come out of the false churches and be separate.

Revelation 18:4 contains the same vital message. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." God does not want His true Christians to attend churches that ignore any of His Ten Commandments.

The question naturally arises as to where you should worship. This was discussed previously but is repeated here.

In these final days of earth's history, the devil and the Catholic Church have even managed to infiltrate the church organization that was God's true church. Satan has been able to place his people as leaders in this organization and, to a large extent, ministers in the pulpits, so that now no church denomination is following God as the Bible specifies.

God's true people are now starting to meet in small groups in people's houses, just as they did shortly after Christ was crucified. Romans 16:5 mentions one of these church groups meeting in a house. "Likewise greet the church that is in their house." Please understand that the people constitute God's true church and not any organization or building. When Christ was on earth the denomination at that time was the Jewish organization, and the Jewish people were God's true church, but after they crucified Christ the true church consisted of true Christians and not the Jewish organization.

Some of the small groups of true Christians today, who keep all the commandments of God, publish magazines and books, and put out audio and video tapes that

contain the accurate truth of the Bible, and some even have radio and television programs that proclaim the truth. Some have even started small independent church congregations and meet in a separate church building. It is the responsibility of each of us to study the Bible continually so that we will understand enough to be able to locate a group of people who are God's true church. We will see that just before the end, the entire world will be arrayed against the small groups of people that make up God's true church in an attempt to put them to death!

Chapter 13

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

We must now show that the papacy is the most deadly enemy the United States will ever have to face. Using the utmost secrecy to conceal her plans, the papacy, through her facade of religion, has for many decades been infiltrating the United States in all levels of government. As a result, the United States will soon lose its constitution and become a tyrannical, persecuting power.

Don't misunderstand here. We have seen that the Catholic Church is **NOT** a Christian religion. It is a strange combination of the old pagan religions with a Christian facade. Just because they claim to be a Christian church does not make it so.

For many decades the papacy has been laying plans for the takeover of the United States. This goal of the papacy is clearly stated in Charles Chiniquy's book *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*.

We are determined . . . to take possession of the United States, and rule them; but we cannot do that without acting secretly and with utmost wisdom. If our plans become known, they will surely be defeated. — Charles Chiniquy, *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*, The Wickliffe Press, Protestant truth Society, Wickliffe Avenue, 104 Hendon Lane, Finchley, London, N3., 1885, p. 373.

On page 374 of this book we read:

How sad will their awakening be, when, with our out-numbering votes, we will turn them, for ever, from every position of honor, power and profit! What will those hypocritical and godless sons and daughters of the fanatical Pilgrim Fathers say, when not a single judge, not a single teacher, not a single policeman will be elected if he be not a devoted . . . Roman Catholic? What will those so-called giants think of their matchless shrewdness and ability, when not a single Senator or member of Congress will be chosen, if he be not submitted to our holy father the Pope? What a sad figure those Protestant Yankees will cut when we will not only elect the President, but fill and command the armies, man the navies, and hold the keys of the public treasury?

Then, yes! then, we will rule the United States, and lay them at the feet of the Vicar of Jesus Christ [the pope], that he may put an end to their godless system of education, and sweep away those impious laws of liberty of conscience which are an insult to God and man!

. . . The American people must be very blind indeed, if they do not see that if they do nothing to prevent it, the day is very near when the Jesuits will rule their country, from the magnificent White House at Washington, to the humblest civil and military department of this vast Republic. — *ibid*, p. 374.

As we have seen, when they say Vicar of Jesus Christ, they mean the pope.

As you read this chapter, keep in mind that they have said it is their goal to take over the United States and trash the Constitution. The American Constitution is thoroughly detested by the papacy, because the freedom safeguards it contains make it impossible for the papacy through their Jesuits to take over the United States as long as the Constitution is in force.

Here is a statement from the same book that shows the power these people have amassed in the United

States.

The Jesuits of the United States form one of the richest and most powerful corporations the world ever saw. — *ibid*, p. 375.

The papacy is by far the wealthiest institution on earth.

Jesus, the founder of Christianity, was the poorest of the poor. Roman Catholicism, which claims to be His church, is the richest of the rich. — Avro Manhattan, *The Vatican Billions*, Chick Publications, p. 17.

The Catholic church is the biggest financial power, wealth accumulator and property owner in existence. She is a greater possessor of material riches than any other single institution, corporation, bank, giant trust, government or state of the whole globe. — Jack Chick, *Smokescreens*, Chick Publications, Chapter 10.

Very few people know anything about the Jesuits because of their extreme secrecy. Here is a description of them from the book *The Great Controversy* that shows the abominable character and deceptiveness of the pope's Jesuits.

Throughout Christendom, Protestantism was menaced by formidable foes. The first triumphs of the Reformation past, Rome summoned new forces, hoping to accomplish its destruction. At this time the order of the Jesuits was created, the most cruel, unscrupulous, and powerful of all the champions of popery. Cut off from earthly ties and human interests, dead to the claims of natural affection, reason and conscience wholly silenced, they knew no rule, no tie, but that of their order, and no duty but to extend its power. The gospel of

Christ had enabled its adherents to meet danger and endure suffering, undismayed by cold, hunger, toil, and poverty, to uphold the banner of truth in face of the rack, the dungeon, and the stake. To combat these forces, Jesuitism inspired its followers with a fanaticism that enabled them to endure like dangers, and to oppose to the power of truth all the weapons of deception. There was no crime too great for them to commit, no deception too base for them to practice, no disguise too difficult for them to assume. Vowed to perpetual poverty and humility, it was their studied aim to secure wealth and power, to be devoted to the overthrow of Protestantism, and the re-establishment of the papal supremacy.

When appearing as members of their order, they wore a garb of sanctity, visiting prisons and hospitals, ministering to the sick and the poor, professing to have renounced the world, and bearing the sacred name of Jesus, who went about doing good. But under this blameless exterior the most criminal and deadly purposes were often concealed. It was a fundamental principle of the order that the end justifies the means. By this code, lying, theft, perjury, assassination, were not only pardonable but commendable, when they served the interests of the church. Under various disguises the Jesuits worked their way into offices of state, climbing up to be the counselors of kings, and shaping the policy of nations. They became servants to act as spies upon their masters. They established colleges for the sons of princes and nobles, and schools for the common people; and the children of Protestant parents were drawn into an observance of popish rites. All the outward pomp and display of the Romish worship was brought to bear to confuse the mind and dazzle and captivate the imagination, and thus the liberty for which the fathers had toiled and bled was betrayed by the sons. The Jesuits rapidly spread themselves over Europe, and wherever they went, there followed a revival of popery. — E. G. White,

The Great Controversy, pp. 234, 235, 1911, Pacific Press Publishing Assn.

Today the pope's Jesuits are not only entrenched at the highest levels of all branches and departments of the U.S. Government, but they are also entrenched at the highest levels of virtually all the major corporations and industries in the United States. The Jesuits are the major stockholders of many of the largest corporations. They own 51% of the stock in Bank of America for instance. And because the papacy is a so-called church, they pay not one penny of taxes. Because they are a so-called church, they are able to operate internationally outside of the laws and legal proceedings everyone else must follow.

Here are a few of the Jesuit-controlled corporations that totally support their Jesuits in congress and the government: American Airlines, TWA, Anheuser Busch, AT&T, Bell Atlantic, Boeing, Cigna, Coca-Cola, Daimler Chrysler, Exxon, Shell, Ford Motor Company, General Electric, Hewlett-Packard, Home Depot, May Company, McDonald's, Motorola, Philip Morris, Price-Waterhouse, Rite Aid, RJR Nabisco, Sony Corp. of America, Texaco, United Parcel Service, Walt Disney Company, and Wells Fargo.

These and other of their corporations give their Jesuit senators and congressmen in both the Democratic and Republican parties many thousands of dollars for their election campaigns. These senators and congressmen are the most radical and dangerous this country has ever had. They do everything they can to pass laws and regulations prohibited by our constitution, laws designed to destroy the United States, to eliminate freedom, and to convert the United States into a ruthless tyranny. They lie constantly to deceive the people so they will go along with the laws and regulations they want to pass.

Everyone in high positions in the government takes a solemn oath to uphold and obey the Constitution, but nearly all of them totally ignore the Constitution. The president issues executive orders that are totally unconstitutional, and Congress passes laws that the Constitution specifically forbids. Our God-given Constitution is the reason the United States has become the greatest country in the world, but it is being thoroughly undermined today by the Jesuits in government as they work to destroy the United States.

The laws and regulations they pass are designed to export the industrial and manufacturing base of the United States to other countries. They are designed to destroy our energy base by restricting oil prospecting, fuel production, and nuclear power plants. The Jesuits in the House, Senate and regulating agencies restrict the private use of land with nonsensical environmental rules and regulations. They pass laws and regulations about what is “proper” to be taught in schools so that children will grow up being extremely ignorant under the banner of being educated.

The Jesuits are not recognized by the general populace because of their treachery and secrecy. They tell no one that they are Jesuits. They even belong to other churches, other organizations, and other cultures, that they have infiltrated, to hide their identity and to control these organizations.

There are millions and millions of the pope’s Jesuits. They are everywhere. They are into everything. They are into every major organization, and control nearly every political organization and government in the world. Because of the Jesuits’ extreme secrecy, many of these organizations and governments are totally unaware that they are being infiltrated and controlled.

It is easy to identify the Jesuits and the Jesuit puppets in the United States Congress, because they are the ones that continually try to get all kinds of laws passed that require exactly the opposite from what the

Constitution says. They continually pass laws that restrict the liberty of the citizens of the country. They continually pass laws to regulate every aspect of life in the United States. They continually pass laws that restrict freedom of speech such as the *Campaign Finance Reform Act*. Incidentally, they always use names for these laws that will sound good to the American people, but rarely indicate what is in the law. They use every means they can to deceive the people of the country.

The Jesuits continually try to pass restrictive gun legislation. The second amendment to the Constitution says, "the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." Every gun law that congress has ever passed is a direct violation of the United States' Constitution. Because of the crime and terrorism in our country today, and because of the government and media propaganda against guns, people are made to believe that these laws are necessary.

When the citizens of a nation are armed, where their right to own guns is not infringed, the crime rate is extremely low.

Every man in Switzerland, for instance, is required to have guns in his home, including assault rifles. Crime in Switzerland is almost non-existent. In states and cities in America that allow people to carry guns, the crime rate is extremely low.

During World War Two, Hitler wanted to invade Switzerland. The Swiss told him that he could send his army across the border, but none of his officers would return. Hitler gave the order to invade Switzerland several times, but his officers refused to obey. Switzerland remained safely neutral all during the war because Hitler could not overcome the guns in the hands of Swiss private citizens. No dictator wants to be the dictator of a nation with 200 million guns around.

Christians generally do not want to have anything to do with guns, because a Christian would never take

the life of another individual. It is not the *USE* of the guns that keeps the crime rate low; it is just the fact that the guns are there, and the criminals and would-be dictators know that the guns are there. That knowledge keeps them at bay.

In order to motivate the people of the United States to give up their guns, the Jesuits stage shootings periodically to show how “dangerous” guns are. These shootings occur in the most emotional places such as schools where children die. But Waco shows what will happen when only the government has guns. Some 86 children died a torturous death at Waco at the hands of the government.

The USA Patriot act of 2001 is in almost total violation of the constitution, requiring many of the regulations Nazi Germany and communist Russia had. When all the requirements of this act are implemented, the citizens of this country will rue the day they ever allowed such a monstrosity to become law. Jesuits in the government were responsible for this law and forced its passage. They forced a vote on this act without giving the congressmen and senators an opportunity to read it! Why didn't the congressmen and senators have the good sense to vote “no” and defeat this act since they were never able to read it before they voted?

The *Homeland Security Act of 2002* is another act that was passed to take away freedom and security in the United States and is in total violation of the constitution. As all the requirements of these acts become implemented, the people of the country will learn firsthand how it feels to have absolutely no freedom. These and other laws and regulations on the books will, when implemented, convert the United States into a more ruthless police state than was Nazi Germany or communist Russia and Red China.

There are also efforts being made to appoint the members of the House of Representatives instead of

electing them as the Constitution specifies.

Today, the United States is run and controlled by its most dedicated enemies. If you wonder at the things the government and the people in control of the government do that are so damaging to the United States, it is because they are our enemies and are determined to destroy the United States. Treason is running rampant throughout all levels and branches of the U.S. government today.

A nation can survive its fools, and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within. An enemy at the gates is less formidable, for he is known and carries his banners openly against the city. But the traitor moves among those within the gates freely, his sly whispers rustling through all the alleys, heard in the very halls of government itself. For the traitor appears no traitor; he speaks in the accents familiar to his victims, and he wears their face and their garments and he appeals to the baseness that lies deep in the hearts of all men. He rots the soul of a nation; he works secretly and unknown in the night to undermine the pillars of a city; he infects the body politic so that it can no longer resist. — Marcus Cicero, speaking to Caesar, Crassus, Pompey and the Roman Senate.

Many wonder today why the Republican party does nothing to defeat the treasonous schemes of the Democrats. It is because the pope's Jesuits have thoroughly infiltrated the Republican party as well as the Democratic party. Many wonder why the news media lie so much to support and protect the Democrats. It is because the pope's Jesuits have thoroughly infiltrated the news media. The news media and schools and colleges, with their lies and propaganda, have so conditioned the people of the country that they are unable to recognize what has been done to them. Victory for the Jesuits seems very near. The Jesuits are like a cancer that has

pervaded nearly every fiber of the society of the United States. We are being defeated by the enemy within.

For many years the Jesuits have prevented the United States from developing additional sources of energy within its own territory. Exploiting the vast oilfields on the Alaskan north slope, that probably contain more oil than the entire middle east, is forbidden. New nuclear power plants, the safest source of electric energy ever discovered, are not permitted. There is no end to the lies people have been made to believe about Nuclear energy. The environment is used as the club to subdue the people of the country into going along with this idiocy. Modern technology is able to develop these sources of power without any damage to the environment. France gets 80% of its power from nuclear power plants without any problems. Needless to say, without sufficient energy, the United States will not be able to defend itself. All the papacy has to do is cut off the oil supply from the middle east.

The United States is now starting to feel the pinch of the energy shortage the Jesuits have created. People have experienced blackouts over large areas as power is shut off to stay within the limits of generating capacity. Today, instead of constructing additional nuclear power plants, some of these plants are being dismantled! Will the people of the United States be able to wake up in time to prevent the coming national tragedy?

Not only in the United States is this treachery being perpetrated by the papacy, but they are secretly at work all over the world to subvert all the nations of the world. Charles Chiniquy continues:

Rome is in constant conspiracy against the rights and liberties of man all over the world; but she is particularly so in the United States. Long before I was ordained a priest I knew that my Church was the most implacable enemy of this Republic. My professors of philosophy, history, and theology had been unanimous in telling me

that the principles and laws of the Church of Rome were absolutely antagonistic to the laws and principles that are the foundation stones of the Constitution of the United States.

1st. The most sacred principle of the United States Constitution is the equality of every citizen before the law. But the fundamental principle of the Church of Rome is the denial of that [e]quality.

2nd. Liberty of conscience is proclaimed by the United States a most sacred principle, which every citizen must uphold But liberty of conscience is declared by all the Popes and Councils of Rome, a most godless, unholy, and diabolical thing, which every good Catholic must abhor and destroy at any cost.

3rd. The American Constitution assures the absolute independence of the civil from the ecclesiastical or Church power; but the Church of Rome declares, through all her Pontiffs and Councils, that such independence is an impiety and a revolt against God.

4th. The American Constitution leaves every man free to serve God according to the dictates of his conscience; but the Church of Rome declares that no man has ever had such a right, and that the Pope alone can know and say what man must believe and do. — Charles Chiniquy, *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*, The Wickliffe Press, Protestant truth Society, Wickliffe Avenue, 104 Hendon Lane, Finchley, London, N3., 1885, p. 375.

And when the papacy takes over there will be bloodshed.

The Church of Rome says that she has a right to punish with the confiscation of their goods, or the penalty of death, those who differ in faith from the Pope. — *ibid*, p. 376.

America simply has no idea of the terrible trouble and persecution that is coming soon at the hands of the

papacy. The people of America have forgotten the wanton cruelty and unrestrained butchery this unholy power demonstrated during the Dark Ages when it slaughtered over 150 million Christians because they wanted to worship God according to the Bible. Hitler's holocaust against the Jews was tiny compared to the papal holocaust against Christians during the Dark Ages, and the Jesuit-controlled news media never mention these atrocities.

The papacy's slaughter of Christians continues to this day. Since the papacy is a small country with little military capability, they always beguile other nations to do their fighting for them. Today the United States is their favorite bully. Thus, they are never directly involved, and people do not realize who is behind the wars, the trouble, and the terrorism. Avro Manhattan's book, *The Vatican's Holocaust*, describes in detail the papacy's continuing slaughter of millions of Christians in the 20th century. At the time of this writing, the complete text of *The Vatican's Holocaust* is available on the internet for downloading at:

<http://www.reformation.org/holocaust.html>

The slaughter in Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia, Croatia and others is a direct result of the Vatican's involvement in this area, but you will never hear about it because the Jesuit-controlled news media not only refuse to mention it but they lie about the situation to keep the papacy from being suspected of her true involvement.

The Jesuits seem to have a code that guides their every action. That code is: "Call your enemy what you are and always tell the exact opposite of the truth." This makes it very difficult to counter their lies and explain clearly and understandably what they are actually doing.

And now the world has terrorism to a degree that was unimaginable before the destruction of the World

Trade Center's twin towers in New York City where nearly 4,000 people lost their lives. This terrorism is part of the plan the Jesuits are implementing to scare the American people into giving up their freedoms, and it is working. The Bible says in Revelation 18:24 that the papacy is responsible for "... the blood of . . . all that were slain upon the earth." Evidence strongly indicates that Muslims hijacked the airliners and flew them into the towers. Thus we have rather strong evidence that the papacy's Jesuits have even been able to infiltrate the Muslims. Remember that the papacy and the Jesuits have been at this business for many hundreds of years. Remember, also, that we saw that no disguise is too difficult for them to assume.

Let us now consider some of the tactics the papacy is using to subvert the United States. Just because they call themselves a church does not mean that they are honest or honorable. Remember that Satan, the devil, gave the papacy their power and great authority (Revelation 13:2). The Catholics, through their Jesuits, are working to accomplish the exact opposite from what the Catholic Church claims they stand for. For instance, the church claims to be against abortion, but their Jesuits, working in secrecy and masquerading as regular citizens in the government, work to pass laws and make judicial rulings permitting abortion. They have their right hand fighting their left hand to thoroughly confuse the people of the United States and to keep the people from ever connecting this evil conspiracy with them. Here is another example. The pope gets on television and, acting very piously, prays for peace, while his Jesuits are behind the scenes stirring up all kinds of wars, conflicts and terrorism in the world.

The papacy has made colossal fools of untold millions of people down through history, and it is still doing so today.

The Jesuits are making a dedicated effort in the United States to degrade the morality of the people of

the country, to destroy family life, and to destroy all the traditional values that made this country the greatest nation in the world. This is being done by the abominable subjects being taught in government schools and colleges. It is being done by history courses that teach from revisionist history books containing many more lies than the truth. It is being done with pornographic sex education courses in the schools. It is being done with the destruction of religious values and the law of God, the Ten Commandments. It is being done by television programs, where entertainment is watching people break God's law. The natural result is a drastic increase in crime. Acts of the most abominable and shocking character are daily perpetrated within this country. The murder of one and a half million unborn babies in this country each year is one result of the demoralization of this nation.

The Jesuits are also flooding the United States with aliens, most of which are Catholic. Not only are we being defeated by the Jesuit enemy within, we are constantly being invaded by an army of aliens from without. These aliens dilute the traditional American society that understands our Constitution and how it works. This makes it much easier for the Jesuits in congress to pass the unconstitutional laws so damaging to the United States. And, of course, along with these aliens come the people who actually blow up the buildings.

There is talk in Washington of giving illegal aliens amnesty again, and also of converting our southern border into a "regional power block" where the area within 100 miles on either side of the border between Mexico and the United States would be administered jointly by Mexico and the U.S. The Jesuits are working to "eradicate the borders that separate Canada, Mexico, and the United States as part of a larger design to create a regional political and economic bloc duplicating the European Union." — *The New American*, October 8, 2001.

There is also talk of putting Mexican citizens in Mexico on United States' Social Security payments. The purpose of this, along with all the wars and police-keeping actions the U.S. military is into and all the welfare the government pays for, is to completely bankrupt the United States.

Pushed by the Mexican government, the Bush administration is working on a Social Security accord that would put tens of thousands of Mexicans [in Mexico] onto the Social Security roster and send hundreds of millions of dollars in benefits south of the border. — Jonathan Weisman, *The Washington Post*, Dec. 19, 2002.

Since the Jesuits beguiled the United States into giving the Panama Canal to the Red Chinese, there are now over 200,000 Red Chinese in the Canal Zone. This portends extremely serious problems for both the United States and Panama. A large percentage of Panamanian citizens want the United States to come back and restore the Canal Zone as before. Incidentally, the treaty giving the canal to Panama was never properly ratified. There were two versions of the treaty: an English version and a Spanish version. These two versions were **NOT** the same. The Senate ratified one version and the Panamanians ratified the other version. And the treason goes on and on.

The Bible predicts what is going to happen to the United States.

There are two beasts (powers) described in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation. The first has been shown to be the papacy, the Roman Catholic Church. The description of the second beast begins with Revelation 13:11. "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon."

The sea in Bible prophecy, you will remember, represents multitudes of people. The ascent of the first beast, the papacy, from the "sea" indicates that this power arose from the populated areas of Europe. The ascent of the second beast of Revelation 13 from the "earth" indicates that this power had its beginning in a sparsely populated area of the globe.

The previous verse, verse 10, gives us an indication of the time when this second beast was arising, for it refers to the deadly wound of verse 3 that the papacy received in the year 1798. "He that leads into captivity shall go into captivity: he that kills with the sword must be killed with the sword." Verse 11, then, describes the ascent of this second beast at that time.

What nation was coming to power in the world around 1798 in a sparsely populated area of the world when the papacy received its deadly wound? The only nation coming to power at that time was the United States of America. The North American continent was then a very sparsely populated area of the globe. Consider the beast that is used to represent the United States. It has two horns like a lamb. What beast other than a lamb has two small lamb-like horns? The obvious answer is the bison, or buffalo, as it is more commonly referred to. The buffalo, whose habitat is the North American continent, appeared for many years as a symbol on United States nickels.

The two lamb-like horns of this beast symbolized the kind, gracious, and gentle nature of this country when it was young. That the horns had no crowns symbolized the great religious and political liberty available to all under the United States Constitution. The horns without crowns represented a nation without a king and a church without a pope. The powerful buffalo symbolized the superior strength of the United States. On American money the message of her trust in God was proclaimed, and the great blessing of God rested upon this country.

Alexis de Tocqueville, a young French philosopher of the last century, came to our shores to discover what magical quality enabled a handful of people to defeat the mighty British Empire twice in 35 years. He looked for the greatness of America in her fertile soil, her limitless forests and natural resources. He examined America's schools, her Congress and her unique Constitution without fully understanding the source of America's strength.

It was not, he said later, until he went to the churches of America and found congregations aflame with righteousness, that he began to comprehend the secret of this power. Upon his return to France, de Tocqueville wrote: "America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great." — Des Griffin, *Descent into Slavery?*, Emissary Publications, P. O. Box 642, South Pasadena, CA 91030, 1980, p. 267.

The United States was the champion of liberty and freedom throughout the world. Before this time no nation in history ever had a written constitution that guaranteed the liberty and freedom of its people. But the glorious beginning of this country was to be corrupted in later years. The gentle, gracious, freedom-loving character of the United States in its youth was later used as a facade to hide the character that this country subsequently developed. This facade has successfully kept hidden, even from most of its own citizens, the real character the United States developed in these last days as a result of Jesuit infiltration and subversion.

Revelation 13:11 tells us that this country will speak as a dragon. We saw that the dragon is Satan. How does the dragon speak? John 8:44 tells us, "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When

he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” The devil is a liar. There is no truth in him. This great country, that began so beautifully by upholding the principles of morality and freedom, speaks, as Revelation 13:11 says, “as a dragon.” In these last days, the United States lies to the entire world, just as the dragon, the devil, does. The United States in these latter days deceives with a skill nearly equal to that of the devil himself, just as the Bible predicted, for the devil is using this country to play a major part in the disastrous events soon to take place. Most of its citizens readily believe the lies of this second beast, the United States.

Why does a country lie? Why does a person lie? Why does Satan lie? Lies are obviously used to deceive and to keep the truth from being known. Countries (and people) lie because a knowledge of their activities will hurt or embarrass them, or will prevent them from carrying out their sinister purposes. The fact that the United States speaks as the dragon shows that its government is engaged in criminal activities that its citizens and the rest of the world must not find out about. There are many thousands of examples of our government’s lying that could be discussed, but only two well-known examples will be considered here.

Perhaps the best known example of the United States government’s lies is our servicemen missing in action from the Vietnam and previous wars. Many very reliable reports of sightings have been documented, and photographs of men still alive have surfaced, but the government continues to lie about these men, claiming that they are all dead. How cruel it is for our government to simply abandon these men to rot in communist prisons for so many years after they risked their lives fighting in a war many of them felt was unjustifiable.

The second example of the United States lying to the world is the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Many books have been written about the as-

sassination that have put the lie to the official government version of what happened. The movie *JFK* very forcefully exposes the lies of the official government version of what happened and, along with many books on the assassination, shows that the assassination of President Kennedy was planned and organized at the highest levels of the U. S. Government. If the government has nothing to hide concerning this assassination, why were all the pertinent official documents of the assassination locked up until far into the twenty-first century? (Note: It is very unfortunate that the movie *JFK* used such revolting language and depicted such abominable scenes to tell the story of the assassination.)

Motion pictures were taken of President Kennedy during the assassination by one of the bystanders, a Mr. Zapruder. These pictures, which were locked in a vault for five years after the murder, show that the *Warren Report* could not possibly be true. The first time the American public got a look at these pictures was in the movie *JFK*. Why were the American people not permitted to view Mr. Zapruder's film earlier? Because the people would realize that the Government was lying.

Later there was a congressional investigation of the assassination. The results of this investigation were also locked away so the citizens could not learn the truth about this murder. Why, unless the government has something to hide and has been lying to the people.

Presidential candidates and most other politicians running for office seem to be very proficient at lying. The news media lie almost continually to manipulate the people of the country.

Consider all the lies that were told about the Waco massacre and all the lies told about the many scandals of the Clinton administration. Other well-known subjects that the government continues to lie about are the destruction of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City,

and the destruction of the World Trade Center towers in New York City.

Because of all the trouble and crime in society that the papacy's subversion of the United States has caused, the papacy will use the backlash against the crime and trouble to have the government pass laws that enforce the papacy's policies. As people come to a general realization that civilization simply cannot ignore God and morality and have any semblance of order and happiness, they will insist that the government pass laws to restore morality and decency in society. The French realized this after three and a half years of the unbridled excesses of the French Revolution. The French people found that they simply could not reject the Bible, and the government passed laws allowing the return of the Scriptures and religious freedom. Incidentally, the French Revolution was the result of the people of France rebelling against the iron handed rule of the papacy.

When the people of the United States, led by the papacy, become aware that the cause of all the trouble and problems in society is the disregard of religious morality, they will pressure Congress to pass laws supposedly to try to reverse decades of damage to the United States. Unfortunately these laws will be designed to legislate morality as defined by the papacy. If a society is going to have moral principles, it will be because of proper education, not legislation.

These religious laws that the United States is going to pass in the near future will cause the events of Revelation 13:12 to occur. "And he exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and causes the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."

Here we see that the United States will soon exercise all the power of the first beast, the papacy, and cause the people of earth to worship the papacy. What could the United States do that would force people to worship the papacy? In direct defiance of the Constitu-

tion, the United States will pass laws demanding obedience to papal religious requirements.

We have seen that Sunday observance was instituted by the papacy and that those who observe Sunday according to papal dictates instead of God's Sabbath, Saturday, are worshiping the papacy. The United States, therefore, will pass laws requiring her citizens to observe Sunday as the day to be kept holy! (Remember that the pope's Jesuits have been infiltrating the U. S. Government and other organizations for many decades.) That such a law would be passed in America may seem very unlikely at this time; nevertheless this is Bible prophecy and it will, indeed, be fulfilled exactly as verse 12 indicates. Actually, such laws are not as farfetched as they might seem. Many states now have Sunday laws on the books. These laws, usually referred to as "blue laws," demand the closure of certain businesses on Sunday.

Today the papacy and her many daughter religions, including non-Christian religions and the New Age movement, are working to consolidate the churches of the world into a single worldwide religion. Because of all the crime and violence in society and the world, and because of the increasingly heavy hand of government regulation and taxes, the people will come to realize that they need the restraints of religion in order to preserve freedom and order, and they will combine the false religions of the world into a vast one-world ecumenical religion that the Bible refers to as the false prophet. Revelation 16:13,14 mention this false prophet. "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon [Satan], and out of the mouth of the beast [the Catholic Church], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [ecumenical Protestantism]. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, that go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

The Sunday law will be one of the results of this false ecumenical religion. The people will mistakenly pressure government to go against the first amendment to the Constitution and legislate religious doctrine — in this case false religious doctrine.

The last issue of contention in this world will be over religion, specifically over which is the proper day on which to worship — Saturday, God's holy Sabbath day, or Sunday, the day set up by the papacy — and we will soon witness religious persecution worse than the world has ever seen.

Because of its position of leadership that the United States enjoys in the world, and because of the Jesuit influence, the rest of the world will follow its example and will also pass religious laws requiring Sunday observance. The papacy and her Jesuits will be the driving force behind this great Sunday movement. Satan and the papacy know that the scheme to establish a political New World Order through the United Nations to take over the world will not work. Through use of the trouble caused by trying to institute the New World Order, trouble caused by atheism, liberalism, socialism, radicalism, and terrorism, they are conditioning the world for these worldwide religious laws, especially the Sunday laws.

Continuing with the prophecy, Revelation 13:13 shows that the United States will dazzle the world with its great feats. "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men." Has the United States ever made fire come down from heaven in the sight of the whole world? During the Second World War this country dropped atomic bombs on two cities in Japan, and fire, indeed, came down from heaven. The reference to "great wonders" refers to the exalted level of technological excellence this country enjoys and the scientific marvels this country has accomplished.

Further describing the United States, Revelation 13:14 says, "And deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles that he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, that had the wound by a sword, and did live."

An image is a copy, a duplication. The first beast, the papacy, is a union of church and state; the armies and police power of the state carry out the demands and dictates of the church as in the Dark Ages. This union of church and state will be duplicated by the United States. Catholics and other religious denominations in the United States will join together in a great ecumenical alliance and will pass religious laws including the national Sunday law. When this happens, the United States will repudiate its glorious beginning of total civil and religious freedom and will become a union of church and state in a vain attempt to dictate morality to its citizens. The United States will use its police power to enforce obedience to the doctrines and dictates of this great ecumenical alliance, thus becoming the image of the beast. We see this beginning to happen today as the so-called religious right becomes more powerful.

Before the end comes, this country will repudiate every principle of its Constitution. The injunction of the first amendment to the Constitution prohibiting the government from making any religious laws will not prevent this prophecy from being realized, and the fires of religious persecution will again be kindled. Those who insist on keeping God's Sabbath day, Saturday, holy according to the Fourth Commandment will suffer severe persecution, as the following verse shows.

Revelation 13:15: "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Thus, we see that in America the true Christians who

continue to keep Saturday, God's Sabbath day, holy will be in danger of losing their lives. As impossible as this sounds to us today, remember that the unconditional prophecies of the Bible never fail. Many of us will live to witness this persecution, that will eventually become so severe that it will be a matter of life or death, and many people will be killed. ". . . The time will come, that whoever kills you will think that he does God service." (John 16:2)

We have recently seen the colossal abuse of governmental power against a religious sect in Waco, Texas. Consider how much of our Constitution had been repudiated in that fiasco. Without due process of law and without a trial, many people including women and young children were murdered in this despicable abuse of power by our government, that was shockingly similar to the Gestapo tactics used in Hitler's Germany. Virtually every thing the government and the news media said about this sect and the military operation in Waco was a lie, told to try to justify the government's actions. Before the government was finished with this operation, they tried to bulldoze all the evidence into oblivion.

Satan is planning to cause unbelievable trouble on the earth. This trouble will take many forms, from calamities of nature to political and civil unrest. The increase in the frequency and severity of earthquakes, hurricanes and tornadoes testifies that this trouble is already starting. Eventually the people who keep God's Sabbath day holy will be blamed for this trouble. The claim will be made that God is angry because this small group of Sabbath-keepers refuses to obey the Sunday law. People will claim that the trouble is the result, and if the world were rid of the Sabbath-keepers the trouble would cease. Thus the Sabbath-keepers, God's true people, are to be killed.

Satan has been trying for nearly 6,000 years to get mankind to break God's laws. He has tried enticement

with sinful pleasures. He has tried deception to convince mankind that the wrong way is the correct way. He has infiltrated his ministers (Jesuits) into the churches. He has used force. He used communism in an attempt to remove all traces of the Word of God from the earth. But no matter what he has done, there have always been a few people who have been true to God. In these last days of earth's history the devil is getting desperate, for he knows that he is going to die, and he can see that his end is very near. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time." (Revelation 12:12). Once more, in desperation, Satan is going to employ force, this time to a degree never before attempted, in an effort to exterminate every one of Christ's true Sabbath-keeping Christians.

Tactics that the United States will use in this religious persecution to suppress liberty of conscience are described in Revelation 13:16,17: "¹⁶And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: ¹⁷And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." The mark of the beast; what is it?

Great economic pressure will be brought to bear on the people who remain true to God and who continue to observe Saturday, His holy Sabbath day. These people will be totally isolated economically from society. They will not be able to hold a job; they will not be able to buy groceries; they will not be able to sell anything in order to obtain food or anything else they need unless they reject God and start keeping Sunday. They will be under extreme pressure to yield their faith to the papacy and to the devil, for the entire world will be arrayed against them. Imagine what life will be like for these people who refuse to receive the mark of the beast. This will be a time of severe trouble, and many who are

not sincere will succumb to this extreme economic pressure. Then, since some will remain true to God and continue to obey His Fourth Commandment and keep Saturday, His Sabbath day, holy, the ultimate punishment will be decreed: these people shall be put to death.

On the other hand, God's warning against receiving the mark of the beast is the most severe warning given in the entire Bible. It is found in Revelation 14:9-11. "9And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ¹⁰The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, that is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

Those who receive the mark of the beast will continue to lead normal lives for a short time before the time of trouble, the seven last plagues, begins. They will be able to go to work and buy the necessities and comforts of life, but they will not be able to face the Lord Jesus when He returns to this earth.

Chapter 14

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” (Revelation 14:9,10).

This is the strongest, most severe warning God gives anywhere in the Bible. Those who receive the mark of the beast will suffer the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture. “Without mixture” indicates that there will be no mercy mixed with this judgment. Previous to this time, God’s judgments have always been tempered with mercy. However, because of the nature of events during the time of the seven last plagues and because of the critical nature of the issue represented by this mark, those who receive the mark of the beast will suffer the results of evil without restraint during the final hours of this earth’s history. At this time God’s Holy Spirit and the influence of His righteousness and grace will be completely withdrawn from the wicked. The resulting horror defies description as the evil of this world is brought to full bloom. God tells us in Daniel 12:1 that the trouble during this time will be more severe than at any time since the earth was created. “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time

thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

We have just read God’s warning against receiving the mark of the beast. Man will also issue a warning. Man’s warning will be against *NOT* receiving the mark of the beast. Both warnings are severe. Revelation 13:15-17 shows that man’s warning includes the threat of death: “And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

Think what this means. We have seen that it means that if you remain true to God and refuse the mark of the beast, you will lose your job and will not receive compensation of any kind. It means that you will not be able to buy groceries to feed your family and yourself. It means that you will not even be able to sell some of your possessions in order to get a little food. You will be totally isolated from society and will not be able to obtain even the simplest necessities. Life will be extremely difficult for God’s true people at this time. This is to be a time of severe trial for the righteous; however, those who refuse the mark of the beast and remain true to God will be saved to enjoy eternity in God’s beautiful new earth.

On the other hand, those who do receive the mark of the beast will continue to lead normal lives for a short time before the time of trouble begins. They will be able to go to work and buy the necessities and comforts of life, but they will not be able to face the Lord Jesus when He returns to this earth. They will die in the cataclysmic earthquakes and destruction of this world, and at the end of the millennium they will be destroyed

in the lake of fire.

The mark of the beast is an issue of prime importance. What is this mark of the beast? There is much confusion in the world today concerning this mark. Since receiving this mark is of utmost importance, God surely must tell us exactly what it is, for He would not give such a stern warning against receiving the mark of the beast and then keep the nature of this mark hidden from our understanding. As we might have suspected, the seal of God is opposite to the mark of the beast, for one can receive either the seal of God or the mark of the beast, but not both.

The Bible uses the words “mark,” “sign,” and “seal” interchangeably. According to Revelation 13:16, the mark of the beast is received either in a person’s forehead or in his right hand. The seal of God, on the other hand, is received only in the forehead, as Revelation 7:2,3 shows. “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.”

Winds in Bible prophecy represent war and strife. These four angels, pictured in verse 1 as holding back the four winds of the earth, prevent the war, strife, and trouble that is coming on the earth from occurring until the people who are to receive the seal of God have been sealed. “And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.” (Revelation 7:1)

As soon as the people of God receive His seal, the angels will release the four winds, and the earth will suffer the trauma of the worst trouble since it was created. This trouble, the seven last plagues, is described in detail in chapter seventeen.

If we can discover what the seal of God is, we will then be able to determine exactly what the mark of the beast is since it is the opposite of the seal of God.

Isaiah 8:16 refers to the seal of God. "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." Here we see that the seal of God has something to do with His law. This, of course, stands to reason, for if a king puts out a proclamation of, for instance, ten laws, what must he do to make it official? He must seal it with his seal so that the people know it is from the king. Otherwise it would only be a piece of paper without signature, a proclamation with no authority.

We have seen that the great King of the universe has issued Ten Commandments. In order to make them official, He must have placed His seal in these laws. Let us now consider what constitutes a seal. The seal of any monarch or official must include these three elements: (1) his name, (2) his title, (3) the territory over which he is empowered to rule. The presidential seal of the United States contains the president's name; his title: President; and the territory over which he rules: the United States of America.

Where in the Ten Commandments do we find the seal of God? Let us painstakingly examine each of the Ten Commandments to see where God has placed His seal.

The first and the last five commandments contain none of the three essentials for a seal.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

The Second, Third, and Fifth Commandments contain His name, "Lord", but neither of the other essentials of a seal.

2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
5. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

The Fourth, then, must contain the information that constitutes the three required elements of a seal.

4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt no do any work, thou,

nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD [His name: Lord] MADE [His title: Creator] HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IN THEM IS [the territory over which He is empowered to rule: the universe], and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Here we see that all three essentials of a seal are contained in the Fourth Commandment: (1) His name: Lord; (2) His title: Creator (Maker); (3) The territory over which He is empowered to rule: Heaven and Earth. Thus, the seal of God is in the Fourth Commandment. You can see why Satan tries so hard to have the world reject the Fourth Commandment, for if this commandment is eliminated, the seal is removed and what remains is just a list of nine laws without signature. This is why the Catholic Church removed the seal of God from their ten commandments in their catechisms.

Chapter eight explained in detail that the term “Israel,” which means “ruling with God,” refers to Christ’s true church today as well as to the Israelites of Old Testament times. (Galatians 3:28,29 and other texts). Revelation 3:21 shows that God’s true Christians will indeed rule with Him. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” In Matthew 21:43 Jesus indicated that the honor of being God’s chosen people would be taken from the Jews. “Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” The nation mentioned in this verse to which Christ gave the kingdom of God is His true church. “Israel” refers to Christ’s true church and His true people today and has nothing to do with the nation

of Israel in the middle east.

With this in mind and with the knowledge that the seal of God is found in the Fourth Commandment, consider Exodus 31:13-17: "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done: but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever." And since Christ's true church today is Israel, the Sabbath is still God's sign between Him and his people. This and the following verses show that the Sabbath, Saturday, is the Lord's Day, and not Sunday as the papacy would try to make us believe.

Thus, the Sabbath is the sign, the mark, the seal between God and His people. The Sabbath day is the seal of God; and it is an everlasting seal, a perpetual covenant, as this text shows.

Ezekiel 20:12 is another verse that shows that the Sabbath is God's sign, His seal, a mark between Him and His people. In fact, this verse shows that God gave His Sabbaths specifically to be the sign of God's true people! "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them."

Ezekiel 20:20 also indicates that the Sabbath is God's seal. "And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God."

How long will the Sabbath be a sign, a seal, a mark between God and His people? Isaiah 66:22,23 indicates that the seal of God will be forever, for His people will worship and keep holy every Sabbath day in the new earth, forever. "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that, from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord."

Remember that all of these Old Testament texts are applicable to us today according to 2 Timothy 3:16,17. "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 perfect, throughly [thoroughly] furnished unto all good works." Sabbath observance is the sign of God's true Christians, and it will always be the sign of God's true Christians, for a perpetual covenant. (Exodus 31:16).

The mark of the beast is the opposite of God's seal. Since the observance of the Sabbath is the mark of God, then Sunday observance must be the mark of the beast. Suppose we ask the beast what its mark is. The answer it gives is:

Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change [of Sabbath to Sunday] was her act. And the act is a **MARK** of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters. — C. F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons

Sunday is our **MARK** of authority . . . The church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact. — *Catholic Record*, September 1, 1923 (Ontario).

Revelation 7:2,3 shows that God's seal is received only in one's forehead. "And I saw another angel as-

ceding from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Revelation 14:9,10 shows that the mark of the beast is received either in one's forehead or in his hand. "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

The mark is not a visible mark that is stamped on the forehead or on the hand. Likewise the seal of God is not a visible seal or mark. These verses tell us that the seal of God is always received in the forehead. The mark of the beast can be received either in the forehead or in the hand. Since the forehead represents the mind, the significance of these marks' being received in the forehead is that a person must make a conscious choice as to which mark he will receive. He must understand the meanings and the relationships of these marks, both to God and to Satan and the beast. Thus, either mark received in the forehead will indicate that a conscious choice had been made. The person who receives either mark in his forehead understands both the penalty and the reward for receiving either one.

The mark of the beast is sometimes received in the right hand, symbolizing that the person does not understand but goes along with society in obeying the laws that dictate Sunday observance. Even though these people do not understand the importance of not receiving the mark of the beast, they will still suffer the penalty, for God has given them plenty of opportunity to learn and understand the necessity of obeying the Ten

Commandments, including the Sabbath commandment.

The mark of the beast, Sunday observance, will come to prominence only when the United States passes the national Sunday law. The controversy between those who have the mark of the beast and want to keep Sunday and those who have the seal of God and want to observe the Sabbath, Saturday, will be the final issue of contention before the end, and it will be an extremely bitter contention.

Chapter 15

WHY JESUS HAS NOT YET RETURNED

Christ is waiting for only one thing to happen before He can initiate the final events of earth's history. As soon as the event for which He is waiting occurs, the final acts in this drama of earth will take place, and Christ will come to put an end to the trials of earth forever.

Satan knows that someday he is going to die. Ezekiel 28:18,19 says that he will someday be ashes upon the surface of the earth. "Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more."

Satan knows that he is going to die. Revelation 12:12 tells us that because of this he is furious. "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Naturally Satan does not want to die. He, like most of us, would rather live — forever. His time is running out, and he is in a panic trying to figure out how to keep himself alive.

Satan knows why Christ has not yet returned. He realizes that if he can prevent the one thing for which Christ is waiting from happening, he will be able to

live. He knows that if he can keep people from realizing exactly why Christ has delayed His return to earth, if he can keep them from understanding the Bible, and if he can keep them from realizing exactly what God expects of them, the event for which Christ is waiting will not happen. Everything that Satan does on the earth, therefore, is designed for only one thing: to keep him alive. By his concentrated barrage of lies and propaganda, through which he deceives the whole world, he attempts to prevent this one event from occurring. To discover what this event is, let us review exactly what God expects of His people.

How high is the standard God wants His people to attain? Is it possible, for instance, after one comes to realize and understand the situation in this world concerning sin, to live a perfect life thereafter? Is it possible for the human being to attain the goal of perfection in this life so that he never again breaks any of God's laws? Can the human being reach a level of character development where it is impossible for him to commit a sin? Does God expect perfection from His people?

Many will take exception to the thought that it is possible for us to reach the plateau of perfection. But before we hastily rule out this possibility, let us consider some of the many verses of Scripture that discuss this point and see exactly what God does expect of us and whether or not perfection is possible for us to attain.

In Matthew 5:48 Jesus gives us a command: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command for us to be perfect just as God is perfect seems like a total impossibility to us because Satan has instilled in our minds that we can never achieve such perfection. This, you will remember, was one of the accusations Satan made against God and His law in heaven: that it was impossible for anyone to obey His law perfectly.

When Jesus commanded us to be perfect, He was commanding perfect obedience to the Ten Commandments. Would Jesus ask us to do something that we could not possibly do? Of course not. However, man cannot achieve this state of perfection by himself; he needs the grace and power of God in his life if he is to accomplish this.

First of all we must understand from 2 Timothy 3:16,17 that we need the message of the entire Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, in order to be able to reach perfection. "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 **PERFECT**, thoroughly [thoroughly] furnished unto all good works." Notice that God gave us the Scriptures, specifically the Old Testament, so "That the man of God may be perfect." Thus we see that the entire Bible contains the information and instructions that we need to achieve perfection.

Ephesians 6:11 tells us to "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." The whole armor of God is the whole truth of God contained in the entire Bible. This text indicates that if we have on this armor, we will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; if we can stand against the wiles of the devil, we will be able to keep from breaking God's law ever again.

Speaking of the new covenant, which, you will remember, is shown in Jeremiah 31:31-33 and Hebrews 8:10 to be God's law written on our hearts and in our minds, Ezekiel 36:26,27 says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." This is a mighty promise God makes to His true people. He says that He, Himself, will cause them to walk in His stat-

utes. He will be the power in the lives of His true Christians to cause them always to obey the Ten Commandments. Furthermore, He says that His people will, indeed, keep His statutes and His laws. When God promises each of us that He will cause us to walk in His statutes and that we will keep His judgments and do them, how could one of God's people possibly say that he could never achieve this goal?

God's causing us to walk in His statutes is somewhat analogous to power steering on a car. Power steering will not turn the wheels until the driver moves the steering wheel slightly. Then the power steering takes over and moves the wheels for him. Likewise, if we want perfection with all our hearts and strive for this goal ourselves, God will take over and do it for us just as He promised.

God promised that He would keep us from breaking His law, and Jude 24 tells us that He has the power to do so. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. . . ." Since Christ has the power to keep us from falling, to keep us from breaking His law, and since He promised that this is exactly what He will do, what excuse do we have for ever breaking any of the Ten Commandments?

If we do not know that we can stop breaking God's law, chances are that we never will. Satan, you see, has been working very hard to convince everyone that it is impossible to reach perfection. We must realize that we have all been deceived all our lives on this point. However, in order to reach perfection we must want this more than anything else in our lives.

Over and over again the Bible indicates that God answered the prayers of Christ while He was on earth. Suppose Christ prayed that God would keep His people from evil, from breaking the Ten Commandments. Would God answer a prayer like that? Of course He would. Jesus prayed that exact prayer, as recorded in

John 17:15: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Christ prayed that His people should remain in the world but that God should keep them from evil. This is exactly what God is doing for His true people, who really want to be perfect.

That God answered this prayer is shown in 2 Thessalonians 3:3: "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil." Evil, of course, is sin, the breaking of any of the Ten Commandments. Since the Lord keeps His true Christians from breaking the law, they can, indeed, live perfect lives if this is what they desire more than anything else.

A very important point is brought out in the following verse. Some may get the mistaken idea that God is simply going to take sin out of our lives, without requiring any effort on our part. This idea is not correct, for the following verse indicates that we are still required to resist the temptations that will come to us. God never says that the task of overcoming sin will not require effort on our parts. In fact, our successful resistance to some temptations will require considerable effort. God does promise to give us the power and the grace that, coupled with our efforts, will make us successful. God also promises in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that He will not allow the devil to tempt us beyond our capacity to resist. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Since God is not permitting us to be tempted beyond our capacity to resist the temptation, how can we possibly have any excuse for sinning? Since He is not permitting us to be tempted beyond our capacity to resist, how can we say that it is impossible for us to stop breaking the Ten Commandments? We sin, you see, because we have chosen to do so. We sin because we

put our desires (lusts) before God. God has done everything to make it possible for us to resist the devil, to overcome sin completely, and then to live perfect lives, but to achieve perfection we must desire it more than life itself.

God again tells us, in 1 Peter 5:10, that He, Himself, will make us perfect. “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, **MAKE YOU PERFECT**, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” God will indeed do this, but He will never do it against our will.

The key to perfection is that one must desire with all his heart to be perfect and, without wavering, strive for this goal above all others. God will not give us the power to be perfect unless perfection is what we really want. One of the reasons so many fail so miserably to achieve perfection is that they are not ready to go all the way with God. They have some pet habits they know are coming between them and God, but they are not quite ready to give them up. Or they have some things they want to do yet, things they know are not quite right in God’s sight, things they know will take time and means from His work.

We all know how easy it is to do something when asked by someone we love. Indeed, we often take great pleasure in obeying one whom we dearly love. Can our love for God be any different? When our love for God exceeds our love for everyone and everything else, we are pleased to do as He has asked. When we cherish God above everything else, we are pleased to obey His commandments — perfectly.

In Ephesians 4:13,14 we see again that God expects us to be perfect. “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning

craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” Notice the meaning of perfect in this text: “Unto a perfect man, unto . . . the stature . . . of Christ.” God, you see, expects us to become as steadfast against sin as was Christ.

Does a truly born-again Christian commit sin? The term “born-again” implies death to our lives of sin. If we have died to sin, will we continue to break God’s law, the Ten Commandments? The Bible definition of a born-again Christian is found in 1 John 5:18. “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” Remember that God is not permitting us to be tempted beyond our capacity to resist. If we sin, it is because we have chosen to do so! If we sin, we have not died to sin and are not born-again.

Thus we have seen many times using many texts that a true born-again Christian will never break any of God’s Ten Commandments. We have seen that God has promised that by His grace and power each true Christian is able to overcome sin fully and then live the remainder of his life without ever again breaking any of God’s Ten Commandments.

The definition of a born-again Christian is also found in 1 John 3:9. This verse not only tells us that we can achieve perfection, but it also says that it is **IMPOSSIBLE** for a true born-again Christian to commit a sin! “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” A true born-again Christian simply does not break God’s Ten Commandments, for it is impossible for him to do so, as we just read! The phrase “his seed remaineth in him” refers to God’s law written on our hearts and in our minds. Do we have the faith to believe this promise of God? Do we have the faith to overcome sin — forever? Is this our desire above even life itself? If so, perfection is not far away.

From the verses that we have just been considering, a definition of the perfection that God requires be-

comes apparent. God requires that the person reach a point where it would be impossible for him ever to sin again. Even Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before sin entered were not perfect according to this standard, for even though they had never sinned until Satan beguiled the woman, they were capable of sinning. God wants His people to attain such quality of character that they are incapable of breaking His law. He wants His people to reach the point where their characters will not permit them to sin.

With so many texts that indicate that a person can totally overcome sin and live a perfect life, why do so many believe that this is impossible? Why is it so difficult to believe that a Christian can live the remainder of his life without sin? Because of the devil's propaganda, which has inundated this world. God tells us that He will keep us from falling, and we believe the devil! Perhaps we do so because it is easier on our consciences if we have an excuse, no matter how flimsy, for doing things that we know God would not approve of. It is time that we reject all false doctrine and accept the truth from God, for He will do what He promises. We must have the faith to accept what the Bible says, regardless of how wrong or how difficult it seems to us, and believe that God will, indeed, enable us to overcome sin totally and to live perfect lives if we truly want Him to.

How does God cause us to walk in His statutes? How does God enable us to keep His laws perfectly? He does this in two ways. By helping us to develop a hatred for sin that rivals His own in intensity. When a person hates sin as much as God does, the option to sin is simply not open to him.

The second way is that God gives us a powerful conscience against sins. Every time we say no to a temptation, we are stronger to resist temptation and our conscience against sin increases in power and intensity.

Because God promised that He will enable those of us to keep His law who really want to with all our hearts, 1 John 3:6 makes the statement that “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.” Here we see that if anyone continues to sin he does not even know the Lord. In fact verse 8 says that “He that committeth sin is of the devil.” A born-again Christian is one who has died to sin and has been born into a new life free from sin. As the apostle Paul says in Romans 6:2, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” If we are still sinning, we are not born-again. There is no such thing as a born-again Christian who breaks God’s Ten Commandment law.

Not only do they who sin not know the Lord, but 1 John 2:3,4 tells us that those who say they know the Lord and yet break any of the Ten Commandments are liars! “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” Remember again that God is not permitting us to be tempted beyond our capacity to resist. If we sin, it is because we have chosen to do so; and if we choose to do so, we certainly do not know the Lord.

Overcoming sin and living perfect lives is entirely possible, as we have seen. Christians who have overcome sin and have achieved perfection are described in Revelation 14:4,5: “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.” They are without fault; they are perfect.

There are other verses in the Bible that mention those who have completely overcome sin and who keep God’s laws perfectly. Revelation 12:17 describes these people: “And the dragon was wroth with the woman,

and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” These people are described as keeping the commandments of God. It does not say they keep most of them, or that they keep them sometimes. It says that they keep them — always. Revelation 14:12 also describes these people: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” It is, then, indeed possible to keep God’s law perfectly, for these verses describe the people who do.

Actually, it is only the perfect who will be saved to enjoy the beautiful eternity with God, for God will not take anyone to heaven who would ever break any of His Ten Commandments after he got there, as we see in Proverbs 2:21,22. “The upright shall dwell in the land, and the *PERFECT* shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.” The perfect shall dwell in the land.

Nahum 1:9 also tells us that no one will ever again break even one of God’s laws after sin and sinners are destroyed. “What do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end: affliction [sin] shall not rise up the second time.”

Some may be worried at this point about people who have died without having reached perfection. These people will not necessarily be lost. God will save a person if that person lived a proper life based on the truth that he had. This is implied in Acts 17:30: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” God will probably save people who sincerely strive to obey Him, and who, in the pure society of heaven, would realize that sin is intolerable and immediately abide by the law; but God will never take anyone to heaven who would break any of the Ten Commandments after he got there. We simply do not have the capacity to judge others at

this time, and we must rely on the fact that God is totally just and that He will do the right thing. Remember that at the end of the millennium the entire universe votes unanimously that Christ is totally righteous and totally just.

Why does God tell us the same things over and over again in the Bible? We have all lived from childhood literally in a sea of deception from the devil. We have believed the devil's lies all our lives, and often Bible truth seems impossible to us. We rationalize and philosophize and explain away the verses we will not accept; we become dogmatic and stubborn. "Thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass." (Isaiah 48:4). We must have complete faith in God that He will not lie to us. We must believe what God tells us in the Bible regardless of what we feel is right. Proverbs 16:25 tells us that "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." God tells us things over and over again hoping that the truth will penetrate our brows of brass.

If God told us something a thousand times, probably most people would still not believe it. As we have seen, He has told us repeatedly to keep the Commandments, yet most do not even believe that the law is applicable today. We have seen that the Lord has told us over and over again that He Himself will make us perfect, yet most refuse to believe it. What must God do to get through to the people of this world?

We sometimes wonder about the severe punishment for sin that was administered in Old Testament times. God severely punished some of the early sinners so that those living afterward would understand that He means exactly what He says. We need to realize that when God tells us something, we can rely upon it. He has told us that He will keep us from sinning and that true, born-again Christians cannot sin. We should search our own hearts to find out why this is so difficult for us to believe.

The parable of the wheat and the tares, found in Matthew 13:24-30, gives us an extremely important clue in our study of why Jesus has not yet returned to gather His faithful people from the earth.

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.”

Here we have a farmer who planted a field of wheat. During the night his enemy came and planted tares. Strangely, the farmer wanted to let the tares grow until the harvest. This is usually not the case in the real world. The farmer would pull up the weeds to allow his crop more room to grow. What does this parable mean? Jesus explains the meaning of this parable in Matthew 13:36-40.

“Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares

are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.”

We see that the situation on earth is symbolized in the parable of the wheat and the tares. Christ is allowing both the wicked and the righteous to grow together until the harvest at the end of the world. The tares referred to here are Bearded Darnell grass, that before ripening looks exactly like wheat. If the seeds are eaten, however, they produce violent nausea, convulsions, and sometimes death. Only at the time of ripening is the difference between the Bearded Darnell grass and the wheat apparent, for the Darnell grass turns black and the wheat turns a golden brown.

One reason why Christ wants to allow the wicked to flourish beside the righteous is that if He punished the false Christians before they showed their true colors, He would appear to be unjust, and many would fall away. The righteous would not understand about the false Christians, thinking that their fellow church members who were punished had been true Christians. They would mistake the tares for wheat. Thus, they would be appalled at what they would believe to be the injustice of God. The farmer in the parable did not want to uproot a tare for fear that wheat might be uprooted also. This parable, therefore, reveals the great care with which Christ works for the salvation of everyone. He is “not willing that any should perish.” (2 Peter 3:9).

These false Christians are the subject of Matthew 7:21-23: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” The world thinks that they are true, but God knows differently, and they must be permitted to “ripen” for the harvest at the end of

time so that the difference is readily apparent to all.

That Christ is waiting for the harvest is also mentioned in James 5:7: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." Here Jesus, the husbandman, is pictured as waiting very patiently for the fruit of the earth to ripen. When the fruit ripens, then follows the harvest, that is described in Revelation 14:14-19.

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."

We see here that the true Christians (the wheat) and the wicked (the tares, or in this last symbolism, the grapes of the earth) both get ripe together. When a person first becomes interested in the message of the Bible, he begins to study. Gradually he understands and applies his newfound knowledge to his life, and some of his sins are forsaken. As he learns more and more and forsakes more and more sin, he grows closer to God and closer to the goal of perfection. This is the process referred to in the Bible when it speaks of Christians ripening for the harvest. The righteous are becoming

more and more righteous. Likewise, the wicked in their ripening process are becoming more and more wicked.

Revelation 14:12 describes the end product of this ripening process. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Here we have people who indeed do keep the commandments of God. They do not just keep some of them, and they do not slip once in a while and sin. Here are they that keep all the commandments all the time. Here are the perfect people. Here are they who have successfully put sin out of their lives. Here are they who have achieved perfection. Here is the ripened wheat for which Christ is waiting.

Will those who achieve perfection realize that they have done so? No, they will not. As they get closer and closer to the goal, they get closer and closer to Christ. They are aware of their past sins and see themselves in comparison with Christ, and none of them will feel that he is perfect.

Christ is patiently waiting for 144,000 of His people to achieve perfection before returning to earth to take them to heaven. Why does He wait for 144,000 people to reach perfection before He will return? When He was on earth He lived a perfect life, showing us that it can be done. Satan, however, complained that Christ could live a perfect life because He was God in heaven, but that men could not achieve this. Another accusation against Christ and His law.

Christ, therefore, must wait until He has 144,000 people whose characters have developed to the point where for them sin is impossible. He can then point to them as proof that his law can be obeyed — perfectly. Then, what can Satan say? Nothing. To the entire universe the 144,000 prove him to be a liar. As soon as the 144,000 perfect people appear, the final events of earth's history will immediately occur, and the pain and misery of earth will come to an end.

Why the number 144,000? This is the number of people that Christ feels is adequate to prove to the universe that the accusations which Satan made against Him and His law are false. This is the number that Christ feels is required to make Satan, himself, admit that he was wrong.

It is sad that only 144,000 of the vast population of earth will achieve this perfection of character in these last days. The 144,000 are discussed in Revelation 14:1-5: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for **THEY ARE WITHOUT FAULT** before the throne of God." Thus we see that the 144,000 are, indeed, the perfect people, for "they are without fault before the throne of God."

The phrase "not defiled with women" is often misunderstood. This simply means that the 144,000 perfect people do not defile their characters in the least with the false doctrines and practices of the many false churches. A woman, you will remember, is the symbol of a church in Bible prophecy. These perfect people will have nothing to do with any heathen doctrine. Their religion is the pure Word of God. Notice that the 144,000 are redeemed from among men. They do not die. They are the righteous living when Christ returns.

The 144,000 are again mentioned in Revelation 7:1-4: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."

The term "Israel," which means "ruling with God," refers to the true Christians in the world today. (Galatians 3:28,29). If God's true people today are Israel, how, then, can they be from the twelve tribes of the children of Israel? Continuing with Revelation 7:5-8 we see that 12,000 people come from each of the twelve tribes to make up the 144,000.

Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

We can get some insight into the meaning of these different tribes by considering Genesis 49:1-27. These

verses describe the last testimony Israel (Jacob) gave to his twelve sons just before his death. Notice that this is a prophecy for the last days, the days in which we are living. "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob: and hearken unto Israel your father." Israel then proceeded to describe the character of each of his sons:

Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.

Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.

Issachar is a strong ass couching between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.

Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.

Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.

Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel: Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.

Thus Israel described the characters of each of his sons. Remember that this was a prophecy for the last days. These twelve personalities represent the twelve character groups of mankind. Therefore, from each of these twelve different character groups will come twelve thousand to make up the 144,000. How perfectly Christ

has planned for this drama of earth and for the salvation of mankind! So that there can be no accusations by Satan that one character type had advantages over others, Christ's perfect people, His 144,000, will come equally from every temperament, indicating that salvation is equally available for everyone in the world. It is totally up to the individual whether he will obey the Lord and be saved or not.

Even heathenism, through astrology, recognizes that there are twelve different character groups into which the human race falls, each under a different sign of the zodiac. Incidentally, God tells us in Jeremiah 10:2 to have nothing to do with astrology. "Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven (signs of the zodiac); for the heathen are dismayed at them."

The 144,000, of course, will not be the only ones to be saved. After Revelation 7:1-8 describes the 144,000, consisting of twelve thousand from each character type, Revelation 7:9 describes a vast multitude who are also saved. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." These are the righteous people of all ages who will be resurrected when Christ returns to enjoy an abundant life in God's eternity.

Thus we see that before He can return to earth and put an end to sin forever, Christ must wait for His 144,000 perfect people. Therefore, when the Lord will return is really up to us.

Revelation 19:7 also shows most clearly that the Lord is waiting for his people to get themselves ready before He will return to the earth. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Second Corinthians 11:2 tells us that His church, His people, are to be presented to Him as His bride. "For I

am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” When His true church, His wife, makes herself ready — when 144,000 of her members reach the goal of perfection — the Lord will return to earth.

How long will we keep Him waiting? How many more people will have to suffer and die before we understand that we are keeping Christ from returning? How many more millions of people will be butchered by the communists, the papacy, and other ruthless dictators around the world before we realize that Christ is waiting for us? How many more unborn babies will be murdered in the abortion clinics of the world before we realize that Christ is waiting for us to get ready for His return?

We think too much of having fun. Many plan all week long what they are going to do on the weekend to have fun, and as they have their fun, millions suffer. People waste a fourth of their lives in front of television sets absorbing the devil’s lies by the millions, as he prepares this world for the final crisis. Millions sit in front of computers watching the most abominable trash on the internet. Millions play the most violent games on their computers. Entertainment today is watching people break God’s law.

Suppose Christ has 143,999 people and is waiting for one more. Suppose also that the last person will be you. How will you feel to learn of the misery, pain, suffering, and death many people were caused to bear because you were not quite ready, because you wanted to do other things before you surrendered your life fully to Christ, and He had to wait for you?

We have seen that Christ Himself gives us power to be perfect. He has promised that we will never be tempted beyond our ability to resist the temptation. Therefore, there can be no excuse for breaking God’s

Ten Commandment law. Christ has done everything necessary for each one of us to be able to reach perfection. There can be no excuse for keeping Christ waiting any longer.

If we sin after we have once understood, it is because we have willingly chosen to serve ourselves instead of our Creator. We have made a conscious choice to break God's law. Once a person understands God's word and becomes a true follower of Christ, he will never permit himself to sin, for sin will be as loathsome to him as it is to God. Remember, that 1 John 3:9 tells us that it is impossible for a true born-again Christian to sin.

It is time to realize that God is in earnest. Sin is despicable in His sight, and it is time for His people to understand this. Perfection, you see, is not only possible; it is what God requires.

Often one hears the expression, "We must finish the work so the Lord will return." There are different ideas as to just what this work is. We have seen that the work which must be done is on the individual, by himself, with the help, the grace, and the power of God, who is able to keep us from falling. Let us get to this work, and, indeed, finish it quickly so that God can end this drama of earth and cleanse the universe of sin forever.

Chapter 16

GOD'S LAST WARNING TO A DYING WORLD

Our world has just about reached the limit of God's mercy and forbearance. Man's pride and arrogance, his greed and selfishness, his violence, brutality and immorality have reached a level that is intolerable. The suffering of millions caused by man's inhumanity to man is appalling to those watching this drama of earth. The end must come soon.

God, of course, will not destroy this world without first warning us of the impending doom, but most of the people will ignore the warnings, just as they did in Noah's time. Noah preached to the people for 120 years, trying to warn them of what was going to happen, but none would listen. They mocked and ridiculed as he gave the warning that rain would fall to such an extent that the whole world would be flooded. They laughed and insulted as he constructed the ark that carried him and his family safely through the flood. The people would not believe Noah because it had never rained on the earth before. Rain was an utter impossibility, they said; and the people continued the evil and violence so detestable to God.

Likewise, as our world rapidly approaches the final catastrophic events of this earth's history, most disregard the abundant warnings and advice God has given concerning the end. Instead of believing God, they believe the scientists and false ministers, who proclaim a more credible report. In this they make a fatal error.

The last warning that God has given to our dying world is an admonition to obey God and to have nothing to do with any of the false religions in the world

today. This warning, found in Revelation 14:6-11 and Revelation 18:1-4, has four parts and is delivered by four angels. The word "angel" is translated from *malak* in Old Testament Hebrew and *aggelos* in New Testament Greek. Both words mean messenger, or agent. When the Bible proclaims that an angel delivers a message, it simply means that a messenger or messengers deliver a message that comes from God. Usually men are the messengers whom God uses to proclaim His messages to the world; they are to be God's messengers in proclaiming this last warning to the world.

The first part of this last warning is found in Revelation 14:6,7: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." The word "fear" means to have a profound reverence for God resulting in strict obedience to His requirements.

The fact that this angel flies in the midst of heaven, and that it goes to "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" indicates that this message is proclaimed world-wide. The subject of the message is the everlasting gospel. The word "gospel" simply means "good news." The good news is that Jesus Christ has provided for us a way of escaping the traumatic events soon to take place and also a way of escaping death in the destruction of the wicked at the end of the millennium.

The message itself is a command to worship God, the Creator, and to return to the pure religion of Christ. It is a command to worship God in Biblical purity and truth, without defilement by heathen doctrines or men's traditions. The fact that a message such as this is in the Bible for these last days indicates that men *have* corrupted their religion and have fallen away from wor-

shipping (obeying) God in the proper way. Men have been involved with tradition and pagan practices so long that these practices seem normal and right, but God warns against these things.

The first message also tells us that God's judgment hour has already begun. Notice the present tense in the statement: "for the hour of his judgment *IS* come." Of necessity, God must judge the people of this world before He returns so that He will know whom to save and whom to reject. Because judgment will have ended by the time Christ returns, Revelation 22:12 tells us that He brings each of us our reward, either life or death, when He comes. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." God's judgment began in the year 1844, the year in which the 2300-day (year) prophecy of Daniel 8:14 expired. Since that time, judgment has been proceeding, beginning with the first people who lived on the earth and continuing to those who are living today.

The second message is found in Revelation 14:8: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

Notice that Babylon is referred to here as a woman. Since a woman represents a church in Bible prophecy and since this woman is shown to be a harlot by her fornication, she represents a false religious system. God, you will remember, uses the term "fornication" to describe the adulteration of the pure doctrine of the Bible with pagan practices and traditions of men. The phrase "she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" shows that this false religious system is world-wide. She has spread her traditions and heathen doctrines to all nations, and most of the people of the world have accepted her pagan traditions and nonsense as truth.

The word "Babylon" means "confusion." This term is used in the Bible to signify the confusion resulting from the more than 500 false religious denominations that exist today. We have seen that Babylon is the Catholic Church and all her Sunday-keeping daughter churches.

The second message is that Babylon, the false religions of the world, has fallen. "Has fallen" is repeated to emphasize the fact that today the false churches have fallen far from the truth of God. As the false churches continue to move farther and farther from the truth, they will soon discover that there is not really that much to keep them separate, and they will form a great ecumenical alliance powerful enough to influence the government of the United States to pass a national Sunday law. This action by the United States will give birth to the image of the beast. The United States and the great ecumenical alliance will form the image of the beast when the police powers of the United States are used to enforce the dictates of the ecumenical alliance and the Catholic Church.

The third message from God to our dying world is found in Revelation 14:9,10. It is the most severe warning found anywhere in the Bible. "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." We saw that the mark of the beast is Sunday observance and that the warning of this third message will go into effect at the time the United States makes the image to the beast by passing a national Sunday law.

In these last hours of earth's history the devil is getting desperate, for he knows that he is going to die, and he can see that Christ will, indeed, have His 144,000

perfect people for whom He is patiently waiting.

Satan will be the driving influence behind this national Sunday law. God's true people are expecting Satan to appear in all his glory when he masquerades as Jesus. What most of these people do not know is that he will do this at least twice! He will first appear shortly before the close of human probation to give impetus and supposedly divine authority to the national Sunday law by telling the people that he changed the day to be kept holy from Saturday to Sunday. This act will not fool the truly sincere and obedient followers of Christ, for they are expecting him to do this, but it will drive the people of the world into a frenzy to persecute those who refuse this mark of the beast in much the same way as the scribes and Pharisees influenced and controlled the mob who demanded the crucifixion of Jesus.

Satan issues his extremely stern warning, described in Revelation 13:15-17, that we had better accept the mark of the beast or else we will not be able either to buy or to sell and thus will not be able to supply our basic needs. Satan even threatens with death those who refuse to receive the mark of the beast. "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Satan will make the lives of the righteous extremely miserable, while trying to convince them that their doctrines are incorrect. Who shall be able to stand? Only the righteous who keep all of the Ten Commandments and put their complete trust in God, for without the grace of God our situation on this planet would be completely hopeless.

Let us further investigate Babylon, for we must

completely understand the meaning of this term in order to understand fully the fourth part of God's warning to our dying world. Revelation 17:1-6,9 describes: "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration [astonishment]. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."

These verses refer to a great harlot, a false church, who has made all nations participate with her in her false religion. The statement that the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her indicates that they have willingly accepted her tradition and pagan practices in place of true Bible doctrine.

John was carried away into the wilderness where he saw this large, powerful church drunken with the blood of the saints. Notice that this is a special wilderness, for the verse says "THE wilderness."

This wilderness is also mentioned in Revelation 12:6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed

her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”

We know from previous chapters that this time period of 1260 prophetic days or actual years is the period of the Dark Ages, when the papacy reigned supreme. John, therefore, in the vision was carried forward in time to this wilderness period of the Dark Ages, that he describes in Revelation chapter seventeen. The only large, powerful, prominent church existing at that time was the papacy. This harlot, therefore, is the Roman Catholic Church.

Let us now go back and consider the details of Revelation 17:1-6,9 with the understanding that this prostitute is the papacy. The statement in verse 1 that this church is a “great whore” indicates an almost total falling away from God’s truth. The phrase “She sits upon many waters” means that she is a world-wide, powerful church. Verse 2 says that the people of the earth are drunk on the wine of her fornication, that is, drunk with her false doctrine. Many fail to realize the significance of this verse. They do not realize that this church’s doctrine has intoxicated virtually the entire world so thoroughly that the truth of the Bible seems totally wrong. These people are stone drunk; they are completely unconscious of the truth in the Word of God. So drunk are they that many of them are unable to understand Bible truth even when it is explained very carefully and in great detail to them.

The statement in verse 3 that this harlot rides upon a seven-headed beast indicates that the church is in control of the political organizations represented by the beast — a union of church and state.

Verse 4 mentions the colors of the papacy: scarlet and purple. The harlot is adorned with these colors and with gold, precious stones, and pearls, symbols that indicate expensive tastes and worldly glamour to attract her lovers, the nations of the earth. The papacy in its pomp and ceremonies is always richly adorned. She is holding a golden cup that is full of wine, the “abomi-

nations and filthiness of her fornication.” The contents of her cup are her pagan doctrines.

“And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” (Revelation 17:5). This verse refers to “Babylon the Great” and indicates that of this family of false churches generally referred to as Babylon, there is one church that is greater than all the rest. This is the church that is basically the seat of the false pagan doctrines that are practiced to a greater or lesser extent in all the other churches. We see that this church is described as a mother church who has given birth to many other churches, all of which are referred to as harlots. Which church claims that it is the mother church? We have seen that the Catholic Church makes this claim:

I acknowledge the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church for the mother and mistress of all churches. — Art. 10, Creed of Pope Pius IV. Double Bull of Pope Pius IV, Nov. 13 and Dec. 9, 1564, trans. in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, New York: Harper, 1919, Vol. 1, p. 99.

Verse 6 says that this mother church is “drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” We have seen previously how the papacy persecuted many millions of Christians during the Dark Ages.

Rome, the capital, or seat of power, of this church, is well-known as the city that is built on seven hills. Verse 9 says that “The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth.” This is yet another point identifying this harlot as the Roman Catholic Church.

The seven heads of the animal in this prophecy actually represent two things. The New International translation of the Bible says in verse 9, “This calls for a

mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings." Verses 10 and 11 say in the King James Version: "And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

These verses are obviously dealing with a time prophecy. John, you will remember, was carried into the wilderness, the period of the Dark Ages. More specifically, he was carried to the end of the Dark Ages, to 1798, when the papacy was receiving its deadly wound. The five heads that have fallen are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, pagan Rome, and papal Rome. The one that is, in 1798, is the United States. The one that is to come is the powerful ecumenical alliance of the false churches that will be instrumental in having the United States pass a national Sunday law. This powerful alliance is called the false prophet in Revelation, chapters 16, 19 and 20. The control of the political power in the United States by this powerful alliance of churches is symbolized by the words "image to the beast." The beast that "was and is not" is the papacy, for it had just received its deadly wound in 1798; but as we know, it was to come back to prominence and power in the world. It is an eighth head in this group of political powers; but, of course, it is also of the seven, just as this prophecy said.

Since this harlot who sits upon a beast having heads that represent powers that had come and gone before the papacy appeared on the scene of history in 538 A.D., one may wonder how this harlot could be the papacy. The reason is that papal doctrine is a strange mixture of the old pagan religions of these fallen nations but with a Christian facade. This prophecy, in fact, shows the pagan nature of papal doctrine. The book entitled *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop, Loizeaux Broth-

ers, Inc., Neptune, New Jersey, shows in great detail the pagan origin of Catholic doctrine.

When Christ was on earth 2000 years ago, He established one church. He did not establish more than one. Ephesians 4:4-6 strongly emphasizes that there is only one true church. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." How much plainer could it be? Satan has saturated the world with many religions and denominations in order to confuse mankind. Many who are trying to find God's true church give up in despair. This tactic of Satan has been extremely successful in keeping most people out of God's true church and ignorant of the truth.

How does one go about finding God's true church? Simply look for the church that teaches obedience to all of God's Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath commandment, and to the other injunctions of Scripture.

This brings us to the fourth part of God's last warning to a dying world. This part is found in Revelation 18:1-8. "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **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. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto

her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.”

Verse 1 indicates that just before the end, the true message of God will go forth through the earth with a loud cry to enlighten the world with the glory and truth of God. Part of the message of this loud cry is given in verse 2, which describes the complete fall from truth of the mother church and all her daughters, for they are the habitation of devils and of every foul spirit, one or more of which are counterfeits of God's Holy Spirit.

Verse 3 again indicates that this false religious system is world-wide, for all nations have become drunk on this wine of Babylon by believing her false doctrines.

Verse 4 is the most important part of this message to Christ's true people who still reside in the false churches. “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Today God's true Christians can be found in all churches throughout the world, including the Roman Catholic Church. These people are in these false churches because they have not heard the truth and do not understand that they should not be there. When they do hear God's truth, they will recognize the Lord's voice and will come out, as verse 4 instructs them to do. Christ tells us in John 10:26-28: “But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” You see, as soon as Christ's true people who are

still in these false churches hear His voice, the truth from the Bible, they will immediately come out of Babylon and follow the Lord; they are His sheep, and they recognize His voice and His truth.

There are other admonitions to come out of the false churches and have nothing more to do with them. Second Corinthians 6:14-18 tells us, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial [Satan]? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore **COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM, AND BE YE SEPARATE**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Christ commands His true Christians to leave all the false churches, to come out from among them and be separate.

First Corinthians 5:11 also tells us to keep no company with those who break any of the Ten Commandments of God. "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." We have seen that those who worship on Sunday are idolaters, for they are worshiping not the Creator God of the universe, but another "god," who has decreed Sunday observance.

A foolish man is one who disregards the law of God. Proverbs 13:20 says: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Proverbs 14:7,9 says: "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him

the lips of knowledge. Fools make a mock at sin.”

Chapter 17

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

Let us now consider more of the details of the last days. Since we have all broken the law of God, we are all guilty of sin and deserving of death. We are all, therefore, on probation in this life. One day soon, however, probation will close, and those who have not responded to the message of truth at that time will be forever lost to suffer their own penalty for sin, which, of course, is death. From the time probation closes, the righteous will remain righteous, and the wicked will remain wicked. There will be no one converted to the truth once probation closes. Revelation 22:11,12 tells us that after probation closes, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

Christ is waiting for His 144,000 perfect people, symbolized in the parable of the wheat and the tares by the ripened wheat. The wicked at this time are also ripening — into perfect wickedness, so that the world will be completely polarized. When this polarization occurs, probation closes and the events of the final year of earth’s history are initiated. That the plagues take one year is found in Revelation 18:8 “Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.” We saw earlier that in prophecy one day equals one year.

What event marks the close of probation? None! The people of earth will not realize that probation has closed — until the first of the seven last plagues oc-

curs. Shortly after probation closes, the seven last plagues begin on the earth. This is the time of trouble, described in Daniel 12:1, such as was not since there was a nation. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

When severe trouble comes, people who never give the Lord a thought when times are good turn to God for help, but during this time of overwhelming trouble they will be unable to find the Word of the Lord, as Amos 8:11,12 says. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it."

Let us now investigate the seven last plagues, that begin shortly after probation closes. Revelation 15:1-8 gives a prelude to the plagues.

Verse 1. And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations

shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5. And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6. And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Verses 1 through 4 describe the righteous praising God. The righteous make it plain that God is not to be held responsible for the calamity of the seven last plagues, for they emphasize in verse 3 that “just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.” This shows that God is not directly responsible for the seven last plagues. He, of course, could prevent the plagues from happening, but He must allow the plagues to fall in order to finish this drama of earth.

Satan, you will remember, wants to be God. He has his own ideas as to how the universe should be run, and he has accused God of all kinds of injustice in an effort to discredit God. Up until probation closes, God overrules Satan’s operation, not permitting the full results of evil to become apparent. During the seven last plagues, however, God completely removes His influence and His Holy Spirit from the earth and allows Satan and the wicked complete freedom to do as they will. This is symbolized in Revelation 15:8 by the temple’s being filled with smoke so that no one could enter. God completely withdraws Himself during the seven last plagues and lets things happen as they will.

Satan wants to be God. Now he has his opportunity

without any restriction from God at all. The results are total chaos. Satan cannot hold things together, and the seven last plagues are the result. Even he did not realize the mighty power of God to keep all nature under control. You will remember that Colossians 1:17 tells us that it is God who holds all things together. "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist [hold together]."

With the understanding that God does not cause the seven last plagues — He only permits them to happen — let us read the entire sixteenth chapter of Revelation, which describes these plagues. Revelation 16:1-21:

Verse 1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

2. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

3. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

4. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters: and they became blood.

5. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

6. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

7. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to

scorch men with fire.

9. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11. And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

12. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

13. 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.

14. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness

of his wrath.

20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

We are told in Revelation 18:8 that the duration of the plagues is one year. You will remember that a day in Bible prophecy represents a year in actual time. The plagues occur during the last year of earth's history.

The first plague, described in verse 2, is ulcerous, cancerous sores all over the bodies of the wicked. The New International translation says "ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image." Notice how this verse emphasizes the fact that those who have the mark of the beast will be afflicted with these sores. God's true people, the 144,000, do not get the sores.

The second plague, described in verse three, is a sea of blood, that kills every living thing in the sea. The wicked are enraged at this time because of the sores and because of the bloody sea. They blame the righteous for these plagues, saying that if they could rid the earth of the Sabbath-keepers, these plagues would be abated. There is, therefore, a death decree, mentioned in Revelation 13:15, issued for the extermination of all those who will not fall into line and observe Sunday instead of God's Sabbath day. This action on the part of the wicked is reminiscent of the time nearly two thousand years ago when the rulers proclaimed that one man, Christ, should perish rather than the whole nation.

The third plague is that all the fresh water is turned into blood. Imagine having the discomfort of the sores and having to drink blood to quench your thirst. This plague further enrages the wicked against the righteous.

The fourth plague, found in verse 8, is that the sun increases its energy output, and the temperature of the earth drastically increases, thus aggravating the pain and misery that the wicked suffer at this time when they are covered with boils and have no water to drink. This intense heat, of course, will cause a severe drought and famine, and the water which is blood will by this time undoubtedly emit an unbearable stench. Still the wicked blaspheme God and blame His people for their predicament.

The fifth plague is a darkening of the earth in rapid succession after the burning heat of the sun. The sun now decreases its energy output. Darkness, bitter cold, and misery follow. "And they gnawed their tongues for pain. And blasphemed the God of heaven. . . ."

The sixth plague is the drying up of the waters of the Euphrates River in preparation for the kings of the east. In order to understand this symbol we need to review the historical account of the drying up of the Euphrates River, which the Medo-Persian army used as a means to defeat the ancient city of Babylon. The river Euphrates flowed through the center of ancient Babylon. Before they attacked Babylon, the army of Medo-Persia diverted the river. They marched into the city over the empty river bottom, and Babylon was defeated. This sixth plague is a reference to the fall of ancient Babylon. The drying up of the waters symbolizes the preparation for the defeat of modern Babylon and the return of the Lord.

In ancient Babylon the people were having a drunken orgy, as described in Daniel chapter five, when the city fell to the Medes and Persians. The people of Babylon were unaware of what was happening. In fact, they were even so careless as to leave the gates across the river open, and the city fell quite easily to the invading army. Likewise modern Babylon, the vast collection of false churches and religions, is totally unaware of its impending doom. In its stupor, drunken on

the wine of Babylon, it persecutes God's true people mercilessly. The kings of the east mentioned in this verse represent Christ and those who accompany Him on His return to earth. Christ and all the holy angels will first appear as a small cloud in the east upon their arrival at earth.

Satan will be the instigator of the battle of the great day of God Almighty. "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 the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." (Verses 13 and 14) The three frogs symbolize lying propaganda that comes from Satan, the papacy, and the great Protestant ecumenical alliance, that had caused the United States to pass the national Sunday law. All three of these proclaim with a loud voice the lying propaganda that goes forth to the nations of earth to prepare them for the battle of that great day of God Almighty, when the entire earth, with the exception of the 144,000, will be arrayed against the returning Lord.

Let us review some of the details of this "battle of the great day of God Almighty." We saw in chapter 5 that this is NOT the battle of Armageddon. What is this propaganda that these three put out, and how does it prepare the wicked for Christ's return?

As we saw in chapter 5, for some time now publications and the news media have been talking about a large asteroid hitting the earth and the catastrophic damage it will cause. Thousands of articles have been written and movies have been made on this subject. Asteroids are millions of rocks in orbit around the Sun generally between the orbits of the planets Mars and Jupiter. They range in size from small boulders to hundreds of miles in diameter. The largest asteroid is about 600 miles in diameter. The impact speed of an asteroid as it

hits the earth could be more than 150 thousand miles per hour. If a large asteroid hit the earth traveling at this speed it would cause catastrophic damage. The cover of the April, 1997 issue of Popular Mechanics magazine has a dramatic, full-color picture of a large asteroid heading straight for the earth. The headlines say, "Asteroid Hit, Planet Earth



Will Be Hit by an Asteroid or Comet." The dinosaurs were destroyed during Noah's flood, but scientists are claiming that a large asteroid that hit the earth was responsible for the extinction of the dinosaurs.

Thus the devil is trying to convince people that the earth is in danger of being destroyed by an asteroid. Why do you suppose he is doing this? We saw earlier that when Christ returns the people will see a small cloud in the east. As Christ gets closer to the earth, the cloud will appear larger and larger. Satan will convince people that this cloud is an asteroid that is headed for the earth, and in order to save the earth we will have to fire nuclear missiles at it in an attempt to break it up into smaller fragments before it gets too close. This is the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Christ will be welcomed with a barrage of nuclear missiles.

Satan knows that his time is getting very short and that things are out of control. He must do something to try to turn the tide of his defeat. He sees the 144,000

whom he has not been able to swerve from their perfect allegiance to God. He must force these people to break God's law, for his life depends on it. It is time for his most overpowering deception: his masquerading again as Christ. He first appeared as Christ to put his counterfeit power and authority behind the Sunday law before probation closed. In all his glory, he will again appear to the inhabitants of earth in his last-ditch effort to make the 144,000 believe that he is Christ and thereby cause them to sin. He must appear at this time in order to be a credible counterfeit, for this is the time the 144,000 are expecting the Lord to return. Because God's true people know that Satan will masquerade as Christ, Satan's appearance before probation closes satisfies their expectation that he will do this and tends to make them more susceptible to his overpowering deception in these final hours.

Have you any idea of the tremendous power these events will have to cause the 144,000 to believe that Satan is Christ? This is the reason for Revelation 16:15, "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." In this verse Jesus gives His righteous people a gentle warning against Satan's overpowering deception when he masquerades as Christ. It is also a word of encouragement to God's people. The deception will be almost overwhelming; but God's people trust in Him and believe His Word, and by His grace they are able to remain steadfast.

Armageddon is generally thought to be the great final battle on earth. It is also generally thought to be a devastating conflict between armies on the earth, between east and west. Verse 16 says, "He gathered them together into a place called . . . Armageddon." The word "Armageddon" is thought to mean Mount Meggido, but there was never a mountain called by this name. No geographical location was ever known by the name Armageddon. This place called Armageddon, therefore,

must be symbolic. A careful study of verses 14 through 16 will show the meaning of this term clearly. Verse 14 mentions the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Verse 15 next refers to the righteous. In verse 15 Christ personally gives His people a gentle warning to be on their guard when Satan masquerades as Christ. Verse 16, then, which mentions Armageddon, refers not to the battle of verse 14 but to Christ and the righteous of verse 15. The meaning of verse 16 becomes clear when one realizes who the personal pronouns refer to in this verse. Let us read verse 16 and indicate the proper meaning of these pronouns: "And he [Christ, who spoke in the previous verse] gathered them [the righteous of the previous verse] together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

Armageddon, therefore, are the places all over the world where the righteous are gathered in small companies to escape the wrath of the wicked and to wait for the return of the Lord. As the persecution over Sunday observance versus Sabbath keeping increases to fearful intensity, the righteous escape to the hills and to the mountains, where they find refuge among the munitions of rocks, as Isaiah 33:15-17 says. "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off." The land that is very far off is heaven.

Armageddon does not refer to a specific place, but to the hills and mountains and other secluded places all over the world where the righteous gather in small companies to escape the wrath of the wicked and to wait for the return of the Lord. This is why, search as they will, scholars cannot find the specific place called Arma-

geddon.

During the seven last plagues the righteous are cared for in a very special way, as Isaiah 33:16, which we just read, shows. The wicked have blood to drink, but the righteous will have both bread and water. Just as God fed the Israelites of old with manna and supplied them with water as they wandered in the wilderness of Sinai for forty years, so He will supply manna and water for His 144,000 during the time of the plagues.

Christ, with all His holy angels, returns to the earth immediately before the seventh plague to gather the righteous, both living and dead, and takes them off the earth before the destruction of the wicked at the seventh plague. During the seventh plague the wicked are all slain and the entire surface of the earth and all the works in the earth are completely broken up by the world-wide earthquake and the huge hailstones. This was described in detail in Chapter Five, The Grand Finale. Notice verse 19: "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." Babylon is divided into three parts. These are the same three parts mentioned in Revelation 16:13 as the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. These three parts are (1) Spiritualism (devil worship through the occult), (2) Catholicism, and (3) the great Protestant ecumenical alliance. These three will be completely destroyed during the seventh plague.

Ezekiel 33:11 says: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Probation could close any day. For those who have died, probation closed at the time of death. None of us knows how long his life will last.

For us to miss eternity in God's new earth would

be tragic. Nothing in this world is worth it. To be ready when the Lord returns is worth any sacrifice we might have to make.

“And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” (Revelation 22:6,7).