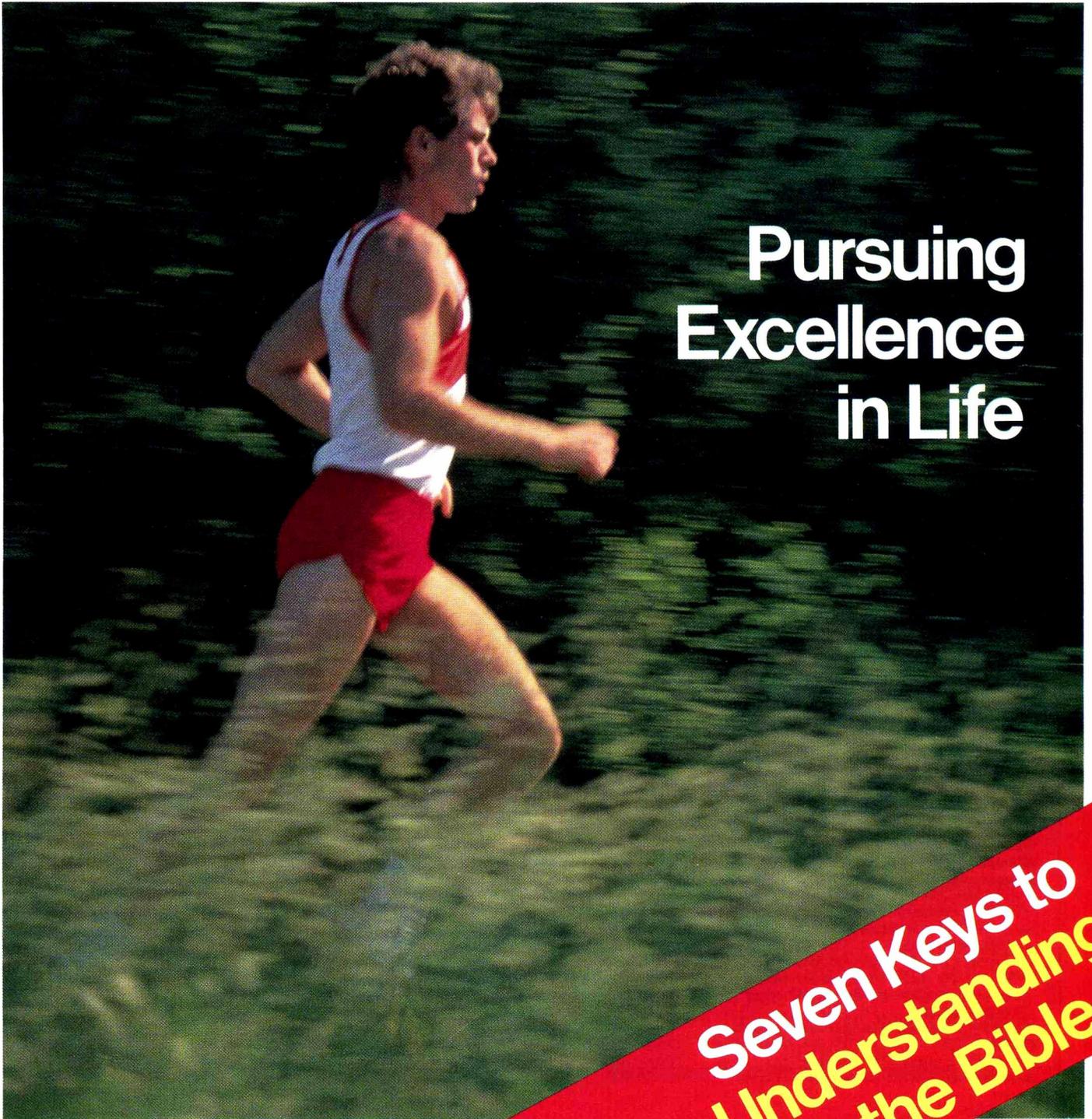


DECEMBER 1984

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



**Pursuing
Excellence
in Life**

**Seven Keys to
Understanding
the Bible**

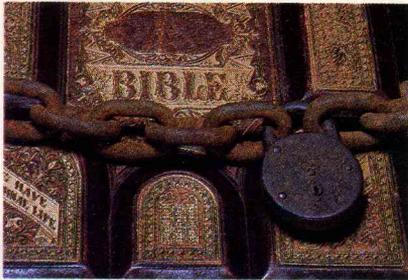
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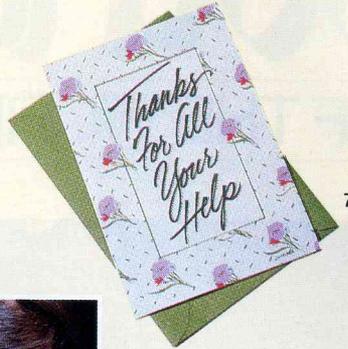
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**7 Keys
to Understanding
the Bible**
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PERSONAL FROM

Robert Armstrong

Why This Work Is Unique!

How grateful we should be that the great God has seen to it in all ages that HIS TRUTH *could not be erased* from human accessibility!

Ever since the time of Jesus Christ there have been orga-

until Jesus Christ died to pay the sinners' penalty. As a palliation for guilty consciences, the Satan-influenced conspirators early seized on "the blood of Christ," deciding that "grace" would be a wonderful selling point to make their pagan religion universal.

But REPENTANCE from sin —

every organized attempt was made to DESTROY the Bible itself. But God saw to it that His Word was preserved. Finally, after the invention of printing, copies of the Bible became accessible to the public.

A few early Protestant ministers began searching for TRUTH. They were buried so deeply in the mire of false teachings, palmed off as "Christianity," that they could not emerge from the morass of confusion at once — or during their lifetime.

Each of these religious leaders did recognize and grasp a few rays of light shining here and there through the darkness. But it is 10 times more difficult to UNlearn error, once believed, than to learn a *new* truth. So each of these men retained perhaps half or more of the error. Each added a certain amount of NEW erroneous doctrine of his own.

Thus a hodgepodge of denominations arose.

Certain Protestant scholars, during the latter part of the 18th century and through the 19th, devoted lifetimes to producing various works, more or less scholarly, to assist in Bible study and understanding. These were the exhaustive concordances, the lexicons or Greek-English and Hebrew-English dictionaries, the marginal reference systems in the printed Bibles, the religious encyclopedias, the Bible dictionaries and the commentaries. Most of these men were scholarly enough — but their minds still were largely blinded to spiritual truth. They had been taught false doctrines from childhood and blindly



nized conspiracies to destroy the Bible.

Jesus Christ started God's Church in A.D. 31. And in A.D. 33 the great conspiracy got under way to organize Satan's GREAT FALSE CHURCH! The conspiracy sought to destroy the true Church and the Word of God, by *counterfeit* doctrines. They appropriated Christ's NAME and called themselves "Christian" — then presented a *false* Christ and a *false* "Christianity."

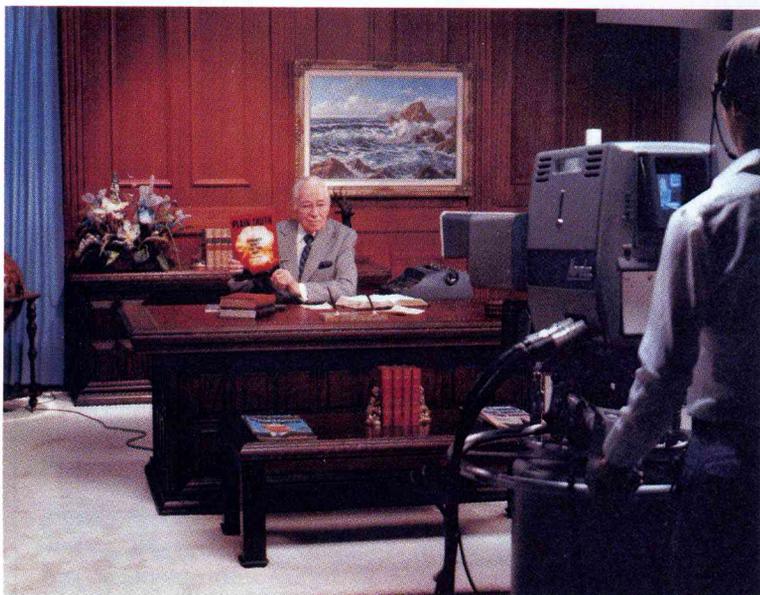
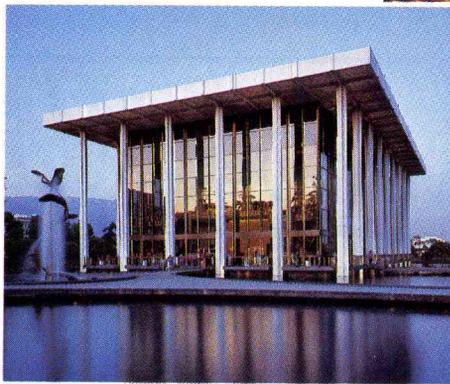
No religion had ever before offered the forgiveness of sins

turning away from sin — which means OBEDIENCE to God's law — that was something quite different. They well *knew* the natural mind of man is *hostile* to the idea of obedience to God and is not subject to the law of God (Romans 8:7).

So they "did away with" God's law. They substituted "penance" for repentance. They perverted the true Gospel of Jesus Christ in a manner to make it utterly ineffective. And THE WHOLE WORLD has been misled and deceived!

During the Middle Dark Ages,

Relying on God alone, God's Church proclaims His truth worldwide. Right: The Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena, considered by many to be the finest auditorium of its type, is the home of an internationally renowned concert series featuring the world's finest performing talents. Far right, grand lobby of Ambassador Auditorium.



In the Church's own studios (above), Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong tapes another World Tomorrow television program. Right: Helpful literature is produced in several languages by the Church.



assumed them to be true. Nevertheless, these exhaustive works and Bible helps were making it gradually possible, for those who would be willing, to come to more truth, more rapidly — and at the same time the more rapidly to dispel error. The real TRUTH was becoming too nearly revealed — Satan became disturbed, then stirred to action.

He introduced German rationalism and the theory of evolution into education. Also after the Dark Ages, he removed his brakes against acquisition of scientific and technological knowledge. To pervert this latter, Satan mixed it with German rationalism in educational institutions.

The new learning became rapidly materialistic. It became agnostic, then more and more atheistic. It began to be considered “old-fashioned” to believe in God. Now “higher criticism” of the Bible gushed forth like an avalanche. Men began sitting in judgment of GOD — began CRITICIZING GOD.

As we developed through the 20th century, this “new” rationalism gradually found its way into the religious seminaries where future ministers were being taught. Students entering seminaries had already encountered the new supposed “rational” knowledge. It appealed to intellectual VANITY. It was the fashion of the day. Men wanted to BELONG. They wanted to CONFORM. So they floated along on the atheistic tidal wave.

This latter is the process that was getting started in real earnest when God brought me to a study of His Word, more than 58 years

ago. The Bible helps had not been “modernized” as yet. They were still on the shelves of the public libraries, and available in second-hand bookstores.

I started my study in an effort to *refute* a biblical truth the big denominations had lost. My determined motive was to prove these denominations were RIGHT.

But in the BIBLE *itself*, and



Church-supported service projects around the world include: working with children at special education centers in Jordan (above left); in Thailand, teaching English to Southeast Asian refugees (above right); participation in archaeological research efforts in Israel and elsewhere (right).



and the former life. This I realized. It meant *giving up* my life as I had lived it and planned to live it.

So I then and there made a covenant with God — not a **BAR-GAIN** — just a covenant in which I **GAVE** my life over to **GOD**. If He could use it, I told Him He could have it. I meant it!

Personal evangelism: Left, Herbert W. Armstrong with Chaim Hertzog, president of Israel. Above, annual Feast of Tabernacles is world's largest convention.

Now I am human, and I have my share of human nature, which I have *tried* to fight. I have cried out to God to fight it for me and through me. Yet it has, inevitably, asserted itself and caught me off guard a number of times.

Being human I have, at times, just as everyone who ever lived has done, allowed this human nature for the moment to snatch this life out of God's hands and reappropriate it for its own interest or desires. But — once awakened to what had been done — this has been repented of.

I *did mean it* when I **GAVE** my life literally and in unconditional **SURRENDER** to **GOD**! I have tried to leave it in His hands. I haven't done a perfect job, but **GOD** has done a perfect **WORK** in spite of human frailty.

But, I can reflect back on two or three contemporary experiences of other men.

One young man had made quite a splash in the ministry. He started out accepting the sponsor-

(Continued on page 21)

checking with all these "helps" besides, many of which had even then deliberately distorted the facts on this subject, the **TRUTH** reluctantly emerged. I was faced with an uncomfortable decision. I didn't want to accept it. To do so meant some **DOING**. It meant being a **DOER** of God's law — not a "hearer" only. And that **DOING** meant persecution, probably the ridicule of former friends and

business acquaintances. But to reject it meant to be deliberately dishonest. It meant to *knowingly* disobey God — and I had come to see what the consequences would be!

It was not easy, but I made the surrender to God. I told Him that this meant the **END** of my life for myself — or in the world and among business associates. It meant utter isolation from them

Photos: Hal Finch, Warren Watson, Good News

7 Keys to Understanding the Bible

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Do you realize that God has purposely closed much of the Holy Bible from human understanding, *until now?*

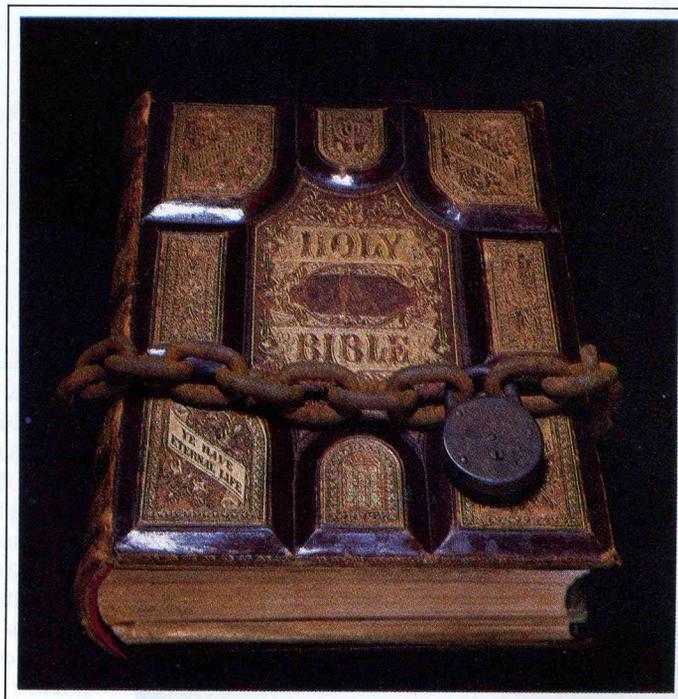
Look at the pitiful spectacle — hundreds of different sects and denominations, all confused and mixed up, each with its *own* different ideas, beliefs and practices — all disagreeing as to what the Bible says — none understanding its full, true message!

WHY?

Because none of them possesses the *keys* needed to open the doors to understanding, and therefore this spiritual treasure house is closed to them.

Locked up until now!

Even the prophets inspired in writing the Word of God did not understand much of what they wrote. Daniel records in his last chapter, “I heard this, but I did not understand it” (Moffatt). When he asked the meaning of what he was inspired to write, he was told, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are *closed up and*



sealed till the time of the end” — or, as Moffatt translates it, “*till the crisis at the close*” (Daniel 12:8-9).

The whole world is now in chaos — we have now entered the world-*crisis* at the *CLOSE* of this age! But even now, Daniel was told, “the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand” (verse 10).

Since this very Word of God reveals that “sin is the transgression of the law” (I John 3:4, Authorized Version), those who encourage the breaking of God’s law, teaching that it is done away

— as nearly all sects and denominations do — are, in Bible terminology, “the wicked.” And who are “the wise,” who shall now understand?

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a *GOOD UNDERSTANDING* have all those who *do* His commandments” (Psalm 111:10).

Again God’s angel caused Daniel to record: “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (Daniel 12:4).

Yes, much of the Word of God, especially the prophecies, were shut up and sealed until now. Today people *run* to and fro, all over the world, in automobiles, trains and planes. Today knowledge has been increased. We have reached the world-*CRISIS* AT THE *CLOSE* of this age! The wise — those who fear God and keep His commandments — can now *UNDERSTAND!*

Even 50 years ago this true understanding *was still closed and sealed!* None of the established church denominations has been willing, in these 50 years, to admit error, correct false teachings or accept new light now sud-

Photos by Hal Finch and Warren Watson

denly revealed! No wonder they all disagree! They are in BABYLON — CONFUSION!

In the first place, none can understand by himself. The carnal mind cannot see spiritual things.

These truths are *revealed* through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit — and God gives His Spirit *only* to those who OBEY Him and keep His commandments! Only the truly converted can even *begin* to understand the marvelous truths of God.

But even having that beginning, there are SEVEN KEYS needed to unlock these closed doors of truth!

And just as one key alone will not unlock your safety deposit box at the bank, so no one, no two or even six of these keys will open the scriptural doors to full UNDERSTANDING. It requires ALL SEVEN KEYS.

Seven vital keys thrown away

Jesus Christ gave His apostles *the keys* of true UNDERSTANDING, which unlock the door to the KINGDOM OF GOD.

To Peter and the others, He said, "And I will give you *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 16:19).

But He prophesied apostasy. "Many false prophets will rise up," He said, "and deceive many" (Matthew 24:11). Paul foretold the great "falling away" from God's truth and Jesus Christ's Gospel, turning unto FABLES (II Thessalonians 2:1-12, II Timothy 4:1-4).

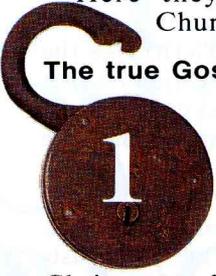
It had even begun in Paul's day (II Thessalonians 2:7). Church leaders only used *the keys* to lock up the door of the Kingdom, and then threw the keys away, even as the Pharisees and rulers did before them: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" said Jesus to them. "For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in" (Matthew 23:13).

And so naturally, today no denomination of traditional

Christianity, sect or church possesses these seven KEYS!

Here they are: God's true Church has all of them!

The true Gospel



Almost no one has this first key, believe it or not! The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel that Jesus Christ preached — a message sent from God by Jesus Christ as messenger. The Gospel of Christ is CHRIST'S OWN GOSPEL — not a story *about* His Person!

Today people are led to believe that the Gospel is telling the story *about* Jesus. Telling people *about* a Savior, they believe it is "the gospel of salvation," not understanding the true *way* of salvation themselves! No wonder there is NO POWER in what is falsely preached as the "gospel" today!

The Gospel of Christ "is the POWER OF GOD to salvation" (Romans 1:16). Today most popular denominations do away with all that is vital in Christ's Gospel, saying He was preaching only to Jews under the Old Covenant! WHAT IGNORANCE!

What *is* Jesus Christ's Gospel? What is the message God sent to mankind by Jesus Christ? It is the GOOD NEWS of the KINGDOM OF GOD! Kingdom means GOVERNMENT! It is the message of *divine government* — government by GOD'S LAWS! It is the prophetic proclamation of the coming WORLD GOVERNMENT to rule all nations and bring today's confused, chaotic, war-weary earth PEACE and JOY! It is the vital, dynamic, powerful, living message of GOD'S GOVERNMENT, first in individual hearts in God's true Church, now in this world, later all nations internationally in the WORLD TOMORROW!

Of course that message includes the knowledge about the Savior, High Priest and coming King! Of course, it includes the true way of salvation, which the churches have lost! And it includes also knowledge of the location of the TERRITORY to be ruled over by the King of the

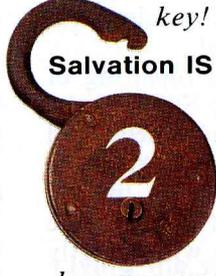
coming Kingdom — the fact it is *this earth* and not heaven!

But there can be no GOVERNMENT without LAWS, and so the TRUE GOSPEL also must proclaim the LAW of God, which alone can bring peace to the world and success, happiness and joy to the individual!

The TRUE GOSPEL has to do with the nations of today's world, world conditions today and Jesus Christ's reign over all nations in the WORLD TOMORROW! It is a full, complete, dynamic and POWERFUL Gospel, which has been kept by the powers of darkness from the world for 1,900 years!

This knowledge is the first key!

Salvation IS creation



The usual idea preached in this dark and confused world is that salvation is God's plan for *repairing the damage* caused by Satan in "the fall of man" in the Garden of Eden.

God, so the world has been taught by church leaders, had *completed* His work of creation — man was a *finished* creation, spiritual, immortal, perfect in character. Then along came Satan, and by cunning he wrecked God's handiwork, thwarted God's purpose, caused man to fall to the low plane of sinful human nature, ruined God's perfect creation! Then God is supposed to have looked down upon this colossal smashup, and to have thereupon thought out THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION as a means of *repairing the damage*.

Salvation, then, is presented merely as God's effort to *restore* man to a condition *as good as* Adam was in the first place. The picture is that God has been doing His very best for 6,000 long years, but Satan has resisted Him!

God has found Himself unable to avoid a CONTEST with Satan — a "GREAT CONTROVERSY," as one writer phrased it — in which God has done His best, but Satan has

continued to outsmart Him and now today, with TIME ABOUT UP, the vast majority of people on earth are still unsaved — still on Satan's side! The contest is almost over, and the best God can now do is take revenge and send Jesus Christ to DESTROY ALL THE WICKED whom Satan has kept on his side!

Can you see *that* picture could only have come from the deceiving false GOD OF THIS WORLD, Satan himself? It presents Satan at every turn as more powerful than God — as succeeding in his rivalry! This entire concept is a damnable LIE!

The TRUTH is the second important KEY — and it explains GOD'S PURPOSE in placing humanity on this earth!

Salvation is *not* a repairing of the damage done by Satan in the Garden of Eden. Satan never did alter or change God's purpose or plan. The devil has never thwarted God's will. All has gone always, and always will, exactly according to GOD'S PURPOSE!

Salvation is merely the COMPLETING of CREATION! Creation was *not* completed 6,000 years ago, at the time described in Genesis 1! That was merely the *first* or *material phase* of a creation *now still going on!* The spiritual creation is a process, continuing, according to God's plan, today!

Man was created PHYSICAL, not spiritual — MORTAL, not immortal — of the dust of the ground — the clay model that God the master potter is now fashioning and shaping, *spiritually*, into the FINAL image! Man was created purposely, in the mere PHYSICAL image of God, a free moral agent, with possibility revealed to him of *receiving* as God's gift the very spiritual nature of God, so that he may by God's power be made into a perfect, righteous, spiritual character, then given immortality as God's gift!

There is no contest! Satan does nothing except what God *permits!* And God permits it FOR A PURPOSE.

Character is created by experience, and experience requires

time, and therefore it is a process! As Jesus Christ our example learned by suffering, so do we!

The fact that SALVATION IS THE COMPLETING OF CREATION — the *spiritual* phase of creation — that GOD'S PURPOSE is to create in us, as free moral agents who make our own decisions, the supreme masterpiece of all His creative acts — holy, righteous, spiritual, immortal CHARACTER — resisting the downpull of Satan and self-desire, building character by LIVING GOD'S LAWS — that knowledge of GOD'S PURPOSE is *the second vital KEY!*

God's dual method

A duality runs all through every phase of God's plan. First, the *material* creation of Genesis 1, completed; second, the *spiritual* creation still in process pictured finally complete in the *prophecy* of Revelation 21 and 22.

There was the *first* Adam, material, of the earth, and there is the *second* Adam, Christ Jesus, spiritual, from heaven.

There was the *first* covenant with Israel, material and national, devoid of salvation, based upon the birthright promise, and there is the NEW Covenant, spiritual and individual, with a spiritually begotten Israel, based upon the scepter promise. God made man mortal, of the dust, in order to convert him into immortality, composed of spirit.

In this very salvation process is the DUAL METHOD — the very word *salvation* means, first, rescuing from the penalty of eternal death, and second, the act of preserving or imparting eternal life as God's gift.

And so, in being saved, we first are now *begotten* of God by the indwelling of His Spirit in our mortal bodies as the temple or house of the Spirit — and are now merely the *heirs* of salvation, and second, we shall finally be fully *born* of God at the resurrection of the just, when we shall *inherit* the Kingdom.

This same DUAL PRINCIPLE

runs all through prophecy! First, a former or preliminary fulfillment that is merely the type or forerunner of a second, the final climactic fulfillment occurring, usually, during this CRISIS AT THE CLOSE we already have entered!

And positively *none* can understand the Bible prophecies unless this DUALITY of prophetic fulfillment is understood. It is a vital key!

God's Holy Days

These were given to God's people to picture and to keep them in the understanding of God's PLAN for bringing about His purpose — His reign over all the earth whose people shall have been converted to righteous immortality!

Every sect, organization or denomination that does not observe God's Holy Days and has fastened its eyes upon the pagan Romish holidays instead has never understood GOD'S PLAN!

God's Holy Days picture: First, Passover, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Second, Feast of Unleavened Bread, putting sin out of our lives, or keeping God's commandments — and during this Festival was the wavesheaf picturing the resurrected Jesus Christ accepted of God as our High Priest.

Third, Feast of Firstfruits or Pentecost, picturing the coming of the Holy Spirit and the completing of this, the merely *first* and preliminary harvest of souls.

Fourth, Feast of Trumpets on first day of seventh month, picturing the Second Coming of Christ at the beginning of the seventh millennium.

Fifth, Day of Atonement, picturing justice done by laying Satan's guilt in our sins upon his own head, removing him and chaining him in the symbolic bottomless pit, making us finally AT ONE with God. Atonement means at-one-ment.

Sixth, Feast of Tabernacles, for seven days, picturing the KINGDOM OF GOD during the seventh

(Continued on page 29)



THE POWER OF APPRECIATION

All of us need to develop more of this godly trait.

By Judd Kirk

“**T**hank you!”
“Nice job!”
“Great work!”
“Good try!”

Those words sound wonderful, don't they? Sure, they make you feel good. And it makes *others* feel good when *you* express warm, sincere appreciation!

Why is it so difficult for people today to express true appreciation? Why are so many “without natural affection” (II Timothy 3:3, Authorized Version)?

Expressing sincere appreciation can encourage and motivate others. It can even inspire greater spiritual growth. That is real power!

The dictionary defines appreciation as “sensitive awareness.” Are you as sensitively aware as you should be?

Appreciating God

The place to begin learning to show real appreciation is in your relationship with God.

How sensitively aware are you of God's loving concern for you? God is the most positive being in the universe, cheering us

on to qualify for His soon-coming Kingdom. Does God receive the praise from you He deserves? If not, then you especially need to continue reading.

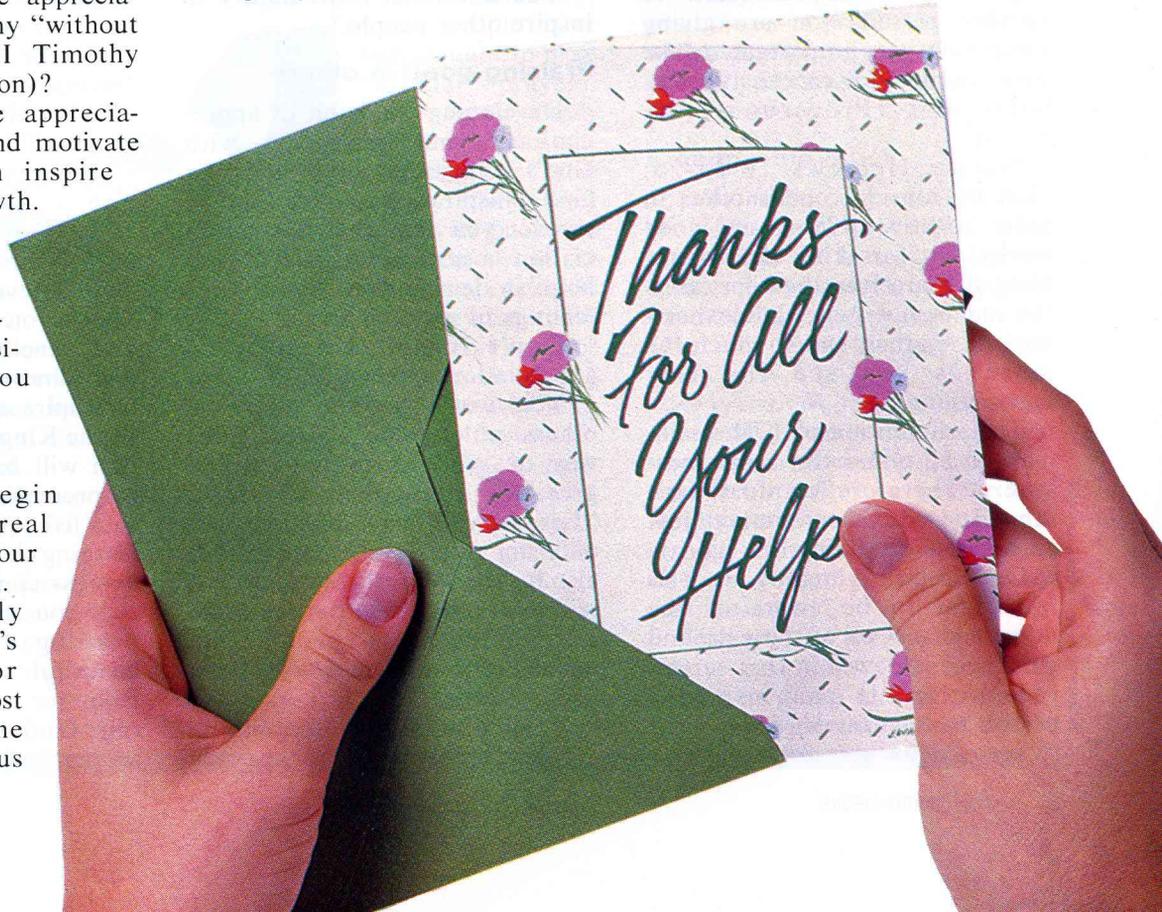
God, after all, is the greatest giver. James 1:17 tells us that “every good gift and every perfect gift” is from Him. He even gave us His Son's life for the forgiveness of our sins, and He did so before we even knew what was going on (Romans 5:8)!

Without that awareness — without that deep appreciation of God and what He is doing — we cannot express proper appreciation to others.

Living the way of giving

Satan the devil is determined to destroy all potential for oneness between you and your Father in heaven. That fiendish goal has driven him to broadcast his message of deception to humanity

Photo by G.A. Belluche Jr.



for almost 6,000 years. Part of that deception is the idea that we are self-sufficient, complete, in need of nothing. That was the basis of his attack on Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-5).

Of course, the exact opposite is true. We need God and we need other humans. That's right — we need each other! Read I John 4:12: "If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us." A proof that God's character is being perfected in us is our love for one another.

Are you proving your love for God by the way you live your life? Does God see you building strong, caring relationships with others? Does God see you nourishing those around you with sincere admiration and praise? If He does, that proves you are responding to God's message, not Satan's.

All of this is part of the way of giving, the basis of God's message to humanity. Simply stated, God wants us to believe and practice Acts 20:35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Of course, it is crucial that you have something to give. With the help of God, you do. When you express your appreciation to another person, you are giving something very important. Make sure you are not carelessly withholding it (Proverbs 12:25, 16:24).

Notice Hebrews 10:24-25: "Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

The admonition of I Thessalonians 5:11 offers the same message: "Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing."

God is clearly telling us it is important to be aware of the effort and success of those around us. There is power in that sort of recognition. It can inspire a person to even try harder.

In order for you to be sensitive

to others, you must have a spiritual awareness. It has much to do with what you think about. Do you think only about yourself and your interests?

Study Philippians 4:8, where Paul actually lists for us what we should have on our minds: "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things."

Pay special attention to the phrase "if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things." Doing this would surely help us be more aware of others, wouldn't it?

In verse 9 Paul instructs us to follow his example. We can see his fine example by reading II Thessalonians 1:4, where he gives generous praise to the Christians of Thessalonica. Paul not only complimented their past behavior but expressed confidence in their future yieldedness to God. He knew this honest praise would greatly encourage them to work and yield even more.

You have that same ability to inspire other people.

Praising good in others

Developing the habit of appreciation is not impossible, with God's help. Begin by praying for God's inspiration — ask Him to convict you that showing appreciation is needed. Ask for God's help in learning to show your feelings of appreciation.

Don't forget: Unexpressed appreciation is powerless!

You won't become aware of others unless you change your way of thinking to the way of give. As Philippians 2:4 says, "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." It will take God's help for you to do this — the carnal mind is not naturally concerned with the good of others.

It will also take one more thing — work. New habits are not

established easily. You must work to become aware of situations where showing appreciation is possible and desirable, and exercise God's giving attitude by doing so.

For instance, how consistently do you say "thank you"? Do you freely praise those in your family when they do well — your wife, husband, children, parents? What about fellow employees on the job, your children's teachers, people in the community who provide services for you?

Ask your friends or family how you do in this area. You might be surprised or even shocked! You may need more of God's help than you thought.

What kind of examples do you set for your children? Nowhere is your appreciation more powerful than with your young ones. They need to know you notice and appreciate their efforts to do what is right. It is like food to their growth and development.

If you are not providing a positive, supportive, enthusiastic environment where generous appreciation is freely shown, you need to pray, think about it and work to change.

When the Kingdom of God is established on this earth, the saints (spirit-born Christians) will take office with the newly coronated, glorified Jesus Christ (Zechariah 14:4-5). The King of kings will institute His way of life — the way of peace — the way of give — all around the world. We as God's children are to have a part in administering that government (Revelation 3:11-12).

Are you ready to do that? Are you developing God's character and mind now? Are you learning to inspire and encourage people? In the Kingdom of God, appreciation will be an important means of promoting spiritual growth in the lives of humans. Are you learning how important it is to express appreciation?

If you are, you will one day be privileged to hear the most beautiful words of appreciation from our very positive, encouraging God: "Well done, good servant" (Luke 19:17). □

Overcoming Prayer Block

It happens to all writers sooner or later. You sit down at your typewriter to start an article, but the words won't come. You type a few lines, but they are awkward and not at all what you wanted to say.

You rip that sheet of paper out and begin the whole thing



all over again. But the next draft is even worse. And so it goes — more paper — more wasted effort — more frustration.

Soon the floor is littered with crumpled sheets of paper, but you have made no progress at all. It is known as writer's block.

You are tempted to get up and forget it, scrub the whole idea and go and do something you *can* do. Which is perfectly fine if you are an amateur, since nobody is depending on you and it doesn't really matter whether you write or not.

But a professional writer can't

permit himself the luxury of giving up. He has a deadline to meet. An editor is counting on him to provide a certain number of pages of copy, and his reputation (and perhaps his livelihood) are at stake.

Not only writers experience this. Artists, composers, architects, landscapers and, indeed, most people engaged in creative pursuits suffer a block from time to time.

That includes people who pray.

Is praying creative?

Perhaps you have not thought of prayer as being a particularly creative activity. But it should be.

Unfortunately, many people have been taught to pray "official" prayers. They learn them by heart, but usually not from the heart. They read

them out of a prayer book, or repeat them from memory. After a while their prayers become habit, and they say them without thinking, or even while thinking about something else. But Jesus specifically told us not to pray like that. We should pray with our brains fully engaged, thinking carefully about what we are saying.

That kind of prayer is a creative activity. It is also, unfortunately, subject from time to time to "prayer block."

It happens like this. You kneel

down to pray, but somehow you are not in the mood. The words won't come. Your mind drifts. You sense you are just talking to four walls, that your prayers aren't going any higher than the ceiling.

"This is a waste of time," you say to yourself. You are tempted to get up, forget it and go and do something else.

Which is perfectly fine for amateurs, people for whom contact with God is not a matter of life and death, or people who really have nothing important to pray about anyway.

But real Christians who understand the plan of God and who want to be a part of the Kingdom of God cannot permit themselves the luxury of walking away from praying just because they don't feel like it.

They are in much the same position as a professional writer with a deadline. Their prayers are needed. They are being counted on to produce.

Clearing the block

How, then, do you overcome a creative block? Writers have their tricks of the trade. Many of those methods work just as well in overcoming "prayer block." Here are four that might help you.

- *Persist.* When things aren't going well, and the ideas just won't seem to come, the temptation for a writer to get up and simply forget the whole thing is strong. But writers who mean business will fight against that temptation.

They will set themselves a goal. They will say, "Nothing or nobody is going to drag me away from this typewriter, until I have

typed at least five pages.” Then they get on with it.

What emerges may not be the greatest prose ever written, but it is something. I have noticed that once I set my mind not to quit until those five pages are finished, things start to loosen up. After a while the words start coming and ideas begin to flow. Before I know it, I am back in creative gear, and may go well over five pages before I realize it.

Try that technique with praying. Determine how long you intend to pray. Decide there and then that you will not abandon the situation until that time is up.

• *Stay there.* Try to pray. It may not be the greatest prayer ever, but you will at least have prayed *some*, and you will not have walked away from your responsibility.

People who do take the easy way out, just abandoning prayer as soon as it gets difficult, find themselves praying less and less. Pretty soon, their prayers have become nothing but brief, half-hearted mutters. God doesn't take prayers like that seriously. They have joined the ranks of amateurs.

• *Get started.* This is often a cause of writer's block. You can't seem to find the right combination of words to begin. The key here is to type something — anything. You see, the thoughts are there, and getting something down seems to unlock the brain.

It is the same with praying. There are no magic words that attract God's attention. He is always ready to listen to His people. Address God by name, and then get started. If nothing else, tell God that you are having difficulty praying to Him, and ask for His assistance. He will help you (Romans 8:26).

Sometimes people who have neglected prayer for a long time feel awkward and embarrassed starting again. They feel that God is angry with them, and that they have no right to take up His time. That's a very human reaction.

But remember the analogy in

the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). The son was afraid to come back. He felt he was not worthy, and was uncertain of what kind of reception he could expect. But the story says that the father saw him coming “a great way off” (verse 20). The father was looking out for him, anticipating the day of his return.

We can learn from this. There is no need to feel hesitant or unworthy in getting back to God. There is no waiting period where you are a kind of second-class citizen until you have proved yourself. If what is stopping you from praying is a feeling that you have neglected prayer for too long, you are deceiving yourself. Start praying. If the thoughts are there — if you are in a sincere, humble, God-fearing attitude — the words will come.

• *Make an outline.* I sometimes find when I am writing that I grind to a halt after a paragraph or so, because I don't have my thoughts organized. The way around this is to make an outline. It is surprising how easy it becomes to type the article all the way through then.

Jesus, it seems, used an outline to pray. The disciples noticed that He could pray easily and regularly. They had been taught to pray in a more formal and ritualistic way by the religious teachers of the day. They had always assumed that was the right way because, after all, the Pharisees and Sadducees were righteous men, weren't they? Surely they knew how to pray, didn't they?

No they didn't, according to Jesus (Matthew 6:7-8). He showed them how He prayed (verses 9-13). Stop for a moment and read Jesus' sample prayer.

Seem familiar?

It is commonly called the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's *prayer outline* would be a better description, because if Jesus just prayed these words, over and over, He would have been guilty of doing what He had just said the hypocrites did.

Rather, these verses are a

series of topics and categories under which the many things that a Christian needs to ask God could be grouped.

There is not space to expand on Jesus' prayer outline in this short article, but it is worthy of your own study. (Our “Ministudy” on Jesus' prayer outline, on pages 19 and 20, will help.)

Responsibility in prayer

With this outline as a guide, you might even want to make a list. There is nothing wrong in this. It is a sensible way to remain businesslike as you pray.

Businesslike? That is a strange word to use in connection with prayer, isn't it? Not really.

You see, one of the strongest incentives for a professional writer to overcome writer's block is the feeling of responsibility that he has toward his editors and readers. If a writer expects to be taken seriously, he must treat the responsibility of writing seriously. “I didn't feel like writing” is no excuse for not having material ready on time.

It is the same with praying. Prayer is not just a religious ritual. It is a way to get things done.

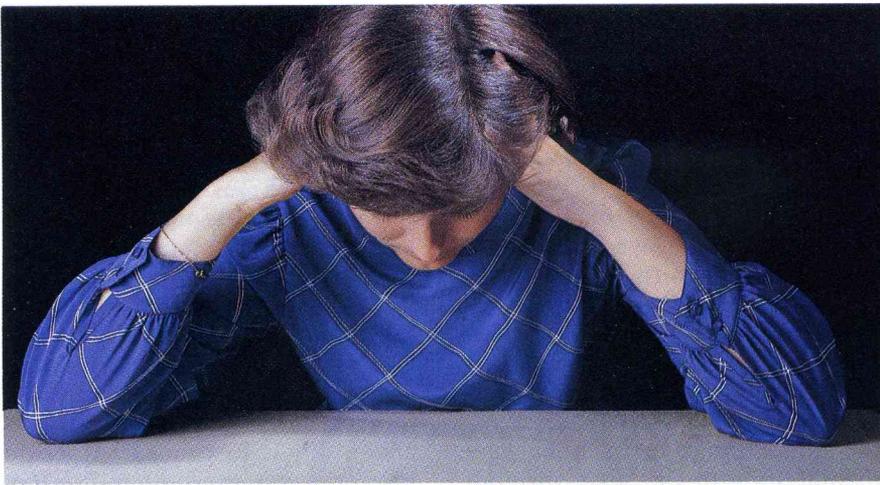
Almost certainly, if you are a regular reader of this magazine, you are interested in God's work and the welfare of God's people.

Praying to God for His people and about His work makes a difference. If you shirk your responsibility, that difference is not made. If you are casual about your effort, why shouldn't God treat it casually?

But if God sees that you take your contact with Him seriously, treating it as a responsibility that counts, He will listen to your prayers. And answer them!

It takes thought and planning. Like a writer, you have deadlines to meet — a daily deadline, of course, and that major deadline of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Like writing, prayer can sometimes be a matter of hard work. But the results make it totally worthwhile. □



How to Win Over Worry

Fears and worries manipulate millions. What is the biblical strategy to beat this chronic problem?

By K. Neil Earle

“Why do you worry?” Jesus Christ asked His disciples (Matthew 6:28).

Yet no one had more pressures, demands, dangers and responsibilities to face than Jesus Christ!

At infancy He was the target of a demoniacal king (Matthew 2:16). As a youth He had to keep Himself unspotted from the thousand treacherous snares of adolescence and the pitfalls of youthful zeal (Luke 2:52). Even during His ministry, when anointed with the power of God’s Holy Spirit, He had to scrupulously avoid saying or preaching anything that His professional enemies could use to shut down His ministry (Matthew 22:15). Yet His words

were powerful, authoritative (Mark 1:22).

No one else ever walked the tightrope that Jesus Christ endured. At the end of it He died an agonizing death, perhaps the most fiendishly cruel execution ever suffered, with the added bitterness of humiliation, betrayal and loneliness.

Yet He taught His own disciples not to worry: “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life . . . do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things” (Matthew 6:25, 34).

The sinless Savior of us all died single, childless, despised and abandoned by human comforts. What keys did He possess to face worry?

How may we overcome this

nagging, draining concern, this morbid pessimism about the cares of this life (Luke 21:34)?

“Be anxious for nothing,” Paul wrote to the Church (Philippians 4:6). We all have problems and challenges to meet, especially in trying to disengage ourselves from this hell-bent world, a society so resourceful at finding the weak chinks in our Christian armor.

How can we win over worry?

Where is our confidence?

Remember that Jesus Christ our example, pioneer of our salvation, faced more than we will ever have to face (Hebrews 2:10, Isaiah 53:4).

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

That’s why we vitally need God’s perspective! Self-help books, professional therapy and clinical counseling can only take one so far. For the ultimate fact is that human life is tragic and meaningless apart from God (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

The great men and women of the Bible faced life’s toughest issues head-on. They did not shrink from raising the big questions; they did not quake before the ultimate realities. In a day and age where we could face nuclear incineration only 25 minutes from now, we need their strength and guidance.

Only God’s servants have the answer to worry. Only the Bible gives clear, concrete answers to the problems that are driving this generation to perplexity. Whether it is the threat of nuclear war, how to face an exam, health worries, facing in-laws and relatives on sensitive subjects or even finding the strength to seek help on your serious problems — read on! This counsel is from the Word of God, and that is the bedrock upon which to build your life (John 17:17).

Fundamental facts

Counselors helping people with worry and anxiety sometimes ask

Photo by Hal Finch

people to consider these three points:

First, ask: "What is the worst that can possibly happen?"

Second, consider: "Can I accept the worst if necessary?"

Third: "Is there any way to improve upon the worst?"

Jesus Christ faced this test in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-44). He Himself had inspired the grim prophecies about His own cruel death. The mental pressure to escape, to flee, to abandon the work was excruciating. Three times He asked His Father in prayer if there was another alternative to the crucifixion. "And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44).

The "agony" here is mental pressure, psychological torture, the kind of inner discomfort we feel when we get unpleasant news or have to face threatening situations or make difficult decisions. That's why the Greek word for *agony* also means "a struggle."

The word Matthew recorded in Matthew 6:25-34, which the Revised Authorized Version translates as "worry," is another interesting Greek word, *merimnao*. *Merimnao* is related to *meros*, "a division," and *merismos*, "dividing asunder."

How accurate! When we are anxious or worried we are disturbing the mind's natural harmony and balance. In effect we are dividing the mind. No wonder we feel inner turmoil and discomfort: The body's defensive system reacts to this struggle (*agonia* in Greek) going on in our mind.

This is why no one likes worry or fear. It is unpleasant. "Fear involves torment," I John 4:18 tells us. Anxiety divides the mind. Some are totally unable to function. Today we say, "They're coming apart." That is what Jesus Christ said not to do. "Do not worry" (Matthew 6:25). Do not *merimnao* — don't come apart.

What did Jesus do?

He faced the worst, accepted it and began to adapt to the new situation — even though it meant

His own death. Most of our problems are not nearly that serious, so we should be inspired by His example (I Peter 2:21, Hebrews 3:1, 14, Romans 8:17, I Corinthians 11:1).

The catch is, if we do not face life's problems with this strategy, if we don't end the mental struggle by asking, "Can I live with the worst result?" — the penalties are passed on to our bodies. This is psychosomatic disease — the mind dictating its unhealthy mental state to the body through the nervous system.

Solomon diagnosed this 3,000 years ago: "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). "He who is cruel troubles his own flesh" (Proverbs 11:17). "A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones" (Proverbs 14:30). "A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones" (Proverbs 17:22).

Here is incentive to avoid worry: The damage it does to our health isn't worth it.

The worst-case scenario

But what if your worst worry comes true, as so few of them do? What if you're diagnosed with terminal illness or find you are somehow trapped in a situation that can't be cured, but must be endured? What then?

The answer is that the same principles that apply to our small worries apply to our big worries. The prescription is always the same — a faith-filled, positive approach (II Timothy 1:7).

How can we build this kind of approach to life? How can we learn to handle our cares and worries — the major setbacks in life, or the negativism and meaninglessness that seep into our spirit from contact with this hopeless world?

Here are several points that can help:

1) *Bathe your mind in the positive emotions — peace, courage, joy, faith.* These are all beneficial, pleasant sensations. And it's not just "the power of positive thinking" — pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps. The real

payoff is that God's Holy Spirit, available to us on repentance and baptism, can immeasurably strengthen fragile human feelings (Galatians 5:22-23).

Instead of temper tantrums leaving us and others irritable, defensive and self-justifying for hours or even days, learn to replace carnal ventilations with the wiser, more beneficial approach of God's Spirit, the power of true love: "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil" (I Corinthians 13:4-5).

How would you like to work for someone like that? How would you like a father like that? Who wouldn't like a neighbor like that?

You would? Then be that way yourself. That is the golden rule, after all, and it really works (Luke 6:31).

2) *Cooperate with the inevitable and don't fuss about trifles.* Even if your worry is serious — a major illness, for example — God's Word offers help and hope. For one thing, Jesus Christ's bloody, mutilated body was accepted as the price of our physical sins (Isaiah 53:5). Healing is promised (Psalm 103:3). Thousands of readers of this magazine have learned that God heals today. So can you.

Focus on the big picture (Romans 8:28). One reason God allows diseases and health trials is to remind us that physical, fleshly existence is only a temporary stage in His plan (I Corinthians 15:50). Eventually we will enter a spiritual family of divine, immortal beings (Philippians 3:20-21).

That's why Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33). There is the ultimate, bedrock reality. Sometimes only severe trials can teach us that, but be encouraged.

Look for the lesson in trials, the point God is trying to make in your life to help better fit you for eternity. Then you will find that "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will

guard your hearts and minds [and help you avoid cardiovascular and mental diseases] through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

3) *Keep busy and don't waste time on revenge.* Trouble has many hidden payoffs (Psalm 119:71). Sometimes severe worries and tests really turn us to God. When we are being criticized and slandered by someone, there's really not much we can do, is there? Only God is our refuge (Psalm 27:1).

Try to train yourself to see much of the criticism that comes your way as a disguised compliment: No one ever kicks a dead dog! Maybe you're arousing envy and jealousy. Perhaps you're stirring the hostility of those who are God's enemies, too (Matthew 5:11). Do your best and keep on producing.

Of course a wise man criticizes himself, is aware of his weaknesses (I Corinthians 11:31). This helps prevent him from being crushed by outside criticism. Work hard and let God protect you from critics (Hebrews 13:6).

4) *Build your health and get yourself as organized as possible.* Much worry and nervousness result from poor physical health. God made the human organism tough and resilient, yet we all need to work on our bodies a lot more. It takes some effort on our part (I Timothy 4:8).

Sometimes forgetfulness and procrastination generate all kinds of tensions and worries. "Did I forget to call?" "When is the next appointment?" "Does the furnace need cleaning?" "Do I have enough in savings to cover this check?"

Sound familiar?

Get organized. Establish a regimen to run your household and work chores more efficiently. Routine chores can be delegated. Make decisions now if you have all the facts. Deputize, supervise, get the family organized. That which is planned is more likely to happen.

We should eliminate any minor worries or mundane details we can. It will give us more energy to tackle the other, major challenges

in life. God is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33).

5) *Rededicate yourself to serving others, to a cause bigger than yourself.* U.S. President John F. Kennedy stirred the idealism of a generation when he proclaimed, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." We who produce this magazine are part of a work that is involved with the saving of the human race!

Only the Bible gives concrete answers to the problems perplexing this generation. God's Word is the bedrock to build your life upon.

Sound farfetched? Listen: There is a Creator God who knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). His schedule is ironclad. Peace movements, charities, pro-lifers, nuclear-freeze advocates — all the altruistic and noble efforts of humanity will not prevent God from sticking to His schedule, or human events from deteriorating (Matthew 24:22). God's blueprint is simple: warning, Great Tribulation, Jesus Christ's return, salvation. No one can alter this fundamental plan (Isaiah 43:13).

Humanity's best efforts always fail. God never fails (Isaiah 42:4). He wants this world warned and educated about His plans for this planet: "The Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants" (Amos 3:7). The *Good News* magazine helps proclaim the world's only sure hope — the world tomorrow under the government and reign of Jesus Christ and His hand-picked staff.

We must learn the lesson: Serving self never works, serving God and neighbor always does (Matthew 22:36-40)!

Sugar Ray Robinson, holder of six world boxing titles in a brilliant career that spanned some 25 years and 109 knockouts, after earning more than \$4 million, has found life's sweetest rewards

helping to rehabilitate underprivileged youths in the ghettos of Los Angeles, Calif. "I truly believe all my life has been a preparation for this," said Mr. Robinson, "and I'll go to my grave trying to help this cause."

We, too, have a cause, a cause much bigger than ourselves. Human life is meaningless unless we take God's overall plan into account (Ecclesiastes 12:8). Man was made to need God, to walk

with God and to get busy fulfilling God's ultimate purpose.

Readers of *The Good News*, you have a chance to find that missing dimension. We are helping lay the foundations of a new civilization that will soon be set up on this earth, a world built on the give principle, a society geared to helping others achieve their incredible human potential.

Unless we fulfill this purpose, we will always be subject to depression and futility, to the pervading sense of hopelessness epidemic in our society. For we will be trying to find peace of mind on our own, and that never works (Proverbs 3:5). Why not? Because, apart from God, there is no hope of a future life, a life of service and undreamed-of usefulness beyond the grave.

Armed with this hope of a future of service and accomplishment under God, this sure knowledge of usefulness for all eternity (Revelation 21:7), we can face life's treacherous currents with buoyancy, hope and purpose.

With God's help we can win over worry. We can agree with King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived: "Do not let your heart envy sinners, but in the fear of the Lord continue all day long; for surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off" (Proverbs 23:17-18). □



In Pursuit of Spiritual Excellence

The example of Olympian Eric Liddell is instructive for those running the ultimate spiritual race.

By Larry Neff

What drives humans to climb Mt. Everest? To summon hidden reserves on the running track? What makes individuals handicapped by deafness or blindness determined to achieve amazing feats? Why do people often react in noble ways during disasters?

Is it pride and vanity? Not

necessarily. The human spirit is truly magnificent. The force that propels people to great physical achievements is often the same force that, when coupled with God's Holy Spirit, can help a true Christian be a spiritual achiever and endure to the end!

Herein lies a vital lesson — one that reaches into the very core of God's plan for His greatest physical creation — ultimately to

become His greatest spiritual creation — man.

It is the lesson of spiritual excellence.

Eric Liddell's achievements

The life of Eric Liddell is an inspiring illustration of this spiritual quality. Liddell did not understand the true Sabbath or Holy Days or God's master plan, but he did manifest an exemplary spirit of excellence.

Liddell's life, of course, was



xcellence

portrayed in the Academy Award-winning film *Chariots of Fire*. His real life, though, as detailed in such books as Sally Magnusson's *The Flying Scotsman*, is even more gripping and fascinating.

Eric Liddell was the second son of Scottish missionaries to China. Born in China, he returned to Scotland to complete his formal education. Rugby was his early specialty in sports, but his fleetness soon led him to track, particularly the 100-yard dash. He won this event, as well as the 220 and 440, in numerous meets.

One such meet, the Triangular International Contest, brought teams from England, Ireland and

Eric Liddell takes the tape to help his team win a one-mile relay race during a 1924 track meet.

Scotland together in the summer of 1923. The week previous Eric Liddell set a British record of 9.7 seconds in the 100 — a record that was to stand for 35 years. But this was to be overshadowed by what occurred at the Triangular. Eric won all three of his races at this meet, but it was his victory in the 440 that stands out as one of track's greatest feats.

After only three strides, he was literally knocked off the track and onto the turf by an English runner who was bursting for the inside spot. Eric didn't quit. He got up. He sprang onto the track. A 20-yard deficit now existed between him and the top-class field of runners.

The gap grew smaller as Liddell strained to catch up. Then he was in fourth place. With 40 yards and the tape to go, he edged into third, on the verge of collapse. However, the word *collapse* was not in Eric Liddell's vocabulary, at least not during a race.

From somewhere deep within, he mustered that special something that catapulted him into the lead. He won the race by two yards! Coaches and spectators were dumbfounded.

This was a true exhibition of the spirit of excellence, of utter determination and burning desire, of drawing on an inner strength seemingly beyond normal ability.

How do we react when we get "knocked off the track"? Do we give up or do we strive mightily to catch up and succeed?

Interestingly, Eric Liddell's running style was unorthodox. He flailed his arms and held his head back, but he got there. We also may appear unorthodox, but we can get there, too.

Olympic victory

Eric Liddell qualified for the 100-meter and 200-meter events in the 1924 Paris Olympics. The timetables were issued. Heats for the 100 were scheduled for Sunday. Though he didn't understand the true Sabbath, which is on Sat-

urday, Eric was sincere in his beliefs. To the horror of British athletic authorities, he absolutely refused to run on Sunday. Some critics went so far as to brand Eric a traitor.

If you would like more information about God's true Sabbath, write for our free booklets *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?* and *Has Time Been Lost?*

It was in early 1924, at least six months before the Olympics, that Liddell made his decision not to run on Sunday. Consequently, he switched to the 400 meters and trained accordingly, but no one thought he had much chance at this distance, due to the faster times of other Olympic entrants. The favorite was Horatio Fitch, an American, who obviously remained the favorite when he clocked 47.8 seconds in the semi-finals. It was a new world and Olympic record.

In contrast, Liddell ran 49 flat on a Thursday, his personal best to that point. Friday morning he brought it down to 48.2. Still, he seemingly posed no threat — except in the minds of a few who knew him and felt he had something not understood by others. That something is what we need spiritually.

Then came the final, on Friday afternoon. The 1924 Olympics were held during one of the most blazing heat waves in Paris's history, and this Friday afternoon was no exception.

The most undesirable outside lane went to Eric. At the crack of the pistol, he bolted into a full sprint, though experienced runners know you just don't go flat out in this race.

At 200 meters, Liddell streaked by at 22.2. Two days earlier, Jackson Scholz of the United States set a world record of 21.6 in the 200. Liddell was only halfway through the race, and was only .6 of a second off that pace. He ran in the 200 himself, taking the bronze at 21.9. His teammate Harold Abrahams, who won the gold in the 100 meters, ran only 22.3 in the 200. So Eric was .1 of a second faster at the halfway mark of the 400

than Abrahams was for the entire 200-meter event!

At this point, Liddell led by five meters. Everyone expected him to crack at any time.

Sure enough, Fitch gained to within two yards. Then came the long final straight. The incredible happened. Eric seemed to sense the threat. He poured it on. He stretched his lead and broke the tape five meters ahead of Fitch. The time — 47.6 seconds, a new world record, eclipsing Fitch's effort of that morning.

Yes, times in track, including the 400 meters, have improved considerably — and so have training techniques, technology and the amount of time devoted to practice. At any rate, the traitor was now a hero.

Likewise, though true Christians will be considered traitors prior to the return of Jesus Christ, if we run our race with determination, we will eventually achieve the proper respect and esteem from others for our efforts.

Indeed, Eric Liddell earned a great deal of respect in Scotland. Even 56 years later, at the 1980 Moscow Olympics, when a Scotsman named Allan Wells finally won the Olympic 100 meters, Wells quietly stated, "This one was for Eric Liddell."

The pursuit of excellence

Of course there was glory in that 400-meter victory. Not so much glory of the flesh — not vanity nor pride. It was the glory of achievement, character, determination, self-discipline and of knowing one had done his best. Sadly, this is so often lacking in sports today, but is still evident in some athletes.

It should definitely be evident in Christians when we participate in athletic endeavors, but it should especially be present in our spiritual lives.

When tempered with humility, this approach is highly valued by God, for it reflects His approach — that of true excellence. Manifested in us and coupled with God's truth, this approach elevates what we do to the level of

the things of God. God's Kingdom and Family, finally, are key-noted by excellence.

Those who were acquainted with Eric Liddell described him as a man of average talents who drove himself to develop and utilize those talents to an amazing degree. What a parallel to the "foolish things of the world," who are called by God to confound the wise (I Corinthians 1:27-29)!

Of course, God's help is involved. But, perhaps this quality of striving for excellence can help us better understand Hebrews 2:10: "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

It's as if God gave humans something in this life that can, in a lesser way, parallel and enable us to glimpse the truly glorious things of His spiritual Family. And perhaps that something is also to act as a potential bridge toward building godly character, if only we are called of God and utilize it properly.

Now, you may not be a runner — you may not be at all interested in running. But you are a runner in life, even if you are in a wheelchair. And you and I need to run our race as Eric Liddell ran his — both the race of life and, more especially, the spiritual race we are in.

At the tape is the glory awaiting the children of God. But the miracle of this transformation won't happen if we settle for mediocrity. It won't happen if we remain as base and foolish as when we started, but by the *change* that takes place in us.

With God's Spirit *and* a spirit of excellence, this change will literally astound the world, because it will lead to our becoming very God!

Running our race

The apostle Paul said, "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). In II Corinthians 12:10 he stated: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in

needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong." Sometimes it seems that those with physical handicaps do the best job of running in this race. They seem to have more desire to maximize whatever physical abilities they have.

Paul himself stands out as one of the greatest "runners" of all time. It's possible he attended the Isthmian Games around A.D. 50. Much of the advice he offered in his epistles draws spiritual analogies from these athletic contests, which provided the inspiration for the modern Olympic Games.

For example, in I Corinthians 9:24, Paul admonished his readers: "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it."

Paul went on in verse 25 to contrast the fading branch of wild olive offered to victors in the Games with the glorious crown we will receive at the conclusion of the Christian race. Even Olympic gold will look tarnished in comparison to that crown.

Make no mistake. Our crown will be one of glory — not pride and vanity, but the glory of satisfaction in accomplishment, perfection of character and achievement, along with radiant brilliance and power to be given us at that great day.

In verse 27, Paul talked about preaching to others. This could well be translated "heralded to others." The herald at the Games summoned the contending runners to their starting positions. This would typify in the analogy the spiritual job of God's true ministry, and is how Paul applied the point to himself.

Paul made related references in several scriptures. One is Acts 20:24, where he talked about the course or track: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Authorized Version).

A runner had to press forward,



Joyful supporters carry Liddell through the streets after his 400-meter victory in the 1924 Olympics.

been the hunter became the hunted: The one who earlier rejoiced at the murders of God's people became willing to die for them.

You can read about some of the suffering Paul endured in the latter part of II Corinthians 11. On many occasions, this brave warrior of God stood virtually alone — particularly during his second imprisonment, which culminated in his death. But in Paul there was no giving up, no quitting. He finished the race.

In II Timothy 4:6-8, Paul described in moving and emotional language the conclusion of his race: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (AV).

And, as the story goes, Paul was led to the outskirts of Rome, along the Ostian Way, on what was probably a hot summer day. There, the executioner's axe severed his head from his body. Unwittingly, the executioner participated in a glorious victory in a great race. At his death in the faith Paul broke the tape and secured the excellency that is soon to come with the Kingdom of God.

God desires excellence in us

The question is, how will we finish our race? Will we even finish? Will we be victorious? Will we manifest excellence? We all can, and God desires this in us.

As the end of this age approaches, let's determine to make full use of the potential excellence God created in the human spirit, and reap more abundantly the rich spiritual lessons and achievements that can help all of us win our great race for the Kingdom of God. □

even to the disregard of his life, in the Isthmian Games. This is the approach we are called on to adopt in our spiritual race. And we can't look back! That can cost us the race.

Furthermore, Paul showed in II Timothy 2:5 that we must follow the rules — do it the right way: "And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules." Eric Liddell will one day come to understand the true rules of the spiritual race. But we have been made privy to that information now.

In Hebrews 12:1-2, Paul wrote: "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our

faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Here we find a reference to weights that were strapped to runners' legs for training purposes. Sin, in this sense, is a weight we have to work against in order to build spiritual strength. Paul also shows it is an endurance race that Jesus Christ has already finished.

In God's view, excellence has a great deal to do with determination, courage and perseverance. Jesus Christ manifested all of these and more in His life, and especially at His crucifixion.

Paul's own example

Paul himself endured more than most. Indeed, in this context, he is one of the greatest heroes of the track. He who had

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

You say that Jesus Christ did not come to save this world. But doesn't the Bible teach that He came to save the world by dying for it?

Jesus certainly did come to die to pay the penalty for this world's sins (John 3:16). But have you read Romans 5:8-10? "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, *we shall be saved by His life.*"

Jesus Christ bled and died for us. His death makes possible the forgiveness of sin. But we shall be saved by His life! Jesus' death does not impart eternal life — it justifies your guilty past. It takes Jesus' life — the Holy Spirit — to impart eternal life.

Notice Paul's teaching: "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. . . . And if Christ is not risen. . . you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (I Corinthians 15:13, 17-18).

If Jesus Christ is not living — if His life is not living in you through the Holy Spirit, if there is no resurrection — then your faith is in vain. You are doomed to perish. You are yet in your sins because there is no living High Priest to plead for you.

Jesus' death cannot, of itself, save you. Christ's blood makes possible the justification of your guilty past — your reconciliation to God. But it takes His life to impart eternal life to humans.

But this is not what we are talking about when we say that if Jesus Christ came to this earth more than 1,900 years ago to save this world, He failed.

Look around you. Nearly five

billion people inhabit this earth. How many are true Christians? How many even know what a Christian is? Here is the Bible definition: "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him" (I John 2:3-5).

Looking at it this way — God's way — do you think that the many are being saved today? Are the vast majority living by every word of God (Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4)? Have Jesus' teachings put an end to war, crime, adultery, thievery, hatred, famine?

If this is the only day of salvation — if people today are now being given their one and only opportunity for salvation — then God has failed. For millions have lived and died without any saving knowledge.

But the fact is that Jesus Christ did not come to give everyone an opportunity for salvation at this time. Rather, your Bible shows that most of the world has been spiritually blinded, deceived, yes, made spiritually drunk on false religious beliefs. They cannot understand the Bible unless God reveals His truth to them (Revelation 12:9, Romans 11:25, 32).

For 6,000 years God is allowing the world to go its own way to teach humanity that its ways only lead to misery and death. God will soon set His hand to save this world. That is the message of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. For 1,000 years the nations are going to learn the way to peace — and be given opportunity for salvation (II Peter 3:8-9).

You need to understand the time element in God's plan of salvation. Write for our amazing article entitled "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?" It will vividly

explain why God has allowed mankind 6,000 years to go his own way and how God will remove the spiritual blindness from the eyes of humanity.

When was the Bible divided into chapters and verses?

The system of dividing the Bible into chapters and verses is man-made and of comparatively recent origin. The Bible, as inspired by God, had no such divisions.

Perhaps the first attempted division of the Bible was undertaken by the Jews. After the Babylonian captivity, they marked off the scrolls into subdivisions. This system was quite different from the one that is in use today, however.

The first modern system of dividing the Bible into sections was devised by Cardinal Hugo in the mid-13th century. Hugo, who was compiling a concordance to the Latin Vulgate Version of the Bible, found it necessary to divide the Bible into sections. These sections basically became the chapters that we are acquainted with today. As yet there were no divisions into verses.

Later, in 1445, Mordecai Nathan, a Jew, divided the Hebrew Old Testament into chapters. He and a later scholar by the name of Athias further broke the Old Testament chapters into verses.

In 1551 the New Testament was similarly subdivided into verses, by English printer Robert Stephens. Ever since that time, the Bible has retained the present chapter and verse system.

The system is not perfect. In some places, Stephens' divisions are inaccurate and tend to break the sense of the subject. Because of such imperfections, a new system of supplementing the chapter-verse division with paragraph arrangements has been adopted in many of the newer revisions of the Bible. This often helps the reader to better comprehend the subject matter. □

Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray

Jesus Christ kept in close personal contact with His Father in heaven. Consequently, Jesus' life was filled with love, faith and power from God. His frequent and fervent prayers made possible His victory over sin and death.

Jesus' disciples were aware that their teacher knew how to draw close to the eternal God and call upon His help in every situation. So one of them asked Jesus to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1). Jesus' instructions are preserved for us today in Luke 11 and Matthew 6.

Let's study our Savior's inspired guide to meaningful and effective prayer.

1. Did Jesus begin by telling His disciples to repeat His sample prayer over and over, or were they to pray in a *similar way* — “in this manner”? Matthew 6:9. Hadn't He previously told them *not* to repeat the same prayer? Verse 7.

Notice that Jesus did not call this the “Lord's Prayer” as many do today, or in any way encourage His disciples to memorize this particular prayer and repeat it when they prayed. He had just forbidden them to do that. Jesus was simply outlining the correct approach to God in prayer and the basic things we should ask for.

2. Notice how Jesus began His sample prayer. To whom did He say we should pray? Verse 9.

Jesus came to reveal the Father to mankind (John 1:18), and He always addressed the Father in His prayers. This Father-child relationship is also open to all of us. Such a private relationship with our heavenly Father should be as real and intimate as the physical relationships we ideally should have with our human fathers or children.

3. Where did Jesus say the Father lives? Matthew 6:9.

Jesus said that our Father is in heaven. When you address the Father in your private prayers, realize that you are having a personal audience with the supreme ruler of the universe. Most people would treasure a private audience with one of this world's rulers. Think how infinitely greater is our privilege of coming to the throne room of the universe, to talk with the Ruler over all at any time, day or night!

4. Should we “hallow,” or honor, the Father's

name when we pray to Him? Matthew 6:9, last part.

As we begin our prayers, we should not only address and think of God as our Father, but also honor and praise His name and His office as Creator and Ruler, as well as His character of unselfish love, great goodness and generosity.

God's name and all that it stands for is to be held in absolute reverence. Our deep respect and awe for our heavenly Father should be total. Addressing God in an attitude of praise, worship and adoration (see Psalms 18:1-3 and 104:33) focuses our attention on the greatness of the being to whom we are praying.

5. How did Jesus continue His sample prayer? Matthew 6:10, first sentence.

This section of Jesus' prayer outline is perhaps the most overlooked and misunderstood of all. Praying “Your Kingdom come” is asking for and looking forward to the time when God's government will be established on this earth through the return of Jesus Christ as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Revelation 19:16). It is earnestly desiring the time when real and lasting peace will be ushered in and all mankind will know and follow God's way (Isaiah 11:9).

Instead of injustice, starvation and war, there will be peace, happiness and great prosperity in the world tomorrow. It will be the prophesied time of the “restoration of all things” (Acts 3:19-21) under the government of God, when the Ten Commandments will be the standard for daily life everywhere.

6. But before God's Kingdom can come, did Jesus say that the advance news of its coming must be proclaimed as a “witness to all the nations”? Matthew 24:14.

Those who have their hearts in the end-time work of God are praying daily that the broadcasting and publishing of this really good news to the world by God's Church today will expand in ever increasing power and authority. Only after this work is done will God's Kingdom come.

7. What did Jesus say in the second part of Matthew 6:10?

In this section of our prayers, we should ask God to help us understand and do His will. We

need to ask God to help us study and understand the foundation of all knowledge, the Holy Bible, which reveals what we are, why we were born and how to achieve His awesome purpose for our lives. We also need God's help, inspiration and guidance in expressing His love, joy, warmth and affection to all those with whom we come in contact. Ask Him to help you be patient and gentle. Ask for meekness, humility and the power of self-control over your temper, weaknesses and lusts.

Ask God for the living faith of Jesus Christ, which will allow you to believe and trust God totally — to know that His way and His law are right, and that He stands behind and backs up His will, His laws and His promises to those who serve Him.

8. What is the next request of Jesus' sample prayer? Matthew 6:11. Can we ask this in confidence if we are seeking, as our highest priority, God's Kingdom and His righteousness? Verse 33 and I John 3:22.

Although not put first, this request is certainly necessary. We can confidently ask God to supply our physical daily needs, such as food, clothing and shelter, as long as we are seeking first the Kingdom of God and keeping His commandments. In your personal requests you can detail your needs and ask God to guide you to do your part. God knows of these needs even before we ask Him (Matthew 6:8). However, He has not promised to automatically supply what we do not ask for. God wants us to never forget that He is the ultimate supplier of everything we have.

9. Is our "daily bread" dual? Matthew 4:4. Who did Jesus say is the spiritual "bread of life"? John 6:35.

In addition to physical food, we need spiritual nourishment. This is obtained by studying the Bible daily to learn the mind of Jesus Christ. We should ask God daily for the spiritual understanding of His words of eternal life and the strength to live by them.

10. Are we also to ask forgiveness of our sins? Matthew 6:12. ("Debts" would have been better translated "sins.")

All of us sin daily by breaking God's commandments in one way or another. We need to recognize and repent of our sins, then ask our loving and merciful Father to forgive us (Psalm 86:5). Remember to ask that "our," not "my," sins be forgiven. Learn to be concerned for other people by having godly love and compassion for them as well.

11. Should we also be forgiving toward others? Matthew 6:12, 14-15. Also notice the principle in Matthew 5:23-24.

Remember that God will forgive us only if we are willing to forgive others. If you cannot first

rid yourself of feelings of bitterness, resentment or hatred toward others, then ask God to clean up your mind by replacing the spirit of hate with His Spirit of love so that your prayers will not be hindered.

12. What is the last request of Jesus' sample prayer? Matthew 6:13, first sentence. But doesn't the Bible elsewhere state that God does not tempt anyone? James 1:13. Is it rather the devil and his demons who are stalking us, watching for a chance to tempt and even destroy us? Ephesians 6:12 and I Peter 5:8.

Jesus' statement in Matthew 6:13 is better translated: "Bring us not into sore trial, but deliver us from the evil one [Satan]." God tempts no one, but He does sometimes permit us to fall into trials and troubles of our own or Satan's devising in order to test us.

We should pray daily and earnestly that God would not permit us to be brought into any severe trial or temptation, as He promises in I Corinthians 10:13. We should also ask that He would give us the spiritual help to recognize sinful thoughts and temptations, to reject them and to do His will.

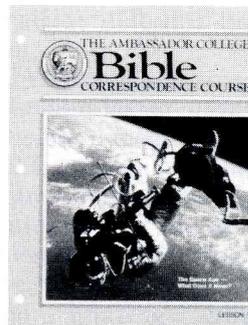
13. Before closing our prayers, in whose name should we acknowledge that we are praying? John 16:23, second sentence.

All our requests should be made in Jesus Christ's name. We can rightfully ask the Father for things "in Jesus' name" when we know it is His will — that Jesus Christ's authority stands behind our requests.

14. How did Jesus say we should close our prayers to the Father? Matthew 6:13, last part.

As Jesus' inspired outline of prayer begins with praise and adoration of our heavenly Father, so does it close. This reminds us once again to whom we are praying and of the character and office of the true God who rules over His vast creation.

Finally, as Jesus shows, we are to affirm the content of our prayer — that we really mean it — by concluding with "Amen." The word *amen* simply means "be it so." □



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PERSONAL

(Continued from page 3)

ship and backing of human religious organizations. To be free of narrow sectarian bias he reasoned he should remain interdenominational. But this did not increase freedom to declare God's TRUTH, but, on the contrary, further restricted it! He soon found that he was limited, in what he was free to preach, to those few doctrines which *all* of these sponsoring, but differing, denominations approved.

God has shown me that when a man sets out to answer God's call to serve HIM, he must rely on God *alone*. If he relies on MEN, he must serve MEN — not God!

Somehow, God brought about circumstances in my own life so that I have been forced always to rely on Him *alone*.

When I was first ordained, I accepted a very small salary from what I then believed to be God's true Church. But envious and scheming ministers, influential near the top, demanded that I preach and act contrary to the plain truth of God's Word.

I guess God saw to it that my salary then was *so small* that it was not too great a temptation to give it up. I did give it up, and promised God then and there that henceforth I would trust Him alone, in faith, to supply the financial need. And God did. Tithes and freewill offerings seemed at once to replace the amount of salary I had relinquished. But gradually God increased the amount, that His work might grow. A few months after my wife and I began to trust God ALONE, the door of radio and the printing press opened. And this work has since grown at a fantastic rate.

Soon after I started on the air, a man came to see me. He represented a group of businessmen. They wanted to team me with a well-known evangelist, and build a big new church. These men offered to supply the financial backing. But of course there were STRINGS attached — I was to be

MUZZLED! I showed this man the front door as an exit from my home!

When Ambassador College was opened, in 1947, I faced opposition within and without.

Other men preaching over the air have founded colleges or seminaries. I know of one who started such an institution. He sought out men of reputation in the field of religious education to administer his institution and to staff its faculty. He himself, though its founder, did not actively head or manage it. He relied on MEN — men of reputation, yes, but still they were *men* — and not GOD. He was a fundamentalist. But as the years went by, the modernist "rationalism" crept in and soon dominated his institution.

I could not help thinking of this example, and the comparison — or contrast — with our experience at Ambassador College.

Like this contemporary, I had to go out into the world of education to find administrators and faculty members. There simply were *none* who understood and believed the TRUTH as God had opened my eyes to see. I could not fill ALL the jobs of administration and instruction — I am not *many*, but only *one* man.

But two things I could, and did, do. I kept myself as chairman of the board of trustees, appointing as board members *only* those who believed God's TRUTH, keeping the setting of all POLICIES in the hand of the board. And second, I made myself the sole instructor in Bible and theology for the first several years.

The men I appointed to top administrative and teaching offices were, of necessity, men trained in *this world's* education. And I had in mind a totally different approach to education. These men were sincere and honest, but they were unable to see what God had held up before my eyes. I found it necessary to remain in CONTROL, and to vigilantly combat every step tending to make our college a rubber stamp of this world's educational institutions.

In those early years God sent

as pioneer students young men whose progress I was able to steer with close personal contact. Today almost the entire faculty is Ambassador College trained — although several had done college work, or received degrees, in other institutions before coming.

But Ambassador College today could not be God's college if I had relied on MEN, instead of relying solely on GOD. At all times, GOD has been kept at the HEAD of these campuses!

That is why this entire work is *different* from anything else on the face of the earth in our time!

The moral for *you* is this: In *your* personal life — in all that you do — make ALMIGHTY GOD THE HEAD of it, and RELY SOLELY AND ALTOGETHER ON HIM —



Ambassador College, with campuses in Pasadena, Calif., and Big Sandy, Tex., pioneers in teaching students not only how to earn a living, but how to live successfully.

and on HIM ALONE! Then it will be a success.

Otherwise it will FAIL! Unless GOD builds the house, they labor in vain that build it! And whatever plant my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up! □

Good News photo

The Truth About the Gospel

Asks any professing Christian whether he believes the Gospel, and he will immediately respond with a resounding “Yes!”

But press that same person to explain just what that Gospel *is* and, if he is able to reply at all, he will almost surely give an answer that is false!

This is frightening. For Jesus Christ commanded that true Christians repent and believe the Gospel (Mark 1:14-15). How can one believe if he doesn't even know what the Gospel is? And Jesus commanded His true disciples to preach the Gospel to the whole world (Matthew 24:14). How can they unless they understand the Gospel message?

Further, God inspired the apostle Paul to pronounce a double curse on all who would pervert, twist or teach another gospel than the true message Jesus brought (Galatians 1:8-9). How many of this world's churches are unwittingly bringing such curses on themselves and their followers simply because they don't know what the true Gospel is?

The basic doctrine

The Gospel is the good news Jesus Christ brought and announced of the coming Kingdom of God. And for those few God is calling now, that message includes the knowledge of how we may enter that promised Kingdom.

The usual teachings of this world

This is decidedly *not* what is being taught by most churches

today. As strange as it seems, today's churches have lost, changed, twisted and perverted the true Gospel. Some groups have actually changed the title of the Gospel to the “social gospel” or the “gospel of wisdom” or some other nonbiblical title.

But by far the most common mistake has been to take the words *gospel of God* and apply them to a different (false) message than the one brought by our Savior Jesus Christ. Usually they preach a message *about* Jesus Christ — about His birth, life and death — even though writers admit that the Bible does not even reveal a complete biography of Jesus' life because that is not its purpose. Or they preach the subject of law and grace — usually stressing that “we don't have to keep the law anymore” — as the Gospel message.

But these subjects, although important and necessary when rightly understood, are not the message Jesus brought. They are not the Gospel!

The Bible teaching

Actually, although it has been forgotten by this world, the true

Gospel message is plain and easy to explain.

Just what, then, is the Gospel? To start, the word *gospel* is translated from a Greek word that means “a good message,” that is, “good news.” This, of course, is commonly understood even by the churches of this world. But, the Gospel is the good news of what?

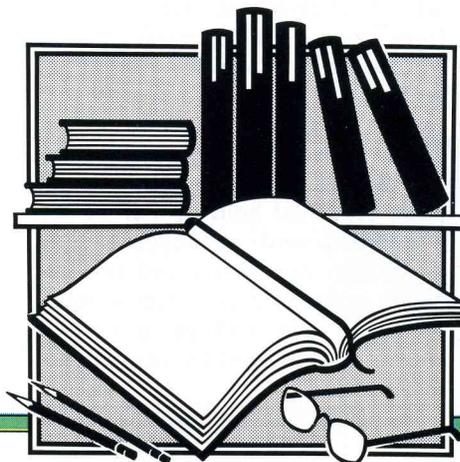
No clearer verse can be found to answer that question than Mark 1:14. Read it in your own Bible: “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.”

There it is: The Gospel is the good news of the coming Kingdom of God!

This Gospel — the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God — has not been preached by this world's churches, and hence they have not understood the truth about that Kingdom. Yet that Kingdom is spoken of in both Old and New Testaments.

Daniel, for example, spoke of this Kingdom in Daniel 2:44-45: “And in the days of these kings [i.e., a prophesied end-time empire of united kings] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these [other] kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”

Isaiah also speaks of it: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. . . . Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and



over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Many other verses could be cited. But it is quite clear that what the prophets speak of here is indeed a literal kingdom — with laws, rulers, domain and subjects — not merely a spiritual or etheral kingdom set up in "men's hearts."

The Kingdom of God is a literal kingdom to be set up here on earth during the Millennium after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It will break in pieces the kingdoms of this world and rule the physical nations of this world, with Jesus Christ Himself as the head. It will be a time of peace, prosperity and tranquillity, when all of God's perfect laws and ways will be administered (Isaiah 11:1-10, Micah 4:1-5).

Further, as the New Testament emphasizes, those who are saved in this age will rule with Jesus Christ over these nations as kings themselves, but with eternal life as spirit beings (Revelation 3:21). And, astoundingly, these spirit beings, the saved, will not be mere angels, but members of God's own Family, on His own plane of existence, and hence very God themselves under the Father and the Son (I John 3:1-3, I Corinthians 15:35-58, Romans 8:12-17).

Therefore, the Kingdom of God is, in its spiritual sense, the Family of God, its members on the God-plane. And when the time comes in God's plan that all physical humans who will qualify for that Kingdom have qualified and have been born into that Family, then that Kingdom will be only of spirit beings who are literal children of God.

Now that truly is breathtaking good news! And it is the very same good news ("Gospel") that Jesus Christ brought.

Jesus' coming and His role as the announcer of the Gospel were precisely told by Malachi: "Be-

hold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me [this role was fulfilled by John the Baptist]. And the Lord [Christ], whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant [i.e., the bringer of the Gospel — the good news], in whom you delight" (Malachi 3:1).

Jesus Christ was the messenger who brought — announced — the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. No wonder He is called "the Word," for He is the communicator of God's great plan to humanity. Yet, the message was not His message, but the Father's (John 12:49-50, John 14:24). And Jesus had no doubts what that message was, for He preached it — the Gospel of the Kingdom — everywhere He went (Mark 1:14-15, Matthew 9:35, 24:14).

And the apostles also were not confused about the message. They knew that they must at first preach to the crowds *who* Jesus Christ was, for in the first century Jesus' identity was not taken for granted as it is today. They therefore prefaced their preaching with explanations that Jesus Christ was the Messiah — the "Messenger of the covenant" who was expected (Malachi 3:1-3) — and they used the unanswerable reality of the resurrection to prove it.

But they knew the Gospel was not merely *who* Christ was, but *what He said*. It was the Gospel of the Kingdom (Luke 9:1-2, 10:1-2, 9, Acts 8:12, 20:25, 28:30-31, Matthew 24:14), and it was preached to Jews and gentiles alike (Acts 10:34-38).

To be sure, for the relatively few whom God is calling now, the Gospel message of course includes not merely the announcement of the Kingdom of God, but the details of salvation and of how one can enter and be born into that glorious Kingdom. But the churches of this world have erred

in thinking that God is trying to save the whole world now, and have for this and other reasons fallen into the teaching of a false gospel — the emphasis of a wrong focus — ignorance of the Kingdom of God.

What a pity! And what a curse has been the ignoring of the true Gospel by the preachers of this world.

Yet God's Church has not forgotten it, but has been preaching it for the first time in 1,900 years, through the printed word and over the airwaves in accordance with Jesus' command in Matthew 24:14. There Jesus explicitly stated that this Gospel of the Kingdom was to be preached in all the world for a witness.

Key verses

Since it helps in personal study to remember key verses, here are some on this subject: Mark 1:14 — the Gospel is the message of the Kingdom of God. Malachi 3:1 — Jesus was the prophesied messenger of that good news. John 12:49-50 — Jesus was not the originator of the message, but merely repeated what the Father told Him to say.

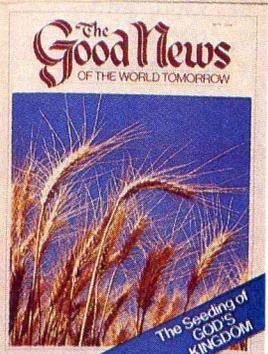
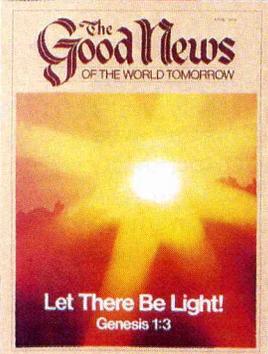
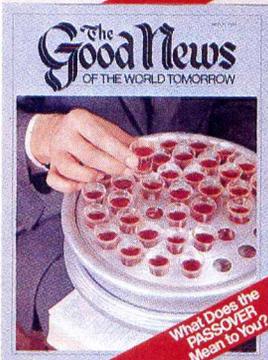
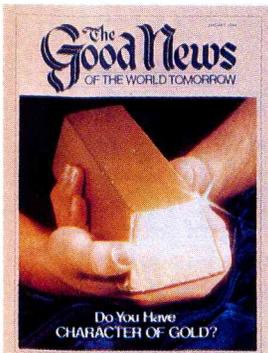
Luke 9:1-2, Acts 10:34-39 — the apostles also taught the same Gospel. Galatians 1:8-9 — a curse is pronounced on any who would teach another gospel. Matthew 24:14, 28:19-20 — the Church is commissioned to preach this Gospel to the whole world at the end of this age.

Yes, the Gospel message is plain. It is the good news of the coming Kingdom of God and includes, for the few now called of God, the way of entering into that Kingdom.

This world's temporary ignorance of the meaning of the true Gospel may sadden us who patiently wait for God's Kingdom. Yet we may rest assured in the knowledge that, nonetheless, the Kingdom is every day one step closer to being here! □

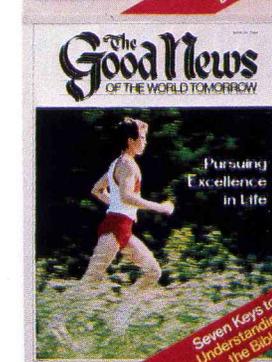
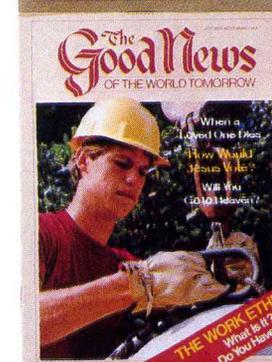
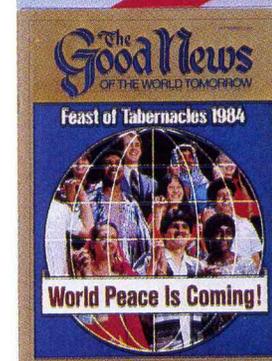
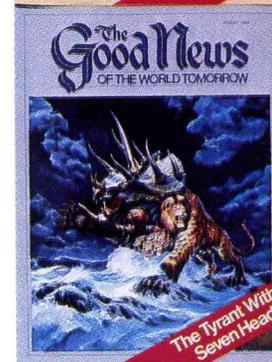
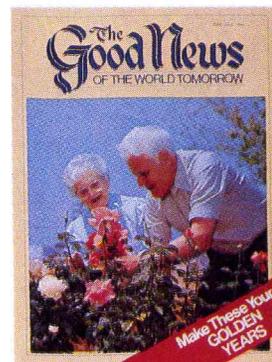
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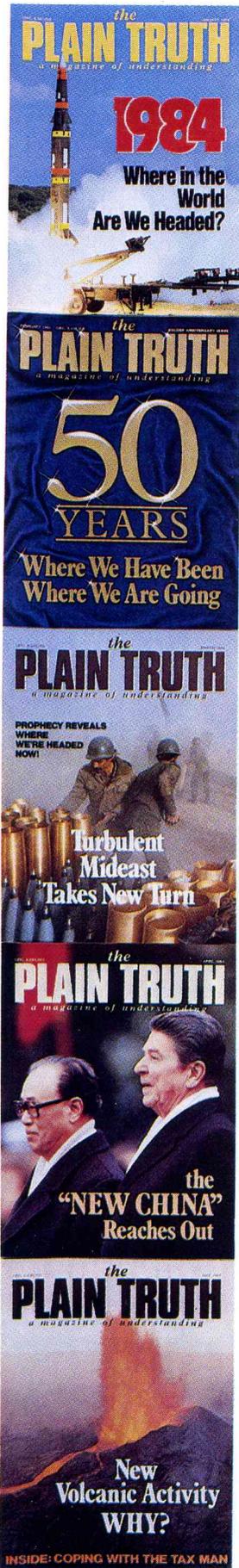
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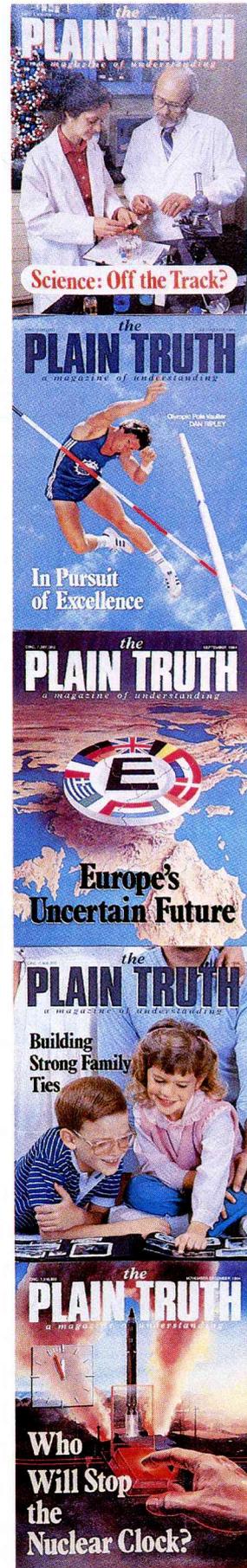
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7 Keys

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millennium, the great fall harvest of souls.

And seventh, the Last Great Day, immediately following the Feast of Tabernacles, picturing the final Great White Throne Judgment, which almost nobody understands, and the final COMPLETING of God's plan!

The truth about Israel

5 The fact that the nation Israel became divided into two nations, the 10-tribed kingdom, retaining the name the kingdom of Israel, possessing the birthright promises, and the kingdom of Judah, composed of Judah and Benjamin and a large portion of Levi, possessing the scepter; and, secondly, the fact revealed during this time of the end that the Jewish people today are merely a portion of the descendants of the kingdom of Judah; and the Americans, British and democracies of northwestern Europe are the so-called "lost 10 tribes" or descended from the house of ISRAEL — and that Britain is Ephraim, and the United States is Manasseh, co-holders of the birthright, which is the true explanation of our sudden rise to the greatest national power and wealth ever possessed.

Prophecies cannot be understood without having this vital key.

Bible interpretation of symbols

6 God has concealed until now His prophecies of these colossal end-time world events now occurring by means of SYMBOLS used to describe these events — as well as by the fact of His dual principle and that our Israelitish identity has been hidden from men.

Symbols, like parables, were used, *not* to make meaning clearer, but to *hide* and *conceal* God's true meaning until the time came

for *Him* to reveal the interpretation. Just as Jesus' parables were not understood until Jesus Himself explained them in plain language, so with symbols.

For generations men have been putting human interpretations upon God's symbols. An important KEY, therefore, is that these symbols are interpreted in plain language in the Bible itself, if not in the context, then elsewhere, and we must search for *God's own interpretation*, never apply our own.

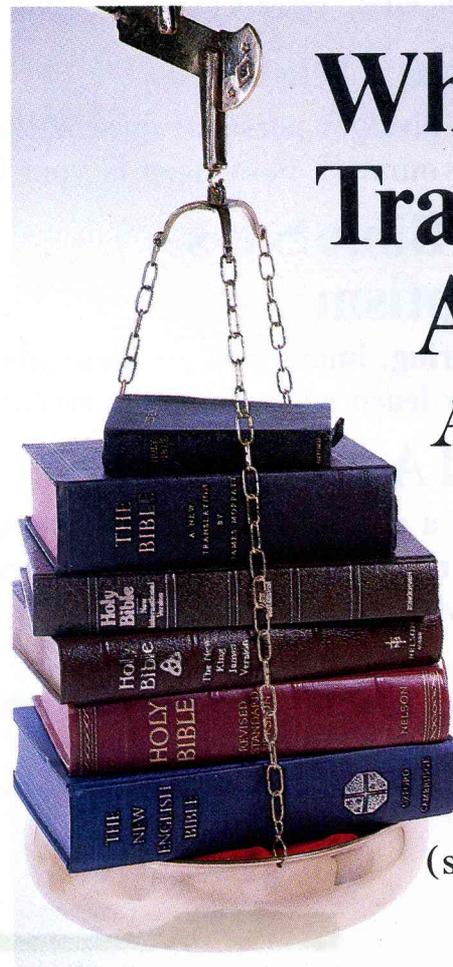
God's Sabbath

7 Since this is the *test* commandment — the one that most professing Christians utterly refuse to obey — the one that requires the greatest reliance on God to keep — it stands as the final *basic key*, for "A GOOD UNDERSTANDING have all those who *do* His command-

ments"! Also it is the basic key to the *identity* of ISRAEL. The house of Israel threw away this key to their identity — and thereby became the "lost 10 tribes!" The great majority of the house of Judah likewise threw it away and lost their identity — not known even today! The Jews who returned to Palestine under Ezra and Nehemiah became strict Sabbatharians and have remained so to this day — and therefore the world looks upon them as ISRAEL (because they carry Israel's *identifying SIGN*) although they are *not* Israel, but only a small portion of JUDAH!

This completes the VITAL KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE — the KEYS to the KINGDOM OF GOD!

The churches have lost these KEYS! No wonder they are all mixed up, in confusion, each claiming the Bible says something *different*, none understanding ITS TRUE MESSAGE! □



Which Bible Translations Are Best?

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COMING IN THE GOOD NEWS

◆ HOW and WHY We Know We Have the Truth

To err, we know, is human. If we say the whole world is deceived in its doctrine and way of life, how can we be sure that we are not also deceived?

◆ Why God Is Not Real to Most People

Millions say they believe in God — but why does He seem so far off to them? Millions have heard *about* God, but do not *know* God. Here's how you can!

◆ Can You Be Trusted?

When someone divulges personal information to you, can you keep it to yourself? How deep is your loyalty?

◆ What the Bible Says About Baptism

Sprinkling, pouring, immersion — ideas about baptism are legion. Now learn what the Bible reveals.

◆ Think and Act Positively!

The Bible gives a precise formula guaranteed to keep you in good spirits even when circumstances are dire. Do you know what that formula is?

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