

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1987

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

**The
Great Horn
of Daniel 8 —
A Sealed Prophecy
Now Open!**

**WHY Are You Reading
This Magazine?**
See Page 2

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OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

NOV.-DEC. 1987

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COVER: Daniel's mysterious prophecy of the "male goat" with the "little horn which grew exceedingly great" (Daniel 8:8-9) could not be fathomed — until God's time came to reveal the meaning! Now you can understand this prophecy's terrifying implications for these last days, by reading the startling article beginning on page 9. Illustration by C. Winston Taylor.

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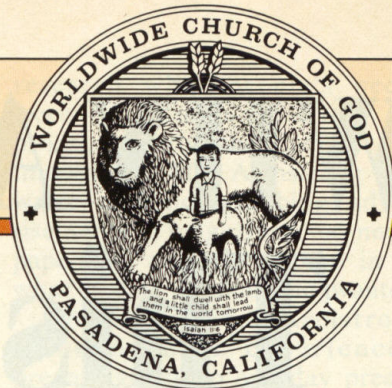
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A Christian in Name Only?

Are you a Christian in name only? Or are you putting the precious knowledge of God into *action*?

I wonder how many of our readers have realized that true Christians are to be *different* from society around them. God has called true Christians "out of the world" (John 15:19). He warns His people to "come out of her," speaking of the end-time generation in rebellion against Him (Revelation 18:4).

Called "ambassadors for Christ" (II Corinthians 5:20), true Christians *represent* God's own government, His laws, His way, His values. But a faithful ambassador is more than just a representative — he is also a *reflection*.

Jesus Christ lived a perfect human life on earth as the example for true Christians to follow. Yet how often do even Christians find themselves emulating the very *imperfect* ways of life promoted by the world around them? How easy it can be to let *this world* shape our thoughts, ideas and actions!

But *true* Christians will strive to be molded by *God*, through His Spirit. They will hunger and thirst for righteousness. They will submit to God's Word as having *authority* over their lives. And this submission to God will manifest itself in what the apostle Paul called "newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (verse 6). Followers of Jesus Christ have to see to it that their "old man" becomes just that — old.

Our old habits, our old prejudices, our old views need to *stay* old. In fact, they need to stay *dead*, just like the "old man" who died at baptism (verse 11). The *new* man, with *new* habits, attitudes and ways — patterned after God's perfect law and Christ's perfect example — must *live* and *grow*.

Serving God is truly a *wonderful* and *joyful* experience! It produces happiness. It creates marvelous peace of mind and freedom from the crushing

fear and anxiety produced by sin. It is not a burden, as the devil has deceived the world into believing. It is an incredible *blessing*!

Yes, the gate is narrow and the way is difficult (Matthew 7:14). But the great God who possesses all power and wisdom in the universe makes available His incomparable aid to enter that gate and follow that way (Matthew 11:28-30).

God did not call His people into the spectacular light of His truth only to let them fend for themselves. Our great High Priest, the resurrected and glorified Jesus Christ, is at the Father's right hand at this very moment for the express purpose of enabling us to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

True Christians realize that God is there to *help*, not to condemn. But they must learn to go to Him for the help needed in *overcoming* the old human flesh so that they can be reflections of Jesus Christ. God says He will work in us *both to will and to do* of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

The Christian life is one of change, of growth, of pioneering a *new and different way of life*! Jesus Christ *lives* in His true followers, not in the form of some mere "sweet feeling in their hearts," but through the power of the Holy Spirit manifested in a life that is fully submitted to God's rule over them, just as Jesus Himself was.

How about you? Are you a Christian in name only? Or are you, as Jesus instructed in Matthew 4:4, seeking God's help to *live by* every word that proceeds from God's mouth? Remember the admonition of the apostle James: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).

Joseph W. Tkach

Pastor General
Worldwide Church of God

WHY Are You Reading This Magazine?

Is it simply coincidence that you now understand God's Word as never before?

By Earl H. Williams

Whether you realize it or not, an all-powerful, super-intelligent Being has intervened in your life. He wants to change the direction of your life. This all-wise Being has a specific destiny and plan for you.

Do you see your calling? Do you understand how and why Almighty God decided to call you?

This article will answer these intriguing questions — questions that may have puzzled you for years. You will be amazed at the wisdom involved when God calls. You will be sobered by your responsibility. And you will be inspired by your potential!

No spiritual accident

It is God the Father who calls us into His Church and starts us toward our incredible destiny (John 6:44). The Greek word for "church" is *ekklesia*. This word literally means "called-out ones."

But how does God call?

The apostle Paul ex-

plains God's unique calling: "For you see your calling, brethren . . . God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty . . . and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are" (1 Corinthians 1:26-28).

Why does God work this way? So "that no flesh should glory in His presence" (verse 29).

On the other hand, just because you are not rich and famous does not mean you have no

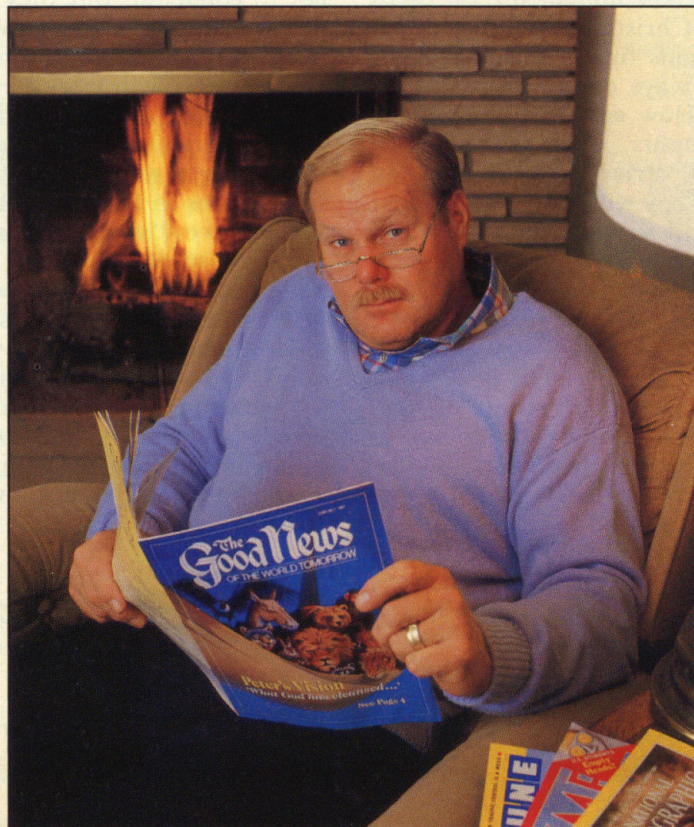
ability or talent. On the contrary, you have tremendous potential. More on that later.

But why would God call *you*? Are you some sort of spiritual accident that took place in God's heavenly throne room?

No! God does not have a huge spiritual "wheel of fortune" that He spins. He didn't pull your name out of a hat, either. God carefully thought out when, where and how He would call you, and the purpose for which He wants to use you.

"He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:4). In this verse Paul uses the plural pronoun *us*, denoting the entire Body of Christ.

Paul is not saying that God chose you individually before the foundation of the world, but that He decided at that time to work through the Church in general. Your specific calling began sometime after your birth. After you are called, you must choose to obey God and prepare for His Kingdom. You do not automatically have it



made (Deuteronomy 30:19, Philippians 3:12).

For a more detailed explanation of this point, write for our free booklet *Is God Trying to Save the World Now?*

How God decides

How, then, did God decide to call you? Notice Romans 8:29: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

In this verse Paul uses the Greek verb *proginosko*, translated "foreknow" in the King James Version of the Bible. It means "to know beforehand." From this Greek word comes our modern English word *prognosis*, which means "to forecast the probable outcome of." For example, a doctor gives a patient a prognosis for recovery. He looks at all of the data on the patient: tests, vital signs, X rays. Then he predicts the probable outcome of the patient's condition.

Paul is telling you that God did a prognosis on you before He called you (verse 30). God knows everything about you, now and in your past. He knows your family background, education, strengths, weaknesses — even the number of hairs on your head (Matthew 10:30). God knows your innermost being (Psalm 44:21).

God's final decision was based on when you would have the best chance of making it into His Kingdom. Should your time for judgment be in this age, when you must battle yourself, this world and Satan (I Peter 4:17)? Or in the world tomorrow, when you would only have yourself to overcome?

After careful analysis, the Father makes a prognosis for the success of the one He would like to call. If all the facts indicate that you can make it now, He calls you. How comforting to know that you have what it takes to make it, that you are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (I Peter 1:2).

When did your calling begin? In many instances God's calling

is a process over a period of time before one actually surrenders to God and begins moving toward complete conversion.

Jesus Christ explained, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). The word *draws* here comes from the Greek verb *helko*, which means "to drag or pull." In other words, God's calling is a drawing process. God may draw us over a day, a year or a lifetime.

God began drawing the apostle Paul from his birth. Paul wrote, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace . . ." (Galatians 1:15).

Paul was born in the Roman city of Tarsus in Cilicia. He was a Jew, but a Roman citizen as well. During his formative years, God allowed him to be exposed to the gentile way of life. He learned their customs, philosophies and traditions (Acts 21:39). God was preparing him to one day be the apostle to the gentiles (II Timothy 1:11).

As a young man, Paul went to Jerusalem to study at the feet of the great rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Here Paul gained a superior knowledge of Judaism and the law. He surpassed his fellow students in knowledge and zeal (Galatians 1:14). This deep knowledge of the traditions of Judaism prepared Paul to deal with his Jewish converts as well as opponents (I Corinthians 9:20-21).

The unseen hand of God was drawing Paul — preparing him for conversion and service.

An outstanding example of a calling in our day was that of Herbert W. Armstrong. God began calling Mr. Armstrong years before his conversion. God inspired in Mr. Armstrong during his boyhood a keen interest in the "why" of things. He was always asking his parents why this and why that. Mr. Armstrong learned early that there is a cause for every effect.

In his late teenage years Mr. Armstrong chose advertising as his profession. He learned how to

research what people's needs were. His cause-and-effect approach to problems helped him immensely. Mr. Armstrong also wrote attention-grabbing advertisements in magazines and newspapers — ads that zeroed in on what people needed and wanted.

God drew Mr. Armstrong through these experiences, preparing him to one day preach and publish the Gospel to the world (Matthew 24:14, Mark 13:10). And for more than 50 years, until Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986, God used Mr. Armstrong's research, writing and advertising skills to make plain to millions the good news of the world tomorrow.

Perhaps you can look back in your life and see God's calling before your actual conversion. Or perhaps right now events and experiences are directing and shaping your life and drawing you toward total commitment to God's way.

Are *you*, even as you read this magazine, being "called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28)? You need to find out!

No one is called by accident. "But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased" (I Corinthians 12:18).

Called to produce

God called Paul, Herbert W. Armstrong, Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach and *you* to do His Work! "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

Paul in this verse used the Greek word *poiema* for "workmanship." This word means "fabric." Paul is telling you that God's hand is weaving the fabric of your life. He is preparing you to do His Work.

It seems like much more than coincidence that God has now placed the human leadership of His Work in the hands of Mr. Tkach, whose name, in Russian, means "weaver"!

Those called now are "a kind of firstfruits of His creatures"

(James 1:18). Every fruit has a seed that gives it the power to produce more fruit. One apple can produce hundreds — one grape, thousands. Jesus Christ says to you, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit” (John 15:16). Fruit produces fruit, and God has called you to produce in His Work.

A piece of the action

But what purpose does God intend for His called people to fulfill today? To bring the good news of the coming Kingdom of God to the world (Matthew 24:14)! Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach is leading the way. But unless you fulfill your calling, the Work cannot be completed.

So what responsibilities do you as a member or co-worker of God’s Church have?

Fervent prayer is the most important — more important than even financial support or becoming directly involved in some way yourself. Mr. Tkach repeatedly emphasizes that this is a work of faith. Faithful prayer is a necessity in preaching the Gospel.

God delegates the actual preaching of the Gospel to the Church. But He wants us to call on Him for the power we need. Your prayers open the doors of radio, television and the printed media. Your prayers inspire Mr. Tkach.

Paul knew he needed the prayers of God’s people: “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, just as it is with you” (II Thessalonians 3:1). A major responsibility of your calling is to pray for God’s Work.

In this materialistic world, finances are required to preach the Gospel. The Church must pay for radio, television, the printing of literature and the care of Church congregations. Yet we do not ask the public for money. So where does it come from? God has called thousands of co-workers and members to support the preaching of the Gospel. They

see their calling and are glad to have a piece of the action.

And God’s called-out ones participate personally, volunteering their time and service in various ways to support the preaching of the Gospel.

One of the greatest ways they participate is by living God’s way. The world around them then is able to see the Gospel in living flesh. Thousands of people have been witnessed to, and even moved toward conversion, by the light of members’ lives (Matthew 5:14-16).

Our members also make the Gospel available to the world by stocking the *Plain Truth* magazine in newsstands, supermarkets and waiting rooms. They do not hand out the magazine door to door or push it on people. They simply make it available to the public. They see their calling — they participate.

Do you see *your* calling — *your* piece of the action?

The reward

You have a great destiny. God has blessed you tremendously. The reward He has for you is incredible! “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit” (I Corinthians 2:9-10).

Those called now will “obtain a better resurrection” — the first resurrection (Hebrews 11:35). Why is the first resurrection better? Because you will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years, and because you will not be subject to the second death (Revelation 20:4-6).

For more information on what the Bible says about the resurrections — yes, there are more than one! — write for a free copy of our reprint “The Resurrection: Hope of Mankind.”

If God calls you in this age, you have a chance to become a senior member of the Family of God. You will have a thousand years’ experience as a born child of God — a thousand years to prepare to serve the billions yet

to enter the Family of God after the second resurrection.

God will give those called in the Philadelphia era of His Church the honor of being pillars in His Family: “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God” (Revelation 3:12). God’s spiritual Temple is composed of His future children (II Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:19-21).

That’s right! You, under Jesus Christ, will provide spiritual support and teaching to countless billions! A pillar supports. And, “Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end” (Isaiah 9:7). What an honor — what an opportunity!

And there is more. Today people worship the “stars” of television, movies and sports. How would you like to be a real star and far outshine those of today? Well, the God who has called you says, “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever” (Daniel 12:3).

Wow!

This is your calling, your piece of the action and your incredible reward. The whole world is anxiously waiting for you to fulfill your calling: “For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19)! □



How Others Learned the Truth

How did you first come into contact with God's Work? Have you ever wondered how others learned the truth?

To make the preaching of the Gospel — the good news of the soon-coming Kingdom of God — possible, God raised up His end-time Work (Matthew 24:14).

The Good News is just one of the tools God uses to proclaim His truth. You probably also receive *The Plain Truth* — a Worldwide Church of God publication with over 20 million readers worldwide. Perhaps you tune in regularly to the *World Tomorrow* broadcast on television or radio.

From letters received by our Mail Processing Center, here are com-

ments from several *Good News* subscribers about how they began receiving the magazine:

"Someone left one of your Good News publications on my bunk. My first thought was to throw it in the trash, but I read it and I like what you had to say. I want to hear more. It made me get a Bible and read along."

"Today a copy of your magazine was put in my mailbox by mistake. I looked it over and found it remarkably interesting, just like your terrific magazine, The Plain Truth."

"I was introduced to your magazines about a year ago, through a dear friend who has been in the Church for many years."

"I am employed at a car dealership, and in one of our waiting areas, a customer left a copy of The Good News."

Plain Truth readers often write in and tell of unusual first contacts with the magazine:

"I 'found' a copy of The Plain Truth in the county dump while there making my contribution to future archaeology. I've read it with great interest from cover to cover several times. The only reason I can think of for such a treasure being in the dump is that its owner died and the cleanup crew threw it away."

"I just checked into a hotel and the inside cover of the Bible has your toll-free number. It says, 'If

you want The Plain Truth, call 1-800-423-4444. It's good, it's free, get it!'"

"I prayed and asked God to lead me to the truth — the plain truth. Later, I was walking by a shopping center and dropped my last penny. I bent over to pick it up and . . . your magazine all but jumped up and smacked me over the head. Those words — The Plain Truth — were exactly what I had asked God for."

"Some months ago, I came across a copy of The Plain Truth magazine lying in the street. This was my first introduction to your Work. How it has helped me! Thank you for making your publications free. It helps me to believe, even more, that you are doing His Work."

Viewers of the *World Tomorrow* program, aired on nearly 400 stations around the world, also recount how they first began watching:

"I was just flipping the dial and it stopped on the program. I tried to turn it but the knob fell off. So I sat and listened. I have listened ever since."

"I wasn't going to watch TV this morning; I was going to read my Bible. But there was an earthquake so I turned the TV on to see if there was a news bulletin and I saw the telecast for the first time."

"When I moved . . . I accidentally got my channels mixed up. . . . Instead of a nature program on wild animals, I recorded your program, and since then have recorded it each week so I can listen and look at your messages more than once. I have some 'favorites' that I have listened to many, many times."

"Never will I forget that day, back in 1955, when I requested my wife to find a Buck Rogers-type of TV show, and she read in the log where it said World Tomorrow. It sounded just like what I wanted but did I ever have a surprise."

Were all these cases simply coincidence? If God chooses to call someone, then He must work out the circumstances to make His truth available to that person.

Are you reading this magazine simply by coincidence? God is making His truth known to you now as you read *The Good News*. □



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

I am confused regarding my obligations to my husband in contrast to my obligations to God. My husband wants me to cook pork, shrimp, etc. for him. Am I obligated to include these foods in my family's diet when I am convinced that God did not intend for us to eat them?

Obviously your husband believes differently from you. That is his right, of course, and you should respect his position. If your husband insists on eating pork, shrimp and other unclean foods, you can purchase and prepare them for *him*.

At the same time, since you respect his wishes, he should be willing to respect yours. He should not expect you to eat a diet that is contrary to your belief and conscience.

Also, a person would certainly be within his or her rights to politely decline food that is not agreeable while visiting at a friend or relative's home.

Readers who are unfamiliar with the Bible's teachings about the foods God says we should or should not eat are invited to request a free copy of our booklet *Principles of Healthful Living*.

Some churches teach their members to store food and other goods for the prophesied time of famine and tribulation. Is this the proper thing to do?

Jesus stated that those who seek to save their lives will lose them (Luke 17:33). He also said that conditions during the coming Great Tribulation will be so bad that all mankind will perish if God does not intervene to save us (Matthew 24:22).

Does this sound like food and other physical preparations will save anyone? No!

The Bible, though, does offer protection to those who are faithfully doing God's end-time Work.

To the Philadelphia era of

God's Church, Jesus says: "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth" (Revelation 3:10).

Rather than putting all our confidence in what we can do for ourselves, we ought to be busily doing the Work of God and trusting Him, in faith, to provide the protection He has promised.

In your articles you often refer to historical dates as "B.C." or "A.D." What do these terms mean?

B.C. is an abbreviation of the words *before Christ* and is used to refer to the time before the birth of Jesus. *A.D.* is an abbreviation of *anno Domini*, a Latin term meaning "in the year of the Lord." *A.D.* applies to the time since Christ's birth.

Christ's birth is commonly used as the central point from which the years are counted. Starting with *A.D.* 1, we count forward until we reach the present year. Years *B.C.*, starting with 1 *B.C.*, are counted *backward* in time. For example, 100 *B.C.* refers to the time 100 years *before* the birth of Jesus.

Actually, Jesus was born earlier than the starting point of this system by about three years. In terms of the existing system, Jesus was born in the year 4 *B.C.* But that was not understood when the *B.C.-A.D.* system was established in the Middle Ages.

Why do the Jews count this year as 5747 on the calendar they use?

The Jews count their years from 3761-3760 *B.C.E.* (Before Common Era), the year the lunisolar calendar starts.

In the century following the fall of Jerusalem in *A.D.* 70, certain Jewish scholars took the date 3761-3760 *B.C.E.* and assigned it to the time described in Genesis 1 and 2. Thus, the Jews preserved the correct date for calendar cal-

culational but mistakenly associated it with creation week.

Actually, creation occurred over two centuries before the beginning of the lunisolar calendar. (The basic factor upon which the lunisolar calendar is based, the average length of the lunar month, would have taken more than two centuries of measurement and observation to determine.) Therefore, the 6,000th year since Adam's creation will elapse in this generation.

What happened to the "giants" spoken of in the Bible? Did they all die out?

The Scriptures indicate that they did. Genesis 7 tells of the worldwide Flood that God sent to destroy "all flesh" on the earth (verse 21). Since the giants of Genesis 6:4 were simply a natural, genetic variation of humans, they died along with the rest of the earth's population. The only people to escape that catastrophe were Noah and his family.

Since Noah was of a stock of smaller people, most of his descendants were of his stature. However, some of the genes to produce giants survived through the wife of Ham, one of Noah's sons. Therefore, a number of the sons of Canaan (one of Ham's sons) were giants (Numbers 13:1-2, 32-33).

In Deuteronomy 2:19-21 we read that God destroyed the giants who dwelt in Ammon so that the children of Lot could possess the land. These giants, who apparently were from a line of a descendant of Canaan named Anak, eventually became extinct. King Og of Bashan was the last of them to inhabit Palestine east of Jordan (Deuteronomy 3:11).

Both before and after the Flood, God was directly involved in the destruction of the giants. The reason for their destruction is not stated directly. But, like Goliath, those people seemed always to be in opposition to God and to God's people Israel. □

Letting Go

Yesterday was an eventful day. Matt, a graphic artist on our editorial staff, and his wife Ruth became the proud parents of a fine baby boy.

It was, of course, the talk of our office.

After dinner yesterday evening quite a different event took place. My wife and I were talking to our 18-year-old daughter. She has completed one year of college and has a good part-time job. She had determined it was time to establish herself on her own. She wanted to get her own apartment, while continuing to work and take classes at college.

That the birth of a new child and the leaving home of another were announced on the same day was a strange coincidence to my wife and me.

It only seemed like yesterday that our 18-year-old was born. Now, she felt ready to establish her individual identity.

Were we ready for it? More importantly, was she ready for it?

Are we ever prepared?

It's not as though this was the first time for us. Three older children have already left home. College, work and marriage have taken them into their own new worlds.

Why should it be different with number four? I suppose it shouldn't. But it doesn't get any easier. Perhaps it is the worry of what our "empty nest" will be

like. Without doubt, it is our anxious concern about a young girl making it in this world. Is it safe? Will she be all right? Is she prepared to resist the temptations that will surely come?

She thinks so. Her mother and I will hold our breath for the first few months.

We have always known the day was coming. For as surely as birds are made to fly and fish are made to swim, parents must face the day when their children leave home.

So new life comes with the built-in realization that a little

baby will grow up and fly away someday. Matt and Ruth probably don't realize how quickly the time will pass. But precious and few are the moments of childhood. Before you can even realize it, children grow up and strike out on their own.

So this month, I'd like to talk about letting go.

Most parents give little thought to the time their sons and daughters will leave — that is, till that day comes.

But an important key to coping with that inevitable day is knowing a good foundation has been laid.

I have spent the past 25 years working primarily in a college environment. For 14 years I was a dean of students. During that time, I have seen thousands of young people come and go through the college experience. I have seen many who were adequately prepared for independence and ready to establish their own lives.

On the other hand, I have seen many who simply were not ready. Some were totally unprepared for the responsibility of living away from home. I have tried to understand why some were successful and some were not.

There is no simple answer. There is no magic formula. But there are some basic common denominators I have noticed for those who were best prepared.

Overprotective parents

The first thing I have noticed is that those who got along best their first year away from home were those who had been prepared by their parents to make wise decisions.

Many parents have actually overprotected their children. Some young people grow up with no experience



in deciding right from wrong. Their parents always told them what was right, and they were expected to do it that way — no questions asked.

Those parents may not have permitted their children to drive an automobile. Did not allow them to go on a date. Would not let them spend a night at a friend's house.

I have seen such young people come to college and not know how to make valid decisions. Some could not study because they could only study with their mothers standing over them.

Some discovered the newfound freedom of dating too much to resist. Often they got involved prematurely in romance.

Many of these problems came because of overly protective homes.

Giving no guidelines

Then there were the opposite problems. Many young people today have had no restrictions placed on them at all. Some parents never know what their teenagers are doing. The teens do poorly in school. They smoke or drink or get into drugs.

When they come to college or get a full-time job, they are not ready for the restrictions and responsibilities school or the boss may place upon them. Carried to an extreme, such problems can cause these young people to be dismissed from college or fired from their jobs. They can lose their driver's licenses. They can be arrested. Repeat offenders can serve time in jail or prison.

That's how serious life can be.

And most of us parents know how critical the consequences can be. So we fear letting our children go.

With drug abuse and sexual promiscuity practically a way of life in our modern Western culture, we have every reason to fear. Fear of AIDS and sexually transmissible diseases. Fear of premarital pregnancy. Fear of alcohol abuse. Fear of becoming the victim of a crime. These are all very real. So the key to letting

go is to lay the best foundation possible beforehand. Don't be overly protective. But don't be so permissive that young people have no restraint.

Teaching values

Here are two suggestions I have learned over the years. I hope they will benefit the many of you who will one day be faced with "letting go."

First, teach your children your value system.

Perhaps what most parents fear most is that their children will get in trouble. We all know what tremendous pulls young people face today.

The liberal philosophy of the world we live in says: "Go ahead. If it feels good, do it!" Unfortunately, sin often feels good — for a short time. The high of drugs. The party atmosphere. The beer and booze. The thrill of driving fast.

If you have not instilled from the earliest age what the consequences of such acts are, your children will find these and similar activities difficult to resist.

It has been hard for many parents to understand why so many young people today start to smoke cigarettes. With all the knowledge about lung cancer and heart disease, you would think no one would ever want a cigarette, cigar, pipe or wad of chewing tobacco. But it doesn't work that way. Young people are tempted by their peers. They are pressured by friends. They are lured by advertisers.

There will be temptations to become sexually active.

There will be temptations to experiment with drugs.

Any parents who think their children will not face those temptations are indeed naive.

Your best defense is what you have taught them. Yes, you have to be careful where they go, what they do, who they go with. But if you have taught them what they ought to do, they will be much better able to resist the temptations that will surely come.

If you lock your children at

home while they are teens, you are only delaying the time they will be tempted. It will come in college. Or on the job. But temptations will come.

Their best defense is the value system you have taught them.

Importance of decision making

The second point is: Teach your children how to make decisions. Life consists of thousands of decisions. Making the right choices means the difference between success and failure. And the best way to ensure a right decision in matters of great importance is by the experience in making decisions when they are not matters of life and death.

For example, at age 14, you may want to guide a youngster toward wise decisions in study time. Or visiting with a friend. Or going to a movie with a group.

By age 16, a teen may be ready to drive a car. To spend a week on vacation with a friend's parents. Or to begin to date members of the opposite sex in a group setting. Or to get an after-school or summertime job.

By age 17, if a young person has exercised wisdom up to that point, he or she would be given even greater opportunities to make decisions about use of time, dating, when to return home from an activity.

Each family will have its own standards. I am not recommending any special age to allow dating or decision making. I am merely showing that the time comes when a teenager must make certain decisions.

There are certainly more than these two points to guide young people into adulthood. But I have found them to be among the best suggestions.

So to Matt and Ruth, congratulations on your new son. I pray he will bring you much joy. But before you know it, he will be leaving home to go his own way.

Love him. Teach him. Most of all, prepare him.

There will come a time you have to let go. □

A Sealed Prophecy

Now Open to Understanding!

In the eighth chapter of Daniel is an astounding prophecy some believe was fulfilled in 1844. Others say in 167 to 164 B.C. by Antiochus Epiphanes. Daniel could not understand it! Its full meaning was sealed from human comprehension "until the time of the end" — this 20th century!

By Herman L. Hoeh

The time has come to make known to our *Good News* readership this astonishing, yet little-known prophecy for "the latter days."

Did you know that the book of Daniel, in your Bible, was closed to full understanding until these latter days?

Daniel was commanded: "Shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end . . . For the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:4, 9-10).

Now open your Bible to Daniel 8, with its vital prophecy for our time. Notice particularly verse 26. Daniel is commanded, "Seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future" — far into the future.

Daniel "was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it" (verse 27, last part).

Time setting of the prophecy

Notice the setting of the prophecy in Daniel 8. It is the

third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king of Babylon, about 550 B.C. Daniel is given a vision while at Shushan in the palace in the province of Elam (Daniel 8:1-2). Here is what he sees in the vision: "Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no beast could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great" (verses 3-4).

Here is a mysterious "ram." What does this ram symbolize?

Notice God's explanation, revealed in verse 20! "The ram which you saw, having the two horns — they are the kings of Media and Persia."

This ram symbolized the Medo-Persian Empire. It destroyed the kingdom of Babylon in the early autumn of 539 B.C. It ruled to 331 B.C.

But this is only the beginning of the prophecy. Now read verse 5:

"And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from

the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes."

What is the Bible explanation of this mysterious symbol? "And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king" (verse 21).

This is not man's interpretation. This is the Bible's own explanation of its symbols.

These symbols were revealed to Daniel. He was inspired to write them in Scripture so that we today can understand the important time setting of this prophecy.

Notice the verse-by-verse movement of time. The ram — the Medo-Persian Empire — came on the world scene in the autumn, 539 B.C.

Then the Greco-Macedonian Empire came on the scene with its first great king, Alexander the Great (verses 6-7). The final conquest of the Medo-Persian Empire by Alexander the Great occurred in 331 B.C.

Understand what this means. By the end of verse 7 we have moved in history from 539 B.C. to the time of Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.

Continue, now, with verse 8:

“The male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.”

Remember, the great horn in the goat’s head symbolized the “first king” of the Greco-Macedonian Empire. That was Alexander the Great. But this horn was suddenly “broken.” Alexander the Great died suddenly of a fever in Babylon in 323 B.C., about 33 years of age.

What follows in time sequence is found in verse 22:

“As for the broken horn” — Alexander the Great died — “and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.”

Alexander’s empire was divided among his generals after his death. By 301 B.C. four generals divided the empire, fulfilling this verse of the prophecy.

In the south — Egypt — ruled Ptolemy. Syria — the north and east — was held by Seleucus. The northwest — Thrace — was under the control of Lysimachus. Macedonia, in the far west, was dominated by Cassander.

Later, in 281 B.C., Seleucus overthrew Lysimachus and completely controlled the north. Thereafter the two dominant areas of the empire were the kingdom of the south, under the Ptolemies, and the kingdom of the north, under the Seleucidae.

(The struggles between these two kingdoms — down to our day, this 20th century — are made plain in the longest prophecy in the Bible — Daniel 11. The explanation of this famous prophecy is available for the asking in our free booklet *The Middle East in Prophecy*.)

Consider again the vital time setting of the prophecy of Daniel 8. It commenced with the Medo-Persian Empire, which lasted until 331 B.C. Then the Greco-Macedonian Empire came on the scene with its first king, Alexander the Great. In 323 B.C. Alexander died at about age 33.

Alexander’s empire was di-



vided into four major parts (verse 22). None of these parts was as strong as the whole kingdom had been under Alexander the Great. The time setting of the four divisions of Alexander’s empire, foretold in this prophecy, brings us to the date 301 B.C.

The rest of the prophecy therefore cannot begin before this date!

Now notice what is to happen next on the world scene — after 301 B.C.

A prophecy for the latter time!

Read verse 9: “And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward

the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land.”

Look at this verse again. Here a “little horn” appears, coming out of one of the four divisions of Alexander’s empire. This “little horn” therefore cannot have arisen before 301 B.C., because not until then was the fourfold division of Alexander’s empire settled! The prophecy will later disclose out of which one.

Whatever this little horn does on the world scene must occur *after* the death of Alexander the Great — and *after* the division of his empire in 301 B.C. into four parts.

We come now to the climax of

this astounding vision. Daniel is told: "The vision refers to the time of the end" (verse 17).

The vision of the "little horn" is for the time of the end! The same time setting is recorded also in verse 23: "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness."

Who — what — does this "little horn" symbolize?

The "little horn"

Notice the Bible explanation!

"A king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes. His power shall be mighty . . . And he shall magnify himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human hand" (verses 23-25).

This is the answer! Could anything be more astounding?

Look at this prophecy again. It is a prophecy for the last days. The little horn symbolizes "a king" — a ruler — who shall arise "in the latter time of their kingdom" (verse 23). Not immediately after the fourfold division of Alexander's empire — but in the "latter time" of human misrule in this world.

This "little horn" — this ruler — this mortal man — stands up against the Prince of princes — that is Christ at His Second Coming!

What the "little horn" will do

Continue with this amazing prophecy for the latter days! "And it [the little horn] grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down" (verses 10-11).

The next verse — verse 12 —

is not clearly translated in the Authorized Version, but is made clear in the New King James Version. Read it: "Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered."

What about the "daily sacrifices" prophesied to be taken away? And where is the "sanctuary" that is to be cast down? What do these symbolize? What do they mean?

Two common — but erroneous — opinions

One opinion — found in most Bible commentaries on Daniel 8 — is that Antiochus Epiphanes (died 164 B.C.) is the "little horn."

Antiochus did indeed prohibit the daily sacrifice — from 167-164 B.C. He defiled the Temple with an idol, and offered swine's blood upon the altar. He authorized the burning of as many scrolls of the Law as could be found. He attempted to stamp

resist Jesus Christ at His Second Coming!

Antiochus Epiphanes came over 2,000 years too early to fulfill this prophecy — except as a forerunner or antetype.

Another opinion has it that the "sanctuary" is not on earth, but in heaven — that it is God's throne. The daily sacrifice, according to this view, is the work Christ has been performing in heaven as High Priest.

Is this the Bible explanation?

Not heavenly sanctuary!

Look at Daniel 8:11. See the Bible answer with your own eyes: "He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down."

Notice what this scripture says! The "place of His sanctuary" is to be cast down!

Now consider: If these daily sacrifices are, as some believe, the daily work of Christ in heaven, then a mortal man — the "little horn" — would have

The vision of the "little horn" is for the time of the end! The same time setting is recorded in Daniel 8:23: "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness." Could anything be more astounding? This is a prophecy for the last days. The little horn symbolizes a ruler who shall arise "in the latter time of their kingdom." This man stands up against the Prince of princes — that is Christ at His Second Coming!

out the truth. He did fulfill this prophecy of the "little horn" — as a forerunner!

But the final ruler symbolized by the "little horn" of Daniel 8 is to be alive at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. He comes on the world scene in the latter days, when human transgression — sin and suffering — is to reach its climax. He is to stand up and

power to intervene in heaven and stop the work of Jesus Christ!

Further, if "His sanctuary" is in heaven, the "little horn" would have the power to "cast down" the sanctuary — the very throne of God in heaven!

IMPOSSIBLE!

No man can stop Jesus Christ from performing His work in heaven. No man — no ruler —

not even the devil himself — can cast down the throne of God and profane His holy sanctuary!

Then what is the meaning of this astounding prophecy?

The Bible answer

First read verses 13 and 14 of Daniel 8:

“Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, ‘How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?’ And he said to me, ‘For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.’”

For the word *days* in verse 14, a footnote correctly reads, “Literally *evening-mornings*.”

Some tried to explain this enigmatic prophecy before God’s time came to reveal it!

Those who assume the “sanctuary” is in heaven claim that this vision of “2,300 days” commenced in 457 B.C. and ended in A.D. 1844. (They say that the “2,300 days” represent 2,300 years in fulfillment.) They further insist that the “sanctuary” that was cast down — the Holy of Holies in heaven itself — God’s very throne — was to be “cleansed” beginning in 1844.

Notice that the Bible makes clear that whatever the little horn is to do for “2,300 days” cannot have begun until after the division of Alexander’s empire into four parts in 301 B.C. But 457 B.C. is over a century and a half too early! That date cannot be the commencement of the “2,300 days.”

But notice further. The little horn takes away the daily sacrifices for “2,300 days.” Were daily sacrifices — whether on earth or in heaven — taken away from the year 457 B.C. until A.D. 1844?

Of course not! The Jews were

offering daily sacrifices almost continuously from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah until the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

But, it is insisted, the sanctuary was not on earth but in heaven!

Granted that the earthly sanctuary is a type of the heavenly sanctuary, God’s throne. But what king or power has ever cast down God’s throne in heaven for 2,300 years? Notice the last part

No man can stop Jesus Christ from performing His work in heaven. Not even the devil himself can cast down the throne of God and profane His holy sanctuary! It is time we freed ourselves from fables about A.D. 1844!

of Daniel 8:13. The “sanctuary” is to be “trampled underfoot.” Has any kingdom, any power, ever trodden under foot God’s heavenly sanctuary for 2,300 years?

Certainly not!

The Bible itself proves that this amazing prophecy has nothing to do with a heavenly sanctuary or the year 1844!

Then what does the prophecy of the “2,300 days” really mean?

A common misunderstanding

Notice Daniel 8:26: “And the vision of the evenings and mornings which was told is true.” The vision of “2,300 days” is here called in Scripture “the vision of the evenings and mornings.” Why?

Notice verse 14 of chapter 8. In most Bibles you will find a marginal note for the word *days* that reveals the original Hebrew word is “evening-mornings.”

This prophecy is not referring to 24-hour days, but to daily sac-

rifices offered evenings and mornings. (See Leviticus 6:9, 12).

The Revised Standard Version correctly reads, “For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings.”

In other words, here is a prophecy that 2,300 evening and morning sacrifices would cease to be offered. Since the daily sacrifice was offered twice a day, this prophecy is actually speaking of 1,150 days. In 1,150 days there would have been exactly 2,300 daily sacrifices offered.

The Jewish *Soncino* commentary on Daniel, by Dr. Judah J. Slotki, comments on this verse: “The numeral refers to the number of times the offerings, normally brought twice daily, will be omitted, giving a total period of 1,150 days.”

At the end of this 1,150-day period the sanctuary was to be “cleansed” or “justified.” This prophecy is dual, as are many Bible prophecies, and it is yet to be completely fulfilled!

What happened to the daily sacrifices in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes (167-164 B.C.) — when 2,300 sacrifices were not offered for a period of 1,150 days — was only a type of what is yet to occur!

But the fulfillment of this prophecy “in the latter days” will not again be for 1,150 days, but for 1,290 days, according to Daniel 12:11.

Notice also in Daniel 11 that the latter days do not commence until verse 40: “At the time of the end . . .” That’s in our day, 2,000 years *after* the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. Therefore, the taking away of daily sacrifices and trampling of a sanctuary underfoot is yet a future event.

We are nearing the fulfillment of these amazing prophecies about the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It is time we woke up to world events and freed ourselves from fables and traditions about A.D. 1844! It’s time we believed the Bible. It’s time we asked God for wisdom and asked Him to lead us and show us His truth! □

Suppose you were on board a ship that was about to set sail, and you somehow learned that the ship was doomed to sink after leaving port.

Wouldn't you do everything you could to get off the ship before it sailed?

The Bible reveals that this world is like a doomed ship. The time is coming when this modern Babylon of confusion, ugliness and death is going to fall (Revelation 18:2). This world's system is about to be replaced by the glorious Kingdom of God (Revelation 11:15)!

Signs of the end

Before a ship leaves port, a series of bells or whistles sounds, over a period of time. These signals warn people who do not intend to sail that they should get off the vessel. Sometimes, as a final warning, one of the ship's crew members announces, "All ashore who are going ashore!"

The Bible also offers, to those who will heed, specific warning signals that mark the end of this evil age. Those warning signals are found in Bible prophecy!

"Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets," says Amos 3:7.

So what does the Bible tell us about the events that are even now leading up to God's intervention in this world?

Jesus' disciples asked Him this very question: "Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us . . . what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'" (Matthew 24:3).

The rest of Matthew 24 — the pivotal prophetic chapter in all the Bible! — relates Jesus' startling answer.

Jesus foretold that false prophets would arise and deceive many (verses 4-5). He said the world would be engulfed in wars, tormented by famines, stricken

What Bible Prophecy Reveals NOW

Where are we now in the relentless march of prophesied end-time events?

By Norman L. Shoaf

with pestilences (verses 6-7). And all these signs are only "the beginning of sorrows" (verse 8)!

These events will culminate in the Great Tribulation, the worst crisis the world has ever faced (verse 21). It will be a time of religious persecution, martyrdom for true Christians, more deception and war (verses 9-12). Jesus warned that "unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved" (verse 22).

The Great Tribulation will be followed by supernatural signs in the heavens (verse 29). Then Jesus Christ will return to conquer this rebellious world and set up the Kingdom of God on earth (verses 30-31).

Christ warned His disciples, "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him" (verse 44).

Revelation's seven seals

The book of Revelation predicts the same timetable that

Christ listed, but presents the major events as "seals."

The seven seals of Revelation are shown in their correct sequence with other end-time events, as prophesied in the Bible, in the chart on pages 14 and 15. These seven seals outline the same order of events Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24.

The first four seals, sometimes referred to as the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," are false prophets (Revelation 6:1-2), war (verses 3-4), famine (verses 5-6) and pestilence (verses 7-8).

The fifth seal is the Great Tribulation (verses 9-11). The sixth seal marks the signs in the heavens (verses 12-17).

The seventh seal denotes Christ's intervention in the affairs of this world. This last seal, explained in chapters 8, 9 and 16 of Revelation (see chart), is made up of seven trumpet plagues that Christ will pour out when He conquers this God-rejecting world. The last trumpet plague is made up of seven last plagues.

But where are we *now* in this sequence of events?

The deepening crisis

Jesus listed the signs of the end in Matthew 24. The book of Revelation repeats and further explains these signs in the form of seven "seals."

The first four signs (false prophets, war, famine and pestilence) have relentlessly intensified, growing worse and worse, from Jesus' day until our time. Now, just as Jesus warned, these problems threaten man's very survival on earth!







Next — this world's deepening crisis will lead directly into the Great Tribulation! That will be a nightmare time of nuclear warfare, great famines and disease epidemics on a worldwide scale, the rise to power of the "beast" and "false prophet" of Revelation, martyrdom of the saints and the captivity of the modern nations of Israel.

It is all too much to explain in

The Seven Seals of Revelation

Sacrifices start at some point ——— 2½ years ——— 1 year

Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

First Seal	Second Seal	Third Seal	Fourth Seal	Fifth Seal	Sixth Seal	Silence in heaven (Revelation 8:1-6)	
White Horse 	Red Horse 	Black Horse 	Pale Horse 	Great Tribulation 	Heavenly Signs 	First Trumpet One third of trees and all grass burned	Second Trumpet One third of sea becomes blood, one third of sea creatures die, one third of ships destroyed
Deception	War	Famine	Pestilence	National Captivity		Revelation 8:7	Revelation 8:8-9
Matthew 24:4-5	Matthew 24:6-8	Matthew 24:7-8	Matthew 24:7-8	Matthew 24:9, 21-22, Luke 21:23-24	Matthew 24:29-30, Joel 2:30-31		
Revelation 6:1-2	Revelation 6:3-4	Revelation 6:5-6	Revelation 6:7-8	Revelation 6:9-11	Revelation 6:12-17		



Sealing of God's People

Revelation 7, Ephesians 1:13-14, Ezekiel 9:4

1,335 days
(Daniel 12:12)

Organized efforts of God's Work to proclaim the Gospel to the

1,290 days
(Daniel 12:11)

Sacrifices end, abomination of desolation set up, Church go

1,260 days
(Daniel 12:7)

Jerusalem surrounded, gentiles overrun city, two witnesses prop
(Matthew 24:15, Revelation 11:2-3, 12:6, 14, 13:5)

this short space. But you need to be watching the warning signs Christ gave of the end of this age! He said, "Watch therefore, and

pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass" (Luke 21:36). This world is

a ship doomed to sink. The warning bells have begun to sound. Listen to God's final warning: "Come out of her, my people, lest

1 year

A very short time

The Day of the Lord — Time of God's Wrath

(Joel 2:1, Revelation 6:15-17, 11:18, 14:19, 15:1)

Seventh Seal: Seven Trumpet Plagues (Revelation 16:1)

Second Trumpet	Third Trumpet	Fourth Trumpet	Fifth Trumpet	Sixth Trumpet	Seventh Trumpet: Seven Last Plagues						
One third of sea becomes blood, one third of sea creatures die, one third of ships destroyed	One third of rivers become wormwood	One third of sun, moon, stars darkened	Locusts, symbolic of beast's military power (Revelation 17:8-14)	200 million horsemen; one third of humanity killed, humanity refuses to repent	First Plague	Second Plague	Third Plague	Fourth Plague	Fifth Plague	Sixth Plague	Seventh Plague
					Sores on people who accepted mark of the beast	Sea turns to blood, all sea creatures die	Rivers turn to blood	Sun scorches humanity with great heat, humanity blasphemes God	Beast's seat of government afflicted	Euphrates dried up, world's armies gathered to Armageddon (Joel 3:9-17)	Great earthquake and hail
Revelation 8:8-9	Revelation 8:10-11	Revelation 8:12	Revelation 9:1-12	Revelation 9:13-21	Revelation 16:2	Revelation 16:3	Revelation 16:4-7	Revelation 16:8-9	Revelation 16:10-11	Revelation 16:12-16	Revelation 16:17-21
			First Woe	Second Woe	Third Woe (Revelation 8:13)						

Zekeiel 9:4

Return of Jesus Christ
 Revelation 10:7, 11:15-19, 19:1-21,
 Matthew 24:30-31, I Corinthians 15:51-52,
 I Thessalonians 4:16, Zechariah 14:1-4

Gospel to the world end (Amos 8:11, John 9:4)

Church goes to place of protection (Daniel 8:9-12, Matthew 24:15-20, Luke 21:20-23)

witnesses prophesy, Church protected in wilderness, beast power rules earth

you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

For more information, write

for free copies of our booklets *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last!* and *The World Won't End This Way!* and our brochure

Prophecy Comes Alive! The unmistakable warnings are sounding all around us. Get off this sinking ship before it's too late! □

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Dating

The Second Time Around

Ideally, marriage is for life. If you are divorced or widowed and want to remarry, here is sound advice as you begin dating again.

By Dexter H. Faulkner

More and more people today are marrying for the second, and sometimes third or more, time around. Sometimes children are involved in this second-time-around courtship.

What should be considered by those who are contemplating remarriage after divorce or the death of a spouse? Or by singles dating those who have been married before?

Is the second time around really better, as some love songs portray? Do people really learn from their mistakes and change into ideal mates after they are more experienced with marriage?

Unfortunately, the statistics do not bear this out. Divorces from second marriages are more prevalent than divorces from first marriages!

Does that mean, then, that once-married people should just forget about ever having a successful marriage? No, not at all. But second marriages are not for the uninformed and immature, especially if children are involved.

Are you sure you could be a loving stepparent to someone else's children? These children many times are traumatized by the death of a parent or the breakup of their home. They need extra love and special understanding. Are you up to that?

Think about it. Graduations, weddings, holidays — can you share them with a former

mate of your mate, or the memory of a mate? You may have to.

Know yourself. Some people just can't accept being second in such an intimate relationship as marriage. Any reference to the former mate will be extremely painful to them, and the complexities of a second marriage, especially one that involves children, will be too much for them to bear.

But, for those of you who have read this far and still feel you could handle whatever comes your way in a second marriage, how should you approach dating the second time around?

Don't rush into a second marriage

Dating toward a second marriage is much the same as any other dating. Dating toward marriage is a time to get to know the other person.

Talk to one another and get to really know each other before you get serious. Relax and have fun. You may be tempted to get too close too fast, but don't let it happen. Take time to become good friends first.

People are different. Some who have been married before find their loneliness so overwhelming that they want to remarry as soon as possible. They tend not to want to spend the time needed to get to really know the person they are dating, or to allow that person to get to know them.

Those of you who are tempted to do this, realize that while you may believe you know exactly what you are looking for, and



don't need much time to make up your mind, others may not share your timetable. Pressuring someone to "get off the fence" will only worsen the situation.

Don't pressure anyone into marriage too soon. It's selfish and certainly not in the best interests of the person you are dating. You're not showing real love when you put your own personal desires above all else, including the person you profess to love.

Other once-marrieds shy away from commitments for some time, not allowing any relationship to get too serious. They need time to soothe and heal the shocks and wounds from the ending of their former marriages, for whatever reasons they ended. Many will still "feel married" for some time, and dating may seem like a silly game to them.

Discuss your previous marriage

If you are the one who has been married, sooner or later you need to talk openly with the one you are interested in about your previous marriage.

Don't just focus on your former mate's problems. Look at yourself honestly and see what you have learned. It isn't necessary to tell every detail of why your marriage failed, but it is wise to admit that you made mistakes, too, and show what you have learned from them. Otherwise, how can those who are considering marriage with you know that there won't be a repeat?

By the way, singles, if someone tries to lead you to believe that all the problems in a former marriage were the fault of the former mate, beware. No one is perfect. You don't want to marry someone who can only see *your* faults.

You can't change the other person

If you are considering marriage and you find the problem in the first marriage of the person you are interested in centered around drink, sex, drugs or any other such issue, don't think you can change the person. Such addictions are not changed easily, even by the person with the problem.

Let me tell you the story of my friend, Mary (not her real name). Mary was 19 when she met Jim. Jim was five years older and seemed so much more mature than the boys Mary had been dating. Almost immediately after Mary began dating Jim, he began to pressure her into marrying him.

Mary, somewhat overwhelmed by Jim's good looks and sophistication, felt flattered that he was so serious about their relationship. Jim told her he had been married before, but that it just didn't work out. Mary was infatuated with Jim. She didn't want to hear about his first wife, so she paid little attention to Jim's vague references to his former marriage.

Two or three times in the three months before they married, Mary saw Jim drunk to the point of passing out. But Jim assured her his drinking bouts were caused by the loneliness of divorce, and their marriage would solve that problem. She believed Jim, because Jim believed it himself. He had not admitted to himself that his drinking was a problem.

Mary's parents became alarmed when she an-

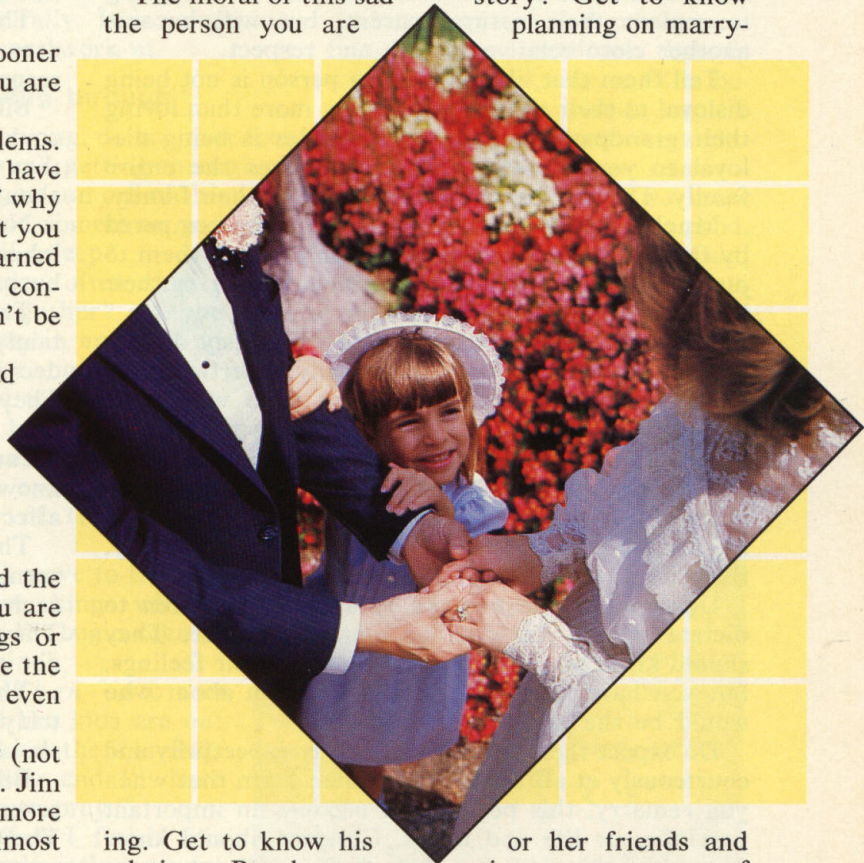
nounced her plans to marry Jim. They knew little about him, and were apprehensive about what they did know. She seemed so young.

But Mary was adamant about the marriage, and before Mary's parents could believe it was happening, over a weekend their daughter married and moved to a city some miles away.

The next few years were a nightmare for Mary. Jim couldn't hold a job for any length of time because he was an alcoholic. Every few months he would leave home for work in the morning and then not show up again for days.

Several children later, after five or six years of misery and longer and longer periods of abandonment by Jim, Mary finally divorced him.

The moral of this sad story? Get to know the person you are planning on marry-



ing. Get to know his or her friends and relatives. People many times are not aware of their own problems. And even if they become aware, that's no guarantee they will be able to overcome them. Nor can you make them change.

During the dating period is also the time to talk about finances with a prospective mate. Find out about alimony and child support. What about future commitments to educational needs of any children involved? Are there debts to be considered? Will you have to lower your standard of living?

If your prospective mate is paying alimony and child support, you may have to live on a limited income, or both you and your mate may have to work to make ends meet. You might not even be able to afford a child of your own.

Basic attitudes toward money need to be made known and discussed before marriage. Money prob-

lems many times are the primary problems in a second marriage.

Dating and children

If you are seriously dating a person who has younger children, or if you have children, both of you should get to know the other's children, and the children should get to know one another. Don't think children can be ignored in your relationship.

Include the children on an outing occasionally. Before the date, the parent should explain to them that he or she is seriously dating toward marriage, and wants them to get acquainted with the person he or she is considering as a future mate.

If the children's natural parent is still living, the children should be told that your date is not going to replace their natural parent, but will become another close relative to love and respect.

Tell them that liking this new person is not being disloyal to their natural parent any more than loving their grandparents or aunts or uncles is being disloyal to you. Family love encompasses the entire family. This person will become part of their family.

Much of what you say will have to be tempered by the age of the children, but don't expect them to just naturally warm up to this new person in their lives, and immediately love him or her.

By the way, if, when you begin seriously dating, you make the mistake of practically deserting your children, spending all your extra time with your newfound love, your children are going to be hurt. Spend time with and talk to your children. Encourage them to express their feelings to you, and be open with them about your need for a mate. If they are involved from the start in your plans to remarry, they aren't as likely to feel abandoned.

Don't make the mistake of allowing children to dictate whom you date or marry, however. They should know you are concerned about their feelings, but you have to make the final decision about who would be the best mate for you.

Do expect them to treat your date respectfully and courteously at all times. They must learn that when you remarry, this person will become an important part of your life and theirs. Children should know from the beginning that their desires will not supersede those of your mate.

Whatever you do, before or after marriage, take care not to run down the natural parent in the eyes of the children. You'll be tempted to compete for their love, or to compete for your prospective mate's love for them. Don't do it. Again, love is not something to be gingerly given out or competed for. They can love and respect their natural parent and they can love and respect you at the same time. Trying to make them love you *instead* of the natural parent can be devastating to them.

These children are an important part of your loved one's life. You may find yourself resenting the time and attention paid them. But you must be able to allow your loved one to love his or her children.

It's difficult, if you have not had children, to

understand how much sacrifice on the parent's part is necessary in a parent-child relationship. That is why it is so important to make sure that you are ready for this added responsibility before you marry someone with children.

Involve God in your decision

A couple, whom we'll call Bill and Sandra, were deeply in love and felt they'd dated long enough to know they wanted to spend the rest of their lives together. They were financially able, and they knew and liked each other's families.

The families knew and approved highly of Bill and Sandra's relationship. Both families were of the same religion, and the couple had counseled about marriage with a minister who knew them well.

They had talked about and agreed on future children, finances, where they wanted to live, their respective jobs — what else was there?

Bill and Sandra knew they had done all they could do themselves to wisely choose a mate, but they also knew about a scripture that said something about God's involvement in the selection.

Notice Proverbs 19:14: "Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife [or husband!] is from the Lord."

They felt they had involved God. They had certainly prayed about making the right choice. They decided to step out in faith and go one step further. They prayed that God would remove their rose-colored glasses, that He would allow circumstances to occur that would reveal to them what they didn't know about each other that would most certainly affect their future life together.

The next few weeks were rough ones. Everything seemed to go wrong. Bill and Sandra saw traits in each other that they had not dreamed were there. They found themselves disagreeing in ways they had not even considered.

They looked at each other and saw each other, truly, for the first time. They wondered if they should call the whole thing off.

Bill and Sandra have been married now for several years. They didn't call off their marriage. They saw each other clearly, and they considered the negative traits of character with the good. They decided they could make it as husband and wife — even when problems came along.

If more couples involved God the first time around, as Bill and Sandra did, second-time marriages would hardly be necessary.

Involve God in your dating toward marriage, whether it is for the first time or the second time around. Then continue to keep Him involved throughout your lives together.

Second-time marriages aren't for everyone, but for those who have counted the cost and are willing to make the effort, they can be successful. They take a lot of work and a lot of maturity and a lot of love and a lot of self-sacrifice. But then, what worthwhile relationship doesn't? □

(To be continued)

When Prayers Go No Farther Than the Ceiling...

Do you sometimes feel God isn't listening to your prayers? Here is how to make your prayers heard on high!

By Michael Feazell

Prayer is an essential part of Christian life. Yet many are unaware of the basic keys to answered prayer God has revealed in His Word!

God wants His people to pray to Him. He delights in the prayers of His saints. We are admonished to "pray always" (Luke 21:36) and to "pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17).

But many people find regular, meaningful prayer difficult. Even

when reminded of the need to be diligent in prayer, it seems that old habits get the best of us, and prayer is often neglected.

Why? Simply because it isn't natural for our human minds to have a relationship with God. It isn't something that comes easily. As Romans 8:7 says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be."

Even if God has specially called us to understand His truth and participate in His end-time Work, staying close to Him never comes naturally. It is something that we must work at.

"Not getting through"

When praying, do you ever feel like you aren't getting through to God? Do you run out of things to say? Do you sometimes just give up and fall asleep?

Or do you often skip prayer altogether? Maybe you sleep in and plan to pray later, but somehow never get around to it.

Making excuses is easy. There are a million of them. Often, our excuses can take the form of the "whens":

"When I move to the new house, then things will be better and I'll begin regular prayer again."

Or, "When summer comes and the kids are out of school, then the mornings will be easier and I'll have more time to pray."

Or, "When I finish this project that's eating up my time, then I'll be able to really get serious about daily prayer."

But this deceptive "when-then" game can go on for the rest of our lives!

True Christians are to take on God's very nature and mind (II Peter 1:4). We are to become like Him, learn to think the way He thinks, see things through His eyes, take on His values. But there is no way that we will ever be "partakers of the divine nature" without

constant communication with Him.

Relationships take time

Maintaining any strong personal relationship takes time. Think of your closest friend. How did your friendship develop? Did you become bosom friends in one meeting? It may have started the first time you met, but you didn't really become close until you spent a great deal of time with that person.

You had to learn to trust him or her. You had in-depth conversations and realized you thought alike about many issues. You began to love your friend.

But it didn't happen overnight.

It's the same with our relationship with God. Even if we know the importance of having a good, strong relationship with God, sometimes we're not as close to Him as we ought to be simply because we neglect doing what the Bible says we must do to maintain that closeness. "Draw



near to God," says James 4:8, "and He will draw near to you."

Time can take its toll. When we don't stay in contact with someone, we begin to lose touch. We aren't as close. That's exactly what happens in our relationship with God!

II Corinthians 4:16 shows how often we need to be renewed with the Spirit of God, with the mind of Christ: "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed *day by day*" (King James Version).

Pray fervently

James 5:16 gives us an insight on the way we should pray: "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

Here is where many stumble. Some will say: "God doesn't hear my prayers because I'm a sinner. I know what I'm like. If you knew my weaknesses, you'd know why God won't hear me."

But if you have been called and reconciled to God, made righteous through the blood of Jesus Christ (Romans 5:9-10), God hears you! God looks on the heart. If you have repented and are looking to God for deliverance from sin, "there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

Some have a mistaken view, too, of what it means to pray fervently.

Have you ever felt, "I'm just talking to the wall. The harder I try, the worse it seems, and the more frustrated I become! I clench my fist and grit my teeth and say, 'God, hear me!' I get as 'effective' and 'fervent' as I can — but it doesn't do any good."

Yet, if you were talking to a close friend about something important to you, something you wanted to share and discuss, would you scream: "Listen to me! Pleeeeeease, hear me!?" Would you groan and moan and whine? Of course you wouldn't!

No, to be fervent and effective

is to be earnest and sincere. All we have to do is really *mean it*.

We know God loves and cares for us. We know He is interested in us and wants to hear us. And so, we can talk to Him with meaning and fervency.

Give thanks

I Thessalonians 5:18 gives another principle for praying: "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God." Show appreciation to God for what He has done, what He has promised and what He is going to do.

Paul covers the same principle in Philippians 4:6: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

Prayer should be filled with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a key ingredient of all Christian prayer, demonstrating one's atti-

Some have a mistaken view of what it means to pray fervently. If you were talking to a close friend about something important, would you scream: "Listen to me! Pleeeeeease, hear me!?" Would you moan and whine? Of course not.

tude toward the Creator and Provider of all.

"Teach us to pray"

The disciples came to Jesus Christ and asked how to pray. They wanted instruction. "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

Following along in the parallel account in Matthew 6, let's look at what Christ told the disciples.

"When you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by

men" (verse 5). If your attitude in praying is for your own vanity, to show off in some way, then your prayers are ineffective.

We may not go as far as praying on a street corner, but consider this situation: A husband and wife get into an argument. In the heat of the moment, one of them says, "Well, I'm just going to go pray about it!" and stomps off into the bedroom. In other words, "I'll show you who's spiritual around here!"

Going to God is a tremendous, priceless privilege we have been given. And not because of anything we did to deserve it! We need to use this privilege with the right kind of attitude that pleases God and reflects the mind of Christ, not in some vain show.

We also need to talk to God in private: "When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place" (verse 6). Prayer isn't something to be done in a public situation under normal circumstances.

"When you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words" (verse 7). Pray in a way that is meaningful. Remember you are talking to the Creator of the universe — the one who has given you your life and who holds the key to your future!

Verse 8 goes on to say: "Therefore do not be like them [the heathen who use vain repetitions]. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him." Some may ask, "If God knows what we need, then why do we need to ask?"

When we come before God and make our requests known to Him with thanksgiving, we are showing God that we understand that He is the only source of help. He is our life-giver. We are building a relationship with Him through prayer and learning to place our minds on the things that are important to Him. Day by day, we learn to think more and more like Him.

After Christ instructed His disciples in the basics of prayer,

He gave them a prayer outline: "In this manner, therefore, pray" (verse 9). He listed seven areas to concentrate on. Let's look at each of these areas and learn what God wants us to pray about.

What to pray about

1) "*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name*" (verse 9). Christ shows we should begin our prayers by glorifying God. We show God how great we know He is by praising and thanking Him. This helps set the stage and give us perspective. We need to remember who we are talking to, and the attitude we should have in talking with Him.

We can thank God that He is a God of love. We can thank Him for His plan and that He is all-wise and all-powerful to carry it out. We need to come before Him in humility and realize we have no strength on our own without Him.

2) "*Your kingdom come*" (verse 10). This is the next most important area. The Kingdom of God is what God is preparing to establish on earth. It is uppermost in His mind. We should thank God for the glorious future He has planned for mankind, and that this world is going to be delivered from all its suffering.

A new government based on justice and righteousness is coming. We should talk to God about His law and how it produces every good and right thing. We can contrast this present society with God's coming Kingdom and discuss how much we appreciate what He is planning to do.

As we build the habit of putting our minds on God's Kingdom first (Matthew 6:33), our desire for the Kingdom becomes more important than our own problems and needs.

3) "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" (Matthew 6:10). Here is our opportunity to pray specifically about what God is accomplishing now on earth — the preaching of the Gospel of the soon-coming Kingdom.

Thank God for His Work, the only glimmer of light in this dying world. Thank Him for the

great and priceless privilege of having a part in this great Work, even though you have done nothing to deserve it. And ask Him to lead and bless His Work according to His will.

Thank God for leading and directing your life as He wills, and for the fact that "all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

4) "*Give us this day our daily bread*" (Matthew 6:11). Thank God for how much He blesses you. Especially remember the spiritual understanding He has given you (Luke 4:4). Thank Him for His continued protection and for providing your needs and the needs of all His people around the world. Ask God to heal the afflicted and encourage those who need encouragement.

God purposefully relegated praying for your own needs and the needs of others to this later point in the sample prayer. When you pray about personal needs, what you have already concentrated on earlier in the prayer helps put the human experience into perspective.

God is training your mind to be set first on those things that are of Him. In this way God teaches us to pray *selflessly*, like Jesus Himself, rather than *selfishly*, as we are otherwise naturally inclined.

5) "*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*" (Matthew 6:12). You might think that such a request ought to come first, or at least nearer the beginning of the prayer. But it is so much easier to fully understand the need to be forgiven after we have discussed how great God is and remembered what His plan and purpose for us is.

It's easier to see, after we have focused on these other areas, how harmful and destructive sin is. Talk to God about why you want to obey Him. Explain why you want to become like Him. Tell Him how excellent His law is and describe the joy and peace that are produced by keeping it.

Remember that God answers

the prayers of those who obey Him (I John 3:22). Ask God for an attitude of being willing to admit where you are wrong and to change and grow.

And it is time in the prayer to ask God for His Spirit of mercy and forgiveness for others. Explain to God that you realize what incredible forgiveness He has given you. Ask Him to help you not to hold grudges or resentment against anyone.

6) "*And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*" (Matthew 6:13). Ask God to help you keep attuned to His law. Ask Him to help you realize who is the originator of sin — Satan — and to help you reject the thoughts and attitudes that lead to sin.

We need to ask God for His Spirit to lead us, and for the faith of Jesus Christ to believe and obey God.

7) "*For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen*" (verse 13). We finish as we began the prayer — giving all praise and honor to God. We thank Him that He is able to and will do everything that He has promised.

Nothing can change the glorious good that God has determined to do. What a comforting thought with which to end our communication with the great Creator God!

This sample outline is a guide for the majority of a Christian's daily prayers. But there is also a time to pray only on one subject, such as in times of crisis or special rejoicing.

The main thing is this: Consider God's instruction about how to pray, and get started!

If you base your prayers on obedience to God, praying daily in the name of Jesus Christ (John 16:23) and according to God's will as He reveals in His Word, the Bible, you will be heard on high! You will develop powerful confidence in the great God. Your prayers will become effective. And your relationship with God will grow strong and unshakable. Don't let anything hold you back. Start today! □

LETTERS

August issue

How refreshing your article "Where Did the Original Apostles Go?" was. I also might add daringly Christian of you, too. The time has come that all denominations . . . should be looking acutely into the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and Britain and America in Bible prophecy.

Bill W. Burk
Garland, Tex.

After reading your article called "Able to Be Friends," I just had to write this letter. I have already thanked God for inspiring it, and I would like to thank Terri Black for putting it together.

I am the widow of a blind man, and reading this article brought back so very many memories of talks he and I used to have as he would explain some of his frustrations to me.

Also, it brought back memories of my own fears and self-consciousness in dealing with the handicapped — that is, before God brought Bruce into my life. I had such a fear of communicating with the handicapped that God had to place Bruce where he was totally blocking my path twice in the same day before I would speak to him. I was forced to communicate to get to my destination!

I'm certainly thankful now that God pushed me into overcoming that hang-up. Not only did it lead to a very happy (although far too short) marriage, but also to many other friendships with handicapped brethren who I now see as being just like me except for physical limitations.

Carol Johnston
Clarksburg, W.Va.

It is a true pleasure to see you take on this world, head to head, in the scriptural boxing arena of "Prove All Things" in each issue of *The Good News*. Thank you for your mini-lesson on the subject of speaking in tongues. Your 1-2-3 procedure of dispelling all nonbiblical concepts about the tongues subject, coupled with the detailed examination of the four biblical passages mentioning tongues, really put a knockout punch to all fables being circulated about the tongues question today. I have now chain-referenced my Bible with the scriptures you used.

M.W.K.
San Antonio, Tex.

The extended family

The "Family Sharing" by Ronald D. Kelly in the June-July *Good News* took

me back in memory to my childhood days and our children's days, where I and our children grew up with loving parents and grandparents and uncles and aunts and cousins a few miles apart from us.

Family reunions and large family picnics were a special treat in those days. As a small child, I can remember well when Mother called "Supper time!" no one was missing at the table.

In these days that type of a family home is rare.

Elizabeth Bunch
Seal Beach, Calif.

Handwriting

Having just re-read the article "Help Your Child Write to Read" (June-July), I would like to compliment Joan C. Bogdanchik for writing such a fine piece on such a neglected skill. I have reason to comment on this subject since I myself have poor handwriting.

She was indeed right to emphasize the importance of legible handwriting, especially since in my own case I have suffered from a lack of it. At college my teachers became increasingly aware of my problem — one even going so far as to describe my writing as "hieroglyphics," whilst politely, if honestly, referring to it as the worst he'd ever seen. . . . I went on to study for a degree (which I have recently finished) and encountered the same problem. Firstly, I even dropped math . . . because of illegibility and then, in my second year, my overall grades . . . went down — most probably as a result of my handwriting. Indeed, soon after I received a formal letter expressing the external examiner's concern at the illegibility problem. . . .

Poor writing can cause more than a loss of grades. In one situation my father was checking a tax form I had filled in. This deteriorated into a short-tempered argument because of the confusion over what I had actually written. Consequently both sides apologized for a problem which arose out of illegibility.

I think the message is clear: Don't underestimate the importance of the written word and the skills needed. That goes for parents and children alike!

Richard Crookes
Southampton, England

Ridiculed for being good

Thank you for your wonderful, trustworthy literature. It helps me study the Bible, and makes it easier for me to not fall prey to "false prophets."

I am reading the article on dating

(part five). It helps to know that even though I might get ridiculed for being good and not doing wrong, all I have to do is keep my faith in God and talk to Him. In this troubled world, one has to have God in her every moment to get through. I wouldn't want to think about life without knowing God. Keep up the good work.

Michelle Kiene
Granby, Colo.

Imprisoned member writes

I am a prisoner in the Chillicothe Correctional Institute. I have been in prison this time going on 27 years, for first-degree murder. I will be 51 in two months. Since I have been about 10 years old, I have been out in the free world only three-and-a-half years — three months in 1952, three months in 1954 and three years from 1957-60.

I was the second prisoner in the world to be baptized into the Worldwide Church of God (in November, 1974). . . . Of the small handful of us who were baptized in prison, God has kept me hanging in there for going on 23 years since I first listened to Herbert W. Armstrong and read my first *Plain Truth* in 1964.

So, outside of what God has taught me via the Church and what little I've learned about survival in this world, you can see that my teachers have been few and far between who knew what they were talking about. . . . Keep telling it like it is and hang in there. We don't have much longer for Christ to return and straighten up this mess we've made of things.

J.M. Manos Sr.
Chillicothe, Ohio

Reads with much interest

I would like to first of all thank you very much for *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News*. At the same time I would like to thank you for sending the Bible Correspondence Course. This course is so interesting and is the best I've ever laid my hands on. These lessons explain everything so clearly and in a way that can be easily understood.

I've been receiving your wonderful magazines *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News* regularly for over two years now. I would like to take the opportunity to tell you how much I appreciate your magazine and with how much interest I read it.

S.B.
Poland

If You Are Losing Faith...

Do you feel as though you're drifting farther and farther from God? Here is what you must do now!

By John Halford

I am writing this in Amman, capital city of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Today, Amman is a bustling, modern city of nearly one million people, and one of the major crossroads of the Middle East.

In Bible times it was also important, although, of course, it was not as big as it is now.

The Bible records that this was the place where King David of Israel sent Uriah the Hittite to certain death. It is an ugly story, but one that teaches us an important lesson.

The death of Uriah

In the days of King David, Amman was known as Rabbah, and it was the capital city of the Ammonites. Just as today, there was hostility between the people of this town and Jerusalem, 60 or so miles to the west.

We read in II Samuel 11:1 how, about 3,000 years ago, King David sent Joab to lay siege to

Rabbah. David, however, remained in Jerusalem, and there he made a tragic mistake.

You probably know the story. David saw Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his trusted generals, bathing, and lusted after her. Then David committed a physical act of adultery with Bathsheba, and later Bathsheba found that she was pregnant (verses 2-5).

Then, as if the adultery wasn't bad enough, David made things even worse. He called Uriah back from the war so that Uriah could spend the night with his wife. David hoped Uriah would then think Bathsheba had become pregnant by him.

But that didn't work. Uriah was a loyal soldier who identified with the hardships of his men at the front. He refused to go home (verse 9)!

David could not persuade Uriah to change his mind. So David arranged for Uriah to be sent back to the war. David instructed that Uriah be assigned to the most dangerous part of the battle — and then be abandoned by his men to be killed (verses 14-15)!

The plan worked. Uriah was killed, probably while storming the old citadel that is now surrounded by modern Amman. So David was able to marry Bathsheba.

It was an ugly incident, uncharacteristic of David.

God liked David. He liked him for his courage — David slew Goliath when everyone else was afraid. God liked him for his loyalty — David risked his life to save his sheep from a lion. David seemed to be a good shepherd who was willing to lay down his life for his sheep. God could identify with that!

So what happened to cause this courageous, loyal, God-fearing man to so tragically betray his faithful servant Uriah? That was not like David. But then, suppos-

edly converted people sometimes do very unconverted things. David had allowed himself to get into a terrible spiritual condition.

God recorded this incident for us, not to embarrass David, but to teach us a lesson: What happened to David could happen — *is happening* — to some people reading this article!

David drifted from God

David had slipped a long way. This was not just a bad day — a momentary lapse. It is obvious that David had embarked on a course that was leading him farther and farther away from God.

Think about it: Adultery was (and is) a serious sin, but David could have repented deeply when he realized what he had done. It is safe to assume that he didn't repent immediately.

Bathsheba could not have



known she was pregnant until some time later. David had ample time to come to his senses and acknowledge the sin. But what did he do? He compounded it. Totally leaving God out of the picture, he tried to cover up the problem, first with subterfuge and then with murder.

David was in serious spiritual trouble — and in danger of losing out on salvation. Unfortunately,

some who are reading this article have gotten themselves into the same condition David was in. They, too, are in deep spiritual trouble. They have known God's way, but they are ready to give it up. They started out well, with hope and enthusiasm. But something has happened. The spark is gone.

Are you that way?

Are you about to lose out?

Are you just going through the motions of living a Christian life? Do you feel hopeless, discouraged, condemned?

What was it that started the rot? A big sin? Or a series of little ones? Or maybe even a series of big ones? Perhaps you have let the cares of this life choke the zeal and drive you once had for God. And so now, do you feel you have slipped too far to get back?

Has it been weeks — maybe months — since you prayed properly? Has the Bible again become a strange book? Perhaps you still attend church services, but you don't feel you belong anymore. You feel like a fraud. You feel God is no longer your friend, and you expect Him to lower the boom on you any day.

You are on the verge of ruining the most wonderful and important opportunity that any human could be given — a chance to be in the first resurrection! And the tragic thing about all this is that *there is no one to blame but yourself.*

You know that — but you no longer know what to do.

God knows, too, and He *does* know what to do!

Look what He did for David.

God was not prepared just to give up on David. God must have watched with great concern as David's spiritual life collapsed. We can only imagine David's state of mind in those awful weeks or months — his despair, his growing feeling of alienation from God, the hollowness as the Holy Spirit within him began to be quenched.

But David did not look for

God. So God went looking for him!

God sent Nathan the prophet to try to bring David to his senses (II Samuel 12:1-15). It worked. David heeded Nathan's stern correction and repented. No justification. No excuses. Just a heartfelt "I have sinned against the Lord" (II Samuel 12:13).

As David uttered those words, all heaven must have breathed a deep sigh of relief. David woke up and got back on the track to salvation.

You can, too. God has not changed. He will still fight for His sheep.

In David's case, God was not about to stand by and let this wonderful man fall away just because David had allowed himself to get down and out spiritually.

Think about this if you have allowed yourself to get into David's condition. Do you feel cut off — that your prayers are going unheard? Is your appetite for God and His way dropping off?

Do you find yourself drifting back into your old ways, and lacking the will to do anything about it? Do you feel that God has lost interest in you — and that you really can't blame Him, given your lack of interest for Him?

Then remember how God came looking for David!

And consider the parable of the good shepherd who leaves the 99 and goes looking for the one lost sheep. It's in Matthew 18, verses 10-14. See how it ends: "It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that *one* of these little ones should perish" (verse 14).

David was one of those little ones — and so are you. And that means that somewhere out there the Good Shepherd is looking for you.

So do what David did. Admit the problem — whatever it is. And pray. Yes, it's hard if you have gotten away from it — but force yourself. Lost sheep bleat till the shepherd finds them. *Fast* and pray if need be. Fasting focuses the mind wonderfully! Get

help and counsel from a servant of God. Lost sheep often can't make it back by themselves. They need a friendly shepherd to help them (Luke 15:5).

Don't be too proud to get help. Whatever it is that has estranged you from God, it is hardly as bad as David's sins — adultery, deceit and the murder of a faithful, trusting friend. You haven't done that, have you? (And even if you *have* — you aren't the first person to do so).

God wants you

After David repented, he wrote Psalm 51, which shows how deeply he understood.

He realized how badly he had let God down, and now he wanted to be restored to full favor, with the Holy Spirit again guiding and leading him (verses 10-11). He wanted once more to anticipate salvation (verse 12). He wanted to have back everything that he had so nearly thrown away.

But why? Not just so *he* would be OK. David understood his calling. Notice verse 13: "Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You."

David asked God to restore him to useful service in His Work.

In the same way, God doesn't call anyone in this age as a favor, but because He has something for them to do. In this end-time Work of God, there is much to do and not enough laborers (Matthew 9:37-38).

If you have dropped aside, you are needed back. God won't replace you until He has given up looking for you.

You don't have to give in to despair and hopelessness. Swallow your pride. Ask God to work with you as He did with David. You may be in a spiritual mess, but there is a way out.

Poor, faithful Uriah died in a battle not far from where I am writing this, but one day he will be resurrected. But David came very close to losing his life *forever.*

What about you? □

You see it adorning cards. It's mentioned in a number of beloved Christmas carols. And you'll often find a cardboard cutout of it hanging above a nativity scene.

Yes, the "star of Bethlehem" is a well-established part of the traditional Christmas story. But as with many other elements surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ, people take for granted what they hear without checking the biblical account!

Christmas cards normally depict wise men atop camels in the desert. Above them hovers a rather large, generally four-pointed star. But is that a true representation? Did they, as the carol says, "follow yonder star"? Was it "westward leading," as the song suggests?

Logical choice

In Matthew 2:1-2 we read: "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.'"

The wise men said they *saw*, past tense, the star. They did not say they followed it.

These wise men, possibly from Persia, were miraculously given understanding that the King of the Jews had been born. Further, they understood that they needed to worship Him. Armed with that information, where did they go?

Where any "wise" person would assume a King of the Jews was located — the center of Judaism, Jerusalem! And that is exactly where they went.

If, as most people believe, the star went before the wise men and led them, we have to con-

The 'Christmas Star': Fact or Fable?

*Did a star really
guide the wise men to
the infant Jesus?*

By Philip Stevens



clude it got lost. Instead of guiding the travelers to where the Christ child was born in Bethlehem, they ended up in Jerusalem.

When the wise men arrived at Herod's court, they asked the king where this newly born Jewish leader was to be found. Herod quizzed his own wise men. The chief priests and scribes referred Herod to Micah 5:2:

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel,

whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Guidance from Herod

Herod then passed this information to his guests, and they left. So it was not the star that guided the wise men — it was Herod!

But then, after they left Herod, the star appeared again: "The star which they had seen [notice, *had seen*, past perfect tense] in the East went before them, till it came and

stood over where the young Child was" (Matthew 2:9). Having been put on the right track, the wise men needed to be shown exactly where to go. God used the star to guide them to the house where Christ was.

The wise men were reassured by the sight of the familiar object. Had the star been with them all the way from their homes, why does it say that they rejoiced when they saw the star (verse 10)? The implication is that it suddenly reappeared and guided them the last part of the way to their destination. Without that help, the wise men could have looked for days — and even then might not have found the Christ child.

This clearly was a supernatural miracle from God. It is quite possible that the "star of Bethlehem" was simply an angel sent to help the wise men find Jesus. The Bible often refers to angels as stars (Job 38:7, Jude 13, Revelation 1:20, 9:1, 12:4).

No, the wise men didn't follow the star for the bulk of their journey. They possessed certain knowledge about the birth of Christ, and they used that understanding to find where He was.

The whole Christmas story points up how human fables and traditions deceive millions even today. For more information, write for a free copy of our booklet *The Plain Truth About Christmas*. □

Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?

Which day should a Christian observe as God's day of worship?

Millions of Christians today — indeed, *most* — observe Sunday as the “Lord's day.” But are they correct?

These are important questions, for the Bible shows that God's Sabbath is a sign that identifies His people (Exodus 31:12-17). Hence those who keep the wrong day are *not* God's people, no matter how sincere they may be!

The basic doctrine

The seventh-day Sabbath was ordained at creation and reconfirmed to ancient Israel. Christ and the apostles faithfully kept it, and it is binding upon us today. The Sabbath is a memorial of creation, a sign of God's people, a time of physical and spiritual rest and refreshment and a picture of the coming millennial rest in the Kingdom of God.

Sabbath — or Sunday?

The vast majority of Christians today, without thinking, accept Sunday as the day of worship. They would recoil at the suggestion they might be wrong.

Yet different Christian denominations differ widely as to exactly *why* they observe Sunday, *what* they believe the day means and *how* it should be observed.

But while Sunday keepers disagree about their reasons and methods, they all agree on one issue: They believe the Sabbath need not be kept.

Therefore, the question here is

whether the Bible proves we must keep the Sabbath.

The Bible teaching

The place to start is Genesis 2:1-3. Here we see that God rested on the seventh day of creation. He “blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.” Exodus 20:11 states that the day God sanctified was the Sabbath.

Thus we see that the Sabbath did not originate with Israel or the Jews of the Old Covenant, as some maintain, but rather at creation itself. It hence is a memorial of creation and a reminder that the true God is Creator. And since the Sabbath began before the Old Covenant was ratified, it cannot somehow be negated by the Old Covenant's passing.

Exodus 16:1-30 shows how God gave manna to the Israelites on six days each week, but not on the seventh. The purpose of the manna, as verse 29 shows, was not just to feed the people but to teach them to observe the Sabbath. This incident occurred before the terms of the Old Covenant were given. Therefore the Sabbath, though it was later

made part of the Old Covenant, was not confined to it. The fact that the Old Covenant is not now in force for true Christians does not disannul the requirement to keep God's Sabbath.

The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus 20:1-17. Verses 8 to 11 comprise the Fourth Commandment, a resounding call by God to keep the Sabbath holy. We are also reminded here that the Sabbath is a rest day; indeed, the word *Sabbath* means “rest.” The fact that the Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments is no small matter, for most Christians regard keeping the Ten Commandments to be among man's most fundamental obligations.

Of course, some will say the Ten Commandments are done away, but can they seriously mean this? Is it now OK to have other gods before God, or to commit adultery, to lie, to steal or to covet? Of course not. Virtually all would concur that all the commandments should be kept — all of them, that is, except the Fourth, which demands we keep the Sabbath holy! How illogical!

Some who have seen this illogic but who wish to keep Sunday anyway will maintain that the verses mean we must indeed keep a day holy, but that the day is now Sunday and not Saturday. But the idea that the Sabbath was somehow changed to Sunday is even less logical, and is rejected by every respectable authority on the Bible and history.

Next, Leviticus 23:1-3 lists the Sabbath as a feast day of God, not of the Jews. This passage fur-



ther calls the Sabbath a holy convocation, and hence a day for a worship meeting.

Any one of a number of verses could be cited to make the next point, but Ezekiel 20:1-26 is a good illustration. These verses show that one of the greatest reasons ancient Israel was sent into captivity was because they broke God's Sabbath law. Nehemiah 13:15-18 confirms that the Jews who returned from that captivity realized this fact.

Can we not see from these verses how seriously God takes the Sabbath? Breaking the Sabbath demands the death penalty for sin (Romans 6:23). How can some conclude that they can take the Fourth Commandment lightly now, in the face of such evidence of God's desire for us to keep the Sabbath?

The New Testament contains much powerful evidence for Sabbath observance as well. Paramount among this evidence is that Jesus Christ Himself kept the Sabbath, not Sunday. Luke 4:16 and other scriptures clearly show that this was His custom, or habit.

In Mark 2:23-28, Christ confirmed that "the Sabbath was made for man" [not just for the Jews!], and that He was the "Lord of the Sabbath." He was thus qualified to state how it should be properly kept. He was the Lord of the Sabbath because He was the Creator God of the Old Testament (Colossians 1:15-16) — and therefore the Creator of the Sabbath! He rested on the Sabbath at creation and He kept it when He came to the earth in human form as Jesus Christ!

Other verses show more proof. For one, New Testament Christians kept the Sabbath after Christ's death, and therefore after everything that was "nailed to the cross" was nailed. For example, Luke 23:55-56 shows that the women who wished to embalm Jesus' body rested on the

Sabbath after His death, "according to the commandment."

Verse after verse likewise confirms that the apostle Paul habitually preached in services on the Sabbath. See Acts 13:14-15, 16:13, 17:2, 18:4. And he preached not just to Jews, but to gentiles as well (Acts 13:42-44). This shows that Paul had one custom for both Jews and gentiles, not two separate customs.

Also, see Acts 15, especially verse 21. James' statement here shows that he assumed the gentiles would continue to hear God's Word preached on the Sabbath. This confirms that converted gentiles kept the Sabbath, and that they would continue to do so even though the decision in Acts 15 to not force circumcision upon gentiles freed them from some Old Testament requirements. Clearly, it did not free them from the Sabbath command, as is sometimes wrongly alleged.

Likewise, Hebrews 4:4-9 confirms the Sabbath is binding today. The final rest of God is yet future for us, in the coming Millennium. The Sabbath pictures that rest. That being so, does it not make sense that the Sabbath day, which pictures the ultimate rest, would continue in full force till the pictured rest arrives?

Two more important points must be made. The first is that the Sabbath will be kept in the world tomorrow, as can be seen from Isaiah 66:22-23. Does it make sense that the Sabbath was to be kept from creation, and by ancient Israel, and by Christ, and by the apostles, and in the future, but not now in this day?

Finally, one more powerful Bible proof for the Sabbath is the very argument some cite against it. Some refuse to keep the Sabbath because the New Testament does not command Sabbath observance with a direct command such as "You shall keep the Sabbath even in New Testament

times. Thus says the Lord." But the lack of such a command shows that whether to keep the Sabbath was never an issue in the early Church!

Had it been an issue, it certainly would have been addressed strongly one way or the other, as the less-important subject of circumcision was. The absence of such statements actually speaks quite loudly for the Sabbath. It shows that continued Sabbath observance was taken for granted by the early Church.

Much more information about God's Sabbath is offered in our booklets titled *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?* and *Has Time Been Lost?* Write for your free copies today.

Key verses

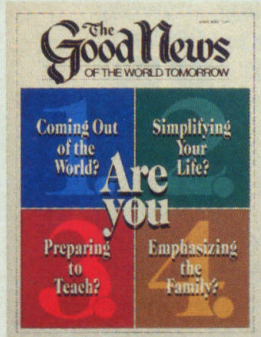
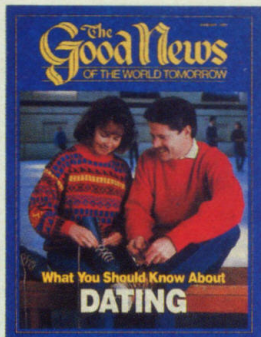
Here is a brief summary of important scriptures about the Sabbath: Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 16:1-30 — the Sabbath was instituted before the Old Covenant. Exodus 20:8-11 — it is one of the Ten Commandments. Leviticus 23:1-3 — the Sabbath is God's day, not the Jews' or anyone else's day; it is a holy meeting day. Ezekiel 20:1-26 — God sent Israel into captivity because of their Sabbath breaking. Luke 4:16 — Christ kept the Sabbath. Acts 13:14-15, 42-44, 15:21 — Paul kept it; so did the gentiles. Hebrews 4:1-10 — the Sabbath pictures the coming millennial rest. Isaiah 66:22-23 — the Sabbath will be kept in the world tomorrow.

Which day is the proper day for a Christian to observe as holy to the Lord? If the Bible is to be our guide, the answer is clear — the Sabbath! □

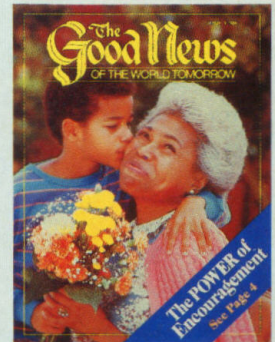
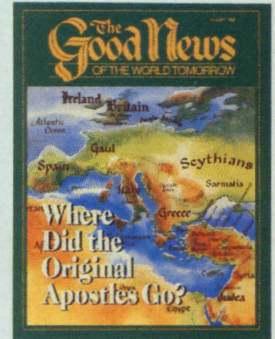
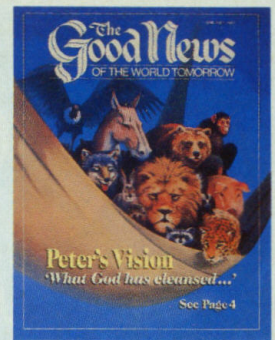
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