

THE WORLD AHEAD

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EDITORIAL

Can You Worship Christ in VAIN?



Roderick C. Meredith
 Editor in Chief

Think this over. People spend time and effort to determine what clothes they should buy, what car they should drive. A wise young man and woman spend many hours over a period of months or years getting to *really know* each other's character before they are willing to make the commitment to marry.

But the average person isn't even *half* as careful when it comes to uniting himself to a church and its doctrines, hoping that this will bring him an *eternal reward* from the Creator of heaven and earth!

Yes, whether we belong to a church or not, most of us have been *very careless* in acquiring our various beliefs about God and Christ. We have been SO CARELESS, in fact, that there are over four hundred denominations and sects all teaching *different* things in the name of Jesus Christ.

The first thing to bear in mind is that if any of our beliefs are *true* they will stand testing. If they are not true, we should want to discover this *and rid ourselves* of this error as soon as possible. The inspired Apostle Paul tells us, "**Prove all things; hold fast that which is good**" (1 Thess. 5:21 KJV).

To prove any spiritual matter, we should obey God's admonition to "lean *not* on your own understanding" (Prov. 3:5). God's Word also instructs us, "There is a way which *seems* right to a man, but its end is the way of DEATH" (Prov. 14:12).

How then are we to discover God's way to salvation? Where are the right teachings or doctrines to be found? "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). We should get *all our doctrines* from the Bible! And we should let the Bible correct us when we are wrong.

Jesus Christ admonishes this materialistic, secular society that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4). Christians are commanded to LIVE by the Bible—to base their lives on its teachings.

This is the challenge Jesus Christ gives those who wish to follow Him: "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). This statement provides the "key" to *true* Christianity! Millions *claim* that they follow Christ, but *few indeed* are willing to DO what He said and follow the *way of life* He lived Himself.

Jesus argued with the scribes and Pharisees about their habit of compromising the clear intent of Scripture with contrary human traditions. Today, as then, Jesus calls those who compromise with the clear teaching of the Bible "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in VAIN they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men'" (Matt. 15:7-9).

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Reuters photo.

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Mad Cows, Englishmen... and

Prophecy!

What's behind Britain's problems?
Few connect today's headlines with Bible prophecy!

by Douglas S. Winnail, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Playwright Noel Coward penned the fabled words that only “mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.” His point was that, in contrast to other nationalities, “Englishmen detest a siesta.” This practical, persevering yet venturesome aspect of the British character played a vital role in carving out and administering the greatest empire the world has

ever seen. It also made England and Englishmen the envy of other nations. The sun, however, set with astonishing suddenness on the British Empire. Britain is no longer considered a major power, yet England and Englishmen have been abruptly thrust back to the center of the world stage—this time by “mad cows.” No longer the object of envy, the “Brits” have been overtaken by a crisis that is

generating animosity and anti-British feelings in many parts of the world, especially continental Europe. There are *important lessons* in this unfortunate situation that should not go unheeded by the rest of mankind.

The recent panic over mad cows is merely the latest in a series of events afflicting Englishmen. While news commentators, journalists, politicians and the public focus on the burgeoning

ramifications of the crisis, looking for someone to blame and workable solutions, few seem to real-

ize we are witnessing biblical prophecies being fulfilled right before our eyes. The Bible focuses on the big picture. Why are these events happening—especially in Britain?

Public Panic!

Mad Cow disease burst dramatically into world news headlines with the announcement by the British government that people eating British beef *might be susceptible* to a fatal brain-destroying disease that *appears* related to Mad Cow disease. Public reaction was immediate. Schools and restaurants stopped serving beef. Supermarkets and butcher shops could not sell beef.

Within days of the announcement dozens of countries in Europe, the Middle East and other areas around the world banned British beef. The \$6.5 billion British beef industry braced for a shock. Ideas were floated to kill all or a major portion of Britain's 11 million cattle, which could cost billions of dollars. The crisis may have serious consequences for the Tory government that is currently in power. Plummeting beef prices and consumer panic all over Europe strained Britain's already tenuous relationship with the European Union at a crucial time. The threat of economic chaos spread like wildfire throughout Europe.

Pestilence in the Pasture

Mad Cow disease did not appear overnight. It has been plaguing British farmers for more than a decade. More than 160,000 head of cattle have been destroyed as a result of the affliction. The disease, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), is similar to a

were thought to be species specific—not transmissible from one species to another. Neither disease was considered to be contagious to humans. Recent studies *now suggest* that British cattle were infected by consuming diseased sheep parts in their feed. Both diseases appear to be caused by recently discovered and little-understood protein substances called “prions.”

The current crisis was spawned by the revelation that an outbreak in Britain of a rare brain-destroying condition in humans, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, also attributed to prions, *may possibly* be related to the ingestion of infected beef tissue from mad cows. If, indeed, the three diseases spring from a common source as some scientists *suspect*, the disease has jumped two species barriers

in a relatively short period of time. *If* those scientists are correct, then millions of people have been exposed. Since Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease has a long incubation period (10 to 40 years), no one knows for sure how many people might come down with it! Estimates suggest the death toll could run from 1,000 to 10 million (*The Sunday Telegraph*, March 24, 1996, p. 21). If there is an actual link between BSE and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, scientists, public health offi-

brain disease that sheep have carried for centuries called scrapie. Both diseases

cial, politicians and the public are worried that Britain could be looking at a *catastrophe* in the making.

Amid accusations, finger pointing and alarm, it is important to recognize the factors that contributed to this nightmare because there are *no cures* for these diseases. The best hope is *prevention*—but that will involve recognizing and eliminating the causes. In order to control the current epidemic and prevent future repetitions, we are going to have to *rediscover* the importance of wisdom, common sense and fundamental values—many of which are actually found in the Bible—a book our

Page 4 left: Auctioneer Mike Credland stands in front of empty cattle pens on March 25. On an average Monday there would be over 400-500 cattle for sale but on the first Monday of the “Mad Cow” scare, the pens were deserted. **Upper right:** British Chief Medical Officer Kenneth Calman speaks at the beginning of a meeting with veterinary experts from E.U. countries in Brussels. **Bottom:** a dairy cattle farmer inspecting his livestock—Reuters photos. **Page 5 top:** a local shopper casts an eye over the beef on sale. **Middle:** examination of a “mad cow” brain is performed by a scientist of the National Center for Food and Veterinarian Studies in Lyon, France. **Bottom:** a worker at an animal crematorium in Hertfordshire watches as a cow suspected of being contaminated with BSE is incinerated on March 28—AFP photos.

modern secular society seems to have largely forgotten.

Agriculture Runs Amuck!

The apparent cause of the Mad Cow epidemic in Britain was the use of

sheep offal (brain, spinal cord, liver, kidneys, etc.) in cattle feed as a protein supplement to help produce growth and boost milk production. From a purely nutritional point of view, this may seem reasonable. However, from a biological perspective, cattle are herbivores. Their digestive tracts are designed to consume and metabolize plant materials, not the tissues of other animals. Had the proper biological perspective guided the thinking of farmers, the species barrier between sheep and cattle probably would not have been broken.

In a thought-provoking editorial, Colin Tudge, a research fellow at the Centre for Philosophy at the London School of Economics, writes that methods of modern animal husbandry (such as feeding diseased animal parts to other animals) are “fundamentally misguided.” He states, “There is no animal in the world less equipped to eat meat than the cow. It is also appalling husbandry, *bordering on the insane*.” Such methods, he observes, “spring from a husbandry governed not by biology or common sense, but purely profit” (*Independent on Sunday*, Mar. 24, 1996, p. 21).

Surprising though it may be to some, biblical principles apply to this situation. God gave humanity dominion over the animals of the earth to *wisely manage* these resources. This principle is contained in God’s instructions to Adam to “dress and keep” the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15; cf. 1:28). “The righteous”—those who obey the laws of God (Ps. 119:172)—**“know the needs of their animals, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel”** (Prov. 12:10 NRSV). Cattle need pastures, not humanly devised substitutes, to sustain them: “How the animals groan! The herds of cattle wander about because there is no pasture for them; even the flocks of sheep are *dazed*” (Joel 1:18 NRSV).

In light of these principles, the Mosaic instructions not to eat animals that had died of natural causes or were torn by beasts (Lev. 22:8) would be

wise to follow with reference to livestock that humans would also use for food. As the Mad Cow epidemic probably illustrates, when diseased tissues of animals are fed to other animals it may result in the transmission of disease, not only to other animals, but ultimately to humans. Understanding and following these biblical principles related to animal husbandry would help prevent the spread of serious diseases.

Pressing for Profits

The pressure to make profits has compromised human judgment at several key points. The realization that inedible portions of animal carcasses (formerly waste products) could be sold for money and utilized in such diverse products as animal gelatins, feed, medicines and cosmetics contributed to the growth of the rendering industry. During the oil crisis in the 1970s, the cooking times and temperatures of the rendering process were reduced. This saved the industry money, but also increased the risk of transmitting infectious disease through the insufficiently sterilized products. More sheep heads were also utilized by the rendering plants during this time. It appears the use of diseased sheep parts in the production of animal feed from this streamlined rendering process may have triggered the Mad Cow epidemic and public health panic (cf. Black, *Microbiology*, 2nd ed., 1993, p. 687).

Farmers operating under the pressure of tight profit margins also played a role. Since the government only reimbursed cattlemen for one-half the market value of a diseased cow, the economic incentive was to ship a suspected BSE animal off to market before it could be diagnosed. As one farmer admitted, “It is easy to cheat the system. Someone who works with a herd can spot a BSE cow a month before the classic symptoms emerge, then bung it quickly off to market” (*The Sunday Telegraph*, Mar. 24, 1996,

p. 2). A government veterinarian estimated that “two infected animals get into the food chain for every one that is eradicated.” Some veterinarians will also “misdiagnose” a mad cow for their “good” clients. Rumors persist that British beef is being smuggled to other countries where it is resold to unsuspecting buyers.

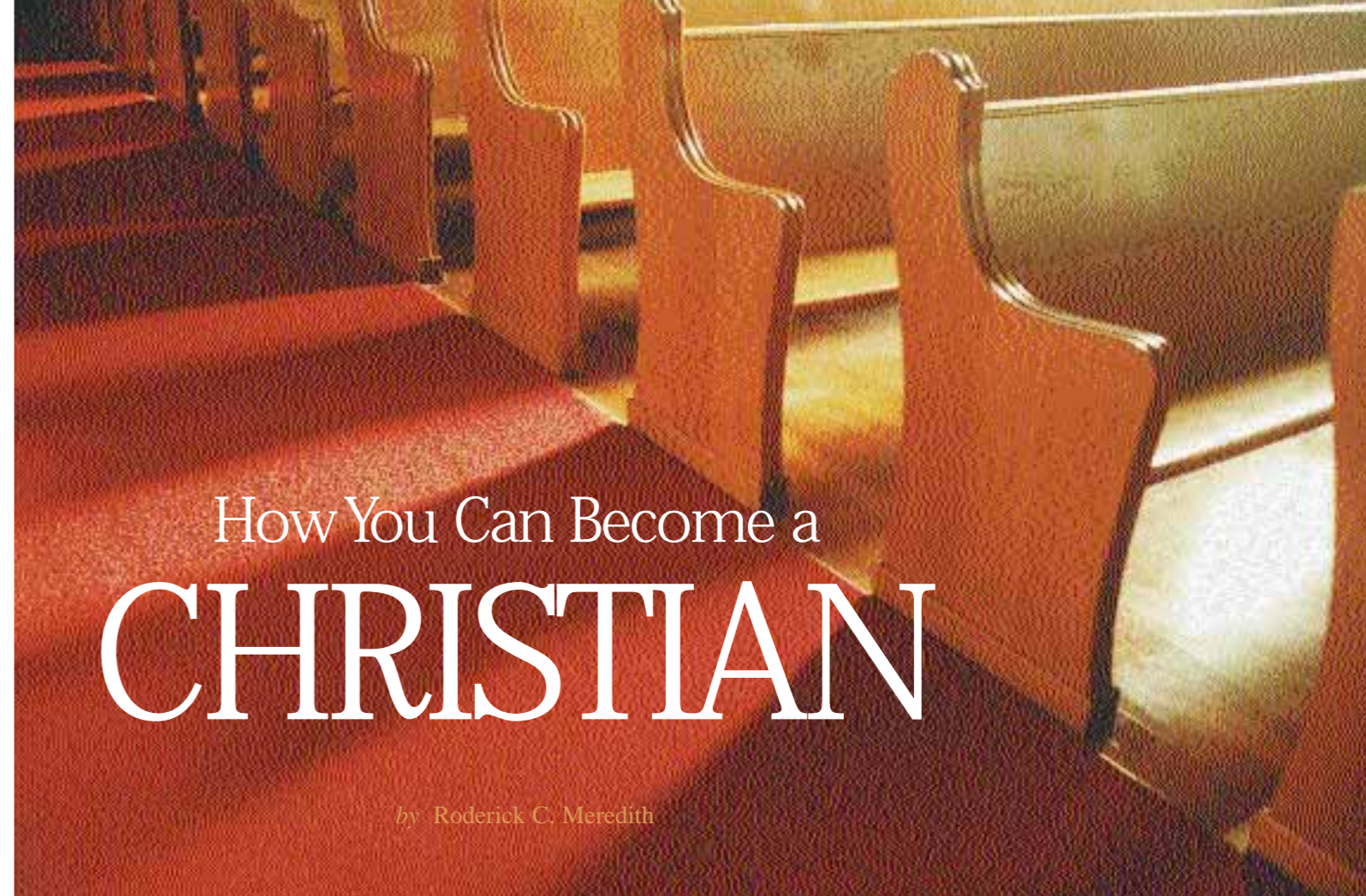
The British meat industry, in the pursuit of profits, utilized offal in the production of *cheap* meat pies, hot dogs and hamburger (mince) from about 1985 until the process was banned in 1989 (p. 21). Although this appealed to the human nature of both bargain-minded shoppers and the meat industry to get “something for nothing,” it proved to be a dangerous combination. Millions of unsuspecting consumers have been potentially exposed to an awful death.

The ethical failures of both individuals and industries, under pressure to keep costs down and to make a maximum profit, now threaten the public health, economies and stability of many nations. It is not surprising that the Bible plainly teaches, “The *love of money* is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith *in their greediness*, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:10). The tenth commandment, “You shall not covet”—**if believed and obeyed**—would help prevent such costly mistakes (Ex. 20:17).

Worshipping a False God?

The immediate trigger of the recent public panic was the acknowledgment by the British government, *after years of denial*, that Mad Cow disease might, indeed, be a threat to human health. The public puts little confidence in official British reassurances that there is little risk, today, from eating regular cuts of beef. According to an editorial in the *Independent on Sunday*, the public

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How You Can Become a CHRISTIAN

by Roderick C. Meredith

You may be in for a surprise!
Many people who THINK they are Christians are very mixed up!
Here is a CHALLENGE to you if you truly want a closer
contact with the Eternal God.

What does Jesus Christ think of the spectacle of *hundreds* of different, competing denominations and sects—all calling themselves “Christian”? Did Christ teach several hundred different methods of salvation—or just *one*?

If you happen to attend a church, how did you select it? Was your decision based on its theology? Consider this challenge objectively—thoughtfully. Before you began going to your present church, did you first try to make a careful, unbiased survey of all your local churches to see which one taught the most biblical *truth*? Did you *compare* the various churches you surveyed by examining how their doctrines stack up against what the Bible plainly teaches?

Or did you, like most people, just grow up in your particular faith and accept its teachings without ever having really *proven* them to yourself?

In last month’s issue, I thoroughly explained—with complete documentation—that much of what currently passes today for “Christianity” is vastly different from the original Christianity taught and practiced by Jesus Christ

and His apostles. As a noted church historian acknowledges, only 50 years after the death of the Apostle Paul “we find a church in many aspects **VERY DIFFERENT** from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul” (Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, *The Story of the Christian Church*, p. 41).

Last month’s article explained in great detail how Christ and the apostles taught a message of *obedience* to the Ten Commandments as a *way of life*. They kept the biblical Sabbath and the Holy Days clearly described in the Bible. Therefore they had God’s blessing and power. (If you did not receive last month’s *World Ahead* magazine, please write for it immediately and we will send you a copy so that you may read and *study* the lead article on true Christianity!)

God was **REAL** to the early true Church! Those original members of the Jerusalem Church of God deeply believed in and understood God’s plan to *intervene in human affairs*. At the end of this age, they knew God would send Jesus Christ back to this earth as King of kings! And they knew and taught that Christ’s Kingdom would be

based on the immutable, eternal, spiritual law of God—which is the standard that defines Christian character and conduct (cf. Rev. 12:17; 14:12)! But, for many of you, this is all new knowledge. You were never taught this information by the religious traditions in which you grew up.

What You Probably Didn't Know

Has this magazine challenged some of your cherished—though assumed and unproved—beliefs? We hope you are discovering the Bible's God, of whom today's popular, though humanly devised, religious systems are ignorant. The Bible teaches the concept of a literal Spirit Personality, called God, who inspired the writing of your Bible. He says He walked and talked with Adam and Eve, with Abraham, appeared to Moses and talked with the prophets. Truly, the Scriptures say it was Almighty God who created and now RULES this universe.

This God is now moving and intervening in world affairs. The growing numbers of wars and their potential for human extinction are all signposts along the prophetic road to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. He has a great master plan that will be fulfilled! The swiftly worsening conditions of drought and famine are prophesied as are the rising crime rate, the breakdown of the family, the soaring incidence of homosexuality, filth and perversity throughout Western civilization.

God the Father is real. Jesus Christ is sitting, literally, at His right hand. A wise person learns to take seriously Sir Winston Churchill's statement: "There is a great design and *purpose* being worked out here below."

Only the Living Jesus Christ—at His Second Coming—will be able to truly stop the hellish destruction and suffering caused by man's wars and way of life! In these last days before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, you need to know—and *know that you know*—how you stand before God! How will God judge you? With an open mind, you should be willing to prove whether or not you have ever been really spiritually converted. Are you willing to believe and live apostolic Christianity—the *true* Christianity taught and practiced by Jesus Christ and His apostles?

Misplaced confidence in a false concept of God and Christ could result in forfeiting your eternal life. Such a deception is extremely dangerous because your own personal vanity may prevent you from admitting that you have been wrong.

Are you willing to face this possibility? Are you willing to change if God shows you through His Word that you have never really known Him, never been properly baptized, never had His Holy Spirit living within you? Your Bible plainly claims, "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Rom. 8:9). You must have Christ's Spirit in you or you are not a

Christian. If you have not received God's Spirit, you have not yet been spiritually converted!

God's Spirit Is the Difference

A truly converted person is filled with and led by the Holy Spirit of God (Rom. 8:14). God places and lives His very life within us through His Holy Spirit. By this means, we are begotten of Him as children and thus partake of His divine nature!

In the past you probably didn't even know what the Holy Spirit was, what it was supposed to do in your life or the real result of being led by it. The Apostle Paul says, "Because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5 NRSV). Through the Holy Spirit, God gives us His love, allowing us to partake of His nature—His character. And *how* is this love of God expressed? Your Bible answers, "**For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.** And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3).

God's character of love is realized in a Christian's life by following the spiritual principles contained in the Ten Commandments—which means, doctrinally, obedience to God's law. God's Spirit leads us to obey Him as our Maker and Ruler. The Apostle Peter was inspired to write about the Holy Spirit that "God has given to those who *obey Him*" (Acts 5:32).

A genuine, godly conversion, then, involves a complete surrender to obey God and His Word. In Acts 2:38, Peter was inspired to tell how to be converted. He said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

You must *repent* of sin! What is sin? The Bible specifically defines it: "**Sin is the transgression of the law**" (1 John 3:4 KJV)!

So to be truly converted, you must repent of breaking God's law. You must be so sorry that you are willing to quit—to turn around and go the other way! You are willing, therefore, to begin obeying God's law and to literally live by every word of God (Matt. 4:4)—including the Ten Commandments!

Anything hard about that? Is this a great, crushing burden? What is so onerous about having no other gods before the true God? How about not taking God's name in vain? Or not breaking His Sabbath? What is so hard about honoring one's parents? Or refraining from murder, adultery, stealing, lying and coveting?

Yet most "Christian" churches these days do NOT teach obedience to the Ten Commandments. They make excuses that "grace" relieves them of responsibility to live righteously. So they teach that it is okay to sin. Not in so many words, of course, but that is the practical effect of

many churches' doctrines. Why do people think they must be free to fight, kill, lie, cheat, steal, commit adultery, break the Sabbath and damn the Creator's name and their fellow human beings—in order to be happy? Where does this ungodly idea come from? No wonder we live in a society plagued by skyrocketing crime! Criminals can only be *encouraged* by the anti-law bias mouthed by such churches.

Repeatedly, one hears so many religionists sanctimoniously proclaim that God's law is a great burden! They think it is "too hard" and refuse to even try to obey it. They fail utterly to realize that it is God's love—poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit—which enables us to keep God's law if we are willing to do our part!

It is Christ's righteousness put within us through His Spirit that makes the difference! And that difference is love, joy and peace with God and our fellowman—to the extent we obey—and to the extent we are growing and overcoming our human natures through this life in preparation for eternal life in the World Ahead.

Baptism Represents a Changed Life

In the New Testament, God's commandments were magnified by Jesus Christ—particularly in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). New Testament Christians are to keep not only the letter but the spirit and intent of God's law in every phase of their lives. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4).

To repent and be converted, then, you must stop disobeying God's law—stop denying His rule over your life. It is a matter of your willingness to honestly see and *acknowledge* that you have been wrong. You must acknowledge that you are willing to surrender your will to obey your God and your Maker! You must express your willingness to accept the shed blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, in full payment for your sins—"the wages of sin is *death*" (Rom. 6:23)—as He died on the stake for you.

If you are willing to do this, then you are ready to be baptized as an outward sign of your willingness to completely bury your old self—literally give your life to God as your Father and to Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, High Priest and coming King.

Notice the inspired description of the meaning of baptism in Romans 6:3-4: "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Baptism, then, symbolizes the *death* and *burial* of the old self—the old human nature that has been contrary to God and His laws. It symbolizes our faith in, and acceptance of, the literal death of Jesus Christ on our

behalf. Also, baptism symbolizes our acceptance of, and faith in, His resurrection—which our coming up out of the watery grave pictures. "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection" (v. 5).

Again, baptism certainly signifies that our old nature—selfish, vain and sinful—has to die. It is an outward acknowledgment of the death of the "old man" in order that the "new man" might emerge from the watery grave to live righteously by God's laws (cf. Ps. 119:172) and to quit sinning! "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" (Rom. 6:6). Since, as we have seen, "sin is the transgression of the law," we should not continue in lawlessness. Rather, we must repent of breaking God's laws and begin to let Jesus Christ—through His Spirit and His love—**live within us His life of obedience** to God's laws and service to our fellowman.

True Christianity requires a *total surrender* that allows the Living Jesus Christ to **literally live within us through the power of the Holy Spirit!** Notice these inspired words of the Apostle Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20 KJV).

Be Sure You Do Your Part

Are you absolutely sure that you have come to this kind of real repentance and surrender to the God of the Bible? Have you come to abhor yourself—to realize that your natural spirit of lust, competition and vanity is simply not bringing you real peace, happiness and eternal life? That, as a whole, the people of this world simply do not know the way to peace or righteousness at all (Rom. 3:10, 17)?

The greatest stumbling block preventing most people from accepting the Truth and being converted is their own vanity. Many people have had religious training from parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, friends as well as a variety of churches. They hate to admit that they—and perhaps friends and loved ones—have been wrong! **They fear to admit that they may never have been converted!**

Human nature makes them want to maintain their own righteousness. But God thunders, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways.... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. 55:8-9).

Many of you reading this article still have what the Bible describes as a "carnal" mind. You have never really

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Is the War on Drugs Lost?

by Jeffrey H. Patton

America's foremost conservative-opinion magazine, *National Review*, splashed the following headline across its February 12, 1996 cover: "THE WAR ON DRUGS IS LOST—Kill It; Go for Legalization; Free Up Police, Courts; Reduce Crime."

The distinguished editors of this respected publication asserted, "Things being as they are, and people as they are, there is no way to prevent somebody somewhere, from concluding that '*National Review* favors drugs.' We don't; we deplore their use; we urge the stiffest feasible sentences against anyone convicted of selling a drug to a minor. But that said, it is our judgment that the war on drugs has failed, that it is diverting intelligent energy away from how to deal with the problem of addiction, that it is wasting our resources, and that it is encouraging civil, judicial, and penal procedures associated with police states. We all agree on movement toward legalization, even though we may differ on just how far" (p. 34).

What has happened to "just say no"? While many ridiculed this statement by former White House First Lady Nancy Reagan in the early 1980s, the message did gradually sink into the consciousness of American adolescents. By 1992, 70 percent of American teenagers *disapproved* of illicit drug use, but that positive trend hasn't lasted. "An annual National Household Survey on Drug Abuse issued by the Substance Abuse and Mental Services Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, reported that monthly use of illicit drugs by adolescents 12 to 17 years of age dropped from 1985 to 1992, from 3.2 million to 1.3 million, only to increase to 2.1 million in 1994.

"A profound reversal in adolescent drug trends is continuing.... Today's teens are less likely to consider drug use harmful and risky, more likely to believe that drug use is widespread and tolerated, and feel more pressure to try illegal drugs than teens did just two years ago. The survey attributed this in part to a glamorization of drugs in pop music, movies and television shows and to an absence of national and community leadership in discouraging experimentation with drugs" (*The New York Times*, "Marijuana Use by Youths Rebounding After Decline," Feb. 20, 1996).

No Light at the End of the Tunnel?

National Review's Editor-at-Large, William F. Buckley Jr., notes that what is called the "War on Drugs" is now consuming \$75 billion per year of public money and "exact[s] an estimated \$70 billion a year from consumers, is responsible for nearly 50 per cent of the [one] million Americans who are today in jail, occupies an estimated 50 percent of the trial time of our judiciary, and takes the time of 400,000 policemen—yet [remains] a plague for which no cure is at hand, nor in prospect" (p. 35).

"In 1985, 811,000 arrests were made for drug offenses. In 1994, 1.35 million arrests were made for drug offenses. Does that mean that the war on drugs is effective? Well, no. An effective law diminishes, rather than increases, the number of violators who have to be arrested" (*National Review*, Feb. 26, 1996, p. 70).

The bipartisan Council on Crime in America states that there are 6.2 million people who use cocaine at least once a week. These coke snorters are joined by some 10 million regular potheads. Millions more are using extremely dangerous and addictive methamphetamines and a variety of hallucinogenic drugs. Heroin is also coming back in a big way!

"Anthony Howard and Patrick Sparre, whom police found dead of drug overdoses in a Santa Monica studio apartment in December, were the most unlikely of heroin users.

"They were USC [University of Southern California, a prestigious,

private university] seniors, former fraternity members and politically conservative. Sparre had once been a member of the campus Young Republicans chapter.

"Both were natural athletes, expert skiers who worked out every day.... They were from close-knit families, and Sparre called home to Sacramento almost every night....

"Howard and Sparre, however, are typical of an increasing number of younger people experimenting with heroin today, narcotics detectives say. This increase is due in part to heroin manufacturers and dealers refining and selling the drug in ways that are more appealing to younger people.

"Prices have dropped dramatically because there is more heroin on the nation's streets, and users do not have to inject the drug because it is pure enough to smoke or snort.... The problem of heroin use among the young is reflected in the skyrocketing number of emergency room visits nationwide connected to heroin use" (*Los Angeles Times*, "Heroin's New Popularity Claims Unlikely Victims," Feb. 11, 1996). Heroin-related "E.R." visits shot up by 2,000 percent from 1988's 1,250 cases to 1994's total of 27,300!

The Buck Stops Here

What's going on? Why is it that, more than 20 years after President Richard Nixon declared "all-out global war on the drug menace" in the early 1970s, there are *increasing quantities* of high-potency drugs flooding the streets (*National*

Review, Feb. 12, 1996, p. 47)?

"It's the money, stupid," remarked Joseph D. McNamara, former chief of police in Kansas City, Missouri, and San Jose, California. "After 35 years as a police officer in three of the country's largest cities, that is my message to the righteous politicians who obstinately proclaim that a War on Drugs will lead to a drug-free America. About \$500 worth of heroin or cocaine in a source country will bring in as much as \$100,000 on the streets of an American city. All the cops, armies, prisons, and executions in the world cannot impede a market with that kind of tax-free profit margin. It is the illegality that permits the obscene markup, enriching drug traffickers, distributors, dealers, crooked cops, lawyers, judges, politicians, bankers, businessmen.

"Naturally, these people are against reform of the drug laws. Drug crooks align themselves with their avowed enemies, such as the Drug Enforcement Agency, in opposing drug reform. They are joined by many others with vested economic interests.... [a] host of industries catering to our national puritanical hypocrisy—researchers willing to tell the government what it wants to hear, prison builders, correction and parole officers' associations, drug-testing companies, and dubious purveyors of antidrug education" (p. 42).

Celerino Castillo, who has recently written a book called *Powder Burns* about his six years in Central America as a Drug Enforcement Agency special agent, is convinced "drug money is what finances U.S.

covert operations worldwide. He believes that despite the War on Drugs, there are more drugs coming into the United States today than 15 years ago and estimates that at least 75 percent of all narcotics enter the

take most of the profit out of drug trafficking, and it is profits that drive the crime. Addicts would be treated—and if necessary maintained—under medical auspices. Children would find it harder, not easier, to get their hands on drugs” (*National Review*, Feb. 12, 1996, p. 40).

Lacking Credibility

In response to *National Review*'s position favoring legalization of addictive substances, the editors of the *Christian Science Monitor* opined, “A parallel is drawn to Prohibition and the criminal networks it spawned, which faded when

country with the acquiescence or direct participation by U.S. and foreign intelligence services. It is they who must be held accountable for the flood of drugs on our streets today, he says” (*The Fresno Bee*, “War on Drugs Is U.S. Fallacy, Ex-Agent Says,” Aug. 14, 1995).

The consensus of the participants in *National Review*'s symposium on the War on Drugs is that current U.S. policy is a failure. This social disaster finds its parallel with a previous drug policy fiasco, which was eventually reversed—Prohibition. That American experiment abysmally failed to eliminate the production and consumption of alcohol from 1920 to 1933. Mr. Buckley and his supporters propose that a better policy would be to transform our present method of waging a War on Drugs with its high quotient of midnight drama and bloody violence into a somewhat boring public-health campaign.

Kurt Schmoke, the mayor of Baltimore, Maryland, said, “Under this alternative to the War on Drugs, the government would set up a regulatory regime to pull addicts into the public-health system. The government, not criminal traffickers, would control the price, distribution, and purity of addictive substances—which it already does with prescription drugs. This would

alcohol was again made legal. But the parallels don't end there. If one looks behind the glitzy facade of product promotion and social acceptance, the alcohol picture in the United States is horrendous: countless lives and families demolished and a yearly medical bill of \$30 billion to \$40 billion.

“What would be the effect of adding cocaine, marijuana, or heroin to the list of *legal dangerous drugs*, a list now limited to alcohol and tobacco? How does society keep commercial interests from exploiting their proven market value?...

“We've said before that the war against drugs needs rethinking. The metaphor itself may be too destructive, too easily narrowed into a war against the people whose lives are being ruined by drugs. **Little has been done to reduce the demand for drugs.** The campaign has never used the tools of persuasion, treatment, economic opportunity, and education as creatively and extensively as it should” (“Legalization: No Answer,” Feb. 8, 1996).

Even the United States' new antidrug czar, retired Gen. Barry R. McCaffrey, admits that the nation's current drug policy lacks credibility with Congress and nations abroad. “McCaffrey indicated that he sees as a major initial task determining

which antidrug programs work and which do not. His instinct, he said, tells him that some programs, such as **drug education for children, are vital**” (*Los Angeles Times*, “Anti-drug Strategy Lacks Credibility, McCaffrey Says,” Mar. 2, 1996).

Winning the Hearts and Minds

Obviously, if there was no demand for cocaine, heroin, marijuana, methamphetamines or other presently illicit drugs, then the dealers and traffickers would be out of business. Before the 1960s there was only a relatively small demand for such drugs. But with the surge of hard rock, acid rock, punk rock—fostering drug-tolerating attitudes common in the “counterculture”—the pushers benefited from massive free advertising, creating a climate of interest in, and acceptance of, mind-altering and addictive drugs.

Often, to gain additional sales, pushers give out “free samples” to hook young, new customers who want to be seen by others as “cool.” Also, drug cartels stimulate demand by paying smugglers and distributors with drugs rather than with money. Such payments-in-kind must then be sold locally or regionally to raise cash. One rotten apple in a box spreads its corruption to its neighbors first and eventually goes on to ruin the whole box.

Would it be a surprise to learn that the Bible *specifically* warns you and me to stay away, far away, from the seductive lure of illicit drugs and their obscene trafficking profits? The Scriptures condemn in the strongest possible language those who abuse and traffic in these life-destroying substances—**saying you cannot be saved if you continue doing such things!**

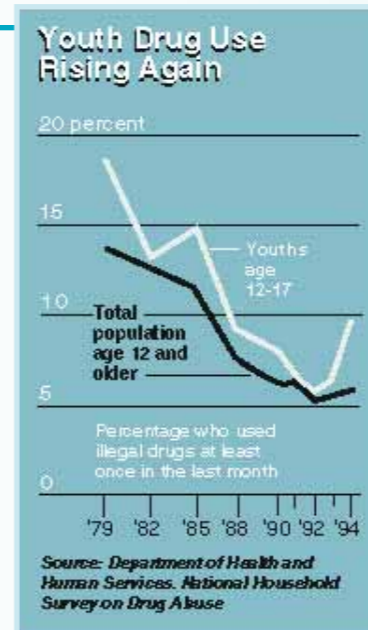
Am I being too strong? Listen to what God inspired the Apostle Paul to write: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are... idolatry, *sorcery*... of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that **those**

who practice such things WILL NOT inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21).

Most people think of sorcery as something practiced by some odd person chanting spells over strange brews of bats' wings, eyes-of-newt and lizard tails. That is not a wrong perception, but it is an incomplete understanding of the Greek word for sorcery—*pharmakeia*. According to the *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*, the definition of *pharmakeia* is: “1) the use or the administering of drugs; 2) poisoning; 3) sorcery, magical arts, often found in connection with idolatry and fostered by it.”

Did you know this destructive, idolatrous plague of drug use was prophesied to be a major contributing factor to the spiritual darkness covering humanity during this endtime? In Malachi 3, the time setting is clearly the era just before the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (vv. 1-2). When the Messiah returns, one of the main categories of persons He will punish will be those connected with the drug trade. God Almighty says, “Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers” (v. 5 NRSV). The future fate of unrepentant sorcerer/drug-traffickers at the hands of the returning Messiah is clear: “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who *do wickedly* will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up” (4:1)!

“Though it is a strange idea to the modern religious worshipper, **drugs have played an important role in the history of religions... psychoactive properties of these substances were designed to bring the ancient wor-**



shipper into closer touch with supernatural forces....

The effects of the drugs were and are reported to enhance religious experiences *similar to* those that occur in religious ceremonies or acts practiced among those who *do not* use drugs” (*The New*

Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 14, p. 199). Psychoactive drugs are physical counterfeits of God's Holy Spirit. They perversely mimic and attempt to substitute for the joy, peace and fulfillment that comes from a true relationship with God. Illicit psychoactive drugs can bring the abuser “into closer touch with supernatural forces”—evil spirits!

If you have been a casual drug abuser or a big-time trafficker, the Word of God calls upon you to “repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). To be truly Christian we must crucify “the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24).

Substance abuse and drug trafficking are sinful! It is an idolatrous work of the flesh—putting drugs and the obscene profits they generate ahead of the Creator God who owns you and your body! “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life” (6:7-8).

Can the love for, and fear of, God win the War on Drugs? “A growing body of social science evidence

shows that one of society's most effective weapons against social ills is an old-fashioned one, namely religion. You don't need a computer printout to figure out that kids who do God are less likely to do drugs or turn to crime or get pregnant.... Drugs are not just a social problem; they're a moral one and require a moral solution.... Religion gives people, particularly teenagers, what they most need to combat drugs, a reason to say no” (*The Wall Street Journal*, “Drugs and God,” Mar. 6, 1996).

The next time someone offers you one of these illicit, life-destroying drugs, you now know *why* you must say “NO.” It is much cooler to be alive forever—growing, learning, being totally caught up in the Spirit of life, joy and light—than to be one of the wicked deadheads whose future is ashes and cinders (Mal. 4:3)! God's plan for winning the War on Drugs involves transforming the hearts and minds of all humanity!

Today's drug abuse problem is simply a symptom of a spiritual void in the lives of many. Do you hunger

or crave for peace, happiness and acceptance? Don't settle for poor substitutes that can never satisfy your inner emptiness. Change your life, repent and turn to God. Jesus Christ gives a definite, solid promise you can claim **if you put God first** in your search for meaning, purpose and happiness in life: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness [doing things God's way], for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6). WA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EDITORIAL (continued from page 3)

Again, how is it possible to worship Christ—and yet do it in VAIN? By following the ideas and traditions of men that are CONTRARY to what Jesus Christ actually taught and practiced! “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). So you can call Jesus “Lord,” but He is NOT your Lord—your Boss—*unless* you genuinely OBEY Him!

It is amazing the extent to which men will go in attempting to “worship” Christ—yet all the while DENYING His fundamental teaching about *obedience* to the Ten Commandments as a *way of life* (Matt. 19:17). Such people build beautiful churches and fill them with huge choirs to sing His praises. Yet they “adopt” pagan feasts and holidays and place Christ’s name on them—and then circle the globe to make converts to *their* brand of religion. But they will NOT truly surrender to let Christ live in them the same obedient life that He lived on this earth more than 1,900 years ago!

The Apostle John—the “apostle of love”—said, “He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4). If you do not surrender to *obey* God, and to experience the way of life based on LIVING by the Ten Commandments—then you do not truly “know” God! You may know *about* God. But you are not genuinely *acquainted* with God unless you experience and practice His very character, which is based on His spiritual law, summarized by the Ten Commandments.

As John later wrote, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:2-3).

Amazing to some, the LOVE of God is expressed through the Ten Commandments. They tell us *how* to love God and *how* to love our neighbor. No matter what kind of “Christianity” men may try to construct, they will be worshipping God and Christ in VAIN unless they acknowledge God’s law as the *basis* of all Christian conduct.



SDA Writes

Thank you for the free edition of the *World Ahead* magazine. I’m not a member of your Church, however I believe in your message. I’m a member of the 7th Day Adventist Church. The Adventist Church was amazed that a small group of men could cause so much damage to the Worldwide Church of God. We support and pray for those believers who have stayed true to the 10 commandments, the laws of clean and unclean meat, the true condition of the dead and the blessed hope of the Second Coming of Christ.

I want to congratulate you and all the members of the Global Church of God for standing up for the Truth in the face of adversity. Satan tried to destroy the Truth, as preached by Herbert W. Armstrong, and has caused much pain and division. Perhaps this is one way that the Savior is dividing the sheep from the goats in these last days.

Thank you for staying true to the Gospel.

Michael L. Warren
Vancouver, Washington

Thanks for Literature

I got your magazine *by accident* in the mail. I read it all before sending it to the right owner. I love it! I would like for you to send the booklet, *Do You Believe the True Gospel?*

Ann Thames
Denham Springs, Louisiana

I can’t find words to tell you how much I appreciate the magazine. Thank you very kindly.

Wilbert Griffin
Hempstead, New York

Thank you in advance for your kindness in sending this material free of charge. That in itself is very commendable. I find that very few churches offer this and I do think that the Word of God

should be given freely.

Betty Jewell
La Verne, California

I would like to say how much I appreciate the inspiring literature I’ve been receiving from the Global Church of God. The February issue of *The World Ahead* was one of the best magazines I’ve ever received in my 35 years of reading religious literature. May God continue to bless your efforts to get His Truth to this evil and adulterous generation.

Gary Knight
Holly Hill, South Carolina

I just received your magazine. Skimming through it, I know I will be completely educated for the month. I have only recently begun studying the Bible and your literature. Your publications are really helping me and I now enjoy reading God’s Word. Thank you for the literature you are so kind to send me.

Juanita Oates
Charlotte, North Carolina

After reading the [article by] Jeffrey Patton about depression, “Kick That Black Dog,” I ask for any further literature from Jeffrey Patton.

Thomas Mbusa
Machakos, Kenya

Approach Appreciated

Enclosed is a contribution.... I feel that you are doing a good job with your TV programs and magazine. Mr. Meredith reminds me of the late Mr. Armstrong in his plain, no-nonsense approach to spreading the true Gospel. Also, the Global Church of God is going in the right direction while I feel that the Worldwide Church of God has strayed. So you have my support.

Greg C. Jones
Franklin, North Carolina

A & B in Prophecy

Thanks for the brochure entitled *America and Britain in Prophecy*. I have enjoyed reading it. I have another booklet on the same subject I got years ago from another church. However, the new brochure seems to have more research done in its preparation. It was interesting to read again.

William Harrison
Water Valley, Mississippi

World Ahead on TV

I don’t have a television set at present, but once a month at Sabbath services, we are treated to a videotape of that morning’s telecast. With one accord, we are all delighted and enthused by the powerful message being presented. It is no wonder that responses are increasing week by week.

Individuals are beginning to recognize the *World Ahead* program as a source of truth and understanding being broadcast with power and authority, as well as with empathy and concern for floundering humanity.

Halvor Halvorsen
Sturbridge, Massachusetts

The Global Church of God not only sponsors the World Ahead magazine, television broadcasts and various booklets, but also holds weekly Sabbath worship services. If you would like to attend or would like more information, please call us in the United States at (800) 959-1641—ed.

I am so glad I’ve found your Saturday morning presentation. Thank you for the booklet you sent. I am writing this right after the broadcast. I wonder if I may receive last week’s offer as well. Thank you for your magazine.

Elsa Hopkins
Palm Springs, California

I am writing about your program on

TV. I studied with Herbert Armstrong and realize that you are teaching the same things he did. I have all of his booklets and went through the old Bible study course. Keep up the good work. God bless you.

Ruth Usselman
Hesperia, California

French Accents

It’s always with great interest that I try to move forward, day by day, in knowing God and studying the Bible. It is, therefore, always a pleasure to hear your *World Ahead* radio broadcasts that teach us the key revelations of the Scriptures. I pray to God that he will give you joy and enthusiasm carrying out your work of revealing God’s Truth. Thank you for your broadcasts, which are so useful in today’s society.

Henri Bournazel
Bellefond, France

“Cyber-talk”

I’m making good use of the Internet now that I know how to download. I find that I can read a lot longer with the larger print. I’m sure our Creator is leading us to this new technology. I had already read the February issue in PDF mode before I received that issue in the mail.

Len Brummond
Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada

We welcome your comments, criticism or questions. Please mail letters for this section to “Letters to the Editor” at our U.S. address. Be sure to include your name, address and daytime phone number. We reserve the right to edit your comments for clarity, propriety or space.



Do you know what is prophesied to happen in the near future? You need to know! Write in today for your free brochure. **AMERICA AND BRITAIN IN PROPHECY**

See page 3 for our addresses and phone numbers.

Myth, Metaphor or Coming Reality?

by John H. Ogwyn

Napoleon, Hitler and Sadaam Hussein have something in common. So also do Mikhail Gorbachev, Benito Mussolini, Franklin Roosevelt and various popes. Each of these, as well as countless other figures, both well-known and obscure, have been labeled by some of their contemporaries as the mysterious “Beast” talked about in the book of Revelation. In addition, even the League of Nations, the United Nations, international Communism and the United States government have been identified as the Beast of Revelation at various times during the 20th century.

On the other hand, some Bible commentators would argue that the book of Revelation and its symbols are only to be understood as metaphors of the battle between good and evil. To such critics the Beast is to be identified as the personification of evil, not as a historical figure or a future world leader.

What about it? Isn't one person's guess as good as another's? Is there really any point in trying to identify specific individuals and institutions as fulfilling this Bible prophecy? Some might ask, “Wasn't the writer of Revelation simply recording myth, or even fevered dreams?”

Understanding Bible prophecy is not intended by the Creator God to be merely an exercise in creative imagination. Neither is prophecy intended to be understood by looking at contemporary events and attempting to read them back into the Bible

account. Rather, no prophecy of the Scriptures is to be of any private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20). When the Bible uses symbolic language, it contains in the text the necessary keys to understand those symbols.

One of the main reasons so many fail to understand prophecy is that they start at the wrong end. They start with the contemporary world in which they live and then try to find those people and events described in the Bible. As we saw in last month's installment, Revelation isn't the place to start in our search to understand the identity of the prophetic Beast. The starting place is the book of Daniel.

In Daniel 2, four sequential empires are identified as stretching from the days of ancient Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar to a time yet future when Jesus Christ returns as King of kings. Daniel 7 describes the same four kingdoms or empires, but uses the symbolism of wild animals. It is necessary to understand the symbols used in Daniel before proceeding to Revelation. Why? Because Daniel records the historical context necessary for understanding those symbols. The writer of Revelation, the Apostle John, describes the same creatures recorded by Daniel, but he provides more detailed information about endtime events.

What possible relevance can long-ago empires and ancient prophets have to our modern, end-of-the-20th-century world? The answer is startling! The books written by the ancient biblical prophets are far

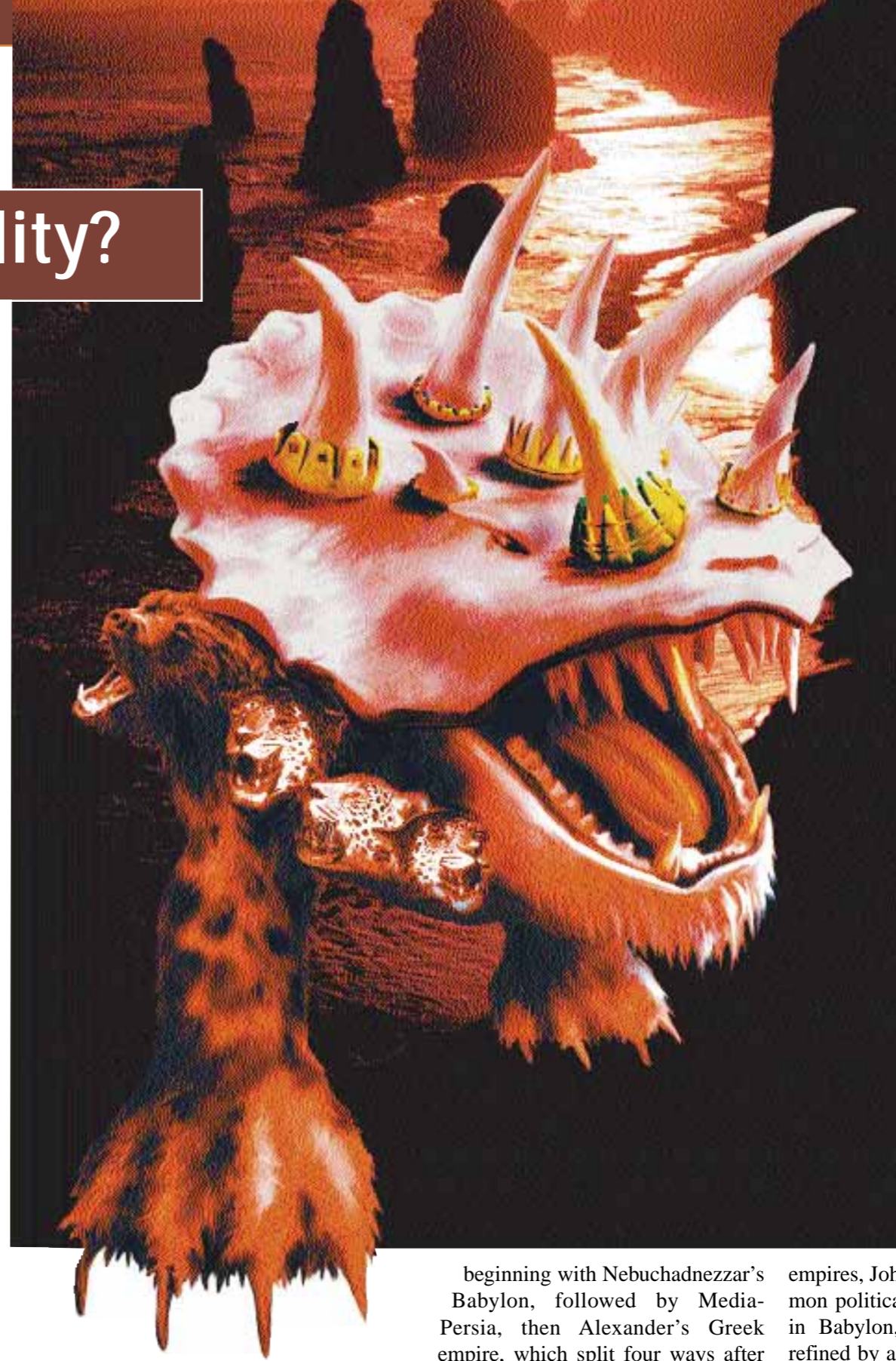
more current than even today's newspaper. How can that be? Your newspaper, CNN News or even news posted on the Internet can only tell you what has *already* happened. But Bible prophecy reports *tomorrow's news* today!

The Vision that Rose from the Dark Sea

An elderly man stood upon the sandy shore of the Isle of Patmos in the Mediterranean Sea. As he gazed out to sea, the scene before him seemed to change. Dark clouds lowered and the sea appeared to churn. He stood transfixed, fascinated. Suddenly, a very strange creature surged up from the crashing surf. A horrific, vicious Beast stood before him snarling and snapping. It had the body of a leopard, the mouth of a lion and the feet of a bear. Then, as if mist, it faded away.

What was it? The creature embodied the strongest characteristics of the first three wild animals Daniel had seen in his vision recorded in Daniel 7. This Beast that the Apostle John saw also had seven heads and ten horns. “The dragon,” John wrote, gives this creature its power and authority. The Scriptures reveal that one of the heads of this creature was wounded to death and was then healed. After the healing took place the creature continued for 42 months (Rev. 13:1-5).

As I recounted last month, an almost identical scene is described in Daniel 7. In that vision, Daniel saw four creatures—a lion, a bear, a four-



headed leopard and a fourth terrible creature with ten horns—arise from a dark, stormy sea (Dan. 7:1-7).

These creatures are clearly identified as the succession of empires

accounts. In each case there are seven heads. In Revelation 13, John saw one creature, not four distinct ones, but the characteristics are the same: seven heads and ten horns are described. In each account the prophets used the symbolism of a lion, a bear and a leopard. Why are the visions different in some respects?

When Daniel saw his vision, it was virtually all about future events. Babylon, symbolized by a lion, was then on the scene and the others were yet to come. When John wrote, more than 600 years later, the Babylonian, Persian and Greek empires had all passed into history. John focused not on the different heads to arise, but upon the details concerning the seventh head, the one that was extant in his day and whose history he recorded in advance. While Daniel revealed four succeeding

empires, John focused on the common political system that originated in Babylon, but was adopted and refined by all the others. He saw the various empires as merely different heads of the same creature.

What about all of the symbolism? Remember, the Bible interprets its own symbols. Daniel 7:23 makes

Notice the similarity of the two

Notice the similarity of the two

clear that the four creatures (embodying seven heads) represent kingdoms. In Revelation 17:9-10, the seven heads of the Beast are identified as “seven mountains” or “seven kings.” According to Daniel 7:24 and Revelation 17:12, horns are symbolic of kings or kingdoms. As for the dragon, which is the source of power for this system, Revelation 12:9 explains, “The great dragon... [is] that old serpent of old, called the Devil, and Satan.”

What of the head “wounded to death”? Remember, it was only the final seventh head, the Roman Empire, that was in power during John’s day. Did the Roman Empire receive a deadly wound, then later come back to life and continue 42 months? Before going further, let’s look at this time period—the 42 months of Revelation 13:5.

Is this a symbolic period? How can we know? In Revelation 11:2, the holy city, Jerusalem, is trodden down for 42 months. In verse 3, two witnesses prophesy there for 1,260 days. A period of 1,260 days is identical with 42 thirty-day months!

From examples elsewhere in the Scriptures, a prophetic reference to a “day” is often used to symbolize one calendar year. In Ezekiel 4, the prophet was told to show symbolically what was going to happen to Israel by lying on one side for 390 days and what would happen to Judah by lying on his other side for 40 days. God explained to Ezekiel that these days symbolized years: “I have laid on you a day for each year” (v. 6; cf. Num. 14:34). The context of Revelation 13 clearly shows, as we will see in the next installment, that this 42-month period (or 1,260 days) must refer to prophetic days—1,260 years in historic fulfillment.

Look again at Revelation 13. John’s terrible creature contained the same prophetic components that Daniel had seen more than 600 years

earlier. Daniel clearly identified what he saw as beginning in his day and continuing until the return of Christ, when the saints would take possession of the kingdom (Dan. 7:18). The Roman Empire of John’s day was simply a continuation of the Babylonian political spirit or philosophy.

Rome Absorbs Her Predecessors

Just as Media-Persia had absorbed Babylon, and Alexander the Great had absorbed the empire of the Medes and Persians—so the Romans absorbed all four of the heads that had sprung from Alexander’s empire. Alexander died at Babylon in 323 B.C. There was an attempt to hold his empire together by proclaiming a regency to govern in the joint names of his nephew and his unborn son. This attempt failed. Within a few years his empire was being divided between four Greek generals who proclaimed themselves kings, just as Daniel had foreseen (Dan. 8:21-22).

In 307 B.C., Antigonos and his son, Demetrius, “took the title king, whereupon Ptolemy and Seleucus, Cassander and Lysimachus did the same. The unity of Alexander’s empire was thus openly ended” (William L. Langer, *Encyclopedia of World History*, 1968, p. 90).

Cassander seized *Greece* and *Macedonia*, and with the aid of Lysimachus and Seleucus, triumphed over Antigonos who was slain at the Battle of Ipsus in 301 B.C. In turn, however, Cassander’s dynasty was overthrown in 276 by Antigonos’s grandson, also named Antigonos. Antigonos II established a dynasty that held Greece and Macedon until the Roman conquest in 168 B.C., when this area became absorbed into the Roman Empire.

Lysimachus, who seized *Asia Minor* and proclaimed himself king in 305 B.C., was eventually defeated

and slain at the Battle of Corpedium in 281 by his erstwhile ally, Seleucus. Eumenes I, the Seleucid governor of Pergamum (in Asia Minor), succeeded in becoming virtually independent of the Seleucids by about 260 B.C. By 230 his successor had taken the title king. When Attalus III died in 133 B.C., he left his kingdom of Pergamum and Asia Minor to the Romans in his will. Thus Rome had now absorbed the second head of Daniel’s leopard.

Seleucus established his kingdom stretching from *Babylon* in the east to *Syria* in the west. The Seleucid dynasty continued until 64 B.C. when the Roman general Pompey made Syria a province of the ever-expanding Roman Empire.

Ptolemy took the title king in 305 B.C., at the same time Cassander, Lysimachus and Seleucus did. His dynasty was established in *Egypt* and continued until the death of Cleopatra in 30 B.C., following her defeat by the Romans. Julius Caesar’s nephew, Octavian, defeated the forces of Cleopatra and Marc Antony at the Battle of Actium and absorbed Egypt into the Roman Empire. “This brought to an end the last of the Hellenistic monarchies” (p. 97). Now all four heads of the Greco-Macedonian leopard were absorbed into the Roman Empire, the fourth beast of Daniel 7.

With this background, it is easier to see why John described the Beast, the Roman Empire of his day, as including all that had gone before since the days of Daniel.

When he described one of the heads being “wounded to death,” he must have been referring to the seventh head, the Roman Empire. The previous six heads had already passed into history by the time of John’s writing.

When was the Roman Empire wounded to death? In 476 A.D. the last Roman emperor of the West, Romulus Augustulus, was deposed

and murdered. This is the traditional date for the fall of the Roman Empire. There was yet to be, however, a subsequent 1,260-year revival of the Roman Empire. This will be the focus of the next installment.

The Story of the First Three “Horns”

Notice another detail about the Beast that is described in both Daniel 7 and in Revelation 13. In each account, ten horns come up out of the seventh head, the Roman Empire. John saw each of these horns as having a crown upon it (Rev. 13:1) and Daniel explained that they represented kings or kingdoms (Dan. 7:24). Daniel also reveals that among these ten horns there came up a “little horn” that caused the first three of the ten to be “plucked up.” What can this possibly mean? Let’s look further at the history of the old Roman Empire.

In 286 A.D., Emperor Diocletian divided the Roman Empire into East and West for administrative purposes. This was symbolized by the “two legs” described in Daniel 2. Serious trouble lay ahead, however, for the Western “leg.” By the 400s A.D., the Empire in the West was in its death throes. There had been barbarian incursions on the frontiers, and finally Rome itself was sacked and looted for the first time in eight centuries! This was accomplished by Alaric and his Visigoths in 409 A.D.

As the Roman Empire in the West collapsed, there were three groups of Barbarian invaders—the *Vandals*, the *Herulii* and the *Ostrogoths*—who sought to set themselves up as the successors to the Roman emperors of the West. Each of these three sought and received official recognition by the emperor in the East as a continuation of legitimate Roman government in the West. There was another emerging authority in the West, however, who eventually obtained their overthrow and ouster.

This emerging leader was the Bishop of Rome. While the Western emperors grew weaker, he correspondingly emerged with increased power and stature. This involved not only increased religious power over the professing Christian community, but civil and political power as well. The pope was particularly disturbed by the Vandals, Herulii and Ostrogoths. While they professed Christianity, it was a non-Trinitarian brand called Arianism. They were not “orthodox” and were therefore viewed as a threat to the religious unity of the empire by the Bishop of Rome.


The *Vandals* invaded North Africa in 429 A.D. After several years of fighting, they entered into a treaty in 435 where they were “recognized” by the Romans as the legitimate continuation of the Empire in North Africa (Langer, p. 135). The Vandals sought to expand their power as successor to Rome. In 455, they even visited pillage and destruction upon the city of Rome itself. They were so thorough that to this day the term “vandal” is attached to those who destroy the property of others. Ultimately, however, the Vandals were uprooted. “In Africa the Vandals were hated as Arians [by the Catholics] and they had to deal with serious Berber revolts, but their power was not broken until the 533-548 Vandalic Wars of [Eastern Roman Emperor] Justinian” (p. 159).

In 476, about 20 years after the Vandals sacked Rome, the *Herulii*, under their leader Odovacar (also spelled Odacer), deposed Romulus Augustulus, the last Western Roman Emperor. Odovacar was “recognized” as the legitimate continuation of Roman government in Italy by the eastern emperor. He was also an Arian, however. This was greatly resented by the Bishop of Rome who appealed to Zeno, the emperor in the East. Zeno dispatched Theodoric, the leader of the Ostrogoths, to drive out the Herulii

in 488. “The orthodox bishops of Italy, disliking Odacer’s Arianism, supported the Arian invader [Theodoric] as representing an almost orthodox emperor. With their help Theodoric broke Odacer’s sturdy resistance in five years of war, and persuaded him to a compromise peace. He invited Odacer and his son to dine with him in Ravenna, fed them generously, and slew them with his own hand (493)” (Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, vol. 4, pp. 97-98).

Ostrogothic rule of Italy, though accepted as a necessary evil in getting rid of the Herulii, remained unpopular with the Bishop of Rome and the Catholic population. General Belisarius, who had been sent by Justinian in 533 A.D. with 500 transport ships and 92 warships to rid Africa of the Vandals, came on to Italy in 536 to drive out the Ostrogoths. “The Ostrogothic forces were meager and divided; the people of Rome hailed Belisarius as a liberator, the clergy welcomed him as a Trinitarian; he entered Rome unopposed” (p. 109).

Thus the first three “horns” were plucked up at the behest of the Bishop of Rome. The stage was being set for the true revival of the Roman Empire in the West. This revival, which took place in 554, and the subsequent revivals have all involved the blessing of the Bishop of Rome. They have all involved him as an intimate player in the various continuations of the empire of ancient Rome.

In next month’s installment we will look at the revived Roman Empire in both history and prophecy. Understanding the history of what has happened between John’s day and our own sets the stage. By knowing where we are in the prophesied sequence of events, we can know what is yet to come! Herein lies the key to understanding where the events happening in today’s world are *really* leading. 

Who Will Be In—“THE FIRST RESURRECTION”?

by Raymond F. McNair

DOES DEATH FOREVER END ONE'S HOPES AND DREAMS?
IS THERE ANY HOPE BEYOND THE GRAVE?
ARE THE DEAD MERELY “SLEEPING” UNTIL THE MOMENT
OF THEIR RESURRECTION?

Can man really know what happens to him at the moment of death—and after? Some think the road to the grave is a one-way street. Eat, drink and be merry—for tomorrow we die! Are they right? Or will the grave someday release its dead?

Since no person in modern times has ever returned from the dead to tell us what is beyond the grave, is there any way man can really come to know what happens after death? Will there be an afterlife?

There are three views concerning what happens to man at death: 1) death ends everything—that is, oblivion engulfs all who die; 2) at death, man immediately passes on to someplace beyond the grave such as heaven, hell or purgatory; and 3) death is merely an indefinite period of “sleeping” in the grave, while awaiting a future resurrection. Which of these three views of the afterlife is biblically correct?

Only the Word of God can supply the real answers to these important questions. In previous articles in *The World Ahead*, we have seen that the Creator God made man (Gen. 2:7), and put within him a human “spirit” (Zech. 12:1; 1 Cor. 2:11). This spirit returns to God at death (Eccl. 12:7). Not one single verse in the Bible says that when you die you go immediately to heaven, or to a burning hell—or to an imaginary purgatory.

“If a Man Dies, Shall He Live Again?”

One of man’s oldest questions remains—“Is there life after death?” Most assuredly! Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures speak with a single voice: **there will be a resurrection for every human who has ever lived!**

One of the oldest references to the afterlife is found in the book of Job. God allowed Satan to sorely try Job—to take away all his material possessions, kill his children and afflict him with painful boils from head to toe. During Job’s bereavement and suffering he had ample

time to ponder life, death and the afterlife.

Job said, “For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again... and its stump may die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant” (14:7-9). He was wondering if the dead would ever rise from their graves. “But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last and where is he?... So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not *awake* nor be roused from their *sleep* [in the grave]” (vv. 10, 12).

Then Job asked the crucial question: **“If a man dies, shall he live again?”** All the days of my hard service [“appointed time,” KJV] I will wait, till my change comes. You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands” (vv. 14-15). He came to realize that his Creator would one day awaken him out of his *sleep* in the dust of the earth. Job knew that the Living God would “call” him up out of the grave and “change” him. That change, which is clearly explained in the New Testament, will take place at the resurrection of the just (Phil. 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

The Prophets Foretold a Resurrection

The Prophet Isaiah believed mortal man would be resurrected from the dust. “Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust... **and the earth shall cast out the dead**” (Is. 26:19).

Another of God’s prophets, Jeremiah, predicted the resurrection of God’s servant, King David: “But they [Israel] shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them” (Jer. 30:9).

Hosea predicted King David’s resurrection as well: “Afterward the children of Israel shall return, seek the LORD their God and David their king, and fear the

LORD and His goodness in the latter days” (Hosea 3:5).

And the Prophet Ezekiel foretold a time when the ancient peoples of the doomed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as the Jews, will come up out of their tombs, thereby being delivered from their long “captivity” in the grave (Ezek. 16:46-59).

This same book describes a time when the whole house of Israel will have their dry bones resurrected, clothed with sinews and flesh and then be imbued with God’s Holy Spirit. Only then, according to Ezekiel’s prophecy, will those resurrected Israelites really come to know God (37:1-14). Further, he says, “David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd” (v. 24).

King David, who was himself a prophet (Acts 2:29-30), foretold his *own* resurrection, as well as the resurrection of the Messiah, whom he prophesied would descend from him: “For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will you allow Your Holy One to see corruption” (Ps. 16:10).

The Prophet Daniel also spoke of a future resurrection: “And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book [of life—Rev. 3:5]. **And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake**, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:1-2). The next verse describes how wonderful it will be for those who are resurrected at that time: **“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”!**

Christ and the Resurrection of the Dead

Clearly the Old Testament prophets believed in a future resurrection. But did Jesus Christ and His New Testament apostles also hold such a view? What, according to New Testament teaching, is the true hope of every one who believes in God and His Son Jesus Christ?

The New Testament makes it clear that man’s only hope lies in a *resurrection*. Christ said, “I am the *resurrection* and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live” (John 11:25). Further, He says, “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I

have the keys of Hades and of Death” (Rev. 1:18). Only Jesus has the keys to unlock the billions of graves of all mankind and resurrect everyone who has ever died.

As a demonstration of Christ’s power over the grave, He used that authority in a spectacular way when he raised Lazarus from his grave, after he had been “dead four days” (John 11:39). Lazarus’ sisters pleaded with Jesus to come and resurrect their dead brother. After arriving at the cave in which Lazarus had been entombed, Jesus “cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Loose him, and let him go’” (vv. 43-44).

Christ also said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live” (John 5:25).

Many, however, don’t realize that, according to Christ, there will be more than one resurrection. “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which ALL who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—[1] those who have done good, to the *resurrection of life*, and [2] those who have done evil, to the *resurrection of condemnation*” (vv. 28-29). The RSV more correctly renders verse 29—“to the *resurrection of judgment*.”

Daniel spoke of some being resurrected “to everlasting life,” while others would later awake unto “shame and everlasting contempt.” Jesus also clearly referred to two distinct resurrections. The *first* is a resurrection to eternal LIFE—the *second*, a resurrection to JUDGMENT.

Matthew 22 relates Christ’s encounter with the Sadducees. They did not believe in the resurrection (v. 23). Jesus told them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven” (vv. 29-30).

In Luke’s account, Jesus told the Sadducees, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; **nor can they die anymore**, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection” (20:34-36).

Jesus told the Sadducees, “But concerning the

resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:31-32). Jesus was quoting Exodus 3:6 to show the teaching of the resurrection had been around since Moses' time.

Christ was saying, in effect, that God would not call himself the God of the patriarchs if they, at death, had passed into oblivion—never to live again! Truly, "God... calls those things which do not exist as though they did" (Rom. 4:17). God knows that he will resurrect Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and "all the prophets." They will all be in the coming Kingdom of God.

Jesus told those Jews who rejected Him, their long-awaited Messiah, that they would "see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out" (Luke 13:28). Before those patriarchs can be in the Kingdom of God, they will first have to be resurrected.

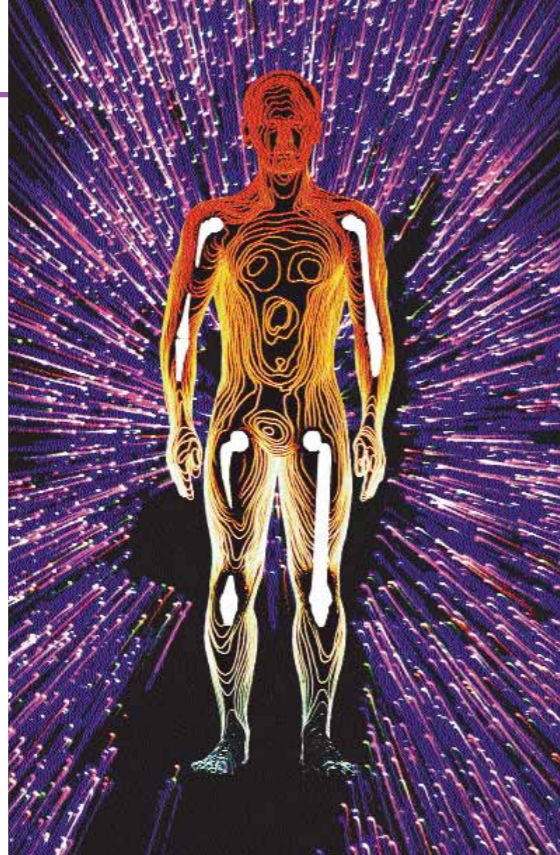
Paul Also Taught the Resurrection

Anyone who is familiar with the New Testament knows that Paul wrote more in it about the resurrection than all of the other apostles put together!

Paul "reasoned in the synagogues with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.... And some said, 'What does this babbler want to say?' Others said, 'He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,' because **he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection**" (Acts 17:17-18). "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, 'We will hear you again on this matter'" (v. 32).

Later, Paul told the Roman Governor Felix, "I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, **that there will be a resurrection of the dead**, both of the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:14-15). In fact, one reason Paul appeared before Felix in the first place was that he had been teaching the resurrection of the dead (23:6).

Very early during the history of the Christian Church, false teachers began to arise who denied the future resurrection! Paul told God's people at Corinth, "Now if Christ



is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (1 Cor. 15:12).

The apostle then said, "But now Christ IS risen from the dead, and has become the *firstfruits* of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ **all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order:** Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (vv. 20-23). "But someone will say, 'How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they

come?'" (v. 35). He then showed that when God's people are resurrected they will be given glorified spirit bodies. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in *incorruption*... raised in *glory*... raised in *power*... raised a *spiritual body*" (vv. 42-44).

Paul then added, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.** For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (vv. 50-53).

"So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory'" (vv. 54-55).

This great defender of the resurrection left no doubt in the minds of the Corinthians. They could be assured of attaining the resurrection—if they would stay the course.

Paul warned Timothy that "Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort [of deceivers], who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that *the resurrection is already past*; and they overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:17-18).

Furthermore, Paul reminded the Hebrews that one of the fundamental truths which compose the doctrinal "foundation" of the New Testament Church of God is "the resurrection of the dead" (Heb. 6:1-2).

He also reminded them of the Old Testament men and women of faith who obeyed God, even though it often

meant experiencing suffering and, in some cases, a horrible death. Some experienced "the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong.... And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, **that they might obtain a better resurrection**" (11:34-35). Exactly who will take part in this "better resurrection"?

The Glorious First Resurrection

What will be one of the most momentous events that will occur at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? At that instant, God will resurrect all of the "dead in Christ" to a glorified, immortal existence. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who *sleep* in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are *asleep* [in death]. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. **And the dead in Christ will rise first.** Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:13-17).

What will happen *after* the saints are resurrected from their graves and ascend into the clouds to meet the returning Jesus Christ? "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:31).

Where will Christ then take His saints? When Jesus returns to this earth He will convey His saints to Jerusalem. "And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east" (Zech. 14:4). Then what? "Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You" (v. 5).

What will happen next? Revelation 20 reveals that, after Christ returns, He will send a mighty archangel to bind Satan for 1,000 years (vv. 1-3). Then, immediately afterward, God will install His glorified saints in authority over the nations, giving them power to rule over all peoples (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21).

The Apostle John, a believer in the resurrection, describes that important event. "And I saw thrones, and they [the glorified saints] sat on them, and judgment [power to rule] was committed to them.... And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This [those resurrected at Christ's coming] is the **FIRST RESURRECTION**. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4-6).

Clearly, those who take part in the "first resurrection"

will rule with Christ 1,000 years, teaching and guiding the nations. No wonder Paul calls this first resurrection a "better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35). Those who take part in it, being immortal, can never die, and they shall have the opportunity of helping Christ restore peace, order and righteousness to all nations on this earth during the glorious Millennium.

Christ will then rule all nations from Jerusalem (Jer. 3:17). The Messiah will sit upon God's holy Mount Zion, in what we today call the land of Israel (Ps. 2:6; Is. 66:20). From Jerusalem, Christ will rule the nations as "King over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9). He will, in fact, be "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16)!

Strive for the First Resurrection!

As Christians, we should all strive for the ultimate prize—the first resurrection.

What was the Apostle Paul's goal? He said he strove diligently to "attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:11). "Not," said Paul, "that I have already attained [to the resurrection], or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of... [eternal life]. But one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, **I press toward the goal [of the resurrection] for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus**" (vv. 12-14).

True Christians eagerly anticipate that glorious "first resurrection," when God will give each a "crown of glory" (1 Peter 5:4; cf. Rev. 2:10). God's children also look forward to that moment when Christ returns to this earth, resurrects the "dead in Christ" and gives them positions of rulership under Him.

The Apostle Paul explained a second great reason for us to yearn for the Kingdom of God on this earth. "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory* which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.... Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now" (Rom. 8:18-19, 21-22).

Many fail to grasp what the Apostle Paul really meant. He understood the headaches, heartaches and misery that all humanity now suffers. He knew we all yearn for the time when the resurrected sons of God will, under Christ, assist Him in restoring to this earth peace, health, prosperity, happiness and joy brim full and running over (Dan. 7:27).

Truly, the earth will then become one happy, utopian paradise: "The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing" (Is. 14:7). When the resurrected saints, under Christ, take over the helm of this earth's governments, utopia will become a living reality (Rev. 5:10; Is. 11:1-9)! WA



It's Just a Little Fling....

No Harm Done—Right?

by Roderick C. Meredith

Adultery! It seems everybody's doing it—whether high government officials, members of the British royal family or celebrities of all stripes. Even well-known religious leaders have been involved.

Turn on the television during the day and you'll see soap operas filled with the most bizarre adulterous affairs imaginable. Or so you think—until you flip over to one of the talk shows and hear about some poor woman whose husband is having an affair with her brother! Watch TV in the evening and you'll find extramarital sex quite acceptable on just about any drama or sitcom you turn to.

A recent issue of *Glamour* maga-

zine published an article that explained: "Why Women Are Cheating and *Not* Feeling Guilty." Referring to classic literature, it notes, "Madame Bovary took a lover, then took arsenic. Anna Karenina threw herself under the 9:02 from St. Petersburg. *Boy, have times changed*" (Amy Pagnozzi, April 1996, p. 256). *Glamour* asked its readers to write and explain why they've had affairs. From the responses they concluded, "The Great Romance Affair was by far the most common extramarital relationship cited by *Glamour's* respondents.... If a woman wants sex, it's usually easy to find. But romance—all the lead-up to sex—can be a rare

prize. You may go without it for so long that you don't even know it's missing. Then, out of the blue, someone appears at your side and revives rapture. **It's hard to feel guilty when you feel so good**" (p. 257).

Another article in the March/April issue of *Mirabella* on "The Affair '96" suggests, "Women... 'find themselves' through adultery these days, and it is celebrated all over the place in pictures that range from the sublime *The Piano* to the ridiculous *Scarlet Letter* to the sublimely ridiculous *Queen Margot* [all recent movies]. The fact that these are all period pieces is no accident: **These movies imply that marriage itself is a relic of an obsolete culture**" (p. 83).

Is marriage a "relic of an obsolete culture"? Why did God institute laws regulating this relationship? Is there a meaningful purpose for marriage that our modern society needs to understand? Should sexuality be expressed solely within marriage—or is adultery okay? What are the answers?

The Seventh Commandment

Let there be no confusion. The Ten Commandments of God are NOT obsolete. The law of gravity still applies and so do the laws of God. Almighty God devoted two of these commandments to protecting home and family relationships. In the March issue of *The World Ahead*, I wrote about the first of these: "Honor your father and your mother."

The other law that directly governs the home and family is the seventh commandment: "You shall not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14). The Creator instituted this command to safeguard the honor and sanctity of matrimony and to protect the basis of all decent society—the family.

The letter of this law directly prohibits adultery as violating the holy rights of marriage. The spirit of the law expands its regulatory jurisdiction to include premarital sexual

conduct as well. Sexual unfaithfulness, whether before or during marriage, is violating God's Word!

Adultery is a capital offense in the eyes of God: "The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, **shall surely be put to death**" (Lev. 20:10). In our permissive age, we would do well to remember this.

In principle, the seventh commandment also covers every other form of sexual conduct outside marriage—including homosexuality! Many today consider sexual preference a "lifestyle choice." But God lists sodomy as an "abomination" deserving the death penalty (Lev. 20:13; cf. Rom. 1:18-32). The New Testament states that the ultimate penalty of *all* sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

Why will God judge us with eternal death unless we really turn away from adulterous sins? The answer is that godly marriage is so precious, righteous and holy in the Eternal's sight that it must not be defiled! Why? Because of what it means and its great purpose in God's plan.

Why Marriage?

The true meaning of marriage cannot be understood without first realizing that sex and marriage are God-given and God-ordained. Leaving God out of the picture—as our modern society generally does—degrades the bonds of holy matrimony to some "evolutionary mating instinct."

God had a definite purpose in creating man and woman. After making Adam, God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (Gen. 2:18). The Creator knew that the man was incomplete by himself and so decided to give him a partner *suitable* for him.

One reason for human marriage, then, is to make man and woman complete. Neither is complete with-

out the other. Alone, man was unable to fulfill the purpose for which he was created. He couldn't learn the character lessons God intended him to. So God put Adam to sleep and took one of his ribs from which He made Eve (vv. 21-22). This was symbolic. "And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman [Heb. *Ishshah*], because she was taken out of Man [Heb. *Ish*].' Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (vv. 23-24).

God showed that Adam and Eve were to dwell together as man and wife in one fleshly union—having sexual intercourse (cf. 1 Cor. 6:16). This implies that husband and wife are to share everything in this life, making their physical lives meaningful and complete. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "**Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge**" (Heb. 13:4).

A second purpose of marriage is to give birth to and rear children. God told Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). Parents are responsible to teach their children the godly way to live, and parents can most effectively accomplish this when their marriage is stable and happy. A nurturing home environment is vital to a child's right development. God places a high value on children. In Malachi 2:15, it is written: "But did He not make them [husband and wife] one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring." It is through the family relationship that character lessons in patience, understanding and kindness can best be learned. And no place is more conducive to developing a sense of decency, loyalty and responsibility than a happy and well-balanced household.

Therefore, along with making us complete and reproduction, a third reason for sex and marriage is to pro-

vide an ideal environment for character building. The Kingdom of God and His law are based firmly on LOVE—outflowing concern for others. If we truly love others, we will desire to serve them. Our lives will demonstrate the way of "give" instead of "get." As Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

A Divine Relationship

The God-ordained institution of marriage is a holy thing—so much so that it is used in the Word of God to typify the spiritual relationship between Christ and His Church! We find this in Ephesians 5: "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, *as also* Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (vv. 22-24). In a Christian home, the wife is to submit to her husband as the head of the household, just as she must learn to submit to Jesus Christ for eternity! This holy relationship teaches a lesson in lasting faithfulness.

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (v. 31). He then states remarkably, "This is a great mystery, **but I speak concerning Christ and the church**. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband" (vv. 32-33). In other words, Paul's *main subject* was the relationship between Christ and the Church.

Human marriage is simply being used to explain this God-plane relationship. Yet the fact that marriage is a physical type of this spiritual relationship is what makes it so sacred. The marital union of a man and woman is to picture the everlasting, loving relationship between Christ and His Church. NOTHING should come between the

parties united by a marriage covenant! Marriage should teach us the lesson of eternal faithfulness to Christ!

Christ exercises His authority over the Church in a loving manner. So also husbands should never abuse spouses or children: “Husbands, *love* your wives, *just as* Christ also loved the church and *gave Himself* for it.... So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church” (vv. 25, 28-29).

Jesus Christ loved His Church. He willingly sacrificed His life for the Church—and for all the people of the world willing to repent. A man takes on a similar responsibility when he marries a woman. A husband must promote his wife’s and his children’s best interests and happiness. God holds husbands accountable to faithfully discharge their duties: “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8).

God Hates Divorce!

Marriage is not something that merely evolved through man’s reasoning and his gradual social development. Nor has it become obsolete today! But the marriage covenant is not unbreakable. There are valid reasons that permit divorce according to the Bible. Yet if people apart from these reasons selfishly separate, then they fail to learn the spiritual lessons of marriage.

Such selfish divorces are a horrible reproach to the Creator God because they deny His divine wisdom in ordaining the marital union—making two people “one flesh.” How can a person ever be trusted to be faithful to the Living Jesus Christ throughout all ages to come if that person selfishly refuses to remain faithful to a God-given spouse during this short human

life span. Such lack of commitment means one fails to learn the lessons of patience, long-suffering, self-control, kindness, faithfulness and enduring love within holy matrimony.

When the Pharisees asked Jesus about the lawfulness of divorce, He responded, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. **Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate**” (Matt. 19:4-6). But they retorted by asking why the Scriptures given through Moses allowed divorce. He answered, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but **from the beginning it was not so**. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality [Gk. *porneia*, “gross immorality”], and marries another, *commits adultery*; and whoever marries her who is divorced *commits adultery*” (vv. 8-9).

Divorce is often a flagrant violation of the sacred marriage covenant made with God and spouse—with remarriage equating to adultery! Even though God *permits* divorce in certain circumstances, it is much better for each partner in marriage to learn to *forgive* the other, and thus preserve the holy marriage bond. Exception clauses like Christ’s (“except for sexual immorality”) and Paul’s (concerning *desertion* by an unconverted mate—1 Cor. 7:15) should be *last resorts*—used only after much prayer, counsel and sincere attempts to save the marriage. Yet, today, marriages are broken up for every reason imaginable: sexual incompatibility; financial difficulties; boredom; career taking priority over the marriage; one spouse wants to move and the other doesn’t—you name it!

What a sick situation! Aside from failing to learn the valuable lessons of

marriage, many seeking divorce or remarriage often fail to deeply consider the agony and frustration their children will experience—scars on little hearts and minds to be carried into future marriages. It is simply awful! Yes, God does *allow* homes to be shattered by divorce—but He *abhors* it: “The LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.... Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. **‘For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce**, for it covers one’s garment with violence,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously’” (Mal. 2:14-16). God HATES divorce and the violence it does to people’s lives. We must learn to hate it too.

“To Lust for Her”

It is a great tragedy that so many in our society no longer look to marriage for their exclusive sexual fulfillment. Today, adultery is common. Some marriage counselors even recommend it on occasion! But adultery and marriage *cannot* comfortably coexist because adultery is a breach of faith that is the basis of marital intimacy. Adultery *devastates* the trust between two people joined in the closest human union possible. Cheating on your present or future spouse amounts to taking one of God’s most precious and beautiful gifts and dragging it through filth. An adulterer spits on the love and trust of his or her spouse.

While sin is forgivable, there are always consequences (2 Sam. 12:12-14). Adultery does serious damage. A married couple may never be as unified as they *could have* been had this terrible sin not been perpetrated. But, with repentance and God’s help, a couple can pick up the pieces of their lives and go on.

Genuinely Christian husbands and wives should seek to be totally joined in body, mind and attitude. In earnest, they should strive to understand each other—to joyously share their hopes and dreams. With this focus, and the power of God’s Spirit, a faithful couple can crush any adulterous temptations.

Sexual immorality begins in the mind. Christ addressed this very thing in his New Testament magnification of the seventh commandment. Here’s what He said in His famous Sermon on the Mount: “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ **But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart**” (Matt. 5:27-28). According to Jesus, then, you break God’s seventh commandment if you so much as entertain thoughts of sexual lust toward a person that is not your spouse. Action follows thought. So, to build godly character, Christians must learn to use God’s Spirit to channel thoughts away from all lustful desires.

This is not easy in a society whose entertainment, fashion and advertising industries sexualize just about everything. Movies glorify illicit sex. Ads for jeans can steam up your glasses these days. The pornography industry is bigger than ever. Why today there is even “phone sex” and “cybersex” to satisfy the fantasies of those fearful of contracting AIDS!

And what is the result of all this sexualization? Households in increasing numbers are made miserable by adulterous affairs. Homes everywhere are breaking up in divorce. Single-parent households are on the rise—so that more and more children are not as well cared for or provided for. Premarital sex is epidemic among our young people. Sexually transmissible diseases are infecting millions! AIDS is killing by the hundreds of thousands! The number of unwed teenage mothers is out of control. Unwanted babies are aborted by the millions! If people would only obey God, ALL

OF THIS WOULD STOP!

If you are a young person engaging in premarital sex, please realize that you are cheapening and damaging the joy of your possible future marriage—and thus seriously jeopardizing your hope for happiness in this present life. And, unless you REPENT and STOP this self-destructive practice, as others have (cf. 1 Cor. 6:11), you will force God to exclude you from everlasting life and happiness in His Kingdom (v. 9). The laws of God are only for our own good and the good of others. We should obey them and fear being listed among the “abominable” and “whoremongers” who will not inherit eternal life!

Every form of sexual immorality is disgusting because sex was created by God to physically and emotionally bind the holy union of marriage. In Proverbs 6:32, God tells us, “Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul.” A marginal note in many Bibles says that the Hebrew word translated “understanding” literally means “heart”—a word used elsewhere to describe the seat of emotions. When a man seduces another man’s wife, he is taking a basic part of that man’s “heart”—his life companion, perhaps the mother of his children, the focal point of many of his hopes and dreams—and dragging it through a sewer pipe. When it comes out at the other end, it STINKS! The profound love, trust and “oneness” of the marriage and home are so violated that the relationship will never be the same again. The adulterous man or woman rips to shreds the life of his or her spouse. Such a person certainly lacks heart.


Adultery is also a capital offense against us all because it strikes at the *heart* of all decent society. But, more than anything, adultery is a capital offense against God who created the institution of marriage out of love for us. No matter what “enlightened” thinkers may try to argue, adultery is

NEVER okay. It is always one of the greatest evils we are capable of—which we must tenaciously resist. Those who persist in sexual immorality will eventually be put to DEATH: “But the cowardly, unbelieving... sexually immoral... shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

“Flee Sexual Immorality”

Through the Apostle Paul, God gives some important advice to those tempted to be sexually immoral. In this age of incessant sexual stimulation, it is imperative to *heed* this advice if you want to walk the road to God’s Kingdom and eternal life. Paul says, “Flee sexual immorality” (1 Cor. 6:18). Realizing that younger people have an even tougher time with this, Paul wrote to Timothy, a young minister, “Flee also youthful lusts” (2 Tim. 2:22). Through Paul, God is telling us to not dwell on wrong sexual desires. We should not place ourselves in situations where we would be sexually tempted.

God’s instruction is to *flee*—to run away as fast as you can—from any situation of enticement. Sex isn’t a toy to be played with—as many young people sadly seem to think. It should be regarded as a wonderful, God-given blessing to only be enjoyed in the holy, sacred union of marriage, which God has ordained. It should always be thought of with a great degree of reverence—and as a physical expression of unselfish love in a Christian marriage, which typifies the eternal faithfulness of Jesus Christ and His Church!

This wayward civilization desperately needs to learn the vital lesson of faithfulness in marriage and family. When Christ returns to this earth to set up His everlasting Kingdom, He will teach the world to obey both the letter and the spirit of the seventh commandment of the Eternal God: “You shall not commit adultery”! 

MAD COWS
(continued from page 6)

assessment of governmental announcements was that “the chances of a minister [politician] telling lies, or at least half-truths, are very high” (p. 20).

As the BSE story unfolds, it appears that the government did not listen, initially, to the warnings of some members of the scientific community who proposed an innovative understanding about the contagious nature of BSE, contrary to standard scientific convention. It also appears that both cattlemen and the rendering industry strongly lobbied against tighter regulations, which were proposed to stem the spreading epidemic. The special interests, not public health, were deciding factors that led to today’s public panic. The objective search for scientific truth was derailed by more expedient compromises with parties who had vested interests in the meat industry.

It is instructive to notice *to whom* the British government is looking to guide them through this crisis. A British Health Department spokesman commented, “**We are driven by our advice from scientists, and science is trying to grapple with a disease that is not well known**” (*Wall Street Journal*, March 22, 1996). However, as we have seen so far in this article, there are numerous factors that contributed to the development of the Mad Cow epidemic that have nothing to do with science. Such ethical problems stem from a collapse of morality in the Western world. Our worship of “maximum profit” and our embrace of secular, materialistic ideas about how to live are much more important to our society than listening to the distant voice of the Hebrews’ God. As this crisis illustrates, the authority we have chosen to follow *is not* the God of this universe who inspired the Bible, but science and human rea-

son—which, unfortunately, are fallible and incomplete. It’s no wonder we are in trouble.

Britain in Prophecy

Why does Britain figure so prominently in this dramatic situation? Why are British cattle so widely affected when cattle in other nations are not? Part of the answer is biological and sociological. The appropriate conditions were apparently there and the biological change in the prion agent appears to have occurred there. However, there is a *much broader perspective* that frames this Mad Cow epidemic—and that is Bible prophecy.

America and Britain are the focus of numerous important biblical prophecies. As the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, our nations were to become the chief recipients of the birthright promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (cf. Gen. 48:5,16-20). Few today realize that the *emergence and demise* of Britain as a world power was the result of God’s hand in history. Commenting on the British Empire, Brian Lapping notes that until 1947 “the government in London ruled more land and people than any other government in history” and that “relative to its size, no great ship of state ever sank so quickly” (*End of Empire*, 1985, p. xiv).

The Bible reveals *God’s purpose* for choosing to bestow the birthright blessings on these specific nations. Moses wrote, “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’” (Deut. 4:5-6). The Israelite nations were given the laws of God to be an *example* to the rest of

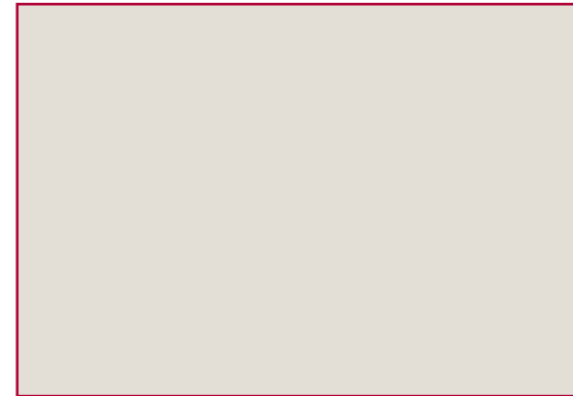
the world—to reveal the true God and the way to a more abundant life.

This sense of “divine purpose” seemed to permeate the minds of many Englishmen during the days of the Empire. “By the latter half of the century, the early-nineteenth century concept of ‘mission’ had broadened into a wider notion of national destiny—to **teach, to preach, to heal and to guide the less fortunate** [cf. Matt. 4:23]. In 1850 Lord John Russell told the Commons: **‘It appears to me that if we give up this right and holy work... we have no right to expect a continuance of those blessings, which, by God’s favour, we have so long enjoyed’**” (Bayly and Herlihy, *Atlas of the British Empire*, 1990).

This profound statement echoes exactly what the Bible records! God promised Israel *blessings* for obedience and *curses* for disobedience. “If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments... I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce” (Lev. 26:3-4), “But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments... I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart.... Those who hate you shall reign over you.... I will break the pride of your power... [and] *destroy your livestock*.... I will send *pestilence among you*; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy” (vv. 14-25). The power of the British Empire has been broken. Now even millions of her cattle are scheduled to be destroyed! These events are happening right before your eyes!

We find a similar set of promises in the book of Deuteronomy. In chapter 28 we read, “Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you *on high above all nations* of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you.... Blessed shall be... the

produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.... The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, **if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways**. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods,



Animal rights protestors demonstrate outside the Ministry of Agriculture over the “Mad Cow” crisis in the beef industry on March 25. —Reuters.

in the fruit of your body, in *the increase of your livestock*” (vv. 1-11). These things have come to pass. The British Empire circled the globe. The Royal Navy ruled the seas. England and Englishmen were the envy of nations. “Perhaps more than any other institution, the British Empire has shaped the political geography of the contemporary world” (*Atlas of the British Empire*).

God, however, also recorded sobering warnings for the nations that He chose and blessed for His “divine mission.” Moses prophesied, “But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD.... Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.... **The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you.... The LORD will strike you with madness.... Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it....** You shall be

driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see.... **And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations**” (vv. 15-37).

God plainly reveals that all these curses would come upon His chosen people because they would not listen to His voice or keep His commandments (v. 45). These events are coming to pass in Britain. In an effort to deal with the costs of eradicating Mad Cow disease, the British government is having to go, hat in hand, to the European Union for a financial bailout to help pay the bill—which could run into the billions of dollars!

The Prophet Hosea speaks directly of the troubles that will befall Ephraim (modern Britain). Ephraim is represented as the leader of the Ten Tribes of Israel (cf. *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 1985, vol. 7, p. 196). Ephraim is described as a proud nation, stumbling along, unwilling to turn to the true God (5:4-5), trusting in human reasoning, yet rotting away from internal problems and troubles (vv. 11-12), and seeking help for incurable internal problems from foreign nations, but not seeking help from God (vv. 13-14).

This is an incredibly accurate picture of present-day Britain—a nation in decline, whose basic industries can no longer compete with foreign rivals (*Management Today*, Feb. 1996, pp. 28-32). Much of that nation “has a dilapidated air” (*New Republic*, Dec. 23, 1985), where adultery at all levels of society makes world headlines, violent street crimes make news (*The Independent*, Feb. 4, 1996) and even the future of the monarchy is in question (*Newsweek*, Mar. 11, 1996).

What is happening today in Britain is not an accident of history. It is the result of a nation, called and blessed by God for a special mission, *forgetting* or *rejecting* that calling and *turning away* from that mission. Britain has become a

nation that has lost its ethical foundation. Its economy and politics have been corrupted by greed. It exports not only tainted meat but raw sexual pornography (*Independent on Sunday*, Mar. 24, 1996, p. 5).

The priesthood of the English state church sanctions homosexuality. Who can be surprised that the influence of Christianity in Britain is waning (p. 9)? Britain “has forgotten his Maker” (Hosea 8:14). God foresaw, sadly, the lack of understanding in today’s Britain: “I have written for him the great things of My law, but they were considered a strange thing” (v. 12). As a result Britain is heading rapidly for the divine retribution so vividly described in the prophecies of Hosea (8:14; 11:5). And according to Bible prophecy, America and the other Israelite nations will not be far behind (Jer. 30:4-7). We are going to reap what we are sowing, and this will be a lesson for all humanity! Our troubles will be largely of our own making (Hosea 4:6-9; 7:1-2).

There is good news ahead, however, for Britain, other Israelite nations and all of mankind. Jesus Christ is going to return to intervene in the affairs of this world. He instructed his own disciples to *watch* world events so they would not be caught by surprise (cf. Matt. 24:42).

If we are willing to repent of our own self-trusting ways and turn to God for direction and guidance in our lives (Hosea 6:6; Acts 2:38-40), acknowledging the truth of the prophecies recorded in the Bible by an omnipotent God (Is. 41:21-24), we will be spared from the coming difficulties this world is going to experience (Rev. 18:4). God is going to restore His people, fill the earth with the knowledge of His ways and bring peace to this entire world (Jer. 30:8, 17; Is. 2:2-4). If you would like to know more about the British-descended peoples’ future, why not write or call for our free booklet—*America and Britain in Prophecy?*

BECOME A CHRISTIAN

(continued from page 9)

surrendered your will to God to obey His commandments. You still argue, reason and justify self. You say, “This is the way I look at it.”

Why is there such a difference between the unconverted and converted mind? “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7). You see, God describes the “carnal” mind—the natural, fleshly mind of man—as a mind that is disobedient to His laws! It tries to reason around those laws and worship its own way. Through this process of reasoning, it refuses to worship God the way He prescribes!

That is why such people have never been able to understand Bible prophecy or the divine purpose being worked out here below. It is also why God has always seemed so far away to them—so unreal. Your Bible says, “A good understanding have all those who do His commandments” (Ps. 111:10).

What About You?

Be honest with yourself! Have *you*, personally, gone through a heartrending repentance as the first step toward your conversion? Have you continually *changed* and *grown* in spiritual understanding, knowledge and character ever since? Are you *living* by the Ten Commandments as a way of life?

Never forget that before real conversion comes real repentance. You need to humble yourself until you can sincerely repent as David did in Psalm 51—one of the best examples of repentance in all the Bible. “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin,” David cried. “For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me” (vv. 2-3).

Notice that David did not try to justify himself. Rather, he acknowledged his sin freely and asked for forgiveness. He said, “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight” (v. 4).

God didn’t have to argue, browbeat or talk David into admitting his guilt regarding his sin with Uriah and Bathsheba. David was instantly willing to see himself and acknowledge and bitterly repent of what he had done. He really came to abhor himself.

Notice: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (v. 5). David was not talking about the act of conception being a sin but the fact that he had always been, so to speak, a “thing” of sin—literally filled with lustful, vain and sinful human nature! David came to repent not only of what he had done—but of what he was!

Have you?

Have you been led by God to see that your very

nature is wrong? Have you come to sincerely want to get rid of your own rotten, selfish, carnal human nature? Are you ready to repent not only of what you have done—but of *what you are*?

King David knew that this was what God required. He said, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise” (v. 17). Before anyone—and this does mean *anyone*—is really and truly converted, he has to be humbled, beaten down and made to realize his own nothingness by God. He has to go through a period of time when he is abhorring himself, acknowledging his sins to God and repenting of them—turning around in his heart, mind and will and determining to go the other way.

When that time comes, a person will quit arguing and reasoning with God or with His ministers doing His Work. He will not grudgingly hang on to false concepts of God. He will quit trying to justify disobedience to God’s commandments and instead turn to live by every word of the Bible. He will not get his feelings hurt at the correction and exhortation of God’s chosen servants.

A Time for Action

Perhaps the God of heaven has brought you to understand the reality of His immutable spiritual laws as well as His great purpose in human existence. Through our broadcast and magazine, you may have come to see that God is now intervening in human affairs. Perhaps you are beginning to see that God’s way of life is good, teaching the way to have a happy home, good health and real peace of mind—**knowing and fulfilling the purpose for which you were born.**

If this is the case, you may wish to write in and request a visit from one of our personal representatives—who will be able to answer nearly any questions you may have about your spiritual life—or other questions concerning this Work of God and the Church of God.

So if you would like to make the decision to ACT on the Truth you have been learning—perhaps to sincerely bury your old self in baptism and give your life to God—send us your name, address and telephone number today. Our ministers will contact you and set up an appointment for personal counseling, but there will be no pressure to be baptized or to join anything. That is totally up to you, according to what God reveals to you to do.

True Christianity—apostolic Christianity as we described it in last month’s lead article—is still alive and well. *You* have to make the decision that you want to be part of it—that *you* want to be a genuine Christian and to fulfill the awesome *purpose* for which you were created.

If you are interested in talking about it, write or call us *today*. 