

# APPENDIXES

## 200 Matthew 5:12

Do lukewarm “Christians” and unbelievers speak well of you? If so read what Christ has to say about you in Luke 6:26.

To be like the prophets of old, from the distant past to the recent past, is to be outspoken (as Christ and His apostles were) and to teach what they taught! There are so many these days who are called “a really nice guy” who preach a watered-down, easy way to Heaven. They are a stench and a disgrace to Christianity! You cannot be like them and expect a great reward in Heaven. They want their rewards now, and that’s all they will have. Matthew 16:24-27.

Jesus taught that the way to Heaven is **difficult**. Matthew 7:14. Be like Christ, and like His faithful servants of the past who have faithfully preached the whole message of the New Testament, without compromise. Christ doesn’t promise popularity in the present life when you do this, but He does promise a GREAT REWARD in Heaven.

Live and speak out boldly for God right where you are, and there’s no telling what the final great results will be. Never feel sorry for yourself under persecution, but rejoice—leap for joy! Your future is great! Jesus guarantees it.

## 200A Matthew 7:13-14

Just what is the narrow gate that leads to everlasting life? In John 10:7-9 Jesus states that He is the door and the gate that leads to life. What does He mean by that?

First of all, He means that because of your sin, He, God’s incomparable Son and your Creator (John 1:2-4), became man, and suffered and died on the cross to make amends for your sin, to make it possible for God to forgive you. But He also means that He is the Lord whom we must now obey if we are to gain life. See Romans 6:16; Hebrews 5:9.

So the key that now opens the gate for you to enter eternal life is your acknowledgment that Jesus Christ is your Savior, and that you will from now on, with God’s help, obey Him as your Lord. Romans 10:9-10.

The narrow gate gets us started on the right road. But also, the road that leads to eternal life is narrow and hazardous. There are all kinds of temptations along the way that must be overcome. There are tests of obedience that you will constantly meet up with. It’s not easy to triumph over natural inclinations day by day.

Another time (Luke 13:24) Jesus said, **You must use extreme effort in order to gain entrance thru the narrow gate.** And the same is true as you walk the path that leads to life. It’s easy enough to believe and to accept the fact that Jesus is the Savior, but to truly obey Him as Lord is difficult indeed.

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The extreme effort needed to enter the gate that leads to Heaven involves determination to overcome (Revelation 2 & 3), with God’s help, the various sins of the flesh, and all other sins with which Satan has you enslaved to himself. He is passionately anti-God, and he doesn’t want you to become a child of God and inherit Heaven. He will do everything in his power to keep you from making the decision in the first place to enthrone Jesus in your life as Lord.

And once you enter the gate that leads to life, Satan will do his dead-level-best to trip you up and get you to leave the path to Heaven. But Jesus has promised to be with you (Revelation 3:20-21; John 14:23; Philippians 2:12-13) to help you overcome. With His help you will safely arrive home in Heaven!

But until you have entered the narrow gate in truth, you are not on the way to life at all. No one becomes a follower of the Lord without first counting the cost. But you must also consider the awful cost of not becoming His follower. The way to Heaven is not an easy way, but it’s a most rewarding way. There’s no middle road. No lukewarmness is accepted by God. Revelation 3:15-16. There’s no fence to straddle, to keep from being on either of the roads. You’re already on one of them.

The path to life is rough, steep, and hedged in on both sides, because in the will of God we must crucify evil passions—we must forgo many pleasures and activities, especially if Christ would have

no part in them.

You must be willing to let some of life's prizes go by. You're living for much higher and unsurpassed eternal prizes. You must be willing to part with much of what the world calls success. You are called to take up your cross and follow in the footsteps of your Lord. See notes on Matthew 10:38 and Mark 8:34-38.

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As a wise person is willing to do without many things as He devotes himself to his education, in preparation for a short and uncertain future of possibly 60 or 70 more years, how much wiser it is to be willing to suffer the loss of even all things (if necessary), for the next 60 or 70 years, in order to make certain that your endless eternal future will be truly rich and fulfilling. So much is at stake!

"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."—*Jim Elliot*

As the next verses in Matthew warn, beware of false teachers! They are everywhere. They are preaching an easy way to Heaven, which will never get you there. They are agents of Satan. If a minister's message doesn't go all the way with Christ's teachings, do not believe him. Believe what Christ and His apostles taught, and you will be safe.

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But don't ever think that the Christian life is a cheerless life. No, it's a thrilling, challenging, and fulfilling life! It's a real challenge to live for Christ and speak out for Him, especially when we have the promise from Him that He will always be with us. Matthew 20:18-20. He has also promised He will always be at our side to help us to overcome every temptation and trial. See Philippians 2:12-13 and the note there. See also 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Peter 1:15; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 15:1-5.

And just like going on a trip, part of the joy of the Christian life is anticipating the pleasures, riches, and total fulfillment ahead at end of the road. You may be a pilgrim as you walk the narrow road, but a crown awaits those who overcome!

Christ never promised that the Christian life would be easy, but He has promised that the results in an endless eternity will be glorious indeed! You cannot afford not to enter the narrow gate and then walk the narrow way with resolute, unflinching, and zealous determination!

## 200B Matthew 7:23

The present tense here indicates that they are fresh from the scenes and acts of their disobedience. Those who pick and choose the commands in the New Testament they are willing to obey, and disregard (thereby disobey) the rest, are living in blatant disobedience to God! According to this warning from Christ, they will be barred from Heaven. Therefore, if this applies to you, repent, and make absolutely sure that you are genuinely born again. 2 Peter 1:10.

Also, remember, God won't accept *work* for *obedience*. Teaching, preaching and active zeal for Christ are no guarantee that you are living in obedience to Him in other matters, or that you are teaching others the absolute necessity of obedience. Read your Bible to know what God would have you do. Then do it, no matter what the cost. Your very life depends on it.

These words of Christ are indeed future prophecy. They are prophecies of warning that only the rebellious will ignore or regard lightly. As we will point out several times in these notes:

The obedience of even the most godly Christian will be imperfect; but even though imperfect, the intent to fully obey God must be real.

## 200C Matthew 7:26-27

The **sand** of these verses does not refer to the works of a person whose hope of salvation is in his own human efforts, as some teach. *It is absolutely necessary to be honest with God's word!* To change the meaning of God's plainly written word is both dishonest and dangerous. Revelation 22:19. The **sand** refers to the failure of this "believer" to make Christ the Lord of his life and *obey* Him.

It is true that we are born again (regenerated) by God, by His word and by His Spirit working in us. But God does not force any person to become a "new person in Christ" against his will. And the will cannot be passive. One must have an intense and strong *desire* to do God's will. See vss 13-23 and Luke 13:23-27. It is only in the truly sincere person that God can effectively work **to help you first of all to desire and determine to do what is pleasing to Him, and then help you to do it.** Philippians 2:13.

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Malachi 3:18 states the following concerning Christ as future Judge: **Then you will again see what**

happens to those who lived righteous lives and to those who lived in sin, to those who served God and to those who did not. It is vital to realize that the Lord demands obedience and service on the part of those who would be His. Many will have some shocking and terrifying disappointments on that Great Day. But these disappointments will not be the portion of those who, in heeding the warning, become truly converted to Christ. Obviously, people's actions have a great deal to do with their salvation, as indicated by Jesus Himself.

If obedience to the Lord is lacking, there will be no salvation for that person, no matter how fine a Christian he may think himself to be. See also Matthew 8:11-12; 10:32-33; 12:36-37; 13:24-30, 36-43; 15:12-14; 16:24-27; 21:42-46; 25:1-46; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-24; Ephesians 5:5.

## 201 Matthew 24:29-31

Many Christians believe that Christ will have taken His own people to be with Himself before the Great Tribulation. Others believe the Lord will take His own from the earth near the middle of the last seven years of the age, or shortly thereafter. Still others believe this great event will not take place until Christ returns in power and glory at the Battle of Armageddon, or just previous to that battle, or immediately after. Then there are those who believe that Christ will not call His own to Himself until the moment described in vs 30-31.

It would be easiest, of course, if the first possibility were correct. How much better to be with the Lord than to go thru the Great Tribulation! Those who believe that Christians will go thru the Tribulation, or at least thru the first part of it, however, have some very convincing Scriptures to support their views.

One of the Scriptures used in support of their contention is 1 Corinthians 15:51-53: Now listen to me, and I will tell you something that has been a secret: Not all of us will die, but we will all be changed. It will happen in a fraction of a second, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sounding of the last trumpet. Because when that trumpet sounds, all the dead who belong to Christ will be resurrected back to life with bodies that will never die. And we who are still alive will also be changed. Because it is absolutely necessary that these decaying, dying bodies be exchanged for bodies that will never decay or die, that these temporary bodies be exchanged for bodies that are everlasting.

According to this Scripture, the Rapture will take place at the sounding of the last trumpet. The last trumpet mentioned in the book of The Revelation is the seventh trumpet (Revelation 11:15; 15:1,5 to 16:21) which brings forth the seven vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. The proponents of a mid-tribulation Rapture point out correctly that the seventh trumpet begins to blow in the middle of the last seven years of the age, which period is known as the seven years of the Great Tribulation. The more severe part of the Tribulation will occur during the last 3 1/2 years. It will be a time of tribulation for the nation of Israel, and for all upon earth at that time who are true believers in Christ.

But also, the last 3 1/2 years of this seven will be the time of God's judgment upon the ungodly on the earth, and especially at the very end, during the Battle of Armageddon—and following this battle, during the time of darkness, earthquakes, great hailstones, and fire from Heaven. Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Peter 3:10-12.

This seventh trumpet will very likely continue to blow—at least in Heaven—for 3 1/2 years. Whether or not the sound of the trumpet will be a literal sound upon earth is not revealed. Those who say that the Rapture of the Church will occur in the middle of the seven years believe the Church will be raptured when this last trumpet begins to blow, or shortly thereafter.

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The mid and post-tribulationists point out that if the last trumpet spoken of in 1 Corinthians is not the seventh and last trumpet of The Revelation, then there must be a trumpet blast which will follow, because it is definitely called "**the last trumpet.**" If there should be a trumpet to follow the seventh trumpet of The Revelation, the only remaining possibility concerning the timing of the Rapture would be its occurrence after the end of the seven years of the tribulation period.

Another Scripture the mid and post-tribulation rapturists use is 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. This is a very strong Scripture in their favor. We refer you to the notes on that Scripture.

As to a possible Rapture of the Church before the Tribulation, proponents support their view with such Scriptures as 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10. Because we know that God has not appointed us to be destroyed by His wrath, but to be saved by means of our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us, so that whether

we are still alert and watchfully living for Him when He comes, or have died in true hope, we will live together with Him forever. Please see the notes on this Scripture, as well.

Returning to v 31 in Matthew 24, people the world over will be included in this great event. Every true child of God who has died since the beginning of time will be resurrected. Every true Christian still living upon the earth will be caught up to be with the Lord. The parable of the good grain and the tares (Matthew 13:30) will thus be fulfilled. The evil will be harvested first (at Armageddon, and in the judgments that follow), and then as described in v 31, the angels will gather the good grain, **God's chosen ones**. Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-40.

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We can hope to be with the Lord during the time of Great Tribulation on earth; in which case we must make sure that we truly love, obey, and serve Him, proving that we are truly born again, and are ready to go to be with Him. On the other hand, we must be ready and willing to suffer and die the martyr's death for the sake of our Lord, even today, if such be His will, and especially if we are to go thru the Tribulation. Also, we dare not believe in a post-tribulation Rapture of Christ's true Church, and use that as an excuse to put off getting right with the Lord until the Tribulation begins, because God's time for you to leave this life may be as soon as *today!*

But after all is said about the possibilities, Christ so plainly said in Matthew 24:29-31 that **immediately after the tribulation of those days there will be a powerful trumpet blast** (the last trumpet), and that it is then that **the angels will gather His chosen ones**.

But the *time* of the Rapture is not the all-important thing—getting right with God and being truly born again is what really matters. So be absolutely sure that you are truly born again. If you need help to find your way to God, be sure to read Appendix 247, page 520, entitled, *The Amazing Story of God*.

## 202 Matthew 25:1-13

The main lesson of this parable of the **ten girls** is that many people who consider themselves to be Christians, even waiting for the Lord's coming, will not make it. This is sad indeed. No true follower of Jesus will gloat over such tragedy, but will seek

to warn everyone to be most diligent to make your calling and election to salvation and eternal life with God a sure thing! 2 Peter 1:10.

The **lamps** and lights of the **five foolish girls** looked just like those of the **wise girls**. But the **foolish** had not made any provision to hold firm unto the end (Matthew 24:13), no matter how long or fierce the temptations to live to please ones' self. "The foolish virgins were like the seed that was sown upon the rock. They heard the word, and at once received it with joy, but they had no root. They were lacking in perseverance, in watchfulness. They did not keep in their minds the thought that, though the bridegroom might come at any moment, still, He might long delay; that there was need for daily preparation, of constant watchfulness for His coming."—*Matthew Henry*.

In our Lord's parable about the seed sown on the rock (Matthew 13:3-23), the seed was readily accepted by the tiny bit of soil on that rock, but the roots of the seed were never allowed to penetrate the stony heart. To produce fruit, the seed of the word of God must be allowed to penetrate deep into the life and soul of a person and take full possession. It is either *all* or *nothing*.

If you are holding back any portion of yourself from the Lord, and are unwilling to be faithful and obedient in everything, you are living in rebellion against Him. You are not really converted. Remember, Adam and Eve were rebellious in only one area of their lives. This does not mean that God demands sinless perfection. But He certainly does demand perfect intent.

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Jesus ends this parable with another warning to **watch**. That word *watch* (*gregoreite* in the Greek) means to *not go to sleep, to keep awake*. We must keep awake to everything that would divert our attention away from the Lord and away from the prize. Life everlasting can only be claimed as we are found to be truly in Christ—all the way. Life eternal with our Lord will be so glorious, so wonderful, and so everlasting that no suffering or pain or waiting can be counted too high a price to pay. Remaining faithful to the end is an absolute imperative. Matthew 10:22; 24:13.

If you have not already done so, promise the Lord this very moment, from the very depths of your being, to be His totally, in sickness and in health, thru all temptations, rejections, or whatever, until you finally stand in His glorious presence. Don't allow any teaching or preaching of *easy*



*believism* rob you of eternal life. Jesus' warning about false teachers is very applicable today. **Both will fall into a pit**—both the teacher and the one who accepts his message. Matthew 15:14.

## 203 Matthew 25:14-30

God has entrusted to every one of us certain talents. They consist of abilities, opportunities, money, and whatever other blessings we have or will have in life.

In God's wisdom, and for His own good reasons and purposes, He has given many talents to some, and few talents to others. The person with only one talent is not to be jealous of the person with many. And the one with many talents is not to look down on the person with only one talent.

The person with many talents will have much more for which he will be held accountable to God at The Judgment than the person with only one talent. There will be the temptation to use one's many talents for personal gain, instead of for the glory of God and for the blessing of our fellowmen. Those with the five and the two talents in this parable would surely have been punished comparably to the unfaithful servant with the one talent, if they had invested and used their talents selfishly, or had hidden them in fear. Revelation 21:8.

But, oh, the joy there will be for all who have invested their time and talents wisely and faithfully for the glory of God. One may rightfully ask, "With the end results promised, are you working now as one ought to work, when such ultragreat rewards are obtainable?"

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Each person has at least one talent. If you are a one-talent person, you may be tempted to believe that your little help is not important. But in the first place, what you make of what God has given you is very important to Him. And according to Christ's teaching here, it's very important to your own future as to what you do with whatever you are and have.

A person with lesser abilities and opportunities will never know what an impact he can make for God in this world unless he diligently uses the little he now has. God may be giving you a more difficult test with your one talent than those who have many. Don't fail the test, or as surely as you now live, you will receive the judgment Christ warns of here. But if you are faithful to the end, in

serving to the extent of your abilities and opportunities, you will receive a reward similar to those who have faithfully served with many talents.

Don't rely on what you've done in the past. Christ says we must be faithful to the end.

The unfaithful servant is seen in the many who want and expect to go to Heaven, but they will not go out of their way to serve Christ. If it's easy and pleasant, O.K. But they love their ease and their freedom to do just what they want to do, without concern about the great needs everywhere that could use their involvement.

According to this teaching by Christ, don't count on Heaven if you are living at ease and are unfaithful to your responsibilities and opportunities.

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Does this mean you gain Heaven by good works? No. But from the beginning God demanded obedience. And when man sinned by disobeying God, He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for your sins and mine. Now you can be forgiven, because of what Christ has done for you. But the New Testament teaches thruout that after being forgiven you are now to become obedient—not only in a few things, but in everything!

In regard to the necessity of obedience to Christ if you are to be saved, look up and read Acts 5:32; Romans 2:6-9; 6:16; 10:9-10; Hebrews 5:9.

Again, **Be most diligent to make your calling and election to salvation and eternal life with God a sure thing!** 2 Peter 1:10.

The whole world is in rebellion against God, and therefore lost! They need to know what you know about Christ and His teachings, and about salvation thru Him! According to Matthew 28:18-20, you and I are responsible before God to tell them. Use your talents fully in doing so! And don't stop until your last day on earth! A Christian must never retire from talking to others about their eternal destination. Romans 10:9-10.

The unfaithful servant was called **wicked and lazy**. To be lazy, and little concerned about warning the lost, is wickedness. And such wickedness will be severely judged by God, into outer darkness. The man's excuse was, **I was afraid**. Is that also your excuse for not witnessing? That was the excuse the Israelites used for not obeying God's orders to march in and possess the promised land. And look what happened to them. Numbers 13 and 14. God gives the same warning to cowards today. Revelation 21:8.

Wickedness does not consist of only the wrong you may do. Negative evil—failing or refusing to do what Christ has commanded you to do—is just as sinful. As we see here, it will be judged just as severely. Your reward will be great if you are faithful to the end—but your punishment will be horrendous if you are lazy and disobedient.

You may think that God's demands are too great, that He's expecting too much. No, He's only demanding right living and right use of what He's given you. And He's promised to always be with you, to forgive, and to help you live and serve as He demands. You are not on your own. God is always with you to help. See Philippians 2:12-13 and the note there. If you sincerely ask for God's help, you can't fail. But you must ask in all sincerity. God bless you! We'll be looking for you in Heaven. Bring many with you!

## 204 Matthew 25:31-46

A great judgment is pictured in these verses, with Jesus Christ seated as Judge. Many have believed this picture to be of the great and final judgment of the wicked. However, since this judgment will take place **when the Son of Man comes in His glory**, it cannot be the final judgment of the wicked. Rather, it is the judgment of all persons still alive on the earth at the time of Christ's return. The final judgment of the wicked is to take place at the end of the first thousand years of Christ's reign on earth—the Millennium. Read Revelation 20.

All of God's people who have died will be resurrected to meet Christ in the air **when He returns**, together with those of His who are still alive on the earth. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. These will live in the Heavenly Jerusalem. Revelation 21:9-27; 22:1-5. So no Christian or Old Testament saint will be included in this judgment, as they will already be with Christ.

As far as the wicked dead are concerned, **The rest of the dead did not come back to life again until the end of the thousand years.** Revelation 20:5. It is safe to conclude, then, that sinners who had died before Christ returns will not be included in the judgment described in this Scripture. The final judgment of the wicked dead will come one thousand years later. Revelation 20:11-15.

It appears quite definitely that the purpose of the judgment mentioned in these verses is to determine who among those still alive on the earth after the Tribulation, and after Christ's true follow-

ers have been transported to Heaven, are worthy to become subjects in Christ's great new Kingdom on earth. Although **all nations** will be gathered before the Lord for this judgment, individual persons will be judged on an individual basis. God does not cast entire nations into Hell. He saves the righteous among them.

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What criterion will the Lord use at this judgment to judge individuals? The apparent basis will be as to how each one has treated the Lord's **brothers and sisters** during the time of the Great Tribulation. And who are the Lord's **brothers and sisters**? No doubt they will include the Jews and Christians who will go thru the Great Tribulation.

Even if the Rapture of the Church should take place before the Great Tribulation, there will still be persons converted to Christ during the time of the Tribulation. So it appears that the basis for the Lord's judgment upon these people will be based upon their treatment of the Jews and Christians during that last terrible time of testing.

The Lord does not promise Heaven to these friends of the Jews and Christians on the basis of their friendship. Only as these individuals are converted to Christ as Lord and Savior during the Millennium is it probable that eternal life will be theirs. Jesus' words to them are, **Come, you who are now so accepted and blessed by My Father, and inherit the Kingdom that was prepared for you before the world was created.**

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God's Kingdom on earth will not be populated, as we have mentioned, by those who are with the Lord in the Heavenly Jerusalem. But the earth will be repopulated by those who had been good to God's people, and who had not taken the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-18; 14:9-11) during the time of the reign of the Satan-inspired man, the Antichrist.

The individuals sent from the Lord's presence at this time **into everlasting fire** will be those who had mistreated the Jews and Christians during the time of the Great Tribulation, or had refused to help them. They will be the people who had cooperated with Antichrist and had received his mark on their hand or forehead.

As the Scriptures warn, no one who receives this mark and cooperates with Antichrist will have any part in God's Kingdom. Revelation 14:9-11

states, And another angel, a third one, followed them, loudly shouting, 'Here's what will happen to anyone who worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on his hand or forehead: He will be included among those who will drink of the wine of God's furious anger, which has been poured out full strength into the cup of His boiling fury. And he will be tormented with fire and burning sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment will rise up forever and ever. Day after endless day and night after endless night they will have no rest. This awful judgment will fall upon all who worship the beast and his image, and upon all who receive his mark or his name.'

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It will be difficult, if not next to impossible, to buy or sell thru ordinary channels during part or all of the Tribulation period without the mark of the beast. But to accept that mark will ultimately result in judgment and Hell. The reign of Antichrist, **the beast**, will be anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Jew, and anti-Christian. And God warns that anyone who has any part with the Antichrist—accepting his mark or number in their forehead or in their right hand for the necessary and legitimate purposes of doing business, or even of sustaining life—will lose his soul. See also Daniel 7:9-10; Malachi 3:1-5; Mark 6:11; Jude 3-4, 13-15.

The **eternal life** received by those who are declared **righteous** at this judgment will no doubt be eternal life on the earth, but not in the Heavenly Jerusalem. Revelation 21:9-27; 22:1-5. At least, this is the immediate promise Christ will give them.

## 205 Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:4-15

Consider what the Lord is saying here in the parable about the farmer sowing seed. The one sowing seed is any minister, Bible teacher, or anyone else telling one or more people the Great News God has for them.

Those receiving the message along the hard pathway are those who hear the message, but their hard hearts won't allow the message to change them. They try as quickly as possible to forget it, especially if they were convicted by it. Some of these folks even attend church regularly. They attend mainly for social reasons, or to ease their conscience. They have little interest in the truth. They think only of their own selfish plans and

desires.

Such hearts need to be plowed deeply by uncompromising preaching, backed by much prayer by preacher and people. There needs to be a breaking up and crushing of the heart in order to get the seed in where it can grow. If those with hard hearts have any concern at all for their future in Heaven or Hell, they also need to pray.

The writer of these notes is experienced in this area. I was a hypocrite. I was an active church member, and listened to the message preached every week. But nothing changed. I really didn't have desire to change, although I knew I should. Finally, after many years, I prayed, "Lord, I know what I should do, but I'm not willing. I seem to be helpless. But I'm willing for You to make me willing." God answered my prayer. It cost me plenty to be crushed, but the blessed assurance I now have in Christ is worth it all.

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Those who receive the seed in the thin soil on the rock are those who joyfully accept the message, but can't take the heat when persecution comes. They are more concerned about keeping their old friends who are on their way to Hell, and more concerned about pleasing neighbors and family members than in pleasing the Lord. They want Heaven, but not if it's going to cost them very much.

Some of this is due to faulty preaching and teaching. Jesus always let His hearers know that it would cost them everything to follow Him and gain eternal life. Innumerable preachers and teachers today are preaching an easy way to Heaven. The way is not easy; it's hard! Matthew 7:13-14. But every step of the difficult way will be abundantly worth it when we get where we are going, instead of where they are going.

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Those who receive the message among thorns are those who agree with the message. The Greek word for *hear* in this instance has been translated **continue to listen**, because it's in the present active, denoting continuous present action.

These are people who agree with the message, are baptized, become church members, and even serve the Lord. But they are slaves to their daily cares, and are cumbered with desire for wealth and for all in this life that will satisfy their carnal appetites.

The work they do for the Lord is done mainly to ease their conscience. They would rather spend their time “in a more profitable and enjoyable way.” So the work they do for God is not from the heart and is not very effective. They don’t produce a crop.

Give heed to Christ’s warning to such people in John 15:1-6. Christ demands our all, nothing less. You cannot be only half converted and be converted. You may object and say that that’s not the way Rev. or Dr. So and So preaches and teaches. But it is the way Christ and His apostles taught! Check it out. Read the Book for yourself and let God show you what the truth is.

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Don’t let the cares of this world and the desire for things and experiences bog you down and bring upon you the judgment received by those in John 15:1-6.

Be one of those in Mark 4:20. The Greek word for *bear* in this verse is also translated **continue to listen**, because it’s also in the present active, indicating continuous present action. But it’s also in the indicative mood, which is the mood of certainty. These folks have a positive attitude about the message of the Lord. They really believe it, and live it.

They put obedience to God ahead of all else. And they are constantly searching His word so they may obey and serve Him better. Anything that hinders or keeps them from being their best for the Lord is put out of their lives, or they turn it completely over to the Lord, trusting Him to make it a blessing instead of a hindrance. They are living for God, and for eternal treasures. They are thoroughly enjoying the present, in spite of the difficulties, as they serve the Lord in whatever occupation they are in. But their sights are on the eternal future!

No wonder God is blessing, and they are producing a great harvest. Join these dedicated ones with all your heart! Fearful warnings from Christ and His apostles hang over all others! Not on just some of the others, but on *all* the others!

## 206 Mark 8:34

Notice that Christ is speaking here to the whole crowd, not just to the twelve men He had called to be His special followers during His life on earth. Also notice that in verses 36 and 37 He indicates very strongly that what He has to say here

has to do with the matter of life or death! And it’s a matter of either *eternal* life or *eternal* death!

He’s telling us here what it really means to be a Christian. He’s letting His hearers know what it means to be truly born again. He’s emphasizing the fact that their minds must be completely changed from thinking of ways and means to please themselves, to being wholly concerned with pleasing Him and telling as many in the world as possible the Great News about the Savior. v 35.

We should consider the words of our Lord here to be of more than ordinary importance, because it’s very evident that He laid great stress upon what He was saying. If we know that there is anything without which we cannot be true followers of Christ, it certainly ought to be of great concern to us, because the very life and salvation of our souls depend upon complying with what Christ says here. Let each of us then take earnest heed to what Christ is saying. Let us be deeply concerned about that which He declares is necessary to prove our claim that we are His followers.

\* \* \*

That which got us into trouble with God in the first place was our stubborn insistence on having our own way instead of obeying our Father. Thru the suffering and death Jesus Christ suffered for us, God has made the way possible for Him to forgive our sins. But in order for Him to be doing the right thing when forgiving us, we must firmly decide to no longer live this life in the way we please, but in the way God desires that we live it!

Many are interested in receiving forgiveness thru Christ until they realize it will cost them their own will, and that they must now live to please God. These people appear willing to worship God, to study the Scriptures, to join in prayer; and they’ll do many things (just like Herod, Mark 6:20) which would make one believe that they have an earnestness and zeal in the cause of Christ; but they draw back when they are called to the difficult exercise of self-denial.

People are willing and ready to exercise self-denial when it comes to something in which their heart is set. For example, look at the man whose ambition it is to prosper in business. What a life of self-denial he is willing to lead. And when working toward a good education, people are willing to exercise much self-denial in order to gain that education, which will benefit them for only a few brief years in this life. If you can exercise self-denial on other occasions and for other purposes,

but feel it too bothersome when called on to do so to please Christ, what does that say about you? It says that your heart is not really with Christ. It says that you are not truly born again.

We must make up our minds to give ourselves wholly to God and to our Savior, Jesus Christ. Christ has plainly said that He will disown those who claim to be His, but are lukewarm in their interest and willingness to go all out for Him. See Revelation 3:1-5, 14-16.

Whenever self-denial is spoken of, there naturally arises in the mind a hatred for it because of the difficulty of self-denial and the pain one experiences in putting it into practice. But let's not give way to this hatred, when we see how our Lord emphasizes the necessity of self-denial, and that it is so absolutely necessary!

One must agree that self-denial is indeed difficult—very difficult. But let's remember that we are not left to face this difficulty alone in our own feeble strength. No, God will give us His Holy Spirit if we ask Him (Luke 11:13), and with His divine cooperation we will be able to do what otherwise would be not only difficult, but impossible. Let's also remember this, *the pain of self-denial is very temporary, but the advantages that flow from it are everlasting!*

Concerning God being always with you to help you live to please Him, see Philippians 2:13 and Appendix 218, page 482.

## 207 Mark 8:35

At times Christ and His apostles made general statements about believing in Christ for salvation, such as John 3:16. At other times they made specific statements, stating what it really means to believe in Christ for salvation. This is one of those specific statements.

To believe in Christ means to turn from our selfishness and sin and fully obey Him, and to be deeply concerned for all others who need to do likewise! That's what Christ is saying here.

He is telling us that we must die to every evil and selfish desire, and live only to obey Him, in all things! This includes living for the purpose of telling everyone the Great News—reaching as many as you possibly can reach by every means possible, with God's help.

If you need to know and obey the Great News (Romans 2:8; 6:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 5:9) in order to gain eternal life, so does everyone else! They need to know what you know. And they need to know the whole truth, not a watered-down

version! Christ has rewards for His faithful servants, but fiery judgment for His servants who prove unfaithful. Jesus gives very clear promises and warnings of this in Matthew 24:45-51 and 25:14-30.

The same applies to us that applied to Ezekiel, when God told him, **Son of man, I have appointed you to be a watchman for the people of Israel. So listen carefully to what I say, and warn them from Me. When I say to the wicked, "You will surely die!" but you don't give him any warning, you don't speak out to warn him about the results of the sinful way in which he is living, in order to save his life, that sinful man will die in his sins; but I will hold you responsible for the death of his soul!**

However, if you do warn that wicked person, and he still doesn't turn from his sinning, and refuses to repent, he will die as a sinner, but you have saved yourself from being judged as worthless. Ezekiel 3:17-19. See 1 Corinthians 9:27 and the note.

\* \* \*

The death warned of above is the second death, the lake of fire. Revelation 20:11-15; 21:7-8. And the life referred to is eternal life.

God would be unrighteous if He allowed into His Heaven those who are selfish, inconsiderate of others, and afraid of what others will say or do if they speak to them about their sin and the Savior. God warns that the cowardly and fearful will not be in His Heaven. He lists them with all other sinners who will not make it. Revelation 21:8.

If you truly love God and love others you will want to warn everyone about the consequences of their sinning, and about the Savior. If you have been negligent in doing so, repent, and begin right now to speak out for Him—for His glory and for the salvation of the lost. Psalm 26:2.

Christ was so concerned about our lost condition that He left all He had in Heaven, in order to save us. He now states that if we are really His followers, we will do the same. We will make it our main purpose in life to obey Him, and to give of our time, our strength, and our everything to save those who are lost!

This may involve some drastic change of present or future plans, whether you are young or old. Begin right where you are. Reach out to those nearest you, and then to those farther out. Begin in your present position, whether in school, at work, in a business or profession, or wherever. And do begin at home, and determine most earnestly and seriously to begin at once!

Be sure to consider Romans 10:9-10 in this regard. This Scripture is just as important for your salvation as John 3:16!

## 208 Mark 8:36-37

It is no crime to be happy in this present life. The crime is either in seeking happiness from wrong sources or being so intensely interested in earthly joys that one forgets the great Source from whom these blessings come to us.

If we become so interested in earthly pursuits that we pursue them from wrong motives, or by wrong means, or with such feverish anxiety that they become the main objects for which we live, then we are seeking to gain the things of this world to the injury of our eternal soul. And to lose the soul is not, as some believe, annihilation. The loss of the soul will be to endure an awful existence in Hell without God!

Just suppose that you reached your highest ambitions for life—you gained possessions, popularity, all the thrills and excitements that the flesh and mind can absorb, even power over millions of people. You gained absolutely everything in this world. It all belongs to you and you can have any part of it at any time in any measure. Just what would you really have?

After all, even if you could buy a thousand or a million suits or dresses, you could wear only one at a time. You could eat only one meal at a time, or gratify yourself in any other way one thrill at a time. So even if you had gained the whole world you wouldn't be able to satisfy yourself with very much. And even if you gained the whole world it wouldn't last very long, because these bodies of ours grow old very quickly. And eternity is forever. In reality, all of your gain would be very shallow satisfaction.

Even your most cherished possessions will soon go to others. No matter what you now own, it will someday soon belong to someone else!

\* \* \*

Besides, where is the rich person who is perfectly satisfied with his wealth, and feels that he has all he needs to make him happy? Every rich person is investigating ways by which he can gain just a little bit more. The same is true of the one who lives to satisfy the various passions of the body. The satisfying never brings true or lasting satisfaction. Only Heaven will bring perfect fulfillment!

If you miss Heaven, you have missed everything!

Most folks aren't concerned about gaining the whole world; they are willing to sell their souls for very little. Just what are you willing to sell your soul for? Just what is it that you are willing to accept in exchange for *your* soul?

\* \* \*

Think of how foolish it is, really, to sell out so cheaply, when by giving your life to Jesus now, and living for Him now, you can have the assurance thru His promises that you will have wealth and riches and pleasures forever in Heaven! You may lose your wealth here—even your health, your friends, and everything else you have on earth, but if, thru the witness of the Holy Spirit with your spirit, you have the assurance that you are truly born again and that eternal life waits for you ahead in the glories of God's Heaven, you're still rich beyond imagination.

\* \* \*

If the world is gained, nothing of any real or lasting value is gained; if the soul is lost, everything is lost! The person who is mainly concerned with fulfillment in this present life asks the question, "Which is the most pleasant and the easiest thing to do?" while the true Christian asks, "Which is the right thing to do?" and will choose that, no matter what the cost. The man of the world looks at death as a loss, while the true Christian looks at death as gain. See Philippians 1:21.

Our lives reach far beyond the things now seen. Are you preparing to really live in the future, or merely exist in constant, irreversible regret? You can change your destination now, but not after it's too late. Choose real life, no matter what it may cost you! Live your life for Jesus, and for others, so you may also lead many of these others to real and eternal life!

## 209 Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26

"The meaning of this verse is that whoever shall refuse, either thru pride or because of sin, to acknowledge to others that Christ is his Lord (Romans 10:9-10) and Savior, and to then truly serve Him here, shall be excluded from His Kingdom hereafter.

"When Christ comes again He will come in most awesome grandeur; not as the babe in Beth-

lehem, not as the man of Nazareth, but as the Son of God in majesty and great power and glory! Those who will not acknowledge Him here in this life must be rejected by Him for the next life; those who will not serve Him on earth will not enjoy His blessings in Heaven.”—*Barnes’ Notes*.

Confessing or denying Christ does not only mean to do so with words, but also by the way we live and the purpose for which we live. Nevertheless, our words are very important. You can see the importance of them in Romans 10:9-10. Acknowledging your allegiance to Christ, and being acknowledged by Him to the Father, is the same as work-days and pay-day. If, in act and word, we acknowledge Him here to others, we will be welcomed Home to Heaven by Him.

\* \* \*

Those who willingly and gladly follow Jesus when the road is smooth and easy, but leave Him when it gets rugged and hard (Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21), will have much to fear at the coming of Christ. Those who inwardly believe His teaching, but because of fear of ridicule from unbelievers are afraid to confess it, also have much to fear. This is also true concerning those who are faithful in attending the various services of the church, but refuse to take responsible duties that they should assume in Christ’s service. People of this character, and all who resemble them, are false Christians.

Nothing less than a sincere, constant, and total obedience to the moral law which Jesus came to fulfill will be accepted from His followers. And no pretenses, excuses, and glossing over will be of any value if this essential and absolutely necessary condition is not complied with.

It is easy enough to confess Christ before those in your own church and among your Christian friends, but do you confess Him among those who despise and hate Him? Are you willing to stand up for what Christ taught among those who despise His teachings, and by your very life testify for Him?

This warning from Christ includes all who merely profess to know Him, whatever their position or circumstance may be. And it adds to the disgrace of being ashamed of Christ when the shame is clearly visible in the presence of those who are low and worthless in their morals.

Consider the contrast between the low and contemptible people in whose presence many “believers” are ashamed of Christ here on earth,

and then the magnificent assembly in whose presence Christ will be ashamed of them hereafter.

\* \* \*

Why should we ever be ashamed of Jesus? That we can ever be justified in such shame is, of course, impossible.

Those who have been unfaithful will be ashamed, and the others exalted, in the day of judgment. Then He who knows us altogether will separate us, according to His unerring judgment of our characters. All will be resurrected, **some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.**

See Hebrews 3:6-19 and the notes there.

## 210 Luke 12:16-21

Consider these facts concerning this rich farmer: This man was not a vile sinner. It is simply that his body and soul had both become the slaves of his wealth. Being utterly and hopelessly selfish, he forgot both God and others. His only concern now was about himself.

God doesn’t desire that anyone should lose his riches, but that he should transfer as much as possible to eternal investments. A true Christian does this by giving to the needs of God’s church, by helping those who are less fortunate, and by helping to finance the publishing of the message of life, both at home and abroad. The greater proportion of one’s time and finances that one is able to invest in this way, the greater will be his treasure in Heaven. See Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 16:9.

We must all realize how very brief this life is, and how uncertain it is. Any one of us may be gone before another day dawns. Therefore, our greatest concern should not be that we have plenty so that we may enjoy life, but that we are obeying God and are putting His concerns first.

\* \* \*

Even if this was a young farmer, and he was able to retire at the age of 30, he had no assurance that he had a long life ahead of him in which to enjoy his wealth. Proverbs 27:1 states, **Don’t brag about what you’ll do tomorrow. God may have other plans for you.**

This man was already rich, and he could have done so much good with the extra harvest he had. He could have been a blessing to many, while at the same time laying up treasure for himself in

Heaven.

God says that people like this man are fools. A wise man is farsighted. He looks into the future, and prepares for it. If we have any sense at all, we will realize that we have absolutely no definite future promised here. We can live only a day at a time. But we are promised a future forever with God if we have accepted His forgiveness of our sins thru Jesus Christ, if we prove by our lives that we have truly repented of our sins, and, if we are living now for the purpose of pleasing and obeying Him. The only future we can be sure of is that which is beyond this life.

We have two choices: We can choose to live for ourselves, to gratify our flesh, and to forget about the needs of others and about really obeying God, with the result that at the Judgment we will be sent far from God into an awful Hell; or we can be farsighted and live to please God, by using our time and strength to help others, and to share the Great News of God's love and salvation with a lost world. Then we can look joyfully forward to a future that is everlasting, and wonderful beyond words. "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."—*Jim Elliot*.

\* \* \*

We cannot take the things of this earth with us, but we can send on ahead our time and strength and the wealth we have. Jesus commanded that we lay up treasures in Heaven. Matthew 6:19-21. It's the only sensible way to live. The present life is too brief and too uncertain, while the eternity God has promised those who love Him is altogether certain, and will never end.

Consider these facts also: Many times we hear the question, "How much is he worth?" Truly, the man is worth only as much as he has laid up in Heaven, because he will soon lose everything else. He will soon have to leave it all behind, to others. If a millionaire or billionaire is actually a selfish, worthless character, he dies a pauper.

There is nothing wrong with preparing for old age, but while doing so, remember the present and eternal needs of others as well. There are so many who need all that you can be to them, and great will be your rewards in Heaven.

One man was heard to say that he was now 40 years of age, and had lived half of his life. But how does he know? Maybe he has now lived all of his life. The good we plan to do we better do now. We have no promise of another tomorrow.

Consider how much the rich man in this

parable lost. He comes before the Judge with a lost name, because God calls him **You fool**; with a lost soul, because it is taken away from him by force; with a lost world, because he has to leave that behind him; and with a lost Heaven, because he hasn't made any provision for his future there. He has no treasure there. And from all indications his heart has not been there. **For where your investments are, that's where your heart will be also.** Matthew 6:21. **Because it's when you are sincerely believing with your heart that you gain right standing with God.** Romans 10:9-10.

The truly wise man is rich toward God. His purpose in life is to please and obey God, and to lay up treasure in Heaven, so he is rich indeed. By being rich toward God, he becomes rich forever!

## 211 Acts 20:20-21

Paul tells here how he had been totally honest with the people. He was never fearful to tell them the full truth, and then leave the consequences with God.

His message was always the same, that they must repent and turn from their sinning, and trust in the Savior whom God had sent. Both of these teachings must be followed, or there is no salvation. There must be both a turning from all sin, and a trusting in the only Savior. See also Acts 26:19-20.

Many times we hear the statement: "There is only one thing necessary to obtain everlasting life, and that is to trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior." That is wrong, wrong, wrong, because it is misleading! It implies that all one has to do is to believe *the fact* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins, and that if we trust Him as our Savior we have eternal life. But the Bible plainly teaches that the only kind of belief that saves is heart-belief. It's not only belief in facts. See Romans 10:10. This is not speaking of your heart of flesh, but the very heart center of your being. We sometimes speak of an aching heart, an anxious heart, a black heart, a broken heart, a childlike heart. *Rodale's Word Finder* lists some 400 such adjectives that are used when describing the heart of the soul.

It is true that Jesus Christ is the only Savior. He is the only One by whom we can obtain God's forgiveness and eternal life. A theological term used in regard to our obtaining this forgiveness is the word *justification*. To be justified means to be absolved of guilt.

But besides being absolved of guilt thru Jesus



Christ, we also must be *regenerated*. Jesus called this being “born again.” It means to be made new. To be made new means that we not only trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, but that we surrender our will to Him, to obey God, and live to please Him. That’s what being born again and being regenerated is all about.

But still this is all of God. God has provided justification thru Jesus Christ, and He is also the One who provides the regeneration. We are informed in the Scriptures that we are born again by the Holy Spirit and by the word of God. That means that the Holy Spirit uses God’s word to convict and convince us that we are sinners and that we are in dire need of the forgiveness God offers us thru Jesus Christ, and that we must now turn from our disobedience to become obedient children of God. If you are trusting Christ as your Savior, but have not made Him your Lord, you are still in rebellion against God, and are unsaved. God will not grant you justification in your rebellious state. Romans 8:13-14.

\* \* \*

As Paul states here, he had been preaching that a person must come to God with a repentant heart and with faith in Jesus Christ. Both are necessary. You cannot get to Heaven merely by now obeying God, and neither can you get there merely by believing in Jesus Christ as your Savior. You must both *repent* and *trust*. For further teaching on this fact see Luke 24:47; Galatians 6:8; 1 Timothy 6:18,19; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:2; Revelation 16:15.

If you are concerned about where you really stand in your relationship to God, turn to Appendix 247, page 520, and read *The Amazing Story of God*, and there make a full surrender of your life to your Lord and Savior. Then you can have the assurance that all is well, and that you have truly been born again.

## 212 Romans 10:9-10

Before considering *how* we may witness for Christ, let us consider *the absolute necessity and importance* of doing so:

First: Those who do not have God’s forgiveness are lost, and face an awful judgment! That’s why Christ came to this earth and lived and suffered and died for us, that He might be the sacrifice to God for our sins. It is absolutely necessary that the world be given this message, so that they

may receive God’s forgiveness and gain eternal life with Him.

A fisherman tells about when he was fishing on a slow-moving river where there was danger a little farther downstream because of several low falls which could be very hazardous if one became so interested in fishing that one’s boat drifted over those falls. One day as he was fishing above those falls, he heard loud shouts, and upon looking downstream he saw a man in a small boat about to go over the falls. His boat did plunge over and capsize, with the man struggling in the water to keep afloat. This was a favorite fishing place, and many men were standing on each side of the river fishing, and many of them were no doubt thinking, “There’s a man in the water. He might drown.” But only one man did anything about it. He plunged into the river and dragged the man ashore, and then went out again and pulled his boat in.

\* \* \*

Are you guilty of looking at your neighbors and others, wherever you may be, and thinking, “There is someone who is no doubt lost. He will go to Hell unless he hears the Great News about Jesus and His salvation”? But you do nothing about the situation. Or are you plunging in, realizing that you may be misunderstood and persecuted in various ways for doing so, but reaching out nevertheless to those lost persons with the message of salvation thru Jesus?

Second: We must bring the message to the lost, because Jesus has commanded that we do so! Mark 16:15; 8:34-35. And Hebrews 5:9 informs us, **Jesus is the source of salvation and eternal life for all who make it their practice to obey Him.** Are we obeying Him when we refuse to make it our practice to talk to others about Him, when He has commanded that we do so? Therefore, we must open our mouth and speak to a lost world!

\* \* \*

Now for some brief thoughts on how to witness for Christ:

The most difficult part about talking to others about Christ is knowing how to begin the conversation. One of the easiest ways to begin your witness for Christ is to simply ask one of the questions listed in the Matthew 28:18-20 note, on page 70. You can ask these questions of anyone, at any time, anywhere. By the answers you receive you

will know quite well where that person stands spiritually. In answer to the question, "Are you planning on making it to Heaven?" most folks answer, "Well, I surely hope so." No matter what their response is, next ask, "Do you know how to get to Heaven for sure?" To this, many will respond with the one-word question, "How?" They are wide open! So tell them how in the best way you know.

Then encourage them to purchase a modern speech translation of the Bible or New Testament, because for a first reading it is best that they read a modern version. The more understandable we can make the truth, the better.

And do encourage them to pray and ask God to help them understand what they read.

Also, encourage them to read the New Testament first, beginning with the Gospel of Luke. Tell them they can read the first two Gospels later on, but it's best to begin with the Gospel of Luke. For a non-Christian or new Christian to read all four Gospels in succession, it gets a bit heavy. But if they will begin with the Gospel of Luke, they can then read the Gospel of John next, which is different, so they won't have the repetition.

Even if you get no further than to challenge them to read thru the New Testament, you will have planted a seed that most folks will never forget. Hopefully, sometime in their life they will desire to know the truth, and will remember your words and read God's word.

Another good way to witness is to give your own testimony. Somewhere in the conversation you can say something like, "Let me tell you what happened to me..."

\* \* \*

You will miss many opportunities to witness unless you make up your mind to witness to everyone. We even need to witness to people who claim to be Christians. Ask them if they are born again and are obeying the Lord. Ask them if they are obeying the Lord by witnessing to others. Ask them how many they are bringing with them to Heaven. Many people claiming to be Christians are not born again. 2 Corinthians 5:17. And Christ stated that only those who are born again will enter Heaven. Impress upon them that fact. Then in your own words you can tell them how to be born again by giving them the message you will find in Appendix 247, page 520, entitled *The Amazing Story of God*. Tell the story in your own words. And don't fail to warn them about the Judgment, and Hell. They all need to be reminded

that the alternative to Heaven is Hell.

One way to keep yourself alert to opportunities to witness is to think of witnessing every time the phone rings. The person calling may need some spiritual help or challenge, even though a Christian. And if it turns out to be a wrong number, here is your great opportunity. Simply acknowledge the fact that they have reached a wrong number, but then quickly, before they can hang up, say, "But you were supposed to call here." Follow that with, "I have a message for you." Then you can ask them, "Are you planning on making it to Heaven?" or some such question.

Depending on how the conversation goes, you can then encourage them to read thru the New Testament, guaranteeing them that before they finish, they will know how to get to Heaven for sure. Even if they don't stay on the line very long, you will have at least planted a seed.

\* \* \*

And whenever the door bell rings, take it as an opportunity to say a word for the Lord. When you go shopping, go for a walk, or wherever, look for opportunities to witness to someone. There are opportunities all over the place.

When on vacation you will find many opportunities to witness. Especially you will have an opportunity if someone asks directions to someplace. After answering their question, whether you can direct them or not, ask them if they know how to get to Heaven. Our main purpose in life should be to make this brief time on earth really count for the Lord in the lives of others, and for the glory of God.

What would happen if everyone who claims to be a Christian was really obeying Romans 10:9-10 and was witnessing for the Lord at every opportunity? There would be a great spiritual awakening! God no doubt wants to start with you in your area.

And don't ever be fearful about speaking to others about the Lord, because it is *they* who become fearful as soon as you open your mouth and begin to talk about Him. This is especially true if you are praying about your witnessing. The Spirit of God will bring conviction upon them the moment you begin to speak. We truly believe that in these last days the Lord is going to so challenge His people to witness for Him that they will be as awesome as an army with banners.

Jesus died for us in order that our sins might be forgiven. Then He cleanses us daily by His

word, so that He might present to Himself a glorious Church, one having no stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, being pure and undefiled. Ephesians 5:27. From all that that Scripture tells us, this is the kind of glorious Church the Lord will have on earth during the end-time days. In these last days **those who know their God will be strong, and carry out great exploits.** Daniel 11:32.

Begin now, today, to talk to others about the Lord! Your exploits for the Lord may have a small beginning, but there's no telling how greatly God will use you later on if you are faithful.

\* \* \*

Here are some statements from others regarding these all-important verses:

"Faith that gets no further than the head will not save. . . . There is a faith which accepts all that needs to be believed, and yet is not saving faith. The requirement is heart faith. Today we are developing heads and minimizing hearts. . . . The light of moral knowledge can play around the head while the heart is untouched; and where hearts are unaffected there can be no true moral reformation...If the heart were full of Christ, would the mouth be full of things of the world? . . . Both the head and the heart, the body and the soul, must move onward to the accomplishment of the perfected salvation."—*The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary*.

\* \* \*

"The risen Savior must be confessed when found. Faith in a risen Savior who is waiting to be found by us must prove its genuineness by the confession of His *name*. It's when we take the Lord's side deliberately that we have tested the reality of our faith. There is a cowardly tendency to believe, but not confess; to get the benefits of salvation without running a single risk for our Savior. But such a selfish, easy-going faith is mere delusion. Whoever really believes in Jesus will not be ashamed to talk about Him to others."—*Pulpit Commentary*

\* \* \*

"Two things are required as conditions of salvation:—1) *Confessing the Lord Jesus*—openly professing our relationship to Him and our dependence upon Him as our Lord and Savior...taking a stand for Him no matter where or what the situation. Our Lord Jesus lays a great stress upon this confessing of Him before men. See Matthew 10:32-33. . . .

"2) *Believing in the heart that God raised Jesus from the dead.* The profession of faith with the mouth, if there be not the power of it in the heart, is but a mockery. . . . And concerning faith: It is with the heart that men must believe, which implies more than an acceptance with the understanding, and takes in the consent of the will, an inward, hearty, sincere, and strong consent. It is not believing (not to be reckoned as so) if it is not with the heart. . . .

"So we have here a brief summary of the terms of salvation, and they are very reasonable; in short they are this, that we must devote, dedicate, and give up, to God, our souls and our bodies—our souls in believing with the heart, and our bodies in confessing with the mouth. This do, and thou shalt live."—*Matthew Henry*

See also Matthew 7:6; 28:18-20 notes and Appendix 226, page 486.

## 213 <sup>1</sup> Corinthians 3:8-17; 2 Corinthians 5:10

Perhaps you have never stood on trial before, but at the end of this life you will. It is something that God tells us will positively happen to everyone, and it is something that must happen, because God would be neglectful if He did not demand obedience and diligence in His service.

There must be a day of accounting. This is why it is absolutely necessary to live in obedience to God. We are responsible moral agents, and we will be held accountable for our every act, word, and thought—for every action and every failure to act.

We will all be there. No one will be absent. No one will escape this judgment. The apostle Paul and those who worked with Him were very concerned about facing God in the judgment. 1 Corinthians 9:27. And every day we are brought that much closer to that great confrontation with God.

\* \* \*

We will be judged publicly, where everyone will hear and know how we lived and served.

It is God who has appointed Christ to be the Judge. John 5:25-29; Acts 10:42; 17:31. Will the believers then be justified by their faith in Christ? Yes, if their faith has been accompanied by good works. "Faith without proper action is dead." James 2:26.

\* \* \*

We will be judged in accordance with what we have done. There will be rewards for those who have been faithful in obedience to Christ, and punishment for those who have been disobedient. There will be degrees of reward and of punishment. Some will be **saved, but only as one barely escaping thru the flames**; others will have **an abundant entrance**; some will receive great punishment, while others will receive lesser punishment. The punishments decreed will not be a matter of probation. We are living in the probationary time now. The punishments and rewards to be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ are eternal judgments and rewards.

We can be sure of this, that all of Christ's decisions about punishments or rewards will be in absolute fairness. **Be most diligent to make your calling and election to salvation and eternal life with God a sure thing!** 2 Peter 1:10. Let's not quibble about the order of events and judgments of the last day, or about exactly what will happen at each judgment. The awesome fact to consider is that we shall stand before God for judgment!

## 214 2 Corinthians 5:18

We are ambassadors of God (vss 19-20 and 6:1) as we share His truths (His words) by witnessing, preaching, and teaching. Results are forthcoming as God's Spirit blesses the words in answer to fervent prayer. It is in this way that sinners are born again by God's Spirit by means of God's word. For that reason the Bible teaches that we are born again by the Spirit of God and by the word of God. John 3:5-8; 1 Peter 1:23.

## 215 Ephesians 1:5

Some use the excuse that they are incapable of living as God would have them live, so they refuse to accept Christ as Lord and Savior. But when you consider all that God's love has compelled Him to do for you to bring you to Himself to be His child and share His glory, your heart should burst with gratitude and love for Him. And that love for God will be one of the great incentives to help you to live a holy and blameless life.

Also, consider a little child as he learns to walk. He stumbles and falls many times before he's finally able to walk with confidence. Even after we learn to walk, we sometimes stumble and fall. But we don't just lie there. We get right up

and continue on toward where we were going. The same is true in living the Christian life. Don't be surprised if you fall flat on your face. If that happens, most earnestly ask God's forgiveness and get up and go again! Determine, with God's help, to do much better from then on.

God has promised you His help thru His Spirit, so there's no need to fail, unless you love your sin more than you want Heaven and God's promised blessings in this life for obeying and trusting Him.

Remember, the alternative is Hell, with its awful and endless consequences. Choose Life! Turn around, and begin walking for God, with His help. See Philippians 2:12-13. God has already done so much for you, and He will do much more, but it is your responsibility to exercise your will and turn from your sin and go God's way. The alternative to Heaven is unthinkable.

## 216 Philippians 1:21

Paul didn't mean that death itself is gain. The life that follows death is gain. After death, he would be free from all the evils of sin, all temptations to sin, all physical and mental pain and suffering, all enemies, conflicts, and cares of life.

But his main gain would be to see and be with God forever, to gain possession of his full inheritance in Christ, to be reunited with loved ones and friends who had gone on before, to experience life on a vastly fuller and higher plane. Because **No eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no man has even imagined the amazing and wonderful things that God has prepared for those who love Him.** 1 Corinthians 2:9. But only those who are trusting in God's mercy thru Christ and are truly living for Him will experience happy dying, with assurance of experiencing future happy, everlasting living.

## 217 Philippians 2:12

What is this all about? Aren't we saved by God's forgiveness of our sins because Jesus died on the cross to save us? Yes, there is no other way to receive God's forgiveness. Jesus did all that was necessary to enable God to forgive our sins.

But let's go back to the beginning of the story. From the very beginning of the Bible, God reveals that He made mankind just like Himself, to be His children. As children we are responsible to obey our Father. But every last one of us has become a rebel. We have all gone our own way. Isaiah 53:6;

Romans 3:23. And the sentence God has pronounced against rebellion is death—spiritual death—an existence in an awful Hell, separated from God.

But God's love found a way to forgive us, thru Christ. Romans 6:23. However, God makes it clear thruout the Bible that there must be a change of heart and a return to obedience to Him if He is to forgive. And there must be a continued, honest effort to obey, as indicated here. Our part in our ultimate salvation is to obey God, and to be extremely concerned about doing so, in **fear and trembling**.

\* \* \*

Jesus called the determination to turn from our sin to a determination to live to obey God being **born again**. John 3:1-21. And Paul tells us here and elsewhere that this born-again experience must continue if we are to be ultimately saved. We are to continue to work at obeying God. And the part our obedience plays in our salvation is just as important as obtaining God's forgiveness thru Christ. Romans 2:8; Hebrews 5:9.

But even in obeying God we need His continual help to do so. And He has promised to help us. See Philippians 2:13 and Appendix 218, page 482. Also, we are born again by the Spirit of God using God's message to convict and convert us. John 1:13; 3:8; 1 Peter 1:23. So God is actively involved in our new birth from the very beginning, and continually thruout life.

Jesus said we must be born again or we won't even see Heaven. John 3:7. And one cannot be born again and practice selective obedience. In other words, to be born again means to be changed into a person living an altogether new life (2 Corinthians 5:17), living to please God. And if you are picking and choosing which of God's commands you are willing to obey, and disregarding the others, you are in deep trouble! The ungodly do that much. This was what Adam and Eve wanted to do. They believed in God and worshiped Him. They didn't want to disregard God's orders, except in regard to that one little ol' fruit tree. Genesis 2:15 to 3:19.

If this is your practice, then you certainly do need to fear and tremble! But *do* something about it. Give God all of your heart, no matter what it costs. Obey Him regarding everything! The dividends will be eternal life and sharing in the glory of God.

\* \* \*

We must do our part in our salvation because God *commands* that we do, both here and in many other places in the Bible. Matthew 7:13-14. There's nothing we can do to be justified (declared guiltless) by God. Only faith in what Jesus has done for us on the cross can do that. The work is already done, by Christ. But we must also be regenerated, born again. And while it is also God who regenerates us, as we see in the next verse, He will not force His will on us. We must earnestly desire to be made new, and then go God's way with all our strength and with all the strength God will give us.

\* \* \*

It is our *duty* to do our part in our own salvation because it is our own personal interest that is at stake. No one else has, or can have, as much interest in our salvation as we have. It is every person's *duty* to be as happy as possible here, and to make whatever preparations are necessary to assure eternal happiness in the future world. No man has a *right* to throw away either his present life or his soul. If it is a man's duty to try to save his life when in danger of drowning, it is no less his duty to do everything necessary to save his soul when in danger of Hell.

If your soul is lost, all is lost! And who can value what you will have lost, and what you could have gained? Your soul is the eternal part of you, made in the image of God. From the beginning of your creation, from the moment of conception, your soul will always exist somewhere; because being in the image of God you are now as eternal as He is.

But it is your choice as to where you will spend eternity. Earnestly determine (with God's help) to persevere in obedience to Him to the end. And do begin at once!

Do as Peter challenged, **Be most diligent to make your calling and election to salvation and eternal life with God a sure thing!** 2 Peter 1:10. If both Paul and Peter were this concerned about making sure of our salvation, we should be too.

Don't take only our word for what we've pointed out here; if you have any doubts, do as the Bereans did (Acts 17:11) and search the Scriptures daily to see if this is actually what the Bible teaches.

We cannot overemphasize your need of spending time with God daily in prayer and in

reading His word. His word is your spiritual food, and you will die spiritually without this fellowship with God! Just as you take time to eat, you *must* take time to be with God. All of your future depends upon it.

## 218 Philippians 2:13

Some believe this verse teaches that God does all the work necessary to cause us to obey Him. They believe we should not interfere, but we should allow God to do His work thru us. But Paul does not say that God works *thru* us. He says God works *in* us to get *us* to decide to do what pleases Him, and He also works *in* us to get *us* to do it. But *we* are the ones who must agree with God to do it, and *we* are the ones who must take the action. God merely influences us, He doesn't force us.

If God were responsible for all you did or didn't do, then you wouldn't need to **fear and tremble** if you didn't do it. It would be God's responsibility, not yours.

But what a joy to know that God is interested enough in us to persuade and urge us to make the right decision, and that He then continues to persuade us to now *do* it. But the decision is our decision. We can make the right decision or refuse to make it. The action is ours, even though God is urging us to do it. So we are the ones who are responsible if we don't do the good we should do after all the help we have received from God.

So God doesn't *desire and determine* for us, but He works in us *to get us to desire and determine*, and to then *do it*.

The decisions and actions necessary for our ultimate salvation are of such a nature that we *need* God's help. How thankful we should be that God so loves us that *He gives us all the help we really need* to make the right decisions and take the right actions. See also John 15:1-5; Romans 7:24-25; 8:1-14,26,37; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Peter 1:13-16; Jude 1c.

## 219 Philippians 3:9-14

These verses are prophetic in nature. They concern our **being included among those who will be raised from among the dead**. The apostle Paul demonstrates his assurance that he will attain to this resurrection and to the glory that God promises, but not by *his own righteousness*. He does not expect to receive pardon for his sins by means of any good works that he has done or can do. He explains that he will have part in the first resur-

rection only because of the righteousness which is credited to him *because of his faith in what Christ suffered for him*. He will attain because of his trust in Christ, because of Christ's death for him on the cross.

The word *righteous* means, *to be innocent, holy*. The word *holy* means *to be pure and blameless*. So the understanding of the word *righteousness* in Scripture ordinarily pertains to *a life that is pure and blameless in the eyes of God*.

\* \* \*

It should also be explained here that the believer never receives Christ's righteousness for his salvation. Righteousness is a state or condition of being. It cannot therefore be passed from one person to another. But one person can affect another person in such a way that the state or condition of the second person is changed.

Our state and condition *of being sinners*, as well as our standing as condemned sinners, is changed by repentance toward God and faith in Christ—from a condemned person to a forgiven person—from an impure person to one who is now pure and blameless in the eyes of God. But how is this change actually carried out? If Christ's righteous life could be merely transferred to us, it would mean that we would not need to live righteous lives ourselves, even after conversion. And this is what some teach and believe, because they do not understand what righteousness really is, that it cannot be imparted from one to another. And they do not understand the difference between the meanings of the words *impute* (credited) and *impart*.

\* \* \*

What is meant by God imputing righteousness to us, is that He *reckons, considers, or regards us as righteous*—as pure and blameless as a result of His forgiving us because of the suffering and death Christ suffered for us. When God imputes righteousness to us, it means He erases the charge of sin against us. The record page of our life thereby becomes pure white—and the result we call righteousness—not because of any work that we could do, nor because Christ's righteousness was imparted to us, but because thru repentance and faith, the record of our sins was removed. The result is a clean, white record.

The word *impute* also has the meaning of *something being set to the account of another*.

That which God sets to our account is a clean record, as the result of our sins being forgiven thru Christ. No, Christ did not live our lives for us so that we would not need to live righteously. No Scripture teaches that. No Scripture teaches that Christ's righteousness is *imparted* to us. The Scriptures teach that righteousness is *imputed* (or credited) to the believer. Romans 4:1-24. And remember there is a great difference between the two words *impute* and *impart*.

\* \* \*

Here's an illustration that may be helpful. Suppose you have a glass of water that is filled with black impurities. But a red-colored chemical is given you, which, when dropped in the water causes every impurity to evaporate, and you have a glass of perfectly pure water. This is the way we receive righteousness thru Christ. When we repent of our sins and believe in the blood of Christ to atone (make amends) for our sins (Revelation 7:13-17), they are forgiven, and the result is a pure soul in the eyes of God. No good works of ours can bring about our justification and purification. It is only by means of the shed blood of Christ. When we accept the shed blood of Christ for the forgiveness of our sin, the record of our life is purified and cleansed, and in the eyes of God we are righteous.

So, righteousness comes to us because of the death Christ died for us, but it is not the righteousness *of Christ*. It is not Christ's life of righteousness which saves us. It is the blood He shed on the cross, which represents His suffering and dying for us, which atones for our sin. It is true that it was necessary that He be altogether righteous in order to be our Savior, but it is *His death* which atones for sin—*not His life*.

\* \* \*

So Christ did not do everything for us. And following the initial cleansing from sin thru Jesus our Savior, God expects us to now live lives (take proper actions, James 2:14-26) that are pleasing to Him, which will be lives that are righteous. But if we sin in an unguarded moment, we are to immediately go to Christ again and ask forgiveness. 1 John 1:8 to 2:5; Proverbs 28:13.

Always remember, two kinds of righteousness are needed to gain eternal life—imputed righteousness and personal righteousness.

## 220 Philippians 3:10

The greatest proofs of Christ's resurrection are the testimonies of His followers who saw Him die, buried Him, and three days later saw Him alive again. Jesus had foretold His death, and that He would rise again from the dead three days later.

After witnessing that resurrection, His followers went thruout the then-known world and testified everywhere of what had happened. They were even willing to die for what they absolutely knew to be the truth. The hope that His resurrection gave them was of such magnitude that they were willing to suffer and die for the truth. The resurrection meant everything to them, and they knew it could mean the same to all others. Romans 10:9-10.

There is no one truth that has greater power over us Christians than the truth that Christ has risen from the dead. His resurrection confirms the truth of the Christian religion; it makes it certain that there is a future existence. That God raised Jesus from the dead is an assurance that He can and will raise us as well. And that's what Christ has promised He will do. John 5:25-29; 11:25-26; 14:2-3.

The hope of the resurrection should so inspire us that we gladly endure suffering and trials for His sake, because we know that we will be raised as He was. Why should we fear death if we will rise to live again in such glorified form? How unimportant the things of this life appear when compared with the glory that shall be ours! See Romans 8:18; 1 Corinthians 15:43; Colossians 3:4; Hebrews 2:10; 1 Peter 5:10.

## 221 Philippians 3:18-19

These people call themselves Christians. They are not enemies of the cross on which Christ died, and they want Heaven and all the other benefits Christ purchased for sinners on the cross. But they are enemies of the other cross that Jesus talked about. He taught that there is a cross for every one of us—a cross that calls us all to die to selfish living. See Matthew 10:38-39; 16:24-26 and the notes.

The cross that Christ says we *must* take up is not sickness, suffering, trials, disappointments, or adversity of any other kind. Christ doesn't ask us to take up such things. A cross is an instrument of death! Christ calls *all* of His followers to death—to willingly die to all selfish desire and ambition, and to all sin, and to work for the advancement of

His Kingdom and glory, and for our future glory. Not all of us are to be foreign missionaries or preachers, but we are all to faithfully and diligently serve Him right where we are.

\* \* \*

Are you one of those of whom Paul is speaking about here? Are you genuine or counterfeit? He is speaking about people who claim to be converted to Christ, but who in reality are not. If they ever were, they are not now.

Where is your heart? Are you deeply in love with the One who died to save you? Are you often thinking of, and rejoicing over, the promised eternal future with God? Do you spend time each day reading and studying Heaven's instruction book, the Bible? Do you visit often with the Lord in prayer? Do you tell others about Him?

Or do you live mainly to satisfy the cravings of your body and mind? Are your plans mainly centered around success now, pleasures, creature comforts, popularity, honor, and a comfortable retirement? Is there little concern to serve God, especially if it will take time and effort? You had better read what Jesus says in Mark 4:18-19 and John 15:1-6.

Are you seldom if ever at prayer meeting, or in Sunday School? Past years don't count for the present. We must **remain faithful!** Matthew 10:22; Colossians 1:23. Is your heart so full of your own interests that you don't really enjoy talking with anyone about the Lord? What are you *really doing* to get the message of Christ to others?

\* \* \*

There are certain animals that inhabit the coral reefs. As long as they keep the upward passage to the surface clear, they are safe, but, if they neglect to do so, the animal soon finds the coral has filled the passage and it is enclosed in a living tomb! Is your passage upward now closed because of the cares and things of this world? There's nothing wrong with things, as long as we use them as God intended, and in the proportion God intended. But while doing so we must not neglect God at all, or any of His commands.

There's much concern about converting the world, but the main need is to convert those already in the church who are lost!

Remember, there's no such thing as a nominal Christian. A nominal Christian is not a Christian at all. Ask Paul. A Christian is one who is

trusting Christ for forgiveness of his sins, and has turned (been converted) from living to please himself to pleasing and obeying God. He is both justified and truly regenerated (born again). A so-called nominal Christian is not living to please God, and is therefore not converted. He is lost, as Paul has just declared.

\* \* \*

Don't judge yourself by others, but by what God says! Even if most "Christians" you know are on the broad road that leads to destruction, you surely shouldn't be satisfied to follow them there.

Allow God to make of you a genuine follower of Jesus. Then, and then only, can you have the sure hope of eternal life. Read James 4:4-10. Ask God to forgive you, and begin to really live for Him **NOW**.

## 222 Philippians 4:17

How much would you give to the Lord's work if you were assured you would continue to receive 20 percent interest in cash each year from your total past giving? How many people would you tell about the Lord if you were offered one ounce of gold for every person to whom you witnessed, 10 ounces for every person you earnestly tried to win to the Lord, and 20 ounces for every person who was gloriously converted to the Lord as a result of your witnessing?

Would you work harder for earthly pay than for rewards in Heaven, for treasure of infinite eternal value that will pay eternal dividends?

We have an enemy—Satan—who is doing his dead-level-best to keep people from being converted to Christ. And if they are converted, Satan does his dead-level-best to keep them from being effective in winning others. You must arm properly, and prepare for combat! See Ephesians 6:10-20.

## 223 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2

It was **not needful** for Paul to write to the church at Thessalonica **about the period of time, or date**, because they had already received all that information they needed.

**The Day of the Lord** does not refer to a 24-hour period, but rather to the time of the end when the Lord will begin to judge the earth. **The Day of the Lord** will climax when Christ returns in power and glory to take His rightful place as King of kings and Lord of lords over all the earth. It is the day



of His wrath on His enemies and the deliverance of His people.

This period of **The Day of the Lord** will be the last 3 1/2 years of the age, ending with the Battle of Armageddon and the following period of darkness, great earthquakes, hail, fire, etc. Revelation 6:12-17. It will come as a **snare** (Luke 21:35) and **like a thief in the night** upon the ungodly people of the earth. True Christians, however, have plenty of light and information on this subject in the Bible. There is no need to be in darkness about the approximate time of this judgment (v 4), especially as the time draws near. There are countless warning signals at the time of this writing.

## 224 1 Thessalonians 5:9

This is one of the Scriptures used by those who believe in a pretribulation Rapture, as an argument that Christ will come for His own before the Great Tribulation. **God has not appointed us to be destroyed by His wrath.** This is indication enough, they claim, that God will not leave His people on earth when He pours out His *wrath* during the Great Tribulation.

Those who believe in Christ's coming for His own in the middle of the seven-year Tribulation claim that the *wrath* of God will not be poured out upon the earth until the last 3 1/2 years of that period, which is true.

Those who believe in the Lord's return for His own immediately after the end of the Tribulation claim that the *wrath* here is judgment in Hell—that it does not refer to the Tribulation at all. They also point out that God is able to protect His own even thru a time when He is pouring out His wrath upon the earth. They point to the three Hebrews who were thrown into the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:1-30) as an example of how God is able to protect His own in any situation.

\* \* \*

Actually, each of these interpretations is probably correct in most details. On the one hand, God's wrath is reserved for the ungodly. And God's wrath will be poured out upon the earth in these last days during the last 3 1/2 years of the Great Tribulation. God will pour His wrath upon the ungodly on earth during the blowing of the seventh trumpet and the pouring out of the seven vials. Revelation 15:1,5 to 19:21.

\* \* \*

On the other hand, the ungodly will certainly have an appointment with God to receive His **wrath** in Hell. The **salvation** of this reference does not necessarily indicate a deliverance from tribulation, but a salvation from judgment in Hell. It was for **this salvation** that Christ died for us.

The previous verse, v 8, appears to support that Paul is speaking about the salvation of the soul. He talks about **faith, hope, and love**—with the final reference to **the sure hope of salvation**.

In v 10 Paul refers to Christ's death for our salvation, with the encouragement **that whether we are still living for Him when He comes, or have died**, even as a result of persecution by Antichrist (Daniel 7:20-22), we have the wonderful assurance that **we will live together with Him** forever. So there is really nothing for the Christian to fear. We will finally be with the Lord forever, no matter what happens. But there is really no mention of a Rapture in this verse.

\* \* \*

George Ladd, former professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, in his book, *The Blessed Hope*, so rightly states in regard to this Scripture:

"Since the Great Tribulation is to consist in part in the outpouring of God's wrath upon decadent and sinful society (Revelation 16:1), and since God has not appointed His people to experience wrath, must we not conclude that the Church is to be removed before God's wrath is poured out upon the earth?

"We hasten here to agree that the Church, which Christ has redeemed by His precious blood, will never experience the wrath of God. If the question of the Rapture and the Tribulation is to be settled on this issue alone, the only alternative is a pre-tribulation Rapture, for the Church will never suffer God's wrath.

"However, this admission does not lead to pre-tribulationism, for the verse in question says nothing about either the Rapture or the Tribulation. All it asserts is that the Church will not fall under God's wrath. The wrath in question may not refer to the Tribulation at all, but to God's wrath in the final judgment. Romans 2:5. However, if it does include the Great Tribulation, the verse neither asserts nor suggests that the Church will be removed from the world; it is only promised deliverance.

"The Israelites were in Egypt during the visitation of the plagues upon the Egyptians but they were sheltered from the worst of these plagues

which fell on the Egyptians. In a similar way it is possible that the Church may find herself on earth during the period of the Tribulation but will by divine protection be sheltered from the sufferings entailed by the outpouring of bowls of wrath, and thus be delivered from the wrath to come. *1 Thessalonians 5:9 says nothing about the Rapture.* That it does is an unjustified inference. It says only that the Church will be delivered from wrath. How the deliverance is to be effected is not suggested. If the Church is on earth during the Great Tribulation but is divinely sheltered from wrath, this verse is fulfilled. This is all it asserts.”

## 225 2 Timothy 4:2

Paul’s charge to Timothy was that he preach God’s message. In connection with this charge, permit the insertion of an article which appeared in one of the issues of *Christian Victory* magazine. The article was headlined, “Positivism, Another Ism?” It read as follows:

“A very subtle ‘ism’ has crept into the thinking of many sincere believers today—‘positivism’. This philosophy creates a trend toward a more ‘positive’ approach to the Great News, rejecting any of the so-called ‘negative’ aspects. The dangers of ‘positivism’ are, notably, two:

“1. It eventually leads to the preaching of love, minus the preaching of judgment. Heaven is OK, but hush hush about Hell. Both are scriptural! 1 John 4:8; Hebrews 12:29.

“2. It produces an unhealthy ‘passive’ spirit within the child of God. To be sure, we must submit to God and not resist the work of the Spirit, but in some other areas it is a sin to remain silent, to say and do nothing. Consider conscientiously, three basic negative injunctions given to the believer:

- a. RESIST the devil. James 4:7
- b. REPROVE...those evil deeds of darkness. Ephesians 5:11
- c. REBUKE...those who will not turn from their sinning. 2 Timothy 4:2-3

Often God tells His people ‘You shall NOT,’ as well as ‘You shall.’ We must warn against the poison as well as point out the good food.”

## 226 2 Timothy 4:2

When telling others about salvation and eternal life thru Jesus Christ you don’t need to wait for a so-called opening or opportunity. Make the opening! You can do that by asking a person at

any time (even going up to him or her without introduction) and asking such a question as, “Say, are you planning on being there?” or “Are you planning on making it to Heaven?” or “Are you ready for Heaven?” or “Do you know how to get to Heaven, for sure?” or “Have you heard the Great News?”

You’ll get all kinds of reactions. That makes it interesting. One person said, “I have my own religion,” to which the witness asked, “And what religion is that?” The answer was, “I was brought up a Presbyterian.”

The witness then said, “But I take it that you’re not a born-again Presbyterian. Am I right?” The answer was a reluctant, “Yes, that’s right.” He was then told that Jesus said that a person won’t even see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again.

\* \* \*

And the best way to present The Amazing Story of God (meaning, God’s plan of salvation) is to begin with the positive. Tell them about what God plans for His children, and many will want to be included in those great plans.

Explain that God made us just like Himself, to be His children. Tell what His plans are for His children. **We will one day be truly like Him.** Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2. **We will reign with Him.** 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:9-10; 20:6; 22:5. Many other things can be mentioned about God’s plans for His children. 1 Corinthians 2:9.

Then tell them how man fell, and how we have all become rebels against our Father. Then warn of God’s dreadful judgment of the sinner. Make the person realize how totally lost he really is, and the consequences.

Then bring the glorious news of Christ coming to be our Savior. Teach Christ as Savior, but also that there must be repentance, making Christ the Lord of their life. Romans 10:9-10. Preach it! Everywhere and to everyone!

\* \* \*

### *A Personal Testimony*

One of the greatest ways in modern times to witness for the Lord is by telephone. There are several ways to use the telephone in this regard. This writer has at various times gone down a certain section in the telephone book and dialed the numbers. Upon reaching the party dialed, the conversation might go something like this:

"Hello?"

"Sir, I have a very important question I would like to ask you."

"And who are you?"

"I'm a very concerned person, with a very important question." (And you might want to give them your name at this point. Or you might give it in your first statement.) "I don't represent any business or organization in this call. This is a personal call."

"What's your question?"

"Are you planning on making it to Heaven?"

One of the usual responses is, "Well, I surely hope so."

"But you certainly know that you'll never get to Heaven by merely hoping so."

"Yes, I know that."

Then we have gone from there to giving a witness about the Lord, following the pattern as much as possible in Appendix 247, page 520. Don't memorize it. Make the presentation casual. Even if you don't get very far with the person, you have at least planted a seed. If at all possible try to encourage the listener to read the New Testament. Promise him that he will know how to get to Heaven for sure if he will read thru the New Testament. Tell him the answer is there. You may not have the opportunity to explain the whole plan of salvation to him, but if you can get him to reading the word of God he will find the way.

You will of course get all kinds of responses to your call. That makes it interesting. The more you witness the easier it will be to respond.

\* \* \*

Another way to use the telephone is to take advantage of all the people who try to sell you anything and everything by phone, and those who call to ask for donations for one charity or another, and those who call for political purposes, etc. Here you have the world coming to your door. Here's one experience of how this writer took advantage of witnessing at such a time:

A very cheerful person responded when I answered the phone, and it turned out that he wanted me to refinance our home. After politely convincing him that I was not interested, I immediately said, before he could hang up, "But say, I have an important question I'd like to ask you."

"Yes, and what's that?"

"Are you counting on making it to Heaven?"

Well, it turned out that this fellow claimed that any religion was as good as another, and he

had all kinds of arguments. The way I handled this person was to simply say, "Listen, Heaven is real—but so is Hell! Are you taking your family with you to where you are going?"

I could tell that this remark really jolted him, and when he said, "Well, I don't think I'm able to decide what will happen to anyone else," I responded with, "Listen, everything you say and do in your home or among your friends and relatives, and your very attitude, is influencing them. You are influencing them for either good or bad, toward Heaven or Hell, every time you are with them."

After some further conversation he said, "Well, I guess I really should look into this matter a little further." I then encouraged him to read the New Testament and find out what God had to say to him.

You will find that people are really concerned about their own family—not only their immediate family but the families of their brothers, sisters, cousins, etc. When they stop to realize that their actions and words are indeed influencing their family, they can become quite concerned.

So include the telephone in your witnessing. And every time someone comes to the door at your home, here is another opportunity to witness for the Lord.

\* \* \*

Why did Jesus come to earth to suffer and die for us? He did so because He knew God must judge us for our sins, and that the judgment would be an *awful* Hell. He now commands us to be saviors of everyone that we ourselves can reach. Yes, with our prayers and finances we must support those who are serving the Lord full-time, but we must also use every strength we have if we are to reach everyone—and one great strength with which we are all gifted is our tongue. Use it to the glory of God!

A model to follow for your witnessing is found in Appendix 247, *The Amazing Story of God*. But do tell it in your own words. See also Matthew 7:6; 28:18-20 and Romans 10:9-10 and the notes after those Scriptures, and Appendix 212 for additional suggestions about witnessing to others.

## 226A 2 Timothy 4:3-4

How can you tell if you are in a dead or compromising church? Is there plenty of activity but very few, if any, being truly born again? Are there

few, if any, baptisms? Is there seldom, if ever, any challenge to read your Bible daily, to pray about every situation, to witness to others about Christ at every opportunity? What are you yourself doing about these most important matters?

If you, yourself, are not reading the Bible daily and spending time in prayer, how can you tell whether the preacher is preaching the truth or not? Every Christian should become a fervent student of the word of God! In challenging others to read the Bible we usually say:

“If you haven’t read the Bible thru, your education has been sadly neglected. As you no doubt know, the Bible is in two major parts—the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament takes up the first 3/4 of the Bible and the New Testament the last 1/4. I suggest that you read the New Testament first. That begins with the birth of Jesus Christ.

“And in the New Testament the first four books are four different accounts of the life of Christ by four men who were there. It’s great that we have those four accounts, but I’ve found from experience that it gets a bit heavy reading all four of them one after the other, because there is a good deal of repetition. I suggest you skip the first two books for your first reading, and begin with the third book, which is Luke. John, the fourth book, is different, so you won’t have the repetition. But you will certainly want to read the first two books (Matthew and Mark) later.

“You should read the New Testament at least twice before you read the Old Testament. And don’t let yourself get bogged down by reading the long lists of names, explanations of sacrifices, offerings, etc. in the Old Testament. Skip over these unless you are making an in-depth study, and get on with the story. God has Great News for you! Read on!”

Use this explanation in challenging others.

\* \* \*

For the sake of yourself, your family, and everyone else in your church, you need to know *definitely* what the Bible teaches so that you can make sure that you, your family, and your friends are receiving the full truth from the pulpit. Your eternal destiny, and the eternal destiny of all others are at stake! When the whole truth is preached in all earnestness there will be converts to Christ, and you will be wanting intensely to see everyone won to Him.

If you find that the preaching in your church is not what it should be, don’t be a gossip and talk

to others about it, but pray earnestly about it and go directly to the pastor and talk to him. That’s the honest and honorable thing to do. Let the pastor know exactly how you feel about his preaching. Let him know that you expect him to preach the truth and the whole truth. By doing this you will be following the Lord’s instructions in Matthew 18:15-17.

\* \* \*

According to those instructions, if the pastor refuses to agree with you, or if there is no change in his preaching, then you should take one or two others with you and visit the pastor again. Hopefully, your pastor will be very concerned about your concern. But if not, you are to take the matter to the whole church.

The cowardly thing to do is to leave the church without taking any action. That would mean that you would leave this man to teach the children, young people, and all others the lies and half-truths that he has taught them in the past. But be much in prayer about this whole matter. You must be sure of God’s leading.

\* \* \*

If you are a pastor, you have a tremendous opportunity and a tremendous responsibility. If you are one of those pastors today who has been explaining away the warnings in God’s word, and skipping over the warnings you don’t dare explain away, you are lying to your congregation. You need to confess this sin to God, and then confess to the church, and ask their forgiveness. God will honor you for doing so, and so will the church.

You may experience strong opposition from some members. But if you are truly God’s messenger you will refuse to preach anything but the truth, and the whole truth, and you will leave the consequences in God’s hands.

\* \* \*

**A WARNING:** The warning in Revelation 22:18-19 about adding to or taking away from the word of God applies to all His warnings and to every other part of His message. To explain away the warnings of God is to take away from His Word! As God warns in The Revelation, the judgment for doing so is horrendous. We trust that if you are guilty, you will most earnestly repent and become a flaming evangel for the whole truth!

## 227 Hebrews 2:1-2

This is not a challenge and warning to the unbeliever, who is not converted. Thruout the entire book of Hebrews the writer is directing his remarks to Hebrew Christians. And they apply today to every Christian. This is a warning to Christians about neglecting the salvation God has promised them thru Christ Jesus.

This warning implies that there is indeed great peril, and the implication is that we shall not escape God's judgment if we lightly regard the salvation He has offered, and lightly regard His teachings and commands.

The implication here is that a way of rescue has been provided. But it also implies that some have become so preoccupied with things that have taken their attention away from the Lord. *The greatness of the salvation* also implies the seriousness of the peril of being so neglectful. It is one thing to be neglectful about matters that are relatively unimportant, but it's altogether something else to be neglectful about a salvation that has been promised to save us from a horrendous Hell that we deserve, and to grant us an everlasting life of total fulfillment in God's glorious Kingdom, which we don't deserve.

\* \* \*

It also implies here, and thruout the book, that it is hopeless to look for rescue and escape from Hell by any other means than the great salvation which God offers. How frightfully dangerous it is then to neglect and lightly regard this salvation by allowing ourselves to be so preoccupied with the things of this brief life.

In regard to this, meditate on what Proverbs 4:23 really means when it states, **Be intensely concerned about what it is that absorbs and monopolizes your time and interest, because your life and destiny are determined by what and who you truly love.** 1 John 2:15-17; Mark 8:34-38.

Just as these Hebrew Christians were in danger of complacency and drifting at a time when the material focus of their faith, the Temple in Jerusalem, had been or was about to be destroyed, many professing Christians today are in danger of going back to a selfish, self-centered life of ease and formal religion, with very little real concern about the world about them that is on its way to Hell. God wants your whole heart! He's not satisfied with anything less!

You cannot be half converted. Either you are

truly and altogether converted to the Lord, to obey Him, to love Him, to serve Him, and to look forward to being with Him forever, or else you are satisfied to merely warm a pew in church and obey only the teachings of Christ which suit you. That is neglecting your salvation and the salvation of the souls of others! God will surely severely judge such backsliding!

\* \* \*

We are not warned here about committing great sins. We are not warned about being murderers, adulterers, thieves, atheists, or scoffers of Christ. But the warning is that we **neglect** the wonderful salvation God offers us thru His Son. Mere neglect is enough to ruin anyone in any situation. A man in business doesn't need to commit forgery or robbery to ruin himself. All he has to do is neglect his business and his ruin is certain.

Most of the calamities of life are caused by simple neglect. Neglect the education of your children and they will grow up ignorant. Neglect to discipline them, and they will grow up to be disobedient in all areas of life. Neglect a farm and the weeds and briars will soon take over. Neglect a house and it soon goes to decay. Neglect sowing, and a man will have no harvest. Neglect the reaping, and the harvest will rot in the fields. Neglect a marriage and it will soon fall apart.

\* \* \*

There is nothing in earthly affairs that will not be ruined if it is not diligently attended to. The same is true concerning the soul. Therefore, a Christian must not neglect reading the Bible, daily. He must not neglect spending time with the Lord in meditation and prayer, and he must not neglect to obey the Lord in all things. And be sure not to neglect Romans 10:9-10.

So for that reason, my brothers and sisters, be most diligent to make your calling and election to salvation and eternal life with God a sure thing! Because if you make a practice of doing the things I have just pointed out to you, you will never stumble and fall. By so doing you will guarantee for yourself a glorious welcome, and the gates into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord will be thrown wide open for you to enter. 2 Peter 1:10-11.

## 228 Hebrews 3:18-19

The whole problem the Israelite people had

in failing to enter the promised land was their unbelief. But they did believe, didn't they? Didn't they believe in the shedding of blood for their salvation? Hadn't they killed the lamb on Passover night in Egypt (Exodus 11-12), and sprinkled the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their homes, so that the death angel would pass by them?

Yes, everyone who left Egypt had done so. And this blood is a symbol of the blood of Christ that was shed for us. It is necessary to have faith in the fact that the blood of Jesus Christ was shed for our sins. But there is more to belief than believing only in the blood.

The problem with their faith was that they lacked confidence in God, and the lack of confidence in God is the great source of evil thruout the world today. It will exclude countless millions from Heaven, and will be the cause of wretchedness for ages to come for these unnumbered millions.

This is the problem of countless millions who profess to be Christians. They want their faith in the blood of Christ which was shed for their sins to be all that is necessary for their entrance into Heaven. But the problem of our lost confidence in God is when we doubt His promises, doubt His oaths, and doubt that He will really follow thru in His warnings. So many people believe they can sin and get away with it. This was the problem of the children of Israel. They were on their way to the promised land that had been promised them by God. Surely nothing could keep them out of the promised land. But their unbelief did.

\* \* \*

As already stated, one serious mistake that many professing Christians make is that they don't believe Romans 10:9-10 applies to them. God reveals there thru the Apostle Paul that the faith necessary for salvation is heart faith. Unless we obey Romans 10:9-10 and act upon what we claim we believe, we are not truly converted. Read that Scripture again, and the notes.

What would happen if everyone who claimed to be a Christian would really take a stand for Christ, as God demands, and speak out for Him at every opportunity? Millions of those who have not heard would then hear. Things would really begin to happen if all who claim to be Christians really were Christians. What would happen if you did?

The writer here says the same thing in v 6 of this chapter. Read it again. Do we really believe such inspired statements by God?

To be converted we must truly believe God's commandments, and also His warnings about failing to obey those commands, as well as believing His promises.

Some may claim that this is salvation by works. No, this is merely stating the fact that to be converted we must obey God. We are not obeying God if we are still living in rebellion toward Him.

\* \* \*

Even Adam and Eve believed God. But Satan put a doubt in their minds as to whether God would really follow thru in His warning about eating the forbidden fruit. In fact, Satan promised Eve that it would make her wise. It is so easy to rationalize when it comes to allowing some sin, or failing to obey some of Jesus' commands. But God won't accept our rationalizations. He says we must be born again. And that new birth means that we must become new people, people who now obey God and tell the world about Him. Again, seriously consider where you stand in regard to Romans 10:9-10.

\* \* \*

This Scripture also emphasizes the fact that if you realize that you are not truly converted to the Lord, the time to take care of that situation is today! 3:7 to 4:7. Not one of us has any assurance at all that we will be here tomorrow.

Nobody should neglect anything that should be done today. But when it comes to the salvation of one's soul, it is more important than anything else that needs to be taken care of. Take care of it now! What proof do you have that you will be more inclined to take care of this matter tomorrow or at some future date than you are today? What evidence do you have that you will not anger God by again putting it off, and bring condemnation on your soul?

\* \* \*

The greatest device that Satan has against people is to have them put off until tomorrow what they should do today about getting right with God. He doesn't mind at all if you believe about God, as long as you put off until tomorrow the surrender of your heart and soul to your Redeemer. You need this warning for yourself, and you also need to give this warning to others to whom you must speak about their need of the Savior. By putting God off

we are rejecting His love.

Why not make sure today, right now, that you will experience and enjoy eternal happiness. As you make that determination, also *determine that you will never turn back!*

The warning in v 6 includes the fact that we must continue faithful to the end of life. This is not faithfulness only in what we believe in our minds, but what we believe in our hearts and souls, and what we put into practice. Are you truly a practicing Christian? If you are not really a practicing Christian you are not a Christian at all. Take care of this matter now, today, this very hour! Surrender your heart and soul to God and give Him all of your future, for the present life and for all time to come.

Once you have made your total surrender to God, with determination that you will never turn back, you can have the assurance that as you follow thru in this, nothing in life can shake you. Even if you lose all of your friends, you still have a future that is marvelous and wonderful beyond words. Even if you should lose all you possess, you still have God's loving promise of being a joint heir of His with Christ, and of spending eternity with Him. Even if your health fails, you still have the assurance of a new body soon, and life and joy and peace that will never end. We'll be looking for you there! Mark 8:34-38.

## 229 Hebrews 4:11

*We also* have a command from God to move forward and take the land. The command of Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16 is now our responsibility, and God expects us to use every means and ability we have to warn the lost of the Hell that awaits them and to tell them of the forgiveness and eternal life that God offers them. Yes, you may be contributing your money to witness for the Lord, and you certainly should, but how about your own witness for the Lord? Are you speaking out for Him? Romans 10:9-10.

It was fear that kept the children of Israel from taking the promised land when God commanded them to go forward and possess it. And it is fear that causes many Christians to not witness for the Lord. But what happened to the fearful Israelites who didn't obey the Lord? They never entered the promised land, did they? Does God have a double standard—one for the Israelites of the past and another for us today? Certainly not! God warns that those who are **fearful and cowardly** will be numbered with all the other sinners who

are rejected by Him. Revelation 21:7-8.

That warning in Revelation 21 about cowards is fearful indeed. But we have the same warning in Ezekiel 33:1-9. Would God be righteous in allowing those into Heaven who were glad to accept his invitation but were unwilling to share the invitation with others? We had better take seriously the command God has given us to move forward and possess the territory that Satan now holds.

## 230 1 Peter 1:3

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the chief doctrine of the Christian faith. If Christ had not risen from the dead, there would be no Christianity. Our faith would be for nothing, and our hope would be an empty hope indeed. The whole message of the Great News would be a farce, and there would be no forgiveness of sin.

The resurrection of Christ is the foundation upon which we base all of our hope in Christ. It's the assurance that we have eternal life, because it removes all fear of death, and assures us of the future blessedness of life with God thruout eternity.

To Peter and the other apostles, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a regeneration. They became new people! That's one reason why we can say that we are born again by means of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is His resurrection that gives us new life, and new hope, and new assurance that is based on historical fact. The entire Christian Church—east and west, north and south—is founded on that fact.

Remember also that Jesus had foretold His resurrection. This is just another assurance that He is the Son of God, who He claimed to be. He knew why He was here and that He would rise again! It was a confirmation of all that He had declared as truth when He lived. It was a proof of the teaching of the immortality of the soul. And it is a pledge that all who are united to Him will rise up to live again, even as He did.

\* \* \*

Before the resurrection Christ's apostles had strong confidence that He was the Messiah, and that He would free Israel from her enemies. But when they found that He had actually died upon the cross, and was buried, they appeared to have lost all hope of the great things which they had before believed. But His resurrection revived all

that hope.

The resurrection of Christ was in a real sense the birth of the Church, and Christian baptism without the resurrection would be an empty ceremony. It would have no meaning whatever.

The inheritance which the Christian is promised in Heaven is the ultimate end of our regeneration, and it's the foundation for the hope and joy that the Christian has even in the present life. We are living for today, but much more so for the future.

And the resurrection gives the Christian a hope that's very much alive. We don't have a hope that can perish, like the hopes of this world, but it continues to grow in intensity until it will reach that joy which knows no bounds in Heaven. And even in Heaven there will be, it seems, a continual progress **from one degree of glory to another.** 2 Corinthians 3:18.

## 231 1 John 2:18; 4:3

The powerful Satan-inspired world ruler of the last days of this age is known by several names in Scripture. They are:

- 1) The little horn. Daniel 7:7-11,15-26; 8:8-26
- 2) The Beast. Daniel 7:11; Revelation 13
- 3) The Assyrian. Isaiah 10:24-25; 14:24-25; 30:30-31; 31:8-9; Micah 5:5-6
- 4) The Antichrist. 1 John 2:18; 4:3
- 5) King of Babylon. Isaiah 14:4; Jeremiah 50:43; 51:31
- 6) The Spoiler. Isaiah 16:4
- 7) The Extortioner. Isaiah 16:4
- 8) King of Fierce Countenance. Daniel 8:23
- 9) The Prince that shall come. Daniel 9:26-27
- 10) The man of sin. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12
- 11) The Son of Perdition. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12
- 12) That wicked one. 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12

In some way or another all of these titles will apply to the Antichrist.

## 232 Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15

Christ will rule the nations as King of kings and Lord of lords when He returns, and all of His true followers will reign with Him. 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10; 20:6; 22:5. Two questions have been asked about this reign of Christ together with His followers. The first is:

Just what kind of reign will this be when it is

said that Christ *will shepherd the nations with a scepter of iron?* Actually, this pictures Christ as a shepherd. A shepherd always carried a rod, for guiding and disciplining his sheep. That rod was also for the purpose of striking to kill any wolf that attacked the sheep.

To rule with a scepter of iron, does not mean that Christ will rule with a harsh and tyrannical iron hand, but with power that is firm and invincible. It denotes a government of strength, or one that cannot be successfully opposed, one in which the subjects are effectively disciplined and controlled.

The Lord will show mercy to some, and judgment to others. He will begin by destroying His anti-Christian foes. Revelation 19:15. Then He will reign in love over the rest. He, together with those reigning under Him, will restrain vice by the most strict administration of justice. And those who continue to insist on despising His commands will be broken and destroyed. 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 informs us that Christ will rule until He has put all rebellion down. Then He will turn everything back to the Father, who in the first place put all things under Him that He might reign in power.

\* \* \*

The second question asked here is: Just who will Christ and His followers reign over, if all of His enemies are put to death when He returns? But not everyone on earth will be put to death when He returns. Revelation 1:7 tells us who will be on earth and see Him as He returns. See the note there. His avowed enemies will be destroyed at Armageddon and after other judgments. But other millions will remain. These who remain will be the new generation of people on earth. They will be the nucleus for a great repopulation of the earth. It is over these that Christ and His followers will reign.

## 233 Revelation 13:1; 17:3, 7-17

We must remember that the term, *the beast*, is symbolic of four possible entities. First of all, the term refers to a supernatural angel (i.e., a powerful demon) out of the bottomless pit. Revelation 11:7; 17:8. Second, the term refers to a powerful mortal man, who is called *the beast* (the Antichrist). Daniel 7:7-8,19-27; 8:9,20-25; 9:26-27; 11:36-45; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10; Revelation 13:1-18; 17:3; 19:19-21; 20:10. Third, the term refers to an empire. Revelation 13:1; 17:9-17; Daniel 7:7-



8,19-25. And of course there is a fourth beast, the false prophet. Revelation 13:11-17; 16:13-14.

Keeping these facts in mind will be of great help. They are all actually interrelated—the *false prophet* serving the *man* being empowered by the *angel out of the bottomless pit* to form a great end-time empire.

\* \* \*

The *sea* in Revelation 13:1 is symbolic, and refers to the people of earth. Revelation 17:1,15; Daniel 7:2-3,17. Therefore, this *beast* (the man, Antichrist) will rise out of the *sea* of humanity. The same is true of the *beast* empire. It is actually a series of empires which are the empires or kingdoms that have persecuted Israel, which are Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the coming Revised Rome.

The *seven heads* represent the seven powerful evil spirits that have tried to dominate these seven empires (see 17:8 note, 2nd paragraph). The *ten horns* represent the ten rulers of Revised Rome of these end-time days, who will rise among the nations to their highest power as a united force during the last 3 1/2 years of the age under Antichrist. See Daniel 2:1-49; 7:1-28; 8:1-27; Revelation 17:7-17.

Antichrist is not one of the seven heads or ten horns. He, as the *beast*, symbolizes his conquering and uniting the entire part of the world formerly controlled by the seven heads, including the ten modern rulers of Revised Rome. The supernatural angel out of the pit—the evil spirit power behind Antichrist—is evidently the second or fifth head, resurrected back to power (Revelation 11:7; 17:8-11). Be sure to read 2nd paragraph of 17:8 note.

## 234 Revelation 13:2

John now further describes this end-time empire of Antichrist: His being *like a leopard* refers to the symbol of the Grecian Empire. Daniel 7:6. He will revive the old Grecian Empire. Daniel 8:9,21-24; Revelation 13:1-4,11-14; 17:7-11.

His *feet* being like the feet of a *bear* refers to the symbol of Medo-Persia. Daniel 7:5. He will overpower the nations as Medo-Persia overpowered Babylon. The *mouth of a lion* refers to the symbol of the lion of Babylon. Daniel 7:4. The message from his mouth will be the message of blasphemous, God-rejecting Babylon. v 5.

The *dragon* refers to Satan, who will give

Antichrist his *power*, his *throne*, and *great authority* thru Satan's lieutenant, the angel (demon) out of the bottomless pit. Revelation 17:7-8. Antichrist will evidently have no qualms about placing himself under the power and control of Satan.

In connection with the identity of Antichrist and his origin, read Daniel 2:31-45; 7:1-28. There you will see that this *beast*, Antichrist and his empire, will spring to power in the area of the old Roman Empire. But then, Daniel 8 further pinpoints his origin to the Greek Empire portion of the old Roman Empire. And in many places in Scripture he is called the Assyrian (Isaiah 10:24-27), so it seems quite possible that he will begin his rise to power in Syria, which was a part of the old Greek Empire. See Daniel 7:7-8,24.

## 235 Revelation 13:3

We are told here that *one* of the *heads* of the seven-headed beast, which had been *mortally wounded*, had come alive again. In other words, one of the evil spirit powers behind an empire of the past will be restored to power. This almost surely refers to the spirit power which controlled the Assyrian Empire in the past, because we noted earlier that the Antichrist will come to power in new Assyria.

We are witnessing here the rebirth of the Assyrian Empire, so it is almost certain that this is the spirit power referred to here as being the *head* that had received the *mortal wound* but was restored. So it is this *head*, the spirit power behind the second great empire that persecuted Israel, that will very likely be restored to power again thru Antichrist and thru the power given Him by Satan, the dragon. See notes on Revelation 17:9-11.

The *Revised* Roman Empire will be formed before Antichrist comes to power, but it is not a *revived* Roman Empire, because ten rulers will rule over ten separate states. Antichrist will have nothing to do with the rise of these ten states. His rise to power will occur after the ten united states and their ten leaders appear on the scene in the approximate geographical area of the old Roman Empire. Daniel 7:7-8.

But Antichrist will be one ruler over the entire area formerly known as the Assyrian Empire. He will bring this empire back to life, and then very likely greatly expand it. Daniel 7:7-8,24 and Revelation 17:12-13 indicate that, after restoring the old Assyrian Empire, Antichrist will conquer three of the ten rulers of the Revised Roman Empire.

The remaining seven rulers will then acknowledge defeat and ask him to take over their kingdoms as well. They will then rule under him. 17:12-13.

*The whole world* will be amazed at what this man, the Antichrist, will have been able to accomplish. They will be amazed to see the former empire of Assyria, and then of Greece, resurrected, and amazed at the power of the Antichrist.

## 236 Revelation 13:11-18

Antichrist will have a co-worker. He is called *the false prophet* in Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10. This man will have the appearance of a *lamb*, seeming very gentle and trustworthy. His words and message, however, will be those of Satan, because he will speak *like a dragon*. His teaching will be false, against God. Just as Antichrist will be empowered by Satan (vss 1-9; Daniel 8:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9), *the false prophet* will also be empowered by him to perform miracles.

In a sense, this *beast* will be the publicity agent for Antichrist. He will be Antichrist's spokesman, and will call on the world to worship this great one who has resurrected the former Assyrian Empire, and then the former Greek Empire, and now rules all that was included in the old Roman Empire as well.

Thru the power of Satan this second beast will *perform great miracles*. As one of his spectacular feats, he will *make fire come down out of Heaven to earth while people are watching*. No doubt he will do many other things not mentioned here. He will be the spiritual leader, Antichrist's high priest, claiming great things for Antichrist and strongly calling the world to honor him with full devotion.

Multitudes of those who are not Christians will be fooled by this false prophet. Having refused the truth from God, God will offer them "strong delusion" (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12) and cause them to believe a lie.

\* \* \*

The false prophet will cause the *inhabitants of the earth to erect an image of the beast who had been fatally wounded by the sword, but was now alive*. v 14. It appears that this image will be made to honor the resurrected Empire of Assyria, or Greece, as well as the Antichrist who restored it. It may even be an image to honor the *beast* empire rather than an image of the *beast* man.

This false prophet will be able either to simu-

late life in the image (thru computers?), or thru the power of Satan to actually produce life in it. In some manner, this image of the beast will be able to *speak*. *Everyone who refuses to worship the image will be killed*. No doubt many Christians will be martyred for their refusal to worship this image. But their resurrection will be glorious.

This false prophet will cause everyone under the power of Antichrist to receive a mark *on their right hand or on their forehead*. But again, the word *all* is not to be taken in the absolute sense, because there will be many who will refuse to receive it because of the warning in Revelation 14:9-11. This mark will be necessary to either *buy or sell*. People will need either the *mark of the beast, his name, or the number that signifies his name* to do business. We do not know what his mark will be. Nor do we know his name. The number of his name, however, is clearly stated.

The number will be 666. Many Greek and Hebrew names have a numerical value of 666. The idea is that in the Greek and Hebrew alphabets there is not a separate system of numbers, as in the English. The letters of these alphabets also stand for numbers.

The letters in the name of the future Antichrist will very likely have a numerical value of 666. We cannot know now what his mark or name will be, but we can all know what the numerical value of his name will very likely be, because it is stated to be 666.

\* \* \*

Let us take a closer look at v 18. The word *wisdom* is from the Greek word *σοφία*, and refers to the *intellect*, i.e., the *mind*. The word *calculate* is from the Greek word *τσαφιδζο*, meaning to *compute*, to *use pebbles* in counting. In other words, the reference is to very simple calculation. The word *number* is from the Greek word *αριθμος*, meaning a number (as reckoned up). This is the Greek word from which we get the word arithmetic.

A good modern translation of this verse in paraphrase would be, "Here's all the wisdom you will need. Let the one who is able to use his mind and understanding, calculate and determine by simple arithmetic who the beast is. Because you will be able to determine who this man is by simple computation. The numerical value of the letters of his name will be 666."

As stated earlier, several names have the numerical value of 666, so the simple fact that a

man's name has this numerical value will be of no significance unless other factors concerning him bear out that he is truly the Antichrist. So in these days of the end any man having a name with this numerical value will bear close watching. It may even be that Antichrist will arbitrarily choose 666 as his number, but the numerical value of his name will also likely total this number.

## 237 Revelation 14:1-5

We read of the 144,000 in Revelation 7:1-8. Their ministry having been completed, they are now seen with the Lord in Heaven. We are not told when their ascension to Heaven takes place. The time factor in this event is not revealed anywhere in Scripture.

There are some students of Scripture who believe that these 144,000 are a different group than the 144,000 of 7:1-8. Their belief is that these are the male children in Israel who were killed by Herod at the birth of Christ. They point out that the 144,000 of these verses are persons *who had not defiled themselves with women, so they are virgins*.

This group is also said to be *the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb*. The argument is that the male children slain at the birth of Christ were truly *the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb*. People believing this also point to the statement that *they had never lied or spoken hypocritically, so they stand before the throne of God blameless*. They argue that such a statement could only be made of infants.

\* \* \*

The answers to such questions when they arise may never be revealed until Jesus comes. The Jewish population in Israel would have had to have been very large at the birth of Christ if 144,000 male babies under the age of two were slain. It's possible, of course, that the soldiers of Herod slew many children who were older than two years, to make sure they got the One they were after. The statement in verse one that these 144,000 had their Heavenly Father's *name written in their foreheads* should almost settle the argument. The same statement is made concerning the 144,000 in 7:1-8. But then, the same could be true of others.

We can be glad that a right belief regarding all the facts and truths concerning the 144,000 is not important to the salvation of our souls. But

when we arrive in Heaven it will be interesting to get some of these answers.

## 238 Revelation 16:15

We are told in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 and 2 Peter 3:10 that the Lord will come *as a thief in the night*. His coming will be a real surprise. The world will not be expecting Him. In spite of all the warnings and judgments that God will pour upon the earth, most people will retain their hard hearts, refusing either to believe or repent.

By this time God will have sent His messengers thruout the entire earth (either by world-wide TV coverage, Revelation 14:6-11, or by literal angels) proclaiming the message of salvation and warning the earth of impending destruction. Some people will no doubt heed the message and be converted. The great majority, however, even as today, will refuse to yield their hearts to Christ as Lord. And when the armies of Antichrist gather at Armageddon with all their armored might, Christ will crush them so suddenly that the world will wonder what happened. Revelation 19:11-21.

Immediately following Armageddon, God will continue His judgments upon the world with great earthquakes, hail, fire and other devastation. vss 18-21; Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:12-17.

\* \* \*

Thru it all, there is a *blessing* pronounced upon those on earth who continue to stay awake to how they live, and yearn for the Lord's coming, always preparing their hearts for Him. Notice that the blessing is pronounced only upon those who are watching how they live. The same is true today. At this hour the Lord is calling many from the earth thru death. Even now, only those who have prepared themselves as God requires, go to be with Him. Matthew 24:42-51.

## 239 Revelation 16:20

No doubt the *islands* will disappear because there will be no more *oceans* (21:1), due to the fact that the waters of the ocean will again return to the sky to form the protective canopy over the earth (Isaiah 4:6), which fell as rain during the time of the Great Flood. This canopy must be restored to the Heavens to protect the earth from the sun, which will be seven times brighter following Christ's return than it is today. Isaiah 30:26.

When only rivers and lakes remain upon the

earth there will be very few islands, except in some of the larger lakes. Again, when a word such as *every* is used, it is not always to be applied in the absolute sense. But so few islands will remain when compared with the number now in existence that it will be as though there were none left.

And the *mountains* will disappear because the earthquakes will level them. Some of the mountainous areas will probably become plains while others will be reduced to habitable rolling hills. And it's conceivable that the Lord may leave just a few of the rugged mountains for climbers and for their beauty.

## 240 Revelation 16:21

The falling stars of 6:13 and Matthew 24:29 will very likely be great showers of large and very large meteorites striking the earth with most devastating blows.

To finish off the devastation, God will send great hailstones from the heavens. Large hailstones the size of potatoes, weighing 1 1/2 to 2 pounds, have been known to cause dreadful destruction of property and vegetation. In this instance, these great hailstones will each weigh over 100 pounds. They would hit the earth with tremendous force, smashing everything that remained following the earthquake, etc.

Evidently there will be different reactions on the part of people to these great judgments of God. Some will *curse and revile God* for this great destruction of life and property. In Revelation 6:12-17 we find that people will seek to *hide themselves in caves and among the rocks of the mountains*. They will call out to the mountains and to the rocks, *Fall on us and hide us from the eyes of the One who sits on the throne and from the terrible anger of the Lamb! Because the terrible Day of Their anger has come, and who will be able to escape Their judgment?* There seems to be some indication of remorse and penitence on the part of these people. See Revelation 11:19 and Isaiah 2:17-21.

To get a more detailed description of the conditions of the earth during this period of terrible judgment from God, read chapters 24-27 of Isaiah. The events of those chapters are yet unfulfilled, and await their fulfillment in the day of God's soon-coming judgment.

## 241 Revelation 17:9-11

These verses present a fuller understanding

of the meaning of this beast with the seven heads and ten horns. We are told that *the seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits*. Earlier (v 1), the woman was described as *sitting on many bodies of water*. The many bodies of water represented people and nations. v 15.

This vile woman of Babylonian religious origin (v 5) has lorded it over the common people and also over the heads of state (v 18) since the days of the Egyptian Empire, and possibly earlier. And she will do it again—undoubtedly with greater intensity.

The *seven mountains* refer to seven kingdoms. The *seven kings* of v 10 refer to the seven spirit (evil spirit) rulers of these seven kingdoms. All of these empires of the past had several human kings in succession, but only one evil spirit king seeking to control each empire. These seven kingdoms are the seven great kingdoms that have been guilty of persecuting Israel, whether past, present, or future.

As previously stated, the six great kingdoms of the past that have persecuted the nation of Israel in notable fashion have been Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The seventh kingdom to persecute Israel will be the future confederacy of the ten nations of Revised Rome. The rulers of the ten nations of this future confederacy are characterized by the ten horns of the beast, while the seven heads represent the seven kingdoms of the past and future.

\* \* \*

The *five spirit rulers that have fallen* (v 10), when John received this revelation, were the spirit rulers of the first five kingdoms mentioned above. *The one in power at the present time*, the one in power at the time God gave the revelation (A.D. 90), was the spirit controlling Rome. The ruler that *hasn't yet come on the scene* will be the spirit behind the confederacy of the ten kingdoms forming Revised Rome. This spirit ruler, *when it does come, must remain for only a short while*. In other words, this confederacy will last for only a brief period of time. Just how brief that period will be we are not told. These ten rulers of Revised Rome will no doubt rise to power with the aid of religious Babylon, as it appears that they will be controlled by her. v 3.

After the ten horns (ten rulers) are fully established, a ruler will rise up among them in the area of the former Grecian Empire portion of the old Roman Empire. He is called "the little horn"

(the Antichrist). Read Daniel 8:1-25. When Alexander the Great died, his kingdom was divided among his four strongest generals. The four divisions were Greece, Turkey, Babylonia, and Egypt. According to Daniel 8:9, it is out of one of these four areas that the Antichrist, *the little horn*, will arise.

Antichrist will likely rise to power in the area of former Assyria, since he is called the Assyrian in Scripture more times than by any other name. Old Assyria took in the area which is now northern Iraq and eastern Syria, before its expansion into an empire. Undoubtedly there will be a realignment of nations in that area, and there will again be a country called Assyria before Antichrist appears. On the other hand, he may even be the force that will form the nation of new Assyria as he comes to power.

\* \* \*

According to Daniel 8:23, Antichrist will appear on the scene when the nations are in such turmoil and trouble as they have never been in before, because of unprecedented evil. Daniel also indicates here that he will be a most powerful personality. Rotherham translates this *a king of mighty presence*. His eyes will powerfully captivate and command respect and confidence. When this world is in hopeless confusion the inhabitants will be relieved to have such a mighty one come forth with the answers. Only those who know God's prophecies will recognize him as the end-time, powerful emissary of Satan.

Leaders of the nations today are looking for just such a man to take complete world control. They say that only an extremely wise, talented, and powerful personality as world ruler can save the world from all the dangers that are threatening.

Antichrist is called the *little horn*, because he will have a small, almost unnoticed beginning. He will come from the area of the former Roman Empire. But he will come out of the portion of that Empire which was part of the former Empire of Greece. *Four kings* were prophesied to *stand up* in the place of Alexander the Great when he died, but they would *not have his power*. Daniel 8:18-22. History reveals that this prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

The words *the latter time of their kingdom* (Daniel 8:23), however, refer primarily to the Greek Kingdom (or Empire) at the end of the age, *when the transgressors are come to the full*, when moral decay has become full blown. This is just

one reason why we believe Antichrist will resurrect the old Empire of Greece by conquering Greece before he attacks the rest of the ten-nation confederacy of Europe. It's conceivable that, starting with the nation of Assyria as his base, he will conquer the surrounding nations until he has reformed the Grecian Empire. He will certainly need to build up substantial military strength somewhere before he is able to *subdue* three of the future ten rulers of Europe. Daniel 7:7-8, 23-24.

\* \* \*

Daniel 8:9 tells us that *the little horn became extremely powerful as he moved toward the south, the east, and toward the glorious land (Israel)*. The first big step, then, in his rise to power, will be his conquering of all the area of the old Grecian Empire. Possibly Greece could first become a part of Revised Rome. In that case, when Antichrist conquers Greece he will be taking his first step in conquering the ten nations of Revised Rome.

There will also be an eighth world kingdom (v 11) over which this spirit power, thru the Antichrist, will rule. This will be the combined kingdoms of the revived Assyrian and Grecian Empires and Revised Rome. As spirit ruler over the eighth great world kingdom, he will empower the Antichrist, the ten rulers, and others, for only a few brief years, after which *he will be driven away into a continual state of being destroyed*.

## 242 Revelation 20:7-10

Toward the end of the first 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth, Satan will be released from his prison to *deceive the nations*. v 8. The word *deceive* is translated from the Greek word *πλανησαι*, and means *to cause to roam from safety, truth, or virtue; to cause to go astray*. Satan will no doubt be allowed to take his great host of fallen angels with him on his tours of the earth, tempting those who have been living under the blessing of the Lord's reign. Some will have enjoyed the benefits of that reign for the full 1,000 years.

Even at that, there will be many, *as vast in numbers as the numberless sands on the seashore*, who will be chafing under the restraint of the Lord's blessed rule. Wanting to satisfy the lusts of the flesh, they will fall for Satan's enticements to "march on Jerusalem and dethrone the king there."

It's almost inconceivable to realize that in spite of all the light and knowledge these people will have about Christ and His goodness, they will still be determined to have their own way. But this was also true of the angels in Heaven who fell, when Lucifer (now Satan) led them to rebel against God. God will now use Satan to test the inhabitants of the new earth to determine whether their affections are really with the Lord, or not.

\*\*\*

This vast army of rebels will converge on Jerusalem from all over the earth. But this time when they are ready for the attack, no doubt before they are able to cause any damage, *fire will come down from God out of Heaven and destroy them*. This will not be the last of them, however, because they will be resurrected with all other rebels of all time for judgment. vs 11-15.

Following this judgment, Satan, and possibly all of the fallen host of angels with him, will be *thrown into the lake of fire, a lake of flaming sulphur*. The *beast and the false prophet* were thrown into this *lake of fire* 1,000 years earlier, at the end of the tribulation period on earth. And they will still be there. To be *thrown into the lake of fire* will not mean that one is suddenly consumed to exist no more. The last part of this verse states that those in the lake of fire *will be tormented day and night forever and ever*.

## 243 Revelation 20:12

Just what are *the books* mentioned here? God of course does not need books as we know them, but there are records of all lives. Each one's memory will be a book. God's memory is a book. And read John 12:44-49 in connection with *the books* there. In that reference Jesus is telling the people that He did not come to earth to judge, but that they did have a Judge, and that Judge would be the words that He was speaking.

Yes, we will all be judged by what we have done with God's word. Have we believed and obeyed it? Or have we ignored much of it? It's all in the record. And God will compare the record in His memory and ours with the record of the books of His word.

Therefore, those who have believed and obeyed God's message will be in His presence by this time, but those who have ignored and disobeyed will now be standing before Him for judgment. And they will be judged according to their deeds in life and according to what they have done with what God revealed to them was His will for them. We are saved by God's grace, but character at last (according to the things they had done) is the test, even as the fruit is the test of the tree.

## 244 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THINGS TO COME

First there came an ominous rumbling, then a most violent shaking. It seemed that the whole building they were in was being literally torn apart. The floor buckled, and parts of it hit the ceiling, crushing several people in the process. There were loud screams from the dying and wounded, then more violent shaking and pounding, and the literal throwing of buildings into the air. "Earthquake!" some screamed.

But what a feeble statement, because what they were experiencing was in fact the greatest of all earthquakes, the one which had long been prophesied would happen at the end of the age. Just days before, the great world dictator had gathered his forces from every nation under his control, and had marched on Israel against those who had dared to challenge his supremacy. But amaz-

ingly, fire from the heavens had destroyed his armies and innumerable millions had died.

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Christians had often warned about the Battle of Armageddon and the greatest of all earthquakes that would follow. Now it was causing unprecedented destruction and havoc everywhere.

Yes, all that God has prophesied will definitely happen. The end of this age is fast approaching, when **the nations on earth will be utterly perplexed and panic-stricken** (Luke 21:25) at all that will be happening as the end approaches.

The Bible predicts that there will be ever-increasing rebellion against God and against moral restraint in the last days. 2 Timothy 3:1-5;

4:3-4. The Lord says thru the prophet Daniel (Daniel 8:23) that the Antichrist, the great opposer of God in the final days, will come to power **when those in rebellion against God have become rotten to the core**, when sin is rampant, when rebellion against God and right living has not only become fully ripe, but also totally rotten.

We see this rebellion increasing today in frightful ways. There have been other times of gross sin in history, but never when the other prophecies for the end were also in the process of being fulfilled so perfectly. The end is indeed fast approaching.

We are told that in the end time the Holy Spirit will step aside (2 Thessalonians 2:6-8) and allow sin to take its natural course without His restraining influence, thereby allowing sin to become fully ripe. With moral decay rampant today it seems certain that He has already stepped aside.

People all over the world will be madly drunk on their success in breaking the restraints of all moral codes. Antichrist will come to power when sin is worse than the world has ever seen (Daniel 8:23), but evidently it will even worsen under his influence. Daniel 11:36-39.

The Bible reveals (Revelation 9:21) that mankind will be guilty of four major sins in the last days:

- \* murder
- \* drugs and experimentation in the occult
- \* sexual immoralities
- \* large-scale thievery

The pressure to indulge in sin will be intense for everyone on earth, Christian and non-Christian alike. Some Christians, beguiled by seducing spirits, will depart from their faith in Christ. Even some who are the most knowledgeable in the things of God will fall. Daniel 11:35.

A significant event in this end-time period will be the rebuilding of the old city of Babylon. Some ask, "How can that be? Bible prophecy states that Babylon will never be rebuilt." True! Babylon will never be rebuilt *after it is burned*. But it has never yet been burned, at least not since the prophecy of its destruction was made. The Bible reveals some very interesting facts concerning new Babylon. For one thing, it will be the capital city of the Antichrist. The country of Iraq is, even at the time of this writing, rebuilding Babylon.

\* \* \*

Egypt will have further reverses, evidently resulting from engagements in war with Israel.

Egypt should have learned her lesson by now, but according to prophecy Egypt will lose the Nile River (Isaiah 11:15; 19:5-10), and will have civil war and continual turmoil. The Nile River will dry up, evidently as a result of a change in the course of the river.

Russia, Turkey, Iran, Poland, Germany, Libya, and Ethiopia, together with other nations, will unite to invade Israel. Ezekiel 38 and 39. But with God's help Israel will thoroughly defeat these nations, who will very likely then become third-rate powers.

The Bible indicates that the USA and her allies will not interfere with this invasion. They will complain and protest loudly (Ezekiel 38:13), but they won't lift a finger to stop Russia and her allies. No reason for this noninterference is given. But the northern powers will definitely meet a powerful Force in Israel: God promises that He Himself will be there to meet them, with a great judgment. Ezekiel 38:16-23.

Following this debacle of nations in Israel, a great spiritual awakening will erupt thruout the whole earth. See Revelation 14:14-16, and the note there, and Joel 2:28-32 notes. Mankind will be given this last wonderful opportunity to get right with God before judgment strikes. Joel 2:28-32.

\* \* \*

Another significant event of these last days will be the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. We know this will happen because prophecy states that Antichrist will conquer Israel and will sit in the Temple in Jerusalem as god. Also, sacrifices will be offered in front of this Temple after the order of the Old Testament, but Antichrist will cause these sacrifices to cease. All of this implies that the Temple will have been rebuilt.

The outstanding characteristic of this final period will be **perilous times**—perils from nature, as God unlooses His vengeance upon the rebellious people of this planet, perils from Satan, and perils from fallen man. 2 Timothy 3:1-5. All kinds of problems will be building up and exploding.

There will be great, great persecution of Christians thruout the world (Matthew 24:7-13) during the last years of this age. There have already been more martyrs of the Christian faith since 1917 than in all the previous years of the Christian era. And the end is just beginning. The Christian Church was born in blood, and it will be glorified in blood as it leaves this earth.

During these end-time days, a 10-nation federation will be formed in Europe. Prophecy indicates that this federation will be formed within the approximate area of the old Roman Empire. Daniel 7:7-8,19-20,23-24.

\* \* \*

It's at this time that the Antichrist will rise to power in the Middle East. He will have an insignificant beginning (Daniel 8:9-12), evidently living and basing his influence in Syria (or Assyria) since the Bible many times refers to him as The Assyrian. Isaiah 10:24; 14:24-25; 30:30-31; 31:8-9; Micah 5:5-6. Evidently he will reconstruct the old Assyrian Empire, and then reconstruct the former Grecian Empire, putting it all together again. Daniel 7:7-8; 8:8-9,21-24; Zechariah 9:13.

After accomplishing that miracle and gaining power over the territory which reaches from the borders of India on the east to the southern border of Egypt in the southwest, and west as far as to include Greece, he will then come against the 10-nation federation in Europe. After he conquers three of these nations, the other seven will surrender to him. The Antichrist will then control everything from the western shores of Europe to the borders of India. Daniel 7:7-8; Rev. 17:12-13.

Unfortunately, Antichrist will not be satisfied with this great accomplishment, but he will go forth **conquering, with determination to conquer the whole world.** Revelation 6:2.

\* \* \*

Sometime during this period, Antichrist will make a 7-year treaty with **many** nations, including Israel. He may even pose as Israel's great protector, because the Bible states that Israel will honor and accept him. The Jews rejected Christ, who came in the name of the Father, saying that He came from Heaven to represent Him, and was sent by Him. But when the Jews refused to receive Him, Christ prophesied that while they refused Him they would at a later date accept someone else who would claim to represent only himself. So we know that Israel will honor and accept the Antichrist, even entering into a treaty with him.

\* \* \*

During his reign Antichrist will demand that everyone receive his mark on their forehead or on their right hand (Revelation 13:16-18) in order to

buy or sell. This mark will be either the Antichrist's name, his symbol, or his number. We don't know his name or his symbol, but we are given his number: 666.

But all who accept **the mark of the beast**, as Scripture calls it, will damn their souls. This warning, plain in Scripture (Revelation 14:9-11), *needs to be sounded loud and clear.* It will be far better to suffer a thousand deaths than to receive the temporary benefits of this mark, and be damned to Hell! (This number, or mark, however, is not to be confused with present-day commercial numberings which have no religious significance.)

\* \* \*

During this period, a great religious monstrosity (Revelation 17:1-7,15-18) will reassert itself and become a political power. The Bible gives this monster the mysterious name of ***MYSTERIOUS BABYLON, THE GREAT MOTHER OF WHORES AND ALL KINDS OF PERVERSIONS AND CORRUPTIONS TAKING PLACE ON THE EARTH.*** Seemingly, this woman is symbolic of a great world church.

There is a powerful movement underway among decadent Protestant denominations to unite all Christian churches and denominations into one great union, that would be tolerant of all ideas and faiths. This great body will then find solid acceptance and union with the major heathen religions of the world. This is exactly what these religious bodies have been working toward for years.

This great world church will then evidently ask Israel for the privilege (Zechariah 5:5-11) of setting up its world headquarters in or near Jerusalem. Israel will refuse. As an alternative, the world church will make the same proposal to new Babylon, and will be accepted there. They might even call their headquarters the City of God, located within new Babylon, as a separate entity within the city limits, or just beyond.

\* \* \*

We are told that the rulers of that time, the ten rulers of Europe, and possibly the Antichrist and others, will use this world church to gain world power. It is evident even now that those who advocate one-world government are those most interested in forming the world church. But when the world rulers have used the world church as a springboard to power and no longer need her, they



will turn on her and burn her headquarters city (Revelation 17:16), destroying and dissolving her completely as a recognized body.

\* \* \*

Simultaneously, the Lord will send two prophets to Israel. In just 11 verses in the Bible (Revelation 11:3-13), we are given a marvelous glimpse of these two prophets who will come to warn Israel of her ways and of the judgment to come. These prophets will be so empowered by God that they will be able to stop rain from falling and do as many wonders as necessary to prove their God-given authority.

Anyone who tries to kill them will be killed himself by fire coming from the prophets' mouths. When their witness is finished, however, God will allow the Antichrist to kill them. He and the Israelis will refuse to bury their bodies, leaving them in the streets of Jerusalem where they fell, for the whole world to view, evidently by television.

The animosity and conviction generated all over the world by these prophets will be so great that people will celebrate their deaths with parties and great jubilation. But after lying dead in the streets three days, the two prophets will rise up with new life and ascend to Heaven in the sight of all. There will be some world-wide shock waves as a result of this.

\* \* \*

Soon after the prophets' resurrection, Antichrist will traitorously break his treaty with Israel. In the middle of the 7-year period of the treaty, he will bring his armies into Israel, possibly on the pretext of protecting it.

In the books of Daniel and The Revelation we have numbers given which enable us to calculate the exact time when Antichrist will attack Israel. It's not exactly in the middle of the seven years, but nearly so. From these numbers we can calculate the time when Antichrist will enter Jerusalem with his armies, and how soon he will attack the Jews after entering the city. We are also given numbers which indicate how long his army will remain in Israel. See Appendix 245, page 505.

When Antichrist turns on the Jews, his first step will be to blow up the altar of sacrifice located in front of their Temple. The Hebrew text is clear on this in Daniel 8:11-14. It is possible that he will use dynamite or something similar to blow the altar out of the way. Then he will replace it

with his own image, and order that it be worshipped.

\* \* \*

Christ spoke of this time when He warned, **When you see [by television?] the abominable thing that has caused so much devastation, standing now in the Temple area,** (in other words, when that despicable thing, that idol, is standing where the altar should be), then, **flee out of Jerusalem as fast as you can go.** See Matthew 24:15-28.

In Zechariah 14 God says, **Flee thru the valley of the mountains,** because here's what will happen: When Antichrist sets up his image in the Temple area, Christ Himself will make a move to fight for Israel. He will literally descend from Heaven, His feet just touching the top of the Mount of Olives. The instant He does so the mountain will split down the middle, making two mountains and a valley thru which the Jews can escape.

The Lord instructs those living in Jerusalem, "When you see that abominable thing standing where it should not be, flee thru the valley of the mountains. Get out of Jerusalem as fast as you can go." And He provides the way of escape. To those in other parts of Israel He says, "Flee to the mountains."

There will be need for immediate flight. In fact, the Lord instructs the Jews not to take time even to go to some other part of the house to rescue valuables. And those in the fields are not to return to the house before leaving. This of course would include those working elsewhere. All are to flee into the mountains or thru the new valley immediately. It will be absolutely necessary for each family member living in Israel at the time of these events to understand all of the instructions well.

*Only those who pay strict and immediate heed to this warning will escape,* because immediately after Antichrist desecrates the Temple he will turn on the Jews and slaughter them. He will direct his armies against them all over Israel.

\* \* \*

In mad pursuit of the Jews, Antichrist will send part of his armies thru the new valley in the Mount of Olives in an attempt to overtake those who are escaping. When a large portion of his forces are in that valley, the Lord will close up the mountain and bury them (Revelation 12:13-17), just as he buried the armies of Pharaoh of Egypt in

the Red Sea. Exodus 14:1-31.

Losing his armies in the Mount of Olives will so enrage the Antichrist that he will turn on all remaining Jews who believe in Christ, and slay them. In fact, so great will be his wrath that two-thirds of all Jews in Israel will be killed. While a great part of Antichrist's army will perish in the Mount of Olives, he will undoubtedly have thousands left in Jerusalem and in other parts of Israel to do his evil work.

While two-thirds of the Jews will be killed, of the other one-third, some will escape, and many will be taken into slavery. Those enslaved will be taken to Babylon, Egypt, and elsewhere. God instructs the Jews that as they are being driven out of Israel (evidently on foot, to be herded as slaves to Babylon), they are to put up markers along the way to enable them to return. Jeremiah 31:21. Such instructions couldn't possibly have applied to the 70-year exile of Israel in Babylon in the 6th century B.C. Any signs so placed would have deteriorated in that period. This future enslavement of the Jews will last only 3 1/2 years, after which they will be liberated—by the Lord.

\* \* \*

Great tribulation will be the lot of the Jews (Jeremiah 30:6-7) and of every true Christian at this time. Daniel 7:20-22,25; Revelation 13:7. Antichrist will pour vengeance upon God's people everywhere. Even within the nations in which he yields no power, many will no doubt worship him and obey his instructions.

During these same brief years, horrendous judgments from God will be unleashed upon the ungodly. In The Revelation we read of seven trumpet judgments, to be followed by seven vial judgments. The seven vial judgments are to be poured out on the kingdom of the Antichrist. Their effects may be world-wide in scope as well, but they will be especially concentrated on the area under Antichrist's control.

\* \* \*

What will the Jews do—those in slavery and those who have fled into the mountains and wilderness? There will no doubt be some among them who will pray most earnestly and effectively for deliverance, and God will answer their prayers! He will raise up 15 outstanding Jews, evidently Jews in free nations—seven religious leaders and eight business, political, or military leaders—to

organize the opposition against the Antichrist. We know the exact number of men. The Old Testament prophecies are very clear on the subject. See Micah 5:5-6.

It's these Jews who will instigate the war against Antichrist. Isaiah 52:1-12; 41:14-16; Micah 4:11-13. But how can they ever expect to overcome him when he's controlling *the whole world*? He will actually control the then-known world, the world of Bible times, around the Mediterranean Sea, and all of the area known at that time. But there will be vast portions of the modern-day world he will not control.

This war council of 15 Jews will mobilize the armies of four great world powers—four great nations or empires (Jeremiah 50:9; Zechariah 1:18-21)—who will go against the Antichrist. Their first target will be his capital city of Babylon.

\* \* \*

As these great powers prepare to move on Babylon to destroy it, God will warn the Jews enslaved there to flee the city. Isaiah 48:20; 49:9; 52:11-12; Jeremiah 50:8-9; 51:6,45-46; Zechariah 2:6-7. But how can slaves leave the place in which they are enslaved? With God, of course, all things are possible, and we are told exactly how He plans to save them.

He will whisper a word to the earth and actually cause it to leave its orbit. The prophecy states that earth will run around in space like a deer that's being chased, and it will wander about like a sheep that has no shepherd. Isaiah 13:13-14. See also Luke 21:26 and the note.

What would your reaction be? How do you suppose people would react today if the earth went out of orbit? It would scare the very life out of most people, wouldn't it? The Scriptures state that in those days **Many will die of heart failure because of fear, resulting from the frightful things that are happening to the earth.** Luke 21:25-26. When this earth goes on its erratic ride thru the heavens without a driver, it will bring terrifying panic to all—except to those who are ready to meet God.

\* \* \*

People in the city of Babylon will be so frightened, shaken, and confused over the results of the earth's tangent that they won't even think of their slaves, the Jews. God says to His captive, praying people, **You won't need to sneak out of Babylon fearfully, nor take hasty flight. Walk out with your heads**

high, and even ask the citizens of Babylon as to the best route to Israel. Then the Lord promises, I'll even be your rear guard. They won't come after you after you've left, because I'm going to keep them back there. Isaiah 52:11-12; Jeremiah 50:4-5.

We are told that Babylon will be the greatest and richest city on earth at the time of Antichrist's reign. People from around the world will go there to make their fortunes. But at this ominous turn of events, when the earth leaves its orbit, these foreigners will also flee and return to their own lands. Jeremiah 50:16; 51:9; Isaiah 47:15. They evidently will have heard this prophecy of the chaos that will occur just before Babylon and the surrounding area is overthrown and burned. Not all of the foreigners will leave, of course, because many will have their business, investments, and families there. And many will value these more than their lives.

The armies of the four major attacking powers, together with many others (Jeremiah 50:9,41), will surge into Babylon in a sudden and fierce attack. They will first slaughter the citizens, both in the city and in the countryside. Jeremiah 50:14-15,29-30,42; 51:49; Revelation 18:6-7.

Then the soldiers of these armies will rob Babylon of everything of value: gold, silver—anything, everywhere—on the dead, in their homes, in their banks, storehouses—everything, everywhere. Finally the victors will burn the place down. Babylon will be slaughtered, plundered, and burned, in that order. See Isaiah 47; Jeremiah 50 and 51; Revelation 18.

\* \* \*

Interestingly, the Bible tells more about the Battle of Babylon than about the Battle of Armageddon. Most of the above Scriptures have to do with modern Babylon rather than ancient Babylon.

During these events, the Jews will be triumphantly marching on their way to Jerusalem, and, according to Scripture (Isaiah 48:20-21; 49:9-11) God will provide food, water, and smooth roads for them in those deserts. He will see that their every need is provided as they travel home. The former slaves will arrive in Jerusalem praising God and shouting loudly enough for all the world to hear. Most likely all of the world *will hear*, and *see*, too, by television. What a tremendous event for the world to witness.

Next, God's liberating armies, after plundering and burning Babylon, will go from Babylon to

Israel and will turn on Antichrist's occupying forces in Jerusalem. The four powers, together with growing Israeli forces, will liberate Israel. The Jews will mobilize, organize, and take part in these final and most memorable of battles. Zechariah 14:14; 9:13 (or vs 12-16); 10:3-6.

This series of conflicts will end in the Battle of Armageddon. The Bible even tells us its timing in relation to other events. The Battle of Armageddon will take place 4 1/2 months after the Battle of Babylon. (140 days. See Chart on page 511.)

\* \* \*

What will be the reason for the **Battle of Armageddon**? What will cause it? Look at it from Antichrist's standpoint. His capital city has been wiped out, and with it he has lost all the Middle East. Thus threatened, he will no doubt mobilize all of his remaining armies thruout Europe, Africa, and elsewhere for the purpose of liquidating these invaders.

His plan will call for nothing less than total annihilation of his enemies. At the same time, the liberating armies will call for further reinforcements from their nations, and from many other nations as well. Many powers near and far will join the four great liberating powers in this last great battle. Joel 3:1-2,9-14; Revelation 16:13-14.

\* \* \*

It's an interesting chain of events: We are told that Antichrist's armies will mobilize in the Valley of Megiddo; then he will evidently come down with one of his armies and go right into the heart of Israel; he gets to within a mile of Jerusalem, on a hill called Nob, where he's able to look over to Jerusalem. Here, we're told, he will raise his fist and threaten the Jews and boast of what he will do on the morrow. He will likely do this for the benefit of television, for all the world to hear and see. Isaiah 10:20-34, esp. v 32.

But early the next morning—we believe it will be early, so God can make a full day's production of this tremendous event—Christ will appear in the heavens! The invading Antichrist army will be no match for the Messiah—the Great Liberator—and Antichrist will go down in ignominious defeat. Revelation 19:19-21.

Immediately after the battle, the Jews will take the spoil from the bodies slain by the Lord. Zechariah 14:14. They will gather all the gold, silver, and other valuables they want. Even the lame,

we are told, will gather their share. The Jews, together with the liberating armies, will enrich themselves from these fallen bodies. Then, the vultures will devour the corpses. Revelation 19:17-21.

The next event will be a great judgment from God, which many have called the *end of the world*. Isaiah 2:10-21; Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:12-17; 16:16-21. First, great darkness will cover all the earth. Then earthquakes such as mankind have never experienced will shake this earth to its very foundations. The shakings will be so severe and extended that they will level every mountain.

Following this, great numbers of large meteorites will crash into the earth, causing horrendous destruction.

\* \* \*

The oceans will disappear. Revelation 21:1. A pertinent theory, held by a number of knowledgeable scientists, is that there was at one time a canopy of ice particles high in the sky, causing a hothouse effect of constant, warm temperatures over the whole earth. It appears likely, from various Scriptures, that this canopy will be restored. The disappearance of the oceans could mean that they will literally return to the skies.

Lakes and rivers will still exist on earth, but there will be a vastly greater land area. Almost three-fourths of our world is covered by oceans today. When the waters return to the skies, there will obviously be much more room on earth. The mountains, lowered as plains and rolling hills, can become farmlands. Finally, even the deserts will **blossom in wondrous profusion and beauty**. Isaiah 35:1-2,6-7; 41:18-20; 43:18-20; 51:3. What a paradise this earth will finally become!

\* \* \*

But while earth is being renovated, it will serve as a colossal judgment from God upon selfish, willful, God-rejecting humans. Besides the judgments already mentioned, there will be great thunder and lightning, no doubt with great torrents of rain and floods. Great hail storms will also strike the earth. The average hailstones of these wild storms will weigh over 100 pounds each. Revelation 16:21. Imagine what destruction such hail will cause!

After the earth has been literally shaken to pieces, washed out, and then pummeled with great meteorites and hailstones to crush what little

remains, the Lord will send a grand finale of fire. He will burn the very bits and pieces of people's finest dreams until all lie in ashes at their feet. 2 Peter 3:5-14.

\* \* \*

The question often arises: "What will happen to the Christians on earth during this time?" Some believe that the Christians will have been taken by God from the earth before the 7-year tribulation even begins. But we believe that the Scriptures clearly teach that the Christian will be here to the very end; at least until just before God pours out His wrath upon mankind shortly after Armageddon. Matthew 24:29-31.

Our belief before making this intense study was that all Christians would be taken by the Lord from the earth before the Great Tribulation, or at least before the last half of it. But we find that the Scriptures are very clear that the Rapture of God's people from the earth will occur *after* the Great Tribulation. See Matthew 24:30-31 notes and Appendix 201, page 467.

\* \* \*

We do hope no one will dismiss us just because of disagreeing with us regarding *the time* of the Rapture of the Church. This is one point where we would like to be wrong. We have no desire to live thru a time of great tribulation. But the blessed hope of Christians is that Christ has promised He will take us to be with Himself, forever. The time when He takes us is not all that important. Our main concern must be that we are *ready to go* when He calls, either by death or in the Rapture.

Three books regarding the Rapture are recommended reading: *The Blessed Hope*, by George Ladd, published by Eerdmans; *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, by Alexander Reese, published by Grand Rapids International Publications; and *The Church and the Tribulation*, by Robert H. Gundry, published by Zondervan.

Following the Rapture, a great marriage will take place in Heaven. Revelation 19:6-9. The Bridegroom is none other than the Son of God, Jesus Christ. The Bride will be those of earth who **have made themselves ready**.

Two judgments will also take place at this time—the judgment for rewards, for all true followers of the Lord, and the judgment of the nations. At the judgment of the nations (Matthew

25:31-46), determination will be made concerning those still living upon the earth. Some will be privileged to enter the Kingdom Age, to repopulate the earth, and some will not. Christ will ask one great question of those who appear before Him at the judgment of the nations: "How did you treat My people, the Christians and the Jews, during the awful time of tribulation? Did you help them or did you ignore their needs, or even help the Antichrist in his persecution of My people?" The Lord will simply say, "Whatever you have done to these, My brothers and sisters, you have done to Me." And they will be judged accordingly. See Matthew 25:31-46.

Later there will be another judgment—the judgment of all who ignored God and His will for them, and who lived to please themselves instead of God. They will be resurrected from death and

Hell for this judgment. Revelation 20:11-15. There will be degrees of anguish and suffering in Hell and in the lake of fire, just as there will be degrees of reward in Heaven for those who sought earnestly to please God. It is our earnest hope that you will surrender in obedience to God and received His forgiveness thru Christ—and everlasting Life.

Following His return to earth, Christ will set up His eternal Kingdom, the Kingdom of God on earth. Christ will then in truth be King of kings and Lord of lords.

This is a bare outline of a few of the outstanding happenings prophesied in the Bible for the end time. As you read and earnestly study God's word, you will discover much, much more.

## 245 GOD'S PROPHESED TIMETABLE FOR THE END

Note the charts on pages 509, 510 and 511.

Then read the explanations here.

When will the end of the age occur? This is a question many have asked. When Christ was on earth He told His followers that no one but the Father knew the day nor the hour when He would return to set up His Kingdom on earth. However, in the prophetic books of Daniel and The Revelation we are given numbers which pinpoint the end of the age, when computed from certain end-time events, as you will see on our chart on p 511.

Again however, this means that we still cannot start the countdown until these certain end-time events occur. This still will not give us the day and the hour of Christ's return, only the approximate time.

All of the time periods given in Daniel and The Revelation have to do with the last 3 1/2 years of the age. So today we cannot give even the approximate time of Christ's return, because we do not know as yet when those last 3 1/2 years will begin. But as the end approaches we will be able to begin to calculate. Notice the record we have of this in Daniel 12:4-9:

<sup>4</sup>"But as for you, Daniel, seal up the meaning of the interpretation of the vision that was given you, and seal up the understanding of the book until the time of the end, when many will run to and fro in it, and the understanding of it will be increased."

<sup>5</sup>Then as I looked, I saw two others standing by the river. One was on my side, and the other on the far

side.

<sup>6</sup>One of them asked the man dressed in linen, who was now above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until these amazing events come to an end?"

<sup>7</sup>The man dressed in linen who was above the waters of the river then raised both hands toward the heavens, and I heard him swear by Him who lives forever, and say, "It will last for a year, plus two years, plus half a year. And as soon as they have shattered the power of the holy people, all these things will come to an end."

<sup>8</sup>I heard all this, but I didn't understand. So I said, "Sir, what will be the outcome of all this?"

<sup>9</sup>"Go your way, Daniel," he replied, "because the meaning of all this has been closed up and sealed until the time of the end."

Certain periods of time concerning the end of the age were given here to Daniel, but notice that Daniel was told (v 4), **Daniel, seal up ... the understanding of the book.** Then notice in v 8 that Daniel becomes rather excited and concerned about the periods of time given him in this revelation, and he asks for a clarification. But again he is told that the meaning of all this has been closed up and sealed until the time of the end. That tells us that these secrets *will be unsealed and revealed* to God's people in the time of the end.

*One indication* that we are now living in the time of the end is that God is now revealing to His

people what He meant by all these numbers in Daniel and The Revelation, as you will see as we progress in this Appendix, and as you study the charts and Scriptures on pages 509, 510 and 511. This is certainly one strong indication that we are living in the days of the end, because Daniel was very definitely told that this information would not be available until the end time. In fact, it is only very recently that God has chosen to reveal how these numbers all fit together.

For many centuries a goodly number of God's ministers have tried to decipher and understand the figures God gave Daniel, many of them even admitting that the end of the age was still in the distant future from their time, but still trying to determine what the figures referred to. If they had only listened to what God told Daniel they would have realized that the meanings of these numbers would not be unsealed and made understandable **until the time of the end.**

Now, in this day, when we see the Jews back in Israel as a nation, and God's prophecies being fulfilled all around us, we know we are living in the time of the end, and we can rightfully expect God to reveal the meaning of His message in the 12th chapter of Daniel.

\* \* \*

Notice also, in v 4, what Daniel was told about *how* these secrets will be revealed. They will be revealed because many will **run to and fro** (in Daniel), **and the understanding of it will be increased.** Many have taught that this points to a time when many will travel extensively, and a time when knowledge will be greatly increased, both of which are certainly true of our day.

Never before has there been such great increase in travel as there has been in the last few years. And knowledge is increasing today as never before. All previous scientific knowledge doubled from 1940 to 1950, in just 10 years! In 1980 scientific knowledge was said to be *tripling* every five years! At this writing scientific knowledge is shooting up like a rocket taking off into space!

\* \* \*

But most Bible students believe this has an entirely different reference. The word *run* here is translated from the Hebrew word *shuwt*, pronounced *shoot*, and it means *to push forth* as in a search. This Hebrew word appears six times in the Old Testament, and in every case it refers to active

searching. The word appears in 2 Chronicles 16:9; Jeremiah 5:1; 49:3; Daniel 12:4; Amos 8:12; and Zechariah 4:10. Even in Jeremiah 49:3, where the meaning is not as obvious, it refers to a scurrying about in search of a hiding place. William Biederwolf, in *THE SECOND COMING BIBLE*, published by Baker Book House, states in regard to these words in Daniel:

"The word *run* means to run about in order to search out and investigate. It cannot therefore mean mere increase of travel. It might mean travel for a purpose, the result of which is the increase of knowledge, but infers rather the meaning of to and fro in the sense of searching, scrutinizing the prophecy, as a result of which, *knowledge* of it will be *increased.*" This has certainly been true of the prophetic Scriptures in these days. Never before has there been such an intensive search as to the meaning of God's prophetic word.

In Daniel 12:7 we have the time of the Great Tribulation in years. The same time is referred to in v 2 of the following Scripture, although here it is given in months:

<sup>1</sup>Then I was given a reed that looked like a measuring rod. And the angel, still standing there, said, "Go now, and measure the Temple of God and the altar and the people worshiping there.

<sup>2</sup>But don't include the court outside the Temple. Don't measure it because the Gentiles already have access to that area. But the time is coming when the Gentiles will trample thruout the entire holy city for 42 months. —Revelation 11:1-2

The measuring here is for the purpose of chastisement, not for building. Israel will be measured and found far short of measuring up to God's will. The court refers to the court of the Gentiles in the Temple area. It is not to be measured and given over to them, because it is already open to them. Gentiles have always been privileged to enter that particular court of the Temple.

The implication here is that the rest of the Temple, and all Jerusalem, will also be taken over by the Gentiles under the direction of Antichrist. He and his armies will trample thruout the streets of Jerusalem for 42 months (3 1/2 years). Prophetic months are always of 30 days duration, and 360 days to the year. That would mean 1,260 days. Keep that number in mind as we continue.

<sup>13</sup>Then I heard two angels talking to each other. Then one of them asked the other, "How long will these things that were seen in the vision continue? How long will their rebellion continue to cause the desolation and elimination of the daily sacrifices? And how long will God's congregation and the Temple con-

time to be given over to this evil one to be trampled underfoot?"

<sup>14</sup> The second angel then said to me, "This condition will continue for 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the Temple will be properly restored." —Daniel 8:13-14

In Revelation 11, we are given the duration of time the armies of Antichrist will walk the streets of Jerusalem. In the above Scripture in Daniel we are given the number of days from the time the altar of sacrifice is destroyed by Antichrist (Daniel 8:11-12; 9:27; 12:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Matthew 24:15-21), until he is overpowered and the sacrifice reinstituted.

But first, a brief word study of the Hebrew, in order to understand the figure of **2,300 evenings and mornings**. In v 14 we have two Hebrew words for the one word translated *days* in many translations. They are *ereb* and *boger*.

*Ereb* means *dusk, day, evening, night*.

*Boger* means *dawn, break of day, morning*.

The correct translation, then, should be, **This condition will continue for 2,300 evenings and mornings**, as we have it. See v 26 for confirmation of this, which refers back to vs 13-14. Evidently it is the evening and morning sacrifices which are referred to. Literally, that would mean 1,150 evening and 1,150 morning sacrifices. In other words—1,150 24-hour days.

This is the only place in Scripture where these two Hebrew words are used to denote a 24-hour day. Now keep that figure of 1,150 also in mind while we look at still another figure in Daniel.

<sup>11</sup> "And from the time that the daily sacrifices are abolished and the abominable thing that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.—Daniel 12:11

The figure **1,290 days** is the number of days that will pass from the time Antichrist blows up the altar of sacrifice until the Battle of Armageddon. The Hebrew word *yowm*, meaning *a 24-hour day*, is used for *days* here. In the next v, Daniel 12:12, we read:

**Blessed is the one who patiently keeps waiting until the 1,335th day arrives.**

This is 45 days more than the number stated in v 11. We believe these 45 days are the days spoken of by Christ in Matthew 24:29-30, during which God will renovate the earth and pour out His judgment upon it in fire, earthquakes, darkness, etc. (Revelation 6:12-17; 16:17-21), between the Battle of Armageddon and the return of our Lord in power and glory to establish His Kingdom upon the earth. The charts and Scriptures on

pages 509, 510 and 511 will provide a clearer picture of the *day* periods in Daniel, which are explained as simply as possible in the following paragraphs:

The 1,290 days of Daniel 12:11 will evidently end at the Battle of Armageddon, when Antichrist is defeated. The desecration of the altar of sacrifice and the setting up of the image of the Beast will therefore have taken place 1,290 days previous to the Battle of Armageddon.

Daniel 8:11-14, however, presented the fact that after Antichrist removes the altar of sacrifice and sets up his own image, the image will remain in that place for only 1,150 **evening and morning** days. That is 140 days less than the 1,290 days of 12:11. So evidently Jerusalem will somehow be liberated from Antichrist and his forces 140 days before the Battle of Armageddon.

But if, according to Revelation 11:1-2, the armies of the Antichrist are to **trample** the streets of Jerusalem for 42 months, or 1,260 days, how is it possible to account for the 110 days' difference between that figure and the 1,150 days during which the image of the Beast stands in the place of the altar of sacrifice? The armies will be in Jerusalem during the 1,150 days that Antichrist's image is standing, but what about the other 110 days?

A likely answer is that Antichrist and his forces will take Jerusalem 110 days before they blow up the altar of sacrifice and erect their image of the Beast. It's even possible that they will enter Israel peaceably under some pretext, 110 days before they blow up the altar. This is an even more likely answer. So they will actually **trample** the streets of Jerusalem 110 days before they blow up the altar, whether in peace or otherwise, plus the 1,150 days the altar is desecrated by the image of the Antichrist, making a total of 1,260 days.

Another interesting Scripture to look at here is Revelation 12:6.

<sup>6</sup> **The woman then fled into the wilderness, where God has prepared a place for her, and where she will be taken care of for 1,260 days.**

The woman here is the remnant of the people of Israel who have fled into the country of Jordan. Matthew 24:15-22; Luke 17:26-37; Zechariah 14:1-7. We are informed that God will take care of the Israelis there for 1,260 days. And that feeding will begin the day, or the day after, Antichrist desecrates the Temple in Israel.

But previously we were told (Daniel 12:11) that there would be 1,290 days from the desecration of the Temple until Armageddon. Therefore,

evidently the Lord will stop feeding the Jews in the wilderness 30 days before the Battle of Armageddon.

We can see the reason for this as we consider that even after Jerusalem is freed from Antichrist, the Jews will be waging war on the surrounding nations. And possibly some time will pass before it would be advisable for the Jews in the wilderness to return to their land. Evidently they will return 30 days before the Battle of Armageddon. Or it could be that 30 days before Armageddon, the Jewish liberating armies will begin airlifting food supplies to the Jews in the wilderness.

It would certainly seem advisable that they stay in the wilderness for the extra 30 days, until after Armageddon, and until after the 45 days of judgment that follow Armageddon.

Also notice that we are informed in Daniel 9:27 that Antichrist will break his treaty **in the middle of the 7-year agreement**. In other words, he will break his treaty after 3 1/2 years. But from the other figures we have been given, we discover that the treaty will actually be broken 30 days before the middle of the 7 years, and not exactly in the middle. There is no direct statement to this effect, but we discover this when we make our deductions regarding these other figures. See charts on pages 509, and 511.

\* \* \*

*The long horizontal broken and solid line* at the top of the chart on pages 510, and 511 represents the 7-year treaty of Antichrist with many nations. Daniel 9:27.

*The solid vertical line*, extending upward, represents the time when Antichrist will desecrate the Temple and persecute the Jews. This will occur 30 days before the actual middle of the 7-year treaty. Notice that the armies of Antichrist will enter Jerusalem 110 days before the abomination takes place.

*The broken vertical line* to the left represents the exact middle of the seven years.

*The second horizontal line* represents the 1,290 days from the time the Temple is desecrated until the Battle of Armageddon. Daniel 12:8-11. From the Battle of Armageddon until the return of Christ in power and glory, there will be 45 days. Daniel 12:12.

*The third horizontal line* represents the 1,150 days from the time the Temple is desecrated until it is recaptured by the Jews. Daniel 8:11-14; Micah 5:5-6. There will then be 140 days from the

time Jerusalem is reclaimed until the Battle of Armageddon. These 140 days will be the period of time when Antichrist will be calling all nations under his power to join him in an attack in Israel against the many nations that joined in defeating him in the Middle East, even totally destroying rebuilt Babylon.

*The fourth horizontal line* points out the fact that for Antichrist and his armies to **tread** the streets of Jerusalem for 1,260 days it will be necessary for them to arrive in Jerusalem 110 days before the Temple is desecrated. Their time of *treading* the streets of Jerusalem (Revelation 11:1-2) will end when Jerusalem is reclaimed by the Jews and their allies.

*The fifth horizontal line* represents the period of time the Jews will be fed by the Lord in the wilderness following the desecration of the Temple. Revelation 12:6. If they stay in the wilderness for 1,260 days there will be just 30 days remaining until the Battle of Armageddon.

\* \* \*

What will happen after the Battle of Armageddon? Well, the Lord Jesus has told us clearly what to expect. In Matthew 24:29-31 He gave His followers the following information:

<sup>29</sup>“Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. The stars will fall from the heavens (see Appendix 240 note, page 496), and the natural forces controlling the planets will be shaken.

<sup>30</sup>Then the sign that will herald the coming of the Son of Man will appear in the sky! When that happens, all the people in the world will mourn. Because then they will see the Son of Man whom they had spurned, coming on the clouds in the sky, with a most majestic display of power and great glory.

<sup>31</sup>And accompanied with the sound of a mighty trumpet blast I will send out My angels to gather My chosen ones together from the four corners of the earth, from the extremity of one horizon to the extremity of the other.”

The apostle Paul was also given information about this same event, as he states in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17:

—Continued on page 512 ➞

—Continued from page 508

<sup>15</sup>I can tell you exactly what the Lord has said about this: When the Lord returns, those of us who are still alive will clearly not rise up to meet Him ahead of those who are asleep in death.



### The following computations will help--

#### Daniel 12:8-12

1290 — There will be 1290 days from the **abomination of desolation** (when Antichrist betrays and turns against Israel and sets up His image in Jerusalem, to be worshiped) to the **Battle of Armageddon**. 1290 days is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  prophetic years\*, plus 30 days ( $360 \times 3\frac{1}{2} + 30 = 1290$ ) where 360 days is one prophetic year (see below).

1290 —days

-1260 —middle of 7 years ( $3\frac{1}{2} \times 360 = 1260$ ) days

30 —days more than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years. This means that while the **abomination** will occur in the middle of the week (of 7 years) Daniel 9:27, it will actually occur 30 days before the exact middle of that 7 years. See chart on p 511.

#### Daniel 12:11-12

1335 —days

-1290

45 —days from the Battle of Armageddon to the return of Christ to reign **with power and great glory**. Matthew 24:30.

#### Daniel 8:11-14

1260 —days, or 42 months, from Revelation 11:1-2; Daniel 12:4-7.

-1150 —from Daniel 8:13-14 -- the number of days Antichrist's idol (image) desecrates the holy place.

110 —the number of days the armies of Antichrist will be in Jerusalem before they desecrate the altar of sacrifice.

1290 —days, from Daniel 12:11 above

-1150 —days, from Daniel 8:13-14

140 —the number of days Israel will enjoy freedom again, before Armageddon. This freedom will result from Antichrist's armies being defeated at Babylon and the Middle East (Jeremiah 50 and 51, most of which is yet future) by great armies of the world being raised up against him by 15 outstanding Jews located outside Israel. Micah 5:5-6; Jeremiah 50:9. During these 140 days Antichrist and his remaining armies in Europe and elsewhere, as well as the armies of his enemies worldwide, will no doubt be preparing feverishly for the showdown back in Israel at Armageddon. Revelation 16:13-16.

1290 —days from desecration of the altar to Armageddon --Daniel 12:11.

-1260 —days the remnant of Israel will be fed in the wilderness

--Revelation 12:6.

30 —days remaining before the **Battle of Armageddon**.

**\*Prophetic Year:** One theory regarding the prophetic year is that before the flood (Genesis 6:1 to 8:22) there was a protective (from the sun) canopy of ice particles high above the earth, accounting for the long lives lived then. God brought about the flood, they say, by causing the planet Mars to make a close flyby of the earth, and the gravity from Mars broke up the canopy and brought it down as rain. This grav-

ity also slowed the journey of the earth around the sun from 360 to 365 days.

Supporting evidence is that the ancients knew Mars had two moons before modern astronomy discovered them. The original 360 days may also account for the 360 degrees in a circle. So that's why, they say, God still speaks of 360 days in a year.

<sup>27</sup> This prince will then arrogantly and ruthlessly dictate the terms of a firm seven-year agreement with many nations. But in the middle of the seven years he will put an end to the sacrifice and grain offerings in Israel. Following this abominable act he will fly on wings as an abominable desolator, and cause devastation and desolation to the very end. Then that which has been decreed will be poured out upon this vile desolator. —Daniel 9:27

<sup>8</sup> I heard all this, but I didn't understand. So I said, "Sir, what will be the outcome of all these things?"

<sup>9</sup> "Go your way, Daniel," he replied, "because the meaning of all this has been closed up and sealed until the time of the end.

<sup>10</sup> "Many will be made clean, pure, and refined by these trials, but the wicked will continue on in their wicked living. And none of the wicked will understand what's really going on, and that the end is fast approaching. But the wise will understand.

<sup>11</sup> "And from the time that the daily sacrifices are abolished and the abominable thing that causes desolation is set up to be worshiped, there will be 1,290 days.

<sup>12</sup> "Blessed are those who patiently keep waiting until the 1,335th day arrives." —Daniel 12:8-12

<sup>11</sup> Yes, he magnified himself, even claiming to be as great as the Prince of the throngs in Heaven. He blew up the holy altar where the daily sacrifices were being made to God and then ordered that the Temple be torn down.

<sup>12</sup> It's because of the Jews' rebellion against the Lord that the masses in Israel will be given over to the horn, along with power to stop the daily sacrifices. He will throw truth to the ground, and prosper in everything he does.

<sup>13</sup> Then I heard two angels talking to each other. One of them asked the other, "How long will these things continue that were seen in the vision? How long will their rebellion continue to cause the desolation and elimination of the daily sacrifices? And how long will God's congregation and the Temple continue to be given over to this evil one to be trampled underfoot?"

<sup>14</sup> The second angel then said to me, "This condition will continue for 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the Temple will be properly restored." —(1150 days) Daniel 8:11-14

<sup>1</sup> Then I was given a long stick that looked like a measuring rod. And the angel, still standing there, said, "Go now, and measure the Temple of God and the altar. And count the people worshipping there.

<sup>2</sup> "But don't include the court outside the Temple area. Don't measure it because the Gentiles already have access to that area. But the time is coming when the Gentiles will trample throughout the entire holy city for 42 months." —Revelation 11:1-2

Beginning of the  
Seven-year treaty      The woman  
then ran into  
the wilderness, where God has prepared a place for her,  
and where she will be taken care of for 1,260 days. —  
Revelation 12:6

<sup>21</sup> As I was watching, that horn started waging war against those dedicated to God, and he was overpowering them,

<sup>22</sup> until our God who has been alive forever, came and pronounced judgment in favor of those dedicated to the Most High God. And the time soon came when God's dedicated ones took over the kingdom. . .

<sup>25</sup> He will speak boastfully against the Most High God and persecute those dedicated to Him, and will try to make alterations in times and in law. Those dedicated to God will be handed over to him for 3 1/2 years. —Daniel 7:21-22,25

<sup>24</sup> "He will have great power, but his power will not come from himself. The destruction he will cause will be awesome, and he will succeed in everything he tackles. He will destroy those in positions of power—and those dedicated to God!" —Daniel 8:24

<sup>1</sup> The angel wearing linen clothes then said, "At the time all this happens, Michael, the great prince who stands guard over your people, will rise up. And there will be a time of great trouble, greater trouble than there has ever been since there was a nation. Never before has there been such trouble.

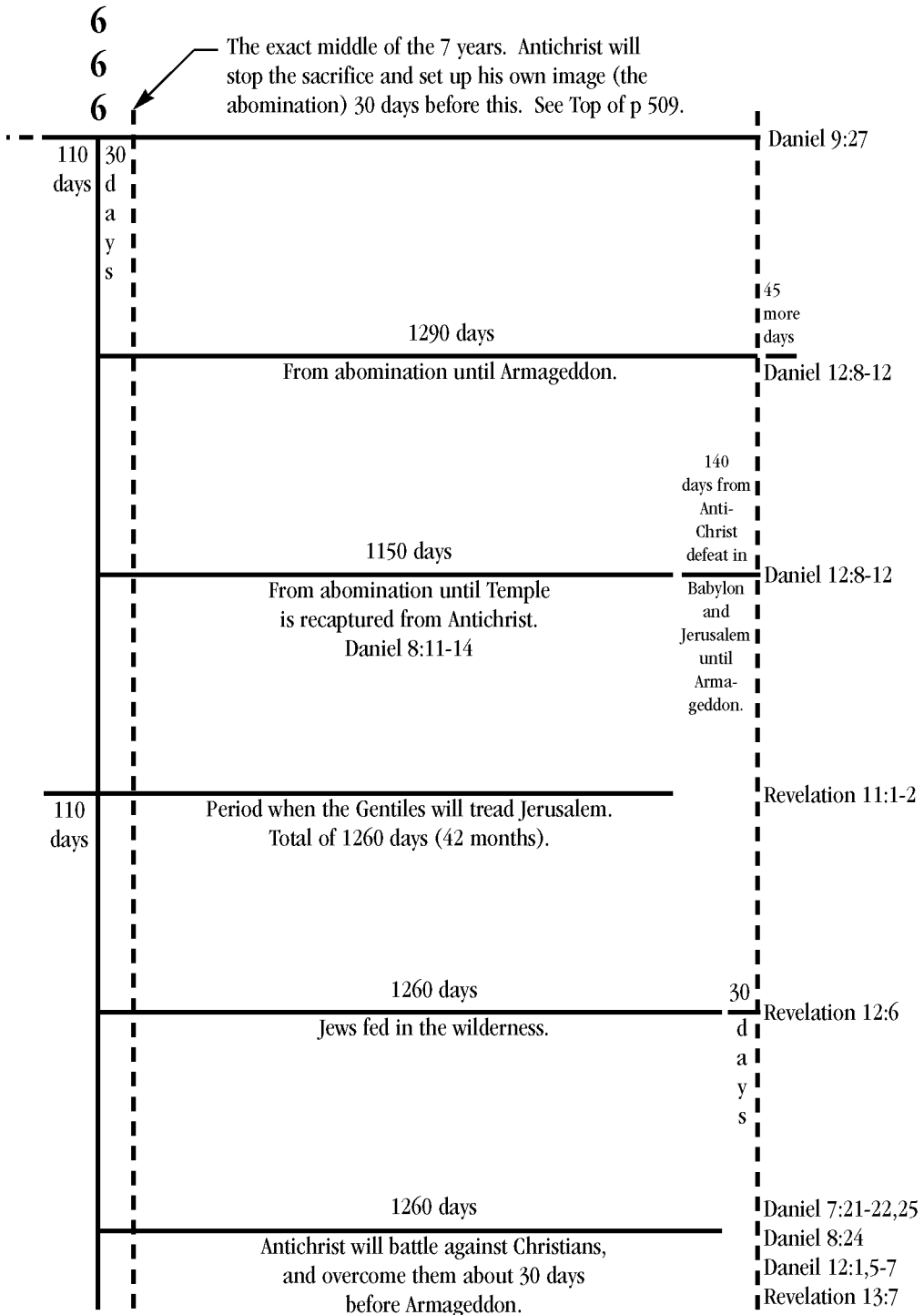
"But that's the time when your people—everyone whose name is found written in The Book—will be saved. . ."

<sup>5</sup> Then as I looked, I saw two others standing by the river. One was on my side, and the other on the far side.

<sup>6</sup> One of them asked the man dressed in linen, who was now above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until these amazing events come to an end?"

<sup>7</sup> The man dressed in linen who was above the waters of the river raised both hands toward the heavens, and I heard him swear by Him who lives forever, and say, "It will last for a year, plus two years, plus half a year. And as soon as they have shattered the power of the holy people, all these things will come to an end." —Daniel 12:1,5-7

<sup>7</sup> Still, he was allowed by God to wage war against those on earth who are His people, even to overpower them. And he was given authority over every tribe, language, and nation as well. —Revelation 13:7



<sup>16</sup>Because the Lord Himself will come down from Heaven with a powerful shout of command, together with the voice of an archangel and the sounding of the trumpet of God! The dead who belong to Christ will be the first to rise.

<sup>17</sup>Then we who are living for the Lord and are still alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. From that moment on we will always be with the Lord!

What profound words! In the midst of all the darkness over the earth at that time, the Lord will appear in the heavens in all His glory and brilliant majesty. What a great and glorious day that will be for those who belong to Christ when He comes to earth in His great power and splendor to receive His Kingdom!

Notice that both in Christ's words and in the words of the apostle Paul we are told that this gathering of God's people to be with Himself will occur **when the Lord returns** after the Battle of

Armageddon and after the 45 days of judgment on the earth. In 1 Corinthians 15:52 Paul calls this **the sounding of the last trumpet**. Isaiah also speaks of that great trumpet call in Isaiah 27:12-13.

It's possible of course, and very likely, that the Rapture itself will take place just before these terrible final judgments strike the earth. Either the Lord will take us from the earth before that judgment hits, or He will protect us thru that time. Great days are ahead, days in which we have the privilege of serving the Lord, even unto death, if necessary.

Let us be faithful!

## 246 Just Who Is Jesus Christ?

The above question is one that has greatly concerned the Church of Jesus Christ ever since He walked upon the Earth as one of us. So it will be best for us, first of all, to devote a couple of pages here to the interesting history of what the early Church decided regarding this question, and why they came to the conclusion they did.

The main concern regarding the question actually became prominent when Arius, a Christian minister in Alexandria, Egypt, began teaching that while Jesus, the Son of God, was indeed the Creator of all things, He Himself had been created by the Father. He was strongly opposed by his bishop and by a large council of 100 bishops, and was finally driven from Alexandria in A.D. 321.

However, Arius continued his preaching, going to Antioch and finding support there. The controversy soon involved the entire Church.

Emperor Constantine had, just a few years before this, declared himself to be a Christian, and by A.D. 320 had made Christianity the religion of the Empire, but he himself refused to be baptized. Besides, he still continued to be the Supreme Pontiff of the heathen religion of Rome—the Babylonian cult of Ishtar. This supposedly guaranteed that he would be a Roman god after death. This tells us something of what he really believed.

He finally was baptized, just before he died. He evidently wanted to play it safe, just in case

Christianity was right, and he didn't make it as a Roman god.

And now, besides controlling the heathen religion, he stepped in and called a council of the Church, to resolve the question of just who Jesus Christ is. This council was held at Nicea, Bithynia (now N.W. Turkey, about 100 miles S.E. of present Istanbul) in the year 325.

"Constantine was a political genius. From his comparatively meager understanding of Christianity and his brief contact with it he concluded two things: that Christianity would become the dominant religious system of the world, and that the dying Roman Empire could be saved, or at least prolonged, by a union with this dynamic religion. Constantine wanted Christianity to become the cement of the empire; he wanted religion to act as a unifying factor in the political system...

"He decided that a unifying creed would bring political and religious peace...The statements of Constantine at the Council of Nicea were the determining factors as to what the council should decide. Still, at the same time the decrees of the council were recognized as authoritative Christian pronouncements...

"The very motives of Constantine in adopting Christianity indicate the direction he had already determined were to be taken. He wanted to use Christianity as a political and social factor in

building the state. This meant the use of secular power, as has been seen, in establishing uniformity. Dissent must be stamped out. It meant imperial settlement of doctrinal and ecclesiastical disputes.”—*A Summary of Christian History by Robert A. Baker—Broadman Press*. Thoughtful leaders were very concerned about this new development—and we should be too, even at this late date.

So here is a heathen, claiming to be a Christian but refusing to obey the Lord and be baptized, and also still a very active leader in his heathen religion, now deciding to supervise the decision as to what the Church should believe.

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Over 300 bishops attended this council, and they were all the guests of Constantine. Their travel expenses were paid, and they were all housed and fed at Nicea at the expense of the government. That put them under real obligation to the Emperor. He had bought their votes! And Constantine was the prominent figure at the council.

Besides the 300 bishops, each of them was allowed to bring along two of the ministers under them, as well as three servants. So there were over 1,800 persons assembled there, to be housed and fed by the government.

There were three distinct groups at this council. There were a few who called themselves the Orthodox party. They were in the minority. There were 20 who were staunchly behind Arius. Then there was the majority group, which weren't sure just how they believed regarding the question before them. Some have called them the semi-Arians.

Constantine entered the council at its opening with great pomp and ceremony.

These bishops were very concerned about pleasing this powerful man, because not too long before that, he had been their enemy, persecuting the Church. The Church had never had it so good as they had it now, and they didn't want to lose the advantage. They wanted to be sure they were politically correct in the eyes of Constantine. So Constantine was able to control the council, and to a large degree decide what the decision would be. He constantly took an active part, and exercised a considerable influence. Whenever he chose, he took the floor and spoke to the assembly, giving his views.

Many of the bishops had brought papers along to the council concerning matters which

they wished to be considered, but Constantine tore them up and threw them in the fire. He said there was only one matter with which they were concerned, and that was concerning just who Jesus Christ was. So in truth he dominated the council.

This council was in session for six weeks. The leader of those who opposed Arius was a minister by the name of Athanasius, a member of the orthodox party. He declared that the Son of God had been begotten of the Father, and was of the same essence (the same substance) as the Father, and is therefore as much God as the Father is, and is His equal in every respect, while Arius claimed that the Son of God had been created by the Father.

Athanasius claimed that Arianism proceeded from human reason, and that he approached his conclusion from divine revelation. But neither of them had any support from Scripture, except where Athanasius asserted that the Son was begotten of the Father.

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When the vote was finally taken, everyone voted that the Son of God was begotten of the Father and was of the same essence as the Father, except for Arius and two others. “The only two who sided with Arius were two Egyptian Bishops, Theonias and Secundus, who persistently refused to sign, and were banished with Arius to Illyria. The books of Arius were burned and his followers branded as enemies of Christianity.”—*History of the Christian Church by Philip Schaff—Errdmans Publishing Co.* So the Church at Rome had begun to assert its claim that it has the power and authority to declare what is truth, without support from the Scriptures. And Christians who had been victims of imperial power just a few years before, now used imperial power to persecute one another.

“On the 29th of July, the 20th anniversary of his accession, Constantine gave the members of the council a splendid banquet in his palace. . . . He remunerated the Bishops lavishly, dismissed them with a suitable valedictory, and letters of commendation to the authorities of all the provinces on their homeward way”. —*History of the Christian Church*.

\* \* \*

A good many of those at the Council of Nicea who had voted for the Nicene Creed had done so with reluctance. They were especially opposed to

the decision that Jesus was of the same essence as the Father. The result was that they continued to preach the doctrine of Arius.

When Constantine died his empire was divided among three of his sons. Two of the sons shortly died, and his son Constantius became emperor over the entire Roman Empire. He agreed with the Arians. So Athanasius was now banished, and the Arian message prevailed. This continued until Constantius died in 361.

Following that, there were several emperors in succession, some who favored Arianism and others who favored the decree of the Council of Nicea. But in the year 379 Emperor Theodosius I came to power. He reigned until the year 395, and during his long reign he put all the power of Rome against the teaching of the Arians. From that time on the teaching of the Arians was more or less a thing of the past.

It was claimed that the Arians associated themselves with the secular political power, but Athanasius and his followers certainly used secular political power every chance they got, and it was that power that finally entrenched the teaching that the Son of God is of the same essence as the Father.

So here we actually have the Roman Empire and the Church at Rome telling us how we must believe, instead of going to the inspired word of God to determine what the truth really is. But true Christian policy has always been—in matters of doctrine where the word of God does not speak, we are to be silent. There are many matters about which God has not yet given us clear understanding. But as we shortly search the Scriptures here, we will discover what they actually do teach in regard to the relationship of God the Father to His Son, Jesus.

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In regard to the controversy which brought about the Council of Nicea, both of the sides were wrong. Arius was wrong because no Scripture teaches that the Son of God was created by the Father, and he was wrong in other matters as well. Athanasius was wrong because no Scripture teaches that the Son of God is of the same essence as the Father. The Scriptures are silent in both cases. But what the Scriptures do teach is that Jesus is the Son of God. And if one is a son, the truth implied is that the son has been begotten by a father. And in this case the Son was begotten by God. How God did this we are not told. We are to merely accept

the fact and stop speculating.

Yes, Arius was wrong, but the power of Rome was also wrong. It was the power of Rome and the Roman Church that insisted that we believe that the Son of God is of the same essence as the Father. As already stated, there is no Scripture that teaches this. Likewise, it is the Church of Rome that teaches purgatory. But there is no Scripture that teaches a purgatory. And the same is true of many other teachings of the Roman Church. So let us stop speculating about God and about His Son Jesus Christ, and about other spiritual matters, and accept only what the revealed word of God teaches! Let us now look to the word of God for the answer to our question.

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**So Just Who Is Jesus Christ?** Let's begin with John 14:28 where Jesus makes the statement, **The Father is greater than I am.** Many believe that Christ was referring only to His time here on earth. But Scriptures thruout the New Testament teach that the Father has always been greater than the Son, and that **Christ belongs to God**, and that **Christ is under the authority of God.** 1 Corinthians 3:23; 11:3.

It had always been obvious to the followers of Christ that the Father was greater than the Son in His human existence. So they understood here that Christ was speaking of the Father being greater than He in His eternal relationship with the Father.

Many use Philipians 2:6 as their proof text that the Son is equal to the Father, where the King James version reads, **Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.** But the Greek word *isos*, translated *equal* there, can also be translated *like*. And really, a better translation here is, **While He is just like God, He didn't consider being like God a highly prized possession that He must tenaciously hang on to for His own good**, as that translation is also in harmony with all other teaching regarding the relationship of the Father and the Son.

Jesus never at any time made any claim to equality with the Father. In John 5:18 the Judeans thought Jesus was claiming equality with God, but Jesus never claimed such. Nor did any of His apostles ever make such a claim for Him.

In fact, in Jesus' prayer in John 17:24, He prayed, **My Father, I want all whom You have given Me to also be with Me where I am so that they may see My glory—the glory which you gave Me. Because You loved Me even before the world was created.** There we

see that Christ's glory, which includes all His power, wisdom, etc. are not of Himself. All His great power and wisdom come from the Father. And it was by this power and wisdom from the Father that the Son (as God) created all things. John 1:2-4; 1 Corinthians 8:16; Ephesians 3:9c; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2.

The same is true of the Son even now. After Jesus had risen from the dead and was again in His glorified state, He said to His followers (Matthew 28:18), **I have been given unlimited power and authority in Heaven and on earth.** Notice again that the power He has even now, is power that's been given Him by the Father.

The Son of God is always dependent upon the Father for all He does, has, and is. See Psalm 2:6-9; 110:1; Matthew 22:44; 28:18; John 5:26; 17:24; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28. So the J F B Commentary is incorrect when they state in regard to John 10:34 that "It is never said of Christ that 'The word of the Lord came to Him.'" True, those exact words are never used regarding God's words coming to Christ, but the message Jesus gave was always the message received by Him from the Father. See John 7:16; 8:28,38,40; 12:49; 14:10; 17:7-8 where Jesus says that everything He taught and preached came to Him from the Father.

\* \* \*

That God wants us to know everything we can learn about Jesus Christ and His relationship to the Father is evident where Peter states, **Continue to grow in all there is to know about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** 2 Peter 3:18. God also wants us to learn everything we can about Himself, as Paul states in Colossians 1:10, **We pray...that you will constantly grow in an ever fuller knowledge of God.** And our knowledge of God must include our knowledge of what the true relationship is between the Son of God and God the Father. And the place to look for that knowledge is in the word of God. We must not speculate, as we noted was done in some of the early Church councils, but we must learn what God and His Son say about their relationship with each other.

For instance, as already twice noted, no Scripture teaches that the Father and the Son are of the same essence, as was declared in the creed coming out of the Council of Nicea.

But in spite of the fact that God wants us to know everything possible about Himself, He knows that our knowledge of Him in this life will be very limited. But that will all change in the great eter-

nity that's before us. When praying to the Father, Jesus said in John 17:3, **And this is what eternal life will mean to them: They will come to really know You, the only One who is truly God. And they will also come to really know Jesus Christ, whom you sent to them.** But we are not to wait until then to know God and Jesus Christ to the fullest extent possible.

\* \* \*

One matter about which the Scriptures are very clear is that the Son of God was begotten (born) of the Father. How God did this we are not told, so it is none of our business. We agree with the various Church councils that have stated that the Son of God is begotten of the Father, not made. There are some theologians who agree that the Son of God was begotten of the Father, but they also claim that the Son is self-existent. But He cannot be self-existent if He received His glory, and all that that includes, from the Father. And the Scriptures are clear that He was indeed begotten of the Father.

The Son therefore owes His existence to the will of the Father, if He is begotten of the Father. Everything He has and is He has received from the Father. John 17:24.

In Colossians 1:15 we read, **As we look at Him we see what God is really like, because He is like God in every way, except that God is invisible. He is God's firstborn Son, whom God has placed in authority over all creation.** God is the creator of all things, but He created everything thru His Son. Colossians 1:16 states, **God created all things by Him—everything in the heavens and everything on earth. This includes everything that can be seen and everything that's invisible, such as the spirit world with its kingdoms, powers, rulers, and authorities. God created all things thru His Son and for Him.**

\* \* \*

God is called the Father of Jesus Christ in 2 Corinthians 1:2-3; Ephesians 3:14; Revelation 3:5,21, and elsewhere.

The Father is also called the God and Father of Jesus. 2 Corinthians 11:31; Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6, and elsewhere.

We can see from these Scriptures that the Father and the Son are two separate persons. They are not one person manifested in different ways, as some believe. They are two separate persons, but one in unity and agreement, in the same way that

Jesus prays to the Father that His followers would be. In John 17:11,21-23 Jesus prayed that His followers would indeed be one.

And we know He did not mean one person, but one in agreement. This is also what is true in regard to the Father and the Son—two different persons in total agreement. Jesus also prayed that we would all be one with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—again, one in agreement. So the oneness is not a one person or entity, but one in unity and agreement.

Many in the Church of Jesus Christ have made the same mistake here that many have made in regard to the statement by Christ when He said at the last supper, **This is my body, and this is my blood.** Those who have taken this literally believe that in partaking of the communion they partake of the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ. But if I should show you a picture of my wife, and say, “This is my wife,” you would know very well that that was not my wife. You would know it was merely a picture of my wife. And that’s what the Lord was saying in regard to the bread and wine. And a similar mistake has been made by understanding the word *one* to mean one entity, while the very context shows that the Scriptures mean one in unity and agreement.

The Father, the Son, and all Christians are to be one—one in unity and in agreement. John 14:20-23; 17:11,21-23.

In the introductions of many of the books and letters of the New Testament there is a definite distinction made between God and the Lord Jesus Christ—denoting two distinct persons. James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2; 1 John 1:3; 2 John 3; Jude 1; Revelation 1:1,5-6.

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The Son of God did not come to earth as man of His own volition. He was sent here by the Father. This was the Father’s plan long before the earth was even created. 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8. And surely the One doing the sending is greater than the One being sent. Regarding Christ being sent to earth by the Father, see Matthew 10:40; Mark 9:37; John 4:34; 5:22-23; 12:44; 15:21; 17:3,8,18,23,25; 20:21. And Jesus was God’s Son long before He left Heaven, as is evident from 1 John 4:9-10.

Only the Father knows all things. This is stated very clearly in Revelation 1:1, which states, **This is the record of future events that Jesus Christ revealed.** God gave Jesus this revelation so that He might reveal

to His servants on earth what will happen in the future.... Jesus received this information from the Father! Here again is revealed the fact that the Father is greater than the Son. He always has been greater and He always will be.

Only the Father knows the exact time of Christ’s second coming. Mark 13:32.

\* \* \*

Our Father has exalted our Savior Jesus Christ to sit with Him at His right hand. This surely is further proof that the Father is greater than the Son. The Son did not assume this place as His right as an equal with the Father; it was given Him by the Father. See Ephesians 1:19-23; Philippians 2:5-9.

That Christ is subservient to the Father see Matthew 26:39,42; Luke 10:16; John 5:19-20; 6:38-39; John 10:17-18; 12:44,49; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 15:22-28, etc.

It was the Father who decreed that the angels were to worship the Son and be subject to Him. Hebrews 1:6; 1 Peter 3:22.

Christ is God’s heir. The Father has given all things to His Son, Jesus. And the One doing the giving in this instance is certainly greater than the One receiving. Matthew 11:27; 28:18; John 3:34-35; 13:3.

We are also heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if we are truly surrendered to Him as Lord and trusting Him as our Savior. Romans 8:16-17; Ephesians 1:11-14,17-18; Colossians 3:23-24; Hebrews 2:5-8; 1 Peter 1:3-4, etc.

Christ is now seated at the right hand of God in Heaven. Mark 16:19; Luke 22:69-71; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22, etc.

But Christ did not assume His position at the right hand of God by His own authority and power. As already stated, it was the Father who placed Him there, as we see in Ephesians 1:19-21, which states:

<sup>19</sup> **May you also realize how extremely great God’s power is. He is already using His great power on behalf of those of us who believe in Him,**

<sup>20</sup> **in the same powerful way that He worked on behalf of Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him right next to Himself at His right hand in Heaven.**

<sup>21</sup> **When He placed Him there, He elevated Him to the highest conceivable dignity and honor, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion among both men and angels, and above every title of authority that can be named, not only in the present order of things but also in that which is to come.**



So it was the Father who elevated Him to this position.

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In praying to the Father, Jesus stated that there is only one person who is truly God (John 17:3), and that's the Father. Yes, Jesus is God, but all the power and authority that Jesus the Son of God has was given Him by the Father. All things have come from the Father.

The Apostle Paul states in 1 Corinthians 8:6, **But it has been revealed to us that there is only one God, and that's the Father, who is the Fountain and Source of all things. It is He who has brought us into existence for His own purposes, plans, and pleasure. And there is only one person whom the Father has made Lord and Ruler of all, and that One is Jesus Christ. Thru Him God created all things, and it's also thru Him that we have come into existence!** So although the Son is like the Father, it is the Father who is the one true God.

So as great as Jesus is, He is not the One who is the only true God. That's the Father. But Jesus is the God thru whom our Father created all things, and likewise created us humans. And it was this God, Jesus, who came to earth in human form as our God and Creator to save us. This is not to say that there are many Gods. No, there is only one true God, and that's the Father. But God has caused His Son Jesus and His other children to be like Himself, and for this we should rejoice, knowing that our future with our God and Father will indeed be great. 1 John 3:2. So let us praise Him!

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But it must be remembered and understood that all of this does not mean that the Son is very inferior to the Father. In Colossians 1:19 we read, **Because the Father took delight in having all the fullness that He Himself is to also be present in His Son.** So the Son of God, our Savior Jesus Christ, is indeed great. But even here it is indicated that the Father is the One who gave the Son all the greatness He has.

God even calls those of us whom He has created in His own image and likeness, gods. Psalm 82:6; John 10:34,35. The psalmist in Psalm 8:5, in speaking to God says, **You have made us just a little lower than You Yourself.** Some, following the Septuagint, have translated this *lower than the angels*, but the Hebrew is *Elohim*—God, not angels. That doesn't in any way mean that we are

equal to the Father, but it does mean that He has created us like Himself, to be His children.

And we also have the ability to create. No other creatures on earth are able to create. Yes, birds build nests, and beavers build dams, etc., but they all do so by instinct. No bird ever decided to build a different kind of nest next year. Mankind, however, is able to create by means of thought and plan. The fact that God calls us gods in the Scripture should indeed make us wonder just what God's plans are for His children in His future eternity.

The Father calls the Son God but He never says that the Son is His God. Hebrews 1:8-9. But the Son often calls the Father His God. Matthew 27:46; John 20:17; Ephesians 1:17, etc. Even after Jesus returned to Heaven He called God His Father and His God. Revelation 2:26-27; 3:5,12.

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Jesus is indeed our God, our Creator. Matthew 1:23; 19:17; Luke 1:47; John 1:1; 20:28; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8-12, etc. But it's only the Father who is called the Most High God, in Luke 1:32,35,76, and in countless other places in Scripture.

\* \* \*

Although God is our Father, Jesus is also called our Father in Isaiah 9:6, because He is our Creator. Here He is called the **everlasting Father**. That does not mean that He is everlasting from eternity past, because this would not be true if He were begotten at some point by the Father, but He is everlasting on into eternity. No doubt His everlasting quality is also by means of the Father.

Only God our Father, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has immortality in and of Himself—not given to Him by another. 1 Timothy 6:16 states, **It is He, God alone, who has immortality, existing in light so utterly brilliant that no man can approach Him. No man has ever seen Him, nor is any man able to see Him. May we all highly honor Him, and acknowledge that by His power God will rule forever. So be it!** And we also have immortality only as we receive it from Him, and of course, we are wholly dependent upon Him for it.

No Scripture that we know of states that the Son of God is eternal from the past. However, the Scripture often quoted at Christmas time, Micah 5:2, states, **But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, even though you are only a small town in the land of Judah, it's out of you that the One will come for Me who is to**

rule in Israel, who has been engaged in outstanding exploits from far back into eternity past. But even here it is not said that the Son is eternal from the past.

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To this writer the relationship between the Father and the Son seems quite clear, but the person of the Holy Spirit is still a mystery. However, notice that Christ promised His followers that He would send the Holy Spirit to them from the Father. John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-16. And when Christ arrived back in Heaven He fulfilled this promise, as Peter states in Acts 2:33, **So, having been exalted and seated at the right hand of God, and having received the promised Holy Spirit from the Father, He has now poured out this which you are both seeing and hearing.** So the Holy Spirit is a person who is able to impart power from Himself to others. We read in John 3:34 that when Christ came to earth the Father gave Him the full power of the Holy Spirit, without measure. So Jesus was able to act in the full power of God even as He was here on earth as man.

Some believe that the Holy Spirit is actually the Father, who imparts His power, His Holy Spirit, to whomever He wills, while others believe that the Holy Spirit is a third person as God. But our study here is concerning the person of Jesus Christ, so we will not seek to plumb the depths of this question here. But the Lord Jesus is still today pouring out God's Holy Spirit upon all who will earnestly ask for this blessing, and refuse to be denied. See Luke 11:5-13.

\* \* \*

As the Son of God, Jesus has been given by the Father all the attributes of God. One of those attributes is omnipresence. He is always present in all places at all times. He especially promises to be present with His followers who are witnessing to others about Him. See Matthew 28:19-20. It is indeed a great assurance to the followers of Christ to know that He is always with us.

And of course every good Bible student knows that after the Son of God was here on earth for 33 years, He was killed by the Romans and the Judeans, but three days later He rose back to life, and 40 days after that He ascended into the heavens as His followers watched. John 17:33-34; 16:28; 17:11,13; Hebrews 1:3; 4:14; 9:24.

\* \* \*

But Jesus Christ is coming back to earth. This time He will return in great glory as King of kings and Lord of lords! Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 1:7. When He returns He will also be the King that Israel has looked for so long. Matthew 2:6; 21:5; 27:11.

\* \* \*

In conclusion, let's look at 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, which reads:

<sup>24</sup>Then the end will come, when Christ will hand the Kingdom over to God the Father, after He has destroyed every opposing ruler, authority, and power.

<sup>25</sup>Because God had destined that Christ must reign until He has thoroughly conquered every enemy, and they all lie subdued under His power.

<sup>26</sup>The last enemy to be destroyed will be death.

<sup>27</sup>This will fulfill the prophecy that states, "God has put everything under His control and authority." But it is clear that the "everything" does not include God Himself, who is the One who put everything under Christ.

<sup>28</sup>Because when all things have finally been put under Him, then the Son will turn the Kingdom over to the Father and be under the One who had put all things under Him. He will do this so that in regard to all matters God may become totally and completely everything in the heart of everyone.

\* \* \*

What could be more clear than the statements above, that the Father, the only true God, is greater than the Son.

So really, the Trinity is not the great mystery that we have so often been told that it is. Yes, we all still have many questions, but if we will accept the bible record for what it says, and not add to it or subtract from it, we have quite a clear view given us of the true relationship between the Father and the Son.

So much more could be said in regard to just who Jesus Christ is. But even after considering all that the Scriptures reveal about Him we would still be left with many questions. 1 Corinthians 13:12 is especially applicable here:

At the present time we see God and His truth as though we were looking thru a glass that is extremely blurred. But then we will be face to face with Him. Now I have only partial knowledge, but then I will have complete understanding of the truth, in the same

way that God now knows all about me.

### ADDENDUM

After writing the above article we sent copies to several theologians for their evaluation. These men, of course, had all been taught that the Father and the Son are equal. And it's hard to change what's been ingrained into us.

One of these theologians had reservations about even reading the article, but after reading it he agrees with it. Others brought up verses that stated that Jesus was God, as proof that He was equal to the Father. But we had already dealt with those Scriptures in the article. We agree that Jesus is God. But He is not God in the same sense that the Father is God.

One person brought up 1 John 1:1-4 and Philippians 2:6-7, but we had already shown that while Jesus is God, the Father is greater.

1 Corinthians 15:46-47 was also given, but it has nothing to do with our question. It merely states that the second Adam was the Lord from Heaven, but it does not say that it was the Father, because it was the Son who came.

One claimed that Jesus was the *Elohim* and the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament. Yes, He was the God of the people of the Old Testament as well as our God. Those names are words for God. The word *Elohim* was also used to refer to men in authority, in positions of honor among men, such as kings and judges. The original meaning and derivation of the word *Jehovah* are unknown. But while the Son of God is called by these names, as well as the Father, this in no way teaches that they are equal. The New Testament especially gives proof in many places that the Father is greater than the Son.

One person pointed out that in several places in The Revelation it appears that both the Father and the Son state, **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.** He claimed that this proved that they were equal. But God was certainly not speaking about His own beginning. The Father had no beginning. He is eternal. What is referred to here is creation. Both Jesus and the Father were involved in the creation of all things, so they could both use the same words in this expression.

Another man believed that the Greek words translated *begotten* in the New Testament could mean an eternal begetting in relation to the Father begetting the Son, and that there was a continual co-mingling of the Spirit of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that this was what was meant by

Christ being begotten by the Father. Well, we have not been able to discover any such meaning in any of the Hebrew or Greek words translated *begotten*. They all mean *to be born of or to give birth to*, etc. It appears to be just another attempt to make the word of God say what one wants it to say. We honestly believe that these people are truly sincere, but sincerely wrong.

Here's part of the report given us by the first theologian we mentioned, who at first had reservations about even reading it. His letter stated:

\* \* \*

"I found your article very stimulating, and in fact, clarifying and faith-building. It does not rob Christ of anything, but puts Him into a sound biblical perspective.

"Our people need to understand the historical background and what actually happened at the Nicea Council, and how that affected the creeds of the Church.

"Let's allow the statements of the gospels to speak for themselves—especially those in John's gospel, the gospel which presents Jesus in his deity. The relationship and the subordination of Jesus to the Father are very clear there.

"...It may be assumed by many Christians that the creeds of the early Christian Church were based totally on Scripture. This is not true. The politicization of the Church and anti-Semitic thinking began to grow rapidly from the time of Constantine.

"The Council of Nicea was notoriously the point when ecclesiastical interpretations superseded biblical considerations. It was also the defining point when anti-Semitism became institutionalized in the ecclesiology of a state church that was fast paganizing at the same time.

"The stifling of the Jewish viewpoint was introduced both subtly and openly. There were 15 Jewish bishops in Jerusalem and Judea, but not one was invited to participate in the Council of Nicea. This breach between Church and Synagogue clearly influenced the accepted beliefs of the Church...The question about Constantine's conversion to Christianity is also a very real one.

"If the Scripture's are left to speak for themselves, there is balance and truth that puts into accurate perspective the relationship of Jesus Christ to God the Father, clearly teaching His subordination to the Father...Many of the statements concerning the relation of Jesus to the Father are found in John's gospel. John presents Jesus in His

divinity, and yet he makes careful distinctions between Jesus and God the Father thruout the Gospel.

"In his book entitled *What the Bible Teaches*, Dr. R.A. Torrey, first president of Moody Bible Institute, and later founder of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, has a chapter in this book entitled *The Subordination of the Son to the Father*. He presents 15 propositions. Here are 8 of them in brief:

1. God the Father is greater than Jesus, the Son. John 14:28.

2. God the Father begat Jesus, the Son. Psalm 2:7; Hebrews 1:4-5; 5:5.

3. Jesus Christ lives because of the Father. John 6:57; Psalm 2:7.

4. The Son can do nothing independently of the Father. John 5:19.

5. Jesus was sent by the Father. John 4:34; 8:29, 42.

6. Jesus received commands from the Father. John 10:18; 12:49; 14:31.

7. Jesus received from the Father all the messages He gave on earth. John 8:28; 12:49-50.

8. Jesus Christ will ultimately deliver up the Kingdom to the Father. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

"Conclusion: Jesus Christ is, and eternally shall be, subordinate to God the Father. Even the time of His return to earth is known only by the Father. This does not denigrate Jesus, but rather puts Him in correct biblical perspective. He is the

Great Link (Mediator) between God and man...

"It is possible that many Christians may 'hang up' on this presentation because it challenges some ecclesiastical assumptions that are not necessarily based on the most literal interpretation of what the Bible says about Jesus. . . . I think that to let the Bible itself speak concerning Him may be in the final analysis the most satisfactory statement concerning Him. . . . It is appropriate to inquire and to seek to understand the relationship between the Father and the Son, *but not to go beyond what God tells us in His word.*"

\* \* \*

We agree. In this matter, as in all matters, ask the Lord to show you the truth from His word, not from any other source or argument.

## 247 The Amazing Story of God

There was a time when there was nothing: no trees, no flowers, birds, animals, or even people—nothing. There wasn't even an earth, sun, moon, or stars—nothing—nothing but God!

The first act of God that we know anything about is that He fathered a Son. We are not told how God did this, we are simply told that He has a Son whom He fathered before anything was created.

Why would God want a Son? Well, the best way to answer that is to put ourselves in God's place. We are told in the Scriptures that God made us just like Himself—in His image and likeness, so we should be able to a certain extent be able to think like God and have some of the desires that God has.

Imagine now that you are the Almighty God. There is only you. There is no other God and no other person anywhere. We are told that God has

no needs, but we know from Scripture that He does have desires. And if you were in the position God was before anything was created, you would surely have the desire for someone like yourself with whom you could fellowship. But there was no one like Himself. So God did what He was able to do, He fathered a Son.

*But, Why a Son?*

Why would God want a Son? Well, in several places the Bible states that *God is love*. The overwhelmingly greatest thing we discover about God as we read the Bible is that He is a God of love. Yes, there are times when God expresses Himself in fierce anger and judgment, but He does so only when it's the right thing to do. Even we do right when we become angry because of some wrong that's being done, and take the necessary steps to correct it.

The fact that God is a God of love is both stated and implied in many places thruout Scripture. And from experience we know that if we have love in our hearts, we need someone to love. And with a heart of love such as God has, His overwhelming desire would be to have an outlet for that love. His very nature would cry out for others like Himself whom He could love and who would love Him in return.

The Son is from eternity the same as the Father. But it's just as difficult for us creatures of time to fully understand eternity as it is for us to really understand God. Maybe this truth has been best stated by the *original* Westminster Confession of Faith which very simply states, "The Son of God was begotten of the Father from eternity."

One of the other confessions of faith says, "He was begotten, not made." We have been created, but the One we speak of here was begotten (born) of the Father. Don't ask how the Father did this. The Bible doesn't reveal how. But it does reveal that God has a begotten Son.

The Nicene Creed states that He was "begotten of His Father before all the worlds."<sup>1</sup>

And for God to receive love in the measure that He could give, He needed someone who was like Himself, who could love Him with the same measure that He could love. So God gave His Son all the glory, power, authority, and capabilities that He Himself has.<sup>2</sup> The Son of God is just like the Father. He has the same capacity for love, the same wisdom, the same power, etc. So the Son is also God.<sup>3</sup>

Still, there is only one Supreme God, which is the Father.<sup>4</sup> And because the Son always does what pleases the Father, they are one God in agreement and unity. There is no clashing of personalities between the Father and the Son. The Son never has tried and never will try to overthrow the Father and take the Father's place. For Him to do so would be as foolish as the fabled farmer who killed his goose that laid the golden eggs in order to get all the golden eggs at once. All the power and glory the Son has, or ever has had or will have, He receives from the Father. Without the Father the Son would be nothing.<sup>5</sup>

It was sometime after the Son received His power and glory from the Father that creation was begun. And everything God created He created thru His Son.<sup>6</sup> His Son did all the actual creating of all things everywhere. Nothing that has been created has been created by anyone except by the Son. Just as good human fathers rejoice in what

their sons can do, evidently God receives the same satisfaction in seeing what His Son can do.

### *God's Many Sons*

But God's love is so great that He wants to love and be loved by many sons and daughters. So in the very first chapter of the Bible you will find that God made mankind just like Himself, to be His children. He created man **in His own image and likeness**. We're not merely a superior species of the animal world; we are made in the image of God, to be His children!

All of His previous creation was in preparation for His children. Even the angels were created mainly to minister and care for those who will be God's heirs.

So your real Father is God! He's the One who made you. Your mother didn't make you. She doesn't know how to make babies. All she did was receive from your father a sperm cell that God had made, which connected with an egg within her that God had also made. Psalm 39:13-18 tells what happened next:

<sup>13</sup> **It was You, O God, who made all the intricate, inner parts of my body and put me together in my mother's womb.**

<sup>14</sup> **I praise and revere You because I am wholly overcome with awe as I consider how wonderfully You have made me. What You have done is truly wonderful—and how well I know it.**

<sup>15</sup> **Not a single thing about me was unknown to You as I was being skillfully formed in utter seclusion, in a place as dark as the deepest part of the earth.**

<sup>16</sup> **Your eyes even saw all the atoms and molecules You would bring together to form the various parts of my body. You also had a blueprint of how my body would be constructed, and a history, pre-written, of everything I would ever do, before I had lived a single day.**

<sup>17</sup> **I'm amazed at how much thought You have put into forming my body, and the interest and concern You have about my entire life—thoughts innumerable.**

<sup>18</sup> **If they could be counted, they would outnumber all the grains of sand on all the seashores. And whenever I wake up, You are still with me!**

And God's purpose from the beginning was that His children would not only be like Him, but also that they would be with Him and share His glory. This is still God's plan. God isn't finished with us yet in bringing us to our ultimate likeness to Himself. For just a few Scriptures regarding our future glory, be sure to look up and read Romans

5:2; 8:18; 1 Corinthians 15:43; Hebrews 2:10; 1 Peter 5:1; 1 John 3:2.

### *The Rebellion*

However, God's first created children took things into their own hands and decided to please themselves instead of obeying their Father. And every last one of us has done the same thing. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.<sup>7</sup> God warned His children that if they disobeyed Him they would die. And this happened, and is continuing to happen. But this dying is not only physical death, but spiritual death.<sup>8</sup> Being created in the image of God we are eternal spirits, just as God is. We will always be somewhere. But those who continue in their rebellion toward their Heavenly Father will be separated from God in an awful state of punishment for untold ages to come.

God is loving and kind, but He can't let us into Heaven for only those reasons. It would be impossible for God to simply say, "Well, we'll just forget about all the times you've ignored and disobeyed Me and lived to please yourself instead of Me. I forgive you."

If God's nature was such that His great love was greater than His wisdom and righteousness, and we could gain His forgiveness whenever we chose, His entire Kingdom would fall. Because then we could know that we could always do just as we pleased, ask His forgiveness whenever we needed His pardon, and then continue in our rebellion, because we could always be forgiven. But God's love is so great that He earnestly wants to forgive, and He devised a way to do so in wisdom and righteousness.

### *God's Plan—A Savior*

The way our Father made it possible for Himself to offer us forgiveness, in a legal and righteous way, and still preserve His Kingdom, was to first of all choose one man thru whom He would work. And the man He chose was named Abraham. You will read about Abraham at the beginning of the Old Testament part of the Bible. We can only believe that among all who were rebelling against God at that time, God found Abraham to be a man who truly loved Him.

And from Abraham came the nation of Israel. Thru the prophets God told the people of Israel that He would one day send them a great Savior. But the people of Israel were rather confused, because the prophets seemed to speak of two great Saviors, whom they called the Messiah. One Messiah appeared to be a powerful and glorious ruler,

while the other was one who would suffer greatly, and die. The Jews had, and still have, various explanations for all this, but they had very little interest in the suffering Messiah. Their interest was in the one who was prophesied to be their coming King. But the truth was that there was only one Messiah, who was prophesied to come two different times. He would first of all come to be God's Lamb (Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29,36; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6; 12:11), sent by God to be His sacrifice for our sins, who would suffer and die as God's sin offering, which would enable God to forgive the sins of mankind. So He first of all came to be the Savior of Israel and of the whole world. When He comes the second time He will be crowned King of Israel, as well as King of kings and Lord of lords over all the earth.

\* \* \*

The Messiah has already made His first appearance here. We know Him as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came to earth in human form some 2,000 years ago, born of a virgin, just as prophesied by the prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 7:14. So the way the Father made it possible for Himself to offer us forgiveness in a legal and righteous way, and still preserve His Kingdom, was to send His incomparable Son, the One who created us—sending Him to earth in human form to become one of us. God's plan of salvation is, of course, not only for Israel but for the whole world.

If someone ridicules you for believing in Jesus Christ, give him this information: Jesus is no mere fictional character; it's a historical fact that He lived in Israel some 2,000 years ago. At thirty years of age He went public about who He was. He claimed to be the Son of God. He said the Father had sent Him to earth in human form on a mission, and with a message for mankind.<sup>9</sup>

He made many other claims about Himself, which only a fool or a con man would make, unless they were true. Some refuse to acknowledge Him as the Son of God and the Savior of the world, but they acknowledge that He was the greatest teacher and the most godly man who ever lived. But you can't have it both ways. Either He was all He claimed to be, or He was the greatest liar, deceiver, or fool that ever walked the face of this earth. But He proved in many amazing ways that He was all He claimed to be!

In the first place, The Father had sent prophets to Israel for over a thousand years telling them that the Christ (the Messiah) was coming.

He even told them where He would be born (in Bethlehem),<sup>10</sup> that He would have no human father, but would be born of a virgin.<sup>11</sup> He even told them that later His Father, God, would call Him out of Egypt.<sup>12</sup>

Speaking about Christ, God told the prophet Moses, **I will raise up a prophet like you for Israel from among their own people. I will put My words in His mouth, and He will tell the people everything I command Him to say.** So Moses told the people about Him, and said, **When He comes, you must listen carefully to everything He tells you.** Deuteronomy 18:15-19. You will find the fulfillment in John 12:44-50 and in other statements of Jesus thruout John.<sup>13</sup>

Jesus was born to be King of Israel. You would think that a king would enter the capital city riding triumphantly upon a horse. But Zechariah 9:9 prophesied that the Messiah would humbly enter Jerusalem riding upon a donkey and upon the colt of a donkey. You will find the fulfillment of that reported in Matthew 21:1-7, together with an informative note. There are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament about His coming, and about what would happen when He came.

### *Miraculous Proof*

His miraculous life was further proof. He healed the sick, the lame, blind, deaf, dumb, and the palsied. He turned water into wine, stopped storms, walked on water, raised the dead, and fed over 5,000 men (besides women and children) with only five small loaves of bread and two small fish. Afterward He had His followers gather up the leftover scraps, and they collected 12 basketsful! That was much more than He had started with.

He was untouchable when a crowd tried to throw Him over a cliff. He even prophesied His own death and how He would die. He prophesied that His own people, the Jews, would turn Him over to the Romans to be crucified (nailed to a cross).

His greatest prophecy, and the fulfillment of it, was that He would rise back to life again three days after He died! His followers saw Him die. They watched as the Roman soldier plunged the spear into His side, resulting in blood and water flowing out. Three days later those same followers saw Him alive, and they later went thruout the then-known world telling the Great News about the Savior, that He had died, had come back to life, and now lives. And that because He lives, we too can now live forever.

He was seen by His followers at various inter-

vals for 40 days after His resurrection. Some 500 of them saw Him at one time. After 40 days He ascended into the heavens as His followers watched. Then two angels appeared and told them, **You men from Galilee, why are you standing here staring into the sky? This Jesus, who has just been taken from you into Heaven, will return in the very same way you watched Him go into Heaven.**

He's coming again—this time as King of kings and Lord of lords! And the prophecy in Zechariah 12:10-14 is that the Jewish nation will look on Me whom they had pierced. The prophet goes on to tell how the Jewish nation will then go into deep mourning as they realize what they had done to their Messiah when they crucified Him.

Possibly the greatest proof that Jesus is indeed the Son of God was the perfect life He lived. Quoting from Isaiah 53:9, the apostle Peter wrote concerning Him, **He never committed a sin. Not even one lie came out of His mouth.**

The apostle John said concerning His sinlessness, **You all know that the Lord Jesus appeared among us to take away our sins. And not even once did He disobey God.** These men could say these things about Him after living with Him constantly for over three years! Christ was the first and only Man who ever lived without sin. He alone lived the only perfect life ever lived.

But He allowed himself to be horribly tortured, and then crucified on a cross by cruel men. He allowed all this so that He, the Son of God, might suffer, shed His blood, and die, because of our sins. He, our Creator, took awful punishment in our place! He is called the Lamb of God, because He was God's offering in sacrifice so that our sins could be forgiven.

### *A Pardon Offered*

Now God is able (in wisdom and righteousness) to offer us forgiveness, if we will accept it on the condition that we turn from our sin to obedience to Him. That's what being born again is all about. You may have heard the Scripture which states, **Because God's love for everyone in the world is so overwhelmingly great, He gave His incomparable Son as His Lamb to be sacrificed to endure extreme suffering and shame, and then die, in order that He might make amends for the sins of all mankind, so that whoever is believing in Him may not perish but have everlasting life.**<sup>14</sup>

As we have stated, God has wonderful plans for His children. He doesn't want any of them to be lost. He wants all of them to be saved. But all have freedom of will. We can choose to turn from

our sin and obey God and receive His forgiveness and eternal life, or we can choose to continue to go our own way and suffer the consequences of a horrendous Hell, and after that the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:11-15.

But there are actually two things that must happen to a person who desires to gain everlasting life. The theologians call those two things *regeneration* and *justification*. The Apostle Paul said they were **repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ**. What did he mean by that?

Well, to repent means to be genuinely sorry for the way you are going, sorry enough to turn right around and get on the right road. For the traveler who discovers he's on the wrong road, the only sensible thing for him to do is to turn right around and find the right road, or he'll never get where he's wanting to go. Repentance toward God means to be genuinely sorry for the selfish and sinful life you are living, sorry enough to, *with God's help*, turn right around and begin living to please and obey God. Jesus called this *being born again*. In John 3:1-7 Jesus said, **You must be born again. In fact, unless you are born again you will never see the Kingdom of Heaven.**

But you are not born again by merely believing in Jesus as your Savior. You are *justified* by your belief in Him. But you are born again, *regenerated*, when you allow God to energize His message to you in the Bible by His Spirit (see John 1:13; 3:1-8; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23, and the notes) convicting you of your sin, convincing you of God's sure and awful judgment upon you because of your sin, and converting you to accept His forgiveness and surrender to His will from this moment on.

Concerning the new birth, Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17, **When anyone enters into a right relationship with Christ, he becomes an altogether new person! His old goals and ambitions and his old way of living are things of the past. Listen! Everything about him or her is now new! The honest aim of a person who is born again is to obey God and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.** Hebrews 5:9 states, **Jesus has become the source of salvation and eternal life for all who make it their practice to obey him.** So a person who is regenerated (born again) is one who has become a new person, one whose sincere aim is to now live to please and obey God.

The second requirement, justification, or, to be justified, means to be absolved of guilt; acquitted. That means you must obtain forgiveness from God for your past sins. And the way God has provided for you to be forgiven is for you to accept the

justification He offers you thru the death Jesus suffered and died on the cross because of your sins. There is nothing you can do about your justification, only to gladly receive it as a most wonderful gift from God.

But always remember that you cannot gain heaven merely by accepting God's forgiveness, because you must also be born again, which means that you must surrender to Jesus Christ as the Lord and Ruler of your life. You must receive Him as both your Lord and your Savior.

### *A Legitimate Concern*

One main concern that keeps many people from accepting God's forgiveness and turning their lives over to Him is that they believe they can't hold out against sin. That's a legitimate concern.

However, Jesus promised those who truly follow Him that He will always be with them to help them. Matthew 28:20. The apostle Paul states in Philippians 2:13, **God is always at work within you, helping you first of all to desire and determine to do what is pleasing to Him, and then helping you to do it.** For some vital comments on that Scripture see Appendix 218, page 482.

The aim of every Christian must be to please God perfectly. But none of us are perfect in this life. There are times when we fail, and we must come to the Lord again and again and ask His forgiveness.

Someone has so rightly said, "The Christian life is a series of new beginnings." The Apostle John wrote a letter to Christians, which is called 1 John in the New Testament, and in vss 8 and 9 of chapter 1 of that letter we read, **"If we say we never sin, we're only fooling ourselves, and there's no truth whatever in our claim. But, if we humbly and sincerely make a practice of confessing our sins to God when we have failed Him, He will be faithful and true to His promise to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all the selfish and immoral things we have done."**

That doesn't mean we have license to sin, no, but that when we do stumble and fall on our face, God is willing to forgive again because of the sacrifice Christ made for our sins.

But let's never forget that our constant, sincere aim, must be perfection. When we fail, our God who loves us so dearly desires to forgive us and help us to get going for Him again. So don't wait until you are able to live a perfect life before turning your life over to God (for none of us are perfect), but accept God's forgiveness now and surrender your life totally to Him. You will then have



the joy in this life of knowing that the Lord is with you, and the assurance that all is well for all eternity. It would be wise for you to turn to 1 John right now and read the first chapter (only ten verses). Also read the brief notes there.

Then consider the following:

*Where's the Profit?*

One day when Jesus was on earth He said to His followers, **What good would it do you even if you gained all the wealth and power and all the flesh-filling experiences in all the world, but then found yourself barred from Heaven and sent to your judgment in Hell? Or look at it this way: If you suddenly found yourself suffering in Hell, how much would you then be willing to give of yourself to God in order to gain His forgiveness and eternal life?**<sup>15</sup>

Think that over for a moment. In Hell you will have no opportunity whatever to be born again spiritually, to be converted from living in sin and living as you please, to living for God. There will be absolutely no hope in Hell. And no exit! Right NOW is the only time you are sure of having in which you can surrender your heart and life to God and begin living in obedience to Him. God isn't asking too much, He's only asking that you accept His forgiveness and give Him your full obedience like any child should obey a father who loves him so dearly.

A wise man once said, "You cannot run a society or cope with its problems if people are not held accountable for what they do." And God cannot run a world if His children are not held accountable for what they do. It's only right that you accept the forgiveness your Father offers you, and then live to please Him.

Most of the people of this world are in sad condition. And the more determined people are to disregard God and go their own way, the worse their condition gets. But God wants to change all that in your life, and give you peace and joy and the sure hope of everlasting life with Him.

He has such wonderful plans for you for all eternity. Will you accept His love and forgiveness before you are forever lost?

*A Preview of Hell*

To be lost from God, loved ones, and Heaven, will mean to be abandoned in the fearful and awful place of torment that the Bible calls Hell. The Bible so very definitely tells us about the absolute fact of Hell and the horrors of it. Consider just one warning that Jesus gave about Hell in the 16th chapter of Luke, where He told about a

rich man who went to Hell.

From Jesus' own words here we are told that Hell is a place of frightful torment, where those who have ignored God and have refused to obey Him will be everlastingly punished. There is a great gulf fixed between Hell and Heaven, so that no one can go from one place to the other. Once a person is in Hell, there is no escape. Also, it will be impossible to commit suicide in Hell.

We learn that the suffering will be great. It's represented by torment in a flame of fire. It will nevertheless be a dark, obscure, and miserable place, where the wicked will be punished with no glimmer of hope of ever being released.

All indications are that those in Hell will be able to see the joy and glory they could have experienced forever in Heaven. See Revelation 14:10. To see where you could have been will only add to your anguish and despair.

The rich man in Jesus' story in Luke 16 asks that a poor beggar he sees in Heaven be allowed to come and give him at least one drop of cool water, but even that is not possible. There will be no relief whatever, not even for a brief moment. There won't be even a one-minute recess.

And one of the greatest sufferings in Hell will be one's memory. They will all remember when they refused God's forgiveness and the offer of eternal life. And the reason most folks will be in Hell is because they had loved some sin which they were unwilling to give up.

No one plans to go to Hell. Most who are there now planned to get right with God, someday. Maybe tomorrow, or next week, but that tomorrow never came. They always wanted freedom to indulge in their sin a little longer.

As Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ has stated: "There is no sin, no matter how pleasurable—and sin can be pleasurable—that is worth the awful consequences."<sup>16</sup>

*The Loss Would Be Incalculable!*

Also, think of all the joys you will miss if you miss Heaven. There will be perfect love there. No disappointments. There will be perfect fulfillment in Heaven in every way, resulting in perfect joy. In fact, in Psalm 16:11 we are told that in God's presence we will experience **fullness of joy, and pleasures forevermore.**

Are the unfulfilling and unsatisfactory pleasures of this brief and uncertain life, and everything else here that's coming to nothing, worth hanging on to at the expense of losing out on an eternal life in Heaven with your real Father who

loves you so? Don't wait another day, or even another moment, to make sure of being with your real family in Heaven.

\* \* \*

This writer was in the produce department of a supermarket buying groceries when I heard a deep, gruff voice over my right shoulder say, "Well, how's your day been goin'?"

I looked around and found a big, burly-looking policeman, with a second policeman. "Well," I replied, "my day's been going great. How about you, have you been catching a lot of those people who need to be caught?"

He chuckled, and then examined some vegetables. Then he turned to me and said, "How about you, have you been catching anyone lately?"

"How about letting me catch you," I said. "I have a question for you."

"Yeah, whazzat?"

"Are you planning on making it to Heaven?"

He looked stunned, and didn't answer, but then he took a couple steps toward me and most emphatically said, "Listen, I've been to Hell! **And I never want to see that place again! NEVER! EVER!**" He paused a moment, and then said, "Maybe I should look into that other place."

I assured him he'd better, because next time he's pronounced clinically dead, the medics might not be able to resuscitate him. I then got copies of Matthew from *The Last Days Bible* from my car and gave one to each of those men, and they were actually thrilled to receive them. I'm hopefully looking forward to seeing both of these men and their families in Heaven.

Yes, Hell will be an awful, terrifying experience, forever, for those sent there. Do the wise thing, and make certain **right now** that you will never be there, but that you'll arrive safely in Heaven, for sure.

Will you sincerely make the following prayer your prayer?

Dear God, my Father:

I am so grateful, so thankful that you included me when You made Your children for Your joy and glory—made just like You Yourself—in Your image and likeness.<sup>17</sup> Your plans for Your children are so incredibly wonderful, and with all my heart I want to be included.

I am so sorry I have fought You for control of the throne of my life, and have insisted on living my life as I've pleased, instead of living it to please You. I'm

ashamed of too much of what I've done and haven't done. I have been so wrong in going my own way and ignoring You. I've been selfishly concerned about only pleasing myself when I've rebelliously resisted Your leadership.

But I'm coming to You now even though I know I'm not a pretty sight. I am dirty with the impurities of my sin. Thank You for loving me anyway and for sending Jesus to suffer and die in my place as the sin-offering for my sin. I now accept Him into my life, so He can take full control of it as my Lord and my Savior.

Lord Jesus, I welcome You—be born in me right here, right now. You can have all that is left of my life, and I will continually look to You for help and strength to live to please You. I love You for loving me so much. Help me now to love You and others as You have loved me. Amen.

\* \* \*

God's Kingdom has a most wonderful future, and you can be a part of it in a most wonderful way. Don't miss it! The alternative is too awful to even consider as a possibility.

After you have accepted God's gift of Life, find a good church where the pastor and people really love, serve, and obey God. Don't settle for a lukewarm fellowship. You need to be with people who really love God. But don't expect a perfect church. Perfection won't come until we are with the Lord.

When you have found your church fellowship, ask the pastor about being baptized. One of your first acts of obedience to the Lord should be your baptism. In your baptism you let the world and all of Heaven know that you now belong to Jesus. And in your baptism you are testifying that you are burying your old life and rising up to live a new life for Christ and for God, your Father. Romans 6:1-8.

*If All Are Lost, All Need to Hear*

When you have accepted God's love and forgiveness, tell others how they, too, may be saved. Not everyone will be glad to listen, but some will. And even where you get only a few words in, that may be the very seed that will eventually lead that person to turn from sin, to believe and be saved.

God has made every follower of the Lord Jesus responsible to tell and warn others. If you were lost without the Savior, so are all others, and they need to know what you know in order to be saved. One of the tests of obedience that God gives is stated in the Scripture that says:

If you will speak out and share with others what you know and believe about the Lord Jesus, and if you sincerely believe in your heart that God has indeed raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Because it's when you are sincerely believing with your heart that you gain right standing with God. So when as a result of true heart-belief you make a practice of opening your mouth to talk to others about the Lord, the results will include your own salvation.<sup>18</sup>

God bless and use you now for His glory and the salvation of many others.

#### References for *The Amazing Story of God*:

1. John 1:1-4; 17:5,24; Colossians 1:17.
2. John 17:24; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.
3. John 1:1; Hebrews 1:7-8.
4. John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6.
5. Matthew 28:18; John 14:28; Philippians 2:6; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.
6. John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9c; Colossians 1:15-16; Hebrews 1:1-2.
7. Romans 3:23.
8. Revelation 20:11-15.
9. John 8:23-30; 12:44-50; 20:21.
10. Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1-6.
11. Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25.
12. Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:13-21.
13. John 6:38; 7:14-18, 25-31; 8:13-16.
14. John 3:16.
15. Mark 8:36-37.
16. Galatians 6:7-8.
17. Genesis 1:26; 5:1; Psalm 8:5; Acts 17:28-29.
18. Romans 10:9-10.

## What others are saying—

A Christian radio talk show host said: "Since I received a copy of *The Last Days Bible* it has become 'my' Bible. It goes with me everywhere I go. I love it."

\* \* \*

"**The Last Days Bible** is imbued with the Spirit of the last call of the Bible itself in Revelation 22:17—a call to the unsaved during these closing days of grace, and a clear call to believers to a life of holiness and witness.

"While there is no lack of modern versions and paraphrase editions of the Bible today, this one is unique in its call 'beseeching men everywhere to become reconciled to God' thru Jesus Christ by the simple act of true heart-belief and confession with the mouth, as prescribed in Romans 10:9-10. It does not leave the reader in doubt as to what it means to be a 'Christian'. The gospel message is given in clear, clarion tones.

"The footnotes are not only authoritative in nature but are instructive as to what the Bible teaches about end-time events, as well as about many other subjects. Its mainstream evangelical views of end-time events will find broad agreement with those held by most evangelical prophetic scholars today. Also included is prophetic insight never before published. And it is written in plain and easy to understand language.

"This is a most excellent tool for witnessing to the unsaved, and for the instruction and exhortation of believers in these most critical and urgent days of the world's history."

—Amos D. Millard, Biblical Professor Emeritus,  
Northwest College, Kirkland, WA

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"A most compelling translation for the end of the age. And a powerful commentary on the absolute need of repentance, obedience, and brokenness, if we are to be born again, and saved."

—Frosty Fowler, talk show host on KGNW, Seattle

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**The Last Days Gospel of Matthew** was published several months earlier, and here are the

responses from several who read it following its publication:

"I am anxious to see the whole New Testament in this translation. Matthew was so exciting to read, and so understandable."

—D.E., San Antonio, TX

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"EXCELLENT! TRULY, a God breathed work! I am now receiving greater understanding and joy in my Bible reading. I especially appreciate the explanatory notes. They have been of great help to me in the proper understanding of God's Word."

—B.J.B., Manassas, VA

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"So often the wording is fresh and gripping!"

—D.P., Mukilteo, WA

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"We have surely enjoyed reading Matthew from **The Last Days Bible**. It is so easy to understand the way you have translated it. The footnotes and the appendixes explain the truths so well."

—H. and G.D., Mesa, AZ

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"I have only read the first chapter so far, but that was enough to convince me that I want copies for friends and loved ones."

—G.B., Vancouver, WA

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"I love it, and the footnotes are so very helpful."

—Mrs. H.C., Pittsburgh, PA

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"Last night as I was reading Matthew from **The Last Days Bible** I was thinking how much I enjoyed it. Then the question came--Where can I get more? When can we have the entire New Testament?"

—D.S., Dearborn, MI

\* \* \*

Others simply said, "Excellent!" "A wonderful translation!"

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And now you have in your hands the whole **Last Days New Testament**. God Bless you as you read God's message in this vibrant, new translation, and as you share it with others.