

AUGUST 1983

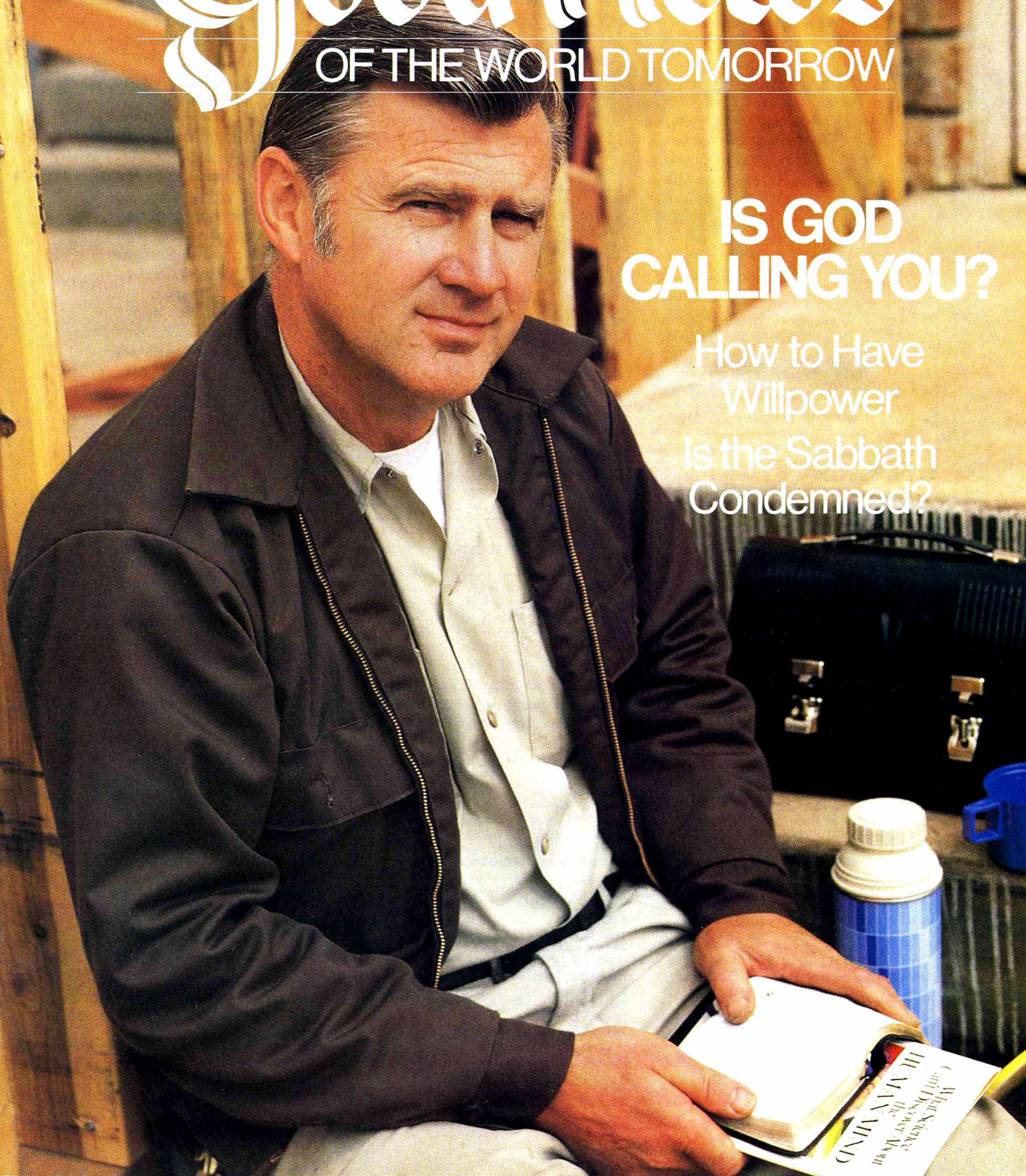
# The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

**IS GOD  
CALLING YOU?**

How to Have  
Willpower

Is the Sabbath  
Condemned?





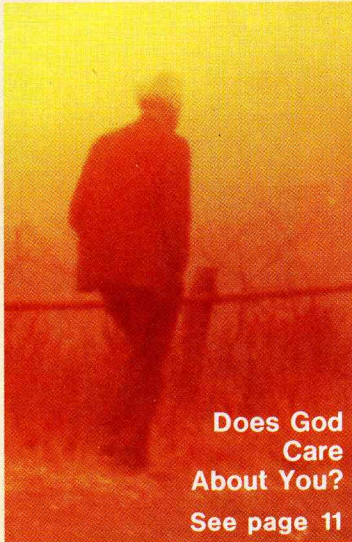
# The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

AUGUST 1983

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**COVER:** God is directly working with only a small number of people at this time. Could you be one of them — are you being called by God? Read the article beginning on page 3. Photo by Hal Finch.

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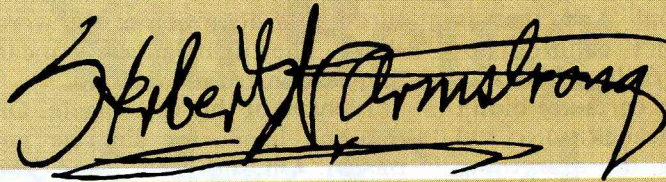
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I have written about the ecumenical movement to unite the churches — by compromise of doctrines and practices.

So now I would like to ask and answer: What about this whole church question — as it concerns *YOU? WHERE IS* the original *true* Church that Jesus Christ founded — the one the *living* Jesus Christ *STILL HEADS* today?

That is the question that haunted me, back in 1926 and early 1927.

I had been reared, like many of our readers, in one of the respected and older Protestant denominations. From infancy I was taken to Sunday school and church. I was told that I was “saved” because I had a “birth-right membership” in the church. I didn’t know much about what my church believed — but I don’t remember worrying about that.

But by age 18 I lost interest, and seldom attended after that. On leaving school I entered the advertising profession. I was ambitious. I craved *STATUS*. So I worked hard, studied continually to improve my abilities, drove myself relentlessly toward that goal of *STATUS!*

Then, after nationwide occurrences totally beyond my control had twice taken businesses I had started, I was *angered* into an intensive study of the Bible for the first time in my life. So far as the Bible was concerned, I had always said, “I just can’t *UNDERSTAND* the Bible.”

Strange — I had always *craved* understanding, but about other things. The Bible seemed to me a dry, dull, dead book that *NOBODY*

could understand. I assumed, of course, that the churches had received all their beliefs, teachings and customs from the Bible — but then, I just had no interest in religion.

But finally, early fall of 1926, I was challenged! I was *doubly* challenged! My wife had taken up with “*religious fanaticism*” — that is, it seemed fanaticism to *me!* She claimed she found it *IN THE BIBLE* — but I knew good and well that was impossible, because it was a belief and practice utterly *CONTRARY* to the churches.

“All these churches can’t be wrong,” I said. “They get their teaching from the Bible, and this fanaticism of yours is *contrary* to what they teach.”

“Well, maybe they teach *contrary* to the Bible, then,” my wife insisted, “because I got *THIS* out of the *BIBLE!*”

Argument was no use. She said if I’d show her where the Bible taught differently, she’d give it up, but not otherwise.

At the same time a sister-in-law challenged me in regard to the theory of evolution. I had never happened to study evolution in school or college. She said I was just plain *IGNORANT* if I didn’t believe in evolution! This stung my pride! *Me IGNORANT?* What an *INSULT!*

“All right,” I answered, “I’ll study into the evolutionary theory thoroughly, and if you’re wrong, as I know you are, I’ll *PROVE IT* to you, and make you *eat those words!*”

I had always believed in *GOD* — though I knew little about Him, and just was not concerned about “religion.” Of course I had never researched the question deeply and thoroughly, to *PROVE*

whether God exists, or whether evolution is true. Few ever have. I just took God for granted, and *supposed* evolution was a false theory. Nearly all who believe either in God or evolution have *assumed* their belief *WITHOUT PROOF!*

But no longer for *ME!* Now I had to *KNOW!*

It became an almost night-and-day study of the Bible, and of in-depth research in books on evolution, geology, paleontology, biology, physics. I did research into radioactivity. That proved there had been no past eternity of matter, but *CREATION!* I studied the creation account in Genesis.

It was a six months’ intensive research, often studying until 1 or 2 a.m. But in the end I *PROVED* the existence of *GOD* and the infallible inspiration of the Bible; I *disproved* the evolutionary theory and *did* make the sister-in-law “eat those words!”

But in the argument with my wife, I *LOST!* She was right. I was wrong. It was by far the bitterest pill to swallow that had ever confronted me.

You see, it meant not only confessing I was wrong. That is hard enough for the carnal mind. But I had now learned *HOW* wrong I was, not only what I had believed through assumption, but what I had done and what I *was*. I had thought I was *pretty good!* Human nature always thinks that. I had learned it is just plain *BAD* and *EVIL*.

I thought immediately, *IF* I accept Bible teaching and begin to *LIVE* by it — *IF* I give in to accept Christ, become converted, live a Christian life — what will all my former business associates and friends say?

In my mind, it meant *GIVING*



THEM ALL UP — for good! It meant conversion! And that is something I don't believe happens *really*, and *fully*, without an inner struggle. It certainly didn't in my case. It meant GIVING UP! It meant giving up everything my heart had been set on — my life goal. It meant forsaking my way of life — a total about-face! Actually it meant giving up my IDOL, though I didn't see it that way, then.

It meant UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER to God. It meant giving up MY LIFE, actually, and GIVING IT TO GOD!

In the end, I did it!

But now I faced a NEW CHALLENGE! In this intensive study, I had found that "all these churches" CAN BE wrong! I found that, so far as I knew of what the church I was reared in believed, it was diametrically contrary to the Bible.

Now the question came, WHERE is the TRUE Church — the one Jesus Christ founded — the one He HEADS today — the one that carries out His MISSION — the one He said He would never leave or forsake?

I had been shockingly disillusioned! It had been virtually a traumatic six months.

When I read Romans 6:23, I stared at that verse in my Bible in shocked, incredulous disbelief! It said, "For the wages of sin is DEATH; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Authorized Version). I had always believed the wages we earn for SIN was *just the opposite of* DEATH. I had been taught that what we get paid for SIN was ETERNAL LIFE — in hell fire! This verse says eternal life is something we can only receive AS A GIFT from GOD.

But NO! Surely no! We already *have* eternal life — so I supposed — we are immortal souls!

I learned that many theologians INTERPRET that verse — that is, they PUT A DIFFERENT MEANING INTO IT. They *change* the meaning of the words to make them conform to their belief instead of letting God's Word *change their belief* to conform

with God's truth. They manufacture a new definition of the word *death*. They define *death* to mean "separation from God."

I looked at this verse again. On the one hand, for sin, we get DEATH. On the other hand, the *opposite* of that penalty is ETERNAL LIFE.

Now, it certainly was clear, if ETERNAL LIFE is the very *opposite* of DEATH, then DEATH cannot mean eternal life!

I was shocked to find that in many, if not most, teachings of Jesus and the New Testament, the churches now teach the very opposite, and follow opposite customs and practices!

I was confused! My head was swimming!

But there it was, in plain language. I read that SOULS can *die*! "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:4, 20). It was important enough to be stated twice. Then my startled eyes read, in Revelation 16:3, AV, "And every living *soul* DIED in the sea." That said SOULS can DIE. Then I saw where Jesus said souls can be DESTROYED: "But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28)!

It began to look like the churches *were* wrong, after all!

But did not Jesus Christ found His CHURCH? He surely did, and I found where He said the gates of the grave would never prevail against it — IT COULD NOT BE DESTROYED! I found where Jesus Christ said He would never leave nor forsake it — where He would always be "in the midst" of it. I found where He was the living HEAD of it! Jesus Christ was resurrected from the grave. HE IS STILL ALIVE!

So *WHERE* was the Church *He* was guiding, directing and using?

I was perplexed. But I kept searching. I continued studying.

I found where Jesus Christ came to DO THE WORK OF GOD. He came to bring mankind the GOSPEL, from GOD. Yet He said that *of Himself*, as a human, by His own human power, He could do nothing — He was utterly

*powerless*, of Himself, for this divine spiritual MISSION. The Father that dwelt within Him — by the power of His Holy Spirit — did the work.

So it was really GOD doing it, by His Holy Spirit, using the individual human mind and body of Jesus as His instrument. GOD started HIS WORK of revealing HIS MESSAGE and building His Church through the individual human BODY of Jesus Christ.

I saw where God's true CHURCH is called "THE BODY OF CHRIST" (I Cor. 12:27, 13, Rom. 12:5). How could the Church be the BODY OF CHRIST? I searched. I studied. God's Word made the truth PLAIN.

God *started* His Gospel WORK — proclaiming the Gospel (good news) of HIS KINGDOM — through the individual human BODY of Jesus. But after His resurrection, Jesus sent the same HOLY SPIRIT on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, and thereafter, to enter into the COLLECTIVE BODY of those constituting GOD'S CHURCH.

The CHURCH, then, is the COLLECTIVE BODY Christ uses as HIS INSTRUMENT, empowered by God's Spirit, to carry on GOD'S WORK. Jesus Christ heads and directs it from heaven!

How does one become a member of this ONE BODY? By receiving God's Holy Spirit. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized [immersed] into ONE BODY" (I Cor. 12:13). The word *baptize* means to immerse — to plunge into. It is God's Holy Spirit that PUTS ONE INTO the only true Church!

But are there MANY CHURCHES? No, everywhere the New Testament speaks of the ONE Body — ONE CHURCH. "For in fact the BODY is not one member but many. . . . But now indeed there are many members, yet ONE BODY" (verses 14, 20). Christ is NOT divided (I Cor. 1:13). There is ONE true Church. All in it "speak the same thing" (I Cor. 1:10).

But WHAT is the divine MISSION of that Church? What is its PUR-

(Continued on page 18)



# Are You Being Called by God?

*What does it mean to be called by God? Why and how does God call human beings? If God is calling you, what should you do?*

By Norman L. Shoaf

**“N**o one can come to Me,” Jesus said, “unless the Father who sent Me draws him” (John 6:44).

This statement from the founder of Christianity knocks in the head the most widely believed error in today’s so-called Christian churches — that God is desperately trying, right now, to save the world!

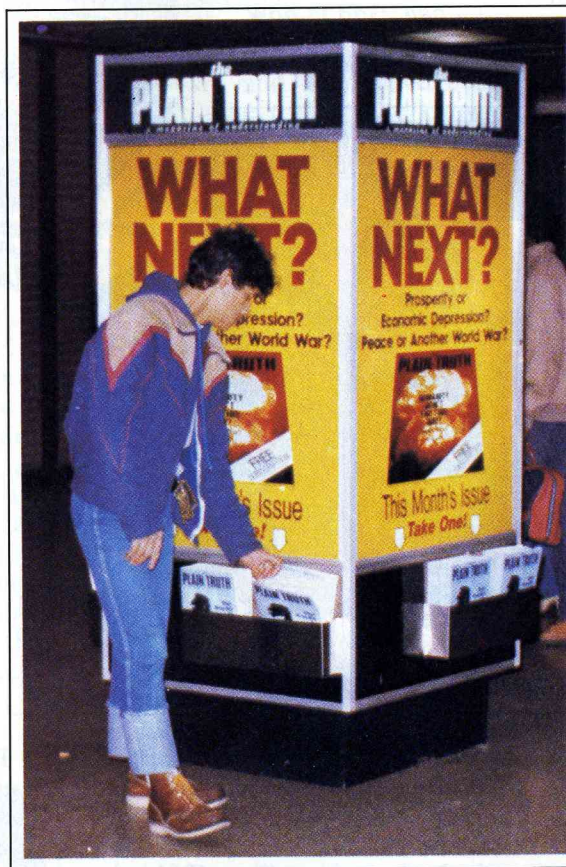
It simply is not true.

Religionists will tell you that a great battle is taking place, this very minute, between God and the devil.

On the one hand God, through the hopelessly confused and conflicting myriad of Christian denominations, is trying to get people to “give their hearts to Him” or be “born again” or join some church so that they can be “saved” and whisked off to heaven when they die.

On the other hand, the devil is working — and quite effectively, too — to keep people from hearing about and submitting to Jesus Christ, trying to deceive and trap people into rejecting God so that they end up burning forever in hell fire.

Nothing could be further from the truth! The plain teaching of your Bible tells a much different — and much more positive — story.



The plain truth is that God is not trying to save the whole world now.

## World cut off from God

Adam and Eve, the first humans, chose to decide for themselves what was right and what was wrong, instead of abiding by God’s definitions and living God’s way of life. Deceived by Satan, the progenitors of all the human race rejected God’s rule over them and chose to go their own — actually Satan’s —

way. You can read about it in the first three chapters of Genesis.

And God allowed them to decide which way they would go. He allowed them to choose to sin. But God thereafter barred Adam and Eve and all succeeding generations from open access to Him, including open access to the tree of life and His Holy Spirit (Gen. 3:22-24).

For 6,000 years now, man has been going his own way, cut off from God. And he has reaped the awful results — the sick, decaying, evil world you live in.

Notice this statement from the almighty God who holds all power and all destiny in His hands: “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He *will not* hear” (Isa. 59:1-2).

There is no battle between God and Satan. God is not trying to save the world now. He has allotted 6,000 years of a 7,000-year plan for man to go the way that leads to death (Prov. 14:12) and learn that obeying God is the only way to happiness.

## A few called now

For now, the world is cut off from God. Except — God has reserved to Himself



the right to work with selected individuals now, during this 6,000-year period, to perform special tasks. As Jesus said, "No one can come to Me *unless* the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44). God is calling some today, for a special purpose. And He reveals Himself and His truth to those He calls.

How? Notice what the apostle Paul said: "But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit" (I Cor. 2:9-10).

God opens a person's mind with the power of His Holy Spirit. When one answers God's call through repentance and baptism, God actually places His Spirit within the person's mind.

God's Spirit gives a human being the mind and will of God, along with the power to obey God. The person can then, for the first time, really understand spiritual knowledge. He is completely different from any person without God's Spirit, and functions differently. He becomes an actual begotten child of God: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

Notice another statement from Paul: "The carnal mind [the mind without God's Spirit] is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (verses 7-9).

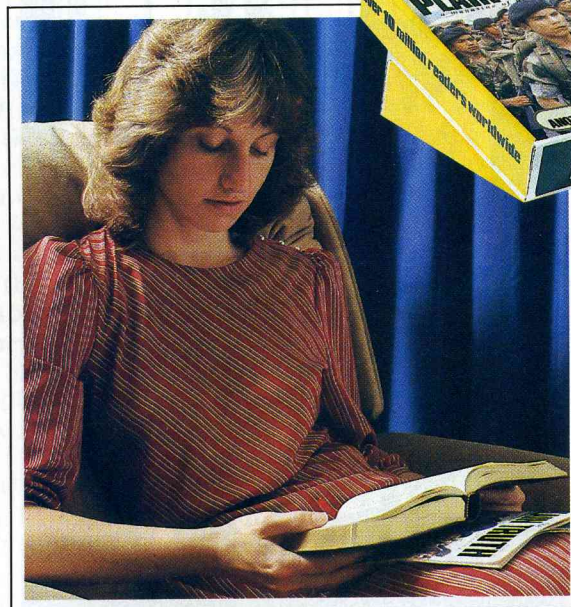
Get that last sentence. It is what separates true Christians from those who are not Christians at all: "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His"!

Unless God personally, directly, miraculously intervenes in a

person's life and opens that person's mind — unless that person submits his life to God and receives God's Holy Spirit — unless that person has God's Spirit leading him, motivating him, guiding his thoughts and actions, he is not a true Christian!

To know God and be a true Christian now — to be qualifying for salvation — God must call

**The Plain Truth magazine and the World Tomorrow broadcast — two tools God uses to call. God is now working with only a small group.**



you and make you part of His Work.

It's not something *you* can choose to do, no matter how much you may want to. God must make the choice to call you and begin working with you.

#### Called to what?

God's Word clearly defines the commission — the Work — that God's called people are to be carrying out at this time.

Notice Matthew 24. Christ was describing the signs that would precede His Second Coming to restore God's government to the earth. In verse 14, He predicted what would happen just before the end of this age: "And

this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."

God's called people in this age are given the commission of carrying Christ's Gospel message — the good news of the world tomorrow — to all the world. That is the message you read about in this magazine. That is the Work every true Christian will be part of.

The other main part of what God's people are called to do is to grow in godly character — come to think and act just as God does. God's begotten children are to be preparing to be married to

Christ at His return (Rev. 19:7). God's Church is

actually being judged by God now, in preparation for birth into God's very Family at Christ's return (I Pet. 4:17).

Is it any wonder that Paul says true Christians are called with a "holy calling" (II Tim. 1:9), or that he tells God's called people to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4:1, AV)?

How does a called and converted person "walk worthy of the vocation"?

Peter says, "As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" (I Pet. 1:15). Peter later noted that true Christians should live as Jesus Christ lived (I Pet. 2:21-22).

#### Is God calling you?

Have you truly been called by God? Is God calling you now — leading you by His Holy Spirit? How would you know?

If you are being called by God, you will come to have a deep, abiding belief that God exists, and that He is in charge of everything that goes on in this physical realm: "He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who

Photos by Hal Finch, Warren Watson and G.A. Belluche Jr.



diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).

If you are being called by God you will believe that the Bible is God’s Word — God’s instruction book for man — that every word of the Bible is true. What’s more, with the Holy Spirit guiding your mind, you will begin to actually understand what you read in the Bible. You will begin to actually want to study the Bible, striving to dig out every gem of truth it has to offer (II Tim. 3:16-17).

You will desire a closer relationship with the great God who created you and who is revealing His truth to you. This type of relationship is fostered through intensive Bible study and fervent prayer. You will understand as you never have before the importance of prayer and how to pray, and you will want to do so regularly. “Draw near to God,” writes James, “and He will draw near to you” (Jas. 4:8).

If God’s Spirit is actually leading you, you will begin to feel a sense of purpose in your life, perhaps for the first time. You will develop an inner sense of urgency about the times we live in, an excitement over the truth you are coming to understand and an expectation about what is ahead. And yet, you will feel an inner peace and calm unlike any other you have ever known. This is the



“peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” (Phil. 4:7), which God’s Spirit offers.

You will come to understand God’s true doctrines, realizing that they are far different from what you have probably been taught or heard all your life. The truths about heaven and hell, about the doctrine of the immortal soul, about holidays such as

Christmas and Easter, about God’s Sabbath, will surprise and move you.

You will come to know deeply that God’s law is in force today. Christ Himself said: “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17).

You will realize the importance of what happened in the Garden of Eden — understand the events that occurred before man’s appearance on earth — begin to get a glimpse of the incredible human potential.

If God is working in your life, you will start to see how you, just like Adam and Eve, have been taking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — how, all your life, you have been following *your* way — the way that leads to death (Prov. 16:25) — instead of God’s way.

You will come to know the meaning of sin, and you will be broken up inside because you yourself have sinned, bringing the death penalty on yourself and requiring the death of Jesus Christ to pay that penalty in your stead (Rom. 3:23, 6:23, 5:8). You will come to see how evil this world really is, and you will want to detach yourself from it — have no part in its hellish ways.

If God is calling you, you will be ready to do the hardest thing any human can do — admit you are wrong. This is the beginning of real repentance. You will want to change your life — stop following Satan’s way and do what God tells you to do, no matter what. You will begin to have the power to say *no* to the wrong urges, habits, desires and attitudes that have always propelled the things you did.

Your life overall — your main motivation and disposition — will be characterized by the word *give* rather than the word *get*.

You will want to do all you can to serve and help this wretched world, and a true Christian achieves this, first and foremost, by doing God’s Work — sharing the precious knowledge of God’s truth with the rest of mankind.

You will put your whole heart into God’s Work. You will completely dedicate yourself to having a part in warning the world of the dramatic events to occur just before the close of this age, and of the fantastic, beautiful world that awaits just beyond the horizon. You will be thrilled to have a part in telling the world there is a better tomorrow — that God cares and is about to act.

If you are being called by God, you will soon realize that nothing else matters.

### Counsel available

If, after careful evaluation, you feel that God is calling you, what should you do?

The Worldwide Church of God has ministers throughout the United States and around the world. These men, fully trained in Bible knowledge by Ambassador College, are completely qualified to answer any questions you may have about God, the Bible, Christianity, conversion or personal problems in your life.

The fact that you are reading and understanding this magazine is a sign that God may be calling you! Perhaps you have been reading this Work’s publications for years, but have hesitated to look deeper into the knowledge we offer. Perhaps you have been confused or apprehensive about what accepting this knowledge might require in your life.

But know this: God holds you responsible for what you know. As James wrote, “To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4:17). If you have read this far and understood what this article has been saying, perhaps it is time to do something about it.

Our ministers would be happy to talk with you about repentance, baptism or other subjects. There is absolutely no cost or obligation on your part in asking for ministerial counsel.

If you would like to talk to one of our men, please write to our address nearest you. You can find a list of our addresses on the inside front cover of this magazine. □



# The Sabbath in the New Testament— COMMANDED or

# CONDEMNED?

Last month in an article entitled “What Was the Apostolic Sabbath?” we examined all the scriptures where the Sabbath was mentioned after Christ was resurrected. We found that there were 10 such texts in the book of Acts and in the epistles.

Then we checked all the places that mentioned the “first day of the week.” When we read them carefully, we found no hint of any change from Sabbath to Sunday.

There was no text that indicated Sunday was a day of rest and religious worship for the apostles and converts, whether Jew or gentile.

We found that the Sabbath of the apostles was what we commonly call Saturday, the seventh day of the week, the same day as commanded in the Old Testament.

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8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.  
9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.  
10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his rest, as God did from

*Must we keep one specific day, or may we “let our conscience be our guide”? This article dares to show what the Scriptures really say.*

By L. Leroy Neff

But some may still believe that there is no New Testament command to keep the Sabbath. Some may also believe that the Sabbath is condemned in the New Testament. Obviously, the Sabbath was an Old Testament institution, but some believe it is not a New Testament institution.

Part of the problem is the belief that since we are a New Testament Church, the Old Testament has been done away with. Others who profess to believe in both the Old and the New Testaments use only those parts of the Old of which they “approve,” or that they believe the New Testa-

ment supports. So that there is no doubt, we will address our questions to the New Testament alone!

### Three New Testament proofs

To begin, let us investigate the common belief that there is no command or clear statement showing that we should keep the Sabbath. We are now going to see three separate proofs that this is not true.

The first is based on a text in Hebrews.

In chapters 3 and 4 we find a discussion of the rest that is promised to God’s people. Because of unbelief and hardness of heart, ancient Israel never did enter into the promised rest (Heb. 3:11).

We are warned not to make the mistakes they made, lest we, too, fail to receive that rest (Heb. 4:1). That rest, by implication, is immortality as spirit beings in God’s Kingdom. The Sabbath day is a physical type of that rest (verse 4).

Verse 8 is improperly trans-



lated in some versions and should read "Joshua," not "Jesus." Actually, the two names are the same; they are just from different languages. The reference obviously applies to Joshua, the son of Nun, not Jesus of Nazareth.

In these two chapters the word *rest* usually is translated from the Greek word *katapausis* (Heb. 3:11, 18, 4:1, 3, 5, 10-11). The Greek word is defined as "a resting, rest."

But in Hebrews 4:9 a totally different and unrelated word is used: *sabbatismos*. This word literally means "a keeping sabbath" or "a sabbath rest."

The Authorized or King James Version reads, "There remaineth therefore a *rest* to the people of God." The marginal reading in the Cambridge and other Bibles is "keeping of a sabbath," rather than "rest."

Now read the text that way: "There remaineth therefore a *keeping of a Sabbath* to the people of God."

A word-for-word transliteration from the Greek text to English is, "Therefore remains a keeping of a Sabbath for the people of God." The Lamsa translation reads, "It is therefore the duty of the people of God to keep the Sabbath."

Note that this Sabbath remains! It was not done away. It was not nailed to the cross. It was not abrogated. It still remains — it still exists!

The next verse reinforces this point: "For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His" (Heb. 4:10, Revised Authorized Version).

After we are baptized and receive God's Holy Spirit, but before we enter into the final rest of God, we enter into a preliminary rest or foretaste of the final rest. This is possible since we have been forgiven of past sins and are no longer under the bondage that sin brings, and we are at peace with God.

If we have entered into that rest, having been forgiven of sin and received God's Holy Spirit, then we, too, will follow God's

example and cease from our work or labor as God did.

This obviously is not talking about retiring or no longer working, as God still works (John 5:17). It refers to resting on the Sabbath just as God did (Gen. 2:2-3, Heb. 4:4).

### **Why should we follow Christ and Paul?**

The second main proof is based on I Corinthians 11:1: "Imitate me," wrote Paul, "just as I also imitate Christ."

This is the same principle we saw last month in I Peter 2:21, I John 2:6 and John 13:15. Jesus Christ set us a perfect example of obedience to God. He did not sin (Heb. 4:15). Sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4). Jesus Christ did not live a perfect life in our stead so that we can live any way we want. Instead, these scriptures show we are to follow His example.

The true Christian will, then, also follow those who follow Christ. Christ kept the Sabbath (Luke 4:16) and so did Paul (Acts 17:2).

It should now be obvious that we ought to keep the Sabbath, too. If we don't we are not following the example of Paul or Christ or the early Christians as recorded in the New Testament.

### **Are the Ten Commandments done away?**

The third main proof relates to God's commandments.

God literally spoke the Ten Commandments to ancient Israel (Ex. 20:1) and later wrote them with His own finger on two tables of stone (Ex. 31:18). These Ten Commandments are commonly referred to throughout the Bible as "the commandments."

Christ kept these very same Ten Commandments (John 15:10). That includes the Sabbath command, which is the Fourth Commandment (Ex. 20:8-11).

From I Corinthians 10, especially verses 4 and 9, it is obvious that the God of the Old Testament was the same one who became, through human birth,

the Jesus Christ of the New Testament. Many other scriptures, such as John 1:1-18, also make this clear.

Jesus Christ, the Word (John 1:1-2, 14), had received the Ten Commandments from the Father and then spoke them to Israel at Mt. Sinai. We should expect, then, that the One who spoke the Ten Commandments to Israel (Ex. 20:1) would later, as Jesus Christ, keep these same commandments!

If we ever expect to receive eternal life, we will need to keep the commandments, which include the one about the Sabbath: "So He said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments'" (Matt. 19:17).

If we really know Jesus Christ, we, too, will keep His commandments, including the one about the Sabbath: "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:3-4).

These commandments are not some new commandments of "love," but the same commandments of love to God and love to neighbor that were given in the beginning (verse 7). Compare Mark 12:29-31 with Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18.

If we want to express the real Christian love of the Bible instead of a false, pseudoreligious love, John says that we will keep God's commandments. That includes Sabbath observance. John says that these commandments are not grievous or burdensome, contrary to what many claim (I John 5:3).

John also said that the remnant, or those in the last Church era of this age, would keep the commandments, which include the Fourth: "And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring [the Church], who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17). The end-



time true saints of God will still keep the commandments, which includes keeping the Sabbath holy: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

Those in Judea are to pray that

they will not need to flee for safety on the Sabbath during the beginning of the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:20). The Sabbath command will still be in effect!

From all these scriptures, it should be crystal clear that the commandments, including the

proper day of rest and worship, are commanded in the New Testament, just as they were commanded in the Old Testament.

Some may still believe, though, that this proof is nullified by texts that condemn the Sabbath.

There are three texts that some

# Why Do Most Observe

Not because they can prove that they should from the Bible!

"You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday."

What is the source of that quote? A publication of the Worldwide Church of God? No, it came from Catholic James Cardinal Gibbons in *The Faith of Our Fathers* (1917 ed.).

A Catholic study course states: "If we followed the Bible only, we would keep holy the Saturday . . . Well, did Christ change the day? . . . We have no record that He did . . . The Church . . . transferred the obligation from Saturday to Sunday" (*Father Smith Instructs Jackson*).

The Catholic church makes no secret that it is responsible for replacing Sabbath keeping with Sunday observance.

And the Protestants? At the time of the Reformation they protested against many teachings of the Catholic church. But few protested against Sunday observance. One of those who did was named Carlstadt. So striking were his writings on the subject that Martin Luther admitted in his book *Against the Celestial Prophets*: "Indeed, if Carlstadt were to write further about the Sabbath, Sunday would have to give way, and the Sabbath — that is to say, Saturday — must be kept holy."

But Luther did not want to go to that extent in rocking the ecclesiastical boat of his time. His reasoning, as found in his *Larger Catechism*, was that "to avoid the unnecessary disturbance which an innovation would occasion, it [the day of worship] should continue to be Sunday" (*Shaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, article "Sunday").

Martin Luther did not take issue with Sunday observance. The Protestant reformers as a whole accepted the Catholic position on Sunday. This is the real reason Protestants observe Sunday today!

## When was Sunday substituted?

It did not happen all at once. It was gradual. "For some time it [Sunday] was observed conjointly with the Sabbath, verbal and ritual relics of such observance still remaining in our liturgical books and customs. But as Jewish habits [an admission that the early true Church kept some of the same customs as the Jews] became disused [On whose authority? God's? No, man's!] by the gentile [pagan-influenced] churches, this practice [Sabbath keeping] was generally, though slowly, discontinued" (*Blunt's Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology*, article "Sunday").

Even while the original apostles were alive it was necessary to warn of "certain men . . . crept in unnoticed" (Jude 4) who were trying to introduce pagan ideas into the Church. Worshiping on the day of the sun was but one of those ideas. Multitudes in the world were being deceived by an expanding counterfeit "Christianity" based on the ancient Babylonian mystery religion.

In the early years of the Church many fraudulent epistles were circulated, masquerading as apostolic letters. Notice how a letter written to gentiles shortly after the turn of the century and attributed to one Ignatius reveals that they, gentiles, were keeping the Sabbath:

"Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner . . . But let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner, rejoicing in meditation on the law, not in relaxation of the body [a deliberate attempt to water down God's

Sabbath law] . . . And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day [Sunday] as a festival . . . the queen and chief of all the days of the week."

Both days were being kept, but observance of Sunday was being emphasized by Ignatius.

Not all early Catholics, however, favored Sunday observance. Around 230, Catholic Origen wrote to fellow Catholics of the gentile churches in Egypt:

"But what is the feast of the Sabbath except that of which the apostle speaks, 'There remaineth therefore a Sabbatism' [Hebrews 4:9], that is, the observance of the Sabbath by the people of God? [Notice how this man understood his native Greek tongue!] Leaving the Jewish observances of the Sabbath, let us see how the Sabbath ought to be observed by a Christian. On the Sabbath day all worldly labors ought to be abstained from. If, therefore, you cease from all secular works, and execute nothing worldly, but give yourselves up to spiritual exercises, repairing to church, attending to sacred reading and instruction . . . this is the observance of the Christian Sabbath" (*Origen's Opera*, Book 2, p. 358).

## Council of Laodicea prohibited Sabbath keeping

In 321 the Roman government issued an edict making Sunday a civil day of rest. The paganized, counterfeit "Christian" religion, which was becoming the empire's dominant religion, supported the edict.

Sabbath keepers were forced to flee the confines of the western Roman Empire. Only in the east did Sabbath keepers remain. Eventually, however, Sabbath keeping was to be stamped out of the eastern Roman Empire as well.

About 365 the Council of Laodicea



people believe do just that. We now need to examine them, in context, to see if they really say what some believe they say.

**What are days, months, times and years?**

The first commonly misunder-

stood text is Galatians 4:10, AV: "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years."

Is Paul here condemning the Galatians for observing the Sabbath? Almost everyone thinks so, but we had better make sure what Paul was writing about.

If Paul had in mind the Sabbath and Holy Days commanded in the law, which *months* were commanded? Which *times* were commanded? The fact is that God's law commands no *months* or *times* to be observed!

But the law does have some-

Gregory, Bishop of Nyassa, a representative of the eastern churches, about 10 years after the Council at Laodicea, dared to tell the world: "With what eyes can you behold the Lord's day, when you despise the Sabbath? Do you not perceive that they are sisters, and that in slighting the one, you affront the other?"

**Sunday finally made a rest day**

Observance of Sunday as a day of total rest was not strictly enforced for almost two centuries more. We even find Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate Bible, working after the Sunday services sev-

It was the Roman church that sanctioned the Roman Sunday as a rest day, and not merely a secular holiday. It was that church that transferred the law of the Sabbath to Sunday.

Another 600 years passed before the last recorded semblance of public worship on the Sabbath was completely extirpated from the eastern churches.

Meanwhile Pope Gregory of Rome, who reigned from 590 to 604, anathematized "those who taught that it was not lawful to do work on

# Sunday?

was called to settle, among other matters, the Sabbath question! One of its most famous canons was the 29th: "Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honoring the Lord's Day, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found Judaizing, let them be anathema from Christ" (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. XIV, p. 148).



Men, not God or the Bible, sanctioned Sunday observance. Far left, the Council of Nicaea (325), at which the outlines of Catholicism were formulated. Augustine (left) admitted that the Roman church transferred the law of the Sabbath to Sunday.

The force of the Roman state had already been utilized in 325, after the Council of Nicaea, to confiscate the property and to destroy the lives of any who obeyed God's command to keep the Passover. So the heavy hand of the state fell upon any who would be faithful in resting on the Sabbath and worshiping God as commanded in the Bible.

Why give such a command if there were no true Christians observing the Sabbath at that time?

Although Sabbath keeping was absolutely prohibited by this council, yet the whole Greek world still continued to attend church services on the Sabbath and work the remainder of the day! Saturday then was observed much as Sunday is observed now!

Public worship on the Sabbath was far from expelled in the churches of the east even four centuries after Christ.



Pope Gregory (far left) anathematized those who opposed Sabbath work, while Protestant reformer Martin Luther (left) did not take issue with Sunday keeping. Luther stated that Sunday should be observed "to avoid . . . unnecessary disturbance."

eral years following the enactments at Laodicea.

But Augustine, around 400, declared: "The holy doctors of the church [not the Bible, but men] have decreed that all the glory of the Jewish Sabbath is transferred to it [Sunday]. Let us therefore keep the Lord's day as the ancients were commanded to do the Sabbath" (*Sabbath Laws*, p. 284).

the day of the Sabbath" (*History of the Popes*, vol. II, p. 378).

That stamped the Sabbath out of the churches of the British Isles and the Continent where, according to Webster's *Rest Days*, "The Celts kept Saturday as a day of rest, with special religious services on Sunday" (A. Bellesheim, *History of the Catholic Church in Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1887-1890, i, 86).

That's the record of history! — By the Good News staff □



thing to say about *times*. Notice Deuteronomy 18:9-12, AV. This passage condemns the practices of the heathen nations that Israel was to drive out: "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an *observer of times*, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consultant with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer" (verses 10-11).

One thing prohibited here is observing times. Rather than commanding such a practice, the law condemned such a practice.

If Galatians 4:10 is condemning days, times, months and years, then they must not have been any periods of time given in the law.

In Galatians 4:12 Paul says that instead of doing what they were doing about these periods of time, they should "become as I am." We have already seen that he kept the Sabbath.

Some apparently believe Paul was a hypocrite. He lived one way and condemned others for following his example. The problem here is not with Paul or with the Scriptures, though, but in the false ideas of people.

In order to understand what Paul is referring to in this scripture, we need to understand an important point. Who were the Galatians, and what was the problem?

The Galatians were children of God by faith in Christ (Gal. 3:26), and therefore children of Abraham by faith, rather than birth (verse 29). Previously they had not known God (Gal. 4:8). The Galatians had been idolaters. In other words, they had been gentile by birth and pagan by religion. They had not known God, but had now come to know God through God's ministers and God's Church.

But what was the question? "But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?" (verse 9).

The Galatians had turned back to their pagan, idolatrous ways by observing days, months, times and years. They were not turning to the days commanded in the law, because they had not known the law; rather, they were turning again to the religious days and times of the pagan religions from which they had come.

When they came into the true Church of God, they learned for the first time about the Sabbath and Holy Days that the New Testament Church observed, but now they had turned from them, back to their old pagan religious days.

When you understand that they were gentiles, formerly practicing the ways of the heathen, and that they had returned to those same ways, you realize that this text has nothing whatever to do with any days commanded in the Old Testament law.

Actually, what was happening in the Galatian church continued from time to time until the church that was seen by the world had completely turned to these same days, months, times and years and renamed them with Christian-sounding names. These pagan observances finally were incorporated into the religion, while the days God commanded were rejected.

### **Can't we decide for ourselves?**

The second text that is commonly misunderstood is Romans 14:5: "One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind."

What could this text mean? Does it mean that each person can decide for himself which day to observe, or whether to observe any day? Does this mean that you can "let your conscience be your guide"? Does it mean that you can esteem all days alike and thereby void any day of worship?

Some believe that this scripture means you can select any day of the week unless it is Saturday, and that if you observe Saturday you will be under a curse!

There are two main points we should understand.

First, this text says nothing about what God esteems, only what man esteems. Christ said, "What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

What does God esteem regarding the Sabbath? He set it apart on the last day of re-creation week (Gen. 2), commanded it forever (Ex. 20:8-10, 31:17) and sent Israel and Judah into captivity because they did not keep the commandments or hallow His Sabbaths. God has high esteem for His Sabbath. The problem is that some people do not so highly esteem it! What is really important is not what man esteems, but what God esteems.

Paul is not saying here that we can decide for ourselves what is holy. Only God can decide what is holy. He has already decreed that the Sabbath is holy and that it will be holy forever. He is concerned as to whether we keep holy what He has made holy.

The second point to notice is the context. What is the subject of Romans 14? Notice verse 2: "For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables."

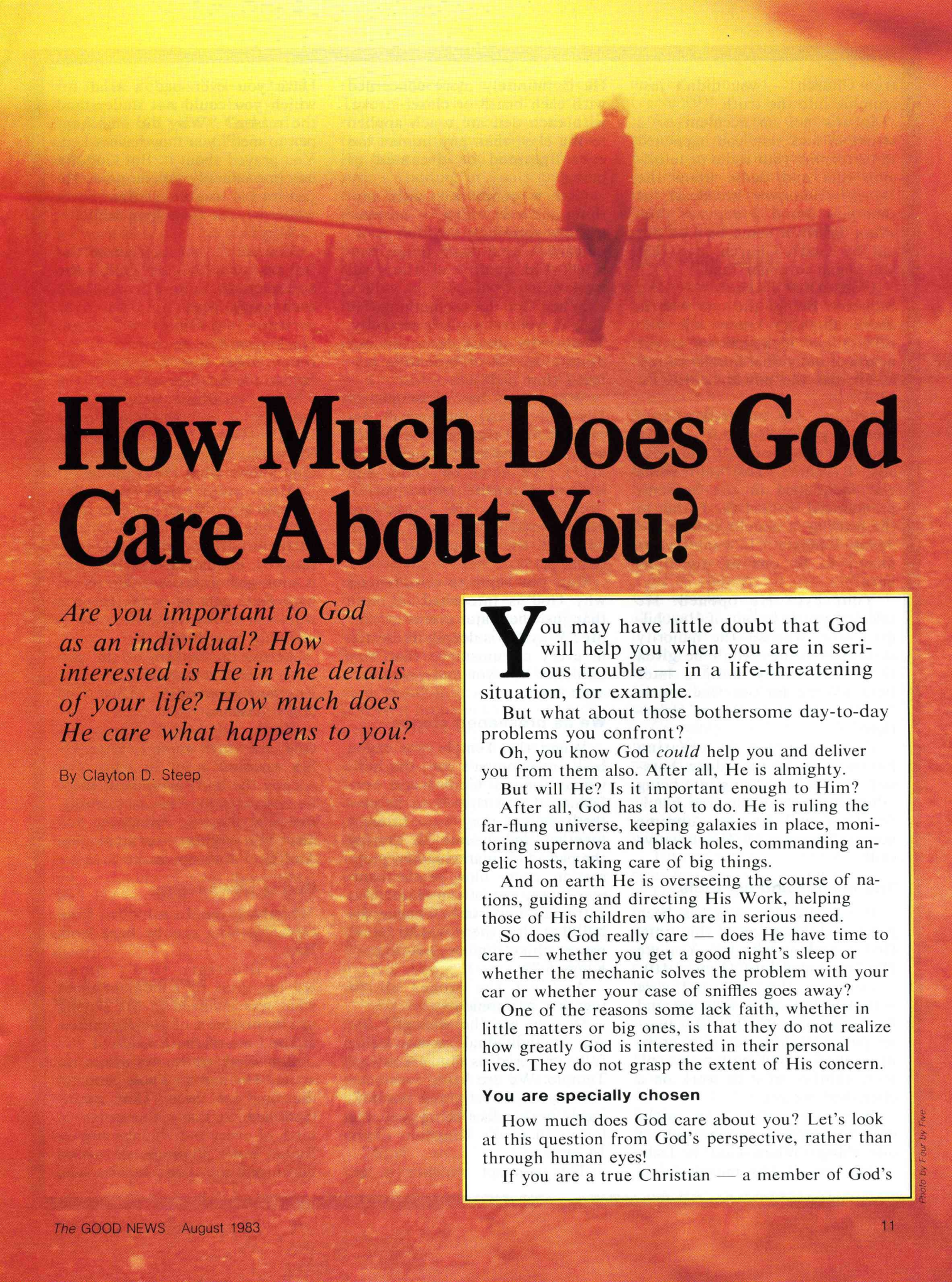
Some people in the Church believed it was all right to eat vegetables and meat; others who were weak in faith (verse 1) thought that Christians should only eat vegetables. As a result, these people were judging each other (verse 4).

Paul explains in verse 17 that "the kingdom of God is not food and drink." The main point is stated in verse 21: "It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak."

The subject of this chapter from start to finish has to do with what people eat. But what does this have to do with verse 5, which relates to esteeming "one day above another"?

In Rome some people had the pagan idea that on certain days certain foods should or should not  
(Continued on page 21)





# How Much Does God Care About You?

*Are you important to God as an individual? How interested is He in the details of your life? How much does He care what happens to you?*

By Clayton D. Steep

**Y**ou may have little doubt that God will help you when you are in serious trouble — in a life-threatening situation, for example.

But what about those bothersome day-to-day problems you confront?

Oh, you know God *could* help you and deliver you from them also. After all, He is almighty.

But will He? Is it important enough to Him?

After all, God has a lot to do. He is ruling the far-flung universe, keeping galaxies in place, monitoring supernova and black holes, commanding angelic hosts, taking care of big things.

And on earth He is overseeing the course of nations, guiding and directing His Work, helping those of His children who are in serious need.

So does God really care — does He have time to care — whether you get a good night's sleep or whether the mechanic solves the problem with your car or whether your case of sniffles goes away?

One of the reasons some lack faith, whether in little matters or big ones, is that they do not realize how greatly God is interested in their personal lives. They do not grasp the extent of His concern.

## **You are specially chosen**

How much does God care about you? Let's look at this question from God's perspective, rather than through human eyes!

If you are a true Christian — a member of God's



true Church — you didn't just stumble into the truth.

It was not an accident or a stroke of luck that you happened to be turning your radio or television dial and came upon the *World Tomorrow* broadcast, or that you found a copy of *The Plain Truth* or some booklet put out by God's Church, and that you began to understand.

God the Father — the Supreme Being, the one who is above all, who knows all, who rules all — looked down at the hearts of individual human beings as He has the power to do (Ps. 11:4).

Millions, yes, hundreds of millions, of people God left in darkness. But you He chose. Individually. By name. Yes, your name was mentioned in the heavens, pronounced by God the Father in the hearing of angelic beings and Jesus Christ: "I want [your name] to be one of my first-born."

Your eyes He opened. He selected you to be one of His children now, whereas the majority of human beings won't be given their opportunity until a later time. (Write for our free article "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?")

God's purpose in creating humanity is to reproduce Himself. He wants to bring into being other members of the God Family. That will be the supreme accomplishment of His creative skill.

### **The master and his tools**

If you are one who has been given understanding at this time, God is working with you. You are His "workmanship" (Eph. 2:10).

Compare the skill and care with which God is forming and finishing you with that of a master potter, painter, sculptor, architect or diamond cutter, or any truly skillful artist at work on a cherished project.

Whatever analogy you might wish to use, you can be sure of one thing: When God is fashioning one of His masterpieces,

He is infinitely more concerned with each brush or chisel stroke, with each delicate touch applied to the clay, than any human has ever dreamed or dreamed of being!

God is concerned with anything and everything — no matter how seemingly small or insignificant — that could in any way affect the quality of the final work of art.

When God does something, He does it well — in fact, perfectly. That's why Jesus described our destiny as that of becoming perfect (Matt. 5:48).

When God has accomplished His will in us, there shall not remain the slightest "spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27). We shall be "holy and without blemish" (same verse), "conformed to the image" of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29), "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19).

Can you begin to comprehend why God is interested in more than just the major events in your life? Why He is deeply interested in every circumstance that may influence how you and your character turn out?

### **We as preshaped stones**

When the Temple was being built in Solomon's day, the individual stones of God's house were fashioned and shaped to fit perfectly before they were brought together and assembled. During the period of quarrying and preparation, every blow of the hammer, every cut of the chisel, was extremely important. Once at the building site, there was to be no more chiseling or hewing (I Kings 6:7).

And yet the stones all fit together harmoniously.

Do you see the analogy? We are, as individual stones, being fully prepared as God's spiritual Temple. We are being fashioned now to fit perfectly and harmoniously in the place being prepared for us in God's Kingdom (John 14:3).

This concept explains a lot.

Have you ever had a trial for which you could not understand the reason? "Why did this happen to me?" you may have asked. You prayed about it. But God did not immediately deliver you. He just let the trouble continue for a while. Maybe for a long while!

Why?

You don't have to know the full answer in this life. God is the architect. He knows what shape each stone needs to take to fit perfectly into His overall design. He knows how to knock off the rough edges, how to smooth and polish the surface to make the whole "building fitly framed together . . . an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21, Authorized Version). Have confidence that God knows what He is doing.

You may have seen the thought-provoking picture of a little boy standing amid signs of extreme poverty. His clothing is tattered, his hair disheveled. Dirt is smudged on his face and on his bare feet, and he is clutching a worn-out teddy bear, but he is grinning nonetheless.

Across the bottom of the picture is the statement: "I know I'm worth somethin', 'cause God don't make no junk!"

You, called and chosen by God, are worth much to Him. He has invested a lot in you. You occupy the most prominent place in His attention. He is forming, molding, shaping, fashioning you into His highest workmanship. And God does not make junk!

### **God is all-knowing**

Nothing you do is hidden from God. Nothing can be kept from Him.

To illustrate God's omniscience, think for a moment about what was involved in the slaying of the firstborn of the Egyptians at the time of the Exodus.

For God to know whom to smite, He had to know who all the firstborn were. That means God had to know the order of birth of every individual living in Egypt, from "Pharaoh who sat on his throne to . . . the captive who



was in the dungeon" (Ex. 12:29). Among all human beings in Egypt, old and young, God had to know who was the first in each family.

You think that was an accomplishment? There was more to it yet. That night God also slew the firstborn of the Egyptians' beasts! So He had to know the birth order of all the animals in Egypt included under the death sentence. No telling how old some of the animals may have been or under what circumstances they were born. God knew which ones were the first to have come out of their mothers' wombs.

Do you think God knows the intimate details of your life any less than those of beasts in ancient Egypt?

Or what about the life or death of a single sparrow? It didn't stretch Jesus' imagination that God could be aware of the well-being of a tiny bird (Matt. 10:29). "Do not fear therefore," declared Jesus to His followers. In other words, don't be anxious and worried about your life. He said, "You are of more value than many sparrows" (verse 31).

Of course, because you are a potential immortal member of the God Family! You are of such intense interest to God that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (verse 30).

Is it reasonable to think that God could be concerned about how many hairs are on your head and at the same time be indifferent to details of your day-to-day life? He is concerned about anything and everything that could affect your growth and development.

### **God is concerned with every situation**

Not long ago, a man and his wife living in the eastern United States were considering whether or not to move across the country to an area where the husband could use his skills to better advantage.

For this family it was a major decision. Several children and

their schooling were involved. There were friends and relatives to leave behind, not to mention all the trauma and problems of packing belongings and moving furniture — pulling up roots and settling down in a new environment thousands of miles away.

No doubt the family spent much time discussing the pros and cons of the move, as well as praying to seek God's will in the matter.

What really stunned and bewildered this couple was when they mentioned to one who claimed to be a minister that they were considering such a move and trying to find out what God's will was. "Frankly, I don't think God cares one way or the other!" was the reply.

Contrast that answer with what James wrote. He specifically said that a Christian ought to be concerned about God's will when considering a move to a different city, a business transaction or any other plans (Jas. 4:13-15).

Why be concerned about God's will if God doesn't care about such matters?

The answer is that God does care. If anything is a problem or a potential problem to any of God's people, He cares.

Are you familiar with the scripture that says: "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of many of their truly serious troubles; but the rest of their problems they must needs struggle with on their own strength"?

There is no such scripture!

Listen to what the Bible says: "The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of *all* their troubles" (Ps. 34:17).

"*All* their troubles" means just that. Big ones, little ones, in-between ones — all of them. Of course, we have to do our part, but then God steps in and supplies everything we lack to give us victory and make things work out right.

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord

delivers him out of them *all*" (verse 19)!

Anybody who doesn't take advantage of God's willingness to help in every situation is missing out on a lot of peace of mind, is making unnecessary mistakes, is being defeated because he is trusting in his own strength.

### **God really cares**

If something bothers you, it is a problem, no matter how insignificant it seems. And no problem is too small to take to God. Nor is any problem too big.

You do not need to face life's problems by yourself. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1).

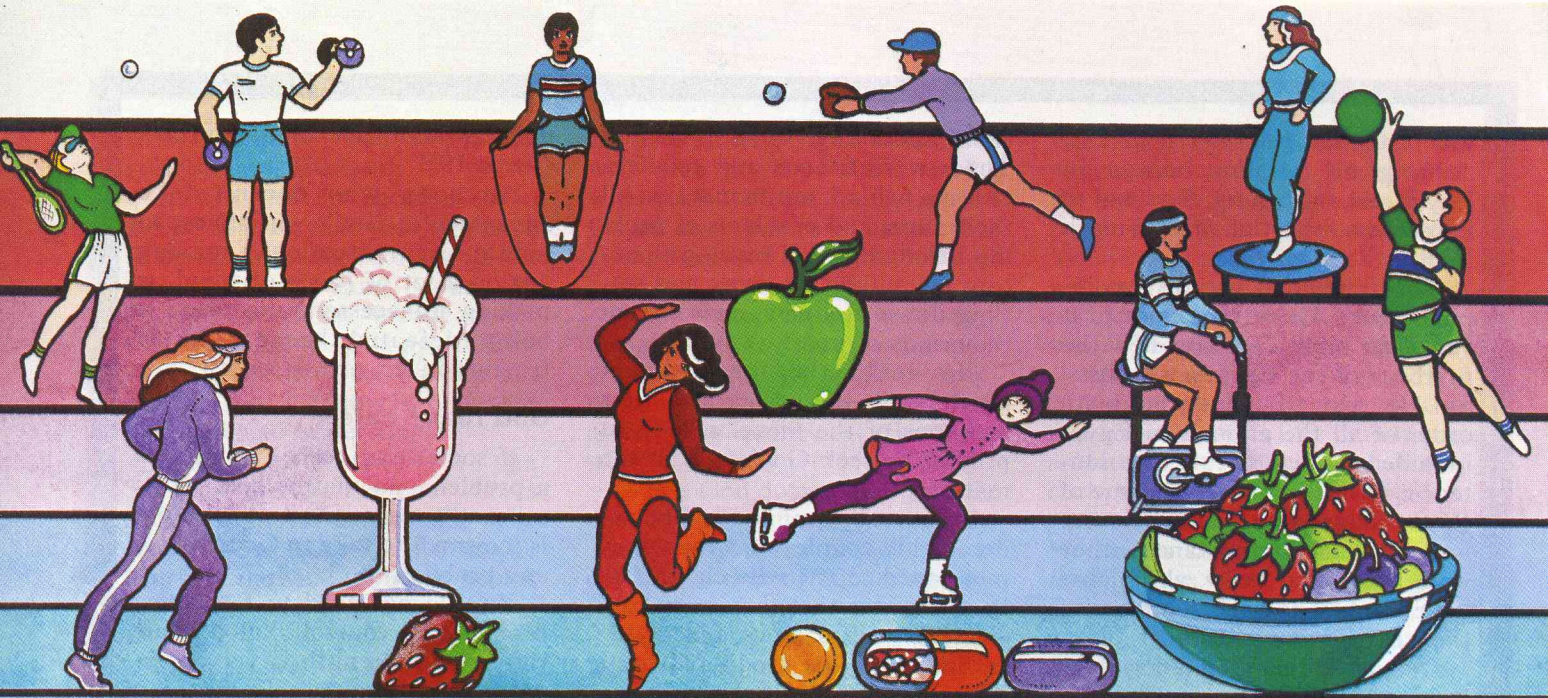
"Commit your way to the Lord," instructs Psalm 37:5. More exactly, the Hebrew states, "Roll your way upon the Lord." Just take all of your problems, all your trials, all your weaknesses and shortcomings, all that you want to change, all that burdens you, weighs you down. Gather it all together, roll it all up and lay it on the Eternal. His back is strong and His shoulders are broad. "Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (same verse).

Certainly you have to do your part. You have to seek wisdom and counsel, exercise perseverance and resourcefulness, apply all the laws of success. But when you take the matter to God, He will supply what you lack.

Take advantage of the tremendous privilege that is yours as one of God's chosen. Seek God's help in all situations, "casting *all* your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (I Pet. 5:7). God really cares about you. Share your life with Him and see!

Experience what moved David to exclaim: "Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from *all* my fears. . . . Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" (Ps. 34:3-4, 8). □





# WILLPOWER

## Why You Need It- How to Have It

*Willpower is one of the most valuable character traits a Christian can possess. How can you develop this important quality?*

By Bernard W. Schnippert

**T**oday's overweight person has available to him every conceivable aid that science can muster to help him lose weight.

Dozens of magazine articles and whole racks of books are devoted to this or that type of diet, or various programs for getting in shape. Calorie counters, charts, scales, pills and high-priced gyms and exercise equipment are offered.

Yes, the modern dieter can come by (or should we say *buy*?) just about anything he needs to lose weight — anything, that is, but the one thing he needs most of all — willpower!

Yes, lack of plain old willpower has stood in the way of more than one would-be dieter.

And, in this or other areas, it has stood in front of you and me, too!

Lack of willpower has stopped us from accomplishing what we

want to on our jobs or on our days off. It has stopped us from cutting the grass, getting the exercise we need or painting the house.

But, more important, a lack of willpower can stand in front of us and block our access to God's Kingdom.

The apostle Paul realized this weakness of human nature. He saw that the good intentions with which the proverbial road to hell (death) is paved are no substitute for the spiritual zeal that builds dynamic growth, the zeal that is

Illustration by Michael Nelson



founded in willpower (Heb. 2:1-3).

Christ said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

To do the will of our Father in heaven, we need to bend our own willpower to the task. That is, if we have the willpower in the first place.

### **Needed: real willpower**

But do not misunderstand. We cannot make it into God's Kingdom on our own power, or by the strength of our own will or works. No, we are saved by faith through grace (Eph. 2:8).

And you and I cannot, of ourselves, somehow conjure up the fruits of God's Spirit that we must exhibit in our daily lives. Those fruits come only from that Spirit, which lives in us.

But willpower is necessary. We need willpower to force ourselves to pray and study the Bible, so we may grow in faith. We need willpower to overcome bad habits like smoking or excessive drinking or overeating. We need willpower to keep ourselves in good physical health, so our minds might function effectively as we try to grow spiritually. And willpower is necessary to keep at least the physical element of God's commands (e.g., "bodily exercise profits" — I Timothy 4:8) as we strive toward God's Kingdom.

Even the willpower that some in our society exhibit can sometimes prove to be wispy indeed. The willpower many call upon is in reality often a mere shadow of strength, and it is hammered at by destructive enemies.

### **Willpower's enemies**

What are the enemies of our willpower?

*Bad habits* perhaps lead the list. After repeating something for a long time, our "automatic pilot" tends to take over. When it does, it can be difficult to return the control to our conscious minds. And when our automatic

pilot has been set on negative, we can end up staggering under the weight of numerous bad habits.

*Peer pressure* is another destructive force hammering away at our willpower. It's just plain hard to buck a crowd that's going the other way than you are. If the world around you was traveling the proper direction instead of the wrong one, it would be far easier to chart a steady and positive course.

*Procrastination* is another enemy. Too often we avoid doing what we should by simply delaying our actions for one more day. One day adds upon another until we have successfully avoided the project altogether.

Plain *laziness* afflicts a lot of people. Laziness is not necessarily the opposite of willpower — the opposite of willpower is weakness. Laziness is not necessarily a lack of strength, but it does reflect a lack of ambition.

Even Moses fell prey to one of the enemies of willpower — *excuses*. Our excuses for not doing this or that are rarely good. And neither were Moses'. See how many excuses Moses found when God told him to rescue the children of Israel (Ex. 3-4)? You and I are just as susceptible, or more so, than he was to offering excuses for not doing things we don't want to do.

More and more people don't take positive action these days because of *doubt*. They doubt that they have the ability to reach the goal that is set before them. They don't pray or study as they should, they don't fast as they should and they don't try to overcome their bad habits because they don't really believe they could make any progress even if they wanted to.

Certainly such an attitude denies God's power as well as their own, for Paul set us the example of "being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). If God is confident that we can reach His Kingdom with His help and a lit-

tle human willpower, why should we doubt?

Closely coupled with doubt is another enemy of willpower — *fear*. Fear overwhelmed our spiritual forefathers, the ancient Israelites, causing their hearts to melt for fear of the "giants" in the promised land (Num. 13:32-14:4). Our hearts can also wax weak at the daily trials we face. Fear of our trials can simply shred our paper-thin willpower into a heap of confetti.

### **Where there's a will . . .**

But there is hope! With God's help, you can build firm resolve and strong determination to exercise your spiritual muscle.

You can learn to be the master of your own body! You can build a healthy prayer and Bible study schedule. You can exercise your body and your mind and you can bring yourself under control.

But willpower does not spring up through spontaneous combustion. No, it takes work. But without the knowledge of how to build the willpower, our sincerest hopes for strength of character will go unfulfilled.

The real way to building willpower is found in the old phrase: "Where there's a will, there's a way." The reverse is also true: Where there is a way (i.e., an earnestly desired goal firmly in mind), there is a will (the willpower to strive toward it).

The goal you and I should center on is that of the Kingdom of God. Planting that goal deep within our hearts and minds will cause a burning desire that can light the fire of ambition toward that goal.

Remember the story of the man who found treasure hidden in the field? Read it in Matthew 13:44: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

To seek God's Kingdom with the





alacrity and zeal — the willpower — pictured by the man who sold all he had to buy the field, we must feel the same way about the Kingdom as the man did about that treasure. We must want it above all else.

If you want God's Kingdom and God's way badly enough, you will find a will to make yourself pray and study. You will find a will to overcome your smoking habit or your overeating. If you want the Kingdom badly enough, you will develop the willpower to seek it.

But the strong desire, the earnest yearning and zealous action of willpower to reach that goal, does not, even then, come merely from within ourselves. Paul explained this when he wrote, "It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

#### A simple solution

Our society is so accustomed to expecting man's intellect to solve his problems that we can come into God's truth expecting answers to our problems to be quite complicated. We tend to think we should read some special book to build willpower or go through a deep psychoanalysis to find what event in our early years doomed us to be weak-willed for the remainder of our lives.

But God's way of solving our problems is more simple. When it comes to spiritual willpower, the simple truth is that God will give us all we need, if we ask Him: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For

everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (Matt. 7:7-8).

Even though true spiritual willpower must come from God (for man of himself has neither the will or desire for God's Kingdom nor the power to get there), nonetheless there are things you can do to make yourself a more fertile resting place for God's Spirit.

You can, in fact, turn many of the enemies of willpower into your friends.

You will realize that repetition and habit, for example, while they can be destructive when you are locked into a negative habit, can also be put to positive use. If you pray an hour a day for 30 days, it will be that much easier to pray the same amount on the 31st day.

And, you can learn to discipline yourself through well planned prods on yourself. Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong has written about how he trained himself — forced himself — to develop the habit of getting up bright and early in the morning. He paid a bellhop to wake him up, and told the bellhop he would not give him the money until he was up and starting to get dressed. Mr. Armstrong kept this system up until the "early-bird" habit was established.

Think of methods you can apply to your own circumstances to get you started building good habits. Develop the *way*, and watch your *willpower* blossom.

You can use peer pressure to your advantage, too. True, it is hard to buck the crowd if they are going in the opposite direction from you. But sometimes the solution is to travel down another street. If you pick friends who are trying to build positive habits, positive habits will be easier for you to build (Prov. 13:20).

Also, learn to replace with courage the doubt that drags down your willpower. Courage comes from preparing to face the future and learning through positive experience (Rom. 5:1-5).

In place of your fear, ask God for faith. He is the author of faith, and He alone can give you a believing and positive attitude (Gal. 5:22).

Replace procrastination with a do-it-now attitude. From a good time-management book, you can learn to organize your time and energy so you *can* do it now, as well as do many other things later. You will find that doing something now means that you do not have an overwhelming load of things to do tomorrow.

Finally, as you see yourself accomplishing things through applying the principles of willpower, take a bit of humble satisfaction in the accomplishments.

Seeing accomplishment encourages one to greater growth and greater zeal: "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life" (Prov. 13:12).

#### You can do it

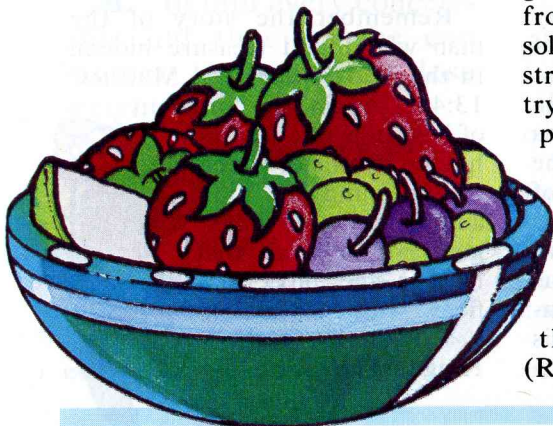
Yes, you can build willpower. You can build willpower if you want God's Kingdom badly enough, for where there is a burning desire for a "way" (a goal), there is willpower to back it up.

But remember, no matter how hard you try (and you should try hard!), you cannot build the willpower necessary for attaining God's Kingdom without God's Spirit, the source of all power, in you. For, as Paul said in II Timothy 1:7, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power [including willpower] and of love and of a sound mind."

So it is God who gives us both the will and the power — the willpower, if you please — to strive toward His Kingdom. Ask God for that willpower and He will not deny it to you.

Yes, feeble men can package diets, pills, books, scales or exercise equipment to help the dieter reach his goal, but they will never be able to market willpower.

But don't worry! For God will give it to you, if you want His Kingdom badly enough and if you ask Him for the willpower to attain it. □





Scripture tells us that Jesus was tempted in all points as we are (Heb. 4:15).

Yet we know He wasn't crippled or handicapped. He didn't live through old age. He wasn't forced into retirement and then forced to try to make ends meet on a pension.

How, then, can Jesus understand all that humans go through?

What about the myriad temptations and problems with which this modern world confronts us? Jesus didn't live in a society quite like this — far from it, in fact.

If we are to come boldly to God's throne of grace (verse 16), how can we be sure that Jesus understands what we feel and mean? After all, He is God — an immortal, almighty spirit being — we are mere flesh, and very weak. If Jesus has never experienced the exact sufferings that we do, how can He understand our personal needs?

Sure, we realize that Paul said most trials are common to all (I Cor. 10:13). And in Christian fellowship we are often surprised and comforted to find someone else who has gone through similar difficulties as ourselves.

Yet we each have experienced unique pains, trials and sufferings that we feel no one else can properly understand. And we may even wonder whether God Himself can. Is God able to really appreciate the depth of troubles we go through?

Peter tells us that Jesus suffered for us, leaving us an example (I Pet. 2:21). In what specific sufferings did Jesus lead the way? What confidence can we have that He does understand the personal traumas of each and every one of His people? Let's look at the facts.

### **Jesus was fully physical**

First, we need to understand

# Does Jesus REALLY Understand?

By Graemme J. Marshall

that Jesus was fully physical — He was as much a human being as any of us are. He “made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7). He was “found in appearance as a man” (verse 8).

Jesus was as fully capable of experiencing the entire gamut of emotions, physical sensations, pains and human needs as any of us are.

Isaiah was inspired to write that even Christ's appearance did not make Him stand out as especially attractive or desirable physically (Isa. 53:2).

Jesus experienced tiredness and, like any human, needed time to recuperate occasionally from shouldering the responsibilities He carried. He rested at the well of Samaria because He was physically weary (John 4:6). After hectic, busy times He would withdraw to areas of quiet solitude in order to recharge His batteries (Mark 6:31).

During the latter part of the first century a false teaching arose that Jesus had not, in fact, been fully physical — that He had not truly experienced what it was like to be a human being. The apostle John, in his first epistle, made several strong statements to counteract this heresy.

John testified of a Jesus whom “we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled” (I John 1:1). Later John warned those he was writing

to, “Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God” (I John 4:2-3).

We today should not make the same mistake of believing that Christ was not fully human and thus could not understand our human feelings and experiences.

### **Lived in a corrupt society**

We today live in a corrupt society that wallows in government inefficiency, social injustice and violent crime. Our lives are regulated by an oppressive system of myriad, and many times foolish, laws and regulations.

But Jesus lived in a similarly corrupt society. He knew the burdens of taxes and human laws and rules. Jesus lived in Judea under the occupation forces of the Romans. The Romans treated the populace as subjugated peoples and enforced harsh requirements.

One rule was that Jews could be commandeered to carry any Roman soldier's equipment for a mile. It is interesting to note that, in response to such an unfair regulation, Jesus encouraged Jews to go above and beyond and to be willing to carry such burdens two miles (Matt. 5:41).

Jesus also spoke of the repressive laws of the religious authorities of His day: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not according to their works; for they say, and do not do” (Matt. 23:2-3).

### **Problems with family, friends and other people**

How many of our most serious problems as Christians involve members of our own families or close friends, or opposition from people we must constantly be around and try to get along with



— employers, fellow workers, neighbors, school officials? Well, Christ had to face similar difficulties.

Jesus was ahead of His time in relation to humanity in general and in relation to His own parents and family. When we become converted — start to live God's way of life instead of the way we have been living — former friends do not accept it (I Pet. 4:3-4). Imagine what it must have been like for the only perfect human being who ever lived!

Jesus' own brothers did not believe in Him and became frustrated at His refusal to publicly show His powers (John 7:3-5).

Jesus was criticized by the religious community for not having acceptable educational credentials (John 7:15). Because He came from Galilee and Nazareth, Jesus suffered snide put-downs about His heritage — “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” asked one man (John 1:46).

In the very hour of Jesus' greatest need, His closest friends deserted Him. In the garden of Gethsemane, His disciples fled when they saw that He would be arrested, leaving Him alone to face the religious authorities and soldiers. The next day many of the disciples were too frightened to be publicly seen near the stake and stood “afar off” (Luke 23:49, Authorized Version).

### **Suffered physical pain**

Many of God's people today must suffer physically because of illnesses or accidents. But Christ understands the very depths of physical suffering as well.

The gospels reveal that in Jesus' last hours as a human, He was falsely accused, reviled, sworn at, spat upon, slapped in the face. He suffered one of the most brutal beatings ever administered and was then crucified, crucifixion being one of the most painful forms of death ever devised.

Notice Isaiah 52:14, speaking of Jesus: “Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons

of men.” Jesus was barely recognizable as a human! Read also Isaiah 53:3-8, which speaks about how much Christ suffered.

Jesus did not, humanly speaking, want to suffer and die, any more than any one of us would want to. Humanly, He didn't want to face the physical pain of crucifixion and eventual death (Matt. 26:37-44). But He did, to pay the penalty of the sins of all mankind.

Yet Jesus' teaching was not to respond in kind to evil. He committed His cause to the righteous judge in heaven (I Pet. 2:21-23). His last words before He died expressed forgiveness for those who had caused the evil done to Him (literally, everyone else who has ever lived, including you and me!). Jesus saw His enemies as deceived humans who did not understand what they were doing (Luke 23:34).

Jesus is certainly qualified to understand our sufferings, but we might well ask whether *we* are qualified to understand *His*!

Perhaps there are other things Jesus might not have specifically experienced. For instance, He did not marry as a human. On the other hand, He was symbolically married to Israel.

And as Creator of all things (Eph. 3:9), He has down through time experienced great depths of emotions about what humans have done to other humans. He was “grieved in His heart” before the Flood (Gen. 6:6). We live in an age comparable to the time of Noah, and can be sure that Jesus likewise grieves today over the hurts and sufferings of this age.

If you can identify with some of these examples, then you can know that you do have a faithful High Priest who has walked this physical life ahead of you. He does know what it means to suffer. He is fully qualified to discuss your personal grief and sorrow with God the Father as your spiritual intercessor.

Pray boldly and confidently, knowing that with every hurt you suffer, Jesus is a high priest who hears, knows and truly understands how you feel! □

## **PERSONAL**

(Continued from page 2)

POSE? The answer is to *do* the WORK OF GOD, which Jesus started and now continues *through* His Church. And *what* did Jesus start DOING?

Mark tells us: “The *beginning* of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). Then, beginning verse 2, Mark records how John the Baptist prepared the way before Him. Coming, then, directly to the BEGINNING of the WORK Christ did, Mark says:

“Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee” — DOING WHAT? — “preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. REPENT, and BELIEVE the gospel’ ” (verses 14-15).

Two things Jesus commanded His hearers to do: 1) REPENT and 2) BELIEVE. But believe WHAT? Believe His GOSPEL! You have to believe that Gospel — that good news of the KINGDOM OF GOD — to be saved! JESUS SAID SO!

The KINGDOM OF GOD is the GOVERNMENT of God. It is also the divine FAMILY of God, into which we may be born. It is the UNIVERSE-RULING Family!

You *repent* of — WHAT? Your rebellion against that GOVERNMENT of God. God governs by HIS LAW, summed up by the Ten Commandments. Some will say, we must repent of SIN! Yes, SURELY! For sin *IS* the transgression of the LAW (I John 3:4).

Repentance means unconditional SURRENDER to the GOVERNMENT of God — to yield to let God RULE your life, according to His laws — it means to live by EVERY WORD IN THE BIBLE (Matt. 4:4).

What is the divine MISSION of God's true CHURCH? It is to carry on THE WORK Jesus started. Jesus commissioned His Church, “Go into all the world and PREACH THE GOSPEL to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Not just *any* gospel. Not a gospel merely *about* the person of Christ, but



His Gospel of the Kingdom of God — the Gospel He said we have to BELIEVE in order to be converted and saved!

Again, Matthew records His great commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in [into] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all things that I have COMMANDED you*; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20). In proclaiming His GOSPEL, Jesus specifically said, "Teach them to OBEY God's COMMANDMENTS"!

Jesus gave a prophecy for our time — just before the END of this world. His disciples came to Him privately. They asked, "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matt. 24:3).

Jesus warned against false ministers saying that Jesus is Christ — yet DECEIVING THE MANY. And answering their question as to what sign would show *when* He is to come, He said: "And *this* gospel of the KINGDOM [the same Gospel He taught the original apostles] will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, AND *THEN* the END will come" (Matt. 24:14).

*That* Gospel was not preached after A.D. 70 to all the world. In every generation it has been preached — to a FEW, but *not* TO ALL THE WORLD — ON ALL CONTINENTS!

Wherever God's true Church is — the ONE Church that is CHRIST'S — it will be preaching *THAT* GOSPEL to the whole world — over *all continents* — today. For we are *near* the END! That is the Gospel of the *living* Christ! It is the GOOD NEWS of the *coming* KINGDOM OF GOD to *RULE THE WORLD!*

It is the Gospel of the divine GOVERNMENT. It teaches people to REPENT of rebellion against God's government — transgression of GOD'S LAWS. It teaches salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ — the remission of sins through Jesus' shed blood and reconcilia-

tion to God by Christ's DEATH, and salvation through His LIFE.

It has NO PART in this world's governments — its members are AMBASSADORS, as in a strange land, of THE KINGDOM OF GOD, soon to destroy and replace all human governments of the nations today.

Jesus prayed for His Church: "Holy Father, keep through *Your name* those whom You have given Me, that they may be ONE as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them *in Your name*. . . .

"But now come I to You . . . I have given them Your word; and

But that is not all. Many have appropriated God's name, but are not proclaiming the KINGDOM OF GOD, as the GOVERNMENT of God, which we must OBEY — teaching obedience to God's law (Ten Commandments) — teaching REPENTANCE of rebellion and transgressing God's holy LAW — teaching that we may be now BEGOTTEN into the KINGDOM (Family) of God, and may, by the resurrection, be BORN into the GOD FAMILY!

That true Church is preaching the imminency of the coming of CHRIST as King of kings and LORD of lords, to RULE all nations

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## Wherever God's true Church is, it will be preaching the GOSPEL to the whole world — the GOOD NEWS of the *coming* KINGDOM OF GOD to *RULE THE WORLD!*

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the world has hated them because *they are not OF the world*, just as I am not OF the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. *They are not OF the world*, just as I am not OF the world. Sanctify them by Your TRUTH. Your word is TRUTH" (John 17:11-17).

Jesus said His true Church was to be KEPT *in the name* of the Father — GOD. *Twelve times* in the New Testament, the NAME of this one *true* Church is *the Church of God!* It is GOD'S Church, and Jesus Christ is its guiding, sustaining, directing HEAD!

In this world, churches are named after MEN, or after the SYSTEM men have devised, or the kind of church government MEN have thought out, CONTRARY to God's Word, or after a significant doctrine they emphasize, or what men hope to make it — all-encompassing, universal or catholic.

But wherever that ONE *true* Church is, it will be named *the Church of God*.

for a thousand years on earth. Not up in heaven, but ON THIS EARTH (Rev. 5:10).

There is only ONE such Church!

It is doing THE WORK OF GOD. It is, as Jesus said it would be, a "little flock," persecuted, despised by the world. But it does have dedicated, consecrated, converted, fully instructed and trained, ordained MINISTERS in all parts of the world — available to call on you, visit you in your home, answer your questions, explain the Bible to you — *IF YOU REQUEST IT!*

But none of them will *EVER* call on you, unless YOU of your own free will request it! Paul had visited the elders (ministers) at Ephesus from house to house — BUT, regarding the general public, Jesus said, "DO NOT GO from house to house" (Luke 10:7).

Neither Jesus, nor Peter, nor Paul, nor any of the original true apostles ever approached people and personally URGED conversion on them. God has made every human a FREE MORAL AGENT. God compels each to MAKE HIS OWN DECISION, *and the true* GOD



# Letters



## Couldn't stop reading

I have been receiving *The Plain Truth* for some time and have always enjoyed it. It has helped me to better understand the Bible and the reasons for the conditions of the world.

I received my first issue of *The Good News* and I was so delighted with it that I just couldn't stop reading it. It has helped me to better understand what God has planned for man in the future and what is expected of us now.

I know I am not asked to pay for any of these articles, but I would like to send a donation to help send God's truth to other people, so that they might also receive a better knowledge of God's Word.

Mrs. Charles Sasnett  
Stilwell, Okla.

## "What's It Worth?"

Thanks so much for a wonderfully meaty issue of the *GN* (May)!

I devoured every article and learned from each one.

I especially enjoyed "Sharing: What's It Worth?" by John A. Halford. It made me realize how privileged we truly are to even be able to attend the Feast each year.

It also reminded me of how much hope we have that the world doesn't even begin to understand as yet.

It really does help us pray "Thy King-

dom come" with a sense of eagerness and expectancy.

Sally Green  
Grandview, Wash.

## Help in trials

The article you published in the April *Good News* entitled "How to Survive Your Trial," by Bernard W. Schnippert, is just what our family needed.

My husband was terminated from his job for keeping the Sabbath just four days before we received our *Good News* magazine. We always enjoy the articles published but this one was like an answered prayer.

We had asked God to help us through this trial and to help us learn a lesson from it. We have and will continue to leave this situation in God's hands. We know that through this trial there are many lessons to be learned, whether it be faith, patience, closeness to God or family or others. But most of all we know it is to help us develop righteous character needed to enter God's Kingdom.

Mr. and Mrs. K. Huddleston  
Knox, Ind.

"How to Survive Your Trial" was really needed, because until I read it, I didn't know the problems I've been having for the past 10 months (they seemed to start right after my baptism) are trials.

Incredible, but true. I really thought it

was some "mysterious something" that would disappear as quickly as it came. Well, now I know.

I've been receiving *The Good News* for a while, and every issue has articles that seem to be written just for me.

Barbara Denton  
Long Island, N.Y.

## April GN

"Sharing: Isn't It About Time?" (April). Yes!

And it is about time for me to thank you all. I have been receiving *The Plain Truth* for about 23 years. You have been giving me *The Good News*, books, booklets, articles, letters and the fantastic Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course.

This April issue of *The Good News* is the best yet — on a roll — back on the track. Thank you, Mr. Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God, from the bottom of my heart.

Bob Erwin  
Dellwood, Mo.

## "Hungry for the truth"

Could you please send us another copy of *The Good News*? Our dog was so "hungry for the truth" that he chewed up the complete magazine. We will be more careful in the future.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles J. Lewis  
Anaheim, Calif.

will never force you to be converted.

But if you, of your own volition, want to know MORE about the very Church that Jesus Christ founded and heads today — if you'd like to ask questions about it — why not write your request for a personal visit to the editor? We may be able to have one of God's own ministers call on you quite soon.

And let me suggest that you JOT DOWN on paper the QUESTIONS you are going to want to ask. I've learned, personally, by more than 55 years' experience, that you'll forget them unless you do.

Hundreds and hundreds — yes, thousands upon thousands — are being converted — their lives CHANGED — by this WORK of GOD, through the *World Tomorrow* broadcast worldwide, through *The Plain Truth*, the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course, through this magazine, *The Good News*, and other vital free literature we send upon request.

Some, not realizing one of God's own called and consecrated ministers could call and explain, and answer questions, have JOINED one of the churches of this world.

You cannot JOIN the true

Church of God — the almighty GOD puts you in.

But if you have questions about fellowship, doctrines or practice — or ANY questions about the Church or the Bible or the Christian LIFE, write me. I cannot call and visit with you personally anymore (as I used to do and wish I still could), but God has now given me many truly called and chosen men who CAN.

DON'T go to the churches of this world, or join any, UNTIL you hear the full truth and weigh carefully the FACTS, according to your own BIBLE. Then make your decision and take what steps GOD shows you. □



# The Sabbath

(Continued from page 10)

be eaten. This practice from Rome has come down even to our day, when some believe that you should not eat meat on Friday, or that one should abstain from feasting during 40 days of Lent.

In this whole chapter Paul was just showing that we should not offend others, particularly weak members who have not yet learned the truth about the proper Christian diet, and that we should not judge them. This passage has nothing to do with the Sabbath. It does not give us license to decide for ourselves what is holy or not holy.

## Who is to judge?

The third commonly misunderstood text we should note is Colossians 2:16-17. Since that text was covered in detail in last month's article, let me briefly summarize.

Paul here instructed the gentile Colossians, who had been observing the Sabbath and Holy Days, not to let religious ascetics criticize or judge them in respect to that part of the Sabbath command relating to what they ate or drank.

Rather, they should let the Church judge in such matters. We have been reading in this article, in part, how the Church would judge such matters.

## When was Christ resurrected?

There is one other major reason that many people give as to why they observe Sunday instead of the Sabbath.

They believe that Christ rose from the grave on Sunday and that Sunday observance honors that great event.

This basic premise of a Sunday resurrection is commonly believed, but is completely erroneous. The Scriptures nowhere say that keeping Sunday honors the

resurrection of Christ. And, more surprising, the Bible nowhere says that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on Sunday!

This commonly believed and cherished tradition did not come from the Bible! This belief resulted from people having preconceived ideas that they inject into the Scriptures, instead of reading carefully what the Bible says.

Notice these points: When the three women came to Christ's tomb early on Sunday morning, they were told, "He is risen"

**The Sabbath is a sign to both God and His people. A sign identifies. In this case the sign identifies God to His people. The sign also identifies God's people to Him.**

(Matt. 28:6, Mark 16:6, Luke 24:6). They were not told "He is rising" or "He just rose a few minutes ago" or "He will rise in a few minutes," but that He was already risen. The time of Christ's rising is not stated.

In fact, John reports, regarding an earlier visit to the tomb, that Christ was already gone from the tomb "while it was still dark" (John 20:1).

If Christ was already resurrected and it was yet dark, before sunrise on Sunday morning, when was He resurrected? The answer is found in Luke's statement in Luke 24:7, quoting Christ: "Saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'"

For a full explanation of that statement, with startling proof from your Bible, write for our free booklet *The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday*. Anyone who observes Sunday because he

thinks that was the day Christ rose has the wrong day!

## What does all this have to do with today?

Now that we have seen from the Bible that the Sabbath is commanded in both Old and New Testaments, and that Sunday was never observed by the early Christians, we need to understand the importance of this knowledge at this end time.

While Moses was on Mt. Sinai talking with God for 40 days and nights at the giving of the Ten Commandments, an important event took place. After the covenant had been made (Ex. 19-20), God made a new, separate and distinct additional covenant with His people. This covenant, described in Exodus 31:12-17, was a Sabbath covenant.

This Sabbath covenant was to last "throughout your generations" (verse 13), which meant as long as they and their descen-

dants were still having children. It was perpetual (verse 16). It was to last forever (verse 17).

This covenant is commonly believed to have lasted only about 1,400 years, until the cross!

But even today, Israel is still begetting children. "Perpetual" has not ceased, and "forever" has not ended!

## An important sign

The main point in this passage is that the Sabbath is a sign to both God and His people: "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you'" (verse 13).

A sign identifies. In this case the sign identifies God to His people. It was God who gave the sign to His people. This sign also identifies God's people to Him.

In Ezekiel 20:12, 20 the Sab-



bath is again called a sign to God's people.

In Deuteronomy 6:8, the Ten Commandments are also referred to as a sign upon the hand and between the eyes (forehead). At that time they were literally written down and fastened on the hand and forehead to remind the Israelites to obey. Now the Holy Spirit serves this function, reminding us of God's commandments and leading us to truth.

Why the hand and the forehead? Because the forehead is the seat of intellect, will or knowledge, while the hand carries out the action of whatever the will directs. In other words, the mind relates to knowledge, and the hand relates to what one does with that knowledge.

You may be able to keep the Ten Commandments without other people noticing, except for one command — the Sabbath. People may not notice that you do not steal or lie or worship other gods, but sooner or later they will notice that you keep the Sabbath.

It is a sign that identifies that you are different from most other people. People probably will not recognize that it is a sign between you and the Creator God, but they will recognize the sign that you are not the same as most other people.

#### **Here is a counterfeit "sign"**

Satan often tries to counterfeit what God commands or does. God has dos and don'ts. Satan has his, too. They appear right to the world, but deceive the whole world (Rev. 12:9). Sometimes Satan's counterfeit is just a little distorted — almost the same, but still different.

Look at the satanic counterfeits in regard to the Sabbath. Satan has deceived one religion into having its "sabbath" on Friday, and another religion into having it on Sunday! Just as close as possible without being the same.

Those who have a counterfeit do not know the true Creator God. They have another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel (II Cor. 11:4). They have another god, the god of this present evil world (II Cor. 4:4). They do not have the correct sign in their forehead or hand — they have a counterfeit sign. Actually it is not a sign, but a *mark* that brands instead of identifying.

#### **The beast's mark enforced**

This mark has great significance for our day. This mark will

**The time is coming again when Sabbath observance will bring severe persecution and, for some, death, unless one is in a place of refuge provided by God. The mark of the beast will be enforced.**

soon make it possible for those who have it to buy and sell, while those who do not have it (but who have the sign of God) will not be able to buy or sell:

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the *mark*, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Rev. 13:16-17, AV).

This mysterious mark has aroused much speculation. Since it has to do with buying and selling, many ideas have arisen.

When I was young, some were claiming that it was the NRA (National Recovery Act) of U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt. Many people have not even heard of that today. Others have thought it is a social security number or a computer number or some kind of credit card.

How foolish! Such speculation

comes as a result of people not recognizing who the *beast* is. They also have not known who has in the past and will yet again in the future control the beast.

The beast in this passage is a nation or government with a strong ruler or dictator. It has had several resurrections already. The next and final one will consist of 10 nations joined together. In the past, it has been known as the Holy Roman Empire.

For more information, please request our free booklet *Who Is the Beast?*

This beast has been ruled over by a world church that does not observe the Sabbath, but that has enforced another day of worship.

The 29th Canon of the Council of Laodicea (364-365) says: "Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honoring the Lord's Day, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found Judaizing, let them be anathema from Christ." Those who disobeyed this canon law were persecuted or put to death.

The time is coming again when Sabbath observance will bring severe persecution and, for some, death, unless one is in a place of refuge provided by God at that time (Rev. 12:14). For a short time the mark of the beast will be enforced. But those who have that mark will then, very soon, receive of God's plagues (Rev. 14:9-10).

We must obey the commandments and have the Sabbath sign instead of the mark of the beast, or we will not inherit the Kingdom of God — we will not receive immortality as typified by the tree of life:

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

You have seen the proof from God's Word. Now, what will you do about it? □



## The Day of Atonement in God's Great Master Plan

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

God's annual festivals remind us how He is working out His master plan for mankind, step by step.

The first three festivals — Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost — picture events leading to the first spiritual "harvest" of Spirit-begotten human beings into God's universe-ruling Family. These days portray the preparation, training and final "reaping" of the firstfruits — those few called by God before Christ's return.

The last four festivals show the plan God has for completing salvation for the rest of the world.

We learned from the last study that the fourth festival, the Feast of Trumpets, pictures the triumphant return of Jesus Christ to rescue mankind from self-destruction and to set up the world-ruling government of God. It is also at Christ's return that the firstfruits of God's plan are born into His Family, to begin assisting Christ in ruling the nations.

But what about Satan? What happens to him?

The fifth annual festival, the Day of Atonement, reveals the answer. It pictures Christ deposing Satan the devil from his present position as world ruler (II Cor. 4:4) and Satan's removal to a place completely away and apart from mankind. He will be bound for 1,000 years, no longer able to deceive the nations and influence man to sin.

After Satan's imprisonment, the rest of humanity will be reconciled — made *at one* — with God.

Let's understand the hidden meaning in the symbolism of this unique fifth festival of God.

1. What annual Sabbath follows only nine days after the Feast of Trumpets? Lev. 23:26-32, 16:29-31. Are God's people commanded to assemble before Him on this day? Lev. 23:27.

2. How are we to specifically observe the

Day of Atonement? Verse 32. How does one "afflict" his body on this day? Isa. 58:3, Ezra 8:21.

The Day of Atonement is perhaps the most unusual Holy Day, as far as what God expects us to do. It is the one day of the year on which God commands us to *fast* — to abstain from food and water (Ex. 34:28, Esther 4:16) — for 24 hours, from sunset on the ninth day of the month to sunset on the tenth day ("from evening unto evening" — Lev. 23:32).

Fasting should be for the purpose of humbling oneself to draw closer to God and His righteous way (Isa. 58:6-11). Thus fasting on the Day of Atonement is a vivid reminder of the state of mind necessary for salvation — of the humility, the godly sorrow, the earnest seeking after God and His way — a condition to which this world will have been brought by catastrophic events culminating in Jesus Christ's return.

3. Does the Day of Atonement also differ from all other annual Holy Days in that no work whatsoever (meaning not even simple food preparation!) is to be done on it? Num. 29:7, Lev. 16:29. Why is this day to be kept so solemnly? Lev. 23:28.

What does *atonement* mean? Webster says to *atone* means to "set at one." To join in one — to form by uniting. This day actually symbolizes God and man being set *at one*: literally the Day of *At-one*-ment! But God and mankind cannot be fully at one — in full agreement — until Satan is restrained.

The 16th chapter of Leviticus details God's instructions to the Levitical priesthood of ancient Israel concerning the Day of Atonement. Let's briefly examine the activities of this day to see their vital connection with the restraining of Satan after Christ's return.

4. Was the Aaronic high priest to make a special sin offering once a year to atone for



# MINISTRY

all the sins of Israel? Lev. 16:32-34. Was this done on the Day of Atonement? Verses 29-30.

5. But what was the high priest to do before making this atonement? Lev. 16:5-8. Was one of the two goats to be sent into the wilderness? Verse 10. Whom did the banished goat represent? Verse 8.

The English word *scapegoat* is not a correct translation of the Hebrew word God inspired. Most Bibles with marginal renderings show that the original word was *azazel*. *Azazel* refers to none other than Satan the devil!

The modern word *scapegoat* carries an entirely wrong connotation. Originally it was *escape goat* — the goat allowed to escape in the wilderness — that the translators took to be the meaning of *azazel*. But today the English word *scapegoat* signifies “one who bears blame or guilt for others.” As we shall see, *azazel* — Satan — will bear his own guilt!

6. Did the high priest next offer the goat chosen by lot for the Lord as a sin offering for all the people? Verses 15-16. Wasn't it Christ Himself who was slain for the sins of all mankind, and who then assumed the office of our perfect, sinless High Priest in heaven? Heb. 2:17, 6:20, 7:26. Did the resurrected Christ begin to do what the Aaronic high priest did in type on the Day of Atonement? Lev. 16:15-19, Heb. 9:7-14.

Throughout the year Israel's sins were symbolically transferred to the Tabernacle and its fixtures. Once a year on the Day of Atonement this mountainous load of guilt was symbolically purged from the nation in order that God might continue to dwell in Israel, for sin separates man from God, who is holy (Isa. 59:2).

And so we can understand today that the slain goat for the Lord actually represented the crucified Jesus. The high priest, by taking the blood of this slain goat through the veil to the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies (a type of God's throne), represented and symbolically did, in a prophetic sense, the work of the risen Christ, who ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven, where He has been interceding as our High Priest for the past 1,952 years.

7. Did the high priest then seize the live *azazel* goat? Lev. 16:20. Did he symbolically place the sins of Israel on the head of *aza-*

*zel*? Verse 21. Whose sins were they, really? John 8:42-44.

Jesus took our guilt — our sins — upon Himself as an innocent substitution, a sacrifice to pay the penalty of sin, which is eternal death (Rom. 6:23). But the real cause of those sins was Satan the devil. He is the author of the sins of mankind. So here are all of man's Satan-inspired sins symbolically being put right back on Satan's head where they belong.

8. Was the *azazel* goat to continue living? Verse 22. Where was he taken? Same verse.

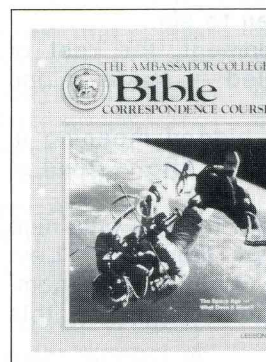
Satan, represented by this live goat, is a spirit being and therefore immortal. To signify that fact, the goat was permitted to live. But notice that he was completely removed from the presence of man.

9. What will be done to Satan after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? Rev. 20:1-2. Where is he cast? Verse 3. Also notice Revelation 18:1-2.

The “bottomless pit” or abyss was pictured by the desert wilderness where *azazel* was banished. Satan and his demons will be completely restrained by Christ from further leading mankind into sin. No longer will Satan be able to broadcast (Eph. 2:2) his evil attitudes into people's minds.

At the devil's chaining by an angel of God (symbolically, the “fit man” — Lev. 16:21, Authorized Version), the minds of men, formerly kept spiritually closed by Satan, will be opened by the Spirit of God!

For the first time, humanity will be able to understand God's master plan of salvation. People will then want to repent and receive forgiveness, through Christ's sacrifice, of their sins. Only then will man become *at one* with Christ and the Father, as pictured by the Day of *At-one*-ment. □



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# The Day of Atonement and YOUR Future

*Most people have not heard of the Day of Atonement. Many who have don't understand it properly. Yet this Day reveals a wonderfully positive truth.*

By George M. Kackos

**S**cene one: A young woman walks through a semitropical garden filled with beautiful trees loaded with luscious fruit. Everything looks so good — so right.

But is it?

Suddenly she is confronted by a talking serpent who asks about God's commands. Subtly, the serpent reasons with her until she decides to eat the fruit forbidden her by her Creator. Her husband then follows her example of disobedience.

From that time forward, mankind continues to be subject to Satan's influence. Consequently, all humans sin and fall short of God's glory.

Scene two: A young man, once strong and virile, is nailed to a stake. Blood oozes from deep, gaping lacerations in His body, wounds inflicted by a savage beating. Tormentors surround Him, arrogantly jeering, "He can save others, but not Himself!"

But the man's mind is not on revenge; it is on the ultimate purpose of His suffering, which is to provide the sacrifice necessary for mankind's salvation.

Finally, after many hours of suffering, death comes suddenly. Three days later He is resurrected. He rejoins His Father, where He serves as High Priest and soon-coming King for all humanity.

Scene three: The earth has been devastated. Plant and aquatic life are almost nonexistent. The human population has been reduced to a small fraction of its former size by the terrifying events of the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord.

Everywhere there is destruction, but there is also hope. Jesus Christ has intervened in world affairs. One obstacle remains — the presence of Satan the devil, mankind's enemy for 6,000 years.

To eliminate this threat to global peace, an angel is sent to bind Satan. Satan is taken to a place of restraint where he is prohibited from influencing mankind for a thousand years.

Is there a relationship between these scenes? The answer is yes. There is a profound relationship that can be understood by studying the meaning of one of God's annual festivals — the Day of Atonement.

## **This Day is commanded**

Most professing Christians don't even know that this Festival of God exists. Many who have heard of it think that it is no longer to be kept. But what does God say?

"And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 'Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. And

you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. . . . You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings' " (Lev. 23:26-28, 31).

This year the Day of Atonement falls on September 17.

Some will reason that this command ceased to be in force after Christ's crucifixion. Such reasoning is false! Jesus Christ did not come to nail God's annual Holy Days to the cross (Matt. 5:17-18).

The fact is that God's festivals have only begun to be fulfilled. These days picture aspects of God's plan of salvation (Col. 2:16-17), and must be observed by true Christians.

For more information on God's true Holy Days and what each one pictures, write for our free booklet *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which?*

But what about the ritualistic laws that the Old Testament commanded with festival observance? Are they to be kept, or have they been fulfilled?

The purpose of the physical rituals God gave to ancient Israel was to remind the people of the need for the payment of their sins. The various sacrifices pointed ahead to the sacrifice of One who would come later in history as Savior of all mankind.

So the ritualistic laws were ful-



filled by the events leading to and including Christ's own sacrificial death. Therefore they need not be kept today, nor can they be, as there is no Aaronic priesthood to perform these physical duties (Heb. 9:8-10, 10:1-4, 9-12).

The ritualistic laws are no longer performed, but their various aspects still have symbolic meaning. For each festival, we seek to understand all the festival's meanings, as revealed in the Bible, as they relate to salvation.

### **The Tabernacle and the priesthood**

Before we proceed with a study of these rituals and symbols, it is necessary for us to understand some things about the Tabernacle and the priesthood.

After making the covenant agreement with Israel, God told the nation to build a Tabernacle, which is a physical type of God's habitation in heaven (Ex. 25-27, 30, Heb. 9:23-24). The Tabernacle consisted of an enclosed courtyard, containing an altar for animal sacrifices and a tent.

The tent was divided into two sections by a veil. The section behind the veil was called the "Most Holy" place or "Holiest of All." The other section was the "holy place" (Ex. 26:33, Heb. 9:3). The most holy place represented God's throne. Located here was the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Ten Commandments and other items (Deut. 10:2, 31:26, Ex. 16:33-34, Num. 17:1-10). The lid of the Ark was called the mercy seat; this was where God manifested Himself (Ex. 25:22).

The job of high priest was given to Aaron; his sons served as priests. As time passed, other of his descendants held these positions. As priests, they performed various animal sacrifices and ceremonies on behalf of Israel.

### **Rituals for Aaron**

On the Day of Atonement, special animal sacrifices and ceremonies were conducted. These are explained in Leviticus 16.

This was the only day when Aaron was allowed to enter the

most holy place. Before doing this, he had to bathe and dress himself in his priestly garments (Lev. 16:4). Then he had to offer on the altar a bullock as a sin offering for himself.

Once this was completed, he took a censer, a vessel that held burning coals, from the altar and entered the most holy place. He then took incense, an aromatic compound, and placed it on the burning coals. Next he sprinkled blood from the bullock on the mercy seat, which represented God's throne (verses 11-14).

Why did Aaron do these things? What did they picture? Aaron had to first make atonement for himself as a sinning human before God. The word *atonement* means "to make at one with."

Washing himself pictured having his conscience changed to accept God's standard of righteousness (Heb. 10:22). His linen coat symbolized living a righteous life (Rev. 19:8). The incense pictured prayers ascending to God (Ps. 141:2, Rev. 5:8). The blood represented the way sins are forgiven (Heb. 9:13-14, Rom. 3:25).

Aaron, the high priest, was a type of Jesus Christ, who is now our High Priest (Heb. 3:1). By living a sinless life, Jesus qualified to offer Himself as a sin sacrifice for all humanity through His crucifixion.

After Jesus' death, the veil in the Temple (the Temple had replaced the Tabernacle) was torn in two from top to bottom (Matt. 27:50-51). The torn veil represented the fact that we are now allowed direct contact with God the Father through prayer (Heb. 10:19-22, John 16:23).

This contact is something that those living before Christ's resurrection did not have; their access was limited to the Word of God, the God of the Old Testament who became Jesus Christ.

### **The two goats**

Now that Aaron had completed sacrifices for himself, what happened next?

"The two goats he must place

in front of the Eternal at the entrance to the Trysting tent [Tabernacle]; Aaron shall cast lots over the goats, one lot for the Eternal and the other for Azazel the demon; the goat that falls by lot to the Eternal shall be brought forward and offered as a sin-offering, but the goat that falls by lot to Azazel shall be set free in presence of the Eternal, that Aaron may perform expiatory rites over it and send it away for Azazel into the desert" (Lev. 16:7-10, Moffatt).

Whom did this slain goat, whose blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat and the altar for the sins of the people (Lev. 16:15-19), represent? The answer is Christ, who was slain and whose blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins (Heb. 9:12, 22-26).

But Christ's death has not completed the job of making atonement for the sins of humanity. Why? Because Satan, the god of this world, has blinded the minds of most people. Consequently, mankind rejects the true Gospel, which includes accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and living a righteous life (II Cor. 4:3-4, Rev. 12:9).

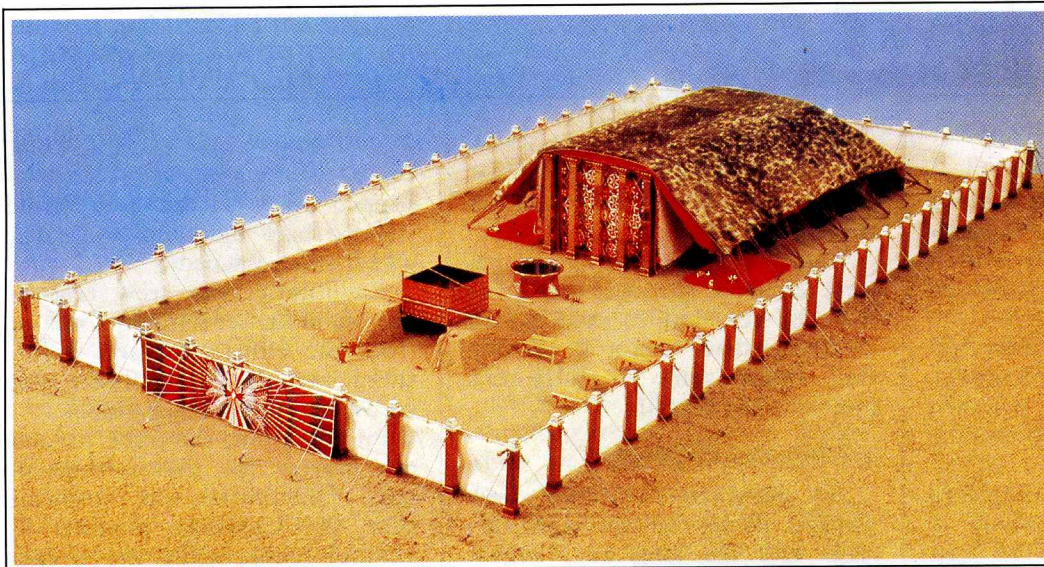
So how will the job of atonement be completed? How will mankind be made at one with God?

The answer is revealed through the symbolism of the live goat — the *azazel*, in Hebrew.

Says *The Comprehensive Commentary*: "[According to] the oldest opinions of the Hebrews and Christians . . . Azazel is the name of the Devil . . . the word signified the goat which went away." The *azazel* was the goat that was sent into the wilderness.

This *azazel* is sometimes referred to as the "escape goat" or "scapegoat." But these terms make the meaning unclear. *Scapegoat* has come to mean "one who bears blame or guilt for others." This is not the case with Satan. He is guilty of influencing mankind into disobeying God (Eph. 2:2). And he will be punished for it — Satan will bear his





**Artist's rendering** (left) shows the Tabernacle in the form of a model. The Tabernacle was a physical type of God's habitation in heaven. Below, a diagram of the layout of the Tabernacle.

Model from The Tabernacle of God in the Wilderness of Sinai by Paul F. Kiene. © 1976 Verlag Hermann Schulte Wetzlar. © 1977 Zondervan Corp. Used by permission. Diagram by Gary Klar.

own guilt! He will not be allowed to escape.

### Satan to be bound

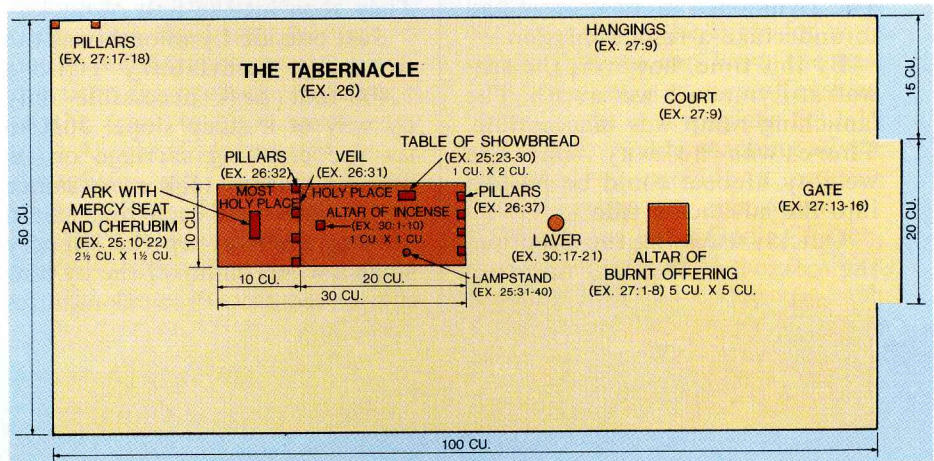
The live goat was brought before Aaron, who, as we have seen, is a type of Jesus Christ, our High Priest. Aaron laid hands on this goat, confessing upon it the people's sins. Then it was led by another individual into the wilderness where it was released (Lev. 16:20-22).

How is this symbolism going to be fulfilled? Jesus is coming to this earth again, this time to rule. He will order Satan bound and taken to a place of restraint for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3).

The world will then become free of Satan's influence and responsive to God's way of life; men's sins will be laid to Satan's charge. The change will be remarkable. Humanity as a whole will accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and live according to God's law (Isa. 11:9). Finally, there will be universal peace, joy and happiness (Jer. 31:12-14).

### What about fasting?

In addition to the symbolism of the sacrifices, there is another aspect of this Festival that we must consider. Notice Leviticus 16:29: "This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own



country or a stranger who sojourns among you."

What does it mean "afflict your soul"? The word *afflict* (Hebrew *anah*) is translated "humble" in Psalm 35:13, where David said, "I humbled myself with fasting." So afflicting oneself means to fast.

Biblical examples show that fasting means to go without food and water (Deut. 9:9, 18, Esther 4:16, Acts 9:8-9). This is the only day when we are commanded to fast. It is so important that in the New Testament we see this Festival referred to as "the Fast" (Acts 27:9).

The purpose of fasting is to humble ourselves, to see our insignificance and realize our need for and utter dependence on God (Jas. 4:9-10). God does not hold us guiltless for the sins that Satan influences us to commit. We bear a responsibility for

yielding to Satan's temptations.

God wants you to examine yourself so you will recognize your shortcomings and overcome them. These are the conditions of a proper fast that will cause God to intervene on your behalf. (For more information on fasting, write for our free reprint article "But by Prayer and Fasting.")

### Keep this Festival

The Day of Atonement, then, is a solemn, serious occasion, and yet, because of what it pictures, this Festival is a tremendously positive and encouraging day.

Besides revealing vital understanding about God's plan of salvation, the Day of Atonement can bring you much closer to God, if you obey God's command to observe this day.

Don't deny yourself this relationship with God. Decide now to keep the Day of Atonement! □



# sharing...

## TEAMWORK!

By Philip Stevens

January 12, 1899, was a bleak day in Britain. Along the normally picturesque southwestern coast, huge, ugly waves pounded the tiny harbors.

In Lynmouth, the 12-man lifeboat crew waited expectantly. With the seas so rough, the men knew their services would soon be required.

That afternoon a telegraph message flashed from Porlock. A boat was in trouble in the bay. The Lynmouth lifeboat crew had to undertake a rescue mission.

By this time, however, the sea-wall at Lynmouth was awash. The launching ramp was inaccessible. There was no way that the weighty lifeboat could be pushed into the advancing tide.

Quickly assessing the situation, the coxswain made a dramatic

announcement: "We'll launch from Porlock!"

Those who heard his words were amazed. Porlock was quite close by sea, but to take a boat there by land meant a 15-mile trek across some of England's most rugged terrain!

### Taking the challenge

As darkness fell, the crew hitched horses to the boat carriage and the long haul began. They soon hit the first obstacle.

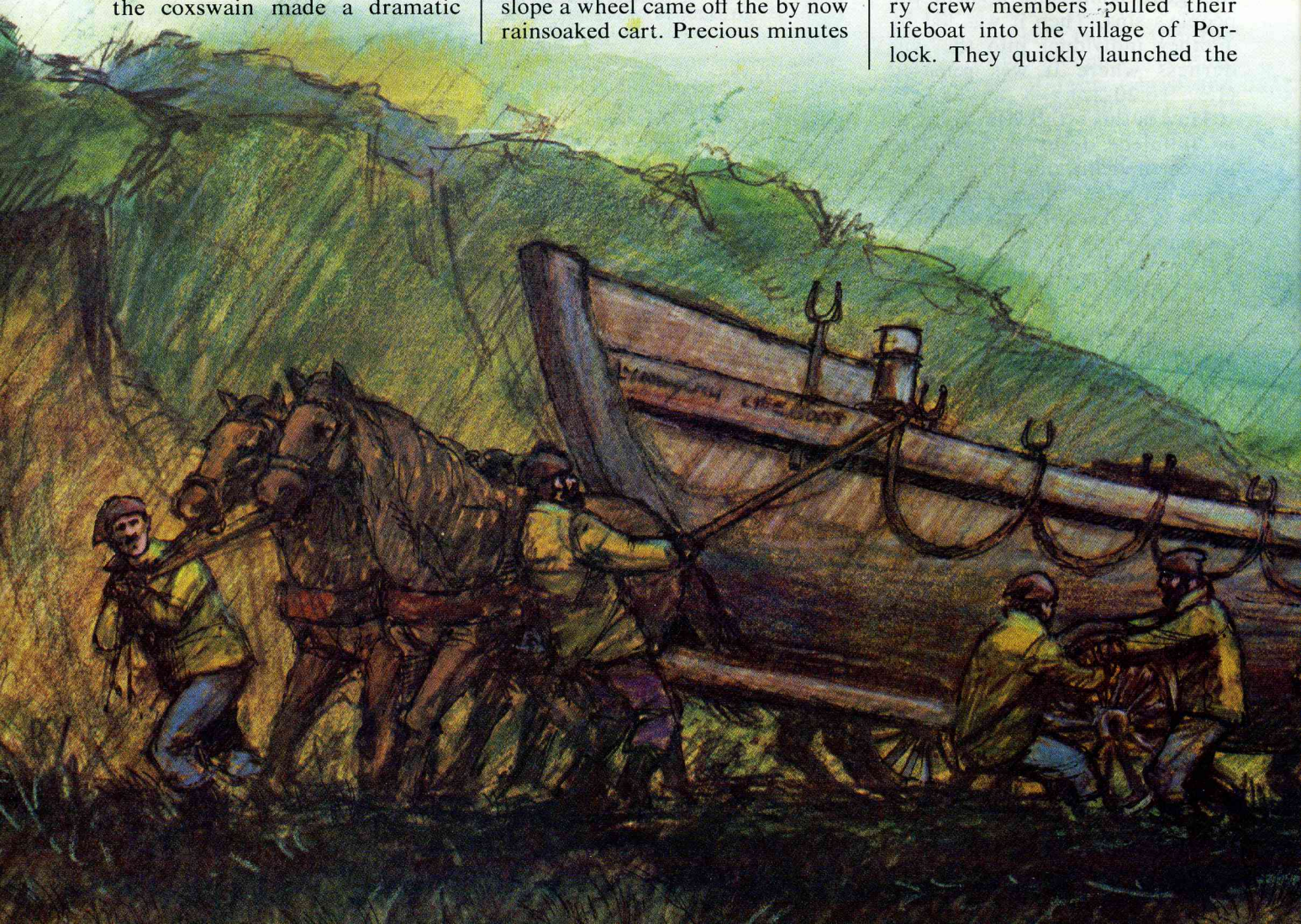
Just outside Lynmouth was the towering Contisbury Hill, a 1,400-foot peak accessible only by way of a steep slope. Just to set the creaking carriage on its upward journey took every ounce of strength that each man could muster. Halfway up the slippery slope a wheel came off the by now rainsoaked cart. Precious minutes

slipped away as the crew lifted the carriage by hand while the wheel was replaced.

Eventually, the crew reached the summit, every man aching from the effort. But still before them lay the long, hard slog across the dark, boggy moor.

At one point, the track became too narrow for the carriage to pass. Undaunted, the coxswain sent the carriage around by another route, while the already exhausted crew manhandled the boat along the miry track until the parties could meet again.

Many times the mission seemed doomed. Trees, garden walls and other obstacles constantly slowed progress. Yet, working together, after a 12-hour trek across Exmoor, the wet, weary crew members pulled their lifeboat into the village of Porlock. They quickly launched the





lifeboat and reached the stricken, battered vessel, whose crew was saved.

A happy ending to a dramatic story, a story that vividly depicts many of the laws of successful living. Among these laws is an aspect that is especially vital in the lives of true Christians today.

That quality is teamwork.

No one man could have hauled that heavy lifeboat over that rugged English terrain. And today, no one person can do the whole Work of God.

Jesus Christ leads God's Work through His apostle, Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong spearheads the Work, preaching the Gospel and feeding the flock. But Mr. Armstrong needs the backing of a closely knit team of dedicated supporters who will pull together, whatever circumstances prevail.

With this in mind, therefore, let us take a look at the vital elements in harmonious teamwork.

### **Follow the leader**

First, a team needs a recognized leader to make decisions.

The anxious sailors awaiting rescue might have met disaster if no coxswain had been in charge of the lifeboat crew. With 12 crew members, there could have easily been 12 different ways to tackle the problem.

The Church's captain is Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:10). He sets the direction and leads by example (I Pet. 2:21). In the Church,

Christ decides what role each member of the team will play — what job in the Church and Work each individual will perform (Eph. 4:11-12). Each of us must work for the common cause under Christ's leadership (Eph. 4:15-16).

### **Encouragement**

Encouragement is another vital ingredient of teamwork. Consider the effort of the valiant Lynmouth crew. They needed mutual encouragement as they battled their way through the mud and rain of that winter night.

Part of our job on Christ's team is to encourage the other members around us. All of us, at times, feel the heavy burdens of doubt and discouragement. That's the time for brothers and sisters on the team to build each other up. A comforting letter, a thoughtful gift or a word fitly spoken (Prov. 25:11) can lighten another's load and help him take heart — help him get back to shouldering his share of the team's burden (Heb. 10:24-25).

### **Sense of urgency**

Watching society crumble around us should drive home the urgency of our mission. And having a sense of urgency is another important aspect of teamwork.

The heroic lifeboat team had a task that compelled their utmost effort. The lives of those mariners aboard the distressed vessel were at stake.

Can we have the same sense of urgency about our team effort? Do we realize that lives are at stake if we fail as a team today? Indeed, God tells us that if it were not for the Work of the

Church, then there would be little point in allowing civilization to continue (Mal. 4:5-6).

### **Be prepared**

For any team to function well it must be physically and mentally trained to peak condition.

Our team in God's Church is no different. We, too, need regular training sessions. Daily, these can consist of private prayer, Bible study and meditation (II Tim. 2:15). Then, weekly, the team can get together for a combined "workout" at Sabbath services.

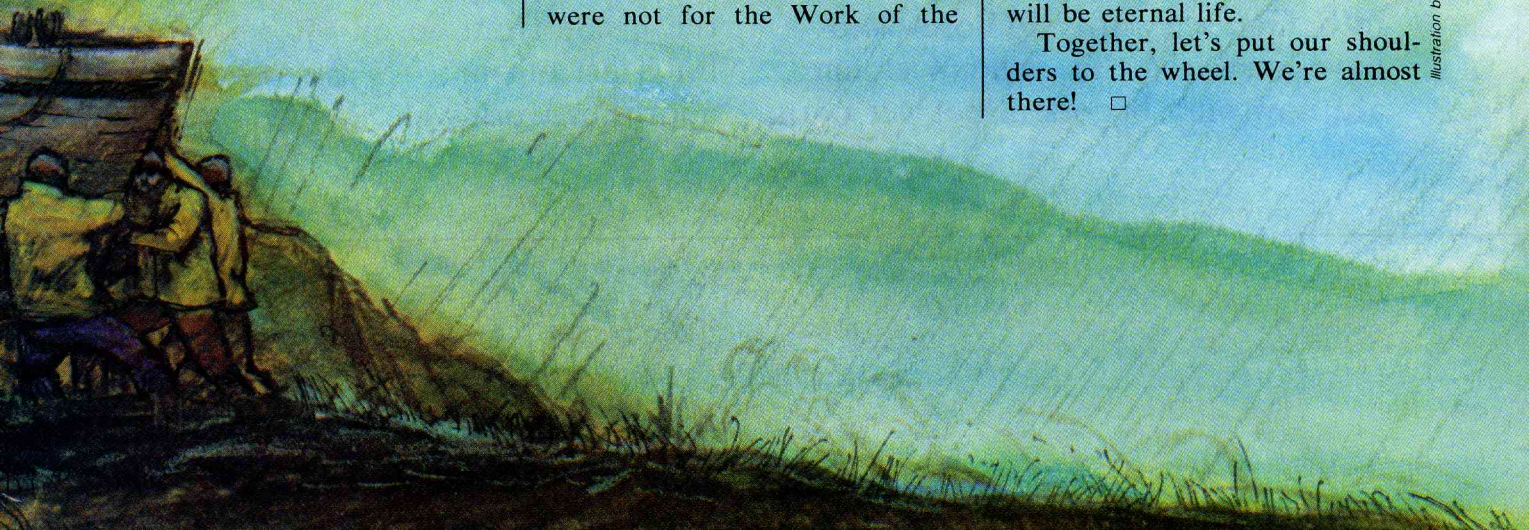
Here, too, is an opportunity for the enemy's tactics to be analyzed. Satan's strategies are well documented in the Bible for us to study, and we can learn the best ways to counter his offensives. Take a look at Ephesians 6:13-19 for some valuable coaching advice designed to provide a positive attack against the opposition.

When you enter God's Church, you join a dedicated team. We're here to help and encourage each other along the way to achieving the goals that God has set for His people (Eccl. 4:9-2). And we can develop our teamwork even more by learning to get along with each other. After all, the Church is a team that will have to work together for eternity (Rev. 22:5)!

The Lynmouth lifeboat crew saved the sailors aboard the crippled ship in Porlock Bay. So daring and difficult was the rescue mission that the team's efforts received special recognition.

If we stick with our team, we, too, will achieve special recognition. Only in our case, the reward will be eternal life.

Together, let's put our shoulders to the wheel. We're almost there! □





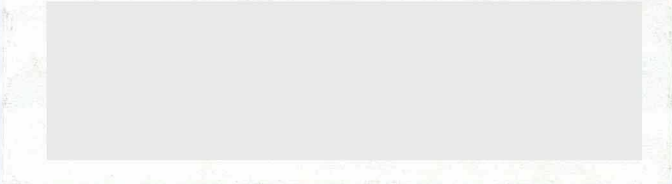
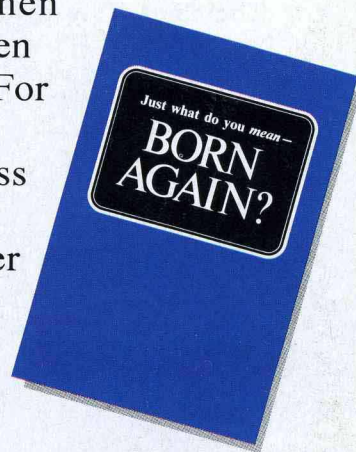
# BORN? OR ONLY BEGOTTEN?



Millions of professing Christians believe they have been “born again,” but do not understand what Jesus meant by those words.

Christ was actually a newscaster. He came to earth to announce how humans could actually be born into God’s Family. Those who have answered this announcement are now only begotten, not yet born.

Our free booklet explains exactly what one is like when born again, and when and how it occurs. For your free copy, just write to our address nearest you. See the inside front cover for a list of our addresses worldwide.



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