

PERSONAL

BY HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

This Feast of Firstfruits corrects the most universally believed false doctrine in Christianity! What is the TRUTH?

What Does PENTECOST MEAN to You?

DO YOU KNOW what is the most universally believed *false* doctrine in the Christian world? God's *annual* Sabbaths were given to keep the true Church in the true knowledge of our Maker's master plan.

The one original, yet persecuted Church of God, stands alone in keeping these annual festivals. And it *alone* has that basic UNDERSTANDING.

That universally believed false doctrine is that all humanity is LOST — consigned to an eternally burning hell — unless they “get saved” by accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior *NOW!* They say that we, *NOW*, are in the *ONLY* day of salvation — that when Christ returns to earth the door to salvation will be CLOSED! Unless you are “saved” *NOW*, you are LOST!

Just last night I heard the world's most famous evangelist tell a massive audience (on television) that we, now, are in the *ONLY* day of salvation — that tomorrow may be too late. Many are frightened into “making their decision for Christ.”

That false belief implies that when Jesus Christ returns in supreme POWER and GLORY, He will be helpless to save you! On the contrary God's Word says Jesus is coming, 1) to restore the government of God, setting up the KING-

DOM OF GOD, and 2) to call ALL people still living to salvation and eternal life.

What is the TRUTH?

What, then, is the TRUTH that the Feast of Firstfruits is given to teach us?

It teaches us the very opposite of what this world's “Christianity” believes.

It teaches us that we of the TRUE Church are the “FIRSTFRUITS” *ONLY* — the FIRST to receive salvation through Christ. It teaches us that *all others* are NOT YET CALLED. It teaches us that as Jesus said, “NO MAN CAN come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (John 6:44).

But isn't God the Father desperately trying to draw *all* humans *NOW*? Emphatically *no!* — *not yet!* Was God unjust? NO! Never!

Notice what God did, right after our first parents rejected God as their RULER, their Revealer of knowledge and as their Savior with the gift of everlasting life.

“And the Eternal God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, *lest he put forth his hand*, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Eternal God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned

every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (Gen. 3:22-24).

Thus, ALL MANKIND was BARRED from access to God or receiving eternal life — all but the comparative FEW God would *specialy* call for some performance leading to the Kingdom of God.

In effect, God said to MANKIND through Adam and Eve: “You have made your own decision. You have rejected me as your God and your Ruler, Revealer of knowledge and Savior. Therefore I have cut you and the whole world that will spring from you off from all contact with me. Go and *form your own governments, your own religions*, your own production and dissemination of knowledge. However, I shall reserve the prerogative to specially call into my service such as I shall choose, *for a part* in preparing for the Kingdom of God. Otherwise, the world that will develop from you is CUT OFF from all contact with me for 6,000 years, when the Kingdom of God shall be established, ruling ALL NATIONS!”

Far from trying to get every human saved spiritually during the 6,000 years, God CUT OFF all humanity — save the comparative FEW He would specially call.

THAT IS WHY Jesus said, “*No man can come to me*” during this 6,000-year period, *except God the Father specialy calls them* — and He has called this few *not just* for salvation, (Continued on page 28)

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 1)

but for a special service preparing for the Kingdom of God, as well.

After that 6,000 years expires, Christ will come again to earth, this time in SUPREME POWER AND GLORY, to set up GOD'S GOVERNMENT. Satan shall be banished. Then, during the seventh thousand years, God will call EVERYBODY then living.

And after the seventh millennium, God will resurrect to mortal life all the billions of people who had not been called for spiritual salvation.

Is God discriminating?

Those who *have been* called have had to overcome Satan. Those called later shall not.

WHY this difference? We might reason: Is God discriminating against us, who have to resist and overcome Satan, when all converted during the millennium will not? But there is no injustice with God. Yet there is a DIFFERENCE!

THINK ON THIS! God is calling ONLY a comparative FEW now. Is that an evil or a blessing? It is a tremendous blessing, for, referring to God's Church for this Church dispensation ONLY, Jesus says: "And he that overcometh [overcomes Satan and self and the world], and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron . . ." (Rev. 2:26-27), and, "To him that overcometh [Satan, the world and self] will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Rev. 3:21).

Those promises pertain *only* to those called before Christ's return. So some wanting to accuse God might ask, "Isn't this UNFAIR to those not called NOW? They have no chance to know, now, the joys of God's Holy Spirit. And they have no promise of exalted position or power when they are 'saved' later!"

Absolutely NO! There is no injustice with God. I'm sure those NOT now called do not feel they are discriminated against. They *don't want* to be called. And as for high and glorified position, that is a responsibility, and I do not know of anyone uncalled who has any sense whatever of dissatisfaction because he may not have such exalted position in the world TOMORROW, ruled by the Kingdom of God.

But nevertheless, this is an interesting point. Those called now do have Satan, Satan's world and their own human nature to overcome — and that requires effort, self-denial and willpower, which most humans would not want to pay.

Highest positions already allotted

But what about those who *shall be* called for the first time, and converted, after Christ returns? Shall they not have any opportunity to inherit a high and lofty position?

Probably the highest and most lofty positions in both Church and State in the world to come already have been allotted.

We know that each of the original 12 apostles will be ruler over one of the 12 nations springing from the 12 tribes of Israel. We know that David will be king over them and those under them. We may well assume that Abraham will have even a higher position. Those are not only the highest honors — they are likewise the highest and most demanding responsibilities.

Probably the chief seats of authority in the world tomorrow ruled by the KINGDOM OF GOD will be already filled at Christ's coming. But, during the thousand years, population (human) will increase and new positions in government and in spiritual administration will increase. Also, in the Great White Throne Judgment later.

Called to more than salvation

But for us now, it is imperative that we understand that those CALLED and inducted by God into His Church NOW, have been called for MORE THAN JUST SPIRITUAL SALVATION AND THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE. We are called, every one of us, for a PART in preparing for the Kingdom of God!

For our part now, in this present "Philadelphia era," each of you is called for the mission of *loyally backing up* the GREAT COMMISSION of proclaiming the true Gospel to the whole world — and one important thing more: When Jesus comes to RULE, His Wife THE CHURCH will have made herself ready — to be holy and without blemish, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. And we in the Church as a whole HAVE NOT ATTAINED FULLY TO THAT HOLY STATURE AS YET.

And our work is not finished until we

do allow God to bring us unitedly to that state — ready to leave this world of flesh and blood — and to enter an entirely NEW WORLD — the Church made immortal, composed of SPIRIT! Our job to which God has called us is far from finished!

In this connection, I have been thinking recently and coming to understand better WHY God brought me back to life, after both heart and breathing had totally ceased. If mouth-to-mouth resuscitation had not been successfully employed, I would have remained totally unconscious until the resurrection. Incidentally, regardless of number of days or years till the resurrection, it would have seemed the next second to me.

God's Church made ready

And in this train of thinking, I have had to ask myself, "What *has* Christ been doing with my life since I was brought back, in August, 1977? I know God called me to reestablish on earth His GOVERNMENT and the proclaiming worldwide of the GREAT COMMISSION — the now imminent KINGDOM OF GOD. All that has been my job since conversion in 1927 — and that job is not yet finished. (Although we have no way of knowing HOW FAR we must reach people in all parts of the world. God does not expect us to reach *every* human on earth with His message, and we may be closer to what He expects than we think.)

But my efforts as Christ's apostle, since the heart failure, have been almost wholly devoted to preparing God's Church — the spiritual temple to which Christ will come.

Repeatedly *The Good News* headlines have blared forth, "And NOW, CHRIST SETS (this, that and other thing) BACK ON THE TRACK."

The living Christ as HEAD of this Church has been using His chosen apostle to TURN HIS CHURCH AROUND — set it back on GOD's track!

I could write much more along this line, but I want to leave that thought with you now.

As we come to God's Feast of First-fruits (Pentecost), let us bear forcibly in mind we in God's Church must be MADE READY — for Christ is coming SOON — and we are NOT YET FULLY READY to be instantly changed and caught up to meet our Lord as He comes in clouds! □