

FEBRUARY 1986

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



Got Money Problems?
There IS a Solution!
See Page 3

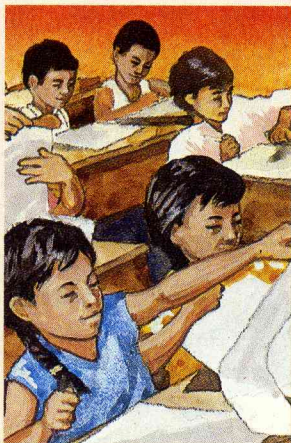
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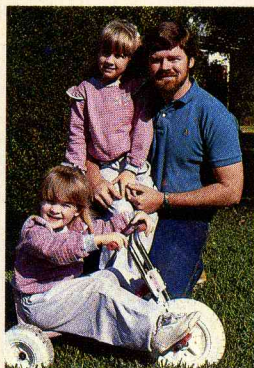
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Who, Me?
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COVER: Got money problems? Does your budget work — or do you even have one? The Bible reveals budgeting principles that can help you solve money troubles once and for all. Be sure to read the article beginning on page 3. Photo by Nathan Faulkner.

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Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?

Part Four

What Is the Mark of the Beast?

Better be sure whether this brand is upon you! Without it, no man will be able to buy or sell! Without it, you may be tortured even to death! But with it, you shall suffer the SEVEN LAST PLAGUES OF GOD!

By Herbert W. Armstrong

We begin now to see that the MARK of the beast involves a point of OBEDIENCE — whether we shall OBEY GOD or reject the commandments of God and obey MAN'S rule.

It has something to do, then, with the COMMANDMENTS OF GOD!

A mark of obedience

Notice, there are two classes — one has the MARK, the other rejects it and is martyred. Notice now the description of those who refuse this evil MARK:

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12).



There it is! In verses 9-11 of this chapter the third angel warns

With this installment, The Good News concludes its serial publication of Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong's new booklet Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?

that those who have the mark of the beast shall be punished by the plagues of God. In the next verse, the 12th, the saints who do *not* have the mark are those who KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

Those who have the mark, therefore, are those who refuse to keep the commandments of God. The MARK of the beast, therefore, involves a rejection of the COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, or of one of them, for if we break one we are guilty of all

(James 2:10).

So, one class of people accepts the MARK of the beast.

The other class keeps the commandments of God.

Mark of disobedience

Hence, *whatever* the mark of the beast may be, it means dis-

Illustration by C. Winston Taylor

obedience to GOD'S government — to the commandments of God.

Here's further proof — here are they who get victory over this mark:

Revelation 15:2-3: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are THY WAYS, thou King of saints."

This corresponds to the children of Israel, delivered from Egyptian bondage under Moses.

Moses was a type of Christ. Pharaoh was the type and fore-runner of this beast. The plagues God poured on Egypt were a type of the last plagues to be poured out on Babylon.

The children of Israel stood on the shore of the Red Sea, and God miraculously delivered them. Here the saints of God are pictured on this symbolic sea of glass.

They sing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb (Christ). Moses pictures law and God's commandments; the Lamb (Christ) pictures faith and salvation from sin.

Remember, the beast is the human civil organization of the devil. In Revelation 12, we find Satan stirred to great wrath "because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (verse 12). He then starts a great PERSECUTION, or TRIBULATION, against the TRUE Church — the true saints of God. This is just prior to the Second Coming of Christ (verse 13). Now notice against whom Satan is so wroth:

"And the dragon [Satan] was wroth with the woman [Church], and went to make war with the remnant [last generation] of her seed, *which keep the commandments of God*, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ [the Bible]" (verse 17).

There it is again! Those keep-

ing God's COMMANDMENTS — those yielding themselves to God's RULE, and living by every word of God — by the BIBLE — which is the written testimony of Jesus Christ — they are the ones the devil will persecute and martyr through his false church and his reborn empire!

But Satan knows his own. He will brand his own with a mark, so they shall not receive this persecution and martyrdom, even as God put a mark on sinning Cain lest men finding him slay him (Genesis 4:15).

All who do *not* receive Satan's brand — the MARK of the BEAST — will suffer Satan's wrath in the tribulation.

Thank God, those days shall be cut short, *for the elect's sake!*

Class on whom plagues fall

There are TWO classes of people. That class that receives the MARK of the beast is the class upon whom the PLAGUES OF GOD will fall. So if we can further identify those who shall receive this WRATH OF GOD, and *why* God will thus punish them, we shall further identify what the mark is.

In Ephesians 5 Paul is telling Christians to flee fornication, covetousness, idolatry — transgressing the TEN COMMANDMENTS. Then he says: "For because of these things [transgressing God's LAW] cometh the WRATH OF GOD [last plagues] upon the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6).

How plain! The wrath of God — the seven last plagues — are coming on those who DISOBEY God, by violating the commandments. The plagues fall upon those who have the mark of the beast!

Those who receive the plagues are breakers of God's commandments, and also at the same time receivers of the MARK! It becomes more and more plain that the mark of the beast represents COMMANDMENT BREAKING.

Notice this again in Colossians 3:5-6: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness,

inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry [transgressions of some of the Ten Commandments]: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."

Notice it also in the prophecies of the Old Testament: "The great day of the Lord [time of God's wrath — the last plagues] is near... that day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress... and I [God] will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men [The plagues! But *why?*], *because they have sinned against the Lord*" (Zephaniah 1:14-17).

What is *sin*? "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4) — commandment breaking.

The TRUTH becomes plain

Now, let's recapitulate! The truth is becoming plain!

1) The *mark* plainly means the rejecting and breaking of God's commandments. And in James 2:10-11, God says if we break only one of the commandments, we are GUILTY of breaking the LAW — guilty of all!

2) The Roman Empire is the real author of this mark. It is the mark of the BEAST, not the woman who rode the beast.

3) The church *caused* people to be deceived into receiving this mark.

4) Satan gives this Roman Empire its seat and great authority — it is the political instrument through which Satan works, in deceiving the world.

5) Those who refuse this mark are prohibited from "buying or selling" — engaging in commerce, trade or holding a job.

6) Many of those refusing this mark were, and shall again be, martyred because of their refusal — because they keep the commandments of God!

7) Therefore, the inevitable and plain conclusion is that the mark is something enforced by the church, originating in the paganism of the Roman Empire, which a cunning, deceiving devil would seize on as a means of

(Continued on page 20)

A Balanced Budget

from the Bible



*Does your budget work? Do you even have one?
The Bible reveals budgeting principles that can help you
overcome money troubles once and for all.*

By Dexter H. Faulkner

Budgeting! Many people, it seems, get uncomfortable when anyone mentions this touchy subject.

Some are convinced they make too little money to budget. Others think they have no head for figures and can't make a budget work.

So, for most people, money matters continue year by year to be a frightful experience!

But money problems are not necessary — even for you.

I learned these principles when I first read this magazine many years ago, and my family has lived by them ever since. I learned that in the pages of the Bible is a plan for the simplest and most effective budget in the

world, one that can work even for people who have failed for years in their attempts to budget their money.

What's more, it might surprise you to know that you may already be applying this plan, in principle, to part of your income.

Let's look at the principles of budget revealed in the Bible, and learn how to overcome money troubles once and for all. First,

Photo by Hal Finch

here are four keys of financing. They are essential before any budget can be put into operation:

Four important keys

- *Make budgeting a family project.* Get everyone involved. Of course, the husband as head of the family should take the lead in planning and sticking to a budget. But the counsel and cooperation of every family member is necessary.

If you are a husband, remember that you and your wife are "heirs together of the grace of life" (I Peter 3:7). By all means consult your wife on how the family income is spent. Perhaps she has more time or skill than you to devote to record-keeping, or to the mechanical process of writing the checks to pay the bills. At the least, your wife should be aware of what is happening, so she can offer wise counsel and be able to handle the job if anything should happen to you.

Children, too, need to develop the right attitude toward finances. They can learn about tithing, budgeting, saving and getting the best value for their money. This includes making wise purchases and not spending money frivolously.

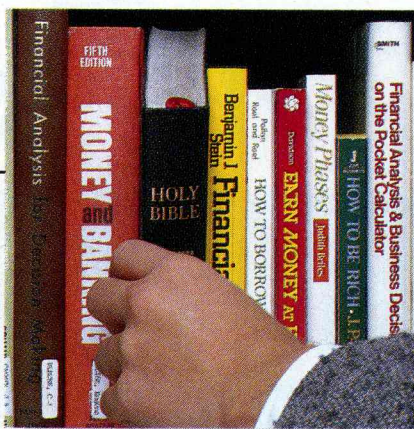
- *Always buy quality.*

The cheapest is not always the best. Often, those who always choose the cheapest develop personalities that reflect this point of character. We tend to act differently when using something expensive. We would have considerably more respect for a fine limousine, for example, than we would our old family jalopy. Over a period of time, the person who always buys the cheapest just because it is the cheapest may develop a careless, sloppy attitude and lose his or her ability to enjoy quality items.

So, when making purchases, realize that many "bargains" are not always what they seem to be. Shop wisely. Evaluate an item by

more than price alone. In the way it will affect you psychologically, an item of slightly higher price may be a far better investment. Anyone who has visited Ambassador College has seen this point demonstrated in the quality surroundings of the campuses.

- *Save.* A big source of misery in family money matters is the habit of living without a savings. Some are convinced that saving is



Many people live on the very edge of financial oblivion. But this simple budget can work even for people who have failed for years in trying to budget their money.

out of the question for them. But most people would not be in the trouble they are in had they only learned to practice this law of finances earlier.

Proverbs 6:6-8 tells us to learn from the ant, who "provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest." In other words, she has a savings of food to tide her over the rough spots and the winter.

Even if you are in financial difficulties, you need to begin a savings. It need not be large at first, just enough to develop the habit in you. Later, when you have gotten out of trouble, you will have established the pattern in your life. Besides, it will sur-

prise you to see just how quickly a few pennies accumulate over the weeks.

Many people live so close to the edge that just one extra bill pushes them over the edge into financial oblivion. How good it would be to have enough savings to pay that one bill you did not anticipate. It is easy to have it if you will just start putting a small amount away from each of your future paychecks.

- *Avoid credit buying.* Just as some think it impossible to save, some are convinced they cannot get along without charge accounts. The fact is that you must get along without them, or you will never enjoy financial happiness.

Despite how much you are presently tied to revolving interest payments, you need to start getting away from them. It may take some time to break their stranglehold, but it will be worth it to your peace of mind. Solomon wrote, "The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7).

Start today to have the strength of character to wait until you can save the cash. It costs much more to pay the interest on borrowed money than it would to save the money ahead of time. Avoid spending sprees.

Almost every charge account is set up on a minimum monthly charge of 1½ percent — that's 18 percent a year. And many charge more. Yet when you have cash, you not only save the carrying charges, but can often buy at a discount.

Of course, in certain cases today credit buying has become almost a necessity. The principle to follow, however, is that credit purchases should be made for necessities only — such as a car or home. Never should you buy luxuries on credit.

Television sets, sporting goods and hobby supplies should be

paid for in cash. It is usually these items that give people trouble in credit buying. It just seems so easy to buy the extras now and delay the payment until later. Don't fall into this trap.

Credit cards should not be used on major purchases where you are forced to carry the payment beyond the initial billing period. In other words, don't charge anything that you can't pay for completely when the bill first comes. Interest rates are so high on credit-card purchases that you will end up paying much more for the items than if you had paid cash. I am happy to say that in the last 20 years I have not had to pay any interest on my credit cards.

The perfect budget

Now let's look at the actual mechanics of the perfect budget.

If you will turn to the 14th chapter of Deuteronomy, you will find the principle given. It is, surprisingly, the principle of second tithe. All God's people should know the tremendous blessing that second tithe is. It somehow seems altogether different from the rest of our income.

Why? The reason is given in Deuteronomy 12:17: "You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain." Each year, when we spend our second tithe to keep God's annual festivals, this money has a special thrill about it.

Many of us are overwhelmed when we first begin to save second tithe. For the first time in our lives, we have money that we are commanded to spend on enjoyable things for ourselves and our families. Never before have we been able to spend money this way, because there were always greater needs elsewhere — charge accounts, utilities, food, clothing. But this money, the second tithe, cannot be spent for these things and is therefore es-

pecially enjoyable. Surprisingly enough, this same blessing can apply to all your money, and not just to tithes alone.

Stop and consider: The way you manage your tithe is the way you ought to also manage all the rest of your income!

Paycheck by paycheck

Second tithe works well because it is handled *paycheck by*



The thing to do is begin now.
If you set up your budget
right away despite your
troubles, you will be surprised
at how you can begin to
fulfill financial obligations.

paycheck and not *need by need*. Many people, though, don't seem to be able to apply this principle to the rest of their income.

The average person pays his bills separately with whatever money is available at the time. But second tithe is not handled this way. Instead of taking what you need to attend the Feast from your income in one lump sum just before the Feast, you save it as a small part of each paycheck. In this way God ensures that you will have what you need when the need arises.

To have financial success, it is necessary to do this with your whole income, not just your tithes.

In brief, you need to pay every bill — even unexpected ones — with every check. Rather than paying all of one bill from one particular check, you will need to begin, just as you do with your tithes, taking a fixed percentage ahead of time from each check for all future bills.

In other words, if you pay the electricity once a month, yet are paid every two weeks, you need to take half of the electricity bill out of each check, beginning one month ahead of time. Don't pay the electricity bill from one check, the rent from the next and the gas and water from the next.

This way only brings headaches.

How to set it up

Make a comprehensive list of all debts and expenses you ordinarily have over a period of time. Include overdue, current and future obligations — everything it will take to run your family for some time to come.

If the longest period you go between bills is a year, such as insurance or taxes, then your list will have to cover a year. If, however, the longest time between any bills is three months, then your list need only cover three months.

Whatever the time, put down all expenses, regular or irregular, that you know you will have during this period. This must even include money spent on recreation, odds and ends and the continuing expenses of rent, food and utilities.

Next, adjust every bill to the length of time between your paychecks. If, for example, you are paid twice a month, then monthly bills will have to be divided in half and weekly bills doubled. A yearly bill should be divided into 24 parts.

Now, make a new list of these adjusted parts (i.e., one-half monthly car payment, two weekly food bills, one-24th property tax). This list is central to the

budget. If you have included every expense, it will tell you exactly how to spend each check; every one will be spent the same way. In other words, each time you get a check, this list will tell you exactly how much to put away for each future expense, so that you will have precisely what you will need to pay the bills as they arrive.

By saving a standard amount for each bill from each check, as with your tithes, the worry of budgeting disappears. Your list of standard amounts automatically tells you how to do the job. Once properly set up, this budget needs only occasional thought, as contrasted with the constant headache of fitting each individual bill into the money on hand. What's more, with this budget you are not forgetting any items or wasting any money.

The greatest blessing is the freedom this budget gives you when you spend the money. If you have carefully and faithfully set aside the money from each check to pay each bill, you will be able to spend it with the reassuring knowledge that it was intended for that purpose — even recreation and luxuries.

So often, families actually make enough money to be able to enjoy certain extras. But without such a budget, few enjoy what they have. They may spend the money on these specialties, but always feel guilty doing so. Had they wisely divided their income into standard segments and included an amount from each check for special extras, they would be able to have these luxuries with a clear conscience.

So learn the lesson. Divide your income into definite sections so that every check is spent automatically on part of every bill. The blessings are beyond belief.

What to include

Your list of expenses must be complete. This is especially true if your income is low or you are deeply in debt. There are a few items that must be included in all budgets:

- *Clothing.* This is a sore spot

for some families. They may manage to get what they need, but only at great pains to the budget. Clothing is a long-term need, and some forget that they will need money to buy clothes. When the time comes, it becomes a painful matter of squeezing out money here and there. Why not just save a little from each check? You do not need to spend it immediately, but when you need it, it will be there.

- *Entertainment.* Many families feel they cannot afford entertainment. To them it is an unnecessary expense. But entertainment is a necessity for a balanced family. Many of us would be overwhelmed with the happiness that can come simply by setting a small amount away each check for entertainment.

- *Offerings.* Holy Day offerings are quite a problem for many brethren. When they come to these occasions, they seem to experience anything but joy. They either feel they cannot afford to give offerings, or they feel guilty about not giving enough. But if you work out in your budget an amount you know is right ("as you are able" — Deuteronomy 16:16-17), you will have a far better feeling about giving. You will know that you have done what you are able to do, and may even be pleased to find that you can give more than you ordinarily do. Then, too, you can always draw on your savings and still give that little extra you would like to.

Why not start now to budget properly with the Spring Holy Days especially in mind? They will be here before you know it! Why not be ready to give as large an offering each time as you are able, having planned and saved as a regular part of your budget?

- *Pocket money.* It seems minor, but incidental items can do more damage to a budget than you might expect. You probably would be surprised if you knew how much money you spend on small, everyday items — toothpaste, haircuts, newspapers, to mention a few.

This division of the budget

may not need to be large, but if you do not include it, this one small point can wreck all your other efforts.

Begin now

One last point needs to be mentioned. It is a little advice on how to get started.

Perhaps you feel you are already so far behind in your finances that you cannot even begin on such a budget. But it is for just such a person that this article has been written. The very reason to start on this budget is to overcome the problem you now think is stopping you!

Such a budget cannot work immediately for anyone near the financial cliff. Frankly, it may take several months to get fully on the scheme. The more months that pass, however, the closer you will come to being where you want to be. And the character developed in this process cannot be valued monetarily.

So the thing for you to do is begin now. Even if you have to run all your accounts in the red for months, you need to set up the plan immediately. If you cannot do what you write on your list, you will at least be able to develop the habit of learning what you should be doing.

Frankly, though, if you will set up your ideal budget right away despite your troubles, realistically including all current bills, repayments of loans and mortgages, future expenses and all the other needs, you will be surprised just how often you actually can begin to fulfill the amounts you have planned to put aside from each check. Even though you can only set aside half of one bill the first month, you will be half a month's bill ahead for the next month. And eventually you will find yourself enjoying the blessings of financial stability.

Budgeting need not be a distasteful scourge, an agonizing plague upon your life. All it takes is the determination and the faith in the Word of God to get free from money worries for the rest of your life.

Budgeting is a blessing! □

Years ago a devout religious man told me, "Peter ate pork and so do I."

I checked in the Bible to see if he was correct.

He apparently was referring to the events mentioned in Acts 10, especially the part concerning Peter's vision of the unclean meats.

Cornelius, a devout gentile, was instructed in a vision to send to Joppa for Peter, who would tell him what he should do (Acts 10:1-8). As Cornelius' messengers were on the way to see Peter, Peter also had a vision. In his vision he became very hungry and saw all kinds of creatures that were not to be eaten, according to the law. "And a voice came to him, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat'" (verse 13).

This was undoubtedly the instance my friend referred to in which Peter was supposed to "eat pork." But did he?

No! Peter objected, even though the voice from heaven instructed him to eat! Notice Peter's reply: "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean" (verse 14).

Peter's response was surprising, if Jesus Christ had made unclean food clean a few years earlier. Peter had not only never eaten anything called unclean by the law, but he had also never eaten anything that was common — that is, ceremonially defiled.

Peter was instructed three times to "kill and eat." He was also told, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (verse 15). Notice that he was instructed about what was not to be considered common any longer. No reference was made to what was clean or unclean. There is a great difference between what is common and what is unclean.

Peter did not

Did Peter Eat Pork?

Some believe that Peter, the apostles and the New Testament Church ate foods that were unclean according to the law. They think Jesus made all meat clean. This article examines the New Testament scriptures on the subject.

By L. Leroy Neff

understand what this vision meant, since he knew that the Scriptures plainly forbade God's people to eat such meat. He realized that if the message was really from God it should not contradict God's inspired Scriptures.

While Peter puzzled over this dilemma, the men from Cornelius arrived. Peter was again given instructions from God: "Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them" (verse 20).

The meaning of Peter's vision

It finally became clear to Peter what all of this was about. He explained it in verse 28: "Then he said to them, 'You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any *man* common or unclean.'"

God's law did not forbid a Jew to keep company with someone of another nation; that was a rule made by Jews based on their wrong interpretation of the law. Until this time Peter and the Church had carefully followed this Jewish custom. God was showing Peter by this vision to accept gentile converts into the Church. He was not showing him that unclean meat was now clean.

Nowhere in this chapter or, for that matter, anywhere else in the Scriptures, do we find that Peter ate pork or any other meat called unclean in the law. My friend was wrong, though I doubt he would have admitted it even if it had been proved to him without question. He was not yet willing to let God or anyone else tell him what he could or could not eat.

Did Christ purge all meat?

If this text does not change the law concerning

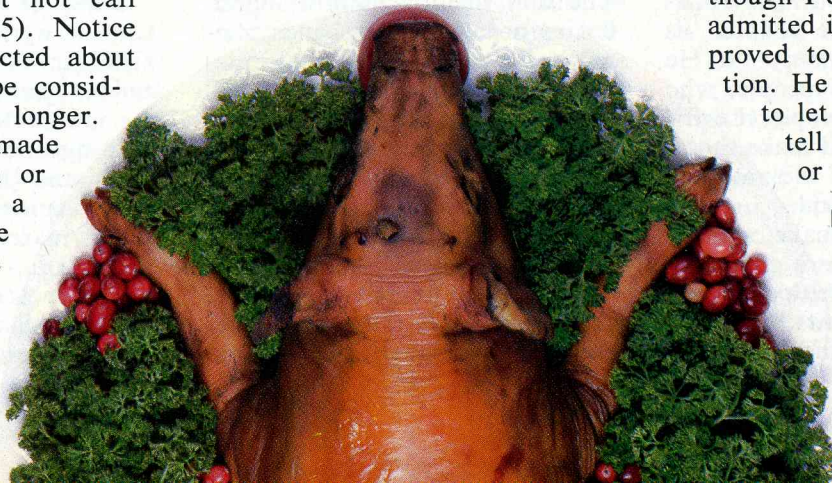


Photo by Hal Finch

clean and unclean meat, do other scriptures?

Mark 7:18-19 is purported to have done away with the law concerning unclean meats: "And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, *purging all meats?*" (Authorized Version).

If Jesus meant by this last phrase that unclean foods were now clean, as many people believe, obviously Peter did not understand it that way several years later, as we have already seen in Acts 10:14.

Before we go further in Mark 7, we should understand a little about the law concerning clean and unclean meats. This distinction was known before the Flood (Genesis 7:2). It was given again by God to Moses and Aaron for all Israel (Leviticus 11). It was rehearsed to all Israel a generation later by Moses (Deuteronomy 14).

When you understand who the "Lord" of the Old Testament really was, you will see that the question is important. Many texts make clear that the One who became Jesus Christ was the same personage known as the "Lord" in the Old Testament (Colossians 1:13-18, John 1:1-5). He was later made flesh by human birth (John 1:14).

He had personally said that His people should "distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten" (Leviticus 11:47). In this same chapter, as well as in Deuteronomy 14, He mentioned that His people, who were to be a holy people (Leviticus 11:44-45), would make themselves abominable if they ate any of the prohibited food.

Why did God make such a law? God always has a good reason for the things He does. Based on several comments, such as Leviticus 26:14-16 and Deuteronomy

28, the answer should be obvious: He prohibited humans from consuming some animals because eating those animals would not contribute to human health and well-being. The Bible makes clear which animals are which in Leviticus 11.

Neither the flesh of the unclean animals nor the human digestive system was miraculously changed during the first century A.D.!

Christ addressed rituals

Back now to Mark 7. A careful reading of this passage shows that Jesus was not addressing the question of clean or unclean meats, nor was He changing any

**The Church had not
previously accepted
people of other nations.
But God showed Peter
by a vision to accept
gentiles into the
Church — not that
unclean meat was
now clean.**

of His own laws. Jesus was pointing out that the Pharisees had added to God's laws many commandments and rituals that were not commanded by God. One of those had to do with how one must wash his hands and arms in a special ceremonial way before eating.

He also said that such rituals of men do not purify the heart. The dirt that one might ingest, having not washed his hands, cannot defile a person. What comes out of the person, such as evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication and other sins, are what defiles him or her (verses 20-23).

Any dirt from unwashed hands does not enter the heart but the "stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods" (verse 19). Jesus was saying that whatever enters the stomach is processed

by the human digestive system to obtain any possible nutrients, and what is left is eliminated from the body as waste.

This is the simple and logical explanation of this text in its context, which shows that it has nothing to do with the subject of clean or unclean meats.

What is required for salvation?

Another text that some people conclude does away with the law concerning unclean foods is Acts 15. Notice verses 28 and 29: "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality."

Is this a new formula for Christian living? Is this all that is required for salvation? Does it do away with unclean meats? Does it do away with the Sabbath? Many people believe it does.

If it does, does it also remove from the Christian the need for repentance? Can the Christian now murder, steal, lie, take God's name in vain? If all that is needed now is to follow the four points of Acts 15:29, then it would seem we could throw away the rest of the Bible!

That is not, of course, what Peter, James and the headquarters ministers at Jerusalem had in mind. In order to understand, notice the problem that is addressed. It is mentioned in verse 1: "And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'"

Some of the Pharisees in the Church went even further: "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses" (verse 5).

In question, then, was circumcision and the law of Moses, not God's spiritual law or all the other instructions of inspired Scripture.

The decision was that the gentile Christians were not obligated to be circumcised and keep the

ritual laws of Moses, but they were instead to refrain from the four prohibitions mentioned in verse 29: "If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well." Note that if they did these things they would be doing "well" — but *not* fulfilling *all* requirements of righteousness or Christian living.

The four points of this verse relate directly to the practices in pagan idolatrous worship of that time, which had been commonly practiced by gentiles before their conversion. Therefore, though they were not required to be circumcised like the Jews, neither were they now to go back to their old pagan ways of worship.

Should we eat what is set before us?

Another scripture that is often misconstrued to do away with the law against eating unclean meats is I Corinthians 10:25: "Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake."

Does this mean that you should not ask what kind of meat it is, where it came from, how it was raised or slaughtered?

Also note verse 27: "Eat whatever is set before you, asking no question." Is Paul saying that if you have been invited to a dinner you should not ask any questions about the food on the table? Does Paul mean that you cannot ask questions about the source, type or preparation of the food?

Some people with stomach problems would be inviting disaster if they didn't ask a few polite questions and then avoid what they knew would cause them trouble. If someone sets poison before you, are you obligated to eat it?

The context should make it clear that such questions are not what Paul had in mind.

The section from verse 14 through the rest of the chapter has to do with eating food that was offered to an idol in a pagan temple. This sounds quite strange to a 20th-century person, because such practices today are virtually unknown. At that time people of-

fered animals as sacrifices in pagan temples. The meat later would be sold to a meat market, where it would be resold to the public. This is the problem Paul was addressing.

What should the gentile Christian do? Should he ask the butcher or his host at dinner whether that particular piece of meat had been sacrificed to an idol? Paul's answer was no. There was no need to ask, as it didn't affect whether the meat was wholesome.

However, if the host said the meat had been offered to an idol, then, for the other person's conscience sake, the Christian should not eat it (verse 28-29).

**We need to notice
the context of a
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put our own
interpretation on
what it means.**

Is nothing unclean now?

In Romans 14:14, Paul said, "I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself."

What is this text all about? We again need to note the context of the chapter to see what Paul was addressing, and not just take part of a sentence out of context and put our own interpretation on what it means. The chapter subject is stated in verse 2: "One man will have faith enough to eat all kinds of food, while a weaker man eats only vegetables" (New English Bible). Some people ate meat and vegetables, while others ate just vegetables.

Paul shows in this chapter that Christians should not look down on one another or judge one another about vegetarianism. In-

stead, they should not do anything that would cause another Christian to stumble, even though what they wanted to do was not contrary to God's ways (verse 21).

If this is what Paul was talking about, what about verse 14, which says "that there is nothing unclean of itself"? The answer is found in understanding the original Greek word that is translated "unclean."

The word in Greek is *koinos*. This literally means, and is usually translated into English, "common," and not "unclean." In the Authorized Version of the Bible, *koinos* is translated "common" seven times. It is translated once as "defiled" and two times as "unclean"; however, the margins usually render "defiled" and "unclean" properly as "common." In every instance, *koinos* should be translated "common."

The Greek word for "unclean" is *akathartos*, which is not used in Romans 14:14. It is so translated 28 times elsewhere in the New Testament. The word *koinos*, which should be translated "common," is used in Romans 14:14 and does not relate to what is called unclean in Leviticus 11.

The improper translation from Greek to English in this verse has caused many to wrongly conclude that this statement by Paul permits Christians to eat foods that even God Himself said we should not eat.

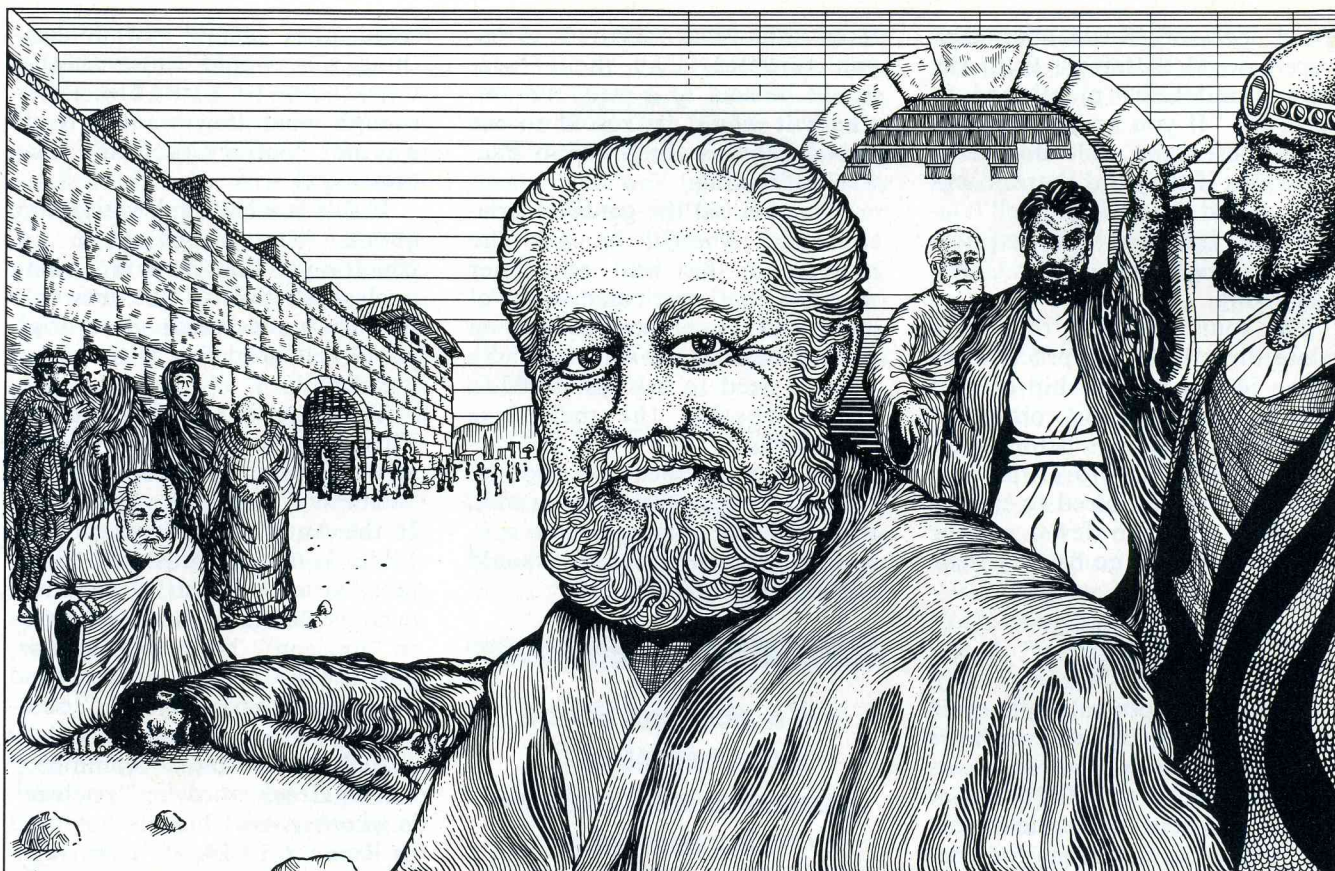
Should nothing be refused?

The remaining scripture that is commonly misunderstood on this subject is I Timothy 4:4: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving."

Does this mean that rats, snakes, spiders and vultures should not be refused, as they are all good to eat and made for that purpose?

Paul, writing to Timothy, was giving instructions to him and the Church. Paul stated that some people would depart from the faith and turn from the true doc-

(Continued on page 22)



BARNABAS

The Son of Encouragement

The apostle Paul charged through the open door to reach the gentiles, but God used Barnabas to open it!

Why was Barnabas called the "son of encouragement"?

By James E. Roberts

The apostle Barnabas bent over the bloodied body, perplexed and distressed. At the first moan and stir of what had appeared to be a corpse, the little coterie of Christians gasped in disbelief.

Then the short, stocky torso turned. Paul slowly sat up

among the blood-stained stones.

An ecstatic Barnabas helped Paul to his feet. Paul had survived a stoning! Astonished, the group heard Paul announce he was all right, and watched him turn back toward the city again (Acts 14:19-20)!

Such was the character of the man God chose to get the Gospel

to the uttermost parts of the known gentile world.

But what of the character of his relieved and grateful partner? What was the role of Barnabas in the Work at that time? What value does his example hold for us today?

Some may be surprised to learn that Barnabas was the major human instrument God used to employ Paul in the min-

Illustration by Monte Wolverton

istry, and to get the gentile Work off the ground.

Barnabas's unique qualities

Barnabas was genuinely humble. He was able to see the good in others. Because of this, he became a prime factor in the growth of the early Church. Cultivation of his qualities in our lives can enhance our impact as Christians today.

Scripture makes some unusual statements about Barnabas. One concerns the special name he was given by Church leaders — a name that seems to have characterized his ministry.

In the early weeks of the fledgling Church, the wealthier converts sold real estate and other possessions to share with the more needy brethren. Curiously, the only person named as an example of this generosity was a certain Joses. We are told that he “was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement)” (Acts 4:36).

The use of this name *Encouragement* is significant. The Greek word has also been translated “consolation” or “comfort.” John 14:26 uses a slightly different form of the Greek: “But the *Comforter*, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things” (Authorized Version).

The name *Barnabas*, then, has essentially the same meaning as the word Jesus used to describe the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The personification of encouragement as the “father” of Barnabas is also significant. He must have manifested this trait in an outstanding way.

This unique individual was a warm and encouraging person. He was positive and uplifting. He was able to see the best in people — to overlook the differences that could produce personal prejudice. This very virtue was used to open the possibility of membership in the early Church to converts of all nations.

Reaching the gentiles

Jesus Christ had shown His in-

tent, just before His ascension to heaven, to ultimately reach all nations with the Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God (Matthew 28:19-20).

After He provided His Church with sufficient human and material resources to evangelize foreign lands, Christ had a major hurdle to overcome. Many Jews were prejudiced against non-Israelites. Many felt superior, being the chosen of God, and harbored bias that would have weakened their willingness to reach out to gentiles.

God revealed first through the leading apostle, Peter, His will for the gentiles, through the incident of the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10). Yet the Jews were still hesitant to admit that God must be dealing with gentiles (verse 28). There was some plain foot-dragging going on.

Whom would God use to get things going in the Work to the gentiles?

Enter Saul

Saul of Tarsus had been public enemy No. 1 to the Christians. He led a gestapo-like group of Jewish zealots on a crusade to completely eradicate the Christians (Acts 8:1).

While on his way to Damascus, Saul was struck blind and brought to repentance by Christ Himself (Acts 9:1-22). Jesus made it clear He had chosen Saul to “bear My name before Gentiles” (verse 15).

After a narrow escape from would-be assassins at Damascus, Saul went to Jerusalem to join himself to the Christians there. But his reputation as their chief tormentor kept him on the outside looking in (verse 26). God began to use a certain man to champion the cause of suspect Saul.

Barnabas had perhaps believed Saul's story, perceiving in him the Holy Spirit. Or he had heard of his conversion and powerful preaching in Damascus. He was able to put aside fear and bias to see the good in Saul. Barnabas stuck his neck out to help Saul

win acceptance from the apostles (verse 27).

But Saul's time had not yet come. After more threats on his life, Saul was sent home to Tarsus. God let a number of years go by while He further prepared His Church for the entrance of the gentiles.

Growth continued, but no real effort was made to take the Gospel to gentile lands. Something did finally happen far up the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, in a gentile city called Antioch.

When the Church was scattered after the initial severe persecution, some of the believers journeyed as far as Antioch and took up residence in various gentile cities. These brethren witnessed to Jews only, until certain ones of them preached to some Greeks. God backed up their effort, and “a great number believed” (Acts 11:19-21).

When the Church leaders at headquarters in Jerusalem heard this news, they decided to investigate, and selected Barnabas for the trip (verse 22).

Barnabas arrived at Antioch and found that the Work of God among the Greeks was genuine. Being the positive, warm fellow he was, Barnabas was delighted. He “encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord” (verse 23). Unhampered by pride and preconceived notions, he could see the potential for good in gentiles. Barnabas lived up to his name, welcoming the new converts.

Another unusual statement is found in the following verse. Luke was so impressed with Barnabas that when he compiled the book of Acts, he stated, under inspiration, “For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith” (verse 24).

Barnabas was filled with the Holy Spirit, known also as the Comforter, which his name meant. He literally stands out for his special ability to see the good in others and encourage them.

Acts 11:24 ends with, “And a great many people were added to the Lord.” The growth was so

rapid that Barnabas realized he was overextended. Assistance was needed to properly pastor the new brethren and allow additional growth. Barnabas was about to make a second major move that would ensure the great impact of Saul of Tarsus on the future of gentile Christians.

Remembering what had been predicted about Saul, Barnabas realized that now was the time, and that Antioch was the place, to activate Saul's ministry. So, "Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul" (verse 25).

Together they returned to Antioch, staying there for a year. Saul probably acted as a kind of associate pastor, subject to the leadership of Barnabas. When the two are mentioned together, Barnabas is named first (verse 30).

Meanwhile, "The word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:24). By the time chapter 13 opens, we find five ministers operating out of Antioch. God's time had come to expand the Work into other parts of the world.

While the ministry there was fasting and praying about this matter, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit made it plain that God had set apart Barnabas and Saul for a special mission (Acts 13:2-3). A new phase of the preaching of the Gospel was about to unfold.

The pair took along young John Mark and set sail for Cyprus, Barnabas' home country. It is ironic that a major change in the roles of Barnabas and Saul occurred on this very island. They preached the Word at Salamis on the eastern end, then crossed the entire island to the city of Paphos (verses 4-6). Here, the party encountered Elymas the sorcerer. It was through a confrontation with this false prophet that assistant Saul became leader Paul.

Paul emerges as leader

Elymas withstood the efforts of the missionaries to preach the word to an interested deputy of the country. "Then Saul, who

also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, 'O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?' " (verses 9-10).

Paul, perhaps remembering the impact of his own bout with blindness on the road to Damascus, used God's power to smite Elymas with blindness. On this occasion he stood out as a dynamic spokesman.

But consider Barnabas' position. He had been in charge over Paul. He had championed the cause of Saul and helped him into the fellowship of the Church. He was the one who dug Saul out of the woodwork at Tarsus and reactivated him. He was the pastor at Antioch. He was the leader of this evangelical tour.

What if Barnabas had dwelt on all these things?

Barnabas had to decide there at Paphos whether to humble himself and submit to God's greater purpose. All we know is that verse 13 simply records, "Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Parga."

Previously it had always been "Barnabas and Saul." Now it was "Paul and his party." Paul was the leader. The entire focus of the rest of the book of Acts is on Paul. But let's focus on the example of Barnabas.

Perhaps he was willing to admit that Paul had certain characteristics that were better suited for the job at hand. Barnabas was a warm and encouraging sort, which is a necessary quality of leadership. But he may have been of such a temperament that he tried to avoid confrontations. On the other hand, Paul was like a seething volcano, always ready to erupt with powerful, convicting preaching or debate, and never backing down from a battle.

Perhaps Barnabas realized this once and for all at Lystra, the city on that first missionary tour where Paul was stoned. Watching beleaguered Paul struggle to his feet and head right back into the

city may have convinced Barnabas of the unique qualities Paul possessed.

At least it is safe to say that he had a similar attitude to that of John the Baptist. Submitting to the new leadership of Jesus Christ, John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Barnabas practiced what Paul later preached: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Philippians 2:3).

Are you like Barnabas?

What about you? Are you content to play second fiddle while someone else blows the trumpet? Or do you smart under emotional wounds when someone else is promoted, feeling you are more qualified or deserving? Do you feel overlooked and mistreated?

Barnabas' humility is also seen in his freedom from feelings of prejudice. Had he been biased, perhaps Paul would not have gotten anywhere with those at Jerusalem. Barnabas was willing to welcome into the Church brethren of other nationalities and cultures. He didn't let petty differences keep him from serving God's people.

What bias is still in your thinking that may be keeping God from using you to a greater extent? Do you pray for God's Work in other countries? Do you warm up to those of other races? Would God have been able to send you to Antioch to serve the needs of new brethren of other cultures?

God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11). Barnabas manifested this same attitude by seeing the good in people. He dwelt on positives. He saw potential for the future. Exactly how much he had to do with Paul's development, and therefore with the growth of the gentile Work, we don't know at this time. We do know enough that we can benefit from his sterling example.

What else, after all, would you expect from a man called the Son of Encouragement? □

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Many passages in the Psalms tell us we should "bless God." How can a person bless God?

God rules the universe supreme! He owns everything that exists. Yet each of us can bless God and bring Him pleasure, delight and joy. How?

If we examine the context of the passages that instruct us to bless God, we find exactly what this term means. Notice Psalm 34:1: "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

To bless God, therefore, means to praise Him.

But why do we praise God? Just because He tells us to? No. The true, wholehearted praise God desires is the praise of sincere thankfulness and appreciation for all the blessings He first gives us: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Psalm 103:2).

The awesomeness of God is worthy of continual praise:

"I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable" (Psalm 145:1-3).

Psalm 96 shows us that God is also blessed in song and worship, and by declaring His salvation to all the world. Psalm 100:4 shows that we bless God by coming before Him in worship, praise and thanksgiving.

This attitude of reverence, fear and respect for God and the laws He has given carries over into our daily lives as we obey Him and become living sacrifices for Him (Romans 12:1). God wants us to be living witnesses to others around us of the true way of abundant Christian living (Matthew 5:16). In this way we set an example and bear fruit, which glorifies God (John 15:8).

Jesus said there is great joy in

heaven over every sinner who, being called by God and seeing the good example of true Christians, repents and begins on the way to salvation and membership in God's own Family (Luke 15:10).

God created humankind to ultimately become His children (Revelation 21:7). The greatest blessing we can give God is to fulfill our purpose in life — yield to God, overcome and qualify for salvation — become a child of God!

What is the biblical name for God's Church?

The Bible gives the true name of God's Church in 12 different places.

In five passages where the true name of the Church appears, the entire Body of Christ — the Church as a whole — is indicated. Thus when speaking of the entire Church, including all its individual members on earth, the name is "the Church of God." Here are these five passages:

1) Acts 20:28 — the elders were admonished to "shepherd *the church of God*."

2) I Corinthians 10:32: "Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to *the church of God*."

3) I Corinthians 11:22: "Or do you despise *the church of God*...?"

4) I Corinthians 15:9 — Paul wrote, "I persecuted *the church of God*."

5) Galatians 1:13 — here Paul repeats the statement he made to the Corinthians: "I persecuted *the church of God*."

Nowhere is the true Church called after the name of some man or doctrine.

Where one specific local congregation is mentioned, the true Church is called "the Church of God," often in connection with the place where the congregation was located. Here are four more passages:

6) I Corinthians 1:2: "*The*

church of God which is at Corinth."

7) II Corinthians 1:1: "*The church of God* which is at Corinth."

8) I Timothy 3:5 — in speaking of a local elder in a local congregation, Paul wrote Timothy, "For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of *the church of God*?"

9) I Timothy 3:15: "I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is *the church of the living God*."

In speaking of the local congregations collectively — not as one general Body, but as the total of all local congregations — the Bible name is "the churches of God." Here are the final three verses:

10) I Corinthians 11:16: "We have no such custom, nor do *the churches of God*."

11) I Thessalonians 2:14: "For you, brethren, became imitators of *the churches of God* which are in Judea in Christ Jesus."

12) II Thessalonians 1:4: "So that we ourselves boast of you among *the churches of God*."

These verses prove the name of the true Church. Denominations not bearing this name could not be God's true Church. And of all the churches that do bear the name, *only one* could be the true Church of God — that one that obeys all the commandments of God and maintains the faith delivered once for all time. All others are counterfeit, even though some know about the true name.

Since Christ is the Head of the Church, Paul also called the various congregations "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16). But the actual name is "the Church of God." It is kept in the name of the Father (John 17:11).

For more information on where God's true Church is today, request our free booklet *Where Is the True Church?* □

Millions fail to realize that God is a Family! Understanding God's Family can help your family enjoy more happiness, unity and productivity.

By George M. Kackos

The perfect family — does it exist?

Your first impulse might be to consider your own family growing up, or your present family with all its human imperfections, and your answer probably is, "Absolutely not!"

But is that true? Are all families flawed — imperfect?

In the human realm, never yet has there been the "perfect" marriage with perfect parents for perfect children.

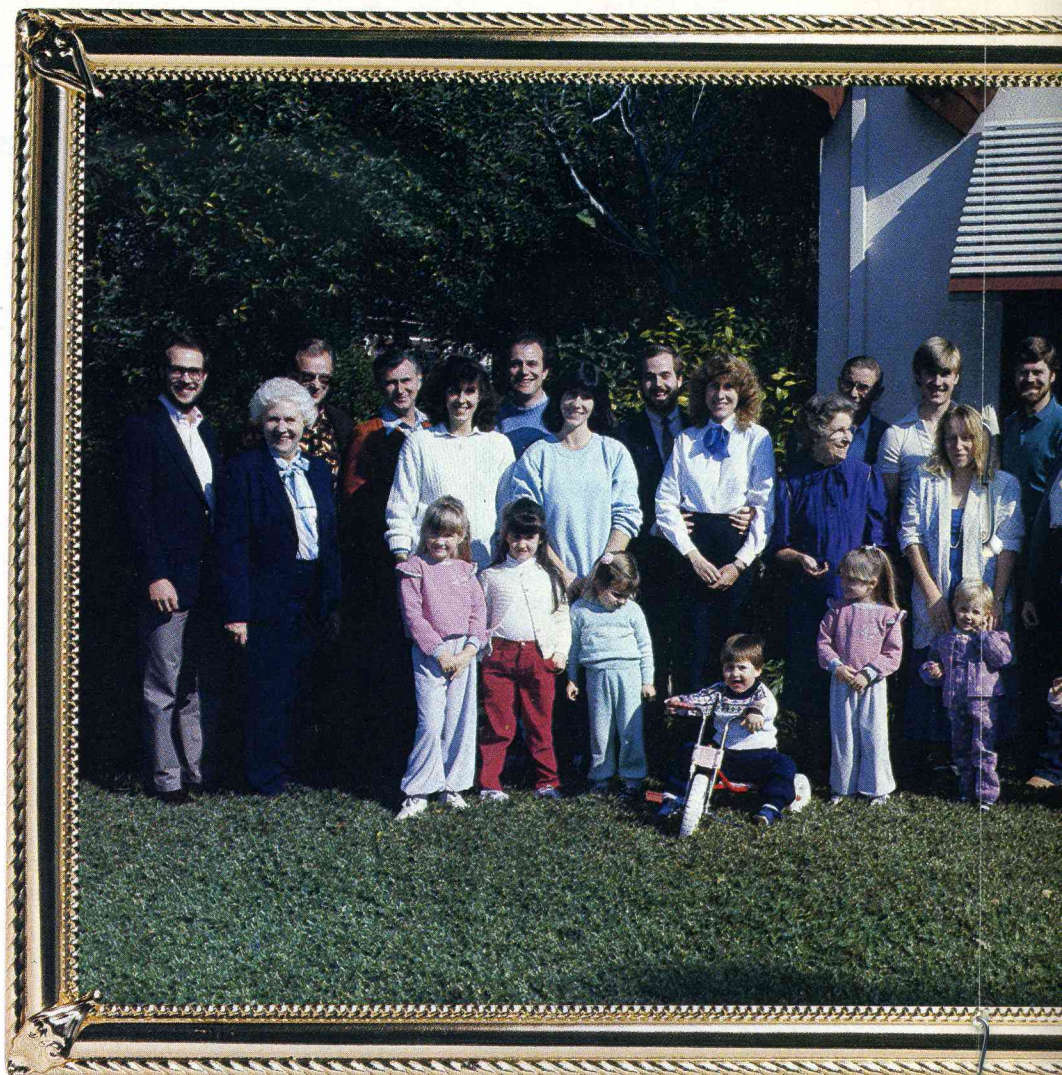
But there *is* a perfect family — a family that has set the example and is a model for our human family relationships as husbands, wives, parents and children.

The two great Beings who control the universe, God the Father and Jesus Christ, are a Family!

In Genesis 1:1 the Hebrew word translated "God" is *Elohim*, which is a plural noun or name. As the English word *family* implies more than one person, so the Hebrew word *Elohim* means more than one. "In the beginning *Gods* created the heavens and the earth" would be a better translation. Presently the God Family consists of two members — God the *Father* and Jesus Christ the *Son*.

It is this very Family of God into which true Christians will be born at the return of Jesus Christ. (If you have not already done so, send immediately for a free copy of Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong's eye-opening book *The Incredible Human Potential*.)

Together God the Father and Je-



You CAN Have Happy Family

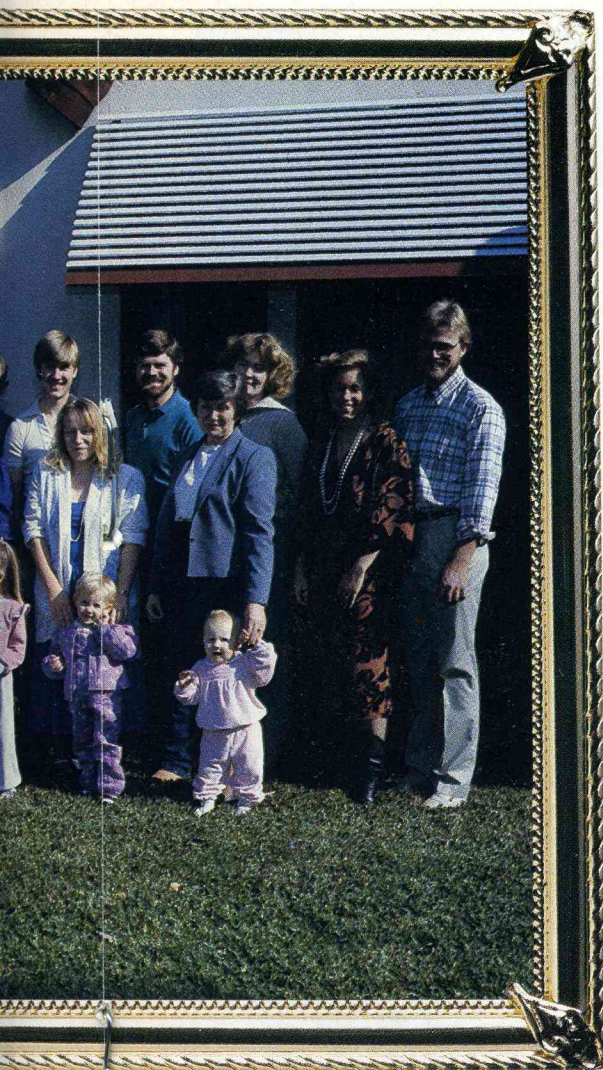
sus Christ set a perfect example of happy, productive family life. Jesus said of God the Father that we should strive to become "perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). And of their personal relationship, Jesus said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30).

They have proven through eter-

nity that their way of living really works. Following their example will work for you, too.

Isn't that what every family wants? Unity? Cooperation? Happiness? Harmony?

Don't you deeply desire a productive family that gives each member a sense of purpose, a feeling of belonging and opportunities



Have a family!

for growth and accomplishment — a family that is an oasis of love and a haven of peace?

The God Family wants that for you. They want your physical family to enjoy what they enjoy, experience what they experience, savor what they savor.

But do you? Are you enjoying a richly satisfying family life, or is it

marred by conflict and unhappiness, punctuated by tensions and frustrations?

Be honest. All of us are victims of fleshly weaknesses. All of us fall far short of God's glory. But we can rise above these weaknesses and do a better job of living. We can, that is, if we strive to follow the God Family's perfect example of successful family living.

Be united in love

What unites God the Father and Jesus Christ? What binds them together? The answer is a rather simple-sounding word — love! That is the one best word to describe what God is. The apostle John wrote, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). God and Christ have expressed that love by first adhering to their own spiritual, immutable laws. They gave those laws to mankind — the Ten Commandments. Unfortunately, very few humans have really practiced those laws as God and His Son practice them.

Those laws form the very basis for their family relationship. And they should form the basis for yours. The family relationship would then center on living not only by the letter but by the spirit and principle of these laws. Constant harmony would result.

Living by God's laws helps one always be in a right attitude of service and devotion to the family. From the God Family that love radiates beyond them, touching the lives of their future Family members — humans who are destined to be born into the God Family.

But what about your family? Is it united by the same type of love as God's Family? Or is it instead divided by strife, indifference and resentment?

Selfishness can strangle your family, quenching harmony and happiness. Hostile words, seething anger and refusal to address problem areas can gash deep wounds that are painful and slow to heal.

Family life doesn't have to be this way. Husbands, wives and children can be liberated from the cruel bondage of selfishness to experience the freedom of godly love — a freedom that brings joy and contentment. This godly love is pro-

duced by obedience to the God Family's laws.

You need to begin to apply the principles of these laws! It may sound easy, but sometimes it's not. It may take far more effort than you imagined. But it can be done. And it will produce results.

Take time to evaluate how you relate to other family members. Ask yourself how important they are to you. Then analyze how you can better express that importance — whether by mere lip service, or by showing a positive, outgoing concern — by your actions!

Be specific. Do you really try to understand their physical, spiritual and emotional needs? How much are you willing to sacrifice for them? Are you willing to turn off the television to talk with your children? Are you willing to set aside your personal plans to take the family somewhere they want to go?

Look deeply into how you relate to your mate and to your children.

Do you find anything missing? Are there areas that need improvement? Since none of us is perfect, there are always many flaws to correct. The trouble is, many families never get around to even analyzing what the problems are — much less setting goals to correct them.

Maybe you have been trying hard to improve. Yet despite your best intentions you probably still fall short. But at least do something. It does no good to sit there. Good intentions never solved a problem. And a little progress is better than no progress at all.

Who's in charge?

One of the most important reasons for the success of God's Family is the understanding of government — who's in charge around here.

During His earthly ministry Jesus said: "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me" (John 5:30). He later said, in John 14:28, that His Father was clearly greater than He. That is, greater in authority. It is the Father who makes the final decisions regulating the rulership of the universe and the plan of

salvation. Through this system of government, the God Family maintains harmony. It has never failed them, because the Father always exercises loving authority and the Son responds with willing submission.

Authority is also necessary in our human families to ensure goals are accomplished and harmony prevails. God Himself has structured leadership into the family. The apostle Paul wrote about the family structure: "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). And he added, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1).

The only way to have a successful family is to apply the laws God reveals. Jesus set the example. He obeyed His Father.

Have you grown to accept the responsibility and authority of the family structure as God designed it? Millions in this modern age haven't.

As a husband, are you using your position as head of the household to serve the best interests of your family? Or are you a dictatorial tyrant? Or, on the other hand, have you abdicated your responsibility to be a loving head of the family — not leading in the decisions that must be made?

Let's face it. Many husbands and fathers fail to properly exercise loving authority by either ignoring the family's needs or by indulging themselves.

Do those of you who are wives willingly submit to your husband's place as head of the family? Do you support his decisions or try to get your own way? Rebellion or even subtle manipulation is wrong and must be avoided to have a happy family.

The key, once again, is to practice God's government. He is the author of family life and family law. There is only one way to succeed, and that is to follow the Maker's instruction manual.

Children should be taught from infancy to recognize and willingly submit to parental authority. If that authority reflects the love and concern of God, they will learn the

value of loving parents and be able to be loving parents when they marry and have their own families.

Through loving authority and willing submission, your family can have happiness and harmony.

Live the truth

Truth is an important element in the God Family. It guides the thinking of God and Christ and determines their actions. As David said in Psalm 33:4, "For the word of the Lord is right, and all His work is done in truth."

What does truth produce?
Much.

Total honesty. Right motivation. Correct ideas. So much more. All of these then build trust, ensure unity and produce success.

As a family you need to rise above deception, false values and wrong beliefs. Reach for the truth that will end arguments, prevent hypocrisy and build trust.

Unfortunately, in some families the truth is cast aside and trampled underfoot by self-justification. What a tragedy to see a family torn apart by strife, unable to heal itself

because family members cling to distorted views of themselves.

Jesus tells us that such strife can be eliminated: "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

If we go to God's Word for our standard and beliefs, then improvements in our attitudes and actions can be made. Blessings will result.

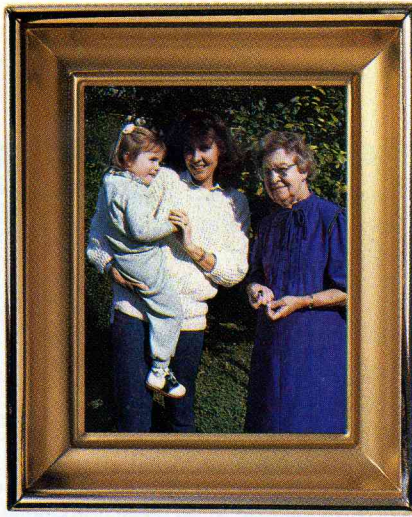
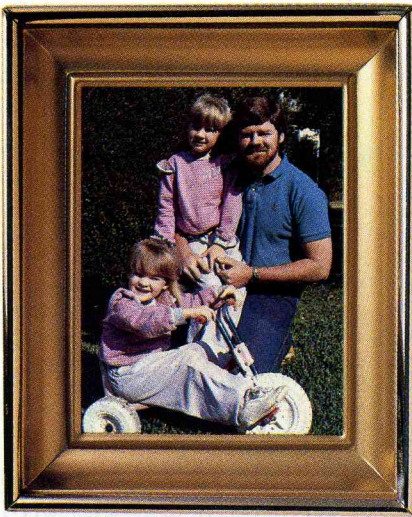
Share feelings and experiences

God the Father and Jesus Christ enjoy being together. They enjoy doing things together and talking together.

Together they have been working on their plan of salvation. Throughout history they have shared trials, joys and hopes in dealing with humanity. Before the Flood they experienced the pain of a whole society that departed from God's way so severely that they had to destroy the world that then was. In the future they will rejoice at the birth of millions, then billions, into their great Family. You will also

Together God the Father and Jesus Christ set a perfect example of happy, productive family life. Following their example will work for you, too.





**Strive to improve! Your joys will
far outnumber your sorrows, your successes
outnumber your failures and your
laughter outweigh your tears.**

have joys and sorrows in your own family. But if you constantly strive to improve your relationship, to live by the laws of God's Family, your joys will far outnumber your sorrows, your successes outnumber your failures and your laughter outweigh your tears.

As you share your experiences as a family, you will find your motivation and desire to spend even more time together will increase. Your horizons will expand. Your personalities will improve. You will build better character.

Family conversations will become joyful experiences. There is enormous power in the words you speak. Learn to speak with positive conviction. Avoid negative tones and criticism.

Examine yourself first. Look at the fruits of your own conversations. Are they eliminating problems or enlarging them? Are they conveying valuable knowledge or worthless gossip? Are they drawing you closer together as a family or separating you?

Conversation is the key to understanding each other. God and Christ have perfect communication — see what you can do about following their example in this vital area of family life.

Both God the Father and Jesus Christ are diligent workers. In de-

scribing that quality, Jesus said, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working" (John 5:17). Though they are active in many different roles, they each have specific areas of service. The Father, for example, answers our prayers (John 16:23); Jesus is our Intercessor (Hebrews 7:25).

Through teamwork they cooperate with each other to run the broad expanse of the universe and serve millions of spiritual and physical beings. The fruits — the beauty of God's creation and His awesome plan of salvation — are incredible.

Teamwork, not competition, should prevail in every family. Each family member has different talents and proclivities. Each should use them in his own unique way, with individual effort, but within the framework and purpose of the team.

This is one reason God has placed government in the family. Each member must work together for the common good while fulfilling individual responsibilities.

As leaders of the team, husbands are responsible to be the primary provider for the family. This responsibility is not only to provide physical necessities, but also includes training, teaching and providing spiritual guidance.

Wives and mothers contribute as

homemakers, a task that requires dedication, education and hard work. In some cases she must supplement the family income. But at all times her goal is to provide love and care for her family. The high standards of a wife and mother are best described in Proverbs 31.

Children must understand their parts in family life. Obedience to parents and family values contributes to the well-being of the family. But that does not just happen. Teaching, time and example all contribute to a child's understanding and willingness to obey. Just as much as the parents, children are responsible for bringing happiness to the family.

Reap the rewards

What do all these principles — godly love, family government, truth, sharing and teamwork — produce? The beautiful thread that should pass through and tightly bind the fabric of every family — the thread of unity.

Yes, unity — that wonderful quality that holds us together in hard times and brings us joy in good times. It binds us with a common purpose, but permits us to recognize our individuality. It provides us an island of rest in a sea of instability.

Isn't this what we all want? Aren't these the qualities that enrich life, bringing joy and happiness? As David said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

You can have these qualities. Maybe not all at once. But you can start now to develop them. They will produce good fruits. If you're tired of family frustrations, fights and failures, heed the words of Jesus Christ: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

God's Family has set the example. Examine its qualities — see how you can apply them in your own family life. Then ask God your Father for the strength and guidance to become a family like His Family.

You will fulfill the very purpose for your existence! □

LETTERS

"Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?"

I am so thankful to receive the *Good News* and *Plain Truth* magazines. They are always interesting and informative.

While reading in my Bible, I became interested in the seventh and eighth chapters of the book of Daniel. I was trying to analyze to whom or to what countries Daniel's dream referred.

When the October-November issue of *The Good News* arrived, my prayer was answered!

Herbert W. Armstrong's series "Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?" will be read with great interest.

Maurice M. Meyer
San Diego, Calif.

Mr. Armstrong, I believe you are inspired to write whatever you write. I appreciate your letters and look forward to receiving each one of them.

Today I was reading *The Good News* and I studied the article "Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?" I can't wait for next month's issue. You make things so plain and understandable.

Beatrice Wirick
East Dundee, Ill.

"Are You Willing to Change?"

I would like to thank you for the booklets I received from you as well as the first copy of the *Good News* magazine. The articles in it are quite stronger than in the *Plain Truth* magazine, but still interesting and straightforward. All your articles and booklets are written in easy-to-understand language and it all seems so plain, reading it and then comparing it with the Bible.

There can't be any doubt that you are representing the true Church in this terrible religious confusion around us today.

I especially liked the article by Roderick C. Meredith, "Are You Willing to Change?" (October-November). I am willing to change even in the face of opposition, as I am getting it from my own family.

Edgar J. Falkenstein
San Antonio, Tex.

I have learned many shocking truths through your publications. I have just begun to understand what I should do with what I am learning. The article "Are You Willing to Change?" really opened my eyes. I feel as though the

article was written for people like myself. Since I understand the things that I read, I know now what to do!

Callie M. Fate
West Monroe, La.

The articles in the October-November issue, such as "Are You Willing to Change?", "Rejoice in God's Sabbath!", "Ministudy: Are You Passing God's Test?" and "Prove All Things: The Christian Calling" have opened my mind and I see now how false these churches are.

My life is changing now and I would recommend these articles to everyone who feels that his or her life is being called by Christ and who wants to know which day to keep the Sabbath.

Jackie Adams
Athens, Ala.

Halloween

My mother and I just received the first issue of *The Good News*. The article on Halloween (October-November) was very informative.

I know a lot of Christians who let their children celebrate that holiday, and I'm going to ask the pastor if he'll do a sermon on the dangers of transforming pagan practices into Christian holidays.

I don't think God is pleased when His people dress up as demons and go begging from house to house, or when they attend "Easter sunrise services" that are patterned after pagan sun-worship rites.

Thank you for publishing such a helpful magazine.

Lois V. Kobb
Polk, Ohio

Last Great Day

I really want to compliment the individual writers of the *Good News* magazine for their wonderful and edifying literature that is made available to me and the world at large.

Thank you so much for making me more familiar with the Holy Bible's content and meaning.

A special thanks to Clayton D. Steep's article entitled "The Last Day, That Great Day" (September). It is one of the most mind-opening pieces of literature I've ever read.

It's so simple and explicit in nature that any unprejudiced mind could understand God's plan for the vast amount of unsaved souls from the past, the present

and the future. Keeping the Last Great Day Feast reflects the true manifestation of God's plan for spiritual redemption of mankind after the millennial rulership of Jesus Christ and His spirit-born assistants. God is truly loving and merciful.

Carl Tyson
Georgetown, Guyana

Prisoner writes

I am presently incarcerated in the Texas Department of Correction and I became interested in your material through a friend of mine. You see, I had lost contact with the outside world and one night at mail call, I said, "When am I going to get some mail?" So in your June-July issue of *The Good News* there was a stamped envelope to it and this friend of mine said, "Here, send this off," so I did. During this time I was confused, lonely and very bitter with hatred.

After I received *The Good News*, I read it and enjoyed it very much, for it opened my eyes to lots of things, including the Bible. I feel at peace with myself now and I am coming to accept God more.

Thank you very much. You keep up the good work, and I pray that you will be around for a long time to come.

Dewitt A. Hankins
Rosharon, Tex.

Wise insights

I thank God for your spiritually wise insights into His Word! I am a subscriber to your magazines *The Plain Truth*, *The Good News*, *Youth 86* and other literature, all of which I thoroughly enjoy from cover to cover, and am eagerly awaiting the next issues of your publications.

They are informative, interesting, impressive, stimulating, exciting and challenging, as is the Bible when one has the proper perception.

Before I began reading your publications, I was seeking meaning and purpose in my life from many varied persons, organizations and publications, which were futile. Then one day you put me on the right track. I received and read *The Plain Truth*, which led me to read my Bible.

I appreciate being led from darkness to the light! No longer do I feel like an outsider looking in, but a part of God's great plan!

Joseph Hoyle
East St. Louis, Ill.

There was not the slightest doubt in my mind about the rightness of what I was doing.

And yet, there I was, breaking the law and in trouble with the police!

All I wanted was a few pieces of chrome trim for my car. I had paid my admission fee to get into the automobile junkyard.

Once inside, it was up to me to wander, screwdriver and pliers in hand, through row after row of wrecked cars. Upon locating the parts I wanted, I had only to remove them and pay for them at the exit.

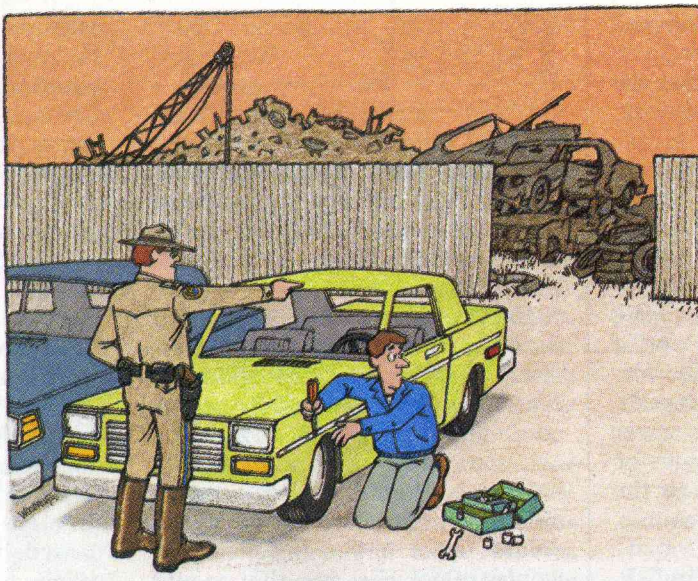
I didn't know that half of the yard belonged to the police department and that the vehicles there were off limits to the public. Oh, the area was cordoned off by a fence, all right. But the gate was wide open and I didn't see the "Stay Out" signs.

So my conscience was perfectly clear. And it was obvious to me that my chances of finding the parts I wanted were far greater in this section, where the cars appeared to be untouched, than in the other section, where they had been thoroughly picked over already.

I did vaguely wonder, though, as I penetrated into the restricted zone, why it was so deserted and all the other customers contented themselves with the junk in the other section. Oh, well, no time to worry about that.

I assumed I was right

I began to look in earnest for an automobile like mine that would have the trim I needed. My concentration was only partly



WHO, ME?

By Clayton D. Steep

interrupted when a voice over a loudspeaker boomed, "Will the man in the blue jacket please return to the public area?"

Silence once more, and my search continued. "Will the man in the blue jacket leave the restricted zone?!" the loudspeaker blared. The demand was repeated a few seconds later with added volume and force.

"What a pity," I said to myself. "It's too bad that troublemaker can't cooperate with the authorities and abide by the rules."

"You in the blue jacket! Get out of there!" the voice thundered. While these words were still hanging in the air, a guard appeared several dozen yards in front of me and motioned for me

to turn around and leave — fast!

Who, me?

Suddenly I saw the picture all too clearly. I was the reprobate in the blue jacket. I was the "troublemaker." I had so much assumed I was right that I had not been receptive to even a suggestion that I was wrong.

With considerable embarrassment, and realizing that by now many eyes were watching me, I quickly backtracked and lost myself amidst the wrecks in the other section of the junkyard.

They couldn't mean me

I had just hastily gotten on a plane in Europe and, out of breath, settled back in my seat. Final preparations for takeoff were under way when a voice with a broken accent came over the public address system: "Mr. Clayton from Milwaukee, U.S.A., please contact a flight attendant."

Isn't that interesting, I thought, someone on this very plane way over here in Europe from Milwaukee, my birthplace, and with part of my name. What a coincidence. Small world!

The request was repeated several times. How many, I don't know. I didn't pay any further attention. Why should I? After all, my surname wasn't Clayton and it had been many years since I had lived in Milwaukee.

Anyway, the plane was about to leave and I was busy looking for my passport. It had been with some other items I carried on board. Now it was gone.

I unbuckled my seat belt and got down to look under my seat. A passenger across the aisle noticed what I was doing and asked me if I was looking for a

Illustration by Michael Jon Woodruff

passport. He had found one and given it to a crew member.

I lost no time in getting the attention of a flight attendant, who ran up to the front as the plane's engines were revving. In a few moments several crew members, including the captain, came back to my seat.

This was suddenly a major incident, because by now the passport had been handed out of the plane to be taken to the airline's office. Now the captain would have to radio the tower and request that the passport be intercepted and sent back to the plane, which would, of course, delay the flight.

He asked in broken English, his face flushed with rage, why I hadn't responded to the announcements.

Who, me?

What could I say? How could I explain in another language to the angry crew members and passengers staring at me that my name was not "Clayton" and yet at the same time it was, that I was not now "from Milwaukee" and yet technically I was? Oh, why hadn't I at least checked with a flight attendant just on the outside chance that *I* was the one being addressed?

Hear — and apply

In both of these instances, I just did not see how the words spoken applied to me. In the spiritual realm, such a reaction could be dangerous indeed.

It is not sufficient just to have ears to hear. One must *hear*! What about the words Herbert W. Armstrong speaks on the *World Tomorrow* program, or the words spoken in sermons from God's other ministers? Or what about the written words in the Bible or in *The Good News*? Do they sink in? Do you allow them to apply to you?

"Let him who thinks he stands [in other words, *assumes* he is right] take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). It really is possible, you know, that this warning could apply to you.

"Who, me?"

Yes, *you!* □

Beast

(Continued from page 2)

cleverly DECEIVING people into breaking God's Ten Commandments. And it involves a direct connection with *holding a job* — engaging in business — earning a living.

Satan is clever — cunning — a deceiver. He palms off counterfeits, which look like the genuine! Naturally he would select the *one* commandment of God that he can counterfeit with a substitute — one in which by human reason alone no man could see where it would make any difference! He would select the one that would seem of least importance to the carnal human mind!

He would not try to deceive men on idolatry, profanity or on stealing, lying, murder, adultery — though he has led people into all of these.

But WHAT commandment could it be — *what* commandment affecting a man's *job*, or his *business*?

There is only one possible commandment — the one regarded by the largest number as the "LEAST" of the commandments — and that is the Fourth Commandment, which says: "REMEMBER the sabbath day, to keep it holy. . . . the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God."

Why saints were martyred

No carnal mind can see, without the special spiritual revelation of God through His Word, where it makes any difference WHICH day man observes.

WHERE DID SUNDAY ORIGINATE? Not with the church, but with the pagan religion of the ROMAN EMPIRE! It is the day on which the ancient pagans assembled at sunrise, faced the east (as they do Easter Sunday morning today) and worshiped the rising SUN.

It was Constantine, emperor of the Roman Empire, not a pope, who made SUNDAY the official so-called "Christian day of rest." But it was *enforced* — people were *caused* to accept it univer-

sally — by the CHURCH! It was for obeying God's FOURTH Commandment — keeping the Sabbath — that millions of saints were put to death. The local Council of Laodicea, about A.D. 363, passed this decree: "Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, resting rather on Sunday. But, if any be found to be Judaizing, *let them be declared anathema from Christ.*"

The church *caused* them to be killed. When the church branded one "anathema" (a heretic), the state police of the empire began torturing him. Unless he recanted, he was tortured until he died!

Laws became so strict no man could hold a job, or engage in business, unless he worked on Saturday and rested on Sunday. And the world is now so geared that it is almost impossible for one to "buy or sell" except he receive this MARK OF THE BEAST!

This is the ONLY COMMANDMENT that was altered by the Roman Empire! In Daniel 7:25 we read the prophecy of this BEAST and the little horn (the political government of the church) rising up, which was to think to CHANGE "times and laws." That is, think to change God's LAW in respect to TIME — the time for the Sabbath!

What is a mark, anyway?

Now what *is* a mark? In Bible usage it is virtually synonymous with a "sign," and in one or two places used interchangeably. There is merely this difference: A mark is a brand of identification, forced on one. Cattle raisers put by force their mark on their cattle — their brand. A sign is also a badge of IDENTITY, but one voluntarily accepted and used. A druggist hangs a sign in front of his store. It may say, "JONES & CO., DRUGS." It *identifies*. It tells what kind of store, and who owns it.

Now the beast, in association with the church, used FORCE to brand the Western world with their MARK. Those who obeyed God and kept His Sabbath were

martyred. They were unable to "buy or sell."

But God does not force anyone. God lets us make our own decision about obeying Him, accepting Christ and becoming His obedient children.

But is the Sabbath God's SIGN that we are Christians, belonging to HIM?

Yes, indeed!

God's SIGN

It was *after* God had made, and ratified, the covenant with Israel. That Old Covenant, of course, was for limited duration and is now replaced with the New. But any covenant made *after* it had been made and ratified by blood *was no part of that Old Covenant*.

It was 40 days after that ratification that God made a new, separate, different covenant between Himself and all who should be His people, to last *forever*. This was no temporary covenant, but for all generations, FOREVER.

It is found in Exodus 31:12-17: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying . . . Verily MY SABBATHS ye shall keep: for it is a SIGN between me and you *throughout your generations*."

These generations of Israel — we are Israel (see our free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*) — *are still going on!*

Now WHY is it a sign? Does it IDENTIFY God to us? Does it *identify* us as HIS? "... That ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you."

Get the powerful meaning of those words!

It is a SIGN, that we may KNOW that the Eternal is the true God. It identifies who God is. How? Notice verse 17: "It is a SIGN . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed."

It is the memorial of God's rest from CREATION. Always, in all parts of the Bible, God identifies Himself as CREATOR. How can we distinguish who is the TRUE God from all the false gods? The true God *created* everything that is, including everything people

have turned into false gods and worshiped.

Some worshiped the sun. But the Eternal, the true God, created the sun, and rules it. Some worship idols carved out of stone, or wood, or marble. But the true God *created* that from which they were made, and even the human beings who made them.

The Sabbath is GOD'S Sabbath, not the Jewish Sabbath. Never does the Bible call it the "Jewish Sabbath." It identifies GOD as the CREATOR.

The Sabbath was made FOR MAN. So said Jesus (Mark 2:27). It was made WHEN man was made (Genesis 2:1-3). It was MADE — and it was Christ, the Yahweh or Eternal, who made it! Therefore HE is the Lord of the Sabbath!

It was made to keep man in the true knowledge of the IDENTITY of the true God, to keep him from idolatry! And history proves that every nation who did NOT keep God's Sabbath worshiped false gods, and did not know who the true God was! When Israel quit keeping God's Sabbath, they went into idolatry (Ezekiel 20:5, 11-13, 17-21).

It was for SABBATH BREAKING GOD SENT BOTH ISRAEL AND JUDAH INTO SLAVERY!

But back to Exodus 31:17-18. It also is the SIGN by which we are identified as belonging to GOD. We BELONG to whom we obey — so we read in Romans! It is the *sign* by which we know He is the ETERNAL "that doth sanctify YOU."

To sanctify is to set apart for spiritual use. The SABBATH sets one apart from the world, and always did — as OBEYING and belonging to GOD.

Can you think of ANY REASON why anyone would EVER keep the Sabbath, except to OBEY GOD? Would any man defy human custom and invite persecution, and be set apart as different, through human reason? Could any atheist be a Sabbath keeper? THE SABBATH IDENTIFIES GOD'S PEOPLE!

God's people, we have seen above, are identified as they who KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS. The

world acknowledges all the other nine commandments. The only one the world rejects is the fourth. The only one that sets one apart from the world — that IDENTIFIES one as belonging to GOD — that is a SIGN of God — is the SABBATH.

Notice, verse 16, it is a "PERPETUAL COVENANT." *It is a COVENANT!* It is no part of the Old Covenant — no part of the law of Moses! It was made with Israel *after* all these, and is a separate, and *perpetual*, COVENANT.

Notice verse 17: "It is a SIGN between me and the children of Israel FOR EVER." There it is! It is a COVENANT. It is FOREVER!

When given to physical, flesh-born Israel, this covenant punished by death any breaking of the SIGN. Today, since the administration of the death penalty by the Levites and judges is not being done (II Corinthians 3:7-8), and since all believers, in all nations, whether Israelite or gentile, are grafted into *spiritual* Israel (Romans 11:24), the willful refusal to keep this *sign* is punishable by death — *the second death*. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God . . . ?" (Hebrews 10:28-29).

Right hand and in forehead

God says the penalty for SIN is DEATH! Sin is the transgression of the law. If we break only this one commandment, we are guilty. The penalty is DEATH!

The Roman church caused people to receive the MARK of pagan ROME — the Sunday observed by the pagan Roman Empire — and the penalty for disobedience was DEATH!

Fifty million or more were put to death — so says history.

It is the ONLY commandment the world will not accept in its MIND (forehead) and OBEY (by work, or rest, with the HAND). It is the ONLY commandment that can distinguish between those

who have the MARK of the BEAST, or the SIGN OF GOD.

Now the book of Revelation is written mostly in symbols. The right hand symbolizes work or labor — the forehead, the intellect or mind. It has to do with what we BELIEVE, in the mind, and whether we OBEY, with the hand.

HOW ABOUT GOD'S SIGN? *It also was received in the forehead, and the hand!*

Regarding one of God's annual Sabbaths, we read: "It shall be for a SIGN unto thee *upon thine hand*, and for a memorial *between thine eyes* [forehead], that the Lord's LAW may be in thy mouth" (Exodus 13:9).

Deuteronomy 6:1, 6-8: "Now these are the COMMANDMENTS... and these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart... and thou shalt bind them for a SIGN *upon thine hand*, and they shall be as frontlets *between thine eyes*."

Deuteronomy 11:18: "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a SIGN *upon your hand*, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes."

Also see Proverbs 7:2-3 and Revelation 7:3-4, 14:1.

There is absolute proof! Yes, the truth is very plain!

The Sabbath is God's SIGN, standing, more than any commandment, for OBEDIENCE. It was symbolically in the HAND and in the FOREHEAD, just as the MARK of the BEAST — the pagan SUNDAY — was in the right HAND and in the FOREHEAD!

SUNDAY observance — Christmas, New Year's, Easter, etc. — *this is the MARK of the BEAST!*

The church *did* cause all under the "Holy Roman Empire" to receive this mark, during the Middle Ages. Not only were active church members caused to observe Sunday instead of the Sabbath, but it became a universal custom so that all the Western world — regardless of religious connection or belief — accepted Sunday instead of Saturday as

the weekly day of rest. It has become universal in the Western world except for Judaism, Islam, a few sects in Christianity and the comparative few whom God has called out of this world and into His true Church.

Has the Roman church stopped causing people to receive this mark?

Just at present she has not the POWER to enforce this mark on everyone. But there will be a United States of EUROPE — a union of 10 nations. It will be a UNION of church and state — and the church once again will sit astride the BEAST.

Now notice Daniel 7:21-22: "I beheld, and the same horn [the political government of the church] made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; *until* the Ancient of days came [Second Coming of Christ], and judgment was given to the saints of the most High."

Yes, the MARK OF THE BEAST once again will be *enforced!* No one will be able to hold a job or engage in business without it. Those refusing will once again be tortured and martyred — probably by the secret police of the political *state* — but at the behest of the church!

Today, ALL NATIONS are deceived by this paganism masquerading under the name "Christianity." Today, America, Canada, Britain — Israelitish nations, descended from the ancient so-called lost 10 tribes of Israel — are actually *in* the ways of this "BABYLON."

God's *last warning* is this: "COME OUT of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and *that ye receive not of HER PLAGUES*" (Revelation 18:4)!

If you are branded by this MARK, *rejecting* the SIGN of God in your forehead and hand, you shall be tortured by God's plagues without mercy! Yes, YOU!

But if you OBEY God — if you are *watching*, praying without ceasing — you shall be accounted worthy to ESCAPE — and come under GOD'S PROTECTION (Luke 21:36). □

Pork?

(Continued from page 9)

trines of the Bible to doctrines of demons (verse 1). One such doctrine was "to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth" (verse 3).

If we let the Bible interpret the Bible, instead of using our own interpretation, this scripture will be clear. What foods did God create to be received? God answers in Leviticus 11.

Such food can be "received with thanksgiving by those who believe [God's instruction in Leviticus 11] and know the truth [of Leviticus 11]." Then such food will be "sanctified [set apart for a holy use and purpose] by the word of God [in Leviticus 11] and prayer [of the one giving thanks, that God has created it for human food]" (verses 4-5).

Paul was saying in I Timothy 4:1-5 that some people would turn to demonic doctrines and abstain from those foods God created for human consumption, which are listed in Leviticus 11.

This article started with the apostle Peter and now it would be good to end with him. He said that Christians should be "obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'" (I Peter 1:14-16).

The scripture that Peter quoted here is found in Leviticus 11:44-45, the chapter where God instructs His people not to eat unclean foods! The part about being holy is still true, and the part about unclean foods is, too.

My friend who thought he followed Peter's example really did not. I have wondered for many years since he died prematurely. Would he have added more years to his life if he had not eaten what God did not design for human food? What if he had really followed Peter's example and "did not eat pork"? □

The Christian Fight — How You Can Win!

The Word of God tells us that all who will follow the Christian way of life will have to face three deadly enemies, each of which tends to discourage us from overcoming sin and developing the character of God. These deadly foes can come between us and God. They put wedges into our minds that can grow, gradually separating us from the guidance and power of God's Holy Spirit and the faith of Jesus Christ — but only if we allow them to do so.

God says these enemies must be defeated, and He tells us how to do it!

1. Does the apostle Paul show there is effort involved in living the Christian life — that eternal life is worth fighting for, so we do not let it slip from our grasp? I Timothy 6:12, 1:18-19. Whose "soldier" was Timothy? II Timothy 2:3-4.

2. Did Paul steadfastly follow God's way of life — did he know, shortly before his death, that he had won the Christian fight? II Timothy 4:6-8.

3. Is the Christian's warfare against physical armies, or is it a spiritual warfare? II Corinthians 10:3-4. Just what is a Christian to fight against? Verse 5.

The first enemy in the Christian's daily warfare is his human nature with its ungodly characteristics (Galatians 5:19-21). Human nature causes us to rationalize deceitfully (Jeremiah 17:9). It entices us to sin — to break God's spiritual law — which cuts us off from Him. Our nature can destroy us spiritually unless we resist its wrong impulses, which lead to sin.

4. What is the second deadly enemy of all Christians? Galatians 1:4. What should a Christian's attitude be toward this world's social order, with its glitter, glamour, status-seeking and alluring appeal? I John 2:15-17.

The apostle John was referring to the society of this world, so much of which is built on and motivated by vanity, self-centeredness, lust and greed.

Because most people have been spiritually deceived (Revelation 12:9), they don't understand how so many of the world's ways could be wrong in God's sight. Nevertheless, this world's ways do bombard Christians continually with

temptations that can lead them away from following Christ.

5. Should Christians strive to avoid the evil that is in the world? II Corinthians 6:14-18, Revelation 18:4. Does this mean they should move away from populated areas? John 17:15-18, especially verse 15.

Christ's prayer in John 17 shows that God does not expect Christians to move to the mountains or deserts to escape the world's distractions. Rather, they should strive to be separate *spiritually* and refuse to participate in the sins of the world.

6. What, or who, is the third great enemy of every Christian? I Peter 5:8-9. Isn't Satan the devil ultimately responsible for inspiring all the evil in this world? II Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:1-2. As the invisible ruler of this world, has he deceived the whole world? Revelation 12:9.

Satan the devil, formerly known as the archangel Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12-14, Ezekiel 28:14-17), became perverted in his thinking and thus developed his evil nature, which he has broadcast to humanity ever since Adam and Eve. Humans have unsuspectingly acquired Satan's nature, which we call "human nature." Notice how Paul described this natural state of mind: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

But once the Holy Spirit of God is added to a person's mind, he has access to the spiritual power to resist the attitudes of self-centeredness, lust, vanity and hate that are spiritually broadcast to the mind by Satan.

No person is compelled to obey these impulses from Satan. The devil has no power to force anyone to think or do wrong! But the unsuspecting automatically do so without realizing what is taking place in their minds. Most people just drift along, responding to emotions and impulses that often find expression in fleshly drives and vain pursuits.

Thus Satan, the "god of this age," "the prince of the power of the air," is actually working "in" (Ephesians 2:2) the minds of unsuspecting people all over the world. That is why the Bible describes this world as "this

present evil age" (Galatians 1:4), and why the world is so thoroughly deceived today!

7. After one is begotten by God's Holy Spirit, which makes him a real Christian (Romans 8:9), the devil will continue to try to deceive him, to lead him away from Christ and His way. What did Paul warn the Corinthian Christians? II Corinthians 11:2-4, 12-15. Did some Christians in Paul's day begin to fall victim to the devil's promptings once again? Galatians 1:6-8, 3:1.

Conversion does not shield us from Satan's wavelength. He continues to broadcast the attitudes of his nature to our minds in an attempt to spiritually overthrow us. When Jesus spoke of overcoming, He referred to overcoming Satan's way. True Christians are fighting to overcome Satan's subtle urgings and the teachings of his false ministers, striving with God's help to remain true to His way.

Before Jesus Christ could qualify to restore the government of God and rule all nations, He had to withstand Satan's most severe temptations. That supreme struggle is recorded in Matthew 4. Notice how the devil attempted to influence Jesus Christ to sin against God.

8. After Jesus had fasted 40 days and nights in the wilderness, how did the devil appeal to Jesus' extreme hunger? Matthew 4:1-3. And to the potential desire for prestige, glory and power? Verses 5-6, 8-9.

9. How did Jesus immediately respond to each of these temptations? Verses 4, 7, 10. What was the outcome of this titanic spiritual battle? Verse 11.

Jesus Christ overcame the devil! He resisted Satan and conquered him, showing His mastery over him. When He gave the devil an order, Satan had to obey. He slunk away, knowing he was defeated in this supreme spiritual encounter of all time. Christ overcame the devil's wiles by the Word of God. He responded to the devil's temptations by citing the scripture that applied in each situation. He knew the Word of God thoroughly. Christ knew God's will and He obeyed it. Therefore, the devil could not deceive Him.

10. Should Christians today also resist the devil with the truth God has revealed to them? I Peter 5:9. What must the devil do if resisted steadfastly? James 4:7.

11. What instructions on fighting against the impulses and attitudes of the devil does God give us through Paul? Ephesians 6:10-12. Besides using the power of God's Spirit, what should Christians "put on" to fight this spiritual battle? Verses 11, 13. Of what does God's spiritual armor consist? Verses 14-17.

We are to be clothed with the revealed "truth" of God (John 17:17) so we can't be

deceived, and wear the "breastplate of righteousness," which is the keeping of God's law (Psalm 119:172).

Our feet are to be shod "with the preparation of the gospel of peace" — we are to be actively doing our part in getting out the message of the soon-coming Kingdom of God (Matthew 24:14) that will rule this earth and bring it peace.

The "shield of faith" protects us from the attacks and enticements of Satan. This is not our own human faith, but the very faith of Jesus Christ, which can be within us (Galatians 2:20, Revelation 14:12). Christ's faith is imparted to us by God's Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

The "helmet of salvation" (Ephesians 6:17) keeps us properly oriented toward our spiritual goal. It is the knowledge of God's awesome purpose for mankind — of becoming Spirit-born members of the Family of God!

The "sword of the Spirit" refers to the written Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). It is the Christian's only offensive weapon in fighting against the devil's influence. To rightly use this weapon we must study the Bible and learn God's will and His promises.

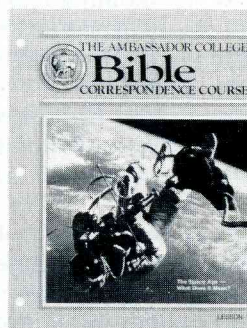
12. What else did Paul say is necessary to win the Christian fight? Ephesians 6:18-20.

Christians are to draw close to God in persevering prayer (I Thessalonians 5:17), praying for all of God's people, for the Work of God's Church and for their own needs.

This is the formula for successfully overcoming Satan and forcing him to flee. This is the perfect strategy for defeating human nature and the sinful attractions of this world, which are both motivated by the archenemy of God.

Spirit-begotten Christians have a continuing spiritual fight on their hands. But with the Word of God as their sword and His armor as their protection, and if they persevere to the end, they will succeed in overcoming all three deadly foes!

(Be sure to request our free booklets *Did God Create a Devil?* and *Human Nature — Did God Create It?*) □



ENROLL IN FREE BIBLE COURSE

The short study you've just completed is a sample of the study method used in each monthly lesson of the eye-opening Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. You can enroll in this free course by writing to the *Good News* office nearest you. See inside front cover for addresses.

I found the story of Qu Xiao in a newspaper I bought in Guangzhou, China. I started reading it casually, and then found myself becoming absorbed as I began to realize that the story contained a lesson for all of us.

Qu Xiao is a teacher, a psychologist and a delegate to China's National People's Congress. These days, he spends a lot of his time lecturing to young people about 22 years of suffering he experienced at the hands of people he only wanted to serve.

It is a remarkable story. May I tell it to you?

Qu Xiao was born in 1931 to poor but educated parents. As a teenager he experienced the tumultuous years of civil war and the Communist Revolution that shaped modern China. He became an enthusiastic supporter of the Revolution, and joined the Youth League.

Qu Xiao decided to get a college education so that he could better serve his country and people. In 1956, while a student at Northeast China Normal School, he was married. He graduated in 1957, to begin his career as a teacher. But almost at once his troubles began.

Only eight days after his graduation, China was convulsed in an anti-rightist campaign. Qu Xiao was branded as a rightist and thus an enemy of the people. He strongly denied it, claiming that his only desire was to serve as a teacher. But there was no arguing with the popular wave of anti-rightist sentiment. Qu Xiao was expelled from the Youth Corps and assigned to teach in a small, insignificant school.

Making the most of it

Instead of giving in to bitterness, Qu Xiao decided to make the most of his situation and threw himself into serving his new students. His students loved him, but the authorities became

Loving Your Enemies

A Lesson From China

*From the experiences of a
teacher in China, we can learn something
about our goal as Christians.*

By John A. Halford

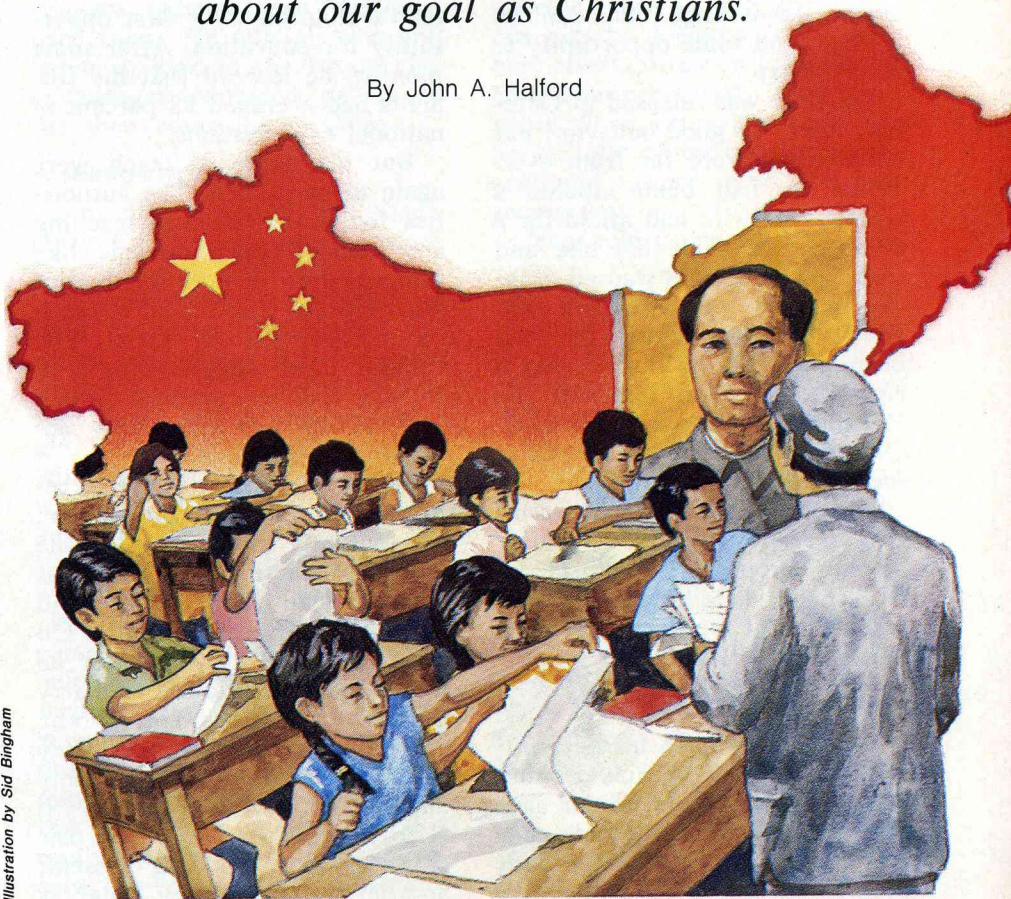


Illustration by Sid Bingham

jealous of his success and accused him of not acting in the best interest of the Party. He was told he was not fit to be a teacher, and that he needed to be "reeducated through labor."

Rather than waiting to be punished, Qu Xiao volunteered to go to a labor farm. He wanted to prove himself to the authorities so he could be allowed to get on with his teaching career.

He thought he would be allowed to leave after a reasonable interval, but soon realized that he had sentenced himself to an indefinite period of "reform." For three and a half years he worked with a traveling labor brigade at back-breaking, menial tasks.

Still, Qu Xiao remained positive, learning all he could. He knew that as a scholar and an intellectual, he had much to learn about the way the ordinary people lived.

Qu Xiao had also begun to learn an even more important lesson: that whatever trials and problems one has in life, there is always something that can be learned, and some opportunity to serve others.

Qu Xiao was released in October, 1961, for good behavior, but his troubles were far from over. When he had been labeled a rightist, his wife had asked for a divorce. She said that she and their newborn child wanted nothing more to do with him. Qu Xiao's son, now 4 years old, had been told that his father was a rightist who had opposed the Revolution, but was now dead. Qu Xiao was not to be allowed to see his little boy again.

He also found that it wasn't easy to reenter society, even after he was supposedly "reformed." No school would accept him as a teacher, and neighbors treated him with contempt.

Hopes again dashed

Never flagging in his determination to teach, Qu Xiao decided to move to a remote border area of China, far from the main centers of population, where perhaps even an outcast would be needed. He found a job among the simple

people, as a herdsman for horses. Using his skills, Qu Xiao began to show his new friends how they could train the horses to plow fields and pull carts, a small but significant step forward for them.

At last he felt he was doing something constructive. One day, one of the leaders of the herdsmen came to him and said: "I understand you're a university graduate. Can you teach?"

Qu Xiao explained that he could, but that he was not allowed to because he had been branded as a rightist.

"Never mind," the leader of the herdsmen said. "We're far from the authorities here. Just be careful."

So at last Qu Xiao became a teacher. The school was primitive — just a thatched shed with some boards nailed together to make desks, and a sheet of iron painted black for a blackboard. Qu Xiao had to teach five grades in these difficult circumstances, but he went to work with a will.

He began to give the herdsmen's children their first opportunity for education. After some months, he learned that his students had averaged 98 percent in national examinations.

But his hopes to teach were again to be dashed. The authorities found that he was teaching and decided that someone like him was unfit to work in a border area. He was transferred to teach on a labor reform farm. The rightist label dogged him still. But Qu Xiao was grateful for any opportunity and cheerfully accepted a minor role.

While teaching at the labor reform farm, Qu Xiao met Yulan, the daughter of the head of the village production team. She was younger than Qu Xiao, beautiful and dedicated to her country. Qu Xiao felt that with his past he would never be allowed to marry her, but to his surprise, she agreed to become his wife. They were very poor — they had only about US\$5 to their name. Qu Xiao bought his wife a new pair of shoes as a wedding present, and between them they bought a new pot for cooking rice. They

moved into a crude shack for a home. Their only furniture was a bookshelf and some tables they would move together for a bed.

But Qu Xiao loved his wife, and she loved him, and he was at last beginning to experience true happiness. The following year they had a healthy baby.

Branded a criminal again

But the good times didn't last long. The Cultural Revolution that convulsed China for 10 years had begun. As an intellectual, Qu Xiao was again branded an enemy of the people. His house was ransacked and his domestic bliss shattered. Day after day he was dragged before the authorities. He was beaten and shouted at, until finally it was decided he was an active counterrevolutionary. Qu Xiao was sentenced to 20 years in jail.

Realizing that he now had no future to offer his young wife and child, he told them, with a sinking heart: "We must get a divorce. You're only 29, and it'll be 20 years before we can be together again. Don't cut yourself off from life because of me."

She refused and promised to wait for him. But he insisted that she must rebuild her life for herself and her child without him. "Marry an honest peasant. That's what I want you to do," he said, and they parted in tears.

He did not know until years later that even though his wife did not want to go through with the divorce, it was forced on her by the authorities. She and the child were sent to another area. The pressure of having a "counterrevolutionary" husband was so great that Yulan and the child fell seriously ill.

Today the Chinese people recognize that the Cultural Revolution was a terrible mistake, and they are determined that nothing like it will ever happen again. Qu Xiao was just one of millions whose lives were disrupted by the upheavals. But unlike some people, Qu Xiao never let bitterness and resentment get the better of him.

Even though he was suffering

from injustices, his inner feelings of love for his people never changed. He knew that as an educated person he had a responsibility, and he believed that sooner or later his country would emerge from turmoil. Then it would need him again.

Success at last

Qu Xiao was right. Eventually the Cultural Revolution ran its course and he was released. As he had predicted, the country was now struggling to rebuild. A whole generation had been wasted, and Qu Xiao was deter-

ending. He went back to his work. His second wife, Yulan, had been forced to divorce him and marry an old peasant, but this man had since died. Now Qu Xiao was able to be reunited with the woman and child he loved. He was also reunited with the son of his first wife, the little boy who had been told he was dead. His first son was now a grown man and married, and rejoiced to meet his long-lost father.

Today, with the years of tribulation behind him, Qu Xiao often lectures on his experiences to the young people of China. He en-

persecute us now will be punished — and, we think, it serves them right!

But if that is what we think, we're missing the point. A true Christian must use the opportunities of this life to educate himself, but not simply for his own sake.

God is not trying to save this world now. He is calling only a few to repentance at this time. They are not chosen because they are special or God's little pets or because they are more innately righteous than others.

If you understand the truth of God, you have a massive responsibility. You must struggle to learn all you can now so that you will be ready for the future. That future will not be spent in sanctimonious isolation in heaven, but on this earth, working with Jesus Christ, so that others may also have salvation.

You must never lose sight of this. Even though this world may not appreciate what you are doing with your life, even though you may receive condemnation and ridicule, even though opportunities may be denied you and your best efforts often go unrewarded and unappreciated, you must never allow yourself to get into an attitude of bitterness and resentment toward those who persecute you.

Jesus told us we must love our enemies, try to do good to those who persecute us and pray for those who hurt us (Matthew 5:44). We must think of them and their future. One day, they will need us.

We must never lose sight of the responsibility of an educated person to be willing to teach others what he knows. We can't do this if we are filled with bitterness, resentment and a spirit of revenge.

Qu Xiao never lost sight of his goal to teach and help others grow. He was not a Christian, but for 22 years he was driven by a love of his country and people to serve them, no matter what they did to him. How much more should we, who are led by the Spirit of God? □

Even though people may not appreciate
what we are doing now as Christians,
we must think of them and their future.
One day, they will need us.

mined to do all he could to repair the damage. Once again he became a teacher.

In 1979 the sentence of "counter-revolutionary" was overturned. Later he received notice that the verdict of "rightist" given in 1957 was found to be completely false. He was restored as a member of the Youth Corps in good standing — at the age of 48! He was also told that sending him to the education labor reform school in 1958 had been a mistake, and the penalty had been rescinded.

His record was now clear. In order to make amends, the authorities asked him if he had any requests.

Requests! He had suffered for 22 years. His efforts to serve the people had been spurned. He had been put in prison twice, and two marriages had been ruined. He had been misrepresented and vilified.

Qu Xiao could have demanded revenge and adequate compensation for the years of wretchedness. He didn't. He asked only to be allowed to continue to serve his people as an educator.

Qu Xiao's story has a happy

courages his people to forget the mistakes of the past and not bear grudges against those who misused them. He tells all who will listen to look to the future. He encourages educated people to use their education to serve.

A lesson for us

I'm glad I found Qu Xiao's story. Can we who are Christians learn a lesson from him?

A real Christian is going to have problems in this life, because this world does not like Jesus Christ or His ways. "A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you," Jesus warned (John 15:20). "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution," wrote Paul (II Timothy 3:12).

Persecution is hard to take, particularly if you are trying to help and serve those who are persecuting you. It is easy to resent your persecutors, and it is human to want to get back at them. It is tempting to gloat over the fact that when the Kingdom of God is established, we Christians will receive our reward, while those who

PROVE ALL THINGS

God's Purpose for Creating Man

That's *Incredible!* was the name of a popular American television program.

It specialized in showing the viewer unusual and spectacular — that is, incredible — stunts, people and events. This show dealt, of course, only in physical phenomena.

God's transcendent *spiritual* purpose for man can be described only with the same superlative — it's simply incredible!

Yet, precious few really understand exactly why God made man, or what is God's purpose and destiny for humanity.

Think what this means! Without the knowledge of why he exists, man has no real meaning or purpose in life. Man has no ultimate goal or destiny, and spiritually is like a cork adrift on an ocean, at the mercy of every force, good and bad, with no direction or anchor. Life is futile and uncertain.

Yet it need not be so, for God, the giver of every good and perfect gift, has clearly spelled out man's purpose in the Bible, for those who will read and believe.

The basic doctrine

The purpose for human life is this: God is literally reproducing Himself through man. He made man to be His sons in His own Family — the God Family — and hence to someday be Gods themselves.

The usual teachings of this world

Religious teachers of this

world have fallen disastrously short of knowing or teaching this incredible truth.

Some religious people say God promises heaven to the saved, although few seem to know exactly what man will do in heaven for all eternity. Others say that the saved become angels.

Still others believe in reincarnation — a sort of ladder-like hierarchy of life forms (from animal to human, and, in some cases, to supernatural) upon which one continually ascends or descends (after death and rebirth), depending upon his goodness or badness now. Some non-Christians believe when one dies his mind loses its identity and combines in blissful oblivion with the forces of the universe.

Those who subscribe to no religion usually think the purpose of life can be nothing higher than "to make this world a better place to live."

But none of these ideas, no matter how seemingly noble or widely held, have, even remotely, a basis in the Bible. What, then, is the purpose for life? Why did God create man? To quote the same question from King David's

lips, "What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" (Psalm 8:4).

The Bible teaching

To answer this question — and to learn the purpose for man — we must first learn something about God. We must learn that God is a Family!

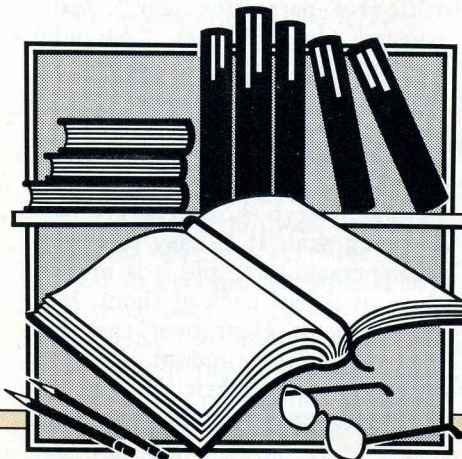
This plain truth is hinted at from the very first verse in the Bible. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This word translated "God" is the Hebrew word *Elohim*, which allows for plurality, like the English words *group* and *church*.

Genesis 1:26 further adds weight to this truth, because it quotes God (*Elohim*) as saying, "Let *Us* make man in *Our* image." Clearly, God is composed of more than one being.

John 1:1-2 removes all doubt about God being more than one when it pronounces: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." No question remains. God is composed of at least two beings who are different yet are both God.

Other verses prove that this group of two God beings is more than a group like a team, but is rather a literal Family. For example, upon Christ's being baptized, "A voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:17).

Further, Christ confirmed in the most dogmatic terms that He



and the Father are indeed related as a Family. In John 10:29-39, He time and again referred to God as His "Father," much to the displeasure of the Jews, who knew He meant it literally and therefore threatened to stone Him for it!

Clearly, we must conclude the obvious. God is more than one. He is a group of two beings. And He is more than a group of non-related Gods. He is, by His own admission, a Family!

But the most breathtaking part is that we — you and I — are destined to become full members of that Family as literal sons! That is the purpose for man!

The Scriptures abound with direct, incontrovertible statements proving this. John 1:12 says quite clearly, "As many as received Him [Christ], to them He gave the right to become children of God." Romans 8:15-16 pronounces: "You received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

Galatians 4:5-7 announces that we have been redeemed by Christ "that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Compare also Hebrews 2:11, which proclaims that, since Christ and we who are converted have the same Father (God), He is "not ashamed" to call us brothers. And in Revelation 21:7 God says, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

But, some would read these verses to be mere figures of speech. They would tell us that we are not to be literal sons of God. Are they correct? Are we to

be members of God's Family only in a symbolic sense?

Clearly we will not be angels. In Hebrews 2:5-11 we read that man will have the world to come in subjection under him, but that angels will not. Hence men will not become angels.

We are told in Philippians 3:21 that we look to Christ from heaven "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Authorized Version). And in I John 3:2 we read: "Now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

There it is! We shall be like Him — not like an angel or some other being of inferior type. We shall be sons of God and part of His Family, and therefore, since God is a Family name, literally Gods ourselves!

Yet some will still not believe. They will feel such a statement surely must be blasphemy. Read again John 10:29-39. See how the Jews themselves sought to stone Christ because He said He was God's Son, and therefore a God and equal with God. They said He spoke blasphemy.

His reply? "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"?' If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"

The Jews could not even accept that Christ was God. Yet He told them that, potentially, they were Gods themselves! They would not believe. Will you?

Some will wonder, "If God wanted sons, why didn't He just create them as powerful spirit beings rather than as human beings who must be changed into spirit?" The answer is that God

created us human first so we may build character (change) and make any mistakes on a relatively low level of power (compared to a spirit being). And, since humans are subject to death (spirit beings are not), unrepentant sinners, along with the misery caused by all the sins we have all committed, can be extinguished from the universe by the final lake of fire.

God's Family and government will increase forever. David and the apostle Paul predicted the vast reaches of the entire universe will be our inherited domain (Psalm 8:4-6, Hebrews 2:6-8).

You need to understand all the aspects of God's amazing plan — what we as members of God's Family will be doing during the Millennium and throughout eternity, and how we may qualify to fulfill that awesome destiny. Why not write for a free copy of our eye-opening book *The Incredible Human Potential*. You've never read anything like it!

Key verses

Such an astounding truth is worth remembering by reviewing from time to time the basic scriptures that prove this doctrine. Here is a summary of the most important ones: Genesis 1:26 and John 1:1 — God is a group of, at present, two beings. Matthew 3:17 — the relationship between the two God beings is Father and Son (a literal family relationship). John 1:12, Romans 8:15-16, Revelation 21:7 — our destiny is to be spiritual sons of God. Philippians 3:21 and I John 3:2 — we will look like Christ and hence be on the same God level as He. John 10:29-39 — Christ told the Jews that all men are potential Gods.

The truth about why God made man is indeed astounding. Stated simply, we are to be God's sons. As Christ stated, potentially, "You are gods"!

Now, that's incredible! □

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