

The _____ Philadelphia Remnant

May/Jun 2007



Dedicated to the memory of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and to the FAITHFUL
Philadelphia Remnant of The TRUE CHURCH OF GOD Scattered Worldwide



“...I [will] seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places
where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.
I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was
driven away...” Ezekiel 34:12,16 KJV

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CONTENTS

Why the Firstfruits	1
Transcript from a sermon given Pentecost, May 26, 1985 - by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong	
Personal	7
Where is the True Church Today	10
Australia: A Land That Thirsts	13
How God Created Man in His Own Image!	17
Being a Firstfruit in the End Time	19
Bible Study:	
Pentecost - The Third Vital Step in God's Master Plan	22
The Vital Importance of Godly Family Values	24
Websites and Statistics	36

Cover: The flock of sheep pictured on the cover of this magazine are representative of the scattered brethren of God's true Church. The Church of God Faithful Flock, with headquarters in Modesto, California, humbly present this new magazine, *The Philadelphia Remnant*. The *Philadelphia Remnant* magazine continues to provide a conduit for the work Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong spearheaded, the work of reaching out to people worldwide with the message of the soon coming Kingdom of God through the preserved writings, recorded telecasts and sermons, and Bible Study messages that Jesus Christ used him to do in his human ministry!

(Photo courtesy <http://phillip.greenspun.com>)

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Why The Firstfruits - Pentecost

A Sermon by

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong

The following is a transcript of a sermon Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong gave in on May 26, 1985. The sub-titles are not part of the original sermon, but have been added for clarity. Alton (Don) Billingsley

Greetings Everybody, Well, brethren, today once again as it happens annually, we come to the Feast of Firstfruits. It is generally called the Feast of Pentecost. That's because in the New Testament it was a matter of counting 50 days from the Passover time—the Sunday in the midst of the Passover time, beginning with that Sunday. And it was a matter of also 7 weeks. So originally it was given to God's people, ancient Israel, as the Feast of Weeks; but generally it was called the Feast of Firstfruits. And it is the time celebrating THE FIRSTFRUITS of God's reaping of His harvest for His Kingdom.



Now, WHY? Why is it the firstfruits? Why is the Church today the firstfruits? Now I remember very well, when I was five years old, I was always wanting to know “Why?” And I was asking my father so many what-he-called “tom fool” questions about why this and why that. I wanted to understand it. I always wanted understanding. He said that someday I would be a Philadelphia lawyer. And, indeed, so I am—because the greatest Law Book in all the world, as I told some of the professors in the law school down at the University of Southern California, is a book that I doubted whether they had a copy in their Law Library; and yet it is the greatest book on law of any that has ever been written. And it talks about law from the very beginning, in the second chapter, all the way through

the book up to the very last chapter; and it's one of the largest books ever written—THE HOLY BIBLE.

It's a book about law. And “law” simply means the rules of human conduct. The rules of human performance and conduct, and especially in relation to others: first of all, in relation to God our Creator, and secondly, in relation to our neighbors. That's what law is. The churches today are afraid of law. They say that the law was nailed to the cross. But it was the law that nailed Jesus to the cross for us, to pay our penalty in our stead.

But WHY? Why the Feast of Firstfruits? Why is this Church the firstfruits of God's harvest for His Kingdom? Is God unfair? Is He discriminating against others, to choose us first (and they have to wait and

come later)? Brethren, I want to say to you, I think that most of you don't understand that AT ALL. I think that most of you think that it merely means that God chose us to get into the Kingdom first, and then they'll come in later. THAT IS NOT THE ANSWER AT ALL! And I perceive that even our ministers, when they preach, take it for granted that the whole goal is to get us into the Kingdom of God; and that's all we are called for now. For no other purpose, but we'll get in ahead of the others. Then God is DISCRIMINATING against the others.

There is A REASON why we are the firstfruits. And I wish I could drive that home, but I fear that most of you just don't get it. You don't understand it at all. WHY? Why are we the firstfruits? I am going to try to make it plain this afternoon, and still I think you won't get it. So much Protestantism has rubbed off on us we can't get it out of our heads. They think God is trying to save the whole world; and then we think, "Well, He's just saving us first." And that is not the answer at all. We're not saved just because God wants us to be His favorites and get us into His Kingdom ahead of others. We are saved for a very, very great purpose. We are the firstfruits of God's harvest for His Kingdom.

WHO AND WHAT IS GOD?

Now, what is the Kingdom of God? We read in the very first verse in all the Bible, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" But Moses wrote that in the Hebrew language; and the word he used for "God" was Elohim, in the Hebrew language. And Elohim happens to be a plural name, meaning more than one person. God is NOT one person. God is a Family of persons. Why did God say...In fact, it wasn't just God as a person; but THE FAMILY said, "*Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness.*" (Verse 26.) The God Family said that, not a God person. Not one person. He would have said, "Let ME make man after My image; but God said, "Let US."

Now, WHO and WHAT is God? That's a great mystery! Most people don't understand it. That'll be chapter 1 in the new book that has just been completed. It's now turned over to the printers. As fast as they can get it out, it will be out. At least there will be a copy for all of you at the Feast of Tabernacles, if not sooner. The greatest mystery—WHO and WHAT is God? Do you know that no religion on Earth knows who and what God is? Tell me what religion knows who and what God is—except God's own Church. You should know, brethren. We should know, we who are here, because God reveals it Himself in His Word, if we understand His Word. But

the churches called "traditional Christianity" don't understand God's Word. I used to think they get their religion out of the Bible. When my wife began keeping the Sabbath, I said, "Well, the Bible says 'Thou shall observe Sunday.'" She said, "How do you know? Have you seen it there?" I said, "Well, no. I don't know much about the Bible." Well, that was about 59 years ago, and I didn't know very much about the Bible then. I know a little something about it today.

I said, "I know because all the churches observe Sunday; and they get their religion out of the Bible, don't they?" And she said, "Well, do they?" "Why, yes, everybody knows the churches get their religion out of the Bible. That's their source of religion." So I began to study. I began to look into the Bible. And I began to find out that they're believing today just exactly the opposite of what the Bible says. The Bible IS God speaking.

Now, we find God describes Himself. Very few people know who or what God is. As I say, no religion knows. Well, God reveals Himself. Now, I quoted Genesis 1:1. Let's quote John 1, verse 1. "*In the beginning*"—again, the same words; but instead of "*In the beginning [Elohim] created*" this (John 1:1) says: *John 1:1, 3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... (3) All things were made by him.* In other words, He created the universe. *John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us [and became Jesus Christ].*

So Jesus Christ was with God, and He was God. But He gave up His divinity, His great glory as God, and became a human being—more than 1950 years ago. Nearly 2000 years ago now. But it said: *John 1:4 In him was life.* He lived, and God lived. God is one person. The Word, who became Jesus, is another person. And it was GOD who said to the Word (who became Jesus): *Genesis 1:26 Let US make man in OUR image.*

God said that to Jesus. Jesus is the Word, the Spokesman, the One who speaks. He is the revelatory thought of God—who REVEALS God's thinking, who REVEALS the mind of God, who SPEAKS for God, and who AGREES COMPLETELY with God. And They are ONE precisely in belief. They are NOT contrary the one to the other. They are 100% in agreement. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed.

Now God and Jesus Christ had existed FOREVER. There never was a time when They began to live and to exist. It says of Jesus Himself, in the book of Hebrews, that He was: *Hebrews 7:3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but...*[has been a high priest

continually, forever; and still is.]

HOW GOD LIVED

But They LIVED. Now, if They lived, what did They do? Well, They were Creators. There are a few little things the Bible does reveal that would apply to Them. Jesus became the Son of God when He was born of a human virgin. Prior to that time, He was one with God; but He was not a Son of God. But He became God's Son when He was born as a human. And Jesus said, when He was on Earth, that He worked; and He said, "*My Father works.*" So They were occupied, and They were busy. They had something to do, and what They did was creating. To create you first have to plan, and devise, and design. So They thought it out. They designed what would be created. They planned it, and They worked according to the pre-thought-out plan and design.

Now, another thing is revealed in the Bible: Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. Well, They agreed perfectly! First let me answer, "How did they live?" They live THE WAY OF LOVE. When Jesus was being baptized, God the Father looked down and said, "You are MY BELOVED Son." He loved the Son, in whom He was well pleased. Jesus said He LOVED the Father; and He obeyed the Father, and kept His Father's commandments. So they were in perfect harmony. We just heard this beautiful song, "Harmony." That will go ringing in my ears now, subconsciously. I'll go to sleep tonight to that in my mind. I can't get it out. I love that.

They had harmony. They were together.

There's another thing about two people. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. But two cannot get along together except one is the boss. God made a man and a woman, and He made the man to be the leader over his wife. Women don't like that very well. At least, some of them don't. A woman says, "I want my marriage," as she's going to the marriage altar, "I don't want to promise to obey my husband. Our marriage is going to be 50/50." Well, that makes me think of the old judge over in Gladewater, who drew up the first contract of the property deal that purchased the Big Sandy property for us, and our college campus over there.

He said that he settled this matter about who would be the boss on the day of his marriage. He said, "On the day we were married, I laid down the law to my wife. And I told her that I would be the boss. And I wanted

that understood from the beginning. I said, 'Now, as the boss, I would allow her to make any little unimportant decisions; but any of the important decisions I would make.'" Now, he says, "That has worked out very well all through these years. No important decisions have ever arisen, or problems." I'm afraid that's the way it is in so many marriages.

Anyway, there has to be leadership. There has to be a way of life. Now, a way of life and rules regulating a way of life simply become a law. And a law is the foundation and the basis of government. And a government is merely the code, or based on a law. And the law is merely the rules of conduct. And the government merely is the administration of the regulation of that law governing conduct. And so that becomes a government.

And so GOD and THE WORD were in authority over Their whole Creation. And there was government because God was the head. It is stated in the Bible that there is one Lawgiver, and that is God the Father. And Jesus obeyed His Father's commands. He said, "I have kept My Father's commandments." He said, though He was the Word of God (the Spokesman), He said, "I have spoken nothing of Myself. The Father which sent Me gave Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak." He didn't come just alone, of His own accord. The Father sent Him. But He willingly came. He did that of His own accord, after His Father sent Him.

ANGELS WERE CREATED

Now, first of all, They created. And the first thing They created was angels. There was no Earth. There was no sun. There were no planets, no stars up in the air, in the sky out in the universe. No matter had ever existed. God is composed of SPIRIT. In John 4:24 you read, "*God is a Spirit.*" And in the first chapter of Hebrews, you read that angels are spirits. God made angels out of spirit. And angels are messengers of God—to serve God and to do His will. And God is the Ruler who governs over His whole Creation. The angels were His first creation so far as He has revealed to us.

And then, after He had created angels, the time came that He created the universe. In the first chapter of Genesis, and also in the second chapter of Genesis (I believe it's about verse 3 or 4.), God created the heavens and the Earth in the same day. Now that doesn't mean twenty-four hour day. But in the day that He created them both—in other words, the general area

of time—He created the heavens and the Earth all at the one time.

When He created the Earth, the angels were already here. I believe it was this morning or else last night (this morning's sermon, I believe) we heard the 38th chapter of Job quoted. The angels were shouting for joy and singing when God laid the foundations of the Earth, and first created the Earth. Now, at the same time, He created the whole universe. And He put angels on this Earth. That was their first abode.

And He put one super archangel...There are three kinds of angels revealed in the Bible: ordinary angels, and they look like humans; but they are composed of spirit. They don't have wings. Then there's another kind of angels (we don't read too much about them in the Bible) called seraphs, or seraphim. They do have wings. And then above them all, with greater power and superior minds, were the cherubs [or cherubim]. And only three of them are mentioned in the Bible. If God created more, He hasn't revealed it to us. One of them was Lucifer. The other two are Michael and Gabriel.

But He placed Lucifer on a throne on this Earth. Now, a throne means ruler over government. And it was God's government, and the government is ruled by God's law. And God's law is summed up in one word: LOVE. But it is out-flowing love—flowing out from God towards others. God is the great Giver. It's the way of giving, the way of serving. Jesus came as a servant, not just as a lord and master. He was a Lord and Master. He says, "You call Me Master and Lord; and...so I am" in one case. {1} And yet He came as a servant, and He washed His disciples feet even. That was the lowly duty of a servant. But this Lucifer had to build character. There's one thing God cannot create by automatic, instantaneous, fiat; and that is CHARACTER.

WHAT GOD LOOKS LIKE

Now, let's get back to God Himself for just a minute. What is God, above all things? I say no one seems to know who and what God is. Well, God—They are two persons. They are formed and shaped exactly as we are, because God made us in Their image. And Jesus was God, and He looked like any other human being. Someone asked Him, "Show us God the Father. What does God look like?" And He said, "Well, have you been so long time with Me, and you ask what does God look like? If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father. He looks like Me."

Now, what did Jesus look like? Like any other man! Otherwise, why did the Pharisees and the high priests and the rest of them pay Judas 30 pieces of silver to point Him out, which one He was, so they could take Him? He looked like any other young Jew of His time, between 30 and 33 years of age. Between 30 and 34, and He looked like any other human being. So God has the same form and shape as we do.

THE CHARACTER AND GOVERNMENT OF GOD

But, now, these angels had free moral agency. They had to make a decision. Again, what is God? God, above all, is SUPREME RIGHTEOUS PERFECT SPIRITUAL CHARACTER. Character is doing what is right, and what has a right result—and rejecting what is wrong, and will have a wrong result. Even though you might want to do the wrong, it is resisting it and doing only the right. So there are different ways of living, different ways of going, different ways of conducting yourself.

God's government is simply the rules of His way of living, the way He and the Word had ALWAYS lived; and that was the way of love. They loved one another, and Jesus served His Father. It's the way of serving, the way of giving, the way of cooperating, of helping one another. Not the way of taking away from one another. Not the way of competition or strife. Not the way of jealousy, and envy, and retribution, and hostility.

God put this super archangel, Lucifer, on the throne to rule the government ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF GOD—and THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD—that was placed on this Earth. Lucifer rebelled! And he became an adversary of God. Now, his name became Satan; and Satan means adversary—an enemy, an adversary. He became hostile. He became jealous of God. He became envious. He became resentful. And then he said that he would rise up, with his angels, and pull off a coup; and throw God off the throne. He would take over in God's place and rule the whole universe! He wanted to head the government of the whole universe.

And he refused to administer the government of God on this Earth, the government that was based on law; and the law was love. But he turned to the opposite way of life {2}. He turned instead of construction to destruction. Instead of love, he turned to hate, and jealousy, and envy, and competition. Then God said, "Let US make man in OUR IMAGE." (Genesis 1:26) And so: *Genesis 2:7 The Eternal God formed man of*

the dust of the ground. . . . Now He took the dust of the ground, and He formed a man; but there was no life in him. He was just a hunk of dirt, but formed in the shape of a human being. Then . . . *God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

MAN BECAME A LIVING SOUL

The Hebrew word is “nephesh,” for soul. And three times in the first chapter of Genesis the land animals, four-legged animals, are called “nephesh.” But the translators—believing that man was an immortal soul, which is not true; because they don’t believe the Word of God, and they think that a soul can’t die, that a soul is immortal—the word “nephesh” they translated into creature. That is, “living creatures” when it comes to animals. It’s the same word, nephesh, however. “*God formed man of the dust of the ground...and man became a living [nephesh],*” same as animals. Now, nephesh or soul means “the life of animals.”

The man was not a soul until God breathed the breath of life into him. He was just a hunk of dirt with a certain form and shape. But when he came into consciousness and life and the breath of air, he became a living soul. NOT AN IMMORTAL SOUL! Now, of that soul, God said, “If you take of the forbidden fruit of the tree that I forbid you to take of, YOU WILL SURELY DIE! That soul would die! Satan came along, confronted mother Eve, and he said, “Oh, you won’t surely die. God knows better than that. You are an immortal soul.” And Eve believed him. Adam seemed to believe it. And their children have been believing it ever since. They still believe we are immortal souls.

God speaks through the Bible. Jesus is the Word of God. The Bible is the same Word of God in writing, exactly the same Word that Jesus spoke; and Jesus is the author of the Bible. And Jesus speaks only what God the Father tells Him to speak, so it is still is the Word of God the Father as well as of Christ.

Adam had to make a choice. Why? Because God said, “*Let Us make man in Our image.*” And what is God’s image? It is PERFECT SPIRITUAL CHARACTER. And that meant character, and God cannot CREATE character automatically. That cannot be done. That requires the decision and even the effort of the created being in whom the character will be formed.

Now, God wanted this Adam to have character, but He didn’t give him immortal life. He didn’t make him immortal. He made him of the dust of the ground and

gave him a temporary chemical existence through the breath of air; and it was supported by food, or fuel you might say. By food and water that came from the ground, and he came from the ground. Incidentally, his wife Eve did not come from the ground. God performed an operation, put Adam into a deep sleep they call anesthesia in the hospitals today; and God performed an operation, and cut out one of Adam’s ribs and formed a woman out of that. So the woman came from the man, not from the dust of the ground. The man came from the dust of the ground. The woman came from the man.

INCREASING THE FAMILY

And then they two became one, just like Jesus (or, the Word) and God became ONE GOD. One God Family! And God is a Family! Now, THE GOD FAMILY said, “*Let US make man in OUR image.*” And He wanted man to become a family, but ultimately he’s to become THE GOD FAMILY. And so God said to Adam and Eve: *Genesis 1:28 Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*

Now, Adam alone couldn’t do that. That’s why God had to make a wife for him, because a man can’t have children all by himself. But the two together could, and so they began to reproduce themselves. GOD IS REPRODUCING HIMSELF. When the angels sinned, God saw that no one but God could be depended upon to rule with the law of God, with love, and never deviate from it. That’s why He said “We’ll create man in Our image.” In other words, ultimately after God’s character. And once man has been finally created in the character of God, you read in I John 3:9, that when we reach that state and we become BORN OF GOD, we’ll be composed of Spirit; and it will be impossible for us to commit sin. In other words, to do any wrong. We will simply live the way of God’s law, the way of love, the way of giving and sharing and cooperating and helping. And it will be IMPOSSIBLE for us to live any other way, because we will have decided not to live any other way; and God will simply give us the power to not do contrary to what we have decided. So it’ll just be impossible. It’s impossible for God to sin. And once we are born of God, it will be impossible for us to sin. But it wasn’t impossible for Adam, because he was not born of God yet. He was only created as a flesh and blood being, made out of the dust of the ground. He had a temporary chemical existence.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT AND GOD'S SPIRIT

Now, there were two trees in the garden. If Adam had taken of the Tree of Life, he would then have received the Spirit of God. There's one thing I want to mention right there. When God created the human being out of the dust of the ground, He put something in him that He did not put in the animals. They are nephesh, and man was nephesh; but there is one difference. In the man, He put a spirit with his brain. It is a human spirit, not a divine Spirit. Not an angel spirit, a human spirit.

Now the human spirit, of necessity, is a self-centered spirit. But, nevertheless, it is SPIRIT. And the spirit in man empowers the human brain with intellect so that he can think. Now animals don't have that spirit, and animals can't think. They can't reason. They can't philosophize. They can't analyze things and come to conclusions. They can't exert wisdom and judgment. They have no concern for art, and literature, and music. But man, having a spirit with his physical brain, does appreciate all those things. And man can think. At least, he thinks he can think. But most of them don't think very soundly.

Now, the man was incomplete. He was physically incomplete. He needed a wife. So God performed an operation, and made a wife for him. But now he was still mentally and spiritually incomplete. He had one human spirit, but that human spirit didn't give him his life. It was the breath he breathed that gave him his life, with circulated blood; and the blood is the life, oxidized by the breath of air in the lungs (as the blood flows through the lungs, on the way back to the heart again). The man was mortal. He had a temporary existence, like a clock wound up that will run down and it will stop when it runs down. But man was incomplete. He had a spirit that gave him an intelligence that animals don't have, gave him a mind that animals don't have. But to come to have the perfect mind and spiritual character, he needed the mind of God. If he had taken of the Tree of Life, that would have connected him with God. And then he would have had a direct contact with God, and the Spirit of God would have come into him. That is THE MIND OF GOD. That is THE LIFE OF GOD. And that would have impregnated him with GOD LIFE. That would have opened his mind, like the Mind of God, to comprehend spiritual truths that God could reveal.

Now without the Spirit of God, he couldn't understand spiritual truths, only physical things. That's why the great scientists, who do not have the Spirit of God,

cannot understand spiritual knowledge. It is foolishness to them. They can understand only what they can see, taste, feel, smell, or hear—the five senses. So they just deny there is anything else. And that, of all things, is ignorance! So the most intellectual, with the largest number of PhDs and other letters after their names, are of all men most ignorant; because they don't have the Spirit of God and they can have no spiritual knowledge. And spiritual things are so much more real than material things! They'll go on lasting; but the material things are only temporary, and will soon be gone.

Adam had to make a choice. He chose rebellion against God, the same as Satan had done; and that put him under the captivity of Satan. He became kidnapped, and his children after him were kidnapped. And Satan, who is a spirit, was in-tuned in the same wavelength as Adam's spirit. So he could simply inject his spirit into Adam, which is the spirit of rebellion, the spirit of jealousy, and envy, and competition, and antagonism, and controversy. So that came into Adam and Eve, and into their children. The first son of Adam was Cain, and the second son was Abel. I presume they must have been about teenagers when this certain event happened. Cain became jealous of Abel, his brother; and so he rose up and slew his brother and killed him. God said, "Where is your brother?" And he said, "I don't know." He was a liar! Now he lied to God about it. And humans have been doing it, and we've all come from Adam and from his children. This world has developed. Developed with a carnal mind, a self-centered mind that is self-centered, loves only self and what it considered that belong to self. Now, some love their possessions because they belong to them. Mothers love their children because they're hers. It's selfish, but it is good. Nevertheless, it is self-centered. God loves more than just His own. He loves everything—everybody, rather. And so this world developed.

When Adam sinned, God CLOSED UP the Tree of Life. And that means He shut humanity OFF FROM GOD! God is the Lawgiver. Man had broken God's law, and the penalty is death. All humanity was shut off from God UNTIL Christ should finally come and sit on that throne. He had to first come and qualify to do it, and remove Satan from that throne. As long as Satan's there, he had kidnapped these children; and he was going to rule over them (instead of God). And so they are shut off from God until the Second Coming of Christ, when He will come as Ruler; and Satan will be banished.

(Continued on page 27, "Pentecost")

Personal

From the Editor

Alton B. (Don) Billingsley

My wife and I live in the foothills about 30 miles east of Stockton, California. We drive to this city on average once a week to do our shopping. While driving to and from there we pass by large fields of wheat this time of the year.

Just before the Feast of Firstfruits, Pentecost, each year I have observed the heads of wheat as being white but the stems are still a little greenish, indicating a little more time needed for full maturity. Usually within another week or so the heads will have become fully ripened and ready to be harvested.

Under normal conditions the spring harvest will begin in this area about the same time as the observance of the Feast of Firstfruits or Pentecost, somewhere about the end of May or early June.

The harvesting machinery will then enter the fields at *exactly the right time* after the tall slender stems have died (normally about 16 inches tall) but barely strong enough to support the weighty heads of wheat. This exact time is determined by the farmer when the heads begin to 'nod', and it is realized the time has come to harvest the wheat. The grains will have become dry and hard by this time and must be harvested just before these stems begin falling over and the heads of grain fall on the ground. For then they cannot be harvested and the farmer loses his opportunity to gain from his investment.



Alton B. (Don) Billingsley

They will be left lying there un-harvested to be eaten by birds and small creatures or later on begin a new growth.

From the beginning of the planting to its full growth and maturity the crops of wheat need nutrients and fertilizer, just like people need the right nutrients and vitamins in the food they eat to grow up to be strong and healthy. As the wheat ceases its growth it begins to dry and the stalks become brittle. Upon the wheat losing its moisture and it becomes harder to keep the individual seeds from falling out and onto the

ground – called “shattering.” Wind or rain can cause the wheat to “shatter”. When this happens the farmer has lost his opportunity to harvest his wheat and also his investment.

God’s Master Plan for the Salvation of Mankind

Scripture makes known that God likens His Church of this end-time to the barley or wheat that is soon to be harvested and become the Firstfruits to be born into His Family.

Simply stated, the planting of the seeds and later harvesting of the golden grains is used by God to explain the meaning of God’s Master Plan for the ultimate salvation of all of mankind.



“God’s purpose in giving His annual Holy Days was to keep His children constantly in true understanding of God’s great plan of

salvation. To accomplish this, God took the yearly material harvest seasons in ancient Israel as the picture of the Spiritual harvest of souls. In the holy land there are two annual harvests. The first is the spring grain harvest. Second, comes the much larger fall harvest (*God's Festivals and Holy Days*, page 18, 1992 publication, original text by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong).

From the Passover season (which includes the Days of Unleavened Bread) the offering of the very first wave sheaf was offered by the priest to be accepted by God. It was made up of a small handful of newly sickled stems and heads of barley (picturing Christ being offered to be accepted by His Father, John 20:17). This was called the "Wave-Sheaf offering" or the "First of the Firstfruits." This had to occur before the early harvest could begin:

"On the early evening following the weekly Sabbath, in a solemn ceremony of the Levitical priesthood . . . the first sheaf was cut. This event always occurred during the Days of Unleavened Bread. . . . Early the following morning, a Sunday morning, this omer of grain was brought to the priest, who solemnly waved it before the Lord to be accepted by Him. This pictures the resurrected Christ – the firstfruits of the harvest of souls (I Corinthians 15:20; Colossians 1:18, *God's Festivals and Holy Days*, page 19, 1992 publication, original text by Mr. Armstrong).

The Greek meaning of Pentecost is count 50. The count of 50 days begins on that Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread and leads to the Feast of Firstfruits, or Pentecost, and completes the early harvest that began during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA, volume IV, page 2318, article, Pentecost:

"The tradition of the ancient church placed the first Christian Pentecost on a Sunday. . . . According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the Passover that year occurred on Thursday, Nisan 14 [observed the night before], and hence Pentecost fell on

Saturday [night -- beginning of Sunday]. The Karaites explained the *shabbath* of Leviticus 23:15 as pointing to the Sabbath of the paschal week and therefore always celebrated Pentecost on Sunday."

The fall harvest, the Feast of Ingathering, is the great harvest that will not be completed until the Last Great Day -- a Day that connects with the closing of the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Goal in Sight

God intends this season to be a time of rejoicing with great happiness for what it pictures to us. In the fields of wheat I observe some few days before the Feast of Firstfruits, or Pentecost, there are the ripened heads, but the stems are yet slightly greenish in color indicating the wheat needs just a few more days of warm sunshine to mature into fully golden ripened heads of grain. Once they are then they are ready to be harvested.

The slightly greenish stems of the wheat are just barely short of the exact time of harvesting. They can be likened to all of us as the faithful members of God's Church who now are very close to being harvested at Christ's coming, but not yet ready now to be harvested for there is a little more time needed to finalize the full development of our character. This is where we are now.

Another Comparison

When we consider where we are in time and the closeness of Jesus Christ returning to this earth, we could also be compared to long distance runners who have been through most of our race in life. We, as they, sometimes feel our weariness and wonder whether we have the strength to finish.

So far, we have clung to our great and wonderful God through His truth that we love and cherish. Perseverance and endurance have been exercised through the great trials of anguish and tears we have had to endure to follow the lead of Jesus Christ. Now we are almost there, much like the part of the wheat crop that has survived the wind and rain.

Giving Birth

At the same time we need to keep in mind the last mile will become almost unbearable, much like a woman who experiences the final painful contractions just before her baby emerges from her womb! Just as the woman giving birth, we will find the need to draw on all the strength, willpower, and determination we can muster to continue and cross the finish line. And by so doing we will complete the finishing touches of character that are yet needed within each of us just as the grains of wheat need a final ripening.

Persevering Effort

Mr. Armstrong often said we have to work as if we are doing it all by ourselves, yet knowing that by crying out to God along the way for strength and help He will be there to HELP us, though *NOT* doing it all for us. Otherwise, there would not be the finalization of character development.

We again can be compared to the grain that has to be fully ripened and harvested at just the right time before the slender stems collapse under the weight of the heavy heads. The lack of timing and the failure of the final effort on our part could be compared to the grains falling from the heads and scattering on the ground. If this should happen we would not be harvested with the firstfruits in the first resurrection. We must condition our minds to never cease the need for persevering effort with our dying breath.

Some years ago I would run a little over seven miles three times a week. There were roads, fields, and orchards over which I would make my way to cover that distance. Coming round that last turn would bring me in sight of my objective and strengthen my will power and determination to finish the race. And though that last part was very hard and the end was yet some distance away, but because I saw it, I would say to myself, God helping me I will make it; and I did each time!

To me setting the goal and finishing it was character development. I knew I needed to be building it within myself if I were to make it all the way in this Way of Life. However I was not unrealistic and unwise by setting a goal I could not complete and possibly hurt

myself, yet I persevered long enough to strengthen my will and determination as well as my body. Even so it was never easy. In the same manner, God has set a goal before us that is only obtainable with His help.

While I was jogging one day and feeling the effects of it, I thought of a heavyweight boxer (George Foreman, I think) I had read about who was quoted as running five miles every day preparing for his next fight. He said he could have quit running and walked and no one would have known about it. Then, he added, "I would have known it." He realized that by quitting this would have affected his character and determination to be a winner, so he always stayed with it all the way.

I knew he was right and that increased my determination to persevere in that run. Picturing the end of that run in mind and finally having it in sight always enabled me to do it. I also thought about one marathon runner who said to me some years ago: "People ask me, how do I do it?" He would reply, "By continuing to put one foot in front of the other." And that is what all of us **MUST** do in God's Way of Life!

We are in a race for real and lasting life; one that will never end! At the same time Bible prophecy reveals we are now very close to entering the terrible times made known by Jesus Christ and His prophets. To encourage us they also make known that just on the other side of our human suffering our race will have been won. So we run not as with doubts or as one who beats the air but we continue to discipline our minds and bodies to remain in the race to completion. (See I Corinthians 9:24-27; Philippians 3:14; Hebrews 12:1-2.)

You have probably seen marathons on television, where huge numbers join together to run, with people on the sidelines handing them something to drink as they go by, refreshing them and enabling them to keep on running. God makes known we are to continually encourage and strengthen our brothers and sisters when we see them lagging in this race for life while weighed down with very heavy and trying problems. (See Hebrews 10:25, etc.)

(Continued on page 32, "Personal")

Where is the True Church Today?

by

Alton B. (Don) Billingsley

Question: *Where is the True Church of*

God in this end-time?

To answer this question it is necessary we not only look at the Scriptures, but also look back on the history of God's Church in our time and compare it to where we are now. And in so doing, sadness is felt to realize most members assume they have the right answer to this question when in reality virtually all of them do not know the truth. This is obvious by seeing where they are today in belief and in practice.

Mr. Armstrong often wrote of the True Church and the need to know where it really is and even more importantly, to be an active member in it while doing the Work, as the following quote from him makes known:

"Many have appropriated God's name, but are not proclaiming the Kingdom of God, as the GOVERNMENT of God which we must OBEY. . . That true Church is preaching the imminency of the coming of Christ as KING of kings and LORD of lords, to RULE all nations for a thousand years on earth. . . . There is only ONE such Church! It is doing the WORK of God. It is as Jesus said it would be, a 'little flock,' persecuted, despised by the world" (Where is the True Church, page 26).

A Few Thousand Asking This Same Question

"Where is the one and only true Church of God in this end-time?" These true members who are yet scattered are trying to work their way through the maze of religious confusion brought about by the development of the hundreds of churches after the scattering in 1995, and come to realize the correct answer. And to compound the confusion each one is claiming to be the only true Church.

The elect members have come to realize these churches are off track with the fullness of the real truth! At the same time they are trying to locate the one in which Jesus Christ is involved, and doing a Work; one with a collective group of members that Christ will soon be returning to take unto Himself His bride. And up to this time they have not found it.

As an example of this important question in the minds of many, please note a short note sent to me from one such member in Tennessee:

"I was associated with the Worldwide Church of God for many years. I left the Church on [in] 1993 when they fell away from the truth. Now there are many churches all claiming to [be] the one true

"And I also say to you that you are Peter (Greek, petros, a stone loose and movable, John 1:42); and on this ROCK (Greek, Petra, huge unmovable rock like Gibraltar, meaning Himself) I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, and the gates of Hades (the grave) will NOT prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18)

Church. Mr. Armstrong often stated that Christ would return to one church, not many. What is your stance on this subject? Thank you:" (Name withheld.)

The purpose of this writing and the ones to follow is to make known the answer to this troubling and perplexing question.

A Chosen Remnant of God's True People

In the context of knowing there are yet a few thousand scattered faithful members in the Church of God, consider what the apostle Paul wrote to the Church in Rome about the state of Israel and consider the very obvious parallels with Spiritual Israel, God's Church (Romans 9-11). By reading carefully through these three chapters we can see that though he is referring to physical Israel who was chosen by God from all other nations on earth to be used as the Center-Piece of His Master Plan for the ultimate salvation of mankind, he then makes known this weighty responsibility has now been carried over into the Spiritual, God's Church (Revelation 5:10; 20:4-6; Daniel 7:18, 27). Note the parallels:

" . . . Israelites, to whom pertain the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises (Exodus 19:4-6); of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen" (Romans 9:4-5).

What the apostle Paul wrote here about the promises now applies to the Church of the living God in this age. However it should also be realized God has not fully rejected the use of physical Israel as His chosen people, for in the beginning of the new world Christ will again use Israel as the Center-Piece of the salvation of the Gentile nations serving as physical priests to them. A service they failed to perform at that time due to their disobedience and lack of faith and trust in God (Exodus 19:3-6; Hebrews 3:7-19).

The Obvious Parallels Never Before Understood

Though the apostle Paul continued to write of the failures of physical Israel, he also continued to use the very obvious duality of Spiritual Israel in these Scriptures, and this is very important for God's people to understand in these end-times. It is also important to realize we are to understand from his writings in these chapters (especially chapters 9 and 11 of Romans), what Christ wants us to understand about the duality of the true Church in context with physical Israel that we **COULD NOT HAVE UNDERSTOOD BEFORE OUR TIME TODAY!** Like so many prophecies, they can only be understood when we enter into the times of their fulfillment (Daniel 12:10; II Thessalonians 2:1-3).

Mr. Armstrong understood these prophetic Scriptures in part but not fully, for his life ended before their fulfillment. He just did not understand *how* or *when* the scattering and falling away would take place, nor the apostate leader who would be used by Satan to do it. Had he known, he would never have chosen this man to replace him. Now that these end-time prophecies are in the process of being completely fulfilled, having begun in late 1994, Christ is now opening the minds of His chosen and selected members to understand an even greater duality of this very important knowledge for both needed understanding and for encouragement (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7).

Israel's Rejection - The Church of God's Acceptance

Picking up with Romans 9, verse 14, and reading through verse 32, we read of God having **" . . . endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, that He might make known THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared BEFOREHAND for glory (Romans 11:26)."**

This can only apply to God's true Church. The apostle fully makes this known by continuing to write:

"Even us WHOM HE CALLED, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As He says also in Hosea: 'I will call them My

people who were NOT My people (Gentiles) . . . And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said of them, ‘You are not My people.’ There they will be called sons of the living God” (a dual application).

Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the children be as the sand of the sea (as the population of Israel now is at this time), **THE REMNANT WILL BE SAVED.**” Scriptures indicate no more than 10 percent of Israel will survive the coming horrors and enter into slavery out of which they will be liberated and then go to the Promised Land of ancient Israel (Isaiah 6:13; Amos 5:1-3; Jeremiah 31:1-14).

Before the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the **REMNANT** OF THE CHURCH will be delivered from it and go to the place of refuge God will have prepared for them. In contrast to the multiple thousands within the many churches of God there will ONLY BE A **SMALL REMNANT** from among them who will be spared from this most horrible soon-coming time on the Church and Israel (Revelation 3:8, 10; 12:13-14).

“For He will **FINISH THE WORK** (we have always referred to the preaching of the Gospel as THE WORK) and **cut it short in righteousness** (soon to be cut off – perhaps in two more years, Revelation 3:7), **because the LORD will make a short work on the earth** (the years of 1934-1986 during the life of Mr. Armstrong and now again being carried to the world through **HIS RECORDED WORKS** ON OUR WEBSITES).

“And as Isaiah said before: ‘Unless the LORD of Sabaoth (hosts) had left us A SEED (Jesus Christ, who used his late apostle, the Elijah to come to do His end-time work), we would have become like Sodom, and we would have become like Gomorrah” (completely destroyed, Malachi 4:4-6).

The Parallel between Israel and the Many Churches of God

Now we will move forward to chapter 11 of Romans

and will consider another very obvious parallel that can be drawn between Israel and the 300-plus Churches of God, with the claim that each one is the true Church! Sadly, there are the many thousands of members who believe that claim made by the well-known and respected ministers who provide the leadership over the larger churches. They teach their members they are the ones to follow! However when we examine their varying beliefs and practices it can be evidenced they are deceiving the many thousands of Church members today through their acceptance and liberal teachings of some of the Protestant teachings!

Among those Churches are most of the Laodicean Church

members with no obvious leader as of now. Though converted, they are sleeping and very self-righteous (Revelation 3:14-22; Matthew 25:1-13)!

The apostle Paul continues to draw the obvious parallel between Israel and the Church (Romans 11:1-8). Note verses 2 and 3:

“ . . . God has NOT cast away His people whom He foreknew (Israel). Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, ‘LORD they have killed your prophets and cut down your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life” (Romans 11:2-3).

Could This Also Be True in Our Time – Today?

To answer this question, please consider this Scripture in view of our Church history from late 1994 and on to where we are today: The apostates who had come to occupy the leadership of the Worldwide Church of God over a nine year period of time fully rejected the true doctrinal teachings and wholly, completely, embraced the Protestant teachings of mainstream religion.

(Continued on page 33, “Church”)

Australia: A Land That Thirsts

by

Fotios Bouras

*A*ustralia, a vast island continent in the southern hemisphere, is in the grip of a severe 10-year drought in many regions across this huge land for which there seems to be no end in sight! Many farmers are becoming desperate as the seasonal rains are staying away. In 2003, 80 percent of Victoria and over 90 percent of New South Wales were in a state of drought. To give our readers a picture of what is taking place, the above writer, and member, writes the following:

My wife and I recently returned from southern Queensland after visiting our daughter. This involved many hours of driving inland through many hundreds of miles of dry desert-like conditions. The drought has hit hard inland, as we drove through arid land we observed very little feed for the sheep and cattle herds that normally graze in green pastures as far as the eye can see. In stark contrast, our drive over the Highlands crossing the Great Dividing Range from Coffs Harbour on the New South Wales coast revealed lush green pastures with plenty of grass and water; this is of little comfort to the farmers inland, presenting to them a real paradox, a visual contradiction of two realities only miles apart.

The water reserves in Melbourne, the capital city of Victoria, keep falling. Storage dams are now at a critical stage and dangerously low with stage 4 water restrictions around the corner, with stage 3a restrictions

having just been implemented. Politicians are debating how to solve the problem, while the drought is taunting them saying, “Wet me if you can.”

Meanwhile, the drought continues, varying in severity from one location to another and from one year to the next, an abundance of water in one city and severe shortage in the next, Amos 4:7-8 above describes the situation well. Brethren who live in Queensland near the cities of Brisbane and the Gold Coast are experiencing this very situation, with Brisbane suffering drought and the Gold Coast only 80 kilometres away having an abundance of water. Overall the situation is worsening. Although some rain has fallen in the dry regions, it is not nearly enough, only managing to water the garden and grazing fields without making any significant impact on the storage dams themselves.

Across the affected states, politicians argue and debate the issues surrounding the drought. In the State of Victoria, the opposition political leaders are saying that Melbourne has only a few months of useful water left in the state’s huge dams. The Victorian Government denies this of course. The truth lies somewhere in between, under the muddy waters.

Brethren, this is just the beginning of one of the many curses to come upon the people of Israel. The signs are

*And
also I have
withholden the rain
from you, when there
were yet three months to
the harvest: and I
caused it to rain upon
one city, and caused it
not to rain upon another
city: one piece was
rained upon, and the
piece whereupon it
rained not withered.
(Amos 4:7, KJV)*

evident and it is believed the time is now in sight where environment, social conditions and political activity, just to mention a few, are going to bring end-time prophecies to a head. Australia is at the beginning of the downhill slide to the conditions mentioned in Deuteronomy 28! There is no turning back as we live in a godless society where the name of God is invoked only with profanity and blasphemy among the masses and the nation's sins have reached heaven itself. Our governments have become arrogant and self-serving; they insult each other and boast of great achievements, denying that all our blessings have come from God. The Apostle Paul speaks well of them and all men when he reveals God's word in reference to the mind set of this last generation. (See II Timothy 3:1– 5.) Israel (Australia) is truly at the crossroad where choices and decisions have to be made by the government and people alike, which will determine whether she: (1) Will incur the wrath of the Almighty God because of her rebellion to His Righteous Laws and multitudes of sins due to her stiff neck and backsliding attitude or, (2) Will continue to receive the promised blessings to the descendents of the Patriarch Abraham. The former is inevitable as Israel's unfaithfulness continues unabated. The reader is encouraged to read the entirety of Jeremiah 9:1–22.

Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD . . . (Jeremiah 9:1-22, KJV).

God has no place in their governing and when He is on their lips their heart is far, far from him, for they do not even know him. They claim to be fighting enemies of democracy (the word itself having lost its meaning and its definition obscured just as our leaders have lost their way) but in reality groping in the dark in far away foreign lands where hundreds of innocents die every month because of the political and social upheaval together with an uncertain future, and yet, Israel's leaders then turn around and place heavy yokes on the

necks of their own people with law upon law and endless ordinances and statutes where every facet of the lives of the citizens is controlled with decrees, ruling and regulating with taxes and duties, and if one is not careful he can find himself on the wrong side of the law.

Israel's leaders use any justification they can find to secure more control and even that is not enough; neighbour is then encouraged to inform on a neighbour and a son is set against his father and a daughter against her mother. Your enemy is made your brother and your brother becomes a stranger and the enemy of the fathers become your ruler and your ruler becomes your god for his word is law. And this law becomes your master, where choices need to be made by the faithful, between bread or famine, freedom or slavery, God or mammon, life or death.

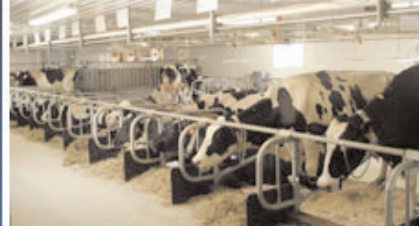
When one perceives what is happening to this nation, an offshoot of the tribe of Joseph, it is of great concern and a troubled heaviness of heart for God's own people know what is to come, where we are in time and where watching is of essence and decisions are at hand. Therefore, God's people are thankful, for they know more and the future to come. The following is presented to better acquaint the readers with Australia.

A Sunburnt Country

Located in the southern hemisphere Australia is a vast sunburnt Island continent, often called the "lucky country," with a diverse range of climate zones. These vary from tropical regions in the north through the arid expanses of the interior to moderate regions in the south. The driest regions are found in the vast central regions of Australia, extending from most of central and southern Western Australia through to the southern regions of the Northern Territory and engulfing most of South Australia. From there reaching to the far west regions of Queensland and New South Wales and down to the northwestern parts of Victoria. This is by far the largest and most dominant region whose features and strange qualities symbolize this entire continent aptly named above.

Low temperatures are moderated by the lack of mountains and surrounding warm oceans. This amazing country is for all purposes an arid land, with

less than 600 mm of rain falling annually over approximately 80% of the land with 50% having less

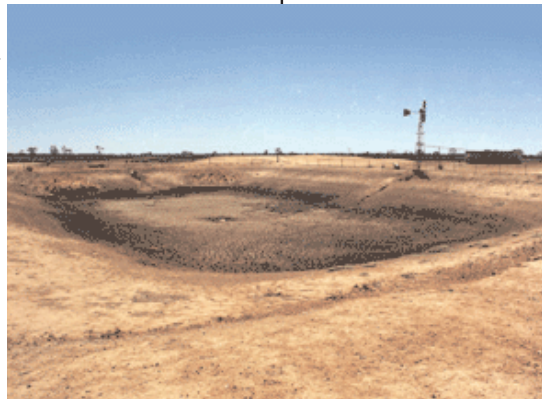


than 300 mm, classifying it as a desert. As a consequence, most inhabitants of this land live near the wetter and more moderate regions of the southeastern coasts predominantly in the major cities of Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and Brisbane.

A Land Flowing with Milk and Honey

Australia is a land of weathered rugged beauty with diversity of terrain and climate. It is a land of great cattle ranges where life is not for the faint-hearted and children may not see rain until their teens. Needed water is brought to the surface from deep aquifers that stretch from north to south across the continent (fed by monsoon rains on the mountains of Papua New Guinea).

In contrast, the coastal regions of the East and the West contain vast plains and fields of rich fertile land where the topsoil is deep and filled with life giving nutrients. To truly appreciate the vastness of these rich plains given by God to the descendents of faithful Abraham by promise, one would have to view them from above and travel for many hours by small plane. The plains feed sheep and cattle and the fields grow crops of various kinds: wheat, barley, rice and many others. Also, fruit orchards, vegetables gardens, olive and grape vine orchards as well as cotton, tea and many other kinds of produce are grown in the appropriate regions. In Northern Queensland sugar cane fields stretch for over 870 miles (1400 Km). This truly is a land that was to flow with Milk and Honey.



And *He* said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will

make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee *for* an everlasting possession. And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, *are* mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. . . . The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads . . . (Genesis 48:4-5, 16, KJV).

(Also heritage of Australia: Joseph's seed).

A Land Familiar with Drought

Australia is the driest inhabited continent and as a consequence water is always a precious resource. The problem is compounded not only by unpredictable rainfall patterns but also by serious droughts that often plague this Island continent. A drought is defined as a long period of time when there is not enough water for people to use as they usually would. In the last 200 years, Australia has experienced many serious droughts, two of which are listed below:

- 1895 to 1903 causing the death of 50% of the sheep and 40% of cattle.

- 1963 to 1968 causing 40% reduction in wheat crops throughout Australia. In

central Australia it began in 1958 and finished in 1967.

Droughts cause a serious problem with farming practices and threaten the environment, agriculture, life cycle of flora and fauna and increase the chance that

toxic algae outbreaks will happen, as well as increase the chances of dust storms and bushfires. For the last ten years Australia has been suffering the effects of a serious drought that has seen its water reserves drop to a dangerous level, especially for the two major cities of Melbourne and Sydney. In serious times the government, together with water authorities, places limits on how much water is used by industry, agriculture and private dwellings, as well as how, when and for what purpose water can be used. At present, across the State of Victoria private dwellings are on stage 3a and stage 4 restrictions. These are severe and rigorous restrictions that carry heavy penalties if breached. In sharp contrast, there are other parts of Australia that have an abundance of water e.g., the City of Darwin (Northern Territory), Northern Queensland and Tasmania.

The situation is so serious that water marshals patrol suburban streets to catch serious offenders and private citizens are encouraged to report on neighbours or on anyone whom they consider as breaching the restrictions. For example, you cannot wash your car at home and you can only water your garden twice a week with a trigger hose on an appointed time and day. The Federal Government is also considering legislation to tax homeowners who have installed water tanks of 5000 litres or greater. It considers itself the rightful owner of rainwater. Farmers are presently taxed for rain falling on their property and caught in farmer's dams.

There are those who blame present and past governments for the lack of foresight and planning for such a time as these as warnings of such times have been given over many years. They argue that additional and bigger storage dams as well as infrastructure should have by now been built and in place to deal with drought conditions, as they exist today.

God's Corrective Hand of Love

The present drought in Australia is believed by many scientists and meteorologists to be compounded and intensified by the effects of global warming (which most scientists now agree is a reality) and is just the beginning of things to come with far reaching long

term effects in the negative. Scientists are even now predicting that diverse negative effects due to global warming such as increased death rate of cattle and sheep due to stress (caused by drought conditions), decreased rainfall across most of the country, increased rainfall in other parts (not necessarily where needed), low crop yields, lower water levels in rivers, higher evaporation rates etc., have already begun and set to speed up in the next ten, twenty or more years.

Some scientists are strongly attributing present climatic changes in Australia to global warming and there is no turning back. Many in Australia are angry that the government is presently ignoring such warning, as it believes this drought also will pass just like the droughts of the past.



Australia's humble beginnings and lack of adherence to God's Commandments, Laws and Civil Ordinances and Precepts, including Biblical instructions on land management techniques has led to the present crises. These crises should be a

powerful reminder and a warning to this nation that a curse is upon this Land of plenty because of broken spiritual and physical laws.

Our leaders in government and industry have long rejected God and his rule over the nations of men. Even from infancy, this nation and its rulers have done their own thing and gone their own way and not acknowledged God as Supreme Ruler and giver of great blessings to those who show Him Reverence and submit to His Law of Love. In many areas our leaders have legislated against the Laws of God and thrown out his Commandments, have turned righteousness to sin and sin to righteousness and have led God's physical people astray. God has chastised this country time and time again with droughts, floods, diseases, bushfires and industrial unrest to turn them around and receive His blessings but to no avail. God wants to truly fulfil his promises to His friend Abraham, but this people do not know or acknowledge God and attribute all their afflictions on explainable natural causes.

(Continued on page 33, "Australia")

How God Created Man in His Own Image

by

Avery Callenback

Then God said, "Let US make man in Our IMAGE, according to OUR LIKENESS; . . . So God created man IN HIS OWN IMAGE; IN THE IMAGE OF GOD He created him; male and female He created them (Genesis 1:26-27).

With the above Scripture in mind an article was written in earlier years to try and explain it from a scholarly point of view: *"Three Historic Views," Plain Truth, May-June 1994, Bill Palmer.*

"Scholars have long debated the meaning of the expression 'image of God'."

- 1) "One view is the ability of humans to think, to reason and to make decisions."**
- 2) "A second suggestion is our capacity to have a relationship with God."**
- 3) "A third perspective is the responsibility of dominion that God has given humans over the earth."**

The writer adds: "Perhaps the best understanding of the image of God is a combination of these three perspectives."

In reading what Mr. Palmer was trying to say regarding "The Image of God" was not perfectly clear to me. However, a few years ago while doing some Bible studies regarding the Passover, I started to read in the Bible in the first chapter of Genesis and noticed the words from (Gen 1: 26), **Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness--RSV.** This led to further research regarding this Scripture.

**Let US Make Man
in OUR Image**

God had said that He created man in His own Image and likeness. What exactly did God mean when He said: **"let US make man in Our image?"** Recently discovered was some information on a WEBSITE regarding the Image of God and here is what was found:

'In Genesis 1:26, 'God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' We know the form and shape of man. That is the image, likeness, form and shape of God— Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, *Mystery of the Ages*, p. 46.

A few weeks later, I was again studying the Bible in the book of Genesis and at that time I noticed that in chapter five, verse three, were words that were very similar to what I had found in Gen 1:26. **Gen 5:3 "When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness (Strong's # 1823), after his image (# 6754), and named him Seth."--RSV.** So I examined both verses closely and looked these words up in *Strong's Concordance of Hebrew word definitions* to find out what some of these things meant.

My curiosity really perked up as I began to wonder if there was a direct analogy or relationship between the words in Genesis 1:26 and Genesis 5:3. I wondered if perhaps I had stumbled onto or came across some new understanding regarding the subject matter of **"The Image of God."** I thought to myself that everyone else in the Church may know about these two scriptures and

how they relate to each other but I sure didn't for it was new to me. I was very happy about possibly discovering or uncovering some new thing in my Bible study.

What I discovered during that time of eight or nine years ago was: God and the Word made man (Adam) in their own image (# 6754) and likeness (# 1823) and Adam had a son name Seth who was in Adam's own likeness (# 1823) and after his image (# 6754).

Therefore, God and the Word are to Adam as Adam is to Seth in likeness and image! By using a simple analogy using only God's written Word, the Bible and the Strong's Concordance of Hebrew word definitions, it can be clearly stated that all human beings have been formed in the very likeness and image of God.

We look like God in human form, just as Jesus Christ appeared in human form to his disciples after he was resurrected. Yet, Jesus Christ was spirit, not flesh. God and Jesus Christ looks like us in image and form but both are spirit (John 14:8-9). These things are shown in plain, simple terms directly from the Bible, the very Word of God. God makes things plain and simple for those who love His truth. The others He leaves in confusion!

Connecting the words (*Strong's Concordance* # 1823) demuwth (dem-ooth'); from # 1819; reveals: resemblance; concretely, model, shape; adverbially, like: KJV - fashion, like (-ness, as), manner, similitude.

6754) tselem (tseh'-lem); from an unused root meaning to shade; a phantom, i.e. (figuratively) illusion, resemblance; hence, a representative figure, especially an idol: KJV - image, vain shew.

This should make the Scripture perfectly clear that God indeed did make us in His IMAGE AND LIKENESS; and for His purpose as the writings below make known.

Why Man was Created in the Image and Likeness of God

FROM: WN, SPECIAL EDITION, 24TH JUNE 1985,

Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the Worldwide Church of God, by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

"God was beginning His greatest all-time accomplishment -- to reproduce Himself. God had first created angels. The great archangel Lucifer had been placed on the throne of the earth when God created the earth and the vast universe. Lucifer had rebelled against God's government and led a third of all angels into rebellion. He became Satan the devil, and his angels became perverted demons. Then God created the first human, Adam, mortal, out of the dust of the earth, with only a physicochemical temporary existence, but offering Adam eternal God-life and opportunity to replace Satan on earth's throne. Adam also rebelled against God and His government, rejecting the tree of life, and choosing to take to himself the knowledge of good and evil, relying on himself instead of God for knowledge and the way of life.

*"God was beginning
His greatest all-time
accomplishment -- to
reproduce Himself."*

Thereupon God closed off the tree of life (the Holy Spirit), except for those specially called, until Christ the second Adam yet in the future should replace Satan on the throne, as the first Adam should have done."

Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the Worldwide Church of God, by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong: "But the first stage of this creation was the physical human man, mortal, having temporary physical existence. Yet in that man, God created the human spirit to empower the physical brain with intellect. This spirit gave mortal man not only physical and material intelligence and mind power, but also the capacity for good or evil, but on the human level -- the carnal or selfish level.

Through the symbolic tree of life God made accessible to Adam God's Holy Spirit to beget in him God-life of immortality and also the God-mind for acquiring God's spiritual knowledge and spiritual character. When God closed the tree of life He closed off from mankind this contact with God the Father, immortality, the God-mind and what the world calls "salvation.""

(Continued on page 34 "Image")

Being A Firstfruit In the End Time

by

Tom Cooper

We are living in the most momentous of times! World events are moving swiftly toward what God's church has referred to as ***"the crisis at the close of the age."*** This *"time of trouble"* will come on all nations without warning. Luke 21:35 says, ***"For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth."*** (NKJ throughout)

As a firstfruit we are members of the future government Christ will bring to re-establish God's government to the earth. Does that thought sink into our minds as we live day to day? Pentecost symbolizes our birth spiritually by God's begetting of us by His Holy Spirit. Do we have enough of His Spirit to pass through the trials yet ahead in order to one day stand before Christ and hear those words; ***"well done good and faithful servant?"*** (Matthew 25:23) What is it that this servant accomplished?

From the point when God began calling us He used His Spirit to begin opening our minds to understand His word. And having come out of this world of being blinded by spiritual darkness, and then being healed so that we could understand God's truth is an unforgettable experience! As the result we found the holy Bible had been opened so that we could understand it. Finding out that the Father does the calling was also one of many truths which changed our understanding of what God's word imparts. Christ said in John 6:44, ***"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."*** Thus, God the Father chose us for a very special purpose!

Further, Christ explained to His disciples what His leaving this mortal life would mean for them: ***"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him (It) to you. . . . However, when He (It), the Spirit of truth, has come, He (It) will guide you into all truth; for He (It) will not speak on His (Its) own authority,***

but whatever He (It) hears He (It) will speak; and He (It) will tell you things to come" (John 16:7, 13). These were

Christ's words to explain to all what it would mean to have the Holy Spirit in us. In the original King James Version the **Helper** is also called **Comforter** or **Advocate** in the margin.

These words explain what the Holy Spirit is for a Christian.

The first thing Christ tells us is that It will ***"guide"*** us into all truth. That is the experience we have all lived through. Secondly, that His Spirit will ***direct*** us as God the Father wills It to do. The last point: our link to prophetic understanding; ***"things to come"***.

Christ also made known another of the advantages of having the Holy Spirit: ***"But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak."*** (Matthew 10:19). . .

The apostle Paul also wrote ***"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself (Itself) makes intercession for us with groanings***

"... These were redeemed from among men, being first-fruits to God and to the Lamb" (Revelation 14:4).

which cannot be uttered”(Romans 8:26).

We also know God's Spirit has directed His true ministry in sermons and sermonettes, in counseling, and in prayers for our healing. It has also guided us through the years since the death of Mr. Armstrong. What ever our story might be through all these past years there is the need to make sure God's Spirit is continuing to be replenished within each of us!

God's Spirit is also likened to oil in a lamp which can run low if not being refilled daily: ***“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1).*** Verses 3 and 8 show their lamps being in danger of being extinguished (God's Spirit). So, as this parable makes known we can be at risk or filled with God's Spirit. As individual members within God's church we are admonished (strongly advised) to *not* quench God's Spirit (I Thessalonians 5:19). It is important to know that our actions can quench or add to the amount of God's Spirit we may have. The important action is in understanding that when we drop off from regular Bible study and prayer we suffer spiritually. Some may have noticed the direct correlation in starting the day with prayer and study and having a “good day”. Others have noticed on “bad days” there was “no time”! Thus; a downward spiral that can *quench* God's Spirit!

Spiritually dozing off can become a real danger from Satan (I Peter 5:8). Christ gave counsel that is imperative to understanding life in these end times and is found in His explanation of the parable of the sower: ***“And the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with the cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity (Luke 8:14; 21:34).***

In today's world most of God's people don't have enough time. Time! We are rushed in order to just earn enough to live. It seems we all have cares. Most don't realize just how rich we are (by comparison to any previous time in history). And seeking pleasures, this pretty much describes the western lifestyle. Choked? Yes, we are on many levels choked. In many cases it feels like the ancient Egyptian task masters are still working

us at night to cut straw for the day time brick making. The lesson here is to persevere and form a permanent habit of study and prayer which works for all of us.

Another facet of using God's Spirit is that we are to produce fruit; growing in grace and knowledge. As we study, pray, and experience life using God's Spirit there are specific fruits we are to be producing. But consider what we're up against! About this age especially, there is information we need to remember.

The apostle Paul warned us of the dangers we would be facing in the end-time (II Timothy 3:1-3). Viewed with a portion of Habakkuk, where it tells us: ***“For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore perverse judgment proceeds” (1:4).*** We realize we are encircled by the world, thus we must have *more*, not less, of God's Holy Spirit to survive! How? Romans 12:21 says, ***“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*** This is a must fruit! This is made possible by the very first fruit of God's Holy Spirit which is LOVE (Galatians 5:22). Likewise, Christ gave a special commandment to every Christian. It is found in John 13:34 and 35. ***“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”***

This love is manifested by following Christ's example to wash one another's feet; a principle of being our brother's keeper. This then is another fruit to work on!

How about those who make our lives miserable? Christ gave us instruction in Matthew 5:43-48, which admonishes us to be like our Father in heaven. This can only be described in physical terms as being like a Chinese finger puzzle. The harder we try our way, “dirt for dirt”, “evil for evil”, the worse our human relations with other people become. Applying God's wisdom we find softens our oppressors will to harass us. Our actions do make a difference. But if we can mimic (like children do their parents) our heavenly Father, Our family wins! Do we remember Mr. Armstrong saying how he prayed for those who persecuted the church or himself by asking that they might come to understand the truth? And so to summarize verse 44 says, ***“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for***



them which spitefully (spitefully) use you, and persecute you.” So here is another fruit to work on!

Consider the ten virgins in Matthew 25 again. Half of God's church will not have sufficient oil to go out to meet the bridegroom. Why? Verse 2 shows five were foolish. Foolish? Revelation 3:20 speaking to those living during the Laodicean era says, ***“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup (dine) with him, and he with Me.”*** The food spoken of is spiritual. Ezekiel 34:2 indicates the end time shepherds do not feed God's flock; . . . ***“Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?”*** It is spiritual food that God places before His people that is significant.

Viewed as a whole, the end time ministry is not following God's government. In fact look at what God says they are doing: **Jeremiah 23:27** ***“who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams . . .”*** How can you be awake and growing in grace and knowledge if you are being starved spiritually all the while being told you are O.K. by your minister? Yes these men have their dreams. But God says otherwise. Acts 5:32 says, ***“And we are His witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”*** Obey Him?? Yes! Do we remember Mr. Armstrong explaining what happens to a person after they are shown a new truth and they reject it? They stop growing. Is that a sign of more or less of God's Holy Spirit? This principle is very evident in all the groups who walked away from any of the truths God saw fit to **restore** to the Philadelphia era of the church. Do you see? If it was alright to just accept most of God's truth then the Sardis era would have been the last era. Instead, as experience has shown us in the past couple of decades, deviating to the right hand or the left has been a disaster for God's people. Until they obey, they are cut off from growing in grace and knowledge. Their oil is in need of replenishment. Obedience to God's laws, His revealed truths, is a prerequisite to growing in grace and knowledge, and to having a supply of oil (God's Spirit). If we need more wisdom, James 1:5 says, ***“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives liberally and without reproach, and***

it will be given to him.” What then of receiving more of God's Holy Spirit? Read for yourself what Christ told us: It is found in **Luke 11:13**, ***“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”*** That's it? Ask?

Yes, obedience to what you understand, then as long as it is in faith knowing God keeps His promises you will receive more (wisdom or faith) of what you ask. God always keeps His promises.

While realizing the shortness of time and seeing how the world is increasing in spiritual darkness, the church needs a clear bright light! And to

provide that light it is imperative that each of us reflect on how much of God's Spirit we may have (Matthew 5:14). It is also the time that we ask for more of the free gifts God offers so the work of being used *as a conduit* for God's end time apostle will proceed unfettered by Satan's attacks. If our hearts are putting God first our future King has an encouraging word for us in this important endeavor: **Matthew 24:45-47**, ***“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?”*** ***“Blessed is that servant whom his master, when He comes, will find so doing. “Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.***

Remember Christ's instruction found in Matthew 5? To summarize: The verses 13 through 24, speak of God's people as the *salt* of the earth, and as a *light* which needs to be placed in a visible place while teaching God's instructions precisely as we were taught, and not one thing in His Law and Doctrinal Teachings has been changed, and that we should have forgiveness in our heart for those who have offended us. Why? So that men might give glory to God. As God's people we are to set the example before the world! However, how bright a light we have is dependent on each of us just as it was when Mr. Armstrong was alive. If it is bright enough God can use us more and more! Bank on it! **And ASK, with faith.**

(Continue on page 35 “Firstfruit”)

PENTECOST - THE THIRD VITAL STEP IN GOD'S MASTER PLAN

Prepared by Gary Liebold

Pentecost

God has a Master Plan for the salvation of mankind, which He has outlined through His seven annual festivals. He instituted these festivals to remind us year after year how He is bringing about the fulfillment of His purpose in our lives by having the opportunity to become spirit-born members of His divine Family! (Romans 8:14-25)

The first festival in God's Master Plan is the Passover (Leviticus 23:5). It is the beginning step, an annual memorial and reminder that Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price for our sins by volunteering before the foundation of the world to be slain as the Passover Lamb and become the Savior for mankind. *ALL* have broken God's law and have earned the WAGES of sin ... *DEATH* (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Jesus paid the death penalty in our stead, covering our past sins (Romans 3:24-25) upon our true repentance and faith in that sacrifice.

The second step in God's plan is the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which pictures overcoming sin, typified by putting the "leaven" of sin out of our lives. During this time, we symbolize removing the "leaven" of sin from our lives by actually removing all physical leavened foods from our homes and eating unleavened bread for seven days. When we begin to obey God and live in submission to His laws, we are then observing this second step in God's plan.

However, to successfully put sin out of our lives and obey God as we should, we need God's Holy Spirit in order to do so. **The third step in God's Master Plan** is pictured by the third annual festival, Pentecost (derived from the Greek word "pentekoste," meaning "fiftieth," Acts 2:1). The Day of Pentecost is

also known as the Feast of Weeks (Deuteronomy 16:9-10) and the Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:15-21, Numbers 28:26).

This Bible Study is designed to examine this third step of God's plan to understand how Pentecost pictures the "firstfruits" SPIRITUALLY, in His Master Plan.

God knows that man does best when reminded by what he repeats year after year. (Leviticus 23:4, Leviticus 23:21). Therefore, God established His Holy Days to correspond with and picture in duality, the two annual harvest seasons that occur in Palestine. The first harvest is a small spring harvest, followed by the second larger harvest in the fall season. The first small harvest begins on the day of the Wave-Sheaf offering and ends on the day of Pentecost, helping to illustrate that God is calling and working with only a FEW people right now (John 6:44). The second, greater harvest pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles [also known as the Feast of Booths (Leviticus 23:39-44) and the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 34:22)], demonstrates the time when God will begin working with billions of people after Christ's return!

1. What, exactly, is the "wave-sheaf" offering? Leviticus 23:9-11. The Wave-Sheaf offering consisted of a small handful, or "sheaf," of newly sickled stems or heads of barley that was brought to the priest to be accepted by God. What does this "wave-sheaf" offering represent? I Corinthians 15:20-23. When was this "wave-sheaf" offering to occur? Leviticus 23:6, 11. Clearly, this offering was to take place on the first day of the week

("morrow after the Sabbath"), following the weekly Sabbath occurring during the Days of Unleavened Bread. God's Church is to count from this day after the Sabbath in the midst of the Days of Unleavened Bread, including (or "from" – verse 15) counting "Sunday" ("morrow after the Sabbath"). What day does the festival of Pentecost actually fall on? Leviticus 23:15-16. Pentecost clearly falls fifty days after the wave-sheaf offering is offered, on the Sunday after the seventh weekly Sabbath.

2. Who was the first of the firstfruits of God's SPIRITUAL harvest? I Corinthians 15:20-23, Colossians 1:18. Jesus Christ was the first of the "firstfruits" because He was a Holy sacrifice, the first to be resurrected as Spirit. Just as the High Priest of the Old Testament had to wave the "sheaf" of barley to be accepted by God before the spring harvest could begin, Jesus Christ had to go before God the Father to be accepted the morning after His resurrection. He therefore fulfilled the symbolism of the "wave-sheaf" offering. (See John 20:17.)

3. Before Christ had been accepted by God after His resurrection, He met Mary in the garden. She could not touch Him at this time (John 20:17) because he had not yet been accepted in heaven. Could His disciples touch Him LATER that same day? Matthew 28:6-9, John 20:20-28. Mary could not touch Christ at the time she first saw Him in the garden because He had not yet been accepted by God the Father, but His disciples could touch Him later that very same day because He, as the first of the firstfruits, had been accepted by God as the spiritual "wave-sheaf" offering in heaven. He therefore fulfilled the symbolism of the Old Testament wave-sheaf offering by being the

first resurrected Son of God (Leviticus 23:10; Revelation 1:5). He became our elder brother, the firstborn Son of God, and the first human to ever complete the process of salvation and to be "born again." (Romans 8:28-29, John 3:3)

4. In addition to His very determined will what powerful force did Jesus Christ possess that enabled Him to obey God and be able to perform the spiritual works He did while here on this earth? John 3:34; 5:30, 8:28-29, 14:10-11, 16-17, 26. God the Father empowered Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, which was within Him. Christ also promised the same spiritual "helper" to His disciples to be within them as it was within Him (John 14:16; Acts 1:8).

5. After Christ's crucifixion and death, did the disciples know they must appear before God on the Day of Pentecost? Acts 2:1. In what miraculous way did God's Holy Spirit come to them at this time? Acts 2:1-6. Did they then become begotten members of God's spiritual Church? I Corinthians 12:12-14. On this day of Pentecost, God first sent His Holy Spirit to the Disciples of Christ, to begin His Church. This was fifty days after Christ's sacrifice was accepted in heaven by God the Father, that the Holy Spirit came to the disciples just as He had promised them it would.

(Continued on page 35, "Bible Study")

The Vital Importance of Godly Family Values

by

Alton B. (Don) Billingsley

There is presently an ongoing all out attack on the traditional family values that have been the stronghold of this nation and the world as never before witnessed!

As the result, the loss of these values has largely driven away the family togetherness. Many fathers and mothers hardly know their children anymore. And at the same time the children hardly even know their parents. The result is, for the most part, a family of strangers.

An example to illustrate this fact of life: One minister gave a sermon some years ago in which he tearfully voiced the problem he had brought about with his daughter due to the many hours he was away from home each day at his work. He said his wife told him one day their daughter had asked her, **“Who is this man who comes into our home? I know you know and seem to like him, but I don’t know him.”**

Sadly this is an example of multiple millions of parents today. They hardly know their children and the children hardly even know either parent.

This is largely due to the excessive demand of precious time placed on parents during the normal work week in commuting and fulfilling the average eight hours at their places of employment.

Necessity requires both parents to work away from home due to the huge financial obligations placed on them to make payments for new homes, automobiles, and other expenses. This has brought about a real internal family crisis for all this leaves very little quality time for the whole family in being together.

***Behold,
I will send you
Elijah the prophet
before the coming of
the great and dread
ful day of the LORD.
And he will TURN the
hearts of the fathers
to the children and
the hearts of the chil
dren to the fathers
LEST I COME AND
STRIKE THE EARTH
WITH TOTAL
DESTRUCTION
(Malachi 4:5 6).***

To add to the problem there is the resulting need to place babies and small children in child-care homes until a parent picks them up when returning home at the end of the day. The older children are pretty much left alone to care for themselves until one or the other parent returns home. The term coined for these children in earlier years was latchkey children.

The Problems Don’t End There

To exacerbate the foregoing problems, consider a few of the other forces at work in turning away parents and children from one another:

1. The Love Bonding: The bonding of babies and small pre-school children to their parents in a loving and caring relationship is more likely to be with those in the child-care centers for they spend more time with the children than do the parents. Though the parents may be looked upon as fathers and mothers by the babies and children in actual fact they really don’t

know them as well due to the very little time devoted to them.

2. Divorce and Remarriage: More often than not each parent has a different work place. This often places an added burden on both husbands and wives who are usually in the company of other men and women with whom they spend far more time than with each other.

As the result, marriages will often break up due to infidelity or other reasons. This places a heavy psychological problem on the children that will probably never be overcome in their lives. The fallout from this is that often some of them will come to be a problem to their parents and society. (It is now being reported there are children as young as nine years of age who are psychopathic, mentally ill or unstable.)

Some little time later the parents will either marry others or move in with other men and women without the benefit of marriage. When this happens the problems grow much worse between the real parents and their children. To add to the problem, stepfathers

America there are tens of thousands of children -- boys and girls -- working as prostitutes. Overwhelmingly they are from the middle and upper class families wrote another writer.

Kids are for sale everywhere, he wrote, and is part of the continuing national tragedy of America's runaway and throwaway child population. About one in three is a so-called throwaway, either fleeing intolerable home conditions or literally forced out of the house to fend for himself.

Many of these children are in the 12-14 age bracket, some as young as nine. One young boy told a reporter the average person cannot imagine what goes on in parts of the gay underground. Kids 11, 12, 13, and 14 are being fed all kinds of drugs and being sexually abused and hurt in the meat-rack bars and at private parties.

One little boy stated that when winter began he had called his dad and he said he didn't want me anymore. Another child said, "I want to die so I won't hurt no more."



National Missing Children's Locate Center

and stepmothers are not always loving and caring with the other parent's children.

Runaway and Throwaway Children

These kinds of family problems often result in what is now termed -- runaway or throwaway children. Large cities have hundreds of these children from a very young age who live on the streets, sleep under bridges, in packing boxes, and even in cemeteries, wherever they can find some sort of shelter.

As the result, these children are exploited by others and end up in prostitution within a month in order to survive. A writer in one weekly national magazine (*Parade Magazine*, July 20, 1986) wrote that across

At the time of that writing the population of runaways was estimated at being well over a million. Think how much greater the population of these pathetic youngsters is today all across America than those few years ago.

In this context also consider the horror of pedophilia (sexual perversion in which children are the preferred sexual object)! Little children are lured by adults into areas where they are kidnapped and raped. Afterwards they are usually murdered to keep the crime from becoming known.

Of all places, this is even ongoing within the Churches! Consider the news over the very recent

past in which it was brought to light the many Catholic priests who have forced themselves on young boys over the years. At the same time there have also been the sexual predators from other churches, though not as many as within the Catholic churches.

Other Forces of Evil

Then there are the drugs, the very bad music, the lyrics, the very skimpy and revealing clothing girls and women wear, porn, the filthy use of words, cursing, and violence in the movies produced by Hollywood with very explicit sex scenes. Added to the ever-growing problem

attacking the family

unit is the full acceptance and protection given to practicing homosexuals and lesbians by the judiciary.

Hollywood is even making favorable movies about these kinds of people conditioning people to the full acceptance of them.



Teachers in the public school system are now being required by law to teach the little children that such deviant behavior is to be considered alternative sexual practices and as such should be accepted as normal. This has grown to such an acceptable level in society that laws are passed in some states making it possible for women to marry women and men to marry men! This is another assault on the family as God intended it to be and a further tearing away of the fabric of the traditional family as it has been known in former years.

Sex dominates in everyday life. This is very easy to see this nation and the world is obsessed with sex in every possible manner. It is flaunted before us on television and in the movie theatre and in real everyday life.

Filthy four letter words are in such common use today by children and adults they have lost their meaning. A very recent newspaper article made known that cursing is everywhere and it is easy to see how it can influence teens. MTV has replaced music videos with vulgar "reality" shows such as "Parental Control" and "Next" on which the beeps censored curse words are heard regularly. Even Mickey Mouse's network has come close to broadcasting profanity. In a recent episode of the Disney Channel show "That's So Raven" the character Raven began to curse "What the --," only to be cut off by her doorbell. Though it isn't exactly vulgar language, it leaned toward the subject. The audience knew what she meant. The writer wrote

that the popularity and common use of cursing could soon have television executives asking themselves why they should censor anything.

With all of these satanic forces bombarding the family, the effort, though not fully realized, is continuing to tear the children away from the parents and the

parents away from the children! This is making it extremely difficult for parents to rear their children with real godly values.

It is a continuing battle for Godly parents to protect their teenage sons and daughters and keep them from being overwhelmed by all of these evil forces coming at them from television, in the movies, and even in the school system. Sadly, Satan is taking far too many of our young people captive with his very influential and captivating forces.

The Family is the Fabric Holding a Nation Together

It should be realized the closely knitted family is the fabric that holds any nation together. And the fabric

must be intertwined with Godly values to withstand the many fiery darts being thrown at it by satanic forces that over recent years have bombarded it trying to completely tear it apart.

Satan the devil well knows that once the family is gone so is a nation! This is why he is using so many influential forces to unravel the family fabric and completely decimate it.

God and His holy and righteous commandments are considered a taboo subject in conversation and in public office. To make the point: A recent question was asked of Marilyn (*Parade Magazine*, Sunday, April 15, 2007), about the discussion of politics, realizing they evoke quarrels. **Marilyn's answer: "Judging from my mail, politics is the number 1 source of intellectual disagreements among Americans."** (She added: "we don't talk much about religion: the topic has become taboo, to say the least.")

In this period of time the deadly results of taking God out of our lives are in evidence everywhere. Yet God tells us the day is soon to come when we will discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him (Malachi 3:18). Before that time there is soon coming terrible destruction and loss of life to many millions of people.

To be continued ❖

"Pentecost"

(...continued from page 6)

WHY CHRIST CAME

Now, there was one exception. Jesus Christ said, "*I will build My church, and the gates of [the grave] shall not prevail against it.*" The Church were the firstfruits. Now why did Jesus say, "*I will build My church...*"? In the first place, why did Jesus come? He's called "the second Adam." He came to do what the first Adam should have done, but did not; and that was to have contact with God, and obey God, and live God's way—

be filled with God's love, with God's mind, and with God's power; and reject the wrong way of Satan. Jesus did that. He had to contend with Satan. Satan tempted Him; and He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet without sin. He met Satan in immortal combat, and Jesus Christ conquered Satan. In the end, He snapped out an order and told Satan to get away; and Satan had to obey Him.

Jesus Christ came for a number of reasons. One was TO QUALIFY to replace Satan on the throne of this Earth, and TO RULE THE EARTH AS A KING. He was born to become a King, and He came to qualify to be the King and replace Satan on the Earth. The churches have lost all knowledge of that! They don't preach Jesus Christ as the coming King, as a Ruler and Someone to obey. They have lost all knowledge of it. It is all in the Bible, however; but they don't follow the Bible. They get their religion from other people before them, and people have just made it up in their minds. They don't believe what the Bible says. I was hearing on the air this morning looking for the Antichrist to come. The Bible doesn't talk about some one Antichrist coming. In first or second John, whichever it is, it says that there are many antichrists and have been. But they have certain traditions that Protestants have had, and they simply follow the teaching of these Protestant traditions. And, as I say, they have rubbed off on us a great deal. They think that God is trying to save the whole world. The world is lost. They really picture it this way: God created man immortal, an immortal soul. Satan came along and wrecked God's handiwork. So man fell, but he's still immortal. And God's plan of redemption is merely God's effort to repair the damage that Satan did, and restore the human race back as good as Adam was before he fell. If you believe that, please erase it from your mind and get rid of it because it is a lie. It's Satan's lie. It is not true.

Jesus Christ came TO QUALIFY! When He comes to rule, He's going to rule over the world; and He's going to teach the world the law of God—the way of living OF GOD. All that's wrong in the world is the way people live! I've said that to kings. I've said it to presidents and prime ministers over the world. I've said it to audiences in capitols all over this world. That's all that is wrong with the world. It's the way people are living! THE WAY WE LIVE is causing all of the troubles. And the way we live is rebellion against the law of God.

But the churches say the law of God is done away. I was listening to a religious program on the air this morning. This was after our program was on the air. They were saying how God will just forget about your sins. There wasn't one word said about repentance.

They were saying the law is done away. And it was from the ministers of a church that I know who believe the law is done away, and they will debate it with you any day (that God's law is done away). Well, God's law is the right way of living. And all that's wrong in the world is the wrong way of living. Whatever we sow, we reap; and we're sowing the wrong thing because we live the wrong way. It's just that simple. But people cannot seem to understand that, because they are deceived by Satan. And Satan is the Great Deceiver.

CHRIST TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES

Well, Jesus said, *"I will build My church."* Now what did He do? He called twelve disciples; and they became His students, or learners. A "disciple" means a learner or a student.

Jesus started a school, and Jesus was the Teacher. And He started teaching these students—twelve that He had CALLED. Later He said to them, "You didn't choose Me. You didn't volunteer." Peter didn't volunteer and Andrew, his brother. They wanted to be fishermen. Jesus saw them out there on the Sea of Galilee in a boat, fishing. That was their business, their job. He said, "Come and follow Me, and give up the job you've got. I'm calling you to a different job." They forsook all, and followed Him. He called others. Later He said, "You didn't choose Me. I've chosen you. I've drafted you! I didn't plead with you to 'Please accept Me. Please give your heart to Me.'" Brethren, you cannot find any place where Jesus went around saying, "Please believe on Me. Please give your heart to Me."

A young man came to me one time, several years ago, up in Oregon. He said, "Mr. Armstrong. I gave my heart to the Lord last night." Well I said, "Did you? Where was that?" "Why down in the First Christian Church." "Well," I said, "that must have been a wonderful event. Was there a physician there with anesthetics; and did he put you in an operation, and open up your body and take your heart out?" "Well, no. No," he said. Well I said, "Did you get hold of your heart and hand it over to Jesus? Was Jesus there?" "Well, no." "Well, what did happen? What did you do? You said you gave Jesus your heart." He said, "Well, I guess I just don't know." He didn't know what he did do. It didn't mean any thing. No, it didn't.

A Methodist preacher came to me up in Oregon. He said, "I've just married a wife. She's got some money. And I'm just too proud to let her support me. I'm an ex-

minister; and the only thing I know, that I've ever done, is to preach. But," he said, "I haven't had a job, and I haven't had any pulpit." He said, "Do you know of any vacant pulpits in Lane County, Oregon here. My wife wants to live in this county, and I have to get a job right here somewhere." I said, "Yes, I do know of one vacant pulpit. But," I said, "that won't help you any." "Well, why?" Well, I said, "Because that's a Church of Christ, or Christian Church; and you're a Methodist.

And," I said, "They have different doctrines than you do, and different beliefs." "Oh well, that doesn't make any difference," he said, "if I can have the job, I'll preach whatever they want me to." That's the average preacher today. "I'll preach whatever they want me to." Yes, I've met all kinds. And this world is full of them.

Jesus came TO QUALIFY to sit on THE THRONE and RULE. He called out some students and began to teach them—to teach them the way and the law of God, to teach them God's plan, to teach them God's purpose and what God is going to do with us. That God is trying to make us HIS OWN CHILDREN, to be BORN OF HIM. And He taught them that which is born of God will be SPIRIT. God is a Spirit! We won't be human; we won't be flesh, any longer. We won't be made from the dust of the ground. We'll be spirit beings. And He taught them. After He had taught them, He also came to die for not only them but the sins of the whole world. And so He did that. Then He went to heaven and established the Church after He had arrived back in heaven.

Now we spent a day over in Munich, in southern Germany; and I found it was a holiday. I hadn't heard of that holiday before. They call it Ascension Day. Well, it probably was the same day of the year that Jesus ascended to heaven, which is ten days before the day of Pentecost (which is today). It seems to me they had the wrong day. It must have been more than ten days ago. Anyway, there is nothing in the Bible that says there is any such day as Ascension Day that we are told to keep. And I hadn't even heard of it, because I've been living according to the Bible and not according to men's traditions.

But Jesus taught these people. He called them OUT of the world, to live His way—to live by the law of God, and live a different way than the rest of the world was living. And to teach them that WAY OF LIFE, about the government of God. And to teach them of God's purpose, that we would become God; and that God is reproducing Himself. After He had taught them, He

Go...
[into all the world] and teach
[in] all nations, baptizing
[people] into the name of the
Father; and the Son, and the Holy
[Spirit]; (20) teaching them to
observe all things whatsoever I
have commanded you.
Matthew 28:19-20

gave them a great commission. He said: *Matthew 28:19-20 Go... [into all the world] and teach [in] all nations, baptizing [people] into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy [Spirit]; (20) teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

LEARNING TO BECOME TEACHERS

So Jesus came to start a school. And He taught them the way of God, the way of GOD'S CHARACTER, so they could be born of God. Then He told them to go out and become teachers themselves, like He had been a Teacher to them; and teach others. And the others that they were to teach were also to be taught, to learn, so that they could become teachers. And the whole purpose of the firstfruits was to call some people out to become teachers; so that, when Christ comes to save the world, they could be kings and priests under Christ. That's why, to those called into the Church (the firstfruits), Jesus said in Revelation 2:26-27: *He that overcometh...to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.* In Revelation 3:21: *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne* [when He comes and takes over the throne of the earth, away from Satan.] In other words, Jesus came to QUALIFY TO RULE in the place of Satan. He came to call a firstfruits out to become teachers and to become rulers and governors (like He is, with Him when He sits on the throne); and rule the others, and teach the others when God starts to save the world. He didn't come to teach us just to be saved. He came to teach us TO BECOME TEACHERS!

Now, we are concerned with a certain project over in Jordan—just outside of Amman, Jordan. It is a school for the mentally retarded. The first time I saw it was two years ago; and they had a fine new facility, new building. It was very modern, very nice. And they had little children there, from the ages of about four years old up to thirteen, all mentally retarded. And they had to even teach them to put a button in a buttonhole. They even had to teach them to sit on the toilet, because they

didn't know anything. And I said, "Is this all of the mentally retarded people in Jordan?" "Oh, no. This is a small fraction of them. Why, Mr. Armstrong, there are thousands of them." Well, I said, "Maybe we could raise money and build a bigger place, and you could take in more of them. Let's get more of them." But they said, "Wait, Mr. Armstrong. We can't do that. Even if we had the money to buy the buildings, and more buildings, we couldn't take in more of them here until we first train more teachers."

God cannot start the Kingdom of God until He first trains teachers. And He has called you and me to become those teachers! THAT'S WHY WE'RE THE FIRSTFRUITS. WE ARE CALLED TO BECOME TEACHERS! And it is, let's see, I believe it's the fifth chapter of Hebrews where

the apostle Paul says to them, "You ought now to be able to be teachers, and you have to be taught just the kindergarten truth about the Kingdom of God. You haven't learned. You should have been better students."

WE are NOT CALLED just for salvation; and, if it were for salvation, we wouldn't have been called at all. You wouldn't have been called at all just to get you into the Kingdom. THAT'S NOT WHY YOU WERE CALLED. You were called to become a student. You were called to learn how to save others when God's Kingdom comes, when Jesus is sitting on the throne on this Earth. Brethren, YOU DON'T GET IT. I've heard ministers speaking as if they never heard of that! I've said to some of them, "I don't think our people understand that." And they say, "Oh yes, they do, Mr. Armstrong." Oh no, you don't. Brethren, you just don't understand that. We're not called to just be the first ones to get into the Kingdom of God. We are called for a special mission—to become teachers. We are not called to become some to go out and convert the world now. We are called to learn how, in the resurrection, we can be rulers and teachers.

TO THE CHURCH—and not to anyone but the Church—Jesus said, "If you overcome (you that are studying to be teachers, if you overcome) I will grant for you to sit with Me on My throne; and help Me rule the world and teach the world." Jesus is the Teacher,



and Jesus is a Ruler. Revelation 5:10, we will be “*kings and priests; and we shall [RULE] on the earth.*” Brethren, I don’t think you’ll ever learn that. Has my teaching been in vain, brethren? Sometimes I wonder. I get terribly discouraged. I don’t think you get it. I think so much Protestantism has rubbed off on you that you just don’t understand the truth when I give it to you. And it is really Christ giving it to you through me, because I’m certainly not competent to give it to you. Of myself, I could not do it at all.

WHY THE FIRSTFRUITS?

Why are we the firstfruits? WHY? I’m not talking about what, when, or how, or anything else; but why? We are the firstfruits to become teachers to teach others. The Church is school. And we are to be taught the way of God, the way of life; and to be taught of God’s program—of God’s program to reproduce Himself. And He’s not trying to save the world. You wonder why you can’t convert your relatives and your friends; and so do I, and I still do. I can’t get over it. I can’t see why they can’t understand any of the Bible whatsoever. They can’t, and they won’t until God calls them. Jesus Christ said: *John 6:44 : No man CAN come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*

Predestination was discussed this morning in the sermon. Predestination has nothing to do with who is going to be saved and who is going to be lost. Predestination means that God predestinated that He would call certain people out, after Christ came to qualify; and we have to do the same thing. If we are going to rule, we have to do the same thing. We have to overcome Satan. Far from being “teacher’s pet,” far from God discriminating against the others, He’s giving us a harder job than He’ll give the others. WE HAVE TO OVERCOME SATAN. And when God does call others, that can’t understand the truth now, there won’t be any Satan around. And there won’t be a world with television that is filled with smut, and with violence, and with rotten sex; and that is what your children are feeding on today. That’ll all be gone. There won’t be any of it. But the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Eternal God, as full as the waters cover the ocean beds; and you and I are the ones that are going to be teaching that knowledge and making the world full.

Now, it doesn’t include just us here. We’re just a little group in Pasadena, California. It doesn’t [just] include all of us, just those in the Church all around the world. It includes those that were called in the early Church, back in the 1st century, 1900 and some years ago—53

or more ago, 54 years ago. They will all be resurrected. They are “the dead in Christ.” And the dead in Christ are those who have learned to be teachers and rulers. They have learned HOW, and they are qualified to teach and to rule.

The Church of God is the school of God. Now, we have something more than just a school; we have a college here at Pasadena. And we have a sister college over at Big Sandy, Texas. There we teach some to be ministers. Then they go out, and they teach others (week by week, on the Sabbath) that God has called and that are in the Church—so that they come to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Now I wonder if you get that! We have to GROW IN KNOWLEDGE! We have to learn God’s program. We have to learn that God is calling us not just to be saved. He’s calling us to learn to be rulers and teachers. Brethren, sometimes I get discouraged. Can I beat that into your heads and your minds?

They talk about so-and-so “had it made.” Are you sure he had it made? Is he going to be a teacher? Is he qualified to sit on that throne with Christ? Does he know about God’s law? We’re the Philadelphia Era of the Church, and we have to be lawyers—students of God’s law, God’s government, God’s way of life. All that’s wrong with this world is the way of life they’re living. It’s all that. And we are called out of the world to live a different way of life.

WE MUST GROW

Peter said we must grow. Not just in knowledge (the knowledge OF our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ) but in grace. What does that mean? Grace is unmerited favor, or gift. But the Holy Spirit is God’s gift. And growing in grace means growing in the character that comes through God’s Spirit. Are you growing in character day by day? Are you growing in the knowledge that God has? In other words, are you a good student? Are you learning? Are you going to be able to teach others? Are you qualifying to be a teacher, and to go out and teach others? IF NOT, YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME! You don’t BELONG in the Church. Maybe God hasn’t called you yet. Or maybe you haven’t opened your mind to understand? I don’t know. I just know, brethren, that I do want you to learn. God has revealed this truth to me. It isn’t known in any church in the world that I know of. It’s precious knowledge. It’s so precious and so valuable! Don’t trample it under feet, as if it was insignificant and didn’t mean anything. It is the truth of God.

There’s something else I want to say about Pentecost. I

think if I'd keep talking here to one o'clock in the morning, some of you still wouldn't get it. Jesus called us "sheep." And sometimes I think some of us are pretty dumb sheep. I wish we could understand it, and I'm trying to make it plain.

You are students. How much are you learning, and how much are you developing your life? To grow in grace is to grow in the character of God. That's not only the knowledge, but it is living that way—to grow in love. That means in how you treat others in your own home. That means in how you treat neighbors, and how you treat people. How kind are you? How loving are you? How much do you encourage others, and try to help others? How much are you developing the character of God in your own life? Just knowledge alone isn't going to do any good. You can hear the Word of God. You can have the knowledge. But not the hearers, but THE DOERS OF THE LAW are justified before God. Are you A DOER? The only reason you need the knowledge is to learn what to do; and it does you no good until you put it to work, and do it!

Now the one thing I did want to say (and I think I do have a little more time to say it in) about Pentecost: On the day of Pentecost there were many who had followed Jesus, and who did believe; and they wanted to know what they should do.

[Peter] said, "Repent everyone of you, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." And repent has to do with not only being sorry and remorseful for the past but changing your mind to the extent that you won't do it any more. You will change your way of life, and live God's way from on now. You'll try and not repeat the sins. And with God's help, you will succeed in overcoming. Now you won't overcome all the sins at once. That's why it is a gradual process. It's the over comers that are going to reign and rule with Christ. Not those who have made it, not those who are perfect all ready. It's a gradual process.

SPEAKING IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

But on the day of Pentecost there were many there

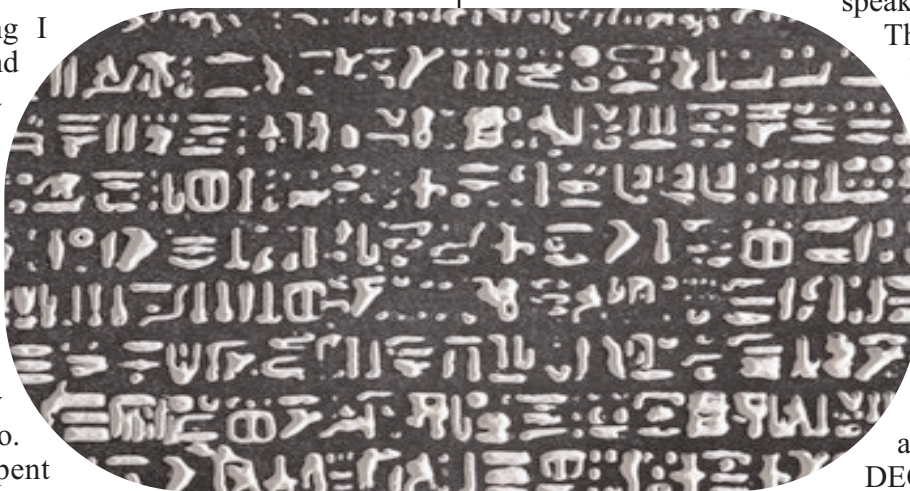
from many different nations, speaking different languages. And something happened on that day. That was the day the Church was born, 1954 years ago today. This is the anniversary of that day. And the Holy Spirit came with a rushing sound, like a rushing mighty wind. Have you ever been in a hurricane? I have, right out in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. And let me tell you, when you hear the winds whistling and roaring like I did, it's a terrible roar.

They heard the sound of the Holy Spirit coming; and they saw it, like flames of fire (or, tongues of fire) sitting on each one of them—the 120. There were 120 there that received the Spirit of God. And people could see the Holy Spirit, like tongues of fire; and then they began to speak in other languages, in tongues. There were people gathered there from nations all over. Some from Parthia, some from that were Medes, and some from...well, some spoke Greek, and some the Parthian language, and some the Median language and other languages. But EVERY ONE OF THEM, thousands of them, and every one of them heard them (the 120) speaking in his language.

They didn't speak in a lot of gibber. "La, la, la, blah, blah,..." I can do that. What did I say? You don't know. Neither do I. The tongues people that call themselves "Pentecostal" are NOT Pentecostal at all! They are poor DECEIVED people that

don't know any better. They say that they are aping that same thing, and they are copying it. You don't see any tongues of fire on their head. You don't hear any roaring sound, like a rushing mighty wind. And they don't speak with the languages that other people from other nations understand every word they're saying while they're there.

Now, there's one other case where they spoke with tongues. That's when Peter had taken salvation to the first Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, up at just north of where Tel Aviv is today. They were devout people, and they wanted to serve God; they just didn't know everything. God had Peter go to them, and that's when salvation first opened to Gentiles. God had to show Peter, in this vision of letting a sheet of unclean animals down—telling him to "go eat." He didn't mean eat unclean animals. He was simply showing him that he should call no man unclean because the Jews wouldn't



have anything to do with Gentiles. So, Peter went to Cornelius' house. They were devout. They had repented. And when Peter told them the way of the gospel, then they believed. They'd already repented. And the Holy Spirit came on them—as on the day of Pentecost—and they did speak...They were of different language, and they spoke the Hebrew and the Greek language. But, in the 14th chapter of I Corinthians, Paul said he would rather speak five words with understanding than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue. This speaking in gibberish and an unknown tongue is a deception of Satan, the devil. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of a sound mind—not of just a lot of gibberish and doing foolish things, nonsensical things. I think we understand that in the Church of God; but I just wanted to mention that, since this is the day of Pentecost.

NOT YET SAVING THE WORLD

This is the day of firstfruits. We are the first. We are the ones who are being taught to become the teachers, to rule with Christ, and to be kings and priest. Now priests are the teachers. And that is when Christ is going to try to save the whole world, when He comes again. He didn't try to save anybody [when He came the first time]. At Jacob's well, a Gentile woman... John had said that she knew who she was talking to. He could give her the living water, and she would never thirst. Well, she asked Him for those living waters. He's speaking of the Holy Spirit. And she said, "Give me then of the Holy Spirit." That's what it meant. Wasn't that a wonderful opportunity for Him to try to convert her, right then and there? Instead, He said, "Go call your husband." Well, she kind of gasped for breath. She said, "I, I, I don't have a husband." And Jesus said, "Well for once, young lady, you've told the truth. You've had five husbands, and the one you are living with now is not your husband." She was amazed that He knew that much about her. He'd never seen her before. But He didn't try to convert her.

You can't find a place where Jesus went about and said, "Please accept Me as your Savior." And yet the churches think that is a whole thing that we should be doing. I guess they think—when I visit foreign kings, and presidents of nations, and prime ministers who rule nations—that I ask them, "Have you given your heart to the Lord?" Why they'd pitch me out of there so fast I wouldn't know what struck me." I even think some of our ministers, the way they talk from the pulpit, think that's what I'm doing.

I'm carrying the gospel into those nations, but I'm not trying to convert the heads of the nations. I try to speak to them as far as they can understand. But God isn't trying to convert them. NO MAN CAN COME TO CHRIST except God the Father draw them, and God hasn't drawn them. That's why you can't convert your own relatives that think you've gone crazy when you've accepted God's truth. You just can't. You see THEY'RE NOT BEING JUDGED! The Judgment Day is coming. Judgment is ON THE CHURCH OF GOD. Judgment is on US. We're being judged, brethren. The world hasn't been called, and the world is not yet judged. And God isn't trying to save the world yet. Not yet. The way to help save the world, brethren, is to learn to be a good teacher—so that, when God's time comes, then you can be a real POWER in helping to save people when God's time has come. But God's time hasn't come for them yet. God's time has come for you to learn how to be a king or a priest. God help you, brethren, to understand. ❖

"Personal"

(...continued from page 9)

Mr. Armstrong has often told us we are not in the race just for ourselves (paraphrased), but to be helpers of the joy of others. The desire to strengthen and share with others the *Good News* Christ has given us, along with being a *watchman* to warn the Church, Israel, and the world of that which is fast coming upon all of us should be within each of us.

The Feast of Firstfruits, Pentecost, is a time of vision and rejoicing for it pictures to us in type we are like the golden grains within the heads of the wheat soon to be harvested. Just as the heads of wheat have to be harvested *at just the right time*, so we also will be harvested at just the exact time needed, if we maintain the strength of character needed to complete it.

During this final completion of ripening we continue to need the nutrients and vitamins that come from meaningful prayer, Bible study and occasional fasting just as the golden wheat needs the nutrients and moisture from the soil.

This will enable us to continue to have the kind of relationship with our God and His Son Jesus Christ, and make possible our being numbered with all of the other Firstfruits who will soon be harvested; a time

pictured by the Feast of Firstfruits, or Pentecost:

“... These are the ones who FOLLOW the Lamb wherever He goes. These were [had been] REDEEMED from among men, being FIRSTFRUITS to God and to the Lamb” (Revelation 14:4). ❖

“Church”

(...continued from page 12)

From the very beginning Jesus Christ knew what the horrendous and evil depth of the sins of Israel would be in this end-time; and when closely examined would be the same as that of the time of the original Elijah! Therefore He gave the like responsibility of Elijah to the Elijah of this generation. Sins that would be so great that unless the use of these two men by Christ would turn a sufficient number of people of Israel around, the lives of all of humanity would have been in **grave peril of being destroyed** as was Sodom and Gomorrah **completely destroyed** (Malachi 4:6; Genesis 18:16-33).

Destroyed the Altars of Worship

The apostate leader and his administration also tore down the *altars* – meaning places of worship for God’s true people, just as did *Jezebel* using her authority as queen of Israel, *a pagan priestess*, with the full permission of her husband, King Ahab, who carried out her instructions (I Kings 21:25-26). She replaced the places of worship with the temples of *Astarte and Baal*; and had the true prophets of God **massacred** (I Kings 18:4).

Once the apostate leader openly proclaimed their **“new understanding”** in the closing part of 1994, he and his administration began bringing **persecution** on all members who wanted to remain faithful to the true doctrinal teachings as revealed by Christ through Mr. Armstrong. Both ministers and members were disfellowshipped, including me, for not accepting the **Protestant teachings** they had fully embraced. Widows and the retired who chose not to accept the new teachings were removed from receiving aid (third tithe) from the new worldly-wide church, as it had come to be. They were left to do the best they could to survive even though

they had faithfully been in the Church for many years.

...to be continued

In the next issue of the *Philadelphia Remnant*, I plan on further making known from the duality of these Scriptures how this applies to the many churches of God in the context of where the true Church members are now scattered. And in so doing, we will work our way through the *maze* of Church confusion until we locate the true Church of today.

Please consider seriously where you are now and think about where you should be. It could mean the difference between having to win your salvation in the Great Tribulation that is very rapidly coming upon the Church and the nations of Israel, or be accounted worthy to be safely be hidden, there to wait for the return of Jesus Christ (Luke 21:36). ❖

“Australia”

(...continued from page 16)

Greed, selfishness, pride and appeasement have ridden the backs of government, lawmakers, industry and commerce to lead this country down the path of shallow and temporary gains, but at what cost? The road ahead looks bleak indeed, with increased blatant and shameless homosexuality, terrorism, crime, diseases and sickness, corruption, debt, homelessness, misery and the list goes on. Because of these, God can no longer stand by and watch His people suffer. His warnings, having gone unheeded for so many years through his late Apostle Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, are at an end.

And now God will soon thunder and make his presence felt and shake the land and talk to Israel in the only language that men understand: plagues (environmental, disease epidemics and military attacks), to punish them and remove them from this great land God gave them as part of the tribe of Ephraim, for which they show little gratitude. Because of all their sins, which are many, God will do this, as the following scriptures make known:32

(Continued next page, “Australia”)

“Australia”

Why should ye (Israel) be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate (my emphasis), your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. 19. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them* (Isaiah 1:5-7, 19-20, 23, KJV).

Our Government and peoples of all cultures living in this great land *down under* are guilty of all the above sins. Australia has over the last 25 years become a multi-cultured people of various religious backgrounds, where foreigners are soaking up their strength and paganism is permeating the land and ensnaring its people. Consequently, Australia will incur the penalties associated with those sins for the time is at hand and God tells us that His Word will not return to him until all is fulfilled.

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it (Isaiah 55:11, KJV).

Please remember to pray for all of us as members of God's true Church here in this part of Israel.

Acknowledgment: Australian Government: Bureau of Meteorology ❖

“Image”

(...continued from pg 18)

“But the second personage of the God family, the Word, gave up His divinity and was born as a human of the virgin Mary. He was God in the human flesh, both God and man, but functioning as a human man in His ministry on earth. He came to qualify, as the first Adam had failed to do, to replace Satan on the throne of the earth. He came also to call out of the world God's Church, also to qualify to sit with Him on this throne, and to qualify to teach and rule with Him as divine beings -- the very first fruits of God's harvest in reproducing Himself. He came also to ransom the world of humans from Satan, who had kidnapped all humanity. He paid this ransom price by His life's blood on the cross.

Jesus said He would build His Church. The word *church*, in the Greek language of the New Testament, is “*ekklesia*”, which means “called-out ones.” As Jesus had to qualify for the throne by overcoming Satan, so did His Church that is to sit with Him on that throne and be given power over the nations to rule, teach and convert into the family of God.”

*He paid this
ransom price by His life's
blood on the cross.*

These “called-out ones” had to grow from human character (wrongfully called human nature) that had been perverted by Satan's constant influence into God's holy and righteous character, in the very image of God. In order to accomplish this, the “called-out ones” have to first be impregnated with God's Holy Spirit and then constantly growing into Godly character: **“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...” - 2 Peter 3:18 - RSV.** Along with growing in grace and knowledge, they had to overcome all things and endure to the end.

What I have written above is only a part of what the full message of what the image and likeness of God is. To explain fully the process of how God and Jesus Christ are creating the same image and likeness in those human beings who are now called and those who have been called for almost 6,000 years, would take a long series of articles. Yet it is all summed up in the words below.

FROM: *Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the*

Worldwide Church of God, by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong,

“God had said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). "Image" refers to spiritual character; likeness refers to form and shape. God creates in dual stages. To make man in God's image means spiritual image -- a spiritual being with God's perfect divine character.

The quotes from the above articles are intended for educational purposes only. ❖

“Firstfruit”

(...continued from page 21)

When Mr. Armstrong was alive many times Zechariah 4:6 was quoted in sermons: ***Then he answered me and said to me: “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts.*** With God now using this part of the Remnant of the Philadelphia era *as a conduit* for the Recorded Works of His late apostle, what has been impossible until now has become possible in this closing part of the end time through His Spirit of Power just as it was done during the life ministry of Mr. Armstrong who was used by God to begin the Philadelphia era of His Church in the early 1930s. If the light we present is too feeble, what then? Do you now understand that there is another reason why Christ shows us there is a difference between the ten virgins (Matthew 25)? God's work has never been about just getting saved. If we do our part, watch the work our Great God will accomplish. Then that scripture may be fulfilled which we have heard in recent sermons and read and wondered about: **Habakkuk 1:5 “Look among the nations and watch- Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you.** If you look at the preceding verses (1-4) you can see this applies to our time now.

We need not fear nor be discouraged for in every

instance when God's people have been on track and facing great peril, He rescued them. In this way God could bring glory to his name. Also gathering the elect into one body would seem impossible after so many years. And it is for us! But for God it is not only possible, but He shows us it will happen. These things pertain to the very near future and are revealed to us by His Spirit! Think about it! We are indeed living in the most momentous of times! And each of us has an important assignment directly from God! May we, as firstfruits, be filled with His Holy and righteous Spirit to do all that is expected of us before the door closes (Revelation 3:7). ❖

“Bible Study”

(...continued from page 23)

6. Does the Bible clearly show that Spirit-begotten and converted Christians are referred to as being "Firstfruits," waiting to be "reaped" in a small, beginning spiritual harvest ahead, at Jesus Christ's return? James 1:18, I Corinthians 15:20-23, Matthew 24:31, I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

7. How long is the Feast of Firstfruits, or Day of Pentecost, to continue to be kept by God's people? Leviticus 23:14, 21. That includes US, as also shown by New Testament examples (Acts 2:1, Acts 20:16, I Corinthians 16:8). God's people still keep the Day of Pentecost, today!

The Day of Pentecost (the third festival given to ancient Israel, and kept by God's people today), is a sign that identifies those who have God's Spirit, those God calls His “ELECT” (Matthew 24:31, Romans 8:33, Colossians 3:12), and those who will be in the first resurrection at Christ's return. This festival clearly makes known only a small number of people today are being called for the beginning of God's plan and purpose (John 6:44). This is pictured and commemorated each and every year by God's annual festival... Pentecost. ❖

...Not by
might nor by power,
but by My Spirit, says the
Lord of Hosts.
(Zechariah 4:6)



WEB SITES

Below are the Web sites that are made available by the Church of God Faithful Flock as resource study tools for a better understanding of the Word of God.

Church of God Faithful Flock www.cog-ff.com	Church of God Faithful Flock is a body of believers who follow the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong, the end time Elijah and Apostle of God's Church.
World News Bulletin www.worldnewsbulletin.com	A Weekly Bulletin of World News from a Biblical Perspective based on bible prophecy. Showing the why behind today's news.
The Ten Commandments www.10commandments.ws	Explains the nature of the Ten Commandments, their spiritual intent, and how they are valid for Christians today. Everything you want to know about the Ten Commandments but were told not to ask.
Just What do you Mean...Born Again? www.begotten.net	Many professing Christians sincerely believe they have been "born again" - but do not understand what Jesus meant by those words. The true answer is not only surprising - it is startling! - THE MOST IMPORTANT truth you can know, here made SO PLAIN you will UNDERSTAND!
A Watchman for the House of Israel www.ezekielwatchman.org	Revelation chapters two and three are prophecies about the one true Church Jesus Christ founded in 31 A.D. In the sixth era of Church prophecy (which is Philadelphia) God sent a modern day EZEKIEL WATCHMAN. Let it be firmly stated, that the modern day EZEKIEL WATCHMAN was Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. It was through him, for over 50 years, God did the EZEKIEL WATCHMAN work.
Herbert W. Armstrong - Apostle of God www.herbertarmstrong.net	Teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong and proofs of his Apostleship of the Philadelphia Era of God's Church.
Herbert W. Armstrong - His Life and Work www.herbertwarmstrong.info	FROM BEGINNINGS humble and small without parallel, to the magnitude of today's enterprises and worldwide impact is the story of GROWTH unbelievable! It is the incredible story of something never done before -- never done this way -- a seemingly impossible achievement utterly unique in the world!
Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days Which? www.holy-days.org	Does it make any difference which days we observe or whether we keep them? Does the Bible establish whether we are to keep certain days holy to God?
The Lost Ten Tribes of Israel www.losttribes.org	Millennia ago, this same national greatness, wealth and power was promised by Almighty to Abraham. Yet few have ever noticed this astonishing fact in Scripture. We must realize, if we would understand, a peculiar fact. The Holy Bible is the particular Book of a definite nationality - the children of Israel.
Prophetic Events www.propheticevents.us	It's time to wake up! These are not normal times! After nearly 6,000 years of comparative quiet, the whole world suddenly erupted in world-shaking VIOLENCE beginning in 1914. But we have seen NOTHING yet, compared to what is soon coming!
The Restored Truths of God www.restoredtruths.net	Matthew 17:11, "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things." [John the Baptist didn't restore anything. And he was already dead when Jesus said this!] Matthew 17:12, "But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them."

Which Day is the Christian Sabbath?

www.sabbathcentral.com

Does it make any difference WHICH day we observe -- or whether we keep it? Does the Bible establish SUNDAY as the LORD'S DAY? Was the Sabbath given for the Jewish people only -- while Christians are commanded to keep SUNDAY as the LORD'S DAY? What about the other Holy Days God established are they for us today?

Church of God Faithful Flock - Home School Association

www.coghomeschool.org

An archive site of material that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong produced during his lifetime as our Apostle and the forecasted End Time Elijah who was to restore all things.

Three World Views - Only One is Going to Happen!

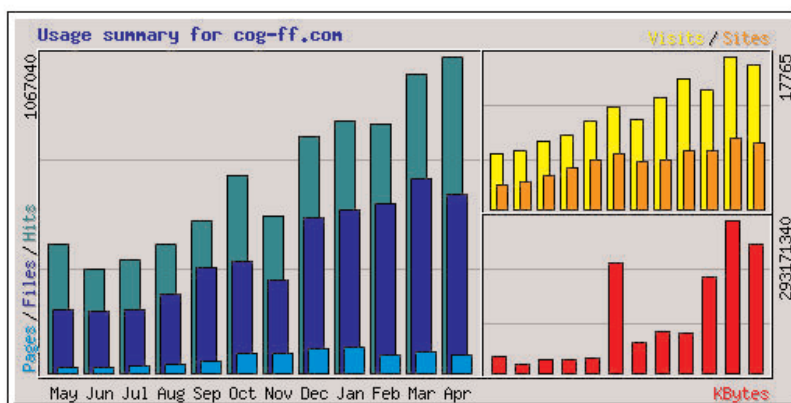
www.newworldahead.org

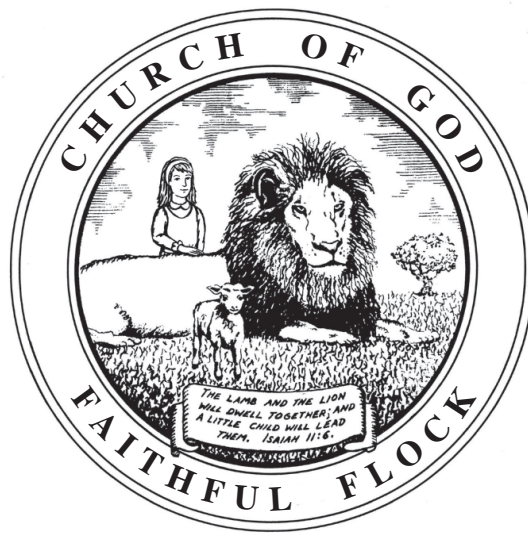
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BELIEVE IT! It will happen, regardless. It is sure -- the world's only sure hope. This advance good news of tomorrow is as certain as the rising of tomorrow's sun.

Web Statistics for www.cog-ff.com

This is our primary tool for the Internet and the statistics below show the remarkable and steady growth of the site as indicated by visitors and information downloaded. One of the primary statistics you might want to see is the number of unique visitors that come by the site as shown in the columns with the yellow background.

Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
APR-07	36,182	20,536	2,018	574	7,793	252,767,487	17,222	60,552	616,085	1,067,040
MAR-07	32,410	21,097	2,332	573	8,202	293,171,340	17,765	72,309	654,033	1,004,726
FEB-07	29,987	20,403	2,205	496	6,845	183,552,369	13,903	61,741	571,301	839,644
JAN-07	27,376	17,703	2,826	486	6,809	74,840,831	15,079	87,613	548,820	848,667
DEC-06	24,135	15,813	2,371	399	5,199	70,830,371	11,179	66,399	442,772	675,783
NOV-06	17,583	10,472	2,140	347	5,457	58,716,021	10,411	64,213	314,177	527,495
OCT-06	21,512	12,115	2,129	383	6,395	212,185,644	11,896	66,005	375,586	666,880
SEP-06	17,104	11,833	1,357	339	5,787	28,923,547	10,199	40,710	355,005	513,143
AUG-06	13,956	8,555	864	279	4,870	26,732,290	8,675	26,796	265,221	432,636
JUL-06	12,230	6,789	785	256	3,986	25,886,806	7,964	24,361	210,465	379,156
JUN-06	11,627	6,983	622	229	3,113	17,433,342	6,884	18,661	209,500	348,833
MAY-06	14,047	6,871	641	206	2,820	30,973,544	6,397	19,894	213,005	435,484
Totals					1,276,013,592	137,574	609,254	4,775,970	7,739,487	





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