

Apr/May/June 2012

The Philadelphia Remnant



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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Cover: The flock of sheep pictured on the cover of this magazine represent the scattered brethren of God's True Church. (*Photo courtesy <http://phillip.greenspun.com>*)

The Church of God Faithful Flock, with headquarters in Valley Springs, California, humbly presents this magazine – *The Philadelphia Remnant*, which 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, sermons and Bible study messages that Jesus Christ used him to do in his human ministry!

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Last Day of Unleavened Bread

By Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong

Spring 1985

I wonder if we always realize just how beautiful this music is that my brother had composed for this Church? I think perhaps a lot of the things in the early part of the Church many of you don't realize, that perhaps it's not heard or been informed on. But when we first began the college and we were raising up a new church here in Pasadena, a local church, and we already had a couple churches up in Oregon. They were very small and no real minister to take care of them at all.

And my brother had composed a piece that I heard him play, and it was very beautiful. And I had had the idea ever since I had been converted that in the congregation we should be singing the words that God Himself has given us.

You know the hymns that we had been singing were just regular hymnals that other churches use, and I noticed that they all seemed to sing the praises of the people, and if you'll go, if you'll get some of those books and read the words that go with many of those hymns composed by people having no knowledge of the Bible actually, they sing the praises of the people doing the singing. Whereas the Psalms that God wrote, and the Psalms really mean songs, sing the praises of God and are meant for the worship of God.

And so I asked my brother if he would devote his time to composing hymns for the Church, and so he devoted the rest of his life for it. Now I think there are about as many hymns that he composed that have not AS YET been printed and that you have never heard, as there are already in the book. And in due time they will come along, and we'll be learning new ones. However, we have a great many even as



MR. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

it is, and hearing that number just played on two violins and a piano just made me realize when you hear just for the music and played as special music, it is beautiful music.

So I will say that much in my brother's memory. He died at the age of 80, and he had devoted the rest of his life from back about 1947 to composing the music that we all sing.

THE PASSOVER SEASON

Well, brethren, this afternoon is the last service in the first annual festival of the year. We have festivals three times a



year in the spring, in the summer and in the fall. And we have the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread in the



DWIGHT ARMSTRONG

spring, and this is the second Holy Day at this time. I want to tell you a little later how we come to be observing these days, but first I want to just say, do we really understand why we keep them? And do we understand this particular festival of the Feast of Unleavened Bread fully?

ADVANCEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY

You know, we have an entirely different situation today than they did in the days of Jesus and the first, original First Century apostles? I think that we have heard compared a number of times in some of the things that have been put on the motion picture screen for us, of the comparison of what those apostles had to confront and how it is for the apostle today, and strangely here is a MUCH bigger world today and many more people in the Church than there were in the first year or two of the Church back there where they had 12 apostles.

Of course, the number of apostles grew even then, but there were 12 at the beginning, and yet they had to go afoot or on horse or mule-back, or row a boat by hand, or sometimes they could use a sailboat ... the winds.

But today we have so many more people and just one apostle today can carry the message out to millions more people than those 12 could do in those days. Today we have automobiles. We have the airplane, and we have the printing press and today we are probably reaching somewhere around 20 to 25 million people through the printing press, and we are reaching undoubtedly much more than a million every week by television.



ONE APOSTLE VIA TECHNOLOGY

How many people do you think who just happen to tune in and happen to listen to a program on television, and we're never on the best network stations or at the best time, how many out of a thousand or out of two or three thousand who listen do you think are going to go to the trouble of going to the telephone and calling in to request literature?

One or two out of a thousand, perhaps, or out of two thousand or three and yet here we're getting up 10, 12, 14, 17 thousand telephone calls from one program.

And that is not even half of the number of people that are writing in to subscribe for the Plain Truth or for our other literature. There is still more that come in from newsstands

and from other means, and we are reaching people by the millions.

THE ACCELERATION OF SIN

But there is one other difference between the way conditions were at that time and the way they are today. This is the festival teaching us to come out of sin by putting leaven out of our houses. It is the idea to teach us to put sin out of our lives.

Well, there are more sins that have been getting into lives today than there were in the days of the early apostles. I wonder if you realize that. Now, they had all of the natural sins that we still have today, but there are more mechanisms today that increase the amount of sins, more opportunities for sin with the motion picture and the automobile and all of the things that we have today, and the printing press.



Now Jesus said, “**As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days just before,**” His Second Coming and His return to put an end to all of this kind of sin and this world and to bring in God’s world, the World Tomorrow, the Kingdom of God.

And certainly what He said was true. Sins have multi-

plied and increased, and there’s so many more ways to sin. Now today, instead of coming out of sin, in the world it seems that the public media, not only newspapers and magazines, but radio, television, every means of reaching the people, are trying to show people how to sin and get away with it. In other words, how to avoid the penalty of sin, but not how to avoid the penalty by quitting sinning, by coming out of sin, but go ahead and sin and then avoid the penalty.



OBSESSION WITH ILLICIT SEX

One of the greatest sins today and it has been ever since, I think, the days of Adam and Eve, and one of the things that Satan is using against the world, perhaps even more than almost any other area of sin, is sex.

I wonder if you ever stop to think. Satan has no sex. He cannot reproduce himself. And we have been given such a wonderful God-given opportunity to reproduce ourselves, to have a family relationship, a loving, pleasant, joyful, family relationship. Satan and the angels cannot have that.

MINISTERING ANGELS OF GOD

Now, I think the angels rejoice, and their mission is to aid and service us who are the heirs of God’s salvation and of His Kingdom. And it is like the angels are a good deal like the nanny that, for example the young, I think there’s two young princes in England, there was a new one born not

long ago, but the parents don’t really take much care of them. They have a nanny to take care of the little kids, or they have servants. Wealthy people have servants to look after their children. But when the child grows up, if he is the heir of a very wealthy father, then he will, of course, be in a much higher position than the servant, but while he is yet a child, a servant is over him.

And so the angels are now higher than we are, and they are here to serve us. There are not only demons, and the demons are ruling this world because Satan is sitting on the throne of the world and not an angel. Satan is a former archangel, but he is sitting on the throne. But the holy angels are there to serve us, and I could tell you in a number of places, as a matter of fact I remember that I wrote that and added it in the book that I’ve been telling you about that is now complete. And I think unless we discover something else later that we want to update or alter or make an addition to or something, it’s now complete, ready to send to the printers for final printing.

And by the way we are going to print the book in the *Plain Truth* serially, and the first issue will come out in about another month or so. I’ve already turned the copy over to the editors of the *Plain Truth*. And, of course, we have the whole book ready by now.

But we hope to have the whole book ready before the Feast of Tabernacles. So, it is ready to go to press just as fast as they can get it printed from now on. But, well, I was going to mention something a minute ago. I think it slipped me now, but that I added into the book.

GOLDA MEIR, PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL

Well, anyway, let me get along. I’m speaking without notes now, and I just have to say what comes to my mind, and it reminds me the last two nights have been a movie on Channel 13 about Golda Meir. I wonder if some of you saw that. It was two hours each evening. It was a full four-hour movie or probably about three hours or a little more originally, but the commercials take out so much time on television. So, it took two nights for it, and it concluded with the time when Anwar Sadat made the famous visit to Jerusalem to declare peace instead of war.

And it showed them having some kind of a banquet, and President Sadat had made a speech and others and finally

Mrs. Meir was going to have to make a speech, and someone sitting next to her said, “Well, have you thought about what you’re going to say? Do you have something in mind to say? What are you going to say?”

She turned and said, “Did you ever know me when I didn’t have anything to say?” I couldn’t help but think about myself. I’m a guy who doesn’t have anything to say when I come out here, but I’ll keep saying it nonetheless.

But I knew Golda Meir, and I knew Anwar Sadat, and Anwar Sadat was a very courageous man to have made that visit, and I attributed so far as you can attribute to carnal people that are not filled with God’s Holy Spirit, I attributed greatness to her. She was a very unusual woman and so far as the natural mind goes, she said some of the very things to me that were said on this movie toward the end.

And she said to me that she wished that the leaders of the Arab nations could all come and sit across the table from her. She said we could have peace, and she said, “Our scientists and our technicians and our experts could teach them so many things to help them, and they could produce so much more out of their lands, and they could have so much more of the good things of the world, and they could be happier, and we could all be happier.”

Now, I’ve visited many heads of state, but I have never heard anyone else say that about enemies. That was one of the things that I noticed.



MR. ARMSTRONG WITH GOLDA MEIR, ANWAR SADAT



MAN’S EFFORT TO AVOID SIN’S PENALTY

Well, there is one thing. There are more sins, more opportunities to sin today and the whole effort is to make sin possible and to then avoid the penalty, to try to cheat God out of the penalty.

Now, the wages of sin finally is death, and all the scientists and technicians in the world are never going to cheat God out of that. However, most of them are asleep at the switch, and they don’t know what they’re doing. Jesus prayed on the cross, “**Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.**” And really I think that far more than 99 percent of the people in the world just know not what they’re doing when they’re sinning. There is so little of the right kind of education in this world, and their minds have not been opened to the truth of God. Satan has blinded them and they ARE blind.

But one of the things he is tempting people on almost more than any other one thing today is sex. Now they try to make it possible to enjoy illicit sex in a way that God never intended.

And, in so doing, they enjoy the beauty of sex – as God intended in marriage and then the production of children, lovely little children to come along, and the beautiful family relationship of real genuine love – for a temporary sensation.

So today they’re beginning to find that what they sow they reap. Now, we have the new diseases now – AIDS coming from homosexuality. So, they try to justify homosexuality. Instead of trying to do away with it and teach it for what it is they say, “Well, it’s just his sexual PREFERENCE.” Well, indeed it is, and sin seems to be the preference of most people instead of righteousness.

Continued on Page 23

The Ezekiel Watchman

God's Warning Message

'... The end has come it has DAWNED for you; Behold it has come! ... a day of trouble is near; ... Now upon you, I will soon pour out My fury ... So you, son of man: I have made you A WATCHMAN for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and WARN them for Me.'

Ezekiel 7:6-8, 33:7

'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the LORD.'

Malachi 4:5

By Alton B. 'Don' Billingsley

On January 20, 1942, the Nazi leadership gathered in a villa on the outskirts of Berlin and adopted the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question.' The Wannsee Conference, as this became known, from the suburb where the meeting was held, formalized the process that exterminated so much of European Jewry, writes Danny Ben-Moshe.

"As we mark the 70th anniversary of that 90-minute meeting in which 15 people condemned millions to death, there are many crucial lessons to learn from the Holocaust ..." – Wannsee Remembered, J-Wire, Jan. 21, 2012.

The Jerusalem World News, on Jan. 25, 2012, added: "Presiding over the conference was SS-Lieutenant General Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the Security Police and Security Service. In attendance were 14 high-ranking German

military and government leaders, among them Adolf Eichmann. Imagine, over lunch 15 men in 90 minutes changed the world forever. January 20, 2012 marks the 70th anniversary of that fateful conference. We dare not let this dubious anniversary pass without marking how little time it takes to alter the course of history. ..."

"... how little time it takes to alter the course of history."





The Berlin Wall

Consider how little time it took to bring down the wall in 1989 that had divided Berlin, Germany since been erected in August 1961, (Wikipedia Encyclopedia) "... and had completely cut off West Berlin from surrounding East Germany and from East Berlin."

It came down virtually overnight – leaving world leaders aghast!

"The **Berlin Wall** (German: *Berliner Mauer*) was a barrier constructed by the German Democratic Republic (GDR, East Germany). The barrier included guard towers placed along large concrete walls, which circumscribed a wide area (later known as the "death strip") that contained anti-vehicle trenches, "fakir beds" and other defenses. ..."

"... In 1989, a radical series of political changes occurred in the Eastern Bloc, associated with the liberalization of the

Eastern Bloc's authoritarian systems and the erosion of political power in the pro-Soviet governments in nearby Poland and Hungary. After several weeks of civil unrest, the East German government announced on 9 November 1989 that all GDR citizens could visit West Germany and West Berlin. Crowds of East Germans crossed and climbed onto the wall, joined by West Germans on the other side in a celebratory atmosphere. Over the next few weeks, a euphoric public and souvenir hunters chipped away parts of the wall; the governments later used industrial equipment to remove most of the rest. The fall of the Berlin Wall paved the way for German reunification, which was formally concluded on 3 October 1990. ..." – *Wikipedia*, the free encyclopedia

What took place at that time illustrates how quickly change can take place that alters the course of history!

Leadership Groups in the Middle East

The course of history is now being altered through similar leadership changes! This is evident from witnessing governments that have recently been overthrown in the Middle East and replaced with leadership that is no longer friendly to this country or Britain



The Transformation of Europe

In addition, the face of Europe is being changed due to economic and other problems of numerous nations!

Soon the Pope, this one or another, will be given the power of miracles by Satan the devil (Revelation 13:11-18). With that power, and what he will then do with it, will alter the course of history by reviving the Roman Empire by bringing 10 nations in Europe under its authority! (Revelation





17:12-13) And when this occurs, it once again will take place virtually overnight!

Blitzkrieg Nuclear Warfare

Shortly thereafter, the Beast with the blessing of the Pope will with **blitzkrieg nuclear warfare** attack and conquer the House of Joseph and other nations of Israel (Ezekiel 5:12-17, 6:6).

Tragically, the House of Joseph is asleep to the plans that undoubtedly are already being crafted by men behind the scenes to conquer and rule the world by the **Revived Roman Empire** (Isaiah 29:14). This can and will take place virtually overnight with no retaliation! (Ezekiel 7:14)

A Divided Nation

Jesus said a house divided cannot stand! This country is greatly divided politically and in other areas than ever before along with many unsolvable problems. The same rebellion is growing in this country much as it has been manifested in other parts of the world.



Famine and Disease Epidemics

Soon we will be entering the hard stages of **famine** (Joel 1), and the **disease epidemics which cannot be cured** (Deuteronomy 28:27, 58-61). They are even now making their appearance as the following articles make known:

Der Spiegel Online, Jan. 27, 2012: Coming Worldwide Disease Epidemics and Pandemics

"Antibiotics were once the wonder drug. Now, however, an increasing number of highly resistant – and deadly – bacteria are spreading around the world.

"The bacteria are transmitted via the skin, through towels, clothing or direct body contact. All it takes is a small abrasion to provide them with access to a victim's bloodstream. Festering pustules develop at the infection site, at which point the pathogens are also capable of corroding the lungs. If doctors wait too long, patients can die very quickly. The two bacteria, ha-MRSA and ca-MRSA, are only two strains





AVIAN FLU VICTIMS IN HANOI

Flickr

from an entire arsenal of pathogens that are now resistant to almost all available antibiotics. Less than a century after the discovery of penicillin, one of the most powerful miracle weapons ever produced by modern medicine threatens to become ineffective.

"With the spread of ESBL-forming bacteria, reserve antibiotics have to be used more and more frequently, thereby allowing new resistances to develop. In fact, there are already some pathogens that not even the drugs of last resort in the medical arsenal can combat. This rapid spread has caused many to wonder whether more and more people will soon die of infectious diseases that were supposedly treatable, as happened in centuries past. Unfortunately, there are many indications that this might ultimately be the case. The World Health Organization (WHO) recently warned against an impending medical catastrophe. ..."

Experts fear diseases 'impossible to treat'

By Jeremy Laurance, *The Independent*,
Feb. 20, 2012

Alarming rise in bacteria resistant to antibiotics. Government report finds Britain is facing a "massive" rise in antibiotic-resistant blood poisoning

caused by the bacterium *E.coli* – bringing closer the spectre of diseases that are impossible to treat. Experts say the growth of antibiotic resistance now poses as great a threat to global health as the emergence of new diseases such as AIDS and pandemic flu.

Gonorrhea Could Join Growing List of Untreatable Diseases

By Christine Gorman, *Scientific American*, Feb. 8, 2012

"The arms race between humanity and disease-causing bacteria is drawing to a close

and the bacteria are winning. The latest evidence: gonorrhea is becoming resistant to all standard **antibiotic treatment**. Gonorrhea is one of the most common sexually **transmitted diseases** in the world with about 600,000 cases diagnosed in the U.S. each year."

The Wrath of God

Due to man's reasoning, and rejection of God and His laws, all these curses are now coming down hard on the House of Joseph, especially Manasseh, and will come to be so bad two-thirds of the people will die from these curses, and the remaining third will go into slavery to other nations



HENRYVILLE, INDIANA TORNADO WRECKAGE

Indiana National Buard

(Ezekiel 5:12, Deuteronomy 28:45).
 God's anger is **red-hot** against His people: **"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Pound your fists and stamp your feet, and say, 'Alas, for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! For they shall fall by the sword (warfare), by famine, and by the pestilence!'"** (Ezekiel 6:11)"

Even now God would spare His people if they were to turn to Him with all their hearts and cease sinning.

He desires repentance for He takes no pleasure in the death of anyone as He makes known through His prophet to the leadership:

"Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have NO pleasure in the death of the wicked, BUT that the wicked TURN from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'" (Ezekiel 33:11)"

Severe Weather Conditions

The prophesied **famine and diseases** is even now in its beginning stages and is being brought about by severe worsening weather conditions to be followed by locusts (Joel 1.).

This will leave this country in such a weakened state it will be overpowered and conquered by the rapidly developing Roman Empire in Europe.

It also can be seen by the astute observer the disasters in nature have been *intensifying* and coming much closer together! They are rapidly leading the way into such terrible times that will be so *terrifying* as to be beyond description – so said Jesus Christ!

"For then there will be [the] Great Tribulation, such as has NOT been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And UNLESS those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved (alive); BUT for the ELECT'S sake those days will be shortened (Matthew 24:21-22)."



The Food Pantry is Almost Bare

The severity of the famine will be upon society before it is realized there is no food to be had from anywhere! Alarmingly, recent news reports make known there are no real reserves of food in either America or Britain!

Prophecy makes known society will soon come to know the *gnawing hunger pangs* – followed by death from the **famine, disease epidemics, and then nuclear warfare, and slavery** – all taking place shortly before Jesus Christ returns and establishes the Kingdom of God (Ezekiel 5:12); **"a soon-coming nightmare that no one seems able or willing to face the truth."**

Are YOU 'AWAKE' AND of God's Faithful Elect? How do you know? Check it out by prayerfully studying what Christ says of the Laodicean Church Era and compare it with the Philadelphia Era (Revelation 3:7-22) Your life could depend on it!



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Personal from the Editor

By Alton B. 'Don' Billingsley

'The Feast of Firstfruits'
'Of His own will (Greek: *having willed*)
He brought us forth by the 'Word of TRUTH', that we might be a kind of Firstfruits of His creatures.'

James 1:18

Dear Brethren,

How so wonderfully, precious and vital is the fullness of God's truth that He has opened our minds to see and understand by the power of His Holy Spirit – by which we have been graced to be numbered among the many Firstfruits in His Master Plan of Salvation that goes back through the centuries to righteous Abel.

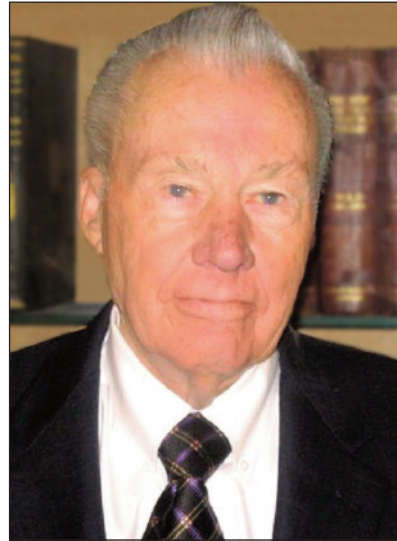
Before the beginning of time, it was willed by God our Father and Jesus Christ to expand Their FAMILY by adding sons and daughters from the human race to be with Them.

"... we also who have been given the FIRSTFRUITS of the Spirit ... for whom He FOREKNEW (II Timothy 1:9, Titus 1:2, Ephesians 1:4-5), He also PREDESTINED to be conformed to THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, that He might be THE FIRSTBORN among many brethren (Romans 8:18-23)."

The awesome enormity of what these Scriptures reveal should cause each of us to marvel with wonderment that the Creator God would have us in mind from past eternity to be blessed at our time in life with such a glorious future awaiting us (II Peter 1:2-4).

Considering the many trials we experience in life, we should ask ourselves: Do we have such a passionate love for God's glorious TRUTH that we will never turn away from it regardless of persecution or suffering a martyr's death?

The depth of love for God and His TRUTH has to be that great or we will fail and miss out on being among the First-



Alton B. (Don) Billingsley
eternal blessings awaiting us (Romans 8:30-35).

fruits at Christ's coming. All along the way of life each will of necessity have to make a continuous stand for it while remaining faithful to our Father and Jesus Christ (II Timothy 3:12).

We must be fully determined not to let anyone or anything separate us from the love of God and the

Selective Choice of the Firstfruits

To try and grasp the enormity of the awesome and precious blessing given to us by our Father and Jesus Christ of the WORD OF TRUTH by which we were selected and brought forth from a blinded world to be numbered among the Firstfruits (Ephesians 2:1-3), Jesus Christ made known to His disciples they were very SPECIAL to Him and to His Master Plan.

This was made very plain to them in response to their question of Christ why He spoke to all the multitudes in parables:

"Because it has been given to YOU to know the MYSTERIES of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it has NOT been given ... therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand ... *lest* they should SEE with their eyes and HEAR with their ears, *lest* they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears hear (Matthew 13:10-11, 13, 15-16)."

As it was then, so it is today. God's true enlightened people live in a world that is engulfed by Satan's darkness of deception that blankets the world! (Revelation 12:9)

This is very evident when trying to teach others something from Scripture that is contrary to their beliefs; also by reading and viewing through the eyes of the news media a misguided world in all areas of life; a world that totally lacks in the reality and value of the TRUTH of God.

Without having being given the reality of true understanding, they could care less. For as Jesus Christ said:

“And this is the condemnation, that the ‘LIGHT’ has come into the world, and men loved DARKNESS rather than the LIGHT, because THEIR DEEDS were evil. For everyone PRACTICING EVIL HATES the LIGHT and does not come to the LIGHT, LEST his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the TRUTH comes to the LIGHT, that his deeds can clearly be seen, that they have been done in God (John 3:19-21).”

The following Scripture makes this very plain: **“In Him was LIFE, and the LIFE was the LIGHT of men. And the LIGHT SHINES in the DARKNESS, and the DARKNESS did NOT comprehend it (John 1:4-5).”**

The World’s Perception of Truth

This is further understood by what Jesus Christ said to Pontus Pilate and his response to Christ: **“...You say, rightly, I am a King. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the TRUTH. Everyone who is of the TRUTH hears My voice.”**

Pilate responded by asking, **“What is truth?”** (John 18:37-38)

Pilate evidently then turned away from Christ in a disinterested manner as to what Jesus Christ might have replied to him and went to speak to the Jews. (NOTE: From a TV documentary: “The oldest fragment of a parchment from the Book of John was found with only these words: **“What is Truth?”**)

The Spiritual Depth of Truth

The Word of TRUTH on the heavenly level can only begin to be understood by the Holy Spirit of God opening one’s mind to receive it as the Apostle James made known (James 1:18).

With this in mind, consider the disciples of Jesus Christ: They were taught the true teachings by Jesus Christ during

His 3½-year ministry while here on earth as God in the human flesh but had not been given the Holy Spirit.

They learned those teachings with a high level of understanding that touched on the depth of the heavenly TRUTH, but it was still on a superficial level.



Scripture reveals they were yet carnal-minded as can be evidenced at the close of Christ’s ministry. Peter denied Him, and they all fled forsaking Him after His arrest (Matthew 26:56).

Ambassador Colleges/Worldwide Church of God

Christ’s disciples possibly could be compared to the Ambassador College students who over the years were taught the true teachings by faculty members who were teaching what they themselves had been taught by God’s late apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

A large number of the men students, having graduated and been ordained as ministers, were sent into the field here and abroad to teach and preach what they had been taught to the membership who also had been called to become a part of the Church of God.

After Mr. Armstrong died, the apostate pastor general who had replaced him, over an eight-year period of time, *slowly, but methodically deprogrammed* them – removing the TRUTH they had learned. With one sermon in December 1994, he completed his *satanic mission* by renouncing all of the teachings of God, including the 10 Commandments, etc., while embracing Protestantism.



The Firstfruits were to be productive servants in God's harvest.

The Promise of God's Holy Spirit

After the disciples had completed their schooling by Jesus Christ, and just before He was taken up into heaven to be with His heavenly Father, He gave them final instructions:

“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the PROMISE of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me (John 20:22; Luke 24:49) ... but you shall RECEIVE POWER when the Holy Spirit has come upon you ...’ (Acts 1:4-5, 8).”

And they did receive the Power of God's Holy Spirit as promised on the Day of Pentecost:

Virtually all of the ministry and the membership then walked away from all they had been taught and learned of the TRUTH – the TRUTH that had been understood with their minds, but had not reached down into the depth of their hearts with love for it.

Many are Called but Few Chosen

The following Scripture was then fulfilled with understanding: **“Many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew 22:14, 20:16).”** Only the chosen few Firstfruits remained faithful to the fullness of the Word of TRUTH, as had those before them through the centuries.

All of the Firstfruits over time were chosen for a very important purpose in God's Master Plan of Salvation for mankind, as Jesus made known to His disciples:

“You did NOT choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you (John 15:16).”

“And when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat on each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit ... (Acts 2:1-4).”

After having received the POWER of God's Holy Spirit entering their minds and hearts, the disciples then had a real grasp with understanding and conviction of the Word of Truth and went forth with those teachings to others as Christ directed them, bearing fruit for the harvest (Luke 10:2, John 4:35).

God's Holy Spirit Given to His Select Few

It was then, and not before, their minds were opened to receive the fullness of the Word of TRUTH with true comprehension and understanding of the MYSTERIES of the teachings of God with heartfelt love for it.

This should also explain and make known why the many thousands who walked away after having embraced the

truth with superficial understanding walked no more with God's Church and returned to Satan's world of darkness.

Though they had hands laid on them after being baptized for the receiving of the Holy Spirit, God our Father did not give it to them for they had not been chosen to be among the selected Firstfruits to be harvested in the coming resurrection by Jesus Christ (John 6:44, 15:16).

The many thousands of members who had walked away from the truth with the apostate pastor general, who himself had also walked away from it, had only understood God's true teachings – *with the mind* – but not with a heart of love for it.

The Holy Spirit Promised to the Disciples of Christ

God's Holy Spirit was promised by Jesus Christ to His disciples to dwell within them forever and always be an ever-present helper in all their needs:

“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that it may abide with you forever – the Spirit of TRUTH, whom the world cannot receive ... it dwells with you and will be in you (John 14:15-17).”

As can be noted, the love for God and His truth is inseparable! Further, Jesus Christ told His disciples of the vital importance of this precious gift as a vital and necessary source of aid and help in their growth and understanding of the Word of Truth

“But the Helper (*does not do it all for us, only helps us*), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, it will teach you all things (*as we apply ourselves seeking it*), and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you (John 14:26).”

God's Holy Spirit will also guide His Elect in greater understanding of the Mysteries and Treasures from God's Words of life:

“However when It, the Spirit of TRUTH has come, It will guide you into all TRUTH ... (John 16:13).”

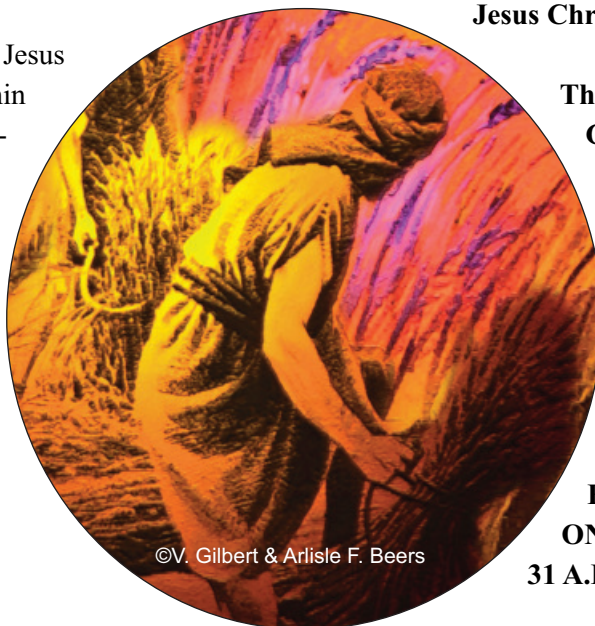
The Church of God

In addition to God's Holy Sabbath being “A SIGN” that identifies the Firstfruits as being God's people (Exodus 31:12-17) – similar to the RAINBOW being a sign from God (Genesis 9:11-17) – something that is SEEN – seen by observing it; so also is the Feast of Firstfruits a SIGN.

Pentecost a Sign, Lesson 35, Correspondence Course

(www.acbcconline.us/lesson35.html)

“The Day of Pentecost or Firstfruits is a SIGN. It identifies those who have God's Holy Spirit, those who are God's elect, those who will be resurrected when Jesus Christ returns to this earth!



The Day of Pentecost identifies God's ONLY TRUE CHURCH! Only God's true Church keeps the Day of Pentecost at the right time in the right way – with the understanding of God's plan.

That is because ONLY GOD'S TRUE CHURCH RECEIVED HIS HOLY SPIRIT AND WAS FOUNDED BY JESUS CHRIST ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST IN 31 A.D.!”

Ever-Present Threatening Dangers

With the ever-present threatening dangers confronting the people of God, Jesus Christ said in His prayer before His death to His heavenly Father:

“... Keep through Your Name (*Church of God*) those whom You have given Me, that they may be ONE as We are. ... I have given them Your Word; and the world has HATED them because they are NOT of the world. ... I do NOT pray that You should take them out of the world but that You should keep them from the EVIL ONE.

Sanctify (*set them apart for a holy purpose*) them by Your TRUTH. Your Word is TRUTH (John 17:11, 14-15, 17).”

The Laodicean and Sardis Eras of the Church of God

Though many thousands of members have been sanctified, been selected as Firstfruits, and numbered among the Elect, *because of their self-righteousness, lukewarmness and sleeping*, Scripture reveals these members will have to repent, and struggle mightily with sheer willpower to remain faithful unto death as ***martyrs during the Great Tribulation***, before their acceptance as Firstfruits by Jesus Christ at His coming back to earth (Revelation 6:9-11; 3:15-16, 19).

The Philadelphia Era of the Church of God

A right and close relationship with God, based on humility, overcoming and enduring faithfully to the end, is our only assurance from Jesus Christ of being counted worthy to be protected from the horrors that are even now in evidence in the world; but leading into the worst soon to come, ***the famine, disease epidemics, and worst of all, the Great Tribulation!*** (Luke 21:36, Matthew 24:13) Prophecy makes known Satan in his great wrath will persecute the people of God who base their lives on God's Word of Truth through his instruments; the cause is the same as always throughout human history, including the death of Jesus Christ on the stake – the Gospel message and teachings from God:

“I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them (John 17:8).”

And regardless of the persecution, strong deception, or whatever yet to come, Jesus Christ admonishes His people not to let anyone take their crown (Revelation 3:11).

The Near Future Very Bleak

For God's true people, as dark and bleak is the near future, beyond is the future life and world that will never end – a life and future that is directly connected with God's Passover and the Feast of Firstfruits.

Even though only the FEW have been called and chosen to be among the Firstfruits to be harvested when Christ returns, the Gospel of the Kingdom must continue to go forth through the Open Door while there is yet some light before the night comes (John 9:4).

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 with sincere love within each of us should be 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.

The Feast of Firstfruits, or Pentecost, is a time of vision and rejoicing for it pictures to us that we are like the golden grains within the heads of the wheat soon to be harvested.

And just as the heads of wheat have to be harvested *at just the right time*, so we also will be harvested at the right time when Jesus Christ returns.

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 need the nutrients and moisture from the soil.

This will also 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 Trumpets:

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion (Zechariah 14:4), and with Him 144,000, having the Father's name written on their foreheads. ... These are the ones who were NOT defiled with other women (Revelation 2:20, wrong churches), for they are virgins (II Corinthians 11:2). These are the ones who FOLLOW the



Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed (*pur-chased*, I Corinthians 6:20, Acts 20:28, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14) **from among men, being FIRSTFRUITS to God and to the Lamb (Revelation 14:1, 4, 3:8-10; Romans 8:23)."**

The question each of us should ponder with sober reflection: *Do I listen to the voice of strangers* (John 10:5); *am I one who is following Jesus Christ wherever He goes – am I a spiritual virgin in God's sight?* Am I numbered among God's true saints to be resurrected or changed, if I am yet alive, when Christ calls for His Bride to come to meet Him in the clouds? (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). These should be sobering questions to each one.

"...here also who have the Firstfruits of the Spirit ... (Romans 8:23)."

The Feast of Firstfruits, Pentecost
Following observance of the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread, the members of the Church of God within a few short weeks will be observing the Feast of Firstfruits, also called Pentecost!

God intends this season to be a time of rejoicing with great happiness for what it pictures to us.

And in this life to which we have been called, we should humbly kneel before our God with heartfelt love, praise and gratitude just at the Apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Ephesus:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He CHOSE us in Him BEFORE the foundation of the world ... having predestined us to son-ship that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Ephesians 1:4)."

Further, Paul wrote of our continued daily need to seek to please God and Christ in all our endeavors: **"...That you**

may walk worthy of the LORD, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God ... giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be PARTAKERS of the inheritance of the saints in the LIGHT. He has delivered from the POWER of the darkness and conveyed (*transferred*) us

into the Kingdom of the Son of His love ... (Colossians 1:1-23)."

Not to be puffed up – but with humility and with heartfelt gratitude.

"For it is the God who commanded LIGHT TO SHINE out of darkness, who has SHONE in our hearts to give

the LIGHT of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus but we have this TREASURE in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the POWER of Christ may be of God and NOT of us (II Corinthians 4:6-7)."

What a glorious and wonderful blessing each one of God's true people have been called and selected to be among the Firstfruits to be harvested in the resurrection when Jesus Christ makes His appearance from heaven above.

We fervently pray that we shall be there while looking forward with great happiness and joy in anticipation of renewing our relationship with others who have gone before us, while meeting the many others we have only read about in Scripture,

Though we realize of our own we could never be accepted by Christ, even so we must give it all we have while trusting Jesus Christ to then save us by His grace (Ephesians 2:4-10), while knowing: **"...He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful (Revelation 17:14)."**

These will be the Firstfruits of God's harvest! (Romans 8:23)



Feast of Pentecost

Value God's Precious Holy Spirit

By Mark Mendiola

After God's Holy Spirit was spectacularly poured out upon Jesus Christ's 120 disciples on the Day of Pentecost in 31 A.D., the Apostle Peter stood up, raised his voice and preached an impassioned, inspiring sermon to a multitude of Jews from many nations who were gathered in Jerusalem for the annual Feast of First-fruits.

"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, 'Re-pent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (*forgiveness*) of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ... And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.'"

Following Peter's powerful message, about 3,000 were moved to repent and be baptized and "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (*teaching*) and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ... And the Lord added to the

church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:37-38, 40-43, 47)."

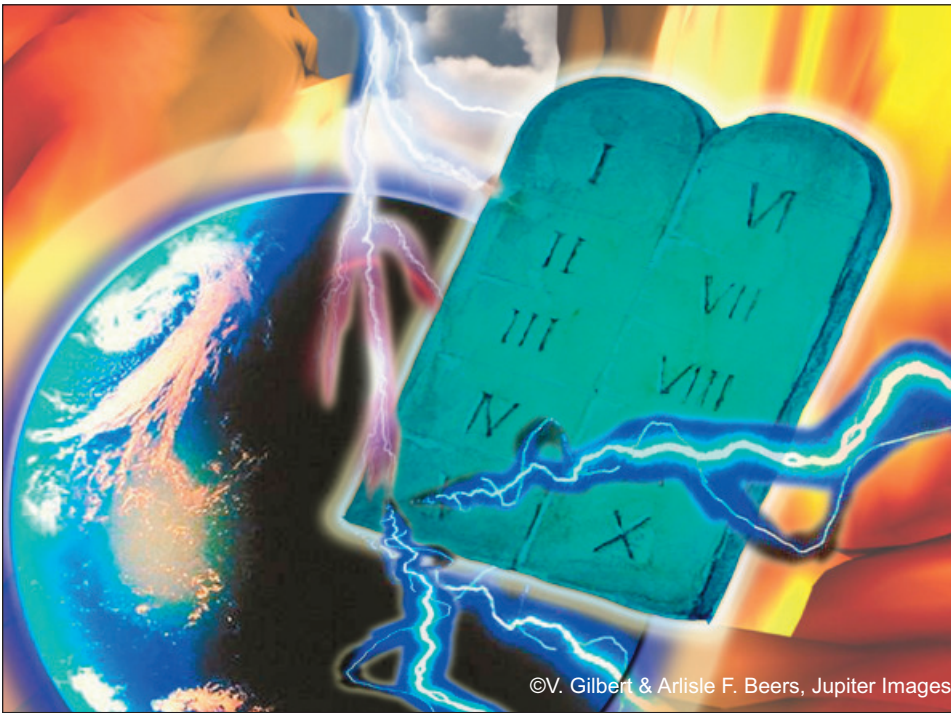
These thousands of Jews who repented, were baptized and received God's Holy Spirit fanned out to return to their respective homes in various countries following their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, planting the seeds of God's Church throughout the Roman Empire.

REPENT OF SIN

Repentance or turning from sin – which is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4), i.e. lawlessness – was a major message and thrust of the ministries of both Jesus Christ and John the Baptist prior to their ruthless murders. Repenting of sin is mandatory before one can be baptized and receive the precious gift of God's Holy Spirit.

"Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel' (Mark 1:14-15)."

Christ emphasized that repentance must include believing in the GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD – mankind's only hope of survival! Notice, He did not define



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the Gospel as “the good news of His atoning sacrifice” or “the good news of His death on the cross” as so many religious denominations espouse. They refuse to proclaim the wonderful news of Christ’s Second Coming to literally establish the Kingdom of God on earth! As a result, they deceive many, Christ warned (Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 14).

They preach a message about Christ, but not the message of Christ! They claim that God’s law was done away and nailed to the cross. They also do not preach an urgent need to repent of sin, contrary to the messages of Christ, John the Baptist, Peter, all the apostles and Old Testament prophets.

Following His crucifixion, death and resurrection, Christ said “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47).”

John the Baptist also stressed the need to repent, connecting it with the Kingdom of God. “In those days, John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’ ... Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance’ (Matthew 3:1-2, 8).”

Mark 1:4 also states: “John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Luke 3:3, 8 adds that John “went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins ... Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance’.”

OBEY GOD’S LAW

The message throughout the Old and New Testaments in the Holy Bible is the same. One must repent of sinning or transgressing God’s law as summarized by the Ten Commandments! That entails accepting Christ’s crucifixion as our Master, Savior and Passover, obeying Him and following His example (I Peter 2:21). Obedience is a mandatory requirement for receiving God’s Holy Spirit at baptism. That also is not emphasized by most professing Christian ministers.

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to

be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit (that) God has given to those who obey Him (Acts 5:29-32).”

Obedience to God’s Ten Commandments is a must to be given and maintain God’s Holy Spirit!

In His profound Sermon on the Mount in which He amplified the spiritual application of that law, Jesus Christ Himself said, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or



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U.S. Department of Defense, White House

GOD'S KINGDOM OF PEACE WILL BE BASED ON HIS HOLY, RIGHTEOUS LAW

the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill (*fill to the full*). ... Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:17, 19)."

Christ equated obeying God's law to the Kingdom of God because that Kingdom will be based on that law as its bedrock. As the Prophet Isaiah foretold, "He will magnify the law and make it honorable (Isaiah 42:21)." When He rules supreme as King of kings and LORD of lords, Christ will teach mankind His ways to walk in His paths "for out of Zion shall go forth the law (Isaiah 2:3)."

The Apostle Paul repeatedly upheld the sanctity and necessity of God's law. He wrote "for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified. ... Do you dishonor God through breaking the law? (Romans 2:13, 23)" Breaking the law dishonors God! Paul refers to "the righteous requirements of the law (verse 26)."

Psalms 119:172 states "all your commandments are righteousness." The Bible defines righteousness as keeping God's commandments or God's law. Throughout his epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul stressed the need to keep God's law and resist sin. He said "where there is no law there is no transgression. ... Sin is not imputed when there is no law (Romans 4:15, 5:13)."

Paul asked, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! ... Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts (Romans 6:1-2, 12)." In this sixth chapter of Romans, Paul em-

phasized the need for baptism to wash away those sins, comparing it to a burial.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not!

On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law ... Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good ...

For we know that the law is spiritual

... I delight in the law of God (Romans 7:7, 12, 14, 22)," the Apostle Paul emphasized.

THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT

After explaining baptism and the need to keep God's law and turn from sin, the Apostle Paul explains God's Holy Spirit and how one must have it to be considered a true Christian. Romans 8 has been called "the Holy Spirit Chapter."



AN OUTPOURING

He again emphasizes "the righteous requirement of the law." He

goes on to show "to be carnally minded is death" and "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." He stressed that "if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he is not His. ... For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God (Romans 8: 4, 6-7, 9, 14)."

True Christians, Paul explained, are those "who have the firstfruits of the Spirit," alluding to the outpouring of



God's Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the Feast of Firstfruits. Earlier in the Book of Romans, he wrote: "Now hope does not disappoint, because **the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit** (Romans 5:5)." "**The gift of the Holy Spirit** had been **poured out** on the Gentiles also (Acts 10:45)."

The Bible plainly shows that **the Holy Spirit is a divine power that is poured out**, not the third personage of a trinity as is erroneously believed by millions of professing Christians.

After His resurrection from the dead and prior to His ascension to heaven, Jesus Christ told His disciples, "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry (*or wait*) in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with **power** from on high (Luke 24:49)."

That Holy Spirit was miraculously **poured out** in such volume – like a waterfall – on the Feast of Pentecost that it was compared to a baptism when someone is immersed under water.

"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be **baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now. ... But **you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you**; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth' (Acts 1:4-5, 8)."

God kept His promise and **poured out that power of His Holy Spirit** on Christ's disciples precisely on the Day of Pentecost in a tremendous display of His infinite power, underscoring that God's annual high days are still to be ob-

served following Christ's crucifixion. Those annual feast days were not nailed to the cross!

"**When the Day of Pentecost had fully come**, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of **a rushing mighty wind**, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak with other tongues (*languages*), as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4)."

Jesus Christ compared God's Holy Spirit to wind and water, both **tremendous sources of power**.

That's no coincidence. Currents of wind and water can be harnessed by turbines to generate electricity! **God's Holy Spirit is a divine power by which we can shine as lights to the world**.

When He was approached at night by Nicodemus, a leading Jewish Pharisee, Christ explained, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. ... **The wind** blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from or where it goes. So is everyone who is born of **the Spirit** (John 3:6, 8)."

On the Last Great Day immediately following the Feast of Tabernacles, Christ stood in the temple at Jerusalem and cried out, "'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow **rivers of living water**.' But this **He spoke concerning the Spirit**, (*which*) those believing in Him would receive; for **the Holy Spirit** was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7:37-39)."



A PRECIOUS GIFT

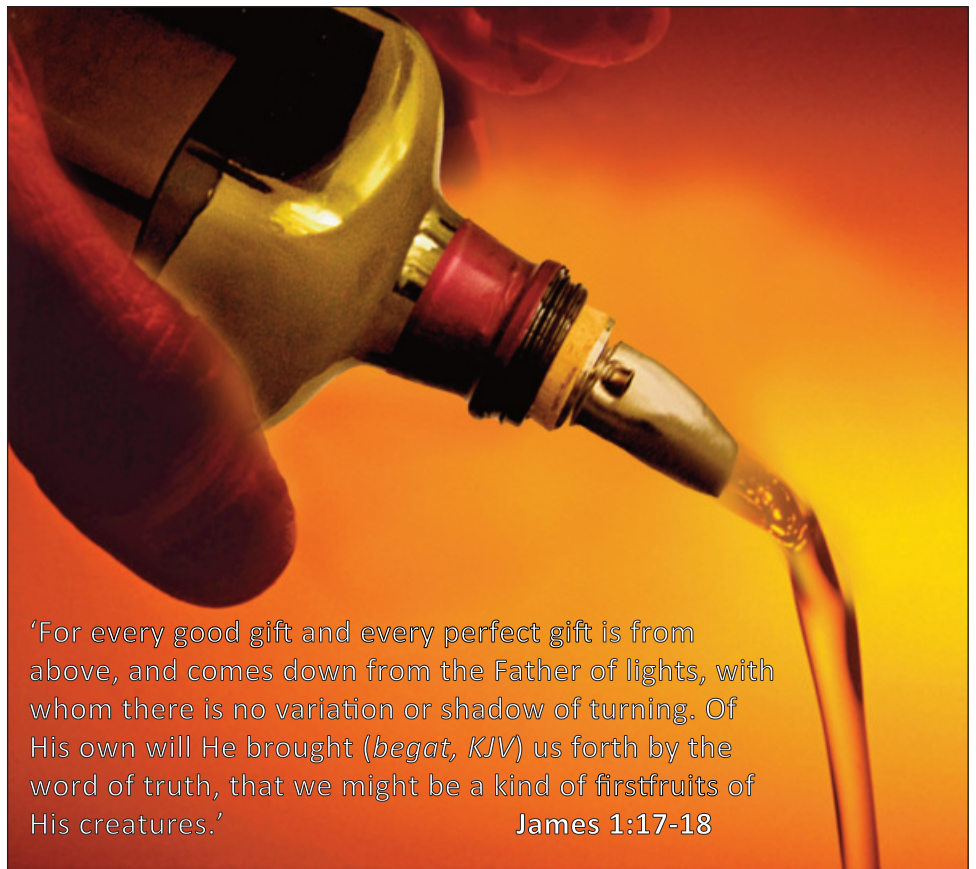
During his Pentecost sermon, the Apostle Peter emphasized in Acts 2:38 if one repents and is baptized for the forgiveness of sins, “You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” God’s Holy Spirit is a gift of inestimable value. The Greek word for “gift” here is “dorea,” meaning “gratuity.” Christ told the Samaritan woman at the well, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water (John 4:10).”

Simon Magus (*also known as Simon the sorcerer or Simon the magician*) of Samaria recognized the Holy Spirit was extremely valuable and thought he could buy it if he paid a large enough sum. “Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you (‘*To hell with you and your money!*’ *Phillips translation*), because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! ... Repent therefore of this your wickedness ... (Acts 8:18-20).”

“Simony” or paying for position or influence in a church is named after this same infamous Simon. Even today churches will politically ordain individuals because of their large financial contributions regardless of whether they are qualified to hold positions of authority or responsibility.

God’s Holy Spirit is a gift of divine power that cannot be bought with any amount of money, gold or silver. Notice how Christ explained the Holy Spirit is given: “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! (Luke 11:13).”

God the Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him, repent and are baptized. “For every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought (*begat, KJV*) us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures (James 1:17-18).”



‘For every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought (*begat, KJV*) us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.’
James 1:17-18

The Apostle Paul admonished the Evangelist Timothy: “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind ... according to the power of God (II Timothy 1:6-8).”

Paul also told Timothy: “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy (*inspired speaking*) with the laying on of hands ... Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all (I Timothy 14-15).”

God’s Holy Spirit must be stirred up or replenished every day via prayer, Bible study, obedience and regular fasting (II Corinthians 4:16). If we neglect that precious gift and do not value it, we will lose it!

LOSING GOD’S SPIRIT

In his epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle Paul gives a stern warning about the consequences of neglecting God’s Holy Spirit. “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed (‘*all the more careful attention*,’ *margin*) to the things we have heard, lest we drift away (*let them slip, KJV*) ... How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? (Hebrews 2:1, 3)” he asked.

He also warned: “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. ... For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end (Hebrews 3:12, 14).”

If those who have repented, been baptized and receive the precious gift of God's Holy Spirit then allow it to dissipate or evaporate through neglect or disobedience to God's law, returning to sin, it is no exaggeration to say they are in grave danger of losing eternal salvation!

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift (dorea), and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come (the Wonderful World Tomorrow!), if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6),” Paul warned.

“For if we *sin wilfully* after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and *fiery indignation* which will devour the adversaries. ... *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God* (Hebrews 10:26-27, 31).”

The Eternal God emphatically states: “But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness (*keeping God's commandments*) and commits iniquity (*lawlessness or sin*), and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithful-



ness of which he is guilty and *the sin which he has committed*, because of them he shall die (Ezekiel 18:24).”

As Paul told the Romans, “*The wages of sin is death*, but *the gift of God* is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).”

God emphasizes the need to repent of sin and the need to receive His Holy Spirit. “*Repent and turn from all your transgressions*, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and *get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit*. For why should you die, O House of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,’ says the Lord GOD. ‘Therefore *turn and live!*’ (Ezekiel 18:30-32)”

King David of Israel, a man after God's own heart, realized one could lose God's Holy Spirit through sinning. “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and *renew a steadfast spirit within me*. Do not cast me away from your presence, and *do not take Your Holy Spirit from me*,” he implored God in earnest prayer (Psalm 51:10-11).”

FOOLISH VIRGINS

In addition to wind and flowing water, God's Holy Spirit also is referred to in the Holy Bible as oil – another source of light and energy. It was a fuel that kept God's temple illuminated (Exodus 27:20). The oil in the lamps had to be replenished and maintained on a regular basis or the temple's interior would be plunged into darkness.

In the context of what would be the sign of His Second Coming and the end of this present evil age (Matthew 24:3, Galatians 1:3), Christ compared the Kingdom of God to *10 virgins* who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. In His “Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins,” Christ refers to the lukewarm spiritual state of His Church prior to His return.

“These are the ones who were not defiled with women, *for they are virgins*. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being *firstfruits* to God and to the Lamb (Revelation 14:4).”

The Apostle Paul also referred to God's Church as a virgin. “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as *a*



chaste virgin to Christ (II Corinthians 11:2).” The Apostle John refers to when “the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. ... The fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ... Blessed are those called to the marriage supper of the Lamb! (Revelation 19:7)”

In His parable, Christ said, “Now five of them were wise, and five of them were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps (Matthew 25:2-4).” The wise virgins valued that oil or precious gift of the Holy Spirit, but the foolish let it diminish. “There is desirable treasure, and oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man squanders it,” Proverbs 21:20 states.

Christ continued in the parable by noting: “But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’” Meanwhile, the foolish had allowed their lamps to get dangerously low and begged the wise for their oil when they awakened from a deep slumber.

“But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was (*slammed*) shut (Matthew 25:9-10).”



FIVE WISE, FIVE FOOLISH VIRGINS

Like Laodiceans, the foolish thought they were in need of nothing and self-sufficient. They had to vainly try to pay any price for the oil at midnight if they could even find any at that late hour. There is no indication they did.

They made last-minute preparations after squandering their time and God’s Holy Spirit. It was obvious they did not value it and were shut out of the marriage supper and God’s Kingdom, left out in the cold and dark! The



Wikimedia

Laodiceans also must buy gold refined in the fire of the Great Tribulation, buy white garments and buy eye salve at the very end (Revelation 3:14-22).

As world conditions relentlessly worsen, it’s obvious our time is running out. How many will be cut to the heart, repent, be baptized and receive God’s Holy Spirit before it is too late? How many who now have that precious gift of God’s spirit will value and maintain it, not squandering it?

How we respond will determine whether we will “be saved from this perverse generation” and be given the awesome privilege of marrying Jesus Christ as His chaste bride in the glorious Kingdom of God!



SHUT OUT OF GOD’S KINGDOM

Unleavened Bread

Continued from Page 4

Did you ever think about what is your preference, brethren? Is it sin or is it righteousness? Because again as I have mentioned before sin is the absence of righteousness. That's precisely what it is, and righteousness brings so much peace and happiness and joy, and it is the absence of that which brings sorrow and suffering and pain and anguish, discouragement, frustration, remorse and those consequences are not happy. They're not pleasant, and that's what the world is suffering.

I think they say that, I heard a statement the other day, I don't remember the exact figure, but nobody who had AIDS a certain number of months ago or a couple of years or something like that, or three, is still alive today. They know of no cure.

And yet they don't say, "Let's give up homosexuality and begin to obey God's laws." They say, "Now let's break God's Law. Let's try to find a way around it," and so the scientists now are trying DESPERATELY to find a cure for AIDS. "Let people go ahead and break God's Law. Let them bring on this disease, and then let us find some way to cheat God by a medicine that will cure it." And LET ME TELL YOU there is NOT a cure in a thousand carloads or a million fake carloads of medicines and drugs! There just isn't.

There may be temporary relief, but you know even the government won't let you put a cure in advertising any kind of medicine. You can say "relief." You can't say "cure."

There's been much in the news the last couple of days that I frankly had not heard of, although I had written a textbook on the subject of sex. This is something that I think has come along since and I had not heard of it – the I.U.D. I had a hard time remembering that because they want to use initials today. They don't want to speak the whole words out, and I have to think it's "I" and "U" and then "D."

And a lot of women have been experimenting with that as a contraceptive. And they are finding that when she uses it now, in so many cases, it makes her barren. And some wives in order to postpone another pregnancy for a year or

two have used this and then they find they can never have another child when they want one.

YOU CAN'T CHEAT GOD'S LAWS AND GET AWAY WITH IT, BRETHREN! YOU CANNOT DO IT! I HOPE we have the sense to know that! The world does not have that kind of sense. They want to break God's laws and then use some means of a drug or a medicine or have science invent something that will let them sin and then avoid the penalty.

They throw sex at you in EVERY way today on television. I think it was this morning there was a sermon. Yes, about turning on X-rated movies on television if you have one of these additions to your television that you can get now, so that you can have the rottenest kind of sex coming right into your living room. And a lot of people like to feast their eyes on something of that sort. Well, we were advised in the morning sermon against that sort of thing.

HOW TODAY'S CHURCH OF GOD CAME TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S HOLY DAYS

Now, I thought it might be interesting this afternoon if you would know a little more about why you are here, how you came to know about these Holy Days. Here we are on a Friday. What are we doing here on a Friday anyway? The world would probably think we're crazy.

I've explained some of this before, but I think I haven't explained what I'd like to say now in quite the same detail. I thought you might be interested in hearing about it, but I think it's pretty well known that I was challenged in the autumn of 1926, both on the subject of evolution and of the Sabbath day.

My wife began to keep the Sabbath. To me, that was religious fanaticism. I had lost interest in church and religion since I had been 18 years of age. I was interested in business.

And when I was challenged, I began to study evolution first. Now it was quite convincing, many of the arguments, but there were a few little missing links that changed the whole complexion when I discovered them. Ultimately, I

proved evolution is a false theory. I can absolutely, completely, disprove evolution, and I have done it. And I've caused dyed-in-the-wool evolutionists to admit that I've proved it, but they say, oh, they have to go on accepting it and believing it anyway, because they've just been wedded to it for so long they wouldn't know how to live without believing in evolution.

Well, that's the atheist's explanation of the presence of a creation WITHOUT the supreme mind of a Creator to have designed and thought out everything and brought it into being by a creation through a Creator.

So I began to wonder, I said, "I always supposed that there is a God. I've been taught that ever since I was able to know anything as I was taken to church from the time I was born. Now, maybe I've been misled. Maybe they were right. Maybe there is no God." I said, "I've got to have PROOF!"

Why do you believe there is a God? So many of you brethren have not really seen the proof; you've heard it and heard it and taken it for granted.

There are a lot of people in the world that say, "Oh, I believe in God alright." Now they don't BELIEVE God. He's no part of their lives, but they will say, "I believe there is a God. I believe God exists." That's what they mean.

Well, they've never proved it. They've just heard it and taken it for granted. I couldn't take it for granted any longer. I had to KNOW, and I was studying day and night and often up into one or two o'clock in the morning till my wife would call out and say, "Are you EVER coming to bed? You need to get some sleep."

And I would be up early enough in the morning to get down to the library in Portland, Oregon, by nine o'clock when it opened and begin another day's study.

And I proved the existence of God, and then I wanted to go further. Could I believe the Bible? I was going to go into the Koran and into the religious writings of other religions, but I said I'll take the Bible first because it's the book out of which the Christian religion comes and that's the religion of this country.

Well, at first I thought the religion of Christianity came out of the Bible, but in my study I found that it doesn't. They try to read it into the Bible, but they're teaching precisely the opposite, the very antithesis of what the Bible says on most important things. They don't know what the gospel is. They don't know what salvation is. They don't know how you get it. They don't know what man is or why he is. They don't know Who and What God is. No religion on earth knows.



THE MYSTERY OF THE AGES

That's why I decided to write this book *The Mystery of the Ages*. Who and What is God? Can you prove He exists? Why is it that people say, "Well, God isn't real to me? God just doesn't seem real." I've heard people say that. Well, we try to make it real, as real as I can in writing in the book.

There are many nations over in the East, the Far East, that believe in evil spirits and various kinds of spirit gods and spirit worship and people for thousands of years have believed things like that. Well, are there spirits? Are there angels? Why? What are they? Why are they? Did God create a devil? That's a mystery. This book had to explain all of that.



technological advances still cannot solve their problems in their own homes or with their next door neighbor. We can't solve political problems. We can't solve economic and industrial problems – capital and labor, problems between nations, wars, everything wrong. How did this civilization develop? That's a mystery.

Ancient Israel, why should there be a "chosen" people? Did God discriminate? Then why the Church? Why is there a Church? What is a Church? Why is it? Is there any reason for it? Does it have a purpose and what is it? The world doesn't know. The ministers of the churches don't know.

And the whole message that God sent by Jesus Christ, His gospel was the Kingdom of God. And they don't know that. The ministers don't preach it today. They preach a gospel about the

person, about the messenger, but the message that He brought, they say nothing about. That finally comes to be Chapter 7 and when we get through with that, that's only still the beginning.

Then let's say I had proved the existence of God. Then I had absolutely proved to my own satisfaction, absolutely proved the authority of the Bible, that it is DEFINITELY the Word of God, the Creator God, that it is 100 percent true in its original writings. Of course, we have translations and a few errors might have crept in here and there, but there's so many translations and there have been so many copies that we can get to the exact truth if we just have a little bit of patience and are willing to study a little bit. We don't need to be in doubt about any point.



Then man. You see I was thinking in the summer of 1926, before this challenge came, I remember it so absolutely vividly, just as if it was only yesterday. I was trying to reason out, I supposed I was an immortal soul at that time, but I was trying to reason out if I'm an immortal soul then what will happen to me when I die? And just who and what am I? And you know the more I thought, I tried to philosophize my way around it and tried to come to an answer, but it was a mystery. I couldn't understand it. But in the study that began that autumn in 1926, I finally found out what a man is – a human being. "The Mystery of Man," that's Chapter 3 in the book.

And then this civilization that has come from man, how did it develop? A civilization that now in the 20th Century has produced awesome results – going to the moon and back, the automobile, all the farm implements – most all have been invented even in the last part of the last 19th century or in this century, many in this century.

Phenomenal progress, and yet people can't solve their own problems. Troubles are escalating. Problems seem unsolvable by human beings. Great minds that can produce great



GOD'S SABBATH DAY

Now in that study, finally of course I had proved that God exists. I had disposed of evolution, but I hadn't yet disposed of this Sabbath question. And I was reading everything that the Methodists and the other people had for Sunday and against the Sabbath. Of course, I was reading what Seventh-day Adventists had and what the Sardis era of the Church of God had about the Sabbath, but I wasn't believing what they said necessarily.

I was only using that as a guide to what was in the Bible and to see whether they had that correct, but the main point was what does the Bible say? And I had finally come to the place where I was just about to accept the Sabbath and that meant eating crow to me because in a dispute as intense as this was a man doesn't like to admit that his wife was right and he was wrong.

But I was just about to accept it and then I came across a booklet, written by a dissenter from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Now they have had dissenters from their church just the same as we have. And here was a dissenter who had written something to try and prove that the Adventists were wrong about the Sabbath. And he had in this book, had gone through all of the passages in the Bible where the Sabbath, the monthly new moons and the annual Holy Days were mentioned, and they are mentioned many times, all three of those mentioned together.

And then he came to Colossians 2 verses 14 and 16 and he said, "Don't you see? There they are, and they're from the

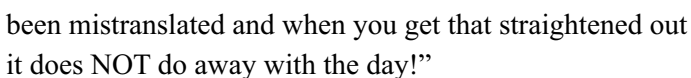
Old Testament and that does away with the Sabbath!"

And I told my wife, I said, "Well, I was just about to accept the Sabbath, but," I said, "this knocks it all in the head. This is a former Seventh-day Adventist and this shows that those days are done away. And it includes the weekly Sabbath as well. It says these Holy Days and new moons are all done away and that means the Sabbath is done away with it."

And my wife was worried sick, and when I told her that, she didn't sleep that night. She prayed ALL night long and in the morning, by the time I awakened in the morning, she told me to go back to the library.

And she said, "I want to ask you one thing. I want you to do this before you make a final decision. I want you to go through Colossians 2 and verse 16 and look up every single word in the original Greek language and get the meaning and you will see," she says. "God has shown me through the night, and I know that there is a word there that has





So, I got a Greek text, and I took the words one by one, and I looked up each Greek word in the lexicon, which gives the definition in the English language of each Greek word. And I finally came to a word “respect.”

Aaron Dean: “Yes, sir.”

Aaron Dean: “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.”

Mr. HWA: “A ‘handwriting of ordinances,’ now ‘nailing it to the cross,’ the idea was that all this was nailed to the cross and that meant that the Sabbath was nailed to the cross and the Holy Days. Now, it said in that verse, ‘hand-

Aaron Dean: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an Holy Day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath Days.”

Mr. HWA: “Now I get an echo over here. I didn’t hear every word of it, but I know it pretty well by heart. It talks about ‘in respect of a Holy,’ let’s see what is it Sabbath, the Holy Day, new moon?”

Aaron Dean: “Holy Day, new moons and then Sabbaths.”

Mr. HWA: “Holy Day, the new moon and then Sabbaths. Now I had already read this and you see, that was what got me, because verse 14 talked about nailing to the cross. And in verse 16 there was the Holy Day, the new moon and the Sabbath Day, and I said, ‘that does away with the Sabbath.’ I said, ‘We know that even the Adventists admit that the annual Holy Days are done away with. They don’t observe these annual Sab-

baths'."

So I went to the library and I came to the word “respect.” I looked up every word in Colossians 2:16, and I saw that the word for respect the original Greek word is (*meiromai*), and it means “part, parcel, portion or observance of.” And I looked further into commentaries, and I looked up in the different lexicons, and one lexicon said that one definition of (*meiromai*) is “sacrificial meat observance.” Sacrificial meat observance.





MR. AND MRS. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

Now, I went back and looked it over and said, "Well THAT'S what's done away! That's what is nailed to the cross. In every one of the texts wherever the annual Holy Days, the monthly new moons, the weekly Sabbath are mentioned together, every place in the Bible there were animal sacrifices held on those days! There was an animal sacrifice every Sabbath, and every new moon, and every time that you could possibly mention, there were animal sacrifices and separate from the things that happened daily otherwise.

Then I began to see that what was done away was the observances. Now I began to see from a further study of Colossians and of Romans, not Colossians, but Romans and Galatians, that the works of the law meant the rituals of the

law. And it was not talking about the 10 Commandments, the spiritual Law, but a PHYSICAL law, and I found out that God had added besides statutes and judgments, now statutes and judgments were the national law of the land.



Now we have a national law of the land in the United States. That's the Constitution of the United States. We have many national laws that are made by Congress in Washington. We have state laws made by the state legislature up in Sacramento. Then we have ordinances made by the city council, and we have even county laws and so on.

But the laws that regulated one person's relationship to another person within the nation were the statutes and judgments. But God added another code of law to ancient Israel, and that was the, often they are called "rituals." In other words, they were physical things to do morning, noon and night, every day, and they included special animal sacrifices every Sabbath, every new moon and every annual Holy Day or annual Sabbath, High Day Sabbath the Jews will call it still today – a High Day.

And so I saw that what was nailed to the cross was the physical ordinances. They had been a substitute for the Holy Spirit! God had closed up the Tree of Life in the days of Adam and Eve, and the Tree of Life had been closed up UNTIL Christ would come to sit on the throne and do away with Satan, and He hasn't done that yet. The Tree of Life is closed off from the WORLD and still is today!



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And today there are some called out of the world for some special purpose, and that's the Church. But Jesus said, **"No man can come to Me,"** in the Church, **"except the Father which sent Me draws him."** In other words, those coming into the Church are the called out ones, and God the Father calls them out, draws them to Him.

And the world does not understand that, and by all means when you get a copy of this book, I want you after you have read it, to go back and read it again. Because there are many things that you are going to forget that you read in Chapters One, Two or Three by the time you get to Chapters Six or Seven. And with that in your mind, you go back and read it all over, and it will ALL make sense. And if you don't do that you're likely to still be mixed up.

There is nothing essentially new in this new book, let me explain that. The Bible is like a jigsaw puzzle. Like it is cut up into a few thousand pieces, each one in a different form and shape, the little curly cues and some oblong, triangles and squares, rectangles, but in different forms and shapes, and there is only one way that one piece will go with certain other pieces. They'll go together no other way and when you get them together it forms a beautiful picture, a jigsaw puzzle.

That's the way the Bible is. It's in different parts here and there, any one subject, you study the Sabbath, you find some of it in the second chapter of Genesis, and you find some of it clear back in Revelation, clear to the end of Revelation. You'll find it all the way through a little here, a little there. So the Bible itself tells you in the Book of Isaiah that God has made it a coded Book, and it is **"here a little, there a little."**

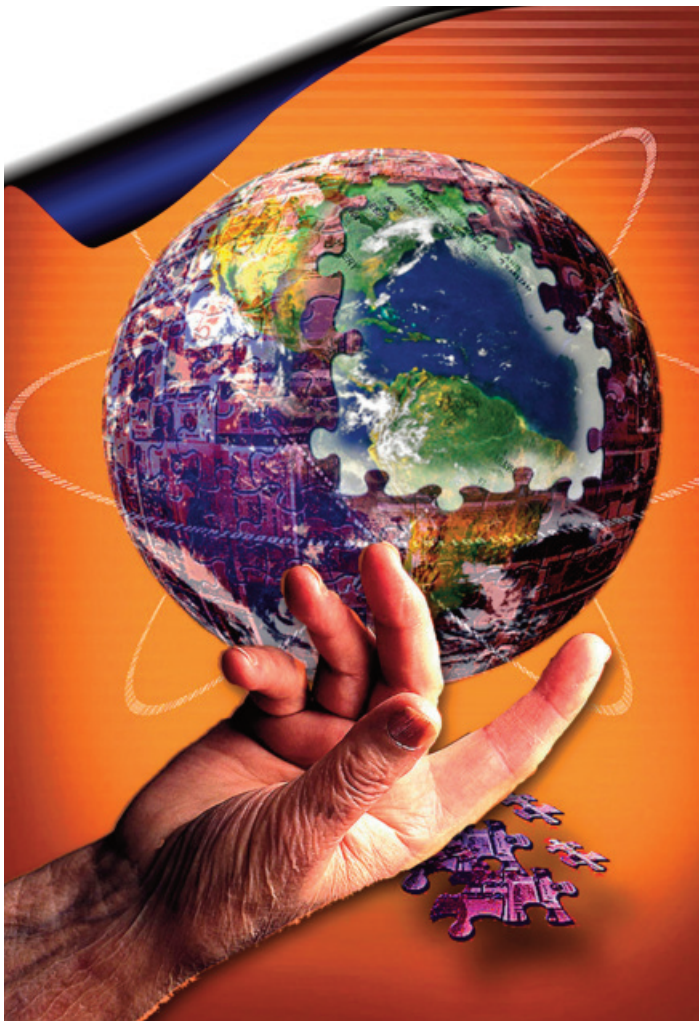
Well, the book I'm writing is trying to take all those

pieces and put them together in a time sequence and still it's only a synopsis. In other words, I'm covering the root, the trunk of the tree and the major branches, but the little minor branches and the twigs I'm not trying to fill in. It is a sort of, oh, what is the word I want to think of? Well, it's a summary anyway, but it explains it so you can begin to understand the Bible, and it is the Bible made plain. That's what it will be.

Aaron Dean and I have been working very hard on this and



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Well, I've tried to practice that and the job is still getting done. There is always a way. I find, now we're serving handicapped people over in Jordan, and I can really suffer to an extent with them and appreciate them because I find I have quite a handicap now. And I find that you can go ahead and get things done in spite of a handicap. That's a thing a lot of people have learned, and I suppose some people have not learned it.



Now, how did this all start?

How did sin start? It started in the Garden of Eden. God had one man created. Now that man, as far as he went, was perfect. God saw whatever He had created, and it was not just good. It was VERY good, VERY good, but He hadn't finished it yet.

Now I have said so many times there is so much duality in the Bible, and in this book you will find the duality is mentioned dozens of times, all the way through. There is so much duality, the first and the second. The first is usually

physical, the second is spiritual. The Old and the New Covenant. The first Adam and the second Adam.

since I can't see to read anything anymore, he has to sit there and read to me. I start to type on the typewriter and every time I stop, he has to come and read what I wrote and set the typewriter for the next word. And I hit the wrong key quite often, but he is able to figure out where I hit the wrong key and correct it. And that's the way we get things done.

But you know if you read the booklet on the *Seven Laws of Success*, you'll find that one of the laws is having the, oh, now what's the word I want? You not only have to have education and drive, but you have to have the, let's see someone will have to tell me the word, I guess, it won't come to me. The ingenuity to think your way through it, anyway, and then you have to stick with it and never give up.



Now, Adam was made in sort of a dual process. First, God made the man. God's purpose was to reproduce Himself, but He started out with a physical man made from the dust of the ground. Now, the man as far as he went was made "**very good.**" You could call it perfect. Physically, he was absolutely per-

fect. There was nothing wrong with him. As long as he observed nature's laws, he wouldn't be sick, but he was not complete yet.

His creation had not been quite completed. God wanted him to reproduce, and he couldn't do it. So, God had to complete him by putting him into a deep sleep. That's exactly what they do when they operate on you in the hospital. We call that anesthesia. And then God operated on him, and God took out one of his ribs.

Now, you know there is a little point there that may interest some of you. A lot of people say, "Well, if God did that how come we don't all come short one rib?" Well, you know acquired characteristics are not carried on by heredity. A man can have a leg amputated, a finger amputated or a toe. That doesn't mean that when he has children they will have it amputated or gone and be born without one. So Adam's children had the full number of ribs when they were born.

But He made a woman out of one of Adam's ribs. The woman wasn't made from the dust of the ground. She was made from the man.



HUSBAND'S LOVING RULE OF HIS WIFE

Now, right now one of the things, one of the evils that are coming along. God made the man to rule over the woman, but it was the kind of ruling in LOVE.

God is a RULER, but God is LOVE. His mercy is as great toward us as the heavens are high above the earth, as far as the east is from the west, so far as He will remove our transgressions from us IF we repent, and because He paid



the penalty in our stead through Christ. That's the way a man should rule over his wife. It is a loving supervision. Loving her as himself.

Sometimes a man loves a wife more than himself and does things for her that he shouldn't that are not good for her. A lot of men love to please their wives and still they neglect the RIGHT kind of leadership over them. This rule is merely leadership, LOVING leadership. That's what it is.

MAN INCOMPLETE

And so man was finally physically complete, but not mentally. He still just had one spirit with a brain and that gave him human mind, with perhaps several million times greater output than an animal brain, and yet the brain is the same and the animal brain is just as good. The difference is there is a spirit in man, but man is not a spiritual being.

On the television this morning, I heard a man say that ... I was watching my program this morning on television, and there was another program following, and I won't mention the man's name. He will mention mine, and he says I don't have any credibility. I don't think he has any either, but I don't have to mention his name.

Anyhow he was saying that God formed man of the dust of the ground, and he became a spiritual being. That is not so. The Bible doesn't say that. A spiritual being, a spirit becomes spirit and CAN'T die, and God said to THIS soul, "Thou shalt surely die if you take the forbidden tree," and "the soul that sinneth it shall die." And so the soul is not spiritual.



THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT

Anyway, then God created the woman. Now how did sin start? Well, Satan slipped in.

Now as to whether Eve had stolen away from Adam and Satan had gotten to her alone or whether Satan got to her while she was right there in Adam's presence, frankly the Bible doesn't state. It does say that when Eve was tempted and deceived, that she took of the fruit, **"and did eat and gave unto her husband with her and he did eat."**

Now at that time, the husband was there with her. Then was he with her at the time that Satan tempted her? The Bible just doesn't say one way or the other. I've always assumed she'd stolen away from him, and he should have been looking after her.

Now perhaps so, and if so she came back to take it, and her husband was with her when she took the fruit, but might not have been with her when the devil tempted her. I don't know. I only know what God says. When I tell you these things, I'm only telling you what God reveals and you can check up on it. It's all in the Bible. You can check up on it, and you can see it the same as I can. I'm

not giving you things that I made up in my mind.

I didn't originate the truths that I teach, but I learned them the same way the Apostle Paul did, directly from Jesus Christ. But you see Jesus Christ in Person was on earth and taught Paul, and the Bible is Jesus Christ in writing. It's the same word exactly, and Jesus Christ in Person was the Word of God, and the Bible in print is the Word of God,

and they're both the same. I just learned it from the printed Word, and he learned it from the verbal Word and from Jesus in Person Who spoke to him. But the Word was the same, precisely the same.

Now they disobeyed God. They sinned, and when they did God closed the Tree of Life, and it was closed UNTIL the Second Adam would come and remove Satan from the throne and sit on that throne. As long as Adam had obeyed



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both physical and spiritual. You read of it in the fourth chapter of Matthew the first verses.

Jesus had to come. He couldn't just come and sit on the throne. He had to come and QUALIFY. Now, He didn't have to be taught how to do it. He already knew that, but He came to call others out of this world to join Him in sitting on that throne WHEN He was going to sit on the throne.

He didn't come to save the world. He

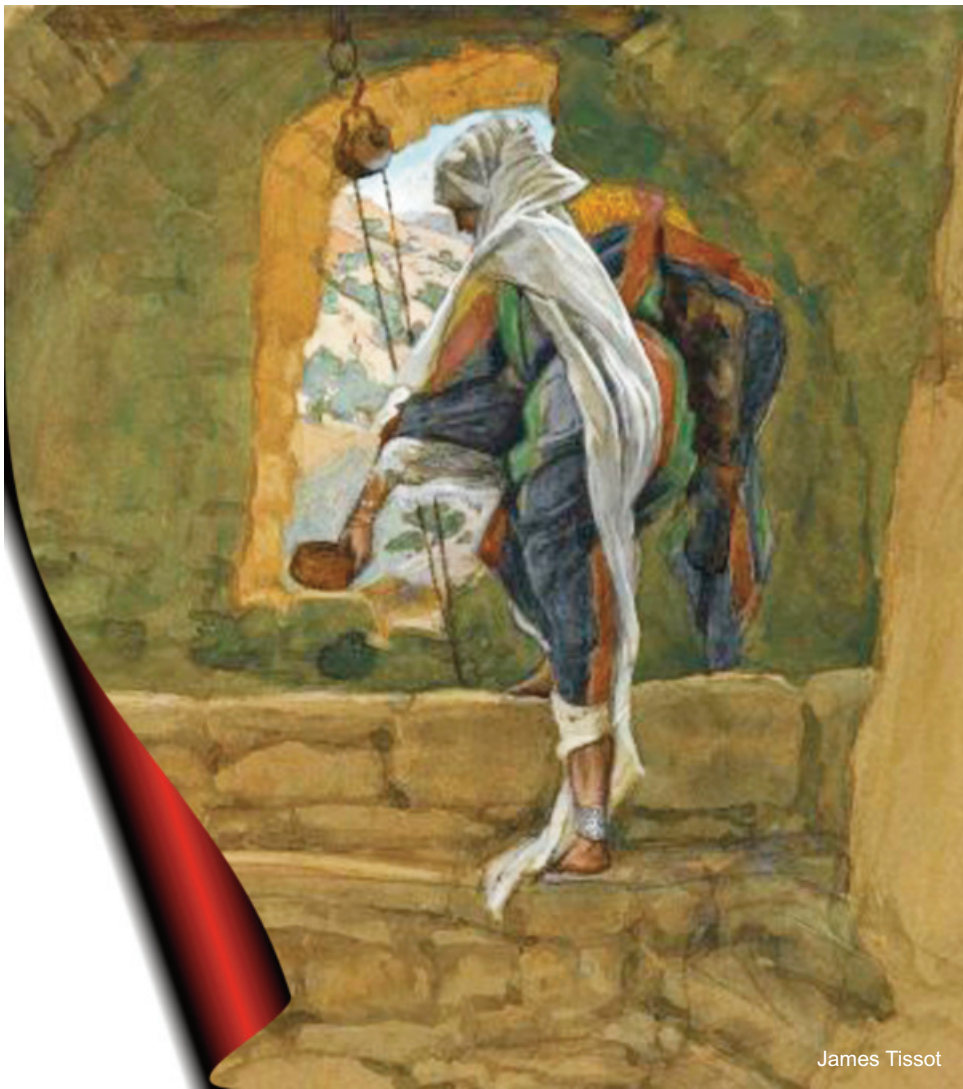
Satan, Adam and his family were to be Satan's kidnapped children, and this world is being held hostage. And Jesus came to pay the ransom price for the kidnapping when He paid for our sins. And so ALL through time up to now the Tree of Life has remained CLOSED. That's why the world can't understand and again in Ephesians 4, the first four verses up to verse 4 you will read how Satan has deceived the world and blinded them, and blinded them so they can't see spiritually. They can't see the truth.

made no effort to save the world. NOT ONCE can you find him begging people to give their hearts to Him. NOT ONCE did He promise them the Holy Spirit if they would only accept Him and receive Him. Not once. Not once did He go out or did He send anyone out on a soul-saving crusade.

THE SECOND ADAM

Now when Jesus came, He was the Second Adam, but He DID NOT come to sit on that throne! Jesus came, now I want you to get this, because I haven't put it quite this way before, Jesus came first to qualify to sit on that throne where the first Adam failed. The first Adam could have qualified to sit on that throne and replace Satan, but He failed. Jesus came and He had to meet Satan head on, and He conquered Satan. Satan tried to conquer Him. That was the most titanic battle ever fought! No great war involving millions of people and shedding of much human blood has been as titanic a battle as the one that Jesus fought when He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights and was tempted of the devil in the three very great temptations,





James Tissot

WOMAN AT THE WELL

On the contrary, He was walking up through Samaria, and He came to Jacob's well, and there was a woman, a Gentile woman, and He mentioned, He asked her to give Him some water, draw a little water out of the well. He was thirsty. And He said, she wondered who He was, she said, **"How come you, a Jew, would ask me?"** Oh, they were Samaritans, and the Jews would call them dogs and would have nothing to do with them, and it was surprising that He would even talk to her because Jews would not. And she asked Him how come? And He answered her, **"If you knew who had asked you for that cup of water, you would ask Him to give you living waters, and He could give you living waters, and you would NEVER thirst."**

Well, right away she did ask Him. She said **"Well, give me of this living water."** The living water He spoke of the Holy Spirit. Oh, what a wonderful chance for Him to say, "Boy, oh boy, daughter if you confess me now you can have the

Holy Spirit! You'll go to heaven when you die!"

He didn't say anything of the kind. Do you know what He said to her? He told her about her sins. He said, **"Go call your husband."**

Well, she looked a little strange at that. **"Well I, uh, I have no husband."**

"Well," Jesus said in effect, **"for once you've told the truth,"** as if she had never been accustomed to telling the truth.

"You've had five husbands, and the one you're living with now is not your husband."

Well, she wondered how He knew all that about me. He never saw me before.

No, He wasn't on a soul-saving crusade. He said, **"No one CAN come to me except the Father that sent Me draw him."**

THE CHURCH OF GOD THE FIRSTFRUITS

Now WHY? Why is the Church the firstfruits? Brethren, today we're ending the first festival, the spring festival. And we begin to look now toward 50 days from last Sunday, and we come to the time of the Day of Pentecost or the Feast of FIRSTFRUITS, picturing the Church as the FIRSTFRUITS of God's salvation.

We are we the FIRSTFRUITS? Is God discriminating against the rest of the world when He calls us out and says others CAN'T come to Him? We have been PREDESTINATED to come to Christ. You have been PREDESTINATED if you have God's Holy Spirit. Otherwise, you wouldn't have God's Holy Spirit. But now why are we the Firstfruits? Why is God not calling the rest of the world? Why are we being called to become teachers in the World Tomorrow?

We're going to be called kings and priests. As kings, we will RULE. Jesus said to us in the Church, not to anyone outside of the Church, **"IF you overcome, you will be given power over the nations to rule with a rod of iron."**

Revelation 3 verse 21: **He that overcometh, to him "will I grant to sit with me IN MY THRONE,"** when He sits on Satan's throne, even as Jesus did overcome and is now set down with His Father on His Father's throne in God's heaven.

We're called for a special reason. Now why are we called now? Why? Is God discriminating against the rest of the world? Or is He discriminating against us? We have to fight Satan, and when they're, when God finally saves them, they won't have Satan to fight because He's not going to call and save them until Satan is put away.

All right let me tell you something you never

thought of before. Now open your ears, please, and listen because here is a truth I think you haven't thought of! Jesus had to come and QUALIFY by overcoming Satan before He could sit on that throne. We are going to sit with Him on that throne, so we have to be called at a time when WE QUALIFY by also having to overcome Satan.

"He that overcometh." What do you overcome? Satan and the world, Satan's world and your own self that Satan's already inoculated his spirit and attitude into you. That's WHY we're the Firstfruits! We have to qualify DURING Satan's reign! The rest of the world will be called when Satan is not reigning any longer.

THE CALLING OF MR. AND MRS. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

Now, you never heard that before, brethren. God has called me as one to whom He can reveal His truths and through whom He's revealed the truths that you have. He revealed

the truth to me. I started to tell you at the beginning of the service this afternoon how God called me back in the fall of 1926, and how I came to this about the Sabbath and Colossians 2:16.

And when I saw that the days weren't being done away with, but that the sacrificial meat offerings ON the days were done away with and only the PHYSICAL things but not the spiritual things, then I said then the days are NOT nailed to the cross, the days are NOT done away with and I said to my wife, "That means you're not keeping enough of the Sabbath. You're only keeping the weekly Sabbaths, and we've got to keep the annual Sabbaths, as well. And she was overjoyed. She could see it right away because now I

could see the Sabbath, and I could see that it meant the annual Sabbaths, as well.

Brethren, so far as I know, no one else on earth except those or those that got it from us, and that's very few, are observing

God's annual Sabbaths. It just has not been done through these ages.

ELIJAH THE PROPHET

God said someone was to come and restore the truths that had been lost, and they were lost mostly during the very first century in the Church over 1,900 years ago.

You know there's a prophecy about John the Baptist. Well, the prophecy is about Elijah, but if you read in (Malachi) 3 verses 1 to 5, it is talking not about someone preparing the way for Christ's First Coming, but when Christ comes to sit on the THRONE of the earth and remove Satan.

You read verse 1 and you can apply that to John the Baptist, but you read on through verse 2, 3, 4 and 5, and you'll find it's talking about the Second Coming of Christ, the things that He will do then, but He did none of those things that are in verses 2, 3, 4 and 5 when He came the first time.



Now John the Baptist did fulfill verse 1, even Jesus said so. Jesus said that he had come in the power and spirit of Elijah. Was he Elijah? No, he wasn't. They asked John the Baptist, **"Are you Elijah?"** He said, **"No, I am not,"** and he wasn't a liar. He knew he was not Elijah.

Am I Elijah? No, definitely not. Now, I've met "Elijah." Elijah has come and announced to me that he was Elijah, but I showed him the way out of the office. I didn't believe him.

I suppose there are a lot of Napoleons around and a lot of Elijahs, even one came into one of our offices one time and said he was Jesus Christ. Well, he got thrown out, and if he was Jesus Christ, Christ couldn't be thrown out. Christ was a little too strong for that.

So there are some crackpots around, but just because we have truth doesn't mean we're crackpots by any matter of means.

Now in the 17th chapter of Matthew, you find the transfiguration when a couple of the apostles were with Jesus and in the transfiguration they saw a vision, and there was Christ as He will be at His Second Coming in glory and with Him was Moses and Elijah, and He said, **"Don't tell anyone until after,"** I think it was after His crucifixion. But then the disciples asked Him, **"Well, how do they say now, that Elijah shall YET come?"**

Now at that time John the Baptist had already come and had been taken prisoner and his ministry was ALL finished and undoubtedly he had already had his head taken off and was dead.

And they asked Jesus, how did they say, that Elijah shall first come? Before the Day of the Lord and before Christ's

Second Coming, and Jesus answered, **"Truly Elijah SHALL come and restore ALL things."**

What was He talking about, brethren? John the Baptist did not restore anything. He came and called those who already knew. He didn't restore knowledge to them. He called them to repentance and baptized them in a baptism of repentance, but he didn't teach them new knowledge. Jesus did that. Jesus is the one who came as a teacher. John the Baptist was a baptizer, not a teacher.

But Jesus said after John the Baptist had come and gone, that Elijah would YET come, before the Second Coming of

Christ and before the Day of the Lord. Has anything been restored? The original truth that had been lost has been restored to this Church. Brethren, these are days when God's prophecies are being fulfilled, and we don't have too much longer until even the Second Coming of Christ is going to occur.

Now, every now and then I see that some

crackpot gets something out saying I have said that I am going to live until the Second Coming of Christ. I don't ever remember having said that, and I'll tell you, I have no reason whatsoever to believe that, absolutely NO reason in the WORLD to believe it. I will just say this. I will live as long as Jesus Christ and God the Father want me to live.

My life belongs to Them. It's not mine. As long as He wants to keep me here I will be here and if I die it's because He's going to let me die and that may be before tomorrow morning. I don't know. I absolutely don't know. For your sakes, I want to stay on. I feel a lot like the Apostle Paul did when he would like to go and be with Christ, but it was needful for them that he stay on longer. It's the same way now.



So, I'll try to take care of myself so that I can stay on as long as God wants me to. I will try to continue to lead you into the truth, **but there ARE those that would love to destroy that truth.**

THE FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS

We are the **Firstfruits**. Now think of why. We are going to come to that Holy Day next. It will be only 50, less than 50 now, 50 days from last Sunday. **That is the Feast of Firstfruits**, and we have to come to realize that we are called as the **Firstfruits** because we are called to have to qualify to sit on that throne the same as Jesus did.

Now we'll be UNDER Him, but we will be made very God, the same as He is made God by a resurrection from the dead. If we die between now and then, we'll be resurrected immortal as God beings. If we're still alive, we'll be changed in the moment, in the twinkling of an eye and rise, not in an airplane, but just rise up in the air by yourself without wings and meet Him in the clouds in the air and everybody will come down over the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, or just to the east of the main city of Jerusalem.

That's why we go up in the air. God's going to get everybody over there in a hurry, and I think somehow you'll go faster than you would in an airplane. I don't know just how God's going to work that out.

PUTTING SIN OUT OF OUR LIVES

We'll wait and see, but we're living in the very last days. Sin is increasing by leaps and bounds. Sin is coming at you and being thrown at you in every way and from every direction as never before. Now, we've had seven days to show us that we have to put sin out of our lives. We're called for a special mission. We are special with God, but that puts the responsibility on you to resist sin, to put sin out of your lives and put the righteousness of God in and to hunger and thirst for God's righteousness.

Brethren, I've come to see why I should hunger and thirst for God's righteousness. You see every bit of pain and suffering, every bit of stress, mental torment of any kind, every bit of everything that is unhappy and unpleasant comes from sin.

If you are righteousness, that's the absence of sin, and sin is the absence of righteousness, but if you get rid of the sin and supplied it with God's righteousness, then you have none of those things to worry about.

Now, I think about God, and God has no worries, no frustrations. God has FULL confidence and faith and FULL as-

urance. God is supremely happy. The only thing that can possibly make Him unhappy is some of us and the things that we do, but I think He loves us so much He's willing to suffer that for us if necessary, and He does.

But I do hunger and thirst for His righteousness because it means the absence of the consequences of sin. This world is trying to do away with the con-

sequences of sin, and they CAN'T DO IT, and they're not accomplishing it, and they never will. The consequences of sin are going to be there. We should come out of it all together.

Now look forward to the next festival, **the Feast of Firstfruits**, and remember we're called, and we're only starting now on getting sin out of our lives and growing in knowledge and in grace and overcoming constantly and enduring to the end. Well, God bless you and help every one of you and keep close to Him.



A very small amount was edited out of this sermon due to the length of it while trying to fit it in the magazine. However, the continuity of the subject has not been affected. Those who would like to receive the complete sermon are encouraged to write and request it from us.

Alton "Don" Billingsley





Energy Crisis Roils Global Economy

Gasoline prices in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and other western countries in the Northern Hemisphere soared at record velocity during 2012's first quarter to levels never seen so early before the traditional summer driving season gets under way, accelerating to \$4 a gallon in the U.S. or even double that in the British Isles!

The spike in fuel prices threatens to steer the global economy's anemic recovery right into the ditch as motorists curtail their travels and put the brakes to consumer spending that drives much of an economy's vitality.

Heightened apprehension about a unilateral military attack by Israel on oil rich Iran's nuclear production sites in the strategic Middle East has done nothing to moderate spiraling gas prices at the pump. In fact, tensions have ratcheted up on a constant basis.

\$5 A GALLON FOR GASOLINE?

In January, GasBuddy.com predicted gasoline prices could approach \$5 a gallon by Memorial Day in the U.S. and remain at record levels for much of the summer.

"It looks like it might be the most painful year at the pump that we have ever seen," senior analyst Patrick DeHaan



said, predicting Chicago's prices could catapult to between \$4.60 and \$4.95 a gallon.

As of March, Chicago's prices were as high as \$4.87 a gallon for regular and expected to shatter all-time highs, leading the nation. Usually, Los Angeles and San Francisco hold that dubious distinction. DeHaan told the *Expired Meter* he expects gas prices to remain higher than \$4 per gallon all summer and possibly hit \$5 a gallon.

Chicago's gas prices were about 70 cents higher than those of last year, with the price rising about 80 cents per gallon in the last month, either exceeding or flirting with all-time records. "This is an increase we've never seen before. It is the fastest increase we've ever seen," DeHaan said. In February, John Hofmeister, former chief executive officer of Shell Oil's U.S. operations, told CNBC News there



is better than a 50 percent likelihood gasoline prices will spike and West Texas crude oil prices could hit \$120 a barrel this year, citing the insatiable need for more oil in China and India. "I'm afraid we face a continuing onslaught of prices creeping even higher," he said.

The closure of East Coast refineries due to declining margins and uncertainty in the Persian Gulf also are factors pushing gas prices to the \$5 a gallon level, Hofmeister said, noting permitting delays persist in the Gulf of Mexico. The Obama administration has done little to encourage domestic drilling, he said.

POLICIES HINDER DOMESTIC OUTPUT

In a report issued in January, the Heritage Foundation stated that while there has been an increase in domestic oil and natural gas production in the United States, it has been due to drilling on private lands, primarily in North Dakota, Texas, Oklahoma and Alaska.

Production on federal lands was down 40 percent as opposed to 10 years ago. The House Natural Resources Committee unveiled figures showing the fewest onshore oil and gas leases issued under the Obama administration since 1984.

The House report also showed there was only one offshore lease sale in 2011. That was in December, narrowly missing 2011's distinction as the first year without an offshore lease sale since 1953, according to *WorldNetDaily*.

President Barack Obama took intense heat from both left and right by deciding in November 2011 to scuttle – at least

until 2013 – the Keystone XL pipeline project that would bring large volumes of synthetic petroleum from Canada for refining domestically.

Transcanada, the energy giant bidding to build the major pipeline, estimates the project would create 20,000 jobs in the U.S., including 13,000 in construction and 7,000 in manufacturing. On March 22, while on an "energy tour" touting his administration's successes, Obama backtracked by deciding to fast track the southern half of the Keystone project.

The *Washington Times* reported the president has not acknowledged the impact of federal actions taken after British Petroleum's oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico or his dramatic shift away from drilling in the outer continental shelf as proposed by President George W. Bush.

Thomas J. Pyle, president of the Institute for Energy Research, accused the Obama administration of a charade. "This administration's record speaks for itself," Pyle said. "For more than three years, President Obama has implemented a three-part strategy: Delay, deny and deceive."

The *Washington Times* reported: "Domestic oil production last year averaged 5.6 million barrels a day, the highest output since 2003 and a 4 percent jump since Mr. Bush's last year in office, according to the March EIA (*Energy Information Administration*) report, but it's far below production levels of a decade ago."





In March, the Congressional Research Service issued a report showing federal oil production represented 7.5 percent of total oil produced from all onshore U.S. lands in 2011 although the federal government owns more than 30 percent of those potential oil lands.

GLOBAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

The United States is not the only industrialized nation suffering gas pains. Gasoline or “petrol” prices in the United Kingdom in mid-March hit a record 140 pence a liter or about \$8.40 a gallon! – rising 6 percent for 2012 and stoking fears of inflation overheating.

In Canada, energy costs advanced 7.2 percent annually in February with pump prices soaring almost 9 percent!

Lance Roberts, head of StreetTalk Advisors, told the *Daily Ticker* on March 8 that most economists are underestimating the impact of high oil prices, which will eventually wallop the U.S. economy. Consumers will be forced to spend more of their incomes on gas, heating oil and other petroleum-based products and less on other expenditures.

Consumers can adjust to temporary vaults in oil prices, but will cut their overall spending the longer the prices remain high, Roberts said, adding a recent boost in consumer spending has resulted from higher energy costs, not an improved mood about the economy’s direction.

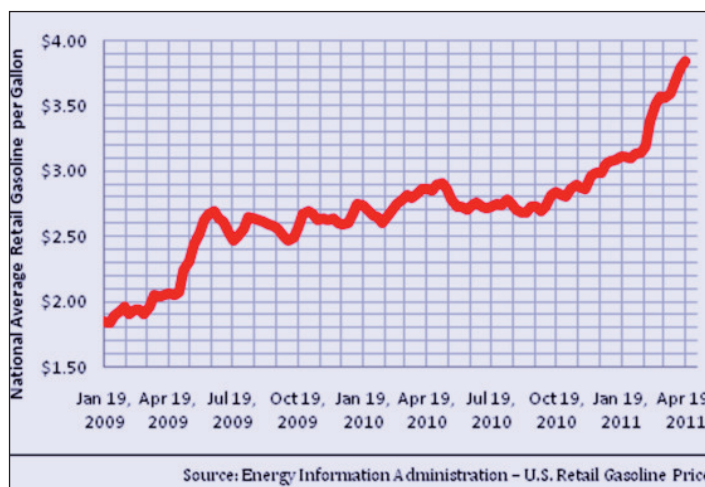
The high gas prices are negatively impacting consumer confidence. The Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan index of consumer sentiment on March 16 showed “gasoline worries ... are outweighing stock market gains and job growth.”

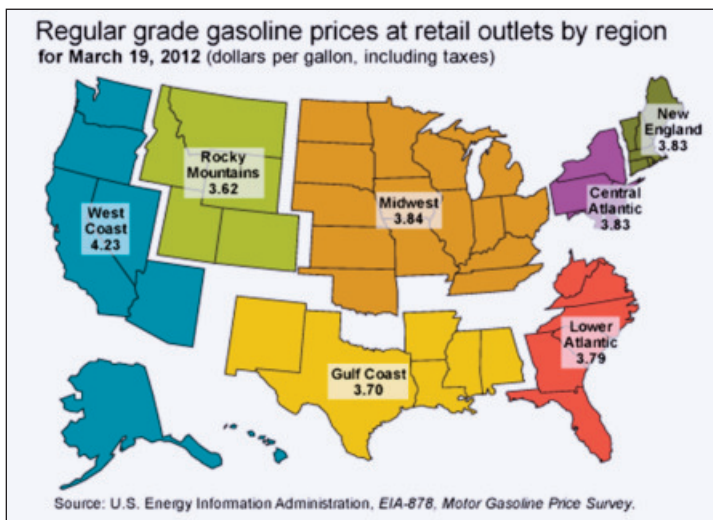
Economists observe that gas prices tend to hit consumer confidence especially hard once they surpass round numbers, such as \$4 or \$5 a gallon. A recent Gallup poll found nearly half of Americans would make significant spending cuts if gas topped \$5 a gallon.

Focusing on typical daily purchases such as gasoline and food, the American Institute for Economic Research estimates everyday prices are up about 8 percent over 2011, not 3.1 percent as the government reports in its Consumer Price Index. Because of the recent run-up in gas prices, “sticker shock” at the pump is hurting Americans more than federal statistics indicate, the institute says, noting motor fuel and transportation costs are up 21 percent from the previous year!

Because of exorbitant fuel prices, Americans have been pumping less gas every week for the past year, the Associated Press reported on March 23. Consumption fell by 4.2 billion gallons or 3 percent. “The national average for a gallon of gas is \$3.89, the highest ever for this time of year, and experts say it could be \$4.25 by late April,” AP reported. “As a result, Americans are taking fewer trips to restaurants and shopping malls. When they take a vacation, they’re staying closer to home.”

In 2011, Americans spent 8.4 percent of their household income on gasoline or about \$4,155, compared with 6.7 percent in 2010, according to the Oil Price Information Service. Gas prices rose by 24 percent and spending on gas rose by 20 percent in 52 weeks. Brent crude oil used to price most of the oil refined into gasoline has jumped by 16 percent this year to more than \$124 per barrel. Benchmark U.S. crude has risen 9 percent this year to more than \$107 per barrel, the AP reports.





THE IRAN QUESTION

What especially worries government leaders, economists and consumers is the prospect of an all-out war breaking out in the Middle East in the event Israel strikes Iran's nuclear weapons complex as Israeli leaders have increasingly indicated they intend to do. All bets are off on how that would impact petroleum and gasoline prices throughout the world!

"Signs that crude future may hit much higher levels are converging, say oil traders and analysts, some of whom predict that Brent crude could reach \$200 a barrel within the next 12 months," CNBC News reported on March 23. That's not taking into account a possible military attack on Iran!

"The biggest issue, they say, is that global crude supply remains uncommonly tight – a scenario that's unlikely to be alleviated any time soon. Even though Libya's oil has largely returned online after the political disruptions that took it off the market last year, and Saudi Arabia is generating its highest output in three decades, the available crude is just barely meeting demand."

In a March 14 report, Goldman Sachs said it expects fundamentals to remain tight in 2012, pushing Brent oil prices to \$130 a barrel in 2013. "With OPEC spare capacity and inventories low, the balance of risk to crude oil prices remains skewed to the upside."

On March 23, Reuters reported oil prices rallied sharply on reports Iranian oil exports fell 300,000 barrels per day or 14 percent due to tightening western economic sanctions, pushing Brent crude oil to \$125 a barrel and U.S. crude to nearly \$107 a barrel. Iran supplies about 2.5 percent of the world's oil or about 300 million barrels a day, providing large volumes to China, Turkey and India. It is third only to

Saudi Arabia and Russia in global oil exports. About 40 percent of the world's oil travels through the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has threatened to close if it is attacked militarily by Israel or the United States. Estimates are oil prices could surge to at least \$175 a barrel were that chokepoint to be obstructed, translating into an even more pronounced boost to gasoline prices.

The United States, Canada, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and democratic European countries are extremely vulnerable to any disruptions to their petroleum imports as they feebly struggle to pull out of a prolonged recession that has left millions unemployed and national budget deficits deepening.

All of them could be in for a crude awakening as they realize the fragility of their economies if a war in the Middle East were to engulf the region and paralyze free flow of trade and commerce.

Bible prophecy shows Anglo-American countries will bear the brunt of a horrific Great Tribulation that looms in the near future – unlike any destruction the world has seen the past 6,000 years.

Conflict in the Middle East very well could ignite that unthinkable global conflagration. An economic Depression worse than that of the 1930s also is a very distinct possibility, more analysts concede.

Keep your eyes focused on the latest developments pertaining to petroleum supplies and gasoline prices. Beyond the traumatic turmoil that lies ahead is the Wonderful World Tomorrow that will come with the return of Jesus Christ, who warned of the unprecedented chaos that will precede his return to establish the Kingdom of God on earth! – **Mark Mendiola**



CHURCH OF GOD – FAITHFUL FLOCK
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Below are web sites made available by the Church of God – Faithful Flock as Bible resource tools.

Church of God Faithful Flock
www.cog-ff.com

Watchman for the House of Israel
www.ezekielwatchman.org

World News Bulletin
www.worldnewsbulletin.com

Lost 10 Tribes of Israel
www.losttribes.org

The Ten Commandments
www.10commandments.ws

Prophetic Events
www.propheticevents.us

What Do You Mean Born Again?
www.begotten.net

Restored Truths of God
www.restoredtruths.net

Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days?
www.holy-days.co

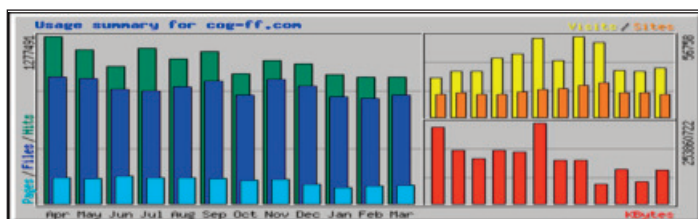
Which Day is the Christian Sabbath?
www.sabbathcentral.com

Herbert W. Armstrong – Apostle of God
www.herbertarmstrong.net

COGFF – Home School Association
www.coghomeschool.org

Herbert W. Armstrong – His Life & Work
www.herbertwarmstrong.info

An Open Letter to the Scattered Flock
www.bodyofchristonline.us



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