

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

WATCH

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IT'S
NOT
EASY
BEING
GREEN



by Mark Armstrong

Surely this ERCOT outfit will have to change its name, at a bare minimum. The “R” in ERCOT stands for reliability, which is a joke in itself after what we in Texas endured. It seems that the government has been “subsidizing” these giant wind farms over the past decade or so, and that relieved Texas of the need for coal and natural gas power plants. It was enough to get off the radar of the “green” zealots while at the same time adding to Texas’ ability to claim that a “sizable percentage” of the grid was made up of “renewable energy.” Just makes you feel warm all over, doesn’t it?

So there was another big event, and it took place only hours before the temperature plunged into the deep freeze and the power went dead. CBS kept promoting their big, breaking news event for Sunday evening. Anderson Cooper interviewed Bill Gates. While Gates told everybody they needed to stop whatever they’re doing and map out a strategy for getting to “carbon zero,” the temperature plunged and the lights and heat ceased working.

It’s starting to look like these “global warming” aficionados are bringing ice-age events upon civilization. This is hardly the first time that frigid cold has accompanied dire warnings about population displacement and DEATH as a result of their

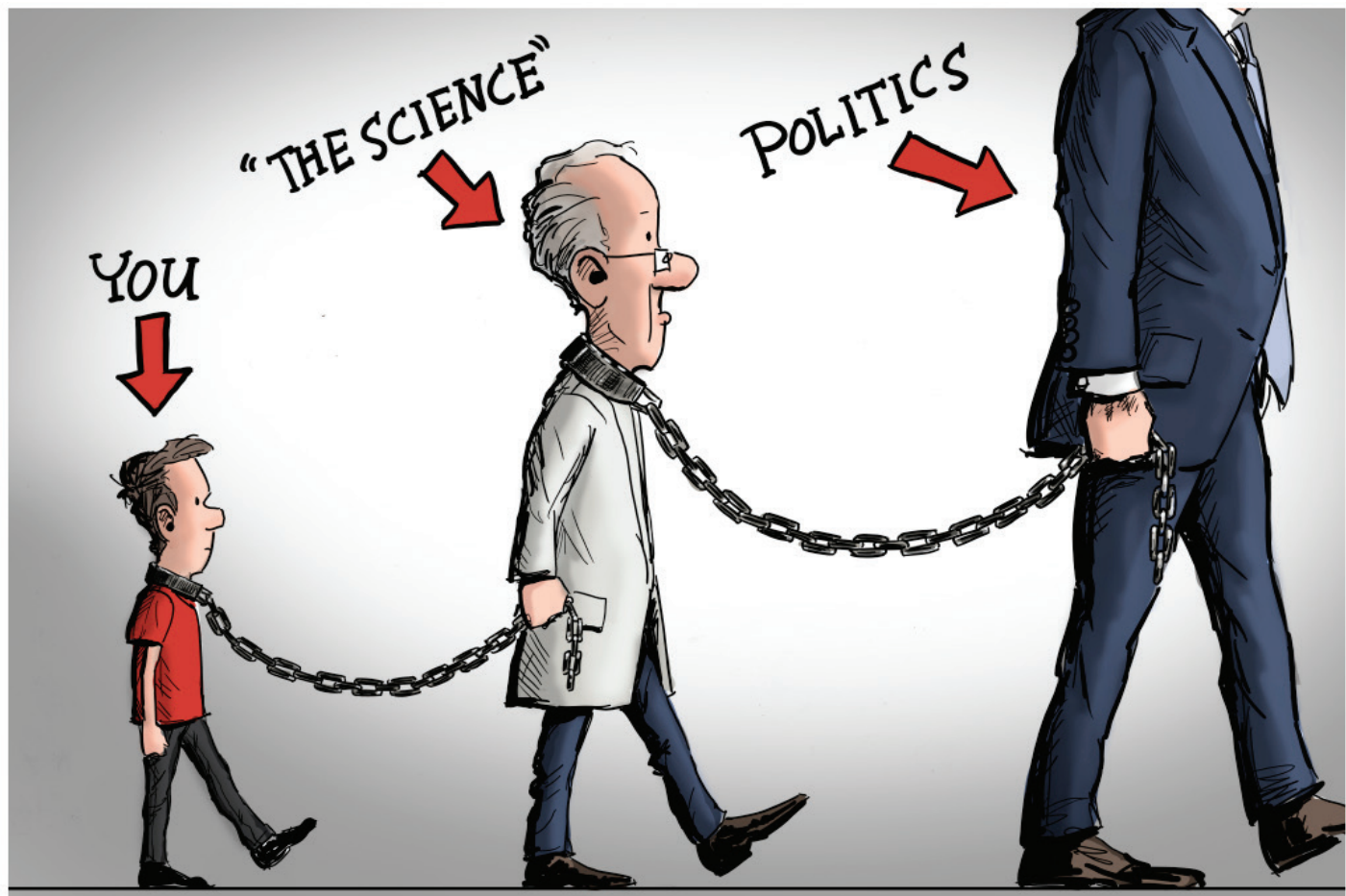
favorite scam. We’re not sure what microprocessors and software have to do with climate, but apparently Mr. Gates of Microsoft fame thinks he’s mastered every subject, and needs to lecture us children on how smart he and the earnest CNN jokers are, and speak to the rest of us like we’re in kindergarten.

Everybody knows what happened, but that’s not quite the same as having lived through the experience. It would be good to have heat in your house when the temperature goes to zero Fahrenheit and stays there for a couple of days. Now they’re holding hearings where the engineers try to bamboozle the public by talking over everybody’s head. We can hardly wait for their conclusions, but their excuses are mostly meaningless now. We’ll be surprised if the families of the dead don’t sue the “reliable” energy corporation out of existence.

There are a lot of problems with these idolatrous wind turbines. They don’t last forever, after all, and won’t pay for themselves over their expected lifetime. Does nobody consider how they are made, what it costs to transport them to their location or what will be done when they cease to produce energy? They are an icon of lunacy, romanticized in countless advertisements over the years. Mostly children or dogs staring wondrously out the car window as

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JUST THE FACTS ON TEXAS' DEEP FREEZE



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FEBRUARY 23, 2021

While political pundits and policy analysts investigate the causes of last week's Texas energy freeze, it is important to recognize that, while all generation forms saw outages, natural gas provided for the majority of electricity generation.

Both sides of the political aisle have been quick to place blame for the rolling blackouts, but the clear-cut data on Texas'

power generation and capacity over the past week demonstrates natural gas generation delivered.

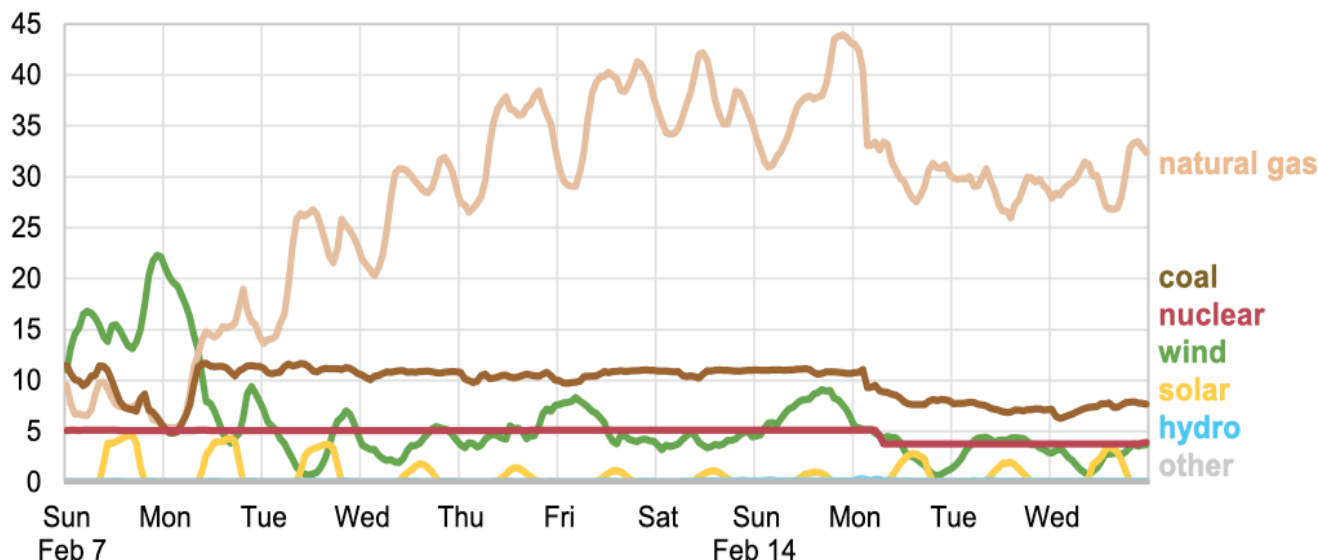
GENERATION ANALYSIS

In 2019, a majority (~53%) of Texas electricity was generated with natural gas, followed by coal (19%), wind (17%), and nuclear (8.6%) according to EIA data. When temperatures fell below zero last week, the spike in electricity demand surged

by 50% to a 69,000 megawatts (MW) peak.

With temperatures plunging into sub-zero territory and in response to peaking demand, natural gas generation ramped from 10 GW to 37 GW, filling 136% of the demand increase, according to Energy Information Administration data. In fact, natural gas generation ramped up to provide two-thirds of all generation in the Texas market during this crisis,

Hourly net generation by energy source (Feb 7–Feb 17, 2021)
Electric Reliability Council of Texas, Inc (ERCOT)
gigawatts



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, [Hourly Electric Grid Monitor](#) (ERCOT net generation by energy source)

according to the EIA.

While the lack of winterized energy infrastructure indeed caused natural gas generation to fall off by 16% on Feb. 15, EIA data also shows coal, nuclear, and wind generation declined by 22%, 24% and 58%, respectively.

For sure, “these extreme weather conditions impacted every aspect of the Texas energy supply chain,” said Todd Staples, president of the Texas Oil and Gas Association.

In a state that prepares for 100 degree, not one-degree days, freeze-offs constrained production, and frigid temps and rolling blackouts contributed to taking gas and other thermal generation capacity offline.

“Natural gas is playing a very important role and very reliable role,” Staples said. “If it weren’t for that product, there would be almost no power in this state right now.”

RELIABILITY, PJM PREPARATION

Wind and solar electric generation capacity is expected to grow this year, federal data suggests, with underlying support from natural gas. But as scientists anticipate more heavy storms and climate-related natural disasters to occur in the coming decades, the crisis in the southwest should serve as an indicator that we need to produce and add more natural gas to the grid, not less.

As we consider the question of reliability beyond the Texas market, a modern, expanded natural gas pipeline and infrastructure network ensures energy can

move efficiently to the regions that need it.

In fact, these infrastructure constraints are exactly what the North American Electric Reliability Corp (NERC) warned about a few months ago in their annual Winter Reliability Assessment, flagging reliability risks during extreme weather events.

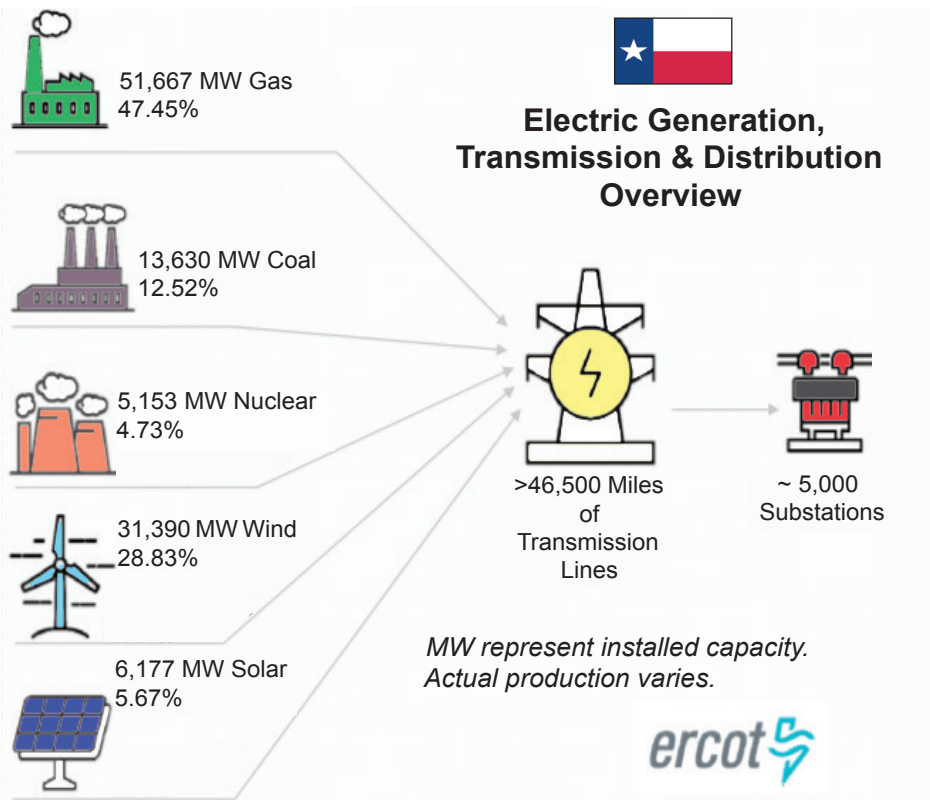
“During extreme and prolonged winter conditions, vital natural-gas fuel supplies for electricity generation can be at risk in New England, California and the southwestern United States,” NERC states.

Here in the northeast, our electric power is distributed through the multi-state PJM Interconnection – the nation’s largest electric grid, serving more than 65 million Americans, 12 states and Washington, D.C. – and has the “winterized” infrastructure that’s able to pow-

er through heavy snowfall and chilling temperatures. A key component to PJM’s reliability strategy is having a diverse fuel mix, robust reserve margin, regional planning and winter preparation, a release states.

“Our power plants are built for freezing temperatures and winterized,” PJM spokesperson Susan Buehler said. “PJM and its member utility companies plan for extreme weather. Reliability is our most important responsibility.”

Balancing the electric grid is complex, and one that needs a resilient resource that can be turned on or off in a matter of minutes. As we shift our attention and policy priorities to creating a more reliable electric grid, natural gas will be absolutely critical to meeting modern energy demands, especially at their peak. □



Will You Get To Heaven?

Are your departed loved ones in HEAVEN? Do Christians go to heaven when they die? Are there really "Mansions in the Sky" waiting for you? Read the surprising, plain truth about these vital questions in your own Bible!

by Garner Ted Armstrong

"Gone to be with the Lord," it is said of dead church-going people today. Is this literally true? Do people really go to heaven when they die?

AN ANCIENT QUESTION

Men have puzzled over the perplexing question of what happens after death for many, many centuries!

It has been somehow inconceivable to man, from his earliest beginnings, that death should end everything. Today, the modern world is divided into many major religions, each in its own turn being divided into many hundreds and even thousands of lesser sects and denominations.

The ancestor worshippers of the Orient firmly believe in a life after death with one's own relatives. The Moslems visualize an eternity in beautiful desert oases, surrounded by babbling waters and dancing girls. Different schisms of Hinduism believe in attaining to a state of "great nothingness" in "Nirvana."

Professing Christianity believes in going to "heaven." Either immediately at death, or during the millennium, or at some other time.

Everywhere, there is the hope of life after death, of an eternal reward. But nowhere, it seems, is there any agreement on where that life will be spent! Why such confusion? Why such ignorance?

ONLY ONE SOURCE

You don't need to be in confusion. You don't have to guess at the outcome of such a fantastically important question! There is an infallibly accurate, factual, thoroughly proved source to which you can go!

That source is your own Bible! The Bible stands proved to be the inspired book of Almighty God, His written revelation to man. Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God [is God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). Peter wrote, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21).

You need to know you can rely on the Bible. You need to know you can trust it. You need to know you can put your faith in what it plainly says, and reject "feelings" of your own. You need to know you can trust the Bible instead of the teachings of men, the assumptions of relatives, or a deathbed vision of a dying loved one!

If you are one who has always assumed the Bible is true, but have never seen it infallibly demonstrated, then write immediately for the free booklet, "*The Proof of the Bible!*"

FALSE ASSUMPTIONS

Every error is based upon a false premise just carelessly taken for granted. Most professing Christians have just taken for granted "heaven" is the reward of the saved! They have never gotten around to proving whether or not this is so from the Bible, but have taken it for granted!

Think for a moment! How many sermons can you recall attempting to prove heaven is the destiny of Christians? Probably you can recall many where heaven was mentioned, was contrasted to a supposed ever-burning hell, or was described. Probably, you have heard many hundreds of ref-

erences to heaven as the final reward. But did you ever hear a sermon that proved it?

No! You never did! Do you know *why*?

Because it can't be proved!

This doctrine, just like perhaps many others people "hold dear," is merely assumed by most professing Christianity. It is "par for the course." It is a common, unquestioned, basic assumption that is carelessly taken for granted.

You need to quit assuming. You need to see it proved, one way or the other. You need to know the truth — and to know that you know, not just carelessly assume certain points to be true.

Perhaps you feel it would be "settling" for a lesser goal to "settle" for earth, instead of "heaven." Such sentiments are human arguments which merely rationalize away or reject a precious truth of God through ridicule, rather than carefully "searching the scriptures daily, whether these things be so!"

Surely you know you can't afford to let preconceived ideas, the concepts of others around you, bias or prejudice keep you chained with bonds of ignorance?

Remember, the truth of God can be proved. It can stand on its own feet! God's precious truth does not need clever "catch phrases" or plays upon words to sustain it. It alone stands the test of all searching of scripture; of open-minded, earnest seeking for the truth. "Seek, and ye shall find," promised your Saviour!

A PERPLEXING DILEMMA

Jesus talked, as recorded in the inspired Word of God, of a coming resurrection. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25). He went on to talk of those who were still in their graves at the time of the second coming of Christ, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [judgment]" (John 5:28-29).

Very plain, isn't it? Jesus said the hour was coming, very plainly referring to a yet future general resurrection. He also referred to the resurrection of Lazarus and others in the New Testament when He said, "and now is." Reading on into the 11th chapter, you read of this miraculous forerunner of the great resurrection at the end of the age.

Later, Jesus said, "...that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). Read the exact time of the resurrection in your Bible! "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day!" (John 6:44).

But what a perplexing dilemma!

If Christians go to heaven immediately when they die — if they are already in heaven, where they have been living in beautiful mansions for hundreds or even thousands of years — why bother with a resurrection?

If they have been released from this sin-sick world, from their old, worn-out, disease-ridden, corruptible bodies, and if they have been with Jesus Christ IN heaven — why would Jesus take them out of heaven, bring them back to earth, plunge them BACK INTO their graves, and then go through the fantastic, laborious effort of resurrecting them? Isn't this a little difficult to believe? Does it really make sense?

NEVER PROMISED HEAVEN

Shocking though it may sound, the Jesus Christ of your Bible never promised heaven as the reward of the saved! He promised something entirely different!

Let's notice, first of all, the most often quoted scriptures used by deluded men to preach the ancient, pagan doctrine of "going to heaven."

Perhaps you, like hundreds of thousands of others, have supposed Jesus said plainly, in the "sermon on the mount" that Christians go to heaven when they die. But He didn't!

Let's turn to this beautiful portion of the Bible, the very heart and core of real Christianity and see just what Jesus DID say.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," said Jesus,

Continued next page

“for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3)! “Why, doesn’t that say He promised heaven?” you might ask. No, it doesn’t!

Notice the proof right in the same section. “Blessed are the meek,” said Jesus two verses later, “for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5)!

Does this mean the “poor in spirit” which merely means those who are truly humble go to heaven while those possessing a very similar attribute of Christian character, that of meekness, are to stay here on earth? No! It means just what it says, that overcomers are to inherit the earth. The kingdom OF heaven, not the kingdom IN heaven!

WHAT ABOUT HEAVENLY MANSIONS?

But what about the time-honored songs, the hopes of millions, the cherished “Christian traditions” of the “homes above” that so many have talked about, sung about, written about, all down through these years?

Turn to this scripture. You read it in John, the 14th chapter. “In my Father’s house are many mansions [abodes]: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2-3).

Notice that nowhere did Jesus say saints go to heaven! He said, rather, there are places, habitations, abodes, mansions, residences which He is preparing. These “places” are now “in” heaven. But Jesus went on to say, “I will come again.” Come where? To this earth, as Jesus repeated so many times. He also said, “that where I am, there ye may be also” (verse 3).

WHERE WILL JESUS BE?

If Jesus comes again to this earth then He will BE on this earth! The earth, and a definite, specific location on the earth, will be where Jesus said He is going to be. If we are to be with Him where He is to be then we, also, are going to be on this earth!

What are the different “mansions” or places Jesus is now busily preparing? Read Luke 19! Jesus likened Himself to a young nobleman, who

went on a long journey into a distant land to qualify to rule a kingdom. At His return, He demanded an accounting from His servants. He then apportioned different responsibilities to them, according to how much they had overcome!

Jesus said Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be in the Kingdom of God here on this earth, and revealed the twelve disciples will rule over the twelve tribes of Israel!

David referred to being a “doorkeeper” in God’s kingdom as being better than the highest offices here on this earth.

Jesus promises rulership over nations (Rev. 2:26) and offices of kings and priests in His kingdom!

There are different places, different abodes, different offices and positions in God’s soon-coming kingdom for which individuals must qualify! That is what Christ is doing NOW! He is, working through His Church, preparing individuals for official positions in God’s Kingdom! HE is putting certain humans through experiences which will better prepare them for specific places in the Government of God!

How vastly misunderstood has been this important scripture.

Notice the plain truth of your Bible: “Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.” (Zech. 14:1). Then follows a graphic description of the accompanying signs of the second coming of Jesus Christ! Be sure you read every word in your own Bible. Now notice verse four, “And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives” (Zech. 14:4).

Yes, it is called the second *coming* of Christ. His second arrival. He is coming again! And He will arrive HERE, on this earth!

The very first message God ever sent back to this earth after the departure of Jesus to heaven is recorded in Acts the first chapter. The disciples were looking up into the skies, where they saw Jesus disappear into a cloud (verse 9). “And, while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, ‘Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus,

which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come [return to this earth] in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:10-11).

Yes, Christ is to come again to this EARTH!

Now, for another surprise, turn to the well-known scripture found in I Thessalonians the 4th chapter. “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep [are dead — not off in heaven] in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend [come down out of] from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

No mention here of saints coming from heaven, but of dead saints rising FIRST before the living are changed!

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord IN THE AIR: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thes. 4:14-17).

How PLAIN! Jesus is returning from heaven. The dead and living saints are to be caught up — not to heaven — but into the air, into the clouds! Simply scoffing at the real meaning of these plain scriptures will NOT change them. Not wanting to believe the precious, glorious, plain truth of the Bible will not do away with it!

What you are reading in this article is directly from the sacred Word of God. Perhaps it sounds NEW and different to you from what you may have always assumed or taken for granted.

You may have a natural, human tendency to want to cling to previous convictions or what you have always heard. But what about it?

Are you one who really zealously desires the truth of God? If you are, you’ll be looking up these scriptures in your Bible. You’ll be reading before them, after them, and other related scriptures. Don’t believe this article unless you check up and see it proved!

This article is not written to ridicule, or try to prejudice your mind against a doctrine. Rather, it is written to point out to you where you may find the truth of God on this very important question!



View from the Mount of Olives, covered with tombs. “And His feet shall stand in that day...”

Continued next page

May God help you to remove bias, to get your ideas in subjection to God's truth and to believe what you see clearly proved!

Remember, Jesus is coming to Earth from heaven, as we have seen so plainly. He is returning after being away. He is coming back after a long absence.

If you had been away on a long journey, of many thousands of miles into a foreign country, and were going to return and you wanted your family to meet you, what would they do?

Would your ship near the harbor, and then your family jump aboard the pilot boat, board your vessel, and all of you then go back to the foreign country from which you came?

Ridiculous, isn't it?

We are to meet Christ as He returns! And nowhere does your Bible say we will then go back to heaven with Him!

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "...ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead..." (I Thes. 1:9-10).

He is coming here and we are to go part way, only as high as the clouds to meet Him, and then to come right down to this earth with Him!

"So shall we ever be with the Lord," says your Bible. But where will the Lord be? On this earth!

WHAT ABOUT THE THIEF ON THE CROSS?

"But didn't the thief on the cross go immediately with Jesus to heaven?" some might ask.

And it's a good question! What about the promise Jesus apparently made to one of the malefactors who was dying beside Him?

Notice! The very same ones who believe the thief on the cross went into paradise with Jesus immediately after death also believe Jesus did not go to paradise, but went immediately into hell to preach to departed "spirits!"

How could this be? Many assume Jesus DID NOT DIE on the cross!

He said He was dead (Rev. 1:18). Unless He died for our sins, we cannot be reconciled to God! And yet many assume Jesus was alive during the time in the tomb, but alive down in hell, suppos-

edly busily "preaching" to some departed souls!

If Jesus promised immediate entry into paradise to the thief, and then spent time in hell, after which He appeared again on earth, and said to Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father:" (John 20:17) and did not have the thief with Him, then did Jesus lie?

No, Jesus did not lie. Neither did He go into a burning hell, but into "*hades*," which means, simply, "the grave!" Check any reliable concordance, commentary, or lexicon for proof of this.

Jesus was dead for three days and three nights (Matt. 12:40). He did not go that very day to paradise as He, Himself, later said plainly!

Then what happened? Notice it! The Greek language never included separation of chapter, verse, or punctuation marks, as commonly used in the English language today. Rather, it was written without any paragraphing or punctuation. It was divided into verses and chapters, as it appears in our English Bibles today, many hundreds of years after the New Testament was written!

Notice how the whole meaning of certain sentences in the English language can be changed by merely changing the punctuation marks!

John might ask, "What's that up in the road, ahead?" And it may sound as if he were asking if he saw a HEAD, the head of a human or an animal, in the road. But if you put the comma in the correct location, the sentence would read thusly: "What's that, up in the road ahead?" and it would make sense.

Now turn to Luke 23:43. Read it carefully. Jesus appears to have said, by the placement of the comma in the English version, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." And yet Jesus knew He was not going to enter into Paradise ON THAT DAY or for the next three or four days!

Now put the comma where it belongs, to preserve the sense of this scripture as proved by all other scriptures on the subject (remember, the Bible interprets itself). "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you today, thou shalt be with me in paradise!" Jesus said it that day, and promised the thief would be in paradise — but He most certainly did not promise paradise to the thief that

very day!

If this could have been true, Jesus not only lied, but made an exception to all others, and became a respecter of persons. Also, He said He is the same through all ages (Heb. 13:8) and does not change!

“Paradise” is commonly assumed to mean “heaven!” But again simply because this is assumed, and carelessly taken for granted does not make it so! The “paradise” will be on this earth!

Notice what the thief asked!

“And he said unto Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when thou COMEST [returns to this LITERAL EARTH here below] into Thy Kingdom!’”

GOD’S KINGDOM ON EARTH

Notice some conclusive scriptures. In the mysterious vision seen by Nebuchadnezzar, and interpreted by God through Daniel, it is revealed the Kingdom of God will be on Earth!

Read the entire 2nd chapter of Daniel. “Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (verse 35).

Now notice the interpretation of the dream in verse 44. “And in the days of these kings [shown by the ten toes, which were smashed by the Stone from heaven] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

God repeatedly uses the type of a mountain as a symbol of a nation, or a kingdom. The Kingdom, or the Nation, of God will consume, destroy, supersede all these worldly kingdoms and will rule them on this Earth!

Describing the events surrounding Christ’s return, and the setting up of His world rule, Isaiah was inspired to write, “And it shall come to pass, in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the moun-

tains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

“And many people shall go and say, ‘Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion [on this Earth] shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem [on this Earth]’” (Isa. 2:2-3). Micah was inspired to write the same thing in his 4th chapter.

Read each of these other vital scriptures! “... when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously” (Isa. 24:23). “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the Earth. In His days Judah shall be saved...” (Jer. 23:5-6). This proves this scripture is for the future, and refers directly to the second coming of Christ, since it describes the salvation of the Jews — a yet future event!

“The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem ... So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be Holy” (Joel 3:15-17).

“...for the Lord dwelleth in Zion” (Joel 3:21).

“And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever” (Micah 4:7).

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord” (Zech. 2:10).

Is this enough? God says over and over again that Christ is coming to this Earth! David is to be resurrected (Ezek. 34:23; 37:24) to be King over Israel, ruling under Christ.

Think of it! David, a man after God’s own heart, “is not ascended into the heavens” (Acts 2:34) but is dead today, awaiting a glorious resurrection to rulership with His Lord!

These are only a few of the plain scriptures showing Christ is to reign on this earth!

Continued next page

YOUR TREMENDOUS REWARD

Salvation is God's free gift!

You can only be saved by the life of Christ (Rom. 5:10) after having been reconciled to God by His death (same verse). But after God's loving pardon for your past sins, there is something you can earn, believe it or not!

Jesus said, "To Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne (Rev. 3:21).

Overcoming means growing in grace and knowledge (II Pet. 3:18). It means growing in ability, in stature and character, becoming more and more like Christ! "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

When we have clearly demonstrated our obedience to God — our faithfulness to His authority, His rule, His government in our lives — He will then apportion positions of government to us!

"Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And He said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in very little, have thou authority over ten cities" (Luke 19:16-17).

Yes, Jesus promises a busy eternity. He promises rulership over His world. He guarantees an active, busy, constructive, scintillating, interesting, absorbing, satisfying, happy eternity of responsibility and of work!

Think of it! Instead of a lazy, boring, intermi-

nable, empty eternity on a cloud with nothing to do, Jesus said, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him I will give power over the nations [on this Earth]: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter they shall be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Revelation 2:26-27).

The saints are to reign on this Earth (Revelation 5:10). They are to be kings and priests of God for one thousand years, right here on this earth (Revelation 20:4).

What a tremendous opportunity! What a glorious hope! We are not going to God in heaven. God is coming here!

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. 21:1-3).

How plain it is! No amount of "rationalization" or of arguing, or of merely "supposing" can change these plain, straightforward truths of your own Bible!

You need to know the wonderful reward God promises those truly living lives of overcoming and you need to be striving to enter into His glorious Kingdom that is going to be set up here on this earth!

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Heaven on Earth?

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by Michael Armstrong

Freedom has long been the pride and boast of America. We cheerfully accept its necessary limitations, “liberty in law” as the familiar tune goes. The freedom to swing your arm necessarily stops short of your neighbor’s nose; your criticisms short of slander. The first amendment of the US Constitution sought to safeguard our most essential liberties including the exercise of religion, freedom of speech, peaceful assembly and the press. This was considered essential by the framers, who were themselves often at odds with one another.

No system of government enacted by man ever has been or ever will be perfect. The lure of the United States has always been opportunity to succeed based on merit or diligence and liberty of conscience. In no way does this protect you from failure or criticism, quite the opposite. You are free to squander both your time and resources on foolish ideas and bad investments. You are free to contradict and be contradicted. You are free to ridicule, belittle, and even to stay home and pout when you get your own feelings hurt.

It is inevitable that a great portion of what is protected will be found distasteful or worse by any particular individual. Think of the dissent between religious sects or political parties in particular. We do not suppress even that which we consider anathema, knowing full well that should such suppression be allowed we might well find ourselves on the receiving end someday. Instead we trust in reason, truth, logic, and even providence while patiently enduring contradiction.

The present reality reveals a somewhat different state of affairs. By analogy you could say that the goals of our forebears being quite lofty, on approach to them we discovered an overwhelming fear of heights. Before getting carried away with former glories, we might benefit from recalling one of the sayings of Solomon: “Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.” (Eccl. 7:10)

This is not to say that we cannot remember, honor, and gain wisdom from the past. There is much to be learned from histo-

ry, particularly certain critical epochs. It is a warning against idealizing it and ignoring its negative examples. This deprives it of humanity and makes it harder to relate to, not to mention the effect on credibility or actual truthfulness. The Bible has always been notable as history that deals very bluntly with the faults of its heroes, such as David or Peter.

The era surrounding the formation of the United States of America is edifying and worthy of study. The contentions and wranglings of the framers, their compromises and the philosophical and historical examples they drew upon for guidance are an education in themselves. The transition from the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution in the early years of our nation and the ensuing struggles to define the jurisdiction of each branch of government and the states themselves remain relevant. Our founding documents have been used as the basis for national charters all over the world.

It is significant that it was created by individuals who were suspicious of government, particularly the habit of those

Continued next page

in authority to increase their own power. They had suffered personally at the hands of a system that had little regard for their collective rights or resolutions. Thus their desire for “limited” government. Yet the necessity to be responsive to the will of the people and confront new and unforeseen circumstances led to plenty of foibles, missteps, and controversial legislation.

The infamous Sedition Act essentially made it a crime to criticize the policies of the federal government and actually led to the imprisonment of quite a few newspaper editors. It was rebuked as unconstitutional by resolutions from both Kentucky and Virginia,

which contain some of the earliest hints towards dissolution of the union as a potential recourse. It was allowed to expire at the end of John Adams’ term, whose presidency it had also effectively ended on account of its unpopularity. It was never reviewed by the Supreme Court, another entity whose exact powers were not yet clearly understood.

Leading directly to the election of Thomas Jefferson, whose proponents had suffered suppression, it was never renewed. While he advocated for its freedom, Mr. Jefferson did not hold a very high opinion of the press as evidenced by the letter reprinted in this magazine. The purchase of Louisiana

brought threats of succession from northern states along the Atlantic who feared they would be disenfranchised. No one involved was entirely certain of the legality or constitutionality of the affair regardless of its propriety. The Embargo Act, later in Mr. Jefferson’s presidency, actually prohibited trade with foreign nations. It was both a failure and, as he had to take on far greater authority than he had ever alleged the government to have, somewhat of an embarrassment.

Julius Caesar is credited with the expression, “Experience is the best teacher.” While there is some intellectual prejudice against “anecdotal evidence,” unjustly where veracity is not an issue, none of us easily forget lessons we learn “the hard way.” It was the founders’ experience that led to the limitations they placed on government and their zealous protection of certain rights. We have benefited from their sagacious maxims, but the circumstances from which they were forged are unique.

Our generation faces its own set of unique circumstances. What sort of solutions will our problems beget? Technology is at the forefront with its reach and influence, not to mention the monetary clout of the largest companies. It poses serious issues to some of our fundamental values such as freedom of speech and religion. What sorts of further complications do we create if we conceive of digital communication as a “right” rather than a convenience or a luxury? It invites an avalanche of legislation and government oversight.

One important way in which

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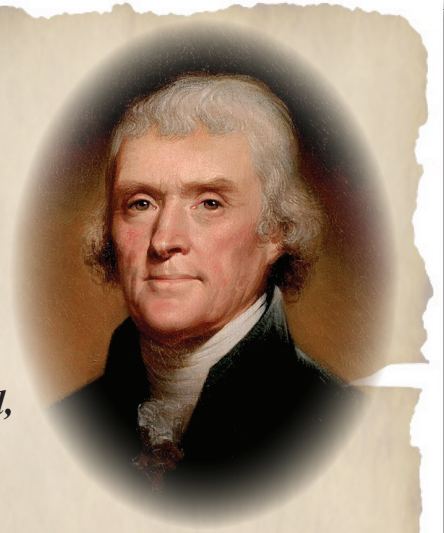


Unable to find representation, the eight British soldiers accused of the Boston Massacre came to John Adams. Though a patriot, he agreed to defend them to ensure they received a fair trial. Six were acquitted and two were only found guilty of manslaughter. Colonists used this example to show the Administration of Justice Act, requiring trials of officials to take place in Britain, was unjust. This “Intolerable Act” led directly to revolution and is an example of unnecessary government overreach backfiring.

Thomas Jefferson

on Misreporting by the Press

Nearing the end of his presidency, Jefferson had been much beleaguered by the twisting of his words by the press. He voices his complete disgust for what was considered news in this reply to John Norvell, 1807. We must beg Mr. Jefferson's pardon for publishing a letter which was intended to be private, comforting ourselves that his intention was to avoid giving his critics any excuse for fresh aspersion.



To your request of my opinion of the manner in which a newspaper should be conducted so as to be most useful, I should answer, "by restraining it to true facts and sound principles only." Yet I fear such a paper would find few subscribers. It is a melancholy truth that a suppression of the press could not more completely deprive the nation of its benefits than is done by its abandoned prostitution to falsehood. Nothing can now be believed which is seen in a newspaper. Truth itself becomes suspicious by being put into that polluted vehicle. The real extent of this state of misinformation is known only to those who are in situations to confront facts within their knowledge with the lies of the day. I really look with commiseration over the great body of my fellow citizens who, reading newspapers, live and die in the belief that they have known something of what has been passing in the world in their time; whereas the accounts they have read in newspapers are just as true a history of any other period of the world as of the present, except that the real names of the day are affixed to their fables. General facts may indeed be collected from them, such as that Europe is now at war, that Bonaparte has been a successful warrior, that he has subjected a great portion of Europe to his will, etc., but no details can be relied on. I will add that the man who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who reads them, inasmuch as he who knows nothing is nearer to truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehoods and errors. He who reads nothing will still learn the great facts, and the details are all false.

Perhaps an editor might begin a reformation in some such way as this. Divide his paper into four chapters, heading the first, Truths; the second, Probabilities; the third, Possibilities; the fourth, Lies. The first chapter would be very short, as it would contain little more than authentic papers and information from such sources as the editor would be willing to risk his own reputation for their truth. The second would contain what, from a mature consideration of all circumstances, his judgments should conclude to be probably true. This, however, should rather contain too little than too much. The third and fourth should be professedly for those readers who would rather have lies for their money than the blank paper they would occupy.

Such an editor, too, would have to set his face against the demoralizing practice of feeding the public mind habitually on slander and the depravity of taste which this nauseous aliment induces. Defamation is becoming a necessity of life, insomuch that a dish of tea in the morning or evening cannot be digested without this stimulant. Even those who do not believe these abominations still read them with complaisance to their auditors, and instead of the abhorrence and indignation which should fill a virtuous mind, betray a secret pleasure in the possibility that some may believe them, though they do not themselves. It seems to escape them that it is not he who prints but he who pays for printing a slander who is its real author.

These thoughts on the subjects of your letter are hazarded at your request. Repeated instances of the publication of what has not been intended for the public eye, and the malignity with which political enemies torture every sentence from me into meanings imagined by their own wickedness only, justify my expressing a solicitude that this hasty communication may in nowise be permitted to find its way into the public papers. Not fearing these political bulldogs, I yet avoid putting myself in the way of being baited by them, and do not wish to volunteer away that portion of tranquility which a firm execution of my duties will permit me to enjoy.

our time differs is that we are quick to rely on government to solve our problems. Many initiatives in the name of fairness, justice, and compassion are pursued, not because individuals believe in them to the extent that they are willing to personally sacrifice in their support, but because government can order it. The expense can be taken from those most able to afford it or added to the debt that daily resembles a work of fiction. How much more support can initiatives garner if they benefit the citizen directly? While cynical, this assessment is largely the reason our country was conceived as a republic rather than a direct democracy.

To endow oneself tends to prove tempting, just as the government's proclivity to enlarge

itself. Hopefully we will find ourselves to be people of principle instead of trying to have our cake and eat it too. How ironic is it that we live in a time where information is more accessible than ever before and one of our main fears is that the common man is too foolish to discern truth from fiction? It's like a dark comedy with too few jokes.

Liberty is not in itself a virtue. By its nature it allows many things repugnant to our sensibilities, but this same principle is the only sure defense of that which we hold most dear, the freedom to abide by our conscience before God. We are reaching a time where a sort of useful tyranny is imagined. A benevolent power to quiet harsh rhetoric or suppress dangerous ideas. An advocate

for truth to check the facts and limit misinformation. Such a creation among men is an illusion.

No one enjoys contradiction or derision. No one wants to fail. The potential to do so is incumbent in the freedom that provides us opportunity to find success, fulfillment, and truth. This is what will suffer at the hands of limitation. The challenges ahead are of great import. The past has never been perfect and the future never will be short of the kingdom of God. If we are not careful, diligent, and principled stewards we may squander even that which we have.

We should carefully consider just how much power we wish the government to have regardless of who may be in charge for the moment. □

Now What?

Continued from page 2

tall. You know what happens when they get hit by lightning? That's not a rare occurrence. They've got a "brain" full of electronics, which don't do so well when fried. London learned that the windmills freeze up and cease to work. There were unforgettable photographs of them at sea, encased in ice, with giant icicles descending from their blades. But that never happens in Texas, until it does. It did, and it lasted nearly a week. We'd almost forgotten the cold and heavy snow of 1983. If you're making something hot to drink and the TV is on, it's not so bad. Just like "green energy" for big cities, nothing else makes much sense either.

Everything we moaned over for the past decade is brand new again, and the self-destruction of the United States is back on track. Do you think for one minute that the Middle East peace arrangement will be spared? Probably not. After all, that rude,

they drive by the green miracle. But they're 240 feet

brash, America-loving President they blindly hated brought it about. No, they're working overtime to get us back in the Iran Nuclear Deal, the Paris Climate Accords, and every international body out to hurt the United States.

The news anchors are breathing easier now that unaccompanied minors are streaming across the border, and the new (supposed) administration says they can't be kept out even to wait for adjudication. Six thousand unaccompanied minors in a single week, according to the happy reports. What's that about?

We bet you're starving for some hint of good news, and we are too. Maybe they won't get everything they want. Maybe there's some strain of sanity that remains in high places — not much, mind you. Maybe they'll start to turn on each other, as they have with Cuomo of New York and Brylcreem of California. Or, though it seems impossible, maybe the fraudulent election will get looked at, but let's not get our hopes up. □



VOID OF JUDGMENT

by John Mitchell

You wake up in the morning and everything is fine. You could watch a beautiful sunrise and listen to birds singing, then pour a cup of fresh coffee that you thoroughly enjoy. Life is good! Then you turn on the television and the peace of mind you had is shattered by the latest “crisis” of the day. You watch in horror as terror attacks, one after another, occur around the world with mass carnage and loss of life and limb, lives devastated by the hatred of religious ideologies. The U.S. stock market by fraud, deceit and manipulation soaring to new highs for bankers, hedge fund traders and politicians; while the ordinary citizens see their jobs eliminated or their wages reduced at work and the purchasing power of those reduced wages eroded by the insane policies of the Federal Reserve in collusion with White House Executive Orders and the Treasury Department. We watch as the last bastion of law, the Justice Department of the United States, colludes with “elitist” politicians to avoid the penalty for selling our nation’s secrets down the drain to foreign adversaries.

You think to yourself, “These bankers and politicians are crazy, just plain nuts.” Thinking people are amazed that world leaders and governing bodies keep borrowing their way into crisis. They keep spending the wealth of our children and grandchildren. Don’t these aforementioned leaders and bankers understand what they are doing? Can they not look back into history and see what happened to the empires and nations that borrowed more than they could pay? Is it just possible that they no longer can think rationally, and the little guy is actually a lot more astute at these issues than those in high places?

For years we have watched the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank put Third World nations into bondage of debt. These nations, though lost as colonial possessions from 1940 through 1965, were later brought back into bondage and servitude to the Western banks and governments by virtually forcing them to take out loans. These loans are so big, and the interest so powerful, that these Third World nations can only ser-

vice the debt forever.

Every so often, the World Bank would be called to a Third World nation to counsel them on how to pay their debt down. The World Bank would send a guru who would always demand that they cut services and benefits to their citizens, and stop funding the infrastructure, so that they could pay their debt. This resulted in virtual starvation during famine, and roads and railways were left in decay as nations paid more back to the World Bank. If these nations chose to pay off their debt, the World Bank would take another role. They would do a “survey,” or the United Nations would, and tell the nation targeted that they had a great future if they would only take out another loan. Then the cycle would repeat itself.

Does this sound at all like the way European nations, Greece, Spain, Japan, and the USA have been living in recent years? Ironically, the former World Bank Chairwoman, Christine Lagarde read the riot act to Europe and the USA four years ago. She warned that if we do not stop financing our lush

Continued next page

materialism (political speak for the skimming of revenues in pork legislation), we will tank.

How have the USA and Europe come to this condition? Something must have changed. And indeed it has! The only thing that can change is one's mind and it can only change in one of two directions.

The recorded story of Adam and Eve in rebellion against the directive of God is the beginning point for mankind. We find in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Genesis that they could eat anything God provided except the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. With their disobedience in eating of the fruit of that tree they now faced what all mankind faces; a choice to do good or to do evil. Any student of history full well knows that the track record of man's relationships and dealings with each other is one of vanity, jealousy, lust and greed. Every dictator, despot, king, queen, president, potentate, and tribal leader in obscure villages is motivated by one desire: to rule over and control the people around them.

Where does that mindset come from? Is it limited to people of higher education or status in society or does it exist in all of us? There is an answer and it is found clearly defined by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:28, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."

From Adam and Eve to our current generation, mankind has

increasingly removed God from its society. It has been, and still is, man's choice to reject his Creator and thus the answer to our original question is clear. A "reprobate" mind is a mind "void of judgment." No matter what approach men take in attempting to solve the tidal wave of destruction staring us in the face today, it is one "void of judgment." The only solution they suggest is to have another conference, summit or meeting in which they propose to have yet another conference, summit or meeting about the same problems, resulting in another conference about the same problems. This example of men's thinking could be defined as, "Losers working with other losers to create loss." Therefore kingdoms and empires come and fall on the ash heap of history and mankind plods on, void of judgment, to his next attempt.

But we are concerned with today, are we not? Our world is one that has come to our highest intellectual capacities, our greatest achievements in science and research. Psychology has plumbed the depths of the human mind. Culture, knowledge, training and education are on every hand. Every politician cries for "more education." But instead of bringing knowledge of God, it brings materialism, atheism, and a spurning of the great spiritual values of life. Our institutions become "void of judgment." Many attend the church of their choice regularly and spout spiritual sounding phrases, having no clue what they are talking about; they are ecclesiastical nuts. If

they knew better, they wouldn't be that way. They are "false teachers," *pseudo didaskolos* described in 2 Peter 2:1

But the worst is yet to come, possibly, maybe, perhaps in our generation. The problems we face are insurmountable by normal methods put forth by the world's leaders. It may soon be time for a different kind of leader. Josephus (Titus Flavius Josephus, 37-100 A.D.), in that famous account of the fall of Jerusalem in the year 70, writes of it in the sixth book of *The Wars of the Jews*. Josephus was the general of the Hebrew army and he was captured in Galilee. He sat there in the tents of the commanders of the Roman legions and he saw the destruction of Jerusalem. You'll not find in literature anything more vivid than his description of the blood that flowed in the streets of the city of God. And this is the paragraph of its final destruction:

Book VI, Chapter 5, *The Wars of the Jews*, by Josephus, 75 A.D., "A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction. He had made a public proclamation in the city to that very day: God commanded him to get up on the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of deliverance. Now there were then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose upon the people . . . that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes."

Continuing in Josephus' writing: "Now a man that is in adversity does easily comply with

such promises; for when such a seducer makes him believe that he shall be delivered from those miseries which oppress him, then it is that he's full of hope for such deliverance. These were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation but like men infatuated, without eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God had made to them." Sounds to me like they were "void of judgment."

What would that false prophet, that different kind of leader, look like today? What would his mind set be? Where would he come from? What would he believe? The answer is to be revealed possibly, maybe, perhaps in our generation. Regardless it will come, and its description is found once again in the pages of that book that needs to be dusted off and read as it was in a previous time in America, indeed, in the whole Western World.

2 Thessalonians 2:2-17, "That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself



The Arch of Titus in Rome depicts the sack of Jerusalem by Roman armies in 70 A.D. and the looting of the Second Temple.

that he is God.

"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

"And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion,

that they should believe a lie:

"That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

"Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

"Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word

Continued next page

and work.” (KJV)

The man of sin, which is the man whom Satan provides to rule the world, will be revealed. Revealed to whom? Answer: to whom is this passage addressed? The saints! The revealing of Satan’s man is described in very different terms when speaking of his deception of the nations. Is this the antichrist, or is it the false prophet? I don’t know, but it is not Rasputin, and it is not the President of the United States. It is a future man.

The elect are here when this man can be identified, and God has to intervene to preserve the saints from deception. This man of sin is not a political leader; he is not a member of the Hidden Hand or the Anglo Saxon elite. He is a religious man. The reason the elite abdicate the throne of mammon to the Antichrist is that they blew it, they overplayed their hand. We may look back, from early 2008 until the present, finding that the Federal Reserve of the US has held the prime rate at nearly zero for the longest time in modern history. Why? They blew it. They pushed the US and EU economies to the max, gambling with our money, and they are on the brink. Total collapse of the world’s economies is imminent. Very soon you will see a “Great Reset” of economies. As a result, soon you will hear that the world needs a spiritual solution.

Well, the coming man of sin (by Satan’s appointment) will rescue them, and though some of you may doubt it, the conditions of this arrangement will be worship, as verse 4 tells us. They worship, and the man of sin promises

power, peace, and wealth. The man of sin wins the world’s elite by flattery. The coming man of sin will offer the ultimate solution to the world elite which will secure their wealth and Utopia. But it will all be trashed by God himself. Why? God hates that coming system, for it is based on power through the fallen church; the Great Whore of Revelation. The man of sin’s time must come on GOD’S schedule, not Jack Van Impe’s or John Hagee’s. Nor are future world wide events chiseled in granite by the Bilderbergers, Illuminati, or any other mystic political entity.

God has or will send a **STRONG DELUSION** that will combine with the “reprobate mind,” or “mind void of judgment,” resulting in decisions that will bring this world to the very edge of extinction. There is only one hope for all mankind, eloquently described by General Douglas McArthur in his farewell speech to Congress and the nation seventy years ago on April 19, 1951. It is fitting for today.

“Men since the beginning of time have sought peace. Various methods through the ages have been attempted to devise an international process to prevent or settle disputes between nations. From the very start workable methods were found insofar as individual citizens were concerned, but the mechanics of an instrumentality of larger international scope have never been successful.

“Military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations, all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the cruci-

ble of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blocks out this alternative. We have had our last chance. If we will not devise some greater and more equitable system, our Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence, an improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature, and all material and cultural developments of the past two thousand years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh.”

The “Spiritual Recrudescence” this great General spoke of is from only one source that is able to remove the delusion of mankind’s reprobate, “void of judgment,” mind and save the world. It is found in Isaiah 2:2-4, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

“And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

“And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” □

BIBLE STUDY

by Dr. James & Natalie Ricks



Judge Not?

DOES CHRIST CONTRADICT HIMSELF ABOUT JUDGING OTHERS?

John 8:15-16, “You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.

“And yet if I do judge, My judgement is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.” (NKJV)

Did Christ contradict Himself in the very same verse? People are sometimes eager to try and find contradictions. Clearly, one should try to approach the Bible objectively, keeping the revelations in context and using common sense. The very important answer to this question about judging others becomes a lesson for everyone.

The first half of verse 15 speaks of humans using whatever skills or abilities they possess to judge or evaluate a person’s ultimate worth. Alternately, Jesus is saying that He did not judge “after the flesh.” Christ went on to explain that, if He did have to judge, He relied on the Father to guide Him through the power of His Spirit. God can truly judge an individual where people can’t.

1 Samuel 16:6-7, “So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, ‘Surely the LORD’S anointed is before Him.’

“But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’”

Samuel saw the tall, handsome, son of Jesse

and thought God was again choosing someone like Saul who looked so appealing as a leader. But God judges the heart, not outward appearances and impressions. God can see our inside, deep down, real character. This verse is the biggest proof that God’s Spirit of discernment is the key to correctly evaluating people.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11, “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: “for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,...

“to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.”

Correctly evaluating and making decisions about people or making assessment of them can only be conducted with deep accuracy by the gifts given to us by God through His Spirit. The context of the above verse makes it clear that only some people are given these gifts. Even then, our judgment maybe limited and not include the final disposition of that person. Final judgment is in the hands of Jesus Christ.

CHRIST CAME TO SAVE, NOT CONDEMN, MANKIND

We cannot condemn people to the lake of fire for their final destruction; only God can make this decision.

Matthew 5:22, “But I say to you that is

Continued next page

BIBLE STUDY

angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.”

God wants us to love all mankind, even our enemies. Jesus warns us against hatred and condemning others. He is opposed to condemning and judging by us.

Matthew 5:44-47, “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

“That you may be sons of your Father in heaven...

“For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?”

God wants us to learn to love others, even though they may be difficult people, instead of rendering total, judgmental condemnation. We need to be bigger and love our enemies! Jesus came to help and save weak sinners.

Matthew 9:11-13, “And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’

“When Jesus heard that, He said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician,

but those who are sick.

“But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’” For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Christ brings all of mankind grace, help and love; not condemnation.

John 5:30, “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.”

Jesus’ final evaluation of us is perfect because He is working in cooperation with the Father.

WHAT DOES “JUDGE NOT” MEAN?

Another familiar verse may need further explanation because it is easy to misunderstand the context in which Christ gave it. This verse was brought to a grandmother’s attention by a small child, age 9, to rebuff any criticism of the child’s actions. What does it really mean?

Matthew 7:1-2, “Judge not, that you be not judged.

“For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”

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BIBLE STUDY

Jesus is saying do not be hypocrites who judge others while ignoring your own problems. Some hide and distract from their own sins by enthusiastically pointing out the sins of others!

Matthew 7:3-5, "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?"

"Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?"

"Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Do these statements mean that a person must not say that any person or activity is wrong? Obviously, that is not the case.

What if someone comes to us and says, for instance, that they cheat on their spouse. Do we have no right to judge them as wrong or sinful? They may say the Bible says, "Do not judge." We can then say, "I do not judge you, but the Bible does." The Bible is our standard. We can know a lot of what is wrong and bad for us because it is spelled out in the word of God.

Romans 13:9 says, "For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

This is a statement that no one today would disagree with but who knows about tomorrow? Really! God says, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isa. 5:20).

THE FINAL JUDGMENT

All people must use some evaluation regarding who we follow and our own morals. Jesus went on to give advice for evaluating people and leaders and standards.

Matthew 7:15-20, "Beware of false prophets,

who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

"You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn-bushes or figs from thistles?"

"Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

"A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

"Therefore by their fruits you will know them."

People should look at the results of those trying to sell them their religious teachings. Many doctrines and movements have clearly only led to division and sometimes dissolution of congregations. Their fruit is bad! If they do not teach the value of worshiping the true God with His Laws they are also bearers of bad fruit.

Deuteronomy 13:1-5, "If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder,

"and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods' - which you have not known - 'and let us serve them,'

"you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

"You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.

"But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the LORD your God..."

How should we evaluate people and actions? If they counter The Commandments of God they are wrong. Moses is telling the people of God that if a teacher comes along that is charismatic, and seems to be correct, but he teaches one to break the First commandment, he is evil. If he teaches against the revealed God of the Bible and His Laws you can evaluate him as bad, but his final judgment is up to God. □


**WORLD NEWS
BRIEF**
IN CASE YOU MISSED IT
COPYING THE CREATOR

Once again, nature has provided engineering a path forward. Australian researchers have proved that concrete is even stronger and more durable when poured in patterns that mimic a lobster's shell. Though thin, the lobster's shell is actually comprised of hundreds of layers with patterns running in opposite directions. Even at a depth of 3,000 ft the shell has to withstand a pressure of over 1300 psi. Some are known to live as deep as 12,000 ft (approximately the depth of the Titanic) where pressures reach well over 5,000 psi. Great progress is being made in 3D printing technology, using concrete as a medium, to actually "print" buildings or homes. By copying the lobster shell patterns during construction researchers and builders hope to be able to incorporate more intricate designs and reach greater heights while improving strength and longevity.

THE SPACE RACE – ROUND 2?

NASA has successfully landed the Perseverance rover on Mars. Perseverance is the fifth such vehicle to be landed on Mars and being roughly the size of an SUV, the largest to date. Its primary mission is to search for evidence of microbial life from previous eons. It will also harvest rock samples to be retrieved by future missions and test out a new machine to collect oxygen out of the carbon dioxide heavy atmosphere. An attempt to fly a small helicopter will also be made which, if successful, will be extremely useful for further exploration.

Other countries are also interested in the red planet. Those with satellites in orbit include Russia, India, the UAE, and the multinational European Space Agency. China also hopes to land

a rover later this year. The spacecraft is already en route. Additionally, Turkey is planning a mission to the moon inside of two years while the ESA and Japan have probes headed to Mercury. Countries hope that these and other feats, such as landing on asteroids, will produce beneficial results. Prestige is certainly a factor, as is the potential to discover valuable minerals. Most especially hope for the kind of technological innovations produced by the race between the US and USSR which undeniably revolutionized many aspects of modern life.

BREAKING CURFEW

The Netherlands has been imposing strict lock-down measures including a 9 pm curfew. These virus related restrictions have not been well received in all parts of the country however. Amsterdam in particular has seen many nights in which mobs have taken to the streets in violent protest. Mobs have repeatedly battled the police, forcing them to bring in water cannons, dogs, mounted officers and to deploy tear gas. Cars have been burned in the riots and property damaged, though many arrests have been made. Officials have sought to lay the blame on a wantonly criminal element rather than acknowledge the frustration with many of their measures. Likewise, the media prefers to downplay any such incidents. While lawless violence is not the answer, the source of their frustration is fairly obvious since a Covid testing facility was intentionally incinerated.

HAZARDOUS EMPLOYMENT IMPERILED

Good intentions sometimes have unforeseen consequences, though this situation strains that statement in all directions. The current state of

affairs being what it is, city councils across California have sought to reward the “heroes” who work in grocery stores. Not at their own expense mind you, the stores themselves are being required to pay each employee an extra \$4 (and in some cities \$5) an hour. For many this has turned into a lose-lose scenario. Predictably, some stores simply cannot afford this unexpected and drastic increase and have been forced to close. No doubt the employees were as delighted as the customers. This is a good example of how government intervention hurts many of those it seeks to help. All mandated pay increases have consequences. Businesses must cut employees, raise prices or both. Then when the remaining employees have to spend more for essentials, like groceries, it’s hard to figure out who actually benefited from the arrangement. Minimum wage in California is currently \$12 an hour and set to reach \$15 by 2022.

TURNING PLAGUE INTO PROFIT

Scenes from Kenya and other areas battling swarms of desert locusts are staggering. Devouring everything in sight, they can travel up to 100 miles a day. Many farmers have had their crops completely devastated. Now some businesses are trying to help them get a little back from the plague that has taken so much. In the dark of the night the locusts settle and can be easily harvested. Large sackfuls are gathered rapidly. Once processed, the locusts can be used in fertilizers and animal feed. While not a solution, this measure can provide some relief to those who have suffered most.

A DISPUTED ALTAR


There is wrangling in Israel over a site on Mt. Ebal claimed to be an altar built by Joshua after leading the Israelites into the promised land. The account is in the book of Joshua, chapter eight. Verses 30-31 read, “Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal, As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offer-

ings.” The location in dispute is undoubtedly an altar of great antiquity on Mt. Ebal though some archaeologists dispute its Biblical significance. The issue has been brought to a head recently as stones from the outer walls have been removed for road repairs. The area is currently under the control of the Palestinian Authority, unmarked and unprotected by any historical designation — circumstances that many are hoping to change.

NOVAVAX

Still considered one of the front-runners in the race to produce a vaccine approved for use in the United States, success is by no means certain for Novavax. This smaller American company has yet to receive final approval for ANY of its vaccines, though one flu shot is nearly ready for market and expected to succeed. In preliminary Covid studies Novavax was one of the top performers. Now clinical trials are underway but are only just beginning in the US. Results from the UK boasted 90% efficacy but a South African study reported a dismal 60%. The South African study was only 1/3 the size but it has already been confirmed to be less effective against the variant first identified in that country, a problem they hope to overcome with a booster. Unfortunately, the variant has already been identified in the US as well and may present a major obstacle to eventual approval. Certain persons are not waiting to find out.

Significantly, Novavax is valued at about 44 times more than it was just a year ago. This is partly because of perceived demand for their potential product and massive cash contributions such as \$1.6 billion from “Operation Warp Speed.” Naturally, this has driven their stock price way, way up. Stock options have long been used as incentives for executives and at Novavax a few of them have chosen this moment to give themselves a large payday. By selling significant portions of stock in their own company they have locked in over \$46 million in profits. While this practice is not unknown, it has spooked many other investors who perceive it as a lack of confidence in Novavax’s product actually reaching market. A significant loss in value would be inevitable in such an instance. □



THE LINK BETWEEN SEX TRAFFICKING, ABORTION, AND PLANNED PARENTHOOD

by Nancy Flanders, *LiveAction.org*

“At least one of my [six] abortions was from Planned Parenthood because they didn’t ask any questions.”

Those are the words of a sex trafficking survivor who took part in the study, “The Health Consequences of Sex Trafficking and Their Implications for Identifying Victims in Healthcare Facilities,” which found that 55% of sex trafficking victims in the study had obtained abortions. Thirty percent had undergone more than one abortion.

Americans have recently become much more aware of the prevalence of child sex trafficking amid the unraveling of the secrets of Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell. But sex trafficking has been a profitable industry for decades, having a symbiotic relationship with the porn and abortion industries.

SEX TRAFFICKING, PORN, AND ABORTION

These three unethical and horrific industries are deeply entangled, each thriving off of the

others. DKT International, which sells the abortion pill and owns the worldwide rights to sell manual vacuum aspiration kits, fought against a 2003 law requiring organizations funded by the U.S. to take an official position against sex trafficking. To do so could have hurt DKT’s business.

DKT International was founded by Philip Harvey, who has made millions of dollars selling pornographic films and sex toys through his company, Adam & Eve. Those films, according to a report by National Review, likely contain footage of sex trafficking victims forced to participate in pornography. DKT International receives 25% of the profits from Adam & Eve (\$75 million in sales in 2019) and then in turn funds the overseas birth control and abortion industry. Harvey sits on the board of the UK-based Marie Stopes International, one of the largest abortion chains in the world.

Meanwhile, sex trafficking victims are frequently forced to undergo multiple abortions to

be able to continue “working.” Abortionists are, therefore, making money off of sex trafficking.

“The prevalence of forced abortions is an especially disturbing trend in sex trafficking,” wrote study authors Laura J. Lederer and Christopher A. Wetzel. “One victim noted that ‘in most of [my six abortions,] I was under serious pressure from my pimps to abort the babies.’ Another survivor, whose abuse at the hands of her traffickers was particularly brutal, reported 17 abortions and indicated that at least some of them were forced on her.”

Despite clear signs of abuse, abortion businesses frequently fail to report these instances to authorities, though they are mandated to do so. Instead, they collect money for abortions and return victims to their traffickers and abusers.

“The abortion industry is profiting tremendously [from sex trafficking] ... financially,” explained Nita Belles, regional director for Oregonians Against Trafficking Humans.

It's a cruel, inhumane, brutal circle in which Planned Parenthood can often be found at the center.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD'S ROLE IN SEX TRAFFICKING

"Survivors [of human trafficking] also had significant contact with clinical treatment facilities, most commonly Planned Parenthood clinics, which more than a quarter of survivors (29.6%) visited," reported Lederer, former senior advisor for trafficking in person for the U.S. Department of State. "... Since pimps and traffickers generally exercise nearly complete control of their victims, these points of contact with healthcare represent rare opportunities for victim identification and intervention."

One victim who took part in the study explained that no one at any clinic she ever visited, including Planned Parenthood, ever asked her questions about her situation. "No one ever asked me anything anytime I ever went to a clinic. ... I was on birth control during the 10 years I was on the streets — mostly Depo-Provera shots [which increase women's risk of contracting HIV by 40%] which I got at the Planned Parenthood and other neighborhood clinics. I also got the morning-after pill from them. I was young and so I had to have a waiver signed in order to get these."

That waiver, it turns out, could be signed by the victims' abusers — as was revealed during Live Action's Aiding Abusers investigation into Planned Parenthood's willingness to aid abusers and traf-

fickers, and cover up sexual abuse.

In 2011, Live Action investigators posed as a pimp and one of his prostitutes seeking a place that would handle STI treatments for his sex trafficking victims — some as young as 14. Planned Parenthood employees at seven facilities across the nation actually worked to help the "sex traffickers" by telling them how to get victims tested, the best way to skirt the laws to get abortions for them, and how to lie on paperwork about the ages of the girls so Planned Parenthood could avoid mandated reporting laws. One Planned Parenthood staffer even encouraged the "pimp" to sign the paperwork as the girls' guardian.

Planned Parenthood manager Amy Woodruff worked at the facility in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and was videotaped coaching the "sex traffickers" on where to get abortions for underage girls:

WOODRUFF: *You never got this from me, just to make all of our lives easier.*

PIMP: *Ok.*

WOODRUFF: *If they're 14 and under...*

PIMP: *Yeah, yeah.*

WOODRUFF: *[circles clinic paper] ... just send 'em right there if they need an abortion. OK? [Laughter].*

WOODRUFF: *...Here's the thing too. If they're minors, just tell them to put down that they're students.*

PIMP: *Students?*

WOODRUFF: *Yeah, just kind of play along that they're students. We want to make it look as*

legit as possible...

While these "sex traffickers" were actually undercover investigators, their experience supports what trafficking victims are saying. One trafficking victim said in an interview that she was "trusted" by her pimp and was given the task of scheduling abortions for the other girls. "The pimps and the traffickers would get fake I.D.'s for the girls and we would take them to have abortions," she explained.

She added that abortion businesses like Planned Parenthood would commit the abortions without question. "[H]onestly they had to know that these were teenagers," she said, "they were not adult women."

After Live Action's Aiding Abusers investigation was released, Planned Parenthood quickly fired the staffers caught aiding the "sex traffickers" and even announced they would be retraining their staff to spot abuse. This was false.

According to former Planned Parenthood manager Ramona Trevino, who was present for one of these retraining sessions, she and her fellow staffers were taught how to spot undercover investigators and determine whether or not they were being recorded — not how to identify trafficking victims.

As more information comes to light about sex trafficking in the U.S., those who have covered it up for decades, like Planned Parenthood, must be held responsible for aiding the abuse of thousands of children and women. □



BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

LESSON SEVEN: THE SABBATH

The seventh-day Sabbath is taught and kept holy in accordance with biblical instruction. Instituted at Creation, reaffirmed to Israel as a part of the covenant at Sinai and taught by Jesus Christ who is the Messenger of the New Covenant, the observance of the Sabbath is considered basic to a Christian's relationship with God.

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW:

The Church of God continues to observe the seventh-day as did Jesus and the New Testament Church. The Sabbath was established by God at Creation week; it was made for man, reaffirmed by Jesus, taught by the apostles and kept down through the centuries by faithful Christians. The importance of the Sabbath in the Old Testament cannot be disputed. Its continued observance is exemplified in the New Testament which confirms Sabbath-keeping as a fundamental practice of Jesus and the apostolic Church.

The original twofold functions of the Sabbath in the Old Testament were not ceremonial. The Sabbath (1) provided needed rest for the body and the psyche; and (2) gave opportunity for closer contact with God through study and prayer. When God established Israel as His people, the Sabbath was utilized as the time for congregational services, a commanded assembly of all the people. These needs are still very much extant in the 21st century.

The weekly Sabbath celebration serves as a reminder that God is Creator by its regular memorial of the Sabbath of Creation. It also affords a view toward a future new creation resulting from God's Kingdom on earth.

The most important New Testament statement on the Sabbath was spoken by Jesus Christ as quoted in Mark 2:27-28. Jesus not only affirms

the Sabbath command, He also instructs us about its purpose. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Thus, it is apparent that the Sabbath was made for man, for his spiritual and physical benefit. It provides the means for loving God to a greater degree by direct worship and, indirectly, by the spiritual renewal which enables one to keep up a constant direction of mind toward godly matters throughout the week. It is in our earnest attempt to express loyalty and love toward our Creator and to worship Him in spirit and in truth that we, as Christians, continue to keep the seventh-day Sabbath.

DOCTRINAL EXPOSITION:

The English word "Sabbath" is basically an anglicized pronunciation of a Hebrew word meaning "rest" or "repose." This Hebrew noun is itself evidently related to the verb "to stop, rest or cease." This same verb is found in ordinary usage (e.g. Lam. 5:14, "The elders have ceased from the gate"). "Ceasing" is exactly what God did on the seventh day of Creation week. In the Hebrew, Genesis 2:2 literally says that God "sabbathed" — ceased or rested — on the seventh day from all His work.

By definition, the Sabbath is a weekly holy day, a solemn rest, an appointed feast, a holy convocation (Lev. 23:3). As such it is a period of time

of approximately 24 hours reckoned from Friday evening sunset until Saturday evening sunset. The period of observation is borne out by the direct statement in Leviticus 23:32 on observing an annual Sabbath, “from evening to evening.”

OLD TESTAMENT PERIOD

The initial and cardinal passage about the Sabbath is contained in the Creation account which reads: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it” (Gen. 2:1-3).

Since from the beginning the Sabbath is associated with Creation week and specifically the creation of man, the Sabbath’s universal or cosmopolitan perspective sets it above any uniquely Israelite law and practice. The Creation Sabbath is presented in much the same way that the later prophets envisioned it—namely as an observance for all mankind, for the Gentile as well as for the Israelite. Therefore, while the Sabbath was later a functional part of the covenant at Sinai (Ex. chapters 20-24), its purpose and place are clearly much broader than that. (For example, Isaiah 66:23 shows that all nations will be observing the Sabbath during the millennial reign of Christ.)

The account of Exodus 16 shows the great importance God places on a specific period of time for the Sabbath. The true Sabbath could never be just one day, any day, out of seven. God caused special miracles to ratify the holiness of the Sabbath—double the normal amount of manna was found on the sixth day and the extra manna did not spoil when left until morning as it would have on any other day. And when some Israelites went looking for manna on the Sabbath, God told Moses, “How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?” (v. 28). This statement is especially relevant since it took place before the covenant at Sinai, proving both that the Sabbath predated that covenant and that it is included as one of God’s commandments and laws.

Just as the Sabbath was commanded before the covenant of Exodus 20-24, so the Sabbath was

also given as a separate covenant with special significance in Exodus 31:12-17. It is referred to as a “sign” of the special relationship between God and Israel. (Signs referred to elsewhere as evidence of covenants are: the rainbow in regard to God’s covenant with mankind, Genesis 9:8-17; and circumcision as a sign of the covenant with Abraham, Genesis 17:1-14.)

Why was God’s Sabbath day singled out in Exodus 31 as a sign? Because of its nature; many other nations kept some of the laws of God in one form or another. Some had fairly tight moral laws, usually criminal ones. But none kept the Sabbath day. It was the one law of God that would make Israel stand out. It would act as a sign to show that Israel was the nation of God. It would also keep Israel knowledgeable of God as Creator—the one true God who made everything. When the nations of the ten tribes of Israel later gave up this Sabbath sign, they were lost to history. But the Jews continue to keep it to this day, and are known by it. It is even called “Jewish” by others. The Sabbath is the one commandment of the ten that will maintain a direct line to God.

Ezekiel 20:12 shows that God gave Israel His Sabbath as a sign for another reason as well: so that they would continually know who was the God that sanctified them. This shows that the Sabbath is a sanctified method of consecration. Certainly sanctification is even more important in the spiritual sense of the New Covenant than it was in the physical sense of the Sinai covenant. Consequently the meaning, impact and importance of the Sabbath in its widest spiritual intent under the New Covenant, far from being diminished, must in fact be intensified for Christians.

Since the Sabbath began at Creation— not with the Sinaitic covenant with Israel—and then was made a special sign in a covenant forever with Israel, we still know the Sabbath as God’s covenant with people today: it is still the same sign.

Once again, the purpose of the special Sabbath covenant of Exodus 31 was to earmark Sabbath observance as a distinguishing practice that would help identify God’s people among the world’s populace. Thus it served to differentiate the true believers from the nonbelievers, God’s people from

Continued next page

the heathen, and not merely the civil Israelite nation from the Egyptian or Canaanite nations. Since the Sabbath was an important religious command of God, its observance helped to identify God's religious system and not merely a civil system or ethnic group. For this reason this special Sabbath Covenant applies today, with the same spiritually binding significance for all who wish to become and remain a part of God's true Church.

During the intertestamental period a great re-awakening took place among the Jewish community with respect to the importance of God's laws. One catalyst was the remembrance of the exiles; another was the slaughter and persecution brought about by Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B.C. The Jewish community "built a wall" around the law by adding regulations far beyond the biblical statements in an attempt to make it "impossible" for anyone to even approach breaking the law: the example of the Sabbath is a classic one.

Hence, as we approach the time of Christ's ministry, we find that the Sabbath, due to man's sincere but exaggerated interpretations, had become not a joy but a burden — something not originally intended by God. As a result, Christ had to set out to clarify the true "spirit" of the law.

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

There is great emphasis on the Sabbath throughout the Old Testament. Much is also written about Sabbath observance in the New Testament. The emphasis changes, however, from a nationalistic system of communal Sabbath-keeping, fulfilling the letter of the law, to an individual responsibility of personal worship on the Sabbath, fulfilling the spirit of the-law. The issues discussed in the New Testament never deal with *whether* the Sabbath should be kept. This would be utterly impossible as we will see. Rather, the questions deal with *how* the Sabbath should be kept.

The seventh-day Sabbath is observed today by only a few, because it is generally assumed that the New Testament shows the abolition of any need to keep the Sabbath. This assumption is rejected by the Church of God. Granted, there is no explicit statement such as, "Christians must keep the Sabbath." When we actually go back to the New Testament

environment, however, the fact that we should keep the Sabbath is so plain that no such statement is required.

Recent scholarly studies have emphasized the extreme strictness in, and rigorous administration of, Sabbath observance in the days of Jesus, even when compared to the later Rabbinic writings in the Mishnah.

Therefore, when Jesus was called into account for doing certain things on the Sabbath, it was not for violating specified Old Testament prohibitions, but for disavowal of non-inspired, traditional regulations concerning the Sabbath. The Old Testament did not forbid one to pick ears of grain on the Sabbath to eat on the spot. Yet when Jesus and His disciples did this He was called to account. The reason? Because the religious leaders had classified picking ears as "reaping" and rubbing loose the grain as "threshing."

The incident of the disciples plucking grain to eat in the fields (Matt. 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5) was no violation of property law since this was specifically permitted in the Old Testament (Deut. 23:25). They were accused only of Sabbath-breaking. Jesus did not defend their actions on the grounds that the Sabbath was done away. Rather, He used relevant analogies: David and the showbread (KJV, "Bread of the Presence," RSV) and the priests in the temple. It was only after He had shown that the actions of the disciples were not a true violation of the Sabbath that He asserted, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28). By this means He showed not that the Sabbath was done away but rather the correct spirit in which to keep the Sabbath. Jesus was clearly a Sabbath-keeper, not a Sabbath-breaker.

Similarly, it was forbidden by extra-biblical Jewish law to treat a sickness when the sick person's life was in no immediate danger. Although being watched by the Pharisees and scribes, Jesus healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11). To defend Himself He used the analogy of pulling a sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath. This shows that it was not His intent to break the Sabbath but to show

that relieving suffering was wholly consistent with the purpose of the day.

Similarly, when He healed a cripple who had been ill 38 years, He told the man to pick up his pallet and go home (John 5:8). This carrying of a few ounces of weight was in no way a violation of the law against bearing a burden on the Sabbath (Jer. 17:21,22,27). It was only in the opinion of certain onlooking religious leaders that He had violated the Sabbath discussions given in the gospels. (Other healings are also described in such passages as John 9; Luke 13:10-13; 14:2-4.)

One passage is undisputed, at least insofar as a clear reference to Sabbath observance after Jesus' own lifetime is concerned. This is Matthew 24:20: "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath." This admonition is directed at Jesus' own followers. And such instructions would have had little place in a non-Sabbath-keeping community. Scholars are almost unanimous in agreeing that this refers at least to a time as late as the 66-70 war against Rome, long after Jesus' death. (The dual implications of this prophecy also show that Jesus knew that the Sabbath would be kept by His people millennia later in the "time of the end.")

In addition, Christ's own example of attending the weekly synagogue is significant. In Luke 4, Jesus attends the synagogue on the Sabbath day in His own city "as His custom was" (v. 16). Evidently it had not been His custom heretofore to speak in the synagogue since the listeners were astonished at his teaching. This indicates He attended regular services as a means of Sabbath observance rather than just for the purpose of teaching. And it is impossible to over emphasize the importance of Christ's own example since He told His disciples to teach all nations those things that He had commanded them (Matt. 28:20).

Thus, we may conclude that the picture of Jesus as a lawbreaker or antinomian radical, while maintained in some fundamentalist circles, is easily refuted by the scriptures and is also generally rejected by scholarship.

The argument that Christians today need not do what Jesus Himself did and taught is refuted by Matthew 28:20, as mentioned above, where the disciples are told to teach what Jesus had commanded

them. Furthermore, Matthew 11:13 shows that, "all the prophets and the law" were in effect until John; this means that Jesus' own actions and teachings were more than simply fulfilling the Sinai Covenant — they were setting the proper example for all Christians for all time.

PRINCIPLES FOR OBSERVING THE SABBATH

Genesis 2:3 reveals that God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it — set it apart as a holy day — because He rested from all His work. God did not rest because He was tired (Isa. 40:28); He rested because He was creating something new by the very act of His resting! He was putting His holy presence into the seventh day of the week and setting the precedent for what all mankind should later do.

The Sabbath in the Sinaitic covenant and in later administrations was often hedged about with very strict legal ordinances about what could or could not be done on that day. These regulations had the purpose of teaching respect for the day and helping lead to the proper understanding of the day and its intent. Jesus looked beyond these legalistic ordinances surrounding the day and pointed to the true purpose of the day.

The Sabbath is a definite day, the seventh day of the week, established by God at creation. To alter its observance to one day — just any day — in seven makes it lose its original meaning. Of course, modern man is aware of geographical locations in which the sun does not set below the horizon every 24 hours. The polar regions in summer are one example; outer space is another. Yet, just as individuals in such locations do not lose track of time in relation to the rest of the world, the basic time of the seventh day of the week on earth can still be known. Despite lack of a clear time of sunset, an appropriate demarcation of the Sabbath day can still be determined.

Christians must keep the day in the spirit. And a true spiritual understanding of the meaning and purpose of the Sabbath obviates the need for detailed regulations; indeed, detailed regulations cannot substitute for a proper spiritual understanding. To attempt to draw detailed lines of Sabbath do's and don'ts would be of little use and would only confuse those seeking to gain understanding of the

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real intent of the Sabbath, which must come from the Spirit of God. Yet some guidelines are necessary — especially for the new convert. Therefore, a rather broad discussion is given here as a means of pointing to a proper understanding of the day.

The Sabbath is a special day, a holy day, a day specifically devoted to God and to spiritual matters. It is not a day for regular business (Isa. 58:13) but a time to turn from the cares and concerns of the mundane life to the things of God. It is a day in which to rejoice, to enjoy, to rest and have time for God and for one's family. The concept of rest does not mean inactivity though, since spiritual activity is quite important. Physical activity per se is not prohibited since certain kinds may be conducive to a better observance of the day (Matt. 12:1).

Jesus' example of doing good on the Sabbath is a farther indication that physical activity as such is not prohibited (e.g. Matt. 12:9-13; John 9:1-14). Doing good by helping others is very much in keeping with the intent of the Sabbath. Relieving the sufferings or taking care of the immediate needs of others is at the heart of Christian love. Since the purpose of the Sabbath is to lead to a more profound understanding of this godly love, activity which promotes this is certainly in harmony with the Sabbath command.

On the other hand, whatever does not contribute to a proper use of the Sabbath is out of keeping with it. Doing one's normal business, earning a living, becoming burdened with the mundane cares of daily life, following purely physical pursuits to the exclusion of spiritual ones, or regularly participating in activities which prevent the needed rest of mind and body, are contrary to the purpose of the Sabbath. These all defeat its very intent — the reason why it was given to man — because they do not generate the benefits that the Sabbath was created to give.

It is not the responsibility of the Church to create an encyclopedic handbook for Sabbath observance. The Church teaches the broad principles and the members apply them in situations as they arise. The Church cannot legislate on every last situation that may be encountered. Each member must be educated and encouraged to make personal value judgments according to his own character and

conscience within the general guidelines provided by the Church.

It is the duty of the ministry of the Church to teach the profound spiritual meaning of the seventh day from a biblical perspective. The ministry must teach both what the letter of the law says and what the spirit of the Sabbath law is.

The most important declaration regarding Sabbath Observance was Jesus' statement that, "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). God created the Sabbath day to serve man — not vice versa. Man was not intended to be enslaved to a period of time. Sabbath observance should not be allowed to become an end in itself. Rather, the day is to serve and help those who observe it. The Sabbath was created, as Christ pointed out, for the service of mankind. It was the day upon which God "rested" — that is, ceased from His labors of creation — "and was refreshed" (Ex. 31:17). The example is clear: God rested, therefore man also should rest from his weekly labors. When man observes the Sabbath day, he is imitating his Creator and commemorating the creation itself.

In short, the Sabbath is God's day. It is a day devoted to God and to godly activities. It is holy. It is hallowed. It is a day to be honored. It is a time to "delight in the Lord" as opposed to one's own mundane business affairs. It should be carefully noted that the term "seeking your own pleasure" (RSV, "finding thine own pleasure," KJV) in Isaiah 58:13 does not, in the Hebrew, have reference to personal enjoyment. The word "pleasure" is *khephets* in Hebrew. In the Jewish Publication Society translation of 1917, it is rendered "thine own business."

With these basic guidelines in mind, it should be evident that the individual must evaluate each situation that confronts him as it arises. He or she must answer several basic questions: will this activity violate the spirit and intent of the Sabbath day? Can I do it in faith? If there is doubt in the person's mind, if the activity contemplated is questionable, it is probably best to avoid it (Rom. 14:23). If it would offend his conscience — or that of others in the Church — he should avoid the activity. Paul said, "If food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall" (I Cor. 8:13).

These guidelines are what the Church provides

to its members as the basis for their personal decision making. It is not the duty of the ministry to spell out and rule on every last kind of activity in the human realm! It is in its spiritual significance. It is the individual's responsibility to interpret that teaching in the light of his or her own situation.

In all this, we should remember that Israel was a self contained, controllable, theocratic community. In today's world, on the other hand, Christians cannot control the circumstances of their environments except to a very limited extent. We are sent into the world (John 17:18). We must coexist with a world that, for the most part, does not obey God. Our situation is quite different from that of ancient Israel.

The Sabbath demonstrates one's recognition of God as Creator, both past and future, and as Lord of our lives. If we do not set aside the Sabbath day

— not just any day of the week, but the day specifically ordained, sanctified and commanded by God and His Word — perhaps it is because of a disinclination or “inability” to serve Him and put Him first. Respect for the Sabbath is one means (among many) of showing one's true attitude toward God and His rulership.

Keeping the Sabbath in its full spiritual intent is a means of developing and demonstrating godly love. It is also a solemn command from God, who wants only the best for His creation. Physically and mentally, the Sabbath renews the body to do more in six days than could be done in seven without such rest. Spiritually, it shows respect and love toward God. God's Sabbath is surely “for men” (Mark 2:27). *(This lesson was abbreviated for space. Contact us for a free copy of the full lesson.)* □

SUMMARY: Read these scriptures in your own Bible:

- **Mark 2:27-28** - The Sabbath was made for man and the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath.
- **Leviticus 23:2-3** - Sabbath is a holy day, a solemn rest, an appointed feast, a holy convocation.
- **Genesis 2:1-3** - God rested on the 7th day, a specific day and the only one with a name.
- **Isaiah 66:23** - In the millennium everyone will keep the Sabbath.
- **Exodus 16:28** - Sabbath is mentioned as Law before Sinai.
- **Exodus 20:8** - Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- **Exodus 31:12-17** - Sabbath is a sign between God and His people.
- **Isaiah 58:13-14** - Blessing for keeping the Sabbath.
- **Acts 13:42-48** - Paul is keeping the Sabbath with the Gentiles.
- **1 Corinthians 7:19** - Physical circumcision is nothing. Uncircumcision is nothing. But keeping the commandments (including the 4th) is.
- **Romans 2:29** - Circumcision of the heart is important.
- **Hebrews 4:11** - Sabbath looks forward to the ultimate rest in the Kingdom of God.
- **Ezekiel 40-48** - Sabbath is to be kept after return of Christ.
- **Leviticus 23:3** - The Sabbath is a holy convocation.
- **Hebrews 10:25** - Gathering together on the Sabbath.

Continued next page



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QUESTIONS (ANSWERS BELOW):

1. Which of the following is true regarding the Sabbath:
 - a) is Holy.
 - b) instituted at Creation.
 - c) reaffirmed to Israel at Sinai.
 - d) taught by Jesus Christ.
 - e) basic to a Christian's relationship with God.
 - f) all of the above
2. The weekly Sabbath celebration serves as a reminder that:
 - a) Association with others is fun.
 - b) God is Creator
3. The New Testament discussions about the Sabbath revolve around how to keep it not whether to keep it. True or False?
4. The basic New Testament scripture on how to keep the Sabbath is _____
5. The Hebrew word translated "Sabbath" means to rest, stop or cease. True or False?
6. The Sabbath is from:
 - a) midnight going into Saturday to midnight going into Sunday.
 - b) sundown Friday to sundown Saturday.
 - c) noon Friday to noon Saturday.
 - d) Saturday morning to Sunday morning.
7. The weekly Sabbath predated the covenant with Israel. True or False?
8. What verse tells us that God hallowed the Sabbath by resting on it?
9. The Sabbath was created only for the tribes of Israel and not the rest of the world. True or False?
10. Where do we hear God speaking to Moses saying, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?"
11. Exodus 20:8 says, "_____ the Sabbath day to keep it holy."
12. Exodus 31 says that the Sabbath is a _____ [what?] between Him and His people?
13. Finish this sentence: The Sabbath is the one commandment of the ten that will maintain a _____ to God.
14. Romans 9:6-8 says that in these New Testament times the seed of Abraham and the promises go to the followers of Christ, not physical Israel. (See Gal. 3:29.) Is this an accurate understanding of the New Testament? Yes or No?
15. The Sabbath is no longer a sign between God and His people. True or False?
16. Jeremiah 17 speaks to dire consequence of negligence in regard to the Sabbath. True or False?
17. The nations went into captivity, in part, because of their Sabbath breaking. True or False?
18. The Sabbath is clearly done away with in the New Testament times. True or False?
19. Secular history of the 1st century cannot be used to support the idea of Sabbath-keeping at that time. True or False?
20. The ministerial conference of Acts 15 did not discuss the abolition or altering of the Sabbath. Why?
 - a) It was an unforgivable oversight.
 - b) It was never an issue.
21. The Sabbath transcends the covenant at Sinai. True or False?
22. What scriptures in Acts record the Gentiles asking Paul to preach to them again on the next Sabbath?
23. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, was constantly being attacked by others Jews who said he was teaching against the Law. Acts 21:20-21 clearly indicates that these accusations were false. Why then, if he taught another Sabbath day, was he not accused by other Jews of Sabbath breaking?
 - a) They never discovered that all these churches started by Paul were keeping the wrong day (Sunday).
 - b) Because Paul vigorously kept all the laws of God including the Sabbath.
24. The Greek word translated "esteem" [*Krino*] is never used for Sabbath-keeping. True or False?
25. The Sabbath day has two great overall purposes according to the Bible:
 - a) It looks back as a witness to the _____ [what?]
 - b) It looks forward as a shadow to the spiritual rest of the _____ [what?]
26. In what verse in Isaiah do we read, "...and from one sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before me."
27. What 9 chapters in Ezekiel describes Israel and the future Temple in prophetic vision and specifically mentions Sabbath-keeping:
 - a) 1-9
 - b) 14-22
 - c) 30-38
 - d) 40-48

28. In polar regions where the sun does not set for 24 hours, 7 days a week, and in outer space, the Sabbath day has no meaning. True or False?
29. The church...
- a) teaches broad principles regarding Sabbath-keeping.
 b) provides specific lists of what cannot be done on the Sabbath.
30. Today, Sabbath teaching includes:
- a) the letter of the Law. b) the spirit of the Law. c) both. d) neither.
31. Which of the following are true about the Sabbath:
- a) it is God’s day. b) it is a day devoted to Godly activities. c) it is holy.
 d) it is a joy and delight. e) not a day for doing thine own business. f) all of the above
32. The phrase “nor finding thine own pleasure“ is better rendered:
- a) feeling good physically and emotionally. b) looking for a joyous time. c) plying your trade.
33. True or False? The following are inherently wrong on the Sabbath:
 watching TV; swimming; listening to music; marital relations; reading the weekly comics
34. What *is* wrong is any activity which interferes with or detracts from the joy, rest and spiritual intention of the day. True or False?
35. It is the duty of the ministry to:
- a) provide the member with basic guidelines for making their own decisions.
 b) spell out and rule on every last kind of activity.
36. Which of these activities would seem not in the spirit of keeping the Sabbath?
- a) participating in football or basketball.
 b) digging up the garden or plowing a field.
 c) harvesting a crop or entire garden.
 d) doing the week’s shopping.
 e) none of the above.
 f) all of the above.
37. In Leviticus 23:3 the Sabbath is called a _____ [what?]
38. Hebrews 10:25 encourages church members to _____ [what?] on the Sabbath.

LESSON SEVEN — ANSWERS:

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 38. (meet together) | 20. (b) |
| 37. (Holy convocation) | 19. (False) |
| 36. (f) | 18. (False) |
| 35. (a) | 17. (True) |
| 34. (True) | 16. (True) |
| overdone) | 15. (False) |
| 33. (False, but anything can be abused or | 14. (Yes) |
| 32. (c) | 13. (direct line) |
| 31. (f) | 12. (sign) |
| 30. (c) | 11. (Remember) |
| 29. (a) | 10. (Exodus 16:28) |
| 28. (False) | 9. (False) |
| 27. (d) | 8. (Genesis 2:2-3) |
| 26. (Isaiah 66:23) | 7. (True) |
| millennium) | 6. (b) |
| 25. (physical creation, Kingdom of God or | 5. (True) |
| 24. (True) | 4. (Mark 2:27-28) |
| 23. (b) | 3. (True) |
| 22. (Acts 13:42-48) | 2. (b) |
| 21. (True) | 1. (f) |



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