

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2004

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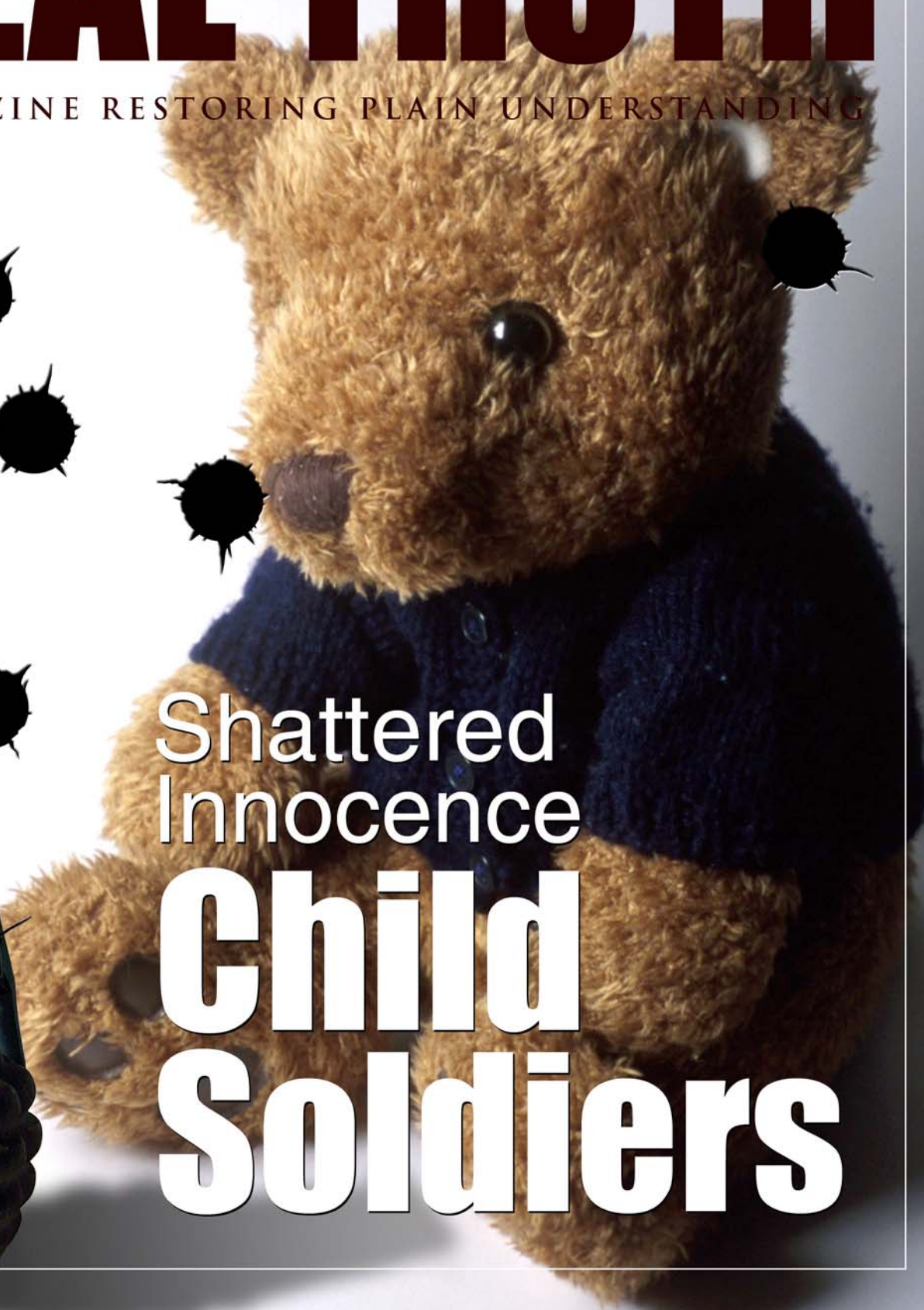
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REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

Shattered
Innocence

Child
Soldiers



THE
REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. 2 | NO. 1 | JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2004

A R T I C L E S

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HOMOSEXUALITY

**Out of the Closet,
Into the Mainstream**

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ABOUT OUR COVER: Increasingly in today’s world, the innocence of childhood is being stolen by war. But a time is coming when children will not see, or be part of, the atrocities of men.

PHOTO CREDITS: Page 32—U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency. Page 33—U.S. Department of Defense photo courtesy of *The New York Times*. All other photos courtesy of ArtToday, Inc.

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The REAL TRUTH magazine is provided free of charge. This is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the members of The Restored Church of God, and by the offerings and donations of co-workers and donors. Contributions are gratefully welcomed and are tax-deductible in the U.S. and Canada. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support the Work of God in preaching and publishing the Gospel to all nations are gladly welcomed as co-workers. Contributions should be sent to the address below.

The preparation and production of this magazine involved the work of editors, proofreaders, graphic artists, illustrators, writers, researchers and those who support the Work of God.

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Scriptures are quoted from the King James (or Authorized) Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Pack



Are You Being Called?

Many wonder if they are being called of God. How can you know? Are feelings sufficient on such a vital matter? What *is* a calling? What does God's Word say? You need to know.

MOST BELIEVE THAT God is trying to save the world now! This thinking goes something like this: God and the devil are at war over the fate of mankind. This is seen as a desperate struggle between good and evil—God and Satan.

Let's put this another way: Is today the only opportunity for all human beings to choose or to reject Christianity? Must all people "decide now" to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior? Is this what the Bible teaches? The answer is an emphatic NO! If it were *yes*, then God is failing miserably in His battle with the devil for control over the fate of all men. In other words, God is "calling" all of mankind, but most are NOT ANSWERING!

Consider! In 1920, when my father was born, there were about 2 billion people on earth. There are now about 6.4 billion—and more every day. Approximately 2 billion, or one-third, believe—to one degree or another—in the name of Jesus Christ. This represents a total that includes every conceivable brand of the over 2,000 *different forms* of professing Christianity. Approximately another one-third of mankind has *heard* of Christ but has not accepted Him and does not *claim* to follow Him. Finally, the last one-third of all people on earth know nothing about Christ. Many in India, Africa,

Japan, China and parts of South America and Southeast Asia have never even heard of Christ. Are they condemned to be lost, having never had an opportunity to understand what they missed or why—having no opportunity to be "called"?

When speaking of Christ's name, the Bible plainly says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is *none other name under heaven* given among men, whereby we must be *saved*" (Acts 4:12). Further, Romans 10:13 states that men must call on *this name* to be saved. Understand! It is obvious that all who have not yielded to the God of the Bible and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior are certainly *not* saved! Countless billions have died in this condition. Most have assumed that the only other option for these is that they were lost to salvation and that God long ago planned this for the vast majority who have ever lived.

If the war to win souls is as most supposed Christian ministers depict it, then the devil is much stronger—and much more effective—in his effort than God is. This is the only other possibility, unless there is a third category containing the vast majority of people. But it must be a category that has not been recognized. There is!—God is simply not calling the masses of humanity today.

But He *is* calling a select few!

Called and Chosen of God

The Bible plainly speaks of those who have been called by God. Notice what Paul said to the Thessalonian brethren: "Faithful is He [God] that *calls* you..." (I Thes. 5:24). As a warning to the Galatian congregation, who were losing sight of the true gospel, he said this: "I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that *called* you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (1:6), and later added, "This persuasion comes not of Him

that *calls* you” (5:7-8). To the Corinthian congregation he wrote, “For you see your *calling* brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are *called*” (I Cor. 1:26).

Christ Himself spoke on many occasions about the Christian calling. You may be familiar with His statement, “For many are *called*, but few are chosen,” found in both Matthew 22:14 and 20:16. Later, adding meaning to the second part of this phrase, He explained this to His disciples: “You have not chosen Me but I have *chosen* you” (John 15:16), and then “But I have *chosen* you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (vs. 19).

When placed together, these passages explain that God is calling a few people—actually a *very* few—out of the world for His supreme purpose. Those who respond to His calling are then “chosen,” going on to repentance, baptism and conversion.

What About You?

After reading some of the literature from The Restored Church of God, many come to recognize that they have been brought into contact with extraordinary understanding. They find themselves learning things that they have never heard before. They notice that the Bible makes sense—that it is not as hard to understand as they had previously thought. Then, feeling a growing need to *act* on what they are learning, many wonder, “Am I being called by God?”

Sometimes this question takes the form of “Am I undergoing ‘conversion’?” or “Should I get baptized?” or even “Have I come in contact with God’s true Church?” At best, most are unsure of how to *answer* these basic questions, and many have absolutely no idea whatsoever how to even properly *address* them.

This brief article will make plain, from God’s Word, how to know if God is calling you. I intend to keep it simple, virtually impossible to misunderstand. After all, this question is

one of the most important you will ever face. Properly understanding its answer is of paramount importance to your life!

I first began learning God’s truth when I was 17 years old. Before God called me, I had not known a single one of the true doctrines of the Bible. The calling process for me began when I heard the voice of a man named Herbert W. Armstrong, being broadcast from Pasadena, California. This was 1966, and it was immediately evident to me that I was hearing things from this man that I had NEVER heard before—and with plain scriptural PROOFS to back them up. I remember being astonished at how clear the Bible became—and how much fun it was to study. Prior to that time, I had always found the Bible boring and hard to understand—throughout the time I attended the well-known, respected denomination of my youth.

Actually, people of all ages and backgrounds puzzle over just what a “calling” is. Many reduce it to little more than a particular *feeling* that comes over them, which they attribute to God. Millions in the world feel “called”—in some cases to the “church,” in other cases to the “ministry,” or “missionary work,” in still other cases to work with children, and in yet others to serve in the medical profession or even in the military. Ignorant of what God says, so many people are left to rely on mere *feelings*, assuming that their lives—and the paths they choose—are divinely inspired. They attribute this “inspiration” to being called of God. Sadly, most never learn that these “callings” have nothing to do with following the true God of the Bible.

A true calling from God is far more than a kind of abstract *feeling* that human reasoning concludes is from God!

Defining a True Calling

In John’s gospel account, Jesus stated, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me *draw*

him...” (6:44). Nineteen verses later, He repeated to His audience, “Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were *given* unto him of My Father” (vs. 65). In the next verse, John records that “From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.”

Many who heard Christ simply could not understand that God has to “draw” people and that a calling is something that is “given” to them. While many today appear to understand that they must in some fashion be called, they do not seek to understand—from the Bible—how to know for certain that it is God who is calling—drawing—giving to them whatever it is they are to receive.

Let’s consider a few scriptures that make plain what it is Christians are “given” when they are called. We must clear up all possible confusion.

In Matthew, Christ’s disciples asked, “Why speak you unto them [the multitudes who heard Him] in parables?” (13:10). His answer summarizes how and with what God calls: “He answered and said unto them, Because it is *given* unto you *to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven* [or kingdom of God], but to them it is *not given*” (vs. 11). The next several verses amplify what He meant, explaining how many in the world can hear the truths of God (the “mysteries of the kingdom”) but not grasp them. Since the overwhelming majority of mankind are not being drawn by the power of God’s Spirit, they have not been given the ability to comprehend God’s Word.

How does this apply to you? The answer directly explains how to know if God is calling you: A calling, in the simplest terms, is understanding the truths of God when you see, read or hear them.

Ask yourself: “Do I understand Bible teachings and truths when I hear them? Do the scriptures about the gospel of the kingdom of God; the

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Should Christians Submit to **GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY?**

Should you always obey civil authority? Does the Bible ever endorse the breaking of man's laws? When man's ordinances are in conflict with God's laws, which have precedence? Must Christians pay taxes? Do Christians have a duty to reform the governments of men? Many are confused about these issues. Here are the answers!

BY DAVID C. PACK

LOOK AROUND YOU! Disrespect for authority has probably never been greater than it is today. It seems to grow worse every day. General lawlessness is growing on a worldwide scale!

Human nature hates being told what to do. It naturally tries to find "loopholes" in instructions—and law. People have grown to be almost entirely concerned about their rights—and whether they are being violated. But few are concerned about the growing chaos and confusion threatening more and more people and nations.

None of the humanly-devised governments on earth are perfect. They are filled with corruption, inefficiency, inconsistency and, often, outright injustice! Most ministers teach that it is a Christian's duty to "make the world a better place." They believe that, through the "efforts of good people, all working together," the world and its governments can find peace,

prosperity and happiness for all.

Is this true? Do Christians have a spiritual duty to make this world's governments better? Does Christ want you to "write your Congressman" about issues that you want addressed?

A Christian is one who follows Jesus Christ—and obeys God. Christ continually spoke about God's government being established on earth. Christians yield to and obey—submit themselves to—THIS government! (Read our free booklet *What is the KINGDOM OF GOD?* to learn more about this future, world-ruling government.)

But must Christians also obey the governments of *men*? What should your relationship be to your country's government? Do you have a responsibility to reform men's governments? Are Christians free to speak evil of individuals in authority if they do not like what they do? What about taxes? Does God require that they be paid?

All Christians live in a physical country on earth. Every country has

some form of human government. There is no escaping the need to address how and whether a Christian is required to obey man's laws, statutes and ordinances.

So what does the Bible say? What did Christ teach about submitting to government authority? What did He *do*? The apostle Peter stated, "Judgment must begin *at the house of God*" (I Pet. 4:17). Christians must understand this subject—for God shall judge them on it.

The Bible Teaching

The Bible has much to say on this matter. We will see that God's instructions are clear.

First, we need to understand basic instruction about the Christian calling. A Christian is not of this world or its systems. Regarding the religious and political systems of this world—Babylon—God instructs, "*Come out of her, MY PEOPLE*, that you be not partakers of her sins" (Rev. 18:4). Babylon means *confusion*. The true servants of God have come out of this world, its governments and its confusion (I Cor. 14:33).

When Christ kept the Passover on the night before He was crucified, He explained an important principle to His disciples. He said, "I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil. They are *not of the world*, even as I am not of the world. *Sanctify them through Your truth: YOUR WORD IS TRUTH*" (John 17:15-17).

A Christian is one who believes and follows the truth. This sets him apart (sanctifies him) from all those around him. He is not *of* the world and its ways, customs, and traditions.

Of course, a Christian cannot live on Mars or in a cave. He cannot leave planet earth or live as a hermit on a mountaintop. Christ did not mean for us to come out of the *physical* world. He meant that we are to come out of its systems of governments and religions. So, Christians do have contact with, and live under, human governments. How does God tell them to view those governments?

Here is what the apostle Paul wrote: “*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.* For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are *ORDAINED OF GOD. Whosoever therefore resists the power, resists the ORDINANCE OF GOD:* and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. *Will you then not be afraid of the power?* Do that which is good, and you shall have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to you for good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid; for he bears not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil. *Wherefore you must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.* For for this cause pay you tribute [taxes] also: for *they are God’s ministers* attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor” (Rom. 13:1-7).

These verses contain much to consider. They leave no question that all people (“*every soul*”)—including Christians—are subject to the “higher powers,” because they are “ordained of God.” To resist them, God says, is to “resist...God.” That is serious! God asks, “*Will you then not be afraid of the power?*” Many are not, but they *should be!*

Christians honor those who deserve honor. They pay taxes (tribute). They

are subject to the government, and “Render...their dues” to all that are in authority. This is not the way most people conduct themselves today. Yet, these are the words of the Creator God.

But do not be confused! Notice that Christians are *not* told to be afraid of the actual men in the office, but rather “of the power” these men hold. Since they only have this power by the permission of God, then it is really the POWER OF GOD that we are to fear.

The Real Authority Behind Men’s Governments

Have you ever wondered who selects the leaders of the countries on earth? Do men ultimately select kings, presidents, prime ministers and other rulers, the human leaders of the nations today?

Benjamin Franklin once said, “The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of man; and if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?” This is truer than Franklin probably ever understood. Here is proof.

We need to read Daniel 4:17. This amazing scripture is found in the middle of a remarkable story and partly explains why more talented people are leaving politics than ever before: “This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that *the Most High rules in the kingdom of men*, and gives it to whomsoever He will, and *sets up over it the basest of men.*” Also, Daniel 2:21 states, “He [God] removes kings, and sets up kings.” There is no misunderstanding the plainness of this verse. *God* establishes and removes kings and kingdoms. If God chooses to place the weakest and “basest” (base means bottom—like a basement) of humans in office, because He may feel this is who the people deserve, then it is His prerogative to do so.

When Christ was on trial for His life before Pontius Pilate, He clarified the real source of Pilate’s authority over the outcome of the trial. Notice: “Then said Pilate unto Him, Speak You not

unto me? Know You not that I have power to crucify You, and have power to release You? Jesus answered, You *could have no power* at all against Me, *except it were given you from above:* therefore he that delivered Me unto you has the greater sin” (John 19:10-11).

Men may come to power in many different ways, including nepotism, bribery, revolution, deceit, or even murder. But these are all things that God allows for His great, overall purpose.

Some who cite Daniel 4:17 miss the point when they say, “God is working in this election and good Christians everywhere, if we can get out the vote, can put godly men in office.” This literally puts them in a position to fight God’s purpose. Many religious leaders misunderstand this verse, believing that it is, somehow, their job to guide Christians to reform men’s governments—to somehow “make them better.” Many are taught that it is their “Christian duty.”

Consider: You and I do not know whom God has selected in advance—the “winner” that *He* wants in office. To cast a vote for someone other than the one God has already selected for victory is to potentially *fight God’s purpose!* That is serious business—and the Bible says that it is possible to do this (Acts 5:39)! In a democracy, where leaders are installed through elections, God determines the winners in advance. In the end, the “will of the people” has no power or effect, because God is in charge of the outcome of elections. (Read our free booklet *Should Christians VOTE?* to learn more.)

God is working out a plan that encompasses 7,000 years. He is allowing mankind to find out that its own ways, governments, values, religions and purposes do not work, and never will. God has already picked the leaders that best work toward the fulfillment of His plan of salvation for all mankind. The powers that be are truly “ordained of God.”

But do not misunderstand. While the Bible reveals that it is God who sets up and removes rulers, and that

governments only have power as long as God permits it, the kingdoms of this world are *not* God's kingdoms!

What If Leaders are Hypocritical?

If leaders lie, cheat, steal and evidence corruption, are Christians “off the hook” in their requirement to obey them? Must their conduct always command respect? Are individuals free to decide who is, and who is not, worthy of honor?

Christ answered these questions when He gave His disciples important instruction about the hypocrisy and terrible conduct of certain religious leaders who held power over the Jews: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore *whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not you after their works:* for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers” (Matt. 23:2-4).

Regardless of how leaders conduct themselves, either in their personal lives or in carrying out their official duties, they must be obeyed. But their ungodly examples are *not* to be copied.

By respecting those who hold offices through the authority and permission of God, we actually show respect to God Himself. While their personal conduct may be far from praiseworthy, even to the point where some corrupt the very government that they represent, they are still appointed by God to preserve order and punish law-breakers and wrongdoers. Make no mistake, those who are preserving order and exercising authority within man’s governments are doing it on God’s behalf. He is working out a purpose that is probably far different than what any personal agenda for “improvement” would solve. When leaders are self-serving—or even outright devilish—it is God’s responsibility to remove them—NOT OURS!

Speak No Evil of Leaders

The apostle Peter spoke of those who “despise government. Presumptuous

are they, selfwilled, they are *not afraid to speak evil of dignities*” (II Pet. 2:10). Some people utter outrageous slander against those in authority—for real or imagined wrongs. They “presume” that it is alright to do this, lacking the fear (“are not afraid”) necessary to hold them back in their attacks against dignitaries (dignities). Such people, themselves, lack even normal human dignity in this regard.

Have you heard the saying, “A little bird told me”? Wise King Solomon warned all to “*Curse not the king*, no not in your thought; and curse not the rich in your bedchamber: for *a bird of the air shall carry the voice*, and that which has wings shall tell the matter” (Ecc. 10:20). Besides the fact that slander is wrong, it is also foolish. Eventually, the “king,” or any leader, will hear what was said.

Paul wrote, “Put them in mind *to be subject* to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, *to speak evil of no man*, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men” (Titus 3:1-2). Does this verse describe you? Or do you reflect cynicism, bitterness, anger and accusation toward others? Paul’s instruction is all-encompassing. He says, “Speak evil of NO MAN.”

Be careful what you say and do, because God also inspired Solomon to record, “*An ungodly man digs up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire*” (Prov. 16:27). I have seen many people who traffic in gossip, innuendo, slander, storytelling and relentless character assassination of leaders of all kinds. They spew “fire” all over those that they attack, seeking to consume them. They presume that they are acting with impunity, even though God says they should fear speaking such evil (Rom. 13:4). They will not get away with this defamation!

Submit Yourselves

Peter also gave important instruction about what God expects of Christians in their responsibility toward civil governments. He wrote, “*Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man FOR THE LORD’S SAKE*: whether it be to the

king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men...Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king” (I Pet. 2:13-15, 17).

“Submit yourselves”—this is what we should do. The term, “for the Lord’s sake,” clarifies that it is God who wishes us to submit to “every ordinance” of men’s governments.

Note that Peter did not state, “OBEY every ordinance.” Why? Because some ordinances are contrary to God’s direct instructions and cannot be obeyed. The following account from the book of Acts illustrates this important point. The apostles had been commanded by the authorities (Acts 4:16-18) to no longer preach anything about Jesus Christ—or to invoke His authority.

Here is how they responded: “But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge you” (vs. 19). The account continues in the next chapter, after the disciples had been arrested, imprisoned and called to account for disregarding the command to cease preaching Christ’s name. Acts 5:29 states, “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN.”

A conversation ensued. Gamaliel, a respected leader, urged the Council to stop further harassment of the apostles. The account continues, “And to him [Gamaliel] they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, *and beaten them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go” (v. 40). The apostles certainly submitted to a beating. Also, they did not lash out and hurl accusations and epithets of every conceivable kind against those who had so unjustly dealt with them. They willingly accepted the consequences of putting God’s way before the wrong-headed instructions of blinded men. They obeyed God rather than men.

In giving instructions for such circumstances, Paul wrote, “So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb. 13:6). Should you ever be faced with the decision to “obey God rather than men,” keep this encouraging verse close to heart.

Should You Pay Taxes?

Various popular “movements” have arisen, teaching the idea that “we do not really have to pay taxes,” or “paying income tax is unconstitutional.” Usually, this is accompanied by some kind of theological explanation for why this is really what God approves. It is NOT!

Here is what Christ said when asked this question. He was plain—impossible to misunderstand: “Tell us therefore, What think you? Is it lawful to give tribute [taxes] unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt you Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He said unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Caesar’s. Then said He unto them, *Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s*; and unto God the things that are God’s. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left Him, and went their way” (Matt. 22:17-22).

Christ labeled the attitude of seeking to get around paying taxes as hypocritical and wicked. Those who cheat the government are absolute *thieves*! Of course, anyone can make a simple mistake. That is different. However, those who seek not to pay taxes are directly disobeying Christ’s plain instructions.

Sometimes it seems as though there is not enough money to pay all the bills. It takes faith to pay both the taxes of men and the tithes that belong to God. You have to rely on God to help you pay what you owe to both Him and man. Notice the following account: “And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter,

and said, Does not your Master pay tribute? He said, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What think you, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers? Peter said unto him, Of strangers. Jesus said unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go you to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first comes up; and when you have opened his mouth, you shall find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for Me and you” (Matt. 17:24-27).

The point? God has the power to give you enough money to satisfy the tax collectors. He is unlimited in what He can do—or how He does it. This includes putting money into the mouth of a fish to supply your financial needs. (None has ever had to experience *this* in order to pay their taxes!) The one who relies on God never needs to worry. God will keep His promise to provide for him. (To learn more, read our free booklets *End all your FINANCIAL WORRIES* and *What is real FAITH?*)

It is also important to never pay these taxes grudgingly. God commands that we pay taxes—therefore, we should do this as willingly as we follow any other of His commands!

An Important Responsibility

The Christian’s responsibility does not end with mere *obedience* to government authority. Paul actually tells us to *pray* for those in authority—and includes a specific reason in the instruction. He states, “I EXHORT therefore, that, first of all, *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks*, be made for all men; For kings, and *for all that are in authority*; THAT WE MAY LEAD A QUIET AND PEACEABLE LIFE in all godliness and honesty” (I Tim. 2:1-2).

Of course, if times of persecution and difficulty in society grow worse, then it is far harder to lead a life of peace, godliness and honesty. Prayers for those in authority can cause God to

bring relief to those who are striving to obey Him. It is important that we never forget this responsibility.

Do Not Suffer as “Evildoers”

Christ said that Christians are to be the “light of the world” and the “salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13-16). They are always to shine as outstanding examples to the world. This includes a humble willingness to cheerfully obey all civil governments under which they find themselves.

When persecution comes as a direct result of obeying God’s commands, Peter instructs, “If you be reproached for the name of Christ, *happy are you*; for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified” (I Pet. 4:14). However, he makes a clear distinction between suffering for the name of Jesus Christ and suffering as a law-breaker. The next verse continues, “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters” (vs.15).

During my thirty-plus year ministry, I have known many people who sought to get around the laws of men. Sometimes, when they were brought to justice, they even found a way to claim that they were really being persecuted for their religious convictions. They also supposed that they could “get away with” what they did without being caught—or that what they were doing was not really wrong, because they were merely breaking the laws of *men*. But God commands us to always keep the laws of men—unless they are contrary to *His* laws, directly or indirectly.

During these years, I have visited and known of many who were either in jail or prison or had previously been there. Almost none of them thought that they were guilty of the crime that had put them behind bars. They nearly always seemed to see themselves as victims of someone else, or something else.

Please see **GOVERNMENT**, page 25

ev·o·lu·tion

[FACT or FICTION?]

Nearly universal in its teaching, evolution stands upon many assumptions. We will discuss the facts—the truth—about this “science.”

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

IN THE PREVIOUS issue, we looked into the illogic of evolution—and the fallacies it employs. We also explored the assumption that evolution is a scientific fact, and showed that it is not even a scientific *theory*. But there is much more to learn about this “theory.”

Two primary aspects of evolution form its foundation. The first one attempts to explain the origin of the universe itself. The second is an explanation of the supposed mechanism that caused non-living matter to turn into plants, which then turned into fish, on to animals and then to human beings.

The more you understand about evolution, the less you will understand why it is taught to millions of schoolchildren.

Cause and Effect—A Scientific Law

There is a great law that governs the entire universe. It is so fundamental that you often apply it without even knowing. Everyone uses it and is impacted by it, whether in industry or in everyday life. It is the law of CAUSE and EFFECT.

If you drop a ball, it falls to the ground. The effect is that the ball falls and hits the ground; the cause is gravity. If you get wet after jumping into a pool, the effect is getting wet—the cause is jumping into the pool. As you can see, “cause and effect” is simply common sense.

This understanding is so universal that it has been granted the status of a scientific law. As discussed in the last issue, for something to be established as a *scientific* law, it must come under rigorous scientific scrutiny. This further shows the fundamental nature of cause and effect. Part of this law’s definition states that you may never have an effect that is *greater than* its cause.

This aspect of cause and effect agrees with another law of science—thermodynamics. Thermodynamics is the study of the dynamics of thermals (heat). It is made up of three basic laws, on which ALL disciplines of science are based. The Second Law of Thermodynamics is directly related to cause and effect. It is best summarized by saying that everything moves toward disorder—or a condition known as entropy. Consider these examples:

If water being heated on a stove is at 150 degrees Fahrenheit, and the burner is turned off, the temperature will drop instead of rise. It will move toward colder rather than hotter. If you spin a top, it will, over time, stop spinning. The energy used to perform any particular task changes from usable to unusable during the process. It will always go from a higher energy level to a lower energy level—where less and less energy is available for use.

This is closely related to the law of cause and effect. Scientific laws cannot be broken, nor will they contradict each other. Scientifically speaking, because of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, every cause will create a *lesser* effect!

How does a more advanced life form—the effect—stem from a simpler life form—the cause? This breaks the Second Law of Thermodynamics. With these concepts in mind, you may already be seeing contradictions in the theory of evolution.

Survivors Survive

One of the most basic concepts in the theory of evolution is “survival of the fittest.” Simply put, it is the concept that nature selects the fittest and most adaptable of a species to produce offspring and therefore survive.

Sounding logical, this theory is taught throughout schools worldwide. By reading this series, you are begin-

ning to see that we must always PROVE what is *assumed* to be true.

Notice: “Once upon a time, it all looked so simple. Nature rewarded the fit with the carrot of survival and punished the unfit with the stick of extinction. The trouble only started when it came to defining fitness...Thus natural selection looks after the survival and reproduction of the fittest, and the fittest are those which have the highest rate of reproduction...We are caught in a circular argument which completely begs the question of what makes evolution evolve” (Arthur Koestler, *Janus: A Summing Up*, 1978).

In other words, the fittest are those who survive, and those who survive are deemed the fittest. This is circular logic! Evolutionists have assumed that just because something survived, it is the fittest of the species. You may now begin to understand why properly understanding logical fallacies becomes so important. Evolution is rampant with them!

The theory of “survival of the fittest” is what is called a “tautology,” a way of saying something redundant. For instance, “survivors survive”; “water is wet”; “matter is material” ; and so on. Such a statement does not prove anything, because it is nothing more than a truism.

Yet, even with such information, evolutionists willingly ignore the facts: “Most evolutionary biologists seem unconcerned about the charge and make only a token effort to explain the tautology away. The remainder... simply concede the fact. For them, natural selection is a tautology which states a heretofore unrecognized relation: The fittest—defined as those who will leave the most offspring—will leave the most offspring.”

“What is most unsettling is that some evolutionary biologists have no qualms about proposing tautologies as explanations. One would immediately reject any lexicographer who tried to define a word by the same word, or a thinker who merely restated his proposition, or any other instance of gross redundancy; yet no one seems scandal-

ized that men of science should be satisfied with a major principle which is no more than a tautology” (G.A. Peseley, *The Epistemological Status of Natural Selection*, 1982).

But some scientists may argue, “We have seen natural selection. It happens around the world on a daily basis. This theory is provable!” But is it? These scientists point to natural selection removing the *unfit*. But this does not create new attributes in a species or, for that matter, create a new species! For evolution to be valid, better, more advanced creatures would have to survive, leading to the creation of *new species*.

A famous Dutch botanist best explained the problem by stating, “Natural selection may explain the survival of the fittest, but it cannot explain the *arrival* of the fittest” (Hugo deVries, *Species and Varieties: Their Origin by Mutation*, 1905, emphasis ours.).

Since all systems in nature are well balanced, there must be a mechanism that *keeps* those systems balanced. Therefore, natural selection is very effective for removing the unfit from a species. This can be witnessed by the instinctive actions of a lion attacking the weakest of a zebra herd. The zebra herd remains healthy, because the *weak* are removed.

Interestingly, the idea of natural selection did not form in the mind of Charles Darwin. In fact, natural selection was documented 20 years earlier, by creationist zoologist/chemist Edward Blyth. Darwin changed the concept from the “natural process of selection” to the “natural means of selection.” He changed it from a readily understood and accepted theory to a circular logic truism!

Like all such truisms, the concept of natural selection attempts to explain everything, but, in reality, it explains nothing. Falsely assumed by so many, this aspect of evolution is nothing more than a redundant statement.

An Eternal Universe

No matter how science tries to simplify the theory of evolution, there is

always the problem of explaining where the universe began. What is its origin?

There are *only* two possibilities: (1) It appeared at a certain point in time, or (2) it has always existed.

Both of these ideas require some investigation. Is the universe eternal? Did it form? And is this possible to prove either way?

Since we are unable to travel back in time, you may quickly think that it is impossible to know if the universe had a beginning. Matter has an amazing property. It decays! In fact, *everything* is moving into a further state of decay. You see this principle at work all around you. If you clean your house, it will eventually become messy again. Even if you are not living there, dust will form and its general state will decay. Your body also evidences this concept. Keeping yourself in shape is work. If you stop exercising or eating properly, you will quickly get out of shape.

These are just everyday examples of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. But how does this prove that the universe is not eternal?

With the coming of the Atomic Age, beginning with Madame Curie’s discovery of radium in 1898, came the knowledge that all radioactive elements continually give off radiation. Consider! Uranium has an atomic weight of 238.0. As it decomposes, it releases a helium atom three times. Each helium atom has an atomic weight of 4. With the new weight of 226.0, uranium becomes radium. Radium continues to give off additional atoms until the end product eventually becomes the inert element called lead. This takes a *tremendous* amount of time.

But, what does this mean? It means that there was a point in time when the uranium could not have existed, because it always breaks down in a highly systematic, controlled way. It is not stable like lead or other elements. It always breaks down. This also means there was a specific moment in time when all radioactive elements came into existence. Remember, none

of them—uranium, radium, thorium, radon, polonium, francium, protactinium and others—have existed forever.

This is the Second Law of Thermodynamics at work! As Henry Moore stated, “The Second Law requires the universe to have had a beginning” (*Scientific Creationism*, 1974). And it represents absolute proof that the universe came into existence or, in other words, that the universe is *not* eternal! That leaves only one possibility. At one point in time, something—or someone—*caused* the universe to come into existence.

This brings us back to the concept of cause and effect. In this case, the universe is the *effect*—but what is the CAUSE? We have seen that every effect must be *less* than the cause. So as vast as our universe is, there must be something greater which caused it. This is consistent with the scientific laws we have already discussed.

Of course, scientists have also come to similar conclusions—the universe is not eternal and there needs to be a “first cause.” Ignoring the TRUE first cause, they attempt to explain the universe in many other ways. The most common is often referred to as the “Big Bang Theory.”

Big Bang—or Big Hoax?

At its very core, the Big Bang Theory states that a particular event caused the formation of matter, with our modern universe expanding from that initial event. After the big bang, another theory takes over. The “inflationary model” was created to explain how a single event caused the expansive universe that exists today.

However, both concepts *break* laws of science. As we saw with the Second Law of Thermodynamics, energy is continually moving into a more chaotic state—with less usable energy—not into a larger, more complex universe. How ridiculous that this FACT is ignored!

But an even bigger problem is the *First* Law of Thermodynamics, often called the Law of Conservation of Energy. It is memorized by high school students, and is a basic funda-

mental law of science. It states that energy cannot be created or destroyed, but can only change its form.

This too flies in the face of the big bang theory! If energy cannot be created, then *something* certainly cannot appear from *nothing*. Evolutionary scientists also understand this problem. Often, attention is taken away from the lack of explanation of the creation of matter by asserting explanations on how the universe “grew.” By lumping the initial creation of matter with the expansion of the universe, scientists have created a series of “smoke and mirrors,” which, as we have seen before, is often the only way to explain various aspects of evolution.

Many scientists, such as Alan Guth, have also raised this point: “First of all, I will say that at the purely technical level, inflation itself does not explain how the universe arose from nothing...Inflation itself takes a very small universe and produces from it a very big universe. But inflation by itself does not explain where that very small universe came from” (Fred, Heerren, *Show Me God*, 1995). Such deceit is taught as fact in schools!

One of the greatest mathematical minds of the modern world closed the door on the inflationary model: “The new inflationary model was a good attempt to explain why the universe is the way it is...In my personal opinion, the new inflationary model is now dead as a scientific theory, although a lot of people do not seem to have not heard of its demise and are still writing papers on it as if it were viable” (Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, 1988).

Like so many aspects of evolution, even when it has been proven to be inaccurate, it is still taught as fact. The smoke and mirrors continue!

Changing the Rules?

Since we have seen that the universe could not have come from “nothing,” is it possible to explain its existence? Must the creation of the universe follow the rules of science?

Any parent is responsible for creat-

ing the rules for their household. At any time, they can change those rules. It is in their power to modify, adjust or even discard these rules. The child in that house must continue to live within the confines of those rules, no matter how they are changed.

So it is with the universe. As the Creator of the universe, God established its rules and has the power to modify them. When He created the universe and matter, He *then* established the laws of science.

Interestingly, the First Law of Thermodynamics actually proves that God has always existed. Remember that this law means *something* could not come from *nothing*. Science has proven that if there was not an eternal God-being to create the universe, there would never have been a universe. Since something can never come from nothing, God *had* to always exist! Unwittingly, science has proven God’s existence, while at the same time disproving evolution!

Nobel Prize winning physicist Louis Neel stated, “The progress of science, no matter how marvelous it appears to be...leads to dead ends and shows our final ineptitude at producing a rational explanation of the universe.” And I would also add, any rational explanation for plants, animals and people. Instead of looking for the truth of creation, science has chosen confusion, deceit and suppositions. But now YOU can see through two more of these evolutionary illusions, to the Being that *did* create you—the God of the universe!

In our brochure “Evolution—Fact or Fiction?”, we will further disprove the theory of evolution by showing more of the weak arguments used to explain how man and animals today exist on earth. Also, many of the common misconceptions about creationism will be explained. Finally, some proofs showing the REAL Creator of the plants, animals, mankind and the universe.

You will have been supplied with the facts—the truth—of your existence. What will you do with those facts? □



Homosexuality

Out of the Closet, Into the Mainstream

A look at how public acceptance of “alternative lifestyles” has dramatically changed—and what the future may hold.

BY BRUCE A. RITTER

STONEWALL, 1969. What began as a routine police raid of the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York’s Greenwich Village, resulted in violent resistance from bar patrons, and riots in the streets.

Thirty-five years later, many consider the Stonewall riots to be the launch of the modern gay rights movement, and a symbol of “coming out of the closet”—of homosexuals no longer hiding or denying their sexual “orientation.”

There was a time, 40, 30, even 25 years ago, when most people seldom heard about or knew of homosexuals (except for the “eccentric” uncle, cousin or family friend, who remained a perpetual bachelor). If a homosexual did reveal himself to family, friends or co-workers, he would have most likely faced rejection—or even worse.

Today, gays, lesbians and bisexuals are coming out of the proverbial closet like never before. And they are largely met by polite tolerance, shrugs of indifference, or even applause, from the mainstream. For many heterosexuals, “coming out” is no longer a “big deal.” In fact, the *Village Voice* recently did a report on “hetero

holdouts”—heterosexual couples who refuse to get married until homosexuals are granted the legal right to marry, too.

Times have certainly changed.

Even the word “queer” has changed. Once used as a slur against them, it is now widely embraced by gays, lesbians and bisexuals alike—many of whom have taken the word and proudly turned it into a personal anthem: “We’re queer, and we’re here!”

Growing Public Acceptance

To better understand how public acceptance of homosexuality has dramatically changed, consider the following:

■ Oregon, Idaho, Ohio, North Dakota, California and other states have either long since repealed sodomy laws or decriminalized all sexual acts between consenting adults.

San Francisco, Berkeley and other cities across America have passed domestic partnership bills granting equal benefits to same-sex and unmarried heterosexual couples.

Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a Texas sodomy ban, ruling that, regardless of sexual orientation, couples have a right to privacy.

■ Violence against homosexuals is considered a “hate crime,” punishable under U.S. federal law. Policies that once restricted homosexuals from immigrating to the U.S. have been canceled. And, by a presidential executive order, people can no longer be denied security clearances on the basis of one’s sexual orientation.

■ An editor for the *Detroit News* started a gay and lesbian issues column, the first of its kind for a major U.S. newspaper.

Following the example of other newspapers, *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* now publish homosexual wedding and commitment announcements.

■ A few years ago, the widely popular family comic strip “For Better or For Worse” introduced a gay character.

Last September, as part of a week-long test run, “Jane’s World” appeared in the daily pages of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*—the first time a mainstream newspaper has published a syndicated comic strip having a lesbian as its lead character.

The newspaper’s Comics Editor said, “We’re trying to find new readers. I deliberately went out of the way to find strips that appeal to younger readers and Atlanta’s gay population” (www.gfn.com).

■ Homosexuals in the U.S. have been publicly celebrating national “Coming Out Day” for the last 15 years.

■ The American Psychiatric Association no longer lists homosexuality as a mental disorder. It also condemns reparative therapy (treatment attempts to change a person from being homosexual to heterosexual).

■ Gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender studies are offered at various prominent institutions of higher learning, such as the University of Chicago, UC Berkeley, UCLA, Penn State, the University of Pennsylvania, William and Mary, Smith, Duke, Cornell, George Mason, Stanford, Harvard, Yale, Swarthmore—the list goes on.

Canada has universities that offer these programs, too (the University of Montreal, the University of Toronto,

the University of Windsor, etc.), as does Australia (the University of Queensland) and the Netherlands (the University of Amsterdam).

■ The Stonewall Inn has been officially placed on the National Register of Historic Places, the first time a gay site has been listed.

■ The 2000 U.S. Census was the first time that the government asked every American household about unmarried partner relationships. It revealed that there are nearly 600,000 same-sex couple households nationwide. Of these, 33 percent of female households and 22 percent of male households have children. (This is partly the result of the “Gay Baby Boom” of the 1980s and 90s, in which the rapid advancements of science and technology enabled same-sex couples to give birth to children.)

In Connecticut, same-sex partner households increased by 254 percent during the 1990s. Of 24 Connecticut towns, one in five unmarried partner households are same-sex couples. In Massachusetts, such households increased by 229 percent, while in Vermont, 422 percent. And both Nebraska and Montana increased more than 300 percent.

Tearing Down Legal Barriers

Equal employment and housing; property ownership; inheritance rights; adoption and custody rights—homosexuals have broken through many of the legal barriers and obstacles that once blocked their path.

In 1986, California was the first state to allow same-sex couples to adopt children. Today, only Florida totally denies adoption to homosexual partners.

Even the barrier to legalized marriage appears to be giving way. Last November, the highest court of Massachusetts ruled that it was unconstitutional for the state to bar same-sex couples from marrying. Massachusetts lawmakers were given 180 days to amend state laws to permit homosexuals to wed. This decision has paved the way for the future breakdown of other legal barriers.

For years, other westernized nations (Denmark, Norway and Sweden, to name just a few) have offered some form of legal partnership status to same-sex couples. And a few countries, such as the Netherlands and Canada, allow homosexuals to legally marry.

Competing for an Alternative Market

According to a recent Fox News report, “...gays comprise a \$350 billion market fiercely loyal to brands that advertise directly to them. Gays are twice as likely to have graduated from college, twice as likely to have an individual income over \$60,000 and twice as likely to have a household income of \$250,000 or more. They are essentially an untapped consumer market that corporate America can no longer ignore.”

This has led marketing strategists to discover DINKS—“dual incomes, no kids”—homosexual couples who bring home dual salaries, without the worry of having to feed, clothe and otherwise financially provide for children. As a result, “Today, nearly every major corporation offers services specially tailored to homosexuals—corporations like AT&T, Hyatt House, Seagrams, Apple Computer, Time-Warner, and American Express” (www.narth.com).

At one time, Fort Lauderdale and Key West were among the handful of cities that competed for the gay and lesbian travel market. No longer! Estimated to be worth \$54 billion per year—about ten percent of the overall travel market—cities such as Miami, Minneapolis, San Diego, Portland, and Palm Springs are competing for this lucrative alternative market.

Bloomington, Indiana has capitalized on its already existing slogan, “Come Out and Play,” adding rainbow colors (which symbolize gay pride).

The city of New Haven, Connecticut markets its “Your Alternative Getaway” brochure to promote the state’s Gay Men’s Chorus.

And Philadelphia has launched an annual \$300,000 marketing campaign to showcase its Center City “gayborhood,” producing ads that depict

Benjamin Franklin flying a rainbow kite. This spring, Philadelphia will be the first to air gay-specific television commercials.

Several countries, such as the Netherlands, Britain and France, have also marketed themselves as “gay-friendly” destinations.

With the emergence of the “Gay Baby Boom,” advertisers are aiming their campaigns toward same-sex couples with children. For example, Volvo published a print ad showing two men and a baby, and a woman hugging her pregnant partner. The headline read, “Whether you’re starting a family or creating one as you go.”

Even traditionally conservative institutions such as banks are targeting their services to homosexual families. One newspaper ad showed a man wearing an earring, while posing with a boy and girl. The text read, “It may be a son or daughter, niece or nephew, even a

However, since *Ellen*, several gay- and lesbian-themed television shows have been born—with many thriving in good ratings.

Will & Grace is a popular Emmy-winning sitcom about the close friendship of a homosexual and his heterosexual female sidekick.

In *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, heterosexual men get fashion make-over tips from five homosexuals. This show has broad appeal among families, teenagers and young urban professionals.

The success of reality TV has brought *Boy Meets Boy*, the first gay dating series. During each episode, several men—including heterosexuals posing as homosexuals—compete for the affections of the same man.

Consider the premise of the new sitcom *It’s All Relative*: “Bobby,” who comes from a traditional, close-knit, religious family, gets engaged to

there’s a recognition that they’re just, you reverse that at grave peril to the democratic process” (*The Christian Science Monitor*, “Out of the Margins, Into the Mainstream,” Dec. 10, 2003).

Trouble in the Churches

Even among traditionally conservative churches and denominations of mainstream Christianity, homosexuals are gaining measures of acceptance.

The year 1972 was the first time an openly gay man was ordained in a mainstream Christian religion. Later that year, the Evangelical Lutheran Church (in the Netherlands) also allowed for homosexuals to become pastors. This paved the way for a dozen other European Protestant churches to do the same. Certain European Catholic churches, which had split from mother Rome back in the 19th century, also permit homosexuals into their clergy. And last summer,

“In 1994, there were 19 gay- and lesbian-themed advertising campaigns worldwide. The year 2000 saw 81 campaigns...”

partner, but someone you love may want to go to college.”

In 1994, there were 19 gay- and lesbian-themed advertising campaigns worldwide. The year 2000 saw 81 campaigns, including a John Hancock Financial Services commercial about a lesbian couple adopting.

In the Media

Throughout the 1990s, several popular television programs have featured minor roles or guest appearances of homosexuals.

But it was the year 1997 that marked a major turning point in television history: The lead character of the sitcom *Ellen* “outed” herself, revealing that she was a lesbian. It just so happened that the comedienne who portrayed her had also “come out” in real life. Immediately, advertisers pulled out from sponsoring the show, leading to the sitcom’s cancellation.

“Liz,” whose parents happen to be two gay men.

The cable TV show *Queer as Folk* chronicles the lives of a group of homosexual men, in addition to a lesbian couple raising a child.

The producers of *The L Word*, which is set to debut on cable TV in early 2004, described the show as being “about a group of young women in Los Angeles, their lives, careers, and romantic relationships—both gay and straight.”

Clearly, the modern gay rights movement has come a long way. So have the views and attitudes of Western mainstream society toward accepting the homosexual lifestyle. And, according to the head of San Francisco State University’s National Sexuality Resource Center, “There is no turning back. You can’t do that in a democracy. Once [equal] rights have been bestowed [on homosexuals] and

Australia’s third largest church became that country’s first mainstream denomination to accept homosexual priests.

Yet, the hot-button issues over homosexual clergymen, blessing ceremonies for gay and lesbian couples, and homosexual marriage have caused a widening rift between liberals and conservatives in the Episcopal and Anglican churches. Last year’s appointment of a homosexual bishop in America’s Episcopal Church has led some to call for a separate North American Anglican church. This appointment even prompted a leading minister of Australia’s Anglican Church to leave and become a Catholic priest. Reportedly, other clergymen there are considering doing the same.

Why do religionists disagree? Because, according to one university religion professor, “It’s not ultimately

Please see **HOMOSEXUALITY**, page 24

Does the New Testament Teach **ALL** Ten Commandments?

Did Christ come to do away with or replace the Ten Commandments? Are all Ten Commandments taught and enforced in the New Testament? Did Paul teach them to the Gentiles? What about the book of James?

BY GEORGE C. ROGERS

MOST WHO PROFESS to follow Jesus Christ believe that all of the Ten Commandments were abolished by His sacrifice. They believe that Christ came to “do away” with those “harsh” commandments. Some believe He re-instituted *some* of them. Still others believe that He replaced the Ten Commandments with a *new commandment*.

Although these people may be sincere, they have been deceived by the “god of this world” (II Cor 4:4; Rev. 12:9), who has used his false ministers to spoon-feed them with doctrinal falsehood (II Cor. 11:13-15).

Instead of allowing the Bible to interpret itself, most people read into scripture whatever meaning they already have been handed and assume is correct. They gloss over what Christ

said in Matthew 5: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am come not to destroy, but to fulfill” (vs. 17). This is the same Christ who prophesied in Isaiah 42: “The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will *magnify the law*, and make it honorable” (vs. 21).

What about you? Are you willing to let the Bible interpret itself? Are you willing to approach scripture with a teachable, open mind and allow God to “speak” to you—tell you His will—through His Word?

If so, you have already set yourself apart from most, of whom Christ said, “This people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men...*Full well you reject the commandment of God*, that you may keep

your own tradition” (Mark 7:6-9).

On Pentecost, A.D. 31, God founded His Church on the teachings of His apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:19-20). Since then, those of the true Church have always continued to keep the apostles’ teachings (Acts 1:42).

The apostles Peter and John instructed Christians to walk as Christ walked—live the way He lived (I Peter 2:21; I John 2:6). The apostle Paul instructed Christians—both Jews *and* Gentiles—to follow him as he followed Christ (I Cor. 11:1).

So then, did Jesus Christ, the Chief Apostle (Heb. 3:1), teach the Ten Commandments? Did He command His apostles to do the same? In other words, are *all* of the Ten Commandments taught in the New Testament?

The First Great Commandment

The first four of the Ten Commandments teach man how to love God. “You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make unto you any graven image...You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain...Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex. 20:3-8).

In Matthew 22, Christ summarized these four, saying, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your

mind. *This is the first and great commandment*” (vs. 37-38).

When Satan the devil tried to tempt Jesus while He fasted in the wilderness, Christ quoted the FIRST COMMANDMENT: “Get you behind Me, Satan: for it is written, *You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve*” (Luke 4:8; Matt. 4:10).

In John 4:24, Christ was speaking about the SECOND COMMANDMENT when He taught that men cannot use physical objects, images or “aids”—in other words, idols—to worship a spiritual God. Since God is a Spirit, His followers must worship Him in spirit.

Paul also taught the Second Commandment: “Neither be you *idolaters*, as were some of them [the Israelites during the Exodus]; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play” (I Cor. 10:7). Carnal-minded Israel did not have the patience to worship a God

blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth” (Col. 3:8).

The FOURTH COMMANDMENT—observing the seventh day Sabbath—is the one most professing Christians refuse to obey. Most assume that men have the authority to change the Sabbath to whatever day pleases them or is convenient.

Yet Christ kept the Sabbath on the seventh day. It was His *custom*: “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, *as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day*, and stood up for to read” (Luke 4:16). In fact, the New Testament says that Christ is “Lord also of the Sabbath”—not the Lord of Sunday (Luke 6:5). Christ says that He “is the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

Paul followed His example. He taught in the synagogues on the Sabbath (Acts 17:2). And not just to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles:

doing of.” Put together, *sabbatismo* means “a keeping of the Sabbath.” When correctly translated, Hebrews 4:9 should read, “There remains therefore a *keeping of the Sabbath* to the people of God.”

This verse establishes the New Testament observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. For *all* of the available proof of the biblical basis and authority for Sabbath-keeping, read our free book *The SABBATH or Sunday – which?*

The Second Great Commandment

The last six of the Ten Commandments instruct man on how to love his fellow man. “Honor your father and your mother... You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet...” (Ex. 20:12-17).

Centuries later, Christ said that anyone who wants to enter eternal life

“In fact...Christ is ‘Lord also of the Sabbath’—not the Lord of Sunday (Luke 6:5).”

they could not see, so they made a physical “god” to satisfy their carnal, physical lusts. But God knew this would happen. Throughout mankind’s history, man has always rejected his Creator in order to worship His creation (Rom. 1:18-25).

In Matthew 15, Christ taught against breaking several of God’s commandments, including the third: “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders [SIXTH COMMANDMENT], adulteries [SEVENTH COMMANDMENT], fornications, thefts [EIGHTH COMMANDMENT], false witness [NINTH COMMANDMENT], *blasphemies* [THIRD COMMANDMENT]” (vs. 18-19). The Greek word used here for “blasphemies” is *blesphemia*, which means “evil speaking,” “railing” or “vilification against God.” In other words, taking God’s name in vain.

Paul also commanded Christians not to do this: “But now you also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice,

“And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the *next Sabbath*... And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.” (Acts 13:42, 44). In chapter 18, verse 4, Paul “reasoned in the synagogue *every Sabbath*, and persuaded the Jews *and the Greeks*.” Few ask why Paul would teach Gentiles (who were unfamiliar with Sabbath-keeping) to meet on the Sabbath. Why is there no evidence that he led them to keep Sunday—the supposed “Lord’s Day”?

Now notice Hebrews 4, verse 9: “There remains therefore a *rest* to the people of God.” In verses 1, 3, 4 and 8, the Greek word for “rest” is *kata-pausin*. It means “rest.” But in verse 9, the Greek word for “rest” is *sabbatimos*, which is a Hebrew word—*Sabbat*, which means “the Sabbath”—combined with a Greek suffix—*imos*, which means “a keeping of” or “a

must keep these *same* commandments: “You shall do no murder [SIXTH COMMANDMENT], You shall not commit adultery [SEVENTH COMMANDMENT], You shall not steal [EIGHTH COMMANDMENT], You shall not bear false witness [NINTH COMMANDMENT], Honor your father and your mother [FIFTH COMMANDMENT]” (Matt. 19:18-19). Christ summarized these as “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” the second greatest commandment (Matt. 22:39).

Years after Christ’s sacrifice (which most religious leaders claim does away with the law), Paul taught these same commandments to Gentile converts in Rome: “For this, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, You shall not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Rom. 13:9).

In Ephesians 6:2, Paul commanded Christians to obey the Fifth Commandment by honoring their parents. (Eph. 6:2). He commanded them to obey the Ninth Commandment: “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor” (Eph. 4:25). He observed the Tenth Commandment, saying, “I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, You shall not covet” (Rom. 7:7).

The apostle James also warned about the dangers of breaking the Tenth Commandment: “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own *lust*, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death” (Jms. 1:14-15).

He continued in chapter 4: “From where come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your *lusts* that war in your members? You lust, and have not: you kill, and

Christ and John had taught. But what is this “new commandment”? Does it supercede the Ten Commandments?

In John 13:34-35, Christ said, “A new commandment I give unto you, *That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.* By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one to another.”

In Matthew 22:37-39, Christ said we must love our neighbors as ourselves. But in John 13, Christ gives a new and higher standard—to love others *as Christ loves us.* Only those with God’s Holy Spirit dwelling in them can love people the way Christ does. “Because the carnal mind is enmity [hostile] against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, *if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.* Now if any man have not the Spirit of

ples on the eve of His crucifixion: “Howbeit when [it], the *Spirit of truth*, is come, [it] will guide you into all truth: for [it] shall not speak of [itself]; but whatsoever [it] shall hear, that shall [it] speak: and [it] will show you things to come. [It] shall glorify Me: for [it] shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father has are Mine: therefore said I, that [it] shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.”

It is the Holy Spirit—the “Spirit of truth”—that is “true in Christ,” and in His servants, members of His Church. This same spirit sets God’s people apart from the world, converting their minds into the mind of Christ. The Holy Spirit empowers a Christian’s mind, enabling him to love the way Christ and God the Father do. Without it, no human being can perfectly fulfill I Corinthians 13: “Love suffers long, and is kind; love envies not; love vaunts not itself, is not puffed

“...Christ said that anyone who wants to enter eternal life must keep these *same* commandments.”

desire to have, and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet you have not, because you ask not. You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your *lusts*” (vs. 1-3).

As you can see, *all* of the Ten Commandments were preached throughout the New Testament.

No wonder the apostle John wrote, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and *keep His commandments.* For this is the love of God, *that we keep His commandments:* and His commandments are not grievous” (I John 5:2-3).

A New Commandment?

After examining all these biblical proofs, some will still believe that the Ten Commandments were abolished, refusing to give up what they have always assumed. They may even claim that the Ten Commandments were “replaced” by the “new commandment”

Christ, he is none of his...For as many as are *led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*” (Rom. 8:7-9, 14). This is talking about true Christians—**GOD’S CHURCH!**

When Christ said, “love one another, as I have loved you,” He was talking to His disciples. Later on, they were baptized and received the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2), becoming the New Testament Church. Only true Christians—those with the Spirit of God in their minds—can hope to love others as Christ does. Carnal man cannot.

But what about the “new commandment” in I John 2:8? “Again, a new commandment I write unto you, *which thing is true in Him and in you:* because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines.” What is it that is both “true in Christ” and “in” Christians?

The answer is in John 16:13-15, where Christ encouraged His disci-

up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; Rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. *Love never fails*” (vs. 4-8).

In II John 5-6, John wrote, “And now I beseech you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto you, *but that which we had from the beginning,* that we love one another. And this is love, *that we walk after His commandments.* This is the commandment, That, *as you have heard from the beginning,* you should walk in it.” This scripture does not replace or do away with the Ten Commandments. Instead, it *reinforces* them.

The Ten Commandments existed before Moses from the time of Creation. All ten were taught throughout the New Testament. They are still in effect today. □

OUR CHILDREN USED

PART ONE OF TWO

Children Used For WAR





Children are a precious part of the fabric of any society. They are the building blocks of future generations. Yet, they are used and abused in the most atrocious of manners. Why? When will it end? What, if anything, can be done now—and in the near future?

BY MARK P. DENEÉ

IN UGANDA, it is not uncommon for children to be awakened in the middle of the night and taken from their homes at gunpoint. Boys and girls alike, many of them under the age of ten, are recruited in this way for the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). They are handed guns and forced to fight against the Ugandan army. Some of the young girls are even made to serve as concubines for LRA leaders.

Seeing what man is capable of, in such mass brutality to his fellow man, is—or at least should be—shocking. And then, putting a child soldier in the place of a man takes the horror to a most tragic level. The prophet Isaiah describes the history of man to our time: “The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes therein shall not know peace” (Isa. 59:8).

This world has degenerated to an extreme low. Mankind now uses and abuses its most innocent and defenseless of treasures—its own children—in a vain and disgusting attempt to get whatever it desires. In Part 1 of this series, we will look at the issue of

“child soldiers.” Those from an affluent nation may have the tendency to emotionally disregard what we will examine as “something that happens to someone else, somewhere else.” Do not allow this to happen!

In Part 2, we will address issues of child use and abuse that are “closer to home.” Remember that we are talking about young, innocent children, who should be absolutely and completely engulfed in the learning and experiencing of the good things in life.

But instead, they are taught to kill...

The Bone-Chilling Facts

Make no mistake! War in every form, fought by men or women of every age, is wrong. But the use of children is perhaps the most appalling part of war's horror.

Several African nations with a history of unstable governments and long civil wars are particularly guilty of the use of children as soldiers. Two countries that were recently in the news are Liberia and Sierra Leone, where fighting has broken out again.

A *CNN* report, “Use of Child Soldiers on the Rise,” indicates that the United Nations Children's Fund believes that up to 60 percent of the armed fighters in Liberia are under the age of 18, and that both government

and rebel troops are guilty of recruiting children. According to Christina Clark of the London-based Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers in Africa, children as young as nine are fighting and killing in Liberia. She says, “Often children are more willing to commit atrocities than adults because they are less developed mentally and emotionally. They are often plied with drugs and alcohol to take away the fear of fighting.”

Nils Kastberg, UNICEF's director of emergency programs, said in this same *CNN* article, “Sometimes they are forcibly abducted. In some instances for example in northern Uganda, the Lord's Resistance Army actually forces children to kill some of their relatives to make sure that they don't go back.” Mr. Kastberg went on to explain that they recruit children to not only “use them as part of firepower but also creating threat and terror.”

A *BBC* report, “Children of conflict,” estimated that there were 300,000 child soldiers worldwide, and that the number grows every year as more children are recruited. It reported that child soldiers had been used in wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Burma.

A 1999 article in *The Economist*, “Kalashnikov kids,” reports an estimate by UNICEF that in Uganda, rebels have abducted as many as 8,000 children since 1995!

Amnesty International believes that another 15,000 are in the ranks of Columbia's security forces, and even more in paramilitary groups.

A 2003 article from *The Economist*, “Thou Shalt Not Kill,” pointed out that Ugandan soldiers are actually terrified of these child soldiers, thinking that they possess magical powers.

The conflict in Burma, between government and rebel ethnic minorities, has been going on now for more than 50 years, the civil war in Columbia for 40 years. The longer the civil wars continue, the greater the use and abuse of children.

A November 2001 *Time* magazine article, “The Child Soldiers,” revealed the bleak landscape of a war-torn Afghanistan. At that time, the Taliban still largely controlled the country. However, the Northern Alliance already existed and, again, both sides were guilty of using child soldiers. One “infantryman” named “Mukhtar” was a natural marksman. He could shoot a man in the head from more than 200 yards away. “I have been in the army for a long time,” he says. “So I should be good at my job.” Indeed, Mukhtar, was a four-year veteran—and only 15 years old. The article reported that most kids joined for the free food, clothes and cigarettes. “This is a very good life,” said one teenager. “I can eat good rice, play chess with my friends and fire many interesting weapons.” Yet despite the “perks,” drug addiction, malnutrition and sexually transmitted diseases are common among the bands of child soldiers.

To believe that it is “a very good life,” while at the same time wallowing in drug addiction and sexually transmitted diseases—and this added to the fact that they live each day to destroy—clearly points to their level of self-deception. The Bible reveals that the whole world is deceived (Rev. 12:9). As we approach the end of the age, this deception has reached an extreme.

Man’s Desperate Way

Historically, young boys have not been far removed from war. For generations, boys in Africa have fought beside their fathers in defense of their villages. Young drummer or trumpet boys have led American and European armies into war; their navy’s ships also had boys on them. In 1945, Berlin was defended by 15-year-olds.

And then there are the ambiguous issues of different cultures. What is

normal culturally for a 14-year-old in Southeast Asia would not be acceptable in Britain. In the latter, a 12-year-old carrying an AK47 assault weapon seems obviously unacceptable, but a 17-year-old, less so. The United Nations defines children as those under the age of 18, but even the U.S. and Britain accept volunteers younger than that into their armed forces. Despite these issues, an article in the July 8, 1999 issue of *The Economist* titled “Kalashnikov kids” identified two significant—and frightening—trends.

Firstly, “Children tend to be used heavily as soldiers during prolonged civil wars; and such civil wars abound at present.” God said this would be the case, and increasingly so, as the 6,000-year period of mankind’s self-rule, under the influence of Satan, came to a close. That time is now! Notice Matthew 24:6: “And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars.”

The second trend identified is: “...although children were once recruited only when the supply of adult fighters ran short, the youngest are now often recruited first.”

The previously mentioned BBC report further explained that the development of lighter weapons, such as the AK47, means that boys as young as eight are strong enough to be armed. It is said that child soldiers are fearless, and that their unpredictability makes them “better fighters.” They are also less demanding than adult soldiers, easier to manipulate and cheaper, as they eat less. A Congolese rebel officer had this to say about why “kadogos” (boy fighters) “make very good soldiers”: “...they obey orders, they are not concerned about getting back to their wife or family, and they don’t know fear” (“Kalashnikov kids”).

Children wage war with little understanding of the conflict—fighting only for whoever controls them in order to stay alive. With the joys of childhood ripped from their lives, it is almost as though they have reverted to some basic survival instinct. In lengthy civil wars, children have even been known to fight for both sides.

In Sierra Leone, the pro-government militia known as “the Kamajors” initiate their new child-recruits into “secret societies” in which they are taught that following the society’s rules will bring them magical powers (“juju”), which will later protect them from the enemy’s bullets (*BBC*, “Children of conflict”). In addition, the rebels make it deliberate policy to use child soldiers to destroy the local social order. For example, the youngest recruit may be used to execute the chief of a village just attacked. Or, the abducted children will attack their own villages and families to further the cycle of feeling cast out of their communities, and thereby more closely associated with the rebels.

Olara Otunnu, the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, and former spokesman for President Obote of Uganda, estimates that 2 million children have been killed bearing arms since 1987, and three times that number have been seriously injured or permanently disabled (“Kalashnikov kids”).

Some, as we have read, are abducted and forced to fight for their government or for some rebel army. Others join willingly—in a frantic attempt to alleviate the constant gnaw of hunger, to escape violence at home, or to search for something better than their poverty-stricken lives. In any case, they are desperately looking for answers, only to find themselves in even more desperate and terrifying straits.

Boys Killing Men—Men Killing Boys

Then there is the tragic situation of a professional army encountering militias made up of children. Recently in Afghanistan, for example, the U.S. army has taken losses from Taliban boys with small-arms. How is the U.S. army supposed to react in such situations and what are the implications of men killing boys? *The Christian Science Monitor* addressed this issue in a 2002 article titled “Tough calls in child-soldier encounters,” recounting

the story of a British patrol that was taken hostage in late 2000 by a rogue militia in Sierra Leone, largely made up of children. The squad commander had apparently refused to open fire, and yet a rescue assault, 16 days later, left an estimated 25 to 150 enemy forces dead, including many children. Major Jim Gray of the British Royal Marines, who served on a UN observer mission in Sierra Leone in 1999 said, “The impact of being fired on by a child is an initial shock, but the soldiers will do their job. But if you don’t care for them when they come home, it might destroy them.”

Unfortunately, however, they will not receive the care they need when they get home. That care will only come after one more absolutely terrible time just ahead—a time known as the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21-22), when mankind will finally learn that living his way brings only destruction and sadness. Then, after the Return of Jesus Christ, mankind will be taught the way of God, the way of GIVE—of love, and outgoing concern for their fellow man and child. Weapons will be turned into tools of agriculture (Isa. 2:4), and “...neither shall they *learn* war any more.”

How do children come out on the other side of these horrific atrocities? Ishmeal Beah, a former child soldier from Sierra Leone said, “I kept pulling the trigger for three years. I ran out of tears to shed” (*The Christian Science Monitor*, “Tough calls in child-soldier encounters,” June 27, 2002). Following are some quotes from *BBC’s* “Children of conflict,” from children describing their horrific experiences:

“I was so afraid of dying. But my friends warned me if the rebel commanders detected any fear in me they would kill me. So I had to pretend to be brave.” - *Charles, 12, Rwandan refugee*

“I just want to go home and be with my family.” - *Christopher, 12, Uganda*

“They abducted me but still they went ahead to kill my mother and father that night.” - *Richard, 12, Rwandan refugee*

“I joined the army when I was young (at 15) without thinking much. I admired soldiers, their guns and crisp, neat uniforms. I just wanted to fight the way they did in the movies and so I joined the army.” - *Htay, 21, Burmese ex-army soldier*

These things are only going to get worse. Retired Marine Colonel Randy Gangle, executive director of the Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities (CETO), a partnership between the Marine Corps and the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, said, “My sense is this will grow rather than diminish. This is a very easy way for individuals to recruit armies and sustain those armies when they take a high number of casualties” (*The Christian Science Monitor*, “Tough calls in child-soldier encounters,” June 27, 2002).

As you may have learned from the pages of this magazine, mankind will typically take the easier of paths, as it goes about living the way of GET, not GIVE. Combine this characteristic of human nature with the multitude of desperate situations around the world, and the fact that they are getting more desperate each day as we approach the end of mankind’s 6,000-years of self-rule, and it is becoming clear that it will only grow *much* worse.

But thankfully, after it gets worse, it will get better. Notice Matthew 24:22: “And except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved [alive]: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” For more information about this time just ahead, you are urged to read our two books *AMERICA AND BRITAIN IN BIBLE PROPHECY* and *TOMORROW’S WONDERFUL WORLD – An Inside View!*

Someone Else’s Child?

War is horror! It is the ultimate expression of mankind living the way of GET. Six thousand years of living *his* way—being deceived by and subjected to the influence of Satan the devil—instead of GOD’S WAY, has resulted in almost constant war, as a “solution” to one issue or the other. The apostle James asks and answers the question of the

origin of war: “From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? You lust, and have not: you kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet have not, because you ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts” (Jms. 4:1-3). (To learn more, read our booklet *And you shall hear of WARS.*)

Children are a treasure—in fact, they are not only *our* little treasures, but they are a treasure of God’s as well. Notice Psalm 127:3: “Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.” The Hebrew word translated “heritage” means “something inherited”—children are a gift, a “reward” from God! They are energetic and inquisitive, and should be learning and experiencing the joys of childhood. They should not be experiencing war in any manner, much less be active participants! Thankfully, a time is coming when the world will be very different than it is now. Notice Zechariah 8:4-5: “Thus says the Lord of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.”

It is unfortunate though, as we mentioned near the beginning, that it is somewhat easier to read the tragic details written here when you live so far away from Uganda, Sierra Leone or Columbia. It is a little easier when you make yourself believe, “Well, at least that doesn’t happen to my child.” Be very careful! This is the very type of self-centered “love” that comes naturally for the human mind, but it is not the love of God. Human love will typically care only for oneself, and for those directly around, such as family and friends. Godly love, on the other hand, cares for others more than for self.

In Part 2, we will look at some other horrific ways in which our children are used and abused. These ways are more widespread, and hit closer to home. □

WHAT IS ARMAGEDDON

Is it a place? An event? Is it the end of the world as we know it? Who will it involve? Few know what Armageddon means. What does the Bible really say? Now you can understand!

BY CHARLES E. HERZOG

NEARLY EVERYONE HAS heard of “Armageddon.” Hundreds of authors have written books on the subject and dozens of movies have been produced depicting the “final battle between good and evil.” Scientists and world leaders alike use the term to refer to the end of the world as we know it—the annihilation of mankind through nuclear, chemical and/or biological warfare.

Some believed that Armageddon would be the final battle of World War I. They were wrong! Others thought that World War II would end with the final battle being Armageddon. They were also wrong! Even more recently, during the Gulf War, Bible “experts” were announcing, “Armageddon is here!” Once again, they were wrong!

What exactly is Armageddon? Is it a place or an event? Who will take part in it? Few really know what it is. Now you can understand!

The Origin of Revelation

While a prisoner on the island of Patmos, off the Greek coast, the apos-

tle John recorded (more than 1,900 years ago) in the book of Revelation what would happen in the very near future—in our time!

The Greek title of the book, *apokalupsis*, means “disclosure: appearing, coming, [en]lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation” and “a disclosure of truth, instruction, concerning divine things before unknown.” Some suppose that the symbols used in Revelation are for the purpose of clouding its meaning. But why would God title the book “to reveal,” if it really means “to hide”?

The Apocalypse, or Revel-ation, begins, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God [the Father] gave unto Him [Jesus], to show unto His servants [true Christians] things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John” (Rev. 1:1). This revelation originated with God the Father, who passed it on to Jesus Christ. Then Christ, through a vision, passed it to John. What he recorded for us was “the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw” (vs. 2).

John was thrust ahead in time into what is described in Chapter 1, verse

10 as the “Lord’s Day,” or the “Day of the Lord.” He was given messages by Christ regarding “...things which are, and things which shall be hereafter” (Rev. 1:19).

The Day of the Lord is the time at the close of this age when God will intervene in mankind’s affairs and bring to a close 6,000 years of misrule. This day is described in several places throughout the Bible (Isa. 13:9; Jer. 46:10; Joel 1:15; Zeph. 1:14-18; Mal. 4:5; Luke 21:34).

Most of what John saw in the vision was foreign to him. He had to describe things in a way that he could communicate to others. How does someone from the first century A.D. describe a helicopter gunship, since he obviously has never seen one? How does he describe a fighter jet—or a nuclear explosion? By using symbols or items that are familiar to him!

A Place—Not an Event

The Bible mentions the word *Armageddon* in only one verse: “And He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16). Though the New Testament was written in Greek, this is not a Greek word. It comes from two Hebrew words—“*har*” and “*megiddo*.” The word “*har*” means a mountain or range of hills (sometimes used figuratively)—hill country.

Megiddo, or Megiddon, was one of the royal cities of the Canaanites until Joshua captured it. Afterwards, it was



ARMAGEDDON?

given to the Manassites. It is located on the southern edge of the great plain of Issachar (also known as the Plain of Esdraelon and Valley of Jezreel). It was a fortified city that guarded the strategic passes of the Mt. Carmel area.

The Bible says that Armageddon is a *place*, not an event. It is not a battlefield, but a gathering place.

The site is within the borders of the modern state of Israel, about 55 to 60 miles north and east of Jerusalem and about 20 miles east of the port city of Haifa. Today, it is nothing more than a 13-acre pile of historic rubble. In ancient times, this area was part of a main highway between Africa and Asia. It provided a natural gathering place due to the flatness of the surrounding topography. Archaeology shows evidence of frequent, extremely heavy defense facilities there.

A Bloody History

Megiddo is a famous setting for several great slaughters throughout history and is first mentioned as one of the Canaanite cities conquered by Joshua (Josh. 12:21) in the early 1400s B.C. When Deborah was judging Israel, she ordered Barak into battle against the Canaanites led by Sisera in this area (Judges 4 and 5). The entire army of Sisera was destroyed—every last soldier.

The famous story of Gideon and his defeat of the Midianites may also have taken place at Armageddon. See Judges 6:33, where the valley of Jezreel is mentioned. Chapter 7 details how God reduced Gideon's army from

32,000 to 300 and yet still defeated their enemy.

King Solomon turned the city into a fortified camp that housed several hundred horses for his fleet of chariots (I Kgs. 9:15-19). The remains of the foundation of Solomon's enormous stable are still visible today. When Jehu, king of Israel, wounded Judah's King Ahaziah in battle, Ahaziah fled to Megiddo and died there (II Kings 9:27).

The Egyptian king, Pharaoh-nechoh, came to the aid of the Assyrians and defeated the Israelites led by Josiah (II Kgs. 23:29-30; II Chron. 35:20-25).

This valley has seen military battles in modern times, as well. On September 19, 1918, British General Allenby won a decisive battle there, defeating the Turks. Because Megiddo is identified as a place of decisive conflicts, and because more battles have been fought there than at any other place in the world, it has become emblematic of any decisive battlefield—as much as Waterloo, Gettysburg or Normandy.

The Seven Last Plagues

The Bible prophesies a series of catastrophic events to occur just before Christ returns to earth. In the midst of these are the Seven Trumpets. Throughout history, trumpet blasts have been used as warnings of imminent danger, such as war or another calamity (Zeph. 1:16; Jer. 4:19; Ezek. 33:2-6).

However, the seventh (last) trumpet

will announce to the world that Christ is coming to establish His rule on earth (I Cor. 15:52; I Thes. 4:16; Rev. 11:15). Also heralded by this last trumpet are the seven last plagues (also called bowls, or vials, of wrath), to punish a rebellious mankind. Seven angels will "pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth" (Rev. 16:1).

The first vial will be poured out upon the earth, "and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them who worshipped his image" (Rev. 16:2). These individuals belong to the great false church-state system.

The second plague is similar to that suffered by the Egyptians just prior to the Exodus (Ex. 7:14-25). Notice: "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea" (Rev. 16:3).

Read for yourself the next three plagues. The rivers and fountains will turn to blood; the sun will become so hot that it will scorch men with fire; darkness and pain will become unbearable. Now look at verse 11. After all these plagues from God, men will continue to "blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and *repented not* of their deeds."

This last generation is so vile, corrupt and contemptuous that God will subject them to the worst punishment possible—and they still will not understand.

Christ compared these days to that of Noah's time: "But as the days of

Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark” (Matt. 24:37-38).

How did God view that time? “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). We are very close to that time again!

The Important Sixth Plague

The sixth of these last plagues sets the stage for the final battle to resist Christ at His Return. Forces of spiritual wickedness are released to force destruction and devastation on the inhabitants of the earth.

Notice how these forces are allowed to gather: “And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the *kings of the east* might be prepared” (Rev. 16:12).

The Euphrates River’s head is in Turkey and flows south through Syria and Iraq, finally reaching the Persian Gulf. God will cause this river to dry up, enabling the “kings of the east” to easily cross over into the Holy Land. This is just a prelude—the setting of the stage of even more significant events to come.

Verse 13 continues, “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon [devil; Rev. 12:9], and out of the mouth of the beast [civil end-time ruler influenced by the devil], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [religious leader associated with end-time ruler.]” In Revelation 17:5, this system is called **BABYLON THE GREAT**.

Verse 14 states, “For they are the spirits of devils [demons], working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to *gather* them to *the battle of that great day of God Almighty*.” These “spirits of devils” are the fallen angels who followed Lucifer (now

Satan) in his insurrection against the Creator (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-17; Rev. 12:4).

Notice! This leader will be accompanied by a great religious leader, who, with the power and influence of the devil, will perform miracles (Rev. 19:20; 13:11-14). When the peoples of the earth witness these miracles, they will be deceived into thinking that this false system is of God and that they are able to fight what they will perceive as supernatural invaders! These two men will be either influenced or possessed by demon spirits, driving this religious-political-military system toward the final battle.

The Kings of the East

The beast power will have already conquered some parts of the Middle East. He will have established a foothold in Jerusalem (Dan. 11:41-43). Daniel refers to the beast as “the king of the north.” This is the same as the fourth beast of Daniel 7—the resurrected Roman Empire! Prophecy tells us that this final resurrection will be a united political, military and religious power that will dominate the world. It will invade the Middle East under the pretense of bringing peace. Undoubtedly, oil will also be a major factor in prompting the beast power into seeking control of the region.

Notice what Daniel says in 11:44: “But tidings out of the *east* and out of the *north* shall trouble him [the beast]...” While this beast power is in the holy land, another military muscle will move in to oppose it.

What country today is east and north of the holy land? Russia, with its capital, Moscow! That’s right! The eastern hordes led by Russia, and allied with China, India and Japan, compose the two-hundred-million-man army mentioned in Revelation 9:16. Again, oil will undoubtedly be a key factor for this war machine from the east.

The “kings of the east” will march into the holy land. This causes the beast, who is already there, to “...go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.” The beast

and his allies will close in on the kings of the east to confront their armies. The world will stand at the brink of total annihilation.

We are now at the point in world events that Jesus referred to in Matthew 24:22: “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved [*alive*; Moffatt translation]: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” They position for war, but a common enemy comes on the scene.

Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty

Notice Revelation 11:15: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD, AND OF HIS CHRIST; AND HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER.**”

There is no *battle* planned at Armageddon! The battle that will take place is called **THE BATTLE OF THE GREAT DAY OF GOD ALMIGHTY** (Rev. 16:14). This last great battle will be fought by all those who will have already *gathered at* Armageddon. These two major forces will see Christ coming out of the clouds (Acts 1:11-12). Considering Him a threat, they will join together, forming an alliance to fight their common enemy. These men will be angry. They will not submit to God’s government. They will think Christ is actually the “Antichrist” and will “make war with the Lamb” (Rev. 17:14). (You may wish to read our free article “**THE ANTICHRIST – Who or what is he?**”)

Jesus Christ’s feet will rest on the Mount of Olives just outside of Jerusalem. Notice Zechariah 14:1-4: “Behold, the day of the **LORD** comes, and your spoil shall be divided in the midst of you. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the **LORD** go forth, and fight against those nations, as when

He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a great valley; and half the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”

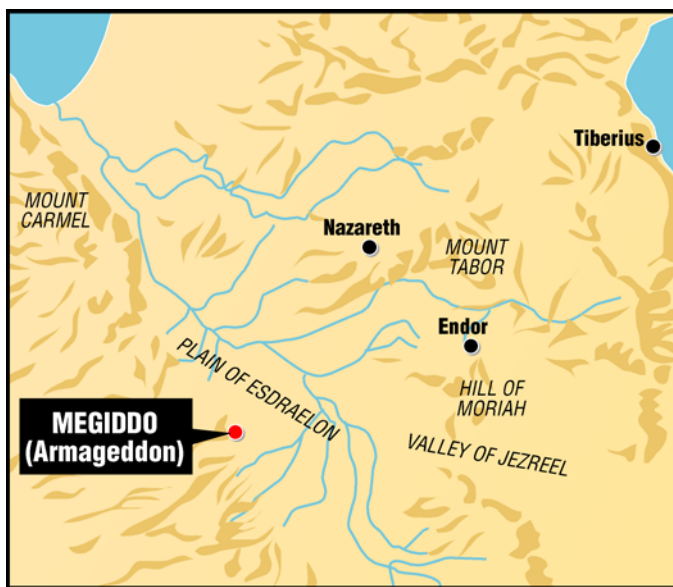
Where then will this battle of the Great Day of the Lord take place? Read in Joel 3:9-14: “Proclaim you this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all you heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: there cause Your mighty ones to come down, O LORD. Let the heathen be weakened, and come up to the *Valley of Jehoshaphat*: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put you in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the *valley of decision*: for the day of the LORD is near in the *valley of decision*.” Compare these verses with Revelation 14:19-20.

The Valley of Jehoshaphat is also known as the valley of decision. This is the name of the valley that lies just to the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives. Today, the Jews use this area, called the Kidron Valley, as a burial ground for their dead.

Jehoshaphat means “the Eternal judges” or “valley of the judgment of the Eternal.” It is here that King Jehoshaphat overthrew the people of Moab, Ammon and Mount Seir when

they came up against the city of Jerusalem (II Chron. 20). God fought this battle without Jehoshaphat lifting a finger.

Verse 17 is the central (middle) verse of the Old Testament. Notice what it says: “You shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand you still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you.” When tomorrow came and they went out, every single one of the enemy was dead!



God did the fighting and wiped them all out.

How will this last battle end? What is the final outcome? Continue in Zechariah 14:12-13: “And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold everyone on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor.”

Puny human beings, who think they can oppose God with the most advanced weapons of war the earth has ever seen, will be utterly destroyed by God. It will be quick and decisive. It will leave the armies in complete destruction.

So we see that the final battle to end man’s rule on earth is not Armageddon. Nor will it be fought at Armageddon. It will be fought just outside Jerusalem. Christ is not going to bring the battle to the individual nations—the battle will come to Him. The armies of the world will march south to battle Christ as He stands on the Mount of Olives.

The events described above will take place in our lifetime—perhaps even sooner than you think!

Finally, the Good News

The good news is that after this horrific battle, Christ will establish His kingdom here on earth—not in heaven! (Read our free booklet *How WORLD PEACE Will Come*.)

All those who have qualified to rule with Him will be resurrected as immortal spirit beings. His kingdom will bring peace and prosperity to a planet that has seen nothing but war and strife for the past 6,000 years! □

HOMOSEXUALITY

Continued from page 12

about civil rights or peace or gender or gay rights—it's about biblical authority" (*Insight Magazine*, "Mainline Churches Face Great Divide," Dec. 23, 2003).

The apostle Paul wrote that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *instruction in righteousness*" (II Tim. 3:16). Remarkably, *only a tiny few* who call themselves Christian truly recognize the divine authority of the Holy Bible!

True Christians also recognize that the Bible interprets itself. They understand that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (II Pet. 1:20), and that "the holy scriptures...are able to make you wise unto salvation" (II Tim. 3:15).

Yet, the religionists and theologians of this world would rather cling to the traditions and ideas of men (Mark 7:7-9). Therefore, they cannot fully agree nor peaceably walk together in total purpose and direction (Amos 3:3). No wonder there are so many differing churches and denominations!

Sodom and Gomorrah

The word "sodomite" appears in the Bible several times (Deut. 23:17-18; I Kgs. 14:21-24; 15:9-12; II Kgs. 23:4-7, etc.). To understand who God considered sodomites, we must turn to the biblical account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In Genesis 19, God sent two angels, appearing as men, to personally investigate the wickedness and depravity of Sodom. Perceiving them as ordinary men, Lot, Abraham's nephew, invited the angels to spend the night in the safety of his home (vs. 1-3).

That night, "the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to you this night? Bring them out

unto us, that we may *know* them" (Gen. 19:4-5). The New King James Version reads, "know them carnally," while the New International Version, which is a more liberal translation, plainly reads, "have sex with them."

Some theologians say this account is about homosexual *sex*, while others say it is about homosexual *rape*. Who is right?

Do not assume. Simply let the Bible interpret the Bible, and apply Isaiah 28:13: "precept upon precept... line upon line...here a little, and there a little." Like assembling a spiritual jigsaw puzzle, we must gather ALL the scriptures that pertain to any particular subject—only then can we truly get a fuller, clearer picture.

With this in mind, notice the following scriptures:

"You shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination... For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people" (Lev. 18:22, 29).

"If a man also lie with mankind, as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20:13).

These verses are clear. They do not need interpretation from men.

Yet some, after reading the above verses, will quickly say, "Well, that's the Old Testament, and that was done away with. Today, Christians follow the New Testament."

Let's see what the New Testament says about homosexuality:

"Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, *nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind...* shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9-11).

"But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers,

for manslayers, for whoremongers, *for them that defile themselves with mankind* [NKJV: "sodomites"]..." (I Tim. 1:8-10).

After rejecting God, and deciding to judge for themselves right from wrong, good from evil (Gen. 3:1-7; Rom. 1:18-20), men "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. 1:21-23).

Because of their rebellion, "God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves...For this cause God gave them up unto *vile affections*: for even their *women did change the natural use into that which is against nature*: And likewise also the *men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly*" (vs. 24-27).

Again, these scriptures do not need "private interpretation"—they plainly speak for themselves.

What Does the Future Hold?

A recent *New York Times/CBS News* poll revealed that most people age 30 and above favor a constitutional amendment allowing marriage between a man and a woman only. However, of those ages 18 to 29, 52 percent oppose this; 58 percent believe that homosexual relations between adults should be legal; and 56 percent favor laws that allow same-sex marriage.

Understand what this means. In a few short years, this younger, more liberal generation will take its place as the leaders and decision-makers of mainstream society. And once in power, it is possible that, instead of being viewed as an alternative lifestyle, homosexuality will become just another part of the mainstream.

This has a greater chance of reality if you consider that homosexuals are

gaining political strength year after year—not only among Democrats, but also among the traditionally conservative Republican Party.

If the above scenario does come to pass, what does the future hold for Christians who believe and teach Romans 1 and similar scriptures? They may be expected to live by the same “Don’t ask, don’t tell” rule that homosexuals abide by in the U.S. military today. In other words, Christians will be allowed to believe whatever they want—as long as they keep it to themselves.

In Canada, parts of the Bible may already be in danger of being deemed as “hate literature,” and thus a civil or even criminal offense. Last fall, the House of Commons passed a bill that many say will criminalize public

expression against the homosexual lifestyle—including preaching what the Bible teaches. One Canadian was fined for placing a newspaper advertisement that had biblical references to homosexuality.

In Britain, a bishop of the Church of England suggested that gays and lesbians should seek psychiatric help to “reorientate” themselves. Responding to complaints that his comments might incite people to turn against homosexuals, police investigated the man to determine if what he said was a criminal offense. (They concluded that it was not.)

Are these shadows of things to come? And what will happen to those who refuse to keep quiet, who “Cry aloud, spare not” and “show My people their transgression and the house of

Jacob their sins” (Isa. 58:1)? They had better prepare themselves for rough times ahead.

Until then, realize this. Just like today, many will *claim* to represent Christ, and will outright condemn homosexuals, fornicators, etc. in His name. But the true ministers and servants of Jesus Christ *do not* CONDEMN *people* themselves—that is not their responsibility. Their duty is two-fold: (1) To “warn” (Ezek. 33:1-19) the modern-day nations descended from ancient Israel of what is coming and why; and (2) to preach—and condemn anything contrary to—God’s Law and the gospel (Matt. 24:14; 28:19-20)—which means the GOOD NEWS—of the soon-coming kingdom of God and the *permanent* peace and prosperity that it will bring to all humanity! □

GOVERNMENT

Continued from page 6

I have watched people break men’s laws (and sometimes God’s laws at the same time) and proclaim themselves victims of injustice, the system, betrayal, the police, bad lawyers, a frame-up, stress, depression, drugs, alcohol, medication, disease, racism, circumstances (including poverty), a bad childhood, broken home, being in the wrong place at the wrong time, etc. Rarely did I find people who did not believe that their crimes were “someone else’s fault.” It is nearly impossi-

ble to help such people see their own guilt. And, unfortunately, since most people naturally root for the underdog, such people seem to easily sway others into believing that they are victims.

Jesus said that one of the signs that we would be near the end of the age (Matt. 24:3) would be that “iniquity [lawlessness] would abound.” We have certainly entered that time.

We live in an age of “anti-heroes,” when lawbreakers are seen as virtuous, or courageous. Foolish people often see them as modern-day “Robin Hoods.” The truth is, Robin Hood committed *crimes* in order to give to the poor!

Do not fall for this—either in your own thinking or the thinking of others! Submit yourself to all of the ordinances of men as though you were directly obeying God Himself—because that is exactly what you are doing when you obey men’s laws. Do not break men’s laws and try to assert that you are in some way actually serving God (John 16:2).

Also, when courts make final rulings, on any matter, they are to be obeyed. To defy them is sin—and either a civil or criminal offense! Never let human reasoning fool you with its endless excuses for why this is not really wrong! □



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The Truth About SMOKING

Does the Bible condemn smoking or any use of tobacco products? Since God does not specifically command, “Thou shalt not smoke or chew tobacco,” many conclude that it is not a sin. Research has proven that it is harmful to one’s health. What does the Bible say about this?

IN RECENT YEARS, much controversy has raged over the negative effects of tobacco use, especially cigarette smoking. Most are familiar with a recent court ruling resulting in the big tobacco companies having to pay billions of dollars in damages. This money will go into a fund benefitting smokers who have been diagnosed with lung cancer. Further lawsuits are pending.

This would have been a fair and just ruling, if only the risks associated with cigarette smoking had not been public knowledge for decades. The plaintiffs knew they were subjecting their bodies to something harmful and potentially fatal. However, only when offered the opportunity to capitalize on the results of their irresponsible actions were they motivated to even *appear* to take a stand.

The problem is not only the blatant hypocrisy of the plaintiffs, but also the tobacco industry’s deception. Whenever presented with hard scientific evidence of their products’ harmful

effects, they throw up a “smoke screen” of politically correct, user-friendly ad campaigns supporting this or that noble cause, as if to say, “Hey, we’re not the bad guys. Look what we’re contributing to disaster relief efforts, environmental protection, and disease research,” etc.

Tobacco companies want to blow their own horn as do-gooders to draw attention away from the plain facts of cigarette smoking. And, since the whole point is to polish their image, the accuracy and sincerity of such ad campaigns is questionable. If their image is shiny enough, tobacco companies know that most people will not look beyond it and examine the facts.

Here are a few:

■ “Clinical data studies tend to confirm the relationship between heavy and prolonged tobacco smoking and incidence of lung cancer (this was known in 1953).”

■ “Tobacco companies put ammonia in cigarettes which makes your brain absorb more nicotine than it normally would” (www.thetruth.com).

■ “[Other] additives are used to make cigarettes that provide high lev-

els of ‘free’ nicotine which increases the addictive ‘kick’ of the nicotine. Ammonium compounds can fulfill this role by raising the alkalinity of smoke.”

■ “Additives are [also] used to enhance the taste of tobacco smoke, to make the product more desirable... Although seemingly innocuous, the addition of flavorings making the cigarette ‘attractive’ and ‘palatable’ is in itself cause for concern.”

■ “In addition to tobacco, which contains nicotine...599 ingredients have been identified in tobacco industry documents as being added to tobacco in the manufacturing of cigarettes by the five major American cigarette manufacturing companies. While some of these chemicals, such as sugars, vanilla extract, prune juice, and vinegar, are generally recognized as safe when used in food products, all produce numerous additional chemical compounds when burned. None, probably, is more deadly than nicotine” (www.drugs.indiana.edu).

■ “Though 600 additives are authorized for use in tobacco products, only the tobacco manufacturers can say which additives are used and in which brands. Not even the Government...responsible for the regulation of tobacco products [has] this information or the power to demand it” (www.ash.org.uk; these websites provide additional information concerning the many documented health hazards linked to cigarette-smoking).

Most people are not interested in getting the facts about an issue, especially when doing so leaves them with

a clear choice between right and wrong. Proverbs 21:2 states, “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD ponders the hearts.”

The world views smoking as socially acceptable—cool—fashionable. This is an especially enticing trap for young people, who are constantly faced with peer pressure and the need to be part of the “in” crowd.

Research has proven that teens become more quickly addicted to cigarettes (within four weeks of their first cigarette) than do adults. (It takes about two years for the average adult smoker to become fully addicted.) It also takes less time for teens to experience withdrawal symptoms when trying to quit (usually within hours of their last cigarette).

Why Do People Smoke?

Most do not stop to examine *why* they do what they do. Most form habits early in life and do nothing to change them. Eventually, these habits seem as natural as breathing, sleeping and eating.

Some children pick up habits—good and bad—from their parents. This is why Solomon was inspired to write, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

In 1992, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that “75% of all teenagers who smoke have parents who smoke.” All too often, parents adopt the child-rearing philosophy of “Do as I say, not as I do.” They may try to impress upon their children the serious adverse effects of certain behavior, yet display that behavior themselves. They may say, “Now, kids, don’t smoke, because it’ll kill you,” while supporting a carton-a-week habit. This sends a confusing message to children, one they may translate into a license to do whatever feels good or gains them peer acceptance.

Statistics show that, each day, between 4,500 and 5,000 11-to-17 year olds smoke for the first time. Approximately 2,000 of them will regularly smoke from that point forward. That translates into almost 750,000

new habitual smokers each year. Current estimates indicate that 4.5 million U.S. smokers are adolescents. Many of these kids look no further than their peers when making decisions between right and wrong.

God’s Word shows the error of this approach. I Kings 12:1-15 records an example from the history of ancient Israel. It shows the disastrous results of a young leader who followed bad advice from his peers instead of wise counsel from his elders. The book of Proverbs has much instruction about heeding the advice of those older and wiser than ourselves, especially our parents (1:8; 3:1-2; 4:1, 20; 6:20; 16:31).

The media plays an enormous role in making cigarette-smoking attractive and appealing to kids. It glamorizes smoking on television and in movies. Advertising generally targets young audiences, sometimes in very subtle ways. Consider the following sarcastic quote: “The August 2001 issue of *Rolling Stone* magazine has a 2-page cigarette ad right smack in the middle. But that’s okay, because [on] the cover of that issue there’s just a picture of [a popular music performer]... We’re sure no one under 18’s ever heard of him or his band – they appeal to a much older audience. So a cigarette ad in that magazine will probably never be seen by any young girls or anything. Just like the tobacco companies agreed.”

Tobacco companies use various tactics in their ad campaigns. Certain magazine ads and billboards display images of “macho men” to appeal to vanity. One popular brand even subtly promotes *beastiality*! Some brands specifically target women, taking subtle shots at traditional values and God-ordained roles. Many advertisements emphasize youthful vitality, sex appeal and freedom from restraints, seeking to attract young people facing these issues.

On the surface, all of this may seem glamorous and exciting. But Christ said, in John 7:24, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” Behind all the glitz, glamour, and machismo masking the

cigarette industry are ugly, frightening facts.

For instance:

■ “Tobacco companies know that nicotine changes your brain so, eventually, your brain can’t function normally without it” (*Brain/nicotine: Tobacco: Biology and Politics*, Stanton A. Glantz, Ph.D., 1992).

■ “Many smokers think that ‘light’ cigarettes are safer than regular cigarettes, and that by smoking ‘light’ cigarettes they will inhale fewer cancer-causing chemicals, or less nicotine. B.C.’s [British Columbia Ministry of Health] new smoking tests have shown how wrong this belief can be. The reports filed by the tobacco companies show that light cigarettes are likely to deliver as many (or more) poisons or toxins to smokers as regular cigarettes” (Nov. 1998).

■ “According to a...report issued by the Office of the Surgeon General, 400,000 adults die every year from smoking-related illnesses, making smoking the number one cause of preventable disease and death in the nation” (www.sciencefriday.com).”

Even after examining the facts, some might still argue, “It’s my body. If I want to smoke, it’s my business. Besides, it’s not hurting anybody else.” This shallow reasoning has been used to validate all kinds of wrong behavior and actions: pre-marital and extra-marital sex, alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution, abortion, etc. Proverbs 14:12 states, “There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

When approached with the moral implications of smoking, some will even argue, “The Bible does not say, ‘Thou shalt not smoke.’”

That may be true, but...

What Does the Bible Say?

The Bible does not *directly state* that smoking is a sin. But it does teach many principles of right human conduct and behavior, clearly showing that habits such as smoking violate God’s supreme laws: *love toward God* and *love toward fellow man* (Matt. 22:36-40).

Ask yourself, “When I smoke, am I trying to please God, other people or myself?” If you answer honestly, you will realize that you are not doing it to please God, the One who created the heavens, the earth, *and* the human body.

God’s people are led by His Spirit (Rom. 8:9). I Corinthians 6:19-20 states, “What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy [Spirit] which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

What does it mean to “glorify God in your body, and in your spirit”? It means that the fruits of the Holy Spirit should be evident in your life: *love* (outgoing concern), joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and *temperance* (self-control) (Gal. 5:22-23).

You are not smoking to please other people. Do other people enjoy inhaling your secondhand smoke? In Philippians 2:3-4, the apostle Paul exhorts us to “...in lowliness of mind let each esteem other[s] better than themselves. Look not every man on his *own* things, but every man also on the things of *others*.” Paul is not saying that we should covet (desire) the things of others, but rather that we should show concern for their well-being.

In I Corinthians 13:5, he states, “[Charity (love—outgoing concern)] does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own...” Someone who is concerned for the well-being of others takes their feelings and needs into consideration.

In Matthew 7:12, Christ said what came to be known as “The Golden Rule”: “Therefore all things whatsoever you would *that men should do to you*, do you even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

In Ephesians 5:29, Paul wrote, “For no man ever yet hated his *own* flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it...”

No one enjoys breathing polluted, foul smelling air. Even the smoker

would admit that he would rather live in an area with fresh air, than where there is prevalent smog.

Violates Sixth Commandment

In Matthew 19:19, Christ repeated the principle of love toward others: “...You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” He was summarizing Commandments five through ten, which provide the basic principles of how we are to treat our fellowman—that includes the Sixth Commandment, which simply states, “Thou shalt not kill” (Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17). (To learn more, request our free booklet *Should You Obey THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?*)

In addition to all the medical evidence proving that one who smokes is slowly killing *himself* (*prolonged* suicide, or self-murder), there is enough evidence proving that the smoke he exhales is harmful, and potentially fatal, to those *inhaling* it as secondhand smoke.

Again, some facts demonstrate this:

- “Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) is responsible for approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths per year among *nonsmokers*.”

- “After the first month of life, infants of parents who smoke have higher mortality rates through the first year of life, mostly because of an increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome and respiratory conditions such as bronciolitis” (*Pediatrics*, November 1994, p. 750).

- “If both...parents smoke, it is the equivalent of the child actively smoking between 60 and 150 cigarettes per year” (*Lancet*, June 6, 1987, p. 1325).

- “Children under five who are exposed to secondhand smoke have a higher risk factor for the development for food allergy.

- And “[Tobacco companies’] products...kill more people than AIDS, murder, suicide, fires, alcohol and all illegal drugs COMBINED!” (www.thetruth.com)

Ultimately, smoking is a form of *hate*. Many who smoke display a complete disregard for those around them.

The very necessity for “No Smoking” signs demonstrates this. Most people do not *naturally* concern themselves with even the *basic* needs of others. Many smokers do not consider that those around them find it uncomfortable to dine, shop, work or enjoy anything while inhaling secondhand smoke.

I John chapters 3 and 4 contain instruction concerning how we are to show love toward others. You may wish to read them to understand how the principle of “love toward man” is violated when one smokes.

Violates Tenth Commandment

Stop and think! Realize that, ultimately, you don’t even smoke to *please* yourself. You do it because it tames a psychological craving or appetite, just as someone with an eating disorder seeks to appease an unbalanced mental perception. That motivation is based on covetousness, which violates the Tenth Commandment (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21).

Some may argue, “I am not desiring something that belongs to someone else. I buy my own cigarettes and smoke them!” But another underlying motivation for those chained to addictive habits is the *lust* for certain lifestyles.

As previously mentioned, cigarette manufacturers employ advertising tactics that appeal to vanity. The conveyed message is: “If you want to go *somewhere* in life, amount to *something*, be *somebody*, then you should smoke, because *everybody* who is *anybody* does it.”

This same line of reasoning was the cause of the fall of the archangel Lucifer (transforming him into Satan the devil): “For you have said in your heart, I will *ascend* into heaven, I will *exalt* my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will *ascend* above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:13).

Lucifer was not content with the power and responsibility that he had been given. He wanted more. (You

may request our free booklet *Who is the DEVIL?* to learn more.)

Addiction Is Idolatry

You have probably never considered that any addictive habit, including smoking, is a form of idolatry. God forbids it in the First Commandment: “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3; Deut. 5:7).

How does smoking put “other gods” before the one true God? Paul asked, in Romans 6:16, “Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves *servants* to obey, his *servants* you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

If you have an addictive habit, you are a slave to it, whether it is alcoholism, drug addiction, nicotine dependence, etc. It literally becomes an addict’s *god*, because it drives his thoughts and actions. In Hebrews 12:1, we read, “...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” God expects us to face our problems head-on and to overcome them. Those who do are promised great rewards: “Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God...” (Rev. 3:12). (You may request our free article “You Can Overcome and Prevent Sin.”)

What You Do With What You Know

God judges us according to what we do with the knowledge that we have. If a person smokes, unaware of the health hazards, then “...the times of this *ignorance* God winked at; but now commands all men every where to *repent* [change]” (Acts 17:30).

In I Peter 1:13-14, we are exhorted to “...gird up the loins of [our] mind...as obedient children, not fashioning [ourselves] according to the *former lusts* in [our] *ignorance*.” The apostle James was inspired to write, “...to him that *knows* to do good, and *does it not*, to him it is *sin*” (4:17). If a smoker is aware of the dangers he exposes himself to and turns a deaf ear

to the warnings, God will hold him accountable for his actions!

Overcoming Is a Process

Overcoming any bad habit or sin is not easy. It is a lifelong process, because no one is or will be perfect as long as he is a flesh-and-blood human being. All Christians battle three enemies: (1) Satan; (2) the pulls of this world; and (3) our own human nature.

But if you follow the steps below, individual sins *can* be overcome.

1. Admit to yourself and to God that you have a problem. This is the first, great step toward eliminating sin from our lives. James 1:23-24 states, “For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was.”

Merely seeing a problem in your life will not make it go away. You have to acknowledge it and determine to do something about it. I John 1:9 states, “If we confess our sins, He [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Once we do our part, God has promised to do His.

2. Realize that with God’s help, you can “kick the habit.” Pray and ask God for His help. As Paul stated, in Philippians 4:13, “[We] can do all things through Christ which strengthens [us].” There is no trial that you face that Christ does not understand. Hebrews 4:15 gives us encouragement: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

3. Tell yourself that “Quitting is quitting,” not merely cutting back. Gradually quitting is not quitting! Smokers often think they can quit by placing a limit on the number of cigarettes they smoke—leaving a temptation. But Christ commands us to “...pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the *flesh is weak*” (Matt. 26:41). In James 1:14, we are instructed to avoid

compromising situations: “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”

4. Consult medical experts. Making a sudden, drastic change in an addictive habit (especially if it has been practiced for years) will carry certain health side effects. But they could be curbed if addressed properly and in a timely fashion.

5. Do not be discouraged. When trying to overcome an addiction, you may find that you are tempted to fall right back into it. I Peter 5:8-9 exhorts, “Be sober, be *vigilant*; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

Satan does not want you to succeed in overcoming and receive the reward that he knows he can never have—sonship in God’s kingdom (Heb. 2:10; Rev. 21:3). Satan will put every imaginable obstacle in your way. Remember, you are wrestling against “...principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

By *diligently* applying the principles above, you will be able to successfully overcome smoking.

“You will gain many benefits from your decision to quit smoking. Most importantly, it may save your life. Those who quit smoking decrease their risk of lung disease, heart disease, emphysema and cancer. They are proud to be rid of the hacking coughs, the messy ash trays, the smell of stale smoke at home, in their cars and on their clothes and hair, and the nicotine stains on their fingers and teeth. Some people report rejuvenation in their senses of smell and taste as well as increased vitality. But for most, the first noticeable difference is a sense of pride in knowing they have ‘kicked the habit’” (www.aquitsmoking.com).

God commands us to “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2). What will you do? □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

plan of salvation and the purpose of human existence; climactic, soon-coming prophesied events; God's warning message to His people; His Law—including the Sabbath command—the Holy Days; tithing; clean and unclean meats; the one true Church; and many other teachings make sense to me?"

When you read or hear these things in our magazines, books, booklets, articles and *WORLD TO COME* programs, do they have meaning to you? Are you grasping them? Are they PLAIN to your understanding? Do you see them as SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE others do not have? Do you feel tempted to pinch yourself in disbelief that you could be shown things of which the masses have no idea?

If the answers to these questions are "yes," then God *is* calling—"drawing"—you! The mysteries of the kingdom of God *are* being given to YOU!

Responsible for Knowledge Given

Babies are born knowing nothing. They do not know even the basics of right and wrong. They have to be taught virtually *everything*. Similarly, the world does not know the things of God—spiritual right from spiritual wrong. But with the knowledge of these things comes the responsibility to act on it.

Two Bible passages demonstrate that God holds people accountable for what they understand. Notice James 4:17: "Therefore to him that KNOWS TO DO GOOD, and does it not, to him it is sin." Now read Hebrews 10:26: "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, there remains no more sacrifice for sins."

Let's understand. Each time you learn more of God's truth (what is "good?"), and it makes sense to you—you at least generally understand it—you are being *given* extraordinary

spiritual *knowledge* for which God holds you accountable.

This is part of the calling process—and is actually central to it. Further, it makes understanding how God calls one much more serious than most have believed. Recognize that God will only call each human being once. Therefore, you are responsible *now* for the knowledge that you are being given. If one does *not* act on what he is learning, God will take that understanding away (Rom. 2:13; Psa. 111:10), and such a person is in a grave spiritual condition.

The Greatest Freedom

God's truth is most exciting to understand. It is the path to all the wonderful, good things in life—things God wants you to have. It is also the path to the greatest *freedom* that there is! Christ told certain Jews professing to believe on Him: "If you continue in My word [the truth – John 17:17], then are you My disciples indeed; and you shall *know the truth*, and THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE" (John 8:31-32). You must be willing to "continue" in your studies of God's Word, learning ever more of His truth, which Christ explains will "set you free" from a world cut off from God and held captive by Satan. Even *this* understanding is precious knowledge.

Your associates in the world probably understand none of these things. Neither do your relatives. Without God's calling, they have no possible way of enjoying *now* what is being offered to YOU—if you are understanding *and* acting upon God's truth.

It is also vital that you make certain the things you are learning. You should find yourself wanting to PROVE the doctrines of God. Paul also told the Thessalonians to "PROVE all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thes. 5:21). If you know God is calling you, take time to *prove* that He exists. Then prove that the Bible is truly His inspired Word for mankind.

Finally, *prove* the identity of God's Church. Remove all doubt, leaving no room for confusion. There

are many counterfeit churches—many spiritual "look-alikes" in the world. Do not be fooled by any of them. Christ promised, "I will build My Church" (Matt. 16:18). Determine to know for certain if you have come in contact with it. (I urge you to read our booklet *Where is God's TRUE CHURCH?*)

At the same time you are proving these things, pray fervently about what you are learning. When you are unclear on a matter, remember that Christ taught, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7:7).

John 14:17 explains how those coming toward conversion begin to find that they can see clearly the things of God. Notice what Christ said when speaking to His disciples about the Holy Spirit they were soon to receive: "Even the Spirit of truth; [which] the world cannot receive, because it sees [it] not, neither knows [it]: but you know [it]; for [it] dwells *with* you, and shall be *in* you."

At this point, the disciples were much like many today—perhaps like you, too. They were seeing many spiritual truths in part, but did not yet *fully* grasp the enormous importance of learning God's Plan and way of life. Through the Holy Spirit working *with* them, God was revealing certain things that they would only understand in a greater way once it was *in* them, beginning at conversion. Ultimately, to fully understand all the things of God—all the mysteries of the kingdom of God—one must be begotten of the Holy Spirit. This occurs when it enters directly into the mind! Lacking baptism and the vital receiving of God's Spirit, it is completely impossible for *anyone* to truly understand even a single biblical truth!

Before discussing how this happens, let's look at the big picture.

God's Master Plan

There is a great reason that God is calling only a few now.

The core of God's Plan encompasses 7,000 years. Few have understood this. Many *have* correctly understood at least some of the verses describing Christ's 1,000-year reign, which will begin at the time of His Return to earth in great power and glory to rule with the saints (Rev. 20:4-6). And while most know little more than this, they know *nothing* of the fact that God has allotted 6,000 years, or six millennial days of a "seven-day week," to man's rule, prior to the seventh 1,000-year "day." The sixth "day" is about to draw to a close. Satan is soon to be bound (Rev. 20:2).

However, he has *not yet* been bound. When Christ, having overcome sin, qualified to replace him (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) as the "god of this world," He assured that Satan will soon no longer be present to deceive and confuse mankind (I Cor. 14:33). But, once again, we must understand that Satan has not *yet* been bound and he seeks to do everything, within the great power that he does possess, continually striving to thwart God's plan. He has certainly deceived his ministers (II Cor. 11:13-15) into believing that God has failed terribly in His plan to save the vast majority of a mankind that He is not yet even calling to salvation. But it is only by God's permission that Satan holds sway over this "present evil world" (Gal. 1:4).

God is not losing a wrestling match over which He clearly has full control. He knows exactly what He is doing, and the beauty of His plan *can* be known. Be assured that no true God would ever choose to condemn the vast majority who have ever lived without giving them a *full opportunity* for salvation. Such a God would not be worth following. He would be an unjust monster *whose* primary purpose is the business of *condemnation!*

We must understand! The Bible says, "But, beloved, *be not ignorant* of this one thing, that *one day* is with the Lord *as a thousand years*, and a

thousand years as one day" (II Pet. 3:8). Of course, most people *are* "ignorant" of not just this "one thing," but almost everything that the Bible teaches.

Yet, this is a fascinating verse.

Man has been given six days, or 6,000 years, to try his own ways, governments, religions, philosophies, value systems and forms of education. Under the sway of Satan, he has practiced sin—DISOBEDIENCE to God's commands—for nearly 6,000 years. Man has then tried to treat all of the ill *effects* instead of treating the *cause* of having broken God's laws. This includes the invention of many religions that merely teach the hollow *ideas of men* in place of the wonderful TRUTHS OF GOD.

God is allowing man to learn bitter lessons. The vast majority, who have never known the precious truth of God, are having to learn that their own ways do not work! Just before humanity is about to erase itself from the earth, through a combination of weapons of mass destruction and the irreversible pollution of a planet that has limits to how much it can withstand, Christ will intervene and save mankind from itself!

Now continue with II Peter. Notice verse 9: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise...but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." Did you notice that God wants to save *everyone*? When speaking of God, Paul states, "Who will have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). That is the plain truth of this scripture. God is not, and never has been, in the "mass condemnation" business.

But God is calling and training a tiny select few who will rule with Christ at His Return, and the setting up of His glorious world-ruling kingdom. (Also read our booklet *Why Do You Exist?*)

Remember. Satan has proliferated many forms of false religion all over the earth. He counterfeits the truth in

endless ways, and God's calling process is no exception. He is a MASTER DECEIVER and the fruits of his efforts lie all around us.

Your Path to Conversion

Your Bible states, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God *they* are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). Verse 9 there states, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." These two passages reveal just what a Christian is—one who has and is led by the Holy Spirit of God. This Spirit is received upon repentance and baptism (Acts.2:38).

If the truth is becoming clear—really PLAIN—to you, set the goal of repentance, baptism, and the receiving of God's Holy Spirit—the beginning of TRUE CONVERSION!

While you are preparing for conversion, focus on examining all the wrong habits and attitudes that you can. There are certain *physical* changes you can make before baptism. Understand. Conversion is entirely about changing, growing, overcoming—and developing the *character of God*. This involves getting into the habit of regular prayer, Bible study, meditation and even periodic fasting.

Then take time to study all of our books, booklets and articles dealing with faith, conversion, baptism, your human potential, and the proofs of God's existence, His Word and His Church. Much—actually everything—is at stake for you if God is calling you now.

Take each step carefully. Follow the timing that is right for you. Yet, do not unnecessarily delay, merely because you have not asked fervently or often enough for the "gift" of repentance (II Tim. 2:25; Acts 11:18). Be careful that you do not follow the pattern of the world, falling into waiting for a magical *feeling* that "now is the time."

The Bible teaches that "repentance is toward God" and that "faith

Please see **BEING CALLED**, page 33



HEALTH, SCIENCE & SOCIETY

The Next Flu Pandemic

Scientists are sounding the alarm: All signs are pointing to the emergence of a new, deadly contagious strain of the flu that will catch the world off-guard. History has shown that flu pandemics occur periodically (the last one was more than 30 years ago), causing widespread illness and death, overwhelming medical systems and wreaking havoc on societies. And flu expert Robert Webster of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, says, "We're overdue." His team describes this next pandemic as not only inevitable, but imminent.

The greatest concern is a flu virus

that would jump the species barrier. In such a case, humans would have no immunity, thus causing a deadly pandemic. Webster continued: "It's knocking at the door. We've seen enough incidence over the last three or four years to make us alarmed." Bird flu, for example, was unknown before 1997. This year alone, there have been two confirmed incidents of this virus "jumping" to humans—one in Hong Kong, and another in the Netherlands. So far, this virus has yet to mutate into a form that is able to efficiently spread between humans.

Sources: *USA Today*, *CBC*

RELIGION

The Vatican and Saddam Hussein

Statements made during a news conference, by Cardinal Renato Martino, head of the Vatican's Justice and Peace Department, in response to the capture of Saddam Hussein, were rather telling and raised quite a media and public stir in the U.S. Referring to the video footage that was repeatedly played after Hussein's capture, Martino said, "I felt pity to see this man destroyed, (the military) looking at his teeth as if he were a cow...Seeing him like this, a man in his tragedy, despite all the heavy blame he bears, I had a sense of compassion for him." One wonders if he and/or other Vatican officials did or would have felt

the same way after the end of World War II, in regard to the German officials who had been incarcerated.

Martino had been one of the strongest Vatican voices against the U.S.-led war. In addition, the news conference, during which these statements were made, was called in order for him to present the "World Day of Peace" message, in which Pope John Paul scorned the United States for invading Iraq without the backing of the United Nations. In any case, this will serve to further bi-polarize the world—the U.S. and its few allies against the rest.

Source: *Yahoo! News*

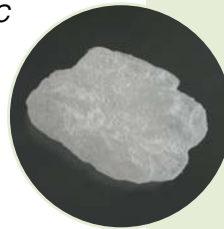
"Speed" in Rural America

Among the amber waves of grain in middle America, drug manufacturers have established a literal network of methamphetamine (commonly called speed, crank, ice, tweek or chicken feed) factories. Barry McCaffrey, drug tsar for the previous administration called speed "the worst drug ever to hit America." Not only do the users suffer, but so do innocent children—from the noxious chemicals left lying around as by-products, from the risk of fire and explosion in these so-called "factories," and from abuse or neglect by adults who are under the influence from this cheap and readily-available drug.

The problem is particularly bad in the Midwest. Iowa, for example, discovered in the latest fiscal year, that 720 cases of child abuse were related to the drug labs. Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana and Minnesota are also coping with this serious problem.

The recipe and ingredients are relatively easy to obtain, and many struggling farmers have done so. The article in *The Economist* concludes that the heartland of America is now a dangerous place for children to grow up in.

Source: *The Economist*



“We Got Him!”—The Implications

Much excitement has been made since the discovery of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein hiding in a “spider hole,” his arrest, and eventual incarceration. Ironically, the brutal despot was reportedly taken without a single shot fired, and then with a rather dishevelled appearance, subjected to a medical examination that was later broadcast to the world—both powerful statements and imagery that will speak volumes to those he terrified, and to those who follow in his footsteps.

Yet, many questions now arise, or at the very least, come to the fore.

Attempts were made to answer some, but others were ignored or not even thought of. Consider the following:

The insurgency and Iraqi self-governance. Despite the accomplishment, the attacks against U.S. and coalition troops, as well as Iraqi police, are expected to continue. Some feel they

are largely driven by the U.S. occupation alone, and have little to do with the former regime. In any case, they make any sort of re-building efforts difficult at best. In addition, the U.S. President, looking at an election in 2004, is feeling the political pressure of still having 100,000+ servicemen in Iraq—and this pressure will only increase

as attacks continue. Yet, Iraq is still a long way from a stable, semi-democratic government by the Iraqi people, and accepted by the Iraqi people—which is really what the Americans are there for. Even this will be difficult and possibly even more so, if events dictate further hostilities between the three main ethnic groups—the Kurds, the Sunni-Arabs, and the Shia-Arabs.

Who’s next in the War on Terror? Despite Saddam Hussein being hated even by most of his Arab neighbors (but particularly, and maybe even exclusively by the political leaders who feared his instable tendencies, while the general Arab populace seemed to admire his anti-American stance, and his support of the Palestinians), their style of governance, their dislike for the U.S. and Israel, and their relative condoning of

radical Islam and terrorism are similar.

Iran, Syria and even Saudi Arabia have been mentioned as possible targets in a “Stage 3,” as indicated in a report from the U.S. Institute for Peace, a body under the auspices of Congress containing leading U.S. analysts.

Progressing with a “Stage 3,” at least one with a campaign that is similar to the ones in Afghanistan and Iraq, will prove to be more difficult. International opinion will certainly not condone the invasion of any of these three relatively “quiet” Arab dictatorships. In addition, any one of those three, and especially Iran, will be more of a military challenge. Is the American public ready, willing and able for a “Stage 3”? There certainly is a danger at this point, of a sense of finale—“we got him”—so why carry on?

General Arab resentment. This is unlikely to diminish, despite the removal of Hussein, and even with a mostly successful outcome in Iraq. The Iran nuclear issue still festers; the Israeli-Palestinian remains in an explosive lurch; both Egypt and Saudi Arabia appear to be moving toward political change; Osama bin Laden remains at large; and America continues to appear as the world’s only superpower—something guaranteed to

keep most Arabs unhappy.

The bigger geo-strategic picture. The “War on Terror” is doing an outstanding job at keeping the world’s, but primarily America’s, eyes off of three areas of geo-strategic significance—Europe, Russia and China. Granted, Europe appears to still be in the midst of growing pains.

However, is it only coincidence that the European Union’s constitutional failure was completely overshadowed in the media by the capture of Saddam Hussein? A two-speed or split Europe will almost guarantee a dangerous and dramatic outcome. Russia, under the leadership of President Putin, appears to be more and more headed toward its former “glory.” And China continues to antagonize the U.S. as it supplies America’s enemies and others with mili-

tary technology, all the while slowly and steadily increasing its own economic and military might.

Sources: *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The World Tribune*

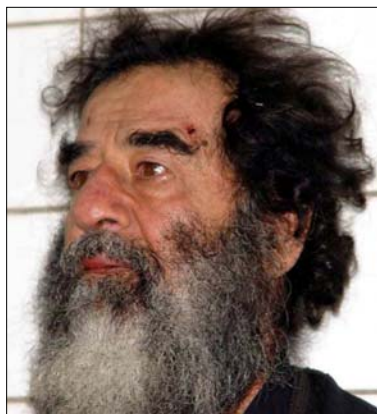
“Hateful” Words Now a War Crime

The United Nations tribunal for Rwanda has established the dangerous precedent that words deemed “hateful” could be considered a war crime. In the Rwandan case, three media executives were convicted of committing and inciting genocide, war crimes and persecution. Such a ruling will set a standard for the new International Criminal Court.

The UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, drafted in 1966 and ratified by 151 nations, including the United States, states, “Any advocacy of national racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.”

The danger comes when deciding what is “religious hatred.” Some (including members of the Canadian government) have espoused that teaching the biblical truth regarding homosexuality is such, paving the way for the international trying and convicting of those who stand up for the truth.

Source: *The Washington Times*



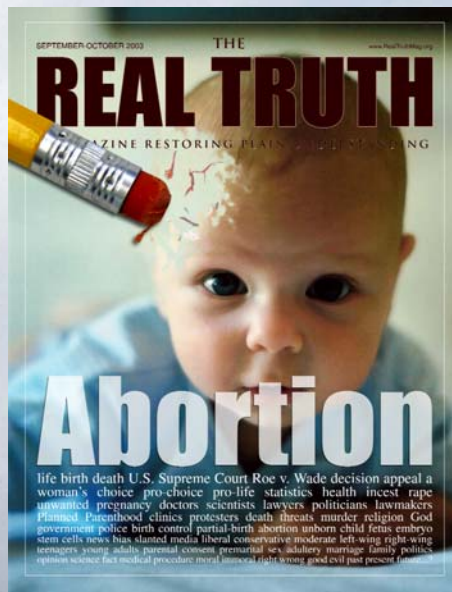
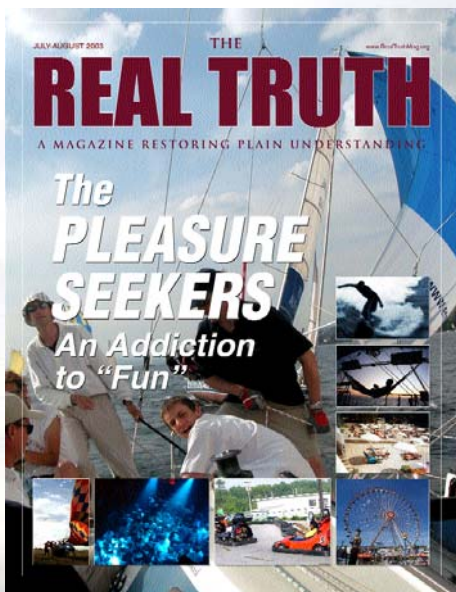
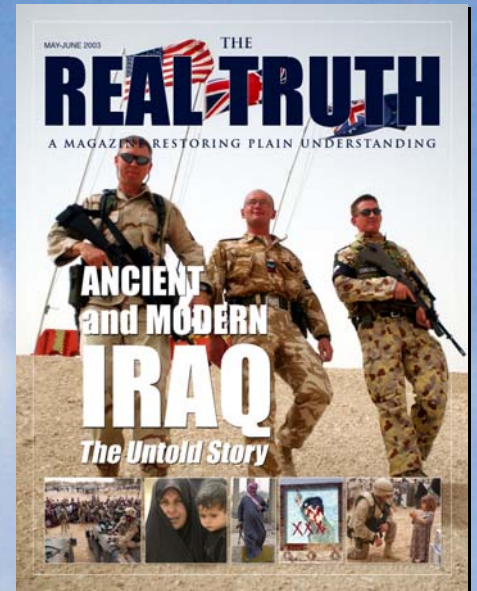
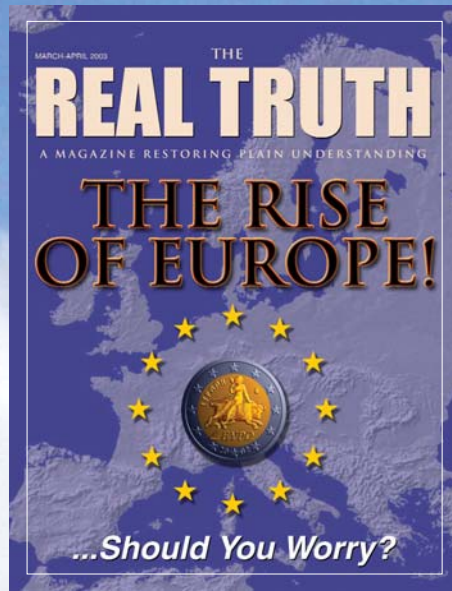
BEING CALLED

Continued from page 31

is toward...Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21). Conversion is a personal private matter between the Father and Christ, and each individual. If God is truly calling you, make certain of your calling. It is most precious!

This is the only way to approach the marvelous gift you are being given! □

Missed out on previous issues?



You can read them online at your convenience!