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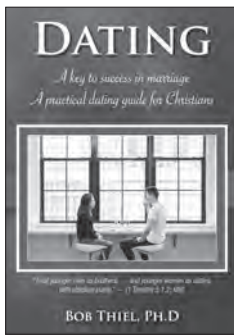
BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY

DATING | What should Christians know?



The Feast of Trumpets
How to Make Wise Decisions!

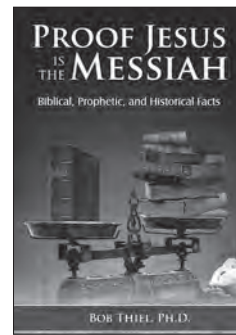
BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY



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About the Front Cover: Artwork developed for the *Continuing Church of God*.

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Feast of Trumpets

The Feast of Trumpets begins after sunset on the Roman calendar date of September 25th in 2022.

Most of the Greco-Roman churches do not keep the biblical holy days that generally occur in the Fall. Yet, these Holy Days portray many pivotal events in God's plan.

The Feast of Trumpets not only pictures the coming of Christ to resurrect the firstfruits from the dead, it also pictures the terrible time of devastation just ahead and the intervention of Jesus Christ to save the living from total annihilation and to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

Let's understand how this festival fits into God's great master plan.

Consider that there is a major time gap between the Day of Pentecost and the Feast of Trumpets. Since the New Testament church began on Pentecost and basically ends when Jesus returns at the last trumpet (1 Corinthians 15:51-57), in a sense the period of time between Pentecost and the Feast of Trumpets can be considered as representing the church age.

The fourth Holy Day, the Feast of Trumpets, is observed in "the seventh month, on the first day of the month" (Leviticus 23:23-25).

The number seven in God's plan signifies completion and perfection. The seventh month of God's calendar (occurs in September and/or October) contains the final four festivals, picturing the completion of God's great master plan for us. The festival that falls on the first day of this month marks the beginning of the final events in God's plan.

It is another annual Sabbath of rest from one's regular work, and it was to be a memorial of blowing of trumpets (Leviticus 23:24-25). It is also a time to learn God's ways (Nehemiah 8:2-3; cf. Ezra 3:1-7). Much of what happened to the children of Israel was written for our "examples, and they were written for our

admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

It is from the blowing of trumpets that the Feast of Trumpets draws its name.

There is a great deal of symbolic meaning tied in with the blowing of these trumpets, especially with regard to the end times in which we're living. It should be noted that the modern Jewish name for this date, Rosh Hashanah, is not biblical nor even original for the Jews. It was something that they adopted centuries after God gave it to them and after the Old Testament was written (Kramer, Amy J. Rosh Hashana Origins. Copyright © 1998-1999 Everything Jewish, Inc.).

The Bible teaches that Trumpets were blown to announce God's feasts, as well as to call people to assemble (Numbers 10:1-3, 10).

Book of Life

Interestingly, Jewish scholars have tied the Feast of Trumpets in with the 'Book of Life' (Peltz M, Rabbi. What is in a Rosh Hashanah greeting? Haaretz, September 17, 2012). Why is that of interest?

Well, the Bible teaches that those who are listed in the 'Book of Life' (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5) will be resurrected (Hebrews 12:22-23). When? At the seventh and last trumpet:

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

The Book of Revelation clearly teaches that seven trumpets will be blown (8:2), punishment comes upon those who are not protected by God (9:4), and then God's kingdom and judgment will come (11:15-18).

Finally, it teaches that those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will experience the second death (Revelation 20:14-15).

Trumpet Blasts

Consider that the Bible shows that during Israel's history, which was heavily punctuated with conflicts and rebellion, trumpets continued to be used as warning devices, to call to arms or as preludes to important messages — always to mark an event of tremendous import to the whole nation.

God also used the prophets, among them Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea and Joel, to warn Israel about punishments He would bring upon them for their constant rebellion against His laws. These prophets were to use their voices like trumpets to blare their warnings to God's people.

1 Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins. (Isaiah 58:1)

We in the Continuing Church of God are working to do that today. We boldly tell of the sins of society and how world events are aligning with properly understood prophecy — which we also strive to explain.

But there will also be literal trumpet blasts coming in the future as the Book of Revelation teaches (Revelation 8:1-13, 9:1-18). But most will not heed those warnings.

Many are blown in the Book of Revelation, and a lot were to be blown on the Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:24) — hopefully many can see the connection.

But the most important trumpet, in a sense, could be the last, the seventh one. Here is what Revelation teaches about that:

15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" 16 And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and

reigned. 18 The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth." 19 Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail. (Revelation 11:15-19)

The Feast of Trumpets pictures the future blowing of trumpets and the reality that Jesus will come and establish the Kingdom of God on the earth. The good news of coming Kingdom of God is a big part of what Jesus wants His servants to proclaim now (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20), and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14). The Feast of Trumpets points to Christ's victory over this world.

Greco-Roman historians, such as Jerome and Epiphanius, recorded that the 'Nazarene Christians' continued to keep the Fall Holy Days into the fourth and fifth centuries. (Catholica Omnia Tabulinum De Ecclesiae Patribus Doctoribusque Materia Migne JP Argumentum Patrologia Latina Volumen MPL025 Ab Columna ad Culumnam 1415 - 1542A, pp. 922, 930) and (The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book II (sects 1-46) Section 1, Chapter 19, 7-9. Frank Williams, editor. Publisher BRILL, 1987, p. 117-119).

They were also kept by the faithful Christians in Jerusalem who claimed the original Christian building in Jerusalem into the fourth century until they were stopped by Imperial authorities (Pixner B. Church of the Apostles Found on Mt. Zion. Biblical Archaeology Review, May/June 1990: 16-35,60).

The anti-Semite John Chrysostom specifically attempted to stop people from keeping the Feast of Trumpets in the late fourth century (John Chrysostom. Homily I Against the Jews I:5;VI:5;VII:2).

However, those trying to be faithful continued to do so throughout history.

The *Continuing* Church of God does so now.

Hopefully, you will be joining us in observing the Feast of Trumpets in 2022 and beyond.

Seven Principles Revealing - How to Make Wise Decisions!



Article originally published in the Good News magazine, September 1963, by the old Radio Church of God (and hence, is no longer copyrighted but now is in the public domain).

Success and happiness in life — EVEN finally achieving the KINGDOM OF GOD depends on making RIGHT DECISIONS. Here from the Business Manager — an ordained Evangelist in God's Church, are SEVEN RULES which will help YOU make the right decisions — EVERY TIME!

HOW OFTEN do we find ourselves in trouble because we have made a wrong decision? Why is it at times we launch into some endeavor — begin a project — enter into a business arrangement — decide to make a major move or make a long-term purchase — then find that things turn out WRONG?

Many of God's people have had the sad experience

of discovering they have made an unwise decision. There is a way to avoid this pitfall! God has made available certain principles which, if diligently applied, will always result in the RIGHT CHOICE. Yet many do not know these principles. Most of us fail to apply them ALL. Many are too IMPATIENT to take time to apply them.

Right Choices — the Whole Purpose of Human Life

God has shown from the beginning that it is up to us to CHOOSE. Our very lives and ultimate eternal life depends on making the RIGHT CHOICE!

Notice God's deadly and serious warning:

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you LIFE and DEATH, BLESSING and CURSING: therefore CHOOSE LIFE, that both thou and thy seed may live." (Deuteronomy 30:19)

God wants us to make the right choices. He wants us to learn how to make right evaluations and come to the right decisions. Every decision we make in life is either a RIGHT ONE which leads toward life, happiness and prosperity, or it is a WRONG ONE and leads toward unhappiness, destitution and death.

Man's Basic Ability to Make Decisions

Our primary KEY we must learn before we learn the SEVEN rules to making wise decisions is what NATIVE ability man has for coming to right conclusions.

Whenever we have a decision to make, the first step we take is usually the most disastrous! That mistake is assuming that we — OF OURSELVES — have the ability to come to a right conclusion. Yet, the Word of God clearly shows us that the basic equipment man has been given to make decisions is equipment that will irrevocably lead him to make the WRONG CHOICE.

The basic nature that all mankind has inherited — believe it or not — will inexorably lead him to make

the WRONG DECISION.

Notice:

“O Lord, I know that the way of man is NOT IN HIMSELF: it is NOT in man that walketh to DIRECT HIS STEPS.” (Jeremiah 10:23)

If we could only learn this primary lesson we would be over the greatest hurdle in directing our lives to successful conclusions. Yet, contrary to God’s direction in His Word, we too often lean to our own understanding and misguided ability to make decisions instead of looking to God! (Prov. 3:5)

Whatever decision or choice we have to make in life, IF we can only realize that the basic nature we have will ALWAYS tend to lead us to make the WRONG DECISION, we will be able to take the first step in avoiding disaster. Almighty God is careful to tell us in Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25: “There is a way that SEEMETH right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

Rule One — Ask God for Wisdom

This brings us to the first rule in making wise decisions. If we are to reach a right choice we must go to a source OUTSIDE of ourselves for the answer!

The Word of God tells us

“... for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by HIM actions are weighed” (1 Samuel 2:3)

God is the source of ALL knowledge! He alone can guide us to make the right choice. Whenever we have a decision or choice to make, the first thing we must do is GO TO GOD in PRAYER and acknowledge that He alone can direct us to make the wise choice. Ask Him for the WISDOM to see what is right. Ask Him for guidance in your pursuit of the right course.

Too many of us leave God out of our decisions. Too many of us plunge ahead seeking advice from other sources and gathering facts BEFORE we acknowledge God as the primary source of right direction. Seeking God’s wisdom and direction is FIRST, then we can follow the next six rules successfully.

God tells us three times in His Word:

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”
(Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10)

When we come to the place where we fear to go ahead without FIRST going to God, then we will stop making wrong choices.

Solomon an Example

When Solomon became King of Israel after his father David, he knew he was faced with many momentous decisions. The responsibility of ruling a mighty nation and making all the decisions that are part of being a monarch weighed heavily upon him.

What was the first thing Solomon did? His actions are an EXAMPLE for us — recorded in the Word of God:

“And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead... for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Give me now WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can JUDGE [decide for] this thy people, that is so GREAT?” (2 Chronicles 1:8:10)

Because Solomon sought God FIRST and acknowledged Him as the source of RIGHT DIRECTION, God granted him wisdom and knowledge to make right decisions and choices. God blessed him and the nation Israel over which he ruled (2 Chronicles 1:11-17).

No matter how large or small a decision we have to make, we should always go to God FIRST and acknowledge Him as the source of direction, wisdom and knowledge to make the right choice.

Even if we must make a quick-rapid-fire-decision, we always have time — even if for only an instant — to pray within ourselves, “Father, help me to see your will.”

Rule Two — Search God’s Word for Examples

After FIRST acknowledging God and asking Him for wisdom and guidance, we must next realize that God has recorded for us IN HIS WORD literally hundreds of examples of right and wrong choices and their results in people’s lives.

In the Old Testament, when God was bringing Israel out of Egypt, the people had to make many decisions; some were right — many were wrong! These examples are priceless in helping us avoid making similar mistakes in decisions we must reach.

Some of the wrong decisions which led to disaster for the people are recorded a second time in I Corinthians in the 10th chapter. Notice what the Apostle Paul says about these occurrences: “Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for OUR ADMONITION, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (Verse 11).

By a deep knowledge of God’s Word — through constant study and meditation — we have a backlog of experience to draw upon. We certainly can profit by the mistakes others have made, and also from their wise decisions.

Jesus’ Example

Jesus, under severe temptation from Satan to make a wrong decision, knew this principle well. When the Tempter sought to entice Jesus to choose immediate world rule — showed him luring world kingdoms to tempt Him — Jesus said:

“IT IS WRITTEN, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)

Jesus also said twice more “IT IS WRITTEN!”

Jesus knew God’s Word. He drew heavily upon it to make His choices. We should follow His example!

The unjust judges of this world follow this principle even if their choices may be wrong. No judge presiding over a court case ever comes to a decision without knowing the decisions that have been rendered previously in similar cases. Lawyers always rehearse previous court cases for what has happened in the past.

We have literally hundreds of “court cases” upon which God has rendered HIS verdict — IN THE BIBLE.

Yet far too many of us neglect to seek that knowledge from God’s Word and apply it to our decisions.

Far too many of us just do not know God’s Word well enough! Therefore we make wrong decisions on

points for which there are direct example in the Word of God.

Rule Three — Get the Facts

The third rule for making wise decisions is one many of us NEGLECT because we are in too much of a hurry to come to a decision — we are IMPATIENT.

Each decision we have to make will usually have many factors to consider. Having only a portion of the information available may cause us to decide prematurely and WRONGLY.

One of the high-pressure selling “gimmicks” or procedures today is to overwhelm a prospective buyer with a lot of “loaded” or one-sided truths and half-truths. These “facts” seem to show conclusively that to buy is the “right choice.” But often to the buyer’s chagrin he will only discover too late that there was another side to the story! Had he CAREFULLY CONSIDERED, he would never have made the purchase.

Whatever decision or choice we have to make, in whatever time is available to us, we should ferret out and weigh every possibility and contingency so we can see every facet every angle of the choices available to us and what the results and effects might be. NEVER BE HURRIED OR PUSHED INTO A DECISION!

A good course of action to follow is to sit down and make a list of all the pros and cons on a sheet of paper. Forcing yourself to take the time to do this will cause you to see things you would not have considered before. List objectively all the facts you have at hand, then ask yourself questions for which you do not have the facts — then GET THOSE FACTS before you decide.

One key which will save you many headaches and pocketbook pains is learn to “wait 24 hours” — especially in reference to impulse buying. Every salesman knows a person is most apt to buy on the spur of the moment after he has been pushed “off balance” by his basic desire to possess plus the strong “pitch” he has just been given. But if you will say, “I’ll think it over” — leave the store — go home and wait until tomorrow — most likely many factors will come to you which you were unable to consider under the pressure of the moment.

This key also applies to any choice you have to make. We are always “off balance” until we have carefully weighed ALL the facts.

Rule Four — Seek Wise and Abundant Counsel

In getting the facts, we should not always lean to our own knowledge of the subject. We should seek those who have the most accurate information relative to our choice.

Let us suppose you are considering a change from one area of the country to another. This involves a change of job — change of home — change of school for children — change of climate — change of cost of living — and many, many other things. A wise decision cannot be reached without learning what these factors are like in the new area. One way to learn these facts is to ask or counsel someone who is an AUTHORITY on these factors in the new area.

In every case seek wise counsel from a reputable authority or sources you can rely on. Don't rely on backyard advice or “water cooler wisdom” for a decision in your life.

Don't be satisfied with one opinion only! A primary principle from God's Word shows us to seek wise counsel:

“WHERE NO COUNSEL is, the people fall: but in the MULTITUDE OF COUNSELLERS THERE IS SAFETY.” (Proverbs 11:14)

Seek Ministerial Counsel

After we have gleaned all the facts available from our own research and from wise and abundant authorities, we should seek additional counsel from God's ministers or elders if available.

God has placed His ministry in His Church to guide and help His people to the most important choice of all — to choose life! God's ministers are wise counsellors to help you reach a wise decision. Seek their counsel before coming to a final decision.

God shows us the purpose for which He has placed a ministry in His Church:

“And he gave some, apostles; and some,

prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the BODY of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-12)

Certainly God's ministers can give wise counsel and guide you to make the right choice. Make available to them all the facts and circumstances you have gleaned. They may see things from a point of view you had not considered.

Paul shows us that ministerial counsel is to be sought and followed:

“Obey them that have the ride over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls [lives — psuche in the Greek], as they that must give account.” (Hebrews 13:17)

Rule Five — Make a Definite Decision

In applying the preceding rules, we will have come to the place where we are ready to make a definite decision. Now is the time!

We have asked God for wisdom and direction; we have searched His Word for examples and lessons; we have gathered and weighed all the facts and eventualities; we have sought authorities, wise and abundant counsellors and ministerial guidance. The choice or decision should now be CLEAR.

Make that decision DECISIVELY — POSITIVELY!

Don't vacillate! Don't waver (unless it is clearly wrong)!

Again God's Word gives us the example:

“For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed... A double minded man is UNSTABLE in all his ways.” (James 1:6, 8)

This brings us to the sixth rule.

Rule Six — Have Faith in Your Decision

Faith is one of the most powerful forces we can employ to cause circumstances to turn out right. Once we have come to a decision based on God's principles we can have FAITH it will work out correctly.

We should EXPECT our choice — to turn out RIGHT

and GOOD. We can have ABSOLUTE FAITH that it will!

“Faith is the substance of things (or conclusions) HOPED FOR, the evidence of things not seen.”
(Hebrews 11:1)

Believing is now our part! The whole eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a testimony of those who made choices and decisions in their lives toward an ultimate goal and they attained them THROUGH FAITH!

Jesus said,

“If thou canst believe, ALL THINGS are possible to him that BELIEVETH!” (Mark 9:23)

Trust your decision. Trust the God who led you to it. Believe in it and HAVE FAITH!

Rule Seven — Follow Counsel and Work Diligently for the Desired End

The last rule is where many fall down. The right conclusion to a decision is NOT AUTOMATIC! We must go all out to bring the desired end to reality.

In the course of obtaining all the facts and getting wise and abundant counsel we will have discovered many things to DO!

Now that we have made our choice and have faith that it will work out, we need to “rollup our sleeves” and “GET TO WORK”!

Another basic principle from God’s Word will help. Wise Solomon learned from God:

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, DO IT WITH THY MIGHT.” (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

Here is where many of us fail. We do not diligently and systematically go step-by-step through every phase of effort toward the desired goal!

Resolve, in every choice or decision, to thoroughly and judiciously DO YOUR PART.

Don’t Forget Your Counsellors

So many times we seek wise counsel from authorities

and then ministers — we learn the right course of action — and then we proceed to forget that counsel and do things differently — according to our own reasoning. (When you take counsel, what you actually do is your choice.)

Remember the advice given and follow it accurately (if appropriate) — write it down if necessary.

We CAN make wise decisions, brethren! God wants us to. He has given us the means to direct our lives to a wonderful and eternal reward through wise choices.

There is never a time in YOUR LIFE when you can afford to NEGLECT these principles.

Write them down on a card and carry them with you. Learn them — make them a part of you. Put them into practice in YOUR life.

God promises:

“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken DILIGENTLY unto the voice of the Eternal thy God, to observe and to do ALL his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Eternal thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

“And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Eternal thy God.

“BLESSED shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

“BLESSED shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

“BLESSED shall be thy basket and thy store.

“BLESSED shalt thou be when thou comest in, and BLESSED shalt thou be when thou goest out.” (Deuteronomy 28:1-6)

Editor: Yes, with God’s help YOU can make wise decisions

Dating for Christians

By Bob Thiel

Pretty much everybody wants to be happy.

Even “loners” do not want to be lonely. If you ask a young single adult what would make him or her happy, you’ll probably hear something like this: “I just want to be loved. I want to build a relationship with someone with whom I can share my life - someone who understands me and will love me.”

Most people want a happy home life, with father, mother and well-behaved, happy children — a loving, close-knit, family.

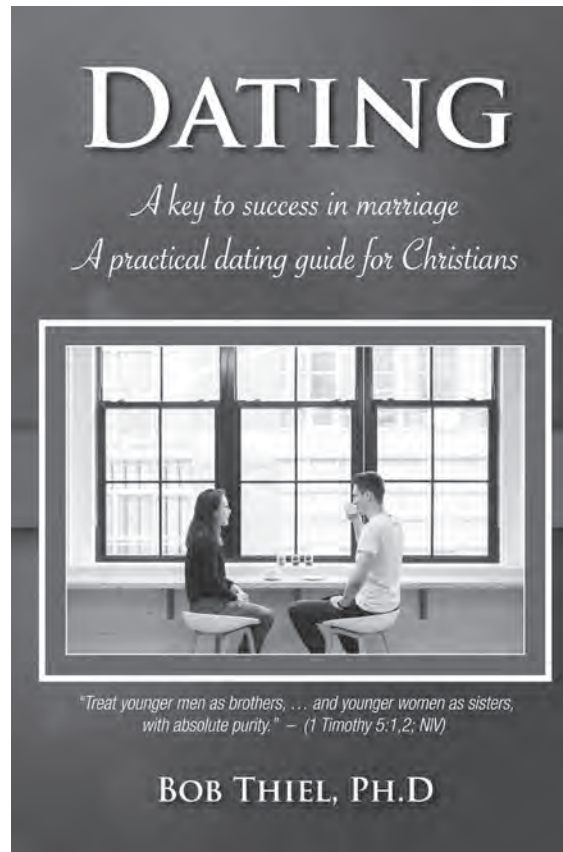
In most Western nations, and many non-Western ones, dating is the way single people use to spend time with potential marital partners. So, if people are going to date, they should date understanding God and His plan for them.

The Bible teaches us that we are made in God’s image (Genesis 1:26). The human family was designed by God to picture God’s own spiritual Family (Ephesians 3:14-15; 5:31-32). But Satan the devil, the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), hates God’s plan and purpose. He works to try to thwart and pervert what God intends.

Satan has deliberately led people away from truth and into philosophies that lead to destruction. Among these is the idea that marriage is not necessary for sex, and that the gratification of sexual lust is something we owe ourselves.

The world has its views on dating. Different cultures have differing norms for dating. But the world’s norms and standards are not always the same as God’s.

In these end times, the family is under attack from



many sides. The institution of marriage itself is no longer cherished as the basis of family life nor even limited to a male and female husband and wife, with possibly children.

Biblical admonitions, doctrines, and principles can help those who date (and those who wish to).

Too many have discovered they should not have married AFTER marriage — instead of before. They did not properly communicate enough before they were married. Dating properly can reduce the risk for divorce. Marrying the wrong person can be one of the most difficult experiences on earth, to hear some describe it. Lack

of preparation for marriage, lack of understanding the sobering responsibilities of marriage, coupled with marrying too young are leading causes of divorce, according to sociologists.

With the apostasy that hit the old Worldwide Church of God in the late 20th century and the subsequent scattering of the brethren, Church of God Christians in the 21st century face the reality of being isolated in many parts of the world.

This can be even more discouraging for the unmarried. Yet, despite concerns, the situation is not without hope.

Unmarried Christians are often facing the situation where there appear to be few, if any, other Christians to date, and possibly marry.

However, that does NOT mean that if you are single, you should lower standards and simply marry anyone, including any Christian that is willing to marry you as that can result in disaster.

This book is intended to help those involved with the Church of God, as well as those who are not, to be better at dating for marriage. Thus, hopefully they can reduce their risk of divorce and increase their chances for a happy and successful marriage.

In most cultures, some type of courtship/dating precedes marriage.

In most societies, people are allowed to choose whether or not to marry someone. This is not a new practice as we see this choice shown in biblical times (e.g. Numbers 36:6; Genesis 24:5-57).

Proper dating reduces the possibility of divorce.

Why?

Because proper dating gives people an opportunity to learn whether or not they can get along with each other.

Divorce is commonplace in the 21st century. Divorce is court sanctioned, politically, religiously and socially acceptable to the world, in most cases.

But divorce isn't happy.

Divorce is admission of defeat. While there can be valid reasons (Matthew 5:32; 1 Corinthians 7:15), divorce is still a public statement of failure.

The "wrong partner" supposedly causes divorce. The divorce rate proves something is seriously wrong in too many marriages. No one really marries "just to get a divorce," in spite of the brave smiles through tears: the emancipated woman over 40 who bounces into her friends' homes with the announcement of how "free" she feels after divorce does not reflect the reality for most.

Like setting up a business or planning a career, marriage is a truly big step in life. It is not to be entered into very casually.

Now when one flippantly says that everyone should have at least one divorce, don't you believe it!

Those saying so are just whistling in the dark — trying to justify, even to themselves, what was in reality an emotional and mental trauma — and probably an economic disaster, too.

Divorce, including in places like the USA, most often

severely hurts finances. And in time, at least one partner (usually the woman), will often end up in a much worse economic situation — as may any children the couple has.

Dating is often preparation for marriage.

It is better to be safe than sorry.

Way of Give and Get

It's been said that the first rule in dating is the first rule in all of life for a Christian, as Jesus stated:

37 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'
38 This is the first and great commandment.
(Matthew 22:37-38)

You will not truly and properly love anyone if you do not love God first and most. And no one will truly love you if they do not properly love God more than they love you.

Jesus also said:

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:39-40)

But you are NOT showing love to a date/neighbor if you compromise with God's commandments.

Most people today do not date for the right reasons. They do not understand what God wants them to learn in life, including interactions with the opposite sex.

Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35, NKJV throughout unless otherwise specified).

The Bible simplifies life into two contrasting overall philosophies: God's way of love (e.g. 1 John 4:8) and Satan's way of selfishness (e.g. Genesis 3:1-6).

Or to put it another way, the way of give vs. the way of get.

The way of get is totally self-oriented — it seems so right to so many, but does not end well (Proverbs 14:12). People caught in the "get way" always need more and more to satisfy their wants.

Yet, the way of give — the way of real love — the only true path to happiness and fulfillment. Giving is an outgoing concern that seeks to serve others rather than the self. Instead of being caught in the syndrome of ‘the more you get, the more you want,’ you find fulfillment in giving.

But what does this have to do with dating? Quite a bit.

If you are dating to be seen, to be more popular, to get physical affection, or other selfish motivations, you are following the way of get.

The give way is the right way. And it is perfectly fine to be looking for a potential spouse when dating (cf. Proverbs 18:22), one you will be able share your life with.

When you are on a date, try to be nice and strive to help the one you are dating have a pleasant time.

The Art of Dating

Why do you date? And what is a “date?”

A date is, after all, a day marked off on a calendar.

It could just as easily be called “meeting,” or “contracting,” or “calendarizing” as dating, but social customs prevail. A date can be just two people or involve groups of people. Group activities give singles an opportunity to interact with people of the opposite sex and help them to better communicate with others.

Dating, itself, is normally considered to be when a single man and single woman intentionally spend time together for activities and/or to see if they can build a relationship together.

Dating should be a fresh, wholesome, constructive, and enjoyable activity that can also be intellectually stimulating and physically up-building.

Dating is helpful for personality development. There is something to what psychologists tell us about the shy man and wallflower woman - both of whom have stunted personalities and lack personal charm.

Conversation should be part of dates. But be careful about bragging and loud talking. The type of dating that DOES develop personality is the kind where

many people can get together, play together, and talk together.

Dating is also useful for having plain, down-to-earth fun. But not the kind of fun that ends up in a premarital pregnancy or marriage to the wrong person. It’s the kind of wholesome fun that is fun today, tomorrow, and forever.

Let’s get a few hints on right dating.

Date as many different people as possible — of all different personalities. Now, in the Church of God there may not be many choices. But that does not mean that you have to repeatedly date the only person or persons that may immediately be eligible.

God can bring someone into the church and into your life at any time.

While you should not wait for the “perfect person” before going on any date (after all YOU are not perfect yourself), you do not have to ‘settle’ because you feel that there will never be any other options. It just may be that God wants you to develop more aspects of character while single longer than you may think.

Don’t be short-sighted (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7).

Don’t think that every date has to be some Hollywood romance. But dating for marriage, could be considered a type of interview. You are basically meeting and asking questions of people who are perhaps candidates to be your spouse. This makes dating a very important job.

Consider also the following:

15 The simple believes every word, But the prudent considers well his steps. (Proverbs 14:15)

Hopefully, the person you are dating really is a Christian. Yet, some brought up in the Church of God, as well as some who come in contact with it, are not really converted. So, exercise wise judgement and caution.

Date people who are intelligent, talented, sensible, truthful, and competent — thinking individuals. Preferably date people with alert, educated, thinking PARENTS. Date individuals of high moral standards.

Proverbs 27:17 says iron sharpens iron. The people

you hang around with are going to build you up or drag you down. Don't let yourself be dragged down. And you parents — watch whom your children are around with and be cognizant where your children are. And you who are teen-agers COOPERATE WITH your parents. Don't think you know it all about dating. You may wish to seek your parents' counsel about dating.

Remember, they've lived a whole lot longer than you. If they are Christian, they should have some advice they can give.

Open Rebuke?

It is not always easy to ask someone out on a date.

But for men who need motivation, the following scripture comes to mind:

5 Open rebuke is better than secret love.
(Proverbs 27:5, KJV)

When I was single, I would remind myself of that scripture when I was sometimes hesitant to ask a woman to dance. Often, I would end up dancing with dozens of ladies in an evening.

It was not that I had 'secret love' for them, but at least had some interest in dancing with them. If I had more interest, and the woman also seemed amenable, I might then ask for a date.

When a gentleman asks a lady out, he is putting himself on the line — risking rejection and hurt feelings. By using charm and grace, a lady can promote a man's

self-esteem in a right way, even if she wants to (or has to) turn a date down.

If you are a woman, be a gracious and truly feminine lady. Likewise, if you are a man, be a noble and masculine gentleman.

Act Appropriately

Be ladies and gentlemen on a date.

Women appreciate men who take the lead in the proper manner. Not on some macho kick, but truly showing thoughtfulness and consideration. Pulling out a chair, helping with her coat, opening the car door — these are but a few of the characteristics that make a man stand tall in a woman's eyes.

In the same way, men genuinely admire and appreciate a true lady — one who will respond and do her best to make the occasion he has planned for her successful.

If you feel ill at ease on a date (and not because your date may be a creep), don't let this stop you from trying again! The more you date, the more relaxed you will become in interacting with others.

With surprising swiftness, nervousness will subside, and confidence will grow.

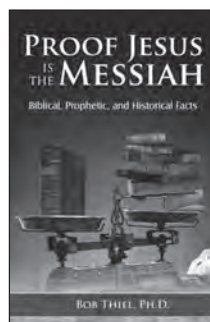
At times, try dating in groups. People often feel more at ease in a group than in a one-on-one situation. Conversation is easier with more people to participate, and much of the anxiety and tension will disappear.

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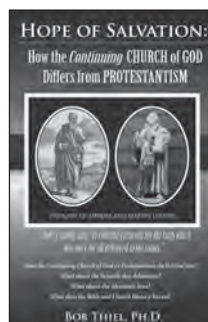
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THE MYSTERY of GOD'S PLAN



Proof JESUS is the MESSIAH



HOPE of SALVATION



TEN COMMANDMENTS
The Decalogue,
Christianity, and the Beast

STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE

Preface: This course is highly based upon the personal correspondence course developed in 1954 that began under the direction of the late C. Paul Meredith in the old Radio Church of God. Various portions have been updated for the 21st century (though much of the original writing has been retained). It also has more scriptural references, as well as information and questions not in the original course. Unless otherwise noted, scriptural references are to the NKJV, copyright Thomas Nelson Publishing, used by permission. The KJV, sometimes referred to as the Authorized Version is also often used. Additionally, Catholic - Approved translations such as the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) are sometimes used as are other translations.



LESSON 21B: HUMAN NATURE

Bob Thiel, Editor-in-Chief

Published 2022 by the *Continuing Church of God*

Why Righteous Rule and Justice Impossible Today

This is a continuation of lesson 21a from the last issue.

1. Are the CIVIL rulers of this world who do not understand or accept the teachings of the true God – its kings, dictators, presidents and legislative bodies – with their carnal minds which are ENMITY against God and His laws (Romans 8:7), able to make LAWS patterned after the intent of God's commandments, and able to RULE according to them? Notice – Mark 7:21-23 once again. Note, in Galatians 5:19, they are called the "WORKS of the flesh."

COMMENT: God's word shows that unconverted humans do not make many laws according to the way God desires, for unconverted humans are "not all there" – as they do not yet have God's Spiritual mind to GUIDE them!

Now it can be clearly seen WHY we have such an evil world with all its strife and turmoil. Now we can see why so many nations are led by power mad dictators. Even the leaders of so-called democratic nations have the same trouble ruling because of their God-given carnal minds!

Now we can clearly see WHY this world receives such imperfect justice from its courts and magistrates. And WHY this world receives such imperfect counsel from its counsellors! And WHY there is so much CORRUPTION in politics and all levels of this world's governments!

Only rulership BASED ON GOD'S LAWS leads to lasting peace and harmony.

2. What SENTENCE does God pronounce on the greedy disobedient rulers of modern-day Israel? Read and summarize Ezekiel 22:6-15.

COMMENT: "Princes" refers to AUTHORITIES – kings, presidents, judges. This prophecy, given long after ancient Israel went into captivity, is for their DESCENDANTS TODAY – Britain, America and the democracies of northwestern Europe.

Here is some information of the root Hebrew word translated as "princes"

Strong's H5387

The KJV translates Strong's H5387 in the following manner: prince (96x), captain (12x), chief (10x), ruler (6x), vapours (3x), governor (1x), chief (with H5387) (1x), clouds (1x), part (1x),

prince (with H5387) (1x).

נָשִׂיף nâsîy', naw-see'; or נָשִׂי' nâsî'; from H5375; properly, an exalted one, i.e. a king or sheik; also a rising mist:—captain, chief, cloud, governor, prince, ruler, vapour. (www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5387/kjv/wlc/o-1/)

God's Laws Broken in Human Activities

1. What does God reveal regarding the eating of too many sweets? Proverbs 25:27.

COMMENT: Natural honey, is perhaps, the BEST sweetening agent available for humans. It also contains some minerals and other nutrients. Whereas white refined sugar, which is produced by human, has definitely been proven to be a problem in high quantities. And then there are the artificial sweeteners which have known and unknown health risks.

What follows when man DISOBEYS God's advice in regard to excessive use of sweets? All dentists know that white sugar, especially in excess (like found in sodas and candy), is responsible for an extremely high rate of dental cavities!

Yet some children and adults LOVE candy and sodas. Many overindulge in sweets which can also be a factor in obesity and diabetes.

2. Does God give any instructions about what humans were to eat? Genesis 1:29, Leviticus 11:2-22. Does the Bible warn about overeating? Proverbs 23:20-21, Deuteronomy 32:15, Jeremiah 50:11-12. What type of things should humans eat? Isaiah 55:2.

COMMENT: Excessive sweets, excessively processed foods, and biblically unclean meats should not be eaten. Overeating to obesity is condemned. God's people are to eat what is good. His word, the Bible, while not going over every specific possible food item, does have guidelines and principles humans should follow.

3. What does God command humankind regarding the eating of PORK? Deuteronomy 14:8.

COMMENT: This world does not obey God's health

laws. So it suffers, and wonders WHY!

God made the human body. He KNOWS what foods will keep it in top operating condition. And He has not altered bodily chemistry since He first gave this commandment. THIS LAW APPLIES TO US TODAY! But modern humans disregard it that to their peril!

Furthermore, many viruses have been associated with animals that the Bible (Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14) says not to eat. Viruses are infectious agents composed of biological materials including protein components. It appears to me that, while it perhaps only happens one in multiple millions of times, when unclean meat is not fully digested by humans that fragments of them may on rare occasions become viruses.

In His word, God is trying to PROTECT US when He, who DESIGNED and built our bodies, reveals the KNOWLEDGE of what not to eat to us!

Increasing numbers of people are DYING yearly from heart attacks which are the direct result of FAT ACCUMULATION within the walls of their arteries. Pork and refined carbohydrates can raise certain fat levels in the human body.

Here is some information related to pork:

Are There Deadly Superbugs in Your Pork?

Scientists have detected antibiotic-resistant bacteria in pork, pigs and some veterinarians. It is possible that these so-called superbugs could infect farmworkers or even people who eat pork.

Antibiotic-resistant bugs were found in more than 7 percent of over 100 swine veterinarians tested. The same bacterial strains were found in nearly 50 percent of 300 tested pigs.

Perhaps of greatest concern, the bacteria were also found in 10 percent of more than 200 samples of ground pork and pork chops collected from four Canadian provinces.

An estimated 18,650 deaths a year in the U.S. are estimated to be caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria. (www.articles.mercola.com)

The same site also had the following from Dr. Mercola:

Scientific Backing for the Avoidance of Pork

Bacon, perhaps one of America's favorite breakfast staples, is in fact one of the worst type of processed meats you could eat for your health. According to a 2006 study, published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, eating bacon five or more times a week was linked to increasing your risk of bladder cancer by 59 percent. ...

You also need to beware of eating undercooked pork, as it can cause trichinosis. ...

Additionally, if you're a diabetic or if you have a weakened immune system, you may also do well to steer clear of chitterlings, a dish consisting of boiled pig intestines that are served up as traditional holiday fare in the Southern U.S.

It's possible for people with poorly controlled diabetes to become seriously ill with enteritis necroticans, a potentially life-threatening intestinal infection. The rare disease causes severe stomach pain, vomiting of blood and low blood pressure. The culprit is the chitterlings-contaminating bacterium known as *Clostridium perfringens* type C, which produces a toxin that is lethal to tissue in your digestive tract. Even cooking the chitterlings might not rid them of the bacteria.

But wait, there's more!

The Unsavory Side of Pork

The pork and swine industry has been continually plagued, and continues to be so to this day, by a wide variety of hazardous and deadly infections and diseases, including:

PRRS — ... "Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome" (PRRS), and may afflict about 75 percent of American pig herds. The PRRS virus primarily attacks the pig's immune system, leaving its body open to a host of infections, particularly in the lungs. ...

The Nipah Virus – Discovered in 1999, the Nipah virus has caused disease in both animals and humans, through contact with infected animals.

Hepatitis E (HEV) – According to the Mayo Clinic and an article in the Journal of Clinical

Biology, pork may be the reservoir responsible for sporadic, locally acquired cases of acute hepatitis reported in regions with relatively mild climates as HEV has been found to transmit between swine and humans.

Porcine Endogenous Retrovirus (PERV) – According to a study in the journal Lancet, this virus can spread to people receiving pig organ transplants, and according to test tube studies, PERV strains does have the ability to infect human cells. PERV genes are scattered throughout pigs' genetic material, and researchers have found that pig heart, spleen and kidney cells release various strains of the virus.

Menangle Virus – In 1998, the journal Emerging Infectious Diseases reported that a new virus infecting pigs was able to jump to humans. ...

What About Pasture-Raised Pork?

In a slightly ironic twist, I can't even safely recommend consuming pasture-raised pork, because while researching this article I stumbled across a study in the current issue of Emerging Infectious Diseases citing concerns about pastured pigs being vulnerable to *Trichinella spiralis* infection, due to their exposure to wild hosts that carry the disease.

Pork parasites can cause brain problems:

September 7, 2012

The diagnosis, officially called Neurocysticercosis, is common in the third world (about 50 million people are infected globally). But American doctors often don't know the symptoms of the 1,900 cases that show up in American hospitals every year.

The worms are originally tiny: about the size of peas. **They come from eating contaminated pork**, and fight their way into the small intestines and cling to the flesh there while draining nutrients from their host. They can grow to be 20 feet long and can make tens of thousands of eggs a day, which ride through the bloodstream through the whole body. (Welsh J. California Has A Problem With Brain-Infecting Parasites. Business Insider)

June 22, 2017

One of the most surprising risks associated with pork — one that's received remarkably little airtime — is multiple sclerosis (MS), a devastating autoimmune condition involving the central nervous system.

The robust link between pork and MS has been known at least since the 1980s, when researchers analyzed the relationship between per capita pork consumption and MS across dozens of countries.

While pork-averse nations like Israel and India were nearly spared from MS's degenerative grips, more liberal consumers, such as West Germany and Denmark, faced sky-high rates.

In fact, when all countries were considered, pork intake and MS showed a whopping correlation of 0.87 ($p < 0.001$), which is much higher and more significant than the relationship between MS and fat intake (0.63, $p < 0.01$), MS and total meat intake (0.61, $p < 0.01$) and MS and beef consumption (no significant relationship).

For perspective, a similar study of diabetes and per capita sugar intake found a correlation of just under 0.60 ($p < 0.001$) when analyzing 165 countries.

As with all epidemiological findings, the correlation between pork consumption and MS can't prove that one causes the other (or even that, within MS-stricken countries, the most enthusiastic pork consumers were the most diseased). But as it turns out, the evidence vault goes much deeper.

Earlier, a study of inhabitants of the Orkney and Shetland Islands of Scotland, a region teeming with unusual delicacies, including seabird eggs, raw milk and undercooked meat, found only one dietary association with MS — consumption of "potted head," a dish made from boiled pig's brain. (Minger D. 4 Hidden Dangers of Pork. Healthline)

The above effectively shows that the correlation between MS and pork consumption is about 45% higher (.27/.60) than the correlation between diabetes and sugar consumption.

Since pork is a major item that many who eat unclean animals consume, let's specifically look at some scriptural admonitions against eating it:

7 and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. 8 Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They are unclean to you. (Leviticus 11:7-8)

8 Also the swine is unclean for you, because it has cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud; you shall not eat their flesh or touch their dead carcasses. (Deuteronomy 14:8)

3 "He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck; He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine's blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, And their soul delights in their abominations, 4 So will I choose their delusions, And bring their fears on them; Because, when I called, no one answered, When I spoke they did not hear; But they did evil before My eyes, And chose that in which I do not delight." (Isaiah 66:3-4)

3 A people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face; Who sacrifice in gardens, And burn incense on altars of brick; 4 Who sit among the graves, And spend the night in the tombs; Who eat swine's flesh, And the broth of abominable things is in their vessels; (Isaiah 65:3-4)

17 "Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, To go to the gardens After an idol in the midst, Eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse, Shall be consumed together," says the Lord. (Isaiah 66:17)

So, in at least three books of the Bible, eating the flesh of pigs is prohibited — and the last two-three references above were prophetic — and still are to be fulfilled. Thus, the prohibitions against pork were NOT nailed to the cross or otherwise done away with. Jesus' death did NOT change the flesh of pork or reduce its ability to pass on health problems.

Disobedience to God's laws of health is but one more of the disobedient ways of humans which lead to "destruction and misery" (Romans 3:16).

4. What does God command us to do when sick — does He instruct us to call the elders — the ministers — of God’s TRUE Church? James 5:14-15. Does God state that He is our HEALER if we seek Him through His representatives here on earth? Same verses and Exodus 15:26. What penalty does God warn is apt to fall on one if he goes to the physicians? 2 Chronicles 16:12-13. Does God even warn against the medicines of DRUGGISTS? Revelation 21:8. Notice especially the word “sorcerers.”

COMMENT: Revelation 21:8 says SORCERERS will suffer eternal death unless they repent.

But there is yet another way humanity is destroying itself in this vicious chain of events. Newer and more lethal POISONS are being used to PRESERVE foods. Yes, POISONS! Eaten in foods over a long period of time, these poisons can produce sickness and death! Murder again in the name of GREED and PROFIT!

Notice an abstract from International Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences And Research published July 1, 2013:

ARTIFICIAL PRESERVATIVES AND THEIR HARMFUL EFFECTS: LOOKING TOWARD NATURE FOR SAFER ALTERNATIVES

Abstract

Preservatives prolong the shelf-life of food, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals by preventing their spoilage. Antimicrobials such as nitrites, nitrates, benzoates and sulfur dioxide destroy or delay the growth of bacteria, yeast and molds. Anti-oxidants such as butylated hydroxy toluene (BHT), butylated hydroxy anisole (BHA), and propyl gallate slow or stop the breakdown of fats and oils. Anti-enzymatic preservatives such as citric and erythorbic acids block the enzymatic processes such as ripening occurring in foodstuffs even after harvest. Natural substances like salt, sugar, vinegar and spices have been used as preservatives since time immemorial. The majority of preservatives used today are artificial rather than natural. Several of them are toxic and several others have potentially life-threatening side effects. Researchers have reported that artificial

preservatives such as nitrates, benzoates, sulfites, sorbates, parabens, formaldehyde, BHT, BHA and several others can cause serious health hazards such as hypersensitivity, allergy, asthma, hyperactivity, neurological damage and cancer. Research has proven that several natural preservatives obtained from plants, animals, microbes and minerals contain antioxidant, antimicrobial and antienzymatic properties. Extracts of basil, clove, neem and rosemary are promising alternatives to their artificial counterparts.

Not all that is put in food is truly good to eat.

“This present [greedy] EVIL world” frequently does things that cause misery and death! Humanity desperately needs the power of God’s Spirit to help CHANGE ITS DIRECTION of its carnally motivated heart!

Theft Pull Expressed in Many Ways

Thefts? Who wants to be a ROBBERY victim? No one! God’s Royal Law of LOVE would absolutely PREVENT this IF everyone were obeying it.

1. Has God given humans a specific commandment NOT to steal? Exodus 20:15. Is the desire to steal an intrinsic part of humanity’s carnal nature? Mark 7:22, first word. Are large groups of so-called “good” people succumbing to this disobedient pull today?

COMMENT: There are many ways large groups of people are giving in to the stealing pull. Not doing an honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay are two of them. No matter who is “on top” — unions or management — there is greed!

The vast majority of crime in all nations is committed by “good” people. Stores lose many times more to employees than they do to shoplifters; banks lose much more to embezzlers than to bank robbers. “Good” people abuse drugs, beat their children or wife, steal items from work, etc.

Other forms of robbery include excessively long “coffee breaks” taken by employees, unreasonably high taxes, and the forming of combines which make “the other fellow” pay more than he or she should

for what he or she receives. So, in the end the public PAYS AND PAYS.

All this, in God's sight, is ROBBERY as surely as if the money were taken out of someone's pocket!

As long as the misery this theft pull causes doesn't hit these robbers DIRECTLY, they think they're "getting away" with something. But they aren't really getting away with anything at all. For GOD is keeping the score!

How FOOLISHLY people act! Each person realizes that he or she must die and has but a few short years to live on this earth. But instead of trying to use this time WISELY in building true character, people often will use every scheming, insidious device possible to get the best from others in order to gain that what they want — at the EXPENSE of sacrificing TRUE happiness for now and perhaps ETERNITY! WHAT SHORTSIGHTEDNESS!!

Yes, it's still the same old world that it was in the time of ancient Babylon — but on a MUCH LARGER SCALE!

2. Today many believe to hold their position in this dog-eat-dog business world, they MUST bear FALSE WITNESS regarding the products they sell, or lie regarding the service the service they are performing. What should former thieves do? Ephesians 4:28.

Does God command man NOT to bear false witness — NOT to LIE? Exodus 20:16. Does thievery and bearing false witness DEFILE those who do it, whether they realize it or not? Mark 7:22-23. Does God reveal what shall befall those who become INCORRIGIBLE LIARS — those who will NOT CHANGE and OBEY God? Revelation 21:27.

More than not stealing, God's word commands former thieves to produce and give! Everyone who can should produce and give.

Another of Many Chains of Sorrow

1. Does God COMMAND US not to commit adultery? Exodus 20:14. Does He plainly point out that this is another of the downward pulls within the nature of mankind? Mark 7:21. Notice the words "adulteries, fornications."

2. Does Christ, our Saviour and future Ruler, likewise verify the fact that man should NOW be keeping God's commandment against adultery — along with the other commandments — in order to receive eternal life? Matthew 19:16-19.
3. Does the Bible warn against of many forms of sexual immorality including sodomy and lesbianism? Romans 1:26-27.

COMMENT: Many do not want to "retain God in their knowledge" (Romans 1:28) and this leads to death (cf. Romans 1:31).

This world is FULL of sexual immorality!

Notice a report from Divorce Statistics.info accessed February 2, 2022:

Latest Infidelity Statistics of USA

With the divorce rate in the United States getting higher every year, so is the cheating and infidelity in relationships. Also it has been found that infidelity rate has increased dramatically within the last twenty-five years in the United States

The following is from kltv.com:

95 Percent Of Americans Had Premarital Sex

More than nine out of 10 Americans, men and women alike, have had premarital sex, according to a new study. ... The study, examining how sexual behavior before marriage has changed over time, was based on interviews conducted with more than 38,000 people — about 33,000 of them women — in 1982, 1988, 1995 and 2002 for the federal National Survey of Family Growth. According to Finer's analysis, 99 percent of the respondents had had sex by age 44, and 95 percent had done so before marriage.

Suggestive movies INFLAME the already willing and disobedient adultery pull even more, urging it to take ACTION. Sex and vice are headlined in the media everywhere, never letting the sexual urge rest. Television programs and commercials daily incite lustful experiences. And a deluge of pornographic magazines, videos, and internet sites also incite lustful experiences.

Women today often dress skimpily, provocatively, and walk SEDUCTIVELY (Isaiah 3:16) — deliberately inciting sexual lust in the male mind. Clean social life is thereby undermined at just about every turn. Even a lot of our music and dances today are SUGGESTIVE of sex. Finally, all too often one or the other mate succumbs to these pressures of the world and actually COMMITS adultery.

The results?

Friction and/or outright divorce are INEVITABLE. Family life is completely disrupted. Consequently, parental discipline and training are relaxed or abandoned altogether. The children become unmanageable and DISOBEDIENT — worthy of death in GOD’S sight (Romans 1:30, 32). And what do such cast-off children go on to do? Some roam the streets, learn to steal, and some finally COMMIT MURDER!

Why “Public Opinion” Demands Evil

“Public opinion” consists of the opinions and DESIRES of the general public — the people of this “civilized” world AS A GROUP. It is simply the expression of the carnal mind — which is at enmity to God (Romans 8:7) — on a MASS scale!

1. What does this world’s “public opinion” DEMAND of its huge system of churches? Isaiah 30:8-10. And this has been worsening as Western societies become more secular. Why? Romans 8:7.

COMMENT: The Old Testament Israelites were FLESH BORN like all other people. They had the SAME disobedient pulls as all people have today.

Public opinion DEMANDS that “SMOOTH THINGS” — things AGREEABLE TO THE DISOBEDIENT NATURE of their mind — be preached RATHER than the commands of God! Most who control the print, broadcast, and internet media simply do not respect the God of the Bible or His teachings on morality. Actually, they tend to despise it — as do many in governmental, academic, and other influential positions.

Public opinion exerts itself in many other ways. If the “public” didn’t DEMAND lewd movies, there would not be any today. But CARNAL NATURE DOES PUSH FOR THEM! The box office and internet receipts say

so. And they don’t lie! The same is true of murder, rape, immorality, and divorce play ups in newspapers and paperback novels. The public’s carnal nature DEMANDS it — and GETS it! There are other examples too numerous to mention.

Did you know that the Bible warns about this?

8 Now go, write it before them on a tablet, And note it on a scroll, That it may be for time to come, Forever and ever: 9 That this is a rebellious people, Lying children, Children who will not hear the law of the Lord; 10 Who say to the seers, “Do not see,” And to the prophets, “Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits. 11 Get out of the way, Turn aside from the path, Cause the Holy One of Israel To cease from before us.”

12 Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel:

“Because you despise this word, And trust in oppression and perversity, And rely on them, 13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you Like a breach ready to fall, A bulge in a high wall, Whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant. 14 And He shall break it like the breaking of the potter’s vessel, Which is broken in pieces; He shall not spare. So there shall not be found among its fragments A shard to take fire from the hearth, Or to take water from the cistern.” (Isaiah 30:8-14)

So, while what happened is not yet the famine of the word, it is consistent with what is prophesied to happen. They want ‘smooth things.’

Over 40 years ago, the old Worldwide Church of God reported the following:

Governmental Reaction

And yet while the Bible places a duty on God’s servants, it also warns that this world — even now and in the future — will not always allow the freedom to publish.

In the past a government’s excuse for persecution was that God’s message IS TOO DISTURBING to be allowed to circulate freely.

In the Old Testament, Elijah, for example, was hauled before King Ahab for the ancient

equivalent of the crime of disturbing the peace: “Ahab said unto him [Elijah], Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” (1 Kings 18:17).

Elijah’s defense was that he wasn’t troubling Israel, only bringing some very distressing news from God to Ahab’s government (verse 18).

Likewise, the religious and political authorities of Amos’ day tried to subject him to “prior restraint” — from speaking his message at all — because the message he brought from God was TOO CONTROVERSIAL!

“Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words Also Amaziah said unto Amos... prophesy not again any more at Bethel”. (Amos 7:10, 12-13)

Amaziah tried to deny Amos a forum for God’s message in ancient Israel. Amos’ message was too upsetting to the political and religious establishments!

The prophet Jeremiah was even subjected to an ancient form of book burning. God commanded Jeremiah to write down “all the words that I [God] have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations...” (Jeremiah 36:2).

Jeremiah put the words on a roll. Eventually, however, possession of the roll came to one of the king’s top aides, who read it to the king (verse 21). After reading “three or four leaves” of the scroll, the aide, ever eager to please a now distraught king, threw the roll into the fireplace (verse 23). Afterwards, the king attempted, unsuccessfully, to seize Jeremiah for putting God’s word to writing.

Earlier, Jeremiah had already endured actual imprisonment for the content of his spoken message (Jeremiah 20:2).

In the New Testament, the authorities tried to prevent the apostles from preaching the Gospel. The apostles were forcibly brought before the council. The high priest asked them: “Did not we straightly command you that you should not

teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine...” (Acts 5:28).

In other words, the civil and religious authorities were seeking to regulate the content of their message!

In response, the apostle Peter declared the firm rule that “we ought to obey God rather than men” (verse 29). Since Peter and company had a God-ordained duty to say what they were saying, the commands of the civil government of Jerusalem were in direct conflict with God’s.

For the future, the Bible prophecy reveals that the time will come when most of this world’s nations will be led by Satan to abolish freedom of the press — and all related freedoms. Why? To prevent any publishing of God’s message from reaching any substantial number of people! ... (Amos 8:11-12). (Calkins J. FREE PRESS IN THE BIBLE? Was It Prophesied? Plain Truth. May 1981)

More and more we are seeing governmental and Big Tech censorship and opposition to teaching the Bible.

Prohibiting the reading/teaching of scripture is wrong, but is consistent with the following end time prophecy:

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2 Timothy 3:1-6)

Governmental and ‘Big Tech’ officials claim they are doing what is good for their areas (essentially claiming a form of godliness), but they often deny the power of God and the word of God!

They are slandering the Bible and freedom of religion. They are headstrong, and haughty, thinking that they know better than the God of the Bible. They are despising many of those who are hoping to do good.

2. What is God’s fourth great commandment?

Exodus 20:8. Is the world keeping it today?

COMMENT: SUNDAY and Saturday are the most observed days in the civilized world. But both cannot be the ONE day God commands humankind to keep. We know that some version of Sunday is observed by the VAST MAJORITY. Now which one of these two days do you think GOD commands us to keep?

Prophecy warns that the people of Britain, the United States, and their Anglo-Saxon descended allies will soon go into CAPTIVITY unless they REPENT of their many sinful ways and turn to GOD for guidance. And shortly after this event, prophecy also shows that the WHOLE WORLD will be punished for disobedience if it does not do the same! (Joel 3:2-3; Amos 7:17; Amos 6:6-8; Luke 21:23-24; Revelation 13:4, 10.)

But many still retort — in their smug complacency — “What, ME repent? Repent of WHAT? What do you mean, REPENT? I’m doing all right as I am!”

LISTEN!

We are ALL a PART of this world’s society. The evil pulls that affect IT affect all of us!! And God says, “ALL HAVE SINNED” (Romans 3:23). That’s why we all, including YOU, need to REPENT!! — to TURN from the practices of “This present EVIL world”! (Acts 3:19; 2 Peter 3:19; 2 Chronicles 7:14).

But you can’t turn away completely UNTIL you repent of your past disobedient ways, turn to God’s Word and commandments, and receive the miraculous POWER of HIS HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 2:38)!

A BETTER World Ahead!

Even though only a relatively FEW short years remain before the smashing close of this desperately wicked age — when prophesied crime, wars, international unrest, greed, fear and lust are reaching such a crescendo that they cannot be ignored by anyone — most people still want to delude themselves into thinking that this world is “a good old place.”

But you know the TRUTH! You have seen aspects of this world for what it really is!

Humanity has CONTINUALLY VIOLATED God’s Law of Love in every way imaginable. These violations have worked hardships, heartaches, and misery on our

fellowmen — only to BOOMERANG RIGHT TEACH to inflict the same heartaches and misery ON US! Then everyone wonders why they’ve been so unhappy (Proverbs 11:18-19).

The Bible explains that tolerating sin in our lives leads to sickness and death:

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:28-32)

The commandments are for our good. Our chastisement comes from God out of love so we do not have to be condemned with the world.

And, of course, God sent Jesus out of love:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:16-17)

Notice also:

1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, (Hebrews 2:1-4)

Every transgression will receive a just reward. There is cause and effect.

The people of this earth were BORN into this evil world — they don’t know of a better world with which to COMPARE it. They do not realize there can be a VASTLY BETTER world than this one! People just

“don’t KNOW what they DON’T know”!

But GOD knows of a BETTER WORLD! He has PLANNED a vastly superior, happy world for mankind. Remember the WONDERFUL UTOPIA “This PRESENT evil world” is to become soon (Isaiah 11:1-10; Isaiah 9:2)? WHY will the WHOLE WORLD be so wonderful then? GOD knows the reason. And now you notice the reason and mark it well, for it concerns YOUR HAPPINESS from NOW on through eternity!!

It is because at THAT time — in the MILLENNIUM — God’s word says:

3 Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.” (Isaiah 2:3)

11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. (Hebrews 8:11).

Do you grasp the great significance of all this? It means that ALL humankind in the Millennium will be REEDUCATED to a state of BELIEF in Christ as their Savior-Ruler, and to REPENTANCE and BAPTISM — just as WE are being educated by God’s Word today.

They will SEEK the Holy Spirit which God will freely give them. Fleshly mankind will then be in a state of SPIRITUAL BEGETTAL by the HOLY SPIRIT of God! They will have the HOLY Spirit, the principal attribute of which is LOVE — GOD’S KIND OF LOVE. Then man will begin to have true LOVE for his fellowman, instead of hate.

By this glimpse of God’s Millennial world you are seeing the CHANGING POWER of the Holy Spirit in action on VAST MASSES of people. Each individual will have TRUE joy, peace, contentment! For THESE ARE THE “FRUITS” OR CHARACTERISTICS THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL MANIFEST IN AND THROUGH THEM! This is what will really make the whole world a “UTOPIA” at that time!

BUT, remember this! Those people who will have lived from this time on through the GREAT TRIBULATION and into that Millennial world, will have been brought to a state of repentance through TERRIBLE SORROWS!

They will be brought to REPENTANCE of all their evil deeds the HARD WAY! This is how they ultimately receive the Holy Spirit which will create within them their own SPIRITUAL Utopia, and will make of the world around them the physical Millennial “Utopia.”

REPENTANCE and SURRENDER of the SELF to God are what will help to make a FUTURE “Utopia” of “This present EVIL world.”

But YOU can have your spiritual “Utopia” start NOW and AVOID the torturous tribulation — if you will REPENT and SURRENDER yourself to God NOW. That is what God is offering you today. You need not go through the tribulation or lose out on the joyous life you can begin to live now, and then later as a spirit-born Son of God. The SAME Holy Spirit which will make possible the Millennial Utopia later on will begin to make possible your Utopia NOW!

YOU NEED NOT WAIT! YOU MUST NOT WAIT — if you want to ESCAPE what’s prophesied to happen before Christ returns.

Now that you know the truth, God commands you to “REPENT ... be baptized ... and you shall receive the ... Holy Spirit” of BEGETTAL – NOW! (Acts 2:38.) YOUR own “world” can become happy and joyous, from this time forward, with an inward joy and positive assurance you have NEVER experienced before — IF YOU will at this time REPENT and GROW SPIRITUALLY in God’s way of life which He will continue to reveal to you in your Bible.

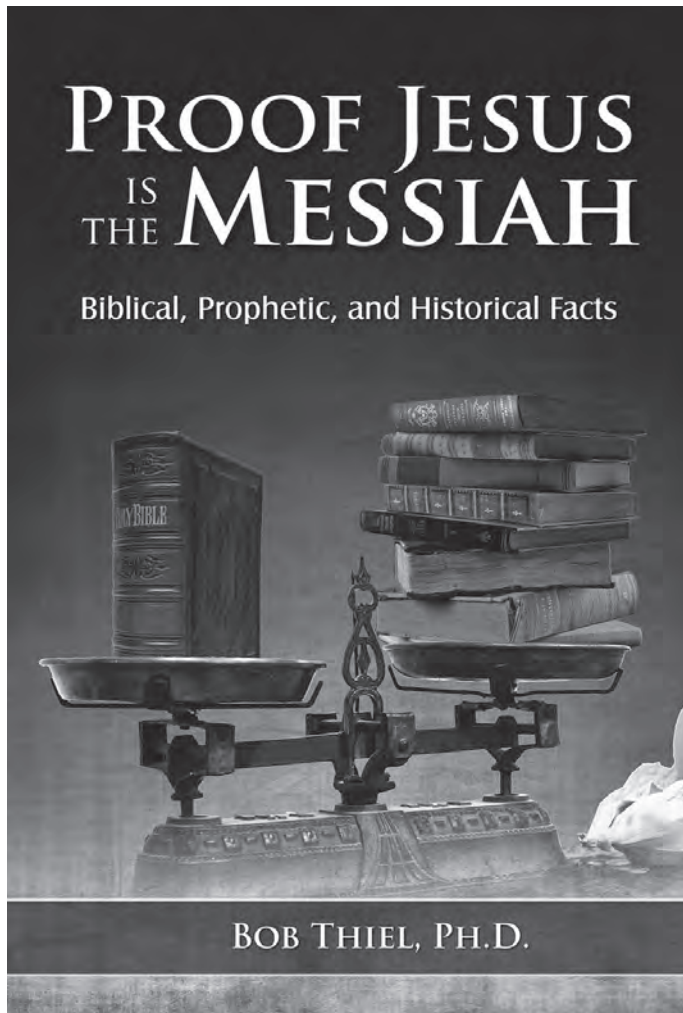
God told ancient Israel, “I call heaven and earth to record THIS DAY against you, that I have set before you life and death, BLESSING and cursing: therefore CHOOSE LIFE” (Deuteronomy 30:19, KJV).

God sets this SAME choice before you TODAY. You may begin to have a happy and joyous life now and glorious eternal life later on, by receiving and using the POWER of God’s HOLY SPIRIT!

God’s great purpose of creating very Sons of God out of mortal mankind marches on! God made you so you can VOLUNTARILY COOPERATE with Him in His great Plan by surrendering your carnal self to Him through REPENTANCE, baptism and obedience to His laws.

The CHOICE is yours—so “choose”! “Choose [ETERNAL] life,” (Deuteronomy 30:19) is God’s ADVICE to you.

Millions Do Not Know What Christ Really Was!



By Herbert W. Armstrong

This article was originally published in the Plain Truth magazine in November 1963 by the old Radio Church of God (and hence is in the public domain for printing).

God is about to intervene in world affairs and SAVE this world from itself!

God Must Step In

Most people want to scoff at the idea that the Creator has power to intervene in human affairs. Yet man today is swiftly reaching the point where the world's only hope will be the intervention of God to REDEEM misguided humanity from the horrible result of our wrong ways.

God alone has power to SAVE man from the inevitable result of competition, greed, selfishness, and resulting world war. God alone has made it possible for man to be saved from the results of SIN. "For God so LOVED the world, that he GAVE his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Do we realize what a tremendous sacrifice had to be made to redeem humanity from sin and give us eternal life? God so loved this world of sinning, wretched mortals that He gave His own Son to save us. God is love!

Collectively, man is about to reach the end of his rope. Man will finally come to realize God's great LOVE when he is supernaturally saved from world suicide. And individually, we need to really understand just

HOW God has made it possible for us to be spared from the penalty of our wrong ways.

The problem of just how God ordained that the penalty of human sin be paid is one that has puzzled theologians for generations. In fact, it was the basis of the first heresies during the very lifetime of the apostles.

How Is It Possible?

The doctrine of Salvation requires clear thinking and a willingness to be corrected and reproved by the Word of God — our only infallible source of information. We must be careful to consider ALL the scriptures on this subject, and realize that one scripture cannot be used to contradict another — for God does not contradict Himself, and as Jesus said, "The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

First of all, we need to understand what is the reward of sin. The penalty for SIN — for going the wrong way — is DEATH. God's inspired Word says: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

When Jesus took our sins He paid the penalty we

have incurred. What was that penalty? Not eternal life in hellfire, but DEATH. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3).

But if Jesus were only human, His life would pay the death penalty for only ONE other person. No one human being could save mankind. The full penalty for everyone's sins must be paid!

Yet God alone could not of Himself pay the penalty of man's sins. The penalty is the forfeiting of human life — not animal or any other kind of life. And God, as the source of all life and the One who has life within himself, and is a spirit being, cannot die (John 5:26; 2 Corinthians. 4:18). Therefore it was absolutely necessary that there be One — The Messiah — who was both human and divine.

Christ Was Divine

In order to pay the penalty for your sins and mine, it was necessary that Christ be Divine — that His life be worth all our human lives put together.

Man does not have life inherent within himself. He has only a chemical existence which soon ends. As God told Adam after his sin: "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19). Then God drove man out of the Garden of Eden "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" (Verses 22-24). So we see that Adam had no eternal life whatsoever inherent within himself — and God did not permit him to attain it at that time.

The New Testament also clearly proves that man has no eternal life inherent within himself.

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (1 John 3:15)

God alone has and can give eternal life.

"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." (John 5:26)

Again we read of Christ: "In Him was LIFE; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). Jesus told Martha,

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John 11:25)

Paul described Christ as the One

"Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto." (1 Timothy 6:16)

If Christ were only human, He could have saved but one other human, and given eternal life to none. To do this required God — the life of the Creator.

Christ Is Creator

In John 1:1-2, we read that Christ — the Word or Spokesman — was with God the Father in the beginning. "All things were made by him (Christ)" (verse 3).

Paul wrote of Christ:

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth." (Colossians 1:16)

Christ is also proved to be the One who did the creating in Hebrews 1:8-10. Christ, the Word, the Divine Spokesman, "spoke and it was done."

Therefore Christ's life is the life of the Creator God. Paul called Him "God our Savior" (Titus 1:3). Yes, in the person of Jesus Christ, the very Creator became our Savior!

Christ is our Maker and a member of the Godhead — the God Family. Therefore, His life which He gave for us is of greater value than the total of all human beings.

In Hebrews 7:1-4, we find a description of One who was "made like unto the Son of God" and now "abideth a priest continually" (verse 3). The entire book of Hebrews reveals the present office of Christ as our High Priest. This description can fit none other than the One who came in the flesh as Jesus the Christ.

He is described as being,

"Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." (Hebrews 7:3)

Hence, we see that He was not the "Son" of God until He was born of the virgin Mary.

Then Jesus, the One through whom the Father had

created the heavens and the earth, was translated into flesh and born of a human virgin. Matthew writes that Mary “was found with child of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:18).

An angel spoke to Joseph telling him the child was conceived of the Holy Spirit and commanding him:

“Thou shalt call his name Jesus (meaning Savior): for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21)

The narrative continues:

“Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” (Matthew 1:23)

Here we see that even Jesus Christ’s name revealed Him both as Savior, and God with us — a divine being with us, in the flesh — to SAVE us from our sins.

Only His life — that of the Creator — could pay the full penalty of sin for all mankind.

Jesus Was Also Human

In order to pay the penalty of human sin, it was not enough that Jesus was Divine. He must also have been human.

The Bible definition of sin is this:

“Sin is the transgression of the law.” (1 John 3:4)

God’s spiritual law was given to man — not the plants, nor the lower animals. The Ten Commandments govern the relationship between men, and between man and God. The transgression of this law constitutes sin. And the wages, or reward, of sin is death (Romans 6:23). God exacts the forfeiture of human life as the penalty for sin.

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” (Hebrews 10:4)

It required HUMAN BLOOD!

Christ, then, must have been human in order to pay this penalty.

Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 15:21-22: “For since by

man (Adam) came death, by man (Christ) came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Since eternal LIFE is made possible only by MAN’S resurrection — and the resurrection to eternal life is made possible for all men only by the resurrection of the ONE MAN — CHRIST — and since He was resurrected from the dead — therefore the DEATH of the ONE MAN, Jesus Christ, was necessary to pay MAN’S penalty.

Adam, the father of the human race, introduced sin into the world. And all of us have succumbed to it. It is the human race that is under the death penalty for sin — and that penalty must be paid — BY HUMAN LIFE!

So since only God has power to save and give life — and since only man can pay the penalty of sin — the only possible way to save mankind was for Yahweh — the “Lord” or “Eternal” of the Old Testament, the One who executed the creation for God the Father — to come in the flesh as a HUMAN — GOD become MAN — and die for the sins of the world.

Only thus could the penalty of all human sin be paid by one man as Savior of the world. That life was the life of our MAKER, become HUMAN, for the very purpose of death — a life greater than the sum-total of all human lives! MARVELOUS MYSTERY!

Jesus Had HUMAN Nature

God came in the flesh as Jesus Christ, lived without sin, and thus was able to die and pay the full penalty of sin in our stead.

The Apostle Paul was inspired to write:

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To REDEEM them that were under the law, ... that we might receive the sonship.” (Galatians 4:4-5).

Jesus Christ was made of a woman — born of the Virgin Mary. He was made “under the law” — His very purpose in coming in the human flesh was to take our sins upon Himself, which would put Him “under the law” — under its penalty, death. He did this to redeem all humanity which is “under the law” — under the penalty of DEATH. Jesus was GOD made mortal human flesh, “for the suffering of death” (Hebrews 2:9) — FOR THAT VERY PURPOSE!

So Jesus took human nature upon Himself and was made subject to death in order to be our Savior. “He also likewise (as the children are partakers of flesh and blood) took part of the same” — took on HUMAN NATURE — became flesh and blood — “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews. 2:14).

Jesus was really DEAD during the three days and nights His body was in the grave. He who had been one of the personalities in God — was changed into flesh so He could DIE for our sins.

Paul explains that Christ: “Being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be EQUAL with God: But made himself of no reputation” — EMPTIED Himself of His divine glory and power — “and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the LIKENESS of men... and became obedient unto DEATH” (Philippians 2:6-8).

When Christ was in the human flesh, He said:

“I can of mine own self do NOTHING: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” (John 5:30)

Jesus had emptied Himself of His divine glory and power. He plainly said he could of Himself — in His own human strength — do NOTHING.

In John 14:12, Jesus said:

“He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”

Here we see that any outside help and power that Jesus had — coming from God the Father — we may also have, and may accomplish greater works through the power of the Holy Spirit which He went to heaven to send.

In living a perfect life, in doing great miracles, Jesus did NOT have any special help from God the Father that we cannot also have.

Christ, one of the beings in the Godhead, had now been changed into flesh — still having the personality and will to do right which distinguished Him as an entity — yet now had become human, having HUMAN NATURE with all of its desires, weaknesses and lusts — and subject to death just like any other human.

This is a truth about which millions are DECEIVED!

Doctrine of Anti-Christ

The Satan-inspired doctrine that Jesus was not human, that He did not inherit the human nature of Adam, that He did not have all the normal human passions and weaknesses against which all of us have to struggle — in a word, that Jesus did not really come “in the flesh” as a normal human being — this is the doctrine of the Anti-Christ. Notice Romans 8:3:

“God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.”

“Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is NOT of God: and this is that spirit of Anti-Christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even NOW already is it in the world.” (1 John 4:3)

Millions are being taught, in one form or another, this deception of Satan the Devil! Some believe that Jesus had a “special” kind of blood in His veins — not containing human nature with all its weaknesses. Then there is the belief that denies the fact that Jesus inherited human nature from His mother, Mary. This theory thwarts the meaning of the many scriptures showing that Christ Jesus came as the son of man — inheriting His human nature from a normal, human mother.

Yes, as the scriptures clearly state, this Satan-inspired doctrine of Anti-Christ is “even NOW” in the world — and some honest and sincere people are being deceived by it.

Doctrine Explained

Now, listen! The underlying PURPOSE of Satan — the Adversary — in formulating the doctrine of Anti-Christ is this: It is an attempt to deny the fact that a normal man — with HUMAN NATURE — could, with the help of God’s Holy Spirit which is now accessible to every man (Acts 10:34-45), live in perfect obedience to the LAW OF GOD as Jesus Christ did. Again notice WHY Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh: “... and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” WHY — “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled IN US, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:3-4).

The idea Satan is trying to put across is that it is impossible for man to keep the spiritual law of God, and so Jesus came as our Savior — not “in the flesh” with normal human nature — but through some “special process” so that He could keep the law of God in our stead! And therefore we don’t have to keep the Spiritual Law. What Christ did in our stead was to die for us! But His obedience was our EXAMPLE!

Those who believe this doctrine seem to forget that Jesus obeyed God in every way, “Leaving us an EXAMPLE, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21-22), that Jesus taught,

“If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17), and that He said of all mankind: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” (Luke 4:4).

We are not only to keep the letter of the law, but to follow it as it is magnified throughout the Bible in “every word of God.”

As Jesus explained throughout Matthew 5, we are to DO and TEACH even the least of the commandments (verse 19), and should go far beyond the scribes and Pharisees by obeying even the spirit, and intent, of God’s great law of love as summed up in the Ten Commandments.

Satan the Devil, through His false ministers who appear as “ministers of righteousness” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15), is trying to deceive the world into believing in a FALSE CHRIST — a Christ who did away with the Father’s spiritual law and made it possible for us to inherit eternal life without having to build, with the help of God’s Spirit, the kind of holy, righteous CHARACTER which would enable us to obey God’s eternal, spiritual LAW both now and forever.

Truth Made Clear

Now that we understand the real motive behind the doctrine of Anti-Christ, let us consider a few final scriptures which will clear up the truth of this matter once and for all time.

In James 1:13-14, we read:

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED WITH EVIL, neither tempteth he any man: But

every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”

How plain! How abundantly clear! Not having human nature with its passions and lusts, God CANNOT be tempted with evil. And on the contrary, every man is tempted by his own lust — because every man does have human nature.

Now turn to Hebrews 2:17-18. Here God shows that Christ is qualified to be a merciful and faithful high priest —

“For in that he himself bath suffered being TEMPTED, he is able to succor them that are tempted.”

Again, in Hebrews 4:15 we read:

“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.”

Could anything be more CLEAR?

God CANNOT be tempted. Yet Jesus Christ WAS tempted in all points like we are. He was HUMAN. He was tempted through the lusts of His HUMAN NATURE.

He said:

“I can of mine own self do NOTHING.” (John 5:30)

In the days of fleshly weakness, He cried out to God who was able to save Him from death (Hebrews 5:7).

In spite of having human nature just as we do, with all of its passions and weaknesses, of being “tempted in all points like as we are,” He was “yet WITHOUT SIN.”

He willingly suffered every human trial, privation, and persecution, “Leaving us an EXAMPLE, that ye should follow his steps: Who DID NO SIN, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Peter. 2:21-22).

Jesus Kept Commandments

Though having human nature, Jesus did not sin! And what is the Bible definition — God’s definition — of sin?

“Sin is the transgression of THE LAW.” (1 John 3:4)

Then Jesus, though having human nature, obeyed God's LAW. He said, "I have kept my Father's commandments" (John 15:10). He instructed:

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the COMMANDMENTS."
(Matthew 19:17)

So it is not only possible — but obligatory — that we obey God's spiritual law, the Ten Commandments, as they are magnified throughout the Bible. Keeping them in the spirit does NOT mean "spiritualizing" them away, but really obeying them as Jesus set us the example, thru the power of God's Holy Spirit, which He gives to them that OBEY Him (Acts 5:32)!

By clearly twisting, distorting, and misapplying scattered scriptures, Satan — operating through his false ministers preaching the doctrine of Anti-Christians been able to deceive nearly all of professing Christianity on this subject.

Peter knew that men would especially try to twist and pervert the writings of Paul in regard to the law of God. He was inspired to write that Paul's epistles contained "some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16). God does not contradict himself, and literally hundreds of plain, clear scriptures teach us to OBEY the commandments of God, the holy, spiritual LAW of God. And your Bible clearly reveals that Jesus — born into the human flesh and having human nature even as you and I — kept His Father's commandments and set us a perfect example.

Exercising Character

The only difference between Jesus and any other human is that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit. Therefore He obeyed God's laws from birth — and never had to go through the process of repenting of going the wrong way, of unlearning wrong ideas and habits, and of gradually learning to exercise His will to do right continually.

He, who had been God, was now changed into human flesh with all its weaknesses and lusts. Nevertheless, He retained in His personality the determination, the WILL to obey God always.

The temptation to do wrong, the idea of sinning entered Jesus' mind. Yes, it DID occur to Him to

disobey God. He WAS tempted in all points like we are!

But from birth, Jesus would always reject these wrong ideas, these temptations. He said, "Get behind me, Satan!" He WILLED to do right. He went to God the Father for POWER to do always right. And, praying for the strength He needed through the Holy Spirit, He always did right.

But it WASN'T easy! Jesus had exactly the same day-to-day battle with sin that we do.

Jesus needed outside help sorely. And He knew where to get that help.

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there PRAYED." (Mark 1:35)

When He needed strength to go through the terrible ordeal of the crucifixion,

"Being in an agony he prayed more EARNESTLY: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke 22:44)

Perhaps now we can better understand Paul's inspired statement in Romans 8:3:

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of SINFUL flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

Yes, Jesus had sinful flesh — human nature. But by exercising the WILL to always obey God, and by receiving the extra help He needed to master His fleshly desires, Jesus repudiated the sway of sin in the human flesh and showed that the law of God could be kept.

Right here let us understand the scriptures which show that Jesus was worshipped while He was yet in the human flesh. In Matthew 2:11; 8:2 and seven other places in the gospels, we find accounts of how men worshipped Jesus.

Yet we know that the Bible forbids us to worship another man.

To understand this, we must realize that in Jesus "God was manifested in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). Men were permitted to worship Jesus because He was the

personality and perfect will of one who was God — and He exercised the character of God. They were not worshipping Jesus as just another man, but as the holy, righteous, perfect character of God manifested in the flesh. He was God — in the human flesh!

God's Great Purpose

And so by exercising the WILL to obey God, Jesus “condemned sin in the flesh” for what purpose?

Here is the real ANSWER to why God had to come in the human flesh! Here is the real PURPOSE for the great SACRIFICE Christ made in emptying Himself of His divine glory and power, and coming to strive with sin in the flesh and finally DIE the ignominious death of the cross!

The answer is given in the very next verse of Romans 8. Christ came to condemn sin in the flesh — “That the righteousness of the LAW might be fulfilled in us, who walk NOT after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (verse 4).

Christ came in the flesh to set us a perfect example, then to DIE in payment for our sins and make it

possible for us to be reconciled to a holy, righteous God and receive of His Spirit — His very life and character implanted within us.

Then He was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven, having now qualified through human experience to be our merciful and faithful high priest — now to guide us and strengthen us through the Holy Spirit so that we, too, can learn to OBEY God's laws perfectly, can WILL to do right always, can develop the holy, spiritual CHARACTER of God — and finally be found worthy to inherit eternal life as the born sons of Almighty God.

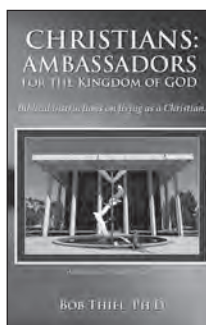
How great is God's love in coming into the human flesh to save us and make us His own!

How wonderful is His plan when we really understand it!

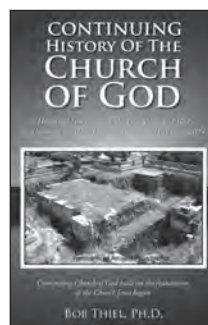
Jesus was fully God and divine before His human birth. He emptied Himself of His divinity and godly power to be born as a human who could be tempted as we. Yet, unlike the rest of us, He did not sin. More about Jesus can also be found in our free book, online at ccog.org, Proof Jesus is the Messiah.

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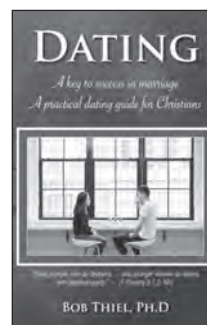
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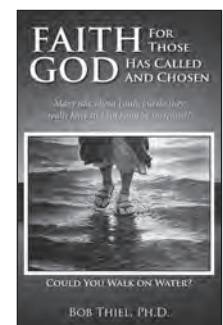
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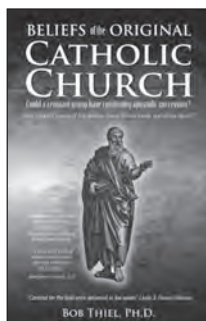
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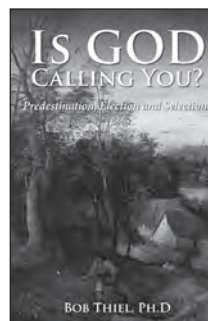
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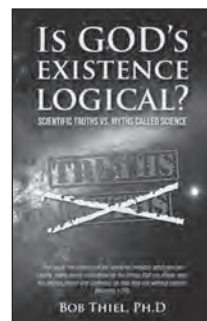
Faith for Those God has Called and Chosen



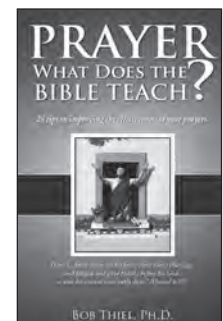
Beliefs of the Original Catholic Church



Is God Calling You?



Is God's Existence Logical?



Prayer: What Does the Bible Teach?

The Miracles of Jesus - Part 5

The Stranger's Daughter

Jesus was travelling away from where He usually preached. He went into a house to rest, in secret, but was found by a woman who lived in the region. She wasn't a Jew. She was from a Gentile nation. But she had heard of Jesus and the miracles that he had done. She was desperate! Her daughter was unable to live a happy life, she was suffering very badly from an evil spirit.

This mother was so worried that she dared to ask for mercy and help from this Jewish man who she called 'Lord' and 'Son of David'. She recognised there was something special about Jesus, that the Living God was with Him.

Jesus said that it wasn't right to give the bread of the children to the dogs! What a strange thing, whatever did He mean?

He was showing that at that time, He was only to teach and do miracles among people from the House of Israel – not the Gentiles who were often called 'dogs'!

She wasn't put off; He was not speaking unkindly — He was telling her the truth of what He was doing at that time — teaching people in Judea. She had faith that He could help her, so she asked for the crumbs of the bread! A little bit of kindness, a small miracle — she knew that His power was sufficient to save even her daughter.

WORD HUNT

g	m	j	e	d	a	e	r	b
m	e	v	i	l	r	d	o	d
i	r	n	c	r	d	o	g	s
r	c	r	t	c	r	u	m	b
a	y	v	l	i	o	n	b	r
m	i	r	a	c	l	e	r	e
j	e	w	i	s	h	e	e	d

Gentile — miracle — evil — mercy — lord — bread — crumb — dog — Jewish

Matthew 15:21-28 (See also Mark 7 24-30)

21 Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

23 But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

24 But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

25 Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

26 But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

27 And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus answered and said to her "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Further Learning

Jesus was travelling on the border of this region, trying to keep away from people. Perhaps a brief respite from instructing the Pharisees, who were constantly accusing Him falsely, (v2) and the clamouring multitudes who came to him for healing afterwards (v 30). Perhaps by going to a foreign border, His fame would not have spread. But even without Instagram or Snapchat, word had spread and His works were known by this woman.

His words to her appear to be insulting. But we know that Jesus never committed a sin and is full of love. Jesus often talked in parables and it was given only

to the disciples to understand (Matthew 13:11, Luke 8:10) But she seems to grasp something of what He is saying and replies with the same imagery around the theme of bread.

Bread is a symbol of the Word of God — a symbol of His very self. We eat unleavened bread as a symbol of putting sin out from our lives.

John 6:33 “For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

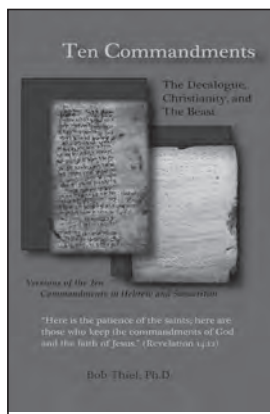
John 4:34 ... “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.”

John 6:35 “I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me will not be hungry, and the one who believes in Me will never be thirsty”

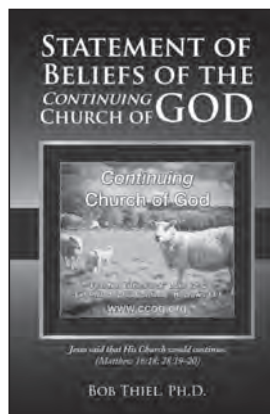
His word, His teaching at that time was for the lost house of Israel! But it would not always be that way. Jesus later sends His disciples to share the truth of the Gospel of the Kingdom and all His teachings throughout the world.

This exchange with the woman is like a foreshadow of what is to come. The Gentiles would get to hear the Gospel. Our Heavenly Father is the one who draws people and it is in His time — the time best for each individual — that each person will be called. This woman recognised Jesus ahead of time. Whether she was only interested in what she could get from Him (the healing of her daughter) or whether she would go on in faith and belief in Jesus the Son of The Most High God is not revealed in this account.

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Ten Commandments



Statement of Beliefs of the Continuing Church of God



Q. When can the Great Tribulation begin? What can I do?

A. The expression “great tribulation” is only used three times in the Bible (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 2:22, 7:14, NKJV).

The first time Jesus that uses it, it is in response to some questions as to the time of the end:

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3)

Jesus begins His response by listing events, and saying the end was not yet:

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. (Matthew 24:4-10)

After listing a couple more items, Jesus lists events that show are essentially immediately before the great tribulation:

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

to what happens about 3 ½ years after the deal is broken and the King of the North stops sacrifices (Daniel 11:31):

21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:21-22)

Jesus laid out a sequence of events before the Great Tribulation can start in Matthew 24. Those items, prior to verse 21, must happen BEFORE the Great Tribulation begins.

Sadly, throughout history, and even in the 21st century, various people (mostly men) have tried to use other criteria. That is why all predictions for the start of the Great Tribulation before 2025 have been wrong.

Now since this is the July-September 2022 edition, and we presume that the deal is not confirmed before August of 2022 and you add 3 ½ years to any date in or past August, it is impossible for the Great Tribulation to begin prior to 2026.

So, does this mean we have anything like 100 years to go?

No.

Jesus said:

34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. (Matthew 24:34)

Jesus spoke of events starting with the beginning of sorrows/troubles, then the great tribulation and the day of the Lord, and then His return in Matthew 24. With the amount of sorrows and troubles (Mark 13:8) we are seeing, it looks like the beginning of sorrows began this century, and we are in the "last generation" before Jesus returns.

Many do not believe that, but the Apostle Peter prophesied doubters would be around now:

3 ... scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." (2 Peter 3:3-4)

Things are not the same. Events are happening in the 21st century.

Jesus gave some advice regarding these matters as Mark and Luke recorded:

35 Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming — in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning — 36 lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" (Mark 13:35-37)

34 "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. 35 For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:34-36)

Watch and live your life in a manner to be accounted worthy to stand before Jesus.

Are we supposed to watch independently of the church?

No. Zephaniah was inspired to write that God's people need to gather together, before the decree to flee is issued, so that it could be possible to be protected from what is coming (Zephaniah 2:1-3). This is also consistent with Jesus' words to the Philadelphian Christians in Revelation 3:7-12.

Take the proper spiritual steps. Support the Philadelphian effort to fulfil Matthew 24:14.

While the Great Tribulation will not start before 2026, it will be before the end of this century, and almost assuredly within the next decade.

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July – September 2022

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