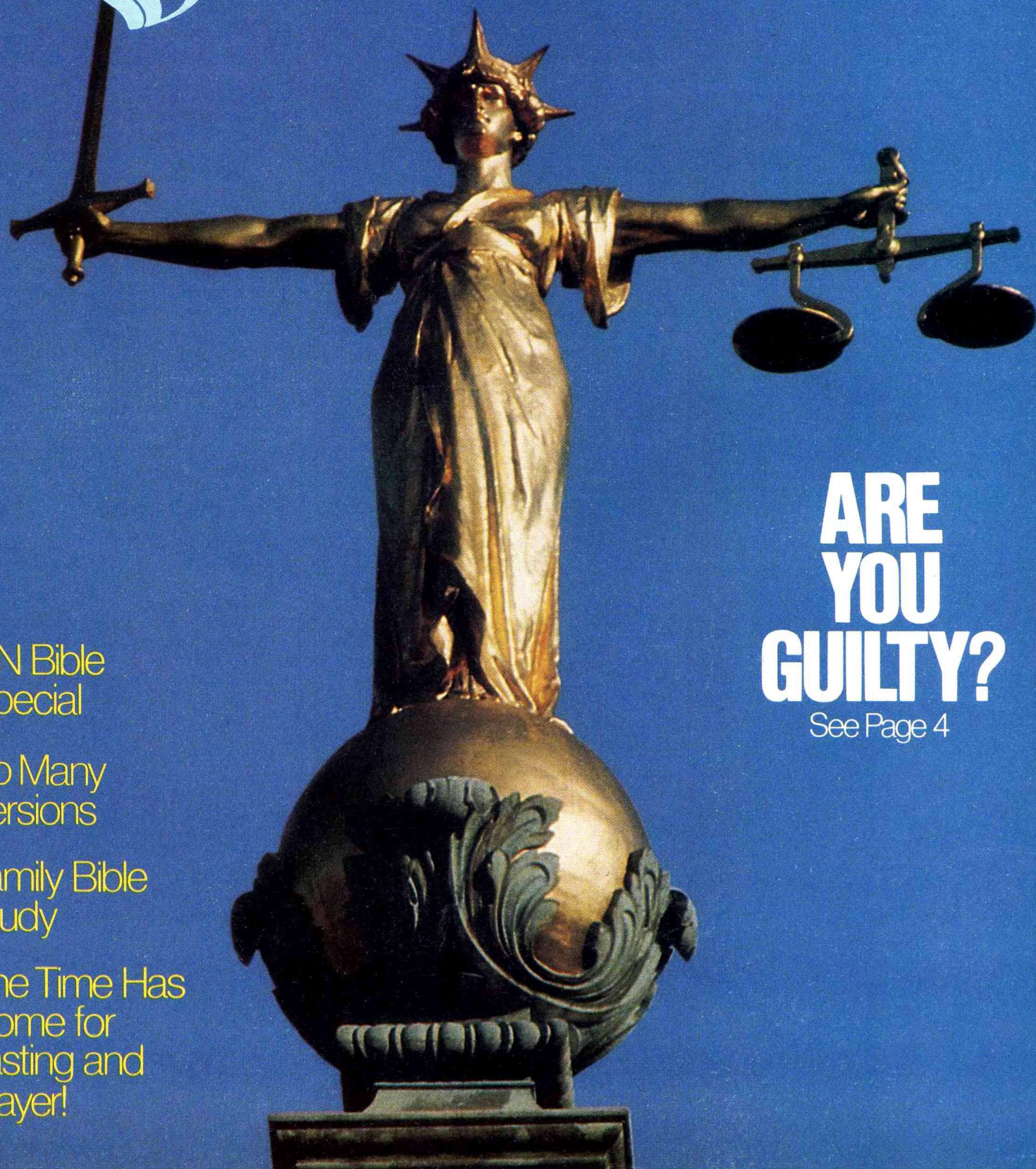


The Good News



**ARE
YOU
GUILTY?**

See Page 4

GN Bible
Special

So Many
Versions

Family Bible
Study

The Time Has
Come for
Fasting and
Prayer!

Personal from

Robert H. Armstrong

The Time We Are In, Now

Just where are we now, in the prophesied panorama of events leading to the END of this age?

Both world events and occurrences in the Church indicate we are in the time mentioned in Daniel 12.

In verse 2, Daniel speaks of the resurrection of saints at the time of Christ's coming. Then he speaks of events leading up to that crowning event of history. He says: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal

the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (verse 4).

We have come to that time — the TIME OF THE END! Rapid travel, to and fro, at high speed! We are definitely in the END TIME! Knowledge has been increased on earth amazingly. We have been going with increasing momentum through the age of invention, the age of science and technology, the air age, the space age and now the NUCLEAR age. Now, for the first time in human history, the weapons of mass destruction have

been produced that can erase all humanity from the earth!

In the one decade of the '60s, the fund of human knowledge DOUBLED. Also the world's troubles and evils DOUBLED!

In verse 7 it is stated, "And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."

It seems indefinite as to the antecedent of the pronoun *he*, above. Other translations use the word *they*. But surely Satan is now endeavoring
(Continued on page 23)

NEVER BEFORE IN HUMAN HISTORY has the world been in a perilous state like the one in which we now find ourselves. Man has created enough weapons of mass destruction to wipe all life off the earth, and the nations seem bent on doing just that. Both world events and occurrences in the Church indicate we are in the time mentioned in Daniel 12. True Christians must be ready for the end of this age!



Photos by CTK, U.S. Air Force, Wide World

The Time Has Come for Fasting and Prayer!

We are in the last days of this present world. God's Church has not been ready for Christ's coming. Here's the way to become ready.

By Herbert W. Armstrong

OUR TIME FOR finishing the Work of God may now be very short. The new GIANT WORLD POWER of the United States of Europe — the revived "HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE" of 554 to 1814 — could conceivably now emerge to stun the whole world in WONDER within a year or two — and very possibly in five years or less.

World conditions are in upheaval as never before. The Iranian crisis, as I write, Nov. 20, *could* trigger a nuclear WORLD WAR III. It won't — for no such war with the U.S.S.R. is prophesied. But the Kremlin has warned Washington that any military action by the United States against Iran would be answered by Russia.

So a *little* nation, Iran, blackmails the mighty United States, burns in angry ridicule the Stars and Stripes and effigies of President Jimmy Carter — while the most powerful nation on earth stands HELPLESS!

The character, personality and actions of the Polish pope, John Paul II, indicate *more* than possibly that he may be the pope to offer his good services to unite the nations of Europe once again. European nations want, seriously, to be united. Of themselves they are unable. John Paul II could make it possible.

If and *when* that happens, the present Work of God, which He is carrying on through His Church, will quickly be finished!

It now appears likely that God's present Work through us will come to an end 1,335 days before the approximate date of Christ's return in supreme POWER and GLORY! It appears the Roman European armies will surround and take half of the city of Jerusalem 45 days later, and the GREAT TRIBULATION will begin 30 days after that. And the GREAT TRIBULATION, running parallel to the worldwide telecast of the TWO WITNESSES (Rev. 11), will last approximately 3½ years.

The prophesied DAY OF THE LORD will probably take place, in its *first* phase, during the latter part of that 3½ years — cutting short the GREAT TRIBULATION caused by Satan's WRATH!

REMEMBER WE CANNOT SET EXACT

DATES. But all signs, both in God's Church, and in the world, do indicate all this is now drawing NEARER THAN WE MAY THINK!

Since I wrote the above, news flashes report Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini has said definitely he is going to put the remaining hostages on trial for espionage, and that he already has found them guilty. This would call for their execution.

President Carter, after counseling with congressional and State Department advisers, declares the United States will use military force if the fanatic Moslem leader in Iran carries out his threat. A group of U.S. warships are in either the Persian Gulf or the Arabian Sea, and the carrier *Kitty-Hawk* has been sent sailing there from the Philippines. The U.N. charter provides for the United States to use military means to defend its diplomats in Iran.

Also today members of the Shiite Moslem sect (headed by the Ayatollah Khomeini) (about one tenth of Islam Arabs) invaded the most sacred of all Islam shrines, the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, killing some and holding others as hostages. The Arab followers of the Islam religion are divided. The Ayatollah Khomeini, virtually a madman, may be seeking to

capture the total power over the entire Islam religion. Anyway, Saudi Arabia, chief oil producer, and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt are on America's side in this.

Following all this, the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan was blown up!

This whole situation is extremely SERIOUS. The whole world is aflame and in chaos. Anarchy is ruling in Iran.

We are well into the TIME OF THE END! The formation of the United States of Europe — “the Beast Power” of Revelation 17 — is close at hand. And that will plunge our people and the world into the GREAT TRIBULATION, to be cut short by the DAY OF THE LORD and the coming of Christ in supreme POWER AND GLORY!

We must press on as never before, to FINISH THE WORK Christ is doing through us! We must now put all else aside — make every sacrifice — to PREPARE OURSELVES for Christ's soon coming!

How get ready?

God's Church is not yet READY to meet our glorified Lord in the air. How, then, shall we *get* ready?

The GREAT TRIBULATION will be cut short (Matt. 24:22) by the “DAY OF THE LORD.” That is the time of God's intervention in world affairs, leading immediately into the coming of Christ. God instructs us how to GET READY, before the DAY OF THE LORD, especially in the prophecy of Joel. Read it carefully. OBEY IT! Put it into action! Here is God's instruction to us, NOW:

“Sanctify ye [set apart] a fast, call a solemn assembly . . . Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come . . . O Lord, to thee will I cry . . . Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness” (Joel 1:14-15, 19; 2:1-2).

Continue: “Therefore also now, saith the Eternal, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the

Eternal your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil” (Joel 2:12-13).

The DAY OF THE LORD will not come until God moves swiftly to cut short the GREAT TRIBULATION. But, we are drawing VERY NEAR to the GREAT TRIBULATION. It probably *has to be MORE* than 3½ years before the coming of Christ in POWER AND GLORY! Yet what did Jesus warn about those who say, “My Lord delayeth his coming”? He pronounced woe upon them. We dare not say, “Oh well, there's at least another 3½ years — there's lots of time yet — I'll start fasting and praying later.” That would be a good way to go into a lake of fire, instead of into God's Kingdom!

Fasting and prayer needed in God's Church today

Brethren, we NEED EARNEST FASTING AND PRAYER NOW! We need to GET READY NOW — and grow constantly in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Some of us are too far from our God right now. Let me tell you of a time when I came to realize that I was not close enough to God. My prayers were not being answered. ARE YOURS?

I have written this before, but those of you who read it need to read it again. It was about mid-January, 1930. I had been converted less than three years. God had directly answered my prayers, but now, near mid-January, 1930, they were not being answered. It was near time for Garner Ted to be born. My wife was excessively anemic — seriously lacking in iron in her blood. The doctor feared she did not have sufficient strength for the delivery. He insisted she must go to the hospital.

But the hospital bill for the birth of our first son, Richard David, had not yet been paid, and the hospital would not admit her until it was paid. I was without money. We were utterly without food. We burned wood in the kitchen stove, and we were completely out of wood. I had prayed. Now I asked in desperation, “WHY doesn't God answer my prayers anymore?” I knew the reason was mine, not God's. But I didn't know the reason.

The Sabbath was coming on. I

decided to FAST AND PRAY until I found the answer.

I fasted Friday night. Sabbath morning I continued the fast — no food — no juice — no liquids. I started Sabbath morning by praying one full whole hour. I did *not* ask God to heal my wife — I asked for nothing, except for God to show me what was wrong with ME that my prayers were not being answered. Then I meditated for one hour, searching my mind, to understand wherein I was wrong. This was followed by one hour of searching the Bible to see if God would reveal to me, there, the answer.

Then I started all over again, with one hour of prayer, one hour of soul-searching meditation and one hour of searching the Bible. This hour-by-hour program was maintained until bedtime that night.

By Sunday morning I was *really* hungry. But I continued the hour-by-hour prayer, meditation and Bible searching.

It must have been about two in the afternoon Sunday that one of our daughters called out, “Grandpa and Grandma Armstrong are driving into our driveway!”

By that time, I *KNEW why* my prayers had not been answered. The stress of trying to earn a living and such cares had taken my time, and I had not been as close to God as I had previously been after my conversion. I guess the “first love” — or the “romance” of conversion — had worn off, and my mind had been taken up with material cares. I had no longer been close enough to God.

But now, Sunday afternoon, this fasting and prayer and soul-searching had brought me back into CLOSENESS with God. I had been reading His many PROMISES to answer prayer in the hours of Bible searching. Now I *KNEW* God would hear!

I did not need a long prayer now. I was very close to my Creator. Now, for the first time in this fast, I asked Him hurriedly to heal my wife and restore the needed iron. I asked God to send us wood. I asked Him for food. I asked Him for payment of the hospital bill. I asked Him for needed money. I asked him for a new overcoat — for I had only an old lightweight topcoat with a hole at least six

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7 Keys to Understanding the Bible

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Editor's Note: This eye-opening article by the Worldwide Church of God's pastor general first appeared in the July, 1953, Plain Truth. The information is just as vital now as it was nearly 27 years ago, and even more so, as we draw closer to the end of this age! As part of this issue's special section on Bible study, we are happy to reprint this important knowledge for the benefit of our readers.

DO YOU realize God has purposely closed much of the Holy Bible from human understanding, *until now*?

Look at the pitiful spectacle — hundreds of different sects and denominations, all confused and mixed up, each with its *own* different ideas, beliefs and practices — all disagreeing as to what the Bible says — none understanding its full true message!

WHY?

Because none of them possesses the *keys* needed to open the doors to understanding, and therefore this spiritual treasure house is closed to them.

Locked up until now!

Even the prophets inspired in writing the Word of God did not understand much of what they wrote. Daniel records in his last chapter:

"I heard this, but I did not understand it" (Moffatt translation). When he asked the meaning of what he was inspired to write, he was told: "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are *closed up and sealed* till the time of the end" (KJV) — or, as Moffatt translates it, "*till the crisis at the close*" (Dan. 12:8-9).

The whole world is now in chaos — we have now entered the world-*crisis*

at the *CLOSE* of this age! But even now, Daniel was told, "the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (verse 10).

Since this very Word of God reveals that "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4), those who encourage the breaking of God's law, teaching that it is done away — as nearly all sects and denominations do — are, in Bible terminology, "the wicked." And who are "the wise," who shall now understand?

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a *GOOD UNDERSTANDING* have all they that *do* his commandments" (Ps. 111:10).

Again God's angel caused Daniel to record: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. 12:4). Yes, much of the Word of God, especially the prophecies, were shut up and sealed until now. Today people *run* to and fro, all over the world, in automobiles, trains and planes. Today knowledge has been increased. We have reached the world-*CRISIS AT THE CLOSE* of this age! The wise — those who fear God and keep His commandments — can now *UNDERSTAND*!

Even 50 years ago this true understanding *was still closed and sealed*! None of the established church denominations has been willing, in these 50 years, to admit error, correct false teachings or accept new light now suddenly revealed! No wonder they all disagree! They are in *BABYLON* — *CONFUSION*!

In the first place, none can understand by himself. The carnal mind cannot see spiritual things. These

truths are *revealed* through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit — and God gives His Spirit *only* to them who *OBEY* Him and keep His commandments! Only the truly converted can even *begin* to understand.

But even having that beginning, there are *SEVEN KEYS* needed to unlock these closed doors of truth! And just as one key alone will not unlock your safety deposit box at the bank, so no one, no two or even six of these keys will open the scriptural doors to full *UNDERSTANDING*. It requires *ALL SEVEN KEYS*.

Seven vital keys thrown away

Christ gave His apostles *the keys* of true *UNDERSTANDING*, which unlock the door to the *KINGDOM OF GOD*.

To Peter and the others, He said: "And I will give unto thee *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*" (Matt. 16:19).

But He prophesied apostasy. "Many false prophets shall rise," He said, "and shall deceive many." Paul foretold the great "falling away" from God's truth and Christ's Gospel, turning into *FABLES* (II Thess. 2:1-9; II Tim. 4:1-4). It had even begun in Paul's day (II Thess. 2:7). Church leaders only used *the keys* to lock up the door of the Kingdom, and then threw the keys away, even as the Pharisees and rulers did before them:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" said Jesus to them, "for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. 23:13).

And so naturally, today no denomination of traditional Christianity, sect or church possesses these seven *KEYS*!

Here they are: God's true Church has all of them!

1

The true Gospel

Almost no one has this first key, believe it or not! The Gospel of Christ is the Gospel Christ preached — a particular message sent from God by Jesus Christ as Messenger. The Gospel of Christ is CHRIST'S OWN GOSPEL — not a story *about* His Person!

Today people are led to believe that the Gospel is telling the story *about* Jesus — telling people *about* a Savior, they believe it is "the Gospel of salvation," not understanding the true *way* of salvation themselves! No wonder there is NO POWER in what is falsely preached as the "Gospel" today! The Gospel of Christ "is the POWER OF GOD unto salvation." Today most popular denominations do away with all that is vital in Christ's Gospel, saying He was preaching only to Jews under the old covenant! WHAT IGNORANCE!

What *is* Christ's Gospel? What is the message God sent to mankind by Jesus Christ? It is the GOOD NEWS of the KINGDOM OF GOD! Kingdom means GOVERNMENT! It is the message of *Divine Government* — government by GOD'S LAWS!

It is the prophetic proclamation of the coming WORLD GOVERNMENT to rule all nations and bring today's confused, chaotic, war-weary earth PEACE and JOY! It is the vital, dynamic, powerful living message of GOD'S GOVERNMENT, first in individual hearts in God's true Church, now in this world, later all nations internationally in the WORLD TOMORROW!

Of course that power-filled message includes the knowledge about the Savior, High Priest and coming King! Of course, it includes the true way of salvation, which the churches seem to have lost! And it includes also knowledge of the location of the TERRITORY to be ruled over by the King of the coming Kingdom — the fact it is *this earth* and not heaven!

But there can be no GOVERNMENT without LAWS, and so the TRUE GOSPEL also must proclaim the LAW of God, which alone can bring peace to the world and success, happiness and joy to the individual!

The TRUE GOSPEL has to do with the

nations of today's world, world conditions today and Christ's reign over all nations in the WORLD TOMORROW! It is a full, complete, dynamic and POWERFUL Gospel, which has been kept by the powers of darkness from the world for 1,900 years! *This knowledge is the first key!*

2

Salvation IS creation

The idea preached in this dark, confused world is that salvation is God's plan for *repairing the damage* caused by Satan in "the fall of man" in the Garden of Eden.

God, so the world has been taught by church leaders, had *completed* His work of creation — man was a *finished* creation, spiritual, immortal, perfect in character. Then along came Satan, and by cunning he wrecked God's handiwork, thwarted God's purpose, caused man to fall to the low plane of sinful human nature, ruined God's perfect creation! Then God is supposed to have looked down upon this colossal smashup, and to have thereupon thought out THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION as a means of *repairing the damage*.

Salvation, then, is presented merely as God's effort to *restore* man to a condition *as good as* Adam was in the first place. The picture is that God has been doing His very best for 6,000 long years, but Satan has resisted Him! God has found Himself unable to avoid a CONTEST with Satan — a "GREAT CONTROVERSY" as one writer phrased it — in which God has done His best, but Satan has continued to outsmart Him and now today, with TIME ABOUT UP, the vast majority of people on earth are still unsaved — still on Satan's side! The contest is almost over, and the best God can now do is take revenge, and soon to send Christ to DESTROY ALL THE WICKED whom Satan has kept on his side!

Can you see *that* picture could only have come from the deceiving false GOD OF THIS WORLD, Satan himself? It presents Satan at every turn as more powerful than God — as succeeding in his rivalry! This entire concept is a damnable LIE!

The TRUTH is the second important

KEY — and it explains GOD'S PURPOSE in placing humanity on this earth!

Salvation is *not* a "repairing of the damage" done by Satan in the Garden of Eden. Satan never did alter or change God's purpose or plan. The devil has never thwarted God's will. All has gone always, and always will, exactly according to GOD'S PURPOSE!

Salvation is merely the COMPLETING of CREATION! Creation was *not* completed 6,000 years ago, at the time described in Genesis 1! That was merely the *first* or *material phase* of a creation *now still going on!* What God then created was *physical* — *material*. The spiritual creation is a process, continuing, according to God's plan, today!

Man was created PHYSICAL, not spiritual — MORTAL, not immortal — of the dust of the ground — the clay model that God the Master Potter is now fashioning and shaping, *spiritually*, into the FINAL image! Man was created purposely, in the mere PHYSICAL image of God, a free moral agent, with possibility revealed to him of *receiving* as God's gift the very spiritual nature of God, so that he may by God's power be made into a perfect, righteous, spiritual character, then given immortality as God's gift! *There is no contest!* Satan does nothing except what God *permits!* And God permits it FOR A PURPOSE.

Character is created by experience, and experience requires time, and therefore it is a process! As Christ our example learned by suffering, so do we! The fact that SALVATION IS THE COMPLETING OF CREATION — the *spiritual* phase of Creation — that GOD'S PURPOSE is to create in us, as free moral agents who make our own decisions, the supreme masterpiece of all His creative acts — holy, righteous, spiritual, immortal CHARACTER — resisting the downpull of Satan and self-desire, building character by LIVING GOD'S LAWS — that knowledge of GOD'S PURPOSE is *the second vital KEY!*

3

God's dual method

A duality runs through every phase of God's plan. First, the *material* creation of Genesis 1, completed; second, the *spiritual* creation still in pro-

cess pictured finally complete in the *prophecy* of Revelation 21 and 22. There was the *first* Adam, material, of the earth; and there is the *second* Adam, Christ Jesus, spiritual, from heaven. There was the *first* covenant with Israel, material and national, devoid of salvation, based upon the birthright promise; and there is the *NEW* covenant, spiritual and individual, with a spiritually begotten Israel, based upon the scepter promise. God made man mortal, of the dust, in order to convert him into immortality, composed of Spirit.

In this very salvation process is the DUAL METHOD — the very word *salvation* means, first, rescuing from the penalty of eternal death, and second, the act of preserving or imparting eternal life as God's gift. And so, in being saved, we first are now *begotten* of God by the indwelling of His Spirit in our mortal bodies as the temple or house of the Spirit — and are now merely the *heirs* of salvation; and second, we shall finally be fully *born* of God at the resurrection of the just, when we shall *inherit* the Kingdom.

This same DUAL PRINCIPLE runs all through prophecy! First, a former or preliminary fulfillment that is merely the type or forerunner of a second, the final climactic fulfillment occurring, usually, during this CRISIS AT THE CLOSE we already have entered! And positively *none* can understand the Bible prophecies unless this DUALITY of fulfillment is understood. It is a vital key!

4

God's Holy Days

These were given to God's people to picture and to keep them in the understanding of God's PLAN for bringing about His purpose — His reign over all the earth whose people shall have been converted to righteous immortality!

Every sect, organization or denomination that does not observe God's Holy Days and fastened its eyes upon the pagan Romish holidays instead, has never understood the knowledge of GOD'S PLAN!

God's Holy Days picture:

First, Passover, the crucifixion of Christ.

Second, Feast of Unleavened Bread, putting sin out of our lives,

or, keeping God's commandments — and during this Festival was the wavesheaf picturing the resurrected Christ accepted of God as our High Priest.

Third, Feast of Firstfruits or Pentecost, picturing the coming of the Holy Spirit and the completing of this, the merely *first* and preliminary harvest of souls.

Fourth, Feast of Trumpets on first day of seventh month, picturing the Second Coming of Christ at the beginning of the seventh millennium at the *last trump*.

Fifth, Day of Atonement, picturing justice done by laying Satan's guilt in our sins upon his own head, removing him and chaining him in the symbolic bottomless pit, making us finally AT ONE with God. Atonement means at-one-ment.

Sixth, Feast of Tabernacles, for seven days, picturing the KINGDOM OF GOD during the seventh millennium, the great fall harvest of souls.

And seventh, the Last Great Day, immediately following the Feast of Tabernacles, picturing the final Great White Throne Judgment, which almost nobody today understands, and the final COMPLETING of God's plan!

5

The truth about Israel

The fact that the nation Israel became divided into two nations, the 10-tribed Kingdom, retaining the name the kingdom of Israel, possessing the birthright promises, and the kingdom of Judah, composed of Judah and Benjamin and a large portion of Levi, possessing the scepter; and, secondly, the fact revealed during this time of the end that the Jewish people today are merely a portion of the descendants of the kingdom of Judah; and the Americans, British and democracies of Northwestern Europe are the so-called "lost 10 tribes" or descended from the house of ISRAEL — and that Britain is Ephraim, and the United States is Manasseh, co-holders of the birthright, which is the true explanation of our sudden rise to the greatest national power and wealth ever possessed by any nation.

Prophecies cannot be understood without this vital key.

6

Bible interpretation of symbols

God has concealed until now His prophecies of these colossal end-time world events now occurring by means of SYMBOLS used to describe these events — as well as by the fact of His dual principle and that our Israelitish identity has been hidden from men.

Symbols, like parables, were used, *not* to make meaning clearer, but to *hide* and *conceal* God's true meaning until the time came for *Him* to reveal the interpretation of the symbols. Just as Jesus' parables were not understood until Jesus Himself explained them in plain language, so with symbols. For generations men have been putting human interpretations upon God's symbols. An important KEY, therefore, is that these symbols are interpreted in plain language in the Bible itself, if not in the context, then elsewhere, and we must search for *God's own interpretation*, never apply our own.

7

God's Sabbath

Since this is the *test* Commandment — the one most professing Christians refuse to obey — the one that causes the greatest *test of faith* and reliance upon God to be able to keep it, it stands as the final completing *basic key* — for "A GOOD UNDERSTANDING have all they that *do* his commandments!"

Also it is the basic key to the *identity* of ISRAEL. The house of Israel threw away this key to their identity — and thereby became the "lost 10 tribes!" The great majority of the house of Judah likewise threw it away and lost their identity — not known even today! The Jews who returned to Palestine under Ezra and Nehemiah became strict sabbatarians and have remained so to this day — and therefore the world looks upon them as ISRAEL (because they carry Israel's *identifying* SIGN) although they are *not* Israel, but only a small portion of JUDAH!

This completes the KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING — the KEYS to the KINGDOM OF GOD!

The churches have lost these KEYS! No wonder they are all mixed up, in confusion, each claiming the Bible says something *different*, none understanding ITS TRUE MESSAGE! □

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 1)

to scatter and even totally nullify the power God has given to His Church. There has been a falling away, though compared to the total number, it has been minimal. And the attack of the State of California was an action calculated to DESTROY the Church of the living GOD! Yet Jesus Christ our living HEAD has used it to draw us much closer to HIM and to one another.

Our Work in the hands of Christ is NOT YET FINISHED, and He will not allow the Work to stop until it is finished! And when will that be? It surely can't be much longer. We are certainly on the final lap, if not the homestretch — but no definite date can, of course, be set.

But when Daniel writes, in verse 7, "all these things shall be finished," he refers back to the subject of this 12th chapter mentioned at the beginning — when the archangel Michael shall stand up (verse 1) (as also mentioned in Rev. 12:7) and Satan shall be cast down — and the GREAT TRIBULATION (verse 1 and Matt. 24:21-22, Mark 13:19-20, Luke 21:22) from the beginning will be 3½ years.

Daniel did not understand, but the angel said, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end (Dan. 12:9).

And then what — in the TIME OF THE END, into which we have entered? "Many shall be purified and made white, and tried . . . but the wise shall understand" (verse 10). WE ARE IN THAT TIME OF TRYING AND TESTING, TO BRING US CLOSER TO GOD — TO PREPARE US FOR CHRIST'S COMING, NOW!

Many of us are being tried and tested as NEVER BEFORE — and for our own good!

But, verse 11, from the time the daily sacrifice shall be taken away. Consider this a moment. This does NOT imply a material temple to be built in our time in Jerusalem. It does seem to imply the Israelis may restore the daily (twice daily) sacrifice — possibly at the Wailing Wall. The indication is the armies of the "beast" of Revelation 17, entering Jerusalem (Dan. 11:41, Zech. 14:2)

will stop this daily sacrifice. "And the abomination that maketh desolate set up." What is this abomination?

This refers to Daniel 11:31 and Matthew 24:15. In Daniel 11:31, the armies of Antiochus Epiphanes were at Jerusalem, and some commentators have interpreted it as Antiochus placing a statue of Jupiter in the Holy of Holies in the temple. Not only does Matthew 24:15 also refer to this. But in a parallel New Testament Luke 21:20 speaks of the same thing as "Jerusalem compassed with armies." This is the correct meaning of this "abomination." It is the armies — not a statue — that made Jerusalem desolate.

From this time (Dan. 12:11) to Christ's coming will be 1,290 days.

Now, verse 12, "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the" 1,335 days.

Never before have we understood these periods of 1,260 days, 1,290 and 1,335 days. But it seems evident, now, a blessing is pronounced on us — GOD'S CHURCH — who wait and endure until the 1,335 days — approximately 1,335 days prior to Christ's coming. But since no one can know the day or the hour of His coming, we probably shall not be able to know the exact day that this 1,335 days begins. But apparently that is the time when OUR WORK SHALL END. That will be a time when the UNITED EUROPE shall appear — the revival of the medieval "Holy Roman Empire." We shall then be warned, and readied to be taken to a place of refuge and safety from the great tribulation. Forty-five days later "the beast's" armies will surround Jerusalem. Thirty days later the great tribulation will probably start with a nuclear attack on London and Britain — and possibly the same day or immediately after, on United States and Canadian cities. The GREAT TRIBULATION, we shall then fully realize, is the time of "Jacob's trouble," spoken of in Jeremiah 30:7. And Jacob's name was named on Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48:16). At that time a third of the people in our nations will die, or shall have died, by famine and disease epidemics. Another third will die of the war — our cities being destroyed (Ezek. 6:6), and the re-

maining third will be carried to the land of our enemies as slaves (Ezek. 5:12).

But while this most terrible TRIBULATION is happening to our people, shall we of God's Church be protected? My son Garner Ted is now scoffing in derision at our being taken to a place of safety during the great tribulation.

Does Revelation 3:10 mean what it says? The Unger's Bible dictionary, under article on the great tribulation, refers to Revelation 3:10, showing the great tribulation covers the whole earth. No other such time of worldwide trial and trouble is prophesied. A Bible I formerly used had in the marginal reference of Revelation 3:10 "or, the great tribulation."

Also Revelation 12:14 shows the Church being FLOWN into a place of safety in the wilderness. After this (Rev. 12:17), Satan will make war with the *remnant* or Laodicean Church. That leads up to Christ's coming.

So, where are we NOW, in the panorama of prophecy?

We have reached the time just before a "United States of Europe" restores the "Holy Roman Empire," under the papacy, in a union of church and state.

The present pope, John Paul II, could very well be the pope who will trigger this and bring it into reality. Gene Hogberg's articles in *The Plain Truth* show much light on this very likely possibility. Once that third great world power is formed, our work will soon be over. That could happen in a year, two years or five years. It could happen SUDDENLY, leaving the whole world aghast in WONDER!

Right now the Iranian crisis is the BIG NEWS. The Moslem present head, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, is today threatening to try the remaining U.S. Embassy hostages as spies, which would mean they would be executed. That could provoke a WAR — unless President Jimmy Carter is too weak.

The WHOLE WORLD IS NOW ON FIRE! This is not the GREAT TRIBULATION, but is certainly preliminary to it.

It's time for intensive FASTING AND PRAYER. □

Fasting and Prayer!

(Continued from page 3)

inches in diameter in one side of the rear. This prayer took no more than 18 seconds. Then I closed, saying, "You've promised to supply ALL our need, and You know what we have need of *before* we ask, so send whatever else You know I need."

God's answer

Then I ran out by our garage, and my father and mother were just getting out of their car. Dad had removed the rear seat and piled kitchen-stove wood in the back of the car. Mother had a huge baking pan with cover on it, full of cooked food that needed only warming. Part of my 18-second prayer was answered while I had yet been praying! We enjoyed a *most* welcome visit with my parents.

On awakening Monday morning, my wife's cheeks were rosy red. The doctor was astounded! She had iron to spare! The Monday-morning mail brought the means of payment for the hospital bill, including Garner Ted's birth, in advance!

Later Monday morning, I stopped up to see my younger brother, Russell, at the gas company office. I always took my old topcoat off on entering the lobby of an office building, folding the gaping hole inside and carrying the coat on my arm. Russell said:

"Look, I know it's embarrassing for you to have to hide that hole in your coat. Today Meier & Frank's have a special sale on overcoats. Anything I charge on my charge account beginning today will not be billed until March 1, and I'll have until March 10 to pay it. You go over and pick out a good warm overcoat, and during noon hour I'll come over and have it charged."

"Oh, no, Russ," I exclaimed, "I can't have you buy me an overcoat." I was embarrassed! Then a voice seemed to say to me: "Didn't you ask Me to give you a new overcoat? Are you too proud to receive it the way I have chosen to answer your prayer?"

Immediately I stopped protesting, and said, meekly, "Okay, Russ, I'll do it, and see you at noon."

That afternoon I happened to stop in at the Portland *Oregonian* office, to see their merchandising man, a Mr. Davidson.

"Well, hello, Mr. Armstrong," he said, "you're just the man I need to see right now. The Bissel Carpet Sweeper people want you to put on a survey for them, to learn direct from consumers the amount of demand for carpet sweepers in face of vacuum-cleaner competition. How soon could you do it?"

"Right away," I answered. There was going to be a good-sized check for this, as soon as the survey was completed.

I went immediately to the office of the company from which we rented our house. Our rent was past due, and they were about to get nasty about it. I told them of the survey, and they agreed to wait for the rent until I received the check.

God knows our needs

That was EVERYTHING I had asked God for Sunday afternoon — except I had asked God to send whatever *else* He knew was a need.

Tuesday, I think it was, my youngest brother Dwight (composer of our hymns) drove to our house.

"Herb," he said, "I want to leave my car here until you take Loma to the hospital. I was just thinking, you might have to go in the middle of the night, with no way to get there. Meantime, I want you to use the car as much as you need."

Thursday evening my sister Mary, Dwight's twin sister, came over.

"Loma," she said to my wife, "I brought over a dressing gown. I don't know why. It's the strangest thing, but something made me kneel and pray this afternoon, and in my mind I heard a voice saying, clearly, 'Take a robe over to Loma!' It was repeated twice. I didn't know you needed a robe, but here it is! This was a most unusual experience."

"Well, Herbert and I understand," said my wife, "I will need a robe in the hospital, but I never thought about it until now."

God had sent what HE knew, before I asked Him, that we needed!

I hope this experience of mid-January, 1930, now 50 years ago, will be the means of helping some of you to take

an effective step toward GETTING READY for CHRIST'S COMING!

What kind of prayer?

But now what *you* need to know about fasting. Fasting without prayer is of no avail *spiritually*. There is a real *physical* benefit, if you understand it, but not many doctors know the physical benefits of fasting. Animals fast by instinct when physically sick.

But fasting alone, without intensive prayer, will not draw you closer to God. But *what kind* of prayer?

Jesus gave a parable describing two kinds of prayer. The self-righteous publican used prayer to try to convince God of his self-righteousness. "I thank thee, O God," he prayed, "that I am so much better than this sinner beside me. I want you to realize, God, how GOOD I am. I fast often, I pay tithe, I am a very righteous man." But the poor sinner beside him was praying humbly: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I'm not worthy even to pray to you."

There was also the incident of a lunatic, demon-possessed (Matt. 17:14-17). The disciples had tried to cast out the demon, but failed. When Jesus cast out the demon, the disciples asked why they had failed. Jesus answered: "Because of your unbelief . . . Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (verses 20-21).

Jesus fasted at times to keep Himself close to God the Father. Could *YOU* cast out a demon? I have, more than once. The first time I was asked to come to a house to cast out a demon, I first fasted and prayed. The demon had possessed a woman, kept in bed. While I was talking with others in the living room, this insane woman yelled out: "I hear you out there. I know who you are — I hear you on the radio!"

I walked into the bedroom. The crazed woman took out from under the covers a flatiron, raised her hand as if to throw it at me.

I took an instant step toward her, pointing a finger directly at her, commanding, "In the name of Jesus Christ, put down that iron." She (the demon in her) saw I was unafraid and spoke with a voice of authority. She put down the iron. I talked with the demon a couple moments, in the same manner Jesus talked to the demon-possessed.

Then I said, with authority, "You foul demon, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to *come out* of this woman!"

The woman grinned. "*YOU* come out!" she said saucily.

I commanded her again, saying to the demon it *HAD* to come out, for I spoke by the authority of Jesus Christ.

"I WON'T come out," answered the demon with the woman's voice. "I've been paying taxes on this place since 1929. I've got a right to stay here."

"You have NO RIGHT! Jesus Christ commands you to come out!" I replied, keeping a stern commanding voice.

The woman sank into a sleep. The next morning they took her to the state hospital for the insane, as they had planned.

Examining her, officials said: "Why did you bring this woman here? She's not insane. She's as sane as any of us."

I checked up. They had lived in that house much longer than since 1929. That was the year she went insane. This event occurred, as near as I remember, in 1934.

I have had other such experiences, but must not take space here to recount them.

Realize your faults

When you fast and pray, do *NOT* use the time of fasting and prayer as a means of inducing God to answer your prayers. Your fasting will not compel God to jump when you crack the whip. If your prayers have not been answered, it is *YOUR* fault, not God's. Fast, as I did in the example cited above, to learn where *YOU* have been wrong. Perhaps you asked for something you should not have asked. Perhaps you were too far apart from God, and close to this world and material problems or pleasures. When you pray while fasting, examine *YOURSELF!* Discern whether your *ATTITUDE* has been right. Seek to draw closer to *GOD* and to *HIS WILL*. Seek for *FAITH* (which He will give you). Then, when you have undergone this self-cleansing, and know you are in *GOD'S WILL*, believe His promises and expect your prayers to be answered.

THE TIME HAS COME for all of us in God's Church to draw *CLOSER TO HIM!* I hope what has been written here will help you. □

Christianity on Trial

(Continued from page 6)

Paul had just finished listing in chapter 11 the heroes of faith who had served God down through time: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets, etc. He immediately follows that list with a statement identifying those people as a "great . . . cloud of witnesses," who should influence us to obey God better! This group of God's chosen servants lived lives that "witnessed" to God's glory, and, symbolically, they are now watching those who claim to be God's servants today. In the resurrection, these people who learned to obey God perfectly will be able to judge whether or not some of us serve God as well as we would like to believe.

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Rev. 6:9-11).

God is completing the construction of His spiritual temple with the body He is working with in this end time. The Church of God today must live up to the awesome legacy of previous faithful servants of God, who have already qualified to be in God's Family. And again, these Christians of former times serve as a symbolic witness of those who now claim to worship Christ.

We are also being watched by Satan the devil, the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10), who would dearly love to witness to God that we are not obeying Jesus Christ, though we claim to.

And above all, our lives and hearts are being searched by God the Father and Jesus Christ, to whom the Father has given the responsibility of judging the entire world (John 5:22). We had better be doing everything

we can to please these great Witnesses!

Put yourself on trial

How well would you be able to defend yourself if you were brought to trial on the charge of being a Christian? Would you have to plead guilty and accept the consequences, or would you be able to easily beat the rap by cataloging just a few of the skeletons in your spiritual closet?

At this critical juncture in world history, and as we are drawing nearer to a special time of the year for those who are keeping God's true Holy Days, Christians must put themselves on trial and cast a cold eye over their spiritual conditions. Each of us needs to throw the book — the Bible — at ourselves and test our character in the perfect mirror of God's law.

Checking ourselves for the sin "that doth so easily beset us" is one of the duties of the Passover season. Once we have found the sin — the spiritual leaven — we must work to put it out of our lives. This is pictured by the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

Jesus Christ is preparing for His marriage, and His bride must be perfect. True Christians have been given the opportunity to be the bride at that very special wedding, and to actually join Christ in a loving, exciting, eternal relationship. But we must be ready when He returns.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversion and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (II Pet. 3:10-14). □