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the

PLAIN TRUTH

a magazine of understanding



Soviet President Brezhnev

**NEW WARNING ON
NUCLEAR
WEAPONS IN
EUROPE**

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Personal from...

What Is the Worst Sin?

What is the greatest possible sin anyone could commit? Certainly a lack of gratitude is one of the most prevalent of sins.

Few have learned to really appreciate what they have.

But what is the *worst* of all sins? The most awful sin that can be committed is, perhaps, one of the very *last* that most people would name.

Think! Every good thing comes from GOD! He is Creator, Sustainer, Ruler. His Glory is beyond human imagination. His is the perfect holy and righteous character. He *is*, and is the very source of, love, wisdom, goodness, might and power.

And yet, he, so great, so mighty, so glorious, is extremely mindful of each one of us! He loves us so very much he *gave* his only begotten Son to pay the penalty in our stead of our folly—our sins. He raised his begotten Son Jesus Christ from the dead, *born* very GOD by his resurrection, and gave to him all the POWER and the GLORY of the entire universe, making him, the risen ever-living CHRIST, the Administrator and Chief Executive over the supreme government of the limitless UNIVERSE!

More than that, through Jesus Christ, God has made it possible for us to receive the very Spirit—the LIFE—the divine NATURE of GOD! Thus we become coheirs *with* Christ, that we, too, may be BORN by a resurrection as very SONS of GOD. Jesus Christ was made the firstborn of many brethren! He, Christ, already has *inherited*—and we through him may become joint *heirs* to later inherit all that is God's—the UNIVERSE ENTIRELY!

Can your mind grasp it? *All that is God's, we may share!*

A portion of this we may imbibe, drink in, be filled with and enjoy *here and now*, even in this temporary life! Every good thing *comes from* GOD!

Now consider what this contact with the living God means.

Even now, in this frail human life, we may

receive from him guidance and wisdom, protection from physical harm, healing when ill, peace of mind, deliverance from trouble and all the attributes of his character—his divine love, faith, patience, assurance, goodness, power to overcome.

From him and from him alone, we may drink in real happiness and joy! From him we may receive the knowledge of the TRUE VALUES—we may know the PURPOSE of life—the WAY to every good thing. We may receive every good and perfect gift that comes down from above!

Now what would be the worst, the most terrible sin one could possibly commit? It is self evident. It is to have another god before the true living GOD!

Whatever occupies your interest more than God and his Word is the idol you are putting before him. None can be truly converted—actually *begotten* of God—until whatever is his IDOL has been smashed, and torn root and branch from his affection and mind and heart.

What is it that *you just can't give up*? You'll *have* to give it up, you know—or *you are committing the most awful sin it is possible to commit!* It is the sin that shuts you off from that personal *contact* with GOD!

God tells us that his ear is not deaf that he cannot hear our petitions. His arm is not short that it cannot respond—but OUR SINS have separated between him and us, that he *will not* hear!

The greatest possible sin is that which shuts you out from the greatest possible acquirement!

The most terrible possible PUNISHMENT that could be sentenced and carried out on any human would be to permanently and irrevocably cut one off from all possible access to GOD!

This world *is* cut off from God—it has cut itself off! Yet, *not* irrevocably. YOU may have *free access* to the Great God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! The WAY is unconditional surrender of your rebellious will to HIS—to HIS WAY—his right and perfect laws. The WAY, then, is by faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior. □

GOD HATES DIVORCE

Yet He Divorced His Own Wife!

WHY?

by Herbert W. Armstrong

Today—one divorce for every two marriages! Is marriage on the way out? Why did even God divorce his wife? Here's truth *new* to you!

THE world's number one evil is the fact people can't live happily at peace with other people. This one fact foreshadows THE END of the world's very civilization. But WHY?

In the single year ending October 31, 1980, there were 1,182,000 divorces in the United States compared with 2,414,000 marriages! Half as many divorces as marriages! In 1979 divorces were nearly two-and-a-half times the rate of only 20 years earlier—1959! European divorce statistics are almost as bad.

Why?

But the important fact is the reason—what has CAUSED this super cancer bringing this world to its death?

A Case History

Usually, in fact, both partners are to blame where marriage ends in divorce. But even where only one partner is at fault, it can put both through this tragic wringer of human anguish. I quote a specific case history in point.

It's a case of an aged personage

who loved a beautiful young woman and proposed marriage. He offered her a considerably increased life-style and many advantages—even to make her the FIRST LADY of all the earth—for this aged personage was GOD. And all the earth was his! I quote from this biblical story because it illustrates human nature and the CAUSE of divorces and broken marriages today. And these biblical experiences “happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come” (I Cor. 10:11, RSV). Much of this romance and its outcome is found in the 16th chapter of Ezekiel, some in Jeremiah 3, some in Malachi 2 and elsewhere. But the proposal of marriage is found in Exodus 19:5. The acceptance is in verse 8. The marriage ceremony in Exodus 24:3-8.

This marriage and the fascinating story concerning it in many ways is typical of many marriage experiences even today. The CAUSES of its historic outcome are precisely the same causes that dissolve many marriages today. In it lies the real reason for so many unhappy marriages, and the agony of divorce. Its ultimate future outcome reveals to us the way to a HAPPY marriage today and the ulti-

mate incredible potential for humanity.

This aged personage's wife to be was in the bondage of slavery in Egypt—just as many young brides today are in the bondage of sin. She was promised enjoyable living in a most desired home—the promised land flowing with milk and honey. This national wife promised to be subject to her husband in everything, and to respect him, in the marriage ceremony. Moses officiated at that ceremony. “And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient” (Ex. 24:7).

This husband, God, took his wife to her very choice new home, the “glory of all lands” (Ezek. 20:15). But his wife was unfaithful and refused to live with him in peace, for two cannot “walk together, except they be agreed” (Amos 3:3). You will read the whole account in story form in the 16th chapter of Ezekiel, where it paints the story of an interesting romance and unsuccessful marriage.

God said, “I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood *in fury* . . .”—the

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DIVORCE

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last plagues at Christ's Second Coming, showing this is a prophecy for OUR TIME (Ezek. 16:38).

Yet, in spite of all, this husband repeatedly PLEADED with his wife to return to him, saying he would forgive and receive her back, but she refused. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you . . ." (Jer. 3:14). Also, ". . . thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord" (Jer. 3:1). "And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce . . ." (verse 8).

But Israel shall yet be resurrected in the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-12, Ezek. 37) and salvation and eternal life shall then be offered. So, finally, all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26) because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But all *now* begotten of God are being judged NOW (I Pet. 4:17).

But Now WHY?

The IMPORTANT THING is to understand *why* Israel sinned, WHY God did divorce, WHY marriages break up today, and what God is going to do about it.

The people of ancient Israel were just like people today, in that they were human, imbued with human nature. But what about the average marriage where usually both husband and wife are at fault?

I cite a case history of some years ago in which my counsel was requested by both parties. The wife complained that the husband would not take time to do even ordinary husband duties around the house—such as cleaning out the basement. He was selfish, in that he spent too much time going to baseball, basketball and hockey games—in which she had no interest. This I knew to be true. "It's all his fault," she accused.

But he likewise accused, "It's all *her* fault!" She was an atheist and communist, and if the national anthem was played on radio, she would snap it off, saying, "I HATE

that thing!" He was a veteran of World War I and very patriotic. She was cold, cross, constantly telling him he was a failure, a no-good. She constantly belittled him, disrespected him. And, beside, he said she was sexually frigid.

Actually, I found that the sexual frigidity was due to sexual ignorance and a lack of sexual knowledge, more than wrong attitude. I asked that they read a book that I felt would correct the ignorance. They did read it, both saw their error, but the knowledge came too late to help, in view of other prob-

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lems in the marriage. To him, I counseled: "She has her mind, and you have yours. You can't change her, but you can change *YOU!* You can solve *HALF* of the problem. I'll try to persuade her to change *HER!*" I explained the same solution to her.

I suggested a six month trial, with each trying to cooperate and work on the *SELF* instead of accusing the other. They agreed to try. But the "try" didn't last two weeks. It ended in divorce.

My suggested solution was sound enough, but it did not save the marriage.

Why?

There were two carnal minds, neither willing to admit wrong or change attitude. When either one

of a marriage partnership has a wrong attitude in conflict with the mate, the marriage won't be happy. People simply do not understand the TRUTH about the human mind and its attitudes. That is what God is going to CHANGE to produce peace and happiness in the WORLD TOMORROW.

Let's try to UNDERSTAND!

The Family Structure

The FAMILY is the foundational bulwark of a lasting society and civilization. HOW did a civilization START?—how was it formed—how built?

God said, "Let us [not me] make MAN in OUR image, after our likeness . . ." (Gen. 1:26). God has power of MIND—so does man. Animals do not. But man is made from the dust of the ground like animals—he has a temporary physiochemical existence like animals—dies the same death (Eccl. 3:19-20). Animal BRAIN is like human brain, though of varying size—yet of similar design, composition, construction, quality. Yet man THINKS, KNOWS, REASONS, MAKES DECISIONS as animals cannot. WHY?

There is a spirit in man (Job 32:8) that is not in animal brain. This spirit in humans imparts the psychic power of intellect, "For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me" (Job 32:18). The dumb animal cannot have the knowledge of a human, and man has it only by this spirit of man—this human spirit—that is in him (I Cor. 2:11). Likewise, no man can comprehend spiritual knowledge save by the Holy Spirit of God (same verse).

Knowledge enters the human mind only through the five senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, feel and touch. But spiritual knowledge (the things of God) is not seen, heard, tasted, smelled or felt (verse 9). God *reveals* spiritual knowledge through HIS SPIRIT (verse 10). So the Holy Spirit of God witnesses "with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16).

BUT GOD'S SPIRIT WILL NOT ENTER AND JOIN WITH THE HUMAN SPIRIT UNTIL THE HUMAN SPIRIT HAS BEEN CONQUERED BY GOD—HAS SURRENDERED UNCONDITIONALLY TO GOD! That's why many