

TOMORROW'S WORLD

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The Future of Jerusalem



A Vital “Key” to Spiritual Growth

A personal message from the Editor in Chief, Roderick C. Meredith

In our hurried, mixed up, distracted lives, we often fail to find time—or to *take time*—to think about what is really important.

Sometimes, at the funeral of a dear friend or loved one, we may pause to realize how quickly the “hustle and bustle” of *our* daily lives could *end*. We may quietly think and meditate on the *real* issues of life: *Why* are we here? What is the *real purpose* of our lives? *How* should we fulfill that great purpose?

Most of us realize that we need to be more sure of our relationship with our Creator, and truly draw close to Him. Most people feel *in a general way* that they would like to fulfill His will. So they think about it briefly... until the *phone rings*, or it is time for their favorite television show, or... So, once again, they delay their opportunity to draw closer to God.

Let me share with you a very important “key” that has helped me during my 54 years in Christ’s ministry. I have experienced many trials and “ups and downs” in my life. I have been terribly disappointed in years past at the actions of some of my own teenagers and other young people as well. I have been hurt by the slights or indiscretions of others whom I loved. My first wife of more than 20 years died in my arms, from cancer. I have seen *dozens* of friends and loved ones turn away from the Truth of God. So there have been *plenty* of “reasons” to become discouraged.

However, one practice has *always* helped me to “bounce back.” In fact, it was that very practice that helped me to become genuinely acquainted with God in the first place.

That vital “key” is the regular practice of setting aside time and energy to truly *seek* God.

How?

Although King David of ancient Israel experienced literally *hundreds* of trials and tests—and profound *sorrow*—he always “bounced back.” In spite of his human weaknesses, he became “a man after God’s own heart” (Acts 13:22). Scripture gives us a little glimpse of how David related with God: “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are

mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor” (Psalm 8:3–5).

David *took time* to **meditate** and to **think on** what was truly important. He often did this outdoors, in the midst of God’s marvelous creation, looking up at the moon and stars. He did **not** have a radio or television blatting away in the background, or a phone ringing, or other distractions while he was spending time seeking God.

When David was hiding out in the wilderness of Judea, as King Saul was trying to destroy him, David literally **cried out** to God: “O God, You are my God; *early will I seek You*; my soul **thirsts** for You; my flesh **longs** for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me” (Psalm 63:1–8).

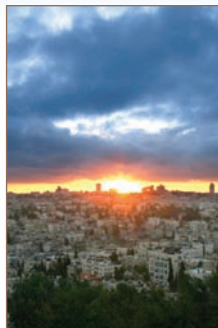
This beautiful passage tells us a *lot* about David’s approach to God. He would continually “seek” God in almost every conceivable situation. God was the very *center* of David’s life, the One whom David genuinely *worshiped* and *adored* and with whom he “fellowshipped.” God was truly the *center* of David’s life! We truly are made in God’s image, and—just as David did—He wants *us* to learn to walk with Him, talk with Him and *fellowship* with Him (1 John 1:3).

But, remember! To draw truly close to our Creator, we *must* worship Him the *way* He tells us! Jesus Christ instructed us, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him *must worship in spirit and*

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YOU Need Salvation!

By Roderick C. Meredith

Are you under God's protection? Does God consider you a "Christian"? Read this article to be sure!

This world is teetering on the edge of *oblivion*. Thoughtful men everywhere are beginning to *fear*. We are living in the shadow of violent *death*. It could come any day or night. It could come at any moment. It could be unleashed by the tiniest political spark in a far-distant land. Earlier this year, the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* moved the famous "Doomsday Clock" *forward* two minutes, to just five minutes to midnight!

People know we are living in dangerous times, and many are restless. Many are thinking more seriously than ever before about many things—not the least of which is the *hereafter*.

Increased Religious Interest

This era of violence and potential world suicide has helped stimulate an

increased interest in religion in the United States. Multitudes are thinking more and more about making peace with somebody, preferably God.

But *are* people really "making peace" with God—being truly *converted*, being *changed*, and coming under His divine *protection*?

The true Creator *God* says most religious people are being *deceived*! Your Bible describes our very end times as a period when Satan the Devil "*deceives the whole world*."

Jesus described our day when He said: "For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall *deceive many*" (Matthew 24:5, KJV). Yes, the *many* preachers who claim to be Christ's ministers, *who* proclaim that He is Christ, but preach *their own humanly devised message about Jesus' person*, are *deceiving* millions and millions of people!

Yet, in order to be regarded by *God* as a *true Christian*—in order to be under *His* protection in these perilous times, in order to be led by *His Spirit*—you *must believe* and *obey* the very message Jesus Christ brought to this earth from God the Father. For Jesus commanded, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15).

In this age, above every other, you *desperately need* God—His guidance, His blessing and His *protection!* There is no use in “kidding” yourself about this fact. *This is your life*—how will you use it?

What You Should Do

You need to face the *fact* that you are very likely one of the multitude going the *broad way* that leads to *destruction* (Luke 13:24)! If you *are* following the crowd—if you have the same general attitude toward religion that most people do—then without doubt you are *deceived!* For remember that Satan the Devil “*deceives the whole world*” (Revelation 12:9).

Thankfully, some of you are different. Many thousands of you

ful Creator God. You must *know* that the Bible is His *inspired* revelation of the real *purpose* of life, and of the spiritual *laws* of happiness and success. You must *prove* and *know* that the Bible carries *authority*—that its words are backed up by the power of the living God who gives you every breath of air you breathe.

You may already understand this. But please be sure you have *proven* it so completely that you would *fear to disobey* what God commands. You must regard God’s word as *the authority* over your very life. Christ said: “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). Once you have fully proved these basic principles to yourself, you need to keep studying to understand and obey the true *message* of Almighty God contained in the Bible.

Christ’s Message

Jesus Christ gave us the perfectly clear revelation of God’s plan and purpose. To be a

It is to be *obeyed!* For Jesus also said, “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and **not** do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

Jesus came to “reveal” the Father (Matthew 10:27). Above all else, He revealed God as the Supreme *Ruler* of the universe. He taught that human beings are not to follow their own ideas and traditions, but should “live... by every word of God” (Luke 4:4). “Search the scriptures,” Jesus said.

In the “model prayer,” Christ taught His disciples to pray, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Luke 11:2).

Christ continually taught *obedience* to the *law* and *will* of God. When a young man asked Him the way to eternal life, Jesus answered: “If you want to enter into life, *keep the commandments*” (Matthew 19:17). So, to be a true Christian, you must yield yourself to *obey* God’s will, keep the Ten Commandments, and *surrender* your will so completely to your Maker that you will sincerely strive to “live by every word of God.”

The New Testament reveals that God is now forming, within the people He calls *holy*, His *right-*

You must *prove* and *know* that the Bible carries *authority*—that its words are backed up by the power of the living God who gives you every breath of air you breathe.

realize that through the *Tomorrow’s World* telecast and the pages of this magazine, you are receiving the very *message* that Jesus Christ brought to save this world from itself. If you are to come under the blessing and protection of God, you need to be *sure* of that message—then *act* on it and *obey* it.

You need to *prove* to yourself, once and for all, that there is a *personal*, living, active, all-power-

“Christian” simply means to believe in and *obey* what Jesus Christ taught—to *accept* and *submit* to the *message* He brought from God the Father.

Jesus stated: “For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak” (John 12:49). So Christ’s *message* comes directly from God the Father.

eous and perfect spiritual character as a prerequisite to the precious *gift* of eternal life in His kingdom. The basis of that perfect character is absolute *yieldedness* to obey God’s perfect spiritual law—revealed by the Ten Commandments and spiritually magnified in the New Testament.

This requires *completely surrendering* your personal will to God. This means a complete *change* in

attitude, belief and way of life. The Apostle Paul was inspired to write: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2).

Remember, *human* will and strength cannot bring about this change. The spiritual love and power must come as a *gift* from God.

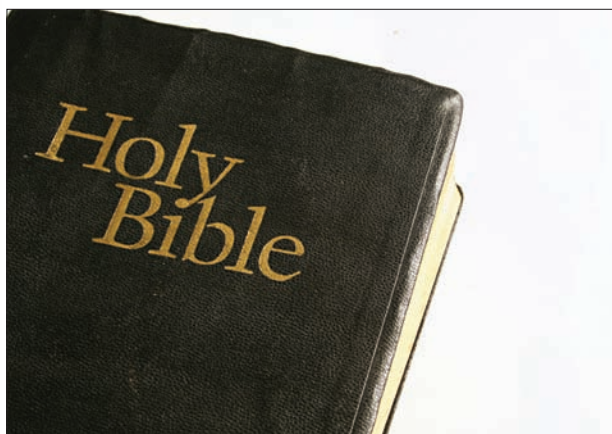
God’s Help Is Required

Most of us have known people who made “resolutions” to live a better life—alcoholics who decided to “give up the bottle,” or criminals who “reformed” by some means or other. Few of these changes are either permanent or satisfactory. Even when a change in one area of life seems to have become permanent, we can see that the person’s *entire* life, attitude, and actions are *not* totally yielded to the complete and perfect will of the Creator.

Human beings cut off from the true God can “reform” themselves to a limited extent. But they can *never* bring about the process we call “conversion.” For *true* conversion is a **total change** which God brings about in one’s very *mind* and *nature*. The Apostle Paul proclaimed, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**: and the life which I now live in the flesh *I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*” (Galatians 2:20, KJV).

That, my friends, is the “key.” Through *genuine* repentance from sin, then total *surrender* to God through Jesus Christ and humble *faith* in God’s for-

givenness of our sins through Christ’s shed blood, we are then *promised* the “gift” of God’s Holy Spirit—*His* very nature and character implanted within us. This **alone** gives us the strength to “overcome” ourselves and truly *obey* God. For it is “Christ in us” who is obeying God’s perfect, spiritual law—*just as* He did in the human flesh (John 15:10).



After **real** conversion, you begin to *study* the Bible, *meditate* on God’s law, and *pray* and talk to God continually. You truly *seek* God always (see my Personal on page 2 of this issue)! By this process, and through His Spirit, you come to have the very *thoughts* and *nature* of God within you. For **Christ** is living within you *through the Holy Spirit*!

Your **whole life** is completely *changed—converted*—and you *grow* in grace and knowledge day by day. In spiritual attitude and character, you become more like Christ in *every phase of life*. A **total change** takes place within you that could never occur except as a supernatural act of the Almighty God.

However, God makes this supernatural help available *under certain very important conditions*.

You Must Believe the True Gospel

Jesus Christ and His apostles always preached the gospel of the *kingdom* or world-ruling *government* of God. We read: “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the *kingdom of God*, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand,

repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:14–15).

Again, notice that the *two things* Jesus commanded were *repentance* and *belief* in His message.

Regarding *belief*, Jesus taught that *belief* in the true gospel He preached, and *obedience* to the laws of God, are

inseparable. He said: “The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. And it

You must do what God says

is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail” (Luke 16:16–17).

Here we see that the law and the prophets—the Old Testament scriptures—were God’s only revelation to mankind before John the Baptist’s ministry. But through Christ, the spiritual message of salvation, and the magnification of God’s laws in their spiritual intent and purpose, was revealed.

Notice also how Jesus connected obedience to God’s laws with the New Testament gospel of the kingdom. Furthermore, as if to squelch any doubt that He was

referring to God's spiritual law revealed in the Ten Commandments, He specified the transgression of one of *those very laws* to which He was referring: "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery" (Luke 16:18).

Throughout the book of Acts, we find the inspired servants of Christ continuing to preach the *gospel of the kingdom*—including, of course, *obedience* to the laws of God. We see that Philip preached this gospel in Acts 8:12. Paul said he preached it to the Gentiles at Ephesus in Acts 20:25. And in Acts 28:30–31, we find that Paul continued to preach this *same message* to the end of his ministry—even to the Gentiles at Rome.

This is the *true gospel*. It is a message of the government of Almighty God over our lives *now*, as preparation for entrance into His soon-coming, world-ruling kingdom, when Jesus Christ will return with divine power and glory as King of kings and Lord of lords. And, since God's kingdom has *laws*,

tism is the next essential step you must take to be truly converted and receive God's Holy Spirit. In fact, *it is a test of your real repentance and willingness to obey God*.

Jesus Christ commanded the apostles: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes *and is baptized* will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16: 15–16).

Jesus meant *exactly* what He said!

In His parting commission, Jesus said: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

In Peter's inspired sermon on the day of Pentecost, he shouted: "**Repent**, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Notice that God *only* promises the *gift* of the Holy Spirit on the condition that you *repent* and are *baptized*. Later, Peter speaks of the *Holy Spirit*, which "God has given

never have been, and never will be—*unless* you are finally willing to *surrender* your life to God the Father, and accept Jesus Christ not only as your Savior, but as your High Priest, your coming King, your *ruler*, whom you will *obey* throughout *all eternity*!

God's Spirit is the very *nature and life* of God through which we become His begotten children. His Spirit will help us grow to maturity in Christian character. What does it bring to us? "But the fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*" (Galatians 5:22–23).

The Holy Spirit gives us power for *self-mastery, self-discipline* and *self-control*. Through it, God's *love* is poured out in our hearts (Romans 5:5). The Holy Spirit conforms us to the image of God (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

You *need* God's Spirit. You *need* His *guidance* and *protection*.

But it is a tremendous decision to yield yourself wholly to God—to *live by* His every word and *obey* Him throughout all eter-

5. You must repent and be baptized, or you will never receive God's Holy Spirit.

it is a message of *surrender* and *obedience* to the laws and rule of God.

To prepare for that kingdom, you must first *repent* of your *sinful* ways. You must turn from *sin*, which is the *transgression of God's spiritual law contained in the Ten Commandments* (1 John 3:4), and *believe* the true gospel. Then, there is another vital step you must take: *water baptism*.

Water Baptism Is Absolutely Necessary

After total *repentance* and *belief* in the true gospel, *water bap-*

to those who *obey* Him" (Acts 5:32). You must *do* what God says. You must *repent* and *be baptized*, or you will never receive God's Holy Spirit.

There is no other way!

The Apostle Paul stated: "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:9). In other words, unless you have fully *repented* of your sins, come to God through Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and been *baptized* as He has commanded, you are *not* Christ's—you do *not* belong to Him. Therefore, you are *not* a Christian in God's eyes—

nity. Such a decision must *not* be taken lightly.

Baptism Involves a Vital Decision

Baptism symbolizes the *death* and *burial* of our old, sinful self, and our *rising* from the watery grave to a *new, changed* and *converted* life. It also pictures Jesus Christ's death and burial to pay for our sins, and His resurrection as the firstborn from the dead.

The Apostle Paul writes: "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ

Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so *we also should walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:3–4).

Your decision to be baptized hinges on your willingness to *completely surrender* your will and your life to God, through Christ as your Savior. He paid the *penalty* for your past sins. But when you *know the truth*, you can *no longer do willfully* what you *know* is sin and expect God's forgiveness without genuine repentance.

God *rules* by His *law*! "Keep the commandments," Jesus said.

Paul wrote: "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness" (Romans 6:16).

When you must *choose* between following the ways of your friends and family, or *obeying* what you have found to be the *will of God*—which course do *you* follow? Do you take the easy way out and follow *men*? Do you *serve* and thereby *worship* the ways of men more than the ways of God?

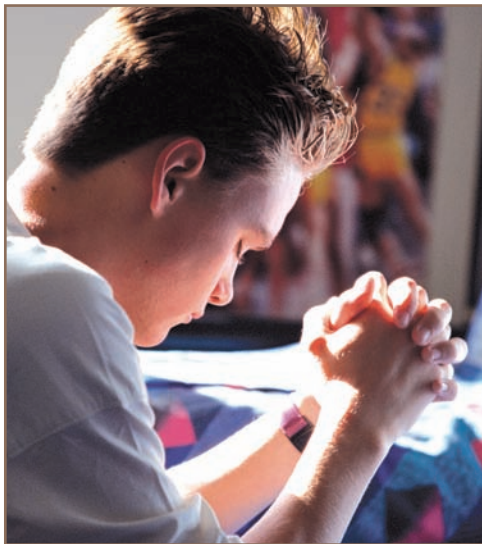
Do not "kid" yourself! *You can never fool God!*

When you learn some new point of *truth* in the pages of this magazine, on the *Tomorrow's World* telecast, or in your own personal Bible study, do you put it into *practice* in your life—do you *obey* it—or do you *reject* it because it conflicts with what your *church* or your particular *society* believes and observes?

Are you like the Pharisees who rejected Christ because

"they loved the praise of *men* more than the praise of God?" (John 12:43). God seems *far away* to some people, and their friends seem *so close* and *so important*. Which do *you worship*? Which do you *obey*?

If you had to give up your job—*your only source of income*—



in order to obey some point of *truth* you found in God's word, *would you do it*? Would you exercise *faith*, as Jesus did, and rely on God's many promises to "supply all your need" (Philippians 4:19)? Would you worship *God*—or *Mammon*?

These questions apply to *you*!

Be Sure of Your Decision

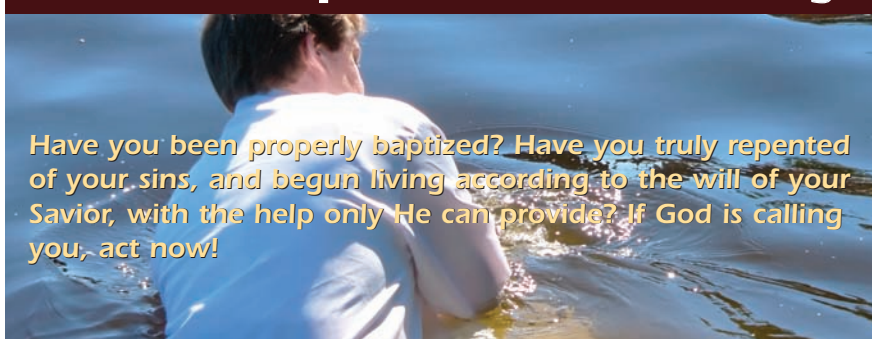
If you still have some questions about baptism, then write immediately for our *free* booklet, *Christian Baptism: Its Real Meaning*. This will answer many questions you may have.

But the decision to be baptized is *yours*. If you feel that you are ready to make an *unconditional surrender* to God through His Son Jesus Christ as personal Savior, then *write us an e-mail or letter* telling us that you want to be baptized.

You can also write a letter to the regional office nearest you (listed on page 30 of this magazine), or phone us, or contact us through our Web site, www.tomorrowworld.org. One of our representatives will then contact you and arrange to meet you at a time and place *agreeable to you*. In most areas of the world, we have ministers to counsel with and baptize those who are ready to fulfill this command of God. *So do not delay!*

You need salvation! But you need to be absolutely *sure* that you are willing to do your part and *give yourself* to God. Then you can be certain that He will grant His *blessings*, His *protection* and His *salvation* to you! ■

Christian Baptism: Its Real Meaning



Have you been properly baptized? Have you truly repented of your sins, and begun living according to the will of your Savior, with the help only He can provide? If God is calling you, act now!

Write for our *FREE* booklet, *Christian Baptism: Its Real Meaning*, or download it from the *Booklets* section of our Web site www.tomorrowworld.org.

Questions & Answers

Question: Jesus said, “Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?” (Mark 7:18–19). Does this mean Christians can eat anything they want?

Answer: People sometimes use Mark 7:18–19 to justify their desire to eat foods the Bible calls “unclean.” It is important, however, to understand this verse from a parable of Christ, in context, so we can truly appreciate what He was teaching.

Notice the verses immediately following: “And He said, ‘What comes out of a man, that defiles a man, for from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man’” (vv. 20–23).

Clearly, Jesus was making a point about the importance of godly conduct. But was He also making a point about diet? Notice the parallel account of this parable in Matthew 15. Here, Christ explained—in the context of ritual hand-washing, not dietary requirements—that every plant “which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted” (Matthew 15:13). This was a parable about godly conduct, not about what should be on our lunch menu!

If this were a literal instruction about diet, we should ask ourselves, “Can Christians today expect to eat arsenic and other poisons, yet not be affected?” Of course not! The parable describes that all *foods* pass through a man. However, it does not say unclean items are considered “food”—Christ was *not* telling us to eat arsenic, *nor* to eat the animals Scripture plainly labels as “unclean” in Leviticus 11.

The Apostle Peter confirmed this understanding in Acts 10. God gave Peter a vision of a sheet coming down from heaven, in which were some animals he considered “unclean.” In the vision, a voice told Peter to kill and eat the animals, but Peter refused, and God again spoke to him, say-

ing, “What God has cleansed you must not call common” (Acts 10:15).

Did Peter understand this as the revocation of the law of clean and unclean meats? No! Peter himself explained the lesson of the vision, saying “God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (v. 28). God had given Peter the vision to show that he should preach to, and keep company with, Jews and Gentiles alike. There is no account of Peter eating unclean foods either before or after this vision!

An end-time prophecy from the book of Isaiah demonstrates that when Christ returns, He will bring judgment on those who persist in eating unclean animals, including those “eating swine’s flesh” (Isaiah 66:17). If Christ had truly allowed human beings to eat swine’s flesh, this prophecy would make no sense—unless we assume Christ plans to punish people for obeying Him!

The biblical laws of clean and unclean meats are not merely a way God sets His people apart; they are laws that protect the physical health of those who obey them. As *Eerdmans’ Handbook of the Bible* reminds us, “These lists [of clean and unclean creatures] have a significance often ignored. Far from being based on fad or fancy, these lists emphasize a fact not discovered until late in the last century... that animals carry diseases dangerous to man” (p. 176). Those who obey God’s law today can experience the blessings He intended for His creation.

To learn more about the biblical law of clean and unclean meats, and how it can help you both physically and spiritually, please write to the regional office nearest you (listed on page 30 of this magazine) and request your free copy of our article, *Do You Really Want to Eat That?* Following God’s dietary guidelines may change your health—and your life!

A hand in a dark suit sleeve reaches into a silver mesh trash can filled with crumpled white paper. A black Bible with 'Holy Bible' printed on the cover is being held by the hand. The background is a solid blue color.

Religion Under Fire!

By Douglas S. Winnail

What is the real significance of the current attack by militant atheists on God and religion? Where is it leading?

In the last several years, a handful of militant atheists have launched a frontal assault on God and religion—especially on Christianity and the Bible. Their deliberate attack on religious belief is remarkable because it *ignores* the lessons of history and the discoveries of modern science! Intentionally provocative books by Oxford zoologist Richard Dawkins and American writer Sam Harris are clearly “no-holds-barred, anti-religion polemics that call for the eradication of all manifestations of faith” (*Christian Science Monitor*, January 4, 2007). Dawkins, a devoted disciple of Darwinian evolution, has been called the “high priest of modern atheism.” In his own words, he says he is “attacking God, all gods, anything and everything supernatural, whatever and whenever they have been or will be invented” (*The God Delusion*, p. 36). Harris similarly asserts, “I have set out to demolish the intellectual and moral pretensions of Christianity” (*Letter to a Christian Nation*, p. ix).

Amazingly, even while these authors are frantically waving the banner of atheism and claiming that belief in materialism and evolution are the only rational conclusions any thinking person can hold, we are today witnessing a *worldwide resurgence* in religious interest and activity! The appearance of such deliberate attacks on the God of the Bible—at a time of increasing violence on the world scene, growing concerns over planetary climate change and the global resurgence of religious activity—is *significant* in ways that few realize. The Bible provides vital insights explaining *what* is behind the resurgence of religion and the skeptics’ attacks on God, Christianity and the Bible—and where this is leading. Before you accept misleading ideas and arguments, you need to understand *why* these issues are erupting *today!*

Wild Ideas

Modern atheists like to promote the idea that their anti-religious views are scientific, intellectually mature and rest upon solid, irrefutable evidence. From such a premise, you would expect their books to be loaded with carefully assembled facts and unassailable information. Instead, readers are pelted with a steady stream of wild claims, unsubstantiated statements, false information, antiquated arguments, risky assumptions, open ridicule and erroneous conclusions. Echoing Sigmund Freud who viewed religion as an illusion, an infantile delusion and a form of mental illness, and Karl Marx who described religion as “the opiate of the people,” Dawkins calls belief in a supernatural god “delusional,” and labels religion “the most common form of superstition” and a “virus of the mind” (Dawkins, pp. 5, 15, 67, 186). Parents who teach their children about God, Dawkins says, are guilty of brainwashing and child abuse! Dawkins asserts, as do other aggressive atheists, “Those who believe in God are therefore dis-

honest, deluded, or stupid” because they follow an “idiotic medieval superstition.”

Dawkins’ book *The God Delusion* has been hailed as “smart... brave... refreshing... demolishes religious leaders’ attempts to prove the existence of God.” However, when examined closely and critically, the ammunition Dawkins uses against religion and belief in God turns out to be little more than “rubber bullets” fired by ivory-tower academics who have a poor grasp of the subject they are attacking. Perhaps the most audacious exercise in bad taste employed by this current atheist offensive is the “blasphemy challenge” directed at young people. An Internet group invites young people “to create videos in which they renounce belief in the ‘sky God of Christianity’ and upload it on the site” as “a way for people to show their non-belief and encouraging others to come out” (*Christian Science Monitor*, January 4, 2007).

“Theologically Challenged” Authors

Many critics have challenged the arguments and information presented by aggressively atheistic writers. Alister McGrath is Professor of Historical Theology at Oxford University and a world-renowned theologian who also holds a Ph.D. in molecular biophysics. He writes: “To put it bluntly, Dawkins’ engagement with theology is superficial and inaccurate, often amounting to little more than cheap point scoring” (*Dawkins’ God*, p. 83). McGrath cites Dawkins’ definition of faith as “blind trust, in the absence of evidence” as *totally ludicrous* in that it is merely “Dawkins’ own definition, constructed with his

own agenda in mind” (*ibid.*, p. 85). Harris promotes similar ideas about the “stupidity” of religious faith. McGrath then provides a definition of faith accepted by theologians: “the conviction of the mind based on adequate evidence” (*ibid.*, p. 86). This resembles the biblical definition of faith as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Real faith is not blind faith—it is belief based on substantial evidence! McGrath critiques Dawkins as one “who, knowing nothing about Christian theology, rushes headlong into the field... There is a total failure on Dawkins’ part to even begin to understand what Christian theology means by its language” (*Dawkins’ God*, p. 99). This same criticism can apply to others who have launched the modern attack on God, religion and the Bible—they simply do not understand the subject they are trying to attack!

Dawkins frequently resorts to ridicule in his attempts to prove there is no God. He claims the existence of God is “no more probable than the tooth fairy” or a “Flying Spaghetti Monster” (*Dawkins*, pp. 52–53). In his intemperate and irreverent manner, Dawkins asserts, “The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser... homophobic, racist... malevolent bully... psychotic delinquent... the monster of the Bible” (*ibid.*, pp. 31, 38, 45). This malicious diatribe, however, *simply does not disprove* the existence of God. In fact, it totally overlooks how the God of the Bible challenges people to prove that He exists (see Malachi 3:8–10). While Dawkins claims

many traditional “proofs” of God are weak, his own arguments are often lacking in substance. Regrettably, many in our day accept or reject the idea of God without ever requiring or examining any evidence.

The atheistic attack on the Bible reveals a failure to understand Scripture and an ignorance of historical evidence. Harris labels as “false” and an “absurdity” the idea that the Bible is divinely inspired by God (*Letter to a Christian Nation*, pp. 5–8). He completely overlooks the evidence that the Bible is a *totally unique text*. Harris cites scriptural examples *out of context* and then claims the teachings of the Bible are “muddled and contradictory” (*ibid.*, p. 11). He states that “the gospels contradict one another” (*ibid.*, p. 58), yet he fails to mention that the gospels are *complementary* accounts of events written by *different* authors—in which we would expect some difference in details. He claims New Testament writers *made* the events of Jesus’ life conform to Old Testament prophecies (*ibid.*, p. 57), yet he fails to explain why *thousands of Jews recognized* Jesus as fulfilling prophecies—including being visibly resurrected from the dead—which had been in Scripture for hundreds of years (Acts 2:22–41).

Harris dismisses the idea of inspired prophecy because the Bible did not predict such innovations as electricity and computers (*Letter to a Christian Nation*, pp. 60–61), yet he fails to mention how the Bible describes prophetic promises that revealed the future of Abraham’s descendants long before they arrived on the scene (for more on this vital topic, request our free booklet, *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*). Harris also neglects to mention that the health laws recorded by Moses

were unique and far in advance of their time. Showing his ignorance of comparative religion, Harris lumps the Bible together with other religious books which “pretend to divine authorship” (*Letter to a Christian Nation*, p. 79), yet he fails to acknowledge how the Bible differs from other religious books. Harris simply does not know much about the subject he sets out to demolish!

Outspoken and combative, Dawkins makes similar outrageous and ill-founded claims contrary to existing evidence. He asserts that the gospels are “ancient fiction,” no more credible than legends of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. He opines that the apostles almost certainly never met Jesus, that Jesus probably never lived and that David probably never existed (Dawkins, pp. 93–97). However, Dawkins fails to mention Peter’s claim that he and the other apostles were “eyewitnesses” to the events they recorded about Jesus’ life (2 Peter 1:16), or that historians in ancient Rome referred to Jesus (see Tacitus, *The Annals*, xv:44; Suetonius, *Life of Claudius*, xxv.4; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII.iii.3). Dawkins appears to be unaware of the discovery of a ninth century BC inscription about the “house of David” (*Is the Bible True?*, Sheler, p. 60). Dawkins asserts that “the gospels are not reliable accounts of what happened in the history of the real world” and that “all were written long after the death of Jesus” such that “huge uncertainty” surrounds the New Testament texts (Dawkins, pp. 92–95).

Dawkins, however, chooses to quote only liberal theologians who harbor doubts about the Bible. He fails to notice that people and places mentioned in Scripture have been dramatically confirmed

by history and archaeology, that the books of the New Testament were written during the lifetimes of the apostles (Sheler, p. 33; *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Geisler, p. 520), and that manuscript evidence confirms that “in substance of the text the Bible is certain... This can be said of no other ancient book in the world” (*Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, McDowell, pp. 44–45).

Frauds and Missing Evidence

Aggressive atheists are often quick to attack religious beliefs like the idea of Purgatory, and the assumption that the earth is only 6,000 years old. Like Charles Darwin, today’s atheists also recoil at the idea of a god who would devise the “damnable doctrine” of people burning forever in the fires of Hell (*Dawkins’ God*, pp. 74–75). However, those “religious” ideas are not actually found in the Bible! While they correctly point out some weak spots in man-made religious doctrines, atheists fail to acknowledge serious flaws in their own “sacred” teaching—the theory of Darwinian evolution.

And there are many such flaws. Jonathan Wells, who holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from Yale University and a Ph.D. in molecular biology from the University of California at Berkeley, has written an informative book explaining how the major “proofs” put forward for evolution “in one way or another, misrepresent the truth.” Wells points out that much of the “overwhelming evidence” for Darwin’s theory of evolution turns out to be “false or misleading” (*Icons of Evolution*, pp. 7–8). He shows how supposed “origin of life” experiments were flawed and did not

create anything resembling life. He notes that, contrary to evolutionary theory which asserts all life developed from simple to complex organisms, the actual fossils in the oldest Cambrian rocks show complex forms of life appearing suddenly, fully formed and without evolutionary ancestors—the so-called “Cambrian explosion” that even Darwin recognized was a problem for his theory (*ibid.*, pp. 35–39).

Wells points out how Darwin’s idea of a branching “tree of life,” depicting how all life developed from a single ancestor, is now largely discredited. He shows how the variation in beak structure of Darwin’s finches in the Galapagos Islands, and the coloration of peppered moths in England, are merely examples of variation within a species and do not prove evolution can produce new species. He reveals that paleontologists no longer regard *Archaeopteryx*—once called “the almost perfect link between reptiles and birds”—to be an ancestor of modern birds (*ibid.*, pp. 112–114). Wells relates how another supposed “missing link” between reptiles and birds—*Archaeoraptor*, a fossil smuggled out of China—turned out to be a hoax, and that another possible “link” named *Bambiraptor* has been depicted with hair and feathers, “but nothing remotely resembling feathers was found with the fossil. The hair-like projections and the feathers are imaginary” (*ibid.*, pp. 126–129). He quotes an ornithologist who predicts the dinosaur-to-bird theory will eventually be “the greatest embarrassment to paleontology of the 20th century” (*ibid.*, p. 130).

Wells also points out that widely published drawings made by embryologist Ernst Haeckel in the 1890s—which Darwin took to

be convincing evidence for his theory of evolution—were “doctored” by Haeckel to show similarities that do not exist, and have been exposed as “one of the most famous fakes in biology” (*ibid.*, pp. 90–92). Wells concludes that the “icons” that supposedly provide the strongest evidence for evolution actually “misrepresent the evidence”—and that some have actually turned out to be fraudulent (*ibid.*, p. 229).

Even so, atheists like Dawkins have latched onto Darwinian evolution because it is the only way they can explain why we are here without invoking any reference to God. True believers in Darwinism simply refuse to accept any other explanation for why the world is the way it is—regardless of the evidence, or lack of evidence. This is why Darwinism has been called “the greatest engine of atheism devised by man.” Yet atheism, and Darwinian evolution upon which it rests, both reveal serious shortcomings to those who examine the evidence carefully.

Crisis of Meaning and Purpose

Theological historian McGrath writes that one of Darwinism’s major consequences is that “evolutionary theory leads to a godless, purposeless world” (*The Twilight of Atheism*, p. 108). In Dawkins’ own words, “There is no need to believe in God after Darwin” and in a Darwinian world “there is... no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference” (*Dawkins’ God*, pp. 50–51). Darwinism postulates that human beings are simply animals, accidents of the evolutionary process with no higher purpose than natural selection—survival of the fittest. McGrath observes, “If

there is no God... then there are no absolute values and truths... no sins... no judgment on sins” and therefore no limits on human behavior and no accountability (*ibid.*, pp. 151, 153). By claiming that human existence has no meaning or purpose and denying absolute values, atheists promote the idea of liberation from restrictive morality systems that interfere with sexual freedoms and give people license to decide for themselves what is good (*ibid.*, p. 152). However, the sobering lesson of the last two hundred years of history is that “to remove God is to eliminate the final restraint on human brutality” (*ibid.*, p. 149).

Contrary to the expectations of secular thinkers, the last half of the 20th century has witnessed the “twilight” of the rule of atheism. The godless ideas of Darwin, Marx and Freud—which Dawkins, Harris and other atheists are promoting—came under discrediting fire. Not only did “the great atheistic messianic ideology” of communism established by the Russian revolution collapse, but religion in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe refused to die (*The Revenge of God*, Kepler, p. 191). Today, we are seeing the rival of “re-Christianizing” movements sprouting from the ruins of communism—which has been a shock to secular intellectuals. Increasing

numbers of people have become disenchanted with the bleak, purposeless, random, atheistically secular world of the 20th century, and are once again turning to religion to regain a sense of meaning, ethics and order (*ibid.*, p. 47). As more than one scholar has noted, “People need to find meaning and purpose in life” (*New York Times*, November 21, 2006).

Prophetic Significance

Many who study the Bible are aware that prophecies about the end of the age describe a time of increasing concerns about war, violence, natural disasters and global environmental crises—which certainly fit our world today (Matthew 24). However, end-time prophecies also foresaw the appearance of blasphemous attacks on God and the Bible, foretelling that in the last days, “perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves... boast-ers, proud, blasphemers... despisers of good... headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:1–4). We can recognize this biblical description in Dawkins’ references to God as a “tooth fairy... psychotic delinquent” and “the monster” of the Bible. Harris claims

(Continued on page 29)

The Bible: Fact or Fiction?

Is biblical religion a fantasy, or is it grounded in truth that you can prove for yourself? The answer may surprise you—and could change your life!

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Scoffers in the Last Days!



More people profess Christianity than any other religion. More than two billion people alive today say they believe Jesus Christ came to this earth

as the Son of God to be crucified for the sins of the world, and that He was buried, rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. The Bible presents Jesus' miracles and His resurrection as proof of His divinity. Scripture shows that these events were *witnessed by many* and were powerful reasons for the spread of the Christian religion.

However, some modern writers and scholars are suggesting that these fundamental teachings of Christianity are only myths and fables. Skeptics have postulated that Jesus was *not* divine, that He married and had a child—and that He *did not* rise from the dead, but was secretly buried in a family tomb in Jerusalem with his wife and son. While some speculate that this new “understanding” about Jesus Christ “could be among the most significant in history” (*Charlotte Observer*, March 4, 2007), what we are witnessing today is simply more prophecy *coming alive!*

Imagining the Past

Where are these “new” ideas coming from? What are their sources? A closer look is revealing. Dr. James Tabor, author of *The Jesus Dynasty*, asserts that his recently published book “presents the story of Jesus in an entirely new light. It is history, not fiction” (p. 4). Yet he states: “History is not merely an assemblage of facts. It also involves an attempt to *retrieve and imagine* the past” (p. 305). Critics note that Tabor's book—and the television documentary *The Lost Tomb of Jesus* to which he contributed—contain “a lot of speculation.” In the concluding pages of his book, Tabor writes: “There is much we can never know... With regard to some areas we are left to *guess and speculate*... [what] might have taken place...” (p. 308). That is not histo-

ry; it is conjecture that could well be fiction. Similarly, in *The Jesus Papers*, Michael Baigent provides no solid evidence—and certainly no proof—for his assertion that Jesus did not die in the crucifixion.

Modern scholars often adopt ideas that run contrary to the biblical record because they do not believe the Bible contains an accurate record of history, so they take the scriptural accounts apart, then reassemble them in a manner *they think* is more correct. Tabor and other modern scholars base their ideas about the Gospels on the so-called “Q” document” or *Gospel of Q*—a *hypothetical* collection of Jesus' sayings *envisioned* by a 19th century German scholar. As one theological encyclopedia notes: “Since Q allegedly contains *sayings*, not works or miracles of Jesus, it is used as a basis for denying the resurrection” and also the deity of Christ (*Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, pp. 618–621). However, *no one has ever seen* this theoretical Q document, and one former proponent of Q now states, “This is the stuff of fairy tales” (*ibid.*). The idea of a Q document “is based on a reconstructionist view of history that rejects New Testament history in Acts. If the Q hypothesis is correct... the book of Acts must be altogether false. Yet no book in the New Testament has more authentication of its historical accuracy than Acts” (*ibid.*). By postulating a never-seen Q document as the basis for the Gospels, modern scholars can take liberties in reconstructing Jesus' life as they *imagine* it to be—so it is no wonder that these “new” perspectives on the life of Jesus *differ so dramatically* from the actual events recorded in the Bible.

Some scholars point to apocryphal writings—never accepted by the Church—for evidence that Jesus was married and had children. One such suggestion that Jesus had a romantic relationship comes from the Gnostic *Gospel of Philip*—a source considered spurious and heretical by early Church leaders—yet some modern scholars view it, and other similar writings, as valid history. Dan Brown, author of the *Da Vinci Code*, draws on these sources as well as other pagan and occult works—yet even scholars who rely on some of the same works recognize Dan Brown's novel as *pure fiction!*

The Biblical Record

A study of the Gospels quickly reveals how the Bible *differs* from the speculative pronouncements of modern liberal scholars. The Bible states plainly

that a “virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” — meaning “God with us” (Isaiah 7:14). Jesus’ enemies mocked Him as not having a physical father (John 8:41). Modern scholars, operating on the assumption that miraculous events cannot occur, reject the biblical account of Jesus’ supernatural conception and virgin birth. The Bible clearly states that Jesus’ body was *not present* when His disciples entered the tomb on the third day, and that cloths that wrapped the body were left behind (Mark 16:6; Luke 24:3–7; John 20:1–7).

Unable to accept a miraculous explanation, some modern scholars suggest Jesus’ body was taken from the tomb and secretly buried elsewhere, though the Bible explains Roman soldiers *were paid to circulate that very lie* in order to *deny* the fact of the resurrection (Matthew 28:11–15).

Scripture explains that Jesus appeared alive after the resurrection on many occasions—even to a group of 500 onlookers (John 20:19–20, 26; 21:1–7; 1 Corinthians 15:6–8). Jesus’ resurrection on the third day was the *primary sign* that He was the promised Messiah (Luke 9:22; 18:31–33; 24:46). Modern liberal scholars, however, with their anti-supernatural bias, deny that a dead body can come alive and walk out of a grave, so they operate on the *assumption* that Jesus’ body must be buried somewhere. Think about it: if Jesus’ body were buried in a family tomb near the site of His crucifixion, as some critics now assert, surely the religious and secular authorities would have been able to find that body and show it to the public to squash the new Christian movement!

The Bible explains that Jesus preached about a coming kingdom of God (Mark 1:14–15), which He said “is not of this world” (John 18:36). Christ came to



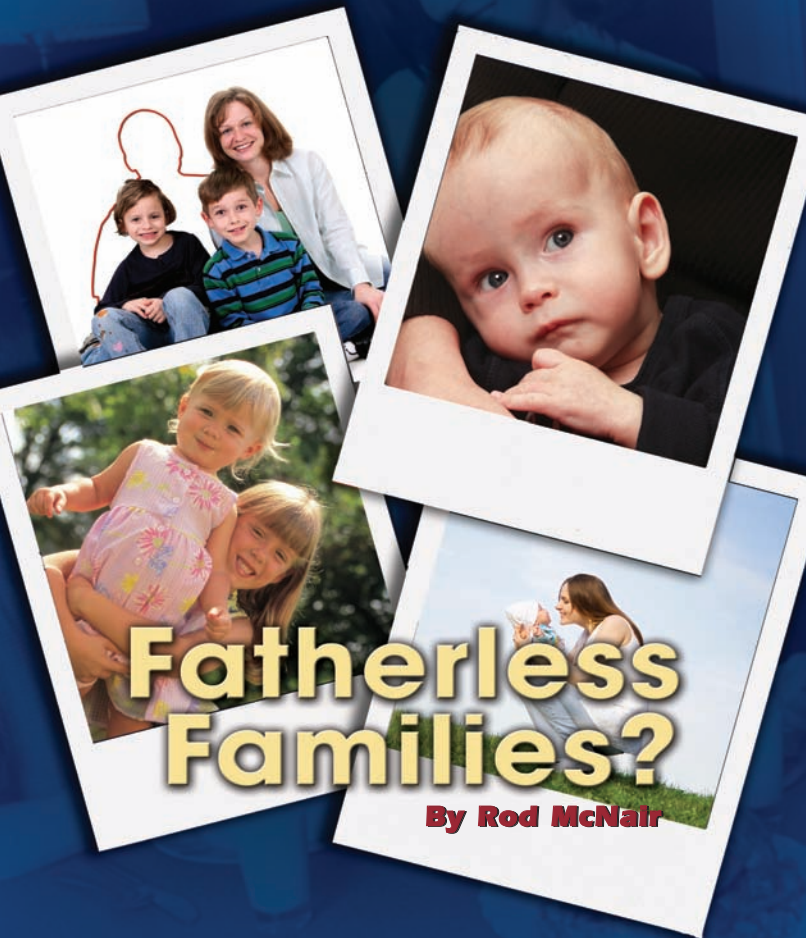
die for the sins of the world, as His disciples recognized (1 John 2:2). Yet some revisionist scholars speculate that the Gospels are mistaken, and that Jesus had a wife and children with whom He intended to start a dynastic line. These scholars say He believed He would not die by crucifixion, but that “God would intervene to save him from his enemies at the final moment” (*The Jesus Dynasty*, p. 310). This makes for entertaining speculation, but totally *contradicts* what the Bible clearly reveals—and *undermines* the very message of the Gospels.

End-Time Scoffers Prophesied

The increasing number of scholars and writers making headlines by openly challenging fundamental teachings of the Bible should come as no surprise to students of Scripture. Long ago, God foretold that “*scoffers* will come

in the last days, walking according to their own lusts” (2 Peter 3:1–6). In *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* this phrase refers to “false teachers... who deny biblical truths” (volume 12, p. 284). The Bible states that “*in the last days*” men “having a form of godliness but *denying* its power” will actually deny that “all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:1–17). They will agree with Dan Brown’s phrase, “The Bible is the product of *man*, my dear. Not of God” (*The Da Vinci Code*, p. 250). Looking to the end of the age, the Apostle Paul predicted that “the time will come when... they will have itching ears [to hear some new idea], they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to *fables*” (2 Timothy 4:1–5). *This is where we are today!* Modern writers and scholars are *twisting* the Scriptures, *denying* the inspiration of the Bible, *rejecting* fundamental teachings of Christianity and *creating in their imaginations* entirely different views about the life of Jesus Christ. Prophecies are indeed *coming alive!*

—Douglas S. Winnail



Will the “good family man” soon be extinct?

Millions of families will observe Father’s Day this year on June 17. The United States is one of several dozen countries that observe this much-beloved holiday on the third Sunday of June each year. Other countries set different dates for Father’s Day; India observes it on the first Sunday of June (June 3 this year), and several European countries (including Italy, Portugal and Spain) observe it on March 19. In Australia and New Zealand, Father’s Day falls on the first Sunday of September (September 2 this year).

As we approach this day when we honor fathers, we should ask: What is the state of “fatherhood”? Does it have real significance in society today?

True fatherhood is not just the biological capacity to father children. In-vitro fertilization can accomplish that with no father present. True fatherhood involves a father being *in the home, training and loving his children in the context of a committed marriage relationship*. By that definition, fatherhood in the United States is at an all-time low. Nearly 40 percent of U.S. births now occur out of wedlock, according to December 2006 statistics from the Centers for Disease Control. In some European countries the figure is

even higher—41 percent in France, roughly 50 percent in Norway, and 62 percent in Iceland (*Daily Policy Digest*, March 27, 2002).

Compounding the problem is that the U.S. has the second-highest divorce rate in the world. Recently, married couples for the first time became a *minority*, accounting for only 49.7 percent of households with children.

Choosing Fatherlessness

Increasingly, older single mothers are *choosing* to become pregnant without a husband. One 31-year old single mother noted that when she became pregnant “it didn’t matter if I had a man, because I knew I could do it alone.” A single mother said that her 9-year old daughter “does cry sometimes about not having her dad around, but we talk about it... I do feel guilt sometimes, but we don’t let it overwhelm us” (*Monterey Herald*, December 25, 2006).

What about the effect on children? Kay Hymowitz, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, said, “Children raised by single moms have a greater risk of poverty, emotional problems, school failure... Cohabiting parents don’t show quite the same strength; neither do stepparents. Marriage carries with it a whole set of messages about how to live, which are consistent with middle-class life in this country” (*ibid.*).

Out-of-wedlock pregnancy and divorce are so widespread, according to author David Blankenhorn, that “before they reach the age of eighteen, more than half of our nation’s children are likely to spend at least a significant portion of their childhoods living apart from their fathers” (*Fatherless America*, p. 1). In studying divorce, researchers Paul Amato and Alan Booth concluded that “at most a third of divorces are so distressed that the children are likely to benefit. The remainder, about 70 percent, involve low-conflict marriages that apparently harm children much less than the realities of divorce (“Two parents, even unhappy, are better,” *Today*, January 7, 1998).

In *Bringing Up Boys*, psychologist James Dobson points out that in spite of such evidence, some believe not only that fathers are unnecessary, but that the institution of fatherhood is harmful to families (p. 65). He cites Carl Auerbach and Louise Silverstein, authors of *Deconstructing the Essential Father*, as well as Karla Mantilla, a radical feminist author, who said, “I am highly suspicious of the...

necessity of kids to have a male role model... The propaganda that children, especially boys, need fathers I think, has contributed incalculably to the misery of children all over the world" (*ibid.*).

Roots of Paternal Conflict

Some mistakenly believe that Jesus Christ came to earth to counterbalance a harsh "Father-figure" God. They fail to see how Jesus showed only deep respect, honor and love for His Father. He said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do... For the Father loves the Son... I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me" (John 5:19–20, 30). In John 14:28, Jesus said His Father was greater than He, in position and authority. He said He came to earth to reveal and declare the Father (John 1:18).

Christ taught that we are to pray to, worship, and love "our Father in heaven" (Matthew 6:9). He said, "O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You, and these [His disciples] have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, *that the love with which You loved Me may be in them.*" (John 17:25–26). Jesus, as our personal Savior and Elder Brother, is teaching us to love His—and our—heavenly Father as well!

Yet many still recoil from fatherhood, in the family or in *religion*. "Consider this dilemma of the father's power. It is a fundamental human problem, shaping psyches and cultures. The anthropologist Weston La Barre, for example, probing for the origins of religion in human societies, finally views the 'anguish' pro-

duced by paternal authority as 'the root of religion' and 'the secret of who we are...' *In short, antagonism toward paternal power seems to go with the territory of fatherhood*" (Blankenhorn, p. 93).

Some years ago, a greeting-card company started a special Mother's Day program for federal prison inmates. Prisoners received a free card, postage paid, to send to their mothers for Mother's Day. The response was overwhelming! The lines were so long, representatives had to return to the factory to get more cards. The program was so successful, the company decided to come back on Fathers' Day. What happened on Father's Day? *Nothing*. There were no lines at all. *Not a single inmate wanted to send a card to his father*. Truly, a loving relationship with a father has a profound effect on one's life. And the *lack* of an engaged, active father is a strong determining factor in behavior gone awry (Dobson, p. 60).

Where did antagonism against fatherhood originate? In the distant past, before mankind was created, the archangel Lucifer rebelled against God, our Father in heaven. We read: "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!... For you have said in your heart... I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, *I will be like the Most High*" (Isaiah 14:12–14). Lucifer became Satan, and as Satan he transmitted his attitude of rebellion to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:5). That same spirit of rebellion against authority—even the authority of our heavenly Father—has been passed on to all mankind, and the result is sin (Romans 3:23).

Human nature naturally resists authority—whether the father of a family, or the Father-figure God (Romans 8:7). "More than the mother-child bond, the father-child

bond is frequently charged with distance, tension, and even hostility, all stemming, at least in part, from the typically distinctive content of paternal authority... the father's power, as a general anthropological proposition, is more conflictual than the mother's: more rule-oriented, more emotionally distant, more aggressive... Much of this tension is rooted in the fact that the child *both craves and resents authority. So does a culture*" (Blankenhorn, p. 93).

Is fatherhood a valid excuse for abusive behavior? Of course not! Violence against wives and children is a horrible and tragic crime. Women and children need to take steps to protect themselves against criminal behavior when it occurs. However, it is wrong to believe, as some do, that the *fatherhood role itself* increases violence against women. In fact, evidence from the National Crime Victimization Survey showed that boyfriends and ex-husbands—unmarried men—are six times more likely than husbands to commit violence against women (*ibid.*, p. 35). Clearly, when men are married, the risk of abuse is dramatically decreased. God mandates that the father is to be the head of the home (Ephesians 5:23), but his role of leadership must be exercised in love and kindness (v. 25).

The Bible reveals four distinct roles that fathers are meant to fulfill. We can also see these roles fulfilled by our spiritual Father in heaven. What are these roles?

Fathers Provide

When God thrust Adam and Eve out of the garden, Adam's role was to provide for the sustenance of the family (Genesis 3:17–19). The Apostle Paul taught that

Do Boys Need Fathers?

- The National Center for Children in Poverty reports that fatherless boys are twice as likely to drop out of school or go to jail, and nearly four times as likely to need treatment for emotional and behavioral problems.
- Dr. William Pollock, Harvard psychologist and author of *Real Boys*, says divorce is difficult for children of both sexes, but is devastating for boys. He says the basic problem is the lack of discipline and supervision in the father's absence, and his unavailability to teach what it means to be a man. Pollock also believes fathers are crucial in helping boys to manage their emotions.
- Don Elum, author of *Raising a Son*, says that with troubled boys, the common theme is distant, uninvolved fathers.
- Prisons are populated primarily by men who were abandoned or rejected by their fathers. Bill Glass, a dedicated evangelist who counseled almost every weekend for 25 years with men who were incarcerated, says that among the thousands of prisoners he had met, not one of them genuinely loved his dad. Ninety-five percent of those on death row hated their fathers.



(Source: *Bringing up Boys*, James Dobson, M.D., pp. 55–56, 60)

wives' and mothers' primary responsibility was to be managers of the home (Titus 2:5; 1 Timothy 5:14). These passages shock and embarrass some people today, but they outline basic biblical roles.

Indeed, when men shirk their responsibility to provide, they cause untold suffering. Author Aubrey Andelin describes the reaction of a woman whose husband quit a higher-paying job for another which made him happier, but at which he only worked four hours a day. “[My husband] does not seem to care whether or not he provides for us... we are desperate for money. We have been living with his parents for the past seven months and it doesn't even look hopeful that we might possibly have our own place to live. I am losing all respect for my husband and without respect there is not real love” (*Man of Steel and Velvet*, p. 78). Yes, a man's desire and earnest attempt to provide for family members is vital if he is to retain their respect.

Sometimes, of course, a man may be unable to provide for his family. Sometimes a wife may

need to step into the “primary breadwinner” role. But the general biblical principle is that a husband should provide for his own (1 Timothy 5:8).

Does God, as our Father, provide for His children? Of course! He sends the sunshine and the rain to all (Matthew 5:45). God takes special care to put bread on the table of those who honor and love Him, so that “in the days of famine they shall be satisfied” (Psalm 37:19). David wrote, “I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants [children] begging bread” (Psalm 37:25). Jesus taught His disciples to ask their Father in heaven to “give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11), and that it is God's pleasure to “give good things to those who ask Him” (Matthew 7:11). Let us look to our spiritual Father for our sustenance and needs. And let us uphold the biblical role of physical fathers to do the same in families here on earth.

Fathers Protect

God designed fathers to protect their wives and children. Men are generally bigger and stronger than women—ideally suited for the role of protector and provider. Their larger frames and stronger muscles were designed to help care for—not abuse and terrorize—a wife and children.

Not that long ago, society took for granted that a father's role was to protect his daughters from boys' unhealthy advances. Meg Meeker describes her father this way: “My dad protected me fiercely, to the point where I was almost too embarrassed to date anyone... But he protected me, not from predatory boys or monsters, but from myself. I was young and too trusting of people and he knew that long before I did” (*Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters*, p. 3).

Today, we see rampant gang violence in communities where fathers are largely absent from their children's lives. “Neighborhoods without fathers are neighborhoods without men able and willing to

confront errant youth, chase threatening gangs, and reproach delinquent fathers... the absence of fathers... deprives the community of those little platoons that informally but often effectively control boys on the street” (Blankenhorn, p. 31).

Does our Father in heaven take care of us? The Bible is full of examples of the protection our Father affords us—especially in the Psalms. Even salvation itself—rescuing us from the final destruction of death—is God protecting His children (1 Corinthians 15:57). God loves us, even to the point of giving up His Son for our lives (John 3:16).

If you value God’s protection in your life, be appreciative of Him. And be thankful for the similar role He established for fathers on earth.

Fathers Teach

God has also given fathers a unique role in the education of their children. The word “discipline” did not originally mean punishment; it meant *teaching*. Just a few hundred years ago, in colonial America, fathers “bore the ultimate responsibility for the care and well-being of their children... fathers assumed primary responsibility for what was seen as the most essential parental task: the religious and moral education of the young.” As the industrial revolution removed men from the household economy, women became the primary influence in the home. This shift has been one of the “defining features of American domestic life since the 1840s” (Blankenhorn, p. 237).

In general, mothers are better equipped to pay special attention to their children’s immediate phys-

ical and emotional needs. Fathers, on the other hand, are typically more concerned about character growth than fulfilling immediate emotional needs. Scripture reminds us: “Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying” (Proverbs 19:18, KJV). Both mothers *and* fathers are necessary for bringing up healthy children, because they complement and balance one another. Author Tim Russert recalled, “Although Dad’s disciplinary tactics were rarely appreciated by his kids at the time, I could have filled this whole book with grateful testimonies from sons and daughters who were at the receiving end years ago” (*Wisdom of our Fathers*, p. 223).

Discipline, however, *does not* mean lashing out in anger. Paul wrote, “Do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged” (Colossians 3:21). Along with teaching, measured, consistent and firm discipline—“exhorting” and “charging”—is what it takes for fathers to “bring [children] up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:11).

God our Father has established a program of character development for us. Sometimes that includes trials and tests (Jeremiah 17:10), for our eventual good. We are told, “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord *loves* He chastens... Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect... For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness” (Hebrews 12:5–7, 9–10). If we are to be in His Kingdom, we need to grow and change. God our Father

is committed to helping us do that, so we can enjoy “the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (v. 11).

Fatherhood is not a curse. It is a necessary complement to motherhood for the training of the next generation. If you had a father who trained you, give thanks for the guidance he passed on to you, however imperfectly. And let us all be grateful that God, as our Father, is willing to train us for life with Him in His Kingdom.

Fathers Nurture

Though fathers may not have the same deep “emotional well” that mothers have, their comfort and encouragement is also essential for their children’s growth. While gentleness, tenderness and affection may not come as naturally to some men, those qualities must be present in fathers who hope to nurture balanced, healthy children. “Gentleness is to the steel qualities what mercy is to justice. When justice is meted out alone, it is cold, undeviating, and unsympathetic.... Although justice is in reality given for the benefit of the individual, without mercy it appears intent on the suffering or even the destruction of the person...” (Andelin, p. 213).

A father who is not attentive to his children’s emotional needs will seem cold and distant. When warmth, communication, and encouragement are absent in a father, family roles can devolve into “master-slave” relationships. Sadly, as authors Ernest Havemann and Marlene Lehtinen note, this is how many today see traditional marriage roles (*Marriage and Families*, p. 206). But God never intended fathers to be cold and aloof. Notice how He describes Himself as our Father: “As one

Do Girls Need Fathers?

- Girls who are close to their fathers exhibit less anxiety and withdrawn behaviors.
- Daughters who perceive that their fathers care a lot about them, and who feel connected to their fathers, have significantly fewer suicide attempts and fewer instances of body dissatisfaction, depression, low self-esteem, substance use and unhealthy weight.
- Girls with involved fathers are twice as likely to stay in school.
- Girls with fathers who are involved in their lives have higher quantitative and verbal skills and higher intellectual functioning.
- Girls whose parents divorce or separate before they turn twenty-one tend to have shorter life spans by four years.
- Girls with good fathers are less likely to flaunt themselves to seek male attention.
- Girls with involved fathers wait longer to become sexually active and have lower rates of teen pregnancy.
- Seventy-six percent of teen girls said fathers influenced their decisions on whether they should become sexually active.
- A daughter from a middle-class family has a five-fold lower risk of out-of-wedlock pregnancy if her father lives at home.
- Girls who lived with their mothers and fathers have significantly fewer growth and developmental delays, and fewer learning disorders, emotional disabilities and behavior problems.
- Girls who live apart from their fathers have significantly less ability to control impulses and delay gratification, and have a weaker sense of right and wrong.



(Source: *Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters*, Meg Meeker, M.D., pp. 23–25).

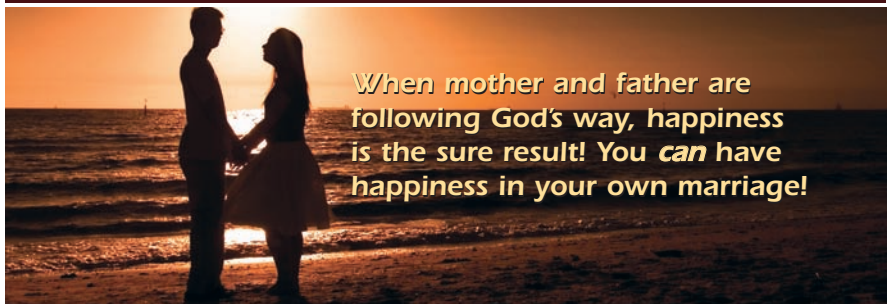
whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you..." (Isaiah 66:13). Paul explained that in his dealings with the church, he tried to be like a caring, compassionate father who comforts (1 Thessalonians 2:11).

As society becomes more decadent and self-obsessed, children need more than ever the strength and love of devoted fathers who will stand by them, support them and be a hero for them. British psychiatrist Dr. Joshua Bierer once observed "[America is] still the fatherless society. The husbands are not husbands. All the women are crying out for a strong man and he's just not there" (Andelin, p. xi). Children need fathers—and women need husbands—who will not bend to peer pressure of "what other parents do." Children need committed fathers who look out for their future character—not just bowing to their every whim and wish.

In a speech for the National Father's Day Committee, General Douglas MacArthur said: "By profession, I am a soldier... But I am prouder, infinitely prouder, to be a father... It is my hope that my son, when I am gone, will remember me not from the battle, but in the home" (Dobson, pp. 68–69). True fatherhood is a noble and honorable role for a man, and is worth striving for.

Will "good family men" become extinct? Not as long as there are men—and women—who appreciate fathers' importance in society, today and in the future. God has given us the father's role as a mirror-image of His protection, providence, discipline, and love for all humanity. As Father's Day approaches, we should thank God—our Father—for the gift of fatherhood. ■

God's Plan for Happy Marriage



When mother and father are following God's way, happiness is the sure result! You *can* have happiness in your own marriage!

Write for our **FREE** booklet, *Gods Plan for Happy Marriage*, or download it from the Booklets section of our Web site www.tomorrowworld.org.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I have read many of your booklets online and some of your magazine articles, and I found them to be to the point and cogently argued. In particular, I appreciated reading your booklets *The Ten Commandments* and *Who Controls the Weather?*. As a former criminal lawyer, now working in the area of immigration, I can attest firsthand that when there is a lack of the presence of the father in a family, this is probably the strongest reason for the increase of crime. Keep up the good work, and know that your message is being heard.

D.J., Oshawa, ON, Canada

I was surprised to read Douglas S. Winnail's article ("The Earth Strikes Back!") in the March-April 2007 issue. I agree that the earth's climate seems to be causing more disasters than in the recently recorded past. This is consistent with Bible prophecy. However, do we really know the causes? Some points not addressed in your article: Burning fossil fuel releases carbon monoxide, not carbon dioxide. Volcanic eruptions release great amounts of carbon dioxide. Water vapor contributes to the "greenhouse effect" about three times as much as carbon dioxide. Solar activity also seems to play a role, as suggested by recent findings of "global warming" on Mars. Ice core data shows carbon dioxide levels are the result of, not the cause of, temperature change. I wish your article had been more thorough in analyzing the different aspects of this complex issue. Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* is not a credible source, as Gore is a self-interested partisan, not a scientist. Legitimate scientists still disagree about the causes of recent climate change.

J.A., Chicago, IL

I just want to say thank you so much for providing God's wonderful Truth to a people in desperate need of light—like me. For so long I've struggled to do things my way, only to find out in the end that it just doesn't work! It's like being insane—doing the same things over and over

again expecting different results. I don't want to be insane anymore. I yearn for the peace of mind that God grants by living His way.

D.M., Hugo, OK

I want you to think and pray long and hard about what you are doing. Jesus did not emphasize the end of the world. He emphasized how to treat one another. I pray you desist in marketing fear and focus on love and mission. I demand you remove this address from your mailing list.

C.R., Adrian, MI

Would you please send me the booklet, *Satan's Counterfeit Christianity*? I can't get enough of your information. I received the *Tomorrow's World* two days ago, and we were traveling immediately thereafter. I read over half of it at the family's home and finished it when I returned. The only problem with it is there is never enough for me. I am currently working on Lesson 22 of the *Bible Study Course* and it is even better than the last. I pray for your continued work. Thank you and the Lord for this work you are doing. This comes from the bottom of my heart.

I.M., Starrucca, PA

One of your subscribers, a friend of mine, gave me her *Tomorrow's World* magazine to read. I got my Bible out and your *Tomorrow's World* together and had a blast. Your magazine was so helpful in understanding the truth in my studying.

E.C., Birmingham, AL

Thank you so much for your literature. I have been able to wipe out a lot of confusion and false data that I was brought up with. Years ago when I first read John 1:1 I was so astounded I just could not believe what I was reading. I was led to believe as so many others that Genesis was the beginning.

T.T., Bay of Plenty, New Zealand

We encourage you to share with us your reactions to *Tomorrow's World*. Please direct your correspondence to "Letters to the Editor" at our United States address, or send e-mail to letters@tomorrowsworld.org. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Remember to include your name, address and daytime phone number.



The Future of Jerusalem

By Richard F. Ames

Today, Jerusalem faces ongoing violence and the threat of all-out war. But your Bible reveals that this historic city will soon be the capital of the world!

Jerusalem is a focal point of conflict in the Middle East. Across the Arab world, millions oppose Israel's hold on this historic city. Around the globe, millions of Muslims hope the day will come when Jerusalem is no longer under Israel's control.

Will their hope be fulfilled? Last March, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad met with leaders of the Palestinian militant group Hamas, and expressed his support of its efforts to wrest control of Jerusalem from Israel. "The time of fulfillment of the godly promise is near. The Zionist regime [Israel] is going through its worst phase, and is on the verge of elimination. The Palestinians should stay vigilant and support their elected government to prepare grounds for liberation of holy Quds [Jerusalem] and deliverance from wicked Zionist fetters," said Ahmadinejad. He urged Hamas to persist in its efforts "for continuing resistance and throwing out the Zionist tyrants from the holy soil of Palestine. Resistance should continue until not even an inch of Palestinian soil" is under Israeli control, Ahmadinejad said.

Other less strident voices have also called for Israel to give up at least some of its control of Jerusalem. In 1980, when Israel declared Jerusalem to be Israel's "united and eternal capital," the Vatican strongly objected to that declaration. By 1984, Pope John Paul II was calling for Jerusalem to have a "special internationally guaranteed status." More recently, Pope Benedict XVI has angered many Israelis by refusing to condemn all Palestinian attacks against Israel, and by noting that Israeli response to those attacks has sometimes violated international law. In his Ash Wednesday message to Jerusalem's Roman Catholics last February, Latin patriarch Michel Sabbah criticized Israeli policy, calling for an end to "the evil of occupation, with all of its oppression," and denounced "the Israeli soldiers who, at any time, enter our Palestinian cities, kill people, take prisoners, uproot trees, and destroy houses."

To understand the future of Jerusalem, we need to understand its past. After Rome fell, Jerusalem came under the control of the Byzantine Empire until Muslim armies conquered the city in 638. In 1099, the

First Crusade saw control of Jerusalem pass to European invaders, who held it until 1187 when it was taken by the Muslim general Saladin, whose successor al-Khamil gave the city to Emperor Frederick II of the Holy Roman Empire in 1228. In 1244 the Ayyubids of Egypt took Jerusalem, and it remained under Egyptian rule until 1516, when armies of the Ottoman Empire seized the city.

Four centuries later, during World War I in 1917, General Edmund Allenby commanded the British forces that defeated the Ottoman Turks and occupied Jerusalem. Britain issued the Balfour Declaration in November 1917, declaring its plan to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and the League of Nations ratified the Declaration in 1922.

The League of Nations fell apart. But in November 1947, another international body—the newly created United Nations—passed General Assembly Resolution 181, which included a plan to put the area around Jerusalem under international control. A year later, Arabs and Israelis went to war, and the United Nations' hopes for peace in the region were dashed. From 1947 to 1967, West Jerusalem remained under Israeli control, while Jordan administered the territory of East Jerusalem.

In the “Six-Day War” of 1967, Israeli forces countered Arab attacks and took control of East Jerusalem, uniting the whole city under Jewish rule for the first time in nearly 1,900 years. Not since the Roman general Titus and his army destroyed the city in 70AD had Jerusalem been under Jewish governance.

Since 1967, Jerusalem has remained under Israeli administration. Yet tensions persist in this

densely peopled city, with an estimated population above 700,000. About 32 percent of the city's population are Arab Muslims, who often find themselves in conflict with the 65 percent of the population who are Jewish.

Three Religions, One City

Can Israel and the Arab states find peace while Jerusalem remains a source of conflict? Will the city ever be the capital of a Palestinian state? Will it come under international control? Your Bible shows that the conflict over Jerusalem will be a central focus of end-time events.

Jerusalem today is a city of many faiths; one survey in 2006 identified 1,200 synagogues, 150 churches and 70 mosques within its boundaries.

Jews look to Jerusalem as the city of the great prophets, and as the capital of the Kingdom of Israel and Judah under King David and his son King Solomon. Ancient Israel's first and second temples, in Jerusalem, were the center of Jewish worship until the Romans destroyed the city in 70AD. Today, Jews worship at the Western Wall, or Wailing Wall, which they believe is the only surviving element of the Second Temple now accessible to Jewish worshippers.

Jerusalem is also the third most holy city of Islam, after Mecca and Medina. Today, the Mosque of Omar, also called the Dome of the Rock, dominates the Temple Mount. The Arabic term for the Temple Mount is *al-Haram as-Sharif*, which means “The Noble Sanctuary.” Muslims believe that Muhammad ascended to heaven from there.

Christians remember Jerusalem as the place where the

Savior was crucified, and where He taught in the Temple—and as the place to which He will return to establish His kingdom, with Jerusalem as world capital.

Military Movements Prophesied

What does Bible prophecy reveal will happen to Jerusalem? Eventually, this ancient city will be the capital of the whole world. But before that time, dramatic military movements will affect Jerusalem. A time will come, near the end of the age, when enemy armies will invade the Holy Land and surround the city of Jerusalem. As Jesus Christ Himself warned, “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near” (Luke 21:20).

These will not be just any armies of the Middle East; Christ's prophecy shows that these will be armies of the Gentiles. He continued: “For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (vv. 22–24).

Be sure to read the parallel accounts in Matthew 24 and Mark. 13. As you read these, note that the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD was a prophetic foreshadowing of the end-time desolation described in these prophecies.

After Jerusalem falls again to Gentile control, for how long will

the Gentiles remain in charge? The answer is in the book of Revelation, which confirms that at the end of this age, Israel will once again lose control of Jerusalem. The Apostle John wrote: “Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, ‘Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months’” (Revelation 11:1–2).

Yes, Jerusalem will be under the control of the Gentiles for 42 months at the end of the age. As you read through the book of Revelation, you will see that this period of three and one-half years precedes the return of Christ. Two prophets of God will witness with great power during that same period of three and one-half years (Revelation 11:3–15). These two witnesses will contend with the Gentile force then dominating the Middle East.

Daniel’s Vision Explained

The prophet Daniel received a vision from an angel, giving us another perspective about Jerusalem’s future. When he asked about the meaning of the vision, the angel told him: “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end” (Daniel 12:9). More than 2,500 years later, we can now understand these prophecies—this is the time of the end! Then: “And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days” (v. 11). God reveals that at the time of the end, shortly before the return of Christ, the daily sacri-

fice will be stopped, or “taken away.” This obviously implies that the sacrifices must be started, before they can be stopped! There are indeed Orthodox Jews who are already planning to reinstate animal sacrifices when it becomes possible to do so. At the moment, however, Jews are not allowed to publicly worship on the Temple Mount, so it remains to be seen where and when the Jews will begin sacrificing. It will likely take a national crisis to precipitate that event.

Notice the other key item Daniel mentions, “the abomination of desolation.” What is it? Historically, the Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes issued a decree in 167BC that prohibited sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple. The Jewish historian Josephus described Antiochus’s actions: “He [Antiochus] also spoiled the temple, and put a stop to the constant practice of offering a daily sacrifice of expiation for three years and six months.” Josephus also explains how Antiochus profaned the altar. “Now Antiochus was not satisfied either with his unexpected taking the city, or with its pillage, or with the great slaughter he had made there... he compelled the Jews to dissolve the laws of their country, and to keep their infants uncircumcised, and to sacrifice swine’s flesh upon the altar” (*Wars of the Jews*, Book I, Chapter 1, Sections 1–2).

Antiochus further profaned the temple. He erected a statue of Jupiter Olympus in the temple and directed everyone to worship it. This abomination, referred to in chapters 8 and 11 of Daniel’s prophecy, was a foreshadowing of an end-time event. This is what Jesus said: “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let

those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Matthew 24:15–16).

Jesus warns us to be alert to an end-time abomination of desolation. Just as Antiochus Epiphanes profaned the Temple in 167BC and prohibited the sacrifices, so a future profane authority will prohibit sacrifices. What or who will be this end-time Abomination of Desolation? Notice: “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4).

Yes, a great false prophet will sit in the temple of God. You need to be alert. You need to understand the future. Do not let yourself be deceived.

This false prophet will perform amazing signs. Notice this description: “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived” (Revelation 13:11–14).

While the Beast power controls Jerusalem, God’s two witnesses will prophesy and prepare the way for the Messiah, the King of

kings, to take over Jerusalem, and the whole world. The book of Revelation describes the work of two end-time prophets. “And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth” (Revelation 11:3).

The book of Revelation goes on to explain that at the end of their witness, the Beast power will overcome and kill these two prophets, but God will resurrect them after three days, to the astonishment of their enemies. God will then begin His judgment by causing a great earthquake in the city. Seven thousand will die. Then the seventh trumpet will sound the good news of the Messiah’s return to earth. “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!’” (v. 15).

Peace Is Coming

Today we live in a world of war and terrorism. Nations strive for peace. But, as the Apostle Paul cautioned us, “As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God’” (Romans 3:10–11). He continues: “Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes” (vv. 15–18).

The only one who will bring us world peace, is the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He is coming back as King of kings, and Lord of lords, as it tells us in Revelation 19:16. And Scripture tells us the exact location to which He will return:

“Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east” (Zechariah 14:3–4). The Mount of Olives is just east of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley.

Jerusalem will be prosperous and flourishing when the Messiah rules the world from Jerusalem. Notice this description: “And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—‘The LORD is one,’ and His name one” (Zechariah 14:8–9).

I hope you are looking forward to that day foretold by the prophet Isaiah. “O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’” (Isaiah 40:9).

Yes, as we have seen, the Messiah is coming to Jerusalem! The whole world will soon understand, that the God of Abraham,

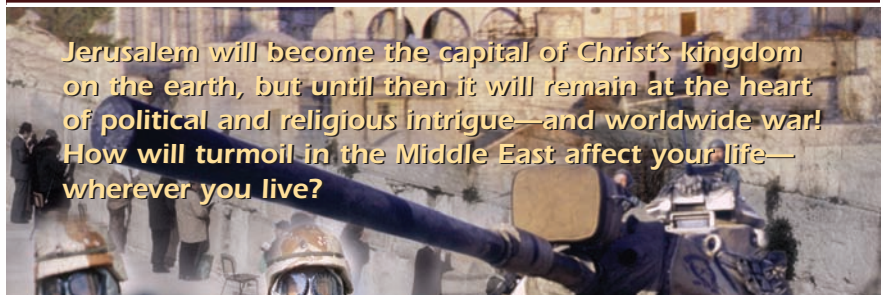
Isaac, and Jacob is the Messiah. Remember the Rock of Israel? Speaking of ancient Israel, the Apostle Paul writes, “Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:1–4). Yes, that Rock was the Messiah—and He will soon return!

As Isaiah wrote: “Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young” (Isaiah 40:10–11).

Yes, the Lord will save His people, and He will educate and wisely rule over all nations. Notice this prophecy concerning Jerusalem. “The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that

(Continued on page 29)

The Middle East in Prophecy



Jerusalem will become the capital of Christ's kingdom on the earth, but until then it will remain at the heart of political and religious intrigue—and worldwide war! How will turmoil in the Middle East affect your life—wherever you live?

Write for our FREE booklet, *The Middle East in Prophecy*, or download it from the Booklets section of our Web site www.tomorrowworld.org.

Watch and Warn

At the Precipice of Economic Collapse

Can North Americans afford to fill their gas tanks at \$4.00 or \$5.00 per gallon? If not, what will millions do when oil prices rise? With very few exceptions (such as Canada), the governments of most oil-producing nations now hate the United States, and many are faced with the threat of war at home. When troubles come, U.S. oil supplies are certain to be hit hard.

The political and economic situation in the Middle East can be likened to an open barrel of gasoline—and Iran, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. are all playing with fire around it. When will it explode? America's actions in the Middle East are deepening long-held Arab resentments against the world's only superpower. An all-out war between Sunni and Shiite Muslims in the region is also a very real possibility; not only would war interrupt oil production, it would also prevent oil tankers from safely transporting their product through the Persian Gulf. Experts warn that as tensions escalate in the Middle East, the price of a barrel of the "black gold" could rocket to \$100.00 or higher.

Trouble Brewing South of the Border

In 2005, Mexico sent the U.S. 1.7 million barrels of oil per day. By December 2006, shipments were down to 1.2 million barrels daily. Mexican oil production is decreasing; experts estimate that in just four years, Mexico's state-owned oil company Pemex will reduce its production by half. A recent *Money and Markets* report pointed out that since oil revenues sustain Mexico's social welfare programs, a drop in those revenues will likely spur greater social unrest in Mexico, and increase the rate of illegal immigration to the U.S. (March 7, 2007).

What can the U.S. do in response? Because of their economic indebtedness, Americans have largely lost the ability to direct their nation's future. That power is increasingly in the hands of bankers and governments overseas, controlling the money and oil needed to

power our energy-dependent and debt-riddled nation. We are seeing the truth of the biblical maxim, "The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7). Americans have been living on borrowed money for the last few years, using the inflated value of real estate to take "equity" out of their homes and fuel an ever-more-extravagant lifestyle.



America the Broke!

The U.S. government is broke! It must borrow more than \$2 billion per day to fund its programs at home and its military operations around the globe. America's trade imbalance is also a huge problem for its economy. At the current spending rate, North Americans buy \$810 billion more in goods and services each

year than they sell overseas. The Treasury Department's printing presses are spewing out new currency at a frantic rate. These factors together put the nation in grave danger that inflation will soon spin out of control. As the dollar declines, everyone buying and selling in dollars will see their purchasing power reduced. The dollar holds its value only so long as people around the world have confidence in its strength. If you have U.S. dollar holdings, what is your level of confidence?

Thankfully, for the time being, the nations holding U.S. IOUs have not demanded payment. They know that doing so too quickly would destroy the value of the dollars they own. Just one rogue nation intent on destroying the U.S. could start a stampede away from the dollar by quickly selling off its U.S. currency holdings—bringing the U.S. down almost overnight in an economic crash. However, any nation doing this would be committing economic suicide, as this would also plunge the whole world into the depths of another Great Depression, bringing worldwide political and social instability—and in all probability leading to World War III! Instead of risking such chaos, many national treasuries around the world are *slowly* diversifying out of dollars, moving into gold, euros and other financial instruments they consider more stable and secure. So far, the dollar's decline

has been relatively slow. But American foreign policy has made the nation an international pariah; at some point, if a country with large dollar holdings decides that the planet would be better off without the U.S., it can “pull the trigger” and quickly bring about America’s economic destruction.

The 400-point plunge in the U.S. stock market in early March of 2007, when American markets fell in sympathy with declining Asian exchanges, illustrated how national economies are intertwined. International currency traders had been borrowing billions of Japanese yen at low interest rates, and investing in higher-yield markets around the world. When the central bank in Japan began to raise interest rates, a sell-off that began in Shanghai ignited panic selling around the globe.

For years, foreign investments in the U.S. have propped up the “housing bubble” which made cheap homeowner mortgages available to poorly qualified buyers. As those investments leave American soil, we can expect real estate values to fall in many U.S. communities. This in turn will increase the number of foreclosures, and will slow the construction industry by raising costs for new borrowers. Warren Buffett, perhaps America’s best-known investor, referred to these international money flows as “financial weapons of mass destruction” (Worldwide Credit ‘Event’ on Verge of Going Boom,” *Register Guard*, November 14, 2006).

The Government Will Not Save Us

The costs of meeting America’s ever-increasing wants and needs is driving the nation to the poor-



house. War abroad and social programs at home are devouring U.S. resources, even while the hungry wolf of inflation is at the door of the average citizen struggling to pay this month’s bills.

David Walker, head of the U.S. Government Accountability Office, recently warned, “We’re underwater to the tune of \$50 trillion, and that number is going up three to four trillion a year... we need to start getting serious soon to make sure that our future is better than our past.”

America owes a significant portion of its debt to nations it defeated in World War II. God warned that if His people did not obey Him, they would have to serve their enemies. “I will give as plunder your wealth, all your treasures, and your high places of sin within all your borders. And you, even yourself, shall let go of your heritage

which I gave you; and I will cause you to serve your enemies in the land which you do not know; for you have kindled a fire in My anger which shall burn forever” (Jeremiah 17:3-4). Just as a family that cannot pay its mortgage payment will lose its home, so too will Americans lose their land if their national debt cannot be paid.

As gas prices rise—along with the cost of food and other necessities—due to scarcity and inflation, how will the average citizen cope? Will you be prepared for what is coming? To whom will you look for your safety and security—the governments of this world, or the great Creator God who made you and loves you?

The U.S. and the other English-speaking nations are losing God’s blessings and protection, as described in Deuteronomy 28. However, you can protect yourself personally from the worst effects of the coming crash. God will intervene on behalf of those who are obeying Him and seeking His protection. Turn to Him, while there is still time!

—Don Davis

The Tomb of Jesus?

Did you watch *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*—the recent Discovery Channel special produced by filmmakers James Cameron (of *Titanic* fame) and Simcha Jacobovici? It caused quite a stir when it aired, exploiting society's current fascination with the *Da Vinci Code* spirit of "creative history."

The show points us to a tomb near Jerusalem, which was thought to be uninteresting archaeologically when it was discovered in 1980. The tomb contained ossuaries (coffins, or "bone boxes") bearing a few names shared by Jesus' family members—and one labeled "Jesus [Yeshua] son of Joseph." The filmmakers say this is the tomb of Jesus' family, and that He was buried there—definitely not resurrected from the dead.

What are we to make of such a claim? Well, for starters, scholars and other experts quickly pointed out that the show's assemblage and interpretation of the facts represented bad science and pseudo-archaeology. Even the probability calculations were questionably applied.

In fact, the program's loose science and slipshod "archaeology" aside, the arguments that have proven the truth of Christianity for centuries are as strong as ever, and suffered not even a dent from this stunt.

Imagine the scene. A hush spreads across the court of King Agrippa, as the Apostle Paul winds down his defense, discussing the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ: "This thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe." Agrippa then says to Paul, "Very passionately delivered, Paul, but your tale is a fantasy. The tomb of this man you say rose from the dead is there, this day, outside Jerusalem! His bones rest alongside those of his mother and the rest of his family. Why you persist in this horrible and perverse lie to your own destruction is beyond me! Festus is right: you truly are mad!"



However, that is not how the exchange between Paul and Agrippa really happened; you can read for yourself how Luke, the first century Church historian, recorded it in Acts 26:22–32. Even in the white-hot heat of terrible first century persecution, when so many were desperate to stamp the young Church out, no one was able to produce a body—let alone an entire family tomb—to refute the Christians' persistent claim of Jesus' resurrection. No one! No matter how passionately the Church's enemies searched, no matter how viciously they interrogated the many Christians they arrested—there was simply no body to be found to demonstrate the Christians' "lie."

Paul and the other apostles would have become laughingstocks if Jesus' tomb and body could have been produced. Instead, history regards them as men who "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6), who changed the course of history forever.

Is it reasonable to believe that the religious and political authorities of Jesus' time could not—with all the power and resources at their disposal—discover the location of a family tomb located in the very area from which this disruptive new message was spreading? Are we to believe that Jesus' original followers voluntarily suffered unimaginable torments—even violent deaths—to proclaim the message of the risen Christ if they knew the message was a lie?

The men who produced *The Lost Tomb of Jesus* want you to believe so—but believing their scenario requires far more faith than a bad-science-but-ripping-yarn television special deserves.

The recipe for *The Lost Tomb of Jesus* consists of a pinch of fact, surrounded by a heaping cup of fanciful storytelling. Yet not even the truth within that pinch casts any doubt on

the truth that has defeated all challengers for nearly two millennia: the tomb of Jesus Christ was empty. He is risen, and He lives today.

If you are interested in really proving the truth of the Bible, please request our free booklet *The Bible: Fact or Fiction?* Do not take anyone's word for it—prove it for yourself!

—Wallace Smith

The Future of Jerusalem (Continued from page 25)

the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it" (Isaiah 2:1–2).

Peaceful World Government Ahead

Mountains are a biblical symbol for a kingdom or government. Isaiah states plainly that the Lord's kingdom will be established in Jerusalem. All nations will submit to the new world government. This will not be government in the hands of selfish human beings. The new government will be a world-ruling divine Kingdom—

the Kingdom of God. This world-ruling kingdom will be governed by the Messiah, the King of kings, Jesus Christ! That is the good news we all look forward to. I hope that you are looking forward to that time of world peace! I hope that you are yearning for the Kingdom to come! I hope you are praying for the Kingdom to come, as we are taught to pray in Matthew 6:10!

Notice this beautiful description of future life in Jerusalem: "Thus says the LORD: 'I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain.' Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Old men and old women shall again sit in the

streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets'" (Zechariah 8:3–5).

The city of Jerusalem will finally live up to its name, "City of Peace," because the Messiah, Jesus Christ will actually dwell there. Only then will the whole world begin to experience genuine peace.

Jerusalem will be the capital of planet earth, and you can have a part in the glorious Kingdom ruled from that capital. Tomorrow's world will be here sooner than you realize. As events move toward this wonderful climax, be sure you are watching world news in the light of Bible prophecy! ■

Religion Under Fire! (Continued from page 13)

that we do not need moral guidelines from the Bible, and that "our own search for happiness" is sufficient guide for morality (*Letter to a Christian Nation*, pp. 23–25). The Apostle Peter warned that "scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming?'" (2 Peter 3:3–4). Dawkins scoffs at the idea of God. Harris ridicules the idea of the virgin birth and the resurrection of Jesus and then makes the interesting observation, "If the basic tenets of Christianity are true, then there are some very grim surprises in store for nonbelievers like myself" (*Letter to a Christian Nation*, p. 5). Today, in our "enlightened" and "intellectually sophisticated" world, many call homosexuality and same-sex marriages "good" and ridicule anyone who promotes or follows biblical morality. Yet the Bible warns, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil... Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes... because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore the anger of the LORD is aroused against His people" (Isaiah 5:20–25). The Bible clearly reveals that a time of judgment is coming (Revelation 11:15–18)—Dawkins, Harris and their collaborators have reason to be concerned!

Numerous prophecies also speak of a revival of religious activity at the end of the age. The Apostle Paul foresaw the appearance of a prominent end-time religious figure who will *deceive* millions with miracles (2 Thessalonians 2). The prophet Isaiah predicted that this person would promote an ecumenical movement of "daughter" churches back to a mother church which claims to be the only true church (Isaiah 47:1–9). The book of Revelation indicates that this prominent religious figure will insert itself into world politics and promote the revival of a European power with roots that go back to the Roman Empire and that this revival will have global implications (Revelation 13; 17; 18). All these events will occur at a time when unbelievers are launching vicious attacks against God and the Bible. Dawkins dismisses the book of Revelation, of course, calling it "one of the weirdest books in the Bible" and asserting that the Apostle John wrote it while he was "on acid" (Dawkins, pp. 257–258). But the time is soon coming when Dawkins' attacks will be seen for what they are, and the Bible will be recognized as the source of truth that explains what is happening in our world and what will happen in our future. If you read your Bible, you will continue to see how true biblical religion is relevant and prophetically significant in ways that few realize today! ■

A Vital “Key” to Spiritual Growth

(Continued from page 2)

truth” (John 4:24). Jesus Christ also stated, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

So, to worship the true God—the God who *inspired the Bible*—we must zealously **study** the Bible. We must “feed” on Christ by *saturating our minds and hearts* with God’s word—by constantly reading with an *open mind, meditating on* and honestly “seeking” God’s will as revealed in His inspired Scripture. Then we will learn *how* to walk with God, *how* to pray to God and *how* to “fellowship” with God. Otherwise, like most of the *billions* of confused people in this world, we will end up serving God with our human imagination—in the *wrong way*—perhaps by following a false religion or simply letting our human imagination tell us what to do. Yet the Bible strictly warns us **not** to do that! “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

What may *seem* like the right way of life may be **directly contrary** to the will of our Creator! So we must all be willing to *study*, to *meditate* and to “**prove all things**”—to compare any and all of our ideas and philosophies with what God tells us in the inspired pages of the Bible! Then we can truly “pour out our hearts” to God in fervent and continual prayer! We can then, in absolute **faith**, ask Him to guide our lives, lead us and *use us* in His service—and bring us into His everlasting Kingdom!

This desire must be *first* in our minds and in our lives, as expressed by the **actions** we take. As Jesus said, “But seek **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

Many Old Testament scriptures show us how God truly blessed all the men and women who put forth the effort to “seek” Him. Notice: “Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: ‘Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you’” (2 Chronicles 15:1–2). How did they respond? “Then

they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul” (v. 12).

The Bible describes how Uzziah was blessed when he walked with God. “He **sought** God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper” (2 Chronicles 26:5).

Again, God’s word helps us see *how* and *why* these righteous kings were blessed. “Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and true before the LORD his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he **prospered**” (2 Chronicles 31:20–21).

The **lesson** is that *if* we truly want to do the will of the great God—who created us and who gives us life and breath—we should zealously “seek” Him with all our hearts. We should do this by urgently **making time** to focus on God’s will by **studying** what He has revealed in the Bible, then **meditating** carefully on what the Bible says His will truly is—then *ferently praying* to our Father in heaven for the strength and understanding to know and do His will. Finally, we must act on His will, and “walk with God”—as did Abraham, David, Jesus and the many others whom God sets for us as examples in inspired Scripture.

Then, *absolutely*, God will *hear* us and **answer us** if we respond to His will, as He has done for those before us. Remember, “Jesus Christ is the **same** yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

For, as God promised His people when they were in captivity in Babylon, “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me *with all your heart*” (Jeremiah 29:11–13).



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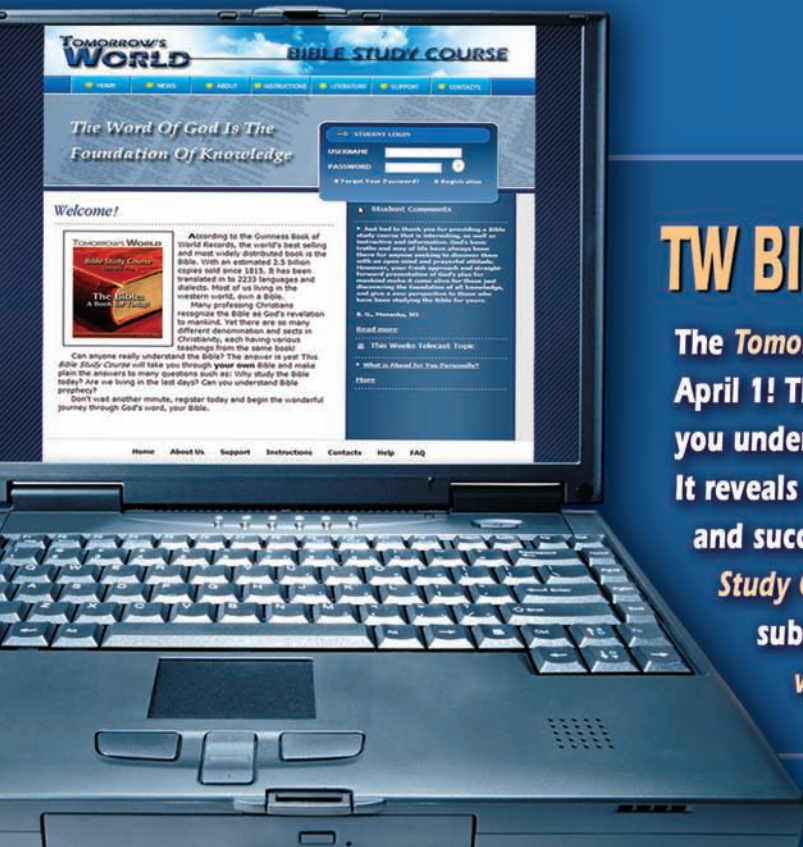
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