

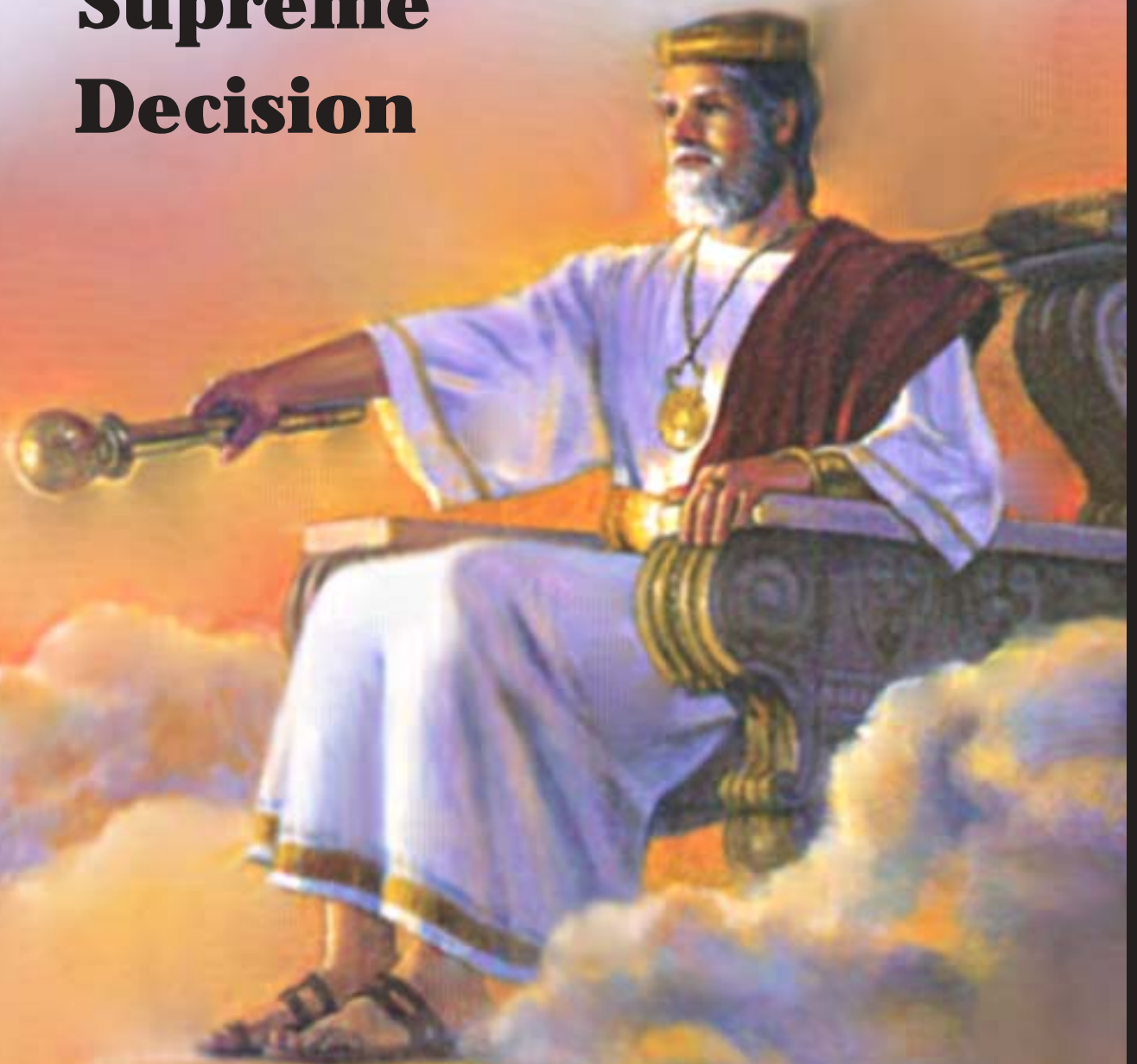
EndTime Issues....

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE – MINISTERS, TEACHERS, BIBLE STUDENTS

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God's Supreme Decision



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Manuscripts are welcomed for consideration. They should relate to something that has recently been happening, to a clearer understanding of prophecy or have a deep spiritual end-time concern, be simply written and well documented with a focused interest to Christians. Length should be limited to 10 double-spaced pages. The ongoing appeal: "Issues of concern to the final generation."

Letters to the editor: We welcome your letters of encouragement, deepening insight on relevant topics and plain feedback relative to *EndTime Issues...* Please keep your communiques brief. Your letters will be the property of Christian Heritage Foundation. Personal answers normally cannot be made. Selected letters may be published in subsequent issues of *EndTime Issues...*

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As the demands for the services of this ministry increase, so does the need for support. This work started with *great sacrifice and faith*. It continues under those same banners.

We need your support in prayers and funds. As our financial base broadens, it opens doors for a greater number to hear and see these special truths.

Donations (tax deductible) can be made by check or money order to the *Christian Heritage Foundation*, 4256-B Mockingbird Lane, Banning, California 92220-1123 USA. Credit card donations are under development.

God's Supreme Decision

President Bush's Supreme Court nominee John G. Roberts, Jr. will likely, based upon preliminary reports, replace Sandra Day O'Connor. Judge Roberts has been an appellate attorney and later served as judge in the U.S. Court of Appeals. If approved, he will have served in the capacity for citizenry appeal and final judicial review in this nation's legal process. An appointment to the highest court will give him power over the "last appeal."

Intriguingly, the Bible is filled with legal language and imagery. In fact, the whole plan of redemption is structured to play out in a courtroom setting. God is seen as the "supreme court's" highest judge (Hebrews 12:23). Jesus is seen as an attorney, representing us (1 John 2:1). In that capacity He is an appellate lawyer. What law is their basis for judicial review and judgment? It is the Ten Commandments with associated statutes. That "law" was "added" into this world's infrastructure because of sin (Galatians 3:19). That is our "constitution," and it is filled with wonderful "bills of rights."

Making the picture an almost unbelievable story, Jesus Christ acts as an administrative legal expert for that constitution. He is called a "mediator" (1 Timothy 2:5). How could He ever do that? He tested that law and found it perfect. "And for this cause He is the mediator of the new testament [New Covenant]" (Hebrews 9:15).

Because of what Jesus did, God, the "Chief Justice of the supreme court," has given Him the task of choosing who will be in the kingdom (Acts 10:42, 17:31). That attorney then becomes judge. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.... In

those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land." Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15. Not only is He to "make up" His kingdom, but all those chosen become witnesses to God's character. They will have on white robes, which were washed in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14). This is beautifully described in the parable of the wedding banquet (Matthew 22:1-14).

The preparation for that eschatologic feast becomes paramount. It was the guests' responsibility to wear a festal garment. It was *proof* that the guests were prepared. The *white garment* was *legal proof* that the individual was a friend of the Son.

Jesus pleads with the Laodicean church to buy white raiment that it might be clothed (Revelation 2:18). He craves the friendship of mankind so much that He even promises we might sit right there with Him on His throne, which He shares with the King of the Universe (Revelation 2:21) – if covenant stipulations are met. The promise doesn't stop there. Those saints share the kingship and judgment responsibility with Jesus (Revelation 20:4).

"In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land." Isaiah 33:5.

"And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD." Hosea 2:19-20.

"The just LORD *is* in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not." Zephaniah 3:5.

In those vast legal proceedings the cry from the very throne comes to all of mankind:

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” Ezekiel 33:11.

“Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” Jeremiah 3:14.

Sadly, there is only a remnant who make themselves available to this wonderful invitation and broad provision of grace. “And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, *even* the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, *yet* a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.” Isaiah 10:20-22.

Jesus said: “For many are called, but few *are* chosen.” Matthew 22:14.

In that special position that Jesus occupies, He directs in a universal call to make our “calling *and* election sure.” “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall

never fall:” II Peter 1:10. What do *we* “do?” It is found in the stipulations of the everlasting covenant.

When does the “choosing” process begin? Daniel 8:14 is an awesome timing prophecy. After 2300 atonement evenings and mornings (years) “the holiness will be vindicated.” In context, God’s church, His people and all heavenly records will be purified of sin. They will be holy.

It will happen, it is happening, the subjects of the kingdom are being made up. Peter said we will be saved – we will never fall “if ye do these things.”

Attorney Jesus will defend us in front of Judge God – yet, in unmistakable love language. He has made legal provision to be our Brother and God our Father. That is the permanent relationship He waits to sign and seal. Then He writes the family name upon us – we are not only heirs but then family (Revelation 3:12). He writes a will, filled with the most wonderful inheritance. Then He tells us how to become heirs – by putting on the white garment.

The “supreme court” is in session. Cases are being reviewed. It is amazing. Those chosen for the kingdom will then sit in that court, helping Him! Jesus’ “last appeals case” will have been you and me! Those now are His supreme decisions.



We are, once again, honored to have insight from Richard Bennett, a former priest in the Roman Catholic Church. He was Jesuit trained in Ireland by the Dominican Order and later at the Angelicum University, Rome, Italy. He finished his studies in 1964. After a life-threatening accident, he spent 14 years contrasting Biblical truth with Catholicism. In 1986 he made the step, by God's grace, to leave the Roman Catholic Church because of what he discovered. He is articulate and a deep thinker, evangelist, writer and apologist now working at Dayspring Fellowship, Reformed Baptist Church in Austin, Texas. www.bereanbeacon.org; - www.the-highway.com. He is a friend, thorough expositor and welcomed contributor to this magazine.

Dear Friend,

This article on mysticism may be one of the most important topics that I have addressed. I am quite amazed that the strong influence of Catholic mysticism has helped mightily to transform the New Age Movement from being counter-culture to being embraced by Evangelicals, and Western civilization and such. Like a plague, Catholic mysticism has affected almost every facet of life without being noticed or perceived.

Sickly sentimental syncretistic mysticism has crossed the threshold of the Gospel even among evangelicals; it is time to make a stand.

In the Lord's truth and grace,

Richard Bennett

The Mystic Plague – Catholicism sets a Spiritualist Agenda

The Roman Catholic Church is persistent in her quest to draw all to herself. One of her major venues is the marketing of mysticism under various guises. This is because, as different world religions begin to adopt the idea that they must work together for the well-being of civilization, Rome truly believes that "well-being" can only come through unity with herself as "the mother of all believers."^[1] Through crises such as famine, war, racism, human rights, ecological problems, and poverty, Rome is appealing for togetherness at the level of faith. Her attempted appropriation of Evangelicalism and false ecumenism with Christian churches to promote her gospel, we have already documented.^[2] Very dangerous, and for the most part unnoticed, is her effort to bond with the

pagan religions of the world. The common ground among them all is mysticism, which easily puts within her grasp the religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Stemming from her own mysticism and that of these pagan religions comes the tide of secular mysticism, now freely flowing through the Western world in health programs, education, and entertainment. Public programs and private services now openly promote a mystic agenda all around us, the consequences of which are becoming apparent in our society. Mysticism has always been the highway into the occult, as many seek to find their identity in "God consciousness." Mystical God consciousness is an attempt to replace Christ's redemption and salvation.

THE INFILTRATION OF CATHOLIC MYSTICISM

Mysticism is an attempt to gain ultimate knowledge of God by a direct experience that by-passes the mind. The strong influence of Catholic mysticism has helped immensely to transform the New Age Movement from being merely a counter-culture sub-culture to becoming a new source of spiritual vision for the world. Catholic mysticism has very effectively and subtly invaded many facets of life without being recognized or critically examined. This has been actively promoted through self-help medical, educational



RICHARD BENNETT

and psychological programs, employing methods such as meditation, philosophical programming, and self-hypnotic contemplation. In melding Eastern subjective spirituality with Western self-assurance, Catholic mysticism has done much to effectively hijack public and private religious life and to invert core beliefs and values of the West.

CATHOLICISM MARRIED TO PAGAN RELIGIONS AND PANTHEISM

For centuries, the Roman Catholic Church has assimilated to herself the mystery elements of pagan religions. Subjective religious experience, or mysticism, continues to be the meeting point of pagan religions and Catholicism, particularly so since Vatican Council II, when Rome changed her major strategy in an attempt to bring Protestants back under the papal fold. The marriage between Romanism and paganism is documented in official statements from Rome. For example, in Vatican Council II documents she states,

“In Hinduism men explore the divine mystery and express it both in the limitless riches of myth and the accurately defined insights of philosophy. They seek release from the trials of the present life by ascetical practices, profound meditation and recourse to God in confidence and love. Buddhism in its various forms testifies to the essential inadequacy of this changing world. It proposes a way of life by which man can, with confidence and trust, attain a state of perfect liberation and reach supreme illumination either through their own efforts or by the aid of divine help.... The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions.”^[3]

Jesuit priest William Johnston explains how it happened,

“Then came the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Overnight the Catholic Church which had been a Western institution exporting its wares to the East became a world community. Asian and African bishops and theologians assembled in Rome and, with their European and American confreres, acknowledged that the Spirit of God is at work in all

peoples and in all religions. Since then, most theologians recognize non-Christian religions as ‘valid ways.’”^[4]

It is on such a quagmire that Catholicism stands hand-in-hand with Buddhism and Hinduism, and out of which well-known Catholic mystics such as William Johnston and Thomas Keating have emerged. For example, Johnston describes the effect of enlightenment, “Self-realization lies at the very heart of Buddhism ... In self-realization I become one with God just as the object is one with the mirror and just as Jesus is one with his Father.”^[5] The famous mystical monk, Thomas Merton, developed this pantheistic identification with God, as does his present day devotee, William Shannon. Merton states,

“[N]ow I realize what we all are. And if only everyone could realize this! ... I suddenly saw all the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God’s eyes. If only they could or see themselves as they really *are*. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed.... I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other.”^[6]

Shannon endorses the idolatrous self-identification with God and cites his mentor, Merton, “A person of true faith travels, not without difficulty, towards the heart of mystery. Such a person, as Merton puts it, ‘works his way through the darkness of his own mystery until he discovers that his own mystery and the mystery of God merge into one reality, which is the only reality.’ *DQ* 180”^[7]. These quotations are standard descriptions of the pantheistic myth that we are all in God. In their own minds, Merton and Shannon have literally transmuted God Himself into their own image, having exchanged Him for human beings as an object of worship. Have they not, in the words of Romans 1:23, “*changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man...?*”

LEADING BUDDHISTS ACKNOWLEDGE SOUL UNITY WITH CATHOLICISM

Leading Buddhists recognizes the marriage of Rome and paganism. Thich Nhat Hanh states,

“Buddhists and Christians know the nirvana, or the Kingdom of God, is within their hearts [sic]. The Gospels speak of the Kingdom of God as a mustard seed planted in the soil of consciousness [sic]. Buddhist sutras speak of Buddha nature as the seed of enlightenment that is already in every one’s consciousness. The practices of prayer and meditation help us touch the most valuable seeds that are within us, and they put us in contact with the ground of our being.”^[8]

The Buddhist leader Dalai Lama on visiting the grave of Thomas Merton at Gethsemane Abbey prayed, “Now our spirits are one.”^[9] It is an appalling blasphemy to affirm of the thrice-Holy God that the Kingdom of God is “as a mustard seed planted in the soil of consciousness” and that “meditation help[s] us touch the most valuable seeds that are in us” and that it “put[s] us in contact with the ground of our being.” Listen to the razor-sharp words of the Redeemer, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”^[10] The Holy Spirit’s unique office is to lead true believers into all truth by convicting us of “*sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*”^[11] It is not by the darkness of meditation on “the ground of our being” that leads us to the kingdom of Christ; rather in the words of Scripture, it is the Father “*which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.*”^[12]

EVANGELICAL ENDORSEMENT OF PANTHEISM

A leading Evangelical, Richard Foster, lauds this pantheistic identification with God. Foster states, “Contemplative Prayer immerses us into the silence of God. How desperately we in the modern world need this wordless baptism! ... Progress in intimacy with God means progress toward silence.”^[13] Foster asks rhetorically, “What is the goal of Contemplative Prayer?” And he answers, “To this question the old writers answer with one

voice: union with God... Bonaventure, a follower of Saint Francis, says that our final goal is ‘union with God,’ which is a pure relationship where we see ‘nothing.’^[14] Seeing “nothing” and the “wordless baptism” are just an Evangelical rehashing of Catholic irrational superstitious myth. Rather, as II Corinthians 4:3 states, “*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*”

The Catholic priest Thomas Keating agrees with Foster as he writes, “Contemplative Prayer is the opening of mind and heart – our whole being – to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words and emotions.”^[15] Thus Keating depersonalized God to the nameless “Ultimate Mystery” in mythology. This impersonal, “Ultimate Mystery” is a non-speaking, non-judgmental “god.” Is Keating in the twenty-first century any better off than the men on Mars Hill to whom Paul spoke regarding their “*altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD, whom therefore ye ignorantly worship*”^[16]? Nor is any morality derived from Keating’s “Ultimate Mystery.” Thus Keating, Merton and Shannon with their pantheistic identification with God have attempted to destroy God’s self-sufficiency as Creator, and the Lord God Almighty. They have endeavored to clone God into the image of humans. According to Romans 1:25, have they not “*changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever*”? No wonder Merton admits, “If only they could or see themselves as they really are.... I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other.” In the place of the true worship of God, they have set about to establish pantheistic idolatry.

DRAMATIZED MYSTICISM

The Pentecostal Word of Faith movement is simply a dramatized form of mysticism. In a sermon tape, Kenneth Copeland states, “You don’t

have a god in you, you are one." In a 1987 crusade, Copeland is documented as saying, "I say this and repeat it so it don't upset you too bad. [sic] When I read in the Bible where He (Jesus) says, I AM, I say, Yes, I am too!"^[17] Kenneth Hagin in Word of Faith says, "You are as much the incarnation of God as Jesus Christ was. Every man who has been born again is an incarnation and Christianity is a miracle. The believer is as much an incarnation as was Jesus of Nazareth."^[18] Casey Treat, known for the infamous quote, "When God looks into the mirror, He sees me! When I look into the mirror I see God!"^[19] proclaims on his WebPage, "God dwells in you. God walks in you. When you walk, God walks. When you show up, God shows up. When you show up, a winner shows up. You won't lose."^[20] Paul Crouch, Benny Hinn, Charles Capps, Robert Tilton, Paul Yonggi Cho, Marilyn Hickey, Morris Cerullo, T. L. Osborn, and Jerry Savelle are just a few more of the well-known names that stage-managed mysticism. As one might suspect, many of the gurus of dramatized mysticism promote fellowship with Catholicism. The Trinity Broadcasting Network, one of the largest radio and TV networks in the world today, through its founders, Paul and Jan Crouch, fosters fellowship with Roman Catholics, amid mysticism presented in the whirling garments of charismania. For example,

"The world of Benny Hinn is a strange, confusing world. He fits perfectly into the category of a Charismatic Catholic priest, dispensing theological bondage and mystical superstition ... a recent Benny Hinn three hour video which presented him 'as a 'twentieth century' 'Holy of Holies', a 'point of contact' for the power and anointing of God much as Roman Catholic priests were presented during medieval times. They also suggested that he is becoming a kind of 'Charismatic Pope.'"^[21]

Catholic Charismatics have all the traditional mysticism of the sacraments, the Word of Faith movement, and Catholic and Zen Mystics from which to draw. In Biblical terms they are thrice dead in deceit, for what has been quoted here are pieces of insolence, blasphemy, and falsehood. The Copelands, the Crouches, Hinn, Hagin, and others

like them would have you rejoice in the light within by claiming that you are a god within. The Lord God Almighty proclaims, "*I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.*"^[22] The Word of the Lord still stands, "*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*"^[23]

THE POPE'S OFFICIAL APPROVAL OF TRADITIONAL MYSTICISM

In an official "Apostolic Letter" the Pope has endorsed Rome's own mystical tradition and the "great mystical tradition of the Church both East and West." His official teaching is,

"[W]e are greatly helped not only by theological investigation but also by that great heritage which is the 'lived theology' of the saints. The saints offer us precious insights ... through their personal experience of those terrible states of trial which the mystical tradition describes as the 'dark night.' Not infrequently the saints have undergone something akin to Jesus' experience on the Cross in the paradoxical blending of bliss and pain. In the Dialogue of Divine Providence, God the Father shows Catherine of Siena how joy and suffering can be present together in holy souls: 'Thus the soul is blissful and afflicted: afflicted on account of the sins of its neighbour, blissful on account of the union and the affection of charity which it has inwardly received. These souls imitate the spotless Lamb, my Only-begotten Son, who on the Cross was both blissful and afflicted.' ... What an illuminating testimony! ... Is it not one of the 'signs of the times' that in today's world, despite widespread secularization, there is a widespread demand for spirituality, a demand which expresses itself in large part as a renewed need for prayer? **Other religions, which are now widely present in ancient Christian lands, offer their own responses to this need, and sometimes they do so in appealing ways...** The great mystical tradition of the Church of both East and West has much to say in this regard. **It shows how prayer can**

progress, as a genuine dialogue of love, to the point of rendering the person wholly possessed by the divine Beloved.” [24]

This is a brilliant piece of political bridge building on the Pope’s part. By citing experiences of “saints,” he attempts to make these experiences universal standards of deep and authentic spirituality. Then he grants approval to other religions by stating that they meet the “renewed need for prayer” in ways which are “appealing,” affirming the idea that the process of prayer can become so consuming that it “render[s] the person wholly possessed by the divine Beloved.” High thoughts, vain imaginations, and carnal reasonings about the greatness of human efforts have always exalted themselves against the knowledge of God. If “a progress, as a genuine dialogue of love, to the point of rendering the person wholly possessed by the divine Beloved” were true, there would have been no need of salvation by the Redeemer. Scripture declares the reality and truth, “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.” [25]

TRUTH CONTRASTED TO CRAFTED MYTHOLOGY

True Christianity is unique among the religions of the world in that it is a rational-historical faith. For the Christian, salvation is based on something entirely outside of man. Salvation is found in the faithfulness and perfect sacrifice of the Christ of history. Catholic and Eastern mystics claim to discover God in the depths of their being. The true Christian looks away from himself to the righteousness of Christ Jesus. Before God, Christ’s satisfaction for sin is a reality that is all-sufficient. It does not need to be supplemented by any other reality. God’s verdict of *justification* is not grounded on any state of being within the believing sinner, rather it is established on Christ Jesus alone. The principle that man can save himself by his experience and by his own life has been the foundation of every pagan religion, as it is of Catholicism. What is so sinister about the present communion of Rome with paganism is that it is contaminating our entire society.

The deadly deceptions of mysticism arrogantly advertise a way of direct access to the All Holy

God and thereby repudiate any need of the Lord Jesus Christ, the One Mediator between God and men. The believer’s worship and approach to God is in the Lord’s own words to be with “*all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*” [26] In the words of the Apostle Paul, “*I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.*” [27] The same Apostle warned believers, “*Let no man beguile you of your reward . . . intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.*” [28] The censure of the Lord God remains on those who have issued lies, “*Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!*” [29] Because of this debasement of Christ and His Gospel we again outline the essentials of historical faith.

OBJECTIVE SALVATION IN THE LORD OF GLORY

As Mediator, Christ Jesus is the only means of union between God and man, “*that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; in him.*” [30] Christ Jesus is exalted to “*the right hand of the Majesty on high*” [31] as the One Savior. He and His Gospel are objective and real! This Gospel is not an idle tale, nor a piece of incomprehensible mysticism; rather it is the proclamation of the awesome historical work of redemption accomplished by God Himself. The Father appointed Christ Jesus as the guarantee of real salvation. Christ Jesus was glorified in finishing the Father’s mightiest work. In Christ’s own words, “*I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*” [32] He had fulfilled all the Father’s will and so gloriously honored the Father. As Savior He is exalted high above “*all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.*” [33] He alone, and not some mystic charm of Rome or Buddha, has been given all authority in heaven and in earth. He has been given power over all flesh that He should in His own words, “*give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*” [34] He alone has been given a name, which is above every name, “*that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to*

the glory of God the Father."[35] It is God's commandment that we trust in Christ, *"This is His command, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ"* [36]

True faith involves a repudiation of the self-deceit of experiential mystical means of reaching God, *"for there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."*[37] The Lord Jesus stands ready to receive every sinner who will throw away his rebellion and pride and trust in Him alone for salvation! Preaching the real historical Christ and His Gospel is the answer to the mindless adumbrations of Rome and the ecumenical mystics. Thus alone can the true Church, God's People *"go forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."*[38] The Gospel is a mighty deliverance from the groveling religious subjectivism of Rome and her pagan mistresses. To know God is life itself to a Christian, in the words of the Lord Himself, *"this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."*[39] Knowledge of God, and faith in Him, are the means whereby all spiritual supports and comforts are conveyed to the true believers. *"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."*[40]

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE NEW AGE ASPIRATION?

The goal of the New Age Movement has consistently been to bring in the Age of Aquarius when all will recognize "the God with themselves." A major step towards this in the words of the New Age prophetess, Alice Bailey, is "the regeneration of the churches." [41] Her vision was that "The Christian church in its many branches can serve as a St. John the Baptist, as a voice crying in the wilderness, and as a nucleus through which world illumination may be accomplished." [42] In a word, she desired the time when the "Christian churches" would embrace the New Age concepts of illumination and self-realization. The New Age plan to bring in world peace cannot fully establish the Golden Age of Aquarius until Biblical Christianity is outlawed or destroyed.

Now that the Church of Rome has entered into liaison with paganism, she has again concocted

another successful work of syncretism. As Catholicism has become the religion of the European Union, [43] the desires of New Age leaders appear to be coming true. Even at the local parish level according to William Shannon "contemplative spirituality" has now widely replaced old-style Catholicism. [44] With New Age convictions being voiced by leading Catholics and Evangelicals, it appears that the desired goal is closer to being achieved. The New Age aspiration to establish a one-world order lead by "a Christ Leader" is being met by the Pope and his Church. All of this ought not to surprise any believer, for the Bible has persistently warned believers of the enormity, growth and prevalence of the apostate church system and her mistresses.

THE GOSPEL POWER AND FINAL DESTRUCTION – THE APOSTATE KINGDOM

The ruin of the Antichrist's kingdom is declared by the Apostle Paul, *"Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."* [45] In our article, "The Antichrist Unveiled," much of the signs and lying wonders of the Papal System were pointed out. Its machinations, however, will have come to completion only when it has rejected the Christ of history, and has received "the christ of Satan," which "christ" is "enlightenment," "Ultimate Mystery" and "self realization." The Lord in His Word has foretold the destruction of Antichrist's reign as *"... that Wicked ... whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."* [46] In the meantime, the victory of the Gospel is present for those who wait on Him. His power has always been greatest in the day of utmost need. The character of God in His gracious Gospel is *"the spirit of his mouth."* This has been understood and lived out as *"the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."* [47] We see His power as we boldly proclaim His graciousness, every individual who is saved *"being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."* [48]

CONCLUSION

What has been shown here regarding Catholic mysticism's outright invasion of Evangelicalism and its commandeering of New Age verbiage and paraphernalia, should cause serious individuals to examine carefully the foundation upon which his or her hopes are built. A mere "I hope I am saved" is not enough, nothing short of the full assurance of faith on the solid Rock, the Lord Christ Jesus, will suffice. It is in God's light, and in it only, that *"we see light."*^[49] True Christians interpret all religious experience by the normative revelation of God recorded for them in the Holy Bible. The wicked love darkness; but God's people love the Light! Mystics have not scrupled openly to equate the true God with "the god" within. They have thought to divest themselves of God Himself by turning to inward self-realization and enlightenment. Rather, the values that they set are based on personal inner feelings that are often incapable of reasoned explanation. The Gospel is the exact opposite, the historical message of the Cross of Christ for a lost world. The Gospel proclaims Christ Himself, and the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who in His love gave His Son to die for sinners. There is no valid excuse for true believers to be deceived by "false apostles," who transform themselves into the "apostles of Christ," *"for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."*^[50] There are many false prophets gone out into the world, if we study diligently these things, which God has recorded for our safeguard against the subtle deceptions of Satan, we will not mislead nor be misled. True believers in Christ must take to heart solemn warnings of the Apostle Paul, *"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? ... be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."*^[51] *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."*^[52]

"CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL SERVE"

In 1986, Pope John Paul II seized the inter-faith initiative by gathering 160 of the world's religious

leaders for a prayer summit at Assisi, Italy. They flew in from around the globe, Islamic Mullahs from nine nations, the Dalai Lama, (traditionally regarded by Buddhists as a living deity), native American Shamans and Indian cultists, African animists, Hindus, Zoroastrians, Catholics and, of course, Protestants. "We will stand side by side asking God to give us peace," declared the Pope.^[53] The grand encore to this initial dramatization of Luciferian unity occurred in January 2002, as Pope John Paul II led 200 leaders of different religions once again at Assisi, Italy. By public demonstration, by official sanction, in countless books and seminars, as well as WebPages with broad ecumenical support, Popedom has set a mystical agenda, which the world loves and accepts. Any believer or confessing fellowship group that remains silent in the face of such bald-faced blasphemy inevitably lends credence to the Pope's deceit. For Rome still assumes her ancient legal principle to stand, "He who is silent is understood to consent."^[54] *"The lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,"*^[55] are Satan's strongholds in the souls of many as proud conceits; exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. The Lord God Almighty commands each one of us to cast *"down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."*^[56] *"Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."*^[57]

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Endnotes

^[1] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second edition (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997) Para. 181

^[2] See our articles on "The Alignment of New Evangelicals with Apostasy," "The Roman Catholic-Lutheran 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification'" and "Biblical Unity or Papal Conformity?"

^[3] Vatican Council II Documents, No. 56, *Nostra Aetate*, "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 28 Oct. 1965, Vol. I, Para. 2, p. 739.

- [4] William Johnston, *The Mirror Mind* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990) p. 7
- [5] *Ibid.*, p. 33, 39
- [6] Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, Image edition Dec. 1989 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966) pp. 157, 158. This book has official Roman Catholic approval.
- [7] William Shannon, *Seeds of Peace Contemplation and Non-Violence* (New York: Crossroad Publ. Co, 1996) p. 73
- [8] Thich Nhat Hanh, Introduction to *Contemplative Prayer* by Thomas Merton, Image Book edition (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1996) p. 5
- [9] <http://www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Jan1997/feature1.asp> 10/8/2002 The website also states that Merton died in Bangkok, Thailand, in 1968, apparently electrocuted by a faulty room fan.
- [10] John 3:3
- [11] John 16:8
- [12] Colossians 1:12-13
- [13] Foster, Richard J., *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992) p. 155
- [14] *Ibid.*, p 159
- [15] Thomas Keating, "The Method of Centering Prayer" <http://www.thecentering.org/centering> 10/22/02
- [16] Acts 17:23
- [17] www.watchman.org/reltop/unbiblcl.htm 11/11/02
- [18] www.watchman.org/reltop/unbiblcl.htm 11/11/02
- [19] Michael Horton, *The Agony of Deceit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1990) p. 91
- [20] www.caseytreat.org/godsword Being_In_Christ 11/11/02
- [21] Benny Hinn, Catholic Mystic www.deceptioninthechurch.com/hinnccatholic.htm 11/11/02
- [22] Isaiah 42:8
- [23] Isaiah 8:20
- [24] OFFICIAL APOSTOLIC LETTER OF POPE JOHN PAUL II "NOVO MILLENNIO INEUNTE"
www.vatican.va/holy_fa_ther/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-mill_ennio-ineunte_en.html+Novo+Millennio+Ineunte Para 27,
- 33 Bolding in any quotation indicates emphasis added in this paper.
- [25] Titus 3:5
- [26] Matthew 22:37
- [27] I Corinthians 14:15
- [28] Colossians 2:18
- [29] Ezekiel 13:3
- [30] Ephesians 1:10
- [31] Hebrews 1:3
- [32] John 17:4
- [33] Ephesians 1:21
- [34] John 17:2
- [35] Philippians 2:10-11
- [36] I John 3:23
- [37] I Timothy 2:5
- [38] Song of Solomon 6:10
- [39] John 17:3
- [40] II Peter 1:3
- [41] Alice Bailey, *Problems of Humanity* (New York, NY: Lucis Publ. Co., 1964) p. 152
- [42] Alice Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* (New York, NY: Lucis Pub. Co., 1957) p. 510.
- [43] This fact of syncretism in the EU we wish to deal with in our next newsletter.
- [44] Shannon, *Seeds of Peace*, p 25.
- [45] II Thessalonians 2:10b-12
- [46] II Thessalonians 2:8
- [47] Romans 1:16.
- [48] Romans 3:24.
- [49] Psalm 36:9
- [50] II Corinthians 11:13-14
- [51] II Corinthians 6:14,15,17
- [52] Ephesians 5:11
- [53] *L'Osservatore Romano*, English version of the official Vatican newspaper, Oct. 27, 1986, p. 1
- [54] "*Qui tacet consentire videtur*"
- [55] Ephesians 2:3
- [56] 2 Corinthians 10:5
- [57] Malachi 3:18

DEVOTIONAL



Conviction's Voice or Voice of Seduction?

IN THE BEGINNING

Within that garden of splendor and amazing beauty was a "tree" that tested Adam and Eve's minds. A plant would "examine" man's use of the powers that elevated him above all the other creation. God gave this elevated being *moral discrimination*.

- Man was given the freedom to choose.
- But, he was not given the freedom to choose the consequences of his choice – that was predetermined and irrevocable.

God went a step further in giving man a special "hearing" gift. His choice *could be influenced* by special voices. Each would encourage a choice that was opposite the other. Each would come to man in a subtle or supernatural way. God graciously unfolded the issues related to the amazing gift of moral choice. Reason would help discern which voice was speaking.

Those voices could be "heard" through two very highly specialized "ears" – additional wonderful gifts. The voice of Satan would be heard through the senses of self-pleasure, excitement, eyes, ears, feelings, touch, etc.). The voice of God would be heard in a highly developed area of the mind called conscience, where conviction, reason, association, memory, etc., worked together.

God went still another step further. This is where it gets serious. By man's choices he could

sharpen or dull the sound of each voice. It would be possible to eventually silence completely one voice while in a fully conscious state. The final end – the ultimate outcome – of that *gift of choice* would cause man to be either fully like Him or totally like Satan.

Expositor White saw this quite clearly:

"All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that *when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses*. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, *sin will become hateful to us.*" – *Desire of Ages*, p. 668 (emphasis added). That's what God craves.

At that remarkable point, our own impulses exclude, automatically, Satan's influences.

- We choose – Him
- He works on the mind.
- The will (choice center of the mind) becomes changed.
- It eventually ceases to respond to Satan.

Jesus was at that point when He said: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" John 8:46.

CHOICES CAN DEGRADE

The demoniacs were almost fully controlled by Satan and his host – until Jesus supernaturally released their control of these men’s wills. They were powerless to respond to anything but the voice of the devil – “spirit of the devil” (Mark 5:1-13). Total possession is described in Revelation 20 – where the wicked have been raised. In the face of glory, Jesus and the New Jerusalem in all its splendor, it says:

“And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of saints about, and the beloved city.” Revelation 20:9. They are ready to fight God and all that He stands for.

Paul gave Timothy a fascinating sign of the end of time:

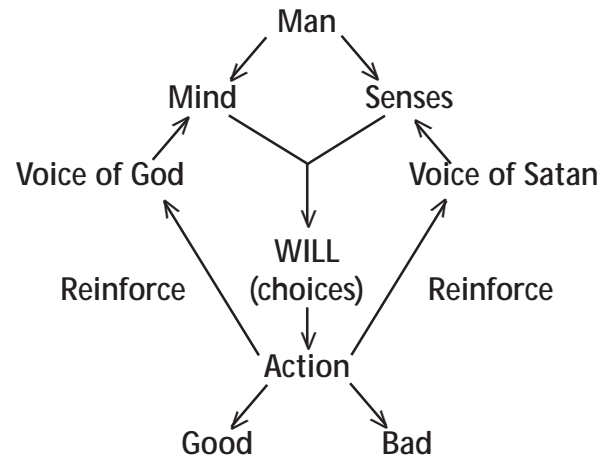
“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; *having their conscience seared with a hot iron.*” 1 Timothy 4:1-2.

That was a definitive statement by the Holy Spirit. Man’s conscience would be irrevocably damaged. Paul had earlier noted to the Romans what people would do:

“And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a *reprobate mind*, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” Romans 1:28-32.

After a certain period of time, God will give someone with a seared or evil conscience “over to a reprobate mind.” That means the mind cannot be renewed, because the person has for so long chosen Satan’s “ways” over God’s “ways” that it is not possible for them to change. This should be a warning for all who persist in sin.

Notice – *God gave them over to a reprobate mind.* This portrays divine abandonment. There is no longer any hope.



Knowing that conscience “is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passion [Satan’s voice]” (*The Faith I Live By*, p. 58), it is reprehensible to note that the Catholic Church states that *it* stands between God and conscience. – *Advent “Conscience” vs. Conscience in Its Practical Workings*, subtitle: “The Supremacy of Conscience.” They decree that inner morality comes from conscience submission to the church – eliminating that beautiful work of the Spirit!

“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said: ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.’” Hebrews 3:13-15 (NIV).

The Bible expresses the importance of maintaining a pure conscience:

“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” Acts 24:16.

HOW DO I TRAIN MY CONSCIENCE?

It was once said that “A clean conscience is the best pillow.” When we heed that inner voice, it brings peace and harmony.

Paul gave us some remarkable insight: “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.” Romans 9:1. His conscience bore witness to the truth of

Jesus Christ. The Spirit helps the conscience, convicting it of right and wrong, approval or condemnation.

That conscience can be trained and molded to respond to the voice of God by knowledge from God's Word: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12:2. As you implant God's thoughts into your mind, the conscience functions more and more in a Godly way. Regularity in sensitizing the mind to the Word brings peace: "Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Psalm 1:1-3.

Peter advised us to hold onto a good conscience (I Peter 3:16). It is a prize to maintain so we can enjoy inner peace.

We are invited to listen to the voice of God through our conscience and through His Word. There, the renewing power to the soul will come.

"There are three ways in which the Lord reveals His will to us, to guide us, and to fit us to guide others. How may we know His **voice** from that of a stranger? How shall we distinguish it from the

voice of a false shepherd? God reveals His will to us in His word, the Holy Scriptures. His **voice** is also revealed in His providential workings; and it will be recognized if we do not separate our souls from Him by walking in our own ways, doing according to our own wills, and following the promptings of an unsanctified heart, until the senses have become so confused that eternal things are not discerned, and the **voice** of Satan is so disguised that it is accepted as the voice of God." – *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 512 (emphasis added).

Yes, there are two voices. Satan always speaks loudly. He wants every sensory input to thrill with ecstasy. He likes the individual to be awed at pleasure, music, amusement, even sensory-designed worship.

Why doesn't God shout and thunder and make sure with flashes of lightning that we know who is speaking? He just doesn't work that way. God's final appeal is to that part of the mind that distinguishes us from all other creatures. When we choose by conviction, it is a rational decision. It truly preserves our freedom. That's what God wants. When we respond to sensory pleasure, we do so as a slave to feelings. That is more like an animal responding to sensory stimuli. That degrades the high thinking ideals that God has for each one. Freedom to choose is not an impulse. It is a high and noble act of the mind. Choosing freely the convictions of that inner voice elevates us to be in harmony with the Eternal.



Why Jesus is Coming Soon

The Great Week of Time

Part 10

The Anticipatory Sevens

Within the Biblical record *numbers* are presented hundreds of times related to prophecy, representing myriads of time periods or waymark events to guide God's people through the great controversy process. The most significant number, as we have repeatedly seen, is *seven*. This was introduced at the very beginning with the creation week. It is the key that unlocks a door into the corridor of prophecy. Incredible as it may seem, it also helps define God's perception of good and evil.

Let's look at the amazing sacred *sevens*:

THE ASTONISHING "ONE"

Jesus, in a self-declaration said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending." Revelation 1:8. He repeated that three more times, the last when drawing that apocalyptic book to a close.

He announces within a framework of time that He was the first – the amazing One. Alpha, the first letter of the Greek alphabet, contextually affirms that nothing is before Him.

At creation (Genesis 1:2-5) light was divided from darkness on the first day. Shortly thereafter our first parents were introduced to the great extremes between good and evil represented by the Trees of Life and Knowledge. Light and darkness – life and death – enveloped the first covenant given to Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:16-17).

When they sinned, God announced the first plan to restore what was lost (Genesis 3:15), a plan that was in place from the foundation of the world (Matthew 26:34). That plan was based upon sevens

and then an eighth. The eighth would become a "first" – a beginning again.

The first millennium demonstrated the massive divide between good and evil. Redemptive history was set on a millennial timeclock. This is intimated in Revelation 20, where the saints, after Christ's coming (Revelation 19:11-16) reign with Him for one thousand years (Revelation 20:6). At the same time, Satan is bound on this uninhabited earth for one thousand years (Revelation 20:2-3).

David ques in on this when he says, "For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past and as a watch in the night." Psalm 90:4. Though this intimates that God's time can't be compared to man's understanding, it is a declaration to man that God has a millennial reference clock. This saga of life within this earth's history is only a millennial moment to Him, even though it might seem "forever" to man.

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." II Peter 3:8.

This is another statement that time is nothing to God. The metaphoric period used is, once again, based on millennial thinking.

Thus, the first period of earth's history – "one" – represented a beginning.

Perfect Creation

Light separated from Darkness

Promise of life instead of death –
there would be another "one"

THE ASTONISHING "TWO"

The second day of creation the sky (or heavens) was introduced within the midst of the waters. This firmament separated atmospheric waters from earthly waters. The Bible says that God called this heaven. A distinction now existed between heaven and earth.

During the second millennium of earth's history God repented that He had made man on earth, and it grieved Him at heart (Genesis 5:6). This *separation* deepened approximately 1600–1700 years after creation – the great deluge came, and the waters were returned to the earth – that began the second day of creation.

It is significant that the world waited seven days after Noah and his family were safe in the ark. This was a reminder to the rabble that they had forgotten the sacred seven that began at creation. The end of that seven would *begin* desolation and destruction. In God's redemptive plan, the end of a seventh would bring restoration.

As dry land was to protect from the waters, the ark became a promised symbol of Christ, a Savior, from the tempest of the world. First, we had a salvic promise, then a symbolic demonstration of what God would do for the faithful within His millennial plan.

THE ASTONISHING "THREE"

On the third day of creation (Genesis 1:9-13) God gathered the waters together into one place, causing dry land to appear – "earth." On that land he created grass, herb-yielding seed, herbs, vegetables and fruit trees, yielding fruit.

Symbolically, grass and flowers represent *people* – also life (Isaiah 40:6-7). The earth supported and sustained this life. Trees are seen as people, especially leaders as they stand in obedience to God's law, bearing fruit (Psalm 1:1-3).

It was during the first part of the third millennium that God chose Abram (Abraham) to be the leader of a great nation (Genesis 12:2-3). Like a giant tree he became the great "father" metaphor of the nation of Israel; the grass, its peoples. God was bringing into existence another creation within the third.

THE ASTONISHING "FOUR"

On the fourth day of creation God made the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night. It was then that light and darkness were divided (Genesis 1:14-19).

The Lord, spiritually, became our sun and shield. "For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psalm 84:11. Jesus had said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." John 9:5. Light became a symbol of righteousness, the sun an image of Jesus. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Malachi 4:2.

Lest anyone might misunderstand this amazing metaphor for purity and right, Jesus declared, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:12. There's the embodiment of the sun, light and life.

Darkness became one of the representations for sin and evil. Jesus, in His interceptive message to Saul said, "I am Jesus" [I will send you] ... to open their eyes [Gentiles], *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Acts 26:15, 18.

Salvation is dependent upon coming out of darkness into the light of Jesus Christ. It means experiencing His sanctifying righteousness.

It was during the fourth millennium that apostasy reached another pinnacle. Darkness came in among God's chosen. God sent beacons of light through prophets like Nathan, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Israel chose darkness and became snared within the clutches of Babylon – the great symbol of darkness.

Then in one of the profound prophecies of the Old Testament Gabriel told Daniel that his people were going to be put on probation – exactly 490 years.

Within that time period everlasting righteousness was to come in and God's people were to give up all rebellion and sin "even until the consummation" (Daniel 9:27). During this fourth millennium

God announced the parameters of mercy and justice. The great division between light and darkness was made emphatically clear. The fourth millennium, filled with the darkness of apostasy, was committed to preparation for the coming Messiah, the sun of righteousness.

In prophecy *declared numbered sevens* are divided into 4-2-1 – always.

This fourth millennium is a great transition to the next 2-1. The parameters to the everlasting covenant are now indelibly riveted into the sacred pages. God has a part *and* man has a part. God is declaring and decreeing that a covenant is incomplete without both! The “fourth” forever defines light.

This fourth theme looks forward to the heavenly seventh when: “There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.” Revelation 22:5.

THE ASTONISHING “FIFTH”

The fifth and sixth days of creation brought sea and air creatures into existence plus terrestrial creatures such as cattle, creeping things and beasts of the earth. Adam was commissioned to subdue the earth. Subdue (*kabash*) implies that creation would be submissive to man. Yet, man would have to guide it. God specifically said that Adam was to have dominion or authority over the “fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that *moveth* upon the earth.”

As the animal kingdom yielded to man, the dignity of this hierarchy in a perfect creation provided harmony. As Christ was over the heavenly created angels, man was to be over the living earthly creatures. Man was also to dress and keep the Garden of Eden that he was placed in. In this beautiful accord, man in turn yielded his allegiance back to his Creator.

The order of things changed when man yielded to Satan. He was brought under the power of Satan. While he promised “them liberty, they

themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.” II Peter 2:19. That dominion that man held was transferred to Satan. He became “god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4).

He had usurped that dominion over the earth that was originally given to Adam¹ because of man’s submission.

At the beginning of the fifth millennium something changed this order of dominion.

“Christ, by His sacrifice paying the penalty of sin, would not only redeem man, but recover the dominion which he had forfeited. All that was lost by the first Adam will be restored by the second. The prophet says, ‘O Tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto Thee shall it come, even the first dominion.’ And the apostle Paul points forward to the ‘redemption of the purchased possession.’ God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. That purpose will be fulfilled when, renewed by the power of God, and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal abode of the redeemed. ‘And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him.’”²

The fifth millennium ushers in the dispensation of grace. Dominion of all creatures with brains, those that move, that can be volitionally responsive, was now slated to be taken from Satan. The legal documents were signed by the blood of Jesus.

This era of grace is mediated by the Holy Spirit, Christ’s representative.

“The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for His blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for it. The Lord expects us to ask Him.”³

¹God’s Amazing Grace, p. 41.

²The Signs of the Times, 11/4/1908.

³Testimonies to Ministers, p. 511.

The fifth millennium paves the way for the transference of dominion control of His special creatures back to God. That occurs when mankind is elevated in God's kingdom: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Revelation 1:5-6. The "fifth" begins the Christian era.

Though apostasy continued, the blood of saints flowed, affirming a growing core of activists against Satan during that thousand years.

THE ASTONISHING "SIXTH"

As noted above, this day of creation saw the completion of the creative creature work. It also became unique in God bringing man into existence – "in His image." The ultimate creation was a being just like He was. The last and crowning act was the creation of Adam and then Eve.

"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." Genesis 1:31.

Sin marred God's perfect work. The sixth millennium was to become the era to *complete* the reversal of what Satan and man did. It is the final preparation time of cleansing so man could enter into the "seventh" or eternal rest with God.

How complete was that restoration to be? Back to the moral image of God that Adam and Eve once enjoyed. This millennium represents man being made once again into God's likeness and when our bodies will be renewed in the twinkling of an eye (I Corinthians 15:52).

"God desires us to reach the standard of perfection made possible for us by the gift of Christ. He calls upon us to make our choice on the right side, to connect with heavenly agencies, to adopt principles that will restore in us the divine image. In His written Word and in the great book of nature He has revealed the principles of life. It is our work to obtain a knowledge of these prin-

ciples, and by obedience to cooperate with Him in restoring health to the body as well as to the soul."⁴

"Let those who work for Christ keep their principles pure. Let the life be untainted by any polluting practice. All heaven is interested in the restoration of the moral image of God in man. All heaven is working to this end. God and the holy angels have an intense desire that human beings shall reach the standard of perfection which Christ died to make it possible for them to reach. It is His desire that we shall be one with Christ, complete in Christ, that we shall be heirs of heaven; but we are left free to choose. God calls upon us to make our choice on the right side, to connect with heavenly agencies, to adopt principles which have a reviving, restoring influence, which will restore in us the moral image lost through disobedience. As by faith we adopt the principles which characterize the life of Christ, they are in the soul as a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life. The soul overflows with the riches of the grace of Christ, and this overflow refreshes other souls."⁵

This is what the apostle Paul called "the redemption of the purchased possession" (Ephesians 1:14).

"Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, ***that we should be holy and without blame before him in love***: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom ***we have redemption*** through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in ***the dispensation of the fulness of times*** [the millennial periods] he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are

⁴God's Amazing Grace, p. 103.

⁵In Heavenly Places, p. 286.

on earth; *even* in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, *ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise*, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." Ephesians 1:3-14.

"Higher education is an experimental knowledge of the plan of salvation, and this knowledge is secured by earnest and diligent study of the Scriptures. Such an education will renew the mind and transform the character, restoring the image of God in the soul."⁶

This sixth millennium can't be finished until that restoration is complete – for those who accept heaven's provisions. That completed work is called the "sealing" in Revelation 7 and Ephesians 1:13-14. The final strife (political and military) of this world is held back (Revelation 7:1-2) (the four winds) until God's people are all sealed in their foreheads (7:3-4).

That sealing was talked about by Ezekiel – the "man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side" and was ready to "set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst" of God's church (Ezekiel 9:3-4). When the sealing is *ended* – the restoration is complete.

At Sinai, as God was trying to reunite the people He had chosen, He gave the Decalogue, written on stone. Of focused interest was the fourth commandment that recalled God as the Creator.

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*,

and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11.

Being written in stone, it was never to be changed. Why? Those principles were an outline of God's character and interrelational ideals established during the first week of creation! It, along with the statutes, modeled the restoration plan.

At the end of the sixth millennium Jesus returns to receive those who make up the restored kingdom. That is when the separation of good and evil is forever made. "Before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:" Matthew 25:32. That is when the last half of Revelation 14 is fulfilled. That is when the millennial reign of Jesus begins – not on earth as so many misunderstand.

Jesus said He would go to His Father's house – heaven – where there were many mansions. It was there that Jesus would go to prepare those places for all the redeemed. Then He said that if He would "go" (fulfilled in Acts 1:9-11), He would come again to *receive* His people to be with Him. "Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be *caught up* together with them *in the clouds*, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." I Thessalonians 4:17.

It is then – in the seventh millennium – that the saints will reign with Christ for one thousand years (Revelation 20:4, 6) in those heavenly mansions. It is also when Satan is chained to this earth for one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3, 7).

What will be the character of man at the time he is sealed?

"God will accept only those who are determined to aim high. He places every human agent under obligation to do his best. *Moral perfection is required of all*. Never should we lower the standard of righteousness in order to accommodate inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong-doing. We need to understand that imperfection of character is sin. All righteous attributes of character dwell in God as a perfect, harmonious whole, and *every one*

⁶*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 11.

who receives Christ as a personal Saviour is privileged to possess these attributes."⁷

Man "reaches a perfection of intelligence and a purity of character but little lower than the perfection and purity of angels."⁸

Many will object and claim that this is impossible, saying that grace has bridged the gap. It has. Grace – that man can lay hold of – brings in the transforming power of heaven, resulting in a new creation during the sixth millennial "week" of time.

"Everyone who by faith obeys God's commandments, will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression."⁹

There it is. In the great millennial plan, what once was, is restored to its original beauty. That is one of the profound messages of the Great Week of Time. It is restoration history that ends in eternal life!

"Satan's work of ruin is forever ended. For six thousand years he has wrought his will, filling the earth with woe, and causing grief throughout the universe. The whole creation has groaned and travailed together in pain. Now God's creatures are forever delivered from his presence and temptations. 'The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet; they [the righteous] break forth into singing.' [Isa. 14:7.] And a shout of praise and triumph ascends from the whole loyal universe. 'The voice of a great multitude,' 'as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings,' is heard, saying, 'Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.'"¹⁰

"The great plan of redemption results in fully bringing back the world into God's favor. All that was lost by sin is restored. Not only man but the earth is redeemed, to be the eternal abode of the obedient. For six thousand years Satan has struggled to maintain possession of the earth. Now God's original purpose in its creation is accomplished. 'The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.'"¹¹

THE ASTONISHING "SEVENTH"

Creation was completed before the "evening" of the seventh day. On that day – the last day of the week that He decreed – He blessed it and sanctified it. The "seventh" became sacred. It became a day of rest, a Sabbath to honor the Creator!

"The saints will rest in the holy city, and reign as kings and priests one thousand years; then Jesus will descend with the saints upon the Mount of Olives, and the mount will part asunder, and become a mighty plain for the Paradise of God to rest upon. The rest of the earth will not be cleansed until the end of the one thousand years, when the wicked dead are raised, and gather up around the city. The feet of the wicked will never desecrate the earth made new. Fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them, burn them up root and branch. Satan is the root, and his children are the branches. The same fire that will devour the wicked, will purify the earth."¹²

A day of a thousand-year duration is seen in the limit established for man's *longevity* before the flood and with Adam. God said in the "day" he would eat of the forbidden tree he would die. Before the end of the millennium – 930 years – Adam died.

Within the thematic period of "seven" is its application as "week," "week of years," "weeks of months" and in millenniums, "week of millenniums." Repeatedly, after the seventh comes an "eighth" – the "day" when all begins again. That will be the study of the next chapter. As Jesus rose on the "eighth," so our grandest hopes rest on the eighth millennium, when all will be made new again.

⁷ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 330.

⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 93.

⁹ *Maranatha*, p. 224.

¹⁰ *The Great Controversy*, p. 673.

¹¹ *The Adventist Home*, pp. 540-541.

¹² *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, pp. 108-109.



Prophecy Unfolds

DANIEL CHAPTERS 8–12 – PART 12

BY FRANKLIN S. FOWLER JR., M.D.

Chapter 32

PRETENDING TO BE LIKE GOD

Daniel 11:36-39

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.” Daniel 11:36.

This “king” is clearly the *king of the north* or *vile person* by the description given (similar to the *little horn* of chapter 8).

- He exalts himself (8:11, 25)
- He magnifies himself above every god (8:25)
- He speaks against God (8:23, 25)
- He prospers (8:12, 8:24-25)

This cross-references with II Thessalonians 2:4.

- Exalteth himself
- Exalteth himself above all that is called God

The *king of the north* had indignation (*zaam*) against the holy covenant (11:30). But at the appointed time the indignation or wrath (*zaam*) of God will turn against him. He prospers until then. Again, in Daniel 8:19 it is at the *appointed time* when God’s wrath is exhibited. It says the *little horn* will come to its end – “he shall be broken without hand” (8:25). Only God intervenes. No man, army or political force brings it to its end. That is exactly what is described in Revelation

16:19. Babylon comes into remembrance before God “to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.”

The final phrase, “that is determined shall be done,” simply means that what God has already decreed will be done. The *vile person*, the *little horn* and the *king of the north* are destined for destruction. God has foretold its final demise. That was declared a second time in Daniel 9:26-27.

Expositor White understood Daniel 11. She applied verses 31-36 to the emerging time of tribulation, future to 1904, when her thoughts were penned. This is what she observed:

“We have no time to lose. Troublous times are before us. The world is stirred with the spirit of war. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place. The prophecy in the eleventh of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Much of the history that has taken place in fulfillment of this prophecy will be repeated. In the thirtieth verse a power is spoken of that ‘shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.’ [Verses 31-36 quoted.]

“Scenes similar to those described in these words will take place. We see evidence that Satan is fast obtaining the control of human minds who have not the fear of God before them. Let all read and understand the prophecies of this book, for we are

now entering upon the time of trouble spoken of: [Dan. 12:1-4 quoted.]¹

This insight helps us to put into perspective the setting and meaning of the last third of this remarkable chapter.

“Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.” Daniel 11:37.

This verse sequentially flows from the previous one. The *king of the north* – the papacy – has no regard for the God of his fathers – nor any god. The Apostolic Church had a pure faith and unswerving interest to uphold the God of truth. As Rome gradually became the center of administrative Christian power, anti-Semitism and pagan influences tainted truth. Compromise and tolerance brought terrible changes to a church still in its youth. The seeds of apostate Christianity, of “Romanism,” sprouted into Catholicism. Bishops, and later popes, were elevated as God. Finally, they ruled against the very Being they claimed to represent. Salvation was deemed only through the church. The priest became the arbiter of forgiveness and the gatekeepers to heaven or hell.

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” II Thessalonians 2:3-4.

The disregard for women is reflected in the coercive rule of celibacy, the denial of women’s role in the priesthood and prohibition of marriage to tens of thousands of nuns who serve the church, often in a state of forced poverty.

Celibacy was instituted by the early Roman Church – not as an issue of purity but to preserve property. Many kings and nobles donated property to priests (who were married) for their long and devoted spiritual services. When they died, the wives would be the heirs. Thus, the church would lose out. In celibacy the church became the heir. This became church dogma, finally eliciting guilt, sin and sacrilege on the part of anyone who opposed or broke a celibacy vow.

Keeping the nuns single became a tool to control and extract loyalty to the church or its priest

leadership. This coercive administrative ploy automatically rejects women’s ordination. Ordination would make women equal to men, something the Catholic Church functionally resists.

Reviewing Catholic literature, one is struck with the moral and elevated spiritual values they see in being celibate and single. All those were an afterthought to the original financial and power objectives of Rome. “For he shall magnify himself above all” – an arrogant theme that Scripture reminds us of repeatedly. They control and manipulate lives, acting as God but representing the character of Satan.

“But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.” Daniel 11:38.

The context flows from the previous verse where in the parting thought it noted that the papacy magnified itself (himself) above every god/God. This new verse transcends even that horror by noting that he honors or promotes the god (the King James Version’s capitalizing of “God” here is incorrect) of strongholds.

This setting implies that because of the papal arrogance, power and elevated honor by the world, it assumes it is its own fortress – impervious to any opposition or powers that might seek to curtail its authority.

Once again, a negative point is made that this power has deviated from the God of heaven and paid loyalty to a god the early Christian church did not know. Immediately, this introduces gods from paganism/mysticism, and what follows confirms this insight.

The papacy honors gods of gold, silver, precious stones and pleasant things. This conjures up the massive system within Catholicism of idols, icons, expensive ornaments, opulent clothing, jewelry and churches that cost many times that of Protestant edifices. The Catholic Church readily admits its rites and worship styles have come heavily from pagan traditions.

Perhaps most reprehensible is the transference of worship from the God of heaven to man himself – the pope. This theme continues what was introduced

¹White, Ellen G.; *Manuscript Releases*, No. 13, p. 394.

in verse 37. The pope is seen as, worshiped as and declared to be "god on earth."

The New York Catholic Catechism says: "The Pope takes the place of Jesus Christ on earth ... by divine right the pope has supreme and full power in faith and morals over each and every pastor and his flock. He is the true Vicar of Christ, the head of the entire church, the father and teacher of all Christians. He is the infallible ruler, the founder of dogmas, the author of and the judge of councils; the universal ruler of truth, the arbiter of the world, the supreme judge of heaven and earth, the judge of all, being judged by one, God himself on earth."

In his encyclical, *The Reunion of Christendom* (1885), Pope Leo XIII stated that the pope holds "upon this earth the place of God Almighty."

The Council of Trent declared: "Sitting in that chair in which Peter, the prince of the Apostles, sat to the close of life, the Catholic Church recognizes in his person the most exalted degree of dignity, and the full jurisdiction not based on constitutions, but emanating from no less authority than from God Himself. As the Successor of St. Peter and the true and legitimate Vicar of Jesus Christ, he therefore, presides over the Universal Church, the Father and Governor of all the faithful, of Bishops also, and of all other prelates, be their station, rank, or power, what they may be."

The Catholic book, *My Catholic Faith*, which is based on the Baltimore Catechism, says on page 251, "The Pope can make and unmake laws for the entire Church; his authority is supreme and unquestioned. Every bishop, every priest, every member of the Church is subject to him."

"The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God and the vicar of God...."

"The Pope is as it were God on earth, sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief of kings, having plenitude of power, to whom has been intrusted by the omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly but also of the heavenly kingdom...."

"The Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws...."

"The Pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man but of God, and he acts as vicegerent

of God upon earth with most ample power of binding and loosing sheep." (Translated from Lucius Ferraris, *Papa II*, Prompts Bibliotheca, vol. VI, pp. 25-29).

That is blasphemy of the highest order against the sovereign God of the universe!

"Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge [and] increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain." *Daniel 11:39*.

The wording of this verse is difficult to grasp. In the context of the previous verse the papacy will continue with those deeds, using the cover of their *strong holds* (their great cathedrals and churches, which they claim to be Christian) as their protection. The mysticism of that cover and its rites and traditions will safeguard the strange god of the papacy – the pope. The world will be enamored with him. This ties to "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?" (Revelation 13:4). The mysticism of the papacy so intrigues the minds of the world that they capitulate to it, feeling it all-powerful.

Whoever acknowledges him is allegedly rewarded with glory (*kabowd*), honor or a *sense* of moral security.

These dynamics were effective in the past and will be repeated in a far more persuasive and deceptive manner at the end:

"As her power increased, the darkness deepened. Faith was transferred from Christ, the true foundation, to the pope of Rome. Instead of trusting in the Son of God for forgiveness of sins and for eternal salvation, the people looked to the pope, and to the priests and prelates to whom he delegated authority. They were taught that the pope was their earthly mediator and that none could approach God except through him; and, further, that he stood in the place of God to them and was therefore to be implicitly obeyed.... Thus the minds of the people were turned away from God to fallible, erring, and cruel men, nay, more, to the prince of darkness himself, who exercised his power through them. Sin was disguised in a garb of sanctity. When the Scriptures are suppressed, and man comes to regard himself as supreme, we need look only for fraud, deception, and debasing iniquity. With the elevation of human laws and traditions was manifest the

corruption that ever results from setting aside the law of God."²

Catholicism creates a psychological magnetism that ensnares millions of minds. Verse 39 portrays a magnetic attraction the world will have for that authority. It reveals an intriguing dependency in a coercive, submissive bond.

"And this is the religion which Protestants are beginning to look upon with so much favor, and which will eventually be united with Protestantism. This union will not, however, be effected by a change in Catholicism, for Rome never changes. She claims infallibility. It is Protestantism that will change. The adoption of liberal ideas on its part will bring it where it can clasp the hand of Catholicism.—RH June 1, 1886.

"The professed Protestant *world* will form a confederacy with the man of sin, and the church and the world will be in corrupt harmony. — 7BC 975 (1891)."³

The final thoughts of this verse reveal that this *vile person*, the *king of the north*, the papacy, will reward land and kingship over the masses (many) to those who have been loyal to its authority. Not only

will the religious world give submissive honor to the papacy, but here, the secular world experiences gain. We must turn to Revelation 17 for added understanding.

The harlot (that blasphemous woman), symbolizing Babylon (the Roman Catholic Church), makes the "inhabitants of the earth ... drunk with the wine of her fornication" (17:2). The world is enamored with her deceptive, abominable teachings. These are depicted by the "abominations" in the "golden cup in her hand" (17:4). It doesn't stop there. The scarlet beast or papal power upon which she rides has ten horns, which are "ten kings" which haven't received their kingdom as yet (the time in which this prophecy begins to unfold). BUT – they will "receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (17:12).

When does that occur? At the very end of time, which is described here in Daniel 11:39! The world has already been divided into ten great divisions for a future time by the United Nations and The Club of Rome. Those are the ten horns depicted here soon to become future "kingdoms" that rule under the administrative guise of the papacy.

²White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 55.

³White, Ellen G.; *Last Day Events*, p. 130.



LIBERTY

IN THE

BALANCE

PART OF VIETNAM MENNONITE CHURCH CENTER DEMOLISHED. Mennonite World Conference 23-Jul-2005. Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam – Sledge hammers and saws ripped into the rear of the Mennonite center in District 2 of Ho Chi Minh City the morning of July 19. By noon the wreckers were gone, leaving a pile of rubble behind.

With government video cameras rolling, 70 government officials and hired hands demolished an 8- by 5-meter rear portion of the 1999 two-story home of the Rev. Nguyen Hong Quang family, including four meters of the room where the Mennonite Church of Vietnam holds weekly worship services.

Quang, general secretary of Vietnam Mennonite Church, was arrested and he is now in a prison in Dak Lak province, several hundred kilometers north of Ho Chi Minh City.

China – Wednesday July 20, 2005. Village Surrounded, 100 Pastors Arrested. Police surrounded an entire village in Qi county, Henan province on June 24, during a leadership training program for house church pastors. About 100 pastors from major cities in Henan were arrested, according to the China Aid Association (CAA). Most were released the same day after questioning, but nine of them, including the leading pastor, Chen Dongming, are now in prison.

MASS ARREST IN JILIN PROVINCE. On May 22, police raided approximately 100 house

churches in Changchun, Jilin province, northeast China. In one of the largest mass arrests in recent years, around 600 house church Christians were detained. Most were released after interrogation, but CAA reported that around 100 leaders were held in custody.

The May raid was unique as the majority of Christians arrested were not peasants but university students and even professors from Changchun University. This arrest was in line with recent internal Communist Party guidelines to stop Christian groups from meeting on campus.

ROMAN CATHOLICS TARGETED. Police have also focused their attention on the unofficial Chinese Roman Catholic Church in recent months.

According to Asia News, members of an unregistered Catholic church in Hebei province wrote a letter on June 8, exposing a wave of arrests ordered by their local Religious Affairs department.

The letter claimed that Bishop Jia Zhiguo, 70, was held in solitary confinement between the death of John Paul II on April 2 and the election of the new pope, Benedict XVI, on April 19. The bishop has since been re-arrested and taken to an unknown location.

FORCED DEPORTATION OF MONTAGNARD ASYLUM SEEKERS: ANOTHER DARK DAY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS AND ALL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS. In the morning of July 20, Cambodian troops and police officers equipped

with electric batons entered Camp 1 of UNHCR in Phnom Pen to confront unarmed and defenseless Montagnard asylum seekers to forcibly deport them to Vietnam . The troops violently beat and knocked unconscious some of the Montagnard asylum seekers in order to forcibly put them on buses and drove them to Vietnamese authorities where they now face an even greater danger for their lives.

Friday, July 22, 2005. RUSSIAN CHRISTIAN LEADER: "PROTESTANT CHURCHES FACE HARDEST PRESSURE IN TEN YEARS." Mass Media Campaigns, Arrests, Disruption of Services, Church Buildings Burned In New Move Against Protestant Churches. ASSIST News Service

ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA (ANS) – A Russian Christian pastor is calling on all people of goodwill "to do all things possible to keep the freedom of beliefs in Russia and not allow the destroying of the Protestant Churches in Russia."

The Rev. Igor 'Nikki' Nikitin, President, Chairman of Senior Bishops Council, Association of Christian Churches in Russia ("Union of Christians") says that "During the last two months Protestant Churches in Russia experienced the hardest pressure of the last ten years! The disruption of services at Churches, arrests of pastors and bishops, burning of church buildings, churches put to the ground, wide mass media campaigns against the Christian Churches are just a few to mention."

In an e-mail to ASSIST News Service (ANS), Pastor Nikitin writes: "A huge mass media campaign was organized to promote the Orthodox ideology and bring indignity and discredit to all other confessions. There were many articles about the leaders of the country, including President Putin, showing their devotion to the Orthodoxy, publishing the pictures with their confessors, and exaggerating the term 'traditional and non-traditional religions in Russia.'"

FOUR CLERGYMEN DETAINED IN ZIMBABWE RAID

– July 21, 2005 – Associated Press. Harare, Zimbabwe (AP) – Police raided church halls in Zimbabwe's second-largest city, rounding up people sheltered there since their homes were destroyed in a hated urban renewal drive that has displaced hundreds of thousands, church leaders said Thursday.

At least four clergymen were detained in Wednesday's raids in Bulawayo, which came ahead of the anticipated release of a U.N. report on the demolition campaign.

HINDU GROUP PLANS DISTRIBUTION OF ANTI-CHRISTIAN LITERATURE. New Delhi, Jul. 22 (CWNews.com) - Hindu activists are planning a massive distribution of anti-Christian pamphlets in the state of Orissa, India, threatening to fan the flames of religious conflict in a region where violence has been commonplace.

The Catholic bishops of India have reported that a Hindu group, formed to support the convicted killer of a Protestant missionary, plans to distribute 30,000 pamphlets attacking Christianity, in Orissa. A police official in the district where the literature was to be distributed says that no pamphlets have been delivered yet, and promises to stop the distribution if possible.

The pamphlets were prepared by a group that backed Dara Singh, the Hindu zealot who was convicted of leading a mob that torched the van in which Rev. Matthew Staines and his two sons were sleeping outside a remote village in Orissa in January 1999. Although Singh was sentenced to be executed, an appeals court in Orissa reduced his sentence. His militant supporters are seeking to gain a political foothold in Orissa, a state in which they sometimes find support from a government led by the Hindu-nationalist BJP party.

IRAQI CHURCH LEADERS FEAR IMPOSITION OF ISLAMIC LAW – 22 July 2005. A letter signed by

the leaders of nine Christian denominations in Iraq pleads that the new constitution should ensure the equality of all faiths in Iraq. The leaders' concerns arise from reports that the Shi'a majority are pressing for Islamic law (shari'a) to be enshrined in the constitution.

A letter signed by the leaders of nine Christian denominations in Iraq pleads that the new constitution should ensure the equality of all faiths in Iraq.

INDIA – VILLAGE EXPELS PASTOR; CHRISTIAN SCHOOL HARASSED (CM).

Villagers in Murichambedu, Tamil Nadu state have forced the closure of its Pentecostal church and expelled its pastor and his wife from the village. Hindu elders in the village accuse Pastor Steven of forcibly converting Hindus to Christianity. The elders have been encouraged by a leading regional daily newspaper Dinomalar, which has led a very one-sided campaign against Steven. It accused him of going door to door in the village converting locals to Christianity, and then taking his campaign to neighboring villages. According to Dinomalar, the villagers told Steven to stop but he 'continued with his virulent activity'. The facts are that village chiefs, concerned at the lower participation of villagers in Hindu festivals, have determined to force Steven out of the village.

UZBEKISTAN – RAIDS AND CONFISCATION OF RELIGIOUS LITERATURE (FORUM 18).

After a secret police raid on her home, interrogations, death threats and a large fine in June, and a 15 day prison sentence for her father, Tashkent-based Protestant Marina Kalinkina told Forum 18 News Service that secret police pressure has not let up. On 11 July, secret police officers again interrogated her about what they claim was illegal religious activity as part of her work

for Bridge of Friendship, a registered charity she leads. One officer told her that if she dared to complain about her treatment to international organisations it would only make things worse for her. Begzot Kadyrov of the government's religious affairs committee defended the secret police actions, claiming that Kalinkina is using her charitable work as an opportunity to preach. "In other words, she is doing the work of an unregistered religious organisation, and that is forbidden under Uzbek law," he told Forum 18.

ERITREA – BRUTAL CRACKDOWN CONTINUES (RELEASE ERITREA).

Eritrean security forces have detained 18 college students, all evangelical Christians, on Friday the 8th of July 2005. The students were from Halhale College, some 20 miles from Asmara. In what appears to be a pre-planned operation, unlike previous mass detentions, the officers approached each student as they left exam halls, following their finals. In a separate incidence, on Wednesday July 6th, Semere Zayid, the university lecturer who was detained and released earlier this year, after a four week detention, has disappeared following a visit to report at a police station in accordance to the conditions of his release. It is now feared that Semere Zayid has now followed his colleagues to wenjel mirmera (crime investigation unit –also known as Karshelie) adjacent to the 2nd police station in Asmara. (Christianity Today) In March, police in Eritrea arrested the pastor of a Full Gospel church on a busy boulevard in the capital city of Asmara. In his mid-50s and married with four children, Kidane Weldu was neither charged nor allowed outside contact. "He is held incommunicado in the second police station in Asmara and is at risk of torture," according to an Amnesty International report.

The Garden Patch



By David E. Stottlemeyer, M.A.
Staff Research Associate
University of California – Riverside
Avocado Breeding Program

Pest Control – Prevention

Learn from Nature

The wisest of men may learn useful lessons from the ways and habits of the little creatures of the earth. The industrious bee gives to men of intelligence an example that they would do well to imitate. These insects observe perfect order, and no idler is allowed in the hive. They execute their appointed work with an intelligence and activity that are beyond our comprehension. The ants, which we consider as only pests to be crushed under our feet, are in many respects superior to man; for he does not as wisely improve the gifts of God. The wise man calls our attention to the small things of the earth: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer." We may learn from these little teachers a lesson of faithfulness. Should we improve with the same diligence the faculties which an all-wise Creator has bestowed upon us, how greatly would our capacities for usefulness be increased. God's eye is upon the smallest of His creatures; does He not, then, regard man formed in His image and require of him corresponding returns for all

the advantages He has given him?
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 455.

Pest Prevention

As the creatures in nature work diligently, so we can also work in all realms of life. In the garden patience and careful observation can help alleviate many of the pest problems we may initially face. In the last article we did an overview of the principles of pest control. Now let's look at some of the practical ways to put these principles into practice in the garden. In this article we will discuss ways to prevent pest problems, while the next few articles in this series will discuss strategies for controlling pests if they become a problem.

Healthy Plants

Strong, vigorous plants have been found to be more resistant to pests than unhealthy plants. And usually, healthy plants are a result of a healthy soil. We have already discussed in previous articles many of the components of a healthy soil: air, water, nutrients, and organic material – and all of these components can be improved by the careful gardener.



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We should not overlook the benefits to the plant that comes from the action of other organisms in a good, healthy, organic garden. Earthworms, for example, help to aerate the soil, improve drainage, and not only bring up nutrients from deeper in the soil, but as the soil passes through the earthworm the nutrients become “more available” to the plant due to processes that take place within the earthworm. And earthworms LOVE organic matter in the soil. It has also been found that a good healthy soil will be rich with a wide variety of microorganisms which helps prevent disease organisms from multiplying and becoming a problem. So, our first line of defense against pests and diseases should be to provide a good, healthy soil. If your soil is poor, or has been abused in the past, don't despair. It may take several seasons, but if you have patience, even the worst soil conditions can be improved and brought to a healthy condition.

Protecting Plants with Other Plants

Another line of defense is using plants to protect other plants. We've already seen the role of diversity in the garden and how having a variety of plants can help encourage beneficial insects. It turns out that there are some plants that directly aid in controlling pests as well. Companion planting is when two or more plants are grown together to help each other. Many plants have substances in their roots, leaves or flowers that can either repel pests, or can enhance the growth of other varieties. For example, Marigolds have been shown to help eliminate nematodes from the garden soil (they must be the scented type to work). There are some seed companies that even sell Marigold varieties that have been selected specifically for this purpose. And there are many other beneficial plants as well. Some plants just seem to help each other – for example, legumes (beans, peas) seem to do well when planted among corn. And some plants can be used as attractants

to lure the pests away from your crop (then destroy the lure crop along with the pests). Often people will plant onions or garlic in or around their crop to discourage pests, and this does work in some situations. But some caution should be used since there are also negative plant interactions – for example, onions and beans do not go well together. There are too many of these interactions for me to give a list them all here, but I will list some gardening books and internet sites that deal with companion planting at the end of the article in the resources section.

Resistant Varieties

It is also possible to find varieties that are resistant to various pests or diseases. By planting such varieties, you can often reduce or eliminate a pest problem. If you see the letters “VNF” on a package of tomatoes, it means that variety is resistant to verticillium wilt, root-knot nematodes, and fusarium wilt. Celebrity and First Lady II are examples of good disease resistant tomatoes. To find these resistant varieties you often have to search through several seed catalogues and read carefully the variety description to see what it has to offer.

Taking Advantage of Pests Life Cycle

Most pests have a life cycle, or stages, which the observant gardener can sometimes use to his or her advantage. Here in Southern California, aphids are a much bigger problem during the warm months – so if you time the planting of broccoli, cauliflower, and other cabbage family crops so they mature during the colder months of the year, you can often virtually eliminate aphid problems. Likewise, I found over the years that the corn earworm is a big problem early in the year, but they diminish to practically nothing in late summer/early fall. If you remember the quote at the beginning of this article: “The wisest of men may learn useful lessons from the ways and

habits of the little creatures of the earth.” You can see how it pays to be observant. And for me, it helps to take notes – a few simple comments on successes/failures on a piece of paper can be a big help when planning next seasons’ garden. And next thing you know, people will be calling you a “green thumb!”

Conclusion

As I said in the previous article, even under the best conditions we can expect occasional problems with pests. How we react to these pests is important since our intervention can have long lasting consequences either improving or degrading the situation. Often, a little planning and careful choice of plants can reduce or eliminate a pest problem completely.

Resources

How to Grow More Vegetables by John Jeavons.
Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA

This book covers all of the areas mentioned in this article with extensive information on companion planting and compatible and incompatible plants.

ATTRA - National Sustainable Agriculture
Information Service

<http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/complant.html>

A nice chart showing compatible and incompatible combinations.

GardenGuides.com

<http://www.gardenguides.com/TipsandTechniques/vcomp.htm>

Another chart with compatible and incompatible combinations.

Golden harvest Organics

<http://www.ghorganics.com/page2.html>

A long list of beneficial plants.

Peaceful Valley Farm Supply

www.groworganic.com

P.O. Box 2209

Grass Valley, Ca. 95945

Catalog has a good selection of seeds and lists some resistant varieties.