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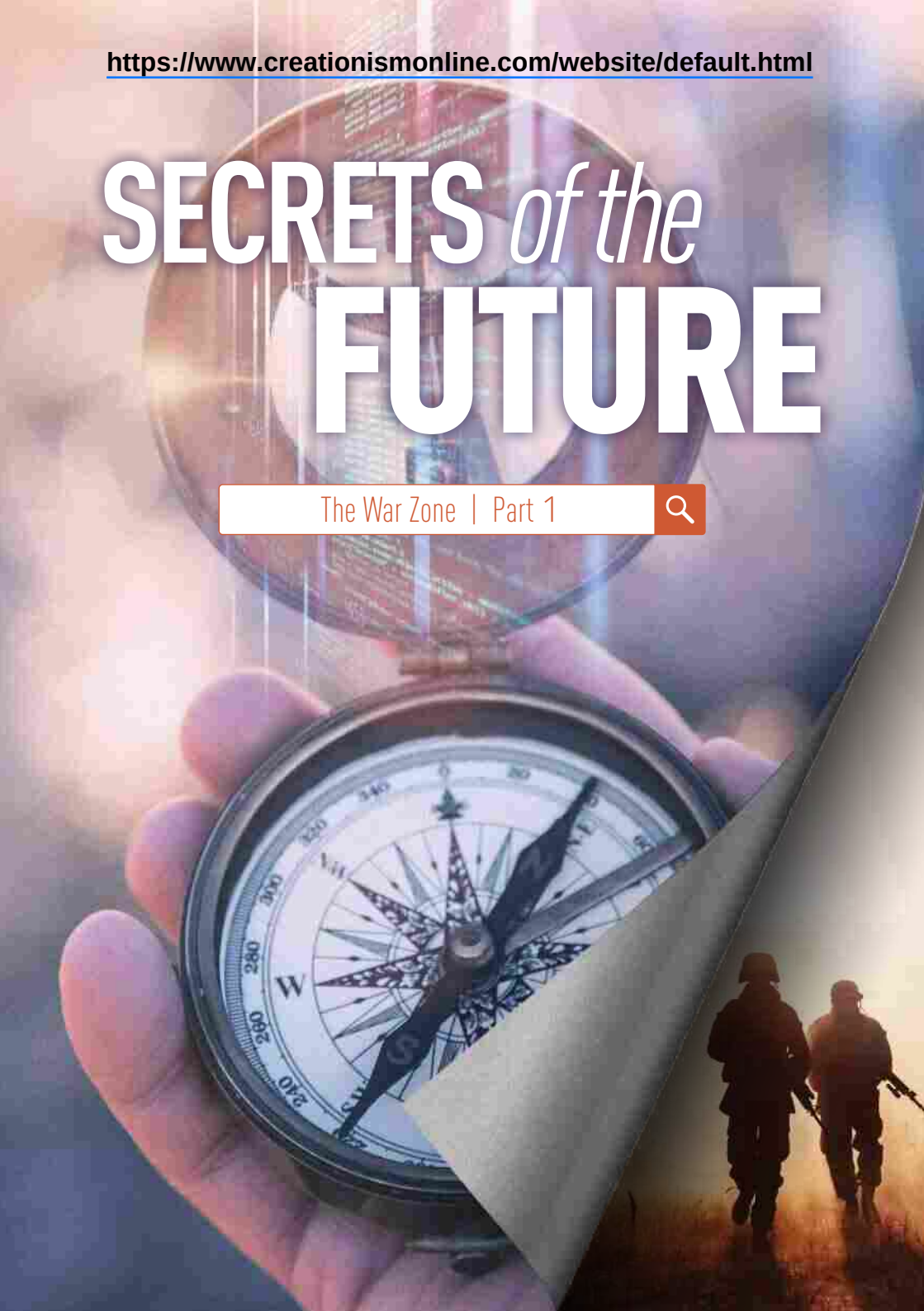
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

The War Zone | Part 1



THE WAR ZONE

Evil is a by-product, a component, of creation. In a world evolving into ever higher forms, hatred, violence, aggression, and war are a part of the evolutionary plan."

- Howard Bloom, The Lucifer Principle, p2

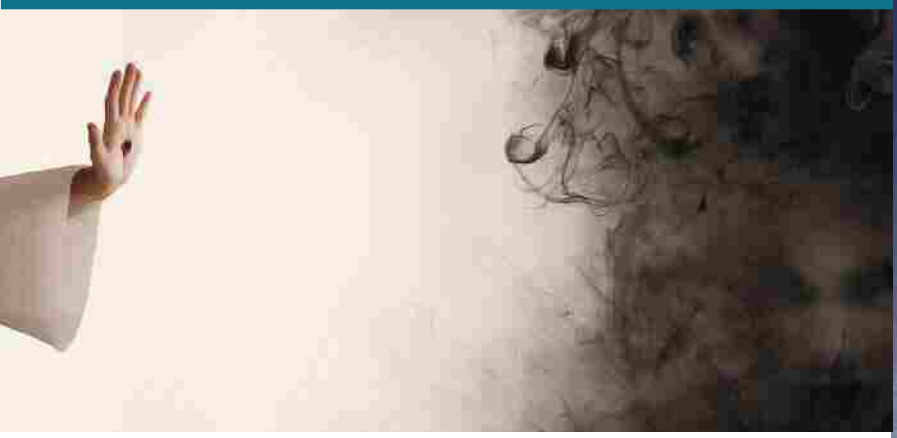
Have you ever wondered why hatred, violence and evil exist? Who or what is responsible for it? Did God create a devil or is Howard Bloom correct when he argues that evil is just part of the evolutionary plan? If God is so good then why does the world seem so bad? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why is there any need for sin, pain and suffering at all?

This planet is right in the heart of a war zone.

What on earth is going on?

The ancient nature religions saw their world in two halves - good and evil, light and dark, life and death, masculine and feminine. Their gods and goddesses would maintain global harmony through keeping the balance of power between the two forces. The east has the yin and yang – two opposing but complementary and interdependent forces.

According to the Barna research group, Western society is also embracing the darker side. The practices of Wicca (magic, sorcery and spell casting) are growing quickly throughout the United States, particularly among younger people. The national Census research indicates that the nature religions (Pagan, Druids, Pantheists and Wicca) are among the fastest growing religions in countries like Australia.



Is it safe to desire a balance between good and evil? Should our spirituality include some association with darkness? Is the devil real? If so, is he dangerous?

This study guide, along with the companion lesson "Does God Care?" delves into the mysterious subject of good versus evil. We will take a behind the scenes look into a cosmic conflict that has raged for thousands of years.

The focus of this lesson is the origin of evil.

Q1. WHERE DID SIN BEGIN?

***1 John 3:8** - He who sins is of the _____, for the devil has sinned from the _____*

According to the Scriptures, sin began with the devil. Evil is not just a force, or part of nature, or an aspect of human consciousness. Evil emanates from the devil himself. Many picture the devil as a mythical cartoon character with hoofs, horns and a pitchfork to turn over unfortunate souls roasting in hell. But the devil is real.



He is responsible for the evil, pain and suffering in our world today. In fact the devil is referred to on many occasions in the Bible. The name "devil" is mentioned over 60 times, while "Satan" (another name for the devil) is mentioned over 50 times.

Q2. WHAT SYMBOLS ARE USED IN THE BIBLE TO DESCRIBE THE DEVIL?

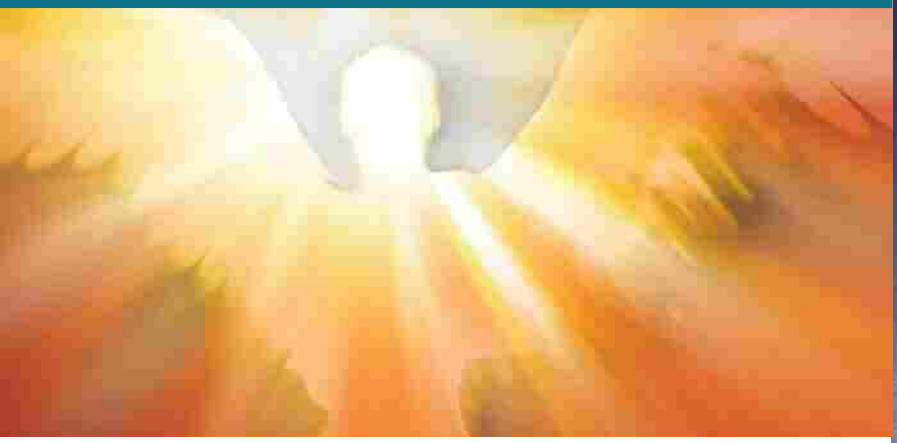
Revelation 12:9 - *So the great _____ was cast out, that _____ of old, called the Devil and Satan*

The devil is called the great dragon. He is dangerous, deadly and a formidable opponent. The devil is also a snake. Clever and crafty, he sneaks up on you and his bite is venomous. Interestingly, in many pagan cultures, the dragon and snake have been a key focus of worship. Their symbols can still be seen today.

Q3. WHAT WAS THE NAME FOR SATAN WHEN HE WAS AN ANGEL IN HEAVEN?

Isaiah 14:12 *- How you are fallen from heaven, O _____, son of the morning!*

The name Lucifer literally means "light bearer", certainly a different name from what he is called today – Satan which means "adversary" and Devil which means "slanderer".



Q4. DID GOD CREATE THE DEVIL?

***Ezekiel 28:15** - You were _____ in your ways from the day you were created, till _____ was found in you*

Lucifer was created by God as a perfect angel. His hometown was heaven! He was gifted in music and held a leadership position among the other angels. Lucifer was stunningly beautiful, bright and had perfect wisdom (Ezekiel 28:12-15).

Because God is love, the last thing He wants is to be worshipped and obeyed out of force or fear. He desires His beings to be motivated by love. God could have created Lucifer as a robot, but robots cannot love or make moral decisions, so God gave Lucifer a free will to choose his own direction in life. God does the same for us today. There is a great risk in love. Ask any parent. They are not certain if their children will grow up to obey or disobey, but they take that risk, because they want someone to love and be loved.



Lucifer chose to rebel against God's love. He chose evil over good. As a result, an angel became a demon.

God did not create the devil; He created a perfect being who made a devil of himself.

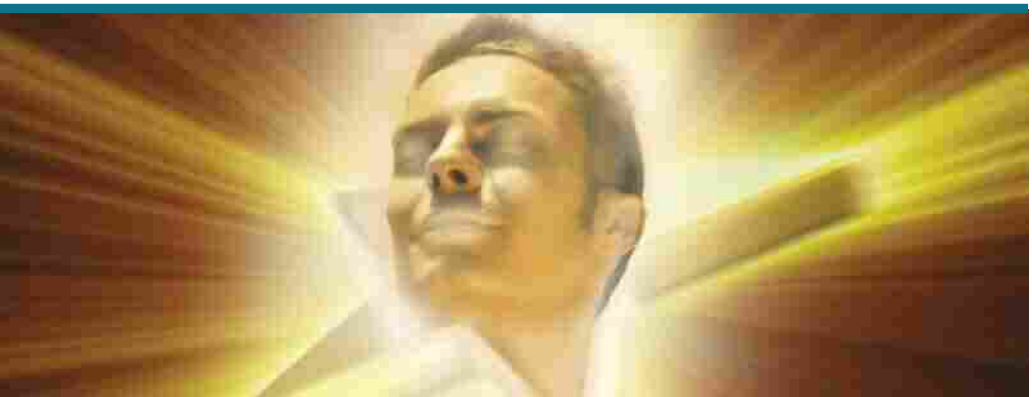
Q5. WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL SIN THAT LUCIFER COMMITTED?

Ezekiel 28:17 *- Your heart was lifted up because of your _____ ; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendour*

Isaiah 14:13,14 *- For you have said in your heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God ... I will be like the _____ _____."*

Lucifer became proud and selfish. He saw his beauty and goodness as something to be worshipped and he wanted to be like God. He was jealous of God. He wanted the other angels to worship and obey him instead of God.

Even today, at the heart of virtually all evil, is pride and selfishness. It is interesting to note that the middle letter of sin, pride and Lucifer is "I". It was Lucifer who began sin with a love of self.





Q6. WHAT HAPPENED IN HEAVEN WHEN LUCIFER OPPOSED GOD?

***Revelation 12:7-9** - And _____ broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought (v7)*

It is hard to imagine a "war" in heaven, but this is what happened when the devil fought against the loving God. This conflict is the central issue of the entire Scriptures. Good vs Evil, Truth vs Lies, Christ vs Satan, Love vs Hate. Even though Satan lost this war in heaven, the conflict continues and we are now in the middle of it.

The heart of this "war" was, and still is, worship. We are happiest when we worship only God (Exodus 20:3). When Jesus came to earth the devil failed in his attempt to get Jesus to worship him (Matthew 4:8-11). Now that Jesus has left, the devil turns his attention onto us. The last great conflict on planet earth will once again revolve around worship. God is calling the world to a loving worship of Him as the Creator God (Revelation 14:6,7), while the devil's final attack will be to force people to worship him, or risk being killed (Revelation 13:15).



Q7. WHO ELSE DOES THE DEVIL HAVE ON HIS SIDE?

***Rev 12:9** - So the great dragon was cast out, ... and his _____ were cast out with him*



The devil was so clever in his deception, that one third of the angels joined forces with the devil against God and were cast out of heaven with him (Revelation 12:4). It is unknown how many there were, possibly billions, but these angels became demons. These demons still work as agents for the devil today (Revelation 16:14).

Q8. WHY DIDN'T GOD DESTROY THE DEVIL?

***1 John 4:8** - He who does not love does not know God, for God is _____*

Because God is love He wants us to worship Him out of love. When Lucifer sinned, God could have destroyed him immediately. That would have solved the problem for a little while, but the remaining angels – who knew nothing about the nature of sin – would start to serve God out of fear not love. They would always have wondered if the devil's claims against God were true.

So God chose another option. He put His character "on trial" before the whole universe. He has allowed the devil to demonstrate the results of sin, so everyone could see that God is love and worthy of worship, while the only outcome for sin is pain, heartache and suffering. This world is now the centre stage for this great drama (1 Corinthians 4:9) and we can see all around us the terrible results of evil.

The major objective for God during this time is to save as many people as possible, eradicate sin from the planet and ensure sin will never rise the second time (Nahum 1:9).





Q9. HOW DID OUR PLANET GET INVOLVED IN SATAN'S REBELLION?

***Gen 3:1-13** - And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The _____ deceived me, and I ate" (v13)*

The devil and his angels were cast to this earth. As a result, he focused his deceptions on human beings. God created Adam and Eve as perfect beings. In fact they were a perfect couple, in a perfect environment with a perfect God.

Like Lucifer, Adam and Eve were given a free choice to decide between good and evil. God gave to Adam and Eve the most beautiful garden, plenty of friendly animals and a personal friendship with each other and God Himself. However, He asked them not to touch or eat from one of the trees in the garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was a test of worship and obedience. The devil used the serpent as a medium to deceive Eve into disobeying God. Eve chose to trust her feelings and the word of the serpent instead of obeying the Word of God.



Q10. WHO DOES THE DEVIL NOW ATTACK AND HATE THE MOST?

***Rev 12:17** - And the dragon was enraged with the _____, and he went to make ____ with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*

The devil has now turned all his attack onto the "woman" – a symbol for God's church (Jeremiah 6:2). You may have heard the phrase "fights like the devil"? Well the devil is now fighting against God's last day church. This true church comprises those who keep all of God's Commandments and believe completely in the testimony of Jesus – which is a phrase that includes the great prophecies of the Scriptures (Revelation 19:10).





Q11. WHAT IS THE MAJOR GOAL OF THE DEVIL?

***John 10:10** - The thief does not come except to _____, and to _____, and to _____. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly*

The main aim of the devil is to rob you of life. He attempts to make you miserable, to inflict hurt and discouragement and to give up on life, through breaking up your friendship with God. Jesus, on the other hand, came to give you life – an abundant life, full of satisfaction and enjoyment.

Q12. WHAT IS THE DEVIL'S MAJOR WEAPON AGAINST GOD'S PEOPLE?

***John 8:44** - You are of your father the devil ... there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a ____ and the father of it*



The devil is a liar. The great conflict between Christ and Satan is not a war of power; it is a war of truth vs lies. The slanderous Satan mixes truth with error to cleverly deceive the masses. If he was clever enough to deceive one-third of the perfect angels who actually lived with God, how much more should we be alert to his deceptions today.

Q13. CAN THE DEVIL BE GOOD?

***2 Corinthians 11:14** - And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of _____*

The devil is at his most dangerous when he is "good". He becomes a "Christian" double agent to deceive Christians. We need to be careful to trust only God's Word, not just what we see, feel or experience.

Q14. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE KEY TACTICS USED BY THE DEVIL?

a. *Misquotes the Bible in order to deceive (Matthew 4:5,6)*

b. *Persecutes God's church to discourage their faith (Revelation 12:13)*



c. *Performs miracles to deceive into false religion (Revelation 16:14)*

d. *Works through and impersonates false pastors to deceive (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)*

e. *Brings pain and disease to discourage and blame God (Job 2:7)*

f. *Demon possession to take full control (Luke 13:16)*

g. *Traps us into sin (2 Timothy 2:26)*

The devil knows the value of effective communication. He attempts to wipe out our communication lines with God by influencing us to neglect personal prayer, meditation and Bible study. He then opens up his own communication lines through what we see, hear and feel – primarily through the media. Many of the movies, television programs, books, internet sites and magazines do a great job in deceiving us into believing the devil's lies about God and the big issues of life.



Q15. HOW CAN I RESIST AND OVERCOME SATAN?

***James 4:7** - Therefore _____ to God. _____ the devil and he will flee from you.*

***Ephesians 6:11-18** - Put on the whole _____ of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (v11)*

It is vital that we overcome the devil by making right choices and asking for God's power. Firstly, we need to submit or surrender our lives to God. Then we need to say "No" to the devil. We need to face the devil head on. Notice that none of the armour mentioned in Ephesians is placed on our back; it is all on the front of us. Jesus resisted the devil by facing the devil head on, using the power of God through quoting Scripture (Matthew 4:10). We cannot overcome the devil in our strength. We need to ask God for supernatural power for victory.



Q16. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS?

***Matt 25:41** - Then He will also say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting _____ prepared for the _____ and his angels*

For those who want to mix the dark life with their everyday life, the warning is given that the devil and all that is associated with him will be destroyed. The mystery of the dark supernatural may appear attractive; but the destination for such an association is clear.

Q17. HOW DOES GOD FEEL ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED?

***Ezekiel 33:11** - "Say to them: "As I live"," says the Lord God, "I have no _____ in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?"*

The heart of God must have been wrenched when Lucifer rebelled. God loved him and did all He could to influence him to turn from his evil ways. Today God loves you also, no matter what choices you have made in life. He knows the end result of evil is destruction, so He pleads with each of us to turn from our evil ways and worship Him. He knows that only then will we discover true peace and happiness.



Three points to remember:

- God is a God of love who created beings with the power of free choice
- The reason we have suffering, pain and death is due to the evil of Satan
- The devil will be destroyed and sin will never return

The story:

A 73-year-old Kenyan grandfather was attacked near his potato crops by an angry leopard. He had a choice – try and run for his life or resist the attack head on. The peasant farmer, Daniel M'Mburugu, decided to resist the attack. "A voice, which must have come from God, whispered to me to drop the panga (machete) and thrust my hand in its wide-open mouth. I obeyed," M'Mburugu said. The farmer managed to survive the attack by pulling out the leopard's tongue. He managed to kill the attacking leopard with his bare hands.



The Bible likens the devil to another big cat. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).



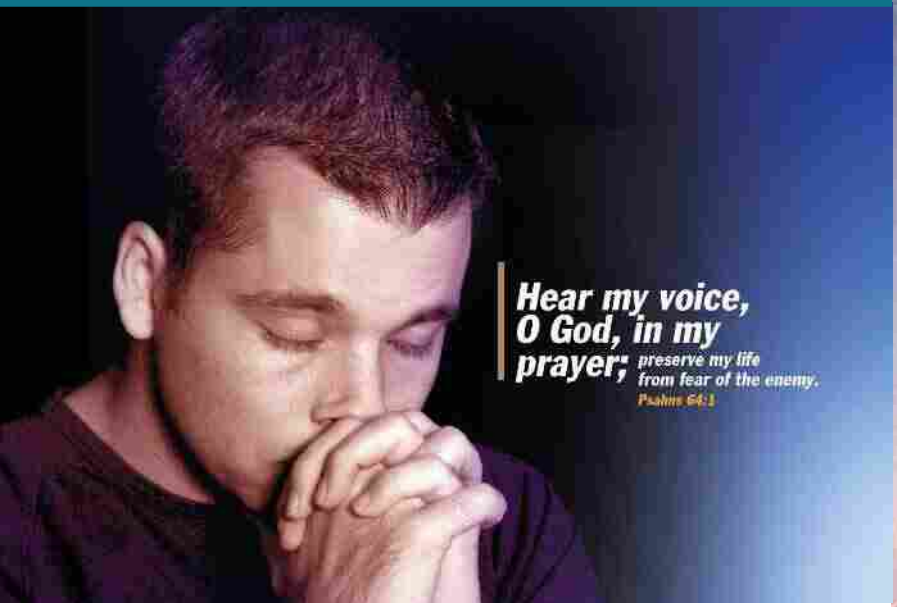
What lessons can you learn from this story that will help you overcome the devil?

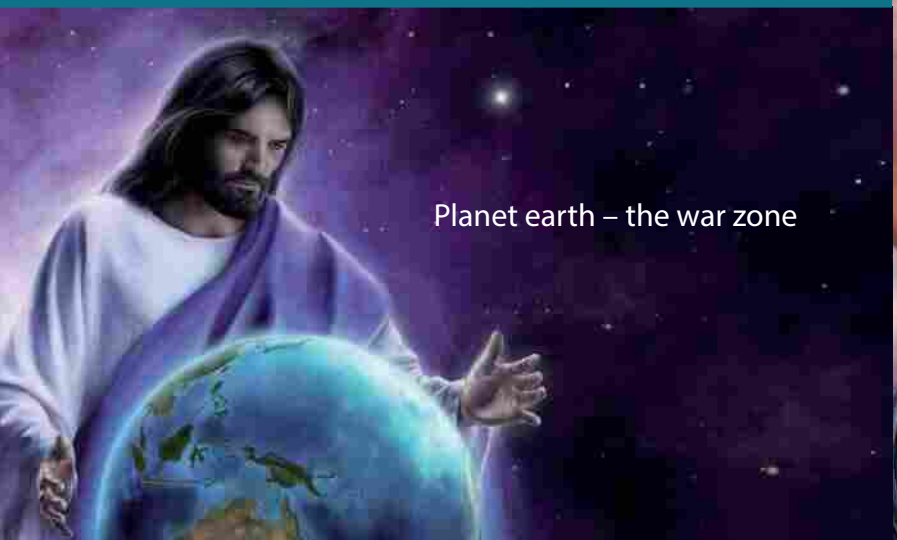
Relational questions:

1. Why is it important that we understand that the devil is a real being?
2. Why is it important that you understand the issues of the great conflict between Christ and Satan?
3. Have you found any effective ways to resist the devil? What are they?
4. Are there any areas in your life where you feel the devil has had a hold over you, and you would like to give them over to Jesus for victory today?

Your response:

God loves you with an everlasting love. At a time when many in the world have fallen for the lies of the devil and rejected the love of God, would you like to choose today to love, worship and obey Him? _____





DOES GOD CARE?

If God is love, why does He allow bad things to happen? And how can Christians also call themselves atheists? Find out how in Part 2 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.



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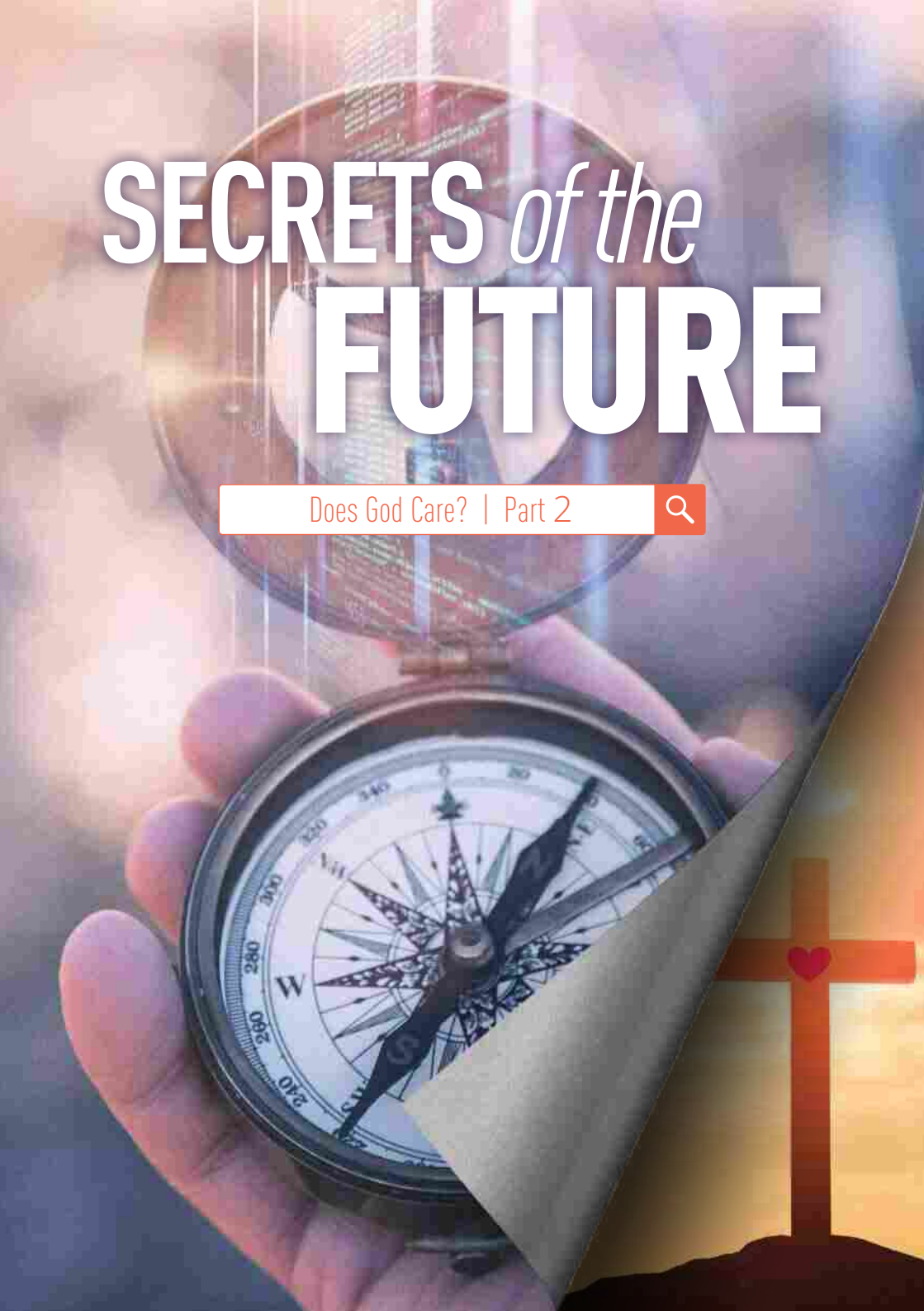
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Does God Care? | Part 2



DOES GOD CARE?

A young Australian couple was on safari in Africa when they heard and felt a tremendous bang. The city was Nairobi. The date was August 7, 1998. Bomb attacks on the US embassy left 212 dead and over 4,000 injured.

As the couple ventured out of their motel they decided to make their way down to the scene of the action. When they arrived they could not believe their eyes. There was complete devastation. People were running around in hysteria with blood flowing down their panicked faces. Shoes were strewn all over the road and footpath. Police on horses were trying to keep people out of the blown up buildings and there were literally thousands of people anxiously searching for friends and family.

An atmosphere of pain, suffering and death hung over the city.

As they turned a corner the couple saw a blown up car. The car was situated in the middle of the road and it was quite obvious the people inside the car had been killed. The occupants had left home that morning but would not return that night.



Situated next to the blown up car was the windshield. It had been blown out of the car and was lying on the ground. The windshield was smashed but there was a sticker that ran across the top of it that was still intact.

The sticker on the windshield stated, “God is love”.

The young couple looked down at the windshield then looked back up at the awful scene.

The thought came to their minds, “How can a God of love allow such pain?”

Does God care? If so, why doesn’t He do something? And do it now!

This study guide, along with the lesson “The War Zone”, covers the subject of good versus evil. In “The War Zone” we outline the origins of evil. In this lesson we ask one of the biggest question in life.

Why does God allow sin, pain and suffering?

Our focus on pain will take us on a journey into the heart of God. What we notice may surprise you. God Himself suffers! Understanding God’s pain will help us understand our own pain. On the flip side, our pain also help us understand God’s pain.



Q1. WHO IS GOD?

1 John 4:8 - *He who does not love does not know God, for God is*

_____

The Bible story begins by introducing God. "In the beginning God ..." (Genesis 1:1). It doesn't explain Him. It doesn't prove Him. It doesn't defend Him. It simply presents God as the One who creates out of nothing and sustains all life.

God is a spiritual being, yet real. He is eternal and all-powerful. He knows everything and is everywhere. With over 100 different names for God in the Bible it's no wonder the Scriptures say, "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain you" (2 Chronicles 6:18).

God is love. He is not just loving. Being loving can change, but God doesn't change. Love is who He is. It is His essence. It is His nature. God is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:6).



Q2. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF GOD'S LOVE?

***1 Corinthians 13:4,5** - Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its _____, is not provoked, thinks no evil*

Today the word "love" is broad in its meaning. Love can mean anything from an affair of lust to the nature of God sitting on His throne.

So what did the Bible writers mean when they boldly declared, "God is love"?



God's love is unconditional. We seldom love the unlovely and usually love those who love us. But God spontaneously loves everyone: "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).



God's love never changes. We sometimes "fall out of love". God doesn't. To the rebellious Jews God said, "I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3). Even if we reject Him, God's love for us is unchanged.

God's love searches out those in need. Some feel we need to search after God as if He is playing hide and seek with us. But the Bible says God's love has come to "seek and to save that which is lost" (Luke 19:10).

God's love puts others first. Our love can be tainted with selfishness. We often give so we can get. But God's love "seeks not its own". It's selfless. Jesus stepped down from His throne and became a man. He was not born in a palace but in a barn with the animals. He lived a humble life and died for us. Jesus put you first and Himself last.

God's love is all giving. This doesn't mean He gives us everything we want. Love does not always equal wealth, ease and safety. God is a loving Father who knows what is best for us. He provides our needs but sometimes leads us down bumpy paths. Times of great challenge can teach us vital lessons in life and prepare us for eternity.

Q3. WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF OUR WORLD?

***Matthew 24:12** - And because lawlessness will _____, the love of many will grow cold*

Life is a paradox – a mixture of bliss and sorrow; delight and disappointment; hope and despair; melted hearts and broken hearts. Life can be going along really well and then bang! Disaster strikes. You receive a phone call informing you that you have cancer. You hear a knock on the door from the police telling you that your son has died in a car accident. You discover your husband is having an affair with another woman.

The whole world is in distress. War. Floods. Earthquakes. Cancer. Rape.

Murder. Suicide. According to the United States Bureau of Justice over 15,000 people are murdered every year including over 500 children. Over 600 people are raped or sexually assaulted every day. Many simply shrug their shoulders and say, "life is unfair".

Evil is real. Pain is real. We are hurting.



Q4. IS GOD RESPONSIBLE FOR PAIN AND EVIL?

Matthew 13:27,28 *- "... Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?" He said to them, "an _____ has done this"*

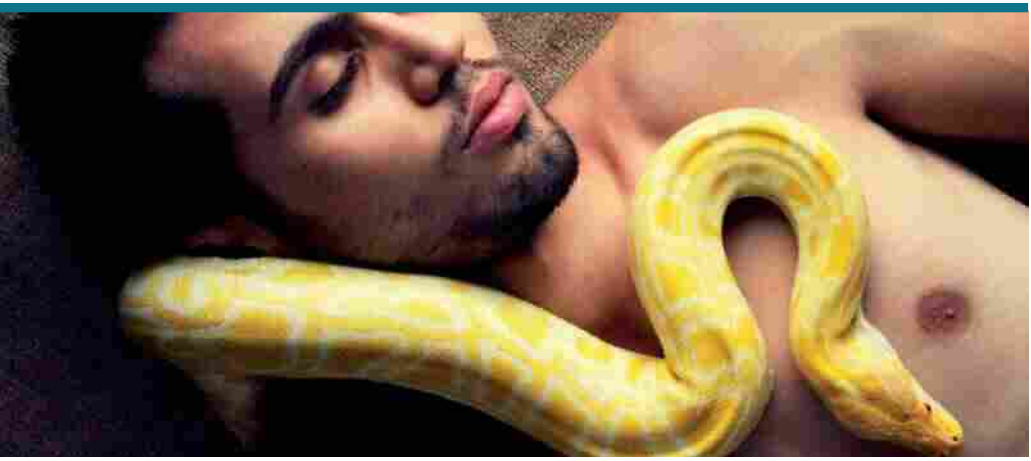
Jesus told a parable that depicted a farmer sowing wheat in the field. As the wheat grew, so did the weeds. Jesus told His listeners that the wheat (the good seed)



represented the good while the tares represented the bad (Matthew 13:38). When asked who was responsible for evil, Jesus clearly blamed the "enemy", which is the devil (v39).

But that leaves us with a dilemma. If God is love, then why do we have evil people? Is the all-knowing Creator God responsible for creating the devil and hence creating evil?

The study guide "The War Zone" deals with the origins of evil in more detail, however to summarise. God is love. Love equals freedom, which means the ability to choose. God didn't create puppets because God wanted to love and be loved. But there is a risk with love because real love means there is the possibility of rejection. In the case of Lucifer, the possibility of evil and rebellion.



God did not create evil or a devil. He created a perfect being called Lucifer who was created with a free will. Lucifer chose to reject God's love and in so doing became the devil.

So who is responsible for evil? Not God. The devil is. The pain in our world today is not a result of God being absent, but a result of the devil being present.

We also have freedom of choice. As a result, we also play a part in evil. The pain of evil often comes from either our choices or the decisions of others. In fact sin comes as a package. The initial experience is exciting. The total experience is painful.

Q5. WHAT IS GOD'S SOLUTION TO EVIL?

***John 3:16** - For God so loved the world that He _____ His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*

Solving evil is not a quick fix. God's master plan involves a process that takes time. God has provided time and space for the results of sin to be seen in their entirety.

The heart of God's plan to eradicate evil is the cross of Calvary. On the cross Jesus paid the penalty for sin and defeated the power of sin.

The cross provides a framework to help us tackle the question, "Does God Care?" Calvary shows a God who gave until there was nothing left to give. The things we find hard to understand about God (our pain and suffering) are accepted on the basis of what we do understand about God (His pain and suffering).

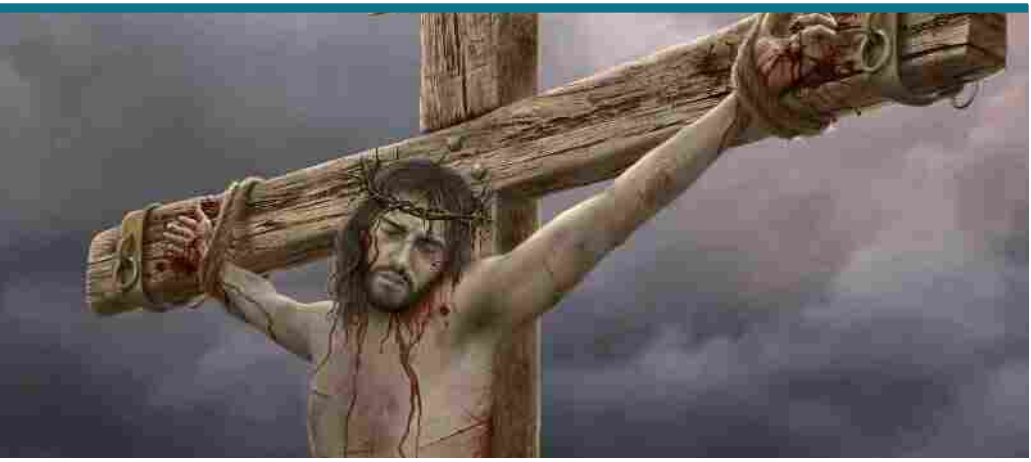


Q6. TO WHAT EXTENT DOES GOD UNDERSTAND PAIN AND SUFFERING?

***Isaiah 53:3** - He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with _____*

No-one has ever suffered more than Jesus. He was misunderstood. Rejected. Abandoned. Accused. Beaten. Killed.

As Jesus was crucified He cried out, "My God, My God why have you forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). These were not rehearsed lines from a Hollywood actor. This was Jesus feeling His heart torn apart from the horror of separation from His Father.



Jesus became like a crumpled piece of paper thrown as far away as possible; an old junk car that children throw stones at. Jesus not only died through physical torture, He died in His soul. Christ became a curse for us; "cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" (Galatians 3:13).

A martyr suffers physically but has the hope of eternal life. Jesus felt as if this was it. Eternal death. Jesus experienced the equivalent of what the Bible calls the "second death" (Revelation 20:14,15). He would soon be resurrected but He didn't feel that way. He became a God forsaken God who felt the full pain of evil.





No matter what pain or tragedy you may be feeling, Jesus understands. He understands all our pain. Physical pain. Mental pain. Emotional pain. Spiritual pain.

We can only imagine His pain.

What about God the Father? Some have suggested that God was a coward for sending His Son. But which is easier? Going through your own pain or seeing the one you love most suffer? God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. There is no greater gift or expression of love than that. God the Father understands suffering more than we can ever comprehend.



Q7. WHAT DOES THE CROSS TELL US ABOUT GOD?

***John 15:13** - Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's _____ for his friends*

Not even the angels knew how good God was until the cross. Jesus not only died for His friends, He died for those who were killing Him. And the devil was orchestrating the murder. Any lingering doubts from the war in heaven were forever settled at the cross.

The cross shows us the hurt sin caused the heart of God. Jesus gave Himself and He would rather not live than live without you. The cross tells you that you are of infinite value to God. He paid for you – not with a billion dollars, but with His own blood.

Even when it seems your world is falling in all around you the cross tells you that God loves you. He is on your side and supports you. He understands you and is your friend. He hurts when you hurt. You can trust Him.

God cares.



Q8. WHY DOESN'T GOD STOP EVIL NOW?

***Matthew 13:28-30** - He said to them, "An enemy has done this." The servants said to him, "do you want us then to go and gather them up?" But he said, "No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the _____ with them. Let both grow together until the _____, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn'"*

In the parable Jesus says evil must stay around long enough to be seen for what it is. If evil (the tares) was eradicated before it had matured there was a chance good people would be lost.

What does Jesus mean?

This is a difficult issue. No-one has all the answers and there is much that we do not understand – for instance the bombing in Nairobi. But evidently the horror of sin will be seen more fully in the future, when the world reaches an even worse state than it is now. What is not clear now will be seen very clearly then.

God needs to ensure that all of those who are saved have no attraction and affection for sin. Even with pain all around us we still do not see evil in its entirety. But the devil is so full of hate it will soon be shown in all its fury.



God is powerful enough to stop sin now. But in His eternal wisdom He has chosen not to – yet! The world in which we live has all sorts of problems. It is full of sin and pain. But God is allowing sin to take its course. Solving the problem of sin is a process and the last thing God wants is "War in Heaven II". In fact it cannot happen. It will not happen.

Q9. HOW DOES GOD FEEL ABOUT YOU?

Jeremiah 29:11 *For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the LORD, thoughts of _____ and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope*

God is personally interested in you and He has wonderful plans for your life. There are times when it seems God doesn't care. Even worse, we think He may be against us. But we can be certain that God is working things out in our life to give us a bright future. From our perspective we may not be able to see this, but we can trust God and His promises.

The key thing to remember is that God is preparing us for heaven; an eternity with Jesus.



Q10. WHAT SHOULD WE DO IF WE ARE ANXIOUS OR SUFFERING?

1 Peter 5:7 *Casting all your care upon Him, for He _____ for you*

It is one thing to believe in God but do we trust Him?

Many of us are natural worriers. We absorb the pressures of life and try to plan solutions to our own problems. Our anticipated concerns often don't eventuate nearly as badly as we thought. We get stressed and this impacts on our health and spirituality.

God wants us to take all our worries, burdens, pain and stress to Him. He cares for us and He will comfort us. In fact Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to provide spiritual encouragement and power.

Ask God to give you peace in your storm. If God can create the universe and loves you so much that He died for you, you can trust Him to guide your life and give you comfort when you are hurting.

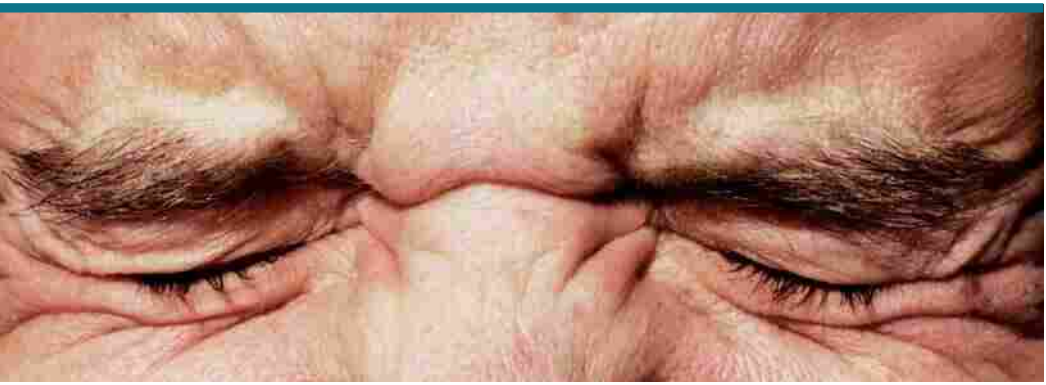
Q11. HOW DOES GOD USE PAIN FOR OUR GOOD?

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for _____ to those who love God...



The Bible says we "know" that all things work together for good. There is no doubt about it. We can trust God to turn even the difficult passages in life into something that benefits us. You will notice the text doesn't say all things are good. Life is not easy and there are many bad things that happen, even to God's people. But all things work out for good.

Although God does not cause pain, He does use it. God permits trials to teach us. The tough times in life drive us to Jesus for help. They show us what is important in life and what is not important.



C.S. Lewis said, "God whispers to us in our pleasures ... but shouts in our pain; it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world" (***The Problem of Pain,*** p91).

An ancient Bible story is told of a man named Job. He was doing really well in life until the devil approached God and told Him that Job was faithful because He was protected. God allowed the devil to harass and torment Job. The result? Job lost everything but remained faithful. Job said, "though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15). This story demonstrates that Satan produces trials. God allows them to refine our characters and demonstrate the pain of evil.

Next time you think of asking God, "Why don't you do something?" consider the thought that maybe He is asking you the same question. Helping other people in pain helps you. We learn to think of others above ourselves and we experience true love. Our life is enriched as we reflect the love of Jesus.

Q12. WILL THERE BE PAIN IN THE NEW EARTH?

Revelation 21:4 *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more _____ , for the former things have passed away*

Pain will be completely absent in the new earth. So will the pain of pain. No tears. No death. No sorrow. No crying. The devil will be obliterated and sin will never raise its ugly head again (Nahum 1:9). Now that is something to look forward to!

Q13. WHAT WILL WE CONCLUDE ABOUT GOD AND HIS CHARACTER?

Revelation 15:3 *...Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! _____ and _____ are Your ways, O King of the saints*

There are many things we do not understand about God. We believe God can do anything and yet we see evil all around us. Our minds find it hard to comprehend. But when sin is over; when the world has no more pain; we will truly appreciate that God's plan to forever remove sin was the best plan. God does care. God is love.



Three points to remember:

- God cares
- The cross demonstrates God's love
- God understands pain

The story:

Kalvin was travelling from Brisbane to New York on a business trip. As he began talking to Lucas, the person seated next to him, the conversation soon turned to religion. Lucas told Kalvin he was a geology student at the University of Queensland. He said his mother was a Catholic and his father was an atheist. Kalvin asked Lucas if he had a personal faith. "Oh no", Lucas said. "I am an atheist like my father."

Lucas then asked if Kalvin had a faith. Kalvin told him that he was a Christian. Lucas sat back in his seat and asked Kalvin what made his religion different to other religions. Kalvin thought about it for a while. He was about to comment on some points of difference between his denomination and others, but instead he then made a comment that startled Lucas. Kalvin said, "We are also atheists". "How so?" said Lucas. He couldn't believe his ears and Kalvin could see his intelligent mind ticking over at the concept of a Christian atheist.

Kalvin then turned the conversation back to Lucas. "Well you tell me about the God you don't believe in". Lucas was a little perplexed. "How can I? I don't believe in God," Kalvin replied, "Yes but you must have a mental picture of this God you don't believe in?" "Oh, OK. Good point. Yes I believe He is big and powerful. But indifferent. In fact, quite cruel when I think of it. I don't think He cares at all." Kalvin jumped in, "There you go, I don't believe in that God either. But what if you discovered a God who really cares. Who loves with such a perfect love that He gives perfect freedom. Who gives everyone the ability to not only love Him, but also reject Him. A God prepared to die so you can live. A God who knows there are bad things in our world but gives us strength to cope. A God who ensures that anyone who really wants to live with Him in heaven will get there."

Lucas sat back and thought about it. He said, "I have never heard that before. You've really got me thinking."

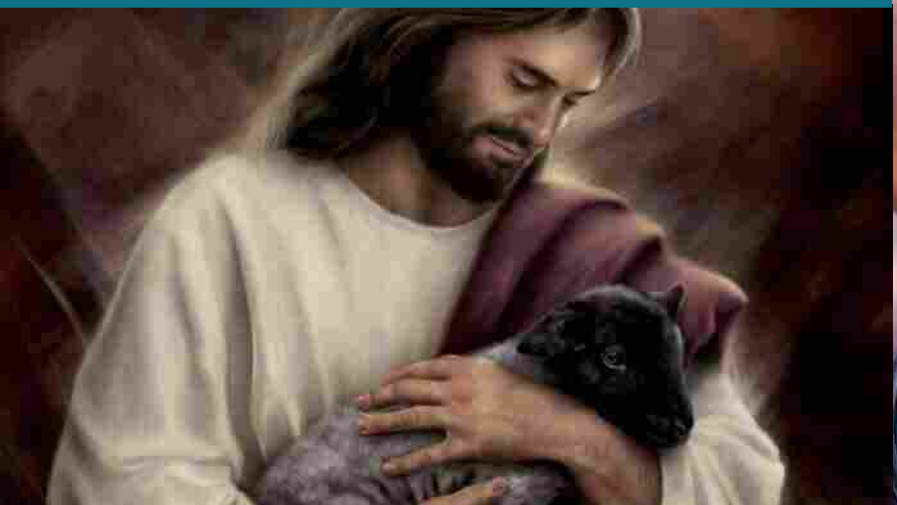
How would you describe God to someone you meet for the first time? What can we do to paint such a picture of God that people like Lucas are attracted to God?

Relational questions:

1. If you were told that you have a terminal illness how do you think you would cope?
2. How do you gain strength and courage when you experience pain and suffering?
3. Share an experience where God has brought good out of a bad situation.

Your response:

Life can be very difficult and we don't have all the answers. But can you see that God does care for you and do you choose to trust Him completely with the rest of your life? _____







WHO WILL CONTROL *the* WORLD?

In order to know the future, we must first understand the past. Learn how an ancient prophecy accurately predicted that Hitler would never control the world in Part 3 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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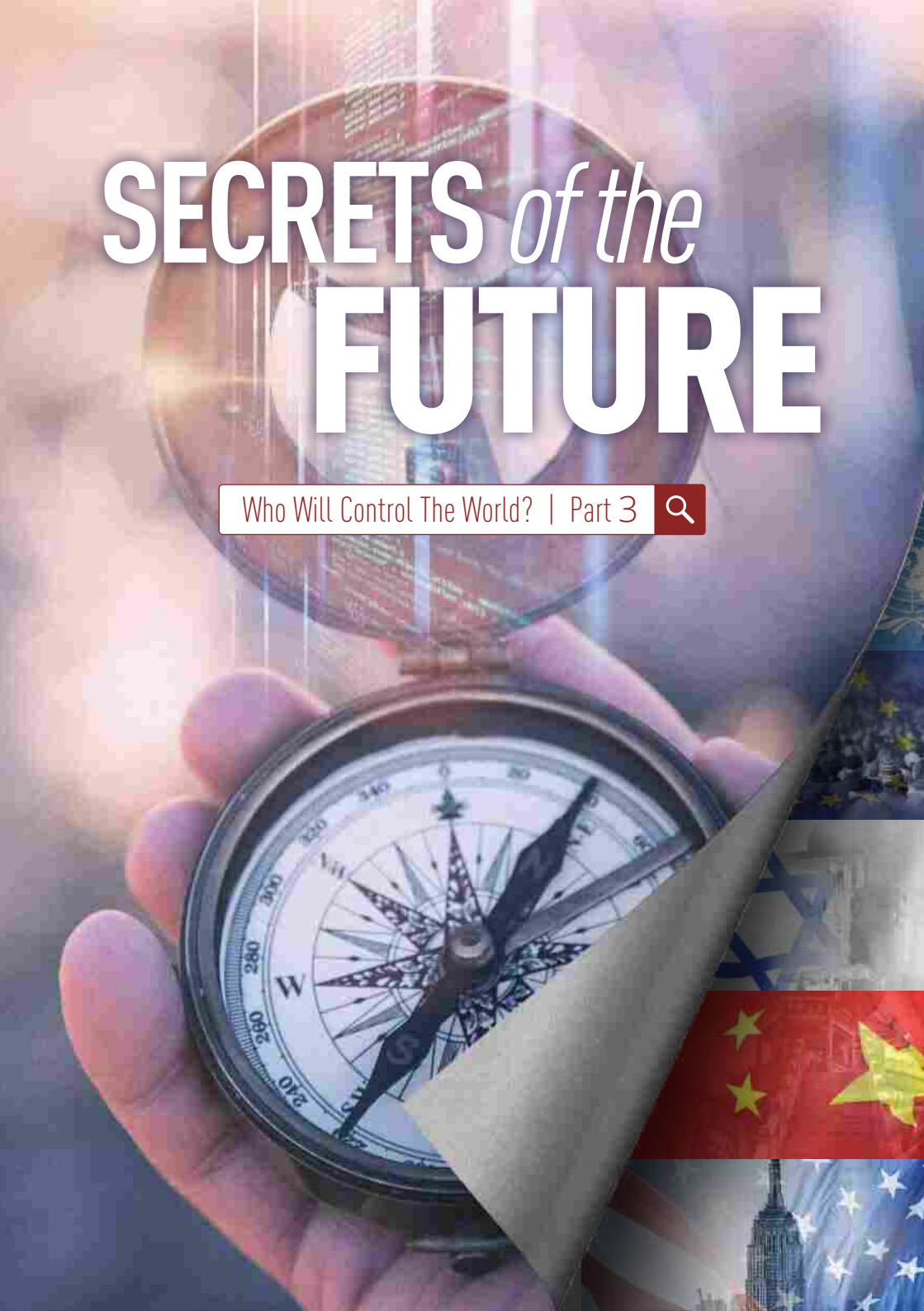
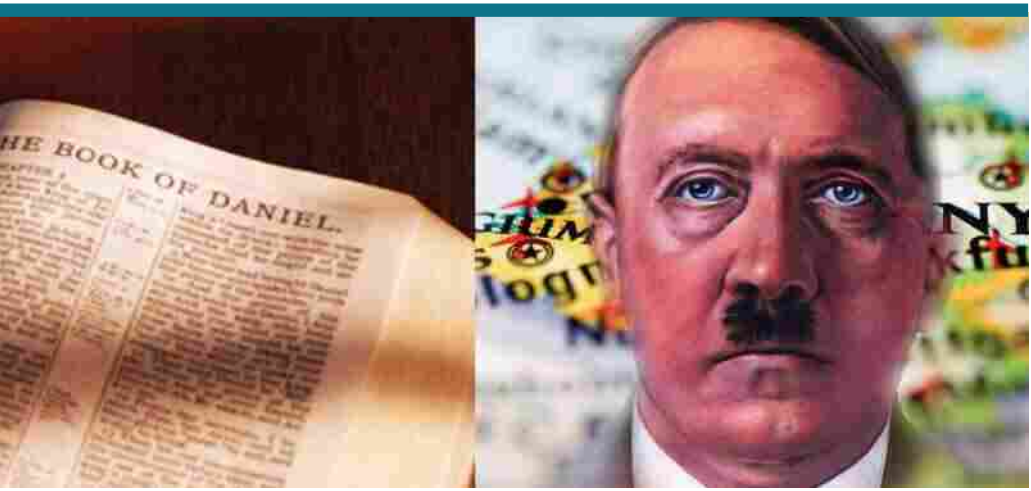
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Who Will Control The World? | Part 3



WHO WILL CONTROL THE WORLD

As a rampaging Adolf Hitler marched his troops across Europe, Franz Hasel, a German soldier in the elite troops of Pioneer Company 699, boldly told his superiors that Hitler was doomed to failure. The reason? A cryptic prophecy from the book of Daniel outlining future world empires – and Germany was not one of them. At the risk of death, Hasel told his leading officer, Captain Miekus, that Germany would never control the world.



As Unit 699 drove deep into Russia, Captain Miekus believed what Hasel was saying and carried extra fuel hoping for a safe retreat. Unfortunately only seven of the 1,200-man unit arrived home safely. The predictions by the prophet Daniel came true – with devastating results.

The book of Daniel was written in the ancient city of Babylon. Many years earlier Nimrod was the ruler of Babylon (or Babel as it was known back then). Nimrod was the father of the secret mysteries of "nature religions" and these mysteries were passed on through the generations until the time of King Nebuchadnezzar II.

Nebuchadnezzar became known as one of the greats in history – a military conqueror and a great builder. Among other things, Nebuchadnezzar built the famous hanging gardens of Babylon. This amazing structure became one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Early in his reign, Nebuchadnezzar set out on a military campaign towards Egypt. On the way, he captured the city of Jerusalem, taking captive the best and the brightest of the Jewish nation, including the young prophet Daniel. As a prisoner of war, Daniel remained true to His Creator God, despite being trained in all the customs and mysteries of Babylon.

While Daniel was in captivity, God gave him the power to unlock a mysterious dream. This dream revolved around future world superpowers and the ultimate future for planet earth. It was the contents of this dream that not only stopped Hitler, but also many other aggressive leaders before him.

So who will control our world in the future? Will it be the United States, Israel or China? Will it be a religious leader such as the Pope or a United Europe? Will one of the nations of Islam dominate the new world?

In order to know the future we must first understand the past. The amazing prophecy that captured the attention of Franz Hasel is found in the second chapter of Daniel. We invite you to read the whole chapter and then we will unlock the prophecy, step by step.



Q1. WHAT HAPPENED TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR ONE NIGHT?

***Daniel 2:1** - Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had _____ and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him*

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that troubled him. As he lay awake at night he knew he had dreamt something of great importance, but he couldn't remember the details.

Q2. WHAT DID NEBUCHADNEZZAR ASK HIS OFFICIAL "SECRET REVEALERS" TO DO?

***Daniel 2:2-4 -** Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to _____ the king his _____ (v2)*

The wise men had been trained in all the secret knowledge and mysteries of Babylon. As intelligence was mixed with magic and religion, these men were the greatest code breakers in the land. They were used by the king to predict the timing and tactics of enemies, cast spells on behalf of the king and read the future through studying the stars and planets. To the wise men of Babylon, the interpretation of a dream was not unusual or difficult – that is of course if the king told them what he dreamt in the first place.



Q3. COULD THE WISE MEN REVEAL THE SECRETS AND WHAT WAS THE RESULT?

***Daniel 2:6-13** - The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, there is _____ a man on _____ who can tell the king's matter (v10)*

For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to _____ all the wise men of Babylon (v12)

The wise men were well accustomed to interpreting dreams, yet all the secret knowledge of Babylon was not sufficient to tell the king the dream that he had forgotten. How true it was when they said there was not a "man on earth" who could interpret it – only a God in heaven, as they were soon to find out.



Q4. WHEN DANIEL HEARD ABOUT THE SITUATION WHAT DID HE ASK THE KING?

***Daniel 2:14-16** - So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might _____ the king the _____ (v16)*

Although Daniel did not practice witchcraft, he was being trained in the secrets of ancient Babylon and was therefore counted as a wise man. He too would be put to death with all those who were unable to tell the king his dream. It is no wonder he was anxious to help the king out with his dilemma.

Q5. WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING DANIEL COULD DO FOR GOD TO REVEAL THE DREAM TO HIM?

***Daniel 2:17,18** - Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek _____ from the God of heaven concerning this _____*

Daniel and his friends prayed to the God of heaven, asking Him to reveal the secret of the dream. Daniel knew the power of prayer. Even today, the most important and effective way to gain supernatural help is to pray. When you need to unlock mysteries in your life; when you want answers to your questions; or when you desire support and strength to cope with a tough personal situation, try talking to God in prayer.



Q6. HOW DID GOD REVEAL THE SECRET TO DANIEL?

***Daniel 2:19** - Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a*

_____ _____

God often revealed his secrets through dreams (see Numbers 12:6). Evidently, God gave Nebuchadnezzar the initial dream and then revealed the interpretation to Daniel in a subsequent dream.

Q7. WHAT DID DANIEL SAY ABOUT THE GOD OF HEAVEN?

Daniel 2:21,22

a. *He changes the _____ and the _____*

b. *He _____ kings and _____ up kings*

c. *He gives _____ to the wise and _____ to those who have understanding*

d. *He _____ deep and secret things*

e. *He _____ what is in the darkness and _____ dwells with Him*

It is clear that Daniel knew the power and authority of God. The overall purpose of this whole dream was to reveal the hidden secret that it is God – not human kings or armies – who controls the destiny of this planet.

Q8. WHAT DID DANIEL SAY THE KING SAW IN THE DREAM?

***Daniel 2:31** - You, O king, were watching; and behold a great _____!*

The king dreamt of a giant statue. This statue stood in front of Nebuchadnezzar and was described by Daniel as awesome. Can you just imagine the king getting excited and shouting out, "That's it Daniel – you've got it! Tell me more".



Q9. WHAT WERE THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS THAT MADE UP THE IMAGE?

Daniel 2:32,33

a. Head of _____

b. Chest and arms of _____

c. Belly and thighs of _____

d. Legs of _____

e. Feet partly of _____ and partly of _____

It is interesting to note that God used earthly minerals as the basis for His prophecy. The value of each material deteriorates as we move down the statue. It starts off with gold at the top and ends up in a mixture of metal and mud at the bottom.



Q10. WHAT DID THE STONE DO TO THE IMAGE AND WHAT DID THE STONE TURN INTO?

***Daniel 2:34,35** - You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which _____ the image on its _____ of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces (v34)*

... And the stone that struck the image became a great_____ and _____ the whole earth (v35)

Daniel told the king that a supernatural rock would hit the image – not on the golden head, but at its clay bound feet. This rock would then take the place of the image and fill the whole earth with its presence and power.

Q11. WHAT DOES THE HEAD OF GOLD REPRESENT?

***Daniel 2:37,38 -** _____ are this head of gold (v38)*

Nebuchadnezzar represented Babylon (verse 39 indicates that this prophecy is primarily about kingdoms rather than the kings). Isaiah had previously described Babylon as "the golden city". The precious mineral gold is a perfect symbol for the wealth, power and superiority of Babylon.

Babylon appeared to be impregnable. The city walls were 60 metres high and thick enough to hold chariot races on the top. The city had a moat around the walls with an equal cubic capacity to the walls themselves

The gates of the city were solid brass and within the city there seemed to be limitless resources.

It was the Babylonians who first charted out the heavens, mapping out the sun and creating the sundial. It was the Babylonians who discovered the system of length, area, capacity and weight. They divided the day into hours and minutes. They were gifted in music and the arts and they were also brilliant at business. It wasn't long before the city of Nebuchadnezzar became the commercial centre for the region and riches flooded into the city. Babylon was a golden city that appeared to have a golden future.





Q12. WHAT DID THE PROPHET ISAIAH PREDICT WOULD HAPPEN TO BABYLON?

***Isaiah 13:19,20** - And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans pride, will be as when God overthrew _____ and _____. It will _____ be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there*

What an amazing prediction. God predicted that this city of gold would become desolate. This is true to this day. Saddam Hussein of Iraq saw King Nebuchadnezzar as his idol and attempted to rebuild ancient Babylon. However, the ancient city is gone, just as the Bible predicted.

Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom ruled the world from 605 to 538BC. It was the combined force of the Medes and Persians that overthrew Babylon in the most amazing circumstances. Over 150 years prior to the fall of Babylon, the prophet Isaiah had predicted that it would be a man by the name of Cyrus who would overthrow the city (Isaiah 45:1,2). That is exactly what happened.

The Medes and Persians were symbolised by silver. They were possibly not as powerful as Babylon and so they needed to overcome the city through brains rather than sheer strength. Cyrus, the Persian military leader, diverted the water from the river Euphrates, which was running directly through the city of Babylon. He then marched his army through the riverbed and under the city walls, claiming victory over a complacent and unsuspecting Babylon.

Q13. WHAT METAL WAS USED TO REPRESENT THE THIRD KINGDOM, THE NATION THAT WOULD TAKE OVER FROM MEDO-PERSIA?

***Daniel 2:39** - a third kingdom of _____*

Alexander the Great led the Greeks to victory over the Medes and Persians in the battle of Arbela in 331BC. The Greeks were known for their bronze armour and swift victories. The Jewish historian Josephus, documented how Alexander the Great knew his destiny as a result of being shown the prophecies of Daniel (***Josephus, Antiquities***, p244).

Q14. WHAT METAL WAS USED TO REPRESENT THE FOURTH KINGDOM?

***Daniel 2:40** - And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as _____*

The iron monarchy of Rome broke the Greeks in 168BC. It was the Romans who were ruling at the time of Jesus and this great superpower was dominant for over 600 years. Those "long legs" of time resulted in much persecution of God's people.





Q15. HOW IS THE BREAK-UP OF ROME INTO MODERN EUROPE DESCRIBED IN THIS PROPHECY?

Daniel 2:41,42 - *Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be _____ (v41)*
... so the kingdom shall be partly _____ and partly _____ (v42)

Instead of another world empire, Rome would be divided into numerous kingdoms symbolised by the ten toes. By 476AD barbarian tribes had conquered Rome and 10 of these tribes eventually became modern Europe. For example, the Anglo-Saxons became England, the Lombards became the Italians and the Franks became the nation of France. It is amazing just how accurately this prophecy has been fulfilled.

Q16. WOULD THE EUROPEAN KINGDOMS EVER SEEK TO UNITE AND HOW SUCCESSFUL WILL THEY BE?

***Daniel 2:43** - As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will _____ with the seed of men; but they will not _____ to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay*

The nations of Europe would mix together, both economically and through intermarriage. However the Bible predicted they would never become fully united. There would always be separate nations and they would never become a single entity in the same way that the United States, for instance, is a single nation.

This aspect of the prophecy has thwarted dictators and military aspirants for hundreds of years. Charlemagne, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm and Hitler have all attempted to unite Europe but failed. Even the European Union (EU) is doing its best to unite Europe.





However, according to Bible prophecy, deep divisions will remain forever. Some have likened modern Europe to a giant sporting team – individuals coming together in a common cause, but always retaining their individuality.



Q17. WHO WILL SET UP THE FINAL KINGDOM?

***Daniel 2:44** - And in the days of these kings the _____ of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall _____ be destroyed*

1 Corinthians 10:4 - ... and that Rock was _____

The Bible predicts that it will be Jesus who will set up His Kingdom. It will not be China, the United States or Israel. There will be a fifth world empire, an empire ruled by the King of kings. The best news of all is this Kingdom of peace will last forever.

Q18. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE EARTHLY KINGDOMS WHEN GOD SETS UP HIS KINGDOM?

***Daniel 2:44** - ... it shall _____ in pieces and _____ all these kingdoms*

The stone strikes the statue at its feet. This indicates that Jesus will come during the time of the divided nations. The kingdoms of this world will be destroyed. This event could happen at any time. As we look down through human history we can see that we are living at the time of the "toes". Just as all the previous aspects of the prophecy have been perfectly fulfilled, so it will be that Jesus will come soon and establish His Kingdom.

Q19. WHAT DID NEBUCHADNEZZAR SAY ABOUT DANIEL'S GOD WHEN HE REALISED THAT DANIEL COULD REVEAL THE MEANING OF HIS DREAM?

***Daniel 2:47** - ... Truly your God is the _____ of gods, the _____ of kings, and a _____ of secrets*

When Nebuchadnezzar saw that Daniel's God could remember the forgotten, foretell the future and overrule any earthly kingdom, he knew that this was the true



God. This was a God who both created secrets and revealed them. A God to be loved and worshipped. A God to be trusted and obeyed. A God who provides hope and certainty in a divided and morally weak world.

Three points to remember:

- God has ultimate control over the world
- We are living in the last days of earth's history
- God's new kingdom will last forever

The story:

Eighty-nine-year-old Samuel Scott had been a Christian for 60 years and yet never heard of the prophecy of Daniel 2. As he learnt this new and exciting prophecy his heart beat with excitement and he couldn't wait to get home to tell his family. Just before he left the Bible study, the teacher asked Samuel to read the following text, "Do not fear, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). He was then asked, "Samuel, what is your Father's good pleasure?" He answered, "To give me His kingdom". As Samuel realised how much God loved him personally this old man knelt down and prayed to his heavenly Father, thanking God for sharing His kingdom.

What does this story tell you about the relevance of Daniel 2 to your life today?

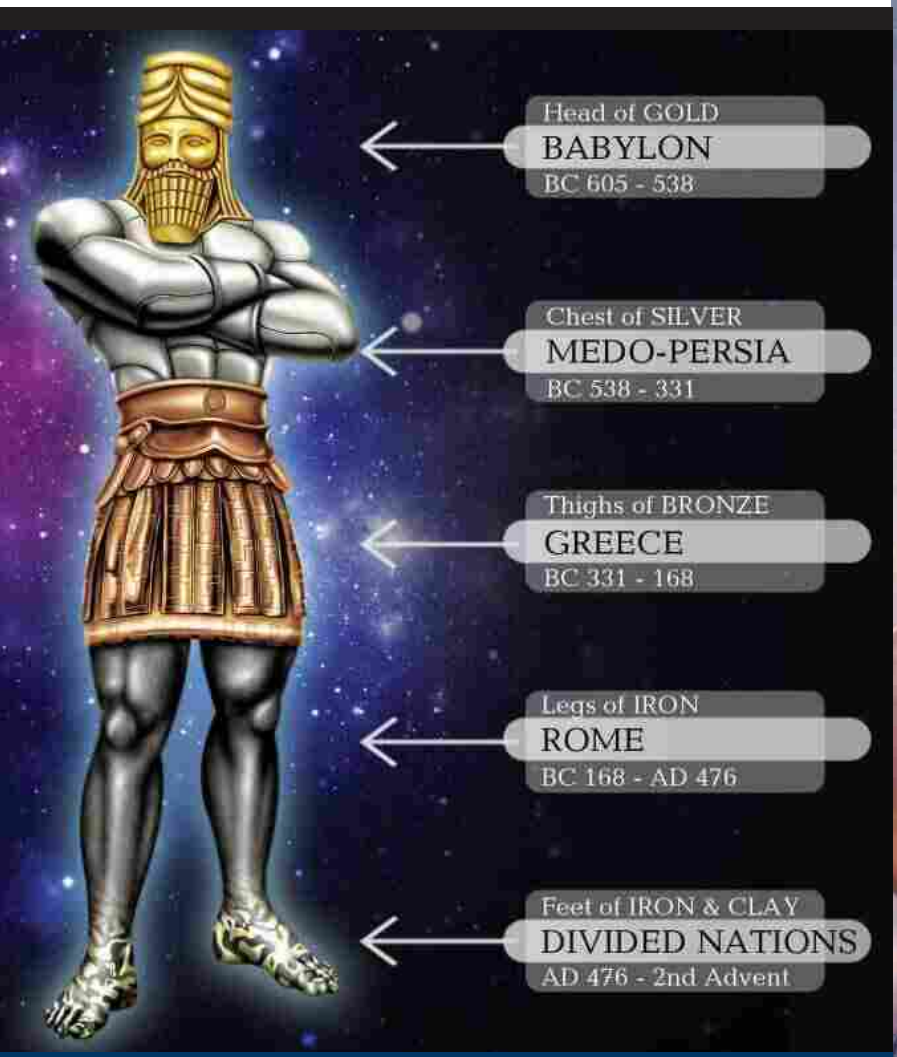
Relational questions:

1. Do you find it easy or difficult to allow God to be "in charge" of your future?
2. In what ways do you think prayer could be helpful during a tough time? Have you experienced this?
3. What have you learnt from this study guide that can help you trust God more as you move into the future?

Your response:

After seeing the way God understands the future and has ultimate control of the events on this planet, are you willing for Him to lead in the future of your life?

_____



NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM GIVEN AND INTERPRETED BY GOD



SECRETS of PROPHECY

Who is in control? Can knowing the past help you to understand the future? Discover the prophetic words made 2,500 years ago - could these words still impact your life today? Decide for yourself in Part 4 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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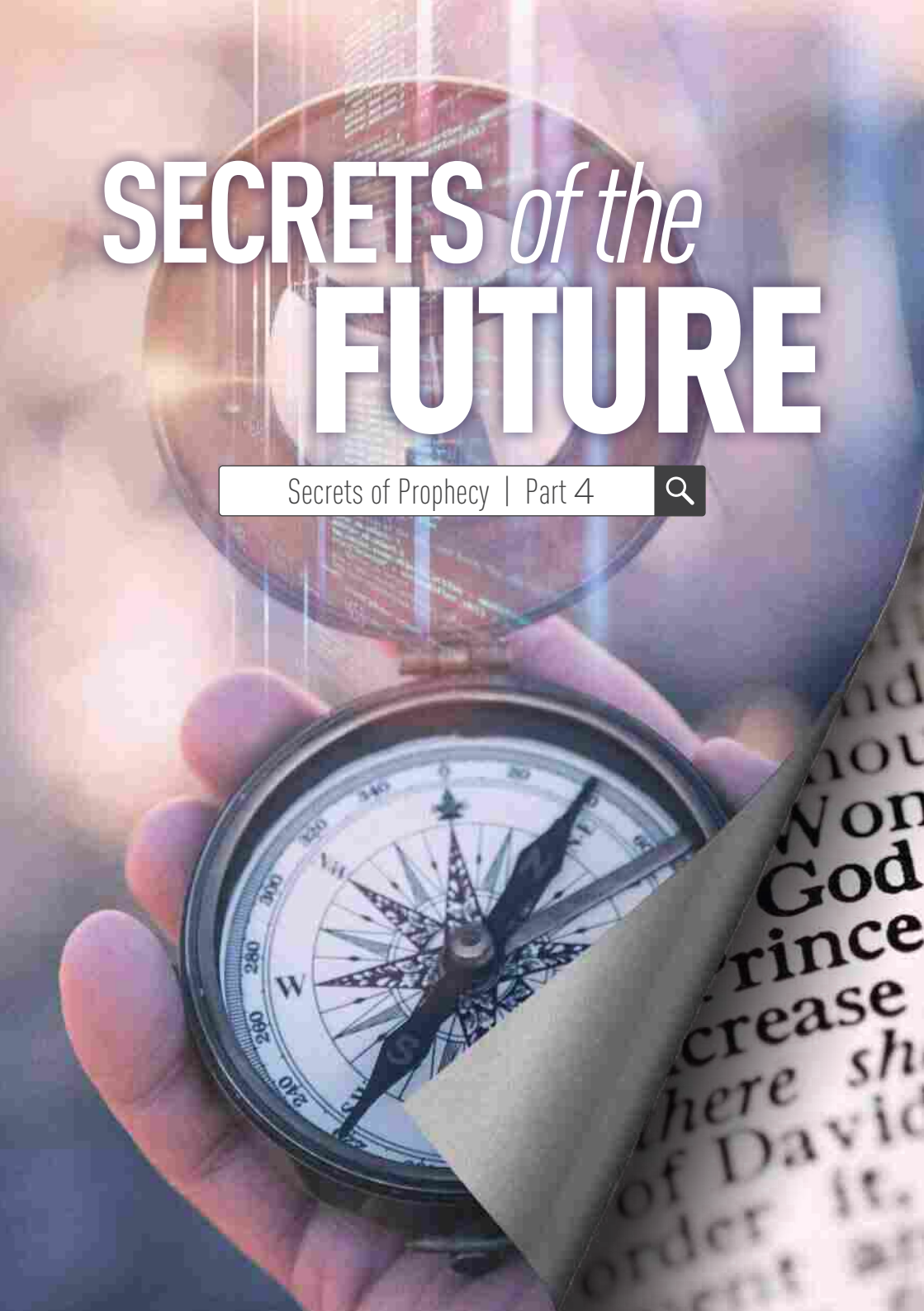
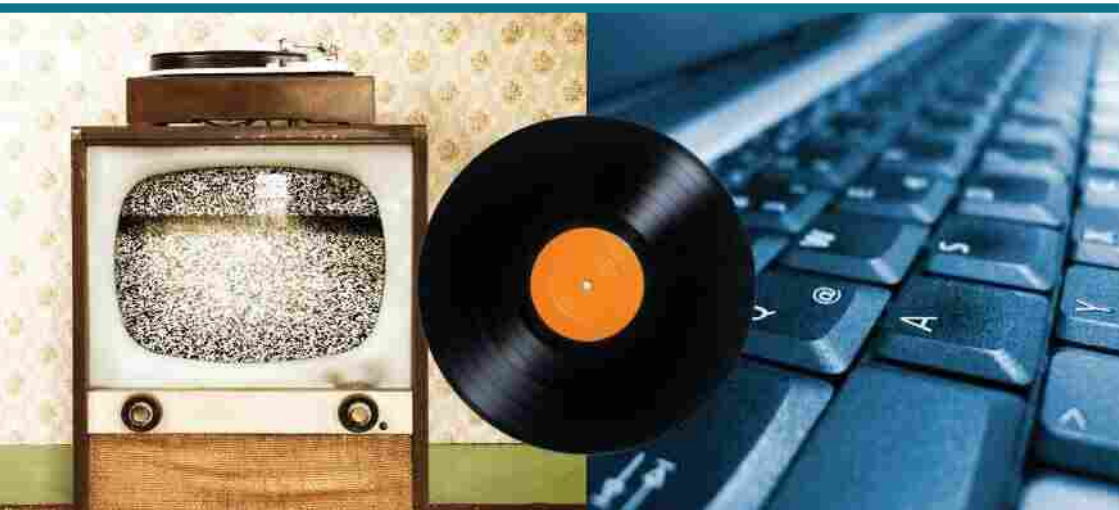

SECRETS of the
FUTURE
Secrets of Prophecy | Part 4

SECRETS OF PROPHECY

"Prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future."
- Niels Bohr, Danish physicist

Predicting the future can be quite risky. Notice these statements:

- ***"The horse is here to stay; the automobile is only a fad."*** Advice to Henry Ford from Horace Rackhan, President of Michigan Savings Bank, 1903
- ***"Who the hell wants actors to talk?"*** H.M.Warner, Warner Brothers, 1927
- ***"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."*** Thomas Watson, Chairman of IBM, 1943
- ***"Television won't last because people will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night."*** Darryl Zanuck, 20th Century Fox, 1946
- ***"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out anyway."*** President of Decca Records, commenting on The Beatles, 1962



Despite the risk, a look into history uncovers a variety of cultures fascinated with knowing the future. The prophets who wrote the ancient Scriptures used mysterious symbols and time codes to describe over 1,000 startling and specific predictions. These "prophecies" predicted major events and the rise and fall of nations throughout history.

The most intriguing and controversial Bible prophecies are those that speak of our time. Among other things the prophets saw:

- A rapid increase in technology and pace of life
- A union of religious and political powers causing war and destruction
- Greedy capitalists who use the cheap labour of the poor
- A global economic collapse
- Destruction of the environment
- The formation of global politics and the globalisation of the world

What is the purpose and relevance of prophecy? Why were the prophecies written in mysterious codes and symbols? How accurate is Bible prophecy and what do the prophecies really mean? Throughout this series you will discover the keys that unlock the secrets of prophecy. As the future becomes clear, important teachings will help you discover life's purpose and answer life's mysteries.



Q1. WHO CLAIMS THE ABILITY TO TRULY KNOW THE FUTURE?

Isaiah 46:9,10 - *Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, _____ the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are _____ yet _____*

The ancient pagan religions of the world relied on specially trained mystics and astrologers to communicate with their nature gods and understand the future. Prophetic "omens" were determined by observing the strange movements of natural events. The fate of kings and nations was predicted based on the formation of stars and planets, the behaviour of birds, the movement of oil through water or even the liver condition of dead sheep.



The God of the ancient Scriptures declares that He is the only one who can truly predict the future. This unique quality of knowing and telling

the things that are “not yet done”, can easily be tested through a study of Bible prophecy. With over 1,000 clear prophecies, and one-third of the Bible devoted to prophecy, you can take God’s challenge and test if He is real, and can truly predict the future.

Quite a few leaders throughout history have taken a keen interest in Bible prophecy. Some made decisions because they believed in God’s prophecies; others openly tried to defy the prophecies.

King Cyrus, the first great Persian monarch, commanded the rebuilding of the Jewish temple, as a result of the prophecies contained in the books of Daniel, Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Alexander the Great spared the city of Jerusalem from destruction and worshipped in its temple, after he was shown the prophetic book of Daniel.

Jesus Christ told His followers they needed to study and understand the book of Daniel. His life and death were also perfectly matched to the prophecies contained in the Old Testament.

Former US President Ronald Reagan worked with Pope John Paul II to overthrow communism, partly because he feared the prophetic battle of Armageddon.

Adolf Hitler openly opposed the prophetic God of the Bible.

Saddam Hussein believed he was the modern fulfilment of a key character in the prophetic book of Daniel; King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.



Q2. WHO DOES GOD REVEAL HIS SECRETS THROUGH?

Amos 3:7 - *Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His _____ to His servants the _____*

Prophets were men and women who God especially chose to share with us His secret mysteries. Many of these mysteries were predictions for the future, or "prophecies".



It is important to note that Jesus warned against "false prophets" (Matthew 24:24). The easiest way to determine a false prophet is by using the Scriptures as a benchmark. If their predictions do not come true, or they conflict with the teachings of Scripture, you can be assured they are not a true prophet of God.

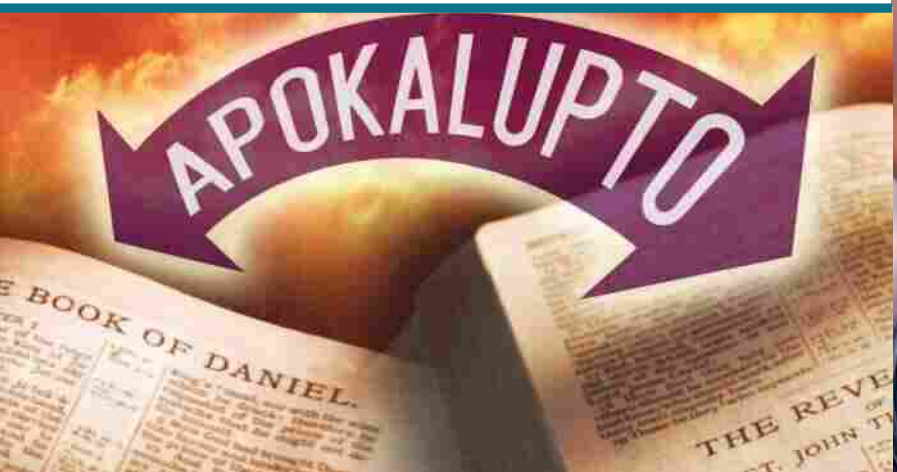
Q3. WHEN WILL THE SECRETS OF PROPHECY BE REVEALED?

Daniel 12:4 - *But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the _____ of the _____; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase*

The two prophetic books that will be investigated most fully in this series are Daniel and Revelation. The book of Daniel contains prophecies that were concealed, or kept secret, until the "time of the end" (Daniel 12:4).

Revelation or "apocalypse" comes from the Greek word "apokalupto", which means "to reveal a secret". It is this book that unlocks the secrets of Daniel and also reveals new prophecies for our time today.

Although prophecy has always been relevant, now is especially the time to read and understand the secrets of prophecy.



Q4. HOW DID GOD REVEAL HIS SECRETS TO HIS PROPHETS?

Numbers 12:6 - *Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a _____; I speak to him in a _____"*

God used dreams and visions to depict and outline His prophecies. On some occasions He would speak directly (1 Samuel 3:10), but usually He spoke through visions. While in vision, the prophets saw a range of symbols and world events that formed the basis of the prophecies.

Sometimes God would reveal the keys to unlocking the prophecy within the vision. At other times the prophets did not understand the meaning and the meaning would remain a mystery until our day, the time of the end (Daniel 8:17,26,27).



Q5. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF BIBLE PROPHECY?

John 14:29 - *And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may _____*

The primary purpose of prophecy is to give us confidence to trust in the God of the Scriptures. God has provided a logical foundation for our belief system, not just a faith based on traditions or culture. There have been many gods throughout history. The Creator God asks us to believe Him on the basis of the accuracy of His predictions. If God created the past, and can see the future, you can trust Him to take care of your life today.

Q6. WHAT APPROACH DOES GOD USE TO OUTLINE HIS PROPHECIES?

Revelation 1:1 - *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants – things which must shortly take place. And He sent and _____ it by His angel to His servant John*



The prophecies of the Bible were "signified" – in other words put into signs and symbols. Many of these symbols depict imagery of mystical animals, colours, metals and people.

Throughout this series we will uncover intriguing prophetic symbols such as:

- 666 and the Mark of the Beast
- The Great Red Dragon
- The Seal of God
- Armageddon
- The Beast from the bottomless pit
- The Time, Times and Half a time
- The Lord's Day
- The Antichrist

Two key aspects of Bible prophecy are:

a. Prophetic Symbols

A variety of symbols are used to represent nations, people, religious movements and political events. In total over 60 symbols can be identified with each symbol playing an important role in portraying the full meaning and significance of each prophecy.



b. Numerals

Great men throughout history such as Isaac Newton and Leonardo Da Vinci have been intrigued with the symbolic meaning of Bible numerals. Not only are there many time periods in the Bible that predict when certain events will occur, but certain numbers also represent a spiritual meaning. In total, at least 12 numbers can be identified as holding special significance.

It is interesting to note that the ancient pagan religions also used signs and symbols to represent spiritual beliefs, particularly in reference to worship of the "nature gods". During the Early to Middle Ages, as the church blended in with the surrounding pagan cultures, some of these symbols were incorporated into Christian art, rituals and traditions. You may recognise some of these symbols.

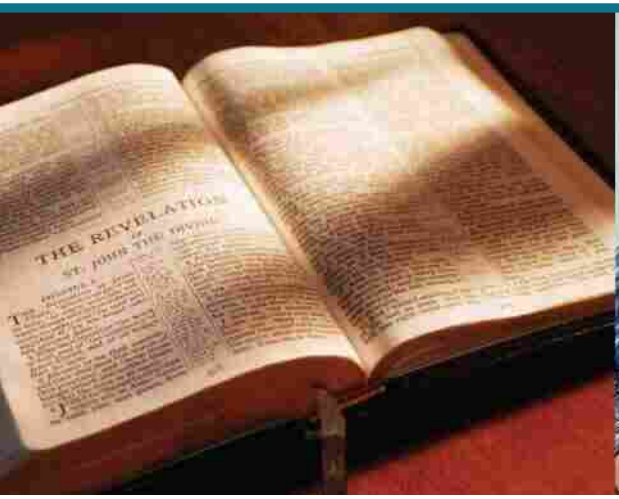
- The egg = birth and fertility goddess
- The sun face = sun god
- Pentagram = union and balance between the spiritual realm
  and the elements of nature
- The solar wheel = sun god/circle of life
- The crescent moon = sacred feminine
- The all seeing eye = spiritual enlightenment
- Chalice = goddess, female sexual organs

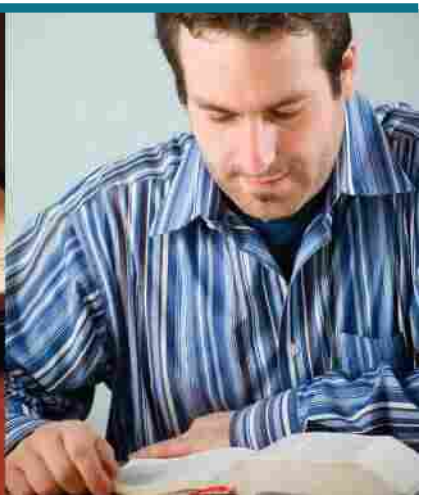


Q7. WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO GAIN THE MOST BENEFIT FROM BIBLE PROPHECY?

Revelation 1:3 - *Blessed is he who _____ and those who _____ the words of this prophecy, and _____ those things which are written in it; for the time is near*

The books of Daniel and Revelation are important for us to read and understand. What is even more important is that we keep, or put into action, the things we learn from God's Word. God wants us to worship Him out of love, and the highest form of worship is obedience. True happiness is the consequence of loving obedience to God and His Word.





Q8. WHY WAS THE BIBLE WRITTEN IN MYSTERIOUS SYMBOLS?

Luke 8:10 - *And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that ' Seeing they may not _____, and hearing they may not_____'*

a. For protection

A number of prophecies predicted the downfall of empires and described nations and global political powers in less than flattering terms. The Bible was at risk of being destroyed by those who opposed God's people and denied God's teachings. The major prophecies were placed into a code for protection. Jesus said, "seeing they may not see and hearing they may not understand". The prophecies were cloaked in symbolism.

b. To increase faith

Bible prophecy is not really difficult to understand, but it does take time and commitment. Readers need to dig into each prophecy to determine its meaning, and search the Scriptures to discover the keys to each symbol. Your faith will increase as you learn more about God and see His amazing love and care for people throughout history (Romans 10:17).



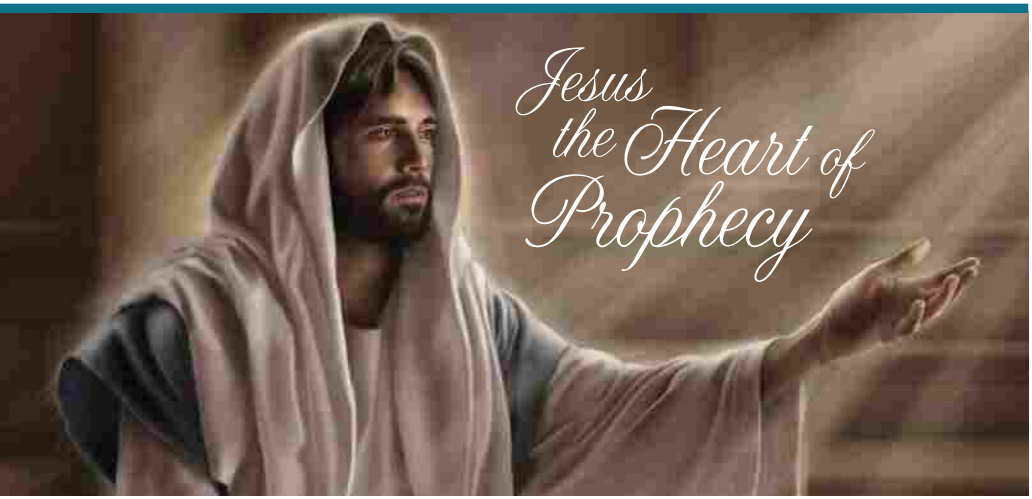
c. To effectively communicate

Symbols are a powerful form of communication. Companies spend millions of dollars creating symbols that touch a chord within the community and effectively communicate the meaning and personality of their brand.

Q9. WHO IS THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF BIBLE PROPHECY?

Revelation 1:1 - *The Revelation of* _____ _____

Although the prophecies outline future events, the focus of Bible prophecy is Jesus Christ. There are many prophecies that refer specifically to Jesus – describing unique names, His appearance, His character and the way He interacts with His people.



Q10. WHAT ARE THE KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING BIBLE PROPHECY?

In order to understand the prophecies, the following principles need to be followed:

a. Understand the symbols

This can be quite easily achieved as the Bible provides the keys to what they mean.

b. Pray for spiritual enlightenment

The Bible says that spiritual things are "spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Ask God to help you understand the prophecies; after all, He developed them.

c. See the prophecies as signposts in time

Some people get confused when they view the prophecies as relevant only to the time of the Bible writers. Misunderstanding can also occur when we apply all the prophecies to the end of time. Throughout this series you will see predictions covering a time period from their inception through to the end of time. God provides "signposts" or events throughout time which highlight where we are in human history.



d. Allow the Bible to interpret itself

It is essential that we allow God to unlock the secrets of prophecy. By comparing Scriptures we can avoid speculation and allow the Bible to interpret itself. Understanding the Old Testament, in particular, is the foundation for understanding Bible prophecy. Of the 404 verses in the book of Revelation, more than 270 refer back to the history, imagery and prophecy of the Old Testament.

Q11. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE KEY SYMBOLS OF PROPHECY?

a. Beast = kingdom/political power **(Daniel 7:17,23)**

The use of animals as a symbol for a nation is still common today. For instance, the "Kangaroos" are Australians, "Kiwis" are New Zealanders, "Springboks" are South Africans and the "Eagle" is often used for Americans.

b. Woman = Church **(Jeremiah 6:2)**

In Bible prophecy a pure woman is a symbol of a pure church; a corrupt woman is a symbol of a corrupt church.

c. Water = many people **(Revelation 17:15)**

Even today a large number of people are referred to as a "sea" of faces.

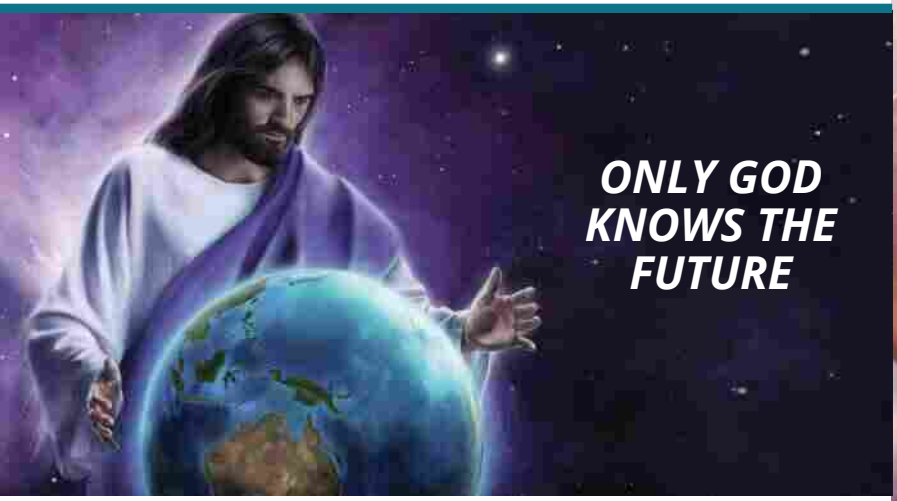
d. Day = year **(Ezekiel 4:6)**

One of the most important numerical codes is the "day for a year" principle. In Bible prophecy a prophetic day equals a literal year. As an example, 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6) represents a literal 1,260 years.

Q12. WHAT WARNING DOES GOD GIVE WHEN INTERPRETING PROPHECY?

2 Peter 1:20 - *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any _____ interpretation*

Prophecies are to be interpreted through an understanding of the Bible, not personal guesswork. What you or I might "think" it means is not as important as what God says the prophecy means. This series of study guides will cover a broad range of important Bible teachings. In each case we will look into the context of specific Bible statements, and move through the Bible to discover the overall meaning.







Q13. WHAT PROMISE DOES JESUS GIVE TO THOSE WHO OBEY HIS WORD?

Revelation 22:14 - *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of _____, and may enter through the gates into the city*

The Bible promises you the gift of eternal life if you choose to accept it. Choosing Jesus means more than just a verbal affirmation. It involves loving Him and a willingness to obey Him. Understanding the prophecies of the Scriptures helps you to know and love God more fully and provides clear direction for these last days of earth's history.

Three points to remember

- Only God knows the future
- The "secrets of prophecy" are understood by allowing the Bible to interpret itself
- Jesus is the centre of prophecy

The Story:

A young girl was watching a man publicly denouncing God as a myth and mocking the thought that anyone could predict the future. She turned to the man and said to him, "My Bible talks about you". "Oh, is that true?", said the man. "What does it say about me?" The young girl quoted to him from the book of Psalms, "The fool has said in his heart there is no God" (Psalms 14:1). As only a young girl could, she then went on to say,"The Bible says the fool has said in his heart there is no God, but Mr you are even sillier because you have actually said it out loud!"

What lessons can we learn from this simple story?

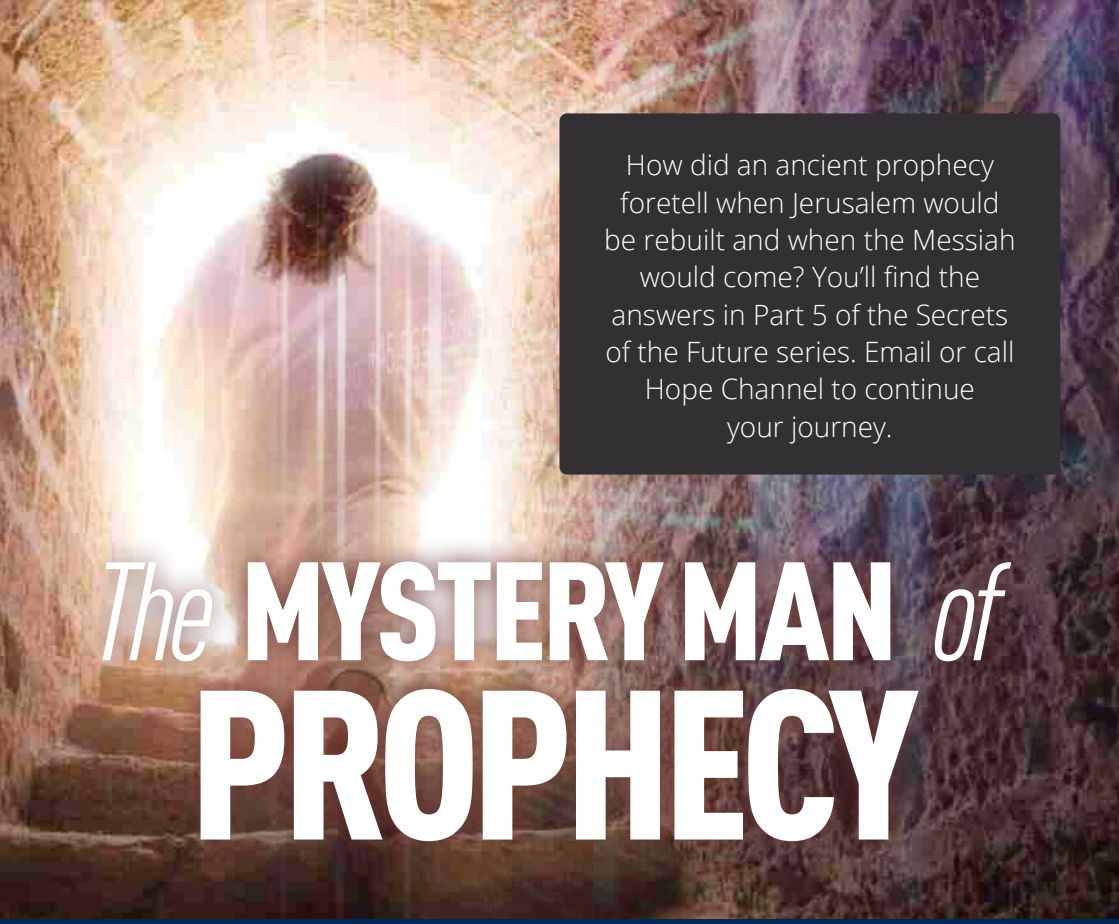
Relational questions

1. How could understanding prophecy impact your spirituality?
2. In what ways do you think an understanding of prophecy will give you hope for the future?
3. What do you think you can do in your approach to Bible study to ensure Jesus remains at the heart of prophecy, instead of just focusing on future facts and events?

Your response:

Knowing the importance and relevance of Bible prophecy, would you like to know God better by further investigating the meaning of Bible prophecy? _____





How did an ancient prophecy foretell when Jerusalem would be rebuilt and when the Messiah would come? You'll find the answers in Part 5 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

The MYSTERY MAN *of* PROPHECY

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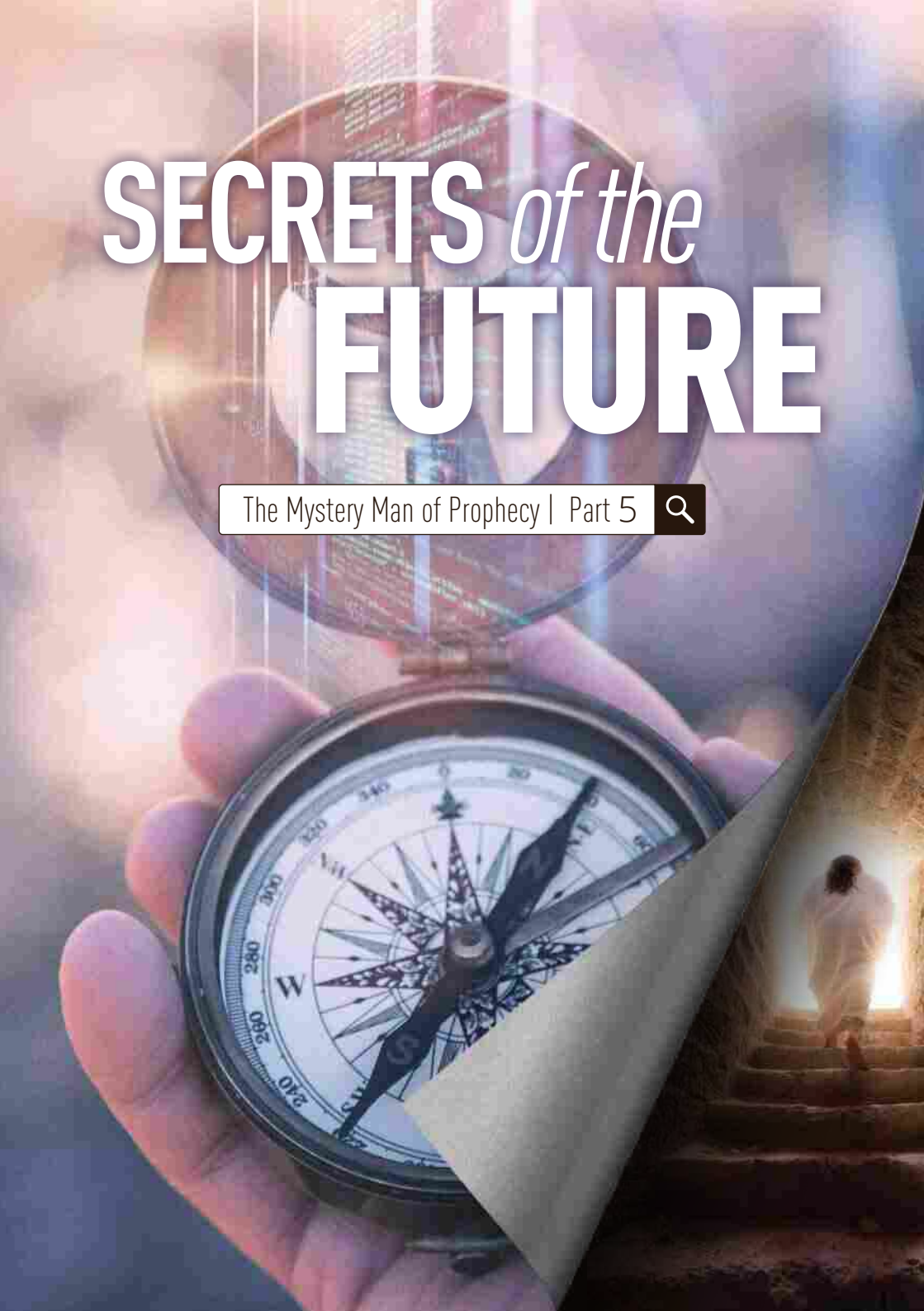

SECRETS of the
FUTURE
The Mystery Man of Prophecy | Part 5

THE MYSTERY MAN OF PROPHECY

Every day people in Jerusalem go down to the Western Wall, praying for the coming of the Messiah. Earnestly and with deep respect they rock their bodies back and forward humbly pleading to their God. The people of Israel hope and pray that soon the Messiah will come, and return their treasured temple to its former glory. The political and spiritual hope of the Jew is a Messiah who will bring freedom to the people of Israel and peace to the world.

Throughout the last 2,000 years, there were many Messiah hopefuls. Simon Bar Kokhba (135AD), Moses of Crete (450AD), Serene (720AD), David Alrui (1160AD), Abraham Abulafia (1240AD), Shabettai Zevi (1626AD) and more recently, Rabbi Schneerson, a New York based Rabbi who created much excitement – until he died.

Where is the Messiah? Why has He taken so long? What has happened to all the promises for the Jews? When will this "mystery man of prophecy" finally arrive?

In what may be the greatest of all prophecies, the ancient prophet Daniel predicted important events in the history of the Jews. This included the exact date for the coming of the Messiah.



In 539BC, as Jerusalem lay in ruins, the prophet Daniel predicted:

- Jerusalem would be rebuilt
- The specific year for the coming of the Messiah
- The Messiah would die
- The unique purpose of the Messiah's death
- The specific year for the death of the Messiah
- A cut off date for the Jewish people as a "chosen race"
- The city of Jerusalem would be destroyed again

Clearly this prophecy has major ramifications for the Jews. Do the Jews know about this prophecy? What do they think about it? Should their search for a Messiah be over?

In a bizarre twist, not only is this prophecy known to Jewish scholars, but a rabbinical curse has been placed on any Jew who reads it to discover the timing of the coming Messiah.

One Jewish Sage said, "May the Spirits of those who attempt to calculate the final time (of Mashiach's coming) expire!" (Sanhedrin 97b, quoted in Chapter 12 of Hilchos Melachim from the ***Mishneh Torah of Rambam***). (Note: "Mashiach" is Hebrew for "Messiah")

With that warning in mind, let us investigate one of the most intriguing prophecies in the ancient Scriptures. Please read the full chapter of Daniel 9 and notice especially verses 24-27.



Q1. WHAT DID JESUS SAY WAS THE THEME OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES?

Luke 24:27 - *And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning _____*

Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures have Jesus Christ as the central theme. The New Testament writers highlight Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies more than 130 times. Some scholars have estimated that the Old Testament contains over 300 specific prophecies, describing who the Messiah is and what He will do. At the very least, more than 50 major prophecies can clearly be identified and tested against a prospective Messiah. What would be the chance of all 50 prophecies being fulfilled in one person?

Astronomer and mathematician, Peter Stoner, calculated that the chances of fulfilling just eight of these prophecies is one in one hundred thousand trillion. The chances of fulfilling nearly 50 of them would be one in one followed by 157 zeros! (***Science Speaks,*** 1963, pp100-109).

By comparing the life of Jesus with the predictions from the Old Testament it is clear that Jesus Christ perfectly fulfilled all the Messianic prophecies. This study guide demonstrates the evidence from just a few of these prophetic passages.



Q2. HOW DO WE KNOW JESUS WAS A HISTORICAL CHARACTER?

Besides the Bible, there are independent historical sources which verify the existence of Jesus Christ. At least 17 non-Christian sources mention Jesus, all within 150 years of His life. These include Roman historians, Greek writers, Jewish religious leaders and Jewish historians.

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (b.AD37) wrote,

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man ... He was the Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians so named from him are not extinct at this day" (***Antiquities,*** xviii, 33).

Q3. WHERE DOES BIBLE PROPHECY PREDICT JESUS WOULD BE BORN?

Micah 5:2 - *But you, _____ Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting*



Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Micah knew the birthplace of the Messiah. There were two Bethlehems in the days of Jesus, one in the North of Palestine and the other, Ephrathah, a small town in Judea. The prophecy is specific. The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judea. New Testament writers recorded the history of this birthplace exactly as the Bible predicted (Matthew 2:1).



Although Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He did not originate from there. According to the prophet Micah, Jesus is from "everlasting". In other words, prior to coming to earth, He never had a beginning. That is part of the mystery of God. Jesus was not just a prophet or a good man – He was God.

Q4. WAS THERE A SPECIFIC TIME WHEN JESUS WOULD APPEAR AND DIE FOR HIS PEOPLE?

Galatians 4:4 - *But when the _____ of the _____ had come, God sent forth His Son ...*

Romans 5:6 - *For when we were still without strength, in _____ _____ Christ died for the ungodly*

One of the key aspects of the Messianic prophecies revolves around time. Jesus came to this earth "in the fullness of time" and died in "due time". Jesus Himself knew the prophecies and on more than one occasion He avoided conflict with the Jews because "His hour had not yet come" (John 7:30).

The Prophecy of Daniel 9

The Context:

Jerusalem had been captured by Babylon, the superpower of the day, and Daniel was taken back as a prisoner of war. While in captivity, Daniel received visions from God, outlining global empires that would succeed the might of Babylon (Daniel 2,7 and 8).

Daniel saw nations such as Medo-Persia, the Greeks and then another empire (the Romans) ruling over the Jews. He literally became sick with anxiety (Daniel 8:27). Where was the Messiah who would bring freedom from persecution and hatred? Why weren't the Jews ruling the world?



As Daniel realised the gravity of the situation he prayed earnestly for his city and his people. He knew the Jews had rebelled against God on many occasions. Now he was concerned that they may have gone too far. God answered Daniel's prayer by sending down the angel Gabriel with a prophecy that we find documented in Daniel chapter nine.



Q5. WHAT WAS THE IDENTIFIED TIME PERIOD ALLOCATED TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE?

Daniel 9:24 - _____ *weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy*

This prophecy deals specifically with the future of the Jews. We know this because Gabriel pinpoints to Daniel "your people and your holy city". At the start of this prophecy, Daniel is given a time code. The Jewish people would

have 70 weeks (490 days) to "make an end of sins" and "bring in everlasting righteousness". This meant God would give the Jews another opportunity to stop their false worship and become a holy nation.

The Messiah – Fact 1: The Jews were given 70 weeks (490 days) to repent

Q6. IN PROPHETIC SYMBOLISM WHAT DOES A DAY REPRESENT?

Ezekiel 4:6 - *... I have laid on you a day for each* _____

In Bible prophecy a day represents a literal year. This principle, found in the prophetic book of Ezekiel, is also found throughout the Bible (Numbers 14:34).
This approach was followed by Jewish scholars prior to Jesus Christ and is still followed today.

The "day for a year" principle is also the only possible answer to the prophecy of Daniel 9. It would be impossible for all the events of Daniel 9 to apply to a literal 490 days. Jerusalem was not even rebuilt by then. As a result, the 490 day time period allocated to the Jews represents a literal 490 years. Clearly, God is very patient.

The Messiah – Fact 2: 70 weeks (490 days) represents 490 literal years

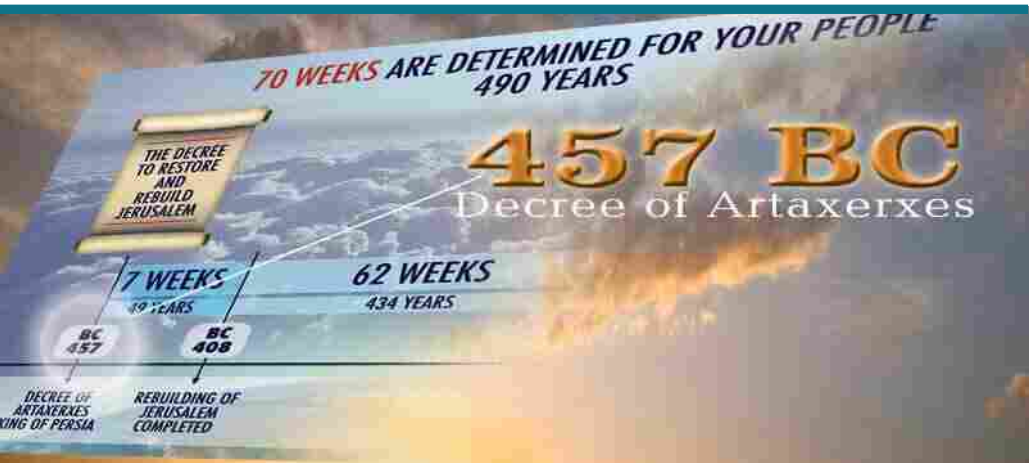


Q7. WHAT WAS THE STARTING POINT FOR THIS TIME PERIOD FOR THE JEWS?

Daniel 9:25 - *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the _____ to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times*

The starting point of this prophecy was a command allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their city. This decree, found in Ezra 7, was made by King Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign, in 457BC. This starting date of 457BC is verified in history through the writings of the Greek historian Herodotus, through Babylonian records and through the Alexandrian astronomer Ptolemy (Canon of Ptolemy). Sir Isaac Newton, one of the greatest scientists ever, documented this starting date as "among the most easily established dates in history" (***Observations upon the prophecies of the Bible,*** pp154-157).

The Messiah – Fact 3: Jerusalem would be rebuilt and the starting date for the prophecy is 457BC





Q8. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AT THE END OF THE FIRST 69 WEEKS?

Daniel 9:25 - *...Until* _____ *the Prince*

Daniel was told the Messiah would come 69 weeks after the command to rebuild Jerusalem. If that command was made in 457BC, then 69 weeks (483 literal years) brings us to a date of 27AD (remember there is no year zero). According to this prophecy, the Messiah would arrive in 27AD.

This is one of the most exciting aspects of this prophecy. "Messiah" means "the Anointed One". Up until 27AD Jesus was a tradesman, working each day as a carpenter. In 27AD His life completely changed. Jesus was baptised in the Jordan river and anointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:37,38). He left His job as a tradesman and began His public ministry as the Messiah for the Jews.

The date of Jesus' baptism (27AD) is determined by a comparison of the biblical account and Roman historical records (Luke 3:1 says the baptism took place in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar. History places this year as 27AD).



The Messiah - Fact 4: The Messiah, Jesus Christ, came right on time in 27AD

Q9. WHAT WAS THE FIRST THING JESUS SAID FOLLOWING HIS BAPTISM?

Mark 1:14,15 - *...The time is _____ (v15)*

Jesus knew the prophecies of Daniel well. He even said "whoever reads, let him understand" (Matthew 24:15). Jesus understood His role in life and He knew that His baptism was the start of His public life and teaching as the Messiah.

The Messiah – Fact 5: Jesus recognised the time He became the Messiah

Q10. WHAT WAS PREDICTED TO HAPPEN TO THE MESSIAH?

Daniel 9:26 - *And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be _____ _____, but not for Himself*

In an amazing twist, we find the Messiah being cut off (or killed). Instead of a King to deliver the Jews from slavery, we find a King who suffers and dies. The prophecy tells us that this Messiah King did not die for Himself. Jesus did not deserve to die – He never sinned. Jesus died for you. His perfect life was offered to save you from your sins and give you a hope for the future.

The Messiah – Fact 6: The Messiah would be killed

Q11. WHAT WOULD THE MESSIAH DO IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LAST WEEK OF THIS PROPHECY?

Daniel 9:27 - *... But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to _____ and offering*

The "middle" of this last week (being half of the last seven years) is three and-a-half years after the coming of the Messiah in 27AD. That would bring us to 31AD – right on time according to Bible prophecy. When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was miraculously ripped from top to bottom. This symbolised the end to animal sacrifices exactly as the Bible predicted (Matthew 27:51).

In the temple service the Passover lamb was sacrificed once a year on a specific day and at a specific time (the



afternoon of the 14th day of the Hebrew month Nisan). As the priests were preparing to kill the Passover lamb, Jesus was dying on a lonely cross. On that dark afternoon, prophecy was fulfilled as "Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

This historical time is verified by Jewish books such as the ***Talmud***. Notice this statement referring to Jesus (Yeshu in Hebrew) being hanged on a tree (crucified):

"On the eve of Passover (the afternoon) they hanged Yeshu (of Nazareth) … But they found naught in his defence and hanged him on the eve of Passover" (Babylonian Sanhedrin 43a).

By decoding the temple service of the Passover along with the amazing time prophecy of Daniel 9 we can see that Jesus Christ died on the very year, month, week and day predicted hundreds of years before it ever took place!

This time prophecy demonstrates that the Bible can be trusted and Jesus Christ is the true Messiah of Bible prophecy.

The Messiah – Fact 7: The Messiah is Jesus Christ who would die in 31AD



Q12. TO WHOM DID JESUS TELL HIS DISCIPLES TO FIRST PREACH?

Matthew 10:5,6 - *..."Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of _____"*

After being anointed as the Messiah in 27AD, Jesus knew the Jewish nation only had seven years left to repent and accept Him as their Messiah and Saviour from sin. Jesus instructed His disciples to focus on preaching to the Jewish people. He longed for the Jewish nation to accept Him and present Him as the Messiah to the whole world. Even after His death, Jesus told His disciples to begin their ministry at Jerusalem. He had not given up on the people of Jerusalem. There was still time, if they would accept Jesus, the resurrected Messiah.

Q13. WHAT WARNING DID JESUS GIVE TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL?

Matthew 21:43 - *Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be _____ from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it*

Jesus loved the people of Jerusalem. Jesus Himself was a Jew. He wept over the city. He pleaded with the religious



leaders to believe in Him and have a heart experience with God. He performed miracles, taught spiritual truths, healed the sick. Jesus did everything to help the Jewish people become a holy nation.

Jesus knew the prophecy of Daniel 9 and He passionately warned them about refusing to accept the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Jesus declared that the great promises of a glorious future would be taken away from the Jews and given to another people.

Q14. WHEN DID THE GOSPEL REALLY BEGIN TO GO TO THE GENTILES?

Acts 7:59, 8:1-4 - *And devout men carried Stephen to his burial....Therefore those who were scattered went _____ preaching the word (Acts 8:2,4)*

When Stephen was killed by the Jewish religious leaders, he became the first Christian martyr. This occurred in 34AD, exactly 490 years after the start of the prophecy. This was the end for the Jewish nation. When God saw what the Jewish leaders did to the leadership of His emerging church, He must have said in His heart, "Enough is enough. Go now and preach the gospel to the Gentiles." Because the Jewish nation hardened themselves against the longsuffering, love of their God, the prophecy was over.

The Messiah – Fact 8: The Jews' probation as God's only chosen people ended in 34AD

Q15. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO JERUSALEM AFTER THE DEATH OF THE MESSIAH?

Daniel 9:26 - *And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall _____ the city and the sanctuary*

Here we are told that some time after the death of Jesus, the city and the sanctuary would be destroyed. This occurred in 70AD when the Roman army marched on Jerusalem and burnt it to the ground. The city and its temple were destroyed to such an extent that any remaining Jews were scattered to all parts of the then known world.

The Messiah - Fact 9: The city and temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed again





Q16. ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, WHO ARE GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE TODAY?

Galatians 3:29 - *And if you are _____, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*

The Bible says that if you belong to Jesus then you have access to all the promises once made to Abraham and his people. The Jews have not been abandoned or "cursed". As individuals every Jew who accepts Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Lord also has total access to the promises of God. But now we find it is the church of Jesus, who are a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people" (1 Peter 2:9).

The Messiah – Fact 10: The Christian Church is now spiritual Israel

Three points to remember:

- Jesus Christ is the theme of the entire Bible
- Jesus Christ is the Messiah for the Jews and the Saviour of all mankind
- If you have accepted Jesus Christ you belong to God's true people – spiritual Israel

The story:

A young lady by the name of Tabitha wore a gold locket around her neck. Tabitha's friends often talked about this locket and wondered who the love of her life might be? Tabitha would never open the locket but her friends could tell how precious the picture of her lover must be.



Tabitha would hold this locket in her hands and treasure it close to her heart. When Tabitha died (unmarried and at a fairly young age) her friends opened the locket. Inside they found a simple crumpled up note that said, "Him whom I have never seen … I love".

What are your reflections on this story in the context of what Jesus means to you?

Relational questions:

1. 1. How has the information in this booklet helped build your faith and trust in God and the Bible?
2. 2. The baptism of Jesus was His anointing as the Messiah. Why do you think He has also asked us to be baptised? (John 3:5)
3. 3. What would you say to a Jewish person who has not accepted Jesus as their Messiah?
4. 4. What can you do in your reading of the Bible to ensure you appreciate the theme of Jesus in every passage?

Your response:

The sacrifice of Jesus was for you. Would you like to accept His sacrifice today, and commit your life to Him as your Messiah, Saviour and Friend? _____



What relevance does an ancient Jewish sanctuary have for us today? Learn more in Part 6 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

REBUILDING *the* TEMPLE

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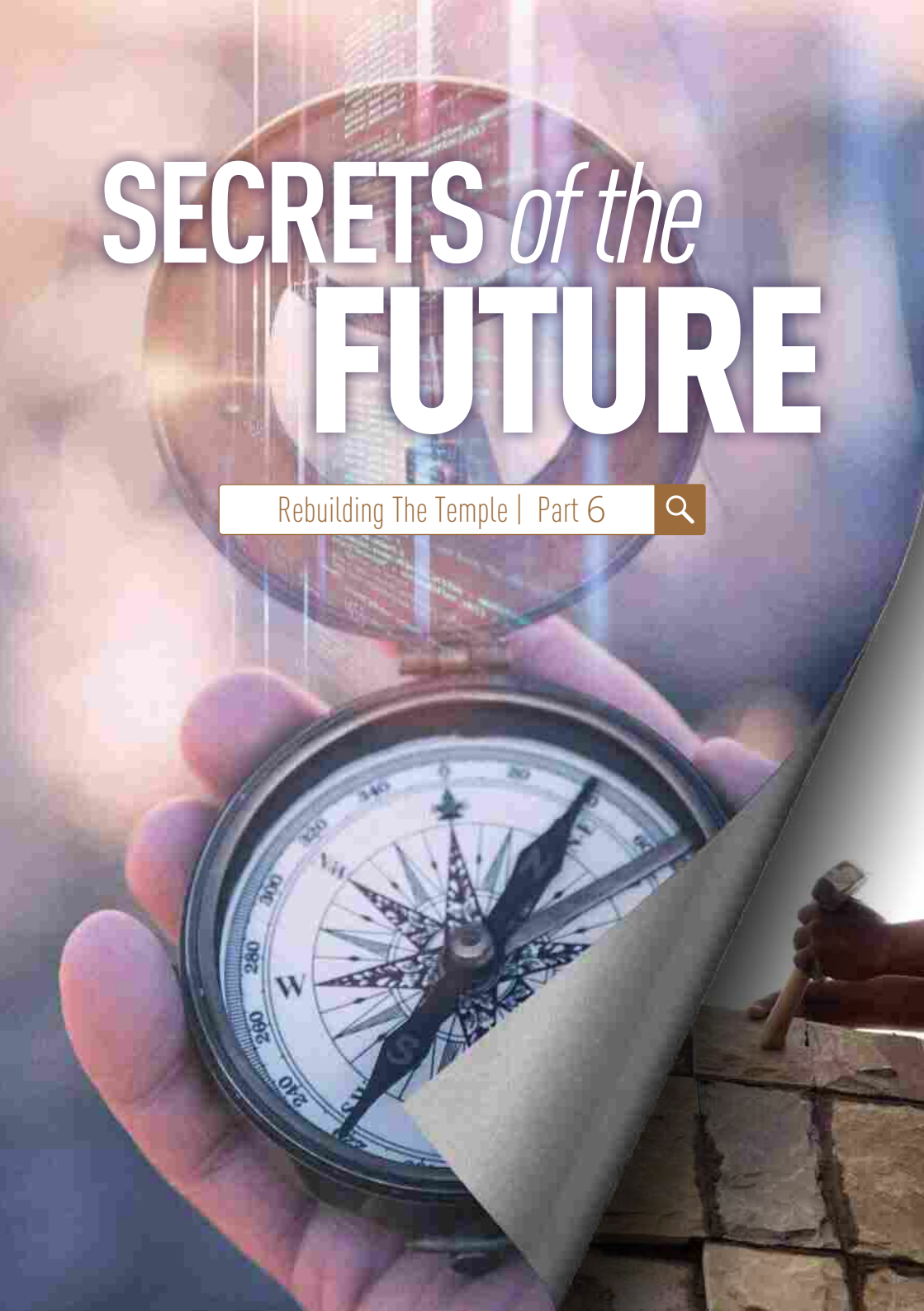


SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Rebuilding The Temple | Part 6

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

Jerusalem, the "city of peace", has a history of bloodshed and destruction. For thousands of years, armies from all over the world have fought over this city and today Jerusalem is still one of the most volatile places in the world. The most prized possession in Jerusalem is the Temple Mount. This small area of the planet is a sacred site to three major world religions. Conflict over this location has the potential to divide the world or even start a global war.

The Temple Mount is currently under Muslim control. This sacred site is recognised as the departure point for the prophet Mohammed, bound for paradise. If you visit the Temple Mount you will notice two beautiful Muslim shrines – the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.



To the Jew this is the holiest site in the world. It is the home of their two most famous temples: Solomon's temple (destroyed by the Babylonians) and Herod's temple which was burnt to the ground by the Romans. This location is the spiritual soul to the Jew. They are determined to reclaim the site and build a new Jewish temple. Many Christians, who also see this as a

sacred site, are sympathetic to the Jews and support the building of the temple.

Some years ago an Australian religious enthusiast, Michael Rohan, entered the Temple Mount and set fire to the Al-Aqsa mosque. Having read an article in a religious paper, he was attempting to help the Jews rebuild their temple. The attempt failed and only stirred up greater hostility.

In recent years the Jews have begun their planning in earnest. The Temple Institute, situated in the Jewish quarter of the old city, has already made 60 sacred temple vessels including the Menorah (seven-branched candlestick) and the precious stones for the breastplate of the High Priest. They also have highly advanced architectural drawings for the new temple itself. There is no compromise. This temple must be built on the original site of the Temple Mount.

Two Talmudic schools, located near the Western Wall, are now teaching hundreds of students the finer details of the ancient sanctuary symbols and services. There are also plans to reintroduce animal sacrifices once the temple has been restored; with a new breed of red heifers currently being raised in southern Israel.

What will eventuate from this sensitive situation remains to be seen. But according to the Bible, should the temple be rebuilt? What was the purpose of the ancient temple (also known as the tabernacle or sanctuary)? What did all the symbols and ceremonies represent? And do we need a high priest or animal sacrifices today?



Q1. WHAT WAS THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE JEWISH SANCTUARY?

***Exodus 25:8** - And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may _____ among them*

God created humans for love and companionship. He even made us in His "own image" so we could understand Him better and learn to love Him more. When our original parents sinned, an intimate friendship with God was made more difficult. Instead of talking "face to face", sin automatically raised a barrier between mankind and our pure and holy God (Isaiah 59:2).

The sanctuary provided a means where God could live with His people. His presence (the "Shekinah glory") would permanently stay in the sanctuary. In this way, God went wherever His people went. God guided, provided and protected His people. The sanctuary symbols and services taught the people to know and understand their loving God.



Q2. WHAT DID GOD SHOW HIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE SANCTUARY AND ITS SERVICES?

***Psalms 77:13** - Your _____, O God, is in the sanctuary*

The sanctuary was a three-dimensional model given to the Jews to show them God's way. In particular, His way to salvation. The subject of the sanctuary covers nearly half the Bible, and involves a wide variety of symbols and ceremonies.

The sanctuary is a prophecy outlining the complete gospel story in detail. It introduces the God of judgment and demonstrates how God will ultimately and eternally solve the problem of sin.

Many other prophetic books, including Daniel and Revelation, base their prophecies on the subject of the sanctuary. In fact, the sanctuary and its services are mentioned over 90 times in Revelation alone. There are few, if any, more important Bible topics for us to understand than the sanctuary.

Q3. WHAT WAS THE CENTRAL TEACHING OF THE SANCTUARY?

***Hebrews 9:22** - ... and without shedding of _____ there is no remission*



The sanctuary service was based on the sacrifice of animals. This heart-wrenching ceremony taught that the shedding of blood was required to obtain forgiveness (remission) and cleansing from sins.

Blood is a symbol of life (Leviticus 17:11). Only the blood from the life of the One who was sinned against (God and His law), could provide forgiveness for the sinner. Jesus was the Lamb of God who gave His blood to take away the sins of the world. Through the sanctuary, God demonstrated the great cost of sin. Through the blood of animals, God pointed towards the promised Saviour and substitute, Jesus Christ.



Q4. WHERE DID MOSES GET THE PLANS TO HELP HIM BUILD THE SANCTUARY?

***Exodus 25:9** - According to all that I show you, that is, the _____ of the tabernacle and the _____ of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it*

When Moses built the sanctuary (also known as the tabernacle), he didn't need his best architects to help him. God gave him the blueprints from Mt Sinai. The sanctuary was meticulously designed by God, and every symbol and ceremony was significant.

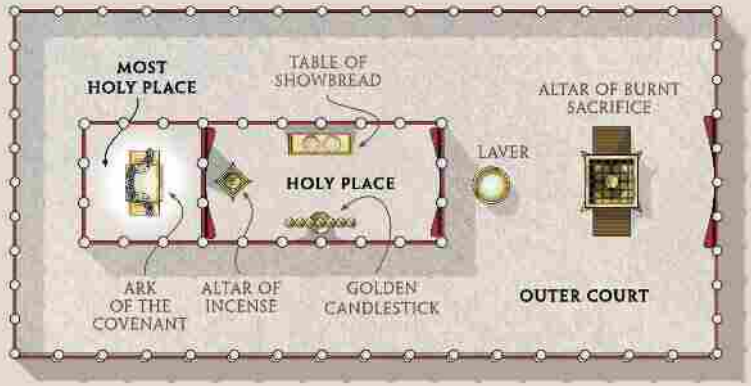
The original sanctuary was not a giant temple located on the Temple Mount. It was a tent in the desert (see Exodus 25-40 for the detail). It was portable, and the Jews would transport the sanctuary as they travelled through the wilderness. A life-sized replica of the Jewish sanctuary was built a few years ago by a kibbutz in the Judean desert. Thousands of tourists visit this tabernacle each year.

The desert sanctuary was made of a variety of materials including acacia wood, goat's hair, ram's skin dyed red, badger's skin, along with silver and gold. The sanctuary consisted of three aspects:

The Courtyard
(about 45 metres long and 22 metres wide)

The Holy Place
(about 9 metres long and 4.5 metres wide)

The Most Holy Place
(about 4.5 metres long and 4.5 metres wide)





The Courtyard

The courtyard set a boundary around the sanctuary. There was only one entrance – through the front curtain (or veil). It was through this veil, the sinner would come with a lamb. Within the courtyard precinct was the altar of burnt offerings (Exodus 40:6) where the animals were sacrificed. There was also a laver (Exodus 40:7) where the priests washed their hands and feet prior to entering the sanctuary.

The Holy Place

In the Holy Place was a seven-branched candlestick (Menorah) (Exodus 25:31-40), continually kept alight with oil. There was the altar of incense (Exodus 30:7,8) where incense burnt continually. There was the table of showbread (Exodus 25:23-30) that held 12 loaves of flat bread.

The Most Holy Place

It was in the Most Holy Place that the presence of God lived. This was the home of the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 40:3). On the Ark stood two angels made of pure gold, watching over the mercy seat of the Ark (Exodus 25:17-22). Inside the Ark was the most awesome part of the sanctuary – the law of God – the Ten Commandments, written personally by the finger of God (Deuteronomy 10:4,5).



Q5. HOW DID THE SINNER RECEIVE FORGIVENESS FOR SINS?

***Leviticus 4:33** - Then he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and _____ it as a sin offering at the place where they kill the burnt offering*

When a person sinned there were awful and bloody consequences. The sinner would take a lamb (possibly a much-loved personal pet of the family) and move towards the sanctuary. You can just imagine the gossip and rumours as that person passed his friends along the way. The sinner took the lamb, and as he walked through the veil, he approached the altar of burnt offering. He then placed his hand on the head of the lamb and confessed his specific sins onto that lamb (Leviticus 5:5). The sinner had symbolically transferred his sins onto that lamb and that lamb must now die. In what must have been a most difficult process, the sinner now killed the lamb himself.

Depending on the sacrifice, the priest either ate part of the animal or took its blood and sprinkled it inside the sanctuary. Thus the sin was transferred from the sinner, to the lamb, to the priest and into the sanctuary. The sinner could then walk away free from the penalty of sin.



Q6. ON WHICH PATTERN WAS THE JEWISH SANCTUARY MODELLED?

***Hebrews 8:1-5** - Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the_____ tabernacle which the _____ erected, and not man (v1,2)*

The earthly sanctuary was a pattern (or copy) of the sanctuary in heaven. The sanctuary that Moses built was a "shadow" reflecting the true and majestic temple that God built. The writer of Hebrews told the Jews the main point was this: there is a High Priest providing salvation in the sanctuary of heaven. To this day, it is pointless building a new temple in Jerusalem. The true sanctuary has already been built. It is in heaven. That should be our focus. It is no wonder that all end time prophecies describe the temple in heaven, not earth.

Q7. WHAT DID JESUS DO IN THE "COURTYARD" OF THIS EARTH?

***John 1:29 -** ... Behold! The _____ of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

God also made a sacrifice to provide forgiveness. Much more precious than a pet animal, Jesus, the Lamb of God, was God's Son. It was in the courtyard of the earthly sanctuary that the animal was sacrificed, and it was on this earth that Jesus died. The death of Jesus was a perfect sacrifice that, unlike the animal sacrifice, was only required once.

The veil in the earthly sanctuary ripped from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51) as Jesus brought an "end to sacrifice and offering" (Daniel 9:27).



Q8. HOW DOES THE FURNITURE IN THE SANCTUARY REPRESENT JESUS?

Each article of furniture in the sanctuary represents an aspect of Jesus in His work to save us from sin.

To illustrate:

- ***Altar of Burnt offering*** = *Sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary (John 1:29)*
- ***Laver*** = *Jesus the living water (John 4:10, Titus 3:5)*
- ***Candlestick*** = *Jesus the light of the world (John1:9)*



- ***Showbread*** = *Jesus the bread of life (John 6:48)*
- ***Altar of incense*** = *Righteousness of Jesus mixed with our prayers (Revelation 8:3)*
- ***Ark of the covenant*** = *Mercy of Jesus for those who break His law (1 John 2:1)*



Q9. WHO IS YOUR HIGH PRIEST TODAY?

Hebrews 4:14-16 *- Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, _____ the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession (v14)*

You still need a priest for salvation today, but not a priest on earth. When Jesus was on earth He became your sacrifice. When Jesus returned to

heaven He became your High Priest. Many people today pray to God through earthly priests or saints. The Bible says there is "One mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1Timothy 2:5). Jesus is our only mediator today – we need no other.



Q10. WHAT DOES JESUS DO AS HIGH PRIEST IN THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY?

Hebrews 7:25 *- Therefore He is also able to _____ to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make _____ for them*

The major role of the High Priest is to bring the benefit of the sacrifice (salvation) into a reality in our life. Salvation was not finished at the cross – in fact the sanctuary model demonstrates that the sacrifice

was just the start of the gospel story! Jesus the Lamb who died for us became the Priest who now lives for us.

In the Old Testament, the priest stood before the Holiness of God (albeit with a veil in between) and became the mediator between God and the sinner. In this way, the sinner had constant access to God, and God had constant access to His people.

When Jesus returned to heaven, He personally took on the role of working with the Father to bring salvation to us. Jesus is the link between human frailty and Divine immortality. Jesus provides forgiveness through offering His blood and righteousness in the place of our sins. Jesus restores our relationship with God and Jesus gives us spiritual power to live a victorious Christian life.

Q11. WHAT WAS THE DAY OF ATONEMENT?

***Leviticus 23:27** - Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of _____. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord*

The Day of Atonement (or Yom Kippur) occurred just once every year. This was the only day the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place. This was a day of judgment. God's people "afflicted their souls". In other words, it was a solemn time of repentance. This was the day to ensure there was complete harmony between God and His people. Those who refused to participate were cut off from God's people (Leviticus 23:29).

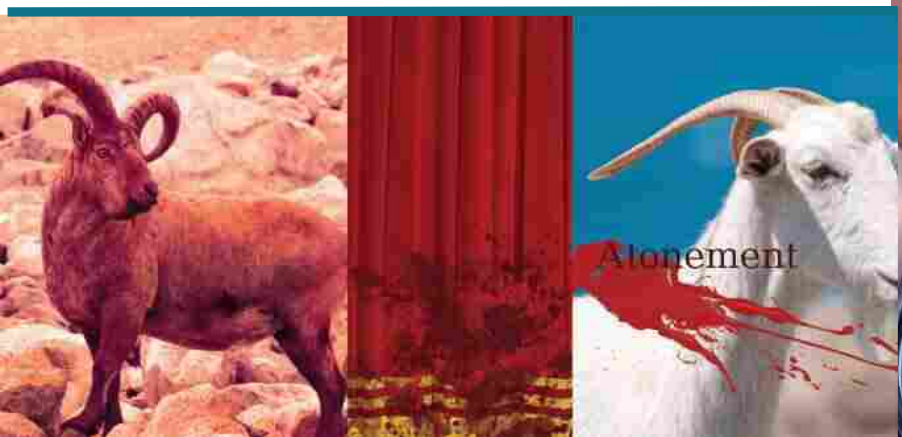
Every day the High Priest would offer sacrifices and transfer the record of sin (symbolised by eating the flesh or sprinkling the blood) into the Holy Place of the sanctuary. The Day of Atonement was a day to cleanse the sanctuary from sin. The prophet Daniel predicts a time when the sanctuary

in heaven will also be cleansed (Daniel 8:14). There will be a judgment prior to the Second Coming of Christ when we also need to ensure our life is in harmony with Jesus (this will be covered in detail in the study guide "The Judgment")

Q12. WHAT WAS DONE ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT THAT SYMBOLISED THE FINAL REMOVAL OF SIN?

***Leviticus 16:7-10** - Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two _____: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the escapegoat (v8)*

On the Day of Atonement two goats were chosen; one for the Lord and the other was called the scapegoat (also known as Azazel or the "devil's goat"). The Lord's goat was killed as a sacrifice for God's people. The blood was taken by the High Priest into the Most Holy Place and sprinkled on the mercy seat of the Ark. This represented the blood of Jesus and the mercy of God to save us from our sins.



Following this, the sins from the sanctuary were symbolically transferred to the scapegoat. The scapegoat was taken out into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:21,22) to die a lonely death. This represents Satan who, at the end of the judgment, will finally bear the consequences of all the sins of humanity.

During the millennium, the devil will be thrown into the wilderness of this earth for 1,000 years. He will finally perish in the lake of fire (Revelation 20). This final act demonstrates that the devil is the one responsible for all the sin, pain and suffering throughout history.



Q13. WHAT MAKES JESUS OUR PERFECT HIGH PRIEST FOR TODAY?

Hebrews 2:17 - *Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His _____, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people*

Hebrews 4:15 - *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points_____ as we are, yet without sin*

Jesus is our brother. He was made in human flesh and was tempted to sin by the devil, just like we are. Jesus understands what it is like to feel the pull of temptation. He understands we are human and how easy it is to spiritually fall. As a result, He is full of mercy and sympathy when we confess our sins.

Jesus resisted temptation. He was totally perfect, "without sin" (see also Hebrews 7:26). Jesus gained the victory over temptation through personal experience. He is ready to give you help just when you need it the most. Because Jesus fulfilled the perfect requirements of the law, He can substitute His perfect life for our sinful life. As a result, we can go "boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find mercy and grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).





Three Points to Remember:

- The sanctuary demonstrates the plan of salvation
- The sanctuary outlines how God solves the problem of sin
- The heavenly sanctuary is where Jesus now ministers to bring you salvation

The Story:

An archaeologist visited a pottery store in Egypt. This man had seen thousands of pots so he was doubtful anything would interest him. Then he fixed his eyes on a pot that was absolutely exquisite. The colours were just outstanding – all shades of crimson and red swirling around the perimeter of this pot. The man asked the potter how much it was, because he wanted to buy it.

"Oh, no, I could never sell that pot." "But why not, what is so special about it?" said the man. And so the potter began to tell the story. The story of how he was on the potter's wheel one day and as he got a new piece of clay he threw it on the wheel and started to try and mould it. The trouble was, this clay was so tough it wouldn't mould. It just stayed in one hard lump. After about 15 minutes of trying, the potter got so exasperated he threw the piece of clay on the ground and tried another bit. After a while, the potter picked back up that stubborn clay and tried again. This process continued over many hours.



On the eighth try something remarkable happened. The potter put so much effort into it, that as the clay moved around the wheel one of the sharp stones in the clay slashed the palm of his hand. And as that blood worked its way into the clay, the potter found that the clay began to go soft. He found he could mould it and he ended up making the most beautiful pot with all those wonderful colours.

"I couldn't sell that pot to you," he said. "That pot has my blood in it. To me it is priceless."

What does this story tell you about your value to Jesus and His commitment to saving you?

Relational questions:

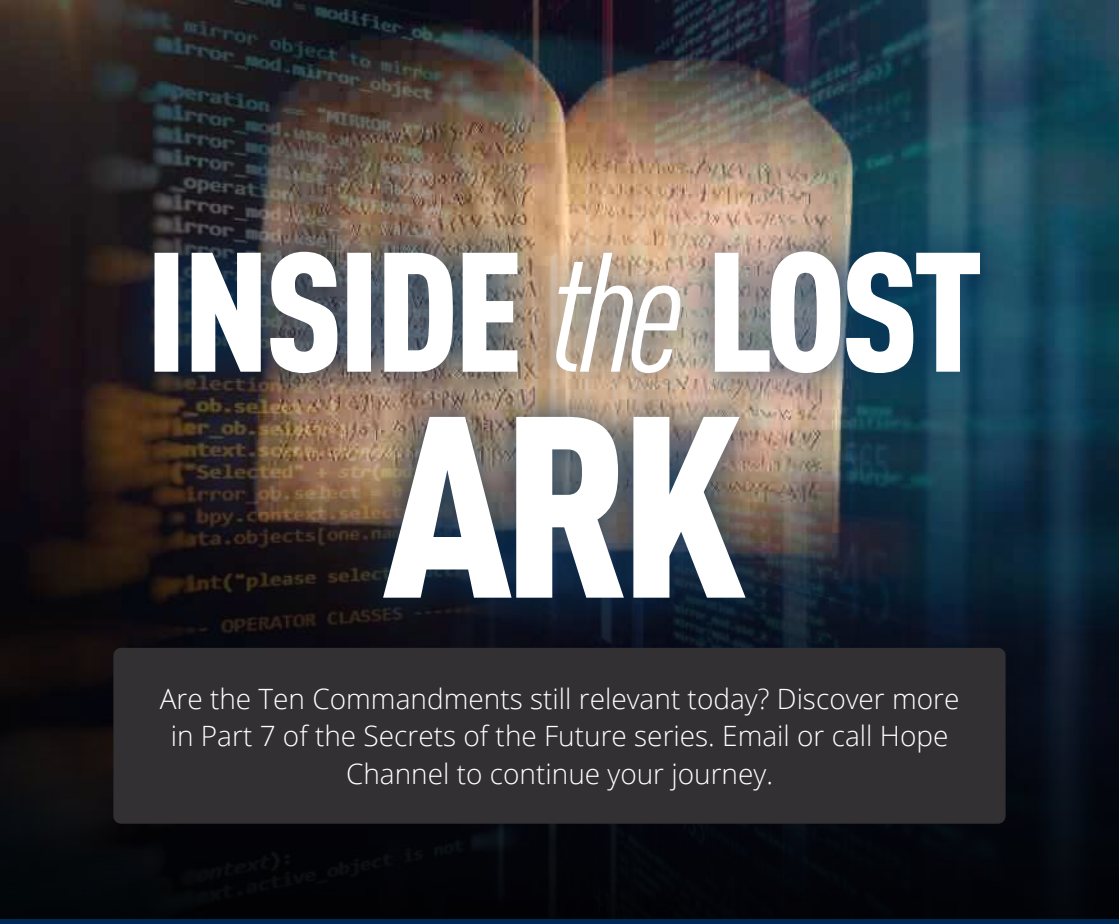
1. Why do you think God made the sanctuary and its services so detailed?
2. Why do you think the sanctuary is an important teaching for today?
3. What does the sanctuary tell you about God?

Your response:

Would you like to accept the full plan of salvation and over time learn more about Jesus in the sanctuary?

_____





INSIDE *the* LOST ARK

Are the Ten Commandments still relevant today? Discover more in Part 7 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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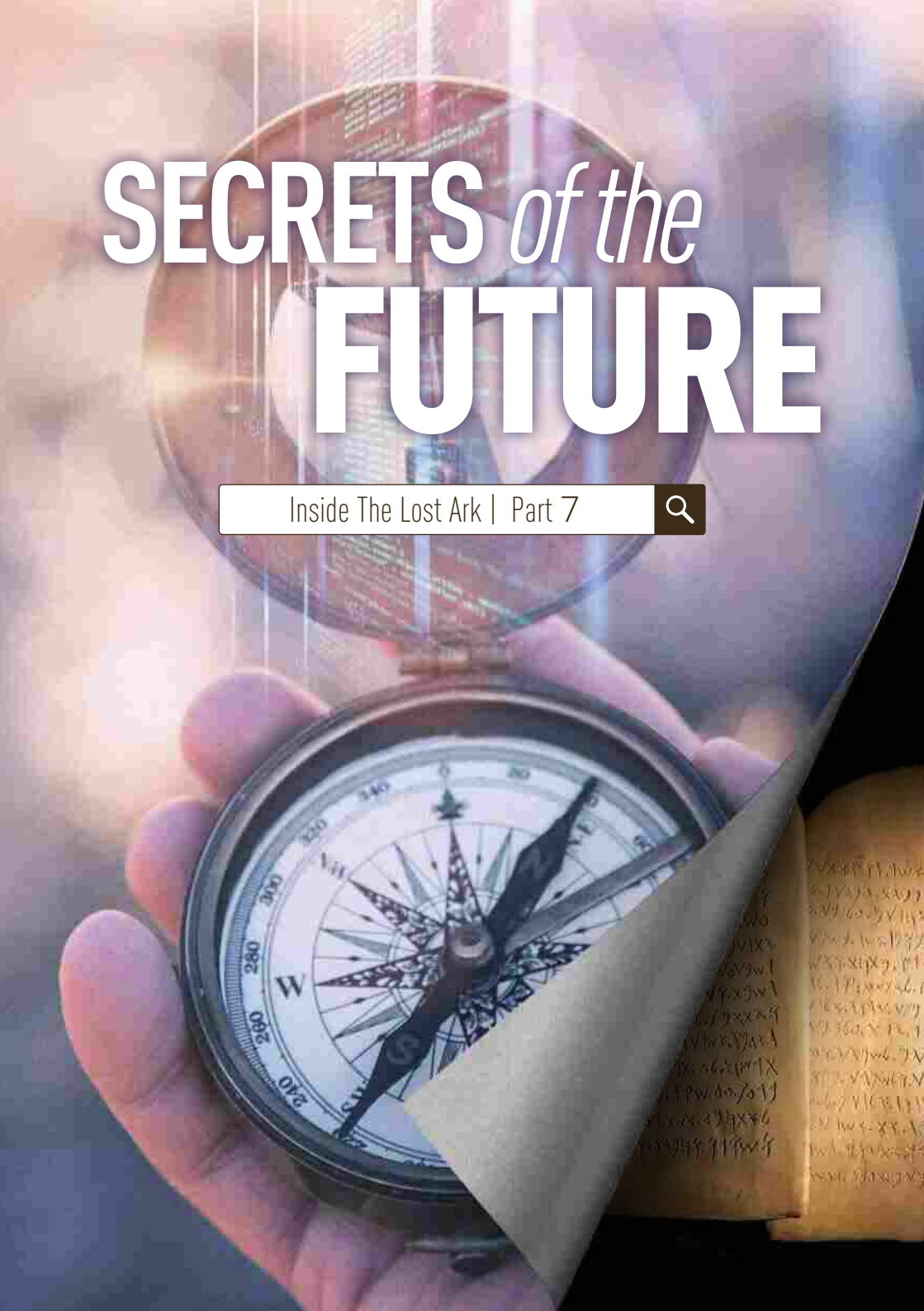

SECRETS of the
FUTURE
Inside The Lost Ark | Part 7

INSIDE THE LOST ARK

One of the most fascinating mysteries of all time is the disappearance of the Ark of the Covenant. The most treasured of all artefacts in the Jewish temple, the Ark was covered in pure gold. It featured two beautiful angels spreading their wings to form a throne for God's presence.

The Ark appeared to possess supernatural powers. It was associated with the presence of God, victory in battle, drying up rivers and causing calamities or death, just by looking at it.

The final resting place for the Ark was in Solomon's glorious temple. Then, in a shroud of mystery, the Ark disappeared. Where did it go? Who took it? Where is it now?

For hundreds of years people have searched for the lost Ark. A secret society called the Knights Templar had a fascination for the Ark. After ten years of excavation in Jerusalem, the society claimed to have found the Ark and transported it away; possibly to Rosslyn chapel in Scotland.

Others also claim to have found the Ark. Archaeologist Ron Wyatt said he found the Ark in a cave under the cross of Calvary in Jerusalem. Vendyl Jones, a Texan archaeologist, has been searching for the Ark most of his life. He believes he found it near the Dead Sea. The Ethiopians of Axum believe they possess the Ark. Others think the Ark was taken to the Vatican or may be buried with the Pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings.



The Jewish history book, ***Maccabees***, describes the prophet Jeremiah hiding the Ark in a hollow cave; somewhere near Mt Nebo, on the eastern side of the Dead Sea (2 Maccabees 2:1-8). The discovery of an ancient copper scroll near the Dead Sea shows a series of maps, referring to a cave in the "Valley of Achor", also near the Dead Sea.

The Jewish ***Talmud*** says the Ark is hidden in a chamber under the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Some rabbis claim to have seen the Ark, but no evidence has come to light.

Among all the speculation, nobody is certain where the Ark of the Covenant is today. What was so special about the Ark? Is the search for the lost Ark just a treasure hunt or is there more to it? What was inside the Ark that was so important? Why did the contents need such protection? In this study guide, we will discover the importance and power of the contents hidden inside the Ark of the Covenant.

Q1. WHAT WERE THE CONTENTS OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT?

Deuteronomy 10:4,5 - *And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments ... Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the _____ which I had made; and there they are, just as the LORD commanded me*



The Ten Commandments are so important to God that He wrote them on stone with His own finger (Exodus 31:18). He then instructed Moses to place them in the holiest of all articles, the Ark of the Covenant. All the other Jewish laws were written in a book by Moses, and placed outside the Ark (Deuteronomy 31:26). The Ten Commandments were holy and protected in the Ark.



Q2. WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT SAY ABOUT THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?

Romans 7:12 - *Therefore the law is _____, and the commandment _____ and _____ and _____*

A common misconception today is that the Ten Commandments were only relevant for people living in Old Testament times. The Commandments are considered irrelevant for those who are saved by grace living in the New Testament. Some even believe God's law is a curse and should never be kept or taught.

However, the New Testament says God's law is perfect. The Commandments are holy and just and good. It is inconceivable that a holy person or a holy church would ever oppose a holy law. God's law is permanent, it will "stand fast forever and ever" (Psalms 111:7,8). All of the Ten Commandments are specifically reinforced throughout the New Testament, by Jesus and the apostles.

Q3. WHAT ARE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?

The Ten Commandments are outlined in Exodus 20:3-17. A summary version is:

1. *You shall have ____ other _____ before Me (v3)*
2. *You shall not make for yourself a carved _____ … You shall not bow down to them nor serve them (v4,5)*
3. *You shall not take the _____ of the LORD your God in vain (v7)*
4. *Remember the _____ day, to keep it holy… the _____ day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God (v8,10)*
5. *Honour your _____ and your _____ (v12)*
6. *You shall not _____ (v13)*
7. *You shall not commit _____ (v14)*



8. *You shall not _____ (v15)*
9. *You shall not bear _____ witness (v16)*
10. *You shall not _____ (v17)*

These Commandments are not just ten suggestions or recommendations. They are the binding principles of love that provide a framework for a happy and holy life (Proverbs 29:18).

Q4. CAN YOU BE SAVED BY KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS?

Ephesians 2:8,9 - *For by _____ you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of _____, lest anyone should boast*

We can never be saved by keeping the Commandments. We are saved completely by God's grace which we accept through faith. Keeping the Commandments is purely a love response to God, not in order to be saved, but because we are saved. When we accept the gift of salvation, the Holy Spirit changes our life (2 Corinthians 5:17). We have an intimate friendship with Jesus and we grow to love what is right, and hate what is wrong. Obeying God is simply the result of a loving relationship with Jesus.

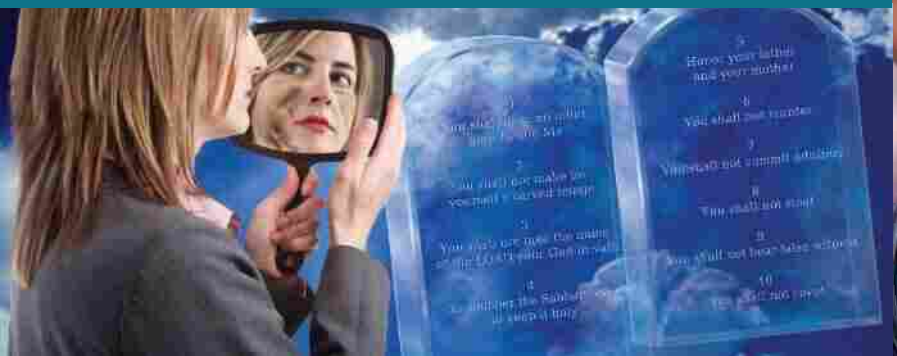
Throughout history the way to salvation has never changed. Even in Old Testament times, people were saved by grace (Genesis 6:8). No-one has ever been saved by their works.

Q5. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF GOD'S LAW?

Romans 7:7 - *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have _____ sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the _____ had said, "You shall not covet"*

The purpose of the law is not to save us. It is to point out sin. Sin is "lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). The law tells us what is right and wrong and thus shows us when and how we have sinned against God. This is why the devil hates the law and attacks it. Without the law we would never look to Jesus as our Saviour from sin. In fact, without the law there would be no sin. And without sin there would be no need for a Saviour.

To illustrate: the law is like a mirror. If a boy, who has played in the mud, looks into the mirror, he will see dirt on his face. The mirror cannot clean his face. Only water and soap can do that. But the mirror can show him very clearly that he needs to be clean. When we look into the law of God, we will see our sin very clearly. The law cannot clean us from sin. We need to go to Jesus who is the only One who can cleanse and forgive.



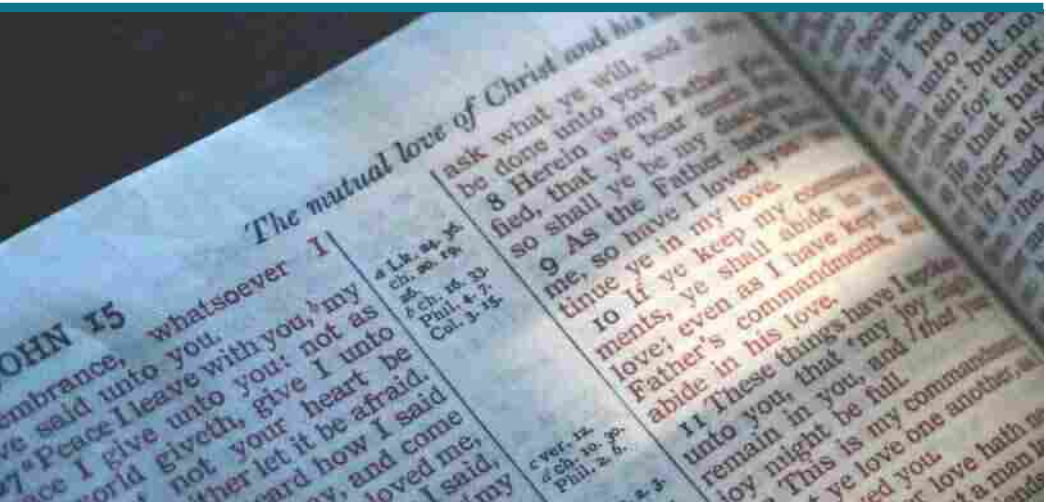
Q6. DID JESUS SUPPORT AND KEEP THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?

Matthew 19:17 - *... if you want to enter into life, keep the _____*

Matthew 5:17-19 - *Do not think that I came to destroy the Law ...Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these Commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called _____ in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called _____ in the kingdom of heaven*

Jesus believed in the Commandments (Matthew 5:17-19), He taught the Commandments (Matthew 19:17) and He kept the Commandments (John 15:10). Jesus said anyone who breaks the least Commandment, and then teaches others to do the same thing, is regarded as the lowest of the low (Matthew 5:19). On the other hand, those who teach and keep the Commandments are regarded by Jesus as spiritual giants (Matthew 5:19).

Jesus is clear. He did not come to abolish the law. He said "think not" – don't even think that He came to destroy it, let alone say it under your breath. Or even worse, preach it! Any preacher, who teaches that the law has been abolished, or is no longer very important, is going directly against the words of Jesus.



Q7. DO THE "NEW" COMMANDMENTS REPLACE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?

Matthew 22: 37-40 - *...You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind ... You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments _____ all the Law and the Prophets*

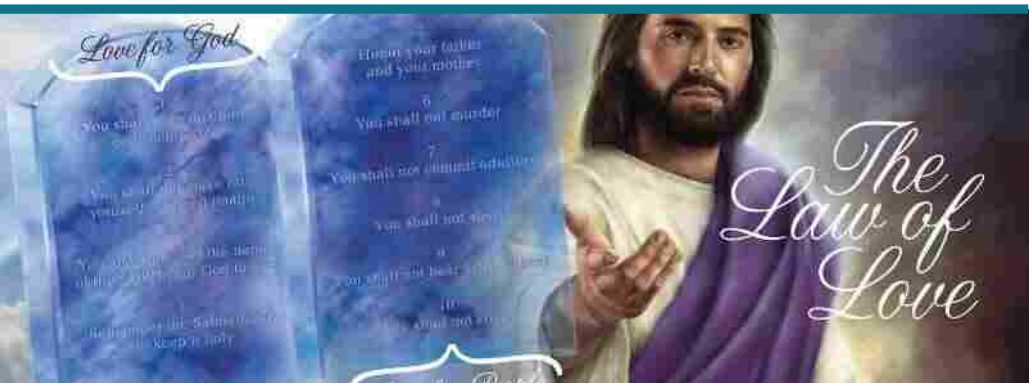
When Jesus referred to the two Commandments of love, they were not new. He was quoting directly from the Old Testament (see Deuteronomy 6:4,5 and Leviticus 19:18). They were "new" to the Pharisees because they were trying to keep the Commandments from religious duty instead of love. As a result, the Pharisees looked good on the outside, but were rotten on the inside (Matthew 23:25).

Jesus knew how to get to the heart of any issue. The heart of the Ten Commandments is love. The first four Commandments all revolve around our love for God. The last six Commandments are based on love for other people. That is why Jesus said the law "hangs" on the two Commandments of love. To illustrate – a door "hangs" on two hinges. If you don't have the hinges in place the door will be of little use. Hinges don't replace the door. They determine whether or not the door works properly.

Jesus never taught that the Ten Commandments were replaced by love. He was simply saying that any attempt to keep the Commandments without love, is not truly



keeping the Commandments. In fact, if we love God, and love other people, we will naturally keep the Ten Commandments.



Q8. DOES GRACE MEAN YOU NO LONGER NEED TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS?

Romans 6:15 - *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly _____!*

Romans 3:31 - *Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we _____ the law*

Back in the days of the apostle Paul, some people were advocating that grace and faith alleviated the need to keep the law. Paul opposed this teaching in the strongest possible way. He said "certainly not!" He then added that if anything, faith establishes the law. Anyone who disregards the Commandments and lives a life of sin – is not under grace but under dis-grace. God's grace not only forgives, it also gives power for obedience.

To be "under the law" means to be under the condemnation of the law.

To illustrate – we are not affected by the speed limit law until we break it. Then we are guilty of it. We "come under the law" and need to pay the penalty. If we receive grace from the policeman and he lets us off, we are no longer "under the law". The last thing we would want to do is then go and speed again. The law is still in place, and we would simply get booked like we should have the first time.

Q9. IS KEEPING MOST OF THE COMMANDMENTS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD?

James 2:8-12 - *For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in _____ point, he is guilty of _____ (v10)*

The majority of our society is happy to keep most of the Commandments; after all, they fit in with their moral values. Most people do not approve of stealing or murder or even adultery. Honouring our father and mother also makes sense. There are some Commandments, however, that God has asked us to keep purely out of love and loyalty to Him.

The Bible says that all the Ten Commandments are important and if we break just one of them we are guilty of breaking them all. To illustrate – if you are hanging over a cliff by a giant chain, all it takes is one link to break and the whole chain is broken, causing you to fall. If we choose to disregard even the least Commandment, we are still choosing to sin against God.



Q10 FROM WHAT MOTIVATION SHOULD WE KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS?

John 14:15 - *If you _____ Me, keep My commandments*

Anyone who loves Jesus will naturally want to keep the Commandments. This theme is not new. Right in the heart of the Ten Commandments it says, "to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exodus 20:6). Jesus knew that obedience from love is worship. Obedience that doesn't come from love is slavery. It is essential that all obedience comes from a love response to Jesus.

Q11 SHOULD WE KEEP THE "SPIRIT OF THE LAW" OR THE "LETTER OF THE LAW"?

Matthew 5:21,22 - *You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder"... But I say to you that whoever is _____ with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement*

Matthew 5:27,28 - *You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to _____ for her has already committed adultery with her in his _____*

The "spirit of the law" is obedience from the heart. The "letter of the law" relates only to external behaviour. Jesus gave a great example of the "spirit of the law". He told his listeners that getting angry was breaking the sixth commandment, "you shall not murder". Jesus knew that if you didn't get

angry in your heart, you automatically wouldn't kill that person. Similarly, if you didn't lust after a person in your heart, you wouldn't commit adultery. Far from dismissing the Commandments, the "spirit of the law" ensures a much deeper and more meaningful obedience – obedience from the heart.

Q12. IS OBEDIENCE LEGALISM OR "WORKS"?

1 John 2:3,4 - *Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His _____. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a _____, and the truth is not in him*

Legalism (or "works") is trying to keep God's Commandments in order to be saved, through your own efforts. On the other hand, true obedience is a natural outcome of knowing and loving God. It is asking God to give us supernatural power for victory and relying on God's promises. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).







Jesus said there will be many Christians who think they are going to heaven but don't make it. Why? Because they see obedience as irrelevant or "legalism". They practice "lawlessness" (Matthew 7:21-23).

Q13. WERE ANY LAWS STOPPED AT THE CROSS?

Ephesians 2:15 - *... having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in _____*

There were some laws that finished with Jesus at the cross. These laws were the sacrifices, ceremonies and feast days, often referred to as the "laws of Moses". These ordinances were symbolic rituals that generally pointed towards Jesus and His death on Calvary.

A significant debate emerged on some of these issues in the early Christian church. One of the arguments revolved around the need for circumcision; a ritual practiced by the Jews. The apostle Paul made it very clear that there was a big difference between rituals and the Ten Commandments. He said, "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters" (1 Corinthians 7:19). The rituals and ceremonies were for the Jews. The Ten Commandments were for everyone.



Q14. IS THERE A ROLE FOR GOD'S LAW IN THE NEW COVENANT?

Hebrews 8:10 - *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their _____ and write them on their_____; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people*

God's law still has a vital role in the New Covenant. The Old Covenant failed because it was based on the weak promises of the Jews who tried to keep God's law in their own strength (see Hebrews 8:6-8). The New Covenant is based on the power of God's promise to take His law and place it in our heart and mind. When God does this, we obey Him through His power and from a loving heart. The Ten Commandments then become ten powerful promises. "You will not!" is no longer a restriction, but an ability to live a victorious spiritual life. This New Covenant experience was available in Old Testament times, just as it is today (Ezekiel 36:26,27).

Q15. ARE GOD'S COMMANDMENTS A BURDEN FOR THE CHRISTIAN?

1 John 5:3 - *For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not* _____



The true Christian loves God's law. After all, obedience brings happiness (Proverbs 29:18) and the law reflects the character of God. The Commandments are only a burden to those who are either unwilling to keep them, or to those who attempt to keep them without the presence and power of Jesus. It is impossible to effectively live the Christian life without a passion for Jesus and keeping His Commandments.



Q16. DO THE COMMANDMENTS HAVE A ROLE IN THE JUDGMENT?

Ecclesiastes 12:13,14 - *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into _____, including every secret thing, whether good or evil*

The wisest man who ever lived, King Solomon, summed up what life is all about in the book of Ecclesiastes. His conclusion? Fear God and keep His Commandments. There was nothing more important than this.

Although we are not saved by the law, obedience is a reflection of our love for Jesus and our acceptance of His free gift. The last chapter of the Bible claims that it will be Commandment keepers who are called "blessed" and who will be going to heaven (Revelation 22:14). It will be the law of God that is used as the benchmark in the judgment.

Q17. HOW WILL GOD'S CHURCH OF THE LAST DAYS REGARD THE COMMANDMENTS?

Revelation 14:12 - *Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the _____ of God and the _____ of Jesus*

God's last day church will possess the beautiful harmony of obedience and faith in Jesus. Throughout the Bible it has always been Jesus and the Commandments that have been the foundation for the church. Those who are ready and waiting for Jesus to come will be those who love Jesus supremely and demonstrate their love through keeping all of His Commandments.





Three points to remember:

- The Ten Commandments point out sin and tell us we need a Saviour
- Jesus believed, kept and taught the Ten Commandments
- God's church of the last days will be Commandment keepers

The story:

A devoted mother was having difficulty with her crying baby. An onlooker callously yelled out, "The best way to keep that baby quiet is to throw it over a cliff". Naturally, the mother was shocked and disgusted. Despite her frustrations, she would not even consider killing her baby. Why? Is it because there is a law in the land that says, "You shall not murder"? If you do you will go to jail! Well, no. Is it because there is a law in heaven that says "You shall not murder"? If you do, you will deserve to burn in the lake of fire. No, not even that is the mother's motivation. Where is the law written that protects the little child? It is written in the mother's heart of love.

What can we learn from this story that will help us in our understanding of obedience?

Relational questions:

1. What is the secret to obedience? How can you obey the Commandments like Jesus did?
2. How can you ensure that your Commandment keeping never becomes "legalism"?
3. Is your "conscience" good enough to tell you what is right and wrong?
4. What should you do if you get discouraged when you break God's law?

Your response:

Do you desire, by the grace of God, to keep all of God's Commandments and live a victorious Christian life?

_____



STEPS *to* SPIRITUAL FREEDOM



What would it take for you to go to heaven? Learn about Jesus' priceless offer in Part 8 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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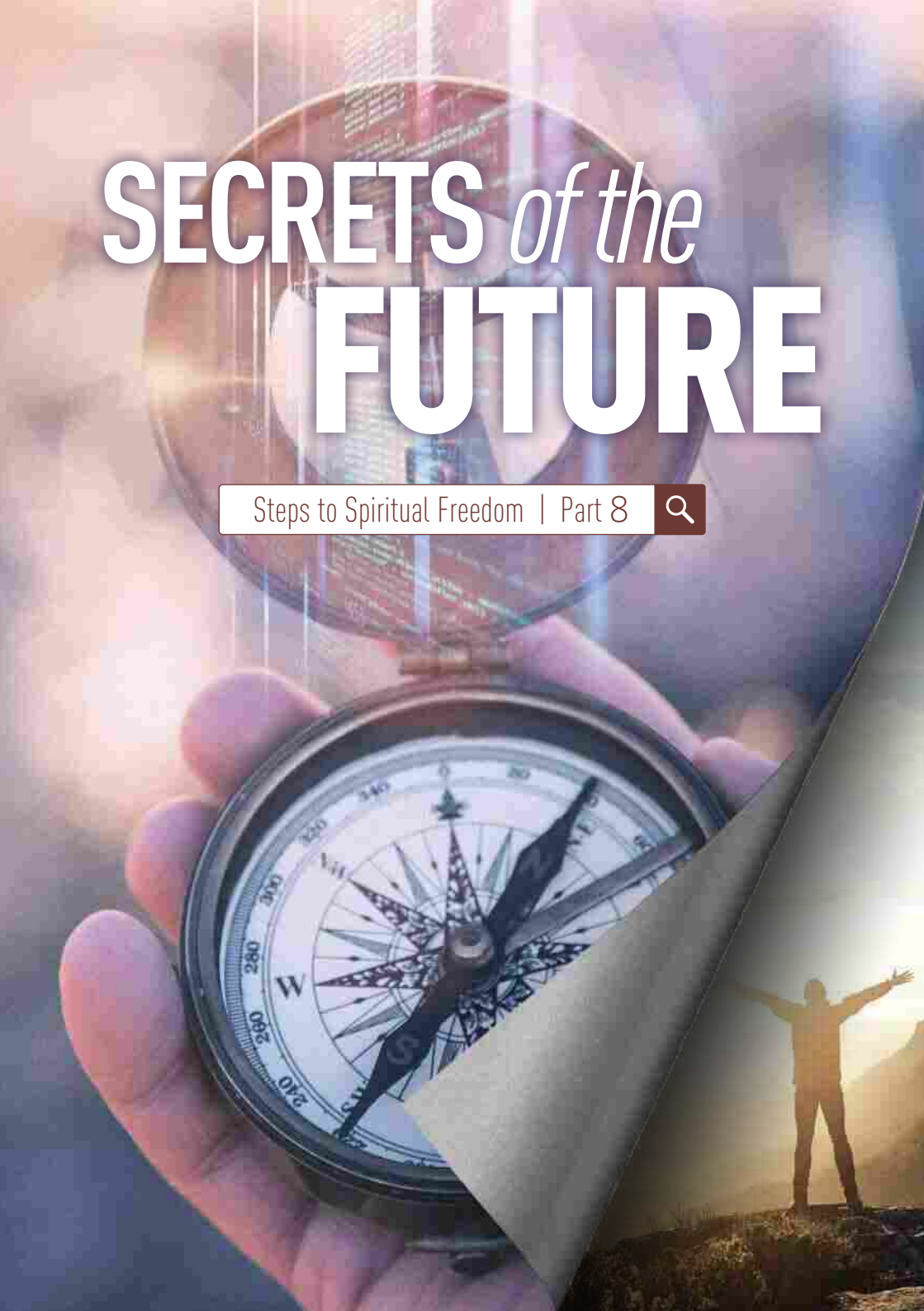
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Steps to Spiritual Freedom | Part 8



STEPS TO SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

Less than half the countries on planet earth experience true freedom (Freedom House and worldaudit.org). Countries such as Angola, Albania, Brunei, Syria and Vietnam still lack human rights, freedom of speech, justice for all and electoral democracy.

One country blacklisted for many years is Iraq. War, dictatorships, kidnapping and torture have been part of life for centuries. During the ill-fated United States war in Iraq, Douglas Wood, an Australian engineer and businessman, was kidnapped at gunpoint and taken hostage in Baghdad. Throughout the next 47 days Wood was beaten, blindfolded and forced to endure the raw emotion of his torture and likely execution.

Douglas Wood got through each day by thinking about his favourite football team and the love he had for his grandchildren. He wasn't sure if he would be rescued, but he never lost hope.



In the most amazing circumstances, Douglas Wood was rescued by Iraqi and US forces while on a routine sweep through one of Baghdad's most dangerous suburbs. Wood heard a shoot-out between the Iraqi army and the insurgents on the roof, and then the army forced their way inside. Wood heard further gunfire, but he knew he was on the road to freedom. When he returned to his homeland, Douglas Wood held a number of speeches telling his story and thanking his rescuers; at the completion of one speech he sang to his audience a moving song entitled "I want to be free".

Do you want to be free? The Bible says the inhabitants of planet earth have also been taken hostage – not by insurgents, but by the devil himself. Do you feel sometimes as if you are captive to guilt, discouragement, deep-seated addictions, abuse, self-centredness or low self-esteem? The good news is that a loving God has developed a rescue plan for you.

Q1. WHO IS THE SOURCE OF TRUE SPIRITUAL FREEDOM?

John 8:36 - *Therefore if the _____ makes you free, you shall be free indeed*

The Bible is a love story that highlights the greatest rescue of all times. We will start this story at the creation of the world. As this story unfolds, you will discover why you are so precious to God and why Jesus is so important to you.



Q2. WHO CREATED THE UNIVERSE?

Genesis 1:1 - *In the beginning _____ created the heavens and the earth*

Planet earth did not evolve. It was designed and created by God. The word "God" in this text is the Hebrew word "Elohim", which is plural, referring to the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. How God could be one God and yet three separate beings is a mystery in itself.

A simple illustration of this concept can be seen in the humble apple. An apple has three parts: the peel, the flesh and the core. They are all separate parts of the apple. Yet they are all one apple. They are not an orange, a lemon or a watermelon. They have different purposes, but they are just one apple. Similarly, the Godhead has three persons. They all have different roles, but they are just one God.

Creation is important because it demonstrates the power of God and tells us why human beings are so precious. God designed and made Adam and Eve with His own hands, to be His personal friends and companions. We are special to God – we are even made in His image (Genesis 1:26).



THE GODHEAD

Q3. WHAT HAPPENED WHEN ADAM AND EVE SINNED?

Genesis 2:17 - *... but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely _____*

Romans 6:23 - *For the wages of sin is _____*

When Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, a natural separation took place. The purity of God formed an instant barrier against the sin within humanity. The nature of Adam and Eve changed and everything on planet earth suffered as a result of that first sin. The natural and inevitable result of sin is death. So if God had not responded, Adam and Eve would have died there and then, and that would have been the end of life on this planet.

Q4. WHAT IS THE FIRST MAJOR PROPHECY OF THE SCRIPTURES?

Genesis 3:15 *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your _____, And you shall bruise His _____*



Here we have the gospel (meaning "good news") mentioned for the first time in the Bible. God is speaking to the serpent (the devil) outlining the great conflict that will occur on planet earth between the seed of the woman (Jesus) and the devil with his followers. The climax of this story is the death of Jesus on Calvary. It was on the cross that Jesus suffered (symbolised by bruising His heel), but Satan was defeated (symbolised through a bruised or crushed head).

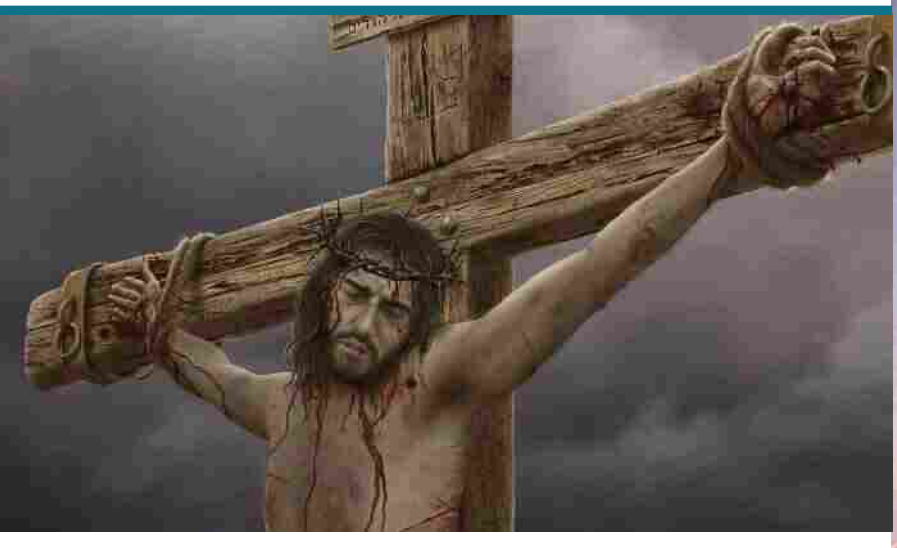
Q5. WHAT SYMBOL IS USED TO REPRESENT JESUS AS OUR SACRIFICE?

John 1:29 - *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The _____ of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

Jesus is the Lamb of God "slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). He was pure and gentle. He did not resist being killed. The book of Isaiah says, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).



Jesus experienced intense physical and emotional abuse and was nearly beaten to death at his trial. He was paraded totally naked before an angry mob - made completely vulnerable. He was brutally nailed to the cross. He was also abused spiritually - not only was the cross seen by some as a pagan sacrifice, but to be hung on a cross was a symbol of being cursed by God (Galatians 3:13). Jesus suffered the highest level of humiliation and abuse for us.



Read about the death of Jesus in Mark 15 (complete chapter). Ask God to show you the depth of His love for you, and to help you realise how much you mean to Him.



Q6. DOES JESUS REALLY CARE ABOUT ME PERSONALLY?

1 Peter 1:18,19 - *... knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold ... but with the precious _____ of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*

There is a growing sector within our community who feel a low sense of personal value. This feeling of worthlessness can result in personal discouragement or depression. God wants you to know that in His eyes you are of infinite value. If God invested all the gold and silver of heaven to save us, then that would be an amazing sacrifice. But we are so valuable to God that He invested the most important thing He could, the "precious blood of Jesus". Not only did God design and personally create us, He also gave the blood of His Son for us.

The old 1975 Ford Escort that once belonged to Pope Benedict sold at an auction for nearly $900,000, while the golf clubs that belonged to J.F. Kennedy sold for over $1 million. Why? Those items were not valuable in and of themselves. Their value lay in the fact that they belonged to someone important. You also belong to someone important – the King of the Universe. Jesus loves you and cares about you personally. He wants you to be His personal friend and live with Him forever.

Q7. HOW DOES THE BLOOD OF JESUS CANCEL OUR SIN?

Hebrews 2:9 - *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste _____ for everyone*

Jesus "tasted death" for everyone. The Bible says that the wages of sin is death, not just physical death, but also what the Bible calls the "Second Death" (Revelation 20:14,15). This is the death that only Jesus has experienced; it is the final death that results from our sins (this will be discussed further in the study guide "Where On Earth is Hell?").

The reason why the blood of Jesus makes it possible to forgive us is explained in the act of substitution. If you truly forgive someone, then you are willing to suffer the consequences of the evil they have done to you, without retaliation. To illustrate; if someone punched you in the eye, forgiving that person means that you experience the pain from their wrongdoing, without returning the punch.

We have sinned against God and His law. Justice requires the penalty of death, and mercy can only be provided by the God whose law we have broken. Jesus chose to suffer the full penalty of our sin in order to provide a way of escape for us.



FORGIVEN





Q8. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT JESUS WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD?

1 Corinthians 15:17 - *And if Christ is not risen, your faith is _____; you are still in your sins!*

The apostle Paul said, if Jesus remained dead, we would have no hope of salvation. Although the death of Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, a dead Christ could not forgive our sins today. Only a living Saviour can give us freedom and hope. That is why there is "no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Q9. WHAT CAN I DO TO BENEFIT FROM THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JESUS?

John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever _____ in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*

This famous text says it all! God gave because He loves. We cannot earn salvation. We will never deserve it. We will never be "good enough". We can only accept it through believing in Him. Everlasting life is a free gift that God offers to you today.

Q10. WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO RECEIVING SPIRITUAL FREEDOM?

You receive spiritual freedom through accepting the gift of salvation. You accept salvation by accepting Jesus as your personal Saviour and Lord of your life. To help you understand how to accept Jesus, here are seven practical steps:





a. Admit you are a sinner

Romans 3:23 - *for _____ have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

The first thing to be realised is your need for Christ. Many people are "good moral citizens" who wouldn't dream of stealing or killing anyone, but every one of us has experienced sin. We have broken God's law either by thought or action, which automatically qualifies us as sinners. The Bible says the "wages" (what we have earned) for our sins is eternal death. Only Jesus Christ can solve the sin problem.

b. Come to Christ

Matthew 11:28 - *_____ to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*

What a beautiful promise! No matter how sinful you may feel at times, just remember that Jesus is a far greater Saviour than you are a sinner. Do not wait until you are "good", or haven't sinned for a while. Jesus is calling you to Him just as you are.

When you "come to Jesus" you simply say to Him that you recognise you are a sinner, you need help in your life and you acknowledge that only He can give you that help.

c. Believe

Acts 16:31 - *So they said, "_____ on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household"*

Believing in Christ is to trust Him. It is more than just an intellectual belief because the "devils believe" (James 2:19). Belief is to have such a trust in Jesus that you are willing to do what He says. To illustrate – a doctor prescribes medicine. If you believe in that doctor you will take the medicine. Jesus has a cure for sin and if we believe in Jesus we will gladly accept His cure.

d. Submit to Christ

James 4:7 - *Therefore _____ to God*



This is where you ask Jesus to be your personal Saviour. There are many people who go to church each week, and yet they have never asked Jesus to be their Saviour from sin.

Jesus says that He stands at the door of your heart and knocks. He wants to enter your life and have a daily relationship with you (Revelation 3:20). If the richest man in the world knocked on your front door and offered you a million dollars if you let him in, how long would it take to invite him into your home? You know the answer! Well Jesus offers you something much greater than a million dollars. He is offering you an eternity of peace and happiness.



e. Repent and confess your sins

1 John 1:9 - *If we _____ our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*



Jesus wants us to be sorry, and say sorry for our sins. Confession can be made directly to God, and He promises that He will forgive you. He has purchased your sins with His own blood. You can be guaranteed that if you deliver His purchase to Him, He will accept the delivery.

Confession needs to be specific. If you have hurt another human being, you need to apologise to that person also. True confession comes from a heart that is sorry for the sin and determined to do whatever it takes to move away from a life of sin.

f. Experience the New Birth

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new _____; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*

One aspect of the Mystery of God is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). The Christian life is not just a modification or reformation of the old life – it is a transformation. You become a new creation. The old life is gone and you live a new life, with Jesus living in you.

The Bible symbol for this change of life is baptism. To be baptised fully in water represents a death and burial of the old life and a resurrection of your new life in partnership with Jesus (Romans 6:3-6).

This change of life and the ongoing growth in spirituality, can only be accomplished through the work and power of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23).

g. Accept Jesus as Lord of your life

Colossians 2:6 - *As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the _____, so _____ in Him*

Many today are happy to have Jesus as their Saviour as an escape plan from hell. But Jesus also wants to be Lord of your life. Jesus said, "if you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). We need to accept Jesus as Lord and then "walk in Him". In other words, be obedient and walk in His steps towards a happy and victorious Christian life. This is not legalism; it is simply a love response to Jesus.





Q11. IS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BORING AND RESTRICTIVE?

John 10:10 - *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more _____*

The devil tries to rob you of life. He makes out that a Christian life is just for boring people who have nothing better to do. He emphasises what you will "miss out on" or "can't do anymore". Jesus says that a life with Him is full of adventure and discovery. It is an abundant life where people of all ages and cultures can discover true happiness and fulfilment in life.

Q12. WHAT ASSURANCE IS THERE FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS?

1 John 5:13 - *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may _____ that you have eternal life*

Eternal life is not just something you can "hope" for. A true belief in Jesus includes having the confidence that you have eternal life today. The reason why you can have such confidence is because the gospel is based on the power and promises of the Creator God.



Q13. WHAT DOES GOD PROMISE TO THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

Philippians 4:13 - *I can do _____ things through Christ who strengthens me*

Ephesians 3:20 - *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the _____ that works in us*

There is no limit to the power of God. No matter where you come from, no matter how bad you have been, no matter what sins you are struggling with – God has the love and power to do exceedingly... abundantly... above... all... that we ask... or think... according to the power that works in us.





YES I HAVE LOVED YOU WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE

JEREMIAH 31:3

Three points to remember:

- All human beings are sinners and without Jesus we are eternally lost
- You can be certain that you have eternal life if you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour
- God wants to empower you today to live a victorious Christian life

The story:

A railway switchman had the job of operating the controls that locked a bridge in place over a large river. One day as the sun was beginning to set he could see and hear the train coming towards him. Unfortunately the controls did not work on this occasion so he hurried down to the tracks to push the lever manually.

As the man leant with all his might on the lever he heard a faint cry. To his horror he saw his four-year-old boy running across the bridge crying "Daddy, where are you?" His first impulse was to yell out to his son, "Run, Run" but he realised it was too late. His son would never make it to the other side of the bridge before the train came. The man had the worst choice in the world to make. In a split second he had to choose between the train or his son. If he left the lever to save his son the train would crash into the river killing hundreds of people on board. If he saved the train his son would almost certainly be killed on the bridge.

As the heart-torn father leant hard on the lever, he watched the train crush the innocent little body of his young boy. With tear filled eyes he peered into the windows of the train and saw the activities of the passengers. They had no idea of the decision the father had just made. They were either playing cards, laughing, sleeping or eating. As the train sped by, the sobbing figure of a broken father was still clinging to the control lever.

God had a similar choice to make. What does this story illustrate about God's love for you?

Relational questions:

1. What should you do if or when you feel you are not "good enough" to get to heaven?
2. What does the death of Jesus on the cross tell you about God? How can you make the cross even more meaningful to you?
3. Do you think the Christian life is hard? Why/Why not? Why don't you think more people accept God's free gift?
4. What would you say is the secret to living the Christian life? What can you do to increase your love for Jesus on a daily basis?

Your response:

Jesus is offering you the free gift of salvation. Would you like to invite Jesus into your life today, or renew that decision, and experience an empowered Christian life?

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The SECRET *to* SUCCESS

What are the secrets to living a successful life? Find out in Part 9 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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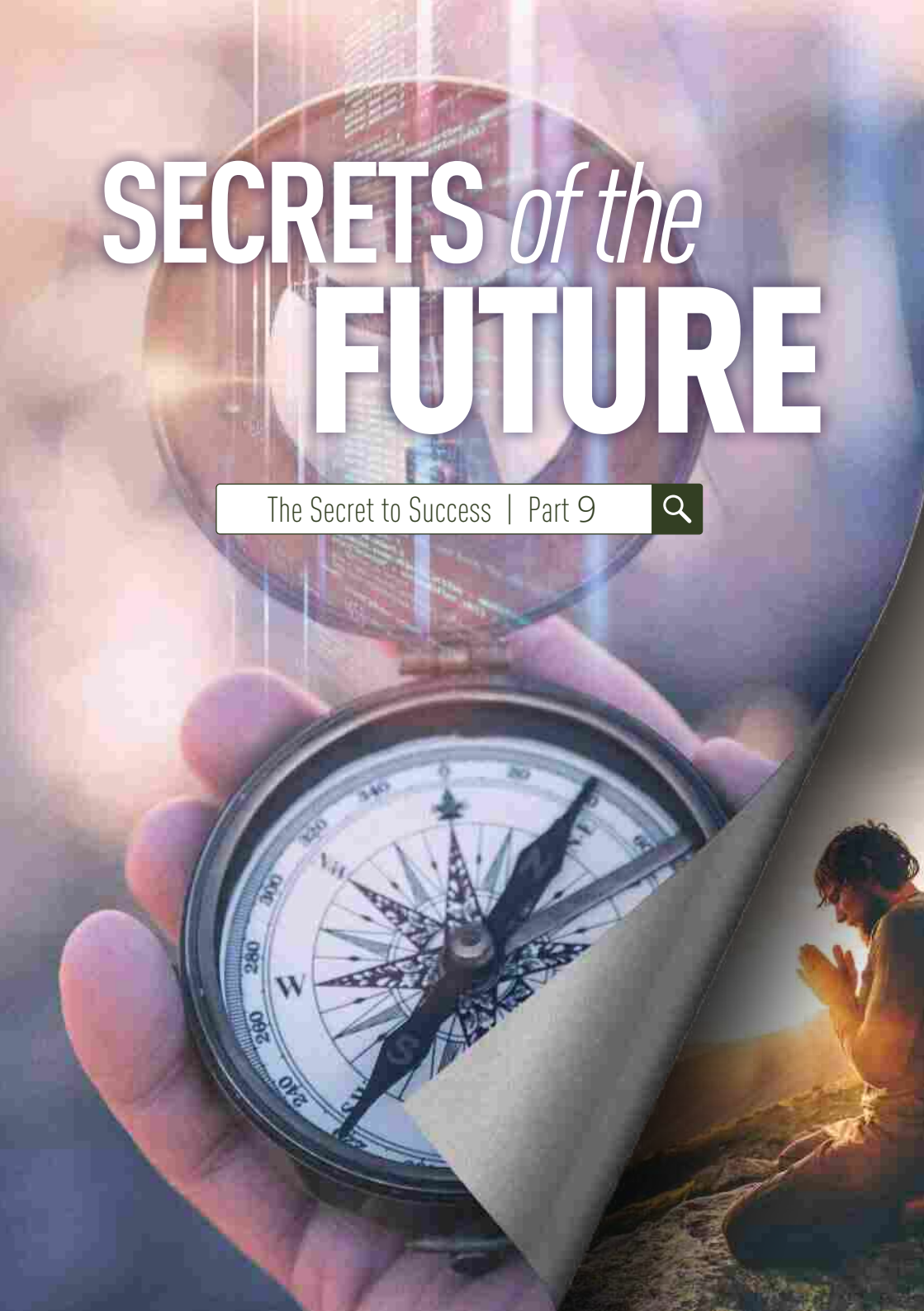
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

The Secret to Success | Part 9



THE SECRET TO SUCCESS

In the Louvre Museum in Paris stands an impressive basalt stele called "The Code of Hammurabi". This four tonne slab of stone was created in 1780BC by the ruler of Babylon and features the King in ceremonial dress before the sun god Shamash. A list of 282 rules (minus the unlucky number 13) is inscribed beneath the sun god, outlining the code of conduct for the city of Babylon. These laws were a code of living for the Babylonians. They covered issues such as business transactions, marriage relationships and penalties for lying.



Law number 153 states, "If a woman had brought about the death of her husband because of another man, they shall impale that woman on stakes". Law 229 was the original building insurance policy – any builder who failed to construct a house properly would be put to death!

Religious life for the Babylonians revolved around sacrifices and prayers to their gods. Each person had their own personal god who protected them from devils and evil spirits. The Babylonians would place their god

in a prominent place in the home. They would light fires, offer banquets, wear dedicated jewellery and recite ritual prayers in a form of worship. Ancient writings (particularly from their wisdom literature) demonstrate a feeling of disillusionment among the worshippers: Is this religion working? I try hard all day to serve my god but what does it really do for me?

Many Christians today are like the Babylonians of old – wondering if their worship means anything. Churches put great efforts into gaining new members, only to lose them within months or even weeks out the "back door". A new Christian tries to be "good" but when they fail, discouragement sets in and they give up. No-one wants to feel like a "hypocrite", so despondent new Christians leave a religion that all seems too hard for them.

Is there a secret to success that enables Christians to live a happy and effective Christian life? What does it mean to be a Christian and how do you live in a way that enables you to grow spiritually? What do you do when you are tempted or feel discouraged? How can you protect yourself from the influences of secular life? And how can you ensure your Christian experience involves "living life to the full"?

This study guide reveals the keys to Christian living. You will see what a Christian is and also how a Christian should live. This will be a very practical study that will help you experience a living relationship with Jesus.



Q1 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

1 John 5:12 - *He who has the _____ has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life*

The average person in the street will tell you that a Christian is someone who "does good works". But there is a difference between what a Christian is and what a Christian does. A Christian has accepted the free gift of salvation and has a living relationship with Jesus. As part of God's family, Christians become "children of God" – to be loved, nurtured and empowered (1 John 3:1).

Q2 WHAT IS THE ONLY TRUE MOTIVATION FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN?

2 Corinthians 5:14 - *For the _____ of _____ compels us ...*

The apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthians is sharing his own experience. This great evangelist encountered all sorts of suffering and was ultimately killed for his faith. Paul told the Corinthians that he couldn't help himself. He had seen the love of Christ! It compelled him to give his whole energy to living for his new found love!



Q3 HOW IMPORTANT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN?

John 6:63 - *It is the Spirit who gives _____; the flesh profits nothing ...*

Without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the life of a Christian is powerless. The Holy Spirit does not just modify your old life. He transforms us into a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The Holy Spirit shows us the love of Jesus, convicts us of sin, leads us into truth and empowers us with spiritual gifts. It is the Holy Spirit that changes our hearts and enables us to produce the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

If you really want to successfully live the Christian life, then ask for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit every day. God is more willing to provide you with His presence than you could ever imagine (Luke 11:13).



Q4 WHAT DID JESUS SAY WAS THE SECRET TO SUCCESS IN LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

John 15:4 - *Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you _____ in Me*

There is only one way to live the Christian life. Stay connected to Jesus. It is easy to try and become your own "vine" – to be self-sufficient and "good" without the presence and power of God. Jesus wants to be your forever Friend. He wants you to come to Him and stay with Him. He is the vine and you are the branch through whom He produces His fruit.

Like any relationship, the key to living as friends is effective communication. When you come to Jesus and accept His love, He will enable you to stay connected to Him. He does this through the avenues of Bible study (God communicates with you), prayer (you communicate with God) and sharing the gospel (God communicates through you).

Q5 WHAT ARE THE SPIRITUAL BENEFITS OF REGULARLY STUDYING THE BIBLE?

Romans 10:17 - *So then _____ comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*

The Bible is God's love letter to you and is a vital ingredient in living the Christian life. It not only outlines historical events, it also shows you the love of God. As you see the way God leads and loves His people, even in the most difficult times, your faith in Him grows.

Studying the Bible has many other benefits. The power of the Word changes your heart (1 Peter 1:23). It shows you God's will (Psalms 119:105). It enables you to overcome temptation (Matthew 4:4). The Bible also shows you the best picture of Jesus (John 5:39,40).

Q6 WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO STUDY AND UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

John 7:17 - *If anyone wills to ____ His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine ...*



The key to understanding the Scripture is to have a heart that is willing to put into action the things that you learn. The purpose of Bible study is not to "prove yourself right" or simply learn intellectual facts. The Bible is there to show you God and empower you with a new life!

The keys to effective Bible study include: praying for the Holy Spirit, a humble attitude, commitment to spend quality time, and a comparison of Scripture with Scripture so the Bible explains itself.

Next time you read the Bible ask these questions: What is God saying to the people at the time of writing? What is God saying to me today? What does this passage tell me about myself? What does this passage tell me about God?

Q7 HOW IMPORTANT WAS PRAYER IN THE LIFE OF JESUS?

Luke 6:12 - *Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all _____ in prayer to God*

The prayer life of Jesus was the most important factor in maintaining a vital connection with His Father. Jesus sometimes prayed all night or woke up before sunrise to spend quality time in prayer. He loved the private, personal talking and sharing with His heavenly Father. Jesus asked His Father to guide Him and empower Him. He would share His feelings and ask for the presence of the Spirit.

If Jesus (who was perfect) focused His life on prayer, how much more do we (who are very much imperfect) need prayer in our life today.



Q8 WHAT DID JESUS SAY WAS VITAL TO EXPERIENCING POWERFUL PRAYER?

Matthew 6:6,7 - *But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain _____ as the heathen do*

Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for their formal, insincere and repetitive prayers. True prayer is not difficult. Just open your heart to God as you would to a friend. God wants you to be open and honest with Him – sharing the love, gratitude, needs and concerns of your heart.

Q9 WHY IS SHARING THE GOSPEL AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

Matthew 24:14 - *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the _____ will come*



Many people today are searching for purpose in life. The Christian mission is clear – share the gospel! This is not just a mission for paid ministers of the gospel. All of us have the privilege and opportunity to introduce and lead people to Christ.

There are many benefits to active involvement in sharing the gospel. God could save people without you, but He knows that working through you will enhance your relationship with Him. The focus of life will move away from self, to helping other people. As you see the love and power of God working in the lives of others you will grow in your faith and love for Him.



Q10 HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN LIVE IN TERMS OF CHARACTER AND CONDUCT?

1 Peter 1:15 - *But as He who called you is holy, you also be _____ in all your conduct*

God calls the Christian to live a holy life. This is a life of purity and obedience to God's Commandments. God wants you to learn to love Jesus and hate the sin that hurts Him and destroys you. The reason why God

makes this call is not so you can become "good enough" to deserve heaven – a holy life shows other people what God is like. You bring honour to God by allowing Him to live out His love and obedience through you.

Q11 WHAT SPIRITUAL ADVICE DID PAUL GIVE TO THE CHRISTIANS IN ROME?

Romans 12:2 - *And do not be _____ to this _____, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*

Have you ever heard the phrase, "when in Rome do as the Romans do"? Well the apostle Paul said to the Christians in Rome, "when in Rome don't do as the Romans do!" With all the secular pressures around you (especially in the large cities) make sure you don't become secular yourself. One Bible translation says, "don't let the world squeeze you into its mould."

Christians are different! They stand for unique principles and values. The Christian lifestyle is based on the Bible and will not always be popular.

Martin Luther King said,

"We are called to be people of conviction, not conformity; of moral nobility, not social respectability. We are commanded to live differently and according to a higher loyalty."



The "world" is simply the values, principles and actions of secular society. To shun this "world" means to make certain that your way of thinking and your behaviour reflects the Word of God, instead of chasing the meaningless attractions of popular culture.

Q12 WHAT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE "WORLD" SHOULD THE CHRISTIAN AVOID?

1 John 2:15,16 - *Do not love the world or the things in the world ... For all that is in the world – the lust of the _____, the lust of the _____, and the _____ of life – is not of the Father but is of the world*

The average person sees over 1,000 commercials every day, enticing us to buy what we don't have and often do what we shouldn't do! Jesus warned against the deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this world (Mark 4:19). The secular influences of the world often revolve around sex, money and power.

The world encourages you to accumulate as much wealth as you possibly can, even at the expense of others – money will make you happy. On the other hand, Jesus said, that someone's "life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15). Christians should live simply, be generous and help others.

The world influences relationships – sex outside marriage, multiple partners or same sex partners. The world says "if it feels good do it!" Christian relationships are for life. God designed marriage as one husband and one wife forever.

The world says that your career, power and position become the measure of life success. As a result you should work until you drop – and don't mind

putting others down as you climb the corporate ladder. To the Christian, work is a ministry to help other people, and make a difference in the world.

Q13 WHAT SORT OF THINGS SHOULD OCCUPY THE MINDS OF CHRISTIANS?

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any _____ and if there is anything _____ – meditate on these things*

You have two forces working within you. The Holy Spirit is convicting you of sin and offering you power to live the Christian life. The devil works through your sinful nature to entice and allure you into believing his deceptions. The devil wants you to think that sin is the better choice in life. A Christian protects the mind and emotions to ensure they can honour God and live a holy life. You may have heard the saying,

"You may not be what you think you are, but what you think, you are!"







The Christian thinks about positive things, sees the best in people, loves to encourage and support. The avenues of the mind are protected. The devil will do all he can to place in front of us television, magazines, music and internet information that leads us away from God. It is no wonder the Bible is emphatic regarding the importance of negating the avenues of communication from the devil.



Q14 WHAT SORT OF CHRISTIANS RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD?

James 4:6 - *But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the _____"*

God cannot help someone who is proud and self-sufficient. When you realise your need of Christ, and admit that you are a sinner, God will give you all the grace you need. A humble Christian not only sees their own need, but also lives a life of service for others.

God gives grace to empower you to live a holy life. A life that impacts every part of your experience including, but not limited to, your finances, relationships, and even how you present yourself.

Q15 WHAT ARE THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT?

2 Corinthians 9:7 - *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a _____ giver*

Malachi 3:8 - *Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, "In what way have we robbed You?" In _____ and _____*

God owns the world and everything in it – including money! As such, the Christian is a steward of God's money here on earth. God wants you to earn your living and then spend money wisely without being stingy. God does not want you to be involved in wasting your time and money on gambling. The Bible says the love of money is a "root of all kinds of evil" (1Timothy 6:10). The devil will do all he can to develop a lust for money-making instead of a love for God.

An important financial principle is to return tithe to God. A tithe (which literally means "tenth") is that portion of our income that He asks us to return to Him. This is not a gift; it is God's money that is used by the church to pay for ministry.

God also wants us to give regular offerings. There is no specific amount that He asks for – He just wants to make sure we give our offerings with a cheerful heart (2 Corinthians 9:7). Tithes are a test of our honesty while offerings are a test of our generosity.



Q16 WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO RELATIONSHIPS, MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY?

Hebrews 13:4 - *Marriage is _____ among all ...*

Genesis 2:24 - *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become _____ flesh*

Christianity revolves around relationships – God with us and us with others. God has designed us to love and be loved. We were made to experience lifelong love and it is in the home that true Christianity is demonstrated. It is a tragedy when Christians are "perfect" at church but "devils" at home! The home should be representative of heaven; a place where friends and family just love to be. God wants families to spend quality time together – having fun and learning about Jesus in practical ways.

Q17 WHAT ARE THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHRISTIAN DRESS?

1 Timothy 2:9,10 - *... in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in _____ apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or _____ or _____ or costly clothing, but ...with good works*

Hosea 2:13 - *"I will punish her for the days of the Baals to which she burned incense. She decked herself with her _____ and _____, and went after her lovers; but Me she forgot," says the LORD*

For both men and women it is vital that Christians represent the life and attitude of Jesus. Jesus wants you to dress in a modest and simple manner, not spending thousands of dollars on all the latest fashions. The Christian focuses on inward beauty and living a Christ-like life.

It is interesting to note that God saw the wearing of jewellery as an outward sign of rebellion and following the "world". A visit to the ancient museums of the world will show you the great importance placed on jewellery among the pagan nations. There are hundreds of pieces of gold earrings, necklaces and bracelets that have been discovered and are now displayed in all their splendour.

Q18 WITH ALL THE TRAPS OF THE WORLD AROUND US, HOW CAN A CHRISTIAN OVERCOME TEMPTATION?

James 4:7 *Therefore submit to God. _____ the devil and he will flee from you*

As a Christian you have all the power in the universe to overcome temptation and sin. If you submit your life to God and choose to say "no" to the devil, God will give you supernatural power for victory. God has so much power and influence that the devil will run for his life!



Q19 WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER ABOUT LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

Jeremiah 31:3 - *The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an _____ love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you"*

God loves you with an everlasting love. It is not dependent on your goodness or even how much you love Him. God has called you and He enables you to effectively live the Christian life. If you spiritually fall, you don't need to be discouraged. Jesus is already waiting to accept you back. The loving Jesus will treat you just as if you have never sinned! Look to Jesus and live in His love. He will enable you to become an empowered Christian – loving God, loving people and loving life!

Three Points to Remember:

- The only way to live as a Christian is to stay connected to Jesus
- The keys to growth are Bible study, prayer and sharing the gospel
- God loves you with an everlasting love

The Story:

A man found a small white dog whimpering by the side of the road. The dog was clearly in pain with a broken leg. The man took the dog home, put a splint on the leg and nursed him back to health. The little pup grew to love the man during this period and hobbled his way around the house, following his new master. They played together, and each day the dog (now named Jetta) would be looking for his master to come home from work.

Then, suddenly, Jetta disappeared. The man was quite upset and felt as if the dog did not appreciate what he had done for him. But the man's feelings soon changed. The next day Jetta was at the back door of the house, wagging his little tail. But this time Jetta was not alone. Sitting beside Jetta was another small dog. And that other dog also had a broken leg. Jetta had brought the lame puppy to his master so it also could be healed.

How do you think this story illustrates growth in the Christian life?

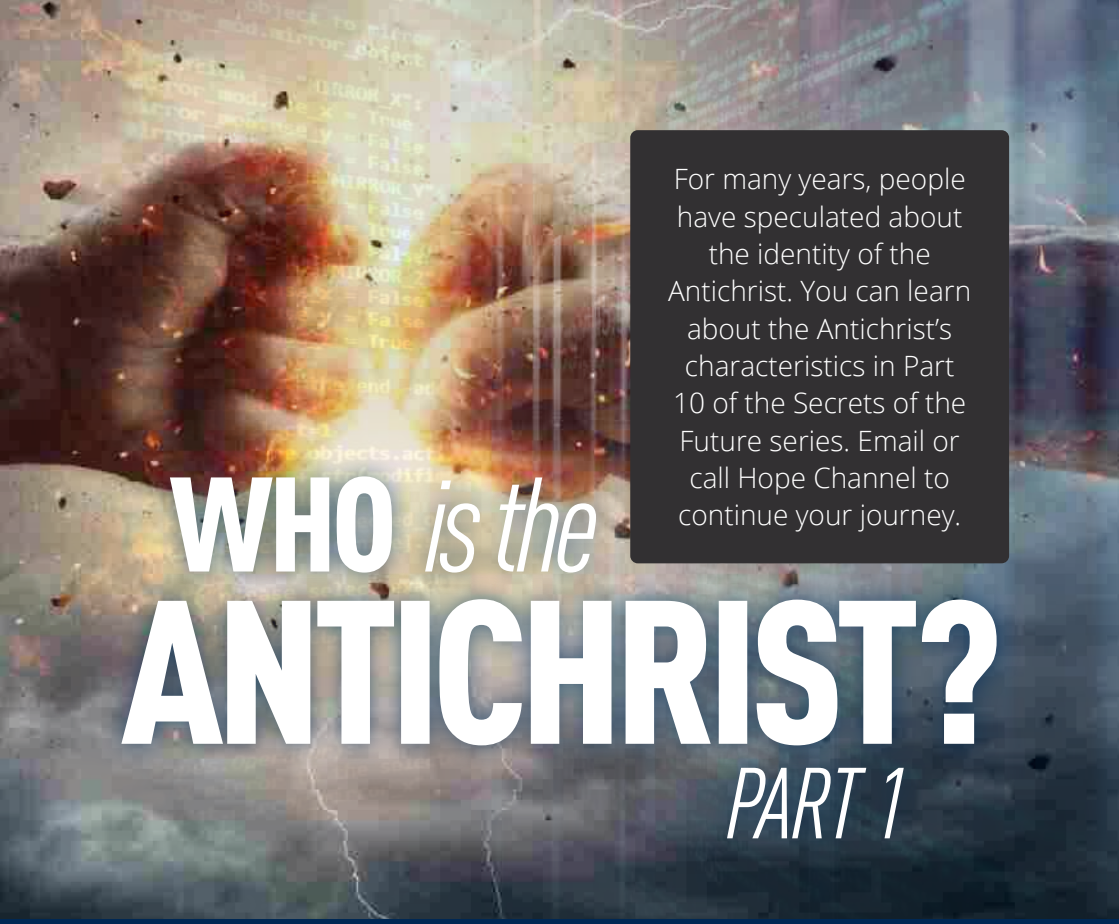
Relational questions:

1. Do you think the Christian life is easy or difficult? Why?
2. Why do you think your lifestyle is important, even though you are not saved by your works?
3. What have you found is the most effective way to maintain a vital connection with God?

Your response:

Now that you have completed the Secrets of Prophecy series would you like to reconfirm your decision to accept Jesus Christ and follow Him completely in your life? _____





For many years, people have speculated about the identity of the Antichrist. You can learn about the Antichrist's characteristics in Part 10 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

WHO *is the* ANTICHRIST? *PART 1*

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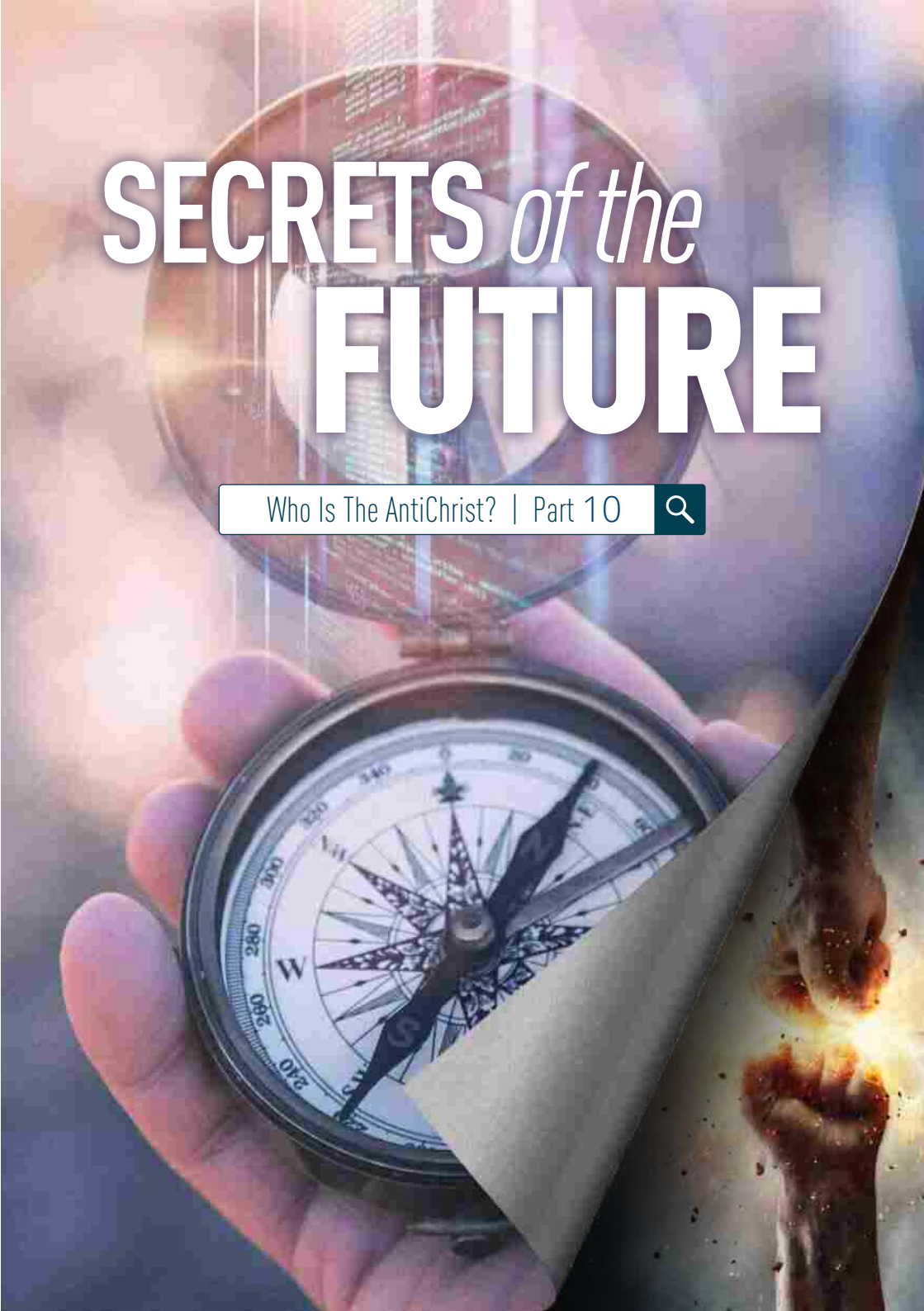

SECRETS of the
FUTURE
Who Is The AntiChrist? | Part 10

WHO IS THE ANTICHRIST?

For hundreds of years, the religious world has been fascinated and fearful of the Antichrist. This mystical figure is seen as a representative of the devil – a political and religious leader associated with evil and deception.

Antichrist characters feature in movies, books and video games. From horror thrillers to religious films – the Antichrist is a source of intrigue and mystery.

Speculation relating to the identity of the Antichrist has resulted in a wide range of candidates. Some of the early contenders were the persecuting Roman Emperors, in particular, Nero and Diocletian, who killed countless Christians and certainly opposed the worship of Jesus Christ.

Many Christians believe the Antichrist will be a political figure at the end of time. This political and military genius will establish a one world government and rule the world. His headquarters will be in Jerusalem where he will demand worship and obedience.



The Muslims have their own views regarding an Antichrist. This person (or Dajjal) is an evil power who appears to promote love and truth, but through deceptive powers actually promotes death and evil.

Nostradamus made a number of prophecies about the Antichrist. He actually predicted three Antichrists. His followers believed Napoleon was the first Antichrist and Hitler was the second. The third, (associated with the mystical name "Mabus") is yet to come.

With such a wide range of views how can we accurately identify the Antichrist? Is the Antichrist an individual or an alliance of evil? Will the Antichrist appear in the future or is he alive today? What role will the Antichrist play in the final events of world history and how can you be certain to avoid the sinister plans of this deceptive power?

In this two part series we will delve into the "secrets of prophecy" and allow the Scriptures to clearly identify the Antichrist of Bible prophecy.

Q1. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE ANTICHRIST?

2 John 1:7 - *For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an _____*

The term "antichrist" is only mentioned in four passages of the Bible – all in the letters of John. In each case, the



term is used to portray a false teacher or deceptive power that corrupts the faith within the church.

An "antichrist" literally means "instead of Christ" or "in the place of Christ". John said there were "many antichrists" within the early church (1 John 2:18) and these antichrists all had a misconception about Jesus Christ.

The original "Antichrist" is the devil himself. It was Lucifer who first wanted to take the place of Christ (Isaiah 14:12-14) and it is he who continually opposes and misrepresents Him.

The Antichrist of Prophecy:

Within Bible prophecy there is one specific "Antichrist" who is described in great detail. This power would rise after the time of the early church and have a dramatic impact on the history of the world.

Q2. WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE ANTICHRIST THAT WOULD ARISE AFTER THE TIME OF THE EARLY CHURCH?

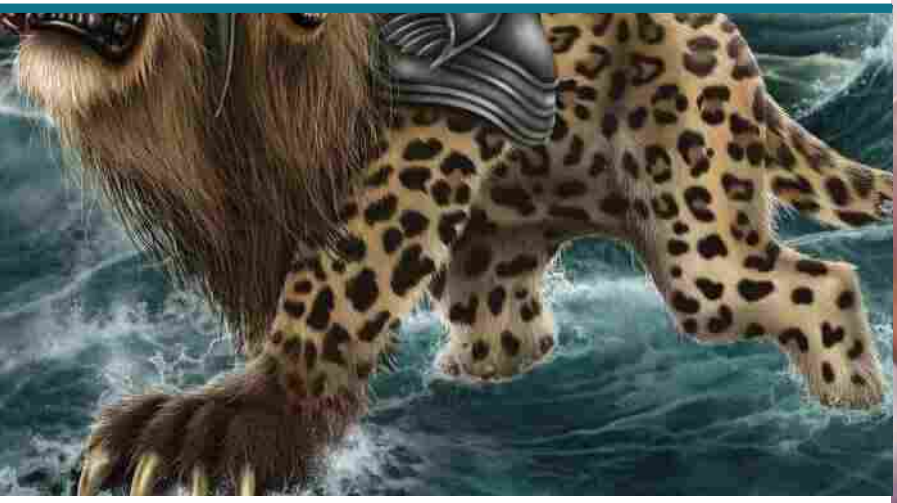
2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 - *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the _____ of _____ is revealed, the son of perdition (v3)*

Within the early church some people believed and taught that Jesus would return in their day. The apostle Paul refuted this concept. He predicted that before Jesus returned, the church would experience a major spiritual fall. This "falling away" would reveal the "man of sin". This great Antichrist would exalt himself and be involved in breaking or disregarding the law of God.

It is interesting to note that the Antichrist of prophecy would arise within the church. In a similar way, Jesus referred to His disciple Judas as the "son of perdition" (John 17:12). Judas was a leader "in the church" who wanted power more than he wanted Christ. Most people think the Antichrist will be a secular political leader. But the Bible is clear. The Antichrist will come from the world of religion.

Most of the prophecies relating to the Antichrist are featured in the books of Daniel and Revelation.

In these prophecies a variety of symbols are used to describe the characteristics and activities of the Antichrist. In the book of Daniel, the Antichrist power is symbolised as a "little horn" (Daniel 7). In the book of Revelation, the same power is described as the "first beast" (Revelation 13) and "Babylon" (Revelation 17). In each case the identifying marks are very similar – indicating the same power presented from slightly different angles.





The focus of this study will be an investigation of Daniel 7. This chapter is vital because it outlines the empires of history and identifies very specific characteristics of the Antichrist. It also lays the foundation for future descriptions of the Antichrist in the book of Revelation. Please read Daniel 7 (there are 28 verses) and notice especially the descriptions and characteristics of the "little horn".

A Vision of Four Beasts (verses 1-7)

Q3. WHAT DID DANIEL SEE COMING UP FROM A WIND SWEPT SEA?

Daniel 7:2,3 - *Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. And _____ great _____ came up from the sea, each different from the other"*

While in vision Daniel saw four great animals coming up from the sea. Each of these "beasts" were different animals with unique characteristics.

Q4. IN BIBLE PROPHECY WHAT DO THE FOLLOWING SYMBOLS REPRESENT?

THE WINDS

Jeremiah 49:36,37 - *"Against Elam I will bring the four winds ... I will bring disaster upon them, My fierce anger", says the LORD; "And I will send the _____ after them until I have consumed them."*

Winds are a symbol of strife, destruction and war. A wind swept sea is one where there is plenty of unrest and commotion.

THE SEA

Revelation 17:15 - *Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw … are _____, multitudes, nations and tongues"*

The sea represents an area of vast population, a place where there are many people from a wide background of nationalities. Even today we refer to such a group as a "sea of faces". The beasts in Daniel's vision were coming up from a very populated area of the globe.



A BEAST

Daniel 7:17 - *Those great beasts, which are four, are four _____*

Daniel 7:23 - *…The fourth beast shall be a fourth _____ on earth*

A beast is a symbol for a kingdom or political power. The use of an animal to represent a nation is still used today.



For instance the "eagle" represents the United States. The "kangaroo" represents Australia. A "beast" is not necessarily a negative symbol – it simply means an animal that has characteristics that represent a nation.

In Daniel 7 we find four great nations or political powers all different from one another, rising up from populated areas of the world where there has been a history of war and destruction.

By comparing the prophecy of Daniel 2 (the great image) with this prophecy of Daniel 7, it is evident that Daniel is seeing the same succession of world empires. Both prophecies are aligned perfectly. However the prophecy of Daniel 7 provides greater detail and a number of additional interesting facts. In Daniel 2 metals are used to symbolise the nations while in Daniel 7 "beasts" or animals are used.



To illustrate the link between the two prophecies, the fourth beast of Daniel 7 has "iron teeth" and is called the "fourth kingdom" (Daniel 7:23). The power represented by iron in Daniel 2 is also called the "fourth kingdom" (Daniel 2:40). The four kingdoms represented in both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 are:

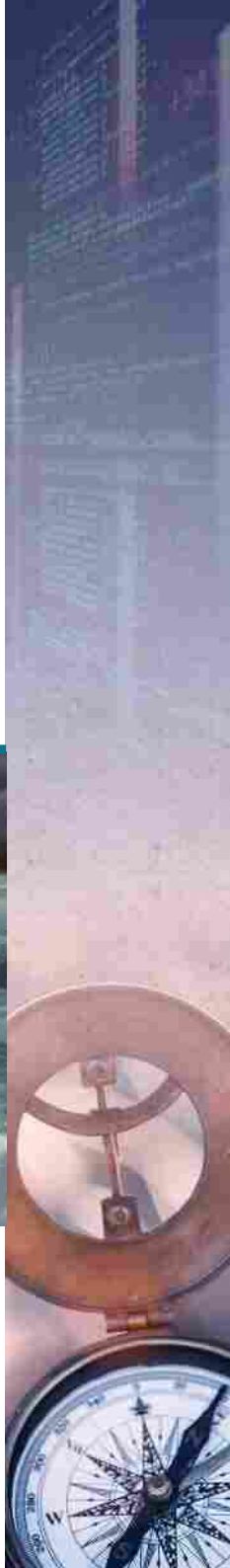
- Babylon
- Medo-Persia
- Greece
- Rome

Q5. WHAT BEAST IS USED TO SYMBOLISE THE FIRST KINGDOM, BABYLON?

Daniel 7:4 - *The first was like a _____, and had eagle's wings*

The king of beasts is a perfect symbol for the proud and powerful Babylon and an ideal parallel to the "head of gold" in Daniel 2. The prophet Jeremiah also described the King of Babylon as being "like a lion" (Jeremiah 50:43,44).





Q6. WHAT ANIMAL IS USED TO REPRESENT THE SECOND KINGDOM, MEDO-PERSIA?

Daniel 7:5 - *And suddenly another beast, a second, like a _____. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth ...*

The coalition government of the Medes and Persians was "lopsided" because the Persians were a much stronger entity than the Medes. The bear had three ribs in its mouth which indicates it had eaten other beasts. The three major powers conquered by Medo-Persia were Babylon, Lydia and Egypt.



Q7. WHAT ANIMAL IS USED TO REPRESENT THE THIRD KINGDOM, GREECE?

Daniel 7:6 - *After this I looked, and there was another, like a _____, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it*

A leopard with four wings represents a very fast and attacking empire. Notice this leopard had four heads. After the death of Alexander, the Greek empire was divided between four of his generals, the heads of his empire. These four generals were: Ptolemy, Seleucus, Cassander and Lysimachus.



Q8. THE FOURTH KINGDOM, PAGAN ROME, IS SYMBOLISED BY A POWERFUL CREATURE WITH IRON TEETH AND TEN HORNS (V7). WHAT DO THE TEN HORNS REPRESENT?

Daniel 7:24 - *The ten horns are ten _____ who shall arise from this kingdom*



Just as the iron legs of Rome divided into the iron and clay feet and ten toes of Daniel 2, now we find Daniel seeing ten horns arising out of the power of Rome. A "horn" is another symbol of a kingdom (Daniel 7: 24, 8:22). The ten horns are the ten powers that rose from the divided Roman Empire. These nations are what we see today as Western Europe.

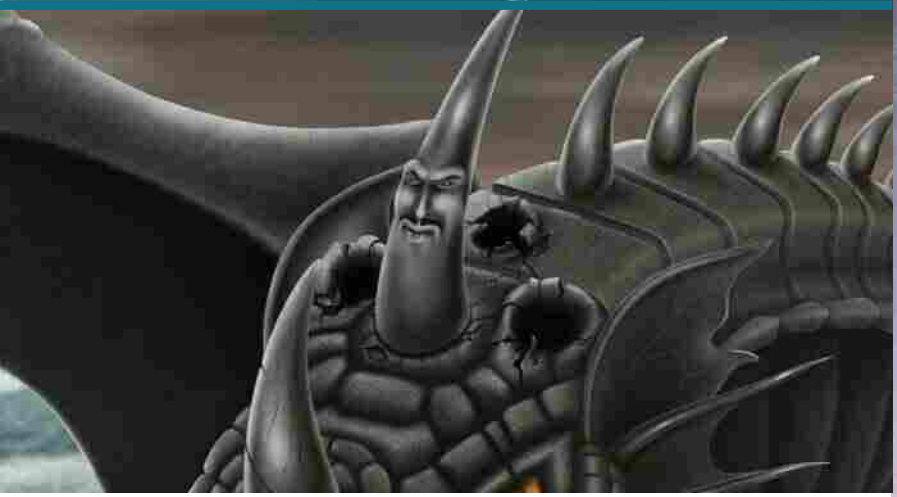


The Little Horn (v8-28)

Q9. WHAT DID DANIEL SEE COMING UP OUT OF THE TEN HORNS?

Daniel 7:8 - *I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a _____ one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots …*

The little horn and the judgment is the focus for the rest of the chapter. It is this power that provides the additional information to the Daniel 2 prophecy. Here we will see the character and power of the little horn, the great Antichrist of prophecy.



Q10. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT CLEARLY IDENTIFY THE ANTICHRIST POWER OF THE LITTLE HORN?

Clue 1 - It arises from Western Europe

The little horn was seen in amongst the ten horns "coming up from them" – rising out of the head of the fourth beast. (Daniel 7:8). This information provides us with the geographical location of the rise of the little



horn. Since the ten horns represent the division of the Roman empire into the nations of Western Europe, the little horn would arise from somewhere within that region.



Clue 2 – It is a "little" kingdom

This political power has the unique characteristic of being a "little horn" (Daniel 7:8). Here we have a small nation that will accomplish large things.

Clue 3 – It arises after the ten tribes of Europe were established

The little horn Antichrist not only comes out of the ten horns but also comes to power after the ten horns were established: "and another shall arise after them" (Daniel 7:24). The ten horns were finally established in 476AD, so we are looking for a power which gained its political clout after this date.

Clue 4 – It overcomes three political powers as it rises to prominence

The Bible says that three of the original ten horns were "plucked out by the roots" (Daniel 7:8). The little horn would overcome three of the tribes of Europe on its way to dominance. Three of the original kingdoms had been

removed by 538AD. This kingdom would come to power sometime around 538AD.

Clue 5 – It is different from the other ten powers

The ten tribes of Western Europe were all secular political powers. The "little horn" was unique – there was something different about this power.

Clue 6 – It would have a man at its head who speaks for it

Although this power is a political entity, it would have "eyes like the eyes of a man" (Daniel 7:8). A man would be the focus of this power and would be the absolute spokesperson (Daniel 7:8).

Clue 7 – It would speak blasphemies against God

This power delves into religion; speaking "pompous words against the Most High" (Daniel 7:25).





Clue 8 – It would persecute God's people

The "little horn" power would "persecute the saints of the Most High" (Daniel 7:25). We are looking for a power who is responsible for the deaths of faithful Christians.

Clue 9 – It would be in power for 1,260 years

This power rules for "a time and times and half a time" (Daniel 7:25). By comparing Daniel 7:25 with Revelation 12:6,14 it is clear that this time prophecy is another way of saying 1,260 days. A "time" is one year, "times" is two years" and "half a time" is six months or as the Amplified Bible translates it, "three and-one-half years". Based on the 30-day calendar used by the Ancient Scriptures, three and-a-half years is 1,260 days.

In Bible prophecy, a day is a symbolic code for a literal year (Ezekiel 4:6). Thus 1,260 days represents 1,260 literal years. Seven times in the books of Daniel and Revelation the same time period is given, using different phrases, to represent the length of rule for this Antichrist power.

Clue 10 – This power would attempt to change times and the law

In one of the most intriguing clues of all, the "little horn" would "intend to change times and law"(Daniel 7:25). In our search for the identity of



the Antichrist we need to discover which power would attempt to alter times in connection with the law.

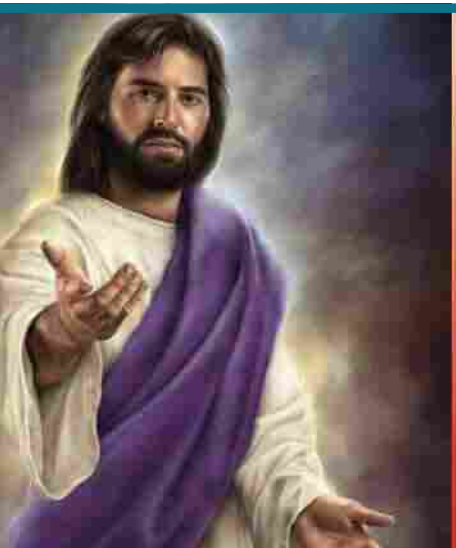
In the next study guide, you will have the opportunity to investigate the facts and clearly identify the Antichrist. You will see the impact this power has had on the world and look at some practical tips on how to respond to upcoming deceptions.

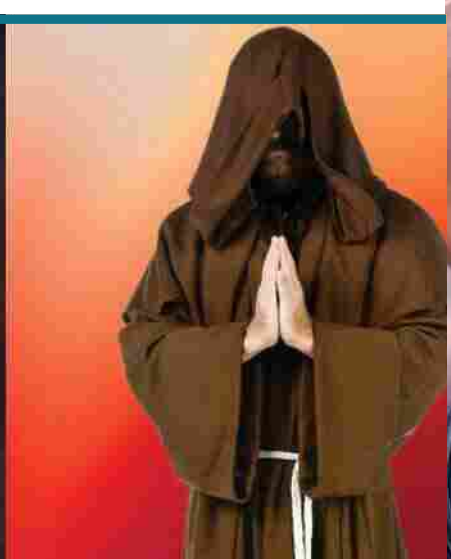
Three Points to Remember:

- An "antichrist" is a person or entity that opposes or attempts to take the place of Jesus Christ
- The Antichrist of prophecy is called the "man of sin"
- Daniel 7 provides at least ten clear clues to identify the Antichrist of prophecy

Story:

Daniel was a pastor who had just been assigned to a new church in Tennessee. Daniel's identical twin brother, Paul, could also preach quite well. Daniel decided to provide a graphic illustration on the subject of "counterfeits"







so he asked his brother to preach the sermon next week. In the sermon Paul stated that many would be deceived by the Antichrist in the last days. Halfway through the presentation Paul asked his congregation if they believed he was their pastor, Daniel. They all put up their hands and started to laugh. To their utter shock Pastor Daniel then emerged from a side entry and stood by his twin brother. Unwittingly, the church was fooled.

What lessons can you learn from this story?

Relational questions:

1. What is the overall attitude that underlies an "antichrist"?
2. In what ways do some Christians demonstrate an antichrist attitude today?
3. What do you think is the attitude of the true Christ and how can you demonstrate that in your life?

Your response:

Are you willing to accept God's truth, even if it means you will need to make changes in your life? _____


my word, then are ye
32 And ye shall know th
e truth shall make yo
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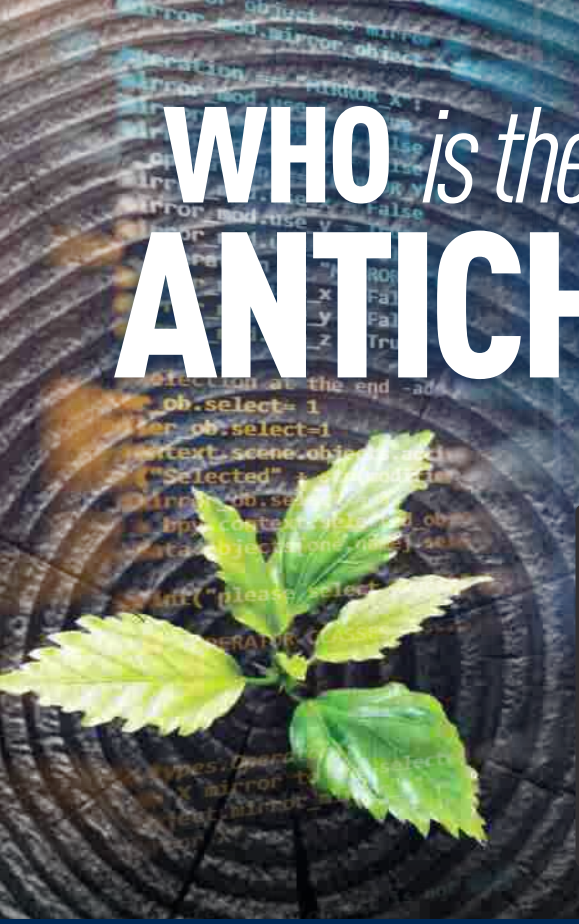
WHO *is the* ANTICHRIST? *PART 2*



Lesson 11 of the Secrets of the Future series uses clues from the Bible to identify the Antichrist predicted in Daniel and Revelation. You won't want to miss this! Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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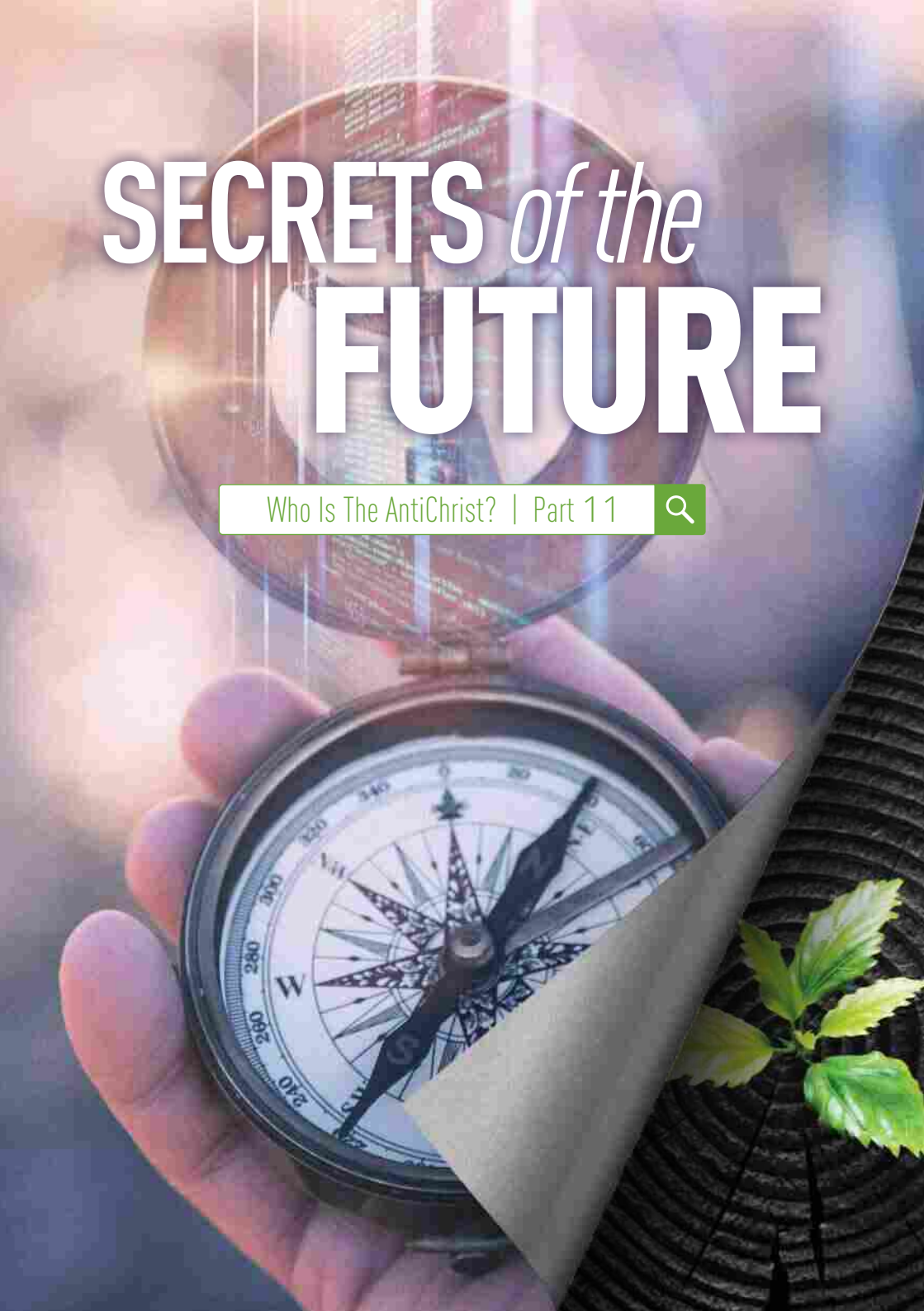


SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Who Is The AntiChrist? | Part 11

WHO IS THE ANTICHRIST?

The Protestant Reformation was one of the greatest events in world history. By the mid 1500s this movement had swept throughout Germany, and was advancing through Switzerland, England, France, Austria and many other parts of Europe.

The Reformation was based on the idea of "Sola Scriptura" – the Bible and the Bible only. Through a study of the Scriptures, the Reformers discovered the refreshing beauty of salvation through faith instead of works.

Prophecy also became a keen focus of study. As the Reformers investigated the books of Daniel and Revelation, the subject of the Antichrist captured their attention. In their view, it was the leadership of their own church that fulfilled all the criteria for being the Antichrist of prophecy. This discovery amazed the Reformers because they loved their church so much.

But the Reformers were certain of their conviction, and they became outspoken in their opposition to the Papacy. Mainstream Christianity had become corrupt. Church life was a form and tradition instead of a heartfelt experience with Jesus.

Displayed in the Luther museum of Wittenberg is a small book entitled ***Passions of Christ and Antichrist***. In this satirical book, the artist Lucas Cranach compares the actions of Jesus Christ with the actions of the Pope of Rome. To illustrate: Cranach sketched on one side of a page Jesus washing the disciples' feet. On the other side of the page was the Pope holding out his toe to be kissed. On another page Cranach sketched Jesus driving out the money changers from the temple. He then compared this to the Pope sitting with his bishops counting his vast piles of wealth, gained at the expense of the poor.

Martin Luther considered this a very good book for the average church member. Art had the ability to effectively communicate to both the scholars and peasants of Europe.

For many years, virtually every Protestant church publicly held the same conviction regarding the Antichrist. This conviction was held at the risk of death.

The Westminster Confession states,

"There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalts himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God" (Chapter 25, art.6).

Is there any validity to the claims of the Reformers? Is it even "Christian" to call other "Christians" an Antichrist? Why does Bible prophecy use such graphic and negative terms and images? What is the relevance of the Antichrist prophecy for today?

In this study guide, in an attitude of humility and prayer, we will test the claims of the Reformers by using the clear identifying marks from the Bible. Also, we will apply the principles of this prophecy, to help us grow in our daily relationship with Jesus.



Q1. HOW CAN WE DISCOVER AND UNDERSTAND BIBLE TRUTH?

Acts 17:11 - *These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word of God with all _____, and searched the Scriptures _____ to find out whether these things were so*

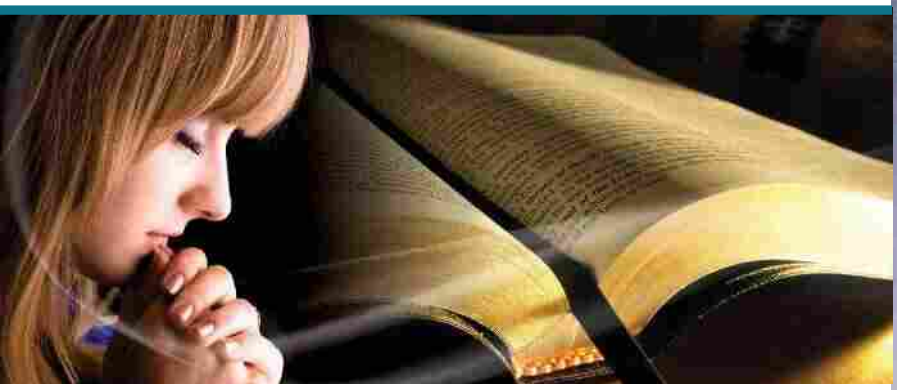
It is vital that any new truth be tested by a study of the Scriptures. Private speculations and interpretations will never unlock the secrets of prophecy. We need to handle the Scriptures carefully and prayerfully, looking at passages in their context and comparing Scripture with Scripture. Only a daily relationship with Jesus and a prayerful study of His Word will enable us to discover the truth.

Q2. WHY DOES BIBLE PROPHECY USE SUCH GRAPHIC AND NEGATIVE TERMS TO DESCRIBE CERTAIN GLOBAL POWERS?

Revelation 3:19 - *As many as I _____, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.*

The Bible reveals the good and bad of political leaders, nations and religions. The uncensored history and future of characters and events provide graphic details of evil and personal sin. We can learn from past mistakes and avoid future dangers. Within the Bible God has been particularly passionate in his warnings of apostasy within His chosen people. God is so strong in His language, because He is so strong in His love.

Throughout this series we see God pointing out faults in the Jewish and Christian faiths alike; whether Protestant or Catholic. God has His people in all religions. His genuine followers (of all faiths) will see the dangers and be obedient to His call for a return to the original faith of the Scriptures.



Identifying the Antichrist

Q3. WHAT ARE THE IDENTIFYING MARKS OF THE ANTICHRIST?

Bible prophecy gives a significant number of clear characteristics to help us identify the Antichrist.

To illustrate. Just imagine you were asked by a friend to pick someone up from the airport. You have never met this person. The first thing you want to know is how to recognise him (or her). After all, there will be hundreds of people coming off the plane.



"Oh that's easy," says your friend. "You see; he will be wearing a pink suit, a bright yellow tie and one high heel shoe. He will have purple hair. He is 80 years of age and only has one leg." Do you think you would miss him? Now that is an extreme example. But in a similar way, God gives a number of very clear identifying marks for the key players in prophecy. This includes the Antichrist.



In our previous study guide (Who is the Antichrist? Part 1) we highlighted the following characteristics from Daniel 7.

Clue 1 – It arises from Western Europe

Clue 2 – It is a "little" kingdom

Clue 3 – It arises after the 10 tribes of Europe were established

Clue 4 – It overcomes three political powers as it rises to prominence

Clue 5 – It is different from the other 10 powers

Clue 6 – It would have a man at its head who speaks for it

Clue 7 – It would speak blasphemies against God

Clue 8 – It would persecute God's people

Clue 9 – It would be in power for 1,260 years

Clue 10 – This power would attempt to change times and the law

Q4. WHO IS THE ANTICHRIST POWER OF DANIEL CHAPTER 7?

When the Protestant Reformers studied the book of Daniel, they pinpointed the Roman Papacy as the "little horn" power. These earnest individuals were not trying to criticise their fellow believers (many of them were still Catholic priests). They were simply studying the messages of love and correction provided by God in the prophecies of the Scriptures.

We will now take a look at the evidence and see if the Roman Papacy matches the clues provided in the prophecy.

Clue 1 - It arises from Western Europe

Antichrist Fact 1 – The Papacy arose from Western Europe

The home or "seat" of the Papacy is Rome, Italy – right in the heart of Western Europe.







Clue 2 – It is a "little" kingdom

Antichrist Fact 2 – The Vatican is a "little" nation

The Vatican is a very small independent kingdom within Europe. The entire kingdom is located on just over 40 hectares (108 acres) of land.

Clue 3 – It arises after the 10 tribes of Europe were established

Antichrist Fact 3 – The Papacy rose to political power in 538AD

The 10 kingdoms were established by 476AD. The Papacy received its major political power once it overthrew the Arian Ostrogoths at Rome in 538AD.

Clue 4 – It overcomes three political powers as it rises to prominence



Antichrist Fact 4 – The Papacy "uprooted" three tribes – the Vandals, Heruli and Ostrogoths

Over time most of the 10 kingdoms of Europe adopted Roman Christianity. However, three of these kingdoms opposed Rome and refused to cooperate. These three powers were defeated by Catholic emperors – the Heruli (493AD), the Vandals (534AD) and the Ostrogoths (538AD). All three kingdoms were "plucked out by the roots" – they have disappeared from Europe.

Clue 5 – It is different from the other 10 powers

Antichrist Fact 5 – The Papacy is a religious power

The Papacy is different from all other powers in terms of being a religious power. A church controlling politics was certainly "different from the first ones" (Daniel 7:24). They were secular governments.

Clue 6 – It would have a man at its head who speaks for it

Antichrist Fact 6 – The Pope is the absolute head of the church



The Papacy has one man at the head. The Papacy is not a democratic government; the Pope is the ultimate authority who speaks for the church.

Clue 7 – It would speak blasphemies against God

Antichrist Fact 7 – The Pope claims to be "God on earth"

According to the Bible, blasphemy is either claiming to forgive sins (Luke 5:21) or claiming to be God (John 10:33). The Papacy claims both. In 1870 the Vatican Council declared that the Pope was infallible whenever speaking from his position of authority. Notice these interesting quotes:

"We (the popes) hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty" (The Great Encyclical Letters of Leo, XIII, p304).

"The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ, Himself, hidden under the veil of flesh" (Catholic National, July 1895).

'Thus the priest may, in a certain manner be called the creator of the Creator, since by saying these words of consecration, he creates as it were, Jesus in the sacrament" (Duties & Dignities of the Priest, St Alphonsus De Ligouri, p27).

Clue 8 – It would persecute God's people

Antichrist Fact 8 – The Papacy has persecuted and killed millions of people

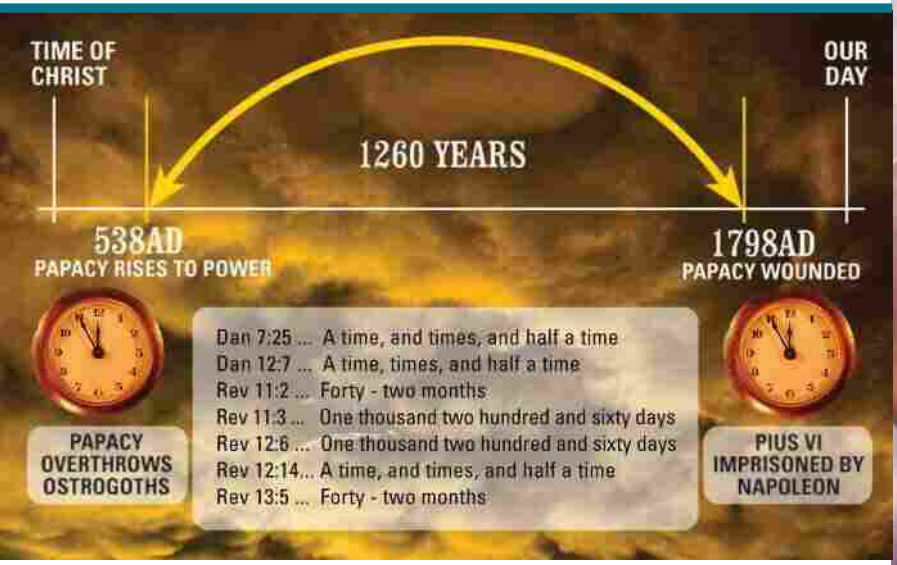
During the Dark Ages, the Church of Rome killed more people than what Hitler did during WWII. Conservative estimates place the killings at 50 million people with some experts placing the figure closer to 150 million

deaths. Millions of people were burnt at the stake for "heresy" when they were simply following the truths of the Scripture instead of the dictates and traditions of the church.

Clue 9 – It would be in power for 1,260 years

Antichrist Fact 9 – The Papacy ruled for 1,260 years

The Papacy gained ultimate power in 538AD when the final opposition, the Ostrogoths were defeated. The church then ruled for 1,260 years until Pope Pius VI was taken captive by Napoleon's general, Berthier. The Pope was stripped of his political powers. Just as the prophecy predicted, the Antichrist received a "deadly wound" in 1798, ending the power of the Papacy.



Clue 10 – This power would attempt to change times and the law



Antichrist Fact 10 – The Papacy attempted to change God's law, the Ten Commandments

In an amazing fulfilment of prophecy the Papacy attempted to change God's law. Firstly, the Catholic catechisms have shortened the Sabbath Commandment from nearly 100 words to just eight. They also removed the Second Commandment completely. This Commandment forbids worship of images and idols. They then split the 10th Commandment into two.

Along with this, the church claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday (the Sabbath is the only Commandment associated with "times"). Any attempt to change the law of God is blasphemy.

The Roman Papacy fits all the clues perfectly. No other power in history or the future could possibly fit all the clues that the prophecy of Daniel 7 has provided.

Q5. WHAT WAS THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO THE REFORMATION?

The Roman Church was deeply concerned about the Reformation. They had the Muslims fighting them from without and the Protestants fighting them from within. Church leaders held a series of meetings in the Northern Italian city of Trent designed to develop initiatives to "counter" the Reformation.



One of the key points of discussion related to the authority of the Bible over church practice and tradition.

The Archbishop of Reggio gave a speech at Trent claiming that Protestants also believe in the authority of the church and tradition. The Archbishop pointed to the fact that the Protestants were keeping Sunday, a day made by church authority and tradition. He claimed Sunday was certainly not a day of worship based on the Bible.

"The Sabbath, the most glorious day in the law, has been changed into the Lord's day. . . . These and other similar matters have not ceased by virtue of Christ's teaching (for He says He has come to fulfil the law, not to destroy it), but they have been changed by the authority of the church."

Gaspare [Ricciulli] de Fosso (Archbishop of Reggio), Address in the 17th Session of the Council of Trent, Jan. 18, 1562

This gave the church great courage and confidence in their basis for faith. They knew the Protestants had a weak link to their theology.

The Council then turned to the issue of the Antichrist. This was their Achilles heel.

The Reformers saw Bible prophecy like a road map of time. Prophecy outlines the future from the time of the vision through to the end of time. The Reformers knew from the book of Daniel that many of the great empires had come and gone. They then pinpointed their time in Bible prophecy, and identified the Pope as the Antichrist.



Q6. SO WHAT DID THE CHURCH DO TO COUNTER THIS APPROACH TO BIBLE PROPHECY?

The Jesuit Order suggested two alternative views on prophecy. A Spaniard by the name of Alcazar claimed all the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation relate to the Jews and pagan Rome. By applying all the prophecies to the past, this approach, called "preterism", resulted in the Middle Ages church escaping all references in prophecy.

The other approach was put forward by another Spaniard, Francisco Ribera. Ribera published a 500-page commentary on Bible prophecy applying the early parts of Revelation to pagan Rome, and all the later parts to a period way off in the future.

This "futurist" approach was supported by another Jesuit by the name of Robert Bellarmine. Bellarmine focused his attack on the Protestant approach to the year day principle of Bible prophecy. He said that the Antichrist was a Jew who would rule for 3 ½ literal years at the end of time. These Jesuits took the 1,260 days of Antichrist rule and made it jump right over the top of the Dark Ages into a last day context. Once again, the Pope and the church were now cleared of any association with the Antichrist or Bible prophecy.

Unfortunately, many Christians today believe in one of these two views.



Q7. WILL THE ANTICHRIST POWER TAKE PART IN THE EVENTS OF THE LAST DAYS?

Revelation 13:3 - *And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was _____. And all the world marveled and followed the beast*

The Papacy received its deadly wound when the Pope was taken captive in 1798. The prophet John then saw a time when this wound would heal. The power of the Antichrist will return. John saw "all the world marveled and followed the beast". The role and influence of the Papacy in last day events will be discussed in the study guide "The Final Superpower".

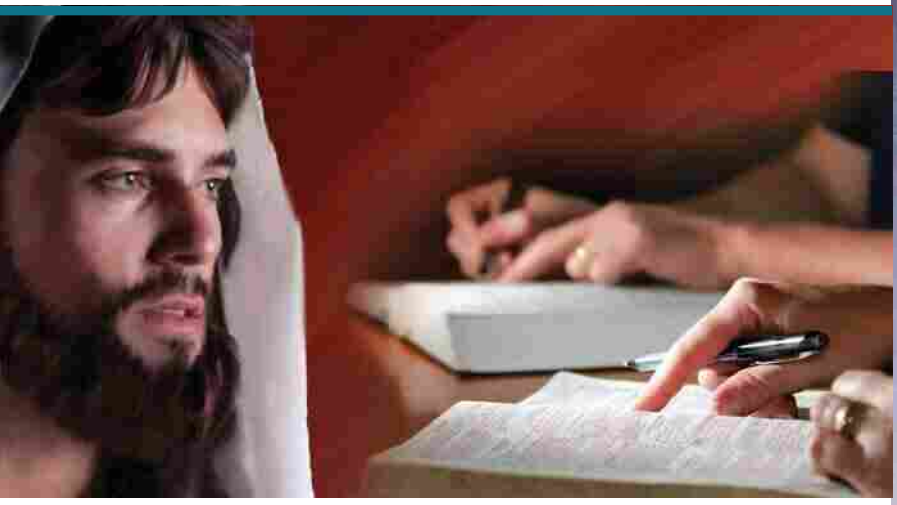
Q8. HOW SHOULD WE APPLY THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION TO OUR LIFE TODAY?

Proverbs 4:18 - *But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines _____ _____ unto the perfect day*

The Christian life is a growth experience. Just as the Reformers grew in their knowledge of truth and love for Jesus, we need to grow every day also. We shouldn't be content with the truth we have. We need to be studying the Scriptures and learning more about Jesus and His love.

As we apply what we learn from the Bible, our own lives experience a personal revival and reformation. We love Jesus more, and demonstrate

His love to others. We learn to hate sin and love doing right. Over time God will put such a love for truth in our hearts and we become willing to die rather than dishonour God.



It is vital when presenting strong truths such as the Antichrist, that we do not display a spirit of Antichrist. We need to be humble, loving and Christ focused. Not dwelling on the faults of others, we need to uplift Christ. It is vital that we know this prophecy because it protects us from areas of deception. But knowing the identity of the Antichrist will not save us. Knowing the person of Christ will.



Three Points to Remember:

- The Protestant believers understood prophecy as a "roadmap of time"
- The evidence of the Roman church in history fulfils the Biblical marks of the Antichrist
- We need to demonstrate the Spirit of Christ when dealing with sensitive prophecies

The Story:

When Martin Luther stood for truth, he did so relying on Jesus. Luther prayed literally for hours each day and studied the Scriptures humbly and earnestly. But Luther faced great opposition.

The Pope's ambassador, Aleander, said of Luther, "In Luther's errors there is enough to warrant the burning of a hundred thousand heretics".

When summonsed to face trial at Worms, Luther's friends warned him not to go.

Luther responded, "I would go to Worms if there were as many devils there as tiles on the roofs; if Huss had been burnt, the truth had not been burnt with him.

I will not fear 10,000 popes; for who is with me is greater than he who is in the world."

When Luther faced the trial he stood before his prosecutors and delivered a powerful two-hour speech. He defended his writings, constantly referring back to the Scriptures. After two hours of preaching, Luther was stopped by the emperor and asked to just give it to them straight.

"Will you retract or not – give me a yes or no!"

Luther then made his famous statement,

"Since your Imperial Majesty requires a plain answer I will give one without horns or hoof! It is this: that I must be convinced either by testimony of

Scripture or by clear arguments. I cannot trust the Pope or councils by themselves, since it is as clear as daylight that they have not only erred but contradicted themselves. I am bound by the Scriptures which I have quoted, my conscience is thirled to the Word of God. I may not and will not recant, because to act against conscience is neither honest or safe. I can do nothing else; here I stand; so help me God! Amen."

What does it take to stand for God like Luther did?

Relational questions:

1. How do you demonstrate to people with a different view to you that you love and accept them?
2. What would you say to someone who says that this is just "an interpretation" of the Antichrist?
3. How would you answer the objection that Bible prophecy has no right to judge an individual or religious entity?

Your response:

Are you willing to follow Jesus wherever He leads, even if you face opposition for your faith? _____



SYMBOL *of the* SUN

Why has an ancient pagan ritual influenced how people worship today? Learn more in Part 12 of the Secrets of Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.



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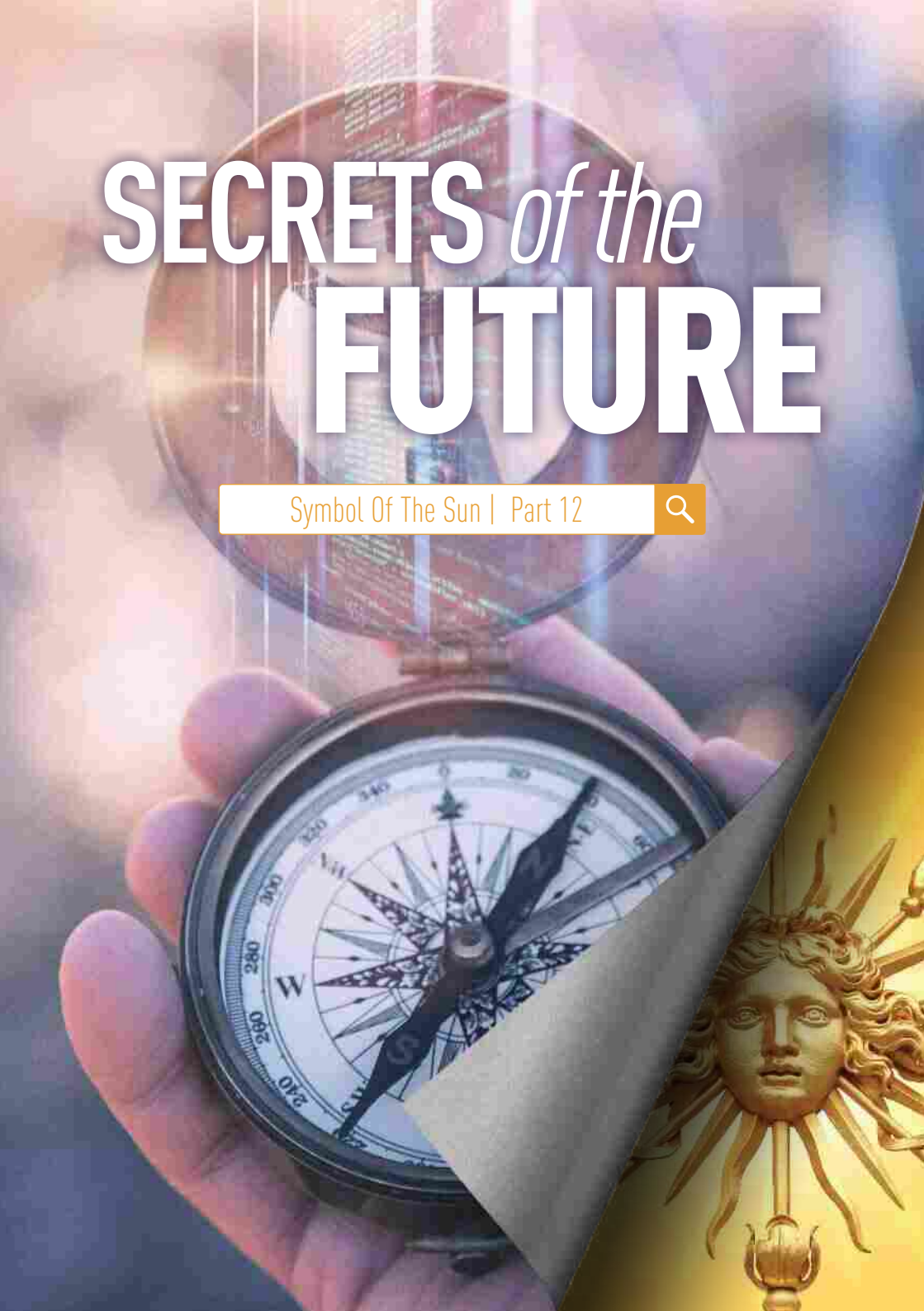
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Symbol Of The Sun | Part 12



SYMBOL OF THE SUN

Throughout history many ancient cultures worshipped the sun. Light and heat were essential elements to cultures dependent on agriculture. As a result, the great force of the sun became the object of their worship. Sun worship began in Babylon with the god Shamash and spread to Egypt (Ra), Assyria (Baal), Persia (Mithra) and Canaan (Moloch). Over time sun worship spread to Greece, the Aztecs, the Incas of Peru, Japan, India and the empire of Rome.



The sun and its life-giving rays became a universal religious symbol. This symbol can be seen in the art and architecture of virtually every ancient civilisation of the world.

By the time of pagan Rome, sun worship was typically conducted on the first day of the week. While the Hebrews simply numbered the days of the week (except for the seventh-day which was called the Sabbath), the pagan religions named the days according to their planetary gods. The first day of the week became "Sun-day" since the sun was the greatest of all stars and planets.

GOD WAS VERY CLEAR IN HIS OPPOSITION TO FALSE WORSHIP:

"Who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded" (Deuteronomy 17:3).

In the early church there was a clear distinction between God's people and the surrounding pagan nations. Those who followed the Creator God worshipped Him on the seventh-day Sabbath, honouring their Creator. The pagans worshipped on the first day of the week, honouring that which was created – the sun.

In the book ***The Da Vinci Code***, Sir Leigh Teabing makes an interesting observation:

"Even Christianity's weekly holy day was stolen from the pagans … Originally … Christianity honoured the Jewish Sabbath of Saturday, but Constantine shifted it to coincide with the pagan's veneration day of the sun…To this day, most churchgoers attend services on Sunday morning with no idea that they are there on account of the pagan sun god's weekly tribute – Sunday" (pp314,315).

Is Leigh Teabing correct in his view of history? Did the Sabbath change from Saturday to Sunday? If so, who made the change and when was it accomplished? Should Christians keep Sunday in honour of the resurrection? Is it possible that Christians today are honouring the sun god instead of the Son of God? In this study guide you will discover the amazing secrets behind one of the greatest deceptions and cover-ups throughout history – the change of the Sabbath.



Q1. ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE WHICH DAY IS THE "LORD'S DAY"?

Exodus 20:10 - *...but the _____ day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God ...*

Mark 2:28 - *Therefore the Son of Man is also _____ of the _____*

According to the last book of the Bible the Lord has a special day (Revelation 1:10). This day has been blessed and made holy. In both the Old and New Testaments the Lord's Day is the Sabbath. Not once does the Bible refer to Sunday as the Lord's Day – it is just another work day within the week.

Q2. DOES THE BIBLE INDICATE THAT SUNDAY IS THE NEW WORSHIP DAY FOR CHRISTIANS?

The underlying principle throughout this "Secrets of Prophecy" study series is a commitment to base every belief on one thing, and one thing alone – the Word of God. In the entire Bible there are just nine references to the first day of the week. You will now be able to examine every passage to see for yourself what the Bible says about Sunday.

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

Genesis 1:5 - *God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the _____ day*

Genesis provides the historical record of God creating the world. God worked on the first six days of the week and then rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2). The days of Creation point out where and how the seventh day was established as the Sabbath.



THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Matthew 28:1 - *Now _____ the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb*

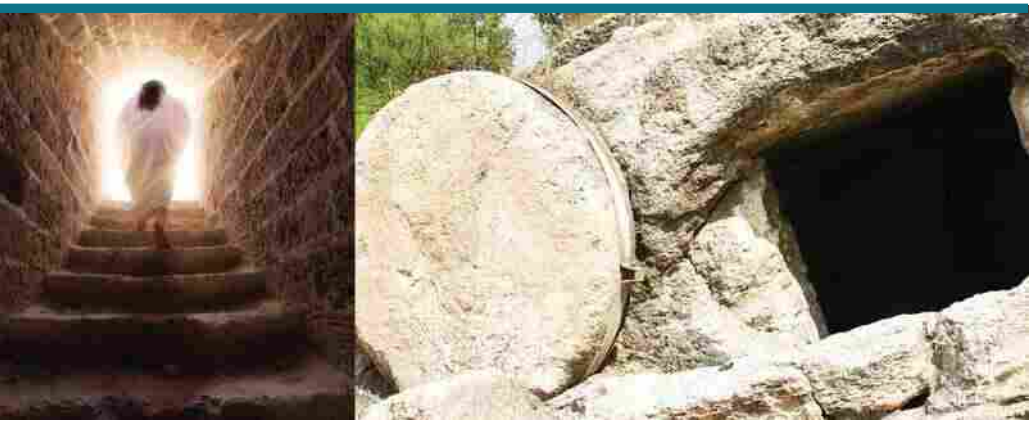
Mark 16:1,2 - *Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and _____ Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had _____*

Mark 16:9 - *Now when He _____ early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons*



Luke 24:1 - *Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the _____ bringing spices which they had prepared*

John 20:1 - *Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the _____ had been taken away from the tomb*



These five references to the first day of the week provide a historical account of the resurrection of Jesus. Not one of them indicates that Sunday was or would become a holy day.

Other points of interest from these texts include:

- The first day of the week is the day after the Sabbath therefore Sunday could not possibly be the Sabbath of the Bible (Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1,2).
- The women came to do some work on Sunday that they were not prepared to do on the Sabbath (Mark 16:1,2, Luke 23:56, 24:1).

- The book of John, which was written over 60 years after the resurrection, does not even hint at a change in the day of worship. The first day is not referred to as "The Lord's Day" or the "New Sabbath". Jesus rested in the tomb on the Sabbath and rose again on the first working day of the week – Sunday.

THE FRIGHTENED DISCIPLES

John 20:19 - *Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for _____ of the _____, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you"*

The group of discouraged disciples huddled together in a room because they were scared of the Jews, not for a worship service! They had witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus and they were fearful of suffering the same fate. The disciples did not even believe Jesus had risen from the dead (Mark 16:14) so they certainly were not holding a worship service in honour of the risen Christ.

THE PREACHING OF PAUL

Acts 20:7,8 - *Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until _____. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together*

Here we find Paul preaching a very long sermon. As a travelling evangelist Paul preached on most days of the week. On this occasion he was preaching at night on the first day of the week. According to the Bible, a day begins



and ends at sunset (Genesis 1:5, Leviticus 23:32) with the dark part of the day coming first. Thus Paul was preaching Saturday night. He continued preaching until midnight. On the next morning (Sunday), Paul walked nearly 30 kilometres from Troas to catch his boat at Assos. He certainly didn't treat the day as a rest day or day of worship.

Some Christians believe that because the church "broke bread" on the first day, Sunday must be a holy day. The reality is that Jesus "broke bread" on Thursday night, just prior to His crucifixion. The early church also "broke bread" on a daily basis as they moved from house to house (Acts 2:46). Once again there is no evidence in this text to say that Sunday had replaced the Sabbath or had become the new day of worship.

PERSONAL DONATIONS TO THE CHURCH

1 Corinthians 16:1,2 - *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something _____, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collection when I come*

This request by Paul to budget and put aside goods (most likely food and clothing for those suffering in Jerusalem) on the Sunday does not refer to an offering in a worship service. This is a collection for the saints not of the saints! This letter was probably read to the church on the Sabbath and the first possible time they could fulfil Paul's request would have been after the



Sabbath, on the next day, Sunday. He was simply asking the church to get everything organised by working on the Sunday so he didn't need to worry about that issue whenever he arrived in Corinth.

In the nine passages of the Bible that refer to Sunday, none of them mention a change of the Sabbath. None of them say Sunday is a holy day or offer the promise of a blessing for keeping it. None of them forbid work on that day and none of them mention that anyone in the Bible was keeping that day in place of the Sabbath.

It is clear that there is no evidence from the Bible that Sunday is anything other than a work day. Any Christian who attempts to keep Sunday holy and disregards the Sabbath does so without any Scriptural authority.

Q3. IN THE SCRIPTURES, WHAT MEMORIAL SYMBOLISES THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS?

Romans 6:3-6 - *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was _____ from the _____ by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (v3,4)*

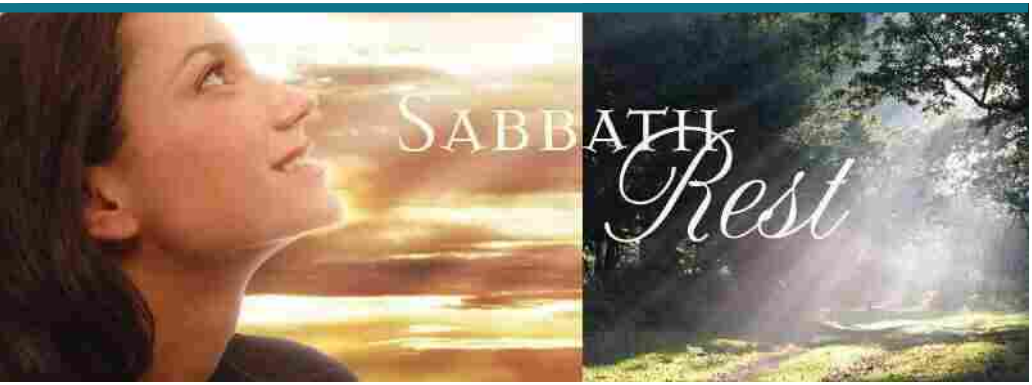


There is a common thought that Sunday worship was instituted to commemorate the resurrection of Christ. From a biblical perspective, baptism is the Christian experience that honours the resurrection. When we are baptised this symbolises a parallel between our new Christian life and the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. There is not one place in the Bible which indicates that any day has become holy as a result of the resurrection of Jesus.

Q4. WAS THE SABBATH ABOLISHED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

Hebrews 4:4-10 - *For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"…There _____ therefore a rest for the people of God (v4,9)*

The Sabbath is the perfect symbol of a trust relationship with Jesus. The Sabbath is a rest from our works. It is worship that honours God and demonstrates our love for Him. The word "rest" in verse 9 is the Greek word "sabbatismos". It literally means "Sabbath rest". The Bible is clear – there remains a Sabbath rest for the New Testament Christian.



Q5. DID THE APOSTLES AND EARLY CHURCH KEEP THE SABBATH?

PAUL AND THE APOSTLES WORSHIP ON THE SABBATH

Acts 17:1-4 - *Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three _____ reasoned with them from the Scriptures (v2)*

Acts 18:4,11 - *And he reasoned in the synagogue _____ Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks (v4)*

Paul and the apostles chose to keep every seventh-day Sabbath as their worship day. This was the day they spent preaching to both Jews and Gentiles. Almost 15 years after the resurrection of Christ, the book of Acts records over 80 Sabbaths observed by the apostles.

Acts 16:13 - *And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where _____ was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there*

The apostles went into nature on the Sabbath, a perfect environment for worship and sharing the gospel. Evidently, this was a location where the women often gathered on the Sabbath to pray and spend quality time with God.



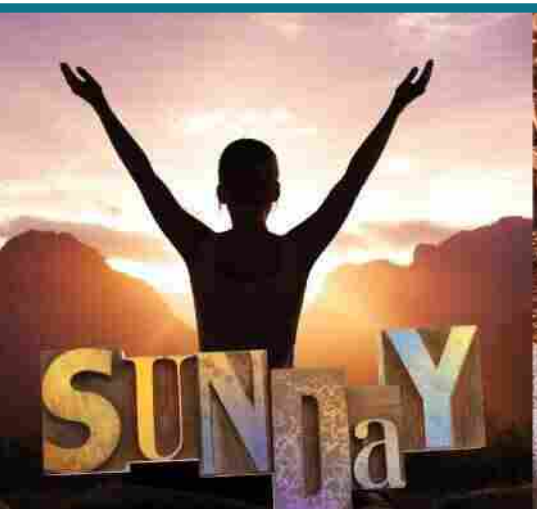
THE GENTILES WORSHIP ON THE SABBATH

Acts 13:42-44 - *So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the _____ begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath…On the next Sabbath almost the _____ city came together to hear the word of God (v42,44)*

The Gentiles knew Paul's commitment to keep the Sabbath and worship on that day. They didn't ask him to come and preach to them on the following day, Sunday. They begged him to come and preach to them on the next Sabbath.

Q6. HOW DID THE CHRISTIAN DAY OF WORSHIP CHANGE FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY?

Throughout the lifetime of the apostles and the New Testament writings there is no evidence of Sunday keeping within the church. The early church faithfully kept the seventh-day Sabbath but Paul had warned there would be a great "falling away" of truth in the church (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The church would allow a number of corruptions into it as it moved further away from the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.





The process towards Sunday took many centuries and began with a yearly celebration of the resurrection day, Sunday. Over time, the church in Rome encouraged this celebration to become weekly rather than just an annual event. By the middle of the second century a number of Christians were keeping two days – the Sabbath was a day of rest and fasting while Sunday became a religious day of festival.

Over time, the religious leaders attempted to distance themselves from the Jews (who were seen as trouble makers and the race who rejected and crucified Christ). So Sunday became more prominent and the Sabbath became less prominent. The first day of the week was also a day of celebration to the secular pagans in Rome – a festival in honour of the great sun-god. Any move towards Sunday would certainly have been a wise political move.

It was the Roman Emperor Constantine, who in 321AD first passed a law to put Sunday above the Bible Sabbath.

"On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed." Codex Justinianus, book 3, title 12,3; trans. in Schaff, ***History of the Christian Church***, Vol.3, 5th edition, p380

This was confirmed in the middle of the fourth century by the church at the council of Laodicea. Here they officially claimed to transfer the blessing and holiness of the Sabbath to Sunday.

"Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honor, and, as being Christians, shall,



if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ." Charles Joseph Hefele, ***A History of the Christian Councils,*** Vol.2,p316

This resulted in unity between the pagans and the Christians in their day of worship. The Christians had compromised by worshipping on the day devoted to the sun-god, instead of the day devoted to the Son of God.

"As a solar festival, Sunday was the sacred day of Mithra; and it is interesting to notice that since Mithra was addressed as Dominus, 'Lord,' Sunday must have been the 'Lord's Day' long before the Christian times." A.Weigall, ***The Paganism in Our Christianity,*** p145

The Catholic Church claims to have changed the Sabbath and perceive their ability to do so as a mark of their authority over the religious world.

The Catholic Catechism of Catholic Doctrine says:

> Question: Which is the Sabbath day?
> Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath day.
> Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?
> Answer: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea, transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.
>
> (Peter Geiermann, ***The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*** (1957 edition), p50)

Notice these statements by Roman Catholic leaders,

"You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify." Cardinal Gibbons, ***The Faith of Our Fathers,*** p89.

"It was the Catholic Church which, by the authority of Jesus Christ, has transferred this rest to Sunday in remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord. Thus the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage

they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the (Roman Catholic) Church." Msgr: Louis Gaston de Segur, *Plain Talk about Protestantism of Today,* p225.



It is clear that the Christian world has accepted the authority of human beings within the church over the Bible Scriptures. Most Christians today are unaware of this great counterfeit and God does not hold them responsible for what they do not know. However, when someone discovers the truth, that person needs to immediately put away the errors and old habits and follow the Lord in love and obedience.

Q7. IF SUNDAY IS NOT PART OF THE SCRIPTURES, WHAT DOES IT SYMBOLISE?

Mark 7:7,9 - *And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of _____...He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your_____"*



Sunday observance is not just a symbol of pagan worship. It is also a symbol of tradition. Tradition should never be placed above the Bible or God's Commandments. Sunday is purely a tradition and a commandment of man – it has no authority or role in Christian worship.



Q8. WHAT DOES GOD THINK ABOUT RELIGIOUS LEADERS WHO IGNORE THE SABBATH?

Ezekiel 22:26,31 - *Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy … and they have _____ their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them … Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them …"*

One of the major reasons why Sunday keeping has become a tradition is because some of the ministers and religious leaders have closed their eyes to the plain teachings of the Bible. To discard Sunday and keep the Sabbath is a life-changing step, especially for a religious leader. God will, however, hold these leaders responsible for disregarding His Sabbath.

Q9. WHAT IS THE PRIMARY REASON FOR KEEPING THE SABBATH OF THE BIBLE?

John 14:15 - *If you _____ Me, keep My Commandments*

Any obedience that is not motivated by love for Jesus is a worthless form of worship. Jesus wants you to love Him with all of your heart and obey Him in acts of worship that bring honour to Him. Jesus showed His love for you by dying on Calvary. You can demonstrate your love to Him through worship, loyalty and obedience. Are you willing to keep God's Commandments? Why not choose today to have a personal love relationship with Jesus and spend time getting to know Him better through keeping God's true Sabbath.



Three Points to Remember:

- There is not one text in the Bible which supports Sunday as a holy day
- The Roman Catholic church claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday
- Sunday worship symbolises obedience to man over God

The Story:

Sisi met Carlos while handing out Christian magazines near a train station in Brisbane, Australia. As they began to chat, the subject of the Sabbath arose. Carlos went to church each Sunday, so the thought of keeping Saturday instead of Sunday was most intriguing.

Sisi opened her Bible and outlined the Sabbath very clearly. She showed Carlos how God was the first Sabbath keeper at Creation. She showed him how the prophets had instructed God's people throughout the centuries to keep the Sabbath. She reviewed the beautiful example of Jesus and the early church keeping the Sabbath. And finally she pointed out to Carlos that the Sabbath will be kept in the new earth. As Carlos went through each text of Scripture, Sisi noticed tears coming down his face. She sensed that the Holy Spirit was convincing him to step out and lovingly obey Jesus so she asked him a question. "Carlos, why don't you join me in keeping the same seventh-day Saturday Sabbath that Jesus kept?"

To her great surprise he looked at her with tears in his eyes and paused. He then said, "I can see the Bible is clear regarding the Sabbath but I can feel the Holy Spirit telling me inside to keep Sunday." Tragically, Carlos had made his choice. He walked away and hasn't been seen since.

What do you think happened in this story? What would you have said to Carlos?

Relational questions:

1. Why do you think so many Christians are unaware of the facts presented in this lesson?
2. Do you think it is a difficult thing to change your day of worship? Why or why not?
3. How can you present this truth to others without sounding like you are judging them?

Your response:

Can you see that keeping Sunday is a commandment of man and not from God? _____

Is it your plan to honour God through keeping the true seventh-day Sabbath of the Bible? _____





What is the key issue that will one day divide the world? All will be revealed in Part 13 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

The FINAL SUPERPOWER

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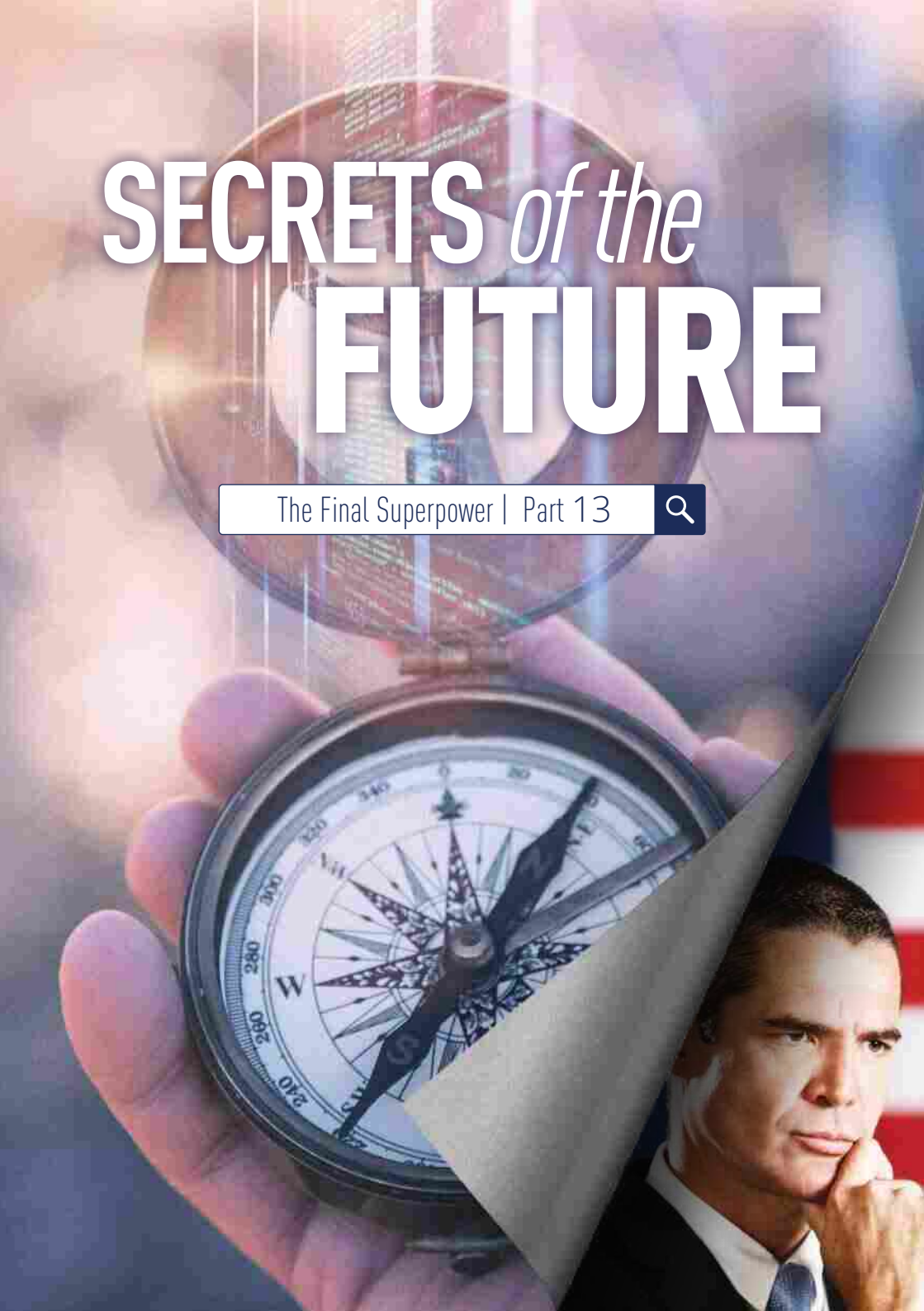
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

The Final Superpower | Part 13



THE FINAL SUPERPOWER

Following World War II the balance of global power was in the hands of two superpowers – the United States and the USSR. World peace was maintained through a method of deterrence and the fear of global annihilation. There was a race to see who could develop the latest military technology and accumulate the most bombs.

By the time Ronald Reagan became President, the Cold War had reached such a state, that he feared the imminent biblical prophecies of Armageddon. He thought the world might soon end unless he acted swiftly to remove the threat of communist Russia.

President Reagan turned to Pope John Paul II and the Catholic Church to help him accomplish this task in the most amazing manner.

The February 24, 1992 edition of ***Time*** magazine led with an article entitled "Holy Alliance". This article documented a secret meeting between the Pope and Reagan in the Vatican library that combined two of the most powerful forces in the world into a strategic alliance.



"In that meeting, Reagan and the Pope agreed to undertake a clandestine campaign to hasten the dissolution of the communist empire ...This was one of the great secret alliances of all time."

The article goes on to say how the two powers would influence Russia – militarily, economically and spiritually throughout the Eastern block countries. The result? The demise of communism and the collapse of the USSR.

Since that time the United States, has become the dominant global influence in all key areas of civilisation – politics, economics, culture, military, technology and science.



The United States is the largest global economy and dominates the money markets of the world. From a political perspective, the United States has taken on the role of global policeman. The nation spends more on warfare than any other country and basically determines the military action of the world.

Does Bible prophecy predict the rise and rule of the United States? If so, does God see the United

States as a power for good or evil? What role will global governments have in influencing world religion and will there be a return to religious persecution?

This study guide will reveal a prophecy that clearly identifies the final superpower. Please read Revelation 13 (18 verses) and consider the two "beasts". Notice how they rule at different times in history, but then form a global alliance at the end of time.

The First Beast (Revelation 13:1-10)

Q1. THERE ARE TWO SUPERPOWERS REPRESENTED IN REVELATION 13. WHAT IS THE FIRST POWER?

Revelation 13:1-10 - *Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a_____ rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name (v1)*

There are eight specific clues to help us identify this political power. An initial investigation uncovers the interesting comparison between this beast and the Antichrist power of Daniel 7. Notice four of the features that are identical to both powers:

Clue 1 – It would rise from the "sea" – a highly populated area (Daniel 7:3, Revelation 13:1)

Clue 2 – It would speak blasphemies against God (Daniel 7:25, Revelation 13:1,5)

Clue 3 – It would persecute God's people (Daniel 7:25, Revelation 13:7)

Clue 4 – It would rule for 1,260 years (Daniel 7:25, Revelation 13:5)

Many political powers have come up from populated areas, blasphemed against God and killed God's people. But only one power has ruled for 1,260 years. That power is the Roman Papacy (for details of the 1,260 year prophecy you can review the study guide entitled "Who is the Antichrist?").

Throughout history many famous Bible scholars and teachers identified the Papacy as this first beast of Revelation 13, including: John Huss (1412), William Tyndale (1550), Sir Isaac Newton (1727) and John Wesley (1764).





Q2. WHAT OTHER FEATURES OF THE FIRST BEAST CAN BE IDENTIFIED?

God provides four more clues within this prophecy, to ensure there is no doubt regarding the identity of the beast.

Clue 5 – Receives its power and authority from the dragon

Revelation 13:2 - ... The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great _____

The dragon is a symbol of the devil (Revelation 12:9), and the devil often works through pagan nations. In Revelation 12:3-5 we find the dragon working through pagan Rome. This fits in perfectly with the prophecy of Revelation 13 because it was pagan Rome that handed over its power, throne and authority to the Roman church.

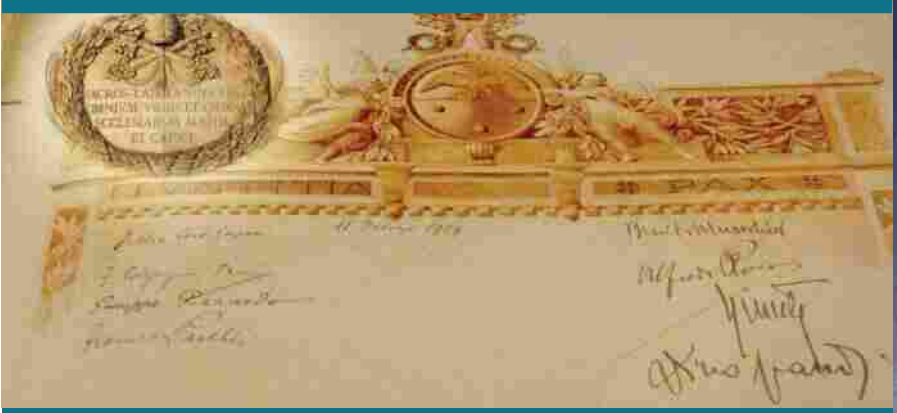
Clue 6 – It would be a global power

Revelation 13:3 *- ... And all the _____ marveled and followed the beast*

The word "Catholic" means universal. There is no greater example of a universal power than the Catholic Church. This church is present in virtually every nation of the world.

Clue 7 – It loses its power then regains it

Revelation 13:3 *- And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was _____*



The Lateran Concordat of 1929 -
Signatures of Benito Mussolini & Cardinal Gasparri

The papacy received a deadly wound in 1798 when the Pope was taken captive and stripped of his political powers. In the year 1929 Mussolini and the Catholic leadership reached an agreement that reinstated the political status of the Vatican. Since that time, the strength and influence of the church has grown tremendously. World leaders and people from all aspects of spirituality now see the Pope as the spiritual leader of the world.

Clue 8 – It is a religious power that receives worship

Revelation 13:8 - *All who dwell on the earth will _____ him …*

This beast is not a secular or democratic government. Politicians aren't worshipped! This beast is a religious power that receives worship from people all over the world.

There is only one political power that fits all the clues – the Roman Papacy. This superpower ruled the world for over a thousand years and has played a vital role in shaping the history of the world.



The Second Beast – The final superpower (Revelation 13:11-18)

The second beast is the final global ruler in earth's history. This is the nation that will enforce the dreaded mark of the beast and play a key role in the last dramatic events on the planet.

Q3. WHAT IS THE INITIAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SECOND BEAST POWER?

Revelation 13:11 - *Then I saw another beast coming up out of the _____, and he had two horns like a _____ and spoke like a _____*



Three major clues within this prophecy enable us to identify this nation. Many Bible scholars today believe this power is the United States. Let's examine the evidence.

Clue 1 – It would arise after the first beast

John, the writer of Revelation, described the first beast going "into captivity" (Revelation 13:10). This occurred in 1798 when the Pope was taken captive and the papacy was stripped of its power. "Then I saw another beast coming up" (v11). The new power would begin to emerge around the same time as the previous power would experience its downfall.

The United States declared its independence in 1776. It voted its Constitution in 1787 and adopted its Bill of Rights in 1791. By 1798 the United States was recognised internationally as a nation and was emerging as a world power.

Clue 2 – It comes from an unpopulated area

In stark contrast to most other political powers in Daniel and Revelation, the second beast comes up out of the earth instead of the sea. We know that the "sea" represents a vastly populated area (Revelation 17:15). So it would be logical for the "earth" to be the very opposite – a land of very few people.

The United States did not rise from the multitudes of Europe or Asia. It was born out of a sparsely populated continent – the New World.

Clue 3 – It is like a lamb and like a dragon

This nation has "two horns like a lamb". A horn is a symbol of power, kings or government (Daniel 7:24). The United States government was established on two key principles: civil liberty and religious liberty. Those who first arrived on the continent were looking for a country



without a king, and a church without a pope – democracy and religious freedom.

This nation would be like a lamb. It would be young, innocent, peace-loving and Christian. Jesus is described as the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29). In the book of Revelation, the symbol of the lamb is used 28 times to represent Jesus. This is exactly how the United States started out. It was a new, peace-loving Christian nation that supported religious and civil liberties.

The prophecy also predicts this power would speak "like a dragon". It would talk tough. The dragon is a symbol of Satan (Revelation 12:7). What a tragedy that this Christian nation will ultimately take on a global role where power and control will become more important than peace and liberty.

Only one global power fits the clues – the United States. The United States was rising to power in 1798 (as the Vatican was receiving its deadly wound) from an unpopulated area of the planet. It began as a freedom loving Christian nation, but is already talking like a dragon.

Q4. IF IT IS TRUE THAT THE UNITED STATES IS THE FINAL SUPERPOWER, WHAT SHOULD OUR ATTITUDE BE TOWARDS THIS NATION AND THEIR PEOPLE?

The United States is a nation that has been blessed by God. It has prospered in so many ways and became a pioneer in providing freedom and genuine care for people around the world. How shocking to think that God predicted that many of the lamb-like values of this great nation would be lost.

Despite the future outlook, this is no time for "anti-American" attitudes. There is never an excuse for hatred or terrorism. Broadly speaking, the American people are kind, honest and compassionate. God's purpose in sharing with us glimpses of the future is preparation not retaliation. God wants us to have a living relationship with Him: a friendship that enables us to withstand any physical, spiritual or emotional challenges.

Q5. WHAT WILL THE UNITED STATES ACHIEVE AND IMPLEMENT AS IT GAINS GREATER POWER?

Revelation 13:12 - *And he exercises all the _____ of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to _____ the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed*

GLOBAL DOMINANCE

The United States will exercise "all the authority of the first beast". This means it will become a global superpower. This nation even has the ability to enforce religion and determine who can buy or sell (v12,17).





At the turn of the 21st century, the ***New York Times*** stated,

"The fact is, no country has been as dominant culturally, economically, technologically and militarily in the history of the world since the Roman empire" (Charles Krauthammer commenting on the superpower status of the United States).

It is amazing how such a young nation has achieved global dominance in such a short amount of time.

A MIXTURE OF POLITICS AND RELIGION

The Bible predicts the United States will form an alliance with the Papacy. It will mix church with state as it "causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast". The first beast, the Papacy, was a mixture of church and state. The United States will encourage its people to make an "image to the beast" (v14). Here we find a return to a church/state government – a mirror image of the Papacy during the Middle Ages.

The first President of the United States made this comment, "Every man, conducting himself as a good citizen, and being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshiping the Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience" (George Washington Letter, United Baptist Chamber of Virginia, May 1789).

The "war on terror" has changed the world. Government laws are now impacting on religious practices and teaching. The boundaries between church and state have become blurred. World governments are looking to the religions of the world to join them in stamping out fundamentalism. The Bible predicts that the last world government will be a combined force of church and state.



Q6. WHAT IS THE FINAL KEY ISSUE THAT DIVIDES THE WORLD?

Revelation 13:12 - *... and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to _____ the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed*

The final global issue will revolve around worship. The world will be divided. Many people will obey the state religion, worshipping the beast and receiving its mark (v16). Those who remain true to God will worship the Creator (Revelation 14:7) and obey all of God's Commandments (Revelation 14:12).

It is interesting to note that the Commandment that revolves around worship and obedience to the Creator God is the Sabbath. If a law was enforced today to "return to God's law" and worship on Sunday – the day chosen by the mainstream church – who would you worship and obey?



Q7. HOW DOES THE DEVIL DECEIVE PEOPLE INTO BELIEVING A FALSE RELIGION?

Revelation 13:13,14 - *He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those _____ which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast ...*

A counterfeit religious revival will sweep the world. Religious healings and miracles will be so persuasive that they will unite the nations of the world (Revelation 16:14). To many people, these miraculous signs will be evidence that the false teachings and religion of the world is the true religion of the Bible.



Q8. IN WHAT WAYS WILL THE UNITED STATES ULTIMATELY ENFORCE ITS CONTROL?

As the United States gains greater power, it exercises greater control. The great tragedy is, that it will be God's true people who are opposed the most vehemently. Notice the future prophetic scenario:

POWER OVER THE WORLD ECONOMY

Revelation 13:17 - *...and that no one may _____ or _____...*

The United States is the home of international finance and business. This one nation contributes over 30% towards the total world economy and has a dominating influence over the policy and actions of world trade.

The amazing advances in technology have enabled the world governments to move towards personal identity cards and a cashless economy. The "Big Brother" has arrived. Everything is set up for the final scenario where the government will determine who will "buy and sell".

ENFORCE TORTURE AND DEATH

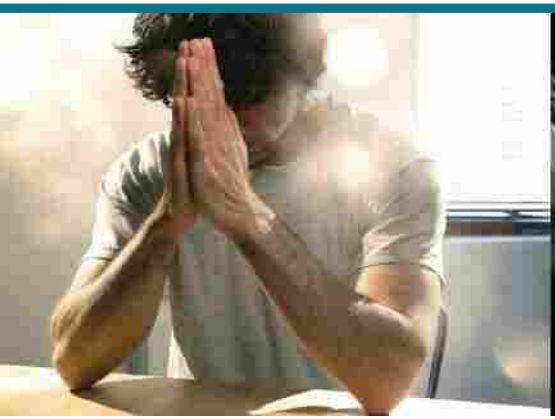
Revelation 13:15 - *... and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be _____*

The United States has traditionally been known for its fairness and love of freedom. In recent years, there have been shocking revelations of torture and death



by the United States military and government. Amnesty International has documented horrific methods of torture at places such as Abu Ghraib prison, Guantanamo Bay and Afghanistan. The United States government has accepted that there are secret CIA prisons around the world, with many prisoners held without charge or trial. "Persuasive techniques" such as waterboarding (making people feel like they are drowning) have been used to get "criminals" to talk.

In the last days those who do not worship and obey the church/state government will be killed for their true faith and love for Jesus.





IMPOSE THE MARK OF THE BEAST

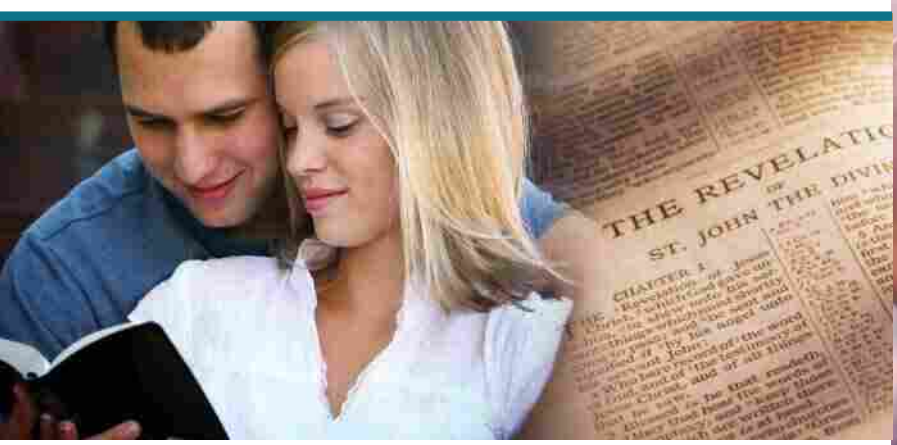
Revelation 13:16 - *He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a _____ on their right hand or on their foreheads*

Revelation 13 concludes with both superpowers (the United States and the Papacy) reaching a climax of power simultaneously. This will result in the implementation of the mark of the beast. The Bible says that if you receive the mark of the beast you will be safe from the government; but unsafe with God. If you refuse the mark of the beast you will be safe with God but unsafe with the government. In such a difficult time as this it is important to "obey God, rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Q9. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAKE SURE YOU AVOID JOINING THOSE WHO DISOBEY GOD?

John 15:5 - *I am the vine, you are the branches. He who _____ in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing*

The only way to stay true to God is to abide in Jesus. This means having a living relationship with Him. This involves praying from your heart and daily Bible study to discover more about God and His will for your life. Abiding in Jesus results in us keeping the Commandments (John 15:10).





Q10. WHAT PROMISE IS MADE TO THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

Matthew 5:10 - *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the _____ of _____*

To those who suffer for Him, Jesus promises an eternal life of happiness. Jesus will strengthen you through the challenges of this life. He will then reward you with a life free from sin, suffering and persecution when He returns.

Three Points to Remember:

- The first beast of Revelation 13 is the same power as the Antichrist "little horn" of Daniel 7 – the Roman Papacy
- The second beast of Revelation 13 is the final superpower in history – the United States
- The key issue that will divide the world will be worship linked to obedience

The Story:

For 22 years Noble Alexander was held in prison on trumped up charges against the Cuban government. The prison guards tortured him, starved him and locked him away for extended periods in solitary confinement. They demanded he abandon Jesus Christ. After he refused to work on the Sabbath, the officials plunged Noble Alexander into a pool of raw sewage. Week after week Noble sang hymns while chin deep in the slime.

When Jesse Jackson arranged for his release in the mid 1980s, Noble Alexander became a free man. He spent the rest of his life telling people about the wonderful love of Jesus.

What lessons can we learn from this story?

Relational questions:

1. Does the future worry you? Do you think worry is a lack of faith?
2. What would you do if your government asked you to do something that went against God's principles?
3. Can you prepare for future persecution? How?
4. What will you do this week to ensure you are "abiding" in Jesus?

Your response:

Are you willing to worship and obey the Creator God in every part of your life even if it means that you may suffer as a result of your faith? _____





The MARK of the BEAST

666

What does the number 666 represent? What is the mark of the beast? And what is the mark of God? Discover the answer to these questions and more in Part 14 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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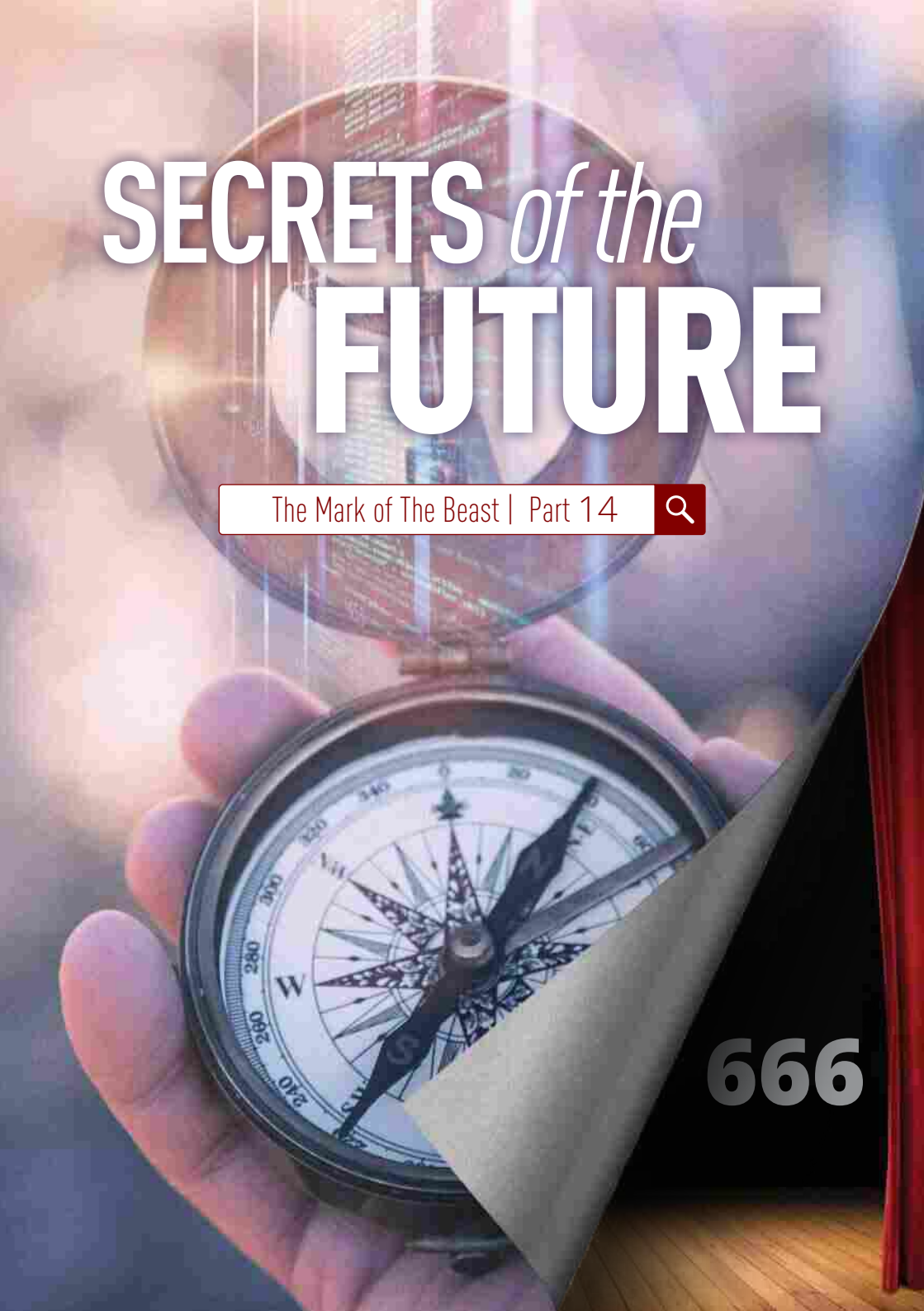

SECRETS of the
FUTURE
The Mark of The Beast | Part 14
666

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

The mark of the beast is one of the most intriguing and important subjects in the Scriptures. This prophecy involves a beast, an image to the beast, the mysterious number 666 and the deadly mark of the beast.

The Bible uses quite frightening and shocking language to describe the consequences of worshipping the beast, or receiving his mark. Any person who gets involved with this mark will be lost for eternity.

Tragically, the overwhelming majority of people will receive the mark of the beast. This is a subject that cannot be overlooked. If we cannot identify the beast or his mark, we could end up with the mark and not even be aware that we have it.

What is the mark of the beast? Notice some interesting opinions that can be found on various websites:

- An invisible laser tattoo seen through an electronic eye
- A microchip under the skin or in the bone of the head or hand
- A new currency taking over from the European Dollar
- The Universal Products Code (barcode) tattooed on the forehead
- A communist "red star" tattooed on the forehead
- The tattooed name of Antichrist written in Hebrew, since the Antichrist must be Jewish
- Your credit card number tattooed onto your forehead
- A number branded or burnt onto you, like branding a cow

With so many interpretations to choose from how can we know the truth? What is the number 666 and how can we avoid any connection with it? Does anyone have the mark of the beast today? If so, are they doomed? Does God have His own mark and if so, who receives it?

This study guide identifies the mark of the beast and reveals how we can be absolutely certain to avoid it.

Q1 WHAT DID THE PROPHET DANIEL SEE HAPPENING ON PLANET EARTH AT THE END OF TIME?

Daniel 12:1 - *... And there shall be a _____ of _____, such as never was since there was a nation*

Prior to the Second Coming of Jesus, the earth will be a scene of catastrophe and conflict. The world governments will enforce the mark of the beast and issue a death decree against God's genuine followers (Revelation 13:15-17). As God sees the attack against His church, He pours out seven deadly plagues resulting in the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16).





Q2 WHO ARE THE SURVIVORS OF THIS TIME OF TROUBLE AND WHAT IS THEIR REWARD?

Revelation 15:2 - *And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the _____ over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God*

Revelation 7:2,3 - *Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the _____ of the living God ..."Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads"*

The survivors of the final conflict will be those who avoid the mark of the beast and receive the seal of God. The reward is entry to God's kingdom and the issue is worship and obedience.

Every person on planet earth will soon receive a mark. Those who worship and obey the beast will receive the mark of the beast. Those who worship and obey the Creator God will receive the mark (or seal) of God. (Note: the words seal, sign and mark can be used interchangeably – see Genesis 17:11, Romans 4:11, Revelation 7:3, Ezekiel 9:4).

Both marks are placed at the same time and both marks are symbolic. They represent authority and allegiance, approval and ownership.

The good news is, that if you receive the mark of God, you automatically avoid receiving the mark of the beast! Because the marks are opposites, by defining the mark of God, we simply need to look for the opposite of that mark to identify the mark of the beast.

Q3 WHERE IS THE MARK OF GOD PLACED?

Revelation 7:3 - *... till we have sealed the servants of our God on their _____*

The mark of God is placed on the forehead (other translations say "in" the forehead). The forehead is where the frontal lobe of the brain is – the area of the mind where decisions are made. Anyone who receives the mark of God has made an immovable decision for God.

Q4 WHAT DOES GOD WRITE ON THE FOREHEADS OF THOSE WHO RECEIVE HIS MARK?

Revelation 22:4 - *They shall see His face, and His _____ shall be on their foreheads*

Revelation 14:1 - *... having His Father's _____ written on their foreheads*



Ancient seals were used, often by kings, to signify authority and approval. Even today, a personal signature of your name gives authority to a cheque or legal document. Here we find God writing His name on the saved as His personal authority and guarantee of protection and everlasting life. This is not a literal mark for everyone to see. It is a mark known only to God and the angels.

The name of God represents His character. When God told Moses what the name of the LORD symbolised, He shared some of the most beautiful aspects of His loving character; "merciful, gracious, longsuffering and abounding in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:5,6). Those who receive the seal of God will have the gracious character of Jesus deeply planted in their minds.



Q5 WHAT KEY ASPECTS OF WORSHIP ARE INVOLVED IN THE MARK OF GOD?

Deuteronomy 11:1,18 - *"Therefore you shall _____ the LORD your God, and _____ His charge, His statutes, His judgments and His commandments always …Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes"*

A relationship where you love God and keep His Commandments is the greatest sign of worship and allegiance. These are the words (or concepts) that God wants His people to live out in their actions and always keep in the front of their minds. God has promised, "I will put my laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people" (Hebrews 8:10). This is the experience of all those who receive the mark of God. They will accept the promise and power of God and have God's Commandments written in their hearts and minds.

Q6 WHO DOES GOD ASK US TO WORSHIP INSTEAD OF THE BEAST?

Revelation 14: 6-12 - *... and worship Him who _____ heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water (v7)*

In Revelation 14:6-12, there are three key messages that go to the world just before Jesus returns. The first message calls for true worship. The final message warns against false worship. This is the definitive choice; either worship the Creator (and receive the mark of God), or worship the beast (and receive the mark of the beast).

The call to worship the Creator is quoted from which Commandment? The Sabbath! (See Exodus 20:11). An integral aspect of true worship is to keep the Sabbath, in honour of God's creative power.





Q7 WHICH ASPECT OF GOD'S LAW IS A SPECIAL SIGN OF GOD'S AUTHORITY?

Ezekiel 20:12,20 - *hallow My _____, and they will be a _____ between Me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD your God (v20)*

The Sabbath is a sign or seal that signifies the authority of God. Those who keep it can "know" that God is in charge of their life. The Sabbath represents God's power to create the world and empower your life. Anyone who keeps the Sabbath is demonstrating allegiance to the Creator God and accepting His complete authority.

Q8 WHY IS THE SABBATH CALLED THE SEAL OF GOD?

Exodus 20:11 - *For in six days the _____ _____ the heavens and the earth, the sea, and _____ that is in them, and rested the seventh day*

The seal of God represents His authority as our Creator and Redeemer and is found in the heart of His law (Isaiah 8:16). An official government seal consists of three elements; a name, a title and a territory. An example would be James II, King of England.



KING'S SEAL

The inscription around the edge is an abbreviation for;

Iacobus Secundus
Dei Gratia Magnae Britanniae,
Franciae et Hiberniae Rex, Fidei Defensor
James the II (NAME) of England,

by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, (TERRITORY) King, (TITLE)
Defender of the Faith (1686 to 1689)

A. Name - James II **B**. Title - King **C**. Territory – British Empire

The reason why the Sabbath is called the seal of God is because this Commandment has all three elements of God's seal within it (see Exodus 20:11).



GOD'S SEAL

The inscription around the edge is taken from the Sabbath Commandment

(NAME) The Lord (for in six days "the Lord"...)

(TITLE) The Creator (the Lord "made"...)

(TERRITORY) The Universe (the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and "all" that is in them)

The Sabbath: The Seal of God's Law

A. Name - The Lord **B**. Title - The Creator **C**. Territory - The Universe

Q9 WHO DID THE PROPHET EZEKIEL SEE RECEIVING THE MARK OF GOD?

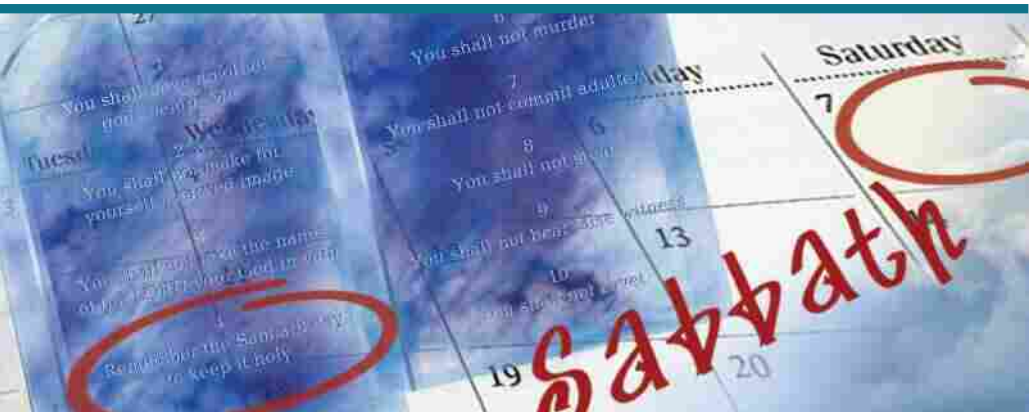
Ezekiel 9:4 - *And the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a _____ on the foreheads of the men who _____ and _____ over all the abominations that are done within it"*

The people of Israel had slumped into deep apostasy and false worship. They were even involved in sun worship (Ezekiel 8:16). God decided to destroy those involved in false worship. But He protected His genuine followers. The people who received the mark of God were those who loved Him, obeyed Him and were deeply upset about the false sun worship within the church.

In the last days God's genuine followers will refuse to participate in false worship. This group receives the mark of God for protection from the judgement of the plagues.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The seal of God is a symbolic mark that signifies God's genuine followers. This mark will be placed on those who love Jesus supremely and keep all of God's Commandments, including the Sabbath. They refuse to accept or participate in false worship. They would rather die than dishonour God.



Q10 WHO IS THE BEAST THAT HAS HIS OWN MARK OF AUTHORITY?

Revelation 13:12 - *And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the _____ beast, whose deadly wound was healed*

The most important factor in determining the mark of the beast is to firstly identify the beast. Once that is clear, then the mark of that specific beast can be determined.

Although it is the second beast of Revelation 13 that enforces the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16), it is doing so on behalf of the first beast (v12-15). It is the first beast, the Papacy, which receives global worship and has its own special mark of authority. This is a mark of allegiance and loyalty that will be enforced on all people (see study guide "The Final Superpower" for the identity of each beast).

Q11 WHAT IS THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST?

Revelation 13:18 - *Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is _____*



The number of the beast is 666. The number six played a key role in the life and religion of the ancient pagan cultures. The Babylonians divided many of their weights, times and measures by six. It was the Babylonians who recognised 360 degrees (60x6) in a circle, 60 minutes in the hour and 60 seconds in the minute. The number six also held mysterious significance among the sun worshipping priests in their religion. Ancient religious sun seals called "Sigilla Solis" have been discovered. They show a table of 36 numbers all adding up to the number 666.

The symbol of "Babylon" in the book of Revelation represents a corrupt Christian church (See Revelation 17:1-6). The Bible highlights the number 666 as another symbol to demonstrate the link between the false religion and worship of the ancients with the false religion and worship of the last days.

The number 666 is not the mark of the beast! It is the number of a "man" and can be "counted" (Revelation 13:17,18) to help identify who the beast is. Some Bible scholars have calculated a universal title of the Pope, "Vicarius Filii Dei" (meaning Vicar of the Son of God) through Roman numerals and found that the number totals to 666.



Q12 WHERE IS THE MARK OF THE BEAST PLACED?

Revelation 13:16 - *He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right _____ or on their _____*

The symbol of the hand represents work or action (Ecclesiastes 9:10). The forehead represents the mind, where decisions are made. Here we find people who will demonstrate allegiance to the beast either in thought or action.

The mark of the beast is a symbol of allegiance to the false religion of the last days.

Q13 WHAT DOES THE BEAST CLAIM AS A SPECIAL MARK OF AUTHORITY?

According to the Papacy, the greatest mark of her authority has been the change of the Sabbath day. Just as the Sabbath is a sign that represents the authority of God, Sunday is a sign that represents the authority of the church.

There are many statements by the church to demonstrate this issue. Notice these comments,



"The church has always had a strong sense of its own authority. ...perhaps the boldest thing, the most revolutionary change the church ever did ... the holy day, the Sabbath, was changed from Saturday to Sunday, 'The Day of the Lord' (dies Domini) was chosen, not from any directions noted in Scriptures, but from the church's sense of its own power." St. Catherine Catholic Church - Sentinel...-Volume 50, #22, Algonac Mich. May 21, 1995

"Of course the Catholic church claims that the change (from Sabbath to Sunday) was her act ... And the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." Reply to a letter, October 28, 1894, from Cardinal Gibbons by Chancellor C.F.Thomas

The church claims the change of the Sabbath is a mark of her authority because virtually every Christian church keeps Sunday. The only basis for keeping Sunday is the authority of the Catholic church. There is no authority from the Scriptures to keep Sunday.

Q14 WHAT DOES THE PAPACY THINK IT HAS THE POWER TO DO?

Daniel 7:25 - *... And shall intend to change _____ and _____*

CHANGING GOD'S TIME

The Papacy has attempted to change God's times in two ways:

a. The time of the Sabbath was changed from Saturday to Sunday

b. The timing of the worship day was changed from the biblical sunset to sunset (Leviticus 23:32), to the pagan custom of midnight to midnight

CHANGING GOD'S LAW

The catechisms of the Papacy have revealed the intent to change God's law in three ways:

a. It has removed the second Commandment (which forbids worship of images and idols)

a. It has reduced the Sabbath Commandment from over 90 words to just eight

a. It has divided the 10th Commandment into two Commandments

It is this change to the times and law of God that has left the mark – the mark of the beast!

Q15 DO PEOPLE WHO CURRENTLY OBSERVE SUNDAY AS A HOLY DAY HAVE THE MARK OF THE BEAST?

Revelation 13:17 - *and that no one may _____ or _____ except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name*

There are many Christians who currently keep Sunday, who love God and will receive eternal life. They do not have the mark of the beast. The enforcement of the mark of the beast is still in the future. At that time the governments of the world will issue a law to enforce Sunday keeping. They will selectively stop buying and selling – attempting to starve God's people into



submission. It is possible that modern technology such as microchips will be used in this process. However the microchip itself is not the mark of the beast. There is not one text that says the mark of the beast is specifically related to technology – the real issue is worship!

The mark of the beast will be placed on anyone who worships and obeys the false religions of the world. This tragic scenario depicts many receivers of the mark sincerely thinking they are doing the right thing. This mark is not just placed on overt "devil worshippers". The key point about the mark of the beast is that people will be "deceived" into false worship (Revelation 19:20).

Each of us will need to choose to obey God at a time when the vast majority of the whole world is obeying man, yet convinced they are obeying God.



Q16 WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO AVOID THE MARK OF THE BEAST?

Revelation 14:9-12 - *Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the _____ of God and the _____ of Jesus (v12)*

Immediately after the most solemn warning message in the Bible, God outlines the characteristics of those who accept His warning and avoid this dreaded mark. If you want to avoid the mark of the beast you need to keep God's Commandments, including the Sabbath. This comes with having a living faith relationship with Jesus. In fact, anyone who has this experience will never receive the mark of the beast!

Q17 WHAT RELATIONSHIP DOES JESUS HAVE WITH THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE SEAL OF GOD?

Revelation 14:4 - *...These are the ones who _____ the Lamb wherever He goes*

What a beautiful picture of a love relationship! Here are people in heaven who follow Jesus everywhere; learning more about Him and spending as much time as possible with Him. In order to follow Jesus in heaven, we must first follow Him here on earth.

Jesus had a loving relationship with His Father and kept all of His Commandments. Jesus wants us to follow Him by living our life each day like He lived His.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The mark of the beast is a symbolic mark that is placed on those who worship and obey the false religions of the world. It will be placed on the hand or forehead,



indicating allegiance to the beast in mind or actions. The mark will be placed on those who are involved in false worship. These people obey man's laws but disobey God's laws.

Three Points to Remember:

- At the end of time every person on earth will receive a mark
- If you receive the mark of God you automatically avoid the mark of the beast
- The mark of God is placed on those who love Jesus with all their heart and are obedient to all of God's Commandments, including the Sabbath.

The story:

During an evangelistic program the speaker was challenged after one of the meetings. The subject was the Sabbath. A tall, well-dressed man approached the speaker and told him that he was a devoted Christian. He had met the Pope and knew many church theologians.

He then went on to say, "Everything you said tonight about the Sabbath is true. The Sabbath is Saturday. The Sabbath was changed to Sunday worship by the church. But I have one problem." "Only one?" the evangelist asked. "Yes. My problem is that you judge truth by the Bible and the Bible alone," said the man. The Speaker took this as a compliment. However, he could see the man was earnest so he said to him, "on what basis do you determine truth?"

The man then said, "I judge the truth by the Bible, tradition and the words of the Pope. If there is a difference between the church and the Bible then I will listen to the Pope since he has the most recent revelation from God." That man left the meeting and did not return to any future programs.

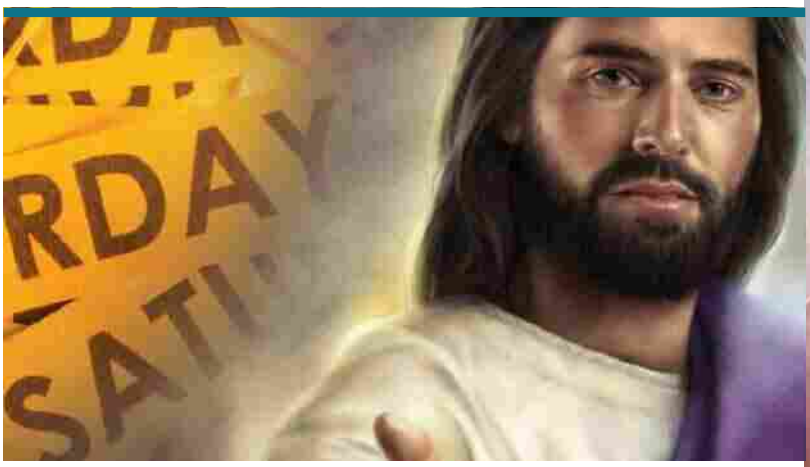
What would you have said to this man? What dangers are inherent in this man's view?

Relational questions:

1. Does keeping the Sabbath alone guarantee you will avoid the mark of the beast? Why?
2. What is the key to obeying God from your heart instead of just outward actions?
3. How can you prepare today to avoid receiving the mark of the beast?

Your response:

The mark of the beast is coming. Would you like to prepare for the seal of God by keeping all of God's Commandments, including the Sabbath, as a sign that you will follow Jesus wherever He leads? _____





WHY SO MANY CHURCHES?

Why are there so many different churches? The Bible tells us how we can identify the characteristics of God's true church. Find out how in Part 15 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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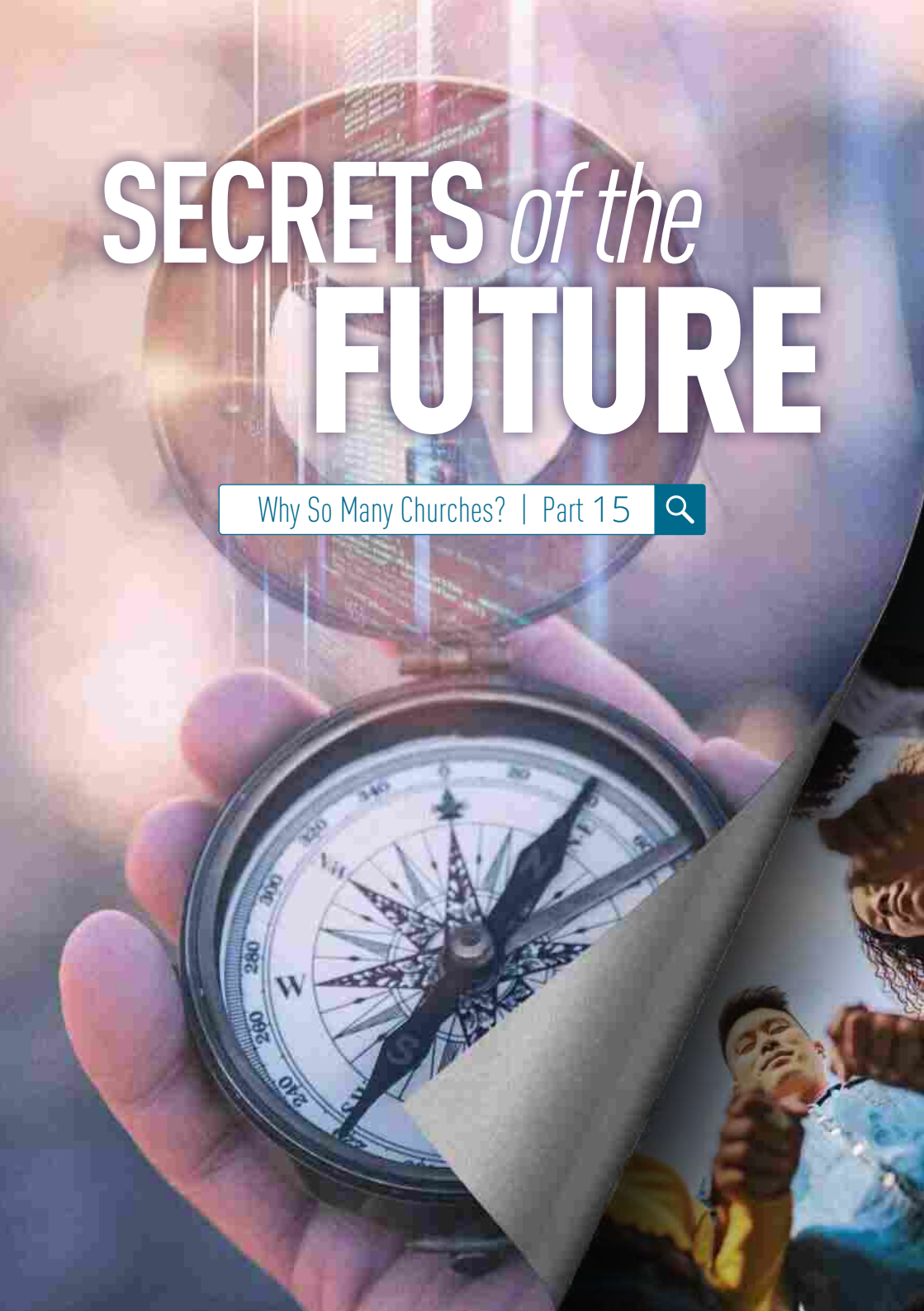
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Why So Many Churches? | Part 15



WHY SO MANY CHURCHES?

As United Airlines Flight 93 was plummeting towards its tragic end on September 11 2001, the flight recorder captured the last words of the hijacking terrorists. “Allah is the greatest!” “Allah is the greatest!” The passionate tones continued until the silence of death as the plane slammed into the Pennsylvanian countryside.

This is not the first time religion has motivated hatred and bloodshed. In 1669 Jean Léger, a noted religious historian, printed a series of graphic sketches showing the religious persecution faced by the “heretic” Christians in the Waldensian valleys of Northern Italy.

One of the images depicted by Léger shows a 90-year-old man, Isaiah Grand, captured for his faith and decapitated in cold blood. Other images show women and children torn into pieces or impaled. The bodies were paraded on a stick as a warning to the local community – conform to the Roman church or be killed.

Religion has always been a contentious issue. The ultimate source of passion, enthusiasm and commitment. But also the seedbed of intolerance and violence. Historians have estimated that the Middle Ages church single-handedly killed over 50 million people for belonging to the ‘wrong church’.

The religious world today is more fragmented than ever before. Among the 19 world religions the ***World Christian Encyclopaedia*** estimates a total of 270 separate religious groups. Within Christianity alone there are 34,000 different Christian groups. All claim to be God’s church and possess “the truth”.

Does God have a church today? If so, which is it? Should we even join a church or is it better to remain an independent believer?

In this study guide you will discover a prophecy that describes the history and characteristics of God's true church. This prophecy, found in Revelation chapter 12, makes it very simple to identify God's church for the last days.

Q1 HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO BELONG TO A CHURCH?

Acts 2:47 - *... And the Lord added to the _____ daily those who were being saved*

An integral aspect of accepting Jesus is to be baptised into His body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:13). The church is not perfect. There is a sense of trust and vulnerability in joining a community of human believers – sometimes people get hurt. But, according to God's Word, one of the most important things for you to do is experience church (Hebrews 10:25).

There are three key benefits from being involved in church:

- The church can enhance your spiritual journey
- You can encourage others in their spiritual journey
- The church community and organisation enables a more effective sharing of the gospel



Q2 WHAT SYMBOL IS USED IN THE BIBLE TO PORTRAY A CHURCH?

Jeremiah 6:2 - *I have likened the daughter of Zion to a lovely and delicate* _____

Throughout the Bible a woman represents a church. A good woman represents God's true church. A prostitute represents an evil church (see 2 Corinthians 11:2, Revelation 17:1-6).

Q3 HOW IS GOD'S TRUE CHURCH DESCRIBED IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION?

Revelation 12:1 - *Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the _____, with the _____ under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve _____*

Here we find the church of God surrounded by the sun, moon and stars – a symbol of the church as the "light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). The sun represents Jesus (Malachi 4:2). The moon represents the Scriptures that reflect the light of Jesus. The stars represent the leadership of God's church – 12 tribes in the Old Testament church and 12 apostles in the New Testament church.

Q4 WHO ATTEMPTED TO DESTROY THE WOMAN AND HER CHILD AS SOON AS HE WAS BORN?

Revelation 12:4 - *... And the _____ stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born*

Here we find the devil, symbolised by a dragon, working through the power of Rome to accomplish his aims (verses 3,4,9). King Herod, a ruler under Rome, heard about the birth of Jesus and immediately issued a death decree on all the male infants of Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16). Jesus and His parents escaped Bethlehem – but the devil did not give up. Ultimately the "dragon" inspired evil men to crucify Jesus on a cross. The good news of the gospel tells us the grave could not hold Jesus. He rose from the dead and completely defeated the devil!



Q5 WHO DID THE DEVIL ATTACK AFTER HE FAILED TO DESTROY JESUS?

Revelation 12:13 - *Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the _____ who gave birth to the male Child*

The devil knows the most effective way to hurt Jesus is to hurt those He loves (ask any parent what hurts more; when they are in pain or when their children are suffering?) The early Christian church suffered greatly at the hands of pagan Rome and millions of people were martyred. Anyone who accepted Jesus knew they could be thrown to the hungry lions in the Colosseum, crucified, burnt to death or even torn in two.

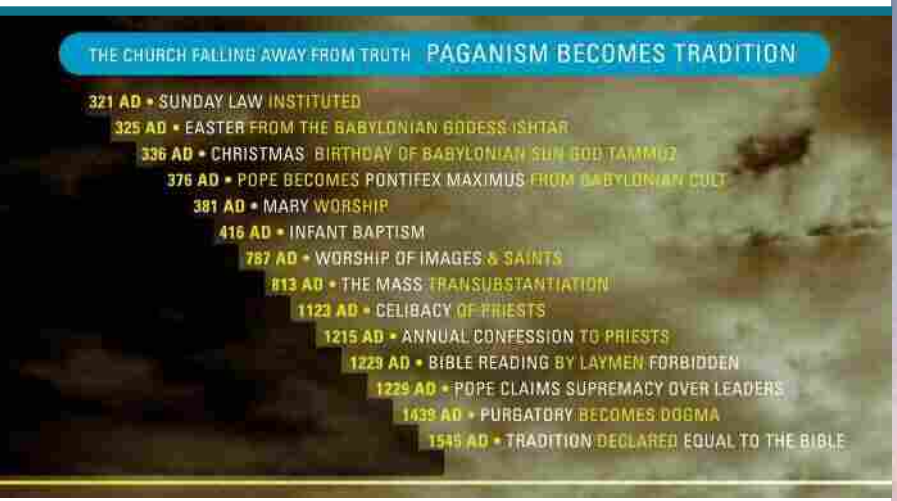
The results were amazing. Instead of destroying God's church, persecution became the catalyst for growth. The Christian character in life and death was such a powerful witness that others were inspired to join the Christian church.

The devil then changed his tactics. The Roman government stopped persecuting the church. It even started to welcome the Christian faith. Through Emperor Constantine Rome began to form a coalition of church and state. Satan decided that if he could not destroy the church he would join it and corrupt it!

Q6 WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH DURING THE MIDDLES AGES?

2 Thessalonians 2:3 - *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the _____ _____ comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition*

For the first 300 years, the Christian church remained relatively pure and true to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. Once the church formed a coalition with the state, paganism began to strongly influence the church. The traditions, teachings and symbols of the pagan gods came into the church while the purity, obedience and worship of the living God went out of the church.



During the Middle Ages, persecution against God's true church was reintroduced. Here the strategy of Satan was to use the church to attack the church! The devil sent a "flood" of armies after those who refused to accept the pagan teachings and practices. Anyone who refused to be part of the Roman church was banished or killed (Revelation 12:15).



Q7 WHERE DID THE TRUE CHURCH GO WHEN THEY WERE PERSECUTED?

Revelation 12:6,14 - *Then the woman fled into the _____, where she has a place prepared by God (v6) ... But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is _____...(v14)*

In 538AD the Roman Emperor Justinian officially made a decree to enforce the power and presence of the Papacy. A failure to join the church resulted in forced removal from the Empire and the confiscation of property. This decree forced the true followers of God to flee the large cities of Europe and move into the mountains and caves of the less populated areas – remote areas in Italy, France, Britain, Switzerland and even the Middle East. It was in these "wilderness" areas that the church could still meet together, worship and study the Bible.

It is important to note that the church of God was still in existence during these times, but not as the official mainstream organisation. The church was "in the wilderness". It comprised groups of people who remained faithful to God at the risk of persecution and death.



Q8 HOW LONG WOULD GOD'S TRUE CHURCH REMAIN "UNDERCOVER" IN THE WILDERNESS?

Revelation 12:6,14 - *... that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days (v6) ... where she is nourished for a _____ and _____ and _____ a time, from the presence of the serpent (v14)*

The prophecy predicted a period of 1,260 years in the wilderness for God's church. This prediction was perfectly fulfilled when the church went into hiding through the Dark Ages from 538 to 1798 (see study guide "Who is the Antichrist?" for more details on these dates).

Prior to the fall of the Papacy a movement began that revolutionised the Christian church. A passion for truth emerged in the lives of men such as Martin Luther, John Wycliffe, John Calvin and John Huss. The Bible was translated into the common language and people understood Bible prophecy and the gospel of Jesus. The Papacy rejected this movement as "heresy" but the spark for the "Reformation" was lit. The slow process of exiting the wilderness had begun.

Below is a list of teachings and churches that emerged as a result of the Reformation. You will see how each church built on the truths of previous churches. The revelation of truth was progressive. This is one



reason why there are so many Christian churches today. The spirit of the Reformation continued throughout the world until the church of God was established for the last days – a church that returned to all the original teachings of the Christian church.



Q9 WHAT IS THE DEVIL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S CHURCH IN THE LAST DAYS?

Revelation 12:17 - *And the dragon was _____ with the woman, and he went to make _____ with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*

The devil is especially angry with the "rest of her offspring", or in other words the church of the last days. Over the last 2,000 years Satan has had the time and experience to refine his tactics. He is full of deceit and evil as

he declares an all out war upon God's final church. The devil will do his best to deceive and discourage as many of God's people as possible because he knows that time is short and this is a war that he will ultimately lose!

God's final church

Q10 WHAT ARE THE IDENTIFYING MARKS FOR GOD'S FINAL CHURCH?

Revelation 12:17 - *And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the _____ of God and have the _____ of Jesus Christ*

The prophecy of Revelation 12 outlines the history of God's church since the time of Christ. The chapter ends with a comment on the church at the end of time. A church referred to as the "rest" or "remnant" of her offspring. This is the final church that represents Jesus and his truth in the closing moments prior to the return of Jesus.





God has provided a number of clear characteristics to enable us to easily identify this church. The Seventh-day Adventist church believes that God has His saved people in all churches. However He specifically raised up the Seventh-day Adventist movement to represent Him and His final message in the end times. The key passages that identify God's final church are found in Revelation 12 and 14. Let's take a look at the evidence.

Clue 1 – It will rise after 1798 (Revelation 12:6,14)

The visible church of God remained in the wilderness until 1798. After that time, God would bring His church out of obscurity and enable it to be a global representation of His love and truth.

Evidence: The Seventh-day Adventist church can trace its beliefs back through the church in the wilderness to the early Christian church; however it visibly emerged during the mid 19th century and was officially organised in 1863.

Clue 2 – It will believe in the original teachings of the Christian church (Revelation 12:17)

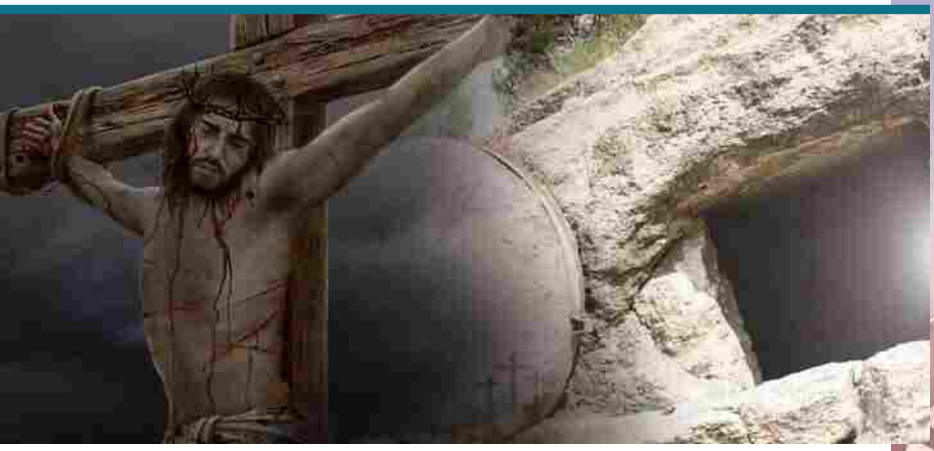
The King James Version of the Bible translates the phrase "rest of her offspring" as the "remnant" (Revelation 12:17). A remnant of material used for making clothing is the end piece of cloth and usually just a small piece. It is also the same colour and pattern as the original cloth. Here we find God's final church with the same practices and teachings as Jesus and the original Christian church.

Evidence: The Seventh-day Adventist church has continued the Reformation. Through a philosophy of taking the Bible and the Bible only as the rule of faith, it has restored all the major truths from the original Christian church.

Clue 3 – It will be based on Jesus Christ and the good news of the gospel (Revelation 14:6,12)

The foundation for the final church will be the love and grace of Jesus Christ. Jesus will be presented as the ultimate destination for any spiritual journey and the answer to all of life's challenges.

Evidence: The Seventh-day Adventist church believes salvation is 100% based on the sacrifice and merits of Jesus. Jesus is the centre of every aspect of the Adventist message – even Bible prophecy is presented as the "Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:1). All reference to obedience and the Ten Commandments is done in the context of love and worshipping Jesus.



Clue 4 – It believes in all of God's Commandments, including the Sabbath (Revelation 12:17, 14:12)

God's church is a Commandment keeping church. This means it is also a Sabbath keeping church. The church of God believes that God's law is a reflection of His

character and anyone who truly loves Jesus will want to keep His law.

Evidence: The Seventh-day Adventist church teaches and keeps all of God's Commandments, including the seventh day Sabbath of the Bible.

Clue 5 – It will preach the final warning message to the world (Revelation 14:6-12)

Just before a global flood, Noah was raised by God to preach a clear and dramatic warning message – "The world will soon be destroyed. Get into the Ark!" At the end of time God has inspired a movement to also preach a specific message. This message is found in Revelation 14:6-12 and will be preached to a world that is facing destruction at the Second Coming of Jesus.

This unique message focuses on the "everlasting gospel" and has three aspects:

1. Worship the Creator God and give Him glory because the judgment has begun (Revelation 14:7)

2. Babylon has fallen (Revelation 14:8)

3. Avoid the mark of the beast (Revelation 14:9-11)

Any church which is God's final church will be preaching this vital message.

Evidence: The Three Angels Message of Revelation 14:6-12 is the focus of the Seventh-day Adventist message and mission. The message is clear: The judgement of God began in 1844, the memorial to the Creator God is the Sabbath (keep the Sabbath), come out of the false religious network of Babylon and avoid any form of false worship – including the mark of the beast.

Clue 6 – It will teach that death is a peaceful rest until the resurrection (Revelation 14:13)

The final church preaches a message about death that protects people from the deceptions of supernatural spiritualism in the last days. Death is a sleep and there should be no communication with the dead through spiritual mediums.

Evidence: One of the most important teachings within the Seventh-day Adventist church is the concept of death as a sleep. At death the person remains in the grave until the resurrection.

Clue 7 – It will be a global movement preaching all over the world (Revelation 14:6)

The church of God will be preaching the final message to "every nation, tribe, tongue and people" (Revelation 14:6).

Evidence: The Seventh-day Adventist church is actively involved in over 220 countries, virtually every country of the world. There is a global commitment to ensure the message is preached by all means possible, including satellite and the internet, to every pocket of the planet.

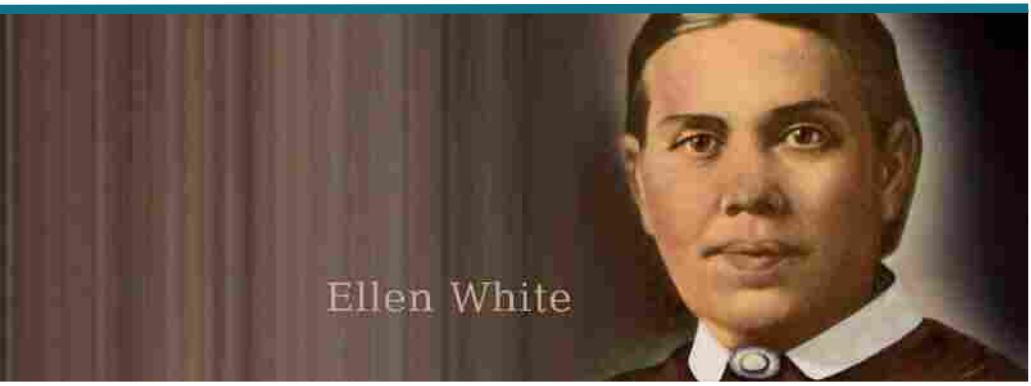
Clue 8 – It will believe in the words of the prophets and have the gift of prophecy (Revelation 12:17, 19:10)

God's church has always placed complete confidence in God's Word. The Bible is the centre and foundation for all understanding of truth. God's final church will also have a strong commitment to prophecy. Prophecy is vital and provides an understanding of God and our future. The final church of God will be identified as having the "testimony of Jesus" – a symbol that represents the "spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 12:17,



19:10). Any church that is God's church of the last days will have a specific spiritual gift – the gift of prophecy.

Evidence: The Seventh-day Adventist church believes in the Bible and the Bible only as the foundation for truth. An important aspect of Bible truth is prophecy. Within the church God raised up a special messenger, Ellen G White, as one of the pioneers of the church. God gave to this lady a special gift, the gift of prophecy, to help guide the church. The writings of Ellen White do not replace the Bible. They do not add to the Bible. They simply support and uplift the Bible. The Bible remains the heart and foundation of the faith and the Bible predicts that the final church will have the gift of prophecy.



Q11 HOW MANY CHURCH ORGANISATIONS DOES JESUS DESIRE TO HAVE ON THIS EARTH?

Ephesians 4:4,5 - *There is _____ body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism*

The last thing God wants is hundreds of religions. It is a tragedy that there are so many churches with different teachings, practices and lifestyles.

God wants one church – a church that is based on three pillars of truth: Jesus Christ, the Word of God and the Ten Commandments.

Q12 GOD DESCRIBES THE CONFUSED SYSTEM OF RELIGION IN THE LAST DAYS AS "BABYLON". WHAT INVITATION DOES JESUS MAKE TO THOSE OUTSIDE HIS FINAL CHURCH?

Revelation 18:4 - *And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come _____ of her _____ people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues"*

John 10:16 - *And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will _____ My voice; and there will be _____ flock and one shepherd*

The word "church" comes from the Greek word "ekklesia" which means "called-out ones". God has His saved people within all churches, people who love Him and are living up to the spiritual light they have. But as we approach the end of time Jesus calls His people into "one flock" – His final church of the last days.

Soon there will only be two global religions. One will worship and obey Jesus Christ. The other will worship and obey the religious powers of the world. Now is the time to hear the call of Jesus and choose God's last day church.





Three Points to Remember:

- An essential aspect of being a Christian is becoming an active member in God's church
- God has always had His church throughout history
- The Seventh-day Adventist church is God's church for the last days

The Story:

On the first day of training, everyone knew the World War II medic, Desmond Doss, was different. Not only did he kneel beside his bed to pray, he also read his Bible every day. Doss refused to carry a weapon and would never train or work on the Seventh-day Sabbath (although he did heal on the Sabbath, just as Jesus did). His fellow soldiers ridiculed Doss. They teased him and harassed him. Doss felt like he was alone, with everyone against him. At one point, one of his officers tried to get him discharged on the basis of mental illness.

It wasn't long, however, before this Sabbath-keeping soldier was seen as a God-send. Time after time Doss braved enemy fire in Okinawa to treat and save wounded soldiers. Even with snipers aiming their guns at Doss, he still went into the heat of battle. Despite being hit by a grenade, he carried over 50 wounded soldiers to their safety. Desmond Doss became the only non

combatant to receive the United States Medal of Honour during WWII. Doss honoured God by being obedient to His Commandments, even when the going was tough. He saw obedience as an important part of loving Jesus and Doss would rather die than break one of God's Commandments.

Desmond Doss was in the minority. He stood for God through ridicule, torment and possible death. If you join God's true church you too may face opposition. What can you learn from this story to help you in your decision for Christ?

Relational questions:

1. What would you say to someone who thinks that it doesn't matter what you believe, or which church you belong to, as long as you are a good person?
2. How important is God's church to you? Why do you think the church is so important to God?
3. If you decide to join God's church what do you think will be the response by the devil? How will he try to hurt and discourage you? How can you prepare for his attacks?

Your response:

Jesus loves you and He is calling you to join Him within God's end time church. Is it your decision to join this church and become a part of sharing God's final message to the world? _____





REST *for the* SOUL

Are you feeling tired and run-down? Read about God's plan for stress relief and rest in Part 16 of the Secrets of Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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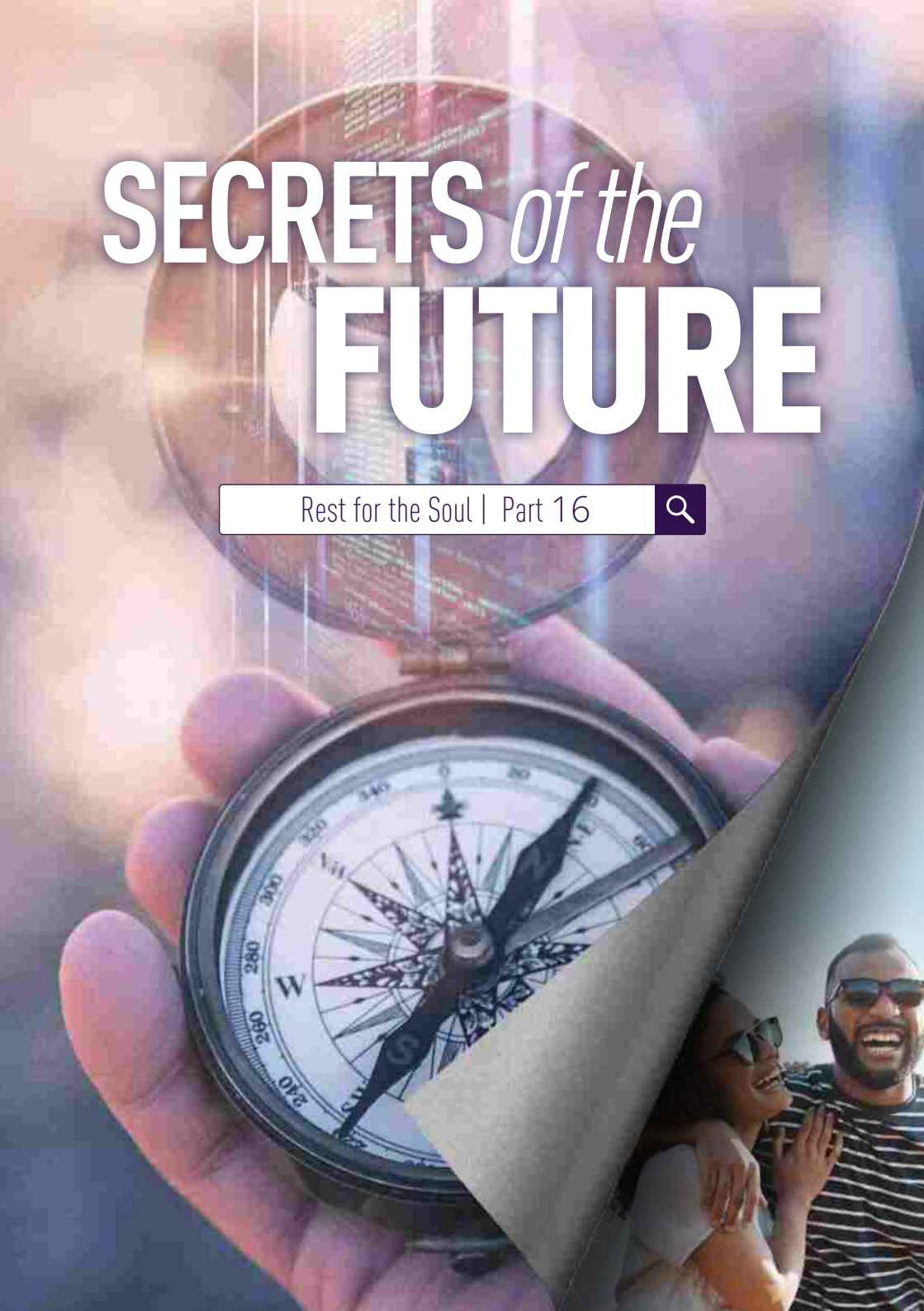
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Rest for the Soul | Part 16



REST FOR THE SOUL

Today's fast-paced, multi-tasking and socially disconnected lifestyle has resulted in unprecedented levels of stress. It seems as if our world has gone mad. We feel a sense of unease about all this. A sense of insecurity. A sense of discontentment. A loss of control of our own lives.

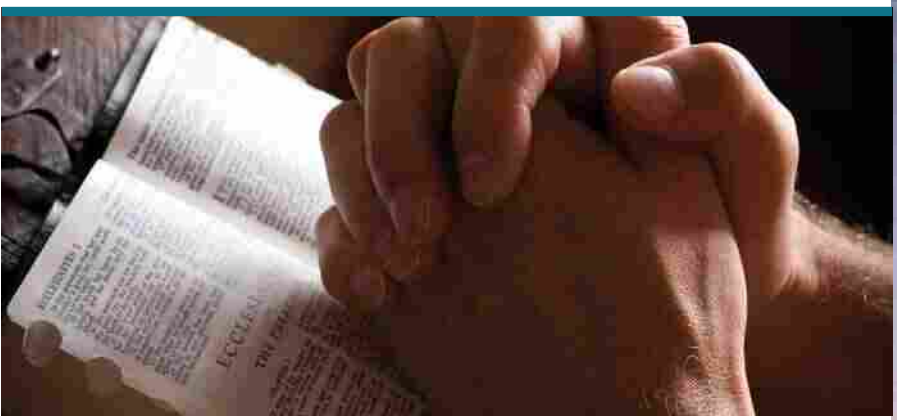
As financial security vanishes concern over personal debt has increased. People are overworking to cope. In a global survey of business leaders, accountancy firm Grant Thornton reported that stress levels had increased by an average of over 50 percent in 12 months. The highest stress levels were recorded in South East Asia. Countries such as Australia (48 percent), New Zealand (46 percent) and the United States (45 percent) all recorded major increases in work-related stress.

Personal reflection on any past week results in: "it was too busy". Harried housewives are talking about their "time crunch". They work through the day and then perform a "second shift" at home. Quality time in needed sleep has been reduced and the stress of modern life is affecting families and relationships. A Cornell University study revealed that the average American father spends just 38 seconds each day in quality time with his children.

There is a breaking point. Personal health suffers, along with emotional stability and resilience. A new condition called "the Atlas syndrome" has appeared. It refers to the feeling of having the weight of the world on your shoulders.

As people look for answers, a variety of solutions to stress have emerged. Harriet Meyers, president of the employer consultant group The Confidence Centre, has suggested a number of interesting tactics to enable people to cope with stress. These include: planting a tree, feeding the birds, dancing a jig, taking a bubble bath, tickling a baby and avoiding the wearing of tight clothes.

Does God have a solution to the current day issues with stress? Does the Bible suggest a practical plan to help us to rest in a restless world? What did Jesus say to those weighed down with hard work and personal burdens? In this study guide you will discover a lost secret that will help you become a closer friend to Jesus and develop a happy and healthy resilience within a stressful world.



Q1. WHAT DOES JESUS PROMISE TO THOSE WHO COME TO HIM WHEN THEY ARE TIRED, WEARY AND STRESSED OUT?

Matthew 11:28 *- Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you _____*



If you would like some rest for your body, mind and soul, then Jesus invites you to come to Him. Jesus wants to spend time with you; quality time and regular time – time away from the frenetic pace of life.

Throughout the Bible God's people always set aside quality time. This included a full day per week, totally dedicated to spending time in worship and rest with their Creator God. During this day of rest the people would be refreshed and rejuvenated – physically, mentally and spiritually.



Q2. WHERE DOES THE IDEA OF A REST DAY COME FROM AND WHAT WAS IT CALLED?

***Genesis 2:2** - And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He _____ on the _____ day from all His work which He had done*

***Exodus 20:10** - ... but the seventh day is the _____ of the Lord your God*

God established a day of rest at the origins of this world. After a busy six days creating planet earth, God rested on the seventh day. The word "rest" in the Genesis story is translated from the Hebrew word "Shabath". In other places of the Bible the seventh day is simply called the "Sabbath".

It was God who kept the first Sabbath day. This was at least 2,000 years before the birth of the Jewish race, 2,500 years before the giving of the law at Mt Sinai and 4,000 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. In fact, the Bible says the Sabbath is so important it is called "the Sabbath of the Lord your God" (Exodus 20:8).

Q3. WHAT DID GOD DO TO THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH TO SET IT APART FROM ALL OTHER DAYS OF THE WEEK?

***Genesis 2:3** - Then God _____ the seventh day and _____ it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made*

God not only rested on the seventh day, He also blessed it. To bless literally means to "make happy". The Sabbath is not a boring day of restrictions; it was blessed by God to be the happiest day of the week. God also sanctified the seventh day. To sanctify literally means to "set apart for holiness". God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. God had such a wonderful experience on that first Sabbath day; He couldn't keep it to Himself. He gave it as a gift to all humanity.



It is important to note that God has only ever blessed and sanctified one day. He has never blessed the first day or the third day or the fifth day. God did not bless the act of resting, He blessed the day itself. As a result, no matter how sincerely someone keeps a day holy (e.g. Muslims keep Friday), it will never be the Sabbath. No human being can make a Sabbath or change the Sabbath. This honour is totally in the hands of the Creator God.

Q4. HOW DO WE KNOW THE SABBATH REMAINED IMPORTANT TO GOD?

Exodus 20:8 - *_____ the Sabbath day, to keep it _____*

God took the Sabbath day of rest and placed it right into the heart of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-17). Of all the things God wanted His people to do, the Sabbath was placed in His "top ten" list of priorities for loving obedience. The Sabbath rest is not just a "side issue". Anyone who disregards the Sabbath today is disregarding God's holy Commandments.



The Sabbath Commandment is the only one which begins with the word "remember". It is a tragic fact that the most forgotten Commandment in the world today is the Sabbath. In a British survey, over a thousand people were interviewed and asked about the relevance of the Ten Commandments. One of the least remembered and voted as most irrelevant Commandments, was the Sabbath. Only 4 percent of people had even heard of it.

A global count of those who keep the Bible Sabbath reveals that in this time of stress and hectic lifestyle less than 1 percent of the global population keep the seventh-day Sabbath. It is no wonder God said, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy".

Q5. IN THE SCRIPTURES, WHAT DOES THE SABBATH REPRESENT?

***Ezekiel 20:12** - Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a _____ between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who _____ them*

The seventh-day Sabbath is important because it is rich in symbolic meaning. The Sabbath is a sign or symbol representing God as our Creator and Redeemer. If we keep the Bible Sabbath we are signifying that we:

a. Believe and trust in a Creator God

The Sabbath is a special day for us to worship the



Creator God, to remember that we were made in God's image and as such, we have great value to God. The Sabbath openly rejects evolution. It lifts up a powerful Creator God who designed and created something from nothing, through the power of His Word.

b. Believe in salvation through Christ not works

God completed His work and rested on the Sabbath. We keep the seventh day Sabbath as a symbol of resting from the impossible task of trying to work our way to heaven (Hebrews 4:9,10).

c. Have a living relationship with God

God says the Sabbath is a sign of sanctification (i.e. becoming holy – Ezekiel 20:12). Just as He made the seventh day holy, now God takes the responsibility of making us holy also. As we spend quality time with Jesus, trusting in His creative power, our lives will change to become like His.

d. Are loyal to God

God has singled out a specific day of the week. He asks us to keep it holy and rest during this day. Those who keep the Sabbath trust God's Word and demonstrate their loyalty to Him through loving worship and obedience.



Q6. WAS THE SABBATH MADE JUST FOR THE JEWS?

***Mark 2:27** - And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for _____, and not man for the Sabbath"*

Jesus clearly says the Sabbath was made for man – not just Jews. The Sabbath is the "Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10). Indeed, Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28). The Sabbath was made to remind us of our Creator God, a God who created Australians, Chinese, Africans and Americans – not just Jews.

The Sabbath was created thousands of years before any Jews existed and is called "the Sabbath of the Lord your God" (Exodus 20:10). It is not just the Jewish Sabbath – it is God's Sabbath. The Sabbath is a special gift to everyone who wants to have an intimate relationship with Him.

Q7. WHICH DAY OF THE WEEK IS THE SABBATH?

***Luke 23:52-24:2** - This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus ... That day was the _____, and the Sabbath drew near (v52,54)*

Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they _____ on the Sabbath according to the _____. (v56)



Now on the _____ day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. (24:1,2)

The Bible is clear. The day before the Sabbath is called the "Preparation" day. The day after the Sabbath is the first day of the week. Therefore, the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. Jesus died on "Good Friday". He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath and rose again on "Easter Sunday". The seventh day of the Bible is Saturday.



It is important to note Luke's record, that the women kept the Sabbath "according to the Commandment". This gospel was written nearly 30 years after the resurrection. If there had been a change in the day of worship, then this would have been an ideal time for Luke to record it. Instead, he simply confirms the seventh day Sabbath Commandment.

A simple look into the various languages of the world also demonstrates that Saturday is the Sabbath. In over 150 languages of the world the word that is currently used for Saturday means "the Sabbath".

To illustrate:

- German: Samstag – meaning Sabbath's day
- Spanish: Sabado – meaning Sabbath
- French: Samedi – meaning Sabbath day
- Italian: Sabbato – meaning Sabbath

The Jews have been keeping the Saturday Sabbath of the Bible for thousands of years. A study from any encyclopaedia or dictionary will show that the Sabbath is Saturday.

Religious leaders from all different religions agree that the Sabbath of the Bible is Saturday. Here are just a few examples:

"So, basically, Saturday is the Sabbath day. It's the last day of the week, the seventh day, the day on which God rested after six days of creation. Even modern calendars have Saturday as the last day of the week and Sunday as the first day of the new week." ***Catholicism for Dummies,*** Rev Trigilio & Rev Brighenti

"Is there any command in the New Testament to change the day of weekly rest from Saturday to Sunday? None". ***Anglican Manual of Christian Doctrine***, p127

"There was and is a commandment to keep holy the Sabbath day, but the Sabbath day was not Sunday.... It will be said, however, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week.... Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament – absolutely not. There is no Scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week." Dr Edward T. Hiscox, author ***The Baptist Manual***.



Q8. WHICH DAY DID JESUS KEEP HOLY?

***Luke 4:16** - So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the _____ day, and stood up to read*

When Jesus was here on earth He was in the custom or habit of Sabbath observance and attending a worship service on that day. The Bible tells us that Jesus is our example in all things, particularly in relation to obedience to the Commandments (1 Peter 2:21,22).



Q9. DID JESUS TEACH THAT SABBATH KEEPING SHOULD BE OBSERVED AFTER HIS CRUCIFIXION?

***Matthew 24:20** - And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the _____*

While predicting the impending destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus asked His people to pray that they would not need to flee from their enemy on the Sabbath. This destruction took place in 70AD, many years after the life and death of Jesus. It is clear from this statement that Jesus expected and supported His people keeping the Sabbath many years after His death.

Q10. DID THE APOSTLE PAUL KEEP THE SABBATH AND WORSHIP ON THE SABBATH WITH BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES?

Acts 13:42-44 - *So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next _____. Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath almost the _____ _____ came together to hear the word of God*

The apostle Paul was a Sabbath keeper (Acts 17:2, 18:4). He, along with the other apostles worshipped on the Sabbath with both Jews and Gentiles. If there was no synagogue in town, Paul would meet by the riverside with the Gentiles. Here he would pray and share the Scriptures on the Sabbath day (Acts 16:13). The Sabbath was certainly the day of worship for the early Christian church.



Q11. WHAT PROMISE IS MADE TO THOSE WHO RETURN TO KEEPING THE BIBLE SABBATH?

Isaiah 58:13,14 *- If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on ____ holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to _____ on the high hills of the earth…*

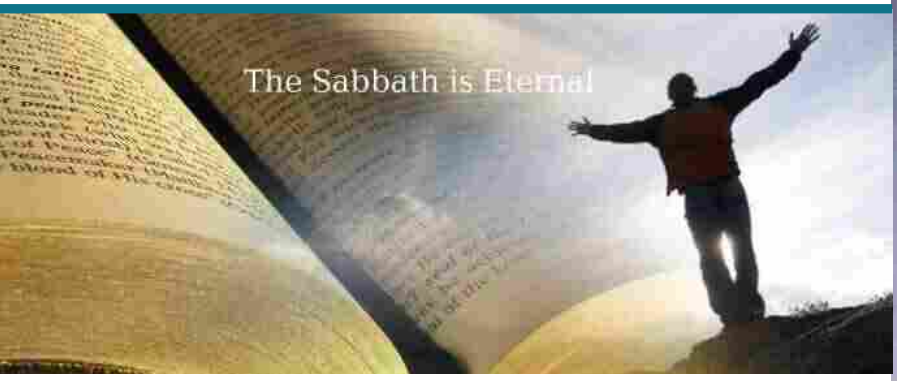
What a wonderful promise. God tells us that if we stop neglecting and trampling all over the Sabbath, He will lift us into a beautiful experience of joy and fulfilment. It will feel as if we are "flying high" riding on the high hills of the earth. The Sabbath is a delightful day where we can forget about the stresses of life. We can focus on spending quality time with Jesus and helping other people.

Q12. ON WHICH DAY WILL THE REDEEMED WORSHIP GOD IN THE NEW EARTH?

Isaiah 66: 22,23 *- "For as the new heavens and the new _____ which I will make shall remain before Me … And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one _____ to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD*

In the new earth, God's people will still come together to worship Him on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was created before man sinned in Eden

(Genesis 2:2,3). As such it was kept by God and sinless humanity. God has asked His people to keep the Sabbath throughout the life of this sinful planet and once again He will experience the Sabbath with His people in the new earth.



KEY POINTS RELATING TO THE SABBATH:

1. The Sabbath was kept by God at creation.
2. The Sabbath was confirmed at Sinai in the Ten Commandments.
3. The Sabbath was honoured by God's people.
4. The Sabbath was exalted by Jesus.
5. The Sabbath was established in Christianity by the disciples.
6. The Sabbath will be kept for eternity.



Q13. HOW SHOULD WE KEEP THE SABBATH ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE?

***Exodus 20:8-11** - Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it _____ (v8)*

The Sabbath is the most enjoyable day of the week. It's a day to forget about the headaches and stress of work and spend a full day in rest and relationship with Jesus. The Bible says that even when work gets really busy, we need to still put God first and keep the Sabbath holy (Exodus 34:21). The Sabbath is to be kept for 24 hours from sunset Friday night to sunset Saturday night (Leviticus 23:32). It is like a park in time – an area of sanity and peace with God while protected from the stress of life.

The Sabbath is a day to spend getting to know God better through studying His Word, prayer and worship at church. It is a day where family and friends can meet together and enjoy each other's company in a spiritual setting. It is a great day to spend in God's nature, or helping other people who may be sick or discouraged. Jesus gave the ideal example of keeping the Sabbath. He went to worship God at the local church. He healed people of physical illness and also restored spiritual health to people (Luke 13:10-17).



Q14. DOES IT REALLY MATTER WHICH DAY IS KEPT AS THE SABBATH?

Deuteronomy 4:2 *Y- ou shall not _____ to the word which I command you, nor _____ from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*

Acts 5:29 *- ...We ought to obey _____ rather than _____.*

There are some Christians who keep Saturday as a rest day. Others rest and worship on Sundays. There are sincere loving Christians in both groups. However, most people never stop to ask God which day is correct according to the Bible. You may be thinking, "Well, does it really matter? What's the difference which day, as long as I keep a day? Surely it wouldn't matter which day I choose to keep holy? After all, any day will do? Isn't a day just a day?"

When it comes to man-made memorials or anniversaries such as ANZAC day, Independence Day or a wedding anniversary it is vital that they take place on the specific day relevant to the issue being celebrated or remembered. No-one would suggest "any day will do". The Sabbath was put in place, not by a human government, but by the Lord God Almighty. This is a specific day that God has established each week, for us to think back and celebrate the love and power of our Creator God.



It is a dangerous thing for us to try and alter an express command of God. When God says something, He means it. In fact, God is always very particular when He asks us to do something or not to do something.

To illustrate – In the Garden of Eden, God told Adam and Eve they could eat from any tree, except one. God specified the one tree. He did not give them liberty to choose any tree they wanted. In the same way, God did not say we could choose any day we wanted as an anniversary of His creation. We simply demonstrate our devotion to Him by our obedience. Now, in Eden, the devil came along in the form of a beautiful serpent and suggested to Eve that God didn't really mean what He said, and when it came to eating food "any tree will do".



After all, all trees are alike. What's the difference? A tree's a tree and the tree was not poisonous. Adam and Eve did not die because of poison. The issue was obedience not the tree. In the same way the issue of the Sabbath is obedience not the day. Unfortunately, this whole world today is in the mess it is, because Adam and Eve used their own reasoning above the express command of God.

Some people believe that the Christian Sabbath is Sunday in honour of the resurrection of Jesus. There is not the slightest evidence of this in the Word of God. By that reasoning, why not keep Friday in honour of the crucifixion?

According to the Bible, breaking the Ten Commandments is sin (1 John 3:4). Misguided men have attempted to change the Sabbath to Sunday, however when it comes to the Sabbath day, the best way to honour God is to "obey God rather than men". God wants you to keep the seventh-day Saturday Sabbath of the Bible.

Q15. WILL GOD'S CHURCH OF THE LAST DAYS BE KEEPING THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?

***Revelation 12:17** - And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who _____ the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*

God's last day church will possess the beautiful harmony of obedience and faith in Jesus. Throughout Scripture, it has always been Jesus and the Commandments that are the foundation for the church. Those who are ready and waiting for Jesus to come will be those who love Jesus supremely and demonstrate their love through keeping all of His Commandments. One of these



Commandments is the beautiful gift of the Sabbath. This is a perpetual symbol of God's creative power and grace for humanity.

Three points to remember:

- God made and kept the Sabbath
- The seventh day (Saturday) is the Sabbath
- The Sabbath is important because it represents God as our Creator and Redeemer

The story:

On one occasion a man stood before a crowd, took a piece of red cloth and publicly burnt it. There was no reaction from the crowd. They just thought he was a bit strange. He then took out a blue piece of cloth and proceeded to burn that cloth also. Once again there was very little reaction. He then took out a white piece of cloth. He showed the cloth to the crowd and burnt the white cloth. By now the crowd thought this must be a joke. They weren't upset – just bemused. They laughed and scoffed at the man.

The same man then took out the flag of New Zealand. In front of hundreds of people the man burnt the flag and trod all over it. Now the crowd were so upset they attacked him and the authorities threw him into jail. What made the difference? After all, the flag was just a few pieces of cloth sewn together. Some white cloth. Some blue cloth. Some red cloth. The man argued that one piece of cloth is the same as any other piece of cloth. But when those colours are formed to make the New Zealand flag the symbolic meaning becomes enormous. That flag represents New Zealand and all that it holds to be important.

In what ways do you think this story illustrates the importance of the seventh-day Sabbath?

Relational questions:

1. Why do you think the Sabbath is so important to God?

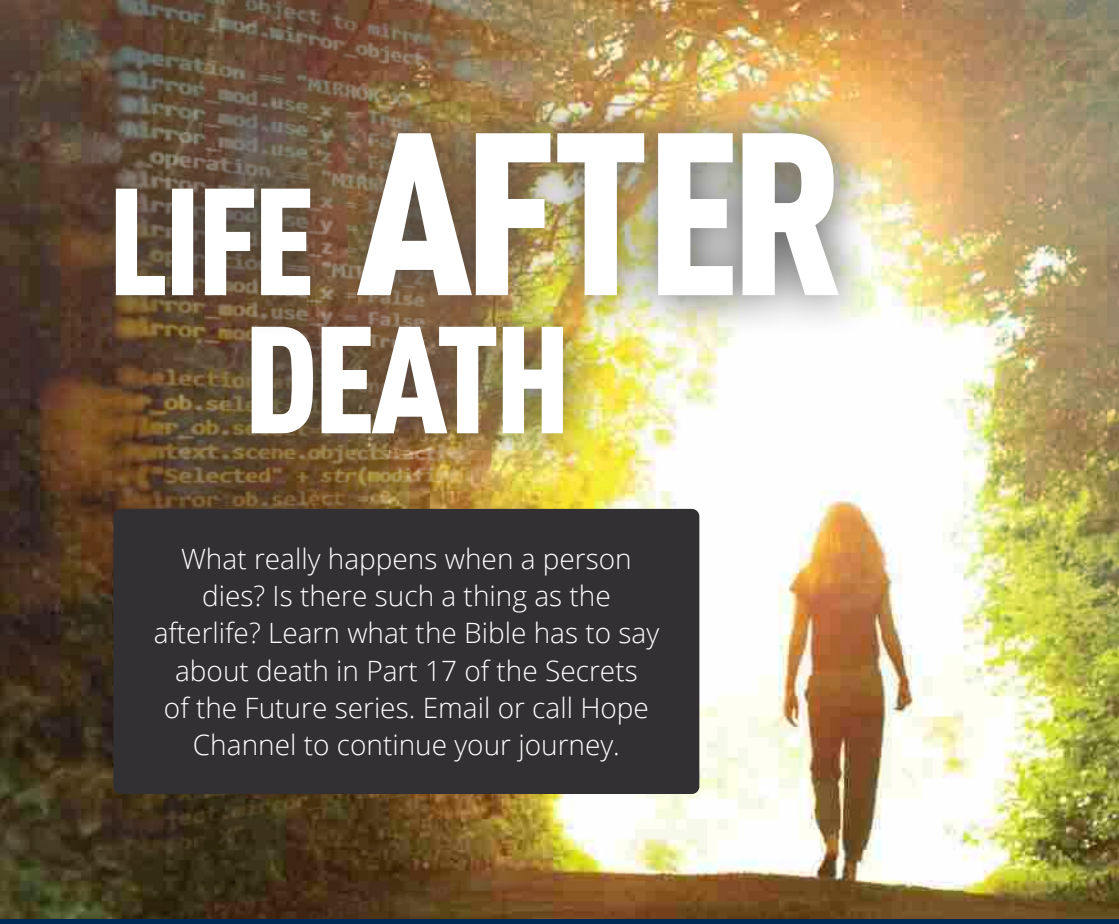
2. In what ways can you prepare for the Sabbath during the week?
3. How can you ensure the Sabbath is seen as enjoyable and not just a list of do's and don'ts?

Your response:

Do you desire to rest in God's creative power and strengthen your relationship with Him through regularly keeping the Sabbath holy? _____



LIFE AFTER DEATH



What really happens when a person dies? Is there such a thing as the afterlife? Learn what the Bible has to say about death in Part 17 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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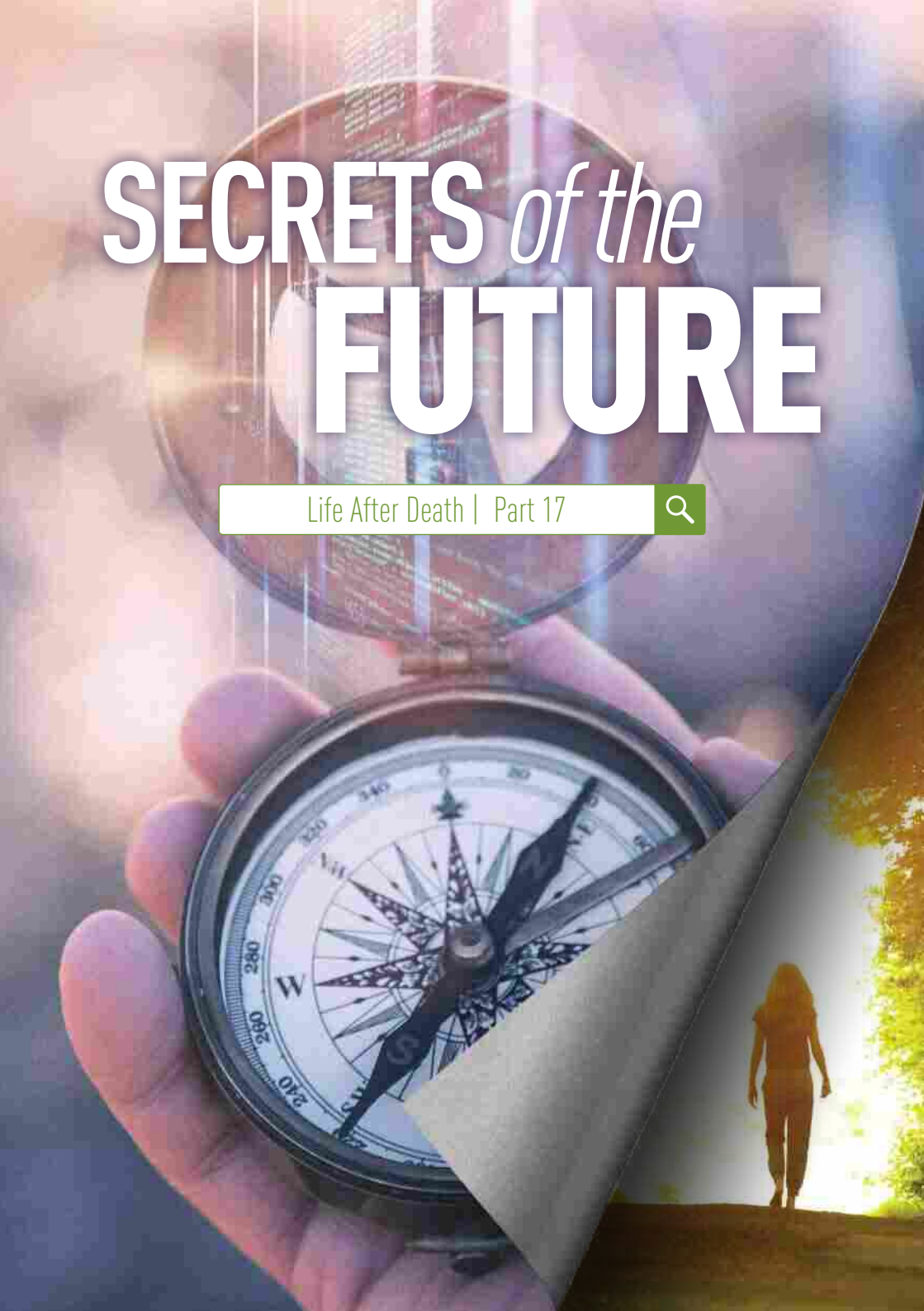

SECRETS of the
FUTURE
Life After Death | Part 17

LIFE AFTER DEATH

One of the great mysteries of life is death. What happens to people when they die? Where do they go? Is that the end of the journey, or just the beginning? Are they completely dead or is there an inner soul that continues to live?

Throughout the cultures of the world, the dead are buried in different ways. In the western world a coffin in an underground grave is the typical burial. The Buddhists of Tibet prefer a "sky burial" where the dead are prayed for then given over to devouring vultures. A visit to Cairo will show you the mummies of the pharaohs and the great pyramids in which they were buried.

You may have witnessed the Hindu open cremations on the Indian Ganges river. Here the remains are ceremoniously sprinkled into the flowing river. Archaeologists have discovered thousands of graves from ancient Persia; all buried in the cracks of a cliff face on the much-loved "mountain of mercy", Rahmat Mountain.

The destination of the dead polarises the world. In the Christian faith many believe the "soul" goes straight to heaven, (or maybe hell). Others believe in a place called purgatory – an area of spiritual cleansing prior to heaven. "Limbo" is a place for people who are not good enough for heaven, but not



bad enough for hell. To some religions, the afterlife is spent in a place called “paradise”. For many in the world there is simply no destination for the dead.

Over half the world believes in reincarnation, where the soul experiences successive lives on planet earth. The form of that life can be either on a higher or lower plane. It depends on the moral quality of the current life.

Interest in the supernatural is a feature of the 21st century. Many today recount a Near Death Experience (NDE), where they sensed themselves leaving their body and entering a sphere of bright light and unexplainable beauty.

High rating television programs are demonstrating “crossing over”. There is “live” communication between the living and the dead. Disney movies, thousands of internet sites, best selling books and popular board games also feature open discussions with the dead. People see apparitions of the Virgin Mary all over the world. They feel she encourages them in their faith and gives messages of hope and peace to the world.

More and more people are visiting mediums and “spirit guides” in the hope of getting in touch with much loved relatives who have passed away. They want friendship, reassurance, support and strength to cope with their emotional heartache and loss.

Is there life after death? What is the soul? What is the spirit? Can we talk to our dead loved ones, and if so, should we?

This study guide uncovers the mystery of life after death. It reveals why a correct understanding of this subject is so vital to your future.



Q1 WHAT ROLE WILL THE SUPERNATURAL PLAY IN END TIME EVENTS?

Revelation 16:14 - *For they are spirits of _____, performing _____, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty*

Bible prophecy predicts demons will work supernatural miracles to deceive the world. These miracles will include "false christs and false prophets" (Matthew 24:24). Billions could be deceived by the devil and his demons impersonating past spiritual leaders.

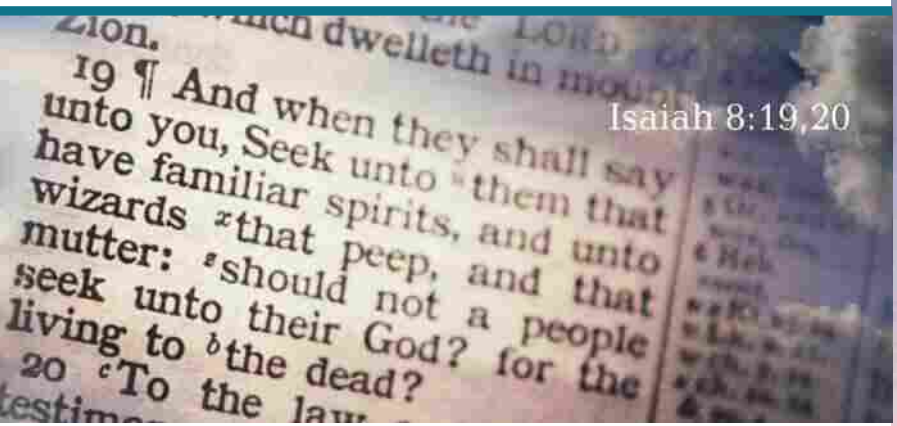
Can you imagine what would happen if Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Buddha, Ghandi and the Virgin Mary all reappeared on earth at once? Just imagine a united peace plan for a world ravaged by natural disasters and terrorism. How easily the nations and religions of the world could be influenced to sacrifice truth in order to form a "one world" New World Order.

Q2 BY WHAT METHOD SHOULD WE TEST SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA?

Isaiah 8:19,20 - *And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? ... To the _____ and to the _____! If they do not speak according to this _____, it is because there is no light in them*

Instead of seeking mediums and astrologers as "spirit guides", the Bible suggests we seek guidance from the Creator God. After all, He is the only one who truly knows the future (Isaiah 46:9,10).

There is a clear benchmark for testing the supernatural – the "law and the testimony". It is "this word" that is the path to seek God's guidance. If we want to ensure evil spirits do not deceive us, then the Bible (law and testimony) is God's source of protection and truth.



One of the devil's most effective weapons in removing trust in the Bible, is to influence senses and feelings. Visiting a medium can touch the heart. Issues such as relationships, a successful future, grief and loneliness are discussed. It seems natural at times for emotions to overrule the rational. You may even see, hear or touch someone who you thought was lost to you forever.

The deceptions of the last days will challenge our faith in God and His Word. Now is the time to exercise that faith by testing everything in life by the Bible.



Q3 DOES GOD GIVE ANY WARNINGS ABOUT CONSULTING THE DEAD?

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 - *... or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the _____. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD ... (v11,12)*

God makes repeated warnings to His people to stay away from any association with mediums and contacting "familiar spirits" (Leviticus 19:31). The "familiar spirits" include those people you have known and loved for many years, but are now dead.

It is understandable why people want to contact their loved ones. Just a word of encouragement and love brings comfort and hope to people who are hurting. So why is God so definite in His opposition to consulting with the dead?

Q4 IS IT POSSIBLE FOR THE DEAD TO TALK TO YOU?

Ecclesiastes 9:5 - *For the living know that they will die; but the dead know _____, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten*

The Bible is clear. It is impossible for a dead person to talk to you – the dead know nothing! Any contact with the "dead" is, in reality, contact with an evil spirit. That is why this practice is such an abomination to the Lord.



The original "medium" was a serpent in the Garden of Eden. God told Adam and Eve that disobedience would cause death. The devil spoke his first lie on earth through the serpent – "you will not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Since that time the devil has made that lie a key teaching of virtually every unbiblical religion. The popular view today is that when someone dies, only the body dies while the "soul" keeps living.

This subject is extremely important to all. A view that is consistent with the devil's first lie, will set people up for the grand deceptions of the last days.

In the remainder of this study guide, we will discover what the Bible says about life after death.

Q5 HOW DID GOD CREATE HUMAN BEINGS?

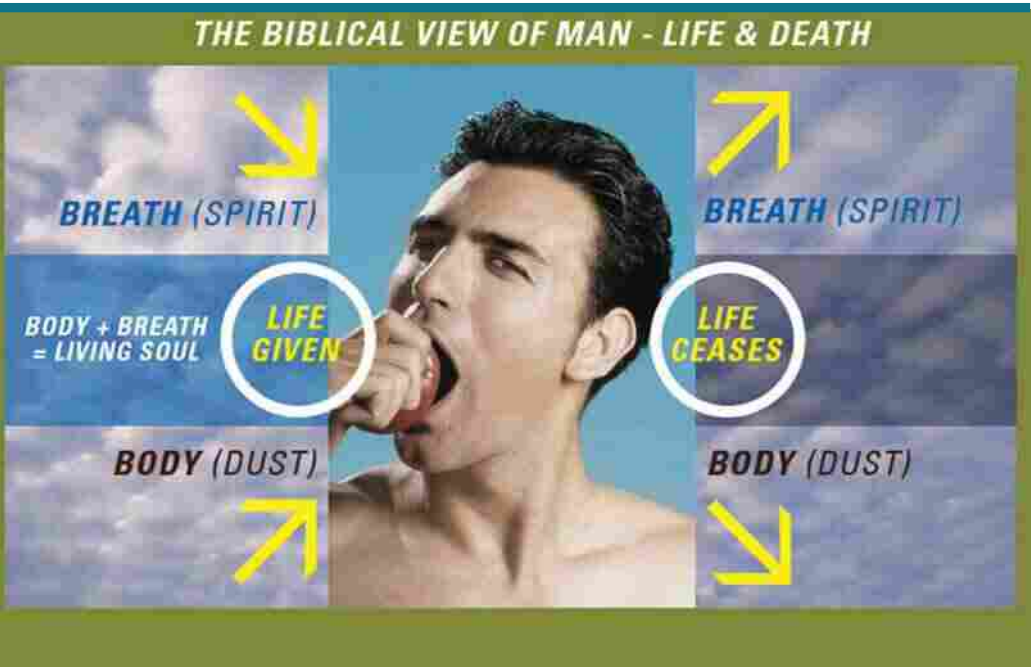
Genesis 2:7 - *And the LORD God formed man of the _____ of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the _____ of life; and man became a living being*



An understanding of death begins with an understanding of life. God miraculously formed humans out of the dust of the ground and the breath of life.

The last word in this text "being" is translated in the King James Version as "soul". "Being" and "soul" can be used interchangeably (the Hebrew word for being, "nephesh" is translated hundreds of times as soul throughout the Bible). The story of creation provides the best definition for soul in the Bible.

Dust of the ground + Breath of life = A living soul



The Bible says that you are a soul. God did not put a soul into Adam and Eve. He put the breath of life into them and they became souls. At death you cease to be a living soul.

To illustrate: A light globe + electricity = light

If you disconnect the electrical plug the light ceases to exist. The light doesn't travel back through the wires to the electricity company. It is simply not in existence. Take away the breath of God and there is no soul.

Another example would be the creation of a wooden box. If we had some boards and nails we could take a hammer and drive the nails into those boards to make a box. We would then have three things instead of two. Remove the nails and where does the box go? The box no longer exists. Once again, remove the breath of God and the soul ceases to exist.



The Bible says that God saved eight souls in the Ark (1 Peter 3:20). It is important to note that these were eight living people, not eight disembodied ghosts!

The ancient Greek philosophers taught the concept that humans possessed a soul. It was a conscious and immortal part of life that goes on living after death. But the Bible is clear. God made a living being (soul) out of the dust of the ground and the breath of life.

Q6 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A PERSON DIES?

Ecclesiastes 12:7 - *Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will _____ to God who gave it*

Every person who dies will decompose and become dust, while the spirit of life returns to God. This process is the exact reverse of the story of creation. The soul ceases to exist when the body returns to the earth and the spirit returns to heaven. There is no distinction between the good and the bad. This is the experience of everyone who dies.

What is the "spirit" that returns to heaven? The spirit is not the same as the soul. The word spirit comes from the Hebrew word "ruach", which simply means breath. In the New Testament the word for spirit is the Greek word "pneuma", which means breath or air. A number of words today have this word as their foundation. For example "pneumonia" is a disease of the air breathing lungs. A "pneumatic" tyre is a tyre that has air in it.

The "spirit" that returns to heaven is not a ghost or a person; it is the breath of life. This "spark of life" is a gift from God and enables us to keep living.



Q7 WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR EMOTIONS WHEN WE DIE?

Ecclesiastes 9:6 - *Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now _____*

At death all emotions and feelings cease to exist. A dead person cannot comfort the living or return any love. An emotion centred "soul" does not exist after death. All feelings are gone.

Q8 CAN A SOUL DIE?

Ezekiel 18:4 - *... the soul who sins shall _____*

Satan has been very successful in propagating his lie, "You shall not surely die". Virtually all pagan religions across every continent and culture teach the concept of a soul that lives through physical death. The Bible alone stands out in opposition to the "immortal soul".

The Bible says the soul ceases to exist at death. All have sinned (Romans 3:23) and therefore all souls must die. While the word soul and spirit are mentioned more than 1700 times in the Bible there is not one place that mentions an immortal soul.



Q9 WHO IS THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS IMMORTALITY?

1 Timothy 6:15,16 - *... the King of kings and Lord of lords, who _____ has immortality ...*

There is only one being who has immortality – the everlasting God. God has been in existence throughout eternity and will continue as the God of the Universe forever. We can have confidence in putting our trust in the one and only immortal God.

Q10 DO GOOD PEOPLE GO STRAIGHT TO HEAVEN AT DEATH?

Acts 2:29,34 - *Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day ... For David did _____ ascend into the heavens...*

Psalms 115:17 - *The dead do not _____ the LORD, nor any who go down into silence*

God described David as someone worthy of heaven; "a man after My own heart" (Acts 13:22). In the book of Acts the apostle Peter – some 1,000 years after the death of David – categorically states that David is not in heaven. David was, and still is, in his tomb resting until the Second Coming of Jesus.



Anyone who is in heaven would be "praising the Lord". But the Bible says that the dead do not praise the Lord (Psalms 115:17). All emotions and worship cease. Also, Jesus told His disciples they would be with Him when He returned to earth, not as soon as they died (John 14:3). Very clearly, the righteous do not go straight to heaven. The dead rest in their graves until Jesus comes back.

Q11 DOES THE BIBLE TEACH REINCARNATION?

Hebrews 9:27 - *And as it is appointed for men to die _____, but after this the judgment*

A research study by Monash University on Australian "Generation Y", found more than half of Australian young people believe in reincarnation. The Bible says that each of us dies once. We do not live and die over and over again.



Q12 WHAT DID JESUS CALL DEATH?

John 11:11-14 - *...and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus _____, but I go that I may wake him up."...However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is _____" (v11,13,14)*

When Jesus talked about the death of Lazarus, he referred to it as a "sleep". Lazarus was not in heaven, he was in his tomb "sleeping" in death. Jesus said "come forth" not "come down" (John 11:43). Imagine how unfair it would be if Lazarus was enjoying life in heaven only to have Jesus pull him out of there to live his life back here on earth.

More than 50 times in the Bible death is called a "sleep". People close their eyes in death and the next thing they know, Jesus has returned; they are reunited with their loved ones, and they are on their way to heaven.



Q13 DID JESUS TELL THE THIEF ON THE CROSS HE WOULD GO TO HEAVEN THE DAY HE DIED?

Luke 23:42,43 - *And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, _____ you will be with Me in Paradise." (v43)*

It appears as if Jesus promised the thief a life in heaven starting the day he died. Certainly many Christians use this text to support such a view. What is important to realise, when looking at this text, is the punctuation. In the original Greek manuscripts there were no full stops or commas in the sentences. As a result, the translators placed the punctuation where they thought it made the most sense.

In the case of the words of Jesus, the context clearly shows that the comma must be placed after the word "today" instead of after "you". The statement of Jesus would then read, "Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise."





We know with certainty, that the thief was not in heaven on that Good Friday, because he did not even die on that day. The soldiers broke his legs late that afternoon because he had not yet died (John 19:31,32). Secondly, Jesus also did not go to heaven that day. After His resurrection Jesus told Mary, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father." (John 20:17). How could He be in heaven on Friday if He had not been there by the following Sunday? If the comma is left in the position of the translators it creates a blatant contradiction within Scripture. Many modern translations have fixed this contradiction by using correct punctuation.

The thief on the cross will be in heaven, but not until he is raised at the Second Coming of Jesus.



Q14 WHAT HAPPENS TO THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD AT THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS?

John 5:28,29 - *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come _____ – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation*

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 *- For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout ... And the dead in Christ shall _____ first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (v16,17)*

The hope for the Christian is not death, but the resurrection. Death is not something to fear because Jesus has the keys to your grave (Revelation 1:18). He will open your grave at the resurrection and you will rise to meet Him in the air.

The concept of going to heaven when we die makes a mockery of two of the most important truths in the Scriptures. The Second Coming would be pointless and the resurrection would become even more pointless. Jesus said that He will return the second time with a reward for everyone according to their works (Matthew 16:27). This would be a strange scenario if the righteous were already enjoying their reward in heaven!

The Bible truth about the condition of the dead is wonderful news. Can you imagine if a baby died and went to a new place all alone without the mother and father? Can you imagine how sad it would be to be in heaven and look down on your loved ones hurting and being lonely? No. That is not the way the Bible portrays death. The Bible says that we rest in the grave sleeping. Then what seems like the next instant, Jesus has returned. From that moment we will live with Jesus and our loved ones in a place where there will be no more sin and sadness.



Q15 WHAT SORT OF BODY WILL BE GIVEN TO THE RIGHTEOUS AT THE SECOND COMING?

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 - *For this corruptible must put on _____, and this mortal must put on _____ (v53)*

More good news! At the resurrection you will receive a new body. A new life that is perfect, both physically and spiritually. A life that will never die. Some people wonder what God will do with those whose bodies have been torn apart by a bomb, who were lost at sea, or cremated. If God can make a human out of dirt and His breath, then there is no need to worry about putting someone's life back together again. God will give us all new bodies and we will live forever!

Three Points to Remember:

- A soul is a living being – souls live and die
- At death people return to the dust of the ground while the spirit of life returns to God
- The hope for the Christian is the resurrection at the Second Coming of Jesus

The story:

Matthew was having pains in his abdomen so the doctor ordered medical tests that required a general anaesthetic. Matthew was very sensitive to the proceedings because he feared "waking up" during the operation. At the point where Matthew felt he was "going under" he shouted out to the nurses, "don't start the operation yet. I am not fully out to it" .



When the nurses told Matthew the operation had already taken place, he was shocked. As he pondered the situation, the thought crossed his mind that this experience must be like death. You don't even realise you have been asleep and the next thing you realise you are taking part in the resurrection.

Why do you think the Bible concept of death is such good news?

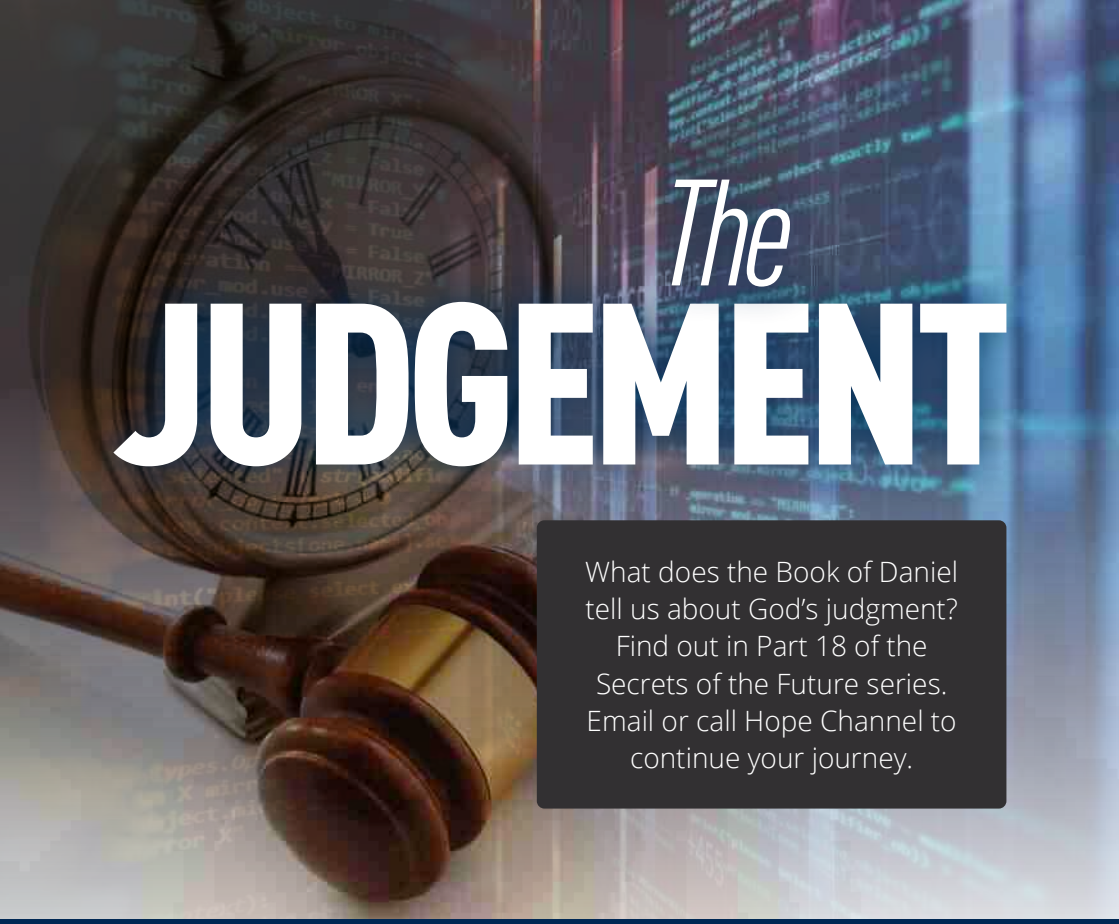
Relational questions:

1. Are you fearful of dying? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think the subject of what happens at death is important from God's perspective?
3. How do you think you would cope with the grief of losing someone you loved? Who would you go to for support and what sort of support do you think you would need?

Your response:

The Bible says that death is a sleep. If you should die before Jesus returns is it your desire to be in the resurrection of eternal life? _____





The JUDGEMENT

What does the Book of Daniel tell us about God's judgment? Find out in Part 18 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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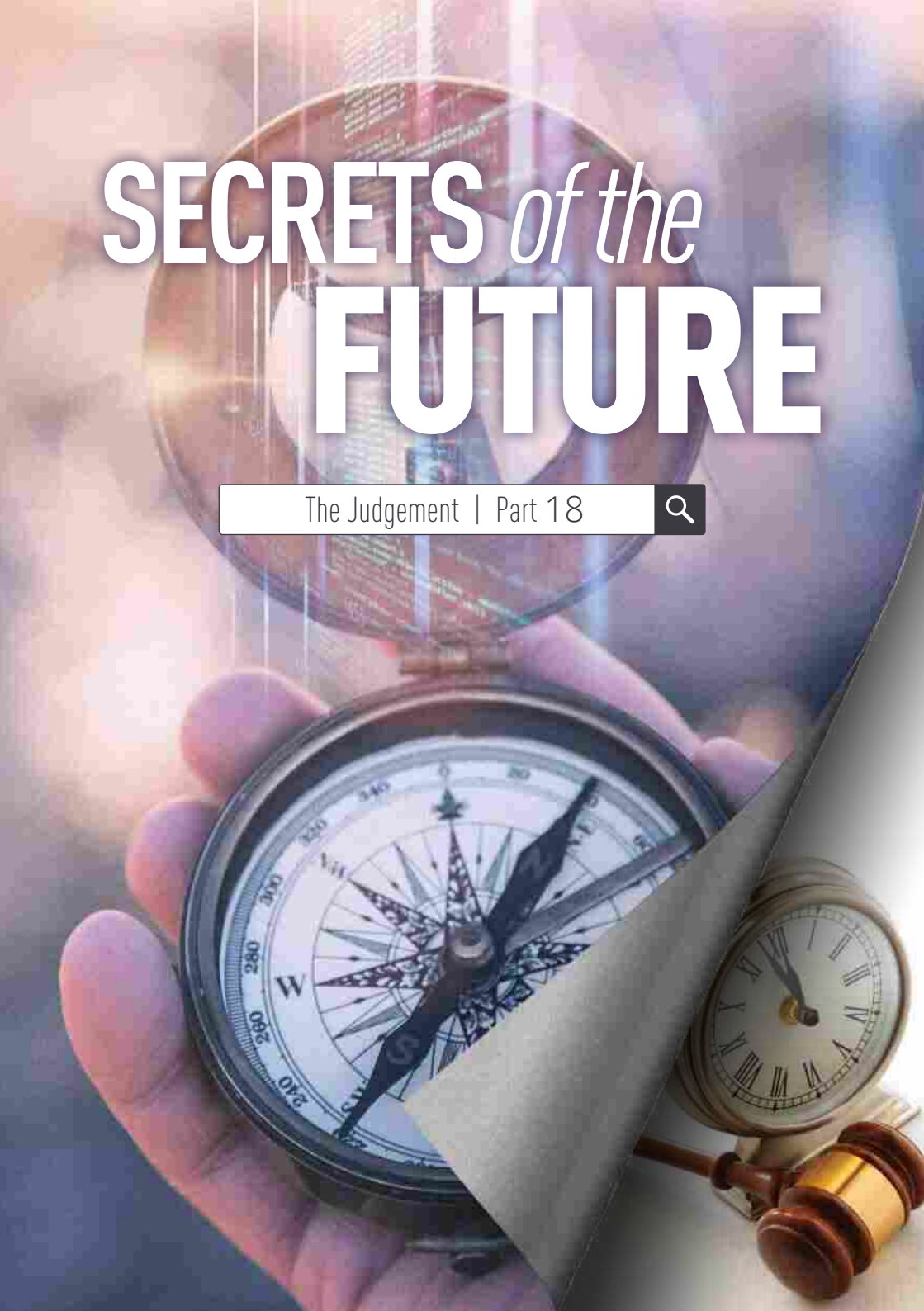
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

The Judgement | Part 18



THE JUDGEMENT

If you were convinced that Jesus would return tonight, how would you feel? What would you do? Where would you go?

On October 22, 1844, tens of thousands of Christians waited for the Lord's return. They gathered in groups on mountaintops, in churches or in their own homes.



In the months prior, believers across North America and other parts of the world, began preparing in earnest for this great event. They prayed and studied their Bibles like never before. Farmers left corn and potato crops unharvested in their fields. Retailers closed the doors to their shops.

This advertisement appeared on the front page of a United States newspaper,

"If I owe anybody any money as a result of my business dealings and if I've not been faithful in paying it, please let me know so I can pay up my debts, because Jesus is coming October 22, 1844, and I want to ascend in the cloud and go with Him." ***The Providence***, Rhode Island Newspaper 1844.

To their great discouragement, Jesus did not come in 1844.

So what had gone wrong?

Years earlier, a Baptist farmer by the name of William Miller began studying prophecy. He came across a prediction in the book of Daniel that caught his attention. Daniel 8:14 states, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed". Miller concluded that this prophecy predicted the date for the Second Coming of Jesus. He did the calculations and determined that Christ would return in 1843 or 1844.

William Miller began a worldwide movement that came from Baptists, Methodists, Catholics and many other religions. At its peak there were over 3,000 ministers and up to 100,000 thousand followers waiting for the Lord's return.

When Jesus did not return hopes were shattered. This event has gone down in history as the "great disappointment".

So why didn't Jesus return all those years ago? Did William Miller miss something? What is the "cleansing of the sanctuary"? Is there any connection between the sanctuary and God's judgment? And if there is, should we be fearful of the judgment today?





In this study guide we will investigate the subject of the judgment. Amazingly, we will discover that the judgment is in session right now.

Q1 HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL FACE THE JUDGMENT?

2 Corinthians 5:10 - *For we must _____ appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad*

Judgment is not optional. All of us will face our Creator and be answerable for the decisions we have made in life. Some are afraid of this event and don't want to talk about it. But if we put our trust and confidence in Jesus there is no need to be nervous. We can even look forward to the judgment.

Q2 WILL THE JUDGMENT TAKE PLACE PRIOR TO THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS?

Revelation 22:12 *And behold, I am coming quickly, and My _____ is with Me, to give to every one according to his work*

Jesus will come with His reward "to give to every one according to his work". A reward must firstly be determined before it can be given. Therefore, there is a time prior to Christ's return when the judgment takes place. This judgment determines who is saved and who is lost.

Like any court room there will be investigation of the evidence, followed by a verdict and sentence. For the Christian, the sentence (or reward) is an eternity with our Friend and Saviour Jesus.



Q3 HOW DID THE PROPHET DANIEL DESCRIBE THE JUDGMENT?

Daniel 7:9,10 *I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of days was seated ...The _____ was seated, and the _____ were opened*

Daniel saw in vision the judgment in heaven's sanctuary. God sat on His throne. The court was seated. Millions of angels were present. The books were opened for investigation. And the judgment began. Daniel portrays this scene as a major and spectacular event.



Q4 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE JUDGMENT?

Daniel 7:18 - *But the saints of the Most High shall receive the _____, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever*

The judgment confirms who will be saved at the Second Coming. The prophet Daniel saw in vision a barrage of attacks against God's people throughout history. He then saw the judgment as God's solution to reward His people (Daniel 7:18,22).



God's heart desire is to save all humanity (2 Peter 3:9). A period of judgment alerts us to the fact that time is running out. Now is the time to be sorry for our sins. Now is the time for complete trust and dependence on Jesus.

The judgment has epic consequences. In a bizarre twist, God is not just the judge, but also the one being judged (Romans 3:4). The whole universe will see God's judgments on every being throughout history. At the completion of the judgment there will be no doubt that God is love. God is fair. God is righteous.

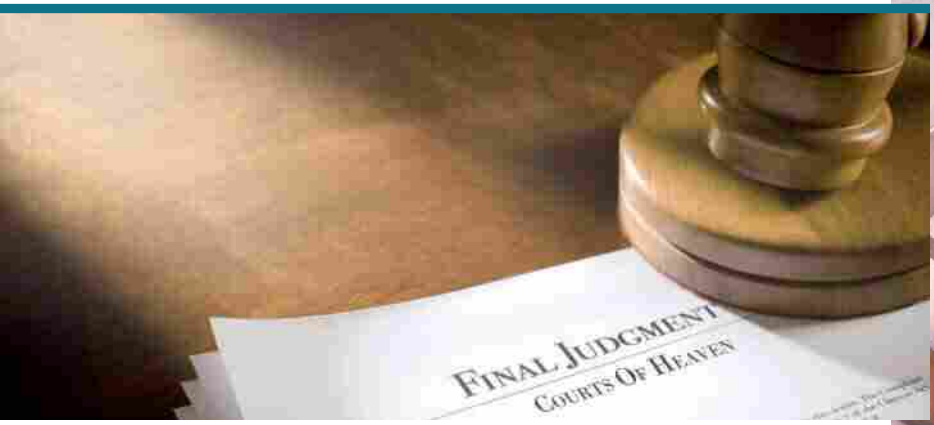
The judgment is an integral step in solving the problem of sin. Not just for now. Forever.

Q5 WHO ARE THE KEY PLAYERS IN THE JUDGMENT?

John 5:22 - *For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the _____*

Those involved in the judgment include:

- God the judge (Daniel 7:9)
- Satan the accuser (Revelation 12:9,10)
- Jesus our defender (1 John 2:1)
- Humans being judged (2 Corinthians 5:10)
- Angels as witnesses (Daniel 7:10)



The judgment is good news. The Father has given the role of judgment to Jesus. So Jesus, our lawyer (or

advocate), will also be our judge. Imagine that! Jesus died in our place. He fulfilled the sentence for our sins. As a result, Jesus can be both just and gracious. If you put your complete trust in Jesus you will be cleared in the judgment.

Q6 ON WHAT BASIS WILL WE BE JUDGED?

Ecclesiastes 12:14 - *For God will bring every _____ into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil*

1 John 2:1 *My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an _____ with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*

Revelation 3:5 *He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of _____; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels*

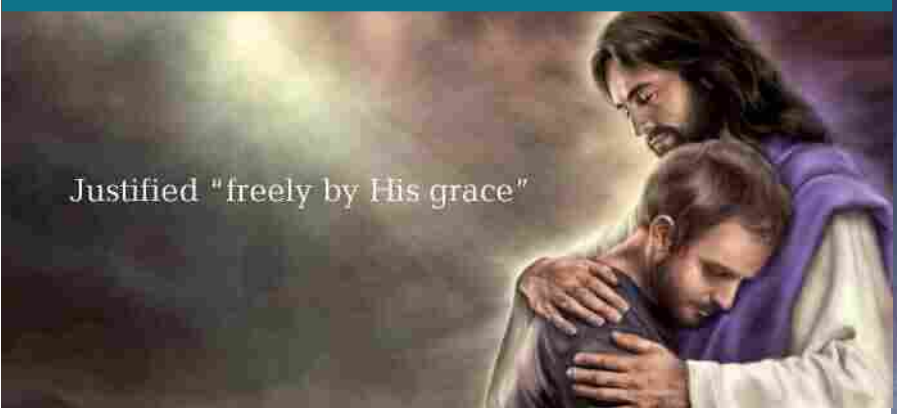
God's law is the standard in the judgment. God records every thought and behaviour. The whole of heaven is aware of what we do, even if our sins are done in secret.

So how can a just God declare a guilty person not guilty?

The Bible says the "wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). We are guilty. We deserve to die. But Jesus took our sentence and died in our place. Since He is the One we sinned against, He is the only One who can take the punishment for our sins.

When we confess our sins two things take place:

- We are declared not guilty
- We are declared righteous



Jesus justifies us "freely by His grace" (Romans 3:24). Our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. That means we are saved. In the judgment, Jesus promises His followers that He will not blot their names out of the Book of Life. On the contrary, it will be the record of their sins that will be blotted out (Acts 3:19).

But consider this. You may wonder why a God of love and mercy does not take everyone to heaven. After all, doesn't He want everyone there?

God will take to heaven everyone who would be happy there. Heaven is more about a friendship with Jesus than a mansion up in the sky. To the believer seeing the face of Jesus will be the pinnacle of life. To the unbeliever it will be torture (Revelation 6:14-16). If we don't enjoy time with God on earth, we certainly would not enjoy it in heaven. God respects our choices. It is the same mercy that keeps some people out of heaven, as it is that allows others into heaven.



Q7 WHEN DOES THE JUDGMENT BEGIN?

Daniel 8:14 - *For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be _____*

The book of Daniel covers the big issues in the great conflict between Christ and Satan. In chapter 7 the prophet saw the rise and fall of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. He then saw the "little horn" power of the Medieval church. Once this power fell (which occurred in 1798), Daniel saw the judgment take place (Daniel 7:9-11). So we know the judgment would occur some time after the year 1798.

In chapter 8 the timing of the judgment becomes very specific. Daniel once again saw the large superpowers of world history (including the antichrist power). They were attacking God's people and ruling the world. Daniel responded by asking "how long" all these attacks would last.

Daniel was told that all the conflict and apostasy would last for 2,300 days before the "sanctuary would be cleansed". This literally made him sick with anxiety (Daniel 8:27). It was clear that this prophecy was a long way off because the prediction would come to fulfilment "many days into the future" (Daniel 8:26). Daniel likely knew that a prophetic day was a year, and so as he looked down the barrel of 2,300 years, he went to his knees in prayer.

Daniel's heartfelt prayer is found in the next chapter, Daniel 9. In fact, the key to understanding the time frame of Daniel 8:14 is to recognize that Daniel 8 and 9 are part of the one vision and prophecy. In the original Scripture manuscripts there was never a division made between the chapters.

Daniel prayed earnestly for his city and people, asking forgiveness and cleansing. God responded to Daniel's prayer by sending His angel Gabriel

(Daniel 9:20-22). Gabriel was the same angel "seen in the vision" of chapter 8 "at the beginning" (Daniel 9:21). Throughout chapter 8 Gabriel identified the beast powers and described the event that would take place at the end of 2,300 days (the cleansing of the sanctuary). The only thing missing was the starting date for the 2,300 day prophecy. In chapter 9 Gabriel provides the starting date and provides further details of the vision that relates specifically to Daniel's city and people; Jerusalem and the Jews (Daniel 9:24-27 – this prophecy is outlined in detail in the study guide "The Mystery Man of Prophecy").



Gabriel said this section of the vision is "determined" (literally means "divided" or cut-off") from the total timeframe of 2,300 days (Daniel 9:24). As a result we can be certain that the starting date for the 2,300 day prophecy is exactly the same as the starting date for the Messiah prophecy of Daniel 9. They are both sections of the one prophecy.





God's Prophetic Time Line: 2,300 Days (Daniel 8:14) & 70 Weeks (Daniel 9:24)

The starting date of this prophecy was a command allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their city (Daniel 9:25). This decree, found in Ezra 7, was made by King Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign, in 457BC. This starting date of 457BC is verified in history through the writings of the Greek historian Herodotus, through Babylonian records and through the Alexandrian astronomer Ptolemy (Canon of Ptolemy). Counting 2,300 literal years from 457BC brings us to 1844, the start of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

William Miller's study had been extensive. He had the timing correct. But the event was wrong. Miller did not understand the meaning of the "cleansing of the sanctuary". He thought it meant the cleansing of the earth by fire at the Second Coming of Jesus.

So what is the "cleansing of the sanctuary"? And why does Daniel connect it to judgment? The best way to answer this question is to review the cleansing of the sanctuary on earth. This event points very clearly to the work of judgment by Jesus in heaven's sanctuary.





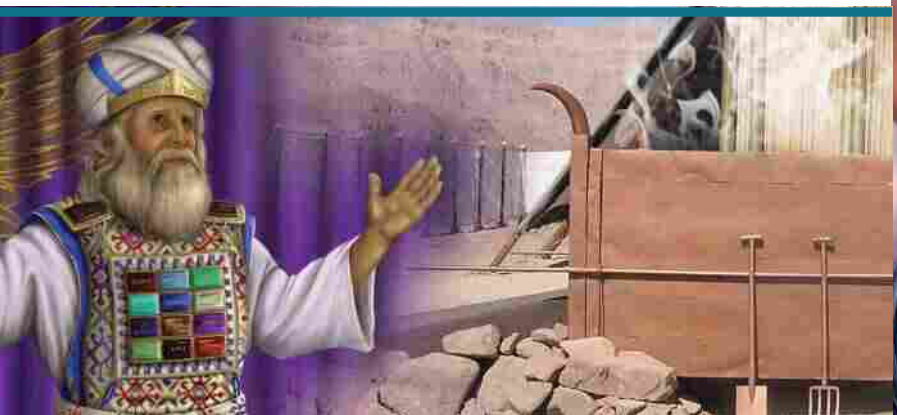
Q8 WHEN WAS THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY "CLEANSED"?

Leviticus 23:27 - *Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of _____. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord*

Leviticus 16:30 - *For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to _____ you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord*

As animal sacrifices were offered each day the priest took the blood and sprinkled it inside the Holy Place of the sanctuary. On other occasions the priest ate part of the flesh of the sacrifice. Both services symbolised the transfer of sin and death from the animal into the sanctuary.

On one day each year a special event took place. On the Day of Atonement the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place, into the very presence of God and His law.





The Day of "At-one-ment" (or Yom Kippur) was a day set aside to ensure complete harmony between God and man. The purpose was to cleanse both the sanctuary and the sinner. The record of sin built up in the sanctuary throughout the year (symbolised by the blood). After the Day of Atonement the sins were symbolically "blotted out" and the sanctuary was cleansed of sin.



This was a day of judgment. The people of Israel would "afflict their souls" by making sure there were no specific sins that were unconfessed or unforsaken. On this day, those who refused to confess their sins were judged guilty and cut off from God's people (Leviticus 23:29).

Q9 HOW WILL THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY BE CLEANSED?

Hebrews 9:23 - *Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens (the earthly sanctuary) should be _____ with these (the blood of animals), but the heavenly things themselves (the heavenly sanctuary) with _____ sacrifices than these (the precious blood of Jesus) (Note: words in brackets inserted for explanation)*

The cleansing of the sanctuary predicted by Daniel cannot refer to the earthly sanctuary. The Jewish temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70AD and has never been rebuilt. The events and symbols of the earthly sanctuary point to Jesus and the sanctuary in heaven. So what is happening in heaven? It may seem strange that a perfect heavenly sanctuary should be "cleansed"; but the record of our sins is in the sanctuary. The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary is the removal of the record of our sins from the books of heaven (Daniel 7:10). It is the judgment. Can you imagine how good it will feel to go to heaven and see none of your sins recorded there?

Before our sins are blotted out, God looks into the books to determine who has accepted the free gift of salvation. There will be some who believe they are Christians, and yet have not fully accepted Jesus or committed their life to Him (Matthew 7:22,23). Those who have not fully accepted Jesus will have their names, not their sins, blotted from the Book of Life (Revelation 3:5).



Q10 WHAT IMPACT SHOULD THE JUDGMENT HAVE ON OUR LIFE?

Revelation 14:7 - *... Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgement _____ come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water*

Living at our time in earth's history is not "business as usual". God's judgment has come. Not may come. Not will come. But has come. The judgment is now in session.

It is time for a spiritual revival and reformation. It is time to worship the Creator God. It is time to live a Spirit filled life. It is time to be free from the guilt and power of sin.



God is patient. He is passionate about saving people. He has waited for many years for people to repent, but soon time will run out. Jesus will return so we can live with Him forever. If you have not already committed your entire life to Him, then why not do so today?

Three Points to Remember:

- The judgment began in 1844
- Jesus is both our advocate and judge
- Now is the time to accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour

The story:

Karen was raised in a Christian home. Her father's friend, Robert, remembers Karen as a bright, bubbly girl. She loved to go on church camps and get out into nature. It seemed to Robert that Karen didn't have a care in the world.

When she became a teenager Karen began experimenting with alcohol and drugs. Over time the impact of sin took hold of her life. She became a heroin addict. A prostitute. Her whole life was a mess. She became pregnant to a man she met on the street. When Karen named her new baby, she called her "Hope". Possibly she wanted hope in her own life and she saw the baby as a symbol of hope.

Karen's life went further into a nosedive. She went to jail for stealing and prostitution and left her young child in the hands of her parents.

After many years Robert was told that Karen was coming home and would finally be able to be reunited with young Hopey (as her grandparents called her).

When Robert saw Karen walk into the room after so many years he couldn't believe his eyes. Her face was marked and ugly. She was so thin she appeared ill. She looked haggard and sin worn. Words could not describe how repulsed he was at the sight of this girl who had ruined her life.



Then Hopey saw her mother. Her reaction was different. She took one look at Karen and said, "Oh look at Mummy – isn't she beautiful?" She didn't see a woman affected by sin. She saw a loving and lovable mother.

You may also feel at times that you have ruined your life with sin. However, in the judgment when God looks at you He doesn't see a hopeless case. He sees Jesus standing in your place and covering your life. You are not worthless. You are a child of God who has infinite value.

How do you feel when you realise that Jesus accepts you and loves you just as you are?

Relational questions:

1. What would you say to someone who feels they are not "good enough" to face the judgment?
2. Why do you think Jesus is the ideal advocate in the judgment?
3. What do you find is the most effective way to overcome sin?

Your response:

The judgment is now in session. Will you decide to accept Jesus today and ask Him to be your advocate in the judgment? _____



SIGNS *of the* TIMES



Many people have claimed to be Jesus Christ or to know the exact date of His return. But what does the Bible say? Find out what signs we should be looking out for in Part 19 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Signs of The Times | Part 19



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

One of the fastest growing interest sectors in today's society is astrology. Celebrities, politicians and millions of other people are looking to the stars to help them with their future. One of the clairvoyants to the stars is the psychic "Nikki". Nikki appears on radio and television programs throughout the United States and claims to have predicted the deaths of Crocodile Hunter Steve Irwin and actor Heath Ledger. Each year she looks into the stars to predict a range of events and trends ranging from natural disasters to the styles of men's fashion.

Mapping and reading the heavens began with the mystical religion of Babylon. Stars and planets were the gods and goddesses of nature and therefore primary indicators of divine will. The ancients would read the omens in the sky to predict weather patterns, famines, wars and the fate of kings and nations.

Is astrology an art or a science? How accurate are the predictions? Is there really anything in it, or is it just a sham?



Whatever your view may be of astrology, the revealed secrets of prophecy are both specific and amazingly accurate. In fact the God who created the stars wrote the predictions, and it is He who also reveals them. The Creator God bases His authenticity on the absolute accuracy of the prophecies of Scripture (Isaiah 46:9,10).

In this study guide we will uncover one of the most relevant prophecies for our time – the signs associated with the Second Coming of Jesus.

As background reading it would be helpful to read the whole chapter of Matthew 24. This chapter has the Second Coming of Jesus as the central focus.

Q1. WHAT DID JESUS SAY WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN BEING ABLE TO READ THE HEAVENS?

Matthew 16:2,3 - *When it is evening you say, "It will be fair weather, for the sky is red"; and in the morning, "it will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening." Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the _____ of the _____*

The religious leaders in the days of Jesus could read the heavens but not the prophetic signs of the Scriptures. The Old Testament was full of prophecies relating to the coming of the Messiah, and yet they



totally misunderstood them. Here was Jesus standing before them and yet they could not see the "signs of the times", the direct fulfilment of the prophecies that pointed to Jesus as their Messiah.



Q2. WHAT SPECIFIC SIGNS WERE THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST MOST INTERESTED IN?

Matthew 24:3 - *"Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of _____ _____, and of the end of the age?"*

The disciples correctly saw the Second Coming and the end of the world (or age) as virtually the same event. They asked Jesus to tell them what signs or signals would indicate when this event would be near.



Q3. DOES ANYONE KNOW THE EXACT DATE OF JESUS' COMING?

Matthew 24:36 - *But of that day and hour ___ one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only*

Over the years a number of people have predicted an exact date for the coming of Jesus. However, notice what this commentator said, "Everyone who predicted the end of the world had one thing in common. They were wrong" (J. Gordon Melton). Jesus said that no-one knows the date except for God. Predicting dates not only results in disappointment and discouragement, it also encourages people to ridicule the Bible.



Q4. CAN WE KNOW WHEN THE RETURN OF JESUS IS NEAR?

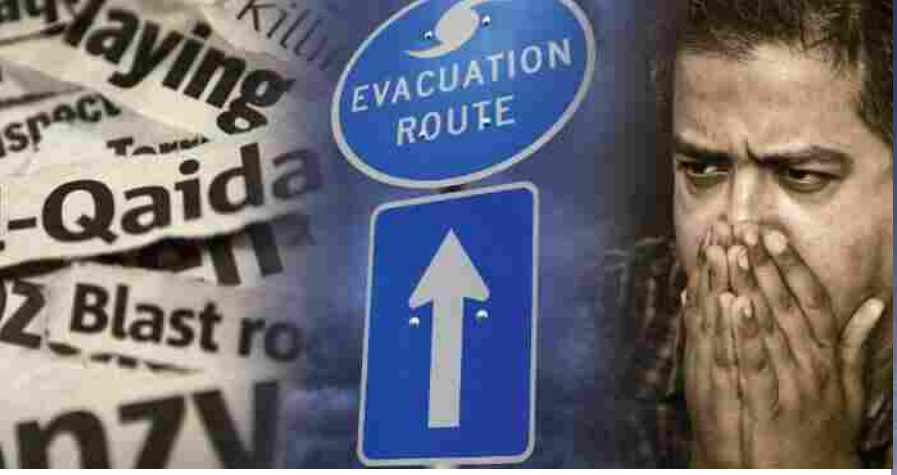
Matthew 24:32,33 - *Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near – at the _____*

Although Jesus warns us against predicting dates, He does tell us to investigate the prophecies and world events in order to see when His coming is near. Just as there were many prophecies regarding the first coming of Jesus, there are also clear prophecies relating to the Second Coming of Jesus.

Q5. WHAT ILLUSTRATION DOES JESUS USE WHEN DESCRIBING THE SIGNS OF CHRIST'S RETURN?

Matthew 24:8 - *All these are the beginning of _____*

After outlining a number of prophetic signs Jesus said they were the "beginning of sorrows". The word sorrow comes from the Greek word "Odin" which literally means the beginning of birth pains. Jesus used the illustration of childbirth as an example to describe the signs of His return.



Just as birth contractions increase in frequency and intensity as the mother gets closer to the birth of her child, so it is the signs of Christ's return become more frequent and intense as we near the end of time.

Q6. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SIGNS ASSOCIATED WITH THE VERY LAST DAYS BEFORE JESUS RETURNS?

a. Signs in the political world

WAR

Matthew 24:6,7 - *And you will hear of _____ and rumours of _____ (v6) For nation will rise _____ nation, and kingdom _____ kingdom (v7)*

Jesus pointed to international war as one of the signs of the last days. In the last century we had two world wars and an estimated average of over 30 wars on the planet every year.

According to the Worldwatch Institute, every hour the world is spending $100 million on soldiers, ammunitions and wars. In fact, the world spends nearly 80 times more money on the military than it would cost to provide basic water and sanitation for the world (worldwatch.org). With at least nine nuclear capable countries and an estimated 27,000 nuclear bombs in stock, the words of Jesus certainly ring true.

TERRORISM

Luke 21:25,26 - *... and on the earth _____ of nations (v25) Men's hearts failing them from _____ and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth (v26)*

Never before have we seen such tension, distress and fear among nations and people as we have today. A rapidly changing world and the increased threat of terrorism have resulted in people feeling unsafe. At a time when world leaders are talking about peace and security (1 Thessalonians 5:3) we are feeling a loss of control in our own lives. Increased heart attacks and stress have resulted from the anxiety of everyday life.

b. Signs in the physical world

EARTHQUAKES, FAMINES AND DISEASE

Matthew 24:7 - ... And there will be _____, _____ and _____ in various places

Up until the 19th century there were just over 2,000 recorded earthquakes. According to the United States Geological Survey program, we now see 500,000 detected quakes each year. An increase in earthquakes and resulting tsunamis are another sign that Jesus is coming back soon.

In terms of famines, the statistics are also alarming. The United Nations Habitat program reports that a billion people do not get enough food; 500 million are chronically malnourished.

The global population was 250 million at the time of Christ. It took 1900 years to reach 2 billion, just 75 years to reach the next 2 billion, then just 25 years to reach the next 2 billion. This earth is populating at such a rate that we have just passed the mark for not having enough arable land to feed the planet, even if we wanted to. Added to this, fresh water levels are diminishing at such a rate that experts are predicting that half the world will live in areas of critical water shortage within 20 years (Jamal Saghir, Director of energy and water, World Bank).

Pestilences are also a sign of the end. These "pests" are not just plant eating locusts or fruit fly; it includes disease. The ***National Geographic*** reports that 3,000 people die each day from a mosquito bite, mostly children from Africa. As we near the end of the world, there will be a whole range of new exotic diseases, spread around the world through travel and refugees. One of the greatest concerns relates to the different strains of flu (eg Bird flu, Swine flu) which appear to be increasing in variety, frequency and severity.





There appears to be a growing trend towards disease from what we eat, particularly through meat products.

We are also fast running out of energy resources (coal, oil and gas) and climate change is occurring to such an extent that this issue is now seen as a greater threat to humanity than terrorism.

What is clear is that even the nature around us is demonstrating the soon return of Jesus.

c. Signs in the business world

CAPITALISM AND GLOBALISM

James 5:1-8 - *Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming on you! …You have heaped up treasure in the last days. Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you _____ back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord …You have lived on the earth in pleasure and_____…You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand*

Here we find rich men taking advantage of the low wages of the poor, while they live in luxury. Capitalism, with little social conscience, is a key aspect of the move towards a global economy in these last days. The world's richest men are increasing their wealth by multiplication not addition. The United Nations Development Report indicates that the world's richest 500 people have more wealth than the combined income of the world's poorest 416 million inhabitants.



Even in the United States the richest 1 percent of the nation has more wealth than the bottom 95 percent of the nation.

The Bible predicts that just before Jesus returns the financial systems of the world will collapse. Money will be hard to come by and the rich who have taken advantage of the poor will lose their great wealth (Revelation 18:11).

INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY

Daniel 12:4 - *But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and _____ shall increase*

No sooner is a new computer, phone or sound system launched, it quickly becomes superseded by a new technology. At a Sony BMG conference in Rome a report was presented indicating that new technology is doubling every two years. There is more unique information developed each year than the previous 5,000 years combined and a week's worth of news from the *New York Times* contains more information that the average person would come across in an entire lifetime living in the 18th century. It is certainly true today that people are stressed out rushing "to and fro" and knowledge has increased.

d. Signs in the social world

A MORAL COLLAPSE

Matthew 24:37 - *But as the days of _____ were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be*



Genesis 6:5 - *Then the Lord saw that the _____ of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil _____*

Jesus said that just before He returns, the earth will be in the same moral state as it was before the flood. At that time the world had become so wicked that only eight people chose to follow God's instructions and be saved. The remainder, by their own choice, were destroyed.

A PREOCCUPATION WITH PLEASURE

2 Timothy 3:1-5 - *But know this that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be... lovers of _____ rather than lovers of God (v1,2,4)*

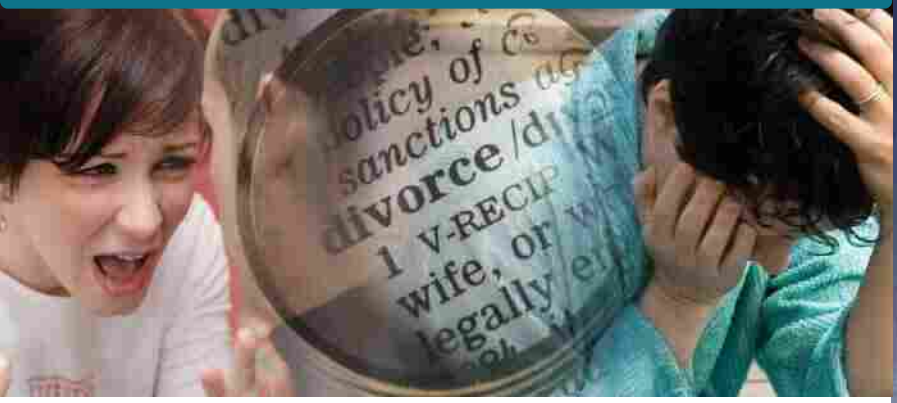
Sport and Leisure – the great love of the last days. As we jam pack hotel pleasure resorts, sports stadiums and spend endless hours in front of our home theatres, we can see a direct fulfilment of this sign of the last days.

DISOBEDIENT CHILDREN

2 Timothy 3:1,2 - *But know this that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be... _____ to parents*

These days, it is a real challenge to bring up children. Parents are losing hope. Some want to give up. It is a crazy world where we find children now officially divorcing from their parents!

Author and commentator Michael Medved claims the average American child will spend more time watching TV by the age of six than they will spend talking with their father in an entire lifetime (Center of the American Experiment). The influence of film, television and music has had a major impact on the family.



BREAKDOWN IN LOVE RELATIONSHIPS

Matthew 24:12 - *And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow _____*

Marriages today are falling apart at a staggering rate. People are still searching for love, but say it's too difficult to find. Spouses have become "partners" and the breakdown of the family is a key sign of the last days.

e. Signs in the religious world

PEOPLE WILL RIDICULE THE MESSAGE OF THE SECOND COMING

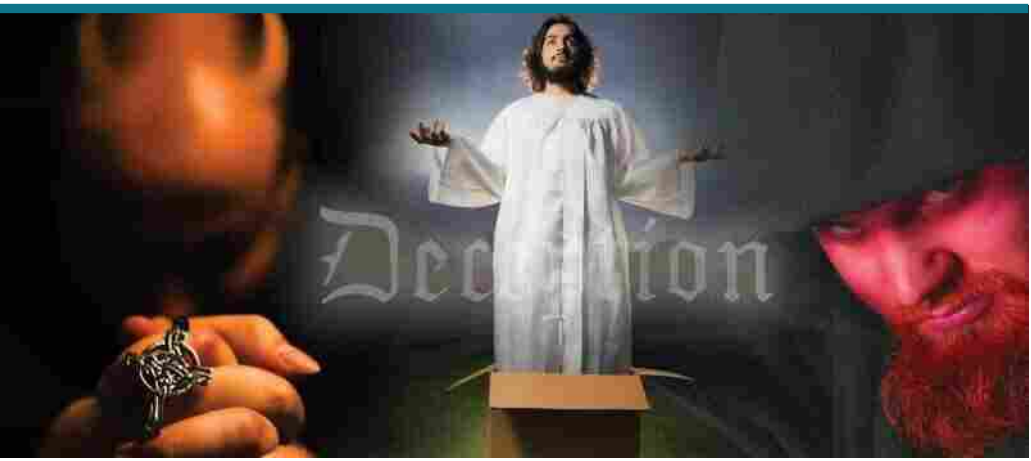
2 Peter 3:3,4 - *Knowing this first: that _____ will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying "where is the promise of His _____"*

There is a growing movement away from religion and churches towards a broad-based inner spirituality. In fact although Jesus promised us He would return (John 14:1-3) many Christians do not even take the Second Coming of Christ seriously. The Bible says this is a sign of the last days.

DECEPTION THROUGH FALSE MIRACLES, PROPHETS AND CHRISTS

Matthew 24:24 - *For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great _____ and _____ to deceive, if possible, even the elect*

Four times in Matthew 24 Jesus warns against religious deception. This miracle working religious deception is moving quickly through religious circles and is a major sign of the last days.



There are numerous people today claiming to be Jesus Christ. One such person is Jose Luis de Jesus Miranda. This man, who shows a "666" tattoo on his forearm, has a global media network and has appeared on CNN, CBS and Fox claiming to be "the Man Christ Jesus" and claiming hundreds of churches and millions of followers.

The Bible indicates that in the last days it will be false christs and false miracles that will be used to unite the nations into a false religious system (Revelation 13:13,14; 16:14)

MOVEMENT TOWARDS SPIRITUALISM

1 Timothy 4:1 - *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving _____ and doctrines of _____*

It wasn't too many years ago when movies and television were subtle regarding the supernatural. Now it is a key theme of many programs. Mediums, witches, devils and communication with the dead are all seen as mainstream.



DECLINE OF GENUINE CHRISTIANITY

2 Tim 3:1-5 - *But know this that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves ... having a _____ of godliness but denying its _____ (v1,2,5)*

Jesus said in the last days there would be many people who will look like Christians, yet they will not experience true spirituality. There are countless "one day a week" Christians. They profess to be Christians but do not experience the power of God.



GOSPEL PREACHED ALL OVER THE WORLD

Matt 24:14 - *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in _____ the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

Many of the signs of Christ's return are a reflection of a sad and evil world. Now we have the good news! A unique message of hope is spreading throughout the world in these last days. This gospel message found in Revelation 14:6-12 can now be transmitted through satellite and internet technology. Jesus has promised that once this message has reached everyone in the world, the end will then come.



Q7. WHAT IS THE GREATEST DANGER ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOON COMING OF JESUS?

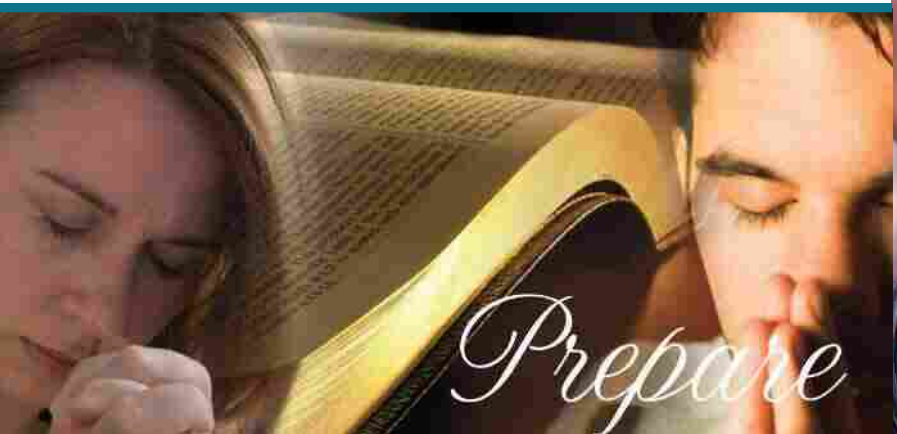
Matthew 24:44 - *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not _____*

Even if we know that Jesus is coming soon, we need to be ready as if He were coming today. Peter says that Jesus will come as a "thief in the night" (2 Peter 3:10). We lock our doors and windows each night because we know a thief could come. Yet, when it happens it gives us a great shock. We cannot afford to delay our preparation for the coming of Jesus. We need to be ready now.

Q8. HOW CAN WE BE READY FOR JESUS TO COME?

Revelation 3:20 - *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone _____ My voice and _____ the door, I will come into him and dine with him, and he with Me*

Firstly we need to be listening to hear the knock from Jesus, asking if He can enter into our lives. Secondly, we need to open the door and ask Him to come in. Have you accepted Jesus as your personal Saviour and asked Him to become an important part of your life?



Three points to remember

- No-one knows exactly when Jesus will return
- The signs indicate Jesus is coming soon
- To be ready for Jesus we need to prepare now

The story:

A young boy from Australia was sleeping one night in his Sydney home. He woke up through the night to find a man staring right at him as the boy lay in his bed. Frightened, the young boy believed this man to be a dangerous thief who could harm him. The young boy decided his best hope was to close his eyes, stay silent and hope for the best. After a while the thief did leave the home and fortunately, the boy was safe.

When that young boy grew up he read from the Bible that Jesus would come like a "thief in the night" to those who aren't ready. As he thought about this he realised that on that day it would be no use closing his eyes, staying silent and hoping for the best. True safety would only come if he accepted Jesus as his Friend now. He decided to commit his life to Jesus and be ready and waiting for Jesus to come.

What lessons can you learn from this story?

Relational Questions:

1. Do you think the Second Coming is an important subject? Why?
2. Does the soon return of Jesus scare you or make you excited?
3. What do you need to do specifically in your life to ensure you are ready for Jesus to come? Are there any barriers that still need to be removed?
4. What do you think will be the first thing you say to Jesus when He returns?

Your Response:

Is it your desire to prepare now to be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus? If so, would you like to ask Jesus to be your personal Saviour and trust Him to guide and direct your life? _____





HOW WILL *the* WORLD END?

What will the Second Coming of Jesus look like? Some describe it as a rapture, in which people will mysteriously vanish. But is this what the Bible says? Learn about it in Part 20 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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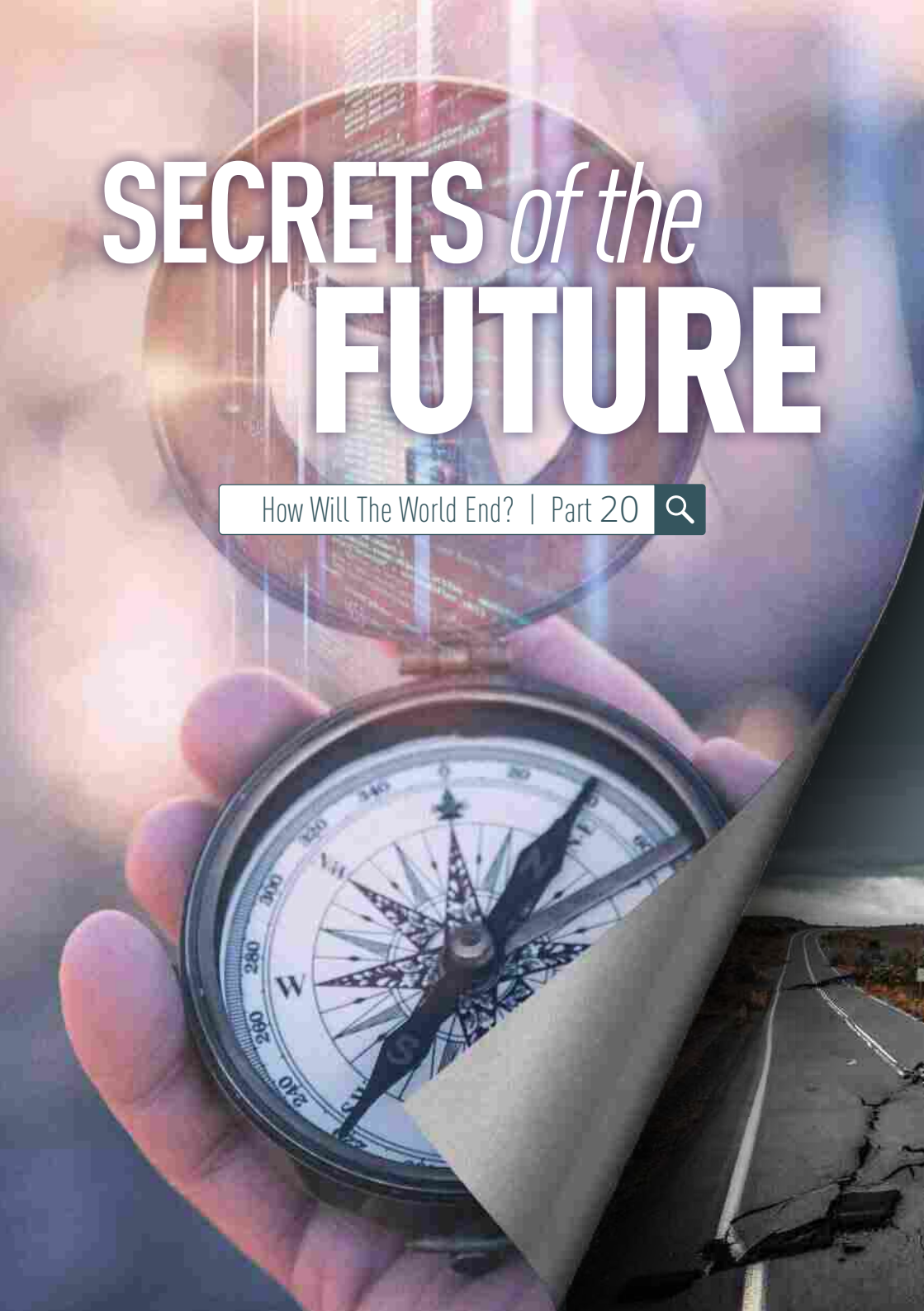
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

How Will The World End? | Part 20



HOW WILL THE WORLD END?

In their book ***The Life and Death of Planet Earth,*** two astrobiologists from the University of Washington, claim the world's future is bound by an internal time clock. Firstly, they say the age of plants and animals will be over, then the ocean will be lost in space, and eventually the entire planet will devolve into a burned-out cinder as the sun swallows it up – in about 7.5 billion years.

Astronomer Robert Smith, from the University of Sussex, agrees with this prognosis and suggests our only hope may be to build a fleet of interplanetary "life rafts". These rafts would need to manoeuvre themselves away from the reach of the sun but still stay close enough to use its energy.

Here are some other bleak options for how our world may end:

- A global nuclear war will occur with the only survivors being cockroaches. These cockroaches will be the "seed" that evolve into the next "intelligent" species – in 100 million years or so.
- A "doomsday" asteroid will hit the planet and destroy humanity. According to the Near Earth Asteroid Tracking project at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, there are between 500 and 1000 large near earth objects that could accomplish this objective.



- A fatal disease will sweep the earth wiping out all humanity. This could be an alien micro organism, or a man-made disease through biotechnology such as an airborne version of the Ebola virus.
- One of the 10 million black holes within the milky way will move towards earth, resulting in our planet being ejected from the solar system and hurtled to a frigid fate in deep space.
- Experiments with the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) will go wrong, and instead of recreating the "Big Bang", 21st century scientists will turn the entire planet into a fine cloud of particles.

Is the future this gloomy? Is there any hope for planet earth or are we doomed into an eternity of oblivion? This study guide will document the prophecies of Scripture that clearly outline how this world will end.

Q1. WHAT HOPE IS THERE FOR THE FUTURE?

Titus 2:13 *- looking for the _____ _____ and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*

Revelation 21:4 *- And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the _____ things have passed _____*



The future life will be full of new beginnings. Just imagine – no more broken relationships, no more cancer, no more depression, no more loneliness and no more youth suicide. The power and effect of sin and death will be gone – replaced with health, happiness and peace.

Q2. WHAT EVENT WILL BEGIN THIS NEW LIFE OF UNENDING HOPE AND HAPPINESS?

***Hebrews 9:28** - … To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a _____ time, apart from sin, for salvation*

The Second Coming of Christ brings victory and salvation to the followers of Jesus, and an end to this world in its present state. This event is so important that it is mentioned over 1,000 times in the Bible. In the New Testament alone, one in every 25 verses speak of the return of Jesus Christ.



Q3. CAN WE BE CERTAIN JESUS WILL COME AGAIN?

***John 14:1-3** - And if I go and prepare a place for you, I ____ come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also (v3)*

Jesus gives us His Word that He will come again. Not maybe – or should – or hope to – but will. If there is one thing we can be absolutely certain of, it is the Second Coming of Jesus. Notice also the main purpose of the Second Coming – to receive us to Himself and take us back to heaven.

Q4. HOW WILL JESUS COME AGAIN?

***Acts 1:9-11** - "Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This _____ Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in _____ _____ as you saw Him go into heaven"*

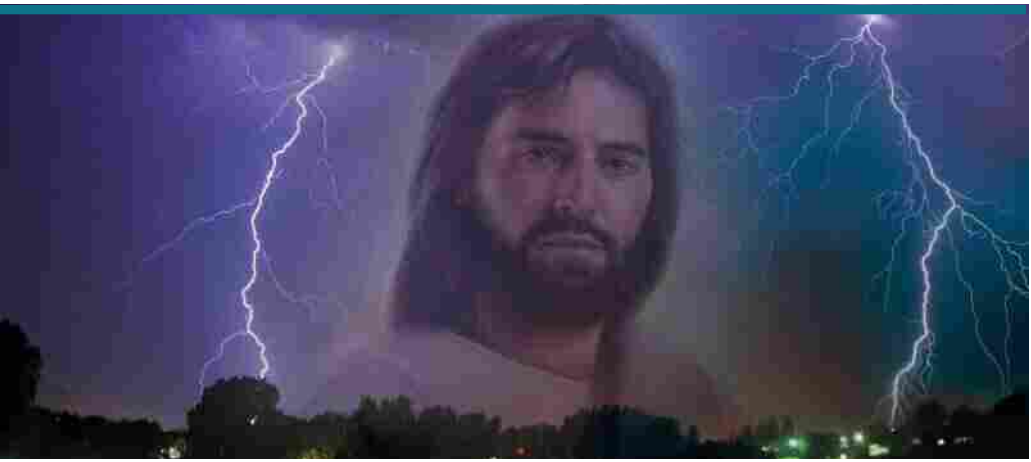


Evidently, when Jesus comes back He will come back in the same way that He left. That is, He will be coming back literally and personally, not figuratively or spiritually. Notice the visual words: watched, looked, behold, gazing and saw. Just like those apostles, we will be able to look up into heaven and actually see Him come back to this earth. Also, it will be this "same" Jesus who returns. Not a ghost or spirit, but in bodily form, just as He left.

Q5. WHO WILL BE WITH JESUS WHEN HE RETURNS?

***Matt 25:31** - When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy _____ with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory*

Can you imagine the enormity of the Second Coming of Jesus? Jesus will be coming down out of heaven, sitting on His throne, accompanied by possibly billions of His angels.



Q6. WHO WILL SEE JESUS WHEN HE RETURNS?

***Matthew 24:30** - Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then ___ the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will ____ the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*

***Revelation 1:7** - Behold, He is coming with clouds and _____ eye will see Him*

The Second Coming will be a global event seen by everyone – good and bad. Every eye will see Him. No-one will miss it. Jesus compared His coming to a huge electrical storm flashing from one side of the sky to the other (Matthew 24:27).

Q7. WILL THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS OCCUR SECRETLY?

***John 5:28,29** - Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will_____ his voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation*

***1 Thessalonians 4:16 -** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a _____, with the _____ of an archangel, and with the _____ of God*



There will be nothing secret or silent about the Second Coming of Jesus. Even the dead will hear the voice of Jesus. With words such as shout, voice and trumpet, God wants to make sure we were absolutely clear that the Second Coming will be an event everyone will hear.

Q8. WHAT DID JESUS MEAN WHEN HE SAID IN MATTHEW 24 "ONE WILL BE TAKEN, AND THE OTHER LEFT"?

***Matthew 24:37-40** - But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took _____ all away, so also will the coming of the Son of man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be _____ and the other_____*

Some Christians believe in a concept called the "secret rapture" At the heart of this teaching, Jesus is said to "rapture" away the righteous in secret. For instance, a plane will be flying along, and suddenly the pilot has just vanished. The good are taken away silently while the wicked are left on planet earth. You have probably read books or seen movies, which incorporate this concept. One such film is the movie ***Gone*** which depicts three lawyers who were "left behind" while their more ethical friends were whisked away to heaven in secret.

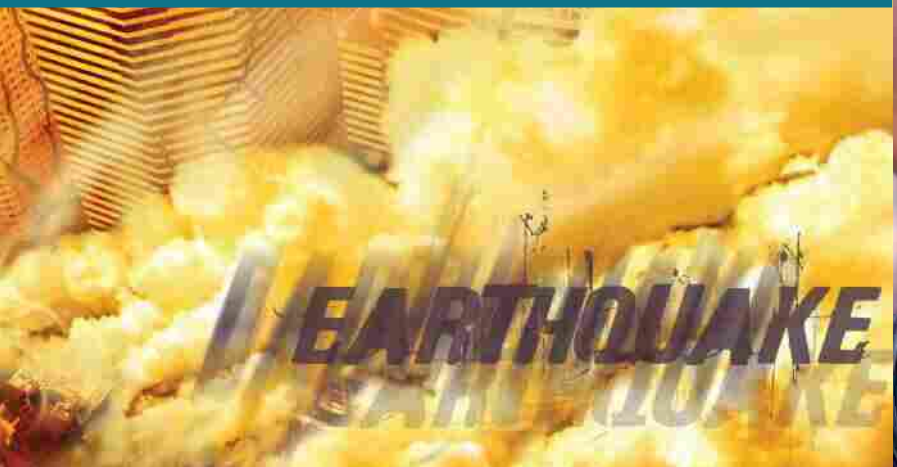
The words of Jesus here in Matthew 24 are often used as evidence for the theory of the secret rapture, but notice what Jesus is actually saying. Jesus compared the Second Coming to the global flood at the time of Noah. He describes how the people of the day were enjoying everyday life as per usual until the flood came along – some were taken; the others were

left. There is not even the slightest indication that this event is secret. Nor is there any reference to a two-stage coming. One of the key "secrets of prophecy" is that the Second Coming is not going to be secret! The return of Jesus will be the loudest, most visible and global event in this world's history.

Q9. HOW WILL THE SECOND COMING AFFECT PLANET EARTH?

***Rev 16:18,20** - ... and there was a great _____, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth....Then every _____ fled away, and the _____ were not found*

With unprecedented earthquakes, islands sinking and mountains falling, planet earth as we know it, will be devastated by the Second Coming (see also 2 Peter 3:10 for a description of the powerful destruction of earth when Jesus comes as a "thief in the night").







Q10. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD WHEN JESUS RETURNS?

***Dan 2:44** - And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...it shall break in _____ and _____ all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever*

Here we find the key point of a secret dream given to King Nebuchadnezzar more than 2,500 years ago. The Second Coming of Jesus will destroy all the kingdoms of this world. God will set up His own Kingdom – a kingdom that will stand forever.

Q11. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE LIVING WICKED WHEN JESUS RETURNS?

***2 Thessalonians 2:8** - And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will _____ with the breath of His mouth and _____ with the brightness of His coming*

The wicked cannot bear the sight of a pure and Holy God. They shout out for the rocks and mountains to fall on them; to hide them from the face of Jesus (Revelation 6:15-17). At the time of Christ's resurrection the brightness of one angel caused the Roman guards to faint and become "like dead men"(Matthew 28:2-4). Imagine the impact of what could be millions, possibly billions, of angels, along with the glory of Jesus. The evil natures of the wicked will be overwhelmed with His purity and brightness.

Q12. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD WHEN JESUS RETURNS?

1 Thessalonians 4:16 - *... And the dead in Christ will _____ first*

When Jesus returns the righteous dead will be raised first out of their graves. Imagine the excitement of standing in a graveyard at that time, or seeing your loved relatives raised from their tombs. The prophet Isaiah says the dead will awake and sing praise to their God (Isaiah 26:19) as they are lifted up to meet Jesus in the air.



Q13. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO OUR BODIES WHEN JESUS COMES?

***1 Corinthians 15:52,53** - ... and the dead will be _____ incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality*

What great news. These imperfect bodies will be changed. We will have eternal youth! Even more importantly, our natures will change. We will become immortal, never to suffer, sin, or die again.

Q14. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RIGHTEOUS LIVING WHEN JESUS RETURNS?

***1 Thessalonians 4: 17** - Then we who are alive and remain shall be _____ up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the _____. And thus we shall always be with the Lord*

Once the righteous dead have been raised, those who are alive and waiting for the return of Jesus will rise into the air also. There will be a giant reunion of all those who have loved God throughout the history of the planet. Notice that Jesus does not set foot on the earth. Jesus will not be seen via CNN at a football match or meeting the President at the White House. The earth will be wiped clean of all life and all the righteous will meet in the air.



Q15. WHAT WARNING DOES JESUS GIVE ABOUT THE SECOND COMING?

***Matthew 24:5** - For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will _____ many*

Jesus warns us that there will be counterfeit or "fake" Christs. It is interesting to note that the Jews are anxiously looking for their Messiah; the Muslims are looking for the return of Jesus (Isa) and the Christians of course are also looking for Jesus to return. One of the last deceptions will be a range of counterfeit Second Comings, possibly including a secret rapture and a literal return by the devil himself, claiming to be Christ. Jesus said these deceptions will be so effective, even the "very elect" may be fooled (Matthew 24:24).

Q16. HOW CAN WE BE PROTECTED AGAINST DECEPTION?

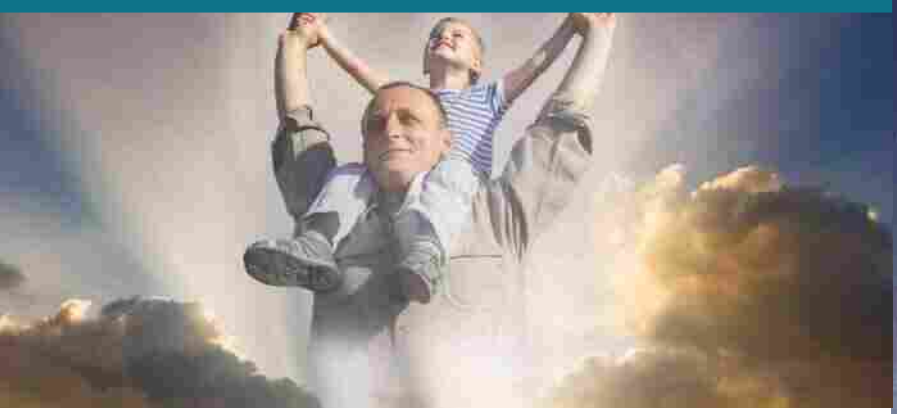
Isaiah 8:20 *- To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to _____ _____, it is because there is no light in them*

In order to know what is right, we need to firstly understand and trust the Scriptures. We then need to test everything by "this Word". In this lesson we have outlined from the Bible how Jesus will return. We can all be certain of truth and error when it comes to this vital issue of the Second Coming.

Q17. WHAT WILL THE RIGHTEOUS SAY AT THE SECOND COMING?

Isaiah 25:9 *- And it will be said in that day: "Behold this is our God; we have _____ for Him, and He will save us"*

The righteous will not be taken by surprise. Jesus will come as a "thief in the night" (2 Peter 3:10) for the wicked, but the righteous will be waiting for Jesus.



Q18. WILL EVERYONE WHO CLAIMS TO BE SAVED BE TAKEN TO HEAVEN WHEN JESUS RETURNS?

***Matt 7:21-23** - Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord", shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the _____ of My Father in heaven (v21)...depart from Me, you who practice _____(v23)*

There are people today who claim to be Christians, full of the Holy Spirit, yet they will miss out on heaven. The reason is simple. Jesus wants not only our worship, but also our obedience. In fact the highest form of worship is obedience. Any Christian who says "Lord, Lord" but is not willing to keep God's law is alienating themselves from God and not practising true Christianity.



Q19. WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SOON COMING OF JESUS?

***Rev 22:20** - He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, _____, Lord Jesus!"*

The Second Coming is the great hope for the Christian. There may be some of you who want Jesus to come – but not yet. You may feel you have too much of your life still to live. But a life with Jesus is not a boring, restrictive life. It involves living life to the full, through health and happiness. It is a life that brings inner peace and contentment. Added to this, it will soon be an eternal life where there will be no more pain, suffering or sorrow. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

Three points to remember:

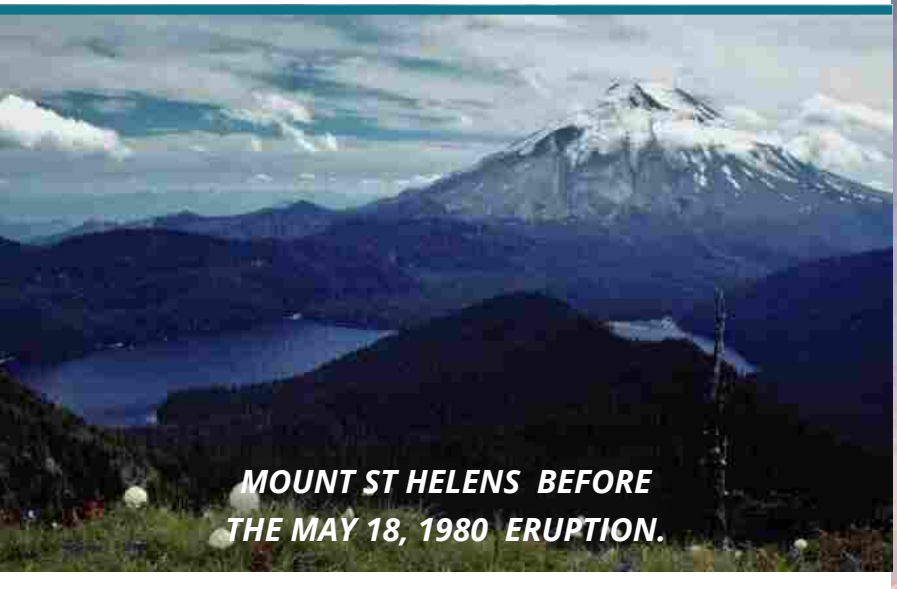
- The Second Coming of Jesus is the great hope for the Christian
- Jesus will return to planet earth – physically, visually and audibly
- Deception regarding the Second Coming is a vital tool of the devil

The story:

In early May 1980, a warning message went out to the residents of Mount St Helens in the United States. Seismologists and other experts had monitored this volcanic mountain for months, and after repeated false alarms, they were sure this time it was going to blow. One of the most famous residents of this mountain was a man by the name of Harry Truman. This old character was nicknamed "the old man of the mountain". He repeatedly had officials plead with him to prepare for the destruction by leaving his property and going to an area of safety. Truman would laugh at the rangers and camera crews and refused to leave the mountain, certain he would be safe. On May 18, 1980, at 8:32am, Mount St Helens erupted violently. The

powerful gases blew out at over 1,000 kilometres per hour with a scorching heat of nearly 400 degrees Celsius. The result was the destruction of every living thing within a 20 km radius. That day 57 people died, including Harry Truman, buried about 30 metres under the lava.

What can we learn from this story as it relates to the destruction of the world at the Second Coming of Christ?



MOUNT ST HELENS BEFORE THE MAY 18, 1980 ERUPTION.

Relational questions:

1. Why is an understanding of the Second Coming important to your everyday Christian experience?
2. What can you do in a practical way to protect yourself against false Christs and religious deceptions about the Second Coming?
3. What do you need to do in your life in order to know and do the will of God?



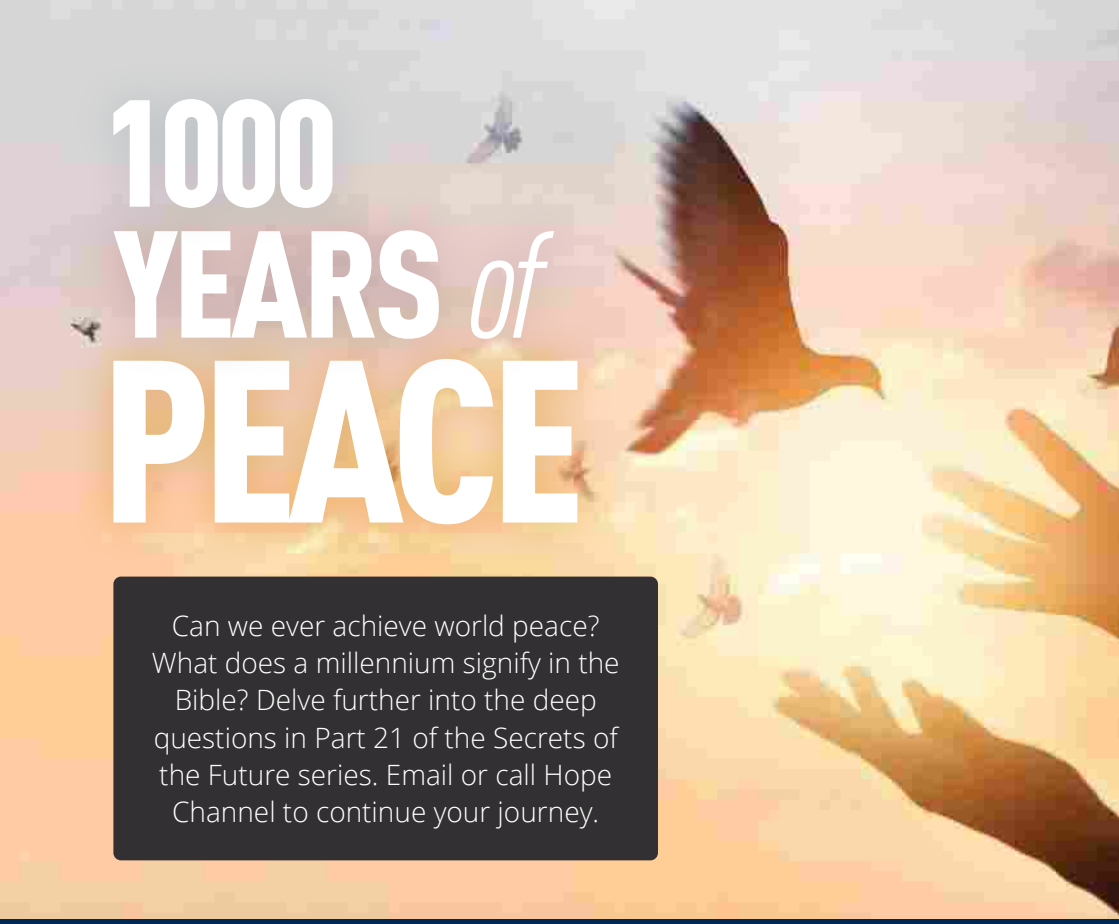
Your response:

When Jesus comes there will be only two groups – the saved and the lost. Would you like to choose today to accept Jesus and be among those who are saved?

_____



1000 YEARS *of* PEACE



Can we ever achieve world peace? What does a millennium signify in the Bible? Delve further into the deep questions in Part 21 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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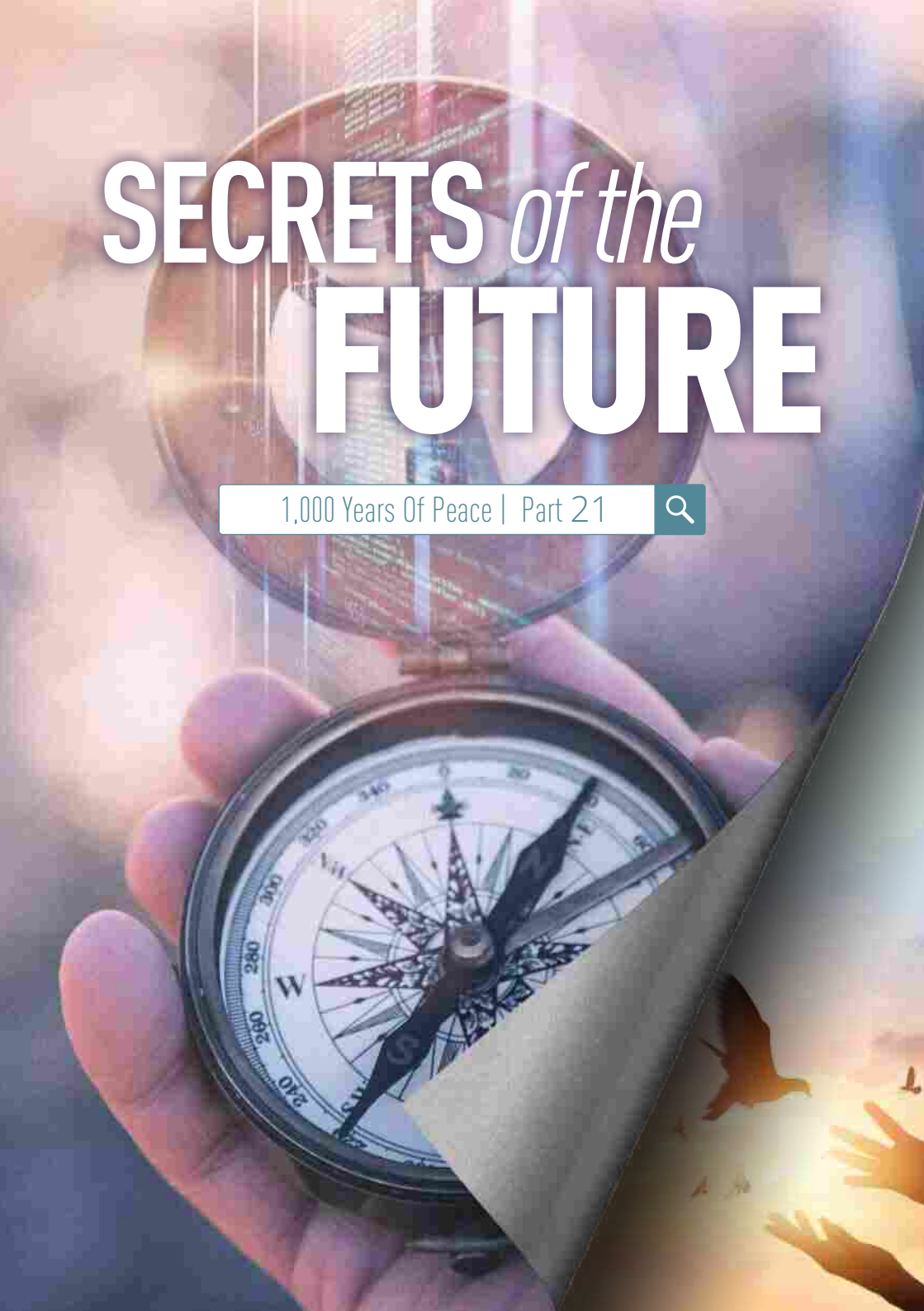


SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

1,000 Years Of Peace | Part 21

1,000 YEARS OF PEACE

What hope is there for world peace? Is global peace and security just a dream? How should the nations of the world try and achieve it? What is the solution to international terrorism and religious tension?

The centre stage for world conflict is the Middle East. Every United States president has tried to bring peace to the Middle East. This statement from President Obama is typical.

"And so my message to these two leaders is clear: despite all the obstacles, despite all the history, despite all the mistrust, we have to find a way forward" (meeting between leaders of the United States, Israel and Palestine in Washington 2009).



Notice this statement by former leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Yasser Arafat,

"Whoever does not accept the fact that Jerusalem will be the capital of a Palestinian State, and only that State, can go drink from the Dead Sea (die) and go to hell"(quoted in "***Unholy War***" p223).

This is a conflict of cultures. A conflict of religion. A conflict of civilisations.

According to many Christians, peace will never come to the Middle East until a special period called the "millennium". During this 1,000 years Jesus will come down from heaven and rule the world from the city of Jerusalem. Only then will the problems of the world be over.

Not all Christians share this view. Although a 1,000 year period is mentioned in Bible prophecy, some Christians think the time period is totally symbolic and not worth investigating. Others think we are in the millennium right now. Others say it has come and gone.

What is this mysterious prediction of a "special" 1,000 years? Will this be a time of world peace? Who will be living on the earth at that time? And what role does God play in the final events of the world?

This study guide reveals what the Bible says about the 1,000 years of peace. Please read the whole chapter of Revelation 20. This prophecy is extremely important. It answers the big questions relating to how and why God ultimately destroys the curse of sin, and what impact this will have on world peace.





Q1 WHO ALONE CAN BRING TRUE PEACE TO THIS WORLD?

Isaiah 9:6 - *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, _____ of _____*

There are no human leaders or peace agencies that can bring about lasting world peace. Throughout Bible prophecy, the final scenes of planet earth are images of upheaval and global stress. Only Jesus, the "Prince of Peace", can and will bring peace to this world.

Q2 HOW LONG WILL THE SAVED REIGN IN PEACE WITH CHRIST?

Revelation 20:4 - *... And they lived and reigned with Christ for a _____ years*

The word "millennium" is not found anywhere in the Bible. It comes from two Latin words, "milli" which means 1,000 and "annus" which means a year. The word simply means 1,000 years. Here we find God's people, His church, living and ruling with Christ for 1,000 years.

The end of the millennium is not the end of living with Christ. The prophet Daniel said the saints would rule "forever, even forever and ever" (Daniel 7:18). The millennium can be likened to a 1,000 year honeymoon in heaven between Christ and His bride, the church!



Q3 HOW MANY RESURRECTIONS DID JESUS SAY WOULD OCCUR?

John 5:28,29 - *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of _____, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of _____*

Jesus said there are two resurrections. The resurrection of the good and the resurrection of the evil. In this study guide you will see that the two resurrections are bookends separating the beginning and end of the 1,000 year millennium. The resurrection of the good begins the 1,000 years. The resurrection of the evil ends the 1,000 years.



Q4 WHEN DO THE THOUSAND YEARS OF PEACE BEGIN?

Revelation 20:6 - *Blessed and holy is he who has part in the _____ resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years*

The 1,000 years begins with the first resurrection. Clearly this is the resurrection of the righteous. Only those who are part of this resurrection will receive eternal life.

Q5 WHEN DOES THE FIRST RESURRECTION OCCUR?

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 - *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will _____ first (v16)*

The resurrection of the righteous occurs at the Second Coming of Jesus. Here we find the "dead in Christ" will be raised from their graves, and they will meet the living righteous up in the air with Jesus. There is certainly no hint of Jesus, His angels or the righteous, meeting in Jerusalem or anywhere else on this earth. Nor is there any hint of a secret rapture. The first resurrection takes place at the literal, physical return of Jesus and His angels.

Q6 WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE UNRIGHTEOUS AT THE SECOND COMING?

2 Thessalonians 2:8 - *... the Lord will _____ with the breath of His mouth and _____ with the brightness of His coming*

When Jesus returns, those people who have chosen a life apart from God will be destroyed by the brightness and purity of His coming. When just one angel came to earth at the resurrection of Jesus, the guards were struck down like dead men (Matthew 28:2,4). Can you imagine the scene "when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him" (Matthew 25:31)? The wicked will drop dead like they have been struck by lightning. They will remain dead for the next 1,000 years.

The Second Coming will devastate the whole earth. There will be the greatest earthquake in history. Islands will vanish. Mountains will be flattened and giant hailstones will drop to the ground (Revelation 16: 18-21). These events will destroy the living wicked. The unrighteous who are already dead will remain in their graves until the end of the 1,000 years (Revelation 20:5).



Q7 HOW DOES THE PROPHET JEREMIAH DESCRIBE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED AT THE SECOND COMING?

Jeremiah 25:33 - *And at that day the slain of the LORD shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall not be _____, or _____, or_____; they shall become refuse on the ground*

The destruction on planet earth will be complete. Nobody will mourn over the dead and there will be no funerals. The dead just rot on the surface of the earth. The world, which has reached well over 6 billion people, is now completely depopulated. There will not be one human being alive on earth after the Second Coming.

One of the cleverest deceptions of the devil is the concept known as the "second chance theory". Many evangelical Christians believe in a "second chance" to repent after the "rapture". The Bible, however, is clear. When Jesus returns the wicked are destroyed and there will be no further opportunities to repent. Every person has had the opportunity to accept the gift of salvation. Their case is closed prior to the Second Coming (Revelation 22:11,12). There is no second chance. There is no middle ground. There is no neutrality. Now is the time to get ready for Jesus to come!

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The millennium begins with the first resurrection, which occurs at the Second Coming of Jesus. The righteous dead will be raised from their graves. They meet Jesus, along with the living righteous, in the air. All the wicked are destroyed at this time and the earth becomes completely desolate.



Events During the Millennium

Q8 AFTER THE SECOND COMING WHERE DOES CHRIST TAKE THE RIGHTEOUS FOR THE NEXT 1,000 YEARS?

John 14:2,3 - *In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a _____ for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where ____ am, there _____ may be also*

. . . . . .



The popular view of Jesus ruling this world during the millennium from Jerusalem is not found in Bible prophecy. The whole purpose of the Second Coming is to gather the righteous and take them all back to heaven to live with Jesus. Jesus promised His followers that He was preparing a home for them in heaven. Jesus said, "where I am, there you may be also." That is why the righteous meet Jesus in the air, not on planet earth.



Q9 WHAT WILL BE THE CONDITION OF PLANET EARTH DURING THE 1,000 YEARS?

Jeremiah 4:23-26 - *I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without _____, and void; and the heavens, they had no light ... I beheld, and indeed there was no _____, and all the birds of the heavens had fled (v23,25)*

This world will be desolate during the millennium. It will not be a place of peace or prosperity. The earth will be "empty" (Isaiah 24:1). Jesus said it will be destroyed just like Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (Luke 17:28-30). Far from being a place of glory, the earth will be like it was prior to creation – without "form and void". Planet earth becomes a wasteland.

Q10 WHAT HAPPENS TO SATAN DURING THE 1,000 YEARS?

Revelation 20:1-3 - *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and _____ him for a thousand years (v1,2)*

Satan is not destroyed at the Second Coming. He is chained and thrown into a "bottomless pit". Once again prophecy uses symbolic imagery here. Let's investigate what this means.

SATAN IN THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

The original Greek word for the bottomless pit is "abussos". This means a dark wasteland, a state of chaos, a desolate region. It doesn't mean a giant chasm that literally has no bottom in it. The condition of the world during the millennium is the same as it was prior to creation. "Abussos" – without form and void – a bottomless pit (Genesis 1:2).

SATAN BOUND BY A CHAIN

The devil will be bound to this earth without anyone to tempt or harass. He can no longer deceive anyone because the righteous are all in heaven and the wicked are all dead. The chain that binds Satan is not a literal chain. He is a spirit who could easily slither out of the strongest chain. The devil will be bound by a chain of circumstances that stops him from doing what he does



so well. Even today, if we have circumstances beyond our control we use the expression "my hands are tied". God has given the devil 1,000 years to meditate on his actions and the horrendous results of his choice to sin.



Q11 WHAT WILL THE RIGHTEOUS DO IN HEAVEN DURING THE 1,000 YEARS?

Revelation 20:4 - *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and _____ was committed to them*

The righteous will not reign on earth. They will be in heaven with Jesus. During this time they will continue to become intimate friends with Jesus. They will also be involved in the judgment of the wicked (see also 1 Corinthians 6:2,3). God will open up the record books of heaven and show His people the lives of the wicked and the choices they made.

During this time our many questions will be answered. Why is a serial murderer in heaven and yet my pastor or mother not there? People will

see evidence demonstrating just how much God tried to save every person and everyone will be satisfied that God is a true and right judge. This is a time also for God's people to make decisions with Jesus about the punishment of the wicked. God involves His people in this process to ensure they understand the nature of His love and justice.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

During the millennium the righteous will be in heaven. They will spend quality time with Jesus and be involved in reviewing the judgment and judging the wicked. This is a time where questions will be answered. There will be eternal certainty that God is fair and just in His judgments. Back on earth the only inhabitants will be the devil and his angels. These demons will be "bound" by a chain of circumstances that ensures they can do nothing but contemplate God's love and the horrific results of their choice to sin.

The End of the Millennium

Q12 WHAT HAPPENS TO THE WICKED AT THE END OF THE 1,000 YEARS?

Revelation 20:5 - *But the rest of the dead did not _____ again until the thousand years were finished*



At the end of the 1,000 years all the wicked from the whole history of planet earth will be raised from their graves. This event results in the devil being "released from his prison" (Revelation 20:7). The devil is released because he now has something to do again. He has billions of people to work his deceptive mischief on. He can now taunt and tempt people all over again.

Q13 WHAT AND WHO COMES DOWN FROM HEAVEN AT THE END OF THE 1,000 YEARS?

Revelation 21:2,10 - *Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of _____ from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (v2)*

At the end of the thousand years the Holy City descends from heaven inhabited by God's people. The golden city lands on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4). Now is the time for Jesus to rule from Jerusalem. But it is not the old city in modern Israel. It is a new city created by God. The Holy City is so majestic that it is described as looking like a "bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:2). The city has walls made from jasper and streets made of gold. There are 12 gates made from solid pearls and the foundations are made from a variety of precious stones (see Revelation 21 for the details).



Q14 WHAT WILL SATAN INFLUENCE THE WICKED TO DO WHEN THEY ARE RAISED FROM THE DEAD?

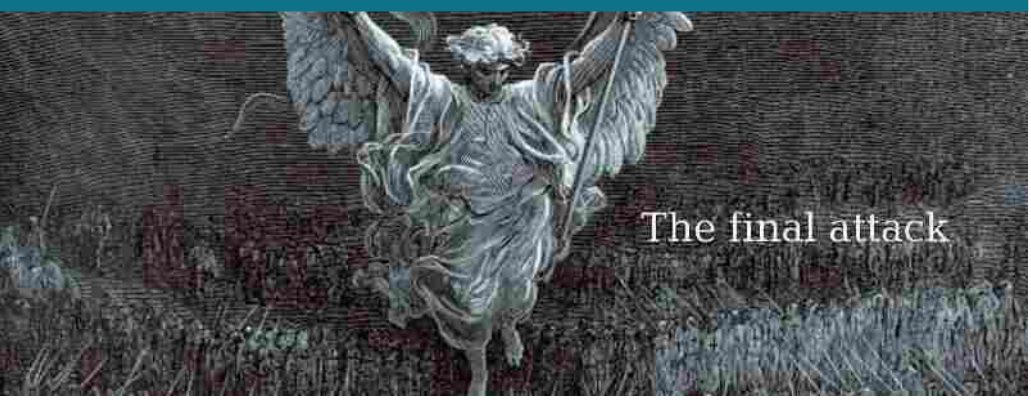
Revelation 20:7,8 - *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to _____ the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to _____, whose number is as the sand of the sea*

Even after 1,000 years the devil will not have changed. He will go out and deceive all the wicked to join him in a final battle against God. One of the saddest statements in the Bible describes the wicked as the "sand of the sea". Here, literally billions of people, join the devil in a last ditch effort to gain control of the universe and the glorious Holy City of God. This is Satan's last stand – a stand that will result in his final doom.

Q15 WHAT HAPPENS TO THE WICKED WHEN THEY ATTEMPT TO ATTACK THE CITY OF GOD?

Revelation 20:9 - *They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And _____ came down from God out of heaven and _____ them*





When the devil and his army surround the city, God will step in and bring a halt to the whole situation. The wicked are judged according to their works and hellfire will come down. This is the "hell" of the Bible. The wicked – including the devil and his angels – are destroyed in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10-14).

The destruction of evil is an act of justice, not cruelty. This event is just as heartbreaking to God as seeing the death of His own Son on Calvary. Nevertheless He knows it must take place. God has done everything He could to save the ones who are now to be destroyed. He loved them and gave His life for them. But they persisted in their rejection of His love. God cannot afford to let sinners into the new earth. To do so would perpetuate sin, suffering and misery.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

After the millennium the Holy City comes down from heaven onto the earth accompanied by Jesus and the righteous. The wicked are all raised from their graves in the second resurrection. The devil influences them to unite in a last ditch attack on God and His city. As they move to attack the city, God steps in and executes judgement through hellfire. The devil is destroyed. The wicked are destroyed. Sin and sinners are forever gone from the universe.

1st resurrection		2nd resurrection
Last Days	**1,000 years**	**Eternity**
Return of Jesus	*Righteous in heaven*	*Christ saints and city descend*
Righteous dead raised	*Wicked remain dead*	*Wicked dead raised*
Living saints caught up	*Satan bound by chains of circumstances*	*Satan released*
Wicked slain	*Righteous will Judge*	*Last judgment*
Satan bound		*Satan and sinners destroyed*
		Earth cleansed and renewed

The New Earth

Q16 WHAT WILL GOD DO TO THIS EARTH ONCE SIN HAS BEEN ERADICATED?

Revelation 21:1,4 - *Now I saw a new_____ and a new _____, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away ...And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away*

After witnessing the tragedy of hellfire, Jesus will wipe away the tears from every eye. God will ensure that sad final scene will never be remembered again (Isaiah 65:17). All traces of sin will be gone. God's people will have an eternity of happiness in a brand new perfect earth.



Q17 WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE TO LIVE IN THE NEW EARTH?

Psalms 16:10,11 - *You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are _____ forevermore (v11)*

No-one will be bored in the new earth. There will be pleasures forevermore! This will be a place where we can create and build whatever we like (Isaiah 65:21,22). Jesus will be living with us so we can spend quality time with Him (Revelation 21:3). We will have perfect health and never get tired (Isaiah 40:31). The new earth will be a paradise for animal lovers – lions and lambs, bears and cows – all playing together and being led by young children (Isaiah 11:6,7). God will especially design the new earth for us to enjoy life and spend each moment getting to know Him better.

Three Points to Remember:

- There are two resurrections – the resurrection of life and the resurrection of condemnation
- There will be 1,000 years between the two resurrections
- The saved will be with Jesus in heaven during the 1,000 years

The story:

Neil was a young German man who decided to stop going to church and start experimenting with alcohol, girls and parties. Each time Neil came home late at night his mother was waiting to berate him for his actions. While a family friend was staying in the home, the mother asked the friend to talk to her son.

When the family friend asked Neil what he believed God thought of him when he did the wrong thing, he was very blunt: "He hates me!" The visiting

friend knew immediately he had discovered a key issue in the heart of Neil. Neil did not want to live forever with God because he misunderstood God. Neil had been tricked by the devil into thinking that God loved him when he was good but hated him when he was bad.

The visiting friend showed Neil a text in Jeremiah: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jeremiah 31:3). As tears poured down the face of young Neil he was asked if he would like to accept Jesus as his friend and Saviour. That night as Neil and his friend knelt down by the bedside, Neil made his decision to live forever with Jesus.

Have you made your decision for Jesus?

Relational questions:

1. What would you say to someone who says they don't want to go to heaven unless their whole family are there also?
2. Imagine your first conversation with Jesus. What would you like to say to Him?
3. What do you think you will love the most about living in the new earth?

Your response:

Where will you be during the 1,000 years? When God has made everything new, would you like to be in the new Holy City of God and live with Jesus throughout eternity? _____





WHERE *on* EARTH *is* HELL?

If God is a God of love, why does hell exist? What is hell? And does it mean burning forever and ever? Find out in Part 22 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Where On Earth Is Hell? | Part 22

WHERE ON EARTH IS HELL?

Many people see God as a hard, harsh and vindictive judge. He is perceived as aloof and eager to hurl people into an everlasting hell of torment and agony. Do the wrong thing and "zap" – a thunderbolt of judgment on your way to hell!

These perceptions of God have developed through the centuries as Christian preachers frightened their congregations with vivid descriptions of the horrors of hell. If hell can appear scarier than a horror movie, avoiding a billion years of agonising pain and torment becomes an attractive option.

Attention grabbing signs in front of churches reinforce the terrors of hell. One giant sign states, "How will you spend eternity – smoking or non smoking?" Another says "turn or burn".

In his sermon, "Sinners in the hand of an angry God", preacher Jonathon Edwards said this,

"The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation don't slumber, the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them, the flames do now rage and glow … the God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked … He will crush you under His feet without mercy; He'll crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on His garments so as to stain all His raiment" (Quoted from Jonathon Edwards Centre, Yale University).

The religious children's book, ***The Sight of Hell,*** offers this disturbing description,

"The fifth dungeon is the red hot oven. The little child is in the red hot oven. Hear how it screams to come out; see how it turns and twists itself

about in the fire. It beats its head against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet on the floor" (quoted from Reverend J. Furniss, ***The Sight of Hell*** in ***Christ Triumphant***, Thomas Allin).

"Good old" sermons and books like these are not as popular in the 21st century. Some religious leaders are worried where all the terrors of hell have gone? They fear this trend towards a quick fix or "air-conditioned" hell might lose church members! As a result, there is a call in some religious circles to get back to strong preaching on the subject.

So if God is a God of love, why is there a hell? Where on earth is hell? What is hell? When will it occur? And will sinners suffer and burn in hell forever and ever?

In this study guide we will discover what the Bible says about the fires of hell. We will see how and why God removes sin and what these actions say about His character of love.

Q1 DOES GOD ENJOY THE DEATH OF THE WICKED?

Ezekiel 33:11 *...I have no _____ in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live*

Jesus came to this earth to save people, not destroy them (Luke 9:56). The destruction and eternal death of the wicked is an "unusual act" for God because He loves everyone (Isaiah 28:21). God personally created people to be His forever friends. He died so we could live!



Unfortunately there is no other solution to the cancer of sin than the destruction of those who have chosen it. As long as sin is present, it will result in human misery. Therefore it must be eradicated. God must destroy sin someday because sin is destroying people. There is nothing that is more precious to God than people.

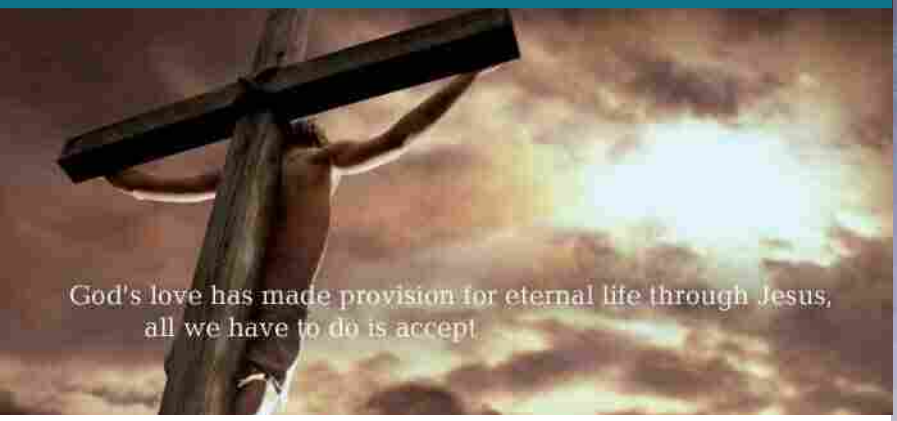


Q2 WHAT IS GOD'S HEARTFELT DESIRE FOR HUMANITY?

2 Peter 3:9 - *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that _____ should perish but that _____ should come to repentance*

God has a vision and commitment for every person to be saved. He would love the whole world to enjoy an eternity of happiness with Him. However, He will not force us to choose eternal life. God allows us to exercise our free will, either for Him or against Him.

If we do not choose eternal life, then the inevitable wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Every person will either be saved or lost. There is no such thing as purgatory, limbo or reincarnation in the Bible. There is only a heaven to look forward to and a hell to avoid.



Q3 WHO WAS HELL DESIGNED FOR?

Matthew 25:41 - *... into the everlasting fire prepared for the _____ and his _____*

Hell was not designed for you! There is a comical myth depicting the devil as the manager of hell. He is responsible for poking the citizens of hell with a pitchfork while "roasting" the wicked. But the Bible says the devil and his angels will be thrown into the lake of fire and they will be turned into ashes (Ezekiel 28:18).



What wonderful news! The devil will be destroyed and he will never tempt, harass, abuse, deceive or condemn anyone again. The devil would like you to join him in hell, and if you really want to end up there you can. But you are going to have to fight against God to get there!

Q4 IS THERE ANYONE IN HELL TODAY?

Matthew 13:40-42 - *Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the _____ of this _____. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire*

The traditional view of hell is a smouldering furnace somewhere under the ground where wicked people end up as soon as they die. The Bible however portrays a quite different view of hell.

According to Jesus, the wicked are "burned by fire" at the end of the age. This means the end of the world. On another occasion, Jesus said the wicked would be judged "in the last day" (John 12:48).

The unrighteous are currently in their graves awaiting the resurrection. Jesus said, "for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth ... those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28,29). The voice of Jesus will call the wicked from the grave, not from hellfire.

There is not one single soul in hell today!

It is only fair that the wicked are not currently in hell. Imagine what kind of God would inflict punishment before the judgment? Or imagine what kind of God would inflict 6,000 years more punishment on someone like Cain

(who killed one man) than He would on Adolf Hitler who killed people by the millions. There is no justice in that!



Q5 WHAT PART OF A PERSON ENTERS HELLFIRE?

Matthew 5:30 - *... for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole _____ to be cast into hell*

Hellfire is not just for a mystical "soul" that is absent from the physical body. Jesus said that the whole body is cast into hell (see also Matthew 10:28). Those who have chosen to reject eternal life will enter hell alive – with their arms, legs, hands, eyes and feet along with the mind, emotions and personality. The whole person is cast into hell.



Q6 WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE WICKED WHEN THEY GO TO HELLFIRE?

Malachi 4:1 - *"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be _____. And the day which is coming shall burn them ____," says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch ..."*

Hellfire does not burn forever. The fire burns until the wicked are destroyed. Notice the word "up" in the text from Malachi. The fire shall burn them "up". The most well known text in the Bible says that sinners "perish" – they do not have an eternal life in heaven or hell (John 3:16).

When a tree is burnt in a bushfire the branches are burnt but the roots usually are not, so the tree can live and grow again. When the wicked are destroyed in hellfire there is left "neither root nor branch". They are totally consumed and there is no possibility of living again.

Death in hellfire (also called the lake of fire) is called the "second death" (Revelation 21:8). This is a death from which there is no resurrection. There is complete annihilation.

The words used to describe the fate of the wicked in hellfire include:

- Perish (John 3:16)
- Death (Romans 6:23)
- Burn up (Malachi 4:1)
- Vanish away (Psalms 37:20)
- Cut off (Psalms 37:9)
- Destroy (Psalms 145:20)
- Devoured (Revelation 20:9)
- Fire shall devour them (Psalms 21:9)
- Day of doom (Job 21:30)

The wicked are destroyed. They perish, and will not go on living forever in hellfire.



Q7 WHERE DOES HELLFIRE TAKE PLACE?

Revelation 20:9 - *They went up on the breadth of the _____ and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them*

Hellfire takes place on the earth. It is not a smoky place of torture far underground. Just as God destroyed the world by a global flood at the time of Noah, at the end of time the world will be destroyed by fire. The "earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).

The book of Revelation describes this amazing scene. As the Holy City comes down from heaven, the wicked surround the city and attempt to capture it. At this time

God sends hellfire down from heaven and completely "devours" the wicked (for more details on this event, you can read the study guide entitled "1,000 Years of Peace").

Q8 HOW LONG WILL THE FIRES OF HELL BURN AND WHY IS THIS ISSUE SO IMPORTANT?

Isaiah 47:14 - *Behold, they shall be as _____, the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame; it shall not be a coal to be warmed by, nor a fire to sit before!*

Nothing will be left of hellfire once it has completed the task of destroying sin. There will be no "coal to be warmed by" or "fire to sit before". The fires of hell go out!

The teaching of an eternal hell does not solve the sin problem. It perpetuates sin. It makes sin eternal. Perhaps even worse, it blackens the character of God.

The concept of an eternal hell of pain and torment has resulted in more atheists than any other concept. If this teaching were true, the torture of the Nazis, Pol Pot, Osama Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein and any other evil tyrant throughout history would be nothing compared with the sadistic nature of God. At least the others eventually allowed people to die!

To illustrate: If your pet dog was vicious and killed an innocent baby, you would be ordered by the government to put down the dog. No-one would want that dog to be given the opportunity to spread its misery again. But there would not be one sane person who would suggest the dog be tortured to death, or even worse, tortured for eternity! It is a tragedy that some people have a worse view of the justice and character of God than they do of even the worst human beings.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

Hell is the place and experience of ultimate destruction by fire – the second death. Hellfire takes place on this earth and will destroy the devil and anyone who has chosen a life of sin and rejected the love and grace of Jesus. The major purpose of hellfire is to destroy every last part of sin so the universe is safe for eternity.



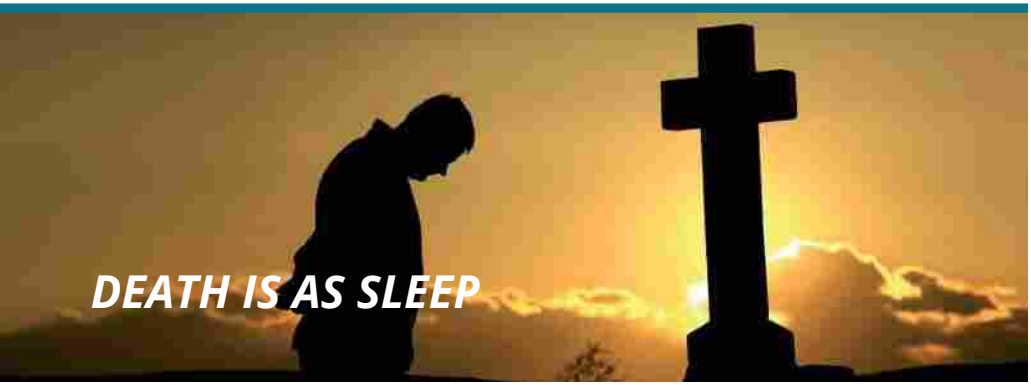
Q9 HOW AND WHEN DID THE TEACHING OF ETERNAL HELL ENTER THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH?

The concept of an eternal hell is closely linked to the concept of the eternal soul. The devil began this teaching when he said in Eden that sinners are immortal; "You will not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). From that origin, this teaching spread throughout the pagan cultures including the Egyptians, Persians and Greeks. Greek mythology



even entered the Jewish faith and there was a division amongst the Jews at the time of Jesus. Although Jesus at times used popular concepts to illustrate a point (e.g. Rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16), He made it clear that death was a sleep (John 11:11-14).

The pagans taught that good and evil were both eternal and so could never be destroyed. A place for tormenting the evil was devised since the gods were powerless to destroy it. This concept of an eternal place of torture entered the Christian church in the late second century through the church leaders Athenagoras (188AD) and Tertullian who died in 240AD. Like many other doctrines, the concepts from paganism entered church teaching and over time became accepted doctrines. Jerome and Augustine continued the emphasis on eternal torment. This teaching became one of the greatest tools for fear and compliance to the church throughout the Middle Ages.



The misunderstanding of hell also made its way into the translations of the Bible. On many occasions, the Hebrew and Greek words for "grave" (Sheol and Hades) were translated as "hell". The Greek word "Gehenna" (translated as "hell") is the word used by Jesus to describe the fires of destruction at the end of time. The Greek word "Tartarus" (also translated as hell) is used once in the entire Bible and means "place of darkness". There is no word in the Old or New Testament, which could be translated as an eternal place of torment.

Q10

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE MEAN WHEN IT TALKS ABOUT ETERNAL AND EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT?

The complete annihilation of the wicked is mentioned over 180 times in the Bible. In each case the wicked are destroyed and hell will burn out. There are a few passages that have led to confusion, due to the graphic nature of the word imagery. It is important to see what the whole Bible says on any subject and the weight of evidence on the subject of hellfire is overwhelmingly in favour of complete destruction of the wicked. The Bible does not contradict itself. Let's take a closer look at the more challenging texts as we compare Scripture with Scripture to discover Bible truth.





a. Everlasting and eternal fire (Matthew 25:41)

Jude 7 - *As Sodom and Gomorrah ... are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of _____ fire*

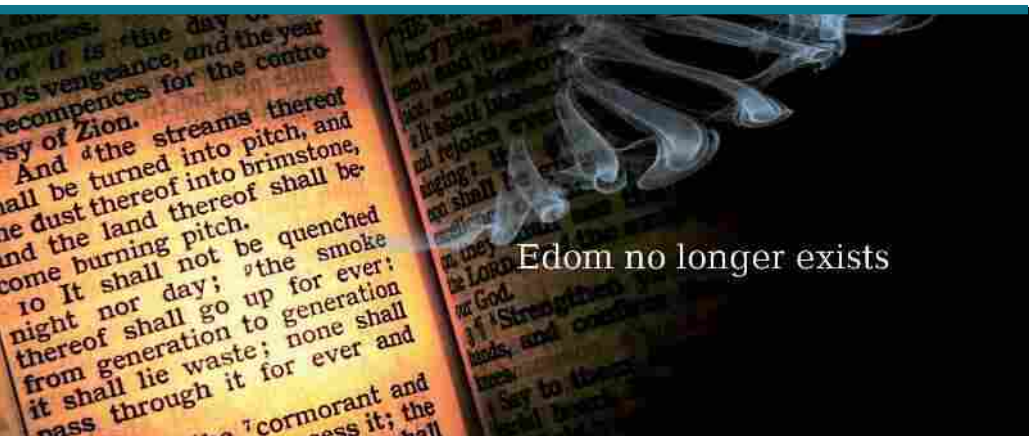
Jesus referred to the everlasting fire of hell. This fire is everlasting in the consequences, not in the duration. For instance, Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked cities that God said would be burnt with "eternal fire". Where are Sodom and Gomorrah today? They were burnt by God and turned into "ashes" (2 Peter 2:6). According to the Bible, an everlasting fire burns the object into ashes, and then goes out.

b. Tormented forever and ever (Revelation 20:10)

Isaiah 34:9,10 - *...its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day; its smoke shall ascend _____*

When describing the destruction of wicked Edom, the prophet Isaiah said the smoke would ascend "forever". Once again, God's prophet used graphic language to describe complete destruction from judgment. Edom is not burning today. It was destroyed.

Over 50 times the word "forever" is used in the Bible to refer to something that would naturally end. For instance, "forever" means until death (Psalms 48:14) or as long as someone lives (1 Samuel 1:22,28). The smoke or punishment of the wicked will last until that person has been destroyed by hellfire.



c. Everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46)

Romans 6:23 - *For the wages of sin is _____*

The wages of sin is not an everlasting life in hell, it is an everlasting death. This is the "second death" (Revelation 21:8), from which there is no resurrection. The apostle Paul said, "These shall be punished with everlasting destruction" (2 Thessalonians 1:9). The Bible is clear – the wicked will receive everlasting punishment, but not everlasting punishing.

d. Unquenchable fire (Luke 3:17)

Jeremiah 17:27 - *But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day ...then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be _____*

This prophecy from Jeremiah was fulfilled when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians with fire (2 Chronicles 36:19-21). The city was ruined by unquenchable fire, but Jerusalem is not still burning today. Unquenchable fire is a fire that no man (or fire brigade) can extinguish. Once the fire has accomplished its task, it will naturally go out.





Q11 ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS "ETERNAL TORMENT", IS DESTRUCTION BY HELLFIRE SOMETHING TO TAKE LIGHTLY?

2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 - *These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the _____ of the Lord and from the _____ of His power (v9)*

To be destroyed by hellfire will be the most horrendous experience known to man. Jesus said there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:13). The reason why this will be so traumatic is because for the first time, there will be complete separation from the "presence of the Lord".

People will realise the enormity of the consequences of their life of sin. All hope will be gone. They will realise the foolishness of clinging to sin, which now costs them everything. Their mental anguish is beyond description and the greater the guilt, the greater the agony. The wicked in total darkness and despair will fall to their knees and acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord. But it will be too late (Philippians 2:10,11).

Now is the time to accept the free gift of life that Jesus is offering you. Jesus wants to be your friend and protect you against hellfire. He loves you and He wants to have a daily close friendship with you throughout eternity.

Q12 WHAT WILL GOD DO ONCE HELL AND SIN ARE ERADICATED?

Revelation 21:1 - *Now I saw a new _____ and a new _____, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away*

Bible prophecy predicts a complete new world to look forward to. There will be a new earth. There will be a new atmosphere (with a new ozone layer if that is still required!) and most importantly, a new life without any traces or reminders of sin.



Three Points to Remember:

- God does not want anyone to be lost but He gives us all a free choice
- There are only two options for the afterlife – heaven or hell
- Hellfire will completely destroy the wicked at the end of the world





The Story:

As a young boy, Martin Luther attended the St George's church in Mansfield, Germany. Each week he looked up at a stained glass window in his church. The artwork depicted an angry, sword wielding God. Martin's imagination ran wild, as he contemplated this angry God ready and waiting to send his frightened little heart into an everlasting hell.

A young Luther also noticed an altarpiece depicting a ship on a rough sea. This boat was heading towards heaven and on this boat sat the Pope and his bishops. The monks were doing the rowing. The trouble was, there sat no common people on the boat, people like Martin and his family. Martin looked anxiously at the common people who were outside of the boat all trying to save themselves by swimming alongside the boat. They were desperate for help to get into the safety of the ship. Some were drowning but the popes and the bishops were all saved. Martin Luther's conclusion? God is harsh and it is almost impossible for people like him to be saved.

It took Martin many years to realise that the God he believed in was not the true God of the Bible. His whole life changed when he found that God was not a God to be afraid of, but a God to be a friend of. God is not a God to run from, but a God to run to.

What is your picture of God?

Relational questions:

1. Do you think someone will go to heaven if their motivation is escaping hell instead of loving Jesus? Why?
2. Why do you think Christians incorporated the teaching of eternal hellfire into the church?
3. Explain how God could be full of justice and mercy? How does the destruction of the wicked demonstrate this?

Your response:

Are you glad that God destroys sin but does not punish people throughout eternity? _____



BURIED UNDER WATER



Is baptism still relevant today? How was Jesus baptised? Find out more about baptism in Part 23 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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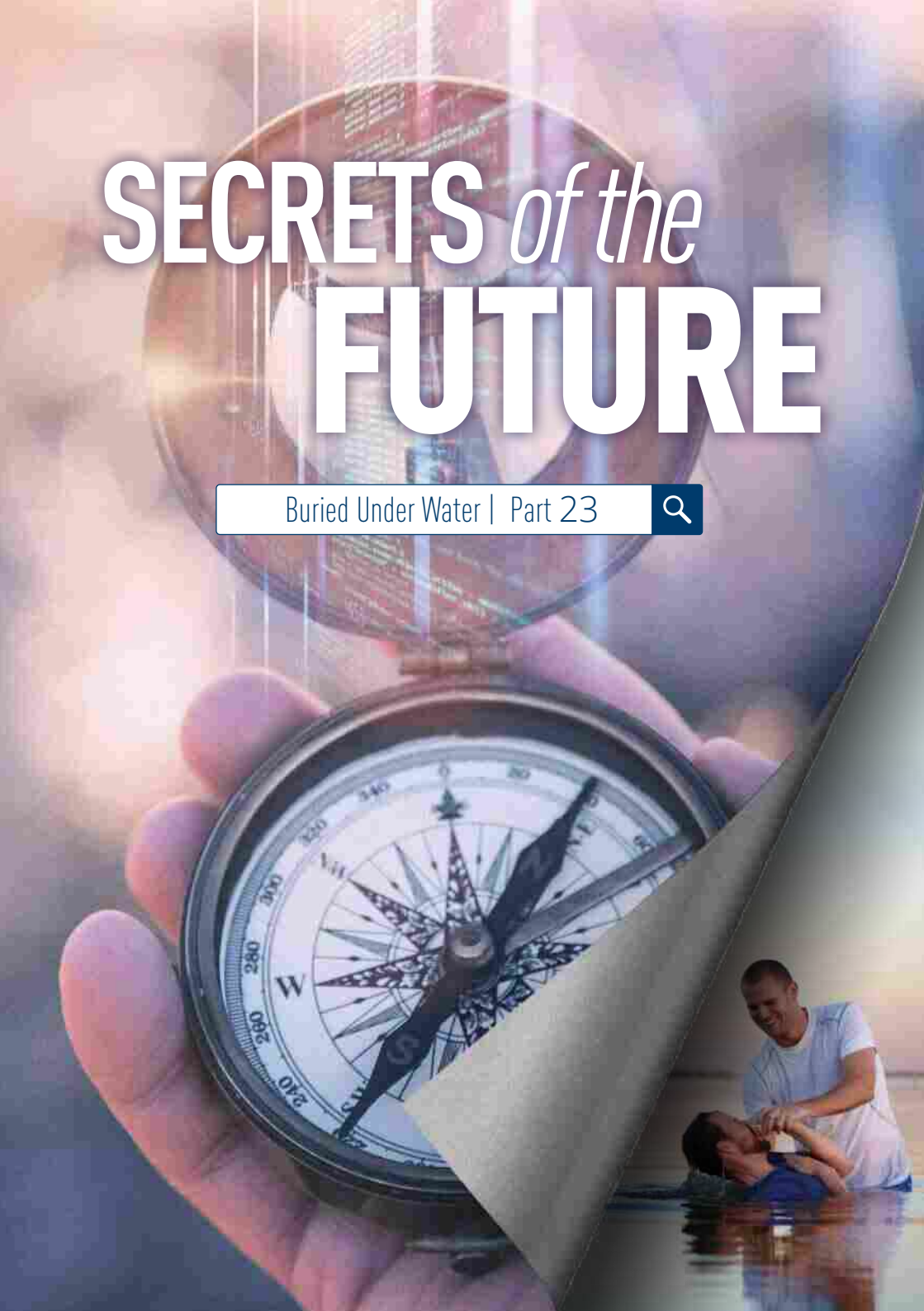
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Buried Under Water | Part 23



BURIED UNDER WATER

Just outside the ancient city of Pompeii, a life-size fresco has been discovered on the walls of the Villa dei Misteri (Villa of Mysteries). This painting depicts an initiation ceremony of a young girl into the mysteries of the religion of Dionysus, the wine God from Greek mythology. Among other things, a female attendant is seen pouring "holy water" into a basin to be used by a priestess in the ceremony. The secret initiation rites appear to include pouring or sprinkling drops of water onto the woman as a symbol of entry into the mystery religion.

The practice of using "holy water" to cleanse the soul can be traced back to the ancient mysteries of Babylon. Newborn infants were "baptised", entitling them to become a part of this mystery religion. Entry into the mysteries of Mithra, Isis and a variety of other pagan religions all used the symbolism of water. A common form of "baptism" was to sprinkle water, which had been blessed by a pagan priest or priestess, onto the head of a young baby.

The Bible says that Jesus Christ was baptised by water in the River Jordan. When Jesus was about 30 years of age, He went to His cousin John the Baptist and asked him to baptise Him in the river. Following the baptism, the onlookers heard a voice from God in heaven saying how pleased He was with Jesus and what He had done through His baptism.

Was Jesus simply following the customs of the ancient pagan religions or was His baptism different? Was the baptism of Jesus a fulfilment of prophecy? Is water baptism still relevant today? If so, how important is it? Why is it that different churches seem to baptise in different ways, and does it really matter? In this study guide, you will discover the rich meaning behind the symbol of biblical baptism.

Q1 HOW IMPORTANT IS BAPTISM?

Mark 16:16 - *He who believes and is _____ will be saved*

According to Jesus, all Christians need to be baptised. It is essential to believe in Jesus, but it is also essential that you publicly demonstrate your belief, through baptism. Jesus clearly says that the practice of baptism, which is mentioned nearly 100 times in the Bible, is a prerequisite for entry to heaven (see also John 3:5).

In the case of someone who is unable to get baptised, such as the thief on the cross (Luke 23:42,43), the baptism of Jesus is substituted in the place of that person. Jesus does not expect us to do something that is physically impossible. However, that situation is very much the exception. It is not an excuse for those who want to avoid the beautiful experience of biblical baptism.



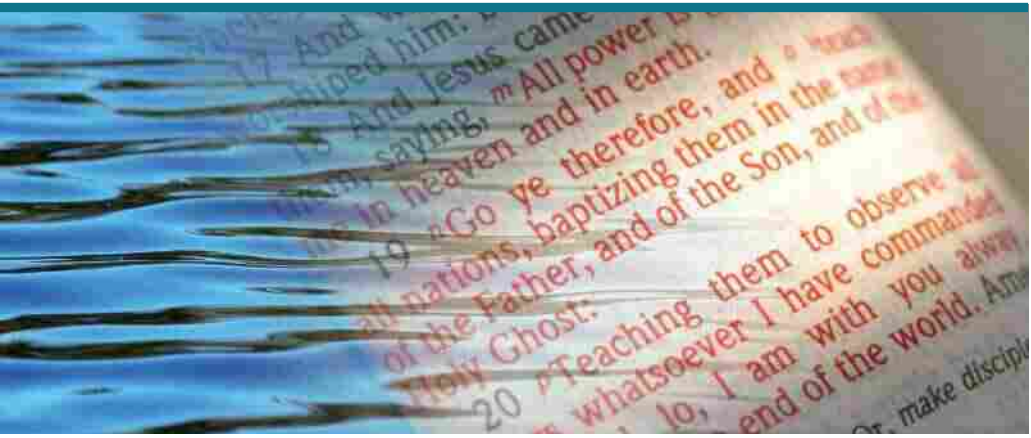


Q2 WHAT WAS ONE OF THE LAST INSTRUCTIONS THAT JESUS GAVE TO HIS DISCIPLES?

Matthew 28:19 - *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, _____ them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*

The last words of someone are often significant. Here we find Jesus sharing his vision for the new Christian church. The leaders of this church were commissioned to share the gospel all over the world, encouraging people to accept Jesus and be baptised. Any church which does not teach or practice baptism is not following the instructions of Jesus.

Notice also the need to baptise in the name of the entire Godhead; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All three have power in their name as God, and all three play a vital role in our spiritual experience. Among other things, the Father cares for us, the Son saves us and the Holy Spirit empowers us.



Q3 HOW MANY METHODS OF BAPTISM ARE RECOMMENDED IN THE BIBLE?

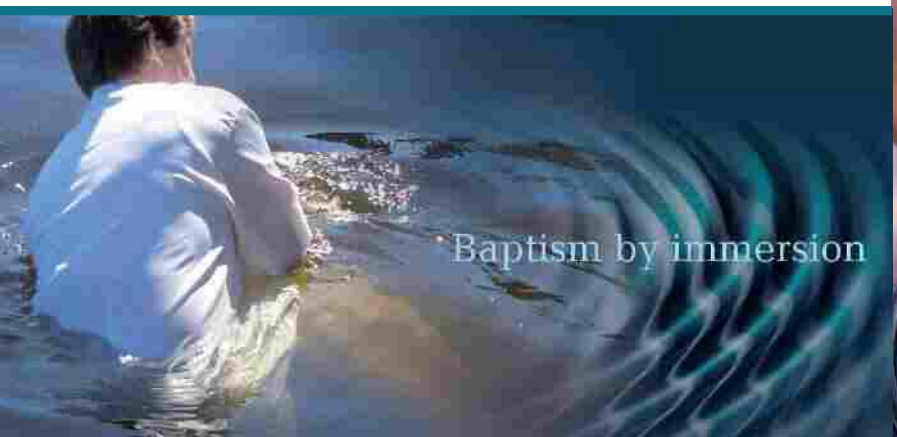
Ephesians 4:5 - *one Lord, one faith, one* _____

Just about every religion on the planet has a unique method of baptism. Some religions baptise in blood. Others use oil or even salt. In the Christian faith, up to 15 different approaches to baptism are used, depending on the culture or tradition.

The Bible indicates that the method of baptism is really important and there is only one true baptism.

The word baptism literally means "to immerse" or "to submerge". It comes from the Greek word "baptizo". Therefore, another word for baptism would simply be immersion. The Bible never uses the words to "sprinkle" or "pour" as an appropriate method of baptism.

The one true baptism of the Bible is baptism in water, by full immersion.





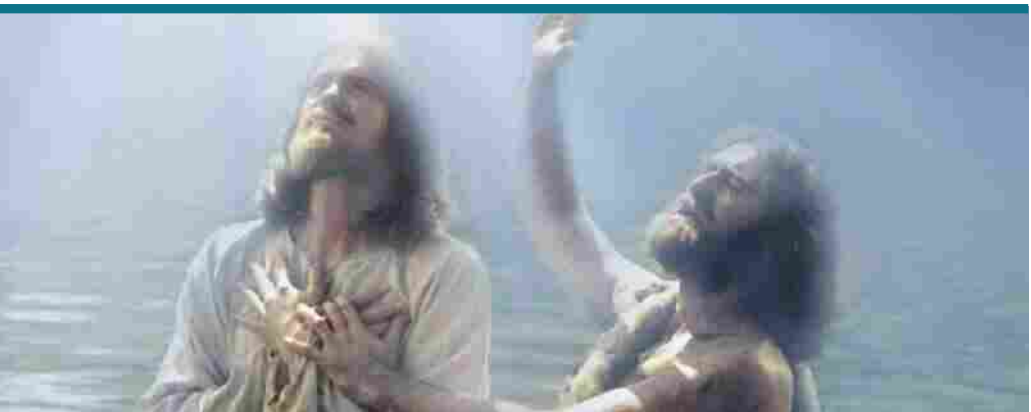
Q4 HOW WAS JESUS BAPTISED?

Mark 1:9, 10 - *It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming ___ _____ the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove*

Jesus went "in" the Jordan and then came "up from" the water. John the Baptist specifically chose to baptise people at a deep part of the river "because there was much water there" (John 3:23). Jesus was baptised in water by full immersion.

It is also important to note that Jesus was not baptised as a baby. Jesus chose to get baptised at the age of 30, when He could make a decision for Himself, and just before He began His public ministry. When Jesus was baptised God the Father said that he was "well pleased" with what Jesus had done (Mark 1:11). As Christians, we are asked to follow the example of Jesus and as a believing adult, be fully immersed in baptism "to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

The baptism of Jesus was a direct fulfilment of prophecy (Daniel 9:25). It was at this point that Jesus left His trade as a carpenter and entered His ministry as the Messiah (see study guide "The Mystery Man of Prophecy"). Clearly, the baptism of Jesus was a very important event.



Q5 HOW DID PHILIP BAPTISE THE MAN FROM ETHIOPIA?

Acts 8:38,39 - *... And both Philip and the eunuch went _____ _____ the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came ____ _____ of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing*

It is clear from this passage that the apostles did not change the method of baptism. Here we find Philip and the Ethiopian man going down into the water, and then coming back up out of the water. They didn't perform the baptism on the riverbank or in the chariot with a cup of water. They both went right into the water to ensure the baptism was conducted by full immersion, according to the example of Jesus.

Q6 WHAT DOES THE SYMBOL OF WATER REPRESENT?

Acts 22:16 - *And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and _____ away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord*

The symbol of water is used to represent cleansing through washing. It symbolises purity and a fresh start.



All of us have done things in our life we are ashamed of. Sometimes we still feel the heavy shadow of guilt from our past. If you would like to have your sins, hurts and discouragements washed away, and have a fresh start in life, then why not consider being baptised.

Baptism symbolises a turning point in your life. A washing away of the old life (inside and out) and beginning a new life in Jesus Christ. There is no power in the water itself to wash away our sins. It is purely symbolic of what God does in our life.

Because baptism symbolises the washing away of sins, sprinkling or even pouring water does not suffice. You can't sprinkle away your sins – they need to be washed away. Only baptism where the whole body is immersed, truly represents the washing away of sins.



Q7 WHAT DOES THE PRACTICE OF BAPTISM ITSELF SYMBOLISE?

Romans 6: 3-6 - *Therefore we were _____ with Him through baptism into _____, that just as Christ was _____ from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (v4)*

Just as Jesus died, was buried and then resurrected, so the new Christian dies to the old life of sin, is buried beneath the water in baptism and then rises to live a new life. A life empowered by the Holy Spirit. This symbolism is at the heart of the meaning and importance of baptism. The person who is baptised firstly chooses to lay down their life of sin. Secondly, there is a brief moment where the eyes close and breathing stops as that person is fully placed under the water. This is followed by a lifting up out of the water to live a totally new life, as symbolised by the resurrection of Jesus.



a. The death of your old life

The Christian life is not just a matter of being a "better person" – it is a death to the old life. The apostle Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20). It is no use wanting to be baptised if you are not prepared to allow your old life to pass away. You would simply come out of the water a wet sinner instead of a new Christian. You would be "buried alive" and simply go back to living your old life. Sprinkling or pouring some "holy water" could never symbolise the death of the old life. You don't just want the old life sprinkled, you need it drowned!



b. Burial of your old life

The Bible says we are "buried with Him in baptism" (Colossians 2:12). No-one is truly baptised until they have been submerged or buried in water. Once again, no amount of sprinkling could ever "bury" you. We need to be baptised fully by immersion.

c. Your new life in Jesus

Once your old life is dead and buried, you are raised out of the water a new person. In fact baptism symbolises your decision to be married to Jesus. Whereas you were married to the "old man", now you are married to Jesus Christ. Baptism is as important to the Christian life as a wedding is to a marriage. That is another reason why only adults should be baptised. Baptism is a public statement that you choose to live a new life in an intimate relationship with Jesus. Any thought of a baby being married is totally inappropriate. So baptism is a conscious choice of love, by a believing adult.

Q8 WHOSE NAME DO PEOPLE TAKE WHEN THEY ARE BAPTISED?

Galatians 3:27 - *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have _____ on_____*

When we are baptised we are firstly baptised into Jesus. This means that we have accepted Him as our best friend and personal Saviour. Secondly, we also "put on Christ". Just as a woman usually takes the name of her husband, so we take on the name of Christ. We are now known as "Christians".



Q9 DOES IT REALLY MATTER WHICH FORM OF BAPTISM IS USED?

Galatians 1:8 *But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be _____*

The reason why it matters how and when we are baptised revolves around the symbolic meaning of baptism. Everything about baptism is symbolic. If we get one aspect wrong then the whole practice of baptism is made meaningless. Parents may be very sincere when they baptise their children, however the practice has no bearing on the salvation of the child.

According to the Bible, belief, repentance, confession and being taught the Scriptures all precede baptism. That is why you will never find one instance of a baby baptism in the Bible.

The Bible teaches one form of baptism. It is vital that we follow the example of Jesus and adhere to the clear teaching of God's Word.



Q10 ON WHAT BASIS DO WE FIND OTHER FORMS OF BAPTISM ENTERING THE CHURCH?

Mark 7:8 - *For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the _____ of men*

Baptism of adults by full immersion was the baptism practised by the church for hundreds of years after the cross. In fact, one can go to many of the ancient churches in Europe and still see the large baptismal fonts or tanks that were clearly used for biblical baptism. Over time the whole symbolism of baptism was lost as the church incorporated pagan practices, including the baptism of babies by sprinkling.

The church of the fourth and fifth century developed the idea that babies were born guilty of the "original sin" of Adam, and therefore lost. All babies needed cleansing and initiation into the family of God. The practice of baptising infants was officially sanctioned by the church at the Council of Mela in 416 AD. Over time, this practice of baptism became a tradition that was enforced by the church.

Throughout Christian history many people defied the church and practised biblical baptism. These people had such a conviction to obey the teachings of Jesus that they were prepared to die for their faith. Thousands of people were killed by the church and state authorities. Ironically, many were drowned in the rivers they had previously been baptised in.



Q11 HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE READY FOR BAPTISM?

- *When you love Jesus (Matthew 22:36,37)*
- *When you have accepted Jesus as your personal Saviour and experience the new birth (2 Corinthians 5:17, John 3:3,5)*
- *When you understand the teachings of Jesus (Matthew 28:19,20)*
- *When you believe in all the teachings of Jesus (Mark 16:16)*
- *When you have repented of past sins (Acts 2:38)*
- *When you have agreed to turn away from sin (Romans 6:5,6, Luke 3:7,8)*

Baptism is for those who have accepted Jesus and want to live a life together with Him. When two people begin to love each other they usually spend some time getting to know each other before they are married. Baptism is an exciting but serious decision. Jesus wants you to get to know Him and fully understand the commitment you are making.





Q12 WHAT MUST ACCOMPANY THE BAPTISM OF WATER?

John 3:5 - *...Unless one is born of _____ and the _____, he cannot enter the kingdom of God*

The baptism of water needs to be accompanied by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To be baptised with the Holy Spirit means to be "fully immersed" with the Holy Spirit. We need to ask for the Holy Spirit and allow the Spirit to change our life. The role of the Holy Spirit is to convict us of sin and to show us the righteousness of Jesus as the solution to sin (John 16:8). It is also the Holy Spirit who helps us understand the teachings of God's Word (John 16:13). The baptism of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated through producing the good fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23) as well as receiving the gifts of the Spirit. This enables us to effectively share the good news about God's love (1 Corinthians 12).

Q13 DOES BAPTISM HAVE ANY CONNECTION WITH JOINING A CHURCH?

Acts 2:41,47 - *Then those who gladly received his word were _____; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them ... And the Lord added to the _____ daily those who were being saved*

Colossians 1:18 *And He is the head of the body, the _____*

1 Corinthians 12:13 *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one _____*

There are some people who wish to be baptised into Jesus, but they don't want to join a church. The Bible is very clear. When we are baptised into Jesus, we automatically become part of His body, the church. The church is God's chosen body of people to help nurture us in our spiritual life as well as work with us to spread the gospel. When we decide for baptism we are also making a commitment to become an active member of God's church.



Q14 IS REBAPTISM EVER APPROPRIATE?

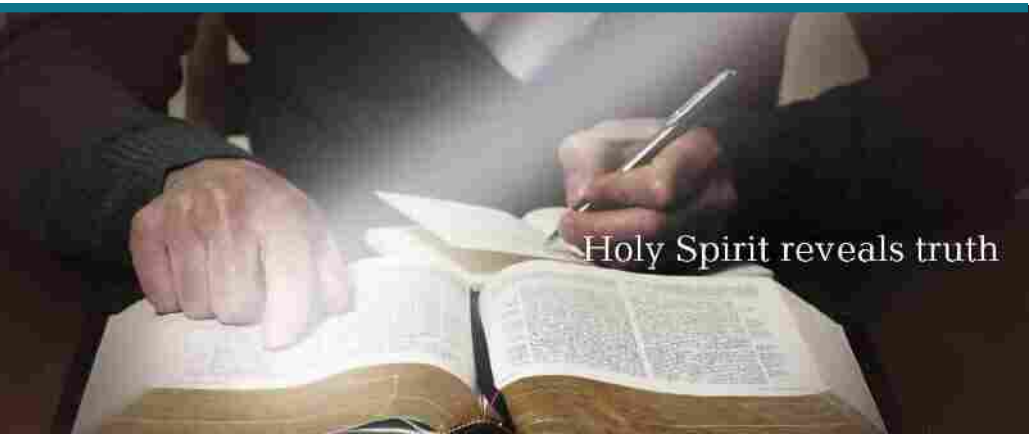
Acts 19:2-5 - *... So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they _____ this, they were _____ in the name of the Lord Jesus*



Although baptism is ideally a once only experience, there are instances when rebaptism is not only appropriate but recommended.

a. When substantial new truth is discovered

When Paul was preaching at Ephesus he found a group of people who had been baptised by John the Baptist, but who had never heard of the Holy Spirit. Paul took these people aside and taught them the wonderful truth about the work and power of the Holy Spirit. This truth had such an impact in their lives that they chose to become rebaptised. This example clearly shows that when significant new truths are learnt, that make a major change in the Christian life, then rebaptism is appropriate.



b. When you have left Christ

Baptism is your marriage ceremony with Jesus. If you have left Jesus and abandoned this relationship, then it is also appropriate to get rebaptised. A "fresh start" in your relationship with Jesus is the result as you once again pledge your love and loyalty to Him.

Q15 WHEN THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS TEMPTED TO PUT OFF HIS BAPTISM FOR A LATER TIME, WHAT ADVICE DID HE RECEIVE?

Acts 22:16 - *And now why are you_____? _____ and be _____*

One of the most effective tactics of the devil is to cause people to procrastinate. To put off making a decision. The Bible says, "why are you waiting?" Don't put off baptism until you think you are "good enough". Don't wait until you feel clean. Don't wait for the approval of other people. The Bible says to "arise and be baptised". Don't delay – make plans today for a fresh start in life through baptism.

Three Points to Remember:

- Baptism is one of the most important aspects of being a Christian
- Only baptism by full immersion of a believing adult is biblical and reflects the meaning behind the symbolism of baptism
- Baptism is the entry point into God's church

The Story:

Ken was a middle-aged man with a devoted Christian family. His wife prayed for Ken each day but it seemed as if he would never budge. In Ken's mind there was no way



he would ever become a Christian. For decades there was little response until one day Ken agreed to go to church with his wife.

Ken was quite impressed with the information he heard so he agreed to go back to church. Over time Ken was convicted by the Holy Spirit to commit his life to Jesus. Ken was at church on one occasion when an appeal was made at the end of the sermon. The pastor asked for the show of hands of all those who would like to be baptised.

There was no holding back Ken. Ken decided to not only put one hand up. He held up both hands! He was afraid the pastor would miss seeing him. As Ken was sitting up in the balcony of the church he was still concerned the pastor would not see him. So Ken stood up – still with both hands in the air!

Shortly after his decision, Ken was baptised and became a vital member of God's church.

How do you feel about Ken's experience? What do you think made him so definite in his decision?

Relational questions:

1. Why do you think Jesus sees baptism as such an important issue?
2. What should you do if you feel you are not "good enough" for baptism? When will you feel "good enough"?
3. Does baptism mean that you will never sin again? If you do sin, does that mean you need to be baptised all over again?

Your response:

Is it your desire to follow the example of Jesus, have a fresh start in life, and begin preparing for your baptism according to the Bible? _____

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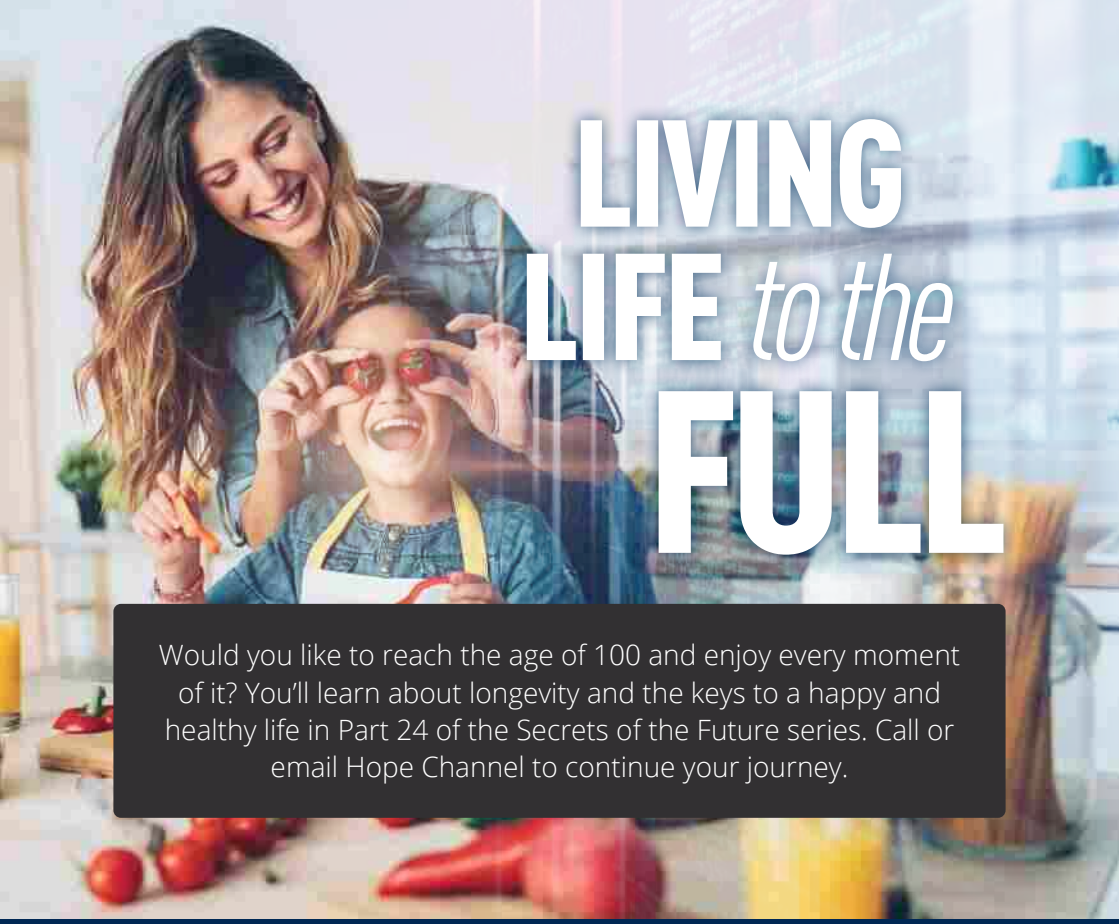

LIVING LIFE *to the* FULL

Would you like to reach the age of 100 and enjoy every moment of it? You'll learn about longevity and the keys to a happy and healthy life in Part 24 of the Secrets of the Future series. Call or email Hope Channel to continue your journey.

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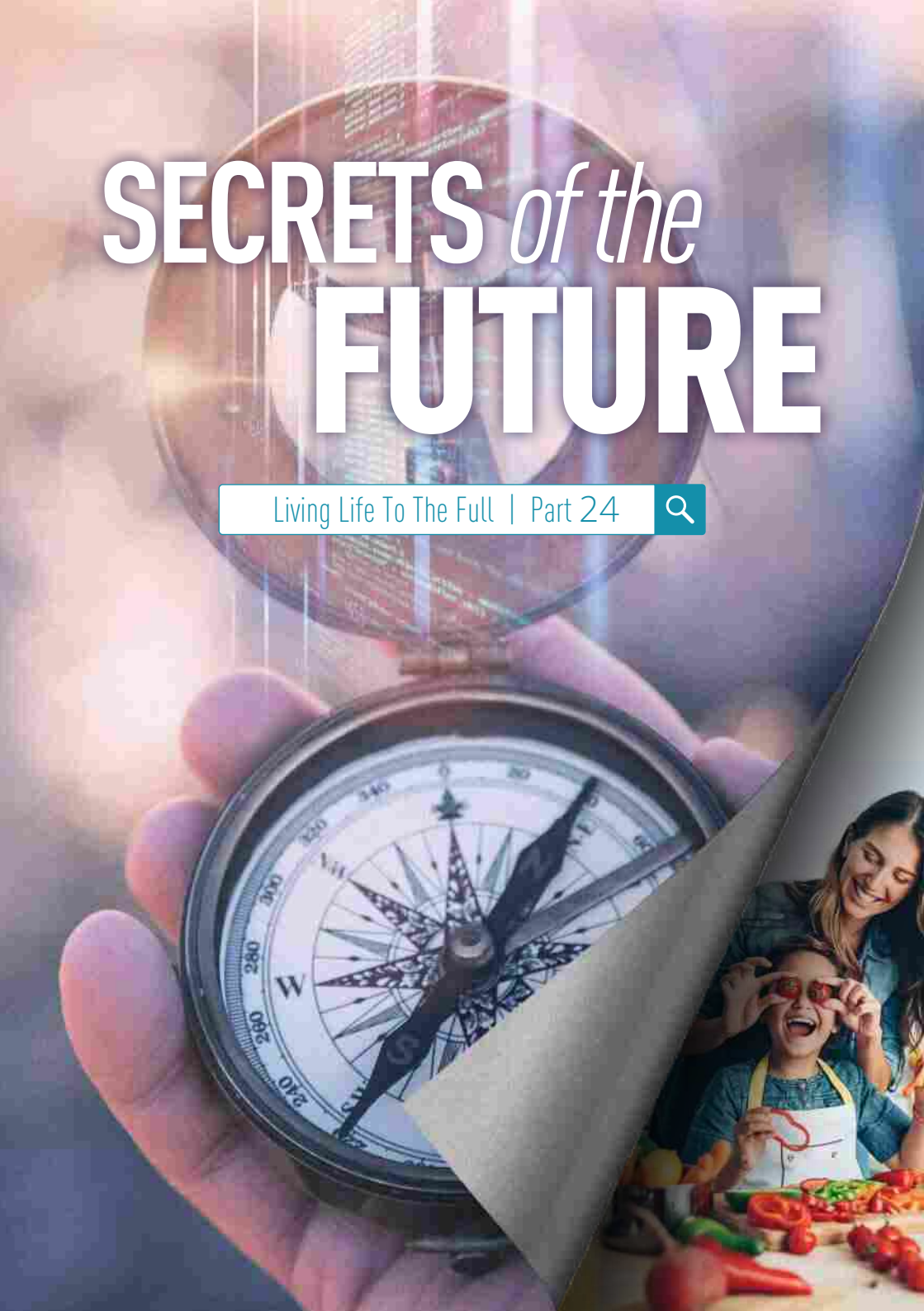
SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

Living Life To The Full | Part 24



LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

How would you like to reach the age of 100 and enjoy every moment of living? In late 2005, ***National Geographic*** featured an article on longevity and quality of life. The author, Dan Buettner, gathered a team of researchers to scour the world for healthy communities. His plan was to discover pockets of the globe where people were living measurably better than anywhere else.

What Buettner discovered was quite staggering. Four areas of the world were highlighted as "Blue Zones". These are communities where people commonly live past the age of 100. The current "Blue Zones" are in Okinawa (Japan), Sardinia (Italy), Nicoya Peninsula (Costa Rica) and Loma Linda (California). The research showed that each group has both longevity and vitality of life. They are fresh, energetic and happy. They seem to die young – at an old age!

What is their secret to health and wellbeing? The research uncovered an emphasis on family, relationships, a plant-based diet and exercise. Importantly, each group also has a sense of faith and participates in a spiritual community.

The "Blue Zone" communities are peaceful and content. And yet, there is a clear sense of purpose. The Costa Ricans call their life purpose "plan de vida". The Okinawans call it "ikigai" meaning "why I wake up in the morning". Here are people who have created an environment for wellbeing.

Of the four groups, Buettner refers to the Seventh-day Adventists from Loma Linda as the American "all-stars" of longevity. With an emphasis on whole person health, this group has a much lower than average incidence of lifestyle-related illnesses. The secret of vitality for Adventists includes the Sabbath rest, a sense of community, and, according to Dan Buettner, "a diet inspired by the Bible" (see www.bluezones.com).

So what does the Bible say about health? Is there any connection between our physical health and spiritual health? How can we change our health habits? This study guide reveals the biblical keys to a happy and healthy life. We can't promise that you will live to 100, but you should find the experience of living much more enjoyable.

Q1 HOW IMPORTANT IS OUR HEALTH?

3 John 2 - *Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in _____, just as your soul prospers*

Health is one of the most important subjects of the Bible. The reason? Human beings are an integrated whole – body, mind, heart and spirit. The apostle John wished his friends to prosper both physically and spiritually. Whatever affects the health of the body, will impact on the whole person. This includes the way we feel, think and interact in our relationships.

When you nurture your body physically, your mind will also be active. A clear mind helps connect to God spiritually. A spiritual life provides a life purpose to be passionate about. These factors form a platform for true health and happiness.



Q2 WHY DID GOD GIVE HIS PEOPLE LAWS OF HEALTH?

Exodus 23:25 - *So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take _____ away from the midst of you*

God gave His people health laws to protect them from sickness and keep them from premature and unnecessary death. As the Creator God He knows what is best for our health. God gave the prophet Moses a number of principles that are still very important today.

Some of these principles include: diet (Leviticus 11:46,47), hygiene (Leviticus 14:8), sterilisation (Numbers 31:22,23), morality (Exodus 20:14), rest (Exodus 20:8-11) and quarantine (Number 5:1-4).



Q3 HOW DOES JESUS WANT US TO LIVE?

John 10:10 - *... I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more* _____

Health is not just the absence of pain and disease. It is the presence of vitality. An abundant life!

God's concept of health is an exchange. Something worse for something better. Destroying for restoring. Hollow for satisfying.

God wants us to flourish. To have energy, vitality, radiance, optimism, resilience, enthusiasm, meaning, purpose, fulfilment, joy, activation, empowerment, inspiration and satisfaction. Basically – to love life!

An abundant life includes the personal presence of Jesus. In fact, a Christless health is really no health at all. Jesus provides us with peace, assurance and hope. Not just healing and restoration. Much more. A life of health and happiness beyond our imagination.

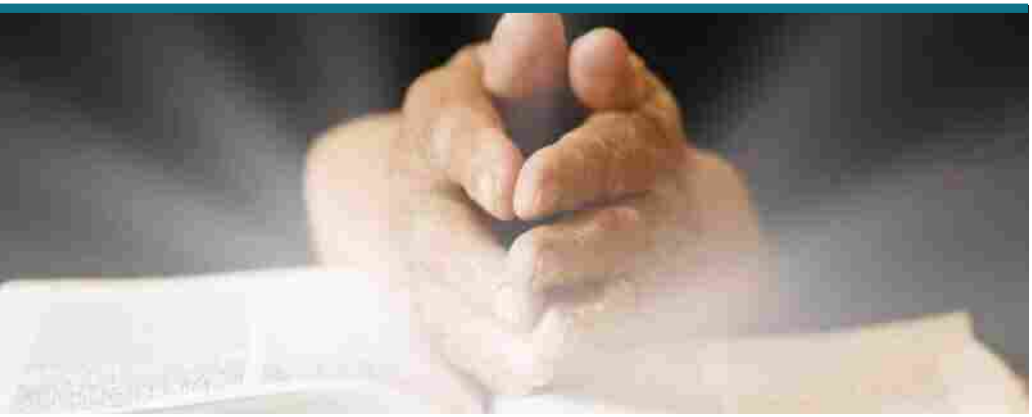




Q4 WHAT DOES THE BIBLE CALL OUR BODY?

1 Corinthians 6:19,20 - *Or do you not know that your body is the _____ of the Holy Spirit ... therefore glorify God in your body*

Some people have the attitude, "It's my body, I can do what I like with it". But the human life is a home for the Holy Spirit. As such we have a responsibility to nurture and nourish our body to ensure it is in the best possible condition to maintain a loving relationship with God.



If the mind is dulled through sickness then God's communication is made more difficult and spiritual growth is stunted. Having vitality and good health helps you understand the Bible and establish a close relationship with God.

Q5 WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS YOU CAN ENHANCE YOUR HEALTH?

1 Corinthians 10:31 - *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the _____ of God*

Here are 10 practical principles to live a happy, healthy life. All of them are consistent with biblical principles and many of them are directly mentioned in the Bible.

BREATHE FRESH AIR

Pure air in the lungs does wonderful things for our health. Our lungs are cleaned, the blood is purified and our brain receives a special "boost" of energy. Fresh air also soothes the nerves and keeps our mood positive and optimistic.

We spend so much time stuck in the dust and stale air of houses, schools and offices. It is vital that we ventilate our homes and get out into the fresh air. Venture out for a morning walk. Take a stroll down by the seaside. Or climb a mountain and take a deep breath. You will just feel good!

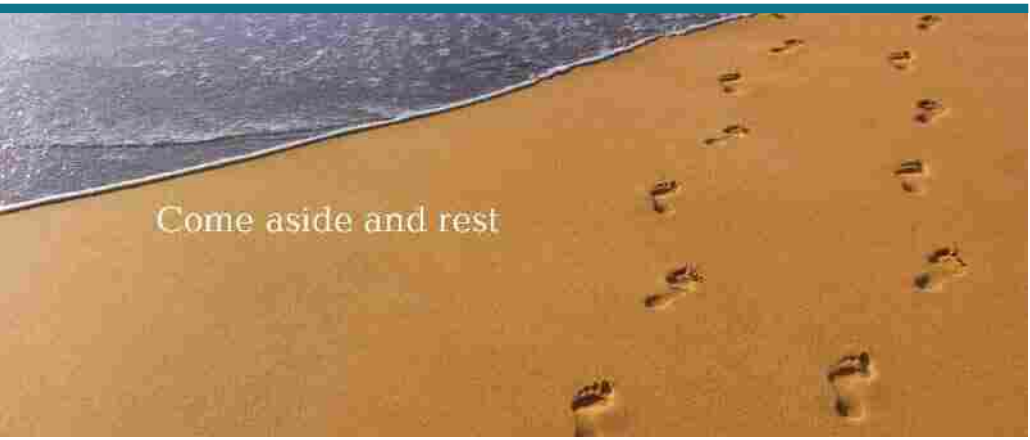
REST

Life today is hectic. The average day is full of multi-tasking, commitments and deadlines. To fit everything in, we often lose out on rest, relaxation and sleep.

When Jesus said to his disciples, "Come aside ... and



rest a while" (Mark 6:31), He knew what He was talking about. The batteries of life need to be recharged. During rest the body is restored and rejuvenated. The mind becomes calmer and clearer. There is nothing better than waking up refreshed after a good deep sleep.



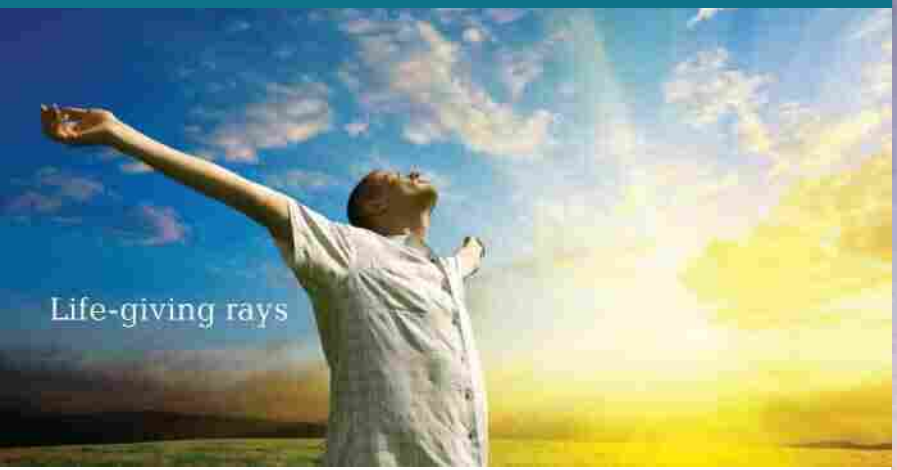
Experts provide a number of tips for helping us get a good night's sleep. Firstly, ensure the sleep environment has a comfortable temperature, is not cluttered with distractions like TVs and radios and make sure you have a good mattress. Secondly, avoid heavy meals, alcohol, nicotine or caffeine before you go to bed. When you wake up, open the blinds or go out into the sunshine.

If life is too hectic, make sure you take a vacation. At the very least, take time just to chill out in nature and relax for a while.

Jesus gave us the Sabbath rest. This is time for our "whole person" to rest and connect with God, family and friends.

SOAK IN SUNLIGHT

It is important that we get out and feel the sun. Of course too much sun can result in skin cancer, so we need to be careful. But exposure to sunlight on our skin produces the very necessary Vitamin D (the sunshine vitamin). Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium, which strengthens the bones.



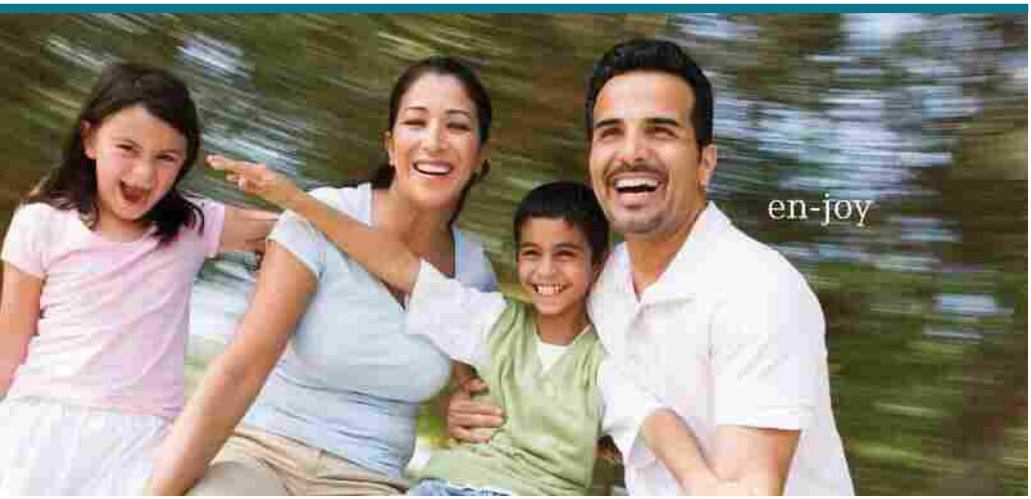
Up to 15 minutes of sunlight a day boosts the immune system and helps reduce the risk of cancer. Sunlight aids mental concentration, gives more energy and can even lower blood pressure. Sunlight also nurtures our emotions and mind. Tests have shown that the life-giving rays of the sun help people who battle with mood swings and depression (Dr Norman Rosenthal: National Institute of Mental Health).



ENJOY LIFE

Our mental attitude to life has a major impact on our overall health. The Bible says, "A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones" (Proverbs 17:22). Be an optimist and have a good laugh once in a while.

According to author Jane Campsie, "adults laugh on average only 15 times per day while kids enjoy a giggle up to 400 times per day" (De-stress, 2000). Laughter relieves the symptoms of stress through releasing endorphins from the brain. According to researchers Dr Lee Berk and Dr William Fry from Loma Linda University, "happy, joyful laughter produces measurable changes in a person's immune system."



There are many other ways for you to feel the experience of enjoying life. Try your hand at one of the arts (play, write or sing music, write a poem or book, create a short film for youtube or paint a picture). Go down to the beach. Fly a kite. Go shopping with friends. Read a good book. Just discover what you are passionate about and do it!

DRINK WATER

Humans cannot survive for very long without water. The body is at least 60% water and is vital for the daily functioning of the body. Water transports nutrients to the vital organs of the body and cleanses the body of waste. Water also lubricates our joints and aids in digestion.

The benefits of drinking plenty of water includes: less headaches, enhanced memory, replenished skin, improved immune system, reduction in the risk of some cancers and weight control. Experts suggest we drink at least 8–10 glasses of water per day.

Water can also be an effective natural treatment for illness. Hydrotherapy is an ancient form of water treatment that uses the stimuli of hot and cold (along with the sensation of water on the skin). This can stimulate the immune system, improve circulation and reduce stress.

NURTURE RELATIONSHIPS

At the heart of human need is to love and be loved. People who have quality relationships, and regularly experience social time, are likely to be healthier and happier. To nurture your relationships you need to spend quality time. Try telling those close to you how much they mean to you. Write them a letter or even a quick SMS message. If you have a disagreement, ensure you don't carry around a grudge. Allow yourself to forgive and be forgiven.

Connecting with the community also can enhance health. Try joining a local community group. Volunteer



and help others. Why not create a community garden in your area.

For the Christian the most precious relationship we have is our friendship with God. As you spend time with Him you will find your whole person health and happiness growing.



BE ACTIVE

At creation God appointed Adam and Eve to do work that involved exercise (Genesis 2:15). Being active provides a variety of very important benefits to our health. Exercise reduces worry and stress, builds muscle, reduces fat, helps us feel good and reduces the risk of heart disease.

Unfortunately, many of us today have jobs that involve very little exercise. It is vital that we still make time in our busy bustle to create movement for our body. If you are just starting then begin slowly. The aim is to get to a point where your heart rate increases while you exercise. Walking is often viewed as the best exercise with an aim of at least 10,000 steps per day. Exercise is cumulative so even if you move your body for 15 minutes two to four times per day, you will be gaining the benefits of being active.

Most of all, find an activity you really enjoy. You will not only get fit and healthy – you will feel good while you do it.

EAT WELL

"And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food…"" (Genesis 1:29)

The original diet that God gave to human beings revolved around whole plant foods. It began with fruits, grains and nuts and expanded to include vegetables (see Genesis 3:18). A diet based on colourful fruits, vegetables, seeds, legumes and nuts can be very tasty and these foods restore and nourish the body. Unprocessed plant-based foods have the nutrients that help prevent many chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes. They also help maintain a good body weight and help you to feel good.

Man's original plant-based diet lasted for over 1,500 years. Throughout that time the average lifespan was 912 years. After the flood, plant foods were obviously quite rare so God allowed meat to be eaten. There were clear guidelines, however, to ensure health was maintained. God had divided the meats into clean and unclean and He told His people to never eat the unclean. Also God stipulated that the blood of the meat should be drained out and no animal fat should be eaten (Leviticus 3:17).

In the Bible, God is specific in terms of which foods are unfit for human eating. The clean meats are those that have a split hoof and chew the cud. The clean fish are those that have scales and fins. Meats such as pigs, prawns, rats and rabbits should all be avoided as food. Other meats such as cattle and lambs were approved (Leviticus chapter 11, Deuteronomy chapter 14). God is

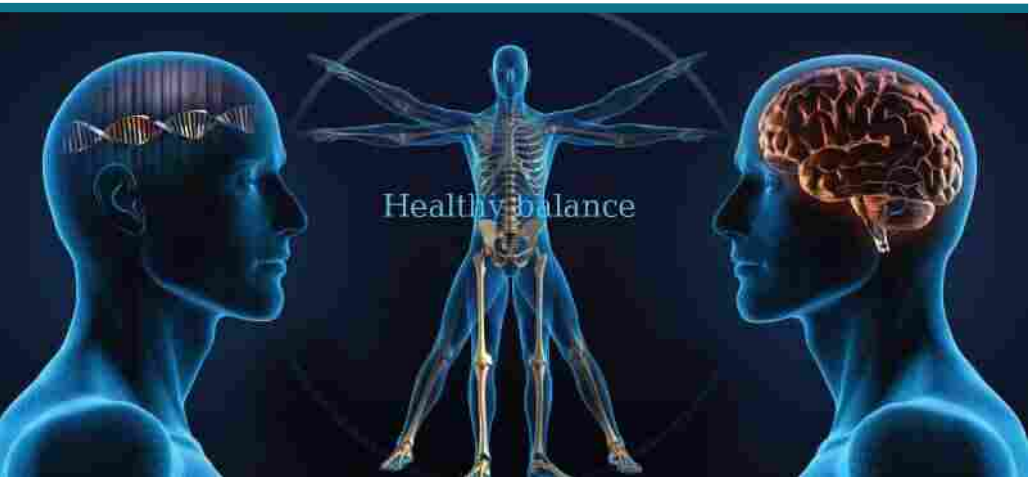


so serious about this issue that He even says that those who eat swine will be destroyed by fire at the Second Coming! (Isaiah 66:15-17).

In the last days of earth's history it still makes sense to eat a plant-based diet. Unprocessed whole plant foods have the nutrition that people require without the harmful effects of meat. Growing plant foods also uses less energy and other scarce resources than meat production. They are a smart choice for the environment.

Eating is one of the pleasures of life. God has given us our senses so we can be fascinated by food. He has given variety in texture, colour and flavour so we can enjoy our eating experience.

In his book ***Food Rules***, author Michael Pollan makes an interesting statement: "eating what stands on one leg (mushroom, spinach) is better than what stands on two legs (chicken), which is better than what stands on four legs (cows, pigs)."



RESPECT THE BODY

God wants us to take care of our bodies and avoid those things that are damaging.

"If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy Him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Corinthians 3:17)

Fitness guru Trevor Romain asks the question – if you don't take care of your body – where are you going to live? That's a good question. If we mistreat our bodies we may not get a second chance. To illustrate: suppose you knew you would only ever have one car in your life. How would you look after it? We would ensure it received good fuel, good oil and good maintenance. We only ever have one body. We should care for our body as if it is the most priceless treasure on earth.

Some of the dangers we need to avoid are:

ALCOHOL

Drinking alcohol is unwise and inconsistent with a Christian lifestyle. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1)

There are some studies that suggest positive health benefits from moderate wine consumption. However, many of these same benefits can be gained from other juices and foods. Also, alcohol can negatively impact on the vital organs of the body. This includes the brain, liver and kidneys.



In 2005, the ***Sydney Morning Herald*** reported on new research with a headline, "Sobering study says even one drink can do you harm". The research indicated that even small quantities of alcohol, increased the risk of heart disease. Back in the 1990s researchers discovered that "even just one or two drinks decreases the brain's ability to gather information … impairs memory, perception, and judgment" (Look Up and Live: A guide to health. P66). With all the attractions and temptations of the world we need a mind that is clear and in tune with God.

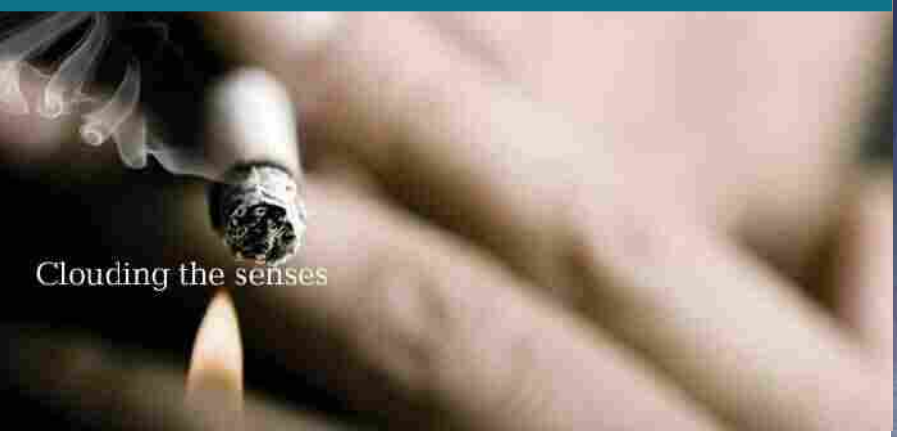
In the Bible, the word "wine" can mean either fermented wine or the pure juice from the grape. God is so definite in His opposition to fermented wine that He says we shouldn't even look at it! (Proverbs 23:29-32). The wine that Jesus created at the marriage feast was the "good wine" – the same sort of wine described by the prophet Isaiah as "new wine" that is "found in the cluster" (Isaiah 65:8). In other words, fresh grape juice. It is hardly likely that Jesus would create barrel loads of alcohol so people could get drunk!

At the last supper Jesus said to His disciples that He would not drink from the "fruit of the vine" again until they meet again in heaven (Matthew 26:29). Once again, there will not be fermentation and alcohol in heaven – clearly Jesus was drinking the pure grape juice, fresh from the vine.

DRUGS AND NICOTINE

Although cigarettes and contemporary drugs are not specifically mentioned in the Bible, the principle of not destroying your body is found in the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 3:17). Drugs and cigarettes are major curses to the health of people within our community. The poisons affect the blood and cause a range of life threatening diseases. God created you to be happy and healthy – the last thing He wants is for you to be smoking or taking drugs.

There are many subtle forms of drugs today that are also causing illness. Try drinking some herbal teas as a replacement to tea and coffee, or fresh juices as a replacement for high-energy drinks – your body will be better for the change.



TRUST IN GOD

Trusting in God takes away the worry and stress of life. We know that many diseases originate in the mind. In particular, guilt and fear can affect the whole body. Trusting in God brings inner peace and hope for the future.

Even if we follow the laws of health, it is still God who brings health and healing.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies" (Psalms 103:2-4).

Some may have a chronic illness and see no relief in sight. If that is you then Jesus gives you the promise, "My grace is sufficient for you." God does not always remove sickness. We live in a world damaged by sin. But if you trust in Jesus, He will sustain you through your challenges. In the new earth we will have new and perfect bodies and there will be "... no more death, nor sorrow nor crying" (Revelation 21:4).



Q6 WHAT IS THE SECRET TO CHANGING OUR LIFESTYLE?

Philippians 4:13 - *I can do all things through _____ who strengthens me*

Take your worry, guilt, fear, addictions and bad habits to Jesus today. Jesus is waiting for you to come just as you are. Ask Him for a new heart and the power to break the harmful habit that is holding you. A happy and healthy life is a journey. Why not take the first step today.

Three Points to Remember:

- God wants us to be happy and healthy
- God's original health plan is still the best
- Through Christ, God has the power to break any bad habit

The Story:

A Christian businessman by the name of Jarrod was flying from Los Angeles to Auckland. Sitting next to him was his close friend Tim. After Jarrod had eaten his vegetarian meal, Tim leant over and placed some of his own roast pork on Jarrod's plate. Jarrod just laughed it off and placed it back onto Tim's plate.

Tim thought he would test his friend out and said, "Come on Jarrod. You can't chew your way into heaven." Jarrod responded quickly, "that may be true, but you can chew your way out." He meant that a poor diet could impact our mind and judgement. This in turn, can lead to poor choices and decisions to sin.

He then went on to share with Tim why he followed a plant-based diet. Jarrod shared his desire to be healthy and happy in this life and prepare for the life to come. Jarrod concluded by saying, "I am not judging you Tim. But I am a Christian planning to go to heaven. From what I can work out they are all vegetarians up there. So I figure I might as well get used to it!"

Although this was a light-hearted conversation, what important truths can we take from this story?

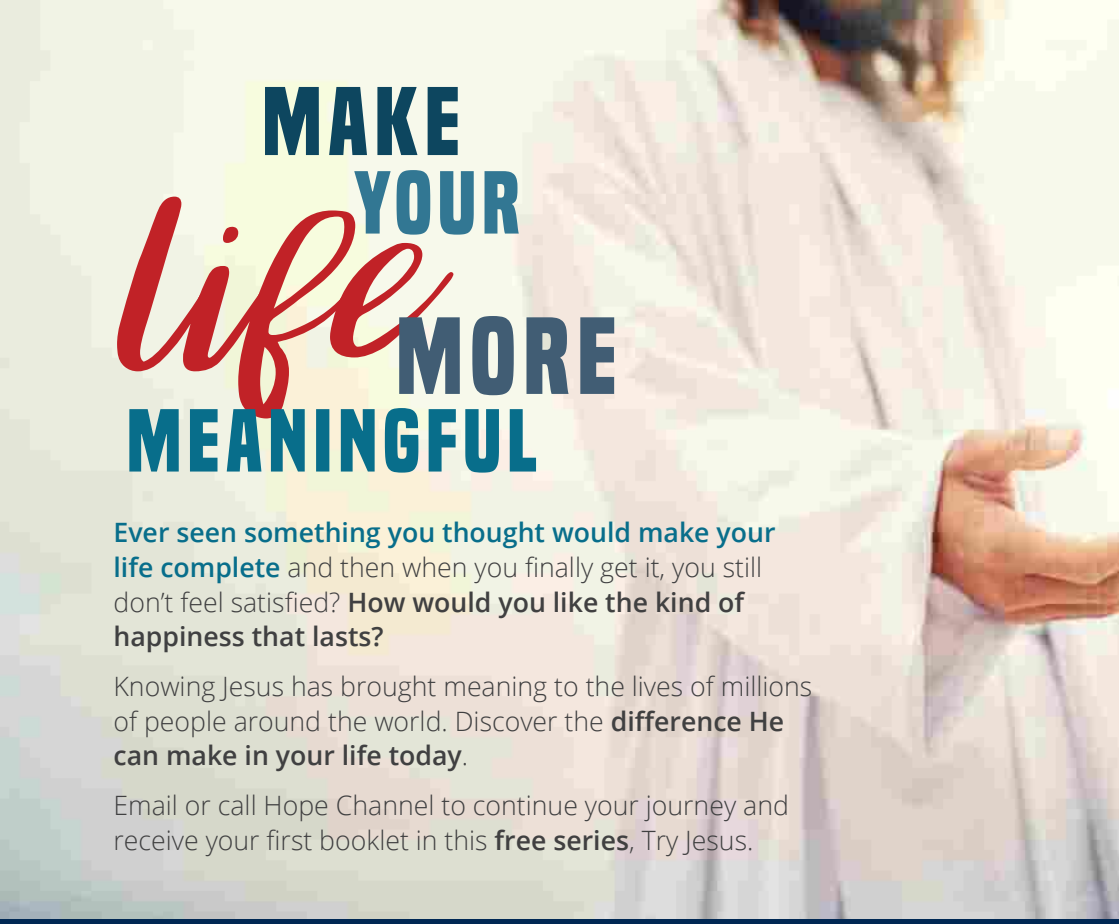
Relational questions:

1. How do you maintain the balance between adopting a healthy lifestyle and not becoming fanatical or judgmental?
2. What have you found to be the key to overcoming unhealthy habits?

Your response:

Do you accept that living a healthy life is an important part of a daily relationship with Jesus and would you like to decide today to grow step by step towards a healthy body, mind and spirit? _____





MAKE YOUR *life* MORE MEANINGFUL

Ever seen something you thought would make your life complete and then when you finally get it, you still don't feel satisfied? **How would you like the kind of happiness that lasts?**

Knowing Jesus has brought meaning to the lives of millions of people around the world. Discover the **difference He can make in your life today**.

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