



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

1

Amazing Discoveries in the Lost Cities of the Dead

Eyes are on the Middle East today. Many political leaders and some of the world's foremost thinkers believe World War III will break out in the Middle East. The Middle East conflict is a seething pot ready to boil over into an international conflagration.

The nation of Israel is at the center of a fomenting Middle East. Jerusalem is the center of three great world religions—Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The Dome of the Rock, or the Al Asque Mosque as it is better known by Muslims the world over, is built on the Temple Mount, itself the former site of the Jewish temple. This is a constant source of irritation to the Jews. Daily Jews approach the Western Wall of the ancient temple to pray for the glory of Israel to return. Christians look to Jerusalem as the place Jesus ministered, was crucified, and resurrected from the dead. Muslims claim it as their city. They believe their prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven from the Temple Mount.

Will the current tension over Jerusalem and the Middle East escalate into a global conflict? What does the future hold? Troubling signs are on the horizon. Global warming, natural disasters, regional conflicts, worldwide hunger, a sagging economy, unprecedented crime, and international terrorism give us reason to pause and ask, "What in the world is going on?"

In an attempt to find answers, many have turned to the psychics only to be tragically disappointed. Nostradamus, Edgar Cayce, and others like them are wrong about the future more often than they are right. Their predictions are unreliable and at best are wild guesses about the future. There is One whose predictions regarding the future are accurate. They pass the test of time. God, speaking through His Word, accurately reveals the future. Isaiah the prophet puts it succinctly, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8). The Bible is not guesswork. The God who knows the future has revealed it to His prophets. Here are some of the Bible's Amazing Prophecies fulfilled.

Prophecies Fulfilled

The Bible predicted the mighty Egyptian empire would fall. The Bible predicted the wealth of Egypt would be plundered and the idols of Egypt destroyed. The land would become desolate (Ezekiel 30:13; 32:12, 15).

God also predicted the destruction of Tyre, that wealthy seacoast city in southern Lebanon (Ezekiel 26:4, 5, 12-14; 28:19). The fascinating thing about this prophecy regarding Tyre is the Bible predicted Tyre would be destroyed, scraped like the top of a rock with its ruins cast into the sea, never rebuilt and left as a place for the spreading of nets. Shortly after Ezekiel's prediction, Nebuchadnezzar attacked Tyre. It took thirteen years to destroy the city. The prophecy is fulfilled in 333 B.C. when Alexander the Great scraped the ruins of old Tyre and threw them into the sea. He then built a causeway to attack new Tyre. Bible prophecy is accurate in all of its details.

The Bible prophet Jeremiah predicted Nebuchadnezzar's attacks on Jerusalem in 605 B.C. (Jeremiah 27:6). Just as the prophet predicted, the Babylonian king attacked and overthrew Jerusalem.

Archaeology Confirms the Truthfulness of God's Word

The spade of the archaeologist confirms that places, names, and dates recorded in the Bible are accurate. A recent discovery at Tel Dan reveals David as king of Israel. The unearthing of the city of Khorsabad confirms the Biblical report that Sargon was king of Assyria (Isaiah 20:1). The discovery of the Moabite Stone confirms the Moabite attacks on Israel as portrayed in the Bible (2 Kings 3:10). And the discovery of Petra, the marvelous capital of the Edomites, reveals the Bible's accuracy in describing ancient foes of Israel.

Notably, the most significant archaeological find of the 20th century was the Dead Sea Scrolls. The scrolls were written by the Essenes, a Jewish sect, about 120-140 B.C. early in the second century before Christ. These fascinating documents contain parts of all of the books of the Old Testament with the possible exception of Esther. The complete manuscript of Isaiah was found. After fifty years of careful examination, Bible scholars and linguists have concluded there are no major variants between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible we hold in our hands today.

This amazing demonstration of accuracy lead even reserved, cautious scholars to speak admiringly of the text. Dr. Don Carson, Biblical scholar said, "The scrolls tend to confirm the solidarity of the old testament to a greater degree than most people expected." The message contained in these ancient manuscripts is essentially the same as the message we read in our Bibles today.

God has guided in the transmission of His Word through the centuries. It is accurate. It still gives hope to a world in deep trouble. It reveals a certain future. It gives us confidence to face tomorrow. God's Word stands forever (Isaiah 40:8).

“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

Isaiah 46:9-10	God declares the end from the beginning, revealing things yet to come to pass.
Ezekiel 30:13	Bible prophecy predicted the ancient capital of Egypt, Noph [Memphis], would be destroyed.
Ezekiel 32:12	The Bible prophet adds this fascinating detail, “They shall pluck the pomp [wealth] of Egypt.”
Ezekiel 32:15	The country of Egypt would become desolate, like a barren desert area.
Ezekiel 26:4, 5, 12-14, 19	The Bible prophet Ezekiel predicted the magnificent city of Tyre would be totally destroyed, never rebuilt at its original location, and scraped like the top of a rock.
Jeremiah 27:6; 32:29	The Bible prophet Jeremiah predicted Babylon’s overthrow and destruction of Jerusalem.
1 Samuel 16:1, 13	Recent archaeological discoveries confirm the truthfulness of the Bible’s description of David as king of Israel.
Isaiah 20:1	The prophet Isaiah names Sargon as King of Assyria. Discoveries at Khorsabad confirm Sargon’s reign.
2 Kings 3:18	In this passage, the Moabites attack Israel. Recent archaeological discoveries confirm the truthfulness of this statement.
Jeremiah 49:17	Jeremiah predicts the total desolation of Edom (Petra).
Isaiah 40:8	The Word of God stands forever.



Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#1 - Amazing Discoveries in the Lost Cities of the Dead

1. ☐ T Since the Bible was written over 2000 years ago, it has little to say to us today.
☐ F (Read Isaiah 40:8)
2. What attribute of God does the prophet Isaiah describe in this passage?
Write your answer on the line below.
“Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times, things not yet done” (Isaiah 48:10).

3. In the list of cities below, circle the ones the Bible makes specific predictions about.
Jerusalem Noph (Memphis)
Alexandria Chicago
Tyre Aman
Beirut Petra
4. What archaeological discovery at Tel Dan reveals an important part of Israel’s history? Underline the right answer.
 - a. The discovery of the inscription of Pontius Pilate
 - b. The discovery of the names of the twelve disciples
 - c. The discovery of the name of King David
5. Why was the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 so significant?
Complete the sentence on the line below.
The Dead Sea Scrolls _____
6. What does the Bible say about itself?
Complete the sentence on the line below.
“All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16).
“Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).
The Bible declares _____
7. What is the greatest evidence for you personally that the Bible is inspired by God?
Write your answer on the line below.
I believe the Bible is inspired by God because _____

Your Name: _____



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2

The World's Next SuperPower

A budding industry today is *Space Tourism*, that expects we'll be able to book ourselves on space vacations within the next 10-20 years—if we can pay the price. If you're interested in space travel, interested in finding out “What's out there” beyond our earth, but you don't have the cash to invest, how about an eternity-long vacation that's offered to you free? God's ultimate reward for the redeemed is far more exciting than any journey in the cramped quarters of some man-made space shuttle!

Christ offers us the *ultimate* space journey. We'll travel with Him through the starry heavens. But first must come to pass the words of **Revelation 11:15**—“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord.” Throughout the ages, earthly kingdoms have arisen to challenge the kingdom of God. There has been a battle for the throne, a battle brought into sharp focus in the Old Testament Book of Daniel. Scripture contains two books of end-time prophecy: Daniel and Revelation. Unlocking Daniel's symbols makes Revelation's prophecies clear. And Jesus' statement in **Matthew 24:15** directs us to understand “Daniel the prophet...whoever reads, let him understand.”

One of the most fascinating Bible chapters is **Daniel 2**. A king dreamed of world events that spanned 2,500 years. Those events have come to pass with such precision that only the hand of God could have been involved. It's a prophecy that proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is in control of history. It is a prophecy that's been almost totally fulfilled...almost, but not quite. **Daniel 2:1** says: “In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.”

This was the king who ruled the great Babylonian Empire 500 years before Christ, the king who built the luxurious Hanging Gardens—one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which seemed of great significance, but when he awoke, he could not remember what he had dreamt. So he called his wise men—who claimed to see into the future—and asked them to tell what he had dreamt. When they admitted that they could not, Nebuchadnezzar condemned them to death.

Now young Daniel, though a prisoner of war in Babylon, was counted among the “wise men” for his gifted intelligence and understanding. When the king's captain came to execute Daniel, he asked for time to pray for God to reveal the dream—and God did! Then Daniel, taking no credit to himself, went before Nebuchadnezzar and told the king that no mortal man could reveal the dream. “But *there is a God in heaven* who reveals secrets, and He has revealed...what will be *in the latter days*.” **Daniel 2:28**. The king's dream focused on end-times, the *close* of earth's history. The dream starts with Nebuchadnezzar and marches through history to the current day.

So Daniel told the king what he had dreamed: “You, O king, were watching: and behold, a great image!... *This image’s head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver; its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.* You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” **Daniel 2:31-35.**

The King was excited! “Yes, that’s it! That’s it!” he cried. “That’s *exactly* what I saw! But Daniel, what does it mean?” What does it mean not only to Nebuchadnezzar but to you and me? Daniel continued: “You, O King,...are this head of **GOLD.**” **Daniel 2:37-38.** The *Babylonian Empire* of Nebuchadnezzar (which made more lavish use of *gold* than any kingdom since) was secure as the dominant world power from 605 B.C. to 539 B.C., but he was to be overthrown by a kingdom represented in **Daniel 2:32** as “the breast and arms of **SILVER.**” Just a few pages ahead in your Bible, **Daniel 5:28**, the next world ruling power is named: the joint empire of *the Medes and the Persians*. Again, a fitting symbol: the two arms joined at the chest to show two kingdoms—Medes and Persians. They ruled the world for two centuries, from 538 B.C. to 331 B.C., but they too were overthrown by a third kingdom.

This third kingdom, depicted in verse 32 as the “belly and thighs of **BRONZE,**” was the *Greek Empire* of Alexander the Great. And what did Alexander’s men wear into battle? Bronze—bronze breastplates, bronze helmets, bronze shields, bronze swords. Once again, God chose a fitting symbol to describe the kingdom that would rule the world from 331 B.C. to 169 B.C.

But history doesn’t end with this third kingdom. Greece did not rule the world forever, for there was a fourth metal after the gold of Babylon, the silver of the Medes and Persians, the bronze of Greece. The next kingdom is represented by **IRON.** Daniel 2:40 says, “The fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron.” The iron monarchy of *Rome* was the last world kingdom, which in 168 B.C. overthrew the Greeks.

Just as legs form the longest part of the body, Rome had the longest reign of any other of the world powers. For more than 500 years, half a millennium, Rome was invincible. But what did the Bible predict would happen next? **Daniel 2:41-43** says, “Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of clay and partly of iron, so this will be a *divided* kingdom.”

History confirms that this seemingly unconquerable Roman Empire crumbled for two reasons—from within and from without. From within—wealth poured into Rome through taxes collected from all over the world and the simple Roman life was replaced with luxury and pomp. The political world brewed with corruption, crime infiltrated the streets, the work ethic was lost, sexual immorality was rampant. And as the mighty Roman Empire weakened from within, Rome was attacked from without and divided into ten smaller kingdoms.

Where are we living today? Right down in the *toenails* of history! Every part of this prophecy has come to pass except one. Listen—Daniel told the king in **verses 34 & 44**: “You watched while a **STONE** was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ...The God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” That *Rock* cut out without hands symbolizes Jesus Christ, who will come to establish His kingdom.

Why is it important that you know about the dream of an ancient king? Simply this: Nebuchadnezzar’s dream portrayed history before it was lived, and once you realize the Bible can be trusted with the past, you’ll know without a doubt it can be trusted to predict those things still to come. Today we have hope, for tomorrow is in the hands of *the God who guides history*—and who *loves* us!



History has followed this prophecy like a *blueprint* and will continue to do so. The political workings of this planet are not random. God has been guiding, controlling, and overruling all along.

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God through the prophet Daniel foretold the breakup of the Roman Empire into **ten toes** of the Image, representing the **ten kingdoms** into which Rome was divided when barbarian tribes carved up the empire. They are:

- Anglo-Saxons: *England*
- Alamanni: *Germany*
- Burgundians: *Switzerland*
- Franks: *France*
- Lombards: *Italy*
- Suevi: *Portugal*
- Visigoths: *Spain*
- Heruli
- Vandals
- Ostrogoths

The last three have no modern names, for they originally took over parts of the Empire but were eventually destroyed—“plucked up by the roots” as **Daniel 7:8, 20, & 24** foretold.

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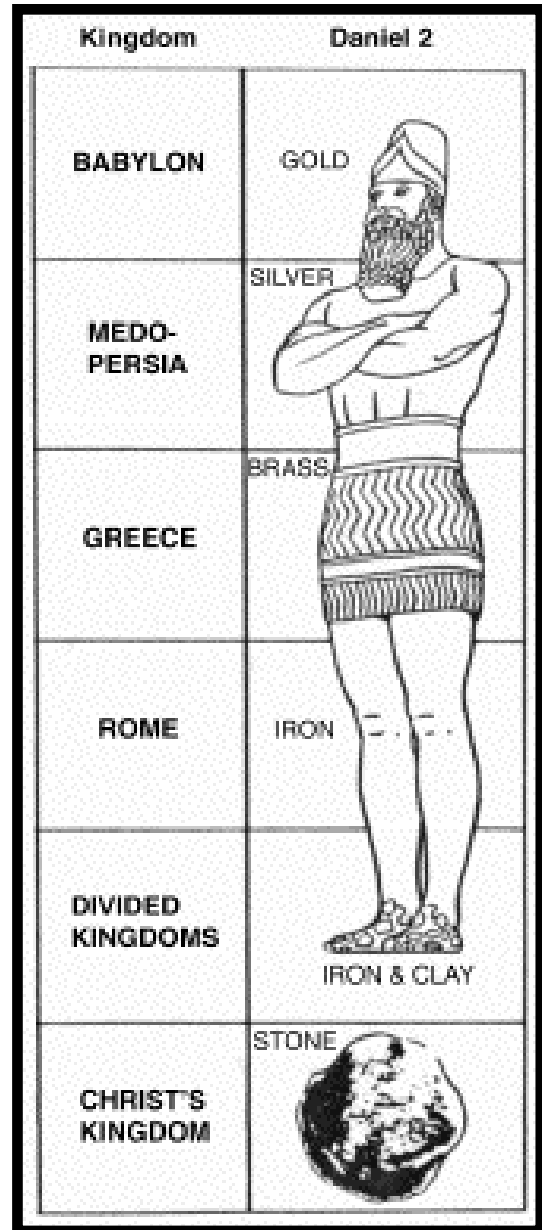
Daniel 2:41-43—**Ten toes**, ten kingdoms, and just as **IRON** and **CLAY** won’t mix together, so the ten kingdoms will not be joined. No matter how many battles are fought, no matter how many *Hitlers* or *Napoleons* or *Charlemagnes* seek to conquer, the world will never be united under one ruler again.

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British Prime Minister Winston Churchill stated: “Any man must have a blind soul who cannot see that some great purpose and design is being worked out here below.” ● So inescapably did Daniel’s prophetic portrayal correspond to its historical fulfillment that the great English historian Edward Gibbon, though not a Christian or Bible believer himself, wittingly or unwittingly used Scriptural language in his monumental *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* when he wrote: “The images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the IRON monarchy of Rome.”

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History has played itself out. Only one kingdom is left to be established. Soon Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Rock of Ages, the One who paid such a remarkable visit to this planet 2000 years ago, is going to pay us another visit. And He’s going to make *quite an entrance* the second time. The heavens will rumble with a great shout as trumpets blast and angels sing. Then Christ and the angelic host will swoop down in a cloud of glory to gather His faithful ones!



Quick Quiz

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#2 - The World’s Next SuperPower

1. Daniel took NO credit or glory to himself when he told the king, “But as for me, this secret is not revealed to _____ for any wisdom that _____ have more than any living.”

To check your answer, see Daniel 2:30.

2. Instead, Daniel’s *first words* to the king directed that monarch’s thoughts to *divinity* when he said: “There is a _____ in _____ that revealeth _____.”

To check your answer, see Daniel 2:28.

3. Just as the gospel hymn praises God by singing “He’s got the whole world...in His hands,” so Scripture asserts the Supreme Rulership of God by saying, “He _____ kings, and _____ kings...The most High _____ in the kingdom of _____, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.”

To check your answer, see Daniel 2:21 and 4:17 (compare Psalms 75:6-7).

4. Is predictive prophecy just for *past* events of *Old* Testament times, or does it extend into our *own* day and age even into *the future*? Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar that God would reveal “what shall be in the _____ days,” and John the Revelator was told to “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which _____ be _____.”

To check your answer, see Daniel 2:28, 45 & Revelation 1:19.

5. The “**Blueprint of History**” delivered by God in a dream seems dependable, for it has *already* been fulfilled in all particulars for 2500 years, but can we trust it for the *remainder* of earth’s history? God says: “The dream is _____, and the interpretation thereof _____.”

To check your answer, see Daniel 2:45.

Your Name: _____



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3

How Near is the End?

On September 8, 1985, 16-year-old Sean Sellers and a companion killed a convenience-store clerk. Sean described the murder in these words: “We didn’t take any money. We didn’t take any merchandise. We just took the life of an innocent man for Satan.” The 16-year-old killer wasn’t even a suspect in the case until six months later when he killed his parents. He was angry at his mother and performed an occult ritual beforehand, explaining, “There was nothing but cold hatred in me.” Sean Sellers was the youngest man on Oklahoma’s death row till he was executed by lethal injection.

Did that story shock you? Probably not. If you’ve been reading your own daily newspaper, you’re probably beyond being shocked at the evil in today’s world—a lawless world that knows no bounds.

Long ago, Jesus sat on a hillside with His disciples and predicted such a time as this. Jesus’ disciples privately asked, “What shall be the *sign* of Thy coming and of the end of the world?” **Matthew 24:3.** The Master foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and then clearly outlined the signs that would precede His Coming. The events that led up to the destruction of Jerusalem would also be present at the end time—but on a much larger scale before Jesus’ Return.

It’s amazing that when we compare Jesus’ prediction in Matthew 24 with the predictions in the Book of Revelation, they provide an incredibly accurate picture of *our* day! It is *our* lifetime of which Jesus spoke! For 2,000 years, the words Jesus spoke on that hilltop in Jerusalem were preserved in the Book of Matthew so we could know the events of *our* time that signal the *end* time. Specific, clear signs would precede the most momentous event of the ages—Christ’s Second Coming.

What are the signs of which He spoke? He told of signs in the world of **religion, politics, nature, and society**. Today, these signs are played out in the stories splashed across our newspapers and TV screens. Let’s examine each of these signs individually.

SIGNS in the world of RELIGION: Jesus foretold in **Matthew 24:5** that “Many shall come in My name, saying, *I am Christ*; and shall deceive many.” Thousands, in their search for certainty, turn to cults, to *false Christs* and *false prophets* who recruit many to follow them. Jesus warned in **Matthew 24:24**, “There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders.”

The Book of Revelation confirms that part of Satan’s plan is *deception*: “He performs great signs so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on earth in the sight of men. And he *deceives* those who dwell on the earth by those signs he was granted to do in the sight of the beast.” **Revelation 13:13-14.** The devil will unleash his deceptive power to take captive men’s and women’s minds.

False religions have increased phenomenally. Cults recruit those who are searching. The *Heaven’s Gate cult* produced a farewell video and then took their own lives. *Jim Jones* of the People’s Temple

led nearly 1000 to their death in the jungles of Guyana as they drank cyanide-laced Kool-Aid. *David Koresh* led his followers to a fiery death in Waco, Texas. To say nothing of *Swiss cults* whose members burned themselves to death, or a *Japanese cult* planning nerve gas attacks on Japanese subways. There are Bible-based cults, UFO cults, Satanist cults, New Age cults, Eastern cults.

The Bible predicts a mighty false revival just before the Second Coming. Over two thousand newspapers in the U.S. carry astrology columns. Dial 900 phone numbers, and psychics will tell your future—for a fee. Click on Internet sites, and you can be guided through numerology, tarot cards, and dream interpretations. The devil is pulling out all the stops in these last days. But God is not caught by surprise—He warns us in His Book.

SIGNS in the world of POLITICS: In **Matthew 24:6-7**, Jesus says, “You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. . . . For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” The 20th Century saw World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Arab-Israeli Wars, the war in Bosnia, the Gulf War, Kosovo, southern and northern Ireland, wars all over Africa from Rwanda and Somalia to the Sudan and the Congo. One source estimates 180 million people have been killed in the last century—a total far greater than for any other century in history. Peace treaties, based on frail human promises, are signed one day and broken the next. Speaking of our time, the Apostle Paul declared in **1 Thessalonians 5:3**, “When they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them. . . . And they shall not escape.”

Today the nuclear threat is greater than ever. Even though the U.S. has downsized our nuclear arsenal, Russia has not. In August of 1999, CBS’s *60 Minutes II* aired a program about Russia’s Secret Cities continuing to produce *plutonium*—the key ingredient in nuclear weapons. When terrorists and rogue governments go to Russia seeking to buy plutonium to make nuclear bombs, scientists who have not been paid by Russia’s crumbling economy are sorely tempted to sell their precious commodity.

Revelation 11:18 puts it this way: “The nations were angry and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged. And that You should reward your servants the prophets and the saints, . . . and should destroy those who destroy the earth.” With unchecked nuclear weapons, we now have the capacity for self-destruction. This is certainly one of the greatest signs of Jesus’ Return, for never before in history has mankind had the capability to destroy all the earth.

SIGNS in the World of NATURE: In **Matthew 24:7**, Jesus said, “There shall be famines, and pestilences [strange diseases], and earthquakes in diverse places.” Do we see *famines* today? Experts know that for many, chronic hunger is an ever-present part of life and that 10,000 people a day, or more than 3.5 million people per year, die of starvation. Do we see *pestilences* today—strange diseases running rampant? Some diseases are becoming resistant to antibiotics. And new diseases appear for which science has no cure—AIDS, Mad Cow disease, the Ebola virus. Do we see *earthquakes* today? Seismograph stations record 12,000 to 14,000 earthquakes per year—about 35 per day. Many earthquakes of disastrous magnitude peppered the century just closed. Turkey and Taiwan recently had devastating quakes. There’s a whole lot of shaking going on!

SIGNS in the world of SOCIETY: No signs are more obvious than those in the social world. Jesus plainly predicted in **Matthew 24:37**: “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.” In Noah’s day, God’s standards were no longer accepted. And how is society’s moral fabric today? *Living together outside of marriage* is commonplace. *Out-of-wedlock babies* account for 30.1% of all births in America. The *divorce rate* quadrupled, from 4.3 million in 1970 to 18.3 million in 1996.

SIGNS in the world of KNOWLEDGE: **Daniel 12:4** speaks of “the time of the end” when “knowledge shall be increased”—knowledge about Daniel’s prophecies and knowledge in general would increase. As you turn on your computer, remember: ours is an age truly exploding with knowledge.



Looking to our daily newspaper for hope, we find only despair. Looking to the Bible in despair, we find hope. Fulfilled prophecies are all around us—Jesus is coming soon!

#3 - How Near is the End?

“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

Matthew 24:3	Jesus’ disciples asked for a sign of His Coming and the end of the world.
Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24	There will be many false religious teachers: false christs and false prophets who will deceive and mislead many.
Rev. 13:13-14	Satan and his agents will perform signs and wonders to deceive people.
Revelation 16:14	Spirits of devils will perform signs and miracles to mislead many.
2 Tim. 4:3-4	The time will come when people won’t endure sound doctrine but will seek out teachers who will tell them what their itching ears want to hear.
Matthew 24:6-7	There will be wars and rumors of wars; nation will rise against nation.
Luke 21:25	There will be distress of nations, with perplexity.
Luke 21:26	Men’s hearts will be failing them, from fear of those things happening.
1 Thess. 5:2-3	Peace talks, based on man’s frail promises, will avail nothing.
Revelation 11:18	When the nations are angry, Christ will ultimately destroy those who would destroy the earth.
Matthew 24:7	There’ll be natural disasters—famines, pestilences, earthquakes—all over.
Matthew 24:12	There will be rising crime and violence, iniquity.
2 Tim. 3:1-4	There will be perilous times with moral decadence of every kind.
Matthew 24:37-39	There will be times of wickedness and violence, as in the days of Noah.
Genesis 6:1-2, 5, 12-13	In Noah’s day, wickedness, evil, corruption, and violence were rampant everywhere.
James 5:1-5, 8	There will be economic difficulties, with labor and management troubles.
Daniel 12:4	Near “the time of the end . . . knowledge shall increase.”
Luke 21:34	But many will be too weighed down with the cares of this life.
Matthew 24:48-51	The evil servant says, “My Lord delays His Coming.”
2 Peter 3:8-10	God chooses to save all—but He honors our freedom of choice.
Revelation 14:6	The everlasting gospel will be preached in every nation and tongue.
Matthew 24:14	This gospel will be preached in all the world; then the end will come.
Matthew 24:42-44	God’s counsel is—“Be ready.”



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#2 - Revelation’s Greatest End-Time Signs

1. One *religious* sign of the End is that Jesus says, “There shall arise false _____, and false _____, and shall show signs and wonders.”

To check your answer, see Matthew 24:24 .

2. ☐ T The most destructive, world-wide conflicts in human history occurred in the 20th
☐ F Century, fulfilling the *political* sign Jesus predicted in “wars and rumors of war.”

To check your answer, see Matthew 24:6-7.

3. To all earlier generations, it must have sounded *incredible* and *incomprehensible* that Christ should come to “destroy them that _____ the _____,” for never before in all ages has man had that awesome capacity!

To check your answer, see Revelation 11:18.

4. ☐ T Pictures of *starving children* around the world haunt us in today’s media, like a
☐ F visual echo of Jesus’ prophecy of “famines...in diverse places.”

To check your answer, see Matthew 24:7.

5. Our *crime-ridden* cities, filled with violence, testify that Jesus’ *social* sign of the End is fulfilled, when He said that just before His Coming society will be “as it was in the days of _____, when “the earth was full of _____.”

To check your answer, see Matthew 24:37 and Genesis 6:11 & 13.

6. A sign in nature’s world is Jesus’ warning of “_____,” or strange diseases, some of which man himself causes, such as *deaths from smoking*.

To check your answer, see Matthew 24:7.

Your Name: _____



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4

The Jesus Myth

Today there's a new revolution in psychoactive drugs. Soon there'll be a pill for every problem. Will we find all our answers in pharmaceuticals? Certainly psychoactive drugs are on a roll. One big reason is the Prozac phenomenon. After this anti-depressant went on the market, people began telling remarkable stories of how their lives had changed dramatically after taking the drug. And that made a lot of people wonder—if a pill can do all this, do we still need God? Do pills do what God cannot? Are psychoactive drugs going to make God obsolete in the 21st century?

Let's take a closer look at exactly what God does in an individual's life. Let's see how the Holy Spirit works in our minds and compare that with what psychoactive drugs do. I think you'll be amazed. There is a divine power which provides radical, life-transforming changes!

Let's turn to the Book of Revelation. Did you know that believers have one dominant image in the Book of Revelation? They're characterized in one way more than any other: God calls them **OVERCOMERS**. Although Revelation pictures hard times and cataclysms in the end time, with evil powers like the dragon and beast warring against God's people, believers **OVERCOME**. Believers are delivered. Believers **WIN**! God's instructive, illuminating refrain starts near the beginning of Revelation:

- **Revelation 2:7** - "To him who **OVERCOMES**, I will give to eat from the tree of life."
- **Revelation 2:11** - "He who **OVERCOMES** shall not be hurt by the second death."
- **Revelation 2:17** - "To him who **OVERCOMES** I will give some of the hidden manna to eat."
- **Revelation 2:26** - "He who **OVERCOMES** . . . to him I will give power over the nations."
- **Revelation 3:5** - "He who **OVERCOMES** shall be clothed in white garments. . . ."
- **Revelation 3:12** - "He who **OVERCOMES**, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God. . . ."
- **Revelation 3:21** - "To him who **OVERCOMES** I will grant to sit with Me on My throne."

The Book of Revelation pictures believers as victors who overcome adversity and evil. We see the same theme later in the book. Speaking of Satan, the accuser, the enemy, **Revelation 12:11** says, "They **OVERCAME** him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." At the end of the book, this same picture emerges. God promises in **Revelation 21:6-7**: "He who **OVERCOMES** shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

In various places, Revelation pictures believers joyously celebrating before God's throne. They're pictured as having gone through great tribulation and coming out *triumphant*. Believers overcome even in the worst of times. That's part of Revelation's message, friends. It's telling us that we weak, sinful human beings can be overcomers. We needn't be intimidated by the forces of evil in this world.

Yes, we may be weak, handicapped by our heredity, by our family of origin, by our environment. But Scripture still offers us hope that we can be overcomers and rise above these things. I've seen God radically transform people around the world—their lives changed forever:

- Drunkards become sober.
- Thieves become honest.
- Money-grabbing businessmen become unselfish, compassionate husbands and fathers.
- Angry, bitter people become renewed in spirit.
- Prostitutes and lust-filled men become transformed.
- Hearts filled with hatred become filled with love.

It's a miracle—a miracle of God's grace! What God does in human hearts and lives is remarkable. The apostle Paul shouts it in these words: "If any man [or woman] is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." **2 Corinthians 5:17.**

How does it happen? How does God transform our lives? The Bible calls this experience "the new birth" or being "born again." To be born again means to be radically transformed from deep within by the power of the Holy Spirit. It means to have a new way of looking at things, a new power operating in your life, new desires, new impulses, new joy and peace in your life.

The human mind cannot understand it, but we become overcomers through the Spirit. We're born again, powerfully changed, with a new power working in our lives. The Spirit has uprooted anger, bitterness, lust, and addictions and replaced them with love, joy, peace, and longsuffering.

The Spirit's power liberates us from the bondage of habits that destroy our souls. **2 Corinthians 3:17** puts it this way: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The Spirit's power frees us from the chains of sin which bind us while drug medication deals only with symptoms. If a person is depressed, certain pills may ease that depression. But no psychoactive drug can show you WHY you're depressed, what lies behind your anger, or what contributes to your anxiety. In our rush to just medicate the mind, we forget that pills don't give us the wisdom or insight we need to deal with our problems and grow through them. But the Holy Spirit works in us to do precisely that. He's the Spirit of revelation, and His revelations can produce dramatic results.

One more thing God's Spirit does is fill up our lives with good things. Look at **Galatians 5:22-23**: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control." Those good qualities the Holy Spirit reproduces inside us. That's how we keep growing. The Spirit moves us down a path that leads to abundant life—everlasting life. Pills can't do that. Pills may be a temporary help. But the Holy Spirit sticks with us for the long haul. He's not an artificial additive. He fills us with good character qualities. And being filled with the Spirit produces no side effects. There's no down side.

Ephesians 3:16 talks about being "strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man." You can be strengthened with the mighty power of God inside you! You can be different than you are! You don't need to struggle with the same habits over and over again. When life presses you down, when you struggle with impulses which seem uncontrollable, when you feel too weak to try—remember the apostle Paul's words, "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." **Romans 8:37.** God has called you to be a winner, not a loser. Our willpower is weak, but when we surrender our will to Him, He gives us power directly from His throne.

My own Dad Jim Finley was born to a problem family in the New York City slum called "Hell's Kitchen." He picked up bad habits, left home, joined the Navy and was going down the wrong road in life when he dropped to his knees and gave His heart to Christ. Dad didn't just get out of Hell's Kitchen. Hell's Kitchen got out of him. My father truly escaped from his old life because he truly made a commitment, heart and soul. That's how we become OVERCOMERS.



“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

Genesis 1:2	The Holy Spirit of God was present at Creation.
Acts 5:3-4	Peter in the Bible equates the Holy Spirit with “God.”
2 Corinthians 3:17	Paul in the Bible equates the Holy Spirit with “the Lord.”
Romans 8:27	The Holy Spirit has a mind.
1 Corinthians 2:11	The Holy Spirit knows and understands the things of God.
Ephesians 4:30	The Holy Spirit is not a mere <i>power</i> or <i>force</i> but a Person who can be grieved.
John 16:13-14	Jesus referred to the Spirit with personal pronouns like <i>He</i> and <i>His</i> —not “it.”
John 14:26	God sends the Holy Spirit to be our divine Teacher.
Acts 5:32	God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him.
John 16:8	God’s Holy Spirit convicts us—in our hearts—of sin.
John 3:3-8	The Holy Spirit brings about the new birth, when one is “born again.”
Ezekiel 36:26-37	The Holy Spirit transforms our character, giving us a new heart.
1 Corinthians 12:11	The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts, equipping us for God’s work.
Genesis 6:3	The Holy Spirit “strives” with us, leading us to do right.
John 16:13	The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth.
Ephesians 3:16	Through His Spirit, God will strengthen us with might in our inner being.
Romans 8:37	In all problems, we can be more than conquerors through Him who loves us.
Revelation 3:12	God gives many breathtaking promises “to him [or her] who OVERCOMES.” (See also Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:26, 3:5, 3:21, 21:7, <i>etc.</i>)
2 Corinthians 5:17	A person who comes to Christ is a <i>new</i> creation—all things have become new!
Galatians 5:22-23	The fruit of the Spirit can fill our lives, our characters, with all good things.
2 Timothy 1:7	God hasn’t given us a spirit of fear, but of <i>power</i> , of <i>love</i> , and of a <i>sound mind</i> .
Romans 8:14	As we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us, we become sons and daughters of God.
Galatians 6:8	“He who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”
Romans 8:11	We need not fear death, for Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, will resurrect His faithful people.
Revelation 19:1	Through all eternity we’ll praise God for His miraculous power of deliverance.



Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#4 - The Jesus Myth

1. The Holy Spirit is more than an *essence* or *influence* or *power* or *force*—He’s a Person! For the Bible speaks of “the _____ of the Spirit” and warns us, “ _____ not the Holy Spirit of God”—attributes that could never be applied to an unconscious force.

To check your answer, see Romans 8:27 and Ephesians 4:30.

2. If we want a *Spirit-filled Christian life*, we must understand that the Bible says God gives the Holy Spirit “to them that _____ Him” and keep His Commandments through *love*.

To check your answer, see Acts 5:32. Compare John 14:15-17.

3. One ministry of the Holy Spirit Jesus pointed out is that “He will *reprove* [modern versions say *convict* or *convince*] the world of _____,” giving us a sense of right and wrong.

To check your answer, see John 16:8.

4. The Holy Spirit was powerfully poured out on the the Day of Pentecost, but He was present and active long before—even at Creation, for the Bible says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. . . . And the _____ of _____ moved upon the face of the waters.”

To check your answer, see Genesis 1:1-2.

5. God knows we face many troubles and temptations, but He offers many great promises “to him who _____,” and wants us to be “ _____ with _____ by His Spirit in the inner man.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 2:7, etc., and Ephesians 3:16.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

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5

Good God! Bad World! Why?

Angels! Angels have become phenomenally prominent the last few years. Angels have made it to prime time. They star in a CBS hit called “Touched by an Angel.” They appear in feature films and are the subject of best-selling books. All through the book of Revelation angels are prominent, appearing in almost every chapter. But right now I want to focus on an angelic conflict outlined in Revelation that overshadows anything we human beings can imagine, an epic battle that’s been going on for centuries. This battle is supremely important because it’s really *a battle about who God is*. It’s a battle about human destiny—and we’re all involved, whether we realize it or not.

War in Heaven: It seems impossible to believe, but **Revelation 12:7-9** tells us, “War broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

War in heaven! It seems like a contradiction in terms. This brings up other perplexing questions, like “*Why* was there war in heaven? What was the *dragon* doing in heaven in the first place? What was *Satan* doing there? Where did he *come* from?”

A Pre-history of Satan: Fortunately there are some good clues. Scripture gives us hints of how that conflict developed. In fact, we can learn what Satan was like before the world was created and where he came from. Ezekiel once communicated a message from God about the king of Tyre. But in the prophecy we see that God is also talking about someone else. The exalted king represents a different, angelic creature. “Thus says the Lord God: You were the seal of *perfection*, full of *wisdom* and perfect in *beauty*...You were the anointed *cherub* who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were *perfect* in your ways from the day you were created, till *iniquity* was found in you.” **Ezekiel 28:12-15.**

Here is described “the anointed cherub who covers.” This was an angel anointed for a special task. In the Jewish temple, the covering cherubs stood over the mercy seat, the throne of God. This angel had a special place near God’s throne. He was “the seal of perfection, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty.”

But something happened to this angel. “Iniquity was found” in him. He allowed sin to enter his life. How? **Ezekiel 28:17** explains: “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.” This angel got wrapped up in his own splendor and beauty. There’s nothing wrong with appreciating your own talents and abilities and feeling good about yourself. So how did this angel move from healthy self-esteem to “iniquity?” How was his wisdom corrupted?

Isaiah 14:12-14 tells us—and also tells us the angel’s name: “How you are fallen from heaven, O *Lucifer*; son of the morning!...For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’”

Lucifer became an angel with an attitude. Being near God’s throne wasn’t enough. He wanted a higher position. He wanted “the kingdom and the power and the glory” of God Himself!

Love Is the Answer: John tells us that “God is *love*.” **1 John 4:8.** Love was all around Lucifer. But Lucifer turned away from that and finally saw God as a rival! His twisted mind pictured God as the enemy. This rebellious angel wondered: Why should God have all the power and authority? Lucifer thought he could do just as good a job at running things.

Now heaven was a place where jealousy and slander and malice had never existed. Angels had never heard a lie (which was invented by Lucifer, **John 8:44**) and couldn’t cope with falsehood. It never occurred to them to question God’s wisdom and love. And suddenly this brilliant Lucifer, this cherub so near the throne of God, starts making remarks. He wonders why God has to have all the glory, why every created being has to obey Him. Maybe there’s an alternative, a *better way* to run the universe.

Lucifer, who seemed so reasonable, so wise, questioned God’s authority and persuaded many other angels to join his rebellion—enough to go to battle over who should run the universe. A great battle ensued—a cosmic conflict. There was *war in heaven*, and Lucifer (now called Satan) was cast out of heaven with all his followers. Why didn’t God just nip evil in the bud—destroy it before it had a chance to spread and cause so much suffering? If God had executed Lucifer, just *zapped* him in an instant, all the other angels would reason: “Poor Lucifer! He *tried to tell us* God is a tyrant—and look what’s happened to him! It seems Lucifer was right. It seems that his charges are true.” God chose a wiser course: He’d allow sin to exist for a period of time, and when it had been fully demonstrated that God’s way brings joy and Lucifer’s way brings death, then and only then would God destroy all evil.

Love doesn’t force. Love lets people see for themselves, decide for themselves. God wants us to love Him back for who He is. No one back then, except God, knew what a disaster Lucifer’s alternative would be. No one knew how much suffering and misery it would create. We had to *see* that for ourselves. That’s the only way God could ensure that evil would never plague the universe again.

Planet Earth Joins the Conflict: In the Garden of Eden, when Eve told the serpent God had said she would die if she ate of a certain tree, Satan contradicted God and said: “You will *not* surely die...For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” **Genesis 3:4-5, NIV.** Satan was saying, “You’ll have greater happiness if you follow me. God is restricting your freedom.” Tragically, Eve and her husband Adam accepted that lie. Today we live on a *planet in rebellion*, a planet full of decay and death.

The Origin of Suffering: In **Matthew 13:24-43** Jesus talked about a man who planted good seed in his field, but useless weeds popped up everywhere, leading a servant to ask, “Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the *weeds* come from?” That’s the question we all face at some time in life: If God made this world to blossom for His children, why do we see so many tragic weeds? In Jesus’ parable the master answered that question very simply. He said, “An *enemy* did this.” It was an enemy of God and man who sowed his seeds of suffering and sin.

God Had a Plan: God didn’t abandon the human race because it rebelled against Him. From the very beginning, He had a plan. If you wonder, “Why doesn’t God *do* something about the sickness and sin and heartache in our world?”—the answer is: He *has* done something. He’s given everything in the gift of His Son. He came into the world and suffered with us—and we can some day triumph with Him!



“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

NOTE: There is now going on in the universe a **cosmic conflict** between Good and Evil. Fortunately, your Bible reveals both the *origin* and the *conclusion* of that conflict.

1 John 4:8 & 16	God's very essence is <i>love</i> —infinite love, undying love.
Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43	Suffering, sickness, and death came from “an enemy” of God and man. (<i>especially verse 28</i>)
Ezekiel 28:12	God created the angel Lucifer absolutely flawless—beautiful and perfect.
Ezekiel 28:15	But Lucifer used his God-given freedom of choice and became evil.
Ezekiel 28:17	Lucifer became puffed up with <i>pride</i> and corrupted himself.
Isaiah 14:12-14	Prideful Lucifer had “ I ” trouble—he wanted to be <i>God!</i>
Revelation 12:7	The Bible reveals that there was <i>war</i> in <i>heaven!</i>
Revelation 12:9	Satan and his evil angels were cast out of heaven to this earth.
Luke 10:18	Jesus Himself said He beheld Satan “fall like lightning from heaven.”
John 8:44	Satan is “the father” of all lies and lying.
Ezekiel 28:13	The Devil was in Eden, the Garden of God, to tempt our first parents.
Genesis 3:1-6	Satan led Adam and Eve to mistrust God and openly defy His command.
Isaiah 59:1-2	Sin separates us from God.
Jeremiah 17:9	The nature of the human race changed—as the result of mankind's disobedience, our <i>nature</i> became sinful—sin infected the human heart.
Romans 3:10, 23	The entire human race plunged into guilt, disobedience, and sin.
Romans 6:23, 5:12	The ultimate result of disobedience is death.
Hebrews 2:14, 4:15	Jesus took man's nature, faced man's temptations, and was victorious.
Romans 5:17-19	Jesus redeemed Adam's failure.
Ephesians 2:8	Through faith in Jesus, salvation is ours as a gift (Romans 6:23).
Ezekiel 28:18	God will finally <i>destroy</i> Satan and bring him to “ashes,” so that the Devil will “be” no more forever.
Revelation 21:1-5	Our God will establish a new heavens and a new earth.
Nahum 1:9	Sin will never rear its ugly head a second time.



Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#5 - Good God! Bad World! Why?

1. Some reason that “Since God created all things, He must have made the Devil.” But the Bible says of Lucifer, “Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God...Thou art the anointed cherub...Thou wast _____ in all thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till *iniquity* was found in thee.”

To check your answer, see Ezekiel 28:13-15.

2. ☐ T When God created angels and mankind, He gave them the wonderful gift of *freedom* of
☐ F *choice*, for He didn’t want mere puppets or robots to serve Him mindlessly, without love.

To check your answer, see Genesis 2:16-17, Ezekiel 28:15, Joshua 24:15.

3. When Lucifer exercised his God-given freedom and rebelled, the Bible says, “There was _____ in _____,” and today we’re still in the midst of a *cosmic conflict* bigger than this small world.

To check your answer, see Revelation 12:7.

4. The egotistical Devil *fell* because of pride. The Bible says: “How you are *fallen* from heaven, O Lucifer...For you have said in your heart, _____ will ascend into heaven, _____ will exalt _____ throne above the stars of God: _____ will also sit on the mount of the congregation..._____ will ascend above the heights of the clouds; _____ will be like the _____.”

To check your answer, see Isaiah 14:12-14.

5. When we wonder *why* all the *sorrow*, *suffering*, and *death* is in the world, we should recall Jesus’ story of the wheat and the weeds, when He explained: “An _____ has done this.”

To check your answer, see Matthew 13:24-43—especially verse 28.

6. To *disprove* Satan’s malicious *lies* about God, “Jesus went about all the cities and villages, _____ in their synagogues, and _____ the gospel of the kingdom, and _____ every sickness and every disease among the people...He was moved with _____ on them.”

To check your answer, see Matthew 9:35-36.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

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6

End-time Living at It's Best

Like an unconscious sky-diver hurtling out of control toward the earth, we are rushing headlong toward an impact with the end time, speeding toward a collision with earth's final events. Prophetic signs reveal history is coming to a climax. As we plummet toward ground zero, many don't have a parachute on. Even more don't realize the horizon is rushing up to meet them.

But even at this late hour, God has devised a way to help us pull our rip cord. God's rescue is described in Revelation, the last book of the Bible. Note what John saw happening near the close of time: "I saw another angel flying in mid-air, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people." **Revelation 14:6, NIV.**

What a dramatic picture! God attempting to rescue every person on planet Earth! This angel is the first of three John saw who issue loud proclamations over the earth. These are God's final, last-day messages—words He shouts at us, seconds from impact. God has always sent messages to warn His people of events that would affect millions. Before the Flood, God had Noah build the Ark and plead with people to take refuge in it. Before Egypt's great famine, God sent Joseph to have the Egyptians stockpile supplies to meet the famine. God wants us to be prepared for what's coming. **Amos 3:7** puts it this way: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets." Prophecy reveals what is coming, and Revelation's prophecies reveal what is coming *especially at end time*. Revelation sends a message that something big is coming. What is this big event? Look carefully at Revelation 14 and you see that the third angel ends his message in verse 13. Then verse 14 describes the next event: The Son of Man returns with a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. This is the Second Coming, the final judgment, when history climaxes and all human destinies are sealed. So obviously the messages that come right before this are vitally important. They're God's last warning, telling us exactly how to open our parachutes as the end of time rushes up to meet us!

Look again at the angel's message: "I saw another angel flying in mid-air, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people." **Revelation 14:6, NIV.** Who is this message for? Is it aimed only at Canadians or those who speak Spanish or those who live in big cities? No, it's for everyone, a universal message for the whole world.

The angel is preaching "the everlasting gospel." The gospel doesn't change. The good news that saved Paul is the *same* good news that will save the last person on earth. There's only one parachute ever made that can rescue sinful human beings—Jesus' love and salvation. The everlasting gospel answers the most important question you'll ever face—What must I do to be saved? We're sinners, both in na-

ture and in behavior. But we can't see the problem if we just keep saying, "I'm OK, everything's fine. I'm no worse than most other people." If we don't understand our fall from grace, we won't see the day of final judgment rushing up to meet us. We won't pull the ripcord. Then the everlasting gospel, that essential parachute, can't save us.

The angel continues in **Revelation 14:7**: "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." This message has *four parts*. FIRST, "**FEAR God.**" To *fear* means to stand in awe, deeply admire, reverence, or respect. Those we respect we long to please or obey. Fearing or respecting God and obeying Him are often linked together. **Ecclesiastes 12:13** says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

God's last-day message calls us to obey Him at a time when millions feel responsible only to their own "inner sense" of right. Millions feel "I can do whatever I choose; I'm accountable only to myself; there's no standard of right or wrong outside of my own mind." But the Book of Revelation shouts an urgent call: "Fear God"—obey God. There *is* a standard outside of your mind. God sends an urgent, loving, truth-filled message calling us back to obedience to Him.

SECOND, **Revelation 14:7** says, "**Give GLORY to Him.**" Giving God glory means honoring Him in everything we do. Glory is a word reserved for the highest form of adoration. To give God glory means our entire lifestyle is surrendered to His will. **1 Corinthians 10:31** says, "Therefore whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." **1 Corinthians 6:20** adds, "For you were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's." Glorify God in all your actions. You don't glorify God by placing abusive substances in your body or by polluting your mind with this world's filth. You do it by saying, "Lord, my body, mind, and spirit are Yours."

THIRD, **Revelation 14:7** says: "**Worship Him who MADE** heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." Why should we *fear* and *glorify* and *worship* God? One good reason the Bible gives is that He's the Creator. We worship the true God, the One who created us. **Revelation 4:11** echoes: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for YOU CREATED all things and by Your will they exist and were created." In an age when the popular, so-called scientific view is that we evolved over millions of years from simple life forms like amoebas to complex forms of life called humans, God calls us back to worshipping Him as the Creator, back to exalting Him as the One who made all things.

Earth's final conflict will pivot on this subject of worship: While **Revelation 14:7** calls us to worship the Creator, **Revelation 14:9** calls us to *avoid* worshipping the beast. These two worships—of the Creator or the beast—form the heart of a titanic struggle between good and evil. The coming economic boycott, the enforcement of the Mark of the Beast, the mysterious #666 all have to do with this final battle over worship. We'll fully explain the significance of what it means to worship the Creator and how to avoid receiving the Mark of the Beast in future presentations.

FOURTH, **Revelation 14:7** says, "**The hour of God's JUDGMENT has come.**" Here is a double meaning: Certainly God will execute judgment and put an end to sin. But in another sense He Himself is the subject of judgment. Remember that at the beginning of time, a rebel angel challenged God's character. Lucifer claimed that God was unfair, unjust. He made these accusations before the whole universe. Now, ages later, He wants to clear His good name and vindicate His actions. The universe has seen the results of Satan's evil work as well as all God has done to save us. The judgment proves God has been fair with each individual. His character is vindicated. At the end of time, the whole *universe* will joyfully proclaim in one chorus of praise, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are your judgments." **Revelation 16:7.**

Jesus is coming back, not to destroy sinners, but to destroy sin. That's why He's given us this urgent message about His judgment, so He can rescue you.



“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

- Revelation 14:6-12** God's urgent message in earth's last hour is His final call to a dying planet.
- Revelation 14:6** (first part) The “everlasting gospel” never changes—it's always new, always true.
- Revelation 14:6** (last part) This message is to go to all the world, to everyone everywhere.
- Revelation 14:7** (first part) God calls us to “give glory to Him” in every aspect of life.
- 1 Corinthians 10:31** Paul says we can glorify God in what we eat or drink or whatever we do.
- 1 Corinthians 6:20** Since Jesus bought us—ransomed us—with His blood, we should glorify Him.
- Revelation 14:7** (middle) The angel announces that “the hour of God's judgment has come.”
- Revelation 22:12** Since Jesus comes to give out His rewards, there must be a judgment before He comes, to determine who receives what reward, when He comes.
- Daniel 7:9-10** Daniel saw the sitting of the Supreme Court of the Universe and the opening of the judgment while events proceeded on earth before the Second Coming.
- Ecclesiastes 12:14** God will bring every secret thing into judgment.
- Hebrews 4:13** All things are open unto God.
- 2 Corinthians 5:10** We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.
- Romans 14:12** Everyone must give account of himself to God.
- Psalms 87:4-6** In the judgment the Lord considers where we were born.
- Revelation 14:7** (last part) Heaven's final message calls all humanity to worship God as the Creator—to “worship Him who MADE” all things.
- Revelation 4:11** The very basis of all true worship is the fact that God *created* us—He's our Maker.
- John 1:1-3, 10, 14** Since Jesus was the active Agent in creation, Revelation's final call to worship the Creator is a call to honor Jesus.
- Revelation 16:7** All God's judgments are righteous and true.



Quick Quiz

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#6 - End-time Living at It’s Best

1. Paul urges, “Whether you _____ or _____, or _____ you do, do all to the _____ of God.”

To check your answer, see 1 Corinthians 10:31.

2. “The _____ of God’s _____ has come” could have a double meaning, (1) referring to the Lord’s evaluation of all people, and (2) a judgment of God Himself—an official vindication of God’s actions and character in the light of history, answering Lucifer’s slanderous charges.

To check your answer, see Revelation 14:7.

3. ☐ T Since Jesus comes to give out His rewards, there must be a judgment *before* He comes,
☐ F to determine who receives what reward, when He comes.

To check your answer, see Revelation 22:12.

4. The Bible says we should *glorify* God because “Ye are _____ with a _____,” — the costly payment of Christ’s blood—so we *belong* to Him by both creation and redemption.

To check your answer, see 1 Corinthians 6:20.

5. In this age of widespread belief in atheistic evolution, Heaven’s final message calls us to honor God as CREATOR—that is, to “_____ Him who _____” all things.

To check your answer, see Revelation 14:7.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

7

Racing Toward Eternity

The triumphs of technology are inspiring. The achievements of the space program are so tangible and specific. All the complex details—the flow of rocket fuel, the humming of computers, the astronaut's check list—fit together like clockwork. But religious hope today tends to be vague and shapeless. People have *hunches* about life after death; people *imagine* what heaven might be like. We don't have much that's specific or tangible, just a light at the end of the tunnel or mankind somehow stumbling into love and peace. Vague hope is OK as a few lines on a greeting card. But what about when death comes close and you're face to face with eternity? Vague hope doesn't do much for us then. We need something more than hunches. We need something specific to cling to.

And God HAS laid out His end-time plan for our world in the Scriptures. He's specific and eager to tell us what's coming, what we can hope for. Much of God's wonderful picture is in the Book of Revelation. Revelation pictures the Event that brings human history to a climax in various dramatic ways:

Revelation 14:14. John writes: "I looked, and behold, a white cloud and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown and in His hand a sharp sickle." This pictures Jesus coming in glory, coming to a world ripe for the harvest.

Revelation 19:11-14: "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True. . . . And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses." This is Jesus Christ riding down like a triumphant general, leading the hosts of heaven, coming to rescue His people from a doomed planet.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 tells us what will happen to believers: "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothed itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality." This is not some mystic speculating about the future. This is the God of the Universe telling us about His end-time plan! He will re-create us as imperishable beings. When? At the last trumpet. **1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17** says Christ will descend with the trumpet call of God, and the dead will rise from their graves!

Scripture outlines God's end-time plan. It also says an enemy will try to sabotage that plan. Speaking about the appearance of false Christs, Jesus warned in **Luke 17:23,24, NIV:** "Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. For the Son of Man in His day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other." Charismatic figures will arise in the last days and claim to be Christ. Their miracle-working powers will seduce many people. They'll gain large followings, and people will come to you excitedly, with glowing faces, and say, "We've *seen* Christ face-

to-face! There He is! Come and see Him.” And what are we told to do? “Don’t go running off after them.” Christ won’t suddenly appear on a talk-show in New York or as a miracle-worker on the streets of Paris. He won’t rise up from somewhere down here—He’ll be coming down from up there.

People can *fake* miracles; people can *claim* to be Christ. Even Satan himself, who can masquerade as an angel of light (**2 Corinthians 11:14**) may try to impersonate Christ. But no one can counterfeit the Second Coming as the Bible describes it. It will be unmistakably real. When the heavens above us explode and ten thousand angels lift their voices, and the unspeakable glory of God Almighty breaks through the clouds, no one will wonder who has come calling!

Some have misinterpreted a few Scripture texts and built up the picture of a Secret Rapture, where individuals are whisked away to heaven while others go about their business. The Secret Rapture theory relies primarily on a few texts that speak of Christ coming like a thief in the night. We’re told to watch and be ready for the unexpected event. On the surface this seems to imply a secret, perhaps invisible, event. But all the Bible passages which discuss Jesus’ coming as a thief discuss not a *secret* coming but an *unexpected* one. Jesus is not coming secretly to a chosen few—He’s coming suddenly when millions don’t expect Him.

The problem is, texts about Jesus coming like a thief stand side by side with texts about Jesus coming in a blaze of glory. Peter in fact mentions the two in the same breath: “The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire. . . .” **2 Peter 3:10, NIV**. Obviously the Lord comes like a thief in the sense that His Return will be a great *surprise* to those who aren’t ready—it catches them off guard. But it’s NOT silent or invisible. There’s nothing quiet about the heavens disappearing with a roar.

Here’s how Christ Himself pictures the event in **Matthew 24:27 & 30, NIV**: “As the LIGHTNING comes from the east and *flashes* to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man . . . the Son of Man will APPEAR in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will MOURN. They will SEE the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with POWER and great GLORY.” This eye-riveting Event may come as an incredible surprise to some—but it *won’t* be quiet and invisible or secret and mystical!

God has laid out His end-time plan very carefully in His Word. Specific events will take place:

1. Seismic upheavals. **Revelation 6:14; 16:18-20** There’ll be stupendous seismic upheavals. The heavens roll back like a scroll; mountains and islands are moved; and a great earthquake shakes the planet.
2. The righteous dead are resurrected. **1 Thessalonians 4:16; John 5:28-29** “The dead in Christ shall rise first.” The faithful asleep in their graves will hear Christ’s voice and rise up to eternal life.
3. The righteous living are translated. **1 Thessalonians 4:17** The righteous who are alive will be caught up together with the resurrected and ascend toward Christ, their Redeemer.
4. Immortality is bestowed. **1 Corinthians 15:53** Both the resurrected dead and the translated living receive the gift of immortality for their faith in Christ. “This mortal must put on immortality.”
5. The wicked are destroyed. **2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:11-21** Those who deliberately and persistently rejected God’s mercy will finally be destroyed.
6. The righteous welcome the returning Christ. **Isaiah 25:9** The redeemed exclaim, “This is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. . . . We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”
7. The righteous journey to heaven. **John 14:2-3** The righteous are welcomed into the divine procession and journey with Christ toward their heavenly home.

What will you feel during those last moments of Earth’s history? Joy? Or terror? You may feel indifferent about God right now, may not think faith is important. But one day soon it will make all the difference and will divide humanity into two groups. One group sees Christ’s Coming as a horrifying surprise. **Revelation 6:15-17** says they’ll pray for the mountains and rocks to fall on them! The other group sees it as a wonderful deliverance, a fulfillment of all they’ve lived for. Open your Heart and make your commitment to Christ right now.



“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

John 14:1-3	Like a promissory note, Jesus said He would return—and we can bank on it!
Acts 1:9-11	Angels confirmed His promise and testified to its truthfulness.
Jude 14	Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of our Lord’s return.
Revelation 1:7	It will be an VISIBLE event. When Jesus returns, every eye shall SEE Him.
Matthew 24:27	Jesus taught that His Return shall be like <i>lightning</i> flashing across the sky.
Matthew 24:30	The wicked also “will SEE the Son of Man coming . . . with power and great glory,” but they “will mourn” their lost opportunity.
1 Thess. 4:15-17	It will be an AUDIBLE event. The Lord Himself will <i>shout</i> , and the trumpet—the noisiest of instruments—shall <i>sound</i> .
Psalms 50:3-5	David declares “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent. . . . He shall call . . . gather My saints together to Me.”
Matthew 16:27, 25:31	It will be a GLORIOUS event, in His own glory and the glory of His Father. He comes with “ALL the holy angels”—which Revelation 5:11 says are trillions!
Revelation 19:11-16	As King of kings leading the armies of heaven, He returns as triumphant Lord.
Isaiah 25:9	The righteous, delighted to see Christ, joyfully exclaim, “Lo, this is our God!”
Revelation 6:14-17	The unsaved wicked fear His Coming and cry for the rocks to fall upon them.
1 Thess. 4:15-17	The faithful <i>dead</i> will first be resurrected and rise to meet the Lord; then the faithful <i>living</i> will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.
1 Cor. 15:51-54	God will clothe His faithful people with immortality.
2 Thess. 2:8	The wicked are struck dead by the brightness of His Coming..
Matthew 13:37-43	The evil are purged out of His kingdom, and the righteous are saved through all eternity.
Titus 2:13	Christ’s Coming is called the “Blessed Hope” of a lost mankind.
Revelation 22:11-12, 17 & 20	Jesus offers His final invitation to prepare for His soon Return.



If you like statistics . . .

There are over 1500 prophecies of Jesus’ Second Coming recorded in the Bible.

For every prophecy of His first coming mentioned in the Old Testament,
there are eight predicting His Second Coming.

The return of our Lord is mentioned once in every five verses in the New Testament.

Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#7 - Racing Toward Eternity

1. Jesus *promised* to return to this sinful world when He said, “I _____ come again”!

To check your answer, see John 14:3.

2. The Savior leads us to believe His Return would be *visually spectacular* when He says it will be “as the _____” that comes out of the east and shines all the way to the west.

To check your answer, see Matthew 24:27.

3. The Apostle Paul leads us to believe Christ’s Return will be *noisily audible* when he describes that event by saying, “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a _____, with the _____ of the archangel, and with the _____ of God.”

To check your answer, see 1 Thessalonians 4:16. Compare Matthew 24:31 and John 5:28-29.

4. ☐ T What the Bible means by “the Second Coming of Christ” is that Jesus comes into your
☐ F heart when you invite Him and accept Him as your Savior.

To check your answer, see any or all of the Scripture texts listed on this Quiz.

5. Could John the Revelator use human language any more *clear* or *emphatic* about the *visible* nature of Christ’s Return than to say simply: “_____ shall see Him”?

To check your answer, see Revelation 1:7.

6. Besides the fact that the wicked are all struck dead by “the brightness of His Coming,” another very cataclysmic, catastrophic event in connection with Christ’s Return is “a _____ earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so _____ an earthquake, and so great.”

To check your answer, see 2 Thessalonians 2:8 and Revelation 16:18, 6:14, and 16:20.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

8

Hope Beyond Tomorrow

Having experienced a shift from one millennium to another, I'm sure this word millennium is in our vocabularies. Just as 10 years is a DECADE and 100 years is a CENTURY, 1000 years is a MILLENNIUM – coming as it does from two Latin words: mille meaning “thousand” and annus meaning “year.” We are now in the twenty-first century and the third millennium since the time of Jesus Christ. But what about the BIBLE millennium? What does the Book of Revelation teach about that? Actually, the specific word *millennium* appears not at all in the Bible, but the idea of a special thousand-year period does. In fact, the expression a “thousand years” appears *six times*—once in each verse from **Revelation 20:2 to 7**. It's an important concept, for the Millennium is, in a sense, GOD'S TIMETABLE OF FINAL EVENTS—it reveals *the schedule God plans to use* when He brings down the curtain on the drama of this world's history.

God says in **1 Corinthians 14:40**, “Let all things be done decently and in order.” And the Lord, being a God of order, has everything organized in a beautiful way. For instance, any study of the future must account for FOUR GROUPS of people: the righteous living when Christ comes, and the wicked living. And the righteous already dead, and the wicked dead. The Bible Millennium neatly accounts for all four groups. Now let's consider events under three headings: Events *before*, *during*, and *after* the Millennium.

A. — Events BEFORE the Millennium

Event #1 - The Mark of the Beast Is Given

Revelation 13:16-17 — The Antichrist Beast enforces his Mark with coercive threats.

Revelation 14:9-10 — But God warns us against taking it.

Event #2 - Our Probation Closes

Revelation 22:11-12 — Jesus accepts each one's decision as final and says He'll return quickly.

Event #3 - The Seven Last Plagues Fall

Revelation 15:1 & 8 — Seven angels pour out the wrath of God.

Revelation 16:1-17 — The Seven Last Plagues punish those who have the Mark of the Beast.

Event #4 - The Second Coming of Christ Is Spectacular

Matthew 24:30-31 — Christ returns “with power and great glory” to gather His faithful people.

Matthew 25:31 — When comes in His glory, all the holy angels accompany Him.

Revelation 1:7 — As Christ gathers His redeemed in the Rapture, “every eye shall see Him.”

Event #5 - The Righteous Dead Are Resurrected

1 Thessalonians 4:16 — The DEAD believers in Christ rise “first”—before the living faithful.

Revelation 20:6 — “The FIRST resurrection” is for those “blessed and holy,” who are “with Him [Christ] a thousand years.” The word *first* implies a *second*, and there ARE two resurrections, 1000 years apart.

John 5:28-29 — “The resurrection of *life*” is opposed to “the resurrection of *damnation*,” 1000 years later.

Event #6 - The Righteous LIVING Are Caught Up

1 Thessalonians 4:17 — The living saints are then caught up “to meet the Lord in the air.”

Event #7 - The Wicked LIVING When Christ Comes Are Struck Dead

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 — Christ will take “vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not.”

2 Thessalonians 2:8 — Christ will “*destroy* [the wicked with the brightness of His Coming.”

Isaiah 13:9 — The Lord will lay the land desolate and destroy the sinners out of it.

Isaiah 66:15-16 — “Behold, . . . the slain of the Lord shall be many.”

B. — Events DURING the Millennium

Event #8 - On EARTH: Satan Is “Bound” with No One Left to Tempt

Revelation 20:1-3 & 7 — Satan is bound with “a *great chain*” and cast into “*the bottomless pit* . . . till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be *released* a little while.”

Are (1) the “great chain” which binds Satan and (2) “the bottomless pit” which forms his “prison” LITERAL? The Devil is real and literal enough. Jesus Himself said: “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” **Luke 10:18**. But the angel Lucifer, who made himself into the Devil called Satan, is a *supernatural being*. As Paul put it: “We wrestle **not** against **flesh and blood**, but against principalities, against powers, against **spiritual wickedness** in high places.” **Ephesians 6:12**.

Simple reason tells us that no actual, literal “chain” or “pit” or “prison” could secure a supernatural being. More important, sacred Scripture tells us the same thing. One day after sailing across the Sea of Galilee: “They [Jesus and His disciples] came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when He was come out of the ship, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and **no man could bind him, no, not with chains: because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces.**” **Mark 5:1-9**.

Ask yourself, if a devil-possessed *man* could easily break apart a chain with superhuman strength, is it likely that the prince of devils himself could be bound with one? So *what kind of “chain” is it* that God uses to bind Satan? It’s a **chain of CIRCUMSTANCES** which binds the Devil more securely than any literal chain ever forged. Note the circumstances in which Satan finds himself at this time: In the first place, all the *righteous*—who were unwilling to listen to him anyway—have been taken to heaven. And all the *wicked* have been struck dead. Thus **the entire earth is depopulated** with NO ONE LEFT for Satan to tempt! Old Testament prophets foresaw this unique situation:

Jeremiah 25:33 — The slain wicked “shall not be LAMENTED OR GATHERED OR BURIED”—for there are no survivors around to do any of these things!

Isaiah 26:21 — When the Lord returns, “the earth...shall no more cover her slain.”

Isaiah 24:1, 3, 22 — “The Lord makes the earth EMPTY...The land shall be utterly EMPTIED.”

How very effective this **chain of circumstances** is! Satan is securely bound—“chained” by circumstances beyond his control. But what is “the bottomless pit”? The Greek word translated “bottomless pit” is *abussos* from which we get our English word *abyss*. Modern Bible versions like the Amplified Bible, NASB, NEB, NIV, TEV, and others translate “bottomless pit” in **Revelation 20:1** as “abyss.” *Abussos* is **exactly the same word** the Greek translation of the Old Testament uses in **Genesis 1:2**, where it says “the earth was **without form, and void.**” The prophet Jeremiah directed divine light on this question when, centuries ago, he looked down the corridor of time with the eye of Inspiration and testified:

Jeremiah 4:23-27 — The earth is desolate—**without form and void**—with NO human inhabitant!

What period of history was Jeremiah seeing when he wrote, “Lo, there was NO MAN”? We might think it was at the start of Creation Week, because (1) “there was no man” *before* God formed Adam, the first man, and because (2) Jeremiah said “the earth...was without form, and void” which was true at that time.

But although those two clues fit that time period, we note that God placed a third clue in this passage which does *not* fit: Jeremiah says he saw “all the **CITIES**...broken down.” This vision couldn’t possibly be of the beginning of Creation Week, for man didn’t build cities before he was even created!

The only other time in human history when prophecy could describe the earth as having “no man” is during the Millennium while the earth is depopulated of all living people—“empty,” as we read before. At that time “all the cities” **will** be “broken down,” completely leveled from the devastation of the final one of

the Seven Last Plagues which brings the most terrific **earthquake** ever and pulverizing **hail**.

Event #9 - In HEAVEN: The Saints Assist in the Judgment

Revelation 20:4 — The redeemed sat on thrones, “and judgment was committed to them.”

Luke 22:30 — Jesus desires “That ye may . . . sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 — The saints shall judge the world and angels—the angels who fell with Lucifer.

Even human legal proceedings don’t dispose of a case in a *flash*. The whole process has several stages:

- First, there’s the *investigation* of all pertinent facts we call a TRIAL.
- Second, there’s the rendering of a *decision* we call a VERDICT.
- Next there’s often an *assessment* of the verdict we call a JUDICIAL REVIEW.
- Finally there is a *carrying out* of the verdict we call the EXECUTION of the sentence.

The same process is seen in mankind’s Final Judgment. The first two steps take place in heaven before Jesus returns (**Daniel 7:9-10**), for *Step One*, the investigation or “trial,” must precede *Step Two* when Christ announces His “verdict” that each morally filthy or holy person stay that way (**Revelation 22:11**). And *Step Four*, the “execution” of the wicked’s final death sentence, will take place *after* the thousand years are finished.

But *Step Three* is where the redeemed saints, in heaven, are granted the privilege of conducting a “judicial review” of the cases of the wicked who lie dead on earth. God knows that because some people are not saved, they’ll be *missed* by the saints—yet He wants **no heavy hearts in heaven**. So God will allow us to ask any questions about His decision as to why some are not saved in heaven, such as:

- “How come Aunt Martha—and Grandfather!—aren’t here? They were such good people.”
- “Yes, and how about Pastor Jones and Father Brown? God *made a mistake* if they’re lost!”

Then an angel will lead the inquirers to heaven’s Record Books, now lying open to examination, and sadly reveal the unforgiven sins—sins not blotted out, unknown to the world, unknown even to close friends and loved ones. God is too wise to allow even a trace of a doubt to linger in anyone’s mind about His justice. Though the wicked from all ages suffered the first death common to all men, God will not destroy them by the second death in the Lake of Fire until this review of His judgment is completed. In other words, God makes sure that Event #14 will not take place until Event #9 has been thoroughly completed.

C. — Events AFTER the Millennium

Event #10 - The Wicked Are Resurrected, So Satan Is Loosed

Revelation 20:3, 5a, & 7 — Those “blessed and holy” had part in the first resurrection. “But the *rest* of the dead [the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were finished. . . . And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be *loosed* out of his prison”—for once again he has people to tempt!

Event #11 - The Holy City Descends from God Out of Heaven

Revelation 21:2 & 10 — The New Jerusalem, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, descends.

Event #12 - The Wicked Surround God’s Holy City

Revelation 20:7-9 — With the wicked alive again, Satan is loosed out of his prison and goes out to deceive them, to gather them to battle against the beloved city.

Event #13 - The Wicked Are Judged Before God’s “Great White Throne”

Revelation 20:11-13 — Before the great white throne, “the books were opened” to judge the lost.

Romans 14:10-12 — Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess and give account to God.

Event #14 - The Wicked Are Destroyed by Fire

Revelation 20:9, 14-15 — When the wicked surround the holy city to attack it, FIRE comes down from God out of heaven and DEVOURS them. This lake of fire is the SECOND death.

Revelation 21:8 — The wicked of every description have their part in this lake of fire.

Event #15 - The Earth Is Cleansed by Fire and Made New

2 Peter 3:10-13 — “The elements shall MELT with fervent heat. . . . All these things shall be DISSOLVED.”

Revelation 21:1 & 5 — But “He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”

Psalms 37:11 & Matthew 5:5 — The blessed redeemed “shall inherit the earth,” the earth made new.

Isaiah 65:17, 21-25 — The redeemed will build houses, plant vineyards, and enjoy the New Earth.

Isaiah 66:22-23 — On the glorious New Earth, we’ll come to worship God from one Sabbath to another.

Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#8 - Hope Beyond Tomorrow

1. The Millennium is *bounded on each end* by a _____ of the dead, *first* of the _____ people, and *then*—a thousand years later—of the _____ people.

To check your answer, see Revelation 20:4-6 and 1 Corinthians 15:22-23.

2. WHERE did Jesus promise to *take* His faithful followers when He returns? _____

To check your answer, see John 14:1-3.

3. ☐ T The Bible makes clear that the redeemed saints will somehow participate in God’s
☐ F Judgment process.

To check your answer, see Revelation 20:4, Luke 22:30, 1 Corinthians 6:2-3.

4. Where will the WICKED remain during this thousand-year period? _____

To check your answer, see Jeremiah 25:33.

5. What condition will the EARTH be in during the thousand years? _____

To check your answer, see Jeremiah 4:23-27.

6. During the thousand years of the Millennium, Satan will be “bound” by a chain which is:
☐ A. A figurative “chain of circumstances.”
☐ B. A literal, actual chain of material links.

To check your answer, see Mark 5:1-4.

7. When the WICKED are raised to *life* at the end of the thousand years, Satan is effectively _____, for he again will have *subjects* to tempt.

To check your answer, see Revelation 20:3 & 7.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

9

How to Identify a Cult Deception

An anonymous caller tipped off police on an otherwise typical Wednesday afternoon in March, 1997. “You might want to check on the residents,” he said and gave an address. A squad car rolled up to a palatial mansion in Rancho Santa Fe, California, in quite an exclusive neighborhood—tennis courts and swimming pools everywhere. This mansion, set on three hill-top acres, had nine bedrooms. What sheriff’s deputies discovered made headlines around the world: 39 bodies, some dead for three days, lying on their backs on bunk beds, cots, or mattresses. They wore identical black shirts and pants. Some had handwritten notes with instructions on how to mix the vodka and Phenobarbital that killed them.

This was the tragedy of the Heaven’s Gate cult. Its victims believed a special spaceship following the Hale-Bopp comet was coming to get them and transport them to a higher level of existence after their suicides. Some of the dead had been with the cult since its beginning in the 70’s. These individuals had once led ordinary lives. But something made them vulnerable and needy. Searching for something to fill the holes in their lives, they had the misfortune of meeting a charismatic cult leader and falling under his influence. Gradually more and more isolated, they were indoctrinated into the mind-set of the cult.

A lot of people are searching today. Some are looking for something new, something different. The American Bookseller’s Association recently reported a 73% increase in the sale of New Age books over a two-year period! Beliefs within the New Age movement are like entrees in a long cafeteria line—there’s something for every taste. But New Agers have this in common: they’re all searching for knowledge *WITHIN* themselves. They believe self-knowledge is God knowledge, that to know one’s self is to know God. But people are being deceived while trying to sort all this out. They assume that all belief systems are more or less created equal. They assume they can just pick and choose according to their personal preference. But Heaven’s Gate is just one example showing it makes a big difference who you follow.

A belief system is a lens through which you see God—any distortion in that lens results in distorting your picture of God. Some groups help you, others exploit you and leave you deeply disillusioned. Can you tell the difference? Identifying false religious teachers isn’t quite as easy as, “The good guys wear *white* hats, the bad guys wear *black*.” More often than not, the bad guys come galloping up with their black hats whitewashed. But let me show you *five clear features that separate a cult from a healthy religious group*. And Revelation highlights these same features, identifying them as Satan’s ways of working—especially in the end times.

Identifying Feature #1: Cults have a single powerful leader who becomes the cult’s messiah. The leader is a charismatic individual who focuses attention on himself and becomes more of a source for truth than God. It becomes increasingly difficult for cult members to separate what he says from what God says. The leader manipulates the minds of his followers and eventually sets himself up as a substitute savior, a counterfeit mes-

siah. Heaven's Gate cult leader Marshall Applewhite believed he and his co-leader Bonnie Nettles came from "an evolutionary level *above* human (the Kingdom of Heaven) incarnated in two human bodies." Applewhite believed he'd been temporarily placed in a human body in order to show people how to get to "the next evolutionary level." Applewhite went further. In September of 1995 he issued an online statement entitled, "Undercover 'Jesus' Surfaces Before Departure." This man began to refer to himself as Jesus. He was a messenger from God, just like Jesus, on the same level.

Revelation 17:13 talks about people in the end times joining themselves with Satan's great ally, the beast: "These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast." Here is a fearful union of minds! It's not about fellowship and mutual support—it's about giving up your mind to follow another's and allowing this other person to have complete power and authority over you. That's what Satan works hard to make happen through false messiahs. But there's only one Son of God. There are no substitutes; there are only counterfeits. **Acts 4:12** says Jesus is the only Source of salvation. Never let *any* religious leader take the place of Christ.

Identifying Feature #2: The cult leader's word, his teachings, become absolute truth. They overshadow the teachings of the Bible. Marshall Applewhite of the Heaven's Gate cult concocted a theology having very little relation to Scripture. He made up his own little world—which included bodies called vehicles, souls called deposits, and a metamorphosis from one evolutionary level to the one above it.

When we're confronted with charismatic leaders, **Isaiah 8:20** points us "to the law and to the testimony! If they do *not* speak according to *this word* [the Word of God, which contains His law and His testimony], it is because there is NO LIGHT in them." So check everything you hear against the teachings of Scripture. Never put anyone else's teaching higher than the principles of the Bible.

Identifying Feature #3: Cults manipulate. Cults use pressure tactics and deception to recruit members, and they coerce members into submission, into staying. Satan uses pressure, coercion, and force. **Revelation 13:16-17** tells us that will surely happen in the last days: "He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that *no one may buy or sell* except one who has the mark or the name of the beast." Economic coercion! This beast figure is really the ultimate cult, the ultimate attempt at mind control. But Christ won't use force or coercion to persuade people. God offers us love, eternal life, and a place in His kingdom. But the choice is ours. No one has the right to stand between you and God or to interfere with your moral choices.

Identifying Feature #4: Cults appeal to miracles as a sign of their "divine" credentials, especially when their teachings contradict Bible truth. They hope you'll close your eyes to the teaching of Scripture and just focus on the razzle dazzle of their religious performance. But miracles are no test of TRUTH, for Satan himself is a supernatural being and can perform great wonders, deceiving many through miracles, as **2 Thessalonians 2:9**, **Revelation 13:13-14** and **16:14** teach us. So don't just go for the glitter. Judge the *miracle* by the *teaching*—not the other way around! Signs and wonders may seem impressive, but God's Word alone provides a solid foundation for faith.

Identifying Feature #5: Cults isolate. Cults isolate converts not only from the outside world but even from their families—a very dangerous thing. The cult leader wants to immerse you completely in the cult environment so the cult becomes your one source of information and affirmation. Forget about family and friends—you have to concentrate on this new life. Cults often foster a *fear* or *hatred* of those outside the group. Everyone else is conspiring against them, everyone else is full of error. Most Heaven's Gate cult members contacted their families only once or twice—in twenty years! One cult member's father said: "There was nothing we could say or do to get her back. They had kidnapped her mind." Cult leaders do that, but not Jesus. Jesus doesn't kidnap our minds, He *enlightens* them. Jesus doesn't cut us off from relationships, He *nurtures* them.



“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

Matthew 24:5 & 24 Jesus warns us of false teachers and prophets.

Proverbs 23:23 “Buy the truth, and sell it not.”

John 17:17 God’s Word is Truth.

John 8:32 Truth in and through Jesus sets us free.

✓ **Identifying Feature #1**

Psalms 146:3 Cults often have a single, powerful human leader who becomes the cult’s messiah.

Isaiah 45:22 But Jesus is the sole Source of our salvation. (Acts 4:12)

✓ **Identifying Feature #2**

Mark 7:7 The cult leader’s word and teachings become absolute truth.

Isaiah 8:20 But if they speak not according to God’s Word, there is no light in them.

✓ **Identifying Feature #3**

Joshua 24:15 Each cult uses “pressure” tactics to coerce its members into submission.

Revelation 22:17 But Christ invites us to come freely, with no compulsion.

✓ **Identifying Feature #4**

Romans 6:23 Each cult denies the central truth of the gospel that Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God. (Ephesians 2:8)

John 8:24 But Jesus declared, “If ye believe not that I am He [the Messiah Savior], ye shall die in your sins.”

✓ **Identifying Feature #5**

1 Cor. 7:13-14 Cults often urge their “converts” to leave their families, but God gives the opposite advice. (Ephesians 5:22 & 25)

2 Thess. 2:10-12 Many will be deceived because they would not receive a love of the truth.

John 14:6 Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. When we discover the way of salvation, He leads us into His truth so we can follow His way of life.

John 12:35 Our only safety is to walk in the light of His Word as He reveals it.

Psalms 119:105 God’s Word is a *lamp* to our feet and a *light* to our path.

1 John 4:1 God asks us to evaluate all religious claims critically: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but TEST the spirits, whether they are of God; because *many false prophets* have gone out into the world.”



Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#9 - How to Identify a Cult Deception

1. A cult may *seem safe* enough, since “There is a way that seemeth _____ unto a man,” because our unaided human wisdom is limited, “but the _____ thereof are the ways of _____.” So we need God’s divine direction in spiritual matters!

To check your answer, see Proverbs 16:25.

2. As a safe guide, God points us “To the law and to the testimony: if they [the cult leaders] speak not according to *this* word [the Word of God, which contains His Law and His testimony], it is because there is _____ in them.”

To check your answer, see Isaiah 8:20.

3. One characteristic of a cult is that cult members believe their *leader* is a “messiah” or godlike person—and often the leader even claims to be divine—but the Lord says plainly, “I am God, and there is _____.”

To check your answer, see Isaiah 45:22 and 46:9.

4. Jesus sadly warned that “Many shall come in _____ name, saying, I am Christ; and shall *deceive* _____.” To check your answer, see Matthew 24:5.

5. We know that God does not want Christians to shut themselves off from the world in utopian communes or cult compounds—like Jonestown in Guyana or David Koresh’s in Waco—when Jesus says, “Ye are the _____ of the earth.” So we must get out of the shaker, and mix!

To check your answer, see Matthew 5:13.

6. The inspired advice Scripture gives each of us is: “_____ to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the _____ of _____.”

To check your answer, see 2 Timothy 2:15.

7. God wants *stable, mature* believers, “That we henceforth be no more _____, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every _____ of _____.”

To check your answer, see Ephesians 4:14.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

10

Whatever Happened to Right and Wrong?

Most people try to make their home a refuge from the stresses and strains of life out in the cold, hard world. They try to make it a place of love and safety. But futurists tell us the home is headed for some pretty dramatic changes. It's more than a matter of Ozzie and Harriet simply getting laptops. The real question is: How will family values survive in the 21st century? What will life be like in your home in the 21st century? Some of the trends sound like good news. Most futurists agree that people will actually spend much more time at home in the 21st century.

But there's troubling news about how easily unhealthy stuff can get into your home. Today there are more and more avenues for incoming material that's dangerous or immoral. We know how quickly a virus or a hoax can spread to millions on the internet. Even worse things can spread, too. Kids can access the most debasing kind of pornography on the internet. Disturbed individuals can try to get a family member's name and address through e-mail. Hate groups and bizarre cults find the internet a great way to spread their propaganda. Every wacko can now have a web site.

In the years ahead we'll watch high definition TV screens with images as sharp as glossy photographs. But what about the content, the messages that hit us so forcefully? If you flip on the TV, you don't see families anymore. Family life is *out*, sex and violence are *in*. One expert says our society "celebrates mayhem while simultaneously condemning it."

Different values compete for our attention, and our loyalty. Your kids are exposed to many different versions of right and wrong. So one very important part of protecting your family is helping them make good choices, helping them be able to sort out values. They need to see for themselves the difference between healthy and unhealthy, between moral and immoral.

Revelation 14:7 says: "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come." God is about to judge the world. And He has a very clear Standard on which He bases judgments of right and wrong. **James 2:10-12**, speaking of the Ten Commandments, says we "will be judged by the law of liberty." God's law is the divine Standard in the judgment. It's the law of liberty because allowing God's grace to transform our hearts so we obey Him *frees* us from sin's bondage.

Note what **Revelation 11:19** says John saw up in heaven: "The temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple." John is showing us that the temple in heaven contains the ark of the covenant, which holds the Ten Commandments. The law of God is a transcript of God's character, a description of His will. It shows us clearly the difference between right and wrong.

This truth about God's law and judgment has been disappearing among Christians in recent years. Believers don't want to talk about it much. Many don't want to think about it at all. And part of the reason we're struggling to protect our families is that we've turned away from God's law for so long. We only want to talk about the gospel—not realizing how judgment and law are part of the gospel. The whole point of Christ dying on the cross was to “justify” us in the judgment, to justify us before God's law.

But we've lost our sense of accountability before a holy God and the sense that He has a great Standard for behavior, something to measure our lives against. Here's how the Bible defines sin in **1 John 3:4**—“Sin is the transgression of the law.” Sin is violating heaven's code of conduct.

In **John 14:15** Jesus said, “If you LOVE Me, keep My commandments.” Love doesn't lead me to do what I please—it leads me to do what *He* pleases. **1 John 2:3, 4** adds these powerful words: “By this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” When we're committed to Christ, when we truly know Him and surrender to Him, the natural response is to obey Him.

On a practical level, God's law works as a mirror to help us see specific problems in our lives, specific sins. In **Romans 7:7** Paul says: “I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’” **Romans 3:20** adds, “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” God's law reveals what sin is. It defines sin. We are not saved by the law. We are saved by grace. **Ephesians 2:8-9**, “By grace you have been saved through faith . . . not of works, lest any man should boast.” Salvation comes only through grace. But grace leads us to obedience, not disobedience. “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” **Romans 6:14**. In this verse Paul declares you won't be dominated by sin—law breaking—because God's grace, His mercy to redeem you from your past guilt and His power working in your life, will enable you to obey God.

Grace and faith don't do away with God's law. **Romans 3:31** asks: “Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we *establish* the law.” So faith, far from doing away with God's commandments, leads us to keep them. In fact, Christ Himself said in **Matthew 5:17**, “Think not [in other words, don't even *think* it!] that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” If God had chosen to destroy His law and thus lower His Standard of righteousness, then Jesus need not have died on the Cross, for there would then have been no penalty to pay.

The law simply reveals we are sinners—it can't save us. But what the law CAN do is drive us into the arms of the Savior who does save. We see our weakness, our sin, and cry out, “Help!” That's how, as **Galatians 3:24** says, the law leads us to Christ. **Psalms 19:7** says, “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” But for many, the law no longer does that, for it has lost its power. Even some churches teach that God has no absolute standards and that His law is no longer relevant to contemporary needs. Some maintain God's law was done away with to make way for the Kingdom of Grace. But removing the Standard of right and wrong brings chaos. We're reaping lawlessness, immorality, and rebellion.

It's estimated that more than *35 million* laws have been drafted by human beings to control behavior. But in just ten brief precepts, the Almighty formalized a code that covers all human conduct. And this code was meant to last—God's own finger carved it on tablets of stone! In fact, God's law has existed for all eternity. **Psalms 111:7-9** says, “All His precepts are sure. They stand fast forever and ever . . . He has commanded His covenant forever.” Long before Sinai, or even Adam and Eve, that unchangeable Standard of right had been the basis of heavenly government. Most angels abided by its precepts quite happily and were blessed. Satan and his co-conspirators tried to make up their own rules, resulting in a tragic conflict and their loss of paradise. When Adam and Eve broke God's trust in the Garden of Eden, their world crumbled at their feet.

In **Hebrews 8:10** God promises: “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.” We can be transformed by God's grace—so transformed that we lovingly obey His law. Would you like to say, “Jesus, in a world of lawlessness, I long to keep Your law. Please change me from within.”



“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

Psalm 111:7-8	God’s commandments are heaven’s eternal code of conduct which stands fast forever.
Romans 3:20	God’s law, revealing sin, leads us to see our guilt and drives us to Jesus.
Psalm 19:7	God’s law is “perfect,” a divine agency leading us to conversion.
Psalm 19:11	In keeping His commandments there is great reward.
Romans 6:14	We are not “under the law” as a means of salvation—salvation comes totally and always by grace. (Ephesians 2:8)
Romans 6:15	Though we’re not under the law, this does not give us liberty to break God’s law.
1 John 2:4	In the Bible, SIN is literally and expressly defined as breaking God’s law.
James 2:10-12	God’s Ten Commandments are like links in a chain: If we break one link, the whole chain is broken.
Isaiah 59:1-2	Sin, or breaking God’s law, leads to separation from God and eternal death. (Romans 6:23)
Romans 3:31	When we are saved by faith, we <i>desire</i> to keep God’s law. (Hebrews 10:7, John 8:29)
John 14:15	Love always leads us to obey. Jesus said, “If you LOVE Me, KEEP My commandments.
1 John 5:3	“This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.”
1 John 2:4-5	“He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”
Hebrews 8:10, 10:16	In the new covenant, Jesus writes His law in our hearts.
Psalm 40:8	He places within our hearts the desire to do His will.
Proverbs 28:9	“One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.”
Revelation 14:12	God’s last-day people keep His commandments through faith.
Revelation 12:17	His remnant, like the faithful through the ages, keep His law.



Quick Quiz

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#10 - Whatever Happened to Right and Wrong?

1. ☐ T Sin is defined in the Bible as breaking or transgressing the Law of God—living with a
☐ F spirit of lawlessness.

To check your answer, see 1 John 3:4.

2. We know God’s Law is still in effect, or there’d be no sin, no guilt, and no need of a Savior, for the Bible says that where there is no _____, there is no _____.

To check your answer, see Romans 4:15.

3. Those who teach Jesus abolished the Law when He came disregard His clear words: “Think NOT that I am come to _____ the Law...I am _____ come to _____, but to fulfill.”

To check your answer, see Matthew 5:17.

4. The Bible uses strong language to say that anyone who claims to know God but does NOT keep His Commandments “is a _____, and the _____ is NOT in him.”

To check your answer, see 1 John 2:4.

5. Satan hates the Law of God—the Ten Commandments—but the Bible describes them in glowing terms, using adjectives like _____, _____, and _____.

To check your answer, see Psalm 19:7 and Romans 7:12.

6. No one can be saved by keeping the Law or anything else he does. “For by _____ are ye saved through _____” —it’s a GIFT of God through Jesus Christ.

To check your answer, see Ephesians 2:8 and Romans 6:23.

7. When Satan whispers in our ear, “You don’t have to keep the Commandments—all you need to do is love God,” we must remember that the Bible says, “This _____ the _____ of God, that we _____ His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous.”

To check your answer, see 1 John 5:3. Compare John 14:15.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

11

A Surprising Answer to Stress

In early 1991, the Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) satellite began sending back information to Earth that caused a sensation in scientific circles. The data it sent back tends to prove that the universe did indeed have a **BEGINNING**. This is important, because some people's picture of the universe leaves no room for God. They can't believe there's a personal Creator behind it all. When people take God out of the picture, they simply say the universe has always been there—it's eternal. That's their starting point.

The basic question of origins doesn't leave many alternatives: You start with *God* or you start with *matter*—either of which has always been there. But the COBE project shows that the universe *hasn't* always been there. It *had* to have a beginning, which narrows down the alternatives to one. That's what caused the big stir. As one Berkeley astronomer put it: "What we have found is evidence of the birth of the universe. . . It's like looking at God." This recent scientific data does point in the direction of a Creator God.

In the Bible's last book, Revelation, God is on center stage as Creator of the universe. John was caught up in vision to an amazing scene in heaven's throne room. What he saw was so dazzling as to be almost beyond description—something you'd only see in your wildest dreams. For instance, **Revelation 4:8** says four living creatures declared ceaselessly, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" It was a scene of joyful worship. Then the twenty-four elders fell down before God and declared: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for YOU CREATED all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." **Revelation 4:11.**

The Lord is indeed an awesome, glorious God *because* He's the Creator. The very basis of all worship is simply this: We did not evolve—God created us! God shines all through the Book of Revelation as the Creator of the universe. **Revelation 10:6** speaks of "Him who lives forever and ever, who **CREATED** heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it." Revelation 14:7 urges us to "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who **MADE** heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

Revelation does not picture God as some vague shadowy essence or an abstract symbol. He's the all-powerful Creator, the Father of all humanity. And therefore **WE** are more than skin and bones—more than a biological accident. We are His creation! But people have lost sight of that today. People have been cut off from this Creator God. He has shrunk in size and power. He's no longer worthy of our heart-felt praise and worship. He's worthy only of a quick nod heavenward. The Darwinian theory of evolution came along, and suddenly God no longer seemed necessary. Yet God calls us to worship Him as the Creator (Revelation 14:7). How do we do that? How do we worship the Creator of heaven and earth? Has He left an eternal symbol of His creative power, a **SIGN** of true worship in an age of evolution?

Let's return to our *origin* so we can understand our *destiny*. Let's return to the book of *beginnings*, Genesis, so we can understand the book of *endings*, Revelation. God created the world in six literal days. After He created Adam and Eve on the sixth day, **Genesis 2:1** says, "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished." It didn't take millions or billions of years! "For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." **Psalms 33:9**.

But the Genesis account of creation doesn't end there. **Genesis 2:2** continues: "On the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done." God rested! Why? Not because He was weary, for Isaiah 40:28 tells us God never gets weary. The Creator of the universe permitted Himself the satisfaction of enjoying His completed creation. And then, pleased with His accomplishments over Earth's first six days, God did something especially significant. **Genesis 2:3** tells us: "Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

God sanctified the seventh day, setting it apart as a holy, special time to remind us of our beginnings—our roots! As long as we set aside the seventh day to worship our Creator, we'll never lose sight of who we are, where we came from, or what our eternal destiny may be. God knew it was essential for mankind, even in Eden, to set aside the seventh day as a day of rest and worship. At the end of each week, Adam and Eve celebrated the *birthday of the world* with their Creator.

The Fourth Commandment, **Exodus 20:8-11**, repeats the Sabbath truth God had taught in Eden. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work,...for in six days the Lord MADE heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and *rested* the seventh day: wherefore the Lord *blessed* the Sabbath day, and *hallowed* it."

Had men and women always remembered God's memorial of creation, the problems so prevalent today—lack of meaning in life, identity crises, loss of self-esteem—would never have arisen. There'd be no evolutionists, no skeptics, no agnostics! The Sabbath was never intended to be confined to Israel. God gave the Sabbath to *Adam and Eve* two thousand years before there was a Jew! God didn't restrict such a blessing to one race only. Nowhere does the Bible call the Sabbath "The Sabbath of the Jews." In **Mark 2:27** Jesus made it clear that "The Sabbath was made for MAN," meaning all mankind.

More than a memorial of creation, the Sabbath is a weekly reminder of our relationship with God, an acknowledgment of God's divinity: "Hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a SIGN between Me and you, that you may know that *I am the Lord your God*." **Ezekiel 20:20**. And the creative power used in sanctifying—making holy—the Sabbath is the same power God uses today in sanctifying sinful men and women, thus our Creator is also our Savior: "Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a SIGN between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who *sanctifies* them." **Ezekiel 20:12**.

But which day is the Sabbath? How can we be certain which day is the seventh? **Luke 23:54-24:1** mentions three consecutive days: (1) the Preparation Day, or Good Friday; (2) the first day of the week, or Easter Sunday; and (3) the day in between, or Saturday, which the Bible calls the Sabbath. There's no doubt which day was the Sabbath in Jesus' time.

Jesus faithfully kept the Sabbath as "His custom," His habitual practice. **Luke 4:16**. And He expected Christians would *still* be keeping the Sabbath forty years *after* His death, when Jerusalem was destroyed. He said in **Matthew 24:20**: "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath." And His followers did keep the Sabbath after the resurrection. The Book of Acts records *eighty-four* Sabbath meetings Paul held. For example, **Acts 13:42,44** says not just Jews but Gentiles worshipped with Paul on God's seventh-day Sabbath. **Isaiah 66:22-23** tells us the redeemed will celebrate the Sabbath through all eternity. **Revelation 14:12** describes those prepared to meet Jesus when He comes: "Here are those who KEEP the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." In **John 14:15** Jesus said, "If you LOVE Me, keep My commandments." And one of those commandments tells us to "remember" the Sabbath day—a sign between God and man forever! We have an appointment with God each week. The rewards of Sabbath-keeping are physical rejuvenation, mental relaxation, and spiritual renewal. It's a priceless, precious gift!

“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

Revelation 14:6-7	God's final message to mankind is a call to worship the Creator.
Revelation 4:11	The basis of all worship is the fact that God created us.
John 1:1-3, 10, 14, Colossians 1:16	Since Jesus was the active Agent in creation, Revelation's final call to worship the Creator is a call to give honor to Jesus.
Exodus 20:8-11	We worship Him as the Creator by keeping His Sabbath.
Genesis 2:1-3	The Sabbath was set apart at creation: God <i>rested</i> upon the seventh day, blessed the seventh day, and <i>hallowed</i> it.
Mark 2:27	Jesus said, “The Sabbath”—given to Adam and Eve 2000 years before the first Jew—“was made for MAN,” that is, for ALL mankind everywhere.
Ezekiel 20:12 & 20	The Sabbath was established for all mankind as a twofold SIGN between God and His people: a sign of sanctification and a sign of God's divine Lordship.
Luke 4:16	Jesus always kept the Sabbath faithfully— “as His custom was.”
Matthew 24:20	Jesus knew Christians would keep the Sabbath in A.D. 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem—nearly 40 years <i>after</i> His death and resurrection.
Acts 13:42, 44	The apostle Paul not only kept the Sabbath himself but also met on that day to worship God with the whole city, Jews and Gentiles alike.
Acts 16:13	Since there was no established Christian church in Philippi, Paul met privately in a country setting with a group of believers on the Sabbath.
Revelation 1:10	At the end of the first century, the Lord still had a special day, “the Lord's Day.” Revelation 1:10 does not reveal which day is the Lord's Day, but Matthew 12:8, Mark 2:28, Luke 6:5, and Isaiah 58:13 do.
Matthew 12:8	“The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.” If the Son of Man is “Lord” of the Sabbath, the Sabbath must be the Lord's day.
Luke 23:54-56, 24:1	This passage lists three days in succession: The day Christ died—the Preparation—FRIDAY. The day Christ rested in the tomb—the Sabbath—SATURDAY. The day Christ rose again—the first day—SUNDAY. Therefore the Sabbath is clearly Saturday, the seventh day of the week.
Hebrews 13:8	Jesus never changes: He's “the same yesterday, today, and forever.”
Malachi 3:6	God never changes: “I am the Lord, I change not.”
Psalms 89:34	God swears never to “alter the word that has gone out of My lips.” And the Ten Commandments <i>did</i> go out of His lips when He spoke them from Mt. Sinai.
Isaiah 66:22-23	We shall keep Sabbath each week in the New Earth even as Adam and Eve kept it in the Garden of Eden.



Quick Quiz

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#11 - A Surprising Answer to Stress

1. The Bible gives two vital “earmarks” or points of identification for God’s saints in the Last Days, which are that they “_____ the _____ of God and the _____ of Jesus.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 14:12.

2. The Bible teaches that God’s holy seventh-day Sabbath was to be a special “SIGN” between Him and His people, first, “that they might know that I am the Lord that _____ them,” and second, “that ye may know that I am the _____ your _____.”

To check your answer, see Ezekiel 20:12 & 20.

3. When God made the first Sabbath to give to mankind at the end of Creation Week, He did it by performing three divine acts: (1) He _____ on the seventh day, (2) then He _____ the seventh day, and (3) He _____ the seventh day.

To check your answer, see Genesis 2:2-3.

4. How do we know that Jesus, God the Son, is the Creator—and that He made the Sabbath?

To check your answer, see John 1:1-3, 10, 14; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:1-10; Mark 2:27.

5. ☐ T We can be sure which day IS the seventh day, because the Bible makes plain that God’s
☐ F Sabbath is the day that falls between Friday and Sunday.

To check your answer, see Luke 23:46 to 24:1 and Mark 15:37 to 16:2.

6. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared we were not even to _____ that He came to _____ the Law, and that not one _____ or one _____ of the Law would pass away, till _____ be fulfilled.

To check your answer, see Matthew 5:17-19.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

12

History's Greatest Religious Cover-up

A fascinating story from Greek mythology warns against deception dressed in religious clothes. The Greeks, unable to defeat the Trojans, resorted to deception. They built a huge wooden horse and delivered it to the gates of Troy, declaring it was an offering to the goddess Athena. But armed Greek soldiers were hiding inside the horse. The Greeks left it outside the walls of Troy and sailed away.

The Trojans were happy to accept it as a token of divine favor, embracing it as a symbol of victory from the gods. But that night, once the horse was inside the city, scores of Greek soldiers jumped out of a secret door. These warriors opened the gates to other Greeks who had returned. The city was set afire. The Trojans had accepted falsehood and were defeated through deception. An offering to the gods, a religious symbol which they at first rejoiced over, was actually part of the enemy's deceitful plan.

Could it be that there's a Trojan horse in the midst of the Christian Church? Could millions be deceived and not know it? Maybe we've accepted a so-called "offering to God" which is actually falsehood under a religious guise. Let me speak plainly: Satan's greatest deceptions are religious ones. Satan disguises error as truth. He's a cunning foe who'll do anything to mislead us—including the substitution of a COUNTERFEIT religious day of worship in place of the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments! Satan's master deception, his Trojan horse under the guise of religion, is a counterfeit day of worship.

Incredibly enough, the Bible predicted it. God foresaw that a rival power would *dare* to attempt to change His holy law! The Devil knows that if he can initiate the change of the TEN COMMANDMENTS—written with God's own finger on tables of stone—he can open the floodgates for every *other* species of falsehood to flow into the Christian Church. Let's see how it happened...

Daniel's Amazing Dream: In Lesson 3 we learned about King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great image, recorded in chapter two of Daniel's book. Now we'll look at chapter seven, where Daniel himself had a dream and saw four "beasts" rise up out of the sea. These divinely-inspired dreams are full of vital meaning for us today. Daniel chapter seven is like an INSTANT REPLAY of Daniel chapter two, only better, because it adds more details and looks at things from a different perspective. Daniel's dream starts in the days of Babylon but takes us through the days of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome—the four world empires. It takes us through Christianity's early days and shows how, AFTER the death of Christ and His disciples in the early centuries, *a power would arise that would attempt to change the Sabbath*.

Read **Daniel 7:1-8** and consult the illustration on page 3, below. Note that the fourth beast was indescribable—not like a **lion**, a **bear**, a **leopard**, or *anything* Daniel had ever seen before! The fourth was a dreadful, powerful beast with iron teeth and ten horns. Then among those ten horns, Daniel saw *another* horn come up. This "Little Horn" became a great power. Daniel 7:8 says, "In this horn were eyes like the

eyes of a *man*, and a *mouth speaking great things*”—verse 20 says, “*very* great things.” And this Little Horn tried to change the commandments and the very Law of God.

Unlocking The Symbols: Some think interpreting prophecy is anybody’s guess. But **2 Peter 1:21**, **RSV** says, “No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s *own* interpretation.” That means I shouldn’t depend on what I personally think the prophecy means—I shouldn’t give my own private interpretation, because the Word of God explains itself, if we let it. God tells us plainly in **Daniel 7:17** and **23** that “These great beasts, which were four, are four kings, which shall arise...The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth.” So these beasts are not four individual kings but rather four successive kingdoms or world empires. In fact, The Living Bible says the fourth beast “is the fourth **WORLD EMPIRE** that will rule the earth.” Even today we use beasts or animals as symbols. We say the *elephant* symbolizes the Republican Party, and the *donkey* the Democrats. We use the Russian *bear* as a symbol of that country, the regal *lion* for England, the *eagle* for the United States. Just as we use animals as symbols for nations, so does God.

Which kingdoms or nations do the beasts in Daniel’s dream represent? Chapters 2 and 7 of Daniel contain remarkable parallels. For instance, the last part of the image had ten toes, and the last beast had ten horns. The four metals and the four beasts symbolize the same four world empires. The fourth beast is the Roman Empire which fell in A.D. 476 and was divided into the nations of modern Europe represented by the tens horns. This point in history was after the death of Christ, after the days of the apostolic church. In those days when Rome was being divided, something would happen. In **Daniel 7:8** the prophet looked at those ten horns, at the ten divisions of Rome, and saw coming up *among them* a Little Horn which had “eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.”

The Mysterious Little Horn: WHERE would this power arise? Not in Asia, Africa, or South America, but “among” the ten horns, which means out of the Roman Empire, out of Rome. WHEN would this power arise? **Daniel 7:24** tells us “after” Rome’s fall and subsequent breakup in A.D. 476. This horn had “eyes like the eyes of a man.” **1 Samuel 9:9** says a prophet was called “a seer” because he sees with God’s wisdom and foresight. But this Little Horn power has not the eyes of God, but the eyes of a man. This power is based not on God’s divine wisdom but on merely human wisdom.

Something about the Little Horn made it *fundamentally different* from the first ten horns. **Daniel 7:24** says the Little Horn power would be “diverse” or (RSV) “different from the former ones,” the former ten. The first ten divisions of the Roman Empire became the modern nations of Western Europe and are all *political* in nature. This “Little Horn” would be different or “diverse” in that it proved to be a religious power (or at least a hybrid, being part religious and part political—a religio-political entity).

Daniel 7:8, 11 & 30 emphasize that this “Little Horn” had “a mouth speaking great things...VERY great things.” Modern translations say, “great boasts,” “pompous words,” *etc.* Finally, **Daniel 7:25** divulges that “He [the Little Horn power] shall speak great words against the most High.” Clearly, then, God is telling us that this power—this religious power which was “different” from all the political powers of Europe, this power that arose in Rome after the breakup of the Roman Empire—would make great claims, great decrees. It would speak pompously, boastfully, even claiming infallible power to change God’s Law and the day of worship!

We know the Roman Catholic Church is responsible for this predicted change for two reasons: (1) It’s the only institution that COULD have done it, and (2) it ADMITS doing it! A catechism is a set of questions-and-answers used as an official training manual to instruct new church members. On page 50 in *The Convert’s Catechism* we read: “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 transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.” Again and again, in many official sources, the church brazenly *admits* changing the day!



#12 - History's Greatest Religious Cover-up





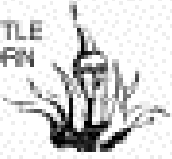

TRADITION DOESN'T COUNT

Popular thinking says that tradition—if old and long-standing—should be honored. If that were so, then prostitution, as “the world’s *oldest* profession,” deserves great respect from all of us! But how OLD a practice is has no bearing at all on how VALID it is. *Antiquity of error* proves only that we’ve been going wrong for a long time! Besides, if a tradition’s long-standing practice is what should impress us, then it’s no contest—the seventh-day Sabbath of the Lord, going all the way back to Creation, wins hands down!

Jesus voiced Heaven’s view of man-made tradition in **Matthew 15:3, 6, & 9** and says quite plainly it is worshipping Him “in vain.”

A QUESTION OF AUTHORITY

People ask me, “Mark, what difference does a day make?” The whole issue is not a matter of *days* but a choice of *masters*. We’re not talking about mere days. We’re talking about masters and allegiance to, loyalty to, the master of our choice. In the final analysis, who is our Master? Jesus—or church leaders? Days, as such, may not be important, but the Bible is. Will we follow the traditions of misguided men or the Word of God? The choice is yours. The Apostle Peter boldly declared: “We ought to obey GOD rather than MEN.” **Acts 5:29**.

COMPARISON OF DANIEL'S SYMBOLIC VISIONS		
Daniel 7	Kingdom	Daniel 2
 LION	BABYLON	GOLD
 BEAR	MEDO-PERSIA	SILVER
 LEOPARD	GREECE	BRASS
 FIERCE BEAST	ROME	IRON
 LITTLE HORN	DIVIDED KINGDOMS	IRON & CLAY
 JUBILEE TRUMPET	CHRIST'S KINGDOM	STONE

EXAMINING DANIEL 7:25: When God predicts the Little Horn power shall “think to change times and laws,” it must pertain to DIVINE laws—the Revised Standard Version says “the law”—of God. Man’s laws, like traffic or tax laws, change so often it’s hardly worthy of notice and wouldn’t be mentioned in the Bible. And the only one of God’s Ten Commandments having to do with TIME is the Fourth Commandment regarding the Sabbath. But why does the prophecy say the Little Horn would “think” to change the law? Can any earthly power *really* change that Law written with God’s own finger? No, but the Little Horn would dare to “think” to change God’s Law! That venerable English version of the Bible for Roman Catholic believers, The Douay Bible, translates **Daniel 7:25** as follows: “And he shall THINK HIMSELF ABLE to change times and laws.”

FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION: The very first cardinal appointed by the Roman Catholic Church in the United States was Cardinal James Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore. Cardinal Gibbons was always one of my heroes as I grew up in the church. He was a brilliant scholar. His book, *The Faith of Our Fathers*, sold millions of copies in America. This is what he said on page 89 of that book: “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 we [Catholics] never sanctify.”

Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#12 - History’s Greatest Religious Cover-up

- Any claim that God changed His Law of Ten Commandments flies in the face of His promise that He would not “_____ the thing that is gone out of My _____.”

To check your answer, see Psalm 89:34 and Exodus 20:1-17—especially verse 1.

- Any notion that Jesus changed the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment is contradicted by His plain words that “Till _____ and _____ pass, one jot or one tittle shall in NO wise pass from the Law.”

To check your answer, see Matthew 5:17-19.

- ☐ T God predicted centuries in advance that a certain power would ATTEMPT to change
☐ F His Law.

To check your answer, see Daniel 7:25.

- Since no mere mortal could actually change divine laws, inspired Scripture says the Little Horn power would “_____ to change times and laws” of God, meaning it would intend to change them and attempt to change them.

To check your answer, see Daniel 7:25.

- ☐ T The Fourth Commandment, dealing with the seventh-day Sabbath, is the only part of
☐ F God’s Law that deals with the element of TIME, thus fitting the prediction of an illegitimate change of “times and laws.”

To check your answer, see Daniel 7:25 and Exodus 20:1-17.

- As Daniel considered the Fourth Beast’s ten horns, “there came up _____ them another little horn,” which means that the Little Horn power would arise among those ten divisions—thus not in Africa, Asia, Australia, or North or South America, but somewhere in ROME!

To check your answer, see Daniel 7:8.

- ☐ T Jesus made plain that man-made TRADITIONS don’t count—especially those that CONFLICT
☐ F with God’s Commandments.

To check your answer, see Matthew 15:3, 6, 9.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

14

Death's Mystery Solved

The death of a loved one shakes us up. The question haunts us: “Can I find hope beyond the grave?” Have you looked death squarely in the face and wondered, “What happens five minutes after death?” Is it heaven, hell, or nothingness? It’s confusing—there are so many varied beliefs on the subject of death. Suppose we take a survey with just one question: *What happens when you die?* Hindus may say your immortal soul is reincarnated as something else—as a cow, a servant, a wealthy businessman, or an insect depending on how you lived this life. Catholics may say there’s an immortal soul that leaves the body and ascends to *heaven* if you’ve been good, *purgatory* if you’re not so good, and *hell* if you’ve been really bad. Protestants may say something similar but leave out the idea about purgatory. Secular humanists may say death is THE END—period. Other Bible-believing Christians believe death is merely a *sleep* till the resurrection day when Christ returns. Ask ten people about death—and you’ll get *eleven* different answers!

But there ARE rock-solid answers. The Bible provides sane, sensible information revealing not only what happens when you die but also how to face death with hope and confidence. **Revelation 1:18** introduces us to Jesus Christ, who says: “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.” Jesus has the key that unlocks death’s door.

Revelation 20:6 says, “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power.” The first resurrection is the resurrection of the righteous. The second death refers to final death, eternal death. In other words, this is a resurrection that leads to eternal life. God promises in **Revelation 21:4**: “There shall be no more death.” God will bring about a final, permanent solution. That’s the great hope of the Book of Revelation. Let’s see exactly what this hope is based on—and what it’s NOT based on! It’s vital that we understand what the Bible teaches on the subject.

Soul Is a Key Word: In **Genesis 2:7**, we read: “God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man *became* a living soul.” It doesn’t say God *put* a soul *into* man but man *became* a living soul—a living BEING, a living PERSON, as modern translations put it, for that’s what the text means. The Bible never says a person “has” a soul—as if it were a separate entity we possess. I don’t *have* a soul, I *am* a soul, a living creature, a person—and so are you.

But someone says, “Wait a minute—I don’t want to get caught up in mere words! Just answer me one thing: Our physical *bodies* die, but our *souls* can never, ever die, can they?” Well, **Ezekiel 18:4** says quite plainly that they can and do: “The soul who sins shall die”—repeated for emphasis in verse 20.

Soul may also mean “life.” For instance, Jesus taught that “Whosoever will save his LIFE shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his LIFE for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the

whole world, and lose his own SOUL? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his SOUL?" **Matthew 16:25-26**—similarly translated in **Mark 8:35-37**. Here Matthew wrote the same Greek word *psuche* four times, but the translators twice rendered it "life" and twice "soul." The two words are interchangeable. Note also: "life" is not something irrevocably ours—we can lose it, for we're *not* inherently immortal.

Only God Is Immortal: The word *mortal* means "subject to death," and *immortal* means the opposite—imperishable. You don't find the term "immortal soul" or "immortality of the soul" even once in the entire Bible! The Word of God doesn't teach such a concept. The Bible often uses the expressions "soul" and "spirit" but never attaches the term "immortal" to either word. We have the *promise* of immortality—as a gift bestowed when Jesus returns. **1 Corinthians 15:51-53** says, "We shall all be CHANGED, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound...and this *mortal* shall PUT ON immortality." So we're NOT inherently or naturally immortal now. In fact, the very word *immortal* is used only once in Scripture, and that sole instance—**1 Timothy 1:17**—applies the word not to *man* but to "the only wise *God*." The same epistle clinches this point in **1 Timothy 6:15-16**—where the inspired theologian Paul explicitly declares that: "The King of kings and Lord of lords...ONLY has immortality."

Spirit Is a Key Word: When God made Adam, He breathed the spirit or breath of life into his nostrils, and he became a living soul. **Ecclesiastes 12:7** says the exact opposite occurs at death: "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it." What goes back to God? The spirit or breath. The Bible never says the soul goes back to God. And the spirits of ALL mankind—good or bad, saint or sinner, Hitler or Mother Teresa—go back to God in the death process.

The word "spirit" comes from the same root as other words pertaining to "breath" or "breathing" such as *inspire* or *respiration*. The Greek word for "spirit" is *pneuma*, which gives us words like *pneumonia*, the respiratory disease, and *pneumatic*, the tires we blow up with air. **Job 27:3** tells us *where* the spirit is: "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils." When a man dies, the breath of God, or the power of God—that spark of life—returns to Him. **James 2:26** says, "The body without the spirit is dead." Even today when we mean "He's dead," we say "He expired" or "He breathed his last." The body without God's breath is dead, because at death God's spirit or His breath goes back to Him.

The Dead Cannot Think: But that breath is NOT a thinking, conscious entity that survives death. Since the dust returns to earth "as it was," presumably the breath or spirit returns to God "as it was." Adam's breath was not conscious before creation—why assume it's conscious after death? The Word of God precludes any idea of consciousness after death. **Psalms 146:4** says when a man dies, "His breath [his spirit] goes forth, he [his body] returns to his earth; in that very day his THOUGHTS PERISH." So can a dead man think? No! On the day he dies, his thoughts perish! **Ecclesiastes 9:5-6** says plainly, "The living know that they shall die; but *the dead know not anything*...Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished." Friends, no matter what we've been taught in the past, no matter what the Devil told Eve in that first lie, the dead know not anything!

Death Is a Dreamless Sleep: The Bible teaches that death is but a sleep that lasts until Christ's second coming. More than fifty times, Bible writers consistently describe death as a sleep. In **Psalms 13:3** David prayed to God lest he "*sleep the sleep of death*." Later, **1 Kings 2:1 & 10** say: "Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die...So David SLEPT with his fathers, and was buried."

Jesus Himself spoke of death as a sleep. When His beloved friend Lazarus grew very sick in a nearby town, the Master said in **John 11:11-14, RSV**, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep...Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead.'" **Psalms 115:17** couldn't be any plainer: "The dead praise NOT the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." Yet if you died and immediately went to heaven, you'd praise the Lord, wouldn't you? The Bible says, "The dead know not anything." The Bible says, "The dead praise not the Lord." Death is NOT the end of the road—it's a dreamless SLEEP in the arms of Jesus.

"IT IS WRITTEN . . ."

John 11:11-14	Jesus compares death to sleep. The Bible compares death to sleep over 50 times, in texts such as Psalm 13:3, Acts 7:59-60, Ephesians 5:14, <i>etc.</i>
1 Thess.4:15-16	Those asleep in Jesus rise at His Second Coming.
John 5:28-29	There are two resurrections—to life and to damnation. (Daniel 12:2)
Genesis 2:7	"God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man <small>BECAME</small> a living soul," a living being, a living person, as modern versions say. God did not <i>put</i> a soul into man.
Ecclesiastes 12:7	The body returns to the dust, and the Spirit returns to God. The Bible does not say the soul returns to God, but the Spirit.
Job 27:3	The Spirit is the same as God's breath of life or His power.
Psalms 146:3-4	When the breath or Spirit returns to God, the "thoughts perish."
1 Timothy 6:16	Human beings do <small>NOT</small> have immortality now—only God does.
Romans 2:7	We "seek for" immortality, for we don't have it now. The Bible uses the word "soul" 1600 times, but <small>NEVER ONCE</small> speaks of an "immortal soul."
Ezekiel 18:4 & 20	The <i>soul</i> , which means <i>being</i> or <i>person</i> (1 Peter 3:20, for example), is not immortal but can die. Ezekiel repeats: "The soul (person) who sins shall <small>DIE</small> ."
1 Cor. 15:51-54	We <i>receive</i> immortality for the first time when Jesus comes again.
Acts 2:29 & 34	David is "both dead and buried." He did <small>NOT</small> ascend to heaven at death, but awaits the coming of Jesus and the first resurrection.
Psalms 115:17	"The dead do not praise the Lord."
Psalms 6:5	"In death there is <small>NO REMEMBRANCE</small> of [God]."
Ecclesiastes 9:5	"The living know that they will die, but the <small>DEAD KNOW NOTHING</small> ."
Job 7:9-10, 14:10, 12, 21	The Bible says the dead <small>CANNOT</small> return to their homes or observe or communicate with their loved ones. (2 Samuel 12:22-23)
Job 19:25-27	The righteous will be resurrected to see God at the Last Day.
Romans 6:23	"The wages of sin is <small>DEATH</small> ," not <i>life in some other place</i> . Death is the <i>absence</i> of life. The <small>GIFT</small> of God is eternal life—which He'll give us <i>when He comes</i> .
2 Timothy 4: 7-8	The apostle Paul awaited the Coming of the Lord for his final reward.
Revelation 22:12	When Jesus comes, His reward of eternal life will be with Him.



Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#14 - Death’s Mystery Solved

1. ☐ T Since Jesus called the Devil “the father” of lies and lying, it’s interesting to note that Satan’s
☐ F first lie on this earth—to Mother Eve in the Garden of Eden—was about death and dying.
To check your answer, see John 8:44 and Genesis 3:1-4.
2. If God alone is immortal, then neither man nor angels are. And the inspired Apostle Paul says it’s
“the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who _____ hath _____.”
To check your answer, see 1 Timothy 6:15-16.
3. The Bible teaches that when a man dies, “His _____ goeth forth, he returneth to his
_____”; in that very day his _____.”
To check your answer, see Psalms 146:4.
4. God settles the matter that man is MORTAL—subject to death—and that he does NOT possess a so-called
“immortal soul” when He repeats plainly: “The _____ who sins shall _____.”
To check your answer, see Ezekiel 18:4 and 20.
5. ☐ T The Bible says that when we die, our BODY returns as dust to the earth as it was, and our
☐ F SOUL returns to God in heaven.
To check your answer, see Ecclesiastes 12:7 and James 2:26.
6. Bible writers consistently refer to death as a dreamless, unconscious sleep. The Psalmist David prayed,
“Hear me, O Lord my God: lighten my eyes, lest I _____ the _____ of
_____.”
To check your answer, see Psalm 13:3.
7. The Bible asks, “Shall _____ man be more just than God?” And when Jesus comes, “We
shall all be CHANGED, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...For this corruptible must put on incor-
ruption, and this _____ must _____ immortality.”
To check your answer, see Job 4:17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

15

Solving the Riddle of Religious Confusion

The Book of Revelation reveals truth and exposes error. God doesn't want us to be deceived. He longs for us to be preserved and protected by His truth. In Revelation, the Apostle John tells the tale of TWO WOMEN. One is dressed in pure white, revealing the purity of true faith and doctrine. This pure woman of **Revelation 12** is committed to Christ. She's absolutely loyal to Him. Her heart burns with a love for Jesus. Nothing can break her loyalty to the One she loves so much. This woman represents all the faithful believers who have loved Jesus Christ, kept His commandments and been obedient to Him down through the ages. **Revelation 17** pictures *another* woman. Now we have the *opposite* picture. *Who is this woman in scarlet riding on a Beast?* The Bible gives many good clues—let's examine them briefly.

She's a CHURCH: In the Bible a WOMAN symbolizes a CHURCH. See such verses as **2 Corinthians 11:2**, **Isaiah 54:5-6**, **Jeremiah 3:14**, **Ephesians 5:31-33**, etc. Christ is represented as the Bridegroom (**Matthew 9:14-15**, **Revelation 19:7**). An unfaithful church commits spiritual adultery (**Ezekiel 16:28, 32**).

She's a CORRUPT church: Just as a pure woman represents a pure church, a corrupt woman represents a corrupt church. The *woman in white* is Christ's bride, the true church. But **Revelation 17:1, 15-16 & 19:2** call this second woman a "WHORE" or "HARLOT"—a *fallen* church teaching false doctrines.

She's a large, WORLDWIDE church: She sits on "many WATERS," explained as being many "*peoples*, and *multitudes*, and *nations*, and *tongues*." **Revelation 17:1 and 15**. The very word *catholic* means "universal," and the Papal church has the largest, most widespread membership in Christendom.

She's a RICH church: This symbolic wicked woman—this corrupt church—is a rich one with gorgeous display. **Revelation 17:4** says she's "decked with GOLD and PRECIOUS STONES and PEARLS, having a GOLDEN cup in her hand." Which church would you say is the *richest* in the world?

She's a church built on SEVEN HILLS or MOUNTAINS: This identification, given in **Revelation 17:9**, is impressive and clear, for ROME is *proverbial* as "the city built on seven hills"! *Webster's* large unabridged dictionary says this under the entry "seven-hilled": "as, the SEVEN-HILLED CITY, that is, ROME, Italy." Furthermore, **Revelation 17:18** tells John, "The woman whom you saw is that GREAT CITY which reigns over the kings of the earth." John wrote this using the *present* tense for the word "reigns," and he knew as well as anyone else that "that great city" was ROME.

She's a RELIGIOUS power dominating the CIVIL powers: **Revelation 17:3 & 7** tell us the harlot, or fallen church, is RIDING the beast. **Daniel 7:17 & 23** tell us a beast represent a king or kingdom. When we ride a horse, we direct it and control it, so the picture God gives here is of a *church* dominating the *civil* power. For centuries, the Papacy dictated to kings. When she wanted to punish or execute any who dared to question her teaching, she'd often call on *the police power of the state*. **Revelation 17:2** describes this harlot: "with whom the kings of the earth

committed fornication.” She has influence over the kings of the earth, great influence over heads of state. Today, unlike other churches, the Vatican exchanges ambassadors with every major nation on earth. They come to her city on seven mountains, and they bow before her, having “lived luxuriously with her.” **Revelation 18:9**

She’s a church that revives BABYLON’S pagan teachings: “On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT. . .” **Revelation 17:5.** Long before John wrote the Book of Revelation, the ancient city of Babylon had been completely destroyed and never rebuilt. For centuries it lay in ruins and had faded into insignificance. The apostle Peter could not have been referring to literal Babylon when he wrote in **1 Peter 5:13** that: “She who is in Babylon . . . greets you.” For there was no church or any other human institution in the desolate ruins of ancient Babylon. He was referring to ROME, as all authorities agree. It’s easy to see why early Christians used “Babylon” as a *code word* or *nickname* for Rome, for there are MANY STRIKING PARALLELS between the twin cities of literal Babylon of ancient times and figurative “Babylon” or Rome. Consider just a few: Babylon was the dominant warring power of its day—Rome was the dominant warring power of its own era. Babylon conquered Israel—centuries later, Rome also conquered Israel. Babylon destroyed the first Jerusalem Temple—Rome destroyed the second. Each carried sacred vessels from the Jewish Temple back to Babylon in the east and Rome in the west; each completely destroyed and devastated the city of Jerusalem; each carried away surviving Jews into captivity. Rome was Babylon all over again. As Babylon’s “carbon copy,” Rome provides a perfect example of *history repeating itself*! But more to the point, this woman who sits on seven hills—this church located in Rome—has revived the same pagan teachings that ancient Babylon taught ages ago. She baptizes them, sanctifies them, and brings them into the Christian church. Ages ago, when presumptuous men tried to build the Tower of Babel at Babylon, God confused their language. **Genesis 11:1-9.** So here in the last book of the Bible, “Babylon” is a spiritual term referring to *confusion*—not the confusion of languages in the Old Testament but RELIGIOUS CONFUSION as the church drifted away from God’s Word.

The Harlot & Image Worship: Many false doctrines entered the church, but let’s focus on just three: IMAGE worship, IMMORTALITY of the soul, and SUN worship. First of all, Babylon was the center of idol worship. Everywhere you turned there were images—idols—representing the pagan gods, not just statues of Bel-Marduk, their chief god. King Nebuchadnezzar set up a huge golden idol and commanded all to bow down before it. But God’s Second Commandment in **Exodus 20:4-5** FORBIDS using images in religious worship, FORBIDS *bowing down before them*. Today the Papal church not only fosters those very things but also has DELETED the Second Commandment from its catechisms (official training manuals)!

The Harlot & Natural Immortality: Sincere Catholics often bow down before a statue of a SAINT and devoutly pray, even though the saint is DEAD. But the Roman church doesn’t teach that they’re dead—even though the idea that man’s soul is naturally immortal is a PAGAN one! All the ancient pagan religions—without exception—had the idea that the soul, or man’s essential being, was immortal. That non-biblical concept, inherited from Babylon, was a common thread running through them all. In Egypt, for instance, the pyramids were great monuments, great houses for the dead to hold their immortal spirits. But the heathen idea of man’s soul being naturally immortal comes from Egypt and Babylon and Greece, not the Bible, whose teaching directly contradicts it. See such verses as **1 Timothy 6:15-16, Ezekiel 18:4 & 20, Ecclesiastes 9:5, Psalm 6:5 and 115:17, John 11:11-14, Psalm 13:3, Ephesians 5:14, etc.**

The Harlot & Sun Worship: The main deity of Babylon and Egypt was the Sun god. Astrology and worship of the heavens originated in Babylon. But God calls it one of the *greatest* of “abominations” in **Ezekiel 8:15-16!** Roman Emperor Constantine was a sun worshiper who never gave it up. The Roman church disregards not only the SECOND Commandment about image worship but also the FOURTH Commandment about the Creator’s seventh-day Sabbath, substituting the unscriptural SUNDAY!



The TESTIMONY of HISTORY . . .

- ◆ The book *Catholic Belief*, by Roman Catholic scholar Father Joseph Faà di Bruno, page 45, states this: “Like two sacred rivers flowing from Paradise, the Bible AND divine Tradition *contain the Word of God*, the precious gems of revealed truths. Though these two divine streams are in themselves, on account of their divine origin, of EQUAL sacredness, and are both full of revealed truths, still, of the two, Tradition is to us MORE clear and safe.” Do you agree that tradition—the customs and practices of man—is more safe than the Bible? Rome baptizes *tradition* with the word “divine” and dares to hold it *above the Bible*.
- ◆ Henry Thomas Buckle, a world-famous historian, says in his book *The History of Civilization*, Volume 1, page 188: “*The adoration of idols* that is in Babylon was succeeded by *the adoration of saints*.”
- ◆ William E. Gladstone, four-time Prime Minister of Great Britain and a theologian in his own right, wrote in *Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler*, pp. 195-198: “The doctrine of *natural*, as distinguished from Christian, immortality . . . crept into the Church, by a BACK DOOR. . . . When arguments are offered for the purely natural immortality of the soul, they are rarely, if ever, derived from Scripture. . . . The natural immortality of the soul is a doctrine wholly unknown to the Holy Scriptures, and standing on no higher plane than that of . . . PHILOSOPHICAL OPINION . . . of philosophical speculations DISGUISED as truths of Divine Revelation.”
- ◆ Sir James G. Frazer, an authoritative scholar, makes this statement in his book *The Worship of Nature*, Volume 1, page 529: “In ancient Babylonia the SUN was WORSHIPPED from immemorial antiquity.”
- ◆ Historian Arthur P. Stanley in his book, *The History of the Eastern Church*, page 184, says this about the Roman Emperor Constantine, “His coins bore on the one side the letters of the name of Christ; on the other, the figure of the SUN GOD, as if he could not bear to relinquish the patronage of the bright luminary.”
- ◆ Lewis Brown says this in *The Believing World*, page 112: “One cannot well refer to those cults of Babylon and Egypt and the rest as DEAD religions. For the echo of their ancient thunder is *still* to be heard reverberating in almost every form of faith existing today.” Ancient Babylonian image worship is in the church today. Ancient Babylonian sun worship is there. Ancient Babylonian belief in the immortality of the soul is there. Yes, the echo of that thunder is still heard in the church today!
- ◆ Doctor Alexander Hislop, in his classic work, *The Two Babylons*, page 105, says this: “To conciliate the Pagans to nominal Christianity, Rome, pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get the Christian and Pagan festivals [that’s the Sabbath and Sunday] amalgamated, and . . . to get Paganism and Christianity—*now far sunk in idolatry*—in this as in so many other things, to shake hands.” He says further: “A glance at the main pillars of the Papal system will sufficiently prove that its doctrine and discipline in all essential respects have been derived from BABYLON.”
- ◆ Catholic William Gildea, Doctor of Divinity, wrote in *The Catholic World*, March, 1894, page 809: “The Sun was a *foremost* god with heathendom. . . . The sun has worshippers at this hour in Persia and other lands. . . . The PAGAN Sunday dedicated to Balder, became the Christian Sunday, sacred to Jesus.”
- ◆ Cardinal James Gibbons, archbishop of Baltimore and noted writer, said in *The Catholic Mirror*, December 23, 1893: “Reason and sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of these alternatives: *either* Protestantism and the keeping holy of Saturday, *or* Catholicity and the keeping holy of Sunday. Compromise IS IMPOSSIBLE.”



Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#15 - Solving the Riddle of Religious Confusion

1. The Bible symbol of a WOMAN always represents a CHURCH—as God says to His people: “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one _____ that I may present you as a chaste _____ to Christ.”

To check your answer, see 2 Corinthians 11:2, Isaiah 54:5-6, Jeremiah 3:14, etc.

2. ☐ T Since a pure woman = a pure church, and a corrupt woman = a corrupt church, we know
☐ F that the woman in scarlet is a CORRUPT church, for John boldly calls her a whore or harlot.

To check your answer, see Revelation 17:1 and 19:2.

3. ☐ T Any encyclopedia, or even a good unabridged dictionary, will confirm that ROME is
☐ F renowned as “the city built on seven hills” or “the seven-hilled city.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 17:9 and a good reference book.

4. The church John describes is a RICH one, for “the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with _____ and PRECIOUS STONES and _____, having a golden cup in her hand.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 17:4 & 18:16.

5. ☐ T ROME was “that great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth” at the time John was
☐ F writing the Book of Revelation.

To check your answer, see Revelation 17:18 and Luke 2:1.

6. ☐ T Besides sun worship, a second key feature of pagan religion in ancient Babylon and Egypt
☐ F was the doctrine of the “immortal soul,” despite Scripture’s consistent teaching to the contrary.

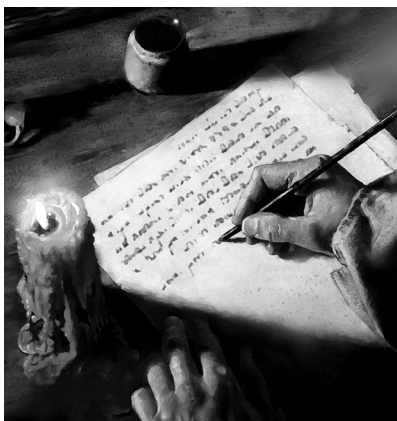
To check your answer, see Ecclesiastes 9:5, 1 Timothy 6:15-16,

Ezekiel 18:4 & 20, Psalm 6:5 and 115:17, etc.

7. The Bible warns us: “Babylon is _____, is _____,” and God—with inexpressible love—calls us to “Come _____ of her, _____ people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 14:8 and 18:2-4.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

16

Unleashing a New Source of Spiritual Power

Today there's a new revolution in psychoactive drugs. Soon there'll be a pill for every problem. Will we find all our answers in pharmaceuticals? Certainly psychoactive drugs are on a roll. One big reason is the Prozac phenomenon. After this anti-depressant went on the market, people began telling remarkable stories of how their lives had changed dramatically after taking the drug. And that made a lot of people wonder—if a pill can do all this, do we still need God? Do pills do what God cannot? Are psychoactive drugs going to make God obsolete in the 21st century?

Let's take a closer look at exactly what God does in an individual's life. Let's see how the Holy Spirit works in our minds and compare that with what psychoactive drugs do. I think you'll be amazed. There is a divine power which provides radical, life-transforming changes!

Let's turn to the Book of Revelation. Did you know that believers have one dominant image in the Book of Revelation? They're characterized in one way more than any other: God calls them **OVERCOMERS**. Although Revelation pictures hard times and cataclysms in the end time, with evil powers like the dragon and beast warring against God's people, believers **OVERCOME**. Believers are delivered. Believers **WIN**! God's instructive, illuminating refrain starts near the beginning of Revelation:

- **Revelation 2:7** - "To him who **OVERCOMES**, I will give to eat from the tree of life."
- **Revelation 2:11** - "He who **OVERCOMES** shall not be hurt by the second death."
- **Revelation 2:17** - "To him who **OVERCOMES** I will give some of the hidden manna to eat."
- **Revelation 2:26** - "He who **OVERCOMES** . . . to him I will give power over the nations."
- **Revelation 3:5** - "He who **OVERCOMES** shall be clothed in white garments. . . ."
- **Revelation 3:12** - "He who **OVERCOMES**, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God. . . ."
- **Revelation 3:21** - "To him who **OVERCOMES** I will grant to sit with Me on My throne."

The Book of Revelation pictures believers as victors who overcome adversity and evil. We see the same theme later in the book. Speaking of Satan, the accuser, the enemy, **Revelation 12:11** says, "They **OVERCAME** him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." At the end of the book, this same picture emerges. God promises in **Revelation 21:6-7**: "He who **OVERCOMES** shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

In various places, Revelation pictures believers joyously celebrating before God's throne. They're pictured as having gone through great tribulation and coming out *triumphant*. Believers overcome even in the worst of times. That's part of Revelation's message, friends. It's telling us that we weak, sinful human beings can be overcomers. We needn't be intimidated by the forces of evil in this world.

Yes, we may be weak, handicapped by our heredity, by our family of origin, by our environment. But Scripture still offers us hope that we can be overcomers and rise above these things. I've seen God radically transform people around the world—their lives changed forever:

- Drunkards become sober.
- Thieves become honest.
- Money-grabbing businessmen become unselfish, compassionate husbands and fathers.
- Angry, bitter people become renewed in spirit.
- Prostitutes and lust-filled men become transformed.
- Hearts filled with hatred become filled with love.

It's a miracle—a miracle of God's grace! What God does in human hearts and lives is remarkable. The apostle Paul shouts it in these words: "If any man [or woman] is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." **2 Corinthians 5:17.**

How does it happen? How does God transform our lives? The Bible calls this experience "the new birth" or being "born again." To be born again means to be radically transformed from deep within by the power of the Holy Spirit. It means to have a new way of looking at things, a new power operating in your life, new desires, new impulses, new joy and peace in your life.

The human mind cannot understand it, but we become overcomers through the Spirit. We're born again, powerfully changed, with a new power working in our lives. The Spirit has uprooted anger, bitterness, lust, and addictions and replaced them with love, joy, peace, and longsuffering.

The Spirit's power liberates us from the bondage of habits that destroy our souls. **2 Corinthians 3:17** puts it this way: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The Spirit's power frees us from the chains of sin which bind us while drug medication deals only with symptoms. If a person is depressed, certain pills may ease that depression. But no psychoactive drug can show you WHY you're depressed, what lies behind your anger, or what contributes to your anxiety. In our rush to just medicate the mind, we forget that pills don't give us the wisdom or insight we need to deal with our problems and grow through them. But the Holy Spirit works in us to do precisely that. He's the Spirit of revelation, and His revelations can produce dramatic results.

One more thing God's Spirit does is fill up our lives with good things. Look at **Galatians 5:22-23**: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control." Those good qualities the Holy Spirit reproduces inside us. That's how we keep growing. The Spirit moves us down a path that leads to abundant life—everlasting life. Pills can't do that. Pills may be a temporary help. But the Holy Spirit sticks with us for the long haul. He's not an artificial additive. He fills us with good character qualities. And being filled with the Spirit produces no side effects. There's no down side.

Ephesians 3:16 talks about being "strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man." You can be strengthened with the mighty power of God inside you! You can be different than you are! You don't need to struggle with the same habits over and over again. When life presses you down, when you struggle with impulses which seem uncontrollable, when you feel too weak to try—remember the apostle Paul's words, "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." **Romans 8:37.** God has called you to be a winner, not a loser. Our willpower is weak, but when we surrender our will to Him, He gives us power directly from His throne.

My own Dad Jim Finley was born to a problem family in the New York City slum called "Hell's Kitchen." He picked up bad habits, left home, joined the Navy and was going down the wrong road in life when he dropped to his knees and gave His heart to Christ. Dad didn't just get out of Hell's Kitchen. Hell's Kitchen got out of him. My father truly escaped from his old life because he truly made a commitment, heart and soul. That's how we become OVERCOMERS.



“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

Genesis 1:2	The Holy Spirit of God was present at Creation.
Acts 5:3-4	Peter in the Bible equates the Holy Spirit with “God.”
2 Corinthians 3:17	Paul in the Bible equates the Holy Spirit with “the Lord.”
Romans 8:27	The Holy Spirit has a mind.
1 Corinthians 2:11	The Holy Spirit knows and understands the things of God.
Ephesians 4:30	The Holy Spirit is not a mere <i>power</i> or <i>force</i> but a Person who can be grieved.
John 16:13-14	Jesus referred to the Spirit with personal pronouns like <i>He</i> and <i>His</i> —not “it.”
John 14:26	God sends the Holy Spirit to be our divine Teacher.
Acts 5:32	God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him.
John 16:8	God’s Holy Spirit convicts us—in our hearts—of sin.
John 3:3-8	The Holy Spirit brings about the new birth, when one is “born again.”
Ezekiel 36:26-37	The Holy Spirit transforms our character, giving us a new heart.
1 Corinthians 12:11	The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts, equipping us for God’s work.
Genesis 6:3	The Holy Spirit “strives” with us, leading us to do right.
John 16:13	The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth.
Ephesians 3:16	Through His Spirit, God will strengthen us with might in our inner being.
Romans 8:37	In all problems, we can be more than conquerors through Him who loves us.
Revelation 3:12	God gives many breathtaking promises “to him [or her] who OVERCOMES.” (See also Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:26, 3:5, 3:21, 21:7, <i>etc.</i>)
2 Corinthians 5:17	A person who comes to Christ is a <i>new</i> creation—all things have become new!
Galatians 5:22-23	The fruit of the Spirit can fill our lives, our characters, with all good things.
2 Timothy 1:7	God hasn’t given us a spirit of fear, but of <i>power</i> , of <i>love</i> , and of a <i>sound mind</i> .
Romans 8:14	As we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us, we become sons and daughters of God.
Galatians 6:8	“He who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”
Romans 8:11	We need not fear death, for Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, will resurrect His faithful people.
Revelation 19:1	Through all eternity we’ll praise God for His miraculous power of deliverance.



Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#16 - Unleashing a New Source of Spiritual Power

1. The Holy Spirit is more than an *essence* or *influence* or *power* or *force*—He’s a Person! For the Bible speaks of “the _____ of the Spirit” and warns us, “ _____ not the Holy Spirit of God”—attributes that could never be applied to an unconscious force.

To check your answer, see Romans 8:27 and Ephesians 4:30.

2. If we want a *Spirit-filled Christian life*, we must understand that the Bible says God gives the Holy Spirit “to them that _____ Him” and keep His Commandments through *love*.

To check your answer, see Acts 5:32. Compare John 14:15-17.

3. One ministry of the Holy Spirit Jesus pointed out is that “He will *reprove* [modern versions say *convict* or *convince*] the world of _____,” giving us a sense of right and wrong.

To check your answer, see John 16:8.

4. The Holy Spirit was powerfully poured out on the the Day of Pentecost, but He was present and active long before—even at Creation, for the Bible says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. . . . And the _____ of _____ moved upon the face of the waters.”

To check your answer, see Genesis 1:1-2.

5. God knows we face many troubles and temptations, but He offers many great promises “to him who _____,” and wants us to be “ _____ with _____ by His Spirit in the inner man.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 2:7, etc., and Ephesians 3:16.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

17

When Life is New

We live in exciting times. Recent years have brought the triumph of democracy in unexpected places. The Berlin Wall crumbled before our very eyes. The Soviet Union and puppet Communist regimes washed away before a miraculous bloodless revolution, ushering in a new era. But most observers fail to see the spiritual dimension in these revolutions against tyranny. It's much more than just a change of political systems. Where tyranny once reigned supreme, God is bringing religious liberty.

We may have forgotten just how deeply God is committed to freedom. He's in the business of freeing people from all kinds of oppression. The Almighty, the Victorious Warrior who rescues the prey from the tyrant, stands in opposition to the empire of Satan in all its forms. Satan seeks to enslave men by any means: vice, deprivation, ignorance, political oppression. God's way and Satan's way are at war: the Lamb of God *vs.* the Red Dragon, the pure woman *vs.* the harlot of Babylon, a battle of love *vs.* force.

God's victory is inevitable, for Christ made the total, all-out commitment for us on the cross. Jesus made the supreme commitment for us and invites us to make the supreme commitment to Him. Each of us must deal with tyranny in our own life. Satan seeks to enslave us in his oppressive kingdom. **Revelation 12:17** depicts the church as a pure woman and Satan as a dragon who attacks God's people: "The dragon was ENRAGED with the woman, and he went to MAKE WAR with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." **1 Peter 5:8-9** describes our enemy in a similar way: "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a ROARING LION looking for someone to devour."

Satan is earth's ultimate tyrant, and we'll remain trapped in his tyrannical empire UNLESS we take a firm stand. Why? Think about it. No one is untouched by the oppression of sin. We struggle with habits and attitudes we know are wrong. We fail to live up to our own standards. We bear scars from the sins of *others*—and we *cause* scars ourselves. All of us suffer from the tyranny of evil unleashed in this world. So how do we escape and find freedom? It's not enough just to wish this tyranny away. We must take a stand, declare another allegiance. And that allegiance must be to the One who sets us free, Jesus Christ.

Revelation 7:14-15 shows people who have declared such an allegiance, a group that has gone through history's last upheavals and made it to the very throne room of God. This text describes the secret of their strength: "These are the ones who came out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in the temple." They've washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! Did you know that a particular Christian practice symbolizes this washing, making things white in the blood of the Lamb, that there's actually a way we can affirm that publicly in our lives? Let's talk about this affirmation, this public statement, and the difference it can make. It's the statement of BAPTISM.

Baptism is mentioned more than 80 times in the New Testament alone. **Matthew 28:19-20** records Jesus' *final instructions* to His disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, BAPTIZING them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, TEACHING them to observe ALL things I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

The MEANING of Baptism: Bible baptism is a public commitment, a symbol of allegiance to Christ, declaring whose side we're on. To be "washed in the Blood of the Lamb" is to make a public statement of loyalty to Him in baptism. No doubt about it: Jesus is the One standing against the evil empire of Satan, the One able to deliver us from the tyrant's grip. So we must give absolute allegiance to Christ as our Savior. But many today give only a vague assent to Jesus as Savior and keep their allegiance a private affair. Sure, they believe in Him, but for some reason that belief never becomes a public statement. Yet we need something definite in our lives. We need to take a firm stand. Private allegiances tend to wither away. Unexpressed beliefs tend to bend with the circumstances. So how do we take a stand? The early Christians show us how very clearly. After one of Peter's first sermons, his listeners were deeply convicted about the claims of Christ. They asked, "What shall we do?" Peter answered in **Acts 2:38**: "Repent and be BAPTIZED, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." These people had faith in Jesus as the Messiah, as Savior. They took a stand and made a public statement by being baptized. Baptism is a way of identifying ourselves with Christ—we join ourselves to Him publicly, just as a man and woman join themselves in marriage through a wedding ceremony.

THE METHOD OF BAPTISM: Look at how Jesus was baptized—He's a safe example to follow. Mark 1:9-10: "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, COMING UP FROM the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove." Jesus WAS FULLY IMMERSSED by John in the Jordan River. **John 3:23** states: "John was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was MUCH WATER there. And they came and were baptized." True biblical baptism requires deep water. Sprinkling doesn't, neither does pouring. Only immersion demands "much water." Paul tells us in **Ephesians 4:5**: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" There's only one genuine faith—saving faith in Christ. There's only one Lord—Jesus our Lord and Savior. And there's only ONE genuine method of baptism—by immersion. In **Acts 8:38** the Apostle Philip baptized an Ethiopian eunuch: "Both Philip and the eunuch WENT DOWN INTO the water, and he baptized him." Philip placed the new believer completely under water. Full immersion is the only method of baptism described in the Bible.

THE SYMBOLISM OF BAPTISM: The Bible method of baptism richly symbolizes Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Paul asks in **Romans 6:3-6**: "Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his DEATH? We were therefore BURIED with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was RAISED from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. . . ." Thus baptism really represents *three things*: (1) DYING to the old sinful way of life. (2) BURYING our sins in the watery grave. (3) RISING AGAIN out of the water to walk a NEW LIFE.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM: Let me make one thing clear. Baptism does not save us—it's not a magic ceremony that gives eternal life. Faith in Christ is what saves us; we receive eternal life only by believing in Him and accepting Him as Savior. And baptism doesn't mean we're *perfect*—it means we're *committed*. But some Scripture passages speak of the supreme importance of Bible baptism. In **Mark 16:16** Jesus Himself said: "He who believes AND is BAPTIZED shall be saved." According to Jesus, baptism is essential for salvation. In **John 3:5**, Jesus emphatically declared: "Unless one is born of WATER and the Spirit, he CANNOT enter the kingdom of God." If a sincere believer, like the thief on the cross, cannot be baptized, then Christ's own baptism will serve in that case. But when we're given the wonderful opportunity presented by baptism, it would be an insult to scorn it and turn away. God's call is urgent in **Acts 22:16, NIV**: "What are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on His name."



“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

Matthew 28:19-20	“Go ye therefore, and TEACH all nations, BAPTIZING them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”
Mark 16:16	“He who believes AND IS BAPTIZED shall be saved.”
John 3:5	“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
Ephesians 4:5	There is “one Lord, one faith, ONE baptism”— <i>not</i> many different correct modes.
Matthew 3:13-17	Jesus was baptized by IMMERSION as an instructed adult in the River Jordan.
John 3:23	Biblical baptism of adults—that is, by immersion—takes “MUCH water.”
Mark 1:9-10	Jesus was baptized by John “IN” the River Jordan and came “up OUT OF the water.” He was fully immersed.
Acts 8:38	“Both Philip and the eunuch went DOWN INTO the water.” Philip baptized him by the Biblical mode of IMMERSION.
Colossians 2:12	The symbol is “BURIED [in a watery grave] with Christ in baptism.”
Romans 6:3-6	Baptism—a beautiful symbol of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection—represents our <i>death</i> to sin, the <i>burial</i> of our old life, and emergence to <i>new</i> life in Jesus. But this is true only when executed by IMMERSION, <i>not</i> sprinkling or pouring.
Acts 2:38	Sincere REPENTANCE should precede baptism.
Mark 16:16	Whoever BELIEVES and is baptized shall be saved.
Acts 2:41-42	“Those who gladly received His word were baptized. . . . They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ DOCTRINE”—TEACHING. (See also Matthew 28:19-20.)
1 Cor. 12:13, 27	Baptism is into the “BODY” of Christ, the CHURCH. (See also Acts 2:46-47.)
Matthew 28:19-20	Jesus gave authority to baptize only to His disciples teaching “all” of His commands. As the Holy Spirit impresses you to be baptized, seek a Sabbath-keeping church teaching ALL that Jesus has commanded.
Acts 22:16	“Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.”



Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#17 - When Life is New

1. To those who wonder whether baptism is important or even necessary, the Master declares: “Unless one is born of _____ and the Spirit, he _____ enter the kingdom of God.”
To check your answer, see John 3:5.
2. Christians know it’s vital to our salvation to BELIEVE in Christ, but Jesus Himself adds a second vital requirement when He says, “He that believeth and is _____ shall be saved.”
To check your answer, see Mark 16:16.
3. When people would come to John the Baptist from all surrounding regions, he baptized them “IN” the Jordan River, at a place called “Aenon near to Salim, because there was _____ there.”
To check your answer, see Matthew 3:5-6 and John 3:23.
4. ☐ T It’s really not possible to choose between being baptized “into Christ” and being baptized
☐ F “into the church,” since Christ is the Head of the “body” we call the church.
To check your answer, see Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 1:22-23.
5. Man’s unsanctified mind has departed from the Bible and devised MANY methods of performing the ritual of baptism—such as sprinkling, pouring, and anointing the forehead with a drop of water! But the Word of God speaks of only “ _____ Lord, _____ faith, _____ baptism.”
To check your answer, see Ephesians 4:5.
6. Essential steps that should precede baptism include which of the following:
☐ A. Repentance—feeling godly sorrow for one’s sins.
☐ B. Belief—having faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
☐ C. Teaching—instruction in the truths of the Bible.
☐ D. Giving—making a donation to the church.
☐ E. All of the above. **NOTE: Infants cannot do any of these!**
To check your answer, see Acts 2:38, Acts 8:37, and Matthew 28:19-20.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

18

Why So Many Denominations?

It's a JUNGLE out there! Protestants are now divided into over 200 major denominations. And most of these church organizations are further sub-divided into many groups. There are, for example, twenty different kinds of Baptists alone. An Anglican bishop once said, "Divided Christendom is a source of weakness in the West. In *non-Christian* lands it is a...stumbling block"—referring to the confusion faced by new believers in *Hindu* or *Buddhist* or *Muslim* lands who, when they decide to follow Christ, must choose between scores of denominations competing for their allegiance. Sooner or later everyone faces a disturbing question: WHY so many denominations? If Christ is supposed to bring people together, why have His followers split into so many factions? Why do *so many* different groups claim to be the One True Church?

God gives some good answers in the Book of Revelation, Chapter 6—specifically a vision of Christian history in a scroll unsealed by Christ, the Lamb. As the scroll unrolls, FOUR HORSES gallop across the sky representing FOUR SUCCESSIVE AGES in the history of the church...

The WHITE Horse of Purity & Victory – Revelation 6:2 says, "I looked, and behold, a WHITE horse. And he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer." White is a symbol of purity. The rider of the white horse held a bow, wore a victor's crown, and rode out as a conqueror in the earliest days of the Christian church. The Early Church, with Jesus as its general, marched into the citadels of Satan and conquered. The early church was faithful, even in the face of persecution. In the end, these people overwhelmed even the might of the Roman Empire. **Colossians 1:23** makes this incredible statement regarding the success of New Testament Christianity: "the gospel which you heard...was preached to every creature under heaven." This period of apostolic purity and power lasted to about A.D. 100.

THE RED HORSE OF FIERCE PERSECUTION – Revelation 6:4 says: "Another horse, fiery RED, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword." This period of fierce persecution dates from about A.D. 100 to 313. Satan, seeing the Christian faith conquering hearts and minds, roused pagan emperors to stamp it out. Believers were burned at the stake, thrown to lions, torn apart on the rack—a great bloody sword was lifted over the church. But remarkably enough, the church kept growing. The world saw Christians willing to DIE for their faith. And the world took notice. It was an argument hard to ignore.

THE BLACK HORSE OF COMPROMISE & CORRUPTION – Pagan persecution failed to destroy the Christian church. So Satan, changing his strategy, decided to attack it from the INSIDE. **Revelation 6:5** says: "I looked, and behold a BLACK horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand." If the color white implies

purity of faith, black represents *corruption* of that faith. The rider carries a pair of scales, or balances, picturing the church as “weighed in the balance and found wanting.” In this period Satan *infiltrated* the church. Pagan beliefs and practices crept into the church and were accepted as part of the faith! God’s Word was replaced with more and more tradition. The church became very powerful in the middle ages, as powerful as the Roman Empire once had been. It boasted great cathedrals and wielded absolute authority over believers. All kinds of pagans, who’d worshipped Zeus or Caesar before, now wanted to join the Christian church. Unfortunately, many church leaders made the transition easier by allowing the new members to hang onto pagan ideas, images, and customs. The Second Commandment’s clear teaching *NOT* to make or bow before images—**Exodus 20:4-5**—was simply deleted from church teaching.

Sun worship also had a very strong hold on the people of the Roman Empire. And it didn’t wither away when pagans began calling on the name of Jesus. So church officials, to make sun-worshippers feel more at home in the Christian church, forbade all work on Sunday. What most people don’t realize now is that the seventh day, Saturday, *REMAINED* the Christian day of worship for some time after Christ’s death. That was the Sabbath for early believers. There is certainly no evidence for the change of the day of worship in the New Testament. Church officials said: After all, Sunday was the day of the Lord’s resurrection. But were pagans who joined the church really worshipping Jesus Christ, the resurrected Lord? Or were they really still worshipping the sun? In the middle of the fifth century, we find Pope Leo I rebuking worshippers at St. Peter’s because they kept turning around and bowing toward the sun before entering the basilica! Mixing pagan customs with Christian teaching greatly weakened the church spiritually.

THE PALE HORSE OF SPIRITUAL DEATH – Revelation 6:8 says: “I looked, and behold, a *PALE* horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.” A corpse is riding a pale horse. Compromise has become spiritual death. By A.D. 538, church councils took the place of the Bible and church leaders became substitute messiahs. This period is known as the Dark Ages. Stagnation was widespread: the arts didn’t flourish; scholarship and learning were repressed. The church wielded the power of the state. The Inquisition was one horrible example of religion using force to maintain orthodoxy. *Outwardly* the church was splendid and majestic and influential. But *inwardly*, there was widespread death and decay. This whole panorama of prophecy took 400 years, from about A.D. 100 to 500—a long period of decline. Many wondered: would God’s light of truth ever shine again? Jesus promised in **Matthew 16:18**: “I will build My church, and gates of hell shall *NOT* prevail against it.” Error would not triumph forever. God’s truth did indeed rise again, championed by brave men and women.

As people were coming out of the Dark Ages, God didn’t pour out *ALL* truth on one person but used *MANY* reformers to restore truth. He blessed people like the *WALDENSES* with the idea of God’s Word as the foundation of faith. He showed *JOHN HUSS* that obedience to God must take precedence over obedience to the church. He showed *MARTIN LUTHER* the wonderful truth of justification by faith. The *ANA-BAPTISTS* rediscovered the truth of adult baptism by immersion. *JOHN WESLEY* rediscovered the truth of sanctification, of how the Spirit works in our lives. Early *ADVENTISTS* rediscovered the truth of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. New churches, new denominations formed around the people who made these discoveries and around the new light rediscovered.

That’s why we have many different denominations. Each one celebrates a particular rediscovery of truth. But here’s where the problem lies. God longs to restore *ALL* of His truth to His people at end time. He wants us to keep going, to keep making discoveries. God has more light to give us. But churches tend to remain static. Lutherans, of course, just want to talk about what Luther taught; Methodists, what Wesley taught, and so on. It’s *good* to preserve important truths, but it’s not good to build a wall around them and just stop there. God intends that each generation accept the truths of earlier generations until the *entire* Truth of God’s Word is restored. God’s plan is to gather a remnant people from all churches and join them together in a final movement that will restore *ALL* of His truth.



“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

- 1 Timothy 3:15** The apostle Paul defines God’s church as “the pillar and ground of the TRUTH.”
- John 17:17** Jesus prays that His people will be sanctified by *His Word, His truth* in every age.
- Revelation 6:1-8** John the Revelator, in the symbolism of the **FOUR HORSEMEN**, describes the ADVANCE of God’s truth—and Satan’s attempt to DESTROY it.

■ White Horse:	APOSTOLIC PURITY & VICTORY	A.D. 31 – A.D. 100
■ Red Horse:	FIERCE PERSECUTION	A.D. 100 – A.D. 313
■ Black Horse:	COMPROMISE & CORRUPTION	A.D. 313 – A.D. 538
■ Pale Horse:	SPIRITUAL DEATH	A.D. 538 – A.D. 1500

- Daniel 8:12** Predicts God’s truth would be “cast down to the ground.”
- 2 Thess. 2:3-7** Predicts there would be “a falling away” or departure from the truth.
- Isaiah 58:12-14** There’s been a breach, a BREAK in the wall of God’s Ten Commandments which the Lord says will be repaired.
- Jude 3** Urges us to “EARNESTLY CONTEND for the faith once delivered to the saints.”
- Revelation 14:6-7** Shares the good news that the everlasting gospel would be proclaimed to the ends of the earth.
- Revelation 12:17** Describes a people called the “remnant”—those who remain loyal to God—who keep His commandments in the last days.
- Revelation 14:12** Describes a people who will keep God’s commands and be filled with the faith of Jesus.
- Isaiah 8:20** Warns us not to accept the teachings of those who lead away from obedience to His Law and His Word.
- Matthew 16:18** “I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall NOT prevail against it.”
- John 10:16** Jesus has “other sheep” in all the different churches and denominations. They shall hear His voice, “and there shall be ONE fold, and ONE Shepherd.”



Quick Quiz

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#18 - Why So Many Denominations?

1. ☐ T In the apostolic era of the early church, God’s truth successfully SPREAD very rapidly and
☐ F very broadly, over most of the then-known world.
To check your answer, see Acts 2:41, 4:4, 6:7; Philippians 4:22, Colossians 1:23.
2. In the panoramic view of church history God gave John, the fourth period was symbolized by a horse of _____ color, and the rider “that sat on him was _____, and _____ followed with him”—signifying the condition of spiritual death in the church!
To check your answer, see Revelation 6:8.
3. Taking a stand for Christ and His truth often calls for courage, but God’s Word still urges, “Ye should earnestly contend for the _____ which was _____ delivered unto the saints.” As Peter fearlessly told authorities trying to intimidate him, “We ought to obey _____ rather than _____.”
To check your answer, see Jude 3 and Acts 5:29.
4. When Paul warns about “grievous _____...not sparing the flock,” he refers to Satan’s attacks from OUTSIDE the church, by persecution. When He warns church leaders or “overseers” that “of your _____ selves shall men arise, speaking _____ things, to draw away disciples after them,” he refers to Satan attacking the church from WITHIN, by corruption of its leaders and its doctrines.
To check your answer, see Acts 20:28-30.
5. Sadly, God refers to corruption from WITHIN when He says that even “_____ have violated My Law, and have profaned Mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the profane, neither have they shown difference between the _____ and the clean, and have _____ their _____ from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.”
To check your answer, see Ezekiel 22:26.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

19

The Search for Certainty

Could it be that some of us are clinging to the wrong thing in the name of religion? There are over 1800 different denominations, creeds, and religious groups in America today! New churches are rapidly springing up across the country. Materialism has NOT SATISFIED the restless longings of the 21st century seekers. Our insatiable search for pleasure has not met the needs of our hearts and souls. Deep within our being is this inner longing to know and discover truth. For this reason there is a turning toward religion, a hunger for genuine Christianity, a heartcry for truth which will support us in life's toughest times.

So the question is, How does the average person ever sort out the claims and counterclaims of all these religious organizations? There are so many conflicting theories and doctrines. Here is an ETERNAL PRINCIPLE: You do not go to the CHURCH to find the truth—you discover the TRUTH to find the church.

In **1 Timothy 3:15** Paul gives one of the clearest definitions of the church in all the Bible: "The church of the living God," he says, is "the *pillar and ground* of the TRUTH." The church is not merely some social institution where people assemble to feel good. It's not some human organization built on man's tradition. The true church is the *custodian* of, the *protector* of, the *preserver* of, the *proclaimer* of **God's Truth**. John Milner sums up our dilemma in these words: "There is but one inquiry to be made, namely, *which is the true church*. . . . By solving this one question . . . you will at once solve every question of religious controversy that has ever been or that ever can be agitated."—*The End of Religious Controversy*, page 95.

Where do you start in the quest for truth? With so many denominations, so many truth claims, maybe you've asked yourself, "Why doesn't God make it easier to sort it all out so we can clearly identify His last-day church?" Well, the Word of God in fact does give guidelines, definite specifications which go back all the way to Christ's early church in the days of the apostles. Let's take a quick look at them now.

✓ **A Church That Uplifts Christ:** Multiplied millions in our world follow the creeds of Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, the New Age movement, and supposedly "Christian" cults which fail to teach the full deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Staying away from those can considerably NARROW our search, as we remember Acts 4:12—which tells us He's our only Savior, our *only* means of salvation.

✓ **A Bible-Believing Church:** As long as the apostles were alive, the church stood firm and true. But compromise crept in, and pagan practices and teachings were accepted. When faithful Christians protested against corruption, they were bitterly persecuted by the official church! During the Dark Ages millions of believers gave up their lives rather than compromise their faith. The reign of intolerance lasted for centuries. But God's truth managed to triumph once again. The Bible, long chained to monastery walls and cathedral pulpits, was translated into the *common language*. Ordinary believers discovered what Scripture really taught. Courageous reformers

uncovered more and more lost truths from the Word of God. The true church makes the Bible its **ONLY** rule of faith and practice. **Psalm 119:105, John 5:39, 2 Tim. 3:16.**

✓ **A Commandment-Keeping Church:** The Bible speaks of a “remnant” as God’s last church in the last days. How do we identify this remnant? What sets it apart? Two important clues are given, two characteristics to identify this group. **Revelation 12:17** in the King James Version says: “And the dragon [Satan] was wroth [enraged] with the woman [the church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God. . . .” Here’s God’s description of His true church. At first glance you’d think almost any church would fit it. But do all religions today really “keep the commandments of God?” Or do some pay lip service to God’s Ten Commandments, while *ignoring the specifics* of those commands? The Second Commandment forbids bowing down to images. But many congregations bow before icons of wood and metal and marble. The Fourth Commandment, perhaps the most ignored of all, calls us to “Remember” the seventh day as God’s holy Sabbath. **Exodus 20:8-11.** Any calendar shows the seventh day of the week to be Saturday, not Sunday—but drive by most churches on Saturday and you’ll find empty parking lots. Yet one distinguishing characteristic of God’s true church is obedience to His commandments, to **ALL TEN** of them. That includes the Fourth, instructing us to keep the seventh day holy. Most Protestant churches *do agree* about **NINE** of the commandments—the *difference* of opinion and practice is over the Fourth. God’s last-day church strives to follow **ALL** of God’s commandments.

✓ **A Church Having the Spirit of Prophecy:** The *other* characteristic **Revelation 12:17** says God’s church will have is “the testimony of Jesus.” What is that precisely? **Revelation 19:10** tells us: “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” God’s last-day church will have the gifts of the Spirit, including the spirit of prophecy. The gift of prophecy is one of God’s identifying marks of His true church. In **1 Corinthians 1:6-7** Paul portrays God’s last-day church this way: “Even as *the testimony of Christ* was confirmed in you, so that *ye come behind in no gift*, waiting for the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

✓ **A Church Practicing Bible Baptism:** A person’s last words are often important. The last words **Matthew 28:19-20** records is this command of Jesus: “Go therefore and make disciples of **ALL** the nations, **BAPTIZING** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **TEACHING** them to observe **ALL THINGS** that I have commanded you. . . .” True Bible baptism—the baptism by immersion of adult instructed believers—is a sign of God’s true church. It should be an easy sign for all churches to measure up to, yet many continue merely *sprinkling* or *pouring* a bit of water on an *infant* who’s oblivious to the whole ceremony! And God’s true church has a purpose: it’s a worldwide mission movement. It is carrying out the mission of reaching and teaching the world, spreading the good news of Jesus’ salvation.

✓ **A Church Teaching the Biblical View of Death:** Spiritualism is leaping across denominational boundaries, from sightings of Mary among Catholics, to seances being held in Protestant churches, to New Age “channeling” of spirits supposedly from the dead. Yet God condemns spiritualism even with the *death penalty*, for He knows how its insidious evil can lead His people astray. **Exodus 22:18, Deuteronomy 18:10-12, Leviticus 20:6 & 27.** The Bible teaching—in strong contrast to spiritualism—is that the dead *unconsciously sleep* until the resurrection. **John 11:11-14, Eph. 5:14, Eccl. 9:5, Psalm 6:5, 13:3, 37:10 & 20.**

✓ **A Health-Conscious Church:** In **Revelation 14:7** we read: “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come.” In the light of this judgment, God calls His people to place Him at the center of their lives. He calls them to “give glory to Him” in their lifestyles. God’s true church urges people to present their bodies to Him as “*a living sacrifice*.” **Romans 12:1.** It urges them to give up alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and unclean foods. **1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20, and 10:31.** It calls them to live *free* from all disease-causing addictions, to live the abundant life of God-given health.

✓ **A Church Eagerly Expecting His Coming:** God has an urgent message for today, a message that paves the way for Christ’s Second Advent. God’s true church pulsates with an advent consciousness. It believes and preaches with power that Jesus is coming soon. That long-awaited Event is the only hope for this old world and “the blessed hope” of the church. **Titus 2:13.**



“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

- Revelation 14:6-12** The message of God’s true church in earth’s last hour is an URGENT one!
- Revelation 14:6** *(first part)* God’s true church preaches the EVERLASTING GOSPEL.
(See Ephesians 2:8, 1 John 1:7 & 9, John 1:12.)
- Revelation 14:6** *(last part)* God’s true church is a WORLD-WIDE, international mission movement.
(See Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15)
- Revelation 14:7** *(first part)* God’s true church calls men and women to GIVE GLORY TO God in their lifestyle. (See 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and 10:31.)
- Revelation 14:7** *(middle)* God’s true church announces, “The hour of GOD’S JUDGMENT has come.” (See Matthew 12:33 & 37, Acts 24:25, Daniel 7:9-10.)
- Revelation 14:7** *(last part)* God’s true church calls all humanity to worship the CREATOR.
- Revelation 4:11** The very basis of worship is the fact that God MADE US.
- Exodus 20:8-11** God’s memorial of Creation is the seventh-day Sabbath.
- Genesis 2:1-3** God’s true church leads us back to the Edenic life of keeping God’s commandments—including the day He blessed and sanctified.
- Revelation 14:12** God’s true church leads men and women to faith in Jesus and obedience to His Law.
- Revelation 14:8** God’s true church warns against the false doctrines and errors of spiritual Babylon.
- Psalms 6:5, 115:17** God’s true church teaches the truth about DEATH. (See also John 11:11-14, Ephesians 5:14, Ecclesiastes 9:5, Psalm 13:3, 37:10 & 20, and 146:3-4, *etc.*)
- John 10:16** Jesus, the Good Shepherd, calls men and women to follow Him and become part of His true movement.
- Revelation 22:17** The Spirit and Bride say “Come.” Through His mighty all-powerful Spirit and His Christ-centered, truth-teaching church, Jesus appeals to us to become part of His people—His heaven-bound family!



Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#19 - The Search for Certainty

1. God’s true church is a *Bible-believing* church. Jesus said of *God’s Word*, “Thy _____ is _____.” “They [the Scriptures]. . . testify of _____,” for Christ is the central theme of the Bible.

To check your answer, see John 17:17 and 5:39.

2. God’s true church *uplifts Christ* as the world’s only Savior, for besides Jesus “There is _____ under heaven . . . whereby we _____ be saved.”

To check your answer, see Acts 4:12.

3. God’s true church is an Adventist church, eagerly awaiting the Master’s Second Advent, for Jesus Himself promised, “I _____ come _____,” and preaching that when He comes, “_____ eye shall _____ Him.”

To check your answer, see John 14:3 and Revelation 1:7.

4. God’s true church teaches the *Biblical* truth about *death*. Jesus taught death is but a *sleep* when He first told His disciples, “Lazarus _____ Then said Jesus . . . plainly, Lazarus is _____.” The Word of God teaches also that it’s an *unconscious* sleep, for “The dead _____ any thing.”

To check your answer, see John 11:11-14 and Ecclesiastes 9:5.

5. God’s true church preaches the *health* message that your _____ is the “_____” of God, so whatever we *eat* or *drink* should be “_____ to the _____ of God.”

To check your answer, see 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20, and 10:31.

6. God’s true church is a *Commandment-keeping* church. Revelation speaks of “the *remnant* . . . which _____ the Commandments of God” and “the *saints* . . . are they that _____ the Commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 12:17 and 14:12.

7. God’s true church practices the Bible method of *baptism* by *immersion*, not by *sprinkling* or *pouring*. The Scripture says, “We are _____ with Him by _____ into death.”

To check your answer, see Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12.

8. “The Spirit [God’s Holy Spirit] and the bride [His church] say, _____,” *inviting us* to *join* them. But conversely, God calls us to come OUT of any *false* church when He cries, “Come out of _____, _____ people.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 22:17 & 18:4.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

20

The Mark of the Beast

Some people are so afraid of it they try to avoid having a Social Security number. Others worry about the bar codes scanned at check-out stands—what could be behind it all? Our topic is the mark of the beast—a subject that’s inspired a lot of speculation—and some strange ideas. But it remains one of the **VITAL** subjects in the Book of Revelation. We wonder: Who is the **BEAST**? Is it a *person* or an *organization*? What does **666** mean? What’s the **MARK** of the beast? More importantly, how can I **AVOID** that mark?

Let’s go to the Book of Revelation for answers. That’s where the beast figure is introduced and where we find clues to his identity. In **Revelation 13:1** John says, “I saw a *beast* rising up out of the sea. . . .” We speak of America as an *eagle* and Russia as a *bear*. Those are symbols that represent nations, powers in the world. Here Revelation describes a great power rising up out of the sea. The **SEA** in Bible prophecy represents nations or people, for **Revelation 17:15** says, “the waters which you saw . . . are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.” So the beast arose out of a populated area. **Revelation 13:2** continues, “The beast which I saw was like a **LEOPARD**, his feet were like the feet of a **BEAR**, and his mouth like the mouth of a **LION**.” Here is a *composite* beast. John uses the same symbols Daniel used when he symbolized Babylon as a lion, Medo-Persia as a bear, Greece as a leopard, and the Roman Empire as a dragon-like beast. This beast of Revelation 13 **SUCCEEDS** those four world empires. Let’s look at **SEVEN CLUES** which identify the beast power. Sacred Scripture and secular history combine to make the identification sure.

Clue Number One: The last part of **Revelation 13:2** tells us, “The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.” The dragon here represents *pagan Rome*. **Revelation 12:9** tells us the dragon is a symbol of Satan, but Satan works through human agencies. In Revelation 12 the dragon tried to destroy Jesus through pagan Rome. A Roman official, Herod, tried to kill baby Jesus (**Matthew 2**). A Roman governor, Pilate, condemned Jesus. A Roman executioner crucified Him. A Roman emblem sealed Jesus’ tomb. A Roman guard watched that tomb. So the dragon represents Satan working through pagan Rome. But **PAGAN** Rome became **PAPAL** Rome, for when Emperor Constantine **MOVED** his headquarters to Constantinople, he left a power vacuum filled by the pontiff of Rome. Prominent historian Arthur P. Stanley describes the shift from a political power to a religious hierarchy: “The popes filled the place of the vacant emperors at Rome, inheriting their *power, prestige, and titles* from paganism.” Thomas Hobbes could truly say that the Papacy was “the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon its grave.”

Clue Number Two: This power in Revelation 13 would become a worldwide *religious* power, not a *political* one. **Revelation 13:8** says, “**ALL** who dwell on the earth will **WORSHIP** him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” All who dwell on earth will worship him. So it’s a **UNIVERSAL** power that initiates **WORSHIP**. And, of course, the Papacy is a universal religious

power that transcends geographic boundaries. This is our second clue.

Clue Number Three: Revelation 13:5 says the beast “was given a mouth speaking GREAT THINGS and BLASPHEMIES.” Christ Himself was twice accused of blasphemy—once in **Luke 5:20-21**, because He *claimed the power to forgive sins*, and again in **John 10:30-33**, because He *claimed to be God*. Jesus wasn’t guilty of blasphemy because He really *was* God, and He really *could* forgive sins! For a mere man to claim such things is indeed blasphemous. Read blasphemous statements 1-4 from the Roman church on page 3. > > >

Clue Number Four: Revelation 13:7 says, speaking of the beast: “It was granted to him to MAKE WAR with the saints and to OVERCOME them.” Persecution! A conservative estimate puts those Christians martyred by the state church during the Dark Ages at over 30 million. In the Catholic Inquisition, people were tortured and burned alive at the stake. Whole families or communities were wiped out for no other crime than “heresy”—they dared to believe something other than what the church taught. Interestingly enough, the Roman Church ADMITS to the persecution it inflicted. See statements 5-6 on page 3. > > >

Clue Number Five: Revelation 13:5 says, “He was given authority to continue for 42 months.” The Bible reckons 30 days to a month. (**Genesis 7:11 & 24, 8:34** shows a five-month period stretched 150 days: thirty days to a month.) And a DAY stands for a YEAR in Bible prophecy. **Ezekiel 4:6**. So 42 months x 30 days = 1260 prophetic days, or 1260 actual years. History books show that A.D. 538 was an important date for the papacy. In that year the decree of Justinian, the Emperor, went into effect making the bishop of Rome head of all the churches. Thus A.D. 538 marked the BEGINNING of papal supremacy. Now adding 1260 years to A.D. 538 we come to the year 1798. In that year Papal power was indeed seriously wounded. In 1798 Napoleon’s army took the pope captive and he later died in exile. Prophecy and history agree perfectly—the 1260 years fit precisely! But had Napoleon consulted Scripture, he’d have realized that the papacy was not finished, only wounded. **Revelation 13:3** tells us that “deadly wound” would be “healed.” And all the world would marvel and follow the beast in the last days.

Clue Number Six: Revelation 13:18 challenges us to “calculate the *number* of the beast, for it is the number of a *man*: His number is 666.” In the Bible the number SEVEN represents perfection, completeness. On the other hand, the number SIX represents human error, imperfection. So a triple six represents something *very wrong*! **Revelation 13:17-18** says quite plainly that “the number of the beast . . . is the number of a MAN.” More specifically, it’s “the number of his NAME.” Still more to the point, a footnote in the Douay Version of the Catholic Bible says: “Verse 18. *Six hundred sixty-six*. The NUMERAL LETTERS of his name shall make up this number.” Individual popes have had *many different* names, but the official title—the umbrella title that covers them all—the title that’s used in coronation ceremonies of each new pope, is VICARIUS FILII DEI, which is Latin for “Vicar of the Son of God.” Since this is a Roman title, we’d expect to use Roman numerals to calculate it. See the COMPUTATION, #7 on page three. > > >

Clue Number Seven: Revelation 13:16-17 says the beast forces all “to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark. . . .” The mark of the beast is a symbol of REBELLION against God, of DISLOYALTY to God’s government. Those allied with the beast receive this mark. But *another* group receive a *different* mark. **Revelation 7:2-3** says “the servants of our God” will be SEALED “on their foreheads” with “the SEAL of the living God.” They’re God’s faithful people, the remnant. **Revelation 14:12** calls them “the SAINTS . . . those who KEEP the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” The seal of God is contained in His law. **Isaiah 8:16** says, “SEAL the LAW among my disciples.” See brief explanation #8 on page 3. > > >

God calls the Sabbath His sign or seal, His mark of authority. What does the beast power claim as its mark of authority? See sample statements from Catholic sources 9-10 on page 3. > > >

In the last days, two groups, two different marks: The MARK of the beast and the SEAL of the living God. On one side, the divine commandments of God. On the other, the beast proclaiming traditions of men and enforcing a substitute Sabbath—Satan’s counterfeit.



#20 - The Mark of the Beast

#7 – Counting the Beast's Number

Meet Mr. 666, whose numerical code-name, like that of Agent 007, has become increasingly talked about.

V.....	5	
I.....	1	
C.....	100	
A.....	0	(not used as a numeral)
R.....	0	(not used as a numeral)
I.....	1	
U.....	5	(formerly the same as V)*
S.....	0	(not used as a numeral)
F.....	0	(not used as a numeral)
I.....	1	
L.....	50	
I.....	1	
I.....	1	
D.....	500	
E.....	0	(not used as a numeral)
I.....	1	

Total = 666

The computation totals 666 *exactly*—no more, no less.

#8 – An official seal or authoritative signature

always contains THREE ELEMENTS:

- The **NAME** of the law-giver.
- His **OFFICE** or **TITLE**—his right to rule.
- The **TERRITORY** which he rules—
his jurisdictional area.

For example:

Name	George Washington	Winston Churchill
Title	President	Prime Minister
Territory	United States	United Kingdom

GOD'S SEAL or signature is found in His Law, specifically in the Fourth Commandment. **Exodus 20:8-11** contains all of the three following elements:

Name **The LORD**
Isaiah 42:8, Jeremiah 16:21, Exodus 15:3, and
Amos 5:8 show that *Jehovah's name* is "the Lord.."

Title **CREATOR or MAKER**

Exodus 20:11 declares: "The Lord **MADE** . . .!"

Territory **HEAVEN and EARTH**

Just as the seals of earthly rulers are found in connection with *their* laws, so we find the Seal of the living God in His Law of Ten Commandments. The Lord—writing with His own finger—formally SIGNED and SEALED His divine Law!

* The letter "V" was the same as "U" until recent centuries. The Romans wrote the letter "V" for both *U* and *V* sounds, just as today we still write the letter "C" for both *K* and *S* sounds in words like *calculate* and *certainty*. Later, Medieval scholars began writing "*U*" for a vowel and "*V*" for a consonant. Encyclopedias confirm this fact. You may see names engraved on buildings that look like "PVBLC LIBRARY." (Think of our letter "W." It looks like two letter V's written together. But when we pronounce its name, we call it a "double-you," not a "double-vee.")

- "The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that *he is not a mere man*, but as it were GOD, and the vicar of God. . . . The Pope is as it were GOD on earth."—Lucius Ferraris, "Papa," article 2 in his *Prompta Bibliotheca* (Handy Library), Volume 6, pages 26-29.
- "We [the Popes] hold upon this earth the place of GOD Almighty."—Pope Leo XIII, *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, page 304.
- "Seek where you will, through heaven and earth, and you will find *but one* created being *who can forgive the sinner*. . . . That extraordinary being is the priest, the Catholic priest."—Michael Muller, *The Catholic Priest*, page 78.
- "To pardon a single sin requires all the omnipotence of God. . . . The Jews justly said: 'Who can forgive sins but God alone?' But *what only GOD can do* by His omnipotence, *the PRIEST can ALSO do* by saying '*Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis*' [I absolve you from your sin]."—Alphonsus de Liguori, *Dignity and Duties of the Priest*, pages 34-35.
- The Catholic publication *Western Watchman*, December 24, 1908, makes this admission: "The Church **HAS** persecuted. Only a tyro [a raw beginner] in church history will deny that. . . . When the church thinks it **GOOD** to use physical force, she **WILL** use it."
- Even more disturbing is this statement from a Catholic textbook: "The church may *by divine right* confiscate the property of heretics, imprison their persons, and condemn them to the **FLAMES**. . . . The **RIGHT** to inflict the severest penalties, even death, belongs to the church. . . . There is no graver offense than heresy . . . therefore it must be rooted out." *Public Ecclesiastical Law*, Volume 2, page 142.
- "**SUNDAY** is our **MARK** of authority. . . . The church is **ABOVE** the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact."—*Catholic Record*, September 1, 1923.
- "The Bible says, remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. The Catholic Church says, No! By my divine power I *abolish* the Sabbath day, and command you to keep holy the **FIRST** day of the week. And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church."—Father Enright, former President of Redemptorist College.

Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#20 - The Mark of the Beast

1. The Bible says the Beast power would be a universal system, for “_____ the world wondered after the Beast . . . and power was given him over _____ kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” But it would also be a religious system, for “they _____ the Beast.” It’s a *universal* system of *worship*.

To check your answer, see Revelation 13:3, 7, and 4.

2. ☐ T The Biblical *counterpart* of the MARK of the Beast is “the SEAL of the living God,” and the
☐ F Bible uses the words “seal” and “sign” interchangeably.

To check your answer, see Revelation 7:2-3, Romans 4:11.

Compare Esther 8:8 & Daniel 6:8, and Ezekiel 20:12 & 20.

3. The Bible says the Beast wore “upon his heads the name of _____. . . .
And there was given unto him a *mouth* speaking *great* things and _____.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 13:1 & 5. Compare Daniel 7:8 & 20.

4. The Bible predicted the Beast power would persecute God’s faithful people, for “it was given to him to _____ with the saints, and to _____ them.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 13:7. Compare Daniel 7:21 & 25.

5. “Power was given unto him [the Beast] to continue _____ and _____ months,” which equals—since the Bible month is *thirty days*—1260 prophetic days or 1260 actual years, when understood on the Scriptural principle of “each _____ for a _____.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 13:5 & 12:6, and Ezekiel 4:6.

6. At the end of the 1260 years, the Beast would have “one of his heads as it were wounded to death” and “go into _____” but that later “his deadly wound was _____.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 13:3 & 10.

Your Name: _____



AMAZING DISCOVERIES

Presented by

Mark Finley

21

What is Heaven Really Like?

There seems to be a lot of **CONFUSION** about the subject of heaven! People have many different ideas about what heaven is like. Some think it's unreal or just a state of mind. "It's pie in the sky when you die." The man on the street isn't the only one confused. Prominent religious leaders recently expressed their ideas to the press. In the August 19, 1999 edition of **SUN**, Pope John Paul II dropped a bombshell by saying that heaven is not a physical place, that paradise is not what you think, and "God is not an old man with a white beard, but a Supreme Being with male and female qualities and that there are no pearly gates." Dr. Deepak Chopra, a world famous spiritual teacher says, "Heaven is as real as spirit, and spirit is the only reality. . . . Because this spirit is within us all along, it is possible to create a 'heaven on earth' simply by turning within and becoming aware of our innermost selves."

Why all the hazy, ambiguous opinions when God has a master key to unlock our knowledge of heaven? The Bible is that master key. We need not depend on man's theories and opinions—we have the Bible, our only safe Source of information on heaven. **2 Peter 1:19** calls this Source "the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a **LIGHT** that shines in a dark place..." **Acts 3:21** speaks of the "restitution of all things." What will God restore? He'll restore "all things" **LOST** by Adam and Eve! It will be Paradise on Planet Earth, all things made new! A perfect world with perfect people!

When Marco Polo returned home from China after 21 years, he had such incredible tales to tell, his friends thought he had gone mad. He said he'd traveled to a city full of silver and gold; he'd seen black stones that burned (they hadn't heard of coal); he'd seen cloth that refused to catch fire even when thrown into the flames (they hadn't heard of asbestos). He talked of huge serpents 10 paces long with jaws wide enough to swallow a man (no one had ever seen a crocodile). He told of nuts the size of a man's head (they'd never seen coconuts). People just laughed at such stories. Years later, when Marco was dying, a devout man at his bedside urged Marco to recant all the tall tales he'd told. Marco refused: "It's all true—every bit of it. In fact, the *half* has not been told." Words are not adequate to express the beauties of the New Earth and the Holy City, either. In that regard, too, "The *half* has not been told." **1 Corinthians 2:9** says, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." Most people don't read the *next* verse: "But God has **REVEALED** them to us through His Spirit." It was through God's Holy Spirit that His prophets could share with us some of the beauties of the New Earth and the Holy City, the New Jerusalem!

The description of that Holy City is breathtaking! While John the Revelator was exiled on the little Island of Patmos off Turkey's coast, God showed him His city in vision. Then John wrote his eye-witness

testimony in **Revelation 21:1-2**: “I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Few illustrations present such happiness and beauty as that of a bride preparing for her wedding day!

Revelation 21:14, 19 continues: “The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb...The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of PRECIOUS STONES.” **Verse 16** specifies the MAGNIFICENT size of the New Jerusalem: There’ll be plenty of room for every person who wants to be a citizen. Jesus promised in **John 14:2** that in his Father’s house there are indeed MANY mansions! And He’s prepared a place there for us. **Revelation 21:21** says, “The twelve gates were twelve PEARLS...And the street of the city was pure GOLD, like transparent glass.”

This earth made new, Earth II, will be the Garden of Eden restored. **Isaiah 35:1** says, “The desert shall...blossom as the rose.” In this promised home, pain can’t exist. There’ll be no cancer, heart attacks, arthritis, or fevers—no illness, *period*—forever! **Isaiah 33:24 & 35:5-6** promise: “The inhabitant will not say, ‘I am sick.’...The eyes of the BLIND shall be opened, and the ears of the DEAF shall be unstopped. Then the LAME shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the DUMB will sing.” **Revelation 21:4** echoes this same wonderful picture: “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more DEATH, NOR SORROW, NOR CRYING; and there shall be no more PAIN, for the former things have passed away.”

In the New Jerusalem, our relentless search for the fountain of youth will find fulfillment. We’ll find it at last in that holy city. **Revelation 22:1-2** tells us: “He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” Here is the fountain of youth! We’ll enjoy perfect bodies and boundless energy to explore the wonders around us.

But you may wonder, how will we channel all this energy? What will keep us busy in such a place of peace and tranquility? How will we occupy ourselves with no evils to combat, no rent to pay, no food to buy? The answer is that we’ve been spinning our wheels down here occupying ourselves with petty things. But in the New Earth, we’ll find out what our minds and hearts are capable of! We’ll explore not only the whole created UNIVERSE but also complete the tapestry of our unfulfilled dreams.

The redeemed won’t inherit thin air. Instead of floating aimlessly in some holy space, they’ll be on solid ground, and they’ll be ACTIVE! Have you ever let the creative juices flow and mentally designed your perfect dream house? You plan this huge living room, this sunken swimming pool, those lush gardens. **Isaiah 65:21-22** tells us heaven is the place where we can actually DO what we only dream about today. “They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat...My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” Our hands, designed by God to work out the visions of our minds, will build and create freely. We’ll be able to produce anything we can conceive! And our energy will be renewed and refreshed week by week as we have wonderful worship and close communion with our Creator. In **Isaiah 66:23** God tells us: “‘From one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,’ says the Lord.” The Sabbath celebration brings us new life and vision even on this marred old Earth, but it will energize us even more amid the splendors of heaven. Our sense of community, our experience of praise will exceed anything we’ve witnessed here below. Voices will rise in perfect harmony, blended in beautiful anthems.

One day soon, this earth will be the center, the capital, of God’s universe! In **Revelation 21:3-4** a voice from heaven says, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and *He will dwell with them*, and they shall be His people. *God Himself will be with them* and be their God...They shall see His face.” Soon you’ll hear Jesus’ voice, richer than any music, saying, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” **Matthew 25:34.**



“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

John 14:1-3	Heaven is a REAL place—we can take Christ’s word for it!
2 Peter 3:10-13	Our Lord has promised to create a new heavens and a new earth.
Matthew 5:5	The meek shall inherit the earth.
Revelation 21:2, 10	The Holy City, New Jerusalem, will descend from God out of heaven.
Isaiah 45:18	God created this world to be inhabited.
Micah 4:8	The first or original dominion will be restored to the human race.
Philippians 3:21	God will give us glorious immortal bodies. (1 Corinthians 15:51-54)
1 Corinthians 13:12	But we won’t lose our identity—we shall be known and recognized.
Isaiah 35:3-6	All physical deformities will be cured. (The eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the crippled healed.)
Isaiah 65:17	God will create a new heavens and a new earth.
Isaiah 65:21-23	Heaven is REAL : “They shall <i>build houses</i> and inhabit them; they shall <i>plant vineyards</i> and eat the fruit of them.”
Isaiah 65:25	The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox. God’s new kingdom will be one of tranquil peace.
Matthew 8:11	We shall fellowship with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the greatest minds of the ages forever!
Revelation 21:3	God Himself shall be WITH us—up close and personal—and be our God!
Revelation 22:3-4	We shall lovingly serve our God forever and enjoy the closest fellowship with Him, face to face.
Revelation 21:16-17	God’s new city is 12,000 furlongs—or 1500 MILES square! Its great wall is 144 cubits—or 216 feet high. Its glories will far exceed the fondest imagination.
Revelation 21:18-21	This spectacular city has walls whose foundations are GEMS , street of pure GOLD , and twelve gates of PEARL , each gate a <i>single</i> pearl—an architect’s dream!
Revelation 21:23-25	“There shall be NO NIGHT there.”
Revelation 21:1	There’ll be “ NO MORE SEA ,” with its salt water no one can drink and its broad expanse separating loved ones.
Revelation 21:7-8, 27	The <i>entrance requirements</i> for the Holy City, New Jerusalem, are listed.
Revelation 22:17	And the Spirit and the Bride say, “Come”—a heavenly invitation!
1 Corinthians 2:9	“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”
Psalms 16:11	“In Your presence is FULLNESS of JOY ; at Your right hand are PLEASURES FOREVERMORE .”



Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#21 - What is Heaven Really Like?

1. In that wonderful New Earth, “God shall wipe away all _____ from their eyes; there shall be no more _____, nor _____, nor _____. There shall be no more _____, for the former things are passed away.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 21:4.

2. ☐ T Eternity is a LONG, long time, so there is the possibility that some might get bored.
☐ F

To check your answer, see 1 Corinthians 2:9 and Psalm 16:11.

3. Some think we’ll be airy, wispy spirits in heaven, but the Bible teaches that our mortal bodies will be transformed like Christ’s “glorious _____,” which had “_____ and _____” after His resurrection.

To check your answer, see Philippians 3:21 and Luke 24:36-43.

4. Everyone will have a fabulous home in the Holy City, for _____ builds this home for us. (A city home!)

To check your answer, see John 14:1-3.

5. The redeemed won’t just sit around and play harps—Scripture teaches: “They shall _____ and inhabit them; they shall _____ and eat the fruit of them.” (A country home—and no landlords!)

To check your answer, see Isaiah 65:21-23.

6. ☐ T God promises that the tragedies of this present world will not come into the minds of the
☐ F redeemed after sin is eliminated.

To check your answer, see Isaiah 65:17.

7. In the glorious New Earth, “The _____ shall rejoice and _____ as the rose. It shall _____ abundantly and rejoice.”

To check your answer, see Isaiah 35:1-2.

Your Name: _____