

A
WORLD
IN
CAPTIVITY

by David C. Pack

Herbert W. Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God (formerly The Radio Church of God until 1968) until his death in 1986. Hundreds of millions heard his voice and read his literature. God called him in the fall of 1926 and he was converted in the spring of 1927. Over the course of Mr. Armstrong's ministry, God revealed through him a great many true biblical doctrines, which had been lost to the Church through the centuries. After his death, his successors ceased to believe and teach these doctrines. Although copyright law prohibits The Restored Church of God from reproducing and distributing literature produced while he led the Worldwide Church of God, we are committed to the preservation and teaching of all of these truths!

THIS BOOKLET IS PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE AND IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST BY THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD.

It is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the members of the Church and others who have elected to support the work of the Church. Contributions are welcomed and gratefully accepted. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support this WORK OF GOD around the world are gladly welcomed as co-workers in this major effort to preach the gospel to all nations.

Copyright © 2002, 2004, 2008, 2010, 2017 The Restored Church of God®
All Rights Reserved.

Printed in the United States of America

Progress in science and technology has never been greater. Advances in knowledge have brought awesome progress, while immorality and human degeneration have never been worse. *WHY?* An unseen *KIDNAPPER* holds humanity hostage and has convinced his captives that he is a benefactor. Yet, events of staggering magnitude will soon shock the world—changing everything! Happiness, abundance, world peace—and *DELIVERANCE*—lie just ahead.

Chapter One

The world has reached the 21st century. All my grandparents were born in the 19th century. Within that time span—just a little over 100 years—the world has changed beyond recognition. Mankind now stands on the threshold of annihilation by weapons of mass destruction, with the frightening specter of terrorism spanning the globe.

World conditions grow more ominous as the news of each day seems worse than the last. Events are speeding toward a great crisis at the close of this age. How did there come to be such appalling evils and terrible suffering on a worldwide scale? And why have world leaders failed to improve the countries they govern and the world at large? What is wrong? Why has progress in knowledge, science and technology not delivered man from his problems? Why does civilization stand on the brink of catastrophe—even extinction—without some kind of intervention and rescue?

Many know *something* is wrong—but do not know *what*. The supposed experts lack answers to life's greatest questions.

Few understand that there *is* a supreme purpose that God is working out here below. Fewer still know *what* this purpose is—they do not understand the forces at work that have controlled civilization since man first appeared on Earth.

The Greatest Kidnapping

Most assume that things are the way they are because mankind has evolved to its present state or condition. This thinking permeates modern education

but it is a false—an entirely *WRONG*—premise. Evolution is a fiction created by men who have been led to this theory by the one who seeks to blind all the inhabitants of earth to God’s awesome plan—His staggering purpose for mankind.

Those who hold to the evolutionary theory are prevented—actually blocked!—from comprehending *why* conditions on Earth are as they are. Many statesmen, leaders and thinkers do feel trapped by these conditions, and the general flow of world events, and unable to do anything about them. Indeed, they *are* trapped. But we need to understand why.

This is *not* God’s world. It is *cut off* from Him and held hostage by an unseen SUPER KIDNAPPER. All of humanity has been deceived into believing the soothing words of this great CAPTOR, thinking themselves better off under his care and leadership. I speak of Satan the devil and his hijacking—6,000 years ago—of Adam and Eve and all of the inhabitants of planet Earth ever after! But the world has remained a *willing* captive ever since.

Anyone who reads newspapers understands kidnapping. This crime often involves executives of large companies, whose release is obtained through paying a ransom. Hijackers work in the same way, except that this crime usually involves seizing an aircraft, bus or some other type of vehicle full of victims.

Most hostage victims are captives until someone either performs a daring rescue or a ransom is paid. Earth is now in a state of captivity, requiring supernatural deliverance—rescue—through ransom payment.

Here is modern man’s predicament: Imagine picking up a 20-chapter book and trying to understand it by starting with the last chapter. You would be lost, completely unable to understand the meaning of persons and events described. In the same way, none can understand events *in the modern world* because they do not have proper background of what has happened in the previous chapters of mankind’s existence on Earth. And it is the very *first* chapter of the story of humanity that is key to *all* “19 chapters” that follow.

Whose World is This?

You may have supposed that the governments of modern nations reflect God’s Way. This is almost everyone’s assumption. Actually, while we will learn that God does, in fact, establish and remove nations, we will also learn that this is *not* God’s world. This is why Christ foretold the coming of God’s world-ruling supergovernment to replace the confused, ineffective and inefficient governments of man. These governments are powerless to solve any of the world’s biggest problems.

How did the world come to be the way that it is? Why is it in such a state of confusion, suffering and ignorance? Why can’t governments get along—avoid war—find peace—reach agreement? Why such constant instability, scandal and division among leaders and seemingly endless revolutions and military

coups? Why is there no shortage of demagogues, dictators and revolutionaries, who always promise to make things better, yet are only able to preside over a continual worsening of problems and conditions?

Despite these conditions, most theologians, religionists and ministers blindly assume that this is God's world—that it reflects His guidance, His Way. Therefore, they conclude that if “all Christians would work together, in love and unity, to make this world and its governments a safer and better place for all, they could bring peace, happiness and prosperity to the world.” This is a completely wrong view. Nowhere did Christ say, “Go into all the world and strive to make it a better place by becoming part of it.” He often said, “Go into all the world and *preach the gospel*.” Christ did not come to make *this* world a better place. He came to announce the coming of a better world, under *His* government!

In short, blind, deceived men think that they can bring world peace through human effort alone. Ironically, this quest often involves “Christian” nations striving to achieve peace through *war*. They see certain evil forces at work and feel compelled to “do something about it.” They assume that Christ would be an “activist,” seeking to “make the world a better place.”

Be honest! Haven't you heard this many times? Haven't you heard churches urge people to “get involved,” or “take a stand,” or something similar, in order to improve some local, national or world problem?

Who Holds Sway Over Earth?

Satan the devil is called the “god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4), the “prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). The apostle John wrote that he “deceives the whole world” (Rev. 12:9).

Satan rebelled against God's government *prior* to the re-creation of Earth (Gen. 1:1-3) and the creation of Adam and Eve. He had led one-third of all angels into rebellion (II Pet. 2:4; Rev. 12:4). Isaiah 14:12-14 reveals that he had ruled the Earth, and Ezekiel 28:15 shows that he was a created being—a great, perfect archangel. He remains as ruler over earth until he is removed after Christ's Return. Christ qualified to replace him at His first coming. (Read our companion booklet *Who Is the Devil?* It focuses on identifying who and what the devil is—as Lucifer, before his rebellion, and Satan afterward.)

So, Satan was lying in wait for “baby” Adam and Eve. They were created on the sixth day of the week, Friday, rested on the Sabbath, Saturday, and were seduced by Satan (Gen. 3:1-6) the next day, Sunday—at the age of *two days old*. No two-day-old child knows how to discern right from wrong. Adam and Eve just *thought* they were grown-up enough to make their own decisions. Like most children today, they chose not to listen to their Parent, God. Instead, they believed Satan's lie that they would not “surely die.” In so doing, they rejected the rule of God's government in their lives.

If Adam had obeyed God's instruction, he could have qualified to replace Satan and restore the government of God on Earth. He chose *captivity* instead.

Now read this account: "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yes, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die. And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die: for God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3:1-7).

In this historic account, Satan lied to Eve, who led Adam into sin with her. The devil's deceit captured these two adult children into the belief that they no longer needed to listen to God—their Parent. Being thrust from the garden, they were forced to fend for themselves. They rejected God's perfect law and rule—His GOVERNMENT over all Creation—as guides in their lives and were made captive to Satan and his way of sin. Because of sin, they no longer had access to God's blessings, guidance, protection or the gift of His Holy Spirit, which would have come by eating of the Tree of Life.

7,000-year Plan

Cut off from God by sin (Isa. 59:1-2), mankind has believed the lies of the god of this world for 6,000 years. The core of God's plan encompasses 7,000 years. Few have understood this. Many *have* correctly understood at least some of the verses describing Christ's coming 1,000-year Reign. But they know *nothing* of God allotting 6,000 years, or six millennial days of a "seven-day week," to man's rule, under Satan, prior to the seventh 1,000-year "day." We are near the end of the "sixth day."

We must understand! The Bible says, "But, beloved, *be not ignorant* of this one thing, that *one day* is with the Lord *as a thousand years*, and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet. 3:8; Psa. 90:4). Of course, most *are* "ignorant" of almost everything that the Bible teaches. Will you comprehend?

Man (under the invisible sway of Satan) has been given six days, or 6,000 years, to try his own ways, governments, religions, philosophies, value systems and forms of education. Under the influence of Satan, he has practiced sin and disobedience to God's commands for nearly 6,000 years. He has then tried to treat all of the ill *effects* instead of the *cause*, which is breaking God's com-

mandments. God is allowing man to learn painful, bitter lessons. The masses, who have never known the precious truth of God, must learn that their own ways do not work! (Read our booklet *Does the Bible Teach Predestination?* to learn about God's Plan.)

How it All Started

John wrote, "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1) and then continued, "the Word was *with* God, and the Word *was* God." If there is One who WAS God, but who was also WITH God, it is obvious that two Beings—two Persons—are described.

Verse 14 continues, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The only God-Being who ever became flesh in order to dwell among men is Jesus Christ. Remember, it says that the Word "was made flesh." Christ was not flesh until He came to Earth to become the Savior of mankind—to pay the RANSOM, His life, and eventually DELIVER mankind from captivity.

Genesis 1:1 states, "In the beginning God..." Moses recorded the first five books of the Old Testament in the Hebrew language. The Hebrew word translated "God" is *Elohim*, a uniplural word like *team*, *group*, *family* or *church*. God is one Family—one God—composed of TWO Beings. This is why Christ could *be* God and be *with* God at the same time. John 4:24 states that "God is a Spirit." God is made up of, or composed of, Spirit. Men are composed of flesh.

God and Christ enjoy perfect harmony and agreement in everything they do. They reflect perfect outgoing concern, love and cooperation. The Father is the supreme leader of a Family that both chose to expand. First, God created the angels and then the entire physical universe, including Earth.

Then, later in Genesis 1, we find that God said, "Let US [more than one] make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness" (vs. 26). There was clearly more than one person involved in the creation of man. Verse 25 shows that each animal was made after "his kind."

Dogs come from dogs and have puppies that look like dogs. Cats come from cats and have kittens that look like cats. Horses come from horses and have foals that look like horses. This is true throughout the entire animal kingdom. This is no mystery.

But here is what HAS been a MYSTERY. Men are not part of the animal kind. They do not carry the likeness of any "beast of the earth" (vs. 25). They are made in the image and likeness of *God*. They are part of the GOD kind. So says your Bible!

Genesis 2:7 states, "God *formed* man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man *became* a living soul." Man is made out of physical matter—flesh. While he is not composed of what God is composed of—Spirit—man is FORMED in the "image and likeness" of God. Also take note that this verse says man "became"—not "had"—a soul. People do not HAVE souls. They ARE souls!

Throughout the Bible are references to God's body parts. They show that God has eyes, ears, hands, feet, a mouth, nostrils, arms and legs, etc. In just one location, Isaiah 59:1-2 mentions His face, ears and hands. Numerous verses make reference to the *mind* of God and Christ (Phil. 2:5). Humans have all of these same physical attributes that God Himself possesses, although made of flesh and not Spirit.

Human beings have been given hands so that they can create. Paws, claws and hooves are not capable of building complex televisions, even *if* a mind is directing them—and, of course, animals have *brains*, not *minds*.

Animals function on instinct. Almost immediately after birth, they know exactly how to function—how to stand up, take steps and find where to get milk. Babies require far longer to even stand up and have to be *taught* how to do everything.

Human beings are capable of acquiring knowledge. Animals do not have this capability. God has programmed into animals, through instinct, everything that they need to function effectively within their environment.

Human beings do not instinctively know everything that they need to know in order to operate successfully throughout their lives. As they grow older and more demands are made upon them, they must acquire ever more knowledge.

All knowledge that men obtain falls into two categories. First is the knowledge of how to work with matter and physical things. Second is the kind of knowledge necessary to develop a personal relationship with both God and their fellow man. All knowledge, therefore, is either PHYSICAL or SPIRITUAL knowledge.

Physical knowledge is acquired through the five senses—*sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste*. People understand that they must acquire a certain amount of useful knowledge and keep adding to it throughout their lives. They recognize that they must *learn* to eat, *learn* to ride a bike, *learn* to play a piano, hammer a nail, cut the grass, get dressed, drive a car, master one or more skills en route to a career, and many other things. To function as adults requires much physical knowledge. Of course, this is not hard to understand. Most adults recognize that no one can succeed in life without a certain amount of knowledge. Today, people need more knowledge than ever to survive in an ever more complex world.

But there is a big problem in all of this. The physical knowledge that we have described has not been sufficient, or of the right *kind*, for mankind to be able to solve the complex problems afflicting all the nations of the world. For instance, he is utterly incapable of achieving world peace.

Why?

What Knowledge?

We must now examine what NO ONE understands. Remember, man is made of flesh. But he has another *non-physical*, critically important component that

must be explained. The apostle Paul wrote, “For what man knows the things of a man, save the *spirit of man* which is in him? even so the things of God knows no man, but the *Spirit of God*” (I Cor. 2:11).

Do not try to “interpret” this verse. Let it interpret itself. Accept it for what it says. This verse identifies two different kinds of spirit—the “Spirit of God” and the “spirit of man.” They are not the same. Each provides a different function in acquiring knowledge.

Human knowledge (“the things of a man”) is acquired because God has given men a human spirit—the *spirit in man*. Paul’s inspired statement also makes clear that spiritual knowledge (“the things of God”) can only be acquired by the presence of the *Spirit of God*. Even this very knowledge is in itself truly amazing! Think of it this way. Virtually no one has the knowledge about HOW either *physical* or *spiritual* knowledge is acquired!

It is the false doctrine of evolution that holds scientists and educators as captives, completely unable to understand the knowledge described here.

The book of Job plainly states, “*But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding*” (32:8). This confirms what Paul said. This identifies that there is a spirit in man, while recognizing spiritual understanding (knowledge) comes from God—“the Almighty.”

Animals do not have the spirit in man. Animal *brains* are entirely different from human *minds*. Humans are given the spirit of man from conception. It allows them, through use of the five senses, to acquire and retain knowledge. Without this unseen spirit element, man would be just another dumb beast. But he is made in the image of God and has been given the power to acquire, retain and use knowledge for all kinds of purposes.

All human beings were created by God to receive two completely different spirits. One comes at conception, and the other comes by an entirely different means. Without the Spirit of God, people are literally “not all there.” Their existence remains limited to what they can acquire on their own without God’s help.

Earlier, we left off talking about the Tree of Life. Let’s now return to it, remembering that Adam was offered the opportunity to eat of this tree.

Delivered From Death Penalty

Man is not naturally headed toward eternal life. He is headed toward DEATH! Human beings live approximately 70-80 years, and in some parts of the world much less. A few manage to live longer, but all eventually die. Yet this was never God’s original purpose. God wants everyone to experience life for all eternity.

God intends that *all* human beings ultimately receive His Holy Spirit. He wants it to eventually enter *all* minds. Let’s learn what role this SECOND spirit component plays, and how it works with the spirit in man. Notice what Paul wrote: “The Spirit [the Holy Spirit] itself bears witness *with* our spirit [spirit in

man], that we are the children of God: And if *children*, then heirs; *heirs of God*, and *joint-heirs with Christ*” (Rom. 8:16-17). Two spirits are described here. Notice that God’s Spirit works “with” the human spirit to bring human beings to salvation as “joint-heirs with Christ.” It is this Spirit that Adam was offered and would have received had he eaten of the Tree of Life!

In I Corinthians 2, Paul also said, “But the *natural man receives not* the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: *neither can he know them*, because they are spiritually discerned” (vs. 14). This is an enormously important verse. It is not possible for human beings to understand spiritual knowledge—spiritual understanding. Such things can only seem “foolish” to a mind that *cannot* “spiritually discern.” No matter how intelligent or talented a person may be, without the Spirit of God, it can be said that they have a *spiritual I.Q. of zero!*

None of the problems common to individuals or nations can be properly addressed and resolved without the involvement of the Holy Spirit at work in minds. Human intelligence and ingenuity are insufficient.

Even attempting to tell people that they do not have this spiritual component is a useless exercise, if God is not opening their minds (John 6:44, 65). It will seem foolish to them because even *this* information is “spiritually discerned.” The more intelligent, self-reliant and accomplished the person is, the more foolish it will probably seem to him to be told that his mind is incomplete.

If Adam had eaten of the Tree of Life, he would have received the Spirit of God. He would have learned the way of love—the “give” way instead of the “get” way of life practiced by this world. The Bible says that “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. 13:10), and that the “love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 5:5).

Romans 8:6 states, “For to be carnally [physically] minded is *death*; but to be SPIRITUALLY MINDED is LIFE and PEACE.” If Adam had received the Spirit of God, he would have had life inherent within him. He would have been an “inheritor” with Christ as much as any true Christian today. He would have also known the way to peace. This is absolutely remarkable understanding—unknown to all but a scattered few on Earth today. It has not been understood until our time!

Great Confusion

Paul wrote, in I Corinthians 14:33, “For God is not the author of *confusion*, but of *peace*, as in all churches of the saints.” In verse 40, he added, “Let all things be done *decently* and in *order*.” It is God’s will that there be order and structure instead of disorder, peace instead of war, decency instead of indecency and clear understanding instead of confusion.

Now we ask crucial questions: *Why* is this world filled with confusion? *Why* is it in such a terrible state of disorder? *Why* do disorder and confusion permeate religion, education, values, morals, ethics, philosophy, politics and

government? *Why* have men not been able to answer life's most important questions?

This world is filled with disease, war, famine, ignorance, poverty, pollution, hatred, crime, immorality, corruption, misery and unhappiness! *Why* can world leaders not solve these problems? Is it because they do not know the One who has the solutions? Is it because they do not know where to find the answers?

Is it because the devil is playing a far greater role than realized?

These are vital questions. They require straightforward, plain truth answers. You will hear us say, "Blow the dust off your Bible! Examine it carefully and see the real truth that has always been on its pages." You will hear us repeat, "Don't believe us just because we say something, but rather believe it if you see it proven in your Bible."

The plain truth is that the Bible contains the answers to these towering questions! However, none are what is commonly taught. From as early as Sunday school, most have been taught to believe ideas that everyone *assumes* are in the Bible. Prepare to be surprised—shocked—at what it really has to say about this fallen angel of whom so much is said but so little is correctly known and understood!

Paul wrote, "PROVE all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thes. 5:21) and "PROVE what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

Will *you* do this?

We will examine the above questions and how they relate to the devil by looking at the basic, important verses that describe him—*who* he is—*what* he is—what his *role* is. To do this, we must leave behind the ideas of men.

Chapter Two

The devil has been a subject of interest for thousands of years. He plays an enormous role in God's Plan. The Bible calls him "the god of this world"—and this world lies in terrible confusion, misery and unhappiness. Since he is the cause, what do you need to know about the devil?

Much has been said about Satan but few know the *truth* about who and what he is. This booklet strips away the mystery, confusion, ignorance, myth, superstition and misconceptions that shroud the truth about his identity.

The devil has been pictured as a ghost, a bogeyman, a spook and a man in a red suit, with horns and a pitchfork, who is "devilishly" handsome. He is also portrayed as a kind of nebulous "epitome of all evil," the cause of everything bad that people do ("the devil made me do it"), and through a host of other false ideas. While these are common ideas, they are all wrong. Even when merged together, they greatly minimize the truth about this great fallen spirit! The kidnapper has convinced his captives that they understand who and what the devil is. They have been completely fooled!

Turn on the television. Go to the movies. Visit a bookstore. How often is the subject of the devil, demons, angels or the spirit world in general, spoken or written about? Whole television series are dedicated to these subjects, with more and more appearing all the time.

There are now authors who write almost exclusively about the spirit world, mixing a false understanding of prophecy into the plot line, and legions of fans purchase their every book. Consider the "Harry Potter" phenomenon. Then

recognize that Satanism and witchcraft are practiced more openly today than at any time in history.

Millions pay large amounts of money to psychics, palm readers, astrologers, crystal ball gazers, witches, wizards, channelers and a host of other mediums, to ask what the future holds.

The devil sells and people are buying as never before! But the arch-kidnapper has fooled all nations.

Complete Deception

The Bible speaks of “Satan, which *deceives the whole world*” (Rev. 12:9). That’s right—“*the whole world.*” This is a staggering statement—but there it is in your Bible. How can the devil deceive over *seven billion* people?

This verse concludes, “he was cast out into the earth, and *his angels* were cast out with him.” Notice that it says, “*HIS* angels.” These beings are referred to as demons. They assist Satan in his work of mass deception.

And if Satan has deceived the entire world, it is not God’s world. It must be one or the other! Since the *whole* world is deceived, it becomes clear *why* it is cut off from God. Deceived people practice lives filled with sin (Isa. 59:1-2).

It is not fun for people to be told they are deceived. No one enjoys hearing that he is ignorant of God’s purpose. These statements wound human pride, but not as much as remaining in deception wounds correct understanding.

If one cannot accept Revelation 12:9 as coming directly from the mind of God, any hope of breaking free of this terrible deception is lost! Such people have *chosen* to remain with their captor for the remainder of the age. (The Bible is the most misrepresented, misinterpreted, misunderstood book of all time. Yet it is the plain word of God! If you doubt this, take the time to prove it to yourself. Read our booklet *Bible Authority... Can It Be Proven?*)

This World’s God

The Bible speaks of the “god of this world”—and he is not the God of heaven. II Corinthians 4:4 records, “In whom the *god of this world* has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the *light* of the glorious *gospel*...should shine unto them.”

There is only one being who wants to “blind” this world to the truth of the real gospel—Satan the devil. The true gospel is about the prophesied soon-coming Kingdom of God—His world-ruling government. (Our book *The Awesome Potential of Man* explains how Christ will return with the saints and establish God’s Kingdom on Earth, thus replacing the devil, who is its present “god.”) No wonder Satan seeks to block people from understanding this marvelous truth. He wants *no* “light” to shine on it because he knows that it depicts a time when he will be banished from his current position of enormous influence—from being SUPERKIDNAPPER.

Three times in John, Christ refers to Satan as “the prince of this world.” John 12:31, 14:30 and 16:11 all reveal that the “prince of this world” will one day be judged. Read these verses. John 12:31 parallels the judgment of this world with Satan’s judgment. This is because this world *is his!*

Let’s make this absolutely plain.

Matthew 4 contains the well-known account of Christ’s confrontation with the devil after fasting for 40 days. The devil repeatedly *tempts* Christ by twisting scripture (one of his favorite devices). At one point, in verses 8 and 9, “the devil took Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed Him all the *kingdoms of the world*, and the glory of them; and said unto Him, All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and *worship me.*” This is a stunning account! *Why?* Notice that Christ rebuked Satan (vs. 10) and quoted Deuteronomy 6:13: “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.” At this point, the temptation ended and the devil departed.

Also notice! At no point did Christ say, “These kingdoms are NOT yours to give” or “Who do you think you are, trying to offer Me what is already Mine (God’s)?” Christ said no such thing. *Why?* Because He knew that *the kingdoms* (governments) *of this world ARE the devil’s.* Christ knew that they *WERE* Satan’s to give. Therefore, He rejected the terms for receiving them from the one (Satan) who *did* have the authority to offer them.

Understand! This account describes the *temptation* of Christ. What the devil offered Him was designed to *tempt* Him. If both Christ and the devil knew that the kingdoms of this world were not the devil’s to give, *then where was the temptation?* Surely, the devil would have known what Christ knew. Of course, Christ, who was God on Earth, would have known that the devil had the power and authority to offer those kingdoms. The temptation would carry no weight—it would be hollow—if they were *not* the devil’s to offer.

In short, for Christ to *overcome* the temptation there had to *be* a temptation! Ultimately, Christ succeeded where Adam had failed. Christ passed a very real test! He overcame the world, the devil and His flesh, in overcoming sin and qualifying to pay the ransom price (His life) for man’s deliverance.

So that there can be absolutely no doubt of the above test, note the exact same account paralleled in Luke 4:6. The devil is speaking directly to Christ. It adds a key phrase that should hit like a sledgehammer: “All this power will I give You, and the glory of them: for that [it] *is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.*” Did you notice? It was completely within the scope of the devil’s power and authority to either offer or withhold the kingdoms of this world. They were *his* to give or not to give. God had “delivered” them to him—to his control.

This world’s nations and governments, with “all the glory of them,” are still under the control of the “god of this world”—the “prince of this world”! Has anyone ever told you this before? This is the plain truth from your Bible! And it has a direct bearing on *why* the world cannot, of itself, break free of captivity. This world, with its ways and systems, is under the control of the devil!

Complete Control

Satan holds sway over all governments and nations of men. But is his own government, led by him and his demons, and ruling over human governments, unified? Is the devil himself divided? Allow Christ to answer these questions.

Christ and His disciples often had to cast out demons. I have done this on a number of occasions, and these can be very intense, dramatic encounters. They are not pleasant to witness. Those who do are often shocked by what they see. It becomes obvious that supernatural power is present—both in the demon being cast out and the greater power necessary to achieve this. Christ’s accusers saw clear evidence that He was backed by *real power*! However, in Matthew 12:24-26, they accused Him of using the devil’s power to exorcise demons.

Here is Christ’s response: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and *every city or house divided against itself shall not stand*: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?” (vs. 25). Christ was saying that Satan would never cast out demons—they are his! He would be dividing his own kingdom. He does have a kingdom. Since his kingdom *does stand*, it is clearly not divided!

Recall Revelation 12:9. It referred to Satan and “his” demons. This clearly means that they are *his*—he controls them. They work together with him in maintaining power over this world’s education, religions, governments and values. The “churchianity” of this world passing for Christianity is no exception.

Here is the point. Not only does Satan govern the kingdoms of this world, through his power and influence, but he also does it in an undivided, unified fashion with the aid of hundreds of millions of demons (Rev. 5:11).

Now notice an amazing account in Daniel 10:13-21. An actual spirit war, lasting three full weeks (vs. 13), is described here! Michael, an archangel, fought with one called the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” and later referred to another up coming battle with an arch-demon called the “prince of Grecia.” Archangels do not need *21 days* to defeat puny, little, physical men. These powerful spirit beings, within Satan’s unified government, ruling over individual kingdoms (nations) within it, were battling Michael. Also notice Jude 9, which demonstrates how Michael “contends” and “disputes” with the devil over different matters.

Ephesians 6:12 explains how Christians wrestle “against principalities, against powers, against the *rulers of the darkness of this world*, against *wicked spirits* [the proper translation] *in high places*.” The context makes clear that these “high places” are within the governments or principalities of this world.

I repeat: This is not God’s world! The devil governs a vast realm of fallen spirits. Together, they deceive, confuse and exert tremendous influence over all the governments and activities on Earth.

God in Ultimate Control

Do not be confused! The above scriptural understanding does not totally disconnect God from all activity on planet Earth. He is still absolutely in charge and in control of His Plan, which involves all human beings.

When Christ was on trial for His life before Pontius Pilate, He clarified the real source of Pilate's authority over the outcome of the trial: "Then said Pilate unto Him, Speak You not unto me? Know You not that I have power to crucify You, and have power to release You? Jesus answered, You could have *no power* at all against Me, *except it were given you from above*: therefore he that delivered Me unto you has the greater sin" (John 19:10-11). Ultimately, Pilate's authority came from God.

Here is the point.

God is working out events in a plan encompassing 7,000 years, with additional phases reaching to eternity. He is allowing mankind to find out that his own ways, governments, values, religions, purposes—and wars in the name of peace—have not, do not and never will work toward permanent, peaceful solutions. The Bible reveals that God sets up and removes rulers, and governments only have power as long as He permits.

Prince of the Power of the Air and the Children of Disobedience

Consider this vital passage. Ephesians 2:2 is speaking of the devil: "...according to the course of this world, according to the *prince of the power of the air*, the *spirit* that now works in the *children of disobedience*." This is a remarkable verse, with the thought continuing at the end of verse 3. Paul tells the Ephesian brethren that at one time *they* "were by nature the *children of wrath*." Who are the "children of wrath"—also called the "children of disobedience" in Ephesians 5:6? How do they relate to the phrase, "prince of the power of the air"?

Notice verse 2. It says Satan's "*spirit...works* in the children of disobedience." Did you see that? The devil has power to use the "air" to broadcast, through his spirit, an attitude of disobedience! He sends moods, feelings, attitudes and pulls of the flesh into people. These "work" within peoples' minds. This "air power" gives the devil immense INFLUENCE, allowing him to send thoughts of confusion, deceit, anger, pride, hate, foolishness, vanity, jealousy, lust, greed, envy, and much more, directly into people's thinking!

In a manner of speaking, the devil owns the largest radio station on Earth and broadcasts 24 hours a day, reaching and deceiving all humanity!

At this point, I must insert important understanding before continuing.

A Christian obeys God, through His Law. Paul recorded that God has a *spiritual* Law that is *holy, just* and *good* (Rom. 7:12, 14)! Christians keep

this Law. When they do, it “keeps them,” so to speak. When they break it, it “breaks them!”

In Acts 5:32, Peter referred to “the Holy Spirit, [which] *God has given to them that obey Him.*” Take time to turn and read this verse. Christians know and practice this verse. God’s Spirit is given upon repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38). It is *this* Spirit that helps Christians obey the Ten Commandments! (Read our book *The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross” or Required for Salvation?*)

We can now better understand WHO are the “children of *disobedience.*” Like the begotten children of God, these people are led by a spirit—but it is the spirit of the god of this world—and it leads and controls them, causing them to conform to their captor’s wishes. He broadcasts a *spirit of disobedience* into his deceived children. No wonder they are also called the “children of wrath.” What could be plainer? Yet a deceived world knows nothing of this understanding.

The connection to wrath is made clear in another scripture. Colossians 3:6 states that “the wrath of God comes on *the children of disobedience.*” Eventually, if people do not repent and obey God’s Holy Law, they will incur the wrath of the true God.

The Father of Murder, Lies and Destruction

Just as God the Father has children, the god of this world is also a father with his own children! What characteristics would his children have? First, consider this proof that the devil *does have children.*

On one occasion, Paul addressed a sorcerer, named Bar-jesus, who was trying to hinder Paul’s preaching and ministry. Paul was forced to say to this man, “O full of all subtlety and all mischief, *you child of the devil,* you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:10). Besides calling this man a “child of the devil,” Paul labels such people “enemies of *all* righteousness” and “the ways of God.” Psalm 119:172 defines *righteousness*: “All Your [God’s] *commandments are righteousness.*”

Children of the devil hate, and are enemies of, the laws of God!

In Revelation 9:11, John calls Satan “a destroyer,” referring to him as a “king *over them,*” a system of people led by a final, world-ruling, counterfeit figure soon to appear, just prior to Christ’s Return. The Hebrew word *Abaddon* means “Satan,” and the Greek word *Apollyon*, also used there, means “*a destroyer.*” Understanding Satan as a DESTROYER sets the stage for the next scripture.

A confrontation between Christ and people who professed to “believe on Him” occurs in John 8:30-31. I urge you to read the entire account, but here is a summary of what happened. Those who professed belief in Christ actually sought to kill Him in verse 37! Christ said, “but you seek to *kill Me,* because

MY WORD has no place in you.” And further, He added, “But now you seek to kill Me, a Man that has told you THE TRUTH” (vs. 40).

People who will not hear the truth do not like to be told they are wrong. Humanly speaking, I must admit that my human nature does not. Be honest with yourself and admit that you are the same.

This story comes to a remarkable climax in verses 43-44. Christ asked, “Why do you not understand My speech?” He answers His own question with, “Because you CANNOT hear My word.” What could possibly cause people standing right beside Christ to “not hear His word?” Verse 44 answers, “You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it.” Christ plainly said, “you are not of God” (vs. 47) and these devil-inspired religious leaders immediately accused Him of “having a demon” (vs. 48)!

This is a powerful statement. The devil is a father who murders and lies. He even murders his own children. (Many kidnappers murder their hostages.) Where he lives, his “abode,” is not in the truth, because he is a deceiver—liar—murderer—destroyer! The devil destroys through both murderous lies and outright murder. Just reviewing the Bible examples of how often this occurred throughout history would double the size of this booklet.

When someone exposes or identifies either the devil, his demons or his “children” for exactly who they are, the exposed seek to turn the tables and accuse the identifier of being demon-possessed. This is what happened to Christ. Matthew recorded that He called these people “children of the wicked one” (Matt. 13:38-39), in the parable of the “Wheat and the Tares.”

Make no mistake! The world is filled with the children of the devil. Let no deceiver tell you otherwise. They have no idea that they serve their own captor’s purpose when they do this (II Tim. 2:24-26).

It has been observed that children are basically a lot like their parents. So it is with Satan’s children, who lie, hate, murder and destroy—just like their parent, their father. Look at this world. On the basis of just this last statement, have you any doubt who is the god of this world? It should be clear WHY confusion, war, ignorance, poverty, disease and misery abound among the nations.

The Tempter

In Matthew 4, we read about Christ’s confrontation with the devil. Verse 1 said Jesus was “to be tempted of the devil.” Verse 3 called the devil “the tempter.” Because Christ was immensely hungry after 40 days of fasting, Satan tried to tempt Him into “turning stones into bread.”

The devil appeared in the form of a serpent, in Eden, and successfully seduced Eve through temptation (Gen. 3:1-6). Verse 1 there reveals how the devil tempts people into disobedience and sin. It says, “Now the serpent was

more *subtle* than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.” The serpent, the devil, deceived Eve by tempting her with the beauty of the tree of which God had forbidden her to eat. He made captivity look attractive.

Temptation never comes from God. James 1:13-15 says, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, *neither tempts he any man*: but every man is tempted, when he is *drawn away of his own lust*, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.”

Temptation *always* originates from “the tempter,” working on the lusts of people. The devil recognizes exactly where human nature is vulnerable, where people can be “enticed” so that “sin is conceived,” making death the final result (Rom. 6:23). Remember, the devil is a *killer*, seeking to murder those he deceives and tempts into sin. He kills through deceit and the pulls of temptation. Ephesians 6:11 warns of the “*wiles* of the devil,” while Revelation 2:24 warns of the “*depths* of Satan”! II Corinthians 2:11 warns not to be “ignorant of his *devices*.” Christians are constantly on guard for his schemes.

The full picture of exactly how the devil has captured the entire world should now be clear. But II Timothy 2:24-26 speaks of those who “recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken CAPTIVE by him *to do his will*.” These verses reveal that sin opens the door to capture. Verse 25 speaks of God “giving them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” as the key to deliverance from captivity.

After repenting of doing the devil’s will, Christians seek and practice doing God’s will for the rest of their lives.

God’s Purpose

The following summary, under the subhead “At the Foundation of the World,” comes from Herbert W. Armstrong’s booklet *A World Held Captive*:

“Upon Adam’s sin, God closed off the tree of life, until the second Adam, Jesus Christ, should pay the ransom price.

“There cannot be a law without a penalty. The penalty of human sin is DEATH. At this very foundation of the world, it was determined that Jesus Christ, as the ‘Lamb of God,’ should be slain in payment of the penalty for all human sin (Rev. 13:8), effective upon repentance and faith. It was also determined by God at that time that all Adam’s children should die (Heb. 9:27), but as in Adam all must die, so in Christ the same ALL shall be made alive by a resurrection from the dead to be judged (I Cor. 15:22).

“But still, none could ever be born of God until God’s holy and perfect spiritual character had been instilled within, by individual choice and proof by performance.

“God set apart a 7,000-year period to complete His original SUPREME PURPOSE of reproducing Himself through man. It was a masterminded MASTER PLAN for working out the PURPOSE here below.

“For almost 6,000 years a civilization has developed, which we call the world. But it has been a world held captive. To this day Satan is still on that throne.

“Meanwhile Satan has worked IN all humans. He has injected into the world enormous EVILS. Jesus the second Adam came to start an entire new WORLD OF GOD through the Church.”

Chapter Three

This is not God's world. By now it is clear that Satan is real, alive and the god of this world, deceiving the nations he has captured. Mankind has been left to try his own governments, religions, educational systems, philosophies, values, morals, ethics and humanly-devised solutions to his problems. These ideas and solutions do not now and will never work. They will all fail. (Read our booklet *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems* to learn why.)

But what, then, does the one who wishes to obey God do? What does the Bible say?

I Peter 5:8-9 warns, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary *the devil*, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: *whom resist steadfast in the faith.*" James 4:6-8 adds, "God resists the *proud*, but gives grace unto the humble. *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil*, and he will flee from you. *Draw near to God*, and He will draw near to you."

Paul said, "Neither *give place* to the devil" (Eph. 4:27). All who would humble themselves before God, to draw "near unto Him," must be willing to do this. When you give the devil "place" in your life, you give him room to maneuver and greater *access* to your mind. When Christ resisted Satan, in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, He told him to depart—and the devil obeyed! Once begotten of God's Holy Spirit, you can do the same! (Read our booklet *What Is True Conversion?*)

Jesus said He would build His Church (Matt. 16:18), promising it could not be destroyed by anyone or anything. But the devil has also built *his* churches.

Satan Has Ministers

Hundreds of millions profess to be Christian. They come in every “shape, flavor, size and texture” of belief and practice. Over 2,000 separate denominations and groups exist in the United States alone, with a new one started every three days. Confusion, division, competition and strife mark the world of “churchianity.”

Where did all of these churches get their *beliefs*? Why can’t they agree on what the Bible says? Many like to say, “But they can’t ALL be *wrong!*” However, since they all *disagree*, they cannot ALL be *right!* Many leaders and preachers in these churches *think* they are serving God and *think* they are teaching the truths of the Bible, but are not!

These manmade variations of pseudo-Christianity are all products of a world held captive by the arch-deceiver who has injected false Christianity into an unsuspecting world. The world believes it walks in freedom from God’s Law, thinking Christ kept it for them, when they are really “free” from contact with God. Their captor has made them comfortable with his easy, convenient, false “Christianity.”

Christ strongly warned of what would happen after He was gone, that deception and conditions on earth would become far worse in the period referred to as “the end of the world” (Matt. 24:3-5). The Greek word *aion* means “age” (not “world,” which is *kosmos*). The *world* is not going to come to an end—only this *age* under the devil’s rule. In verse 5, Christ said, “For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall *deceive many.*”

The mass confusion in this world’s churches proves this statement true!

Now notice II Corinthians 11:13-15! False ministers were challenging Paul’s authority. They were bringing other doctrines and beliefs into Corinth. Paul identified them for exactly what they were and who they represented. Read his words carefully, in light of all that you have read: “For such are *false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.* Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

Deception, confusion and disagreement are inseparable from the world and its supposed Christian churches. However, most do not recognize false ministers because they *appear* to be true ministers of *light*—just as the “god of this world” *appears* to be the true God. The devil is an effective COUNTERFEITER! He counterfeits true ministers with false ministers, true doctrines with false doctrines and the true God with the false god—himself!

True Christians Come Out of This World!

Jesus said, “I will BUILD My Church” (Matt. 16:18). It is the Church—that Church—which will marry Jesus Christ (Rev. 19:7-9). His Church is also

called “Jerusalem which is above,” which is “the *mother* of us all” (Gal. 4:26). Like any good mother, this Church nurtures and feeds her children. She has been doing her part for 2,000 years.

Ephesians 2:20-22 refers to the Church of God as a “BUILDING fitly framed together” that has been “BUILT upon a foundation of the apostles, prophets and Jesus Christ Himself.” Verse 22 adds, “You also are BUILDED together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Christians are being built together into the Church that Christ is constructing.

This broken world is a building in desperate need of repair. But it is not God’s purpose to rebuild—repair—*this world*. It cannot be rebuilt, but rather must be replaced entirely. By contrast, Christ is building His Church *now*!

God’s purpose in this age is to call a very few out of captivity and Satan’s world to train them for future rulership as teachers (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10) in the Kingdom of God. Revelation 20:11-12 shows that all will one day have access to the Tree of Life at the time of the general resurrection of the dead. A few are being called now—set free from Satan—and prepared for rulership to begin at Christ’s return. Paul says that all called now, and over the last 2,000 years, have come “out from among them, [to] be...separate” (II Cor. 6:17).

In Revelation 17, John wrote to all who would serve God. He described the final world-ruling system soon to come, called “Babylon the Great” (vs. 5). God instructs Christians, “*Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues.* For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities” (Rev. 18:4).

John also recorded Christ’s words on the night before His crucifixion, when He was praying about His disciples and all true Christians who would come after them: “They are *not of* the world, even as I am *not of* the world. Sanctify them through Your *truth: Your word is truth*” (17:16-17).

The words of the Bible are *true*. They are “the truth.” The word “sanctify” means to “set apart for a holy use.”

True servants of God are set apart for God’s use. The churches of this world do not know the truth. They have been taken captive and taught a false brand of Christianity, not of the Bible.

What will you do? All those who are determined to obey God *must come out of this world*! They must give up its ways and choose the ways of God! They must determine to break free of their captor through the help of God and the ransom payment of Christ’s sacrifice.

In I John 5:19, John was inspired to state bluntly, “The *whole world* lies in wickedness.” This is not surprising, since the whole world is deceived by its captor “god.” Paul, in Galatians 1:4, also bluntly referred to “this present evil world.” Peter spoke of “the pollutions of the world” (II Peter 2:20). No wonder John further warns Christians to “love not the world” (I John 2:15). Likewise, James says to remain “unspotted from the world” (1:27) and, using

even stronger language, cautions “whosoever therefore will be a *friend* of the world is the *enemy of God*” (4:4).

These are very powerful warnings to Christians throughout all ages!

Jesus also summarized the state of the world when He said of the Father, “the world has *not* known You” (John 17:25), and 15:19, that His true servants “are not OF the world, but I have chosen you OUT OF the world.” Now examine I Thessalonians 5:5: “You [Christians] are all the children of *light*, and the children of the *day*: we [Christians] are not of the *night*, nor of *darkness*.”

Recall Ephesians 6:12 and how Satan and his demons are the “rulers of *darkness*.” The children of God walk in the light of day, obeying Him through the power of His Spirit, while the children of the god of this world walk in darkness and disobedience, under the influence of his spirit.

The implications of these passages are profound!

The Accuser of the Brethren

Revelation 12:10 calls Satan “the *accuser* of our brethren.” John records that he “*accused* them [Christians] before our God day and night.” This endless pattern of accusation will only cease when Christ confines him to the outer heavens far away from Earth (Lev. 16:10, 21-22) after His Return. The devil hates those who have escaped his captivity.

Wherever the true Church is found, accusation and persecution are seen. The devil seeks to thwart, hinder and falsely accuse the Church. When Paul wished to come to the Thessalonian Church, traveling with other ministers, he said repeatedly, “Satan hindered us” (I Thes. 2:18). One way he hinders God’s ministers is by using counterfeit human agents and instruments.

This very work of God has endured many such hindrances and persecutions—and they will continue until this world’s system is replaced by the establishment of the GOVERNMENT of God.

God’s servants are not *of* this world, though they are *in* it. Christ strongly warned His disciples before His crucifixion of what life would be like after He had ascended to heaven. We have already quoted a portion of the next verse. In John 15:18-20, He said, “If the world hate[s] you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you *out of the world*, *therefore the world hates you*. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, *they will also persecute you*; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.”

Christ *was* hated! He *was* persecuted! He *was* put to death by crucifixion—one of the most painful, torturous deaths ever devised by human imaginations!

The plain facts of your Bible are clear. “*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*” (II Tim. 3:12). There is no escaping this. If you

doubt it, give this booklet to one of your more “religious” friends or relatives (of course, at your own risk) and watch their reaction.

Though the devil constantly attacks and accuses Christ’s true servants, many verses demonstrate His promise to “never leave nor forsake His Church” (Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20; etc.). Christ always keeps His word.

Why Were You Born?

God said that He made human beings in His “image” and “likeness.” This means what it says. God created you to become “like” Him in every way. Through His Spirit entering the mind, upon conversion, a new spirit life is begotten. A tiny spirit-begotten “fetus” comes into existence. Just as little children grow up to look like their physical parents, so also do God’s children slowly take on the SPIRITUAL likeness of their Parent, God, in character and nature (II Pet. 1:4), as in image and form.

Both the Old and New Testaments make this point absolutely plain! Has anyone ever pointed out the following scriptures to you? While many have some vague understanding that Christians might be “sons of God,” few ever consider this: “Beloved, *now* are we the *sons of God*, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be LIKE Him; for we shall *see Him as He is*” (I John 3:2). We will one day have the very likeness of Jesus Christ. Remember that Romans 8:16 said that we are “children” of God with Christ.

King David also understood this when he wrote, “As for me, I will *behold Your face* in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I *awake*, with Your LIKE-NESS” (Psa. 17:15).

David knew that we will see the face of God. So did John. Both understood that at the resurrection—when we “awake”—we will be exactly like God, in form and character. So then, God is reproducing Himself in human beings who have received His Holy Spirit. *He is creating children that will look and be just like Himself!* This is why you were born.

God has perfect character. Character is facing a choice between doing what is right and doing what is wrong and choosing *right*, even against temptation and desire to do otherwise! Adam and Eve made the wrong choice and cut themselves off from the Spirit of God and the character-building process of conversion, leading finally to salvation in the Kingdom of God—the God Family.

It is the very Spirit of God in us that will allow us to awake in the resurrection. Notice Romans 8:11: “But if the *Spirit* of Him that *raised up Jesus* from the dead *dwell in you*, He that raised up Christ from the dead *shall also quicken your mortal bodies BY His Spirit* that dwells in you” (also I Cor. 15 and I Thes. 4:13-18). Christ was *raised* to return to His position alongside God the Father. He had fulfilled His task of becoming Savior—assuring mankind’s RESCUE lies just ahead!

Now understand this point! The very same Spirit, dwelling in us from the moment of conversion, will raise us (all those begotten) to be with God in His Kingdom.

Just as the newly begotten baby grows in its mother's womb, the Christian must also grow before he can leave the "womb" of the Church. Peter wrote, "But GROW in *grace*, and in the *knowledge* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). Christians are to grow in this lifetime. To be given divine authority and power, as joint-heirs with Christ, they must qualify, through the building of God's righteous character in their lives.

When Adam rejected the Tree of Life, he rejected the opportunity to receive the Spirit of God, which would have opened his mind to the plan of God—to why he had been created. His decision caused him and his wife, Eve, to be cast from the garden. Their joint decision carried grave implications for all human beings who came from them. All humans to follow could not have access to the Tree of Life, thus causing humanity's captivity to continue for 6,000 years.

The Genesis account reads, "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the TREE OF LIFE, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the LORD God *sent him forth from the garden* of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So *He drove out the man*; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the WAY of the TREE OF LIFE" (3:22-24). The "way" of receiving and living by God's Spirit was no longer accessible to men.

Instead of following God's instruction, Adam took of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." He thought he knew better than God. He took to himself the right to decide between what was right (good) and what was wrong (evil). He thought that he could trust his own physical senses in all matters. In this sense, this decision did "open his eyes" (Gen. 3:7)—but not to the things of God, which come only by receiving God's Spirit. Adam's decision precluded any opportunity to acquire *spiritual* knowledge. His understanding remained limited to what he could learn through the five physical senses.

With this decision, Adam cut off himself and all mankind from any access to God. It is this OTHER tree that has been guiding the thinking of the men and nations of Earth ever since Adam's fateful choice. We must understand what this means for you and me. It means that all human beings are NOT COMPLETE IN THEIR PRESENT STATE! All knowledge that would enter human minds could only be physical and material. For his enormous sin of rejecting God and the Tree of Life, man was rejected BY God and cast from the garden. Mankind was cast out with him and taken captive!

The arch-kidnapper's work was complete at that moment. The whole world ever after would be held hostage—taken captive—until the coming and sacrifice of Christ would pay the enormous ransom necessary to free them!

God the Father has a plan to rescue His kidnapped children. This is the purpose for which He sent His Son (John 3:16)—to pay the ransom for and deliver His Family.

Your Awesome Potential

Hebrews 2:5 describes the earth under the “subjection of angels” now, but makes clear that these angels will not rule over “the world to come.”

Additional verses in this chapter explain what will happen after the fallen angels governing this world are replaced. Notice verse 6: “What is man, that you are mindful of him?” Verse 7 continues, “You made him a little lower than [margin: inferior to] the angels; you crown him with *glory* and *honor*... You have put *all things* in subjection under his feet. For in that He put *all* in subjection under him, He left *nothing* that is not put under him. But *now* we see *NOT YET all things* put under him.”

Speaking of Christ, verse 9 continues, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” And verse 10: “For it became Him...in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the *captain of their salvation* perfect through sufferings.”

Did you grasp what is meant? These verses contain the promise of a staggering potential available to you and me.

Christians are to inherit “*all things*” and be “crowned with glory and honor” through the calling of God and sacrifice of Jesus Christ—“the *captain of their salvation*.”

There can be no confusing what “*all things*” means. It states “*nothing*” (vs. 8) will be excluded from this inheritance. Our Captain has delivered us now, with the whole world to be delivered later!

Isaiah 9:6-7 prophesies Christ returning to earth with the “government [of God] on His shoulders,” which will bring peace to a world in captivity filled with hate, confusion, destruction, violence, war, disease and death.

Finally, recall Matthew 4:9. The devil had offered Christ rulership over “all things” if He would fall down and worship him. We see that *Christians* are promised the same “all things”—but *only* on the condition that they worship the TRUE GOD and *not* their former captor—the god of this world!

The Full Picture

Herbert W. Armstrong ended his booklet *A World Held Captive* with:

“What, then, is the real PURPOSE of the Church? WHY did Jesus found the Church? Was it to repair the superstructure of the faulty and decadent BUILDING to which I have likened this present evil world? Was it to ‘save’ by conversion this sinning world of Satan? Was it to become divided into many divisions or branches, Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant?”

“The whole professing ‘Christian’ world has been deceived. All nations have been deceived. The ninth verse of Revelation 12 states this emphatically and plainly.

“God started His supreme mission and PURPOSE of reproducing Himself through the first human, Adam. But to become a begotten child of God, so that he might, on acquiring the spiritual character of God, be BORN into the divine FAMILY OF GOD, Adam was required to make a choice. He chose apostasy, rebellion, self-righteousness mixed with evil—the way of the kidnapper of the potential family of God.

“God said plainly to Adam, that on the disobedience of taking the forbidden fruit, he would surely die. His temporary existence and he died after 930 years.

“Study Ephesians 2:1-2. Satan, as prince of the power of the air, actually works IN—within the natural born children of Adam. Satan worked within Adam’s first son, when he slew his brother Abel. All Adam’s children have sinned. All, up to those living today, DIE.

“But, it was decreed at the foundation of this world—at the time of Adam’s sin that as in Adam all should die, so in Christ, the second Adam, the same ALL should be brought back to life through resurrection from the dead.

“The tree of LIFE was closed to all humanity until Christ the SECOND ADAM. He was born of his mother, the virgin Mary, of the Adamic human family. But her Son Jesus was fathered, not by MAN, a son of Adam, but by GOD. AS a son of GOD, the tree of LIFE was opened to Him. But as a son of MAN, He, like the first Adam, was required to make a CHOICE!

“Satan tried to destroy him as an infant, but God moved to prevent that. Then, at about age 30, before He could preach a word of God’s message, the gospel, Satan attacked him head-on. In this temptation (Matt. 4:1-11), Jesus made his choice. He rejected Satan’s temptation and way of life. He chose God’s way, according to the Scriptures. He defeated Satan, commanding him to depart from him, and the defeated Satan slunk away. JESUS HAD QUALIFIED TO REPLACE SATAN ON THE THRONE OF THE EARTH! Thus, as Jesus said in Mark 1:15, the time was fulfilled and the Kingdom of God was at hand.

“The SECOND ADAM had passed the test. He had overthrown Satan. He had qualified to replace Satan on earth’s throne and to RESTORE THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

“Sin and rebellion had started with the one man, Adam. Righteousness and obedience leading to PEACE now started with the one man, Jesus Christ. He was the BEGINNING—THE FOUNDATION—of the altogether NEW ‘building’—the new world—the new civilization—the WORLD TOMORROW!

The Church Still Stands

“Jesus said He would build his Church. His Church was that new building—that new civilization—that new world, in embryo.

“He also said the Church would never die. The rains would fall (Matt. 7:24-27), the floods would come, the hurricanes would blow, but this NEW house built on the solid rock foundation would ALWAYS STAND!

“Jesus did not say ‘churches.’ Paul said they would all ‘speak the same thing’—no divisions. Where is that Church today?” (Read our booklet *Where Is God's Church?* for the enlightening answer!)

The following literature expands on topics discussed in this booklet:

- The Awesome Potential of Man
- The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross” *or* Required for Salvation?
- Bible Authority...Can It Be *Proven*?
- Does the Bible Teach Predestination?
- What Is *True* Conversion?
- *Where* Is God’s Church?
- Who Is the Devil?
- *Why* Man Cannot Solve His Problems

051518
AWI

The Restored Church of God

1000 Ambassador Drive
Wadsworth, OH 44281
USA

P.O. Box 4064
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7S3
CANADA

Phone: (330) 334-2266
Fax: (330) 334-6513
E-mail: info@rcg.org
Web: rcg.org