

NEW **Horizons**

Vol 23 No 2

March/April 2019

addressing the important issues for today and tomorrow



inside...

One World
Let's Celebrate!
When God Calls
The Son of God
Trust God
Transformed

CGOM

Churches Of God Outreach Ministries

With around two thousand Christian denominations vying for your attention, it's easy to miss the important issues of life and religion. It's our hope that through *New Horizons* our readers will come to understand the true meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel was proclaimed by Jesus and by his apostles in terms clear to those who have 'ears to hear' - and recorded for us in the Scriptures. Over the centuries that truth has been buried, dug up, buried again. Our desire is to restore the simple apostolic message. We hope you will be excited by what the Scriptures reveal about life, and the horizons beyond.

Who We Are

The *Churches of God Outreach Ministries* is an international association of independent local assemblies - Christians who meet together for worship, instruction in the faith and fellowship. Each assembly is self-governing according to Bible principles, but co-operates through our Conference with other like-minded assemblies to work towards agreed evangelistic goals.

These goals are within the framework of the commission set for his church by Jesus: "...going, therefore, disciple all nations, baptising them...and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). He further commanded that we "...Shepherd...[and] feed my sheep".

To these ends we publish Bible-based literature—eg our bi-monthly Newsletter **OUTREACH, NEW HORIZONS** magazine, the **BIBLE BASICS** on-line home study course, and a 32-lesson **STUDY COURSE**.

The *Outreach Ministries* also supports a network of Independent fellowships and scattered brethren.

We cordially invite all independent fellowships of whatever size - and individuals - to associate with us in this worldwide ministry. Our *Statement of Beliefs* and a *Publications Catalogue* is available from any of our addresses or from our web site **www.cgom.org**. We are pleased to offer you, without charge, any of our publications.

New Horizons is published by the *Churches of God Outreach Ministries*, an association of independent churches, to make known the good news of the soon-coming Kingdom of God

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If you would like a copy of our *Statement of Beliefs* or a *Publications List* please request it from any of the addresses listed or go to our website: **www.cgom.org**

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new Horizons

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Globalism - is it a threat, or a promise of a better world?

Ever so slowly, but with seeming inevitability, our world creeps toward 'global solutions for global problems'. For some this is a move towards a world without conflict, a world of equality and a world of utopian perfection. Others fear globalism will lead to totalitarianism, the subjection of mankind to an elite cabal of dictatorial tyrants.

There can be little doubt that the pooling of resources can work material benefit for our world. As 'many run to and fro' - easy travel, access to information at the touch of a button (sometimes!), imports of the rich variety of goods produced from earth's bounty - all combine to add 'spice' and variety to our lives. But there's a downside.

Technology blurs boundaries between sovereign nations. Missiles can at the touch of a button be despatched thousands of miles with pin-point accuracy. Nuclear explosions - remember Hiroshima, Chernobyl - provoke mayhem and long-term suffering across continents. Industrial and domestic pollutants from around the globe affect all of us in our own back yards. Outbreaks of deadly disease are scattered worldwide by our fast-moving transport networks. And let's not forget the worldwide internet - a tool that scatters ideologies, and tutors and facilitates terrorists.

Not unrelated to technology is the upsurge in *terrorism*. Suicide murderers emerge from nowhere (but usually from Islam) to cause mayhem, to scatter innocent body parts around hotels, tower blocks, trains and cafes.

Then there 's the *economy*. Vast trading blocs exert economic pressure on weak nations. World trade organizations impose tariffs affecting the daily life of all of us worldwide. Big Business dominates, absorbing smaller enterprises, often sinking in a morass of corruption and greed.

ONE WORLD... ...is it inevitable?

On the *political front* the United Nations Organization (it is not a government) stealthily extends its influence towards one-world government. Power blocs - such as the European Union - seek to amass political, economic and military authority over hundreds of millions.

Let's not forget, too, the attempts to introduce *religious unity*. Near enough two-thirds of mankind - Protestants and Catholics - are about ready to join forces under the auspices of the Roman Church. Efforts are exerted to fudge the boundaries between Christianity and Islam. While *multi-culturalism* is promoted as the saviour - but a false saviour - of racial harmony. Even the supposedly Christian festival of Christmas - cele-

brating, in fact, the 'birth' of the sun god - is becoming universally observed.

The Reason Why

All such factors conspire to give an invisible push towards one world with a single global government. Given the problems that face us on a global scale it offers the most likely solution. It takes on an air of inevitability.

Of late, terrorism occupies the energies of our Western democratic governments. Control is presented as the only reasonable solution, a necessity.

Britain has more CCTV surveillance than any other nation. Our right to privacy is fast eroding through surveillance, petty behavioural law, bulk collection and scrutiny of communications data, e-mails, texts, phone calls, social media *etc.* The ancestral right of *habeas corpus* is, in Britain and in the United States (Guantanamo), trodden underfoot - presented as an anti-terrorist necessity.

'The Englishman's home is his castle' summarized our right to privacy. The UK Government proposed (not yet adopted) to demand we admit inspectors into our homes to assess our tax liability. Even freedom of expression is threatened by the raucous 'politically correct' movement.

Power and authority, increasingly, is removed from personal responsibility into Politbureau-style State control.

Pitfalls

We need, however, to embark on such practices with eyes wide open and with caution. ID cards would, stated the London *Times* newspaper, 'create one of the most far-reaching systems of government surveillance in the world'. And, said *The Guardian*, 'it will become impossible to make the smallest transaction without revealing your identity. The innocent, however, have much to hide; it is called a private life'.

Consider the words of the great British statesman, William Pitt: "Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants. It is the creed of slaves". It has been suggested that all revolutions end in reinforcement of the State's powers. (Rather, in the hands of those who control the State.)

Whether from good intentions, or from blind ignorance or from evil intent such measures move us step-by-step towards a totalitarian State. The drive for efficient government tends towards dictatorship. Notes one author: "*Lenin, Stalin, Mao...knew that when all power is vested in the State, and when those controlling the State can claim to act in the name of historical inevitability, then you have the recipe for totalitarianism*" (Daily Mail).

The erosion of national sovereignty and the lust for power that dwells in unscrupulous leaders tends towards multi-national governments and ultimately to world government. How long before the 'United Nations' - now an assembly of sovereign states - becomes a 'World Government'?

The Predicted Outcome

It is alleged - by 'conspiracy theorists' - that there are dark and un-

seen forces patiently driving the momentum towards world government. The Bildeberger group, the CFR, the promoters of a 'United States of Europe', the New World Order, the World Economic Forum (in Davos), the Illuminati - such secretive bodies are, supposedly, manipulating national leaders and world events to that end.

Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants. It is the creed of slaves *Wm Pitt*

Conspiracy or not, the outcome of such human plans are in the unseen hands of One who will ensure all 'goes to plan'. That outcome has been predicted millennia ago. And it is not pretty!

In the hands of man, government has failed abysmally. Mankind, throughout six thousand years of recorded civilisation, has striven for a Utopian dream. But apart from a few intermittent decades of relative peace the dream has become a nightmare. It simply isn't within the ability of the human mind to sustain peace and prosperity - even within a single nation never mind a host of nations or the entire world of disunited nations.

That 'unseen hand' - the all-powerful Creator God - has given His creation an end-stop 'week' of millennia - six thousand years - to prove our willingness - and our ability - to rule by His perfect revealed Law. We have failed. Looking down the centuries He foresaw the inevitable end product of human government. Rather than rule His way - of harmonious co-operation between sovereign nations - successive governments have perversely and bloodily competed, raped Earth's resources, greedily amassed personal wealth and trodden down and

massacred the 'little people'.

One World

Man's week is about over. But there's one more 'hour': the final roll of the dice is universal control of the world. That's where human leadership is heading. Democracy has failed to bring it to fruition, and wily politicians work subtly behind closed doors to introduce their nefarious dream of control.

The apostle John in vision witnessed a final attempt at world domination. Swiftly on the world scene will arise an awe-inspiring anti-God military power that will gain authority over every race, every nation, every creed. It will be revered by all mankind. All who cling to a pure faith in the Creator, in Jesus Christ, will be subdued.

Itself anti-God, this entity will, however, be supported by a miracle-working universal religious power, resistance to its diktats being rewarded with death.

But the entire Satan-inspired system will exercise its power for a brief three and a half years. The 'Babylonian' destructive dictatorship will be crushed - by the return of the Lord, Jesus the Messiah.

New World Order

Human ineptitude will bring our planet to the brink of extinction. Divine intervention alone can save us. Only the application to government of divine wisdom can usher in the Utopia for which man cries out. Jesus will implement such a government - right here, on Planet Earth.

At his coming, those in whom dwells the Spirit of God will rise from the grave to reign with him over 'earth's huddled *cont'd p.3*

ROME REVIVED

There's a rising anti-current to globalism, an insidious drift away from it, a rise of 'right-wing' authoritarian nationalism—and not just in the UK. 'Right-wing' parties are assuming power or gaining influence—eg in the United States, Poland, Italy, France, and even in Germany. It is perhaps stirred by a populist reaction to widespread arrogant elitism.

For well over a thousand years Europe's nation states were dominated by a perversion of the Christian faith and coerced into submission. Rome held Europe in a deadly grip through the power of the Inquisition and spiritual sanctions. The Christian world is now fairly evenly divided between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, with roots of division extending back five centuries to the Reformation. Protestantism was a reaction to Rome's vicious excesses—all executed in the name of Jesus.

That, however, is not merely 'a bad dream' to be forgotten because of Rome's present self-presentation as the world's gentle lamb-like moral leader. Old habits die hard! The Scriptures have prepared us for a resurgence of papal authority—this time to be world-domineering and not confined to Europe.

The Pope is, of course, the head of the Roman Catholic community. But he is, too, the secular head of the world's smallest State—the Vatican, with its 110 acres and one thousand population. It has diplomatic representation with almost all other states.

Reconciliation

Mainstream Protestantism's five

centuries of antagonism to Rome is changing, for most evangelical Protestant leaders now seek to heal the rift—not by standing for Bible truth but by submission to the Roman Pope. The buzz-word is '*Doctrine is pointless; let's just love one another. The Reformation was a grave mistake*'.

And not just church leaders but also the political leaders all of whom sooner or later bow before the Pope and who now acknowledge him as the world's moral guide. Indeed on the present Pope's visit to the United States he was accorded the deference given to the US President. He was the first Pope to address the world's leaders at the United Nations—others have merely addressed delegates. Change certainly is afoot!

Predicted

The present drift to Romanism, to abasement to the Papal call for Sunday to be made a universally imposed rest day—all have echoes of the Biblical scenario for the end of this era of human rule. All nations, all faiths are predicted to submit to a religio-secular authority headed by the Roman antichrist.

It is a clarion call for all true believers to draw ever closer to the Father and to our Saviour. It is a warning that whatever your beliefs, whatever faith you presently embrace—you will, on pain of death, be required to 'worship the beast'. Ω

STUDY THE WORD
Be sure to enroll for our free 32-lesson Study Course. It's a key to what is for many a 'Book of Mystery'

One World...cont'd from p.2

masses'. The sad remnant of men and women who survive the coming chaos will be nourished back to sanity.

They and their children will, under divine rule, learn the true principles that promote a productive and happy life. Successive generations will for a thousand years learn God's ways - and be prepared to live eternally.

World To Come

Notice that all those who rule alongside Jesus in that world to come, in the thousand-year Kingdom, have the Spirit of God dwelling in them in this present-life. They have fully committed to him, have, '*...followed the Lamb wherever he goes*'. They are gathered from all continents, from all centuries since creation. Said Jesus to his questioners: '*...you [will] see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God*' (Luke 13:28).

When Jesus reigns, all mankind will be freed from the restraining influence of the spiritual forces that now blind us to the way of peace. That Spirit will indwell mankind freely. There will at last be one King, one faith, one government; the return of the long sought-after 'Golden Age'—one perfect world in which dwells righteousness. Ω

read our articles

God's Grand Design

<http://www.cgom.org/Publications/Articles/GodsGrandDesign.pdf>

A Message of Hope

www.cgom.org/Publications/Articles/TheWorldOfTomorrow.pdf

Quotations from the Bible in New Horizons are from translations which clearly express the meaning in modern terms

Let's Celebrate!

Celebration is universal with mankind—we enjoy an opportunity to remember a personal or national event, perhaps a time for a change of pace—and certainly a time for religious festivals, which re-occur year after year.

From earliest times the yearly agricultural cycle was celebrated almost universally—in spring, in summer, in the autumn. They were times of rejoicing and thanksgiving for ‘harvest home’. But over time these simple festivals became corrupted by licentious behaviour—much like the modern ‘Christmas’!

As mankind lost touch with the Creator they abandoned these festivals and ‘...changed the glory of the incorruptible God into a likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed animals, and creeping things. Because of this, God gave them up to impurity in the lusts of their hearts, their bodies to be dishonored among themselves, who changed the truth of God into the lie, and worshiped and served the created thing more than the Creator’ (Romans 1:23-25).

They began to worship the elements of nature—sun, moon *etc*—celebrating, for example, the ‘death and re-birth’ of the sun in late December, and in spring the death and resurrection of Astarte (Ishtar, Isis) goddess of spring—hence the fertility symbols of eggs and rabbits at ‘Easter’ as nature bursts into life.

Goodbye, Creator

All such religious activity highlights the abandonment by mankind in general of the Creator and true worship. Other religious systems have their gods, each identified by their form of worship. They may acknowledge a supreme God but their religious ceremonies indicate that He is not the God of the Christian scriptures who is consistent through time and eternity, and who has provided a unique pattern of worship which is brought into focus by what He revealed

The book of Genesis gives us insight into the origin of the festivals. God revealed this either to Moses or to his predecessors who passed it on: ‘...*Let luminaries be [seen] in the expanse of the heavens, to divide between the day and the night. And let them be for signs [Heb.oth] and for seasons [Heb.mo'ed], and for days and years*’ (Genesis 1:14).

‘Seasons’ [Heb *mo'ed*] is applied to the festivals which God appointed for Israel: ‘...*Speak to the sons of Israel, and you shall say to them, The appointed feasts [Heb.mo'ed] of Jehovah which you shall proclaim, holy gatherings, shall be these: These are My appointed seasons [mo'ed]*’ (Leviticus 23:2).

through Israel. The Christian God, was identified by the cessation of work on the seventh day of the week—a day to rest, to draw near to Him in fellowship, to celebrate His creation (Exodus 20:11, 31:17).

But these ‘holy days’ were much more than a celebration, for they also encapsulated the outline of the divine plan, the pattern for how He would implement the plan. Each festival marks a significant aspect of it.

Corruption

The harvest theme is central to the worship of JHVH—a framework for worship which was embraced by the first century church but later corrupted as the ungodly observances associated with sun worship infiltrated the church and became almost universal in Christianity to this day.

Mankind (contrary to received ‘wisdom’) was formed as a complete being—instantly fully-functioning, rational, creative and with the potential for an unending life. The integrity of this existence was dependent on conforming to their inbuilt psyche, defined as *torah*—instruction, guidance. While this remained intact they would continue their physical life.

Choose a contrary path—our first

parents had freedom of will—and the process of decay leading to death would begin. The Creator had given life, but they chose death, their human spirit forever corrupted. Having chosen to reject God’s way, to reject divine sovereignty, they entered on a path—God calls it ‘idolatry’—leading to alienation from God and the treacherous breaking of their covenant with Him.

Jesus addressed this with the religious leadership in Judaism: ‘...*in vain [pointless, to no purpose] do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men. You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. And he said unto them, Full well do you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition*’ (Mark 7:7-9).

Harvest Celebration

Adam’s firstborn, Cain, rebelliously began to worship in a way *he* chose rather than the way God revealed—as exemplified by his brother Abel’s blood sacrifice. This took place ‘...*at the end of days*’, the designated end of the agricultural year in the autumn (Genesis 4:3).

It is also Jewish tradition that both Abraham and Lot in the same time-frame offered unleavened bread to his visitors—the time in spring later observed by Israel as the annual *Days of Unleavened Bread* (called the Passover - Luke 22:1).

These cultural/religious events—part and parcel of daily Palestinian life in that era—were formalized in the new nation of Israel as the three joyous annual times of corporate worship; spring, summer, autumn. They represented God’s unchanging pattern for His worship (all else is idolatrous); their prophetic significance unfolded in succeeding centuries.

All the various artifacts encrusting and debasing modern Christian worship—trees, eggs, rabbits, crosses *etc*—detract from the pure worship set out in the Scriptures from ages past, and render void such traditional worship. Ω

God issues invitations to join His divine Family. Will you accept? Will you stay?

Is the Devil in the driver's seat? At first sight it would appear that 'he is winning'. If there is a competition for 'souls' God appears to be the loser. But a game is by no means God's purpose, for: *'...The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance [change their life]'* (II Peter 3:9). That invitation is universal to all who hear: *'... whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely'* (Revelation 22:17).

So why do so many pay lip-service to the King of kings, why do so few truly respond, so few covenant to *'...follow the Lamb wherever he goes'*?

Scattered Seed

That's a question Jesus addressed in his parable of the Sower (Matthew 13). He had earlier explained that his way was not 'a walk in the park': *'...narrow is the gate, and constricted is the way that leads away into life, and few are the ones finding it'* (ch 7:14). By contrast, he says, the road most of us take is 'broad' and leads to destruction. For most folk, Christ's invitation simply passes over their head.

As in Jesus's parable, the farmer, in Bible times, walked through the open field scattering his precious seed, the wind wafting much of it away to undesirable locations. Some seed would fall on open ground only to be devoured by birds and other predators as food. The apostle Paul addresses this in writing to Corinth: *'...if our gospel is being hidden, it has been hidden in those being lost, in whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving, so that the brightness of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God, should not dawn on them'* (II Corinthians 4:4). Mankind is enveloped in spiritual darkness.

Jesus, in explaining his parable, calls

this 'god' *'the wicked one [Satan]'* (Matthew 13:19) who inserts barriers to an understanding of the Gospel through, for example, his malign influence on education, religion, culture (Ephesians 2:2).

There are others who have encountered Jesus's message and *did* respond—for a brief time. They simply didn't put down the spiritual roots needed to imbibe nourishment from God's Word through personal study or in church. They didn't 'grow to maturity'. When the 'heat of the sun' arose on 'stony ground' the new shoots withered.

Some believers persist for a time, but 'thorns' choke the spark of faith (personal challenges, pressures from family, financial reverse, career *etc.*).

Precious Prize

Commitment to Christ is no easy ride! Jesus warned potential believers to consider carefully in what they are getting involved—to 'count the cost' of discipleship (Luke 14:28). For at stake is the most precious prize possible—to join with Jesus Christ eternally in the Family of God as 'joint-heirs: *'...if children, also heirs; truly heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer together, that we may also be glorified together'* Romans 8:17).

No surprise, then, that the Father carefully selects who will forever be at His right hand: *'...No man can come to me',* said Jesus *'except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day'* (John 6:44).

A Corrupt Gospel

God scatters the seed of the Kingdom (His Word - Luke 8:11) universally. *All* are invited. He has commissioned His church to disseminate that message—a task rather poorly performed down the centuries!

When God Calls

Not long after Jesus was resurrected the message he brought became corrupted. Avaricious and power-hungry men, for over a thousand years, enforced Babylon and all its perversions on the world. The true Gospel was expunged and those who clung to it were tortured, burned, murdered—a blood-bath of those who courageously nourished the pure seed, the pure Word of God.

But God has never left Himself without witness. The torch of faith may at times have burned dimly but multiple thousands remained faithful and won their blood-soaked crown. In the sixteenth century the Reformers began a process of change, rejecting many of the unscriptural teachings that entangled believers in a web of deceit.

By mid eighteenth century, the mediæval church having been by then stripped of its usurped authority (in 1789), further changes resulted—in a few areas—in the abandonment of the Babylonian 'adornments' associated with sun worship—his birth in late December, weekly adoration on Sundays, Lent, 'Easter' and sun-rise services, debauched priestly control, mother worship *etc.* All such, introduced into the church, replaced the pure teachings of Jesus.

Jude, the brother of Jesus, foresaw this apostasy: *'...there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus'* (v.4)

Still to Come

Such changes are now embraced by many Christian groups around the world, often in face of implacable opposition by family, friends, and by the large denominations. As Jesus warned: *'...If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters,* *cont'd p.8*

The Son of God

The relationship between the Father, the Word and ourselves underlies the divine purpose

Jesus—the ‘Word’ (Gk. *logos*)—has always co-existed in perfect harmony with the Father, sharing the same holy Spirit. In due time he offered himself to pay the legal penalty for mankind’s sin.

In process of time God through that same Spirit begat a Son: ‘...*the birth of Jesus the Messiah was thus. While his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they had cohabited, she was found to be with child by the holy Spirit*’ (Matthew 1:18).

The Word divested himself of divine glory and qualities and was transformed as human flesh: ‘...*the Word was made [became] flesh, and dwelt among us...the only begotten [Gk.monogenes] of the Father*’ (John 1:14). The apostle Paul adds: ‘...*being in the form of God, [he] thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*’ (Philippians 2:6-7).

The Family of God

‘God’ is a *family*—without beginning, without end, an ‘everlasting Kingdom’. That, of course, is a mystery to us, for our minds cannot grasp—but has to live with—that concept. (‘Where did God come from?’ *cp* Deuteronomy 29:29). He is—but is perceived through individual faith: ‘...*without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is [that He exists]*’ (Hebrews 11:6).

As a family, the eternal God [Heb *Elohim*] was ever two separate entities, both in perfect harmony. (If one, why not two? *Elohim* is plural.) In their relationship with mankind they were known as JHVH. Each had a role in creation—the ‘Logos’ as the ‘Chief Executive Officer’ who creat-

ed the material universe: ‘...*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear*’ (Hebrews 11:3). And Paul to the Colossian church: ‘...*by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist*’ (ch 1:16).

Jesus’s Human Spirit

Becoming human, Jesus shared our ‘spirit in man’ as illustrated by various texts:

‘...*Jesus perceived in his spirit*’ (Mark 2:8, 8:12, Luke 1:80 etc). He was like us but because of his divine origin exempt from all the baggage we inherit since Adam: ‘...*The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High [ie the holy Spirit] will overshadow you, and for this reason that holy One being born of you will be called Son of God*’ (Luke 1:35, Matthew 1:18).

Jesus had our human nature and shared the same struggles we have with sin—but always defeating temptation victoriously: ‘...*[he] in the days of his flesh offered up both prayers and supplications, with loud crying and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard as a result of his reverence*’ (Hebrews 5:7). An example for us, surely, who struggle in similar manner!

The Father perfectly understands that we struggle with our corrupted human spirit (inherited from Adam), but gives us that same indwelling holy Spirit as had Jesus to aid us as we seek to emulate him.

The ‘spirit in man’ is the energizing force that activates the body’s cognitive processes. It is the seat of our will, and regulates expression of our overt behaviour, our emotional responses, through our living flesh, in which in our present corrupted state ‘...*there is no good thing*’ (Romans 7:18).

He lived a perfect sinless life in perfect harmony with the Father with whom he was in constant communication, a life culminating in his death just before which he stated: ‘...*I have glorified You on the earth. I finished the work that You gave Me to do*’ (John 17:4), and on the cross saying ‘...*it is finished*’ (ch 18:30). Speaking to the Twelve at the last meal together he said: ‘...*Father! Give me glory in your presence now, the same glory I had with you before the world was made*’ (John 17:5). [Being sinless, There was no impediment to Jesus exercising any gift of the Spirit.]

When He Died

When Jesus released his human spirit he died (Matthew 27:50) and his body was entombed in ‘*the heart of the earth*’ for three days and three nights (ch 12:40). He is described as being for that period in *hades*—the grave [*KJV*-‘hell’] (Acts 2:31), and his spirit, - as *per* King Solomon—‘*returned to God who gave it*’. But, being sinless, ‘...*God raised him from the dead*’ (Acts 13:30).

Paul details what followed: ‘...*[God] raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavenly places, above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name named*’ (Ephesians 1:20-22). That same holy Spirit communicates with us through our human spirit: ‘...*The Spirit itself bears witness [witnesses together, interacts] with our spirit, that we are the children of God*’ (Romans 8:16).

A New Role

Following his resurrection, Jesus, having experienced life as a human [*...the man, Christ Jesus*] (Romans 5:15)], assumed a new relationship with the Father—but as a Son, and the inheritor of the universe, the ‘...*the firstborn from the dead*’ (Revelation 1:5).

As such he retains all his divine glory, power, majesty and authority. As the apostle Paul tells us, Jesus willingly divested himself of his divinity for our sake—an awesome

sacrifice.

The Godhead is repeatedly referred to as having separate roles—in both the Old Testament and the New. In the Old it was the Logos who not only ‘...*created all things*’ (Colossians 1:16) but interacted, sometimes face-to-face, directly with mankind executing the plans of the Godhead. In the New ‘...*all judgment*’ was committed to the Son (John 5:22).

The Father and Jesus are frequently described separately. For example: ‘... *God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ*’ (I Timothy 1:1), ‘...*God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour*’ (Titus 1:4). To the church in Corinth Paul wrote: ‘...*there is for us only one God, the Father, who is the Creator of all things and for whom we live; and there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created and through whom we live*’ (I Corinthians 8:5). [see also the introductions to many of Paul’s letters.]

The Firstborn

In sum, Jesus for our sake became human flesh, died, was resurrected in a spirit body and ascended to the Father clothed with the glory he had shared with Him before his birth as the only-begotten [Gk.*monogenes*] (at his conception) Son of the Father. The Father had never before generated a human off-spring.

Jesus now is ‘... *the image of the invisible God, the firstborn [Gk.prototokon] of every creature*’ (Colossians 1:15). He is ‘...*the firstborn from the dead*’ (v.18).

Jesus is the first of the children of God to be born as, to become, spirit and in a new relationship with the Father. In him the image of God is restored, to be shared with those who are with him, the ‘firstborn’. Those who in this life are through Christ in a relationship with the Father will in the resurrection become ‘...*the church of the firstborn*’ (Hebrews 12:23).

Our Relationship

On repentance and baptism believ-

Festivals 2019

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Lord’s Supper | April 18 Thurs evg |
| Unleavened Bread | April 20-26 |
| Pentecost | June 9 |
| Trumpets | Septemb 30 |
| Atonement | October 9 |
| Tabernacles | Octob 14-20 |
| Eighth Day | October 21 |

Become Flesh

It gives us pleasure to look at the material creation, whether in the beauty of a flower or the sight of Earth captured from the moon or some distant galaxy seen from space telescopes.

Yet the Scriptures tell us that all this visible universe was created by God from the unseen: ‘...*We also know that what can be seen was made out of what cannot be seen*’ (Hebrews 11:3). Not created ‘from nothing’ but from the *unseen*.

That cannot refer to the particles made visible by powerful microscopes—these do exist. We can conclude that this ‘invisible’ must be *spirit*—a clue as to how God may transform spirit into substance—to human flesh: ‘...*the word became flesh and dwelled among us*’.

ers receive God’s Spirit and become the children of God: ‘...*and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*’ (Romans 8:17). As says the apostle John, ‘...*now are we the sons of God...we will be like him*’ (I John 3:2). All those in whom resides the holy Spirit are viewed by the Father as ‘...*sons and daughters of the almighty*’ (II Corinthians 6:18), sharing with Jesus Christ as co-heirs.

God’s Spirit, working during our lifetime since baptism, transforms our human spirit to prepare us for our resurrection at Christ’s return, when we will be clothed with our spirit body (I Corinthians 15:44) and become joint-heirs of the Kingdom.

How awesome that, when we remain faithful to the end, we will share that same relationship with the Father, as does our Saviour, the Son of God. Ω

TRUST GOD!

I find it helpful to ‘browse’ the Psalms day by day—though they can be a little scary at times! But one aspect that strikes me is the writers’ total dependence on God. The theme of ‘*Trust me I am God*’ resonates throughout.

Even in their blackest days—surrounded, even defeated at times, by enemies—yet their trust is His loving care and compassion shines through. They are steadfastly on God’s side.

Certainly, and when necessary for their—and our—eternal well-being, God allowed adversity to assail them. But the Psalmists still trust Him implicitly, patiently waiting for a resolution.’...*Fret not yourself because of evildoers*’, wrote David. He continues ‘...*trust in the LORD and do good*’ (ch 37). Hang in there and get on with life.

In our uncertain times we need to echo their unfailing faith in Him. We are in His hands, even when we forget that, in the words of the apostle Paul, ‘...*all things work together for good to them that love God*’ (Romans 8:28). Ω

CALLING ALL INTERNET USERS!

The Outreach Ministries website lists over a hundred Bible-based articles which address issues frequently on the minds of Christians. You may download any, or request print copies. There is, too, a section of on-line audio sermons, links to associated groups, back issues of *New Horizons*

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Q Must we suffer to be cleansed from sin?

The reference here is to I Peter 4:1: *'...as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin' (KJV)*. Various texts assure us that no form of 'works' can save or deliver from sin. Simply experiencing severe pain or prolonged illness—not even by the 'holiest' of brethren—won't render us sinless. Nor does self-flagellation, for it is by God's grace we are saved. John, for example, states: *'...If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us' (I John 1:8)*. Or, as wrote Paul in a parallel passage: *'...he that is dead is free from sin' (Romans 6:7)*. Another version, correctly, has this: *'...for every one that is dead in his body,*

Seeming discrepancies in the Bible text are often resolved by considering the peculiarities of the language. A further example is embedded in the so-called 'Lord's prayer', where the King James has *'...lead us not into temptation'*. But we know from other texts (eg James 1:13) that God won't do that. So the logical meaning is *'...suffer us not to be led into temptation'* (using another form of *enallage* whereby it is not the act but the permitting of the act).

has ceased from all sins'. With the indwelling Spirit we are indeed 'dead to sin'.

A key to this puzzle lies in the nature of both the Hebrew and the Greek. It is a common form of *enallage*, by which the verb is put not for the doing of an action but for the effect of it. In this case

'suffered in the flesh' signifies the effect of Christ's suffering, ie 'his death'.

Christians experience suffering in many guises—but it doesn't make us sinless! Ω

When God Calls...from p.5

and besides, even his own life, he cannot be My disciple' (Luke 14:26). Loyalty to Christ and his word is crucial. It must be our priority.

The spectre of a resurgent medieval-style militant church merging religion and political control and rising to violently dominate the entire world is written large in the Bible prophecies. It will enforce the observance of alien Sunday worship to the exclusion of all other. *Refusniks* will be branded as heretics—and, as in the Middle Ages, be cruelly 'eliminated'. Not a pleasant prospect.

Prepare for Eternity

More—as with the spurious medieval Roman church—the proclamation of the true Gospel message will at that time be suppressed. As the prophet Amos tells us, there will be a *'...famine... of hearing the words of the Lord'* (Amos 8:11).

But God's invitation—for the present—remains on the table, and He is sifting through the 'applicants'. Respond and He will take special interest in you, encouraging you to follow and then commit to Jesus the Messiah: *'... All that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me, and the one coming to Me I will in no way cast out' (John 6:37)*.

Following our baptism the Father imparts His holy Spirit, for *'...if anyone has not the Spirit of Christ, he is not His' (Romans 8:9)*. By its indwelling presence believers are being trained in God's world-view, preparing to reign with Christ in his earthly Kingdom.

It starts here and now in this short life. Its purpose is to shape us into the character image of Christ Jesus and the Father, of whom he is the perfect reflection.

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons' (Hebrews 12:5-7) Ω

Israel Revived

Somewhere on this earth and at this historical moment there are nations which God calls 'Israel'. No - you won't find them in Palestine, it's not the Israeli nation. For the latter, despite its name, is known in the Scriptures as *'The House of Judah'*.

Judah's brother nations, the *'House of Israel'*, were taken captive to Assyria, from where they scattered widely, losing their identity and becoming known by various names. James, for example, wrote to *'...the twelve tribes scattered abroad' (James 1:1)*.

The prophecies draw a pen picture of Judah's brother nations, a moral profile, at the last hours of human history. The eighth century BC prophet Hosea, for one, draws a clear, sharp portrait of end-time Israel. It's not pretty.

Much of what the prophet says applied to his contemporaries. But he also looks down the centuries to 'the latter days'. There can be no doubt that time is coming close.

The slide-rule Hosea uses is the revealed Law of Jehovah. You won't find that Law a high priority on the agenda of many nations—even in the 'Christian' West where 'Israel' now lives, largely. Compare the track record of other faiths!

Israel's God never burned a widow on her husband's funeral pyre. Nor did He have a caste system nor oppress women. Nor did God promise a 'sexual paradise' in heaven for the faithful. Nor was cannibalism acceptable to their God, Jehovah. Nor human sacrifice.

Ancient Israel was selected by God to show-case His way of life, underpinned by His perfect Law. And like the modern Israel nations they ignored it with the inevitable consequence of physical and mental illness, economic woes—and ultimately foreign invasion.

The Scriptures predict such an outcome for our Anglo-saxon nations, and God is 'grooming' His church here and now to prepare for them to, with Christ, establish His earthly Kingdom.

MiniStudy***Transformed!***

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (II Corinthians 5:17)

be you transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2)

Perhaps aided by modern media we have become used to—even immune to—the horrendous depths of depravity to which mankind can descend. Extreme personal and State violence, depraved sexual behaviour, child abuse, mass extermination, ethnic cleansing have been the mark not only of the so-called ‘third world’ but also our ‘civilized West. It has been so in some degree throughout history. Such is moderated only by the small acts of kindness, bravery, courage that we may encounter daily—even in dire circumstances.

- The Roman Empire, in New Testament times, was no different—as experienced and recorded by the apostle Paul in his letter to the church of God in Rome: ‘...*They are filled with all kinds of wickedness, evil, greed, and vice; they are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, deceit, and malice. They gossip and speak evil of one another; they are hateful to God, insolent, proud, and boastful; they think of more ways to do evil; they disobey their parents; they have no conscience; they do not keep their promises, and they show no kindness or pity for others*’ (ch 1:29-31). It’s a scenario echoed by the historian Edward Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*
- Roman society (and much of the contemporary Judaism) was totally at odds with Christian values. The prevailing ethic was male superiority and dominance. Thus such depraved activity as paedophilia and homosexuality and rape were viewed as virtuous, normal and pure. Women were mere chattels and marriage throughout Roman society was for the sole purpose of bearing off-spring—then discarded. Christian morality was ‘unnatural’ and undermined the prevailing culture; Christians were viewed as subversive of the State. The Scriptures—notably the writings of the apostle Paul—reflect the call for Christians to be steadfast in their opposition, to resist the downward pull of corrupt society
- That is the moral cesspit into which our modern world is sinking, with its rampant promiscuity, casual adultery, official kow-towing to immoral practices, and increasing unrestrained sexual and physical violence. And it is Bible-believing Christians who are increasingly despised and side-lined, their morality seen as archaic and irrelevant to the modern world. It can only worsen
- The Gospel message is in essence a call for us, for all mankind, to cast aside the chains that bind us to our lower nature—the nature unleashed when God is removed from our life. Countless man and women down the centuries have courageously battled the current of Romanism, with its immorality at the highest hierarchical level. Unshackled by its demise, the message of Christ, even in a weakened form, has for three centuries held that corruption at bay. That influence has waned, and we are drifting downward to Rome
- Hear the apostle Paul, writing to Christians mired in that Roman culture: ‘...*be not conformed to this world; be you transformed by the renewing of your mind*’ (Romans 12:2). It is no less applicable in this day and age. That transformation is the essential step toward a life beyond the grave, to the resurrection to eternal life, to participation in the everlasting Kingdom of God. The apostle, again: ‘...*Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*’ (I Corinthians 6:9-10). Don’t think you can retain such practices and yet ‘be saved’! We must become ‘*a new creature*’, transformed by the inner working of God’s holy Spirit: ‘...*if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*’ (ch 8:9) Ω

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