

**MAN**

# **Horizons**

*Vol 8 No 5*

*September/October 2004*

*addressing the important issues for today and tomorrow*

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**CGOM**

Churches Of God Outreach Ministries

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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 the clearest of terms - and  
recorded for us in the Scrip-  
tures. Over the centuries  
that truth has been buried,  
dug up, buried again. Our  
desire is to restore the sim-  
ple apostolic message. We  
hope you will be excited  
by what the Scriptures re-  
veal about life, and the  
horizons beyond**

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# new Horizons

Issue No 47

September/October 2004

**'The end is nigh'. But does God have a plan for it?**

**The Scriptures outline a plan that will end wars and usher in a thousand years of peace. Here is that divine plan**

Since the days of the great sixth century BC world empire of ancient Babylon through to our own day, despots have dreamed of ruling the world. For Adolf Hitler it was a 'thousand year Reich'. For all of them it demanded conquest. Vast resources poured into the training and deployment of an efficient killing machine.

Yet here we are - still a world in which nation States jealously guard against invasion by would-be dictators. Billions of dollars are annually expended on armaments and armies supposedly for self-defence.

## Prophetic Image

'I have a dream' announced the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. It was from God, prophetic, and is as relevant today as then (Daniel 2)!

He saw a huge multi-metal statue - head of gold, silver arms and torso, loins of brass and legs of iron. Each represented successive kingdoms which dominated vast swathes of the world - Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome. All were briefly victorious by force of arms.

The Roman kingdom was destined to last longest, and - represented by the European Union - is with us still, its military muscle now being flexed

on the world stage. Prophecy reveals it will destructively dominate the world.

'Peace', under the rule of these empires, has ever been bought at the expense of suppression of all opposition, and maintained by fear. And all have with time crumbled to dust.

Officially, the Roman Empire expired some fourteen hundred years ago. But repeatedly - just as prophesied - it has been empowered to rise again, always with accompanying bloodshed. Its coming 'resurrection', in the shape of the European Union, called by President Prodi the *United States of Europe*, is the final stage!

## Divine Power

**God's** Few in our western world give a thought to the course of history. It just flows on, meandering aimlessly through times of relative peace and frenzied outbursts of destruction. Most are blind to the pattern that is stamped on the ages.

## End-time Plan

Kingdoms rise and wane, men rise from obscurity to notoriety. It all appears random. But the 'hand of history' is God's hand. The Creator hasn't retired!

The on-going fulfilment of that sixth century BC prophecy recorded in the book of Daniel is evidence enough that God is acutely interested in human affairs. He is *'sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes - and sets over them the lowest of men'* (Daniel 4:17).

## A Crushing Blow

Man turned his back on his Creator, chose to follow his own agenda. God wasn't included. So He has simply let us get on with that agenda. He allows us to follow our human reasoning - hence world chaos! - but continues to exert His sovereign overall control of events.

The great image stood on feet of iron and clay - great strength mixed with political instability. Those feet are planted in our age, at world's end. It is time for God to act!

The whole of human civilisation is about to be dealt a crushing blow. All human government with its perversity, its incompetence, its ignorance is about to be overthrown by the direct intervention of our Creator. The king of Babylon in his dream saw a great rock 'cut out without hands' - supernaturally - crash down on the feet of the image, with its ten ruling 'kings'.

Prophetically, it sweeps away all trace of human civilisation and replaces it with the divine Kingdom:

*In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a Kingdom that will never be destroyed nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end but it will itself endure for ever (v.44)*

## Divine Plan

God hasn't left us in ignorance. His plan for the restoration of mankind to His created intention is clearly laid out in Scripture. Prophecy gives us the detail. But the broad brush-stroke of the divine plan is depicted in the pattern of 'appointed times' - annual events when God meets with

His people, each day significant in human history.

Since man's beginning, God has set aside special days every year, outlined in Leviticus 23: *"These are the Lord's appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times"* (v.4). [Note that they are *God's* feasts, not just for Israel!]

*New Horizons* will address each of these in due course, but of significance at this time of year is the 'Festival of Tabernacles' - seven days of worship, fellowship, instruction; a joyous celebration in God's presence. [There is, added on to it, an 'eighth day' which has special significance for eternity. See p.3]

In Israel, *Tabernacles* celebrated a harvest work completed and safely gathered in. It was also a reminder of their forty years exile before entering 'the promised land'. For Christians it is symbolic of our pilgrimage through life, with its ups and downs - but always with God and His Son our Saviour ever present with us 'in the pillar and the cloud'.

But there is more to Tabernacles.

### Millennial Peace

The festivals depict physical events on earth. For example, a preceding festival (the *Day of Trumpets*) is firmly set prophetically around the time of Christ's return - Jesus coming as the King of Daniel's 'stone Kingdom'. The 'seven trumpets' of the Book of Revelation are of prophetic relevance here. We would, then, expect Tabernacles to embrace a further earthly working out of the divine plan. [Request the free booklet **Keys to the Book of Revelation**]

And that's so, for one of the first acts of the returning Messiah is the enforcement, by powerful divine sanctions, of a requirement to observe the *Festival of Tabernacles*:

*Then the survivors of all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year by year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem...they will have no rain* (Zechariah 14:16-19)

### Jesus Will Reign

In sum, the Festival of Tabernacles has the prophetic significance of the final stage of God's dealings with human flesh before eternity. These seven days - completeness - symbolize Christ's coming Kingship over all nations.

He will reign - with the resurrected Christians - over the remnant of those men and women who survive the coming world chaos, and will usher in a thousand years of peace. The prophet Micah explains:

*In the last days the mountain of the Lord's Temple will be established as chief among the mountains [ie nations]. It will be raised above the hills and people will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, 'Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths'. The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more* (ch 4:1-5)

**Tabernacles is a joyous 7-day celebration in God's presence** ﷻ

The motto of the failed United Nations Organization '*Nation Shall Speak Peace Unto Nation*' - will at long last have its fulfilment. Not under the corrupt rule of mere men but by the hand of the Almighty Sovereign of the world, Jesus Christ, returned in all the power of the God-ﷻ

### The 'Millennium'

The 'one thousand year' reign of the Messiah (*ie* Jesus) is represented by the seventh day of a prophetic week. Mankind has had six 'days' of testing self-rule - our performance demonstrating that we can't successfully rule ourselves for very long. Each of these 'days' lasts a notional thousand years. The Millennium - presided over by the Prince of Peace, Jesus - is represented in part by the weekly 'rest day', the seventh-day Sabbath

## Autumn Festivals 2004

**Trumpets:** September 16  
**Atonement:** September 25  
**Tabernacles:** Sept 30-Oct 6  
**Closing Day:** October 7  
*each begins at sunset the previous evening*

### OBSERVE GOD'S DAYS

The Bible - *ie* God's - festivals have existed through time, their meaning being progressively revealed to His people by God in His due time.

They cluster around *seven* annual holy days. Each has significance for the divine plan. For example, most Christians - especially since *The Passion of the Christ* film! - are aware of 'Passover' in the Spring, associated with the death of Jesus and the 'Last Supper'. Also the *Day of Firstfruits* - also known as *Pentecost* - in early summer.

There are others - each significant in the outworking of the divine plan. Many of His followers continue to observe all these festivals, as God-appointed.

The power of their symbolism overshadows the 'weak and beggarly' humanly-devised festivals of modern Christianity, festivals derived from the ravings of ancient false prophets.

*For more detail, request the booklet*  
**God's Holy Days**

## ETERNITY

*the closing of man's day*

The symbolism of the eighth day of the autumn festival focuses on eternity - God's 'end game'.

The number 'eight' - mentioned eighty times in Scripture - is associated with new beginnings, a new order. Examples are the 'eighth day' - the first day of a new week. Jesus, following his resurrection at the beginning of the eighth day, Sunday, presented himself before the Father on that day in his new spirit body. Eight persons survived the Great Flood to enter the new world. God's people were covenanted through circumcision on the eighth day of life. Even in physics - for the eighth note on a musical scale is the same as the first note, *etc.*

Within Judaism, this eighth day - following the seven days of Tabernacles - is 'a festival in itself'. It is a time of exuberant jubilation - a veritable marriage feast. "...it is this day which above all expresses the joy of the Jewish religion" (*Teach Yourself Judaism* p.188).

This eighth day is called 'a day of restraint' (Nehemiah 8:18, KJV margin), but known as the 'closing day' (*see LXX*). It represents the culmination of God's plan for man. We begin, formed from earth's elements in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26), as 'clay models' of what God wants us to become.

The Psalmist wrote: "*What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you take care of him. You made him a little lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honour and set him over the work of your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet*" (Psalm 8:4-6).

However, it doesn't look that way  
*[cont'd col.3]*

## INVITATION TO HELP!

*New Horizons* is a major evangelism tool of the *Outreach Ministries*, distributed *free* to all who request it. It isn't for sale! But it needs a wider distribution, and our readers can help. Here's how.

Individuals as well as local fellowships are invited to regularly distribute a specific number of copies of each bi-monthly issue - how many is up to you.

You could, for example, pass on copies to friends and relatives. Or leave a copy in the doctor's or dentist's office. Even mail it.

Expansion, however, costs! We therefore invite you to pledge the cost of your copies. So a pledge of \$10 (£5) will provide the *CGOM* message to a further 10 readers - potential sons and daughters of God. Your pledge will enable us to print the appropriate number of extra copies. You may, of course, cancel your pledge at any time.

All we need is a note from you with your mailing address and the number of copies you wish to distribute. Should you decide to advance our outreach efforts in this way, please donate to your local office of the *Outreach Ministries*.

Should you wish to help distribute *New Horizons* but are unable to contribute financially we are still happy to welcome you as a distributor. Everything helps!

*Your prayerful consideration  
of this request will be  
appreciated.*

**ask for: Why Were You Born?**

right now! So the writer of Hebrews comments on this passage:

*For that He [the Lord] put all in subjection under him [ie mankind] He left nothing that is not put under him. But now do we not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour that he by the grace of God may taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:6-10). Paul adds: "The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children then heirs - heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him that we may also be glorified together (Romans 8:16-17)*

We are '*to be brought to glory!*' That's God's end-game for mankind. He gives us opportunity - and we must each one of us grasp it personally - to be transformed from dirt to glory. It is summed up by Hannah (I Samuel 2:8) "*He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the beggar from the ash heap, to set them among princes and make them inherit the throne of glory*".

Interestingly, the context of her prayer was an annual sacrifice - likely, the autumn festival (*ch* 1:7).

Each of the 'holy days' God has revealed is an important guide to the divine plan for mankind - for now and for eternity. Not least is this *closing day* of the festival year, pointing us to the culmination of His magnificent plan. ﷻ

**request these articles - no charge:**  
***The World of Tomorrow...***  
***...a message of hope***  
**and**  
***God's Grand Design***

# THE PENTECOST EXPERIENCE

## Is 'speaking in tongues' a true Pentecostal experience?

Years ago I attended a 'revival meeting' - I don't recall the sponsors - at the Lincoln show ground. Frankly, I left before too long as I felt uncomfortable. Because almost everyone was making sounds that simply didn't make sense to me. I figured, of course, that they were 'speaking in tongues'.

Now - I'm a dedicated Bible student and my first experience of this sounded alarm bells. Was I wrong? Was the experience of these sincere folk from God? And has time changed my understanding?

### Pentecostal Fire

Since that time the world has been treated to a virtual explosion of 'tongues' and related phenomena in an increasing variety of religious communities - barking, laughing, writhing, 'slain in the Spirit', sticking to the floor *etc.* But what we have not witnessed is a repeat of what happened on that first Christian Pentecost. That must have been awesome.

Here on a Sunday morning between nine and ten, crowds thronged the streets of Jerusalem headed for the Temple, for they were celebrating the annual '*Feast of Weeks*' - Pentecost. There were Jews there from many nations. Suddenly there was a thunderous noise like an approaching tornado that confused its hearers and attracted them to a house where a group of people had gathered.

Then, shockingly, the appearance of fire came down on the group's heads, dividing equally and 'crowning' each of them. More was to follow. For each member of the gathered crowd heard each of the men speak "*in our own language wherein we were*

*born*" - Latin, Greek, Arabic. Sixteen different languages are listed (Acts 2). These speakers are branded elsewhere as "*unlearned and ignorant*"! And they had not, indeed, been pouring over their phrase scrolls in the last six weeks! The account states: "*And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues [languages] as the Spirit gave them utterance*" (v.4). Nor was this the only miraculous event, for everyone within earshot heard in their own dialect (v.8) the words spoken.

The speakers were, of course, disciples of Jesus. After his resurrection he had told them to "*remain [KJV tarry] in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high*" (Luke 24:49). No specific mention of the Feast of Weeks, but they gathered on that day anyway as was their custom. Now the power had come, and in a sense this was the empowering of the New Testament church.

'Tongues', we see from this account, was the divine gift of being able to speak in a foreign language that had never been learned. The complete 'Pentecost experience' has never been repeated - anywhere.

### Gifts of the Spirit

The apostle Paul addresses this modern version of 'tongue speaking' (or *glossolalia*) when sorting out the recalcitrant Corinthian church. The brethren there were scrambling to outdo one another by exercising spiritual gifts. Paul (I Corinthians 14) laid down rules - rules ignored in modern practice, as I had experienced:

- all spiritual gifts are inferior to

love - the prime fruit of the in-working of the divine Spirit (*ch* 13)

- gifts are divinely dispensed to benefit the whole assembly (*ch* 12:7)
- gifts are dispensed individually by God's sovereign will (12:18) and no-one has all of them (v.30)
- far superior to speaking in an unlearned language is the gift of 'prophecy' - edifying the assembly in words clearly understood (*ch* 14:19)
- the gift of 'tongues' [languages] is not for the benefit of the converted (v.22)
- in public worship those who exercise it are to be limited (v.27), and are to speak *one at a time* to avoid confusion
- its public use is permitted only if someone present has the supernatural gift of interpretation (v.28)
- gifts are not spontaneous but are under the control of the individual (14:32f)

Any individual or church professing to have and promote the gift of 'speaking in tongues' must be judged by Jesus Christ on these criteria.

### 'Divine' Oracle

It's a fact that 'speaking in tongues' *as widely practiced today* (*ie*, not the Bible form) is not specifically a Pentecostal or indeed generally Christian phenomenon - it's also exercised in non-Christian religions, and was so in Bible times. It can result from self-induced emotional excitement, aided by fervent song and repetitive speech - 'Jesus, Jesus, Jesus...*etc.*'

In some churches members are taught how to 'perform'! Clearly, as today practised, 'tongue-speaking' in no way reflects the Biblical gift of language but is, likely - however sincerely uttered - no more than an

outpouring of emotionally-generated disjointed sounds - sounds which do not conform to any known grammatical structure or language. This does not, of course, preclude the sovereign God from at any time passing on the true gift to fulfil His purpose.

It's not unlikely that in Corinth - the only local assembly which he addressed on the subject of speaking in tongues - the apostle Paul was in part dealing with the influence of this aberration. The unruly Corinthians - highly gifted, yet he calls them carnal, immature - were confusing a true spiritual gift with the local pagan worship of Apollo.

For, a few miles from the city (Corinth was the gateway to it) was the world famous Delphic Oracle where a woman possessed of the 'spirit of Python' - "seized with a certain divine frenzy" - gave drug-induced concocted replies in an incomprehensible babble to questions posed to it. The words spoken by the prophetess were 'interpreted' by 'prophet-priests'.

### A Bridge Too Far

Once confined to 'Pentecostals', the practice of 'tongues' has spread like wildfire through most Christian churches. Evangelicals, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, house churches and promoted worldwide by the Alpha course - all have embraced it to some degree.

It is seen as a badge of orthodoxy - if you don't 'speak in tongues' could you really be Christian?

The 'charismatic renewal' is seen as a much-needed unifying force for Christendom - a bridge over the troubled waters of doctrinal diversity. Evangelicals and Catholics - once sworn theological enemies - happily worship together, sharing pulpits and hymnals, rolling together between the pews in a frenzy of barking and hysterical laughter. But one vital principle is studiously ignored.

### The Apostolic Faith

Whatever took place at the first Christian Pentecost the results were a far cry from modern charismatic practice. Here's Luke's account, recording Peter's fiery sermon: "*Then those that gladly received his word were baptized...and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine.... Then fear [awe] came upon every soul*" (Acts 2:41-43).

That doesn't happen today. The first Christians didn't laugh or crow like hens or bark like dogs. They did not babble incomprehensibly. Those men and women were awe-struck. And they listened to - and diligently followed - the apostles' teachings.

The present-day fervour for church unity through charismatic worship ignores doctrinal diversity. Through 'inter-faith dialogue' or Alpha courses

or massive publicity it returns millions to the confusion of doctrine in the churches from which they come. All are fed the pabulum of traditional religious fable contrary to the plain '*doctrine of the apostles*'.

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth - the age-old Word of God. The apostle Paul urges us to be wary: "*For if he who comes [ie any teacher] preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted - you may well put up with it*" (II Corinthians 11:4). We must constantly be on guard!

The Christians in Berea (Acts 17:11) were commended for their diligent awareness: "...*they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures [all they had then were the writings of the Old Testament!] daily whether these things were so*".

Time after time the Bible warns, explains, counsels all who profess Jesus Christ to study - and follow - the doctrines of the apostles. They became the infallible irreplaceable mouthpiece for the ascended Jesus.

If you consider yourself to be Christ's you must answer to Him - not to your church's leaders or to its traditional teachings - for your belief and practice. **ف**

### Internet Access

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***in strict confidence***

### Bible Basics

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*We are pleased to reply to any questions you may have arising from any of our publications. However at this time we are not in a position to 'grade' your studies in **Bible Basics***

# Forgive - and be Forgiven

## "To err is human, to forgive is divine". What does the Bible teach?

John Morton

The model prayer that Jesus Christ gave to His disciples tells us to seek forgiveness from God our Father for our debts (Matthew 6:9-13). "Debts" refer to our sins (Luke 11:4). According to Scripture we have all sinned (Romans 3:23) and if we say we haven't then we deceive ourselves (1 John 1:8).

Sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4) and the result of our sin is death (Romans 6:23). Having sinned we are all under the penalty of the law, which is eternal death. What can we do? Do we have to die? Our merciful God wants us to have eternal life, to live and reign with Him forever (Revelation 22:5).

God gave His son that we might be forgiven. He paid the death penalty for us that we might have eternal life (Romans 5:8, John 3:16). If we turn to God and sincerely and genuinely repent of our sins He will forgive us (Acts 3:19, Colossians 1:13,14).

When someone transgresses the law of God they are answerable to God and only He can forgive them. We cannot forgive a person for their sins against God. We can forgive them for transgressions against us personally, but they are still ultimately answerable to God. Only God the law-giver has the power to forgive (see the last part of Mark 2:7 and Luke 5:21). When we confess our sins to God, He will forgive (Psalm 32:5).

### Learn To Forgive

In the process of forgiving us He wants us to learn to be forgiving to-

ward others. Notice in the model prayer (Matthew 6:12), Christ said to pray to the Father to forgive our debts (sins) as we forgive our debtors, *ie* as we forgive those who have sinned against us. The lesson of forgiveness is so important for us to comprehend that Jesus elaborates "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6: 14-15).

Unless we have a forgiving attitude toward others, we will not be forgiven. If we are not forgiven then we are not saved from the penalty of death that we have earned as wages of sin. God wants us to repent of our sins (Acts 3:19). He is willing to forgive and forget, to blot out all record of our sins (see also Psalm 103:3,4,12 and Isaiah 43:25).

Are we in turn willing to forgive and put aside the things others do to us (Ephesians 4:32)? Or do we use every opportunity to remind them of their transgressions? If someone, who has offended us, is sorry and repentant we are to forgive them as commanded (Luke 17:3-4). But will we forgive and forget, or will we continue to feel ill-will toward them?

### Who Do We Forgive?

The Scripture we have just looked at talks about forgiving a brother who has repented. Does this mean that we only need to forgive those who repent of what they have done to us? We do well to look toward the example of Jesus Christ, God's own son. Even when people were reviling,

abusing and hitting him, he prayed "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). He did not wait for them to repent.

Notice that in the model prayer we mentioned earlier (Matthew 6:12, 14-15), in giving this instruction Christ did not give any indication about being selective as to who we forgive. He talked about forgiving men, generically implying all people, for the sins they have committed against us, which also implies all sins against us. He even tells us to pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:43-44).

### How Often?

The disciple Peter asked Christ if he really meant we must forgive seven times as if that was pushing the limits, and Christ replied that we need to forgive "until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21-22), showing that we are to continue to have an attitude of forgiveness regardless of the number of times someone offends against us.

God will wipe all our sins from remembrance (Hebrews 10:17), and He expects us to do the same for others. If we bring up past grievances to throw in the face of someone who has offended us, it shows we have not really forgiven them for those past grievances. If we allow our minds to dwell on offences that have been committed against us we become vulnerable to Satan's devices (II Corinthians 2:10-11).

When our attitude is not right we harm not only the relationship with the other person, but our relationship with God as well (Isaiah 59:2). The result is that our attitude deteriorates into one of unforgiving bitterness (Hebrews 12:15). The more bitter and revengeful we become the harder it is to forgive, and if we have not forgiven then we cannot expect to be forgiven. A bitter and unforgiving

[cont'd page 8



**Millions are affected - unnecessarily. Can we identify the cause?**

## THE ROOTS OF SEXUAL DISEASE

Disease has stalked mankind from early times, and men and women - skilled and unskilled - have done their best to eliminate it. In recent years, however, a virtual epidemic of sexual disease sweeps Britain and other 'civilized' nations.

Cancer usually - sadly, not always - cuts down the older among us and is devastating to the whole family. Arthritis cripples - again usually the elderly. Other dread diseases tear us apart, and - rarely - pandemics erupt through whole continents.

But sexual diseases rip apart future generations. The 'silent killer' - chlamydia, for example, affects fertility - infected young women barred from conceiving their heart's desire, their own 'flesh and blood' family. It is not unavoidable, nor is the cause a mystery.

### Designed for Health

The human body is a miraculous piece of biological engineering. A twelve-week old foetus, for example, has 4,500 perfectly working parts, complete with all organs essential to life and able to dance around in the womb. At birth we have an immune system that wards off most noxious influences. And we are perfectly designed - mentally and physically - to propagate the human race, apart from the ravages of perverse genetic mutation.

The reason? God made it so. We are a product of divine design, our anatomy and physiology and psychology perfectly tailored to the world He created. And, like any machine or instrument or system, we function optimally when we conform to the innate design. And we don't make the rules!

### Law and Life

It's commonly accepted - even

among Christians - that divine Law is irrelevant to life. It's 'old hat'. obsolete, outmoded, it is said. Yet that same Law with all its branches is the guardian of human health - not least sexual.

Imagine society's transformation if just one of those Laws were adhered to: *'You shall not commit adultery'*. That law - regarded today as perverse - stems from the very first divine institution, one enacted to protect mankind. It reads: *'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a suitable helper, completing him'.... God took one of [Adam's]ribs...and from the rib God formed a woman and brought her to the man. Adam said, 'This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of a man'. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and cling to his wife, and they shall become one flesh (Genesis 2:18-25).*

Implied is the concept that a man and a woman are *exclusive to one another* as long as they live. Contrast that with our modern world. The main reason for all our horrendous sexual diseases? Promiscuity - the swapping of multiple sexual partners, whether or not within a formal marriage.

### UK Increases 2002-2003

Chlamydia	+ 9%
Gonorrhoea	- 3%
Syphilis	+ 28%
Herpes	- 2%
Genital Warts	+2%
<i>Chlamydia has tripled in less than a decade to 90,000 in 2003</i>	
<i>Total number seen:</i>	+ 37%

### Origins of Disease

Disease isn't at source a divine infliction. Misuse your computer and it will as a result malfunction. Meddle with your computer's capabilities and you can generate a destructive 'virus' or 'worm' able to disrupt millions of other users. Such effects happen without Bill Gates programming them! Others have.

Here's the analogy. Personally ignore the Laws of health and you become ill. Manipulate the human - or animal or plant - genes and you may, just, precipitate an epidemic. Also, we are all affected adversely by environmental factors - the result of human interference.

### Ancient Wisdom

The Bible term for all this meddling with nature is *sin*. Our first parents (take that as creation or evolution) overthrew the Creator's foundation Law of Life, precipitating a crisis from which we have not recovered. *And won't* - until all humanity finally comes, in his Millennial Kingdom, under the universal sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul - writing of the early ages of man - neatly sums it up:

*God gave them up in agreement with their inner cravings to such impurity as dishonoured their own bodies.... For this reason God abandoned them to shameful passions. Their women perverted natural functions for the unnatural, and similarly the men forsook their natural relationships with women and burned up with lust for one another, men committing shamelessness with men and so acquiring in their persons the penalty that was coming to them on account of their wrong behaviour*  
Romans 1:24-27

Our present morass is fuelled by

**Disease... cont'd**

perverse official Government policy, 'reality television', advertising, fashion and the precipitous decline in public moral standards

Inner city streets - and increasingly suburbia and rural areas - are nightly splattered with drink-laden youth, all too often resulting in unwanted pregnancies - and foul destructive sexually transmitted disease. Send them on holiday and their libidos are unleashed in a sexual frenzy.

**Divine Cure**

None of this is simply twenty-first century. History is littered with nations in decline through immorality. Gibbon, for example, cites the marriage merry-go-round as a reason for Rome's fall. Let's look at another historical and more accurate record - the Christian Bible.

A mass destruction of humanity happened nearly five thousand years ago. One of the factors was a form of sexual sin - that perennial failing of fallen man. *'God saw that human wickedness was growing out of bounds on earth, that the intention of all human thinking produced nothing but evil all day'* (Genesis 6:1-8).

Only one family retained its integrity. As for the rest: *'God looked at the earth and saw how degenerated it was; for all those living on the earth had perverted their way'* (v.12). All except that one family were wiped out and a new beginning made.

Fast forward a few centuries and we find another family with whom God can work: that of Abram, later called Abraham. Such was his piety that God selected him to be 'a father of many nations' through his son Isaac.

God had a secure homeland earmarked for Abraham and his progeny: Palestine. It was occupied by descendants of Canaan, the grandson of Ham - one of Noah's

**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 quarterly *Newsletter*, a bi-monthly outreach magazine *New Horizons*, the *Bible Basics* home 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. We are pleased to offer you, without charge, any of our publications.

sons - and at that time controlled by the tribe of the iniquitous Amorites.

**Palestine Defiled**

Canaan had committed an obscene act on his grandfather, and the

**FORGIVE ...cont'd**

attitude can cause us to fall from God's grace.

When we finally come face to face with God, will He be able to forgive us for our sins? Or will we have fallen from grace because we have been too unforgiving toward others? It's not too late to change (Ephesians 5:15-16 and 4:32). But change we must if we want to escape eternal death.

The choice to forgive - or not to forgive - is ours to make. The reward for making the right choice is that we, in turn, will be forgiven. ف

Amorites (off-spring of Canaan) had developed the same perverse habits. But God is patient, and He allowed them time to repent. But God could foresee the outcome: *"...the wickedness of the Amorites is not yet brim full"* (Genesis 15:16), He informed Abraham.

The extent of their evil behaviour was described to Israel as they were delivered from Egypt and before they entered Canaan. It included incest, sexual promiscuity, homosexual behaviour, bestiality. *"...you shall not behave as they behaved in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor as they do in the land of Canaan where I am taking you"* (Leviticus 18:1-5).

These, says God, were sexual practices in Egypt and in Canaan and *'rendered the country unclean'*. For this reason *'...the land will throw out you too [Israel], when you defile it, as it disgorged the nation that preceded you'* (vv.27-30)

*It's a solemn warning to our own twenty-first century nations* ف

**Spend a Lifetime - Together**  
*some suggestions for a successful marriage*

**MiniStudy...****Does God Exist?  
In the beginning God...**

***He that comes to God must believe that He exists and that He becomes the Rewarder of those who search for Him...Hebrews 11:6***

The vast majority of earth's billions believe there's a God - of some sort. The confusion of ideas about Him, however, is but an excuse for disbelief. But just an excuse. For the evidence for His existence is before our eyes.

- The Hubble telescope is sensitive enough to peer thirteen billion years into the past. Yet no-one imagines this incredible piece of engineering somehow self-assembled; launched itself into orbit and maintains itself. Clearly, it was designed and crafted by a greater intelligence
- Astronomers believe the latest 'snapshots' from Hubble take us back to a 'mere seven hundred million' years after the assumed 'Big Bang'. Supposedly, that event is the origin of all physical matter
- But wait! That unbelievable powerhouse of stored energy which 'exploded' to

form our Universe is obviously not 'the first cause'. Where did that ball of energy come from? Whatever your view of origins, that question must be answered

- All Earth's material, all the elements, must derive in some form from that original 'big bang'. Take, for example, radium. It is radio-active with a 'half-life' - the time taken for half of the atoms of a radioactive substance to decay - of just sixteen hundred years. Why has only a portion of it become inert lead? Why not all of it?
- The universe we inhabit is physical. All science requires dependability - that what is experimentally true today will be true tomorrow. We exist and survive by immutable Law. Where did *that* come from?
- Here's a challenge for you. Create for me a grain of wheat, or, perhaps man's supposed simplest ancestor, an amoeba. *No*, you may not use existing genes! Start with *nothing* - not even air; and you don't
- The 'First Cause' - the un-created Creator God - is a dimension incomprehensible to mere physical beings. He is Spirit. Logically, He must have always existed, otherwise we must accept that *matter* has always existed. And that inert matter gendered the human mind. It was *God* who created the complexity of the physical dimension
- The Creator has chosen to share His being with humanity. He reveals Himself in His Creation and in His Word - the Christian Scriptures
- All this is neatly summed up by the apostle Paul:

*"From the creation of the world onward His invisible qualities, such as His eternal power and divine nature, have been discerned mentally through His handiwork. So they are without adequate excuse"* (Romans 1:20)

***"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'"***  
(Psalm 14:1; 53:1.)

*Further reading:*

**Is Jesus God?  
God - Father and /Son**

*unsigned articles are by the Editor*

*New Horizons* may be viewed  
on our web-site  
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**Divorce - Is It Biblical?**  
**The Most Important Job**

*request—no charge*

**Where are Enoch  
and Elijah?**

**Are Some Foods  
Unfit to Eat?**

**Reap a Destiny**

***Bible Basics***

The Churches of God Outreach  
Ministries publish an internet  
Bible home study course

If you would like to study with  
us check it out at

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The introductory lesson gives  
some hints about how to  
study the Bible

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tions arising from any of our publica-  
tions. However, we are not yet in a  
position to 'grade' your responses*

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