

### [The Blast, the Blame, the Blasphemy](#)

Suddenly, Americans have been savagely propelled into the bloody reality of terrorism. Always before, millions of Americans watched their television sets displaying the shattered remains of buildings in Beirut, or Germany, or Northern Ireland, or London, or Buenos Aires. Always before, it was a militant Middle-Eastern group who planted bombs aboard airliners, or hijacked Greek cruise ships, or savagely attacked Olympic athletes. But on the morning of April 19, 1995-hideous, bloody, shocking terrorism blasted apart the last of American innocence. If the World Trade Center was a wake-up call, Oklahoma City was a hammer to the head. Why? Why Oklahoma City? Who are these people who would so callously blast innocent men, women, and little children to bits? Terrorism is not limited to any one nation. Is there any common thread that links terrorist acts?

### [Biblical Terrorists](#)

In the unstable world of Roman-occupied Judea, the threat of violence was commonplace in Jesus' day.

### [With What Body Do They Come?](#)

When people are introduced to the truth of the resurrection, all kinds of questions come to mind. How is it possible? Well, of course God can do it. But HOW? Does He keep records on every person who has ever lived and died? Is He keeping records on you and me--TODAY?



### [What I say to, I say to everyone: Watch! \(Mark 13:37\)](#)

### [The Law and the Christian](#)

Continuing in this issue, we present a new way of studying your Bible. Using this magazine, your own Bible, a cassette tape recorder, and a notebook, you can dramatically increase your knowledge and understanding of the Bible. Read on to see how it works.

### [You Can Take It With You!](#)

All your life, you have heard the saying, "You can't take it with you." Obviously, as this old saying goes, we leave everything behind when we go to our graves--all our money, property, mementos, bric-a-brac, family albums, and treasured personal possessions. But, believe it or not, even though we eventually return to the ground from which we came, we can take with us our most precious possessions of all! In this encouraging, inspiring series, you will find answers to perplexing questions: "What if my spouse was not saved when he died?" "What about my father, who, though not a church-going man, was a good man, honest, and a good husband?" "What about our little girl, who was only two when

she died?" "What about our son who was killed in Vietnam? He wasn't religious, but he was a good boy. Is he in hell? What happened to him when he died?"

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# Biblical Terrorists

**In the unstable world of Roman-occupied Judea, the threat of violence was commonplace in Jesus' day.**

**by William H. Ellis**

After illegal arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, Roman Procurator, the next morning. Read the account in Mark 15. Notice, at the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it was customary for Pilate to release any prisoner the people chose (verse 6).

Who was in prison, convicted of capital crimes, awaiting execution? We know from later events that at least two, and probably four, criminals were in cells sentenced to death, the men later crucified on either side of Jesus.

But, perhaps we are more familiar with Barabbas. Or, are we?

"And there was one named Barabbas, which *lay bound* with them that had made insurrection with him, who had *committed murder in the insurrection*" (Mark 15:7).

Barabbas had already been tried, convicted and sentenced to be crucified. His crime was bloody, armed rebellion against the government. He was a murderer, and more. According to Eerdman's *The New Bible Dictionary* (1962), he was "a bandit arrested for *homicidal political terrorism*."

The phrasing of this section of Scripture "may indicate that he [Barabbas] was of the party of Zealots, who desired to throw off the Roman yoke by force," (*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 1962).

## The Zealots

Who were these "Zealots"?

Labeled a "robber" (John 18:39-40), Barabbas could also be described as a highwayman and bandit.

Josephus describes the activities of these "robbers" a few years later: "Certain of those robbers went up to the city, as if they were going to worship God, while they had *daggers under their garments*, and, by thus mingling themselves among the multitude, they slew Jonathan [the high priest, circa A.D. 54], and as this murder was never avenged, the robbers went up with the greatest security at the festivals after this time, and having weapons *concealed* in like manner as before, and mingling themselves among the multitude, they slew certain of their own enemies..." (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 20: Chapter 8: Part 5).

In his *Wars of the Jews*, Josephus notes: "Other robbers that came out of the country [rural areas], and came into the city, and joining to them those that were worse than themselves, omitted no kind of barbarity; for they did not measure their courage by their rapings and plunderings only, but proceeded as far as murdering men" (Book 4: Chapter 3: Part 4).

Josephus identifies the group: "the *zealots*; for that was the name they went by, as if they were zealous in good undertakings, and were not rather zealous in the worst actions, and extravagant in them beyond the example of others" (Book 4: Chapter 3: Part 9).

The name Zealots is falsely translated "patriots" in some modern translations of the New Testament. Don't be misled. Josephus wasn't. These men may have called themselves "patriots" but were, in fact, political criminals.

Barabbas was a bandit, a political terrorist, a murderer, a political assassin, a Zealot!

Further identification of Barabbas links him directly to the branch of the Zealots known as the *Sicarii*, their name taken from the Latin, *sicarius*, which meant *daggar man or assassin*, according to *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Volume 3.

Notice what Josephus says of the Sicarii: "It happened that Judea was afflicted by the robbers, while all the *villages were set on fire*, and plundered by them. And then it was that the Sicarii, as they were called, who were robbers, grew numerous. they made use of small swords...but somewhat crooked, and like the Romans *sicae* [or sickles] as they were called: and from these weapons these robbers got their denomination, and with those weapons they slew a great many" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 20: Chapter 8: Part 10).

## **Barabbas, the Terrorist, Set Free!**

It was this Barabbas the people chose to set free, and Jesus Christ was condemned to die on the stake, even though Pilate had pronounced Jesus innocent!

Notice Luke's account. Pilate told the leaders of the city concerning Jesus: "Behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him, and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him" (Luke 23:14-15).

However, the people chose to release Barabbas (verse 18) who was guilty, "Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison" (verse 19).

Matthew describes Barabbas as "a notable prisoner" and the *New International Version* translates it "a notorious prisoner" (Matthew 27:16). His crimes of political terrorism were well known.

It is Matthew who records the phrasing of Pilate's question to the crowd: "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called the Christ?"

According to *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Volume 2), "There are fairly clear indications that even Barabbas, the Zealot between whom and Jesus Pilate asked the people to choose, had Jesus as his first name."

The irony of Pilate's question is even more pronounced: "Who do you want me to release to you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus called the 'Anointed.'"

The people responded: "Barab-bas"! (Matthew 27:21.)

They chose the cowardly, back-stabbing, political terrorist responsible for burning buildings, highway robbery, and political murder--Barabbas!

And Jesus Christ died in his place.

No man who has ever lived could know so well what Christ's sacrificial death meant. Barabbas, condemned to die for his despicable crimes, was released and replaced by the sinless life of the Son of God. We hear no more about Barabbas in Scripture.

## **Political Strife and Self-Styled Militia**

The Zealots were a paramilitary, self-styled militia who had been hiding out in rural areas before coming into the cities with their "death squads" of underground urban guerrillas, the Sicarii. They had been operating for some time in Judea, enough so that their politics had drawn attention.

The political establishment of the day wanted to know where Jesus Christ stood with regard to some of the ultra-"patriotic" programs of the Zealots. For example, the Zealots objected to paying taxes to the Roman authorities (*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Volume 3, page 1168).

When grilled on the subject of paying taxes by "mainstream" Herodian politicians, Jesus answered that His followers should pay their taxes (Matthew 22:15-21), an affront to the ideology of the extreme militant right.

When discussing doing good towards one's neighbor, Jesus used the example of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), and He identifies the "thieves" as these same highwaymen and robbers. The same Greek word is used to describe the militant Zealots. Jesus pointed out publicly that the hated foreigners, the Samaritans, who were considered by some to be unwanted aliens in Judea, were better than the criminal terrorists of the extreme right.

The Zealots carried illegal, concealed, military-style weapons. Their attitude was that they had the "right" to bear arms, even though the Sicarii "sickle" blade and the Roman short sword certainly couldn't be construed as tools of a farmer's trade or needed for hunting.

Jesus didn't stockpile arms for a rebellion; He didn't pack a sword hidden under His garments. When asked how His followers should respond to Roman soldiers who might force them to help carry burdens, Jesus taught them to go the extra mile in cooperation with the government (Matthew 5:41).

When leaving the hall of the Lord's Supper, Jesus knew some of His disciples did carry concealed weapons. Notice why, in this instance, He allowed it: "For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, and *he was reckoned among the transgressors*: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough" (Luke 22:37-38). Quoting Isaiah 53:12, Jesus plainly said that they were *carrying illegal weapons and were transgressing the law!*

## Jesus Christ's Disciples

As you read about the Zealots and the Sicarii, you may remember that one of Jesus' disciples was Simon called Zelotes, or the Zealot (Luke 6:15). Is it possible that a man who had once been a member of the Zealots political "action group" and perhaps even been a terrorist, could be called to serve by Jesus Christ?

Indeed, a repentant Simon Zelotes, whose life completely changed from his old, violent, militant ways, became one of the apostles who received God's Spirit on the Day of Pentecost! He is mentioned once again in Acts 1:13.

But, what of the other disciple, the one who didn't put aside his violent, back-stabbing ways of life? Wasn't there such a one that Jesus also called? Read Luke 6:16: "and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor."

The link between the appellation given this Judas and the daggar men, the *assassins of the Sicarii* has been researched. Niel Elliott, in reviewing Hyam Maccoby's book, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, notes that *Iscariot*, in Greek, becomes *Sicarii* in Latin (*Bible Review*, February, 1994, pages 14-15).

Called to serve by Jesus, Judas the (e)*Sicarii*(t) didn't change his ways, but continued to foment, incite, and eventually carry out his secret agenda and schemes.

Judas allowed himself to become the pawn of the religious/political establishment. He plotted with the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Herodians who were pursuing their own status quo agenda. He accepted their payoff "contract" to identify Jesus for arrest.

Judas Iscariot, the *Sicarii*, ended his career as a political terrorist by committing suicide (Matthew 27:5-8; Acts 1:16-19) after setting up the political murder of Jesus Christ!

**[Editor's Note:** Flavius Josephus was a politician and military leader in the Jewish wars with Rome (circa A.D. 68-70). He was captured after battling the Roman army in Galilee and placed under house arrest in Rome. The emperor commissioned him to write a

history of his people, *The Antiquities of the Jews* and the background of the war which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, *The Wars of the Jews*.

Josephus' works are contemporary with the writing of the New Testament. Unlike the Dead Sea Scrolls, still a subject of scholarly controversy, the writings of Josephus are secular history available for under \$20.00 at any good bookstore. Josephus was a Pharisee. He was not a Christian.]

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## With What Body Do They Come?

**When people are introduced to the truth of the resurrection, all kinds of questions come to mind. How is it possible? Well, of course God can do it. But HOW? Does He keep records on every person who has ever lived and died? Is He keeping records on you and me--TODAY?**

**by William H. Ellis**

**S**teeped in Greek philosophy which made its deceitful way into modern Christianity through the Roman Catholic Church fathers, we find it difficult to conceive of the "resurrection of the dead." Like the Corin-thians, we quickly ask: "But, how does God do that? What will these resurrected people look like? How will we be able to recognize our relatives who have died?"

The famous Catholic philosopher Thomas Aquinas had a real problem with the concept. The way he saw it, a resurrection wasn't possible because it wasn't logical. He might have said: "How can God resurrect someone, for instance, who has been eaten by a cannibal? Or, more to the point, what about the cannibal? Every cell, molecule and atom of a cannibal's body is made up of all the cells, molecules and atoms of everyone he has ever eaten!" Aquinas just didn't get it, did he?

Oddly enough, those who have watched any of the episodes of the science-fiction TV show *Star Trek* take for granted what they see on the small screen. They have no difficulty imagining how the technology of the future can transport people from spaceship to planet and back again, rearranging their molecules precisely so that they go and arrive in mid-sentence, never losing a moment of thought. If they leave the spaceship fearful, they arrive on the planet fearful; if they leave angry, they arrive angry--even their emotions are intact.

If the inventors and creators of science fiction can imagine it, surely God can actually do it! Perhaps we don't know how, but we do know that God, our Creator, keeps records in some form.

## In the Record Books

When the resurrected dead, the small and the great, stand before God Almighty and begin to live lives which are judged and measured by the books of Scripture (Revelation 20:12), there is another book mentioned, the "*Book of Life*" (Revelation 20:12,15).

Some kind of records are kept.

Notice what God says about the way the faithful behave: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord *hearkened*, and *heard* it, and a *book of remembrance was written before Him* for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name" (Malachi 3:16).

Paul wrote to the Philippians assuring them his fellow laborers have their names written in the Book of Life (Philippians 4:3). In doing so, Paul was only writing what Jesus Himself had told the disciples: "But rather rejoice, because *your names are written in heaven*" (Luke 10:20).

The apostle John, after the vision of Revelation, wrote: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will *not blot out his name out of the book of life*" (Revelation 3:5).

Although a record is kept, it is possible to have it blotted out or erased. Notice that is just what happens to those who make the mistake of worshipping the "beast" of Revelation 13:4: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, *whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*" (Revelation 13:8).



Those who are written in that Book are called "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are *written in heaven...*" (Hebrews 12:23).

Even Moses was aware that God could erase his name from that record. In fact, Moses so loved the stubborn, rebellious, sinful, and wicked people of Israel in the wilderness, he was willing to sacrifice his place for them: "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Ye now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou has written. And the Lord said unto Moses, *Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book*" (Exodus 32:31,32).

## What Kinds of Records?

Jesus told His disciples: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul [*psuche*]: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul [*psuche*] and body in hell [*gehenna*]. But," He continued a verse later, "the very hairs of your head are all *numbered*" (Matthew 10:28,30). Luke records Jesus' assurance, "there shall not an hair of your head perish" (Luke 21:18), a promise repeated in Acts 27:34.

Is God aware of and recording the number of the hairs on each of our heads? It appears so! After all, we are told He can know the number of sparrows that fall, and we, as part of His creation plan, are of greater value to Him than many sparrows (Matthew 10:29,31).

Detailed records are kept, but the emphasis is on more important matters than whether we are balding or not, although apparently even that is included.

God is primarily concerned with the development of our character into God-like character. So, He watches and records our deeds and actions, our comings and goings (Psalm 121:8). Although we can't earn salvation and the free gift of God's grace, we will be measured according to how we behaved--how we measured up to God's revealed will in the books of the Bible (Revelation 20:12-15).

Note especially Revelation 20:13: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (*hades*, the grave) delivered up the dead which were in them..." Those eaten by sharks, those buried in ancient archeological tombs, all will be restored to physical life in the general resurrection.

It's back to the same question we started with, the question the Corinthi-ans asked: "With what body do they come?"

## Personal Records

In the Psalms, God reveals just how much of our individuality is kept and recorded. Notice Psalm 139:13-16. David is aware of the miracle of life God has granted.

"For thou has possessed my reins: for thou has covered me in my mother's womb." The Hebrew sense for the word *covered* here is "woven" or "knit me together." From the moment of conception, the newly-begotten child is patiently knit together as the days of pregnancy pass. The DNA strands which joined in conception from father and mother now create the unique separate person to be born. Even the whorls of the child's fingerprints are formed in the womb.

"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully [awesomely] and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul (*nephesh*) knoweth right well.

"My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." God knows the myriads of compounds, chemicals, and minerals which compose our bodies.

When David speaks of his "substance" here, he is referring specifically to the framework of his skeleton, organized with its tendons and muscles, each accomplishing the engineering feats of leverage, balance, and force which allow our bodies flexible, powerful, delicate movement.

When he mentions he was "curiously wrought" the Hebrew word gives the sense of "embroidered" like an intricate tapestry. How fitting a description of the interweavings of our nervous systems and the tiny capillaries to the strong arteries of our circulatory systems.

"Thine eyes did see my *substance*," David continued, and in this place the word substance is a different Hebrew word than that used above. This time it is better translated "unfinished, yet imperfect work." God knows that our fantastically complex human bodies are as yet unfinished and imperfect, "yet being unperfect; and IN THY BOOK ALL MY MEMBERS WERE WRITTEN."

Psalm 139:16 says that the details of our physical bodies, the construction of our skeleton, the very workings of our human flesh and bone are *recorded in God's records!*

We know that the DNA record of each of us describes every detail of our physical life.

Is it hard for us to imagine that God has a way of recording that to use later when He brings human bodies to life in the resurrection? With such accurate records, you would certainly be able to recognize your loved ones because they would look just as you knew them to look while they were alive before.

David continues: "*My members were written*, which in continuance were fashioned." These members were growing and changing and yet the records were kept, even "when as yet there was none of them."

God does reveal some things about how He works. Although much of the details we can only begin to grasp, He gives us assurances that He knows what He is doing and has the power to fulfill His promises to us.

He knows our thoughts (Psalm 139:1). He knows what we do, day by day and night by night (verses 2,3). He even knows our unspoken thoughts and words (verse 4). No wonder David wrote: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (verse 6).

But, what of our personalities, the qualities that make us who we are beyond physical appearances?

Turn to Psalm 56:8: "Thou tellest my wanderings." When we stray from God, or just wander aimlessly about not knowing what to do with ourselves, God knows it.

"Put thou *my tears* into thy bottle: are they not in *thy book*?" Yes, even our deepest emotions, moved by our deepest feelings are recorded IN GOD'S BOOK.

Through His Word and through His servants, God gives us an insight into the way He works. Thomas Aquinas never understood.

In discussing the subject with His disciples, Jesus reminded them: "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops" (Matthew 10:27).

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# You Can Take It With You!

## (Or: Everything You've Always Wanted To Know About What Happens When We Die)

All your life, you have heard the saying, "You can't take it with you." Obviously, as this old saying goes, we leave everything behind when we go to our graves--all our money, property, mementos, bric-a-brac, family albums, and treasured personal possessions. But, believe it or not, even though we eventually return to the ground from which we came, we can take with us our most precious possessions of all! In this encouraging, inspiring series, you will find answers to perplexing questions: "What if my spouse was not saved when he died?" "What about my father, who, though not a church-going man, was a good man, honest, and a good husband?" "What about our little girl, who was only two when she died?" "What about our son who was killed in Vietnam? He wasn't religious, but he was a good boy. Is he in hell? What happened to him when he died?"

by Garner Ted Armstrong

"There is nothing surer than death and taxes." We've all heard it. But, since the Bible speaks often of a resurrection from the dead, do we take anything with us to the grave? Do we bring anything back with us in the resurrection? Will we recognize our loved ones? If so, will we have our memories intact? And what about the bad memories? What about character, integrity, and knowledge?

When Job learned of the tragedies that had destroyed his family, his herds, and his home, he said: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Eternal gave, and the Eternal hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Eternal" (Job 1:21).

Like families of whom we hear in the news, in Homestead, Florida, or in California, or in the Midwest, who have lost everything to hurricane, fire, flood, mudslide, or tornado, Job was devastated. His children were dead. His cattle were dead. His home was destroyed.

Faced with this monumental tragedy, he could only contemplate the somber fact that all physical and material things are left behind when we die. He had nothing left. But then, he couldn't take it with him when it was his turn to be buried.

We've all heard it. We have all said it at one time or another. "You can't take it with you."

Solomon knew that merely piling up material goods was evil, that hoarding money was wrong. He said: "There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. As he came forth from his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which

he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that labored for the wind?" (Ecclesiastes 5:13-16).

The word *wind* in the book of Ecclesiastes is nearly always rendered "vanity." It is a book about vanity; about empty, useless agendas; about false hopes, wrong goals, and a "pursuit after wind." Solomon, too, knew we take nothing material with us to the grave.

Anciently, pagan kings and pharaohs were unwilling to believe these biblical philosophies. They not only thought they could take everything with them into the next life, they struggled all their lives, making life insufferable for thousands around them, to amass a gigantic fortune to accompany them in death, and, presumably, to provide them comforts in their expected life beyond the grave.

The largest monuments on earth are mute testimony to the attempt by the rulers of Egypt to "take it with them" when they died. The pyramids are tombs. With carefully concealed entry ways, and mazes of passages, and with myths, lies, and curses, the pharaohs hoped to thwart would-be grave robbers.

Of course, they failed.

Today, like the touring display of King Tut Akamen's golden treasures, their former wealth either ended up in national museums or were sold in bits and pieces on the black market. Their mummified bodies are, like their fabulous wealth, on display to the public.

In ancient China, rulers were sometimes buried in huge crypts, accompanied by dozens of wooden carved warriors on wooden horses, with gold, silver, jewelry, silks, arms, and exquisite works of art alongside them. Sometimes, loyal servants, wives, and bodyguards were either required to commit suicide or were put to death to accompany their ruler into the underworld. Not only did they think they could take material wealth with them, they thought they could take their friends, guards, and family.

But people in the modern Christian-professing world know better, so they are buried in their best (or favorite) suit, or dress. No wallet. No money. No personal possessions. For many, it is the only time they will ever ride in a limousine, and a very rare occasion, indeed, to wear their best suit and tie.

## **Every Human Dies, But Will Be Resurrected**

The Bible insists there is coming a time when God will raise the dead. When the dead are raised, what will they be like? Will they appear as they did in life?

God says He will raise *all* of the dead, no matter into which category, spiritually, they may have belonged.

Your Bible says: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). As God told Adam: "Dust thou art, and unto dust [soil, the

elements of this physical earth; the ground, from which we came] shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19). God had warned Adam that in the day he rebelled against God's commandment, he would surely incur the punishment for sin, which is *death*.

Notice: "For the wages of sin is *death*; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Here are two opposites. Death, and eternal life. Man has no inherent eternal life. We are mortal, physical, temporal. God says: "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them [their memory--their consciousness] is forgotten" (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

The opposite of death is eternal life.

Your Bible says eternal life is *only* available "through Jesus Christ our Lord." We do *not* have a so-called "immortal soul" dwelling within us from conception, or birth.

Eternal life is *only* possible by the process of spiritual salvation; through repentance of sin, baptism, and the receiving of God's Holy Spirit, which begets us as His children, called "new creatures in Christ."

We do not have eternal life by virtue of human birth. We are not immortal. Paul wrote: "Thou shalt keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ...Who *only* hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach..." (I Timothy 6:14- 16).

Yet, all your life, you have been taught the myth that man has an *immortal soul* from birth. You have been taught that the unsaved immediately go to an "ever-burning hell fire," there to shriek, scream, and writhe in unimaginable agony of fire day after day, month after month, year after year--thousands of lifetimes with never a respite!

All this, so goes the myth, simply because they were born in China, or India, or Bangladesh, or Pakistan, and *never heard the name of Jesus Christ!*

Is this true? Will God torture for countless billions of years human beings who never had a chance to be saved?

At the very foundational bedrock of biblical understanding is the knowledge of *what is man*. Are we an "immortal soul," dwelling in a temporary physical body? Though our bodies die, do our "souls" go immediately to heaven, or to an ever-burning hell, or to various stages or compartments in "purgatory"?

For a complete understanding, with plenty of absolute *proofs* presented from the pages of your own Bible, write, or call (903) 825-2525 immediately for your *free* copies of our booklets, *Do You Have An Immortal Soul? Believe It or Not, The Bible Does Not Promise*

*Heaven, and Is There A Real Hell Fire?* Each piece of literature is thoroughly researched, biblically substantiated.

You will see how the Hebrew word *nephesh*, which is the *only* word translated "soul" into the English Old Testament, may be used in more than a dozen different ways. You will see the word applied to dead bodies, to clams, lobsters, whales, or skunks! You will see how the word is used five times in the book of Genesis to indicate lower life forms in the oceans before it is ever used of man. Get those booklets, and prove all things (I Thessalonians 5:21).

No, a loving God does not torture human beings who never had a chance for salvation. The billions who have lived and died without having heard the name of Jesus Christ are not shrieking in hell. God is *love*, not hate. He is *merciful*, not vindictive. He desires to *save*, not destroy.

So remember, *every* human being who has ever lived, and who has died, or is yet to die, will be RESURRECTED at some point in time. The first death that occurs to all humans is "natural," because of the human aging process--our short, human life spans. That first death, *no matter how it comes*, whether in a murder, or tragic accident, or peacefully, under sedation at age 90, is not the "wages of sin."

Now, let's understand. Believe it or not, your Bible shows there will ultimately be *three different resurrections!*

## **The First Resurrection**

Christ said: "Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; And hath given Him authority to execute judgement also, because He is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [Greek, "judgment"]" (John 5:25-29).

Here, Jesus speaks of two categories of people; those who have done good, and those who have done evil. Two different resurrections, for different purposes. One, a resurrection "of life," and the other, a resurrection "of judgment."

The resurrection of life is spoken of in great detail in many places in the New Testament. Notice how Paul puts it: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the Firstfruits of them that slept" (I Corinthians 15:19,20).

The foundational bedrock of the Christian faith is the fact of Christ's resurrection.

The disciples were, at first, unwilling witnesses. They did not at first *believe* Jesus had truly been resurrected, that He was *alive* again! Only after many miraculous occurrences--materializing among them in a closed room, appearing to them along a lonely roadway, appearing to them on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, forcing Thomas to put his hand into the nail and spear wounds--did they finally come to *know* that "He is risen."

The *fact* of Christ's resurrection was the pivotal centerpiece of the testimony of the disciples. And why not? It was the most astounding, mind-boggling, stupendous event of their lives!

Peter said: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the *resurrection of Christ*, that His soul [Greek: *psuche*, meaning "life"] was not left in hell [Greek: *hades*, meaning "the grave"], neither His flesh did see corruption.

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

"For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:29-36).

The apostles of Christ had not "studied," or "proved" to themselves out of a set of "proof texts" that Christ was alive. They had *seen Him*. They didn't merely "believe," they **KNEW**. There is a difference.

Because they knew, they preached, powerfully, of the resurrection.

When they were being examined by the rulers, elders, and the scribes because of an astounding healing of a well-known crippled beggar at one of the city gates, Peter spoke up: "Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole: Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God *raised from the dead*, even by Him doth this man stand before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the Head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:8-12).

Salvation is only through Jesus Christ of Nazareth; only through *repentance* (Acts 2:38), baptism (Romans 6), and the receiving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32; I Corinthians



12:13). Then, when a person who is saved dies, he awaits the *first resurrection* from the dead, which takes place at the moment of Christ's return.

Notice that Jesus spoke only of *two* categories of people, those who were being saved, and those who had not yet been judged, who were unsaved. But Christ Himself, and the Scriptures, speak of *another category* of people--those who have had an opportunity for salvation, and have consciously rejected it. They are called the "incorrigibly wicked," and are characterized by the rich man of Luke 16, in the parable about Lazarus and the rich man. For a full understanding of this fascinating parable, write immediately for your free copy of our publication, *Is Lazarus In Heaven?*

Notice the clear statements of Paul concerning the first resurrection: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order [there is a sequence of events, a chronological *order* of events concerning the resurrections]: Christ the firstfruits; *afterward* they that are Christ's at *His coming*" (I Corinthians 15:22,23).

Many details are given concerning this first great resurrection of the "dead in Christ." Jesus said: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars [meteorites] shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds [these are living human beings, Christians who are engaged in accomplishing the work of God on this earth], from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:29-31).

Notice a corroborating scripture: "For I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [dead], that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which also sleep in Jesus [the dead in Christ] will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain [the "elect," who shall be gathered from all over the world by His angels] unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:13-17).

He is coming "with clouds," and the dead in Christ are to meet Him "in the air." Look up air in any encyclopedia. You will find it is the material mantle of gaseous substances, such as hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, ozone, and many other gases which make up our earth's atmosphere.

By way of comparison, if you have a small desk-sized globe of the world, the transparent lacquer finish on your globe is thicker than the actual mantle of air that surrounds our world.

Jesus is coming back to this earth.

The living saints are *not* taken to heaven at His coming, nor are the "dead in Christ" taken to heaven at His coming. He is *coming again*, not awaiting, in heaven, the arrival of souls, or of saints.

Notice: "Behold the *Day of the Lord* cometh...I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle...Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations [see Revelation 19:11-21], as when He fought in the day of battle: And *His feet shall stand IN THAT DAY* [the "Day of the Lord," or the time of God's intervention on earth; the time of the conclusion of the Battle of Armageddon; the time of the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; the time of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!] upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east...And the Lord shall be king over all the *earth*: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one" (Zechariah 14:1- 9).

Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth to rule it with a rod of iron (Isaiah 2:2-4; Isaiah 11:4- 16; Revelation 2:26, 3:21; Micah 4). When His startled disciples watched Him depart this earth, as He was literally being taken up into the air, and disappearing into the clouds overhead, the very first message to ever come down to this earth after Jesus went to heaven was: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This *same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall **SO COME IN LIKE MANNER AS YE HAVE SEEN HIM GO** into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

He is coming with clouds, into the lower atmosphere of this earth, and will continue His descent until He stands upon the Mount of Olives. Not only are the "dead in Christ" resurrected at the moment of Christ's return, but the *living* saints are miraculously *changed*.

Notice how Paul, in the famous "resurrection chapter" of the Bible, puts it: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep [die] but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump* [at the exact moment of Christ's return], for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and *we shall be changed*" (I Corinthians 15:50-52).

So at the very moment Jesus Christ arrives on this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, the "dead in Christ" are resurrected, caught up into the clouds, and are transported by Christ's angels to meet the returning Christ in the air.

At the very same moment, those *living* saints in whom the Spirit of God dwells will be *changed* from mortal to immortal; from flesh to spirit; from human to divine, and will likewise be caught up into the air, to meet the descending Christ over the Mount of Olives.

His feet will stand in that very day on the Mount of Olives, a short walk from Jerusalem! With Him will be all the great men and women of the Bible, from Seth to Noah; from Moses to Elijah; from John the Baptist to Paul. Also with Him will be millions of people

you and I have never known; people who lived their Christian lives in the valleys of Europe during the Middle Ages; people who were persecuted, perhaps put to death, for their faith in Christ.

Such is the Bible description of the *first* great resurrection. Now, we know who is resurrected when Christ returns. We know the living saints will be *changed* in the batting of an eyelash, and that they will not precede the dead in Christ, but that all will be caught up at the same time, the time of the voice of the archangel, the trump of God, and the Second Coming of Christ.

But what of the *second* resurrection of which Christ spoke? What of those who have *never had an opportunity* for salvation; who have never heard the gospel, never had a chance to either believe it, or reject it?

After all, the vast bulk of the world's population falls into this category. Christ said there would come a resurrection of "judgment."

## The Second Great Resurrection

Jesus Christ may well have spoken a word in the Aramaic language which would have been translated, "they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." The word in John 5:29 is *krisis* in the Greek language, and means "a *decision* for or against; a *tribunal*, justice, accusation, condemnation, damnation, judgment.

"His statement could easily have included *both* the "second resurrection" to judgment and the *third* resurrection to destruction, of which you will shortly read, but primarily indicated the *second* resurrection, which will be the greatest resurrection of the dead in all history, a resurrection for the purpose of "judgment."

What is judgment?

First, remember that a judgment is *not a sentencing*! In a trial, there is the trial phase, or the "judgment" phase, and then, if a person is found guilty, a "sentencing." Many people confuse the two.

Millions have assumed all their lives that in the "judgment" day, it is as if God, on a great throne, has gathered before Him countless millions of people. As each fearful, apprehensive person approaches His throne, angels are thumbing through "books," which supposedly contain a terrible record of every dirty, rotten, shameful thing the trembling person has done. A written record is there, proving what a terrible sinner or, in some cases, a good Christian, this person has been. Often as not, as this favored myth goes, God slams a gavel down on His desk, and a huge hole opens up beneath the feet of the unfortunate wretch who has just had all his dirty linen exposed before God and Christ, millions of angels, and the millions of people waiting their turn.

With a terrible shriek, the convicted sinner plunges down to hell! Then, perhaps the next person is told: "You get to go to heaven!"

How many stories are there about "Saint Peter and the pearly gates"? With a resounding "whoosh!" up he goes. But why go to "heaven" when apparently God is right there before him? Obviously, those who concocted this mythological scene forgot a few important details.

But all this is pure myth--superstition mixed with some of grandma's applesauce.

The *judgment* of which the Bible speaks takes place over a *lifetime*, not in a few seconds.

You and I are said to be *under judgment* right now. Each day we are *judged* by our innermost thoughts, our actions, and our words.

*How* are we being judged?

Peter wrote: "For the time is come that *judgment* must begin at the house of God [the church Jesus built]: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (I Peter 4:17,18). We are judged by the words of God's revelation to mankind, the Bible. The word *Bible* comes from the Greek *biblios*. It means "books." Standing by itself, the word *Bible* connotes nothing holy or sacred. Only when we say "Holy Bible" are we truly referring to the sacred Scriptures. God's Word is like a sharp, two-edged sword that discerns even the intent and innermost thought of the human heart (Hebrews 4:12). It is God's Word which judges us.

The word *judgment* is used many times in God's Word to connote "fairness" and "equity," as well as "discernment" between right and wrong. Notice some examples: "Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually" (Hosea 12:6).

The term is used both positively, as in discernment and fairness, and negatively, when men pervert judgement. Amos wrote: "Seek the Eternal, and ye shall live; lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel. Ye who turn judgement to wormwood [a bitter thing], and leave off righteousness in the earth...for I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right...seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Eternal, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate [among the elders; the officials, the courts]: it may be that the Eternal God will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph" (Amos 6- 15; excerpts).

Now, *when* will this greatest resurrection in all of history; the resurrection to *judgment*, or discernment, or trial, occur?

Notice how John described the glorious *first* resurrection, and then immediately described the *second* great general resurrection: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the *first* resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

Christ said, at His last supper: "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations, And I appoint unto you a *kingdom*, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; That ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:28-30).

Then, John said: "But the REST OF THE DEAD lived *not again until the thousand years were finished...*" (Revelation 20:5). As we have seen from many, many  scriptures, the *first* resurrection takes place at the precise instant of the Second Coming of Christ. At that event, the living saints are *changed* in a "moment, in the twinkling of an eye," and caught up together with the "dead in Christ" who are resurrected to meet the descending Christ in the air.

In that same day, they all descend to the Mount of Olives. Jesus Christ will establish His Kingdom, and rule this world with a rod of iron for one thousand long years. Read Revelation 5:10; 2:26; and 3:21.

But the "rest of the dead," including all the billions of human beings who *never so much as heard the name* of Jesus Christ, "lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

For one thousand years, *peace*, prosperity, happiness, and joy will have reigned on earth. Satan will have been hurled far away from the earth, into a symbolic "bottomless pit."

This great event is pictured by the typology of the "Day of Atonement." Anciently, a "fit man" was selected to take a "rough goat," over which all the sins of Israel had been placed, into a vast wilderness--so far away the goat would never find its way back to civilization (see Leviticus 16:20-22; 23:27-32).

John wrote: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more *till the thousand years should be fulfilled*: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Revelation 20:1-3).

As we have read, it is at the end of the millennial reign of Christ and the saints (who are born into the God Family at the first resurrection) when the "rest of the dead" are to come forth from their graves.

These are the *unsaved*, the countless hundreds of millions and *billions* of human beings who lived in places like Irkutsk, Afghanistan, Niger, Rwanda, India, China, Japan; who

lived from the time before the Flood of Noah until the time of the Battle of Armageddon. They are the Huns, the Magyars, the Celts, the Mayans, Aztecs, Incas, and the Toltecs. They are the ancient tribes of Africa, and the Vikings of Norway and Iceland.

Notice the biblical picture: "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great [the masses, peasants and farmers, together with the rich, kings and emperors] stand before God: and the books [Greek: *biblios*] were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged [remember, being "*judged*" is *not being sentenced!*] *out of those things which were written in the books* [Greek: *biblios*], according to their works" (Revelation 20:11,12).

Your God is consistent. He says He *does not change* (Malachi 3:6). The Bible says: "Jesus Christ, the *same*, yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

How is God judging His own people today?

He is judging them according to the *Bible*, which merely means "books." It is the "books" of divine writ, the *Holy Scriptures*, which judge us. God tells us we are *being judged daily* from the pages of His Holy Word!

God is not going to judge *differently* following the Millennium. He does not change. He is the *same*.

These countless millions of unsaved, ignorant, oftentimes savage people, who were in the most primitive, darkened state of Satan-inspired idolatry, are going to *learn* about God; they are going to learn in the *same way you are learning*, by hearing about, reading, studying, and being taught from the *Word of God!*

Millions of them lived during a time when *human sacrifice* to pagan gods was carried out! They are going to be *re-educated*, brought to a perfect knowledge of God and His purpose for mankind. They will have plenty of *time* to learn about God and His way of life.

Notice: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (Isaiah 65:17,18).

Clearly, this scripture tells us that memories of the old world, the sin-sick, crime-ridden, disease-infested, war-torn world in which you and I live today, "shall not be remembered, nor come to mind." If this is literal, and not merely metaphor, it indicates God will obliterate bad memories.

Though the following scriptures refer to a period of time called the "Great White Throne Judgment," they give us a pattern God will use concerning the lifespan of humans in the

Millennium--the amount of *time* available for people to learn, and to practice, God's way of life.

"There shall be no more thence an infant of days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isaiah 65:20).

More on this one-hundred-year period later. For now, notice that God has decreed that *after one hundred years*, if a person is still unrepentant, still unyielding to God's laws, still stiff-necked and hard-hearted, and living in sin, he will be "accursed," which means *condemned*. This truly IS a "sentencing"!

He is *judged* from God's Word during a one-hundred-year lifetime. If he or she is still refusing to obey God, to repent and be saved at the end of this time, a *sentence* is handed down. The sentence is *death* (Romans 6:23).

Notice it: "For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall *burn them up*, saith the Eternal of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Malachi 4:1).

Jesus said, in explaining the parable of the wheat and the tares to His disciples: "The field is the world [notice, it is *not* the church!]: the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares [a weed, sometimes called "cheat wheat"] are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 13:38-43).

Christ spoke of *Gehenna fire*. The term comes from a valley just outside the old city of Jerusalem, which served, anciently, as a town dump. Originally owned by the family of "Hinnom," or "Geena," as some scholars believe, this narrow valley was a place of "perpetual fires." Today, such practices are extremely rare in modern, developed countries. The stench from constantly smoldering refuse, garbage, and the like is intolerable.

But over two thousand years ago, just such fires continually burned in the piles of refuse, garbage, and discarded material in the valley of Hinnom. Some have proposed that, in the case of convicted criminals who had committed some great crimes and had been adjudged unworthy of decent burial, after being put to death by stoning, their battered bodies would be thrown into the perpetual fires of Hinnom.

Jesus used this noxious place as a *type*, or an example, of the dreaded "Gehenna fire" which shall destroy the incorrigibly wicked. Read Matthew 13:49,50.

Jesus used two different words which are translated "hell" into the English language. The most common word is *hades* in the Greek, and this word has nothing to do whatsoever with fires, or heat, or burning. It means, simply, "the grave."

Here is the proof. Notice what Jesus said about Capernaum, which had haughtily rejected His teachings; "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell [Greek: *hades*]: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matthew 11:23,24). As mentioned earlier, for a complete understanding of the origin of the word *hell*, write, or call (903) 825-2525, for your free copy of our brochure *Is There A Real Hell Fire?* It is thoroughly researched, with plenty of scriptural references and examples.

Briefly, the word *hell* in English comes from an old Nordic name for a false, pagan god, deriving from their superstitions about the "underworld of the dead." It was *hel*, or *behelian*. As late as the 1930s many American farmers still spoke of placing their potatoes in "hell" after harvesting. "Hell" merely meant a dark hole in the ground. It is the erroneous word used for the Greek word *hades* which *should* have always been translated "the grave."

But Jesus also spoke of a *real* "hell fire," which He called "Gehenna"!

Notice: "And if your right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Geena" (Matthew 5:29). Here, I left the *untranslated* original word Christ used in place. The English- language Bible says "hell." But Christ's audience knew immediately what He meant. He referred to the noxious garbage dump outside Jerusalem, with its fires which consumed trash as well as an occasional body of an animal, or a criminal.

As an aside, it is important to note that Christ spoke by way of *analogy*, or in metaphor, and not literally. How do we know this? Simply by comparing scripture with scripture; by allowing the Word of God to interpret itself, without attempting to put our own meaning into it.

Since our bodies are the "temple of the Holy Spirit," (Romans 6:13; I Corinthians 6:19,20), and the Bible absolutely forbids disfiguring or maiming our bodies, it is clear Jesus meant something else.

Obviously, He was showing how some human appetites, some desires, some passions, are as difficult to overcome, are such a *part* of some people, that rejecting them is like "pulling eye teeth," or gouging out an eye, or cutting off a hand.



It is also obvious that if a kleptomaniac (a compulsive thief) cut off his hand, he could still steal with the other hand; obvious that, if a person committed sins with the eye, he could still commit the same sins with the other eye.

The most important point to be made is that Jesus Christ said those who fail to *overcome sin* by the power of God, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, will be cast into *Gehenna fire*, there to be "burnt up," completely *destroyed*.

Notice the remainder of the passage you read in Malachi: "And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 4:3). Gehenna fire *consumes* the bodies of unrepentant sinners. They do not burn forever.

## **A One Hundred Year Lifespan**

Clearly, God shows us through Isaiah's 65th chapter that He will grant a *one hundred year lifespan* to human beings during the Great White Throne Judgment period, following the Millennium.

There is simply no other way to understand the verses we read. Notice it again: "There shall be no more thence an *infant of days*, nor an old man that hath not filled his days..." (Isaiah 65:20). This reveals a very important and essential truth. Many scriptures show that during the Millennium the human family will continue to marry and bear children. Many scriptures portray the happy, glorious Kingdom of God, in which families and children are present (see Isaiah 11:4-9; Ezekiel 37:24-26; Zechariah 8:5).

However, during this one-hundred-year period, those who are resurrected as infants, and all the little children born during the last months of the Millennium who have not yet matured, will be the *last* generation of the human family.

From the moment of the beginning of the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11,12), no more babies are conceived or born.

"There shall be no more thence [there--during this period] an *infant of days*..." no more one-day-old, or two-week-old babies.

Also, there will be no elderly of mid-seventies, or in their eighties, who die. There will not be an "old man that hath not filled his days," meaning lived to be one hundred.

Notice the rest of this important scripture: "For the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isaiah 65:20).

Obviously, these are two different categories. The child who dies at age one hundred is not classified as a "sinner," so the logical assumption is that the little infant who began to live at the beginning of this one-hundred-year period of judgment, and who arrives at his one hundredth birthday, simply dies of old age. Then what happens?

One of two possibilities, both completely substantiated in scripture; both already set as *precedents* by God Himself. One, he is either allowed to die the first physical death (for it is "appointed to men once to die") and then is instantly *resurrected* from the dead; or, two, he is *changed* from flesh to spirit, from human to divine, in an instant, in the "twinkling of an eye" (I Corinthians 15:50-52) at the moment of the completion of the one-hundred-year judgment period.

Of course, none of this really concerns you and me, except as a matter of information, a desire to satisfy curiosity about "what happens to other people," or to our loved ones.

And that curiosity, that concern for loved ones, is what we must now come to understand.

Millions have been left in fear and worry over the fate of beloved family members. They have been *deceived* by the false teachings of the "immortality of the soul" and the "ever-burning hell," or by vague, musty old concepts of "purgatory."

I was once asked by a neighbor of mine, not a member of God's church, about his father. He described his dad as a very "good and decent" man. His dad had worked all his life for the U.S. Postal Service. He had been a good father, a provider for his family of four. He had been faithful to his wife, and had not been a gambler, or a drunkard. His main passion in life, after his early shift delivering mail, was to simply go to one of his favorite lakes and fish.

"But what happened to him when he died?" my neighbor asked. "I know he was not a Christian. He almost never went to church except when my mother would beg him to on a special occasion. But he didn't cuss, or drink, or smoke, or anything like that. So, since he wasn't 'saved,' as they say, but yet he was a 'good man,' did he go to hell?"

Literally millions of puzzled relatives have wondered about such things. And in the answer to these precise questions is some of the very *best news you could ever hear!*

To *understand*, you need to know what your Bible says about the state of the dead.

## **What Is It Like To Be Dead?**

God says: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: *as the one dieth, so dieth the other*; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Ecclesiastes 3:19,20).

God's Word says men die in the same fashion as cows, horses, dogs, or sheep. Their condition in death is the *same*. They both owe their lives to the oxygen in the air. When they die, they both decay, and return to the soil from which they come.

Are the dead *conscious* in some way?

"For the living know that they shall die; but the dead *know not any thing*, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them [their memory--their conscious thought] is forgotten" (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

David knew this. He knew that man returns to the "dust," to the elements of the soil, from which we came. He wrote: "What profit is there in my blood, which I go down to the pit [Hebrew: *sheol*, usually translated "hell," erroneously]? Shall the *dust* praise Thee? Shall it declare Thy truth?" (Psalm 30:9).

Thus, your Bible shows that when humans die, they are no longer conscious. They have no thoughts, no memory, no awareness. The Bible describes death as the deepest kind of sleep--black, stygian *oblivion*--a complete unawareness of the passage of time; no pain, no worry, no memory.

Notice: "While I live I will praise the Eternal: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth [he expires], he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:2-4).

It is not the clever catch-phrase of some theologian to refer to death as "sleep."

God's Word refers to the dead in Christ as those who "sleep in Jesus" (I Thessalonians 4:14). Notice some other examples: "For this cause [not discerning the Lord's body in connection with the Lord's Supper, or Communion] many are weak and sickly among you, and many *sleep*" (I Corinthians 11:30).

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the *dead* shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Corinthians 15:52).

The *dead know not anything*, your Bible says. They have *no memory*. They are characterized as being in the most profound *sleep*, with no conscious thought, no awareness. At the instant of the resurrection, they will once again be thinking, remembering, conscious beings. To them, it will have been as if, from the moment of death to the moment of the resurrection, only a *fraction of a second, the twinkling of an eye*, had passed!

Millions of them will say: "What happened just then?" Millions will not even *know* they were dead, for millions have died so suddenly there was no time for thought, or even pain!

If you have any questions at all about whether the dead are *conscious*, they should have been put to rest by these divinely-revealed truths. For further study, write or call for your free copy of *Do You Have An Immortal Soul?*

Continued next issue . . .

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## The Blast, the Blame, the Blasphemy

### DEATH OF THE INNOCENTS-TERRORISM AT HOME

Suddenly, Americans have been savagely propelled into the bloody reality of terrorism. Always before, millions of Americans watched their television sets displaying the shattered remains of buildings in Beirut, or Germany, or Northern Ireland, or London, or Buenos Aires. Always before, it was a militant Middle-Eastern group who planted bombs aboard airliners, or hijacked Greek cruise ships, or savagely attacked Olympic athletes. But on the morning of April 19, 1995- hideous, bloody, shocking terrorism blasted apart the last of American innocence. If the World Trade Center was a wake-up call, Oklahoma City was a hammer to the head. Why? Why Oklahoma City? Who are these people who would so callously blast innocent men, women, and little children to bits? Terrorism is not limited to any one nation. Is there any common thread that links terrorist acts?

by Garner Ted Armstrong

The morning after the blast, I called a friend, a minister of the Church of God, in Oklahoma City, Mr. Leslie Pope, to see how he and his family had been affected by the blast.

He told me his son Larry had been working inside the building across the street. "He was standing against an air-conditioning duct in an inside room, and the explosion knocked him across the room; knocked him down."

Apparently, the sudden, massive outrush of expanding gas had sought every opening to escape; had instantly expanded the duct, knocking Larry off his feet.

He then described how Larry had joined those who were trying to rescue victims of the blast; how he saw one body that had been completely ripped apart, another that had been decapitated.

In the early confusion, the Pope family had heard that the blast had occurred in the building in which their son was working. For some hours, he helped rescue workers until all civilians were ordered away from the site. He arrived home bruised, stiff and sore, shocked from what he had seen. His father said, "He got home to lots of hugs, I'll tell you that."

It was an emotional phone call. For Mr. Pope, and for me.

Even as the proverbial stone, cast into the pond, sends tiny ripples to the farthest shore, so the shock wave from the Oklahoma City bombing spread across the nation, indeed, around the world. Millions were stunned beyond belief.

Instantly, families, friends, rescue workers and officials from many federal, state and local agencies responded. Tirelessly, they labored against almost impossible odds, searching through a shattered building whose entire front had been blown off; searching beneath tons of broken concrete, which threatened to give way at any moment, trying to find living survivors and bring out the dead.

Churches, relief agencies, private persons lined up to give blood. People drove to Oklahoma City from many other states, trying to help. Firemen, rescue workers from far away Idaho and other western states came to serve.

On a national day of mourning called by the president, special memorial services were held on the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, attended by many officials, including the governor and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Clinton, and Dr. Billy Graham.

Millions wept for Oklahoma City as they watched the moving ceremony, saw the faces of the grieving families. Especially poignant was the young mother in the front row, clutching pictures of her two little boys and some teddy bears-both boys had been killed in the blast.

A photographer captured a picture which leapt onto the front pages of major news magazines within days-tiny Baylee Almon, who had celebrated her first birthday only the previous day, lay lifeless in firefighter Chris Fields' arms, her bloody, broken little body limp in death.

## **A Special Television Program**

The following Tuesday, when I taped my weekly television program for release on Saturday and Sunday, I addressed this terrible tragedy.

I spoke with some emotion about far-out extremists; about how utterly ludicrous, how utterly stupid, it is for someone to commit such an act. "How can someone," I asked, "upset over what happened near Waco, say to himself, 'You killed those innocent people down there in Waco!' (people he had never met and didn't know) and then say, 'So I am going to kill innocent people in Oklahoma City!'"

I spoke of the "human flotsam" who would carry out such a cruel, heartless, vicious act. Once it was revealed an arrest had been made, and that others were in the offing, it was obvious the bombing was the work of middle-Americans who were extremist in their views-people who are consumed with virulent hatred against their own government, and against government agencies, such as the BATF, the FBI, CIA, and IRS.

I urged calm. I spoke of Christ's example. I called for sanity, for reason, for prayer. I told the people in Oklahoma City our prayers were with them.

Shockingly, we received about a dozen hate-filled calls following that program. In one case, a man threatened to come to our offices and *kill me and the entire staff!* Because I mentioned the tears I had shed over the bloody scenes of tiny tots being carried lifeless from the building, one woman angrily told one of our telephone operators, "Well, I didn't see him shedding any tears over those children in Waco!"

That woman demanded her name be removed from our mailing list. I have no idea who she is, for I didn't ask. However, I am only too happy to remove the name of a person with that kind of irrational hatred from our list. She didn't see me crying over the children in Waco because she wasn't sitting in my office or my living room when I cried over those children, and because I don't cry on her demand!

She didn't see me crying for the children in Waco because she was not present with me when the terrible tragedy there unfolded! But her vicious and slanderous remark is obvious on its face for its wholly outrageous point: She plainly implied I was glad the children died in Waco-that I am somehow in sympathy with the BATF's handling of the situation there!

If that woman should read these words, which I doubt, since she has demanded her name be removed from our mailing list, I would suggest she get down on her knees and pray to

her Creator for repentance, for God's Spirit of forgiveness, believing the best, and tolerance.

I was deeply stricken by the fiery death of those innocent children in Waco. I was sickened by the death of all-including their parents, and Koresh himself. I believed his oft-reported concepts of the "seven seals" were wildly off course; that his rantings about his own prominence in some imagined "Armageddon" involving himself and his followers was sheer paranoia.

However, I also accept the fact that Koresh had a *right* to believe whatever he wished; that his followers had a right to follow him in those beliefs. I absolutely, categorically, *disagreed* with government tactics, including the initial armed assault, the interminable standoff, the noise, the helicopters, the use of chemical weapons, and the final assault with a massive tank! I have often stated my disagreements with such brutal tactics. But the last thing on earth I would ever think of doing would be to *kill some innocent children because my government perpetrated some acts which caused the death of other innocent children!*

The solution in a democratic society for government abuses is available through democratic means.

That means demonstrations, not demolitions. It means talk, talk, and more talk, not terror. It means writing letters to the news media, to state and federal officials, to senators and congressmen. It means holding rallies, speaking out, being heard. It means ballots, not bullets, bombast, not bombs!

Unfortunately, there are those who would murder the innocent, somehow convincing themselves little one-year-olds are "the enemy." I hope each individual who reads this magazine will be utterly unable to *understand* how such perverted minds work.

## Goals of Terrorists

Terrorists seek, first of all, to create a climate of rank *terror* in the minds of their perceived enemies. Usually, the true "enemy" of the terrorist is the *government*, perhaps symbolized by one single leader, or a particular political party.

Terrorists seek to break the political will of individuals and governments to continue to resist the overthrow of the status quo.

Terrorists have no sense of pity, empathy, or remorse toward their innocent victims. Regardless of the amount of human suffering; of the loss of life, maiming, dismembering, and lasting emotional and mental trauma they cause, they measure their "success" only by the size of the headlines, the amount of media time given to the event.

Therefore, the larger the bomb, the greater the destruction, the greater the loss of human life, the greater the "success" of their mission.

## **We Do Not Negotiate With Terrorists**

For decades, tiny Israel pursued the policy, no matter how painful, of refusing to negotiate with terrorists. Bombings, mortar, rocket and artillery barrages against peaceful farms and *kibbutzim*, machine-gun attacks against civilian buses, the capture of military or civilian hostages-it mattered not.

The government stood firm.

If hostages were taken, they were considered as casualties. No bargaining. No negotiating.

Of course, Israel would make every effort to retaliate. Thus, if a border kibbutz was viciously attacked and innocent women and children killed, it would be only a matter of hours until Israeli Air Force fighter bombers attacked known terrorist hideouts, training camps, or villages harboring terrorists.

When innocent people were hijacked by the insane dictator, Idi Amin, who was cooperating with Mideastern terrorists, and former members of the Baader Meinhof gang were taken to the Entebbe Airport in Uganda, Israel staged one of the most sensational rescues of all times.

The sensational rescue was covered in a book and a major motion picture.

Yet, with the change of government in Israel to the more moderate Yitzhak Rabin, a search for peace with the PLO began. Today, vicious extremists in both the Israeli and Palestinian camps seek to destroy the peace process by carrying out bombings, shootings, knifings-anything to murder their perceived enemies and prevent the gradual implementation of Palestinian autonomy.

How times change.

Today, Israel is engaged in ongoing negotiations with Yassir Arafat, who personally ordered who knows how many vicious terrorist attacks against innocent Israeli civilians. Now, Arafat himself is the target of vicious hate mongers of "HAMAS," who seek to derail any attempt at peace in the Mideast.

Terrorism is not new. It is as old as civilization itself. Americans, however, were not accustomed to massive terrorism in-side America. Certainly, not in the heartland, the Bible belt, the bastion of American conservatism.

Now, terrorism rears its hideous head here.

## **Inside the Mind of a Terrorist**



Who do you hate? If the "Dean Martin Show" were still on television today, perhaps his opening line would be, "Everybody hates somebody, sometime...." Even the most cursory glance at the world reveals seething hatreds fueling acts of the most vicious kind from Rwanda to Bosnia; from South Africa to Northern Ireland; from Mexico to Chechnya.

Greeks and Turks hate each other. Jews hate Arabs, and Arabs hate Jews. Blacks hate whites, and whites hate blacks. Ibos hate Hausas, while Zulus hate Matabeles, and Hindus hate Muslims. Serbs hate Croats, while Greeks hate Bosnians, and the Russians hate the Germans. The Flemish hate the Walloons, the Algerians hate the French, Libyans hate Americans, and Iranians hate Iraqis, while Iraqis hate almost everybody. Albanians hate the Italians, Egyptians hate Israelis, Quebecois separatists hate other Canadians and the government, while skinheads hate the Jews, the FBI, the BATF, the U.S. government, the flag, bankers, Republicans, Democrats, and the CIA. The South Koreans hate the North Koreans, and you and I could never tell them apart, while Koreans hate the Japanese, who are contemptuous of the Ainu. Taiwanese hate the Chinese, who are the same people. Tutsis hate the Hutus, and perhaps a million have died in vicious machete attacks in Rwanda, where you and I could never tell them apart.

There is hatred enough in the world. Plenty of hatred to go around.

Whom do you hate? Which countries, which races, which nationalities do you hate? Many southerners in the United States are still seething from the Civil War, fought by their grandparents and great-grandparents; some still display the Confederate flag, while blacks and northerners call it a "symbol of hate" and sue to have it removed from public buildings. Hate jokes between Oklahoma and Texas, between Italians and "Polacks," between Norwegians and Finns, between North and South, between black and white, white and Chicanos, Chicanos and oriental are commonplace throughout the U.S. The hate names are rife: Polack, bohunkie, slick, greaser, night fighter, pasty, kike, gook, slope, wop, pepper belly, spade, nigger, Aggie, dork, jerk-the epithets and hateful slang names are too numerous to name, for there are hundreds of them.

From the earliest recollections of little children, parents pass on hatred, suspicion, resentment, paranoia. People think: "You are different from me, so I hate you." "You dress differently, talk differently, so I hate you." "I have never met you, so I hate you." "You come from a different country, so I hate you." "You are 'the man,' who will brutalize me if you get the chance, so I hate you."

Time and time again, we have observed scenes of little children of different races and cultural backgrounds playing happily together. Of and by themselves, these innocent, sweet, trusting little human beings would not hate.

But after a few years with *their* parents, and the ideas among their peers handed down by their parents, these growing children learn where their mistrust, their suspicions, their resentments, and their hatreds should be directed.

I have said for decades, "No one knows quite how to hate so well as religious people." Another oft-repeated quote: "You'd better be careful about some of these religious people-if you get too close to them, you might get yourself killed."

Those statements are learned from a vast amount of history, from the Bible, and from present-day news. Jim Jones and his fanatical followers-the hideous specter of hundreds of human beings lining up to commit mass suicide by drinking deadly poison-is a poignant example. The more recent mass, simultaneous suicide of fringe religious groups in Switzerland and Canada is another. Koresh and his ideas of "Armageddon" which somehow involved him, and the helpless little children that were shot *within* the compound, is yet another.

The Pharisees hated Jesus Christ with a vicious, virulent hatred. Continually, they tried to have Him killed (John 7:1). Of these hating people, Christ said: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you...He that hateth Me hateth My Father also" (John 15:17-27).

Speaking of His disciples in the latter days, Christ said: "They shall put you out of the synagogues [these are religious people; this is what is to happen inside churches!]: yea, the time cometh, that WHOSOEVER KILLETH YOU WILL THINK THAT HE DOETH GOD SERVICE" (John 16:1,2).

Can you imagine it?

When someone is so filled with hatred they blasphemously claim *God as their ally*, and commit *murder*, believing they have *done God's will*, they have reached the ultimate abyss of viciousness, the lowest level of Satanic hate.

## **The Hatred of Satan**

Satan the devil seethes with *hatred*. He was in the Garden of Eden seeking to wreck God's plan from the beginning. He so perverted the human race in the first thousand years of human history that God could save only eight persons from extinction in the Flood.

Satan was there, at the birth of Christ, to cause a genocidal maniac to order the deaths of thousands of innocent little babies and children up to two years of age, in an attempt to kill Christ.

He was there at Christ's baptism, to tempt Him. He entered personally into Judas Iscariot to betray Christ, and so be instrumental in His death.

Satan is the "god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4), who *blinds* the minds of those who will not accept the truth of God. He is called the "prince of the power of the air," who holds sway over the nations of this earth (Revelation 12:9). He is vicious, virulently

angry, hateful. He is called "the *accuser* of the brethren" (Revelation 12:10), who "accuses God's people day and night." He is called a "roaring lion" who walks about, seeking whom he might devour (I Peter 5:8).

Hatred is the diametric *opposite* of love.

But *God IS LOVE* (I John 4:16). This does not mean God is a vague "idea," or that God is some disembodied "principle" of love, as opposed to hatred. God IS, and His whole nature and character is defined by *love*

. Love is an outgoing concern for the one being loved. It is gentleness, consideration, empathy, protectiveness, forgiveness, under-standing, patience, kindness, goodness.

The *law* of God is a law of *love*

. Jesus Christ described the Holy Spirit as being like "rivers of living waters." The *channel* through which those living waters of God's Spirit flows is the *Ten Commandments*. Please write for our booklets, *Who, What, is God?* and *The Ten Command-ments*

. God tells us: "For this is the love of God, that we *keep His commandments*: for His commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). A cardinal point of God's righteous law is "Thou shalt not kill!" Jesus defined this law even further, lifting it to a *spiritual* plane, applying it as a *New Covenant law*: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.' But I say unto you, '*Love your enemies*, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven...'" (Matthew 5:43-45).

Strangely, some "survivalist" and "white supremacist" groups actually *wrap themselves in the cloak of the Christian religion*. How *strange*. Their hatreds, suspicions and paranoia are soundly *condemned* by Jesus Christ!

It is an utter *blasphemy* for those who would resort to the most heartless acts, such as shootings, knifings, and bombings-taking innocent human life-to claim *Christianity* as their banner. Instead, they are children of Satan, whose mind is perverted with hatred unbridled. Wrath without end. Vitriol undiluted. Vengeance, anger, viciousness, with no conscience.

You cannot understand the mind of a terrorist. It is an *inhuman* mind. Devoid of common human emotions such as compassion, pity, empathy, sympathy, remorse. Devoid of conscience.

Terrorists kill humans the way humans kill flies and cockroaches-without another thought. This is satanic. It is hatred of the blackest kind.

## Prophecies of the Times

Millions of professing Christians believe there is a devil. They hear sermons about Satan. They are urged to resist his evil influence.

How many know that he is real, that he has countless millions of evil spirits, fallen angels, called "demons," who do his bidding? (See Revelation 12:9; II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; I Peter 5:8.)

Satan *hates humanity*. He knows his time is limited on this earth; he knows that the saints shall "judge angels" (I Corinthians 6:3).

The Bible plainly says Satan will have the greatest wrath; he will seethe with the most vicious hatred, *just before the divine intervention of God* in human affairs (Revelation 12:12).

We see the evidence of this all around us. The horrible image of that blasted out building will live in infamy for the rest of this age. It will no doubt be called to mind by Christ Himself in the Millennium as an example of hate.

Today, even in the beloved United States of America, we are being afflicted by satanic hate.

Paul was inspired to write about the carnal mind in the last days. He said: "This know also, that in the last days *perilous times* shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" (II Timothy 3:1,2).

Self-love is idolatry. Extreme selfishness, the desire of a person to *have his own way* above all else, is a twisted perversion. Arrogance, pride, the smug conceits of a deceived ignoramus are vivid evidence of the disease of "self-love" which afflicts the minds of vicious people who would blast the life out of innocent victims in order to make some political point.

God's Word continues, saying these people will be "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good" (II Timothy 3:3).

The heartless cruelty of a child killer is certainly described here. They have no "natural affection." Their twisted minds do not contain pity, compassion, empathy toward the feelings of others. They murder in cold dispassion. Notice God's Word says men will be "fierce," and will *despise* those who believe in God's goodness.

Their virulent ferocity is only made the more hateful when they see the reaction of good people to evil. Forgiveness, gentleness, goodness, meekness, kindness-these are utterly foreign to such people, even as they are foreign to Satan the devil.

"Traitors, heady [headstrong, self-willed], highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Having a *form of godliness*, but denying the power thereof" (II Timothy 3:4,5). Some fanatics, such as those in the Mideast who commit suicide by wrapping semtex around themselves and walking into a crowd at a bus stop, are *very religious* people. But they *deny the power* of God to redress wrong. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." But to these people, they will take the law into their own hands. They will exact vengeance. Hating some agency, or branch of government, or imagined conspiracy, they decide to *kill the innocent*. Thus, they blasphemously trample over the very principles in which they claim to believe.

Many such people dress themselves in the flag, mouth super-patriotic slogans, and frequently refer to "God and country."

Yet, they deny the *power* of God. They do not believe in and expect the intervention of a divine, all-wise, all-powerful God, Who will send Jesus Christ to *rule this world with a rod of iron* (Revelation 2:26). They do not hope for, or pray for, God's *Kingdom* to come to right the wrongs.

No, they arrogate to themselves the powers of God.

*They will exact vengeance!*

Two wrongs don't make a right. Poison plus poison does not equal no poison. Sin added to sin does not erase sin. The idiotic reasoning, "You (meaning people they don't know, have never met, and can't identify) hurt some people in Waco, so I will kill hundreds of innocent people, including tiny children, in Oklahoma City," is vile, stupid, vicious, calloused, filthy, evil, senseless, and satanic.

The far-out extremists, instead of taking heart over November 1994 elections, Newt Gingrich and the "Contract with America," proposed tax relief, the defeat of Hillary Clinton's health care proposals, the possibility of Arney's flat tax proposals being adopted in some form, things moving in a more conservative direction, have, instead, virtually destroyed their own cause! They have handed the government a stick with which to beat them over the head, caused a furious debate in Congress, caused expenditure of billions in heightened security at government buildings, created a climate of fear and mistrust, made millions of formerly sympathetic Americans angry at their organizations, and brought about a move toward greater government powers for infiltration, spying, and clamping down on fringe groups.

## **What Should Be the Christian Response?**

When Jesus Christ was on trial for His life, He told Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom *were* of this world, *then would My servants fight*, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

When Peter tried to kill the servant of the high priest, Christ rebuked him, saying: "All they that take [up] the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26:51,52).

Those who understand Christ's gospel know that He preached a message about a divine government which He is to establish at His Second Coming.

They know God's servants are not "of the world" (I John 2:15); that they do not engage in worldly politics, nor participate in the world's guerrilla movements, fringe groups, or wars!

To them, they are citizens of a *future kingdom* which is not yet established. Christ told them to pray, "Thy Kingdom come," not attempt to violently overthrow existing governments. Write for our free booklets, *Just What Is the Kingdom of God?* and *What is the Real Gospel?*

Finally, God's Word tells Christians: "Let every soul [person] be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation [margin]" (Romans 13:1,2).

The apostle Paul exercised his right of citizenship by appealing to due process (Acts 25:10-12)-stating he appealed to Caesar. Christians today should likewise *work within the law*, not allow themselves to become victim to Satan's seething hatreds.

Even as Christ predicted, you and I are living in a time when "because *iniquity* [sin! lawlessness!] shall abound, the *love* of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12).

*Pray* for the families of the victims of that vicious, satanic, hateful bombing in Oklahoma City. Pray for your country. Pray for your leaders. Then, if you feel you must personally do something about conditions, *do so entirely within the law!*

It is *legal* for you to speak, write, talk, protest, demonstrate, and then speak, write, talk and demonstrate some more! It is *legal* for you to voice your opinion!

But always remember, Jesus Christ plainly says His Kingdom is *not of this world. It is not of this time.* His citizens look for a better world to come, and they know it will be brought about by God's divine power, not by their own human intervention.