

GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN AND THE ANGELS



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Introduction

We owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to Mr Herbert W. Armstrong for being the instrument through who God revealed a tremendous amount of His truth to those of us in the Church of God.

Of all the precious truths God revealed to us through Mr Armstrong one of the greatest and most profound truths He revealed was that of the incredible potential for all mankind of one day becoming full sons and daughters of God. It staggers the mind this "clod to God" program that God has in store for us when you let it truly sink in and consider the enormous transformation that we will go through at the resurrection if we overcome sin in this life with the help of Almighty God!

Mr Armstrong wrote two tremendous books which covered this awesome subject - "The Incredible Human Potential" (1978) and "Mystery of the Ages" (1985). They both covered the WHOLE of God's plan from just God and the Word to the creation of angels, the sin of the earthly angels, why God wanted to reproduce Himself and how He purposed to do that, right through to the Incredible Human Potential of inheriting the universe.

Though I agree with the vast majority of what Mr Armstrong wrote about God's plan in those two books there are a few points that he covers that should be re-evaluated and looked at in a new way. There are also other questions that spring from the material that he covers that we should also look at.

In The Beginning

With that in mind let's let Mr Armstrong open up the story in the beautiful, clear and simplistic way that few writers come near to:

Did you ever start viewing a motion picture when it was more than half way through? You probably were bewildered—not having seen what occurred before and led up to the point where you first began to see. It's the same in coming to an UNDERSTANDING of what God has prepared for humanity—of the ultimate human potential. True understanding can come only by beginning the story at the beginning!

If one should ask, where do you find the actual beginning of events in the Bible, most who possess even a slight knowledge of the world's 'best seller' would say, 'Why in Genesis chapter one verse one, of course.'

WRONG! The real beginning, in order of time sequence, is found in the New Testament, in the first chapter of John, verse one. The events portrayed in Genesis occurred later—possibly even millions of years later. But the event recorded in John 1:1 reveals an existence perhaps long prior to the time God created the earth and the material universe.

Note it: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.' It continues, 'The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.' The term 'all things' is translated in Hebrews 1:3, in the Moffatt translation, as 'the UNIVERSE.' The entire UNIVERSE was made by Him! The fourteenth verse of John 1 says: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.'

The Personage called the Word was the one who ultimately—yet more than 1900 years ago—was born Jesus Christ. The name, 'the Word,' is translated from the original Greek text, and means, literally, just what is translated into English—'Spokesman.' But He was not the Son of God 'in the beginning.' Yet the Scriptures reveal that He has always existed, and always will—'from eternity to eternity.' He was 'without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life...' (Heb. 7:3).

So think on this, if you will! Originally there existed only these two Spirit Personages, self-existent. They had creative powers—they had perfect supreme minds—they possessed perfect, holy and righteous CHARACTER. But THERE WAS NONE ELSE—NOTHING ELSE! There was no matter—no material universe—YET! No other living being or thing. Only these two, equal in mind and powers, except that God was supreme in authority, and the Word in perfect harmony under that authority. They were of one mind, in absolute agreement.

But ALL THINGS—the universe and everything existing in it—were made by the Personage called the Word. Yet, as we read in Ephesians 3:9: 'God ... created ALL THINGS by Jesus Christ.' And prior to becoming Jesus Christ, He was 'the Word!' Also, in His human life Jesus said He spoke only as the Father directed.

Yes, THINK! In the eternity even prior to 'prehistory' there were these two Supreme Beings. Alone! In the emptiness of space! No other life forms—no other living beings! Nothing else!" (Incredible Human Potential, p34-36).

Was Christ Created?

Imagine that - nothing but these two beings - God the Father and the one who would become known as Jesus Christ. Two beings who are both God beings - two beings who are BOTH GOD (John 1:1) for God is a **KIND** of being just as man is a kind of being. God is a family - the Father and the Son. God is the family name just as human families share a surname. Mr Armstrong tells us that they have both existed from past eternity.

Therein lies our first controversy that has been debated in the Church of God, not just in recent years, but for centuries if you care to dig into the history of the debate. There has for much of the history of the church existed a minority who believe that Christ was a created being, that He was the first being that was ever created before anything else. Even the Jehovah Witnesses believe in this idea.

I never took much of an interest in the debate about whether Christ was created until I ran across a scripture that throws a spanner into the works regarding this issue. On the traditional side of the argument that the church has believed it seems a pretty clear cut case. Hebrews 7:3 that says that Christ, who most of the Church of God believes to be Melchizedek, is said to be "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither

beginning of days nor end of life.” Not everyone takes the view that this is referring to Jesus Christ.

Micah 5:2, on the other hand, is very clearly referring to Jesus Christ. It says: “And you, Bethlehem Ephratah, you being least among the thousands of Judah, out of you He shall come forth to Me, to become Ruler in Israel, **He whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.**”

The King James translation says “from everlasting”. The Hebrew word “olam” used at the end of the verse does refer to eternity and Bethlehem is where the Messiah was born so this clear verse has to be our starting point in any discussion on whether Christ was created or not. It has to be our default position if there is any doubt on the subject.

Let’s now take the scripture that I said above throws a bit of a spanner in the works on this issue which appears, at face value, to support the other side of the argument. It’s found in John 5:26. We read, “For as the Father has life in himself so He (the Father) has **GRANTED** the Son to have life in Himself.”

How on earth could the Father grant Christ life inherent if He has always had it? Doesn’t it say that Christ has no beginning or end in Hebrews 7:3 and likewise in Micah 5:2? How do we reconcile these verses which seem to contradict each other?

First of all, let me state that I’m not taking John 5:26 out of context. The word granted is in the past tense and is here stated before Christ was crucified so it doesn’t refer to the Father restoring Christ’s life after His crucifixion.

Of the two commentaries that I have, which support the traditional side of the argument, their explanation of the phrase “the Father has granted the Son to have life in Himself” is that Christ has been given the authority by the Father to give and take life as He is the way, the truth and the life and no-one has life except by Him.

I’m not fully convinced of that explanation because it says He’s been given life in Himself. It doesn’t seem to indicate His authority over the life of others based on them living His way. Another explanation could be the Father’s begetting of His physical life in the womb of Mary. I am not totally convinced of this either as the life the Son has in Himself is described as the same life the Father has in Himself - eternal life.

I am open to any other explanations other than the simple reading of it that seemingly says that the Father gave the Son, by creation, eternal life way back at the beginning of time.

At the Bunbury, Australia Global Feast site in 1996 David Pack gave a sermon on why we should want eternal life. He said that in Romans 2:6-7 (KJV) it says that we seek BOTH eternal life and immortality. He felt that there was a difference between the two. Immortality is like a stick which has a beginning but no end whereas eternal life goes infinitely in both directions.

IF that is the case, which I’m also not totally convinced of, then the reason we would have eternal life in the Kingdom would be, because we would be God beings composed of the Holy Spirit, we would be tapped into all the knowledge and experiences of the Father as if we had no beginning.

That statement really got my attention. Maybe Mr Pack’s explanation of eternal life might explain our apparent contradiction we’ve been discussing. Maybe, because Christ has always been a God being composed of the Holy Spirit, Christ has always been tapped into

all the knowledge and experiences of the Father as if He had no beginning and therefore He has eternal life that way.

A friend of mine in Sydney once while we were having a discussion about the creation of Eve asked me, "Could God have cloned Himself in a similar way back before He created the angels?"

Both Micah 5:2 and Hebrews 7:3 appear to indicate that Jesus as the Word (John 1:1-14) has existed since past eternity.

An alternative explanation for these verses might be, as strange as it might sound, that Christ was created **before God created time**. We talk about time but the essence of what time is defies our ability to define or explain it. No one truly understands what time really is.

Just as an aside, I heard once that a minister asked a Hebrew scholar about the meaning of the word YHVH translated as LORD or the Eternal in the Old Testament. He didn't agree that "the Eternal" was the best translation for it because the word eternal is connected to time. He felt that the best translation for it was "**the Timeless One**" - someone who transcends time. An interesting thought.

I'm not saying that God cloning Himself is what actually happened at the dawn of time. I'm just trying to follow through on both possibilities to the fullest degree to come up with a possible verdict.

Could this be how it happened? In the beginning of time God may well have cloned Himself with perhaps a similar but slightly younger looking face. His pre-eminence over all the angels would still apply because Christ has never sinned; He was one who created the whole universe including the angels, and the fact that He is comprised of the Holy Spirit, as opposed to just angelic spirit.

This alternative explanation might answer a few other questions. If God the Father did clone Himself this may explain why the Word has always been subject in authority to the Father and enhance the understanding of some of the scriptures that constantly talk about the Father and the Son being one as well as why Christ is called "everlasting Father" in Isaiah 9:6-7.

It may also be at the heart of the gut feeling why many people have leaned in this direction on this subject. **Think on this point. It's hard enough to comprehend the fact that a perfect, loving, almighty being has ALWAYS existed – let alone two of them!**

There are two other scriptures that are used frequently by those who believe that Christ was created before anything else was created. The first is Colossians 1:13-15 which says: "For He has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, **THE FIRST-BORN OF ALL CREATION.**"

The other scripture is found in Revelation 3:14. In the book of Revelation, in the seven letters to the seven churches, Jesus Christ said to the Church in Laodicea: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, **THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD**" (Revelation 3:14).

If Christ wasn't created then one can ask, "How can He be the beginning of the creation of God?" Does this mean that He was created before anything else was created? Does it mean that He is the beginning of the creation because He was the one who created the universe according to the Father's will? Does it mean that He is the beginning of the creation of

billions of God beings after going through the process of being begotten by the Holy Spirit through Mary and then born as a spirit God being at His resurrection. The context of the verses don't make it clear which of the three options Paul and John had in mind when they wrote it.

One point that is very difficult to explain for the "Christ was created" point of view is how Christ in the days He appeared on earth as Melchizedek was "without father" as it states in Hebrews 7:3.

Also, if it did happen this way, and that Christ was created by the Father and that character is not something God can create instantly, did Christ have to develop character? He has ALWAYS been comprised of Holy Spirit - been a God being. Does that mean as a spirit God being He could never sin, unlike when He was in the flesh?

If He couldn't have sinned as a spirit being, a God being, then why create us fleshly beings first and not of the Holy Spirit if we are to also be a part of the God family?

We're starting to open up a Pandora's box of questions. There will be even more of these questions as we go along. As much as we'd like to have it all figured out we need the humility to say with certain things that we just don't know and won't know until Christ returns and answers those 101 questions for us.

Before closing this rather unclear subject I'd like to offer some historical quotes from what the early church fathers believed on this subject and let the reader decide what to make of them. Justin Martyr wrote the following:

But to the Father of all, who is unbegotten, there is no name given.... And His Son, who is properly called Son, the Word, who also was with Him and was **BEGOTTEN BEFORE THE WORKS [of Creation]**, when at first He created and arranged all things by Him, is called Christ . . . ("The Second Apology of Justin," chap.6, page 190).

Later, in his dialogue with Trypho, a Jewish intellectual and scholar, Justin Martyr goes into some detail on the origin of the Logos of God, who later became Jesus Christ. In chapter 61 of his lengthy treatise, Justin declares:

'I shall give you another testimony, my friends,' said I, from the Scriptures, that God **BEGAT BEFORE ALL CREATURES A BEGINNING**, [who was] a certain rational power [proceeding] from Himself, who is called by the Holy Spirit, now the Glory of the Lord, now the Son, again Wisdom, again an Angel, then God, and then Lord and Logos; and on another occasion He calls Himself Captain, when He appeared in human form to Joshua the son of Nave (Nun). For He can be called by all those names, since He ministers to the Father's will, and since He was begotten of the Father by an act of will; just as we see happening among ourselves: for when we give out some word, we beget the word; yet not by abscission, so as to lessen the word [which remains] in us, when we give it out: and just as we see also happening in the case of a fire, which is not lessened when it kindled [another], but remains the same; and that which has been kindled by it likewise appears to exist by itself, not diminishing that from which it was kindled.

THE WORD OF WISDOM, who is Himself this GOD BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER of all things, and Word, and Wisdom, and Power, and Glory of the Begetter, will bear

evidence to me, when He speaks by Solomon the following: 'If I shall declare to you what happens daily, I shall call to mind events from everlasting and review them. The Lord made me the BEGINNING of His ways for His works. FROM EVERLASTING He established me IN THE BEGINNING, BEFORE He had made the earth, and before He had made the deeps, before the springs of the waters had issued forth, before the mountains had been established. Before all the hills He BEGETS ME....

When He made ready the heavens, I was along with Him, and when He set up His throne on the winds: when He made the high clouds strong, and the springs of the deep safe, when He made the foundations of the earth, I was with Him ARRANGING. I was that in which He rejoiced; daily and at all times I delighted in His countenance, because He delighted in the finishing of the inhabitable world, and delighted in the sons of men...." ("Dialogue with Trypho," chap.61, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol.1, page 228).

In the next chapter, Justin quotes and expounds from the book of Genesis, as follows:

These are the words: 'And God said, Behold, Adam has become as one of us, to know good and evil.' In saying, therefore, 'as one of us,' [Moses] has declared that [there is a certain] number of persons associated with one another, and that they are at least two.... **But this Offspring, which was truly brought forth FROM THE FATHER,** was with the Father before all the creatures, and the Father communed with Him; even as the Scripture by Solomon has made clear, that He whom Solomon calls Wisdom, was **BEGOTTEN AS A BEGINNING** before all His creatures and as **OFFSPRING BY GOD** ("Dialogue with Trypho," chap.62, ANF, vol. 1, page 228).

Another early church leader was Hippolytus, a Greek, who was a disciple of Irenaeus from A.D. 170 to 236. Hippolytus, like Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, also discussed at length the nature of the Godhead. In his book, "The Refutation of All Heresies", Hippolytus says that in the original beginning there was only ONE God - the One who became known as the "Father." As Hippolytus himself puts it:

The first and only [one God], both Creator and Lord of all, had nothing coeval [CO-EQUAL] with Himself But He was One, alone in Himself By an exercise of His will He created things that are, which antecedently had no existence, except that He willed to make them (book 10, chapter 28, Ante-Nicene Fathers, volume 5, page 150).

What was the FIRST thing the Father created, before anything else was brought into existence? Says Hippolytus:

Therefore this solitary and supreme Deity, **BY AN EXERCISE OF REFLECTION, BROUGHT FORTH THE LOGOS FIRST...** Him alone He produced from existing things; for the Father Himself constituted existence, **AND THE BEING BORN FROM HIM WAS THE CAUSE OF ALL THINGS THAT ARE PRODUCED.**

The Logos was in the Father Himself, bearing the will of His progenitor, and not being unacquainted with the mind of the Father. For simultaneously with His

procession from His Progenitor, inasmuch as He is this PROGENITOR'S FIRST-BORN, he has, as a voice in Himself, the ideas conceived in the Father. **And so it was, that when the Father ordered the world to come into existence, the Logos one by one completed each object of creation, thus pleasing God."**

That phrase in the last quote where it says God created the Word by "an exercise of REFLECTION" is fascinating and quite similar to the idea I was mentioning before about the slight possibility that God may have cloned Himself before he created anything else. Only time will tell whether this view espoused by Hippolytus is indeed what really happened. What we do know for certain is that in the earliest beginnings of time there existed these two God beings before anything else was created.

What Is God Like?

What were these two God beings like? Mr Armstrong tells us the following in Mystery of the Ages:

God is Creator of all - of everything in the vast Universe - the stars, the galaxies in endless space, this earth, man, and everything in the earth. That is what God is - what He does. He creates! He designs, forms, and shapes. He gives life! He is the great giver. And His law - His way of life - is the way of giving, not getting which is the way of this world.

But what is God like?... God is Spirit (John 4:24 RSV). Why is God not real to so many people? Because God and the Word are composed of spirit, not matter, not flesh and blood like humans. God is invisible to human eyes (Colossians 1:15). He does not seem real. To seem real the mind naturally wants to visualize a definite form and shape. But even though God is composed of spirit and not of visible matter, God nevertheless does have definite form and shape. What is God's form and shape?

In Genesis 1:26 God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness. We know the form and shape of man. That is the image, likeness, form, and shape of God. In various parts of the Bible it is revealed that God has a face, eyes, a nose, mouth and ears. He has hair on his head. It is revealed God has arms and legs. And God has hands and fingers.

No animal, fowl, bird, fish, insect, or any other kind of life we know of has hands like human hands. Even if any other living being of which we know had a mind to think with, without hands and fingers he could not design and make things as a man does. God has feet and toes and a body. God has a mind. Animals have brains but no mind power like man's. If you know what a man looks like, you know what is the form and shape of God, for he made man in his image, after his very likeness!

One of Jesus's disciples asked him what God the Father looks like. Jesus replied 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known me Philip? He that has seen me has seen the Father'(John 14:9). Jesus looked like the Father. Jesus was actually God with us (Matthew 1:23)....And what was Jesus's appearance? It was that of a human man, for he also was the Son of man. He looked so much like other Jewish men of his day that his enemies bribed Judas to point him out and identify who in a crowd at night was Jesus.

So now we know God has the same form and shape as a man. We also know He is composed of spirit, not of matter as is man. Spirit is invisible to human eyes, unless manifested by some special process. And if so manifested we should see both God the Father and Christ now glorified in heaven with faces, though formed and shaped like human faces, as bright as the sun full strength! Their eyes flames of fire, feet like burnished brass, and hair white as snow (Revelation 1:14-16).

Most important of all however is what is God's nature - His character - like? One cannot know what God is unless He knows what His character is! The character of both God the Father and Christ the Son is that of spiritual holiness, righteousness and absolute perfection.

That character might be summed up in the one word love, defined as an out flowing, loving concern. It is the way of giving, serving, helping, sharing, not the 'get' way. It is the way devoid of coveting, lust and greed, vanity and selfishness, competition, strife, violence and destruction, envy and jealousy, resentment and bitterness. God's inherent nature is the way of peace, of justice, mercy, happiness and joy radiating outward toward those he has created!

The Word and God lived. What did they do? They created. How did they live - what was their 'life-style'? They lived the way of their perfect character - the way of outflowing love. When Jesus was baptised, God the Father said 'You are my beloved son'. God loved the Word. And the Word loved God - obeyed him completely.

Two can't walk together except they be agreed. They were in total agreement and cooperation. Also two can't walk together in continuous peace except one be the head, or leader in control. God [the Father] was leader.

Their way of life produced perfect peace, cooperation, happiness, accomplishment. This way of life became a law. Law is a code of conduct, or relationship, between two or more. One might call the rules of a sports contest the 'law' of the game. The presence of law requires a penalty for infraction. There can be no law without a penalty for its violation. The very fact of law presupposes government. Government is the administration and enforcement of law by one in authority. This necessitates authoritative leadership - one in command....God [the Father is the] leader (p.33,38-40,softbound)"

God is holy (Psalm 99:9). The word holy means pure of heart or free from sin. God is spirit (John 4:24). Since God is comprised of spirit and has this holy attitude it is correct to call God a Holy Spirit.

God is the very personification of the Holy Spirit. Since both the Father and Christ are God (John 1:1-2) - both individually have the Holy Spirit which issues or **FLows** (John 7:38) from them and fills the **WHOLE UNIVERSE**.

We read in Psalm 139:7-8:"Where can I go from **YOUR SPIRIT?** Or where can I go from **YOUR PRESENCE**. If I ascend into heaven you are there. If I make my bed down in hell, behold you are there."

God's spirit is equated with God's presence. The Father and the Son are not present everywhere in person but they are through their power - the Holy Spirit. In one sense, it's like God's extended arm by which He can act on anything anywhere.

The Bible's very own definition for the Holy Spirit is found in Luke 1:35 where it is called "the **POWER** of the Most High". It is also called the power of God in Romans 15:19, Jeremiah 32:17 and Judges 14:6.

The Father and the Son's spiritual bodies are not omnipresent, but the Father and the Son are omnipresent by and through the Holy Spirit in the sense that they can see, know and do anything anywhere through their all-pervading spirit that issues from them and fills heaven and earth. How they are able to do anything anywhere by their spirit is beyond our limited human comprehension, just as we can't fully grasp how a brown cow eats green grass and gives us white milk from which we get yellow butter.

Mr Robert Fahey in a sermon that he gave in 1987 discussed why God created the universe and why He wanted to create other beings to fill the universe with. He tells us:

In the beginning there were these two spirit beings of almighty power and perfect, holy righteous character. They lived the way of **GIVE**. They were kind and generous, always at peace and in perfect harmony. They had no selfishness whatsoever. They lived the way of love, of giving and sharing. **They had life inherent within them, not like you and I, and they wanted to SHARE that life.** They decided somewhere that they wanted to share life. They wanted more beings. They wanted to be able to talk with these beings. They wanted to fellowship, to work together, to have a diversity of beings that would dwell in peace and harmony - to have a family to live in joyous unity. But they didn't want someone that would spoil the nest.

They didn't want some selfish, self-willed or arrogant person. They didn't want some contentious, touchy, critical, self-exalting type of person or some angry, irritable, grouchy type of person but instead they wanted to have co-operative, humble people who are pleasant to be with and are gracious and kind to enjoy fellowshiping with and to enjoy their viewpoints because different minds look at things differently and it's fascinating. **God wanted to have beings with different viewpoints and experiences to share the company and even wisdom with.** God knew that if He wanted to have harmony He would have to have givers, not getters. He would have to have people of a similar nature who would always respect the Father, first of all, and also would respect their fellow beings and have their welfare in mind, who would be helpful and co-operative and considerate just like God. After He would create the universe He wanted to have a **FAMILY** of immortals to share it with.

The Creation Of Angels

What happened then? Let Mr Armstrong pick up the story:

They did not create matter first. The laws and facts of radioactivity tell us with certainty that there was a time when such matter did not exist. But the Great God through the Word first designed and created SPIRIT BEINGS— angels, each individually created— millions or perhaps even billions of them! They were composed wholly of Spirit. They were given self-containing life— life inherent— immortality. But also God created within them MINDS— with power to think, to reason, to make choices and decisions!

But there was one super-important quality that even God's creative powers could not create instantly by fiat—the same perfect, holy, righteous CHARACTER inherent in both God and the Word! This kind of character must be DEVELOPED, by the CHOICE and the INTENT of the one in whom it comes to exist.

So mark well this super-vital truism—that perfect, holy and righteous character is the supreme feat of accomplishment possible for Almighty God the Creator—it is also the means to His ultimate supreme PURPOSE! His final objective!

But how? I repeat, such perfect character must be developed. It requires the free choice and decision of the separate entity in whom it is to be created. But, further, even then it must be instilled by and from the Holy God who, only, has such righteous character to endow.

Perfect, holy and righteous character is the ability in such a separate entity to come to discern the true and right way from the false, to make voluntarily a full and unconditional surrender to God and His perfect way—to yield to be conquered by God—to determine even against temptation or self-desire, to live and to do the right. And even then such holy character is the gift of God. It comes by yielding to God to instill His LAW (God's right way of life) within the entity who so decides and wills.

Actually, this perfect character comes only from God, as instilled within the entity of His creation, upon voluntary acquiescence, even after severe trial and test. I have devoted a few paragraphs to this point because it is the supreme pinnacle means in God's overall PURPOSE!

Now as to the pre-historic angels: God 1) created them with minds capable of thinking, reasoning, making choices and decisions with self-will, and, 2) revealed plainly to them His TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS WAY. But God, of necessity, allowed them free moral agency in accepting God's right way, or turning to contrary ways of their own devising.”

What was God's ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE for the angels? Beyond question it is that which, now, because of angelic rebellion, has become the transcendent potential of humans! As the testing ground, and opportunity for positive and active creative accomplishment, God created—brought into existence—the entire vast material universe.

God now created not only matter, but with and in it energy and such laws as man has discovered in the fields of physics and chemistry. God formed matter to be present in both the organic and the inorganic states. And so we come now to that which is revealed in Genesis 1:1: 'In the beginning [of the physical universe] God created the heavens and the earth'.

As previously stated, in the King James English language translation (AV) will be found the word 'heaven' in the singular. But this originally was written by Moses in Hebrew. And in the Hebrew the word is in the plural—'heavens'— thus including not only our earth, but the entire material UNIVERSE. It is therefore indicated that at that time—after the creation of angels—the entire universe was brought into existence at the same time as the creation of our earth. I find strong indication of this in other biblical internal evidence.

The original Hebrew words (the words originally written by Moses) imply a perfect creation. God reveals Himself as Creator of perfection, light, and beauty. Every reference in the Bible describes the condition of any completed phase of God's creation as 'very good'—perfect. This first verse of the Bible actually speaks of the original PHYSICAL creation in its entirety—the universe—including the earth, perhaps millions of years ago as a perfect creation, beautiful and perfect as far as its creation was a finished, completed work. God is a perfectionist!

In Job 38:4, 7, God is speaking specifically of the creation of this earth. He said all the angels (created "sons of God") shouted for joy at the creation of the earth. This reveals that angels were created before the creation of the earth—and probably before the material universe. The suns, planets, and astral bodies are material substance. Angels are individually created Spirit beings, composed solely of Spirit.

It will come as a surprise to many to learn that angels inhabited this earth before the creation of man. This passage from Job implies it. Other passages place angels on earth prior to man. Notice II Peter 2:4-6. First in time order were 'angels that sinned.' Next in time sequence, the antediluvian world beginning with Adam, carrying through to the Flood. After that, Sodom and Gomorrah.

Sinning Angels

This Book of books, containing the revealed knowledge of the Creator God, tells us that God created angels as composed of Spirit. But can you imagine angels becoming sinning angels? Angels were created with power of thought, of decision and of choice, else they have no individuality or character. Since sin is the transgression of God's law, these angels rebelled against God's law, the basis of God's government.

Notice carefully what is revealed in II Peter 2:4-5: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly"....

The verses quoted above place the sinning of the angels prior to the antediluvian sins that started with Adam, prior to the creation of man. And that should be a surprise revealing of one phase of the missing dimension in knowledge! Angels inhabited this earth before the creation of man. And the government of God was administered on earth until the rebellion of the sinning angels. How long these angels inhabited the earth before the creation of man is not revealed. It might have been millions— or even billions—of years. More on that later.

But these angels sinned. Sin is the transgression of God's law (I John 3:4). And God's law is the basis of God's government. So we know these angels, apparently a third of all the angels (Rev. 12:4), sinned—rebelled against the government of God. And sin carries penalties. The penalty for the sin of the angels is not death, as it is for man. Angels are immortal Spirit beings and cannot die. These Spirit beings had been given dominion over the PHYSICAL EARTH as a possession and an abode.

The universal, worldwide sin of the angels resulted in the physical destruction of the face of the earth. God is Creator. God is also ruler over His creation. He preserves what He creates by His government. What God creates, He has created for a

purpose—to be used, preserved, and maintained. And this use is regulated by God's government. When the angels rebelled against God's government, the preservation of the physical earth and all its original beauty and glory ceased—and physical destruction to the surface of the earth resulted!....

How did this sin of the angels come to take place? How did it start? Remember, God the Creator preserves, improves and enhances what He creates by His government. What He creates is created to be used. This earth was to be inhabited and used by angels, originally. When God placed angels—apparently a third of all (Rev. 12:4)—on the newly created, perfect, beautiful and glorious earth, He set over them, on a throne, to administer the government of God, an archangel—the great cherub Lucifer. There were only two other beings of this extremely high rank of cherub, Michael and Gabriel....

First, notice what is revealed in Isaiah 14....This passage in Isaiah 14 speaks of the doom of this coming king (of a United European power) at the hands of the glorified, all-powerful Christ. It refers to him as Satan's chief political ruler and military destroyer, totally deceived by Satan in the years very shortly ahead of us. Then, coming to verse 12, this human earthly type of Satan the devil suddenly transposes to Satan himself—the former archangel, Lucifer:

'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!' A better translation here is: "How art thou, who didst weaken the nations, cut down to the ground." The RSV translates it: "How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!" This the former Lucifer did through the human political-military leader in his power— spoken of in the first eleven verses.

The name "Lucifer" means "Shining star of the dawn," or "Bringer of light," as God first created him. Now continue: "For thou hast said in shine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars [angels] of God." Notice, Lucifer had a throne; he was a ruler. His throne was on earth, for he was going to ascend into heaven.

Continue: "I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (verses 13-14). Actually, it is plain that Lucifer had nothing less in mind than knocking the Creator God off His throne and becoming supreme God himself. Apparently he planned to put himself in place of God, over the universe!

But finally, as the context returns again to the human type: "Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell [Heb. sheol], to the sides of the pit" (verse 15). From that point, the thought returns to the human king. Lucifer was the supreme masterpiece of God's creative power, as an individually created being, threatening, as a Frankenstein monster, to destroy his own maker—and assume all His powers to rule the whole universe.

His rebel rule was NOT a government based upon the principle of love—of giving, of outgoing concern for the good of others, but based on SELF-CENTEREDNESS, on vanity, lust and greed, on envy, jealousy, the spirit of competition, hatred, violence and destruction, on darkness and error, instead of light and truth, on ugliness instead of beauty.

Look now at the other biblical passage describing this supreme angelic creation of God, in Ezekiel 28....at this point (verse 11), as in Isaiah 14, the lesser human type lifts to a greater spirit antitype. Instead of the prince of Tyre—a human man—it now speaks of the KING of Tyre. This is the same Lucifer.

Ezekiel the prophet continues: 'Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the KING of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the [Eternal] God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty" (verses 11-12). Please read that again! God would never say anything like that of a human man. This superb spirit being filled up the sum total of wisdom, perfection and beauty. He was the supreme pinnacle, the masterpiece, of God's creation, as an individually created being, the greatest one in the almighty power of God to create! The tragic thing is that he rebelled against his Maker!

"Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God" (verse 13). He had inhabited this earth. His throne was here. 'Every precious stone was thy covering . . . the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created' (verse 13). He was a created being—not born human. He was a Spirit being—not human flesh. Great genius and skill in music was created in him....

But continuing the particular revelation of this crucially important missing dimension in knowledge: 'Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so,' says God of this Lucifer. This takes us back to the twenty-fifth chapter of Exodus, where God gave Moses the pattern for the Ark of the Covenant. The description begins with verse 10, and verses 18-20 show, in the material pattern, the two cherubs who were stationed at each end of the very throne of God in heaven—the throne of the government of God over the entire universe. The wings of the two cherubim covered the throne of God.

This Lucifer, then, had been stationed at the very throne of God. He was trained and experienced in the administration of the government of God. God chose such a being, well-experienced and trained, to be the king ruling the government of God over the angels who inhabited the whole earth. Continue: ' . . . thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.' This is not talking about any human being. But continue: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity [lawlessness] was found in thee" (Ezek. 28:15).

He had complete knowledge, understanding and wisdom. But he also was given full powers of reasoning, thinking, making decisions, making his choice. And, with all this foreknowledge—even of results and consequences—this superb being, the highest that even God could create by fiat, turned to rebellion against his Maker—against the way that produces every good.

He turned to lawlessness. He had been trained in the administration of perfect law and order. As long as Lucifer continued in this perfect way, there was happiness and joy unspeakable over the whole earth. There was glorious peace—beautiful harmony, perfect love, co-operation. The government of God produced a wonderfully happy state—so long as Lucifer was loyal in the conduct of God's government.

What caused the angels on earth to sin, to turn to lawlessness? Certainly the ordinary angels did not persuade this great superbeing to turn traitor. No, it was in him that iniquity was found. But, after how long? We don't know. God does not

reveal that! It could have been any number of years from one or less to millions times millions.

And then, even after Lucifer himself made the decision to rebel and try to invade God's heaven to take over the universe, it is not revealed how long it took him to persuade all of the angels under him to turn traitor and follow him....But think how long it must have taken the soured and embittered Lucifer to turn millions of holy angels into resentment, bitterness, disloyalty, and finally open and vicious rebellion. It could have taken hundreds, thousands, or millions of years. This was all before the first human was created.

All this happened after the original creation of the earth, described in verse 1 of Genesis 1. Verse 2 of this "creation" chapter describes a condition resulting from this sin of the angels. The events described in verse 2, therefore, may occurred millions of years after the original creation of the earth....

But why did God create man on the earth (Gen. 1:26)?

Look at this situation as God does. God has given us humans minds, like the mind of God, only inferior and limited. God made us in His image, after His likeness (form and shape), only composed of matter instead of Spirit. But God says, 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus' (Phil. 2:5). We can, to some degree, think even as God thinks. How must God have looked at the situation, as He started renewing the face of the earth—after the colossal debacle of the angels!

He had created a beautiful, perfect creation in the earth. He populated it with holy angels—probably millions of them. He put over them, as king, on an earthly throne, the archangel—the cherub Lucifer. Lucifer was the supreme masterpiece of God's creative power as a single separately created Spirit being. He was the most perfect in beauty, power, mind, knowledge, intellect, wisdom, within the almighty power of God to create. God can create nothing higher or more perfect, by instantaneous fiat.

Yet this great being, knowledgeable, trained and experienced at God's own throne in heaven over the universe and the administration of the government of God, had rejected that government, corrupted his way, rebelled against administering or even obeying it. He had led all his angels astray and into the sin of rebellion and disloyalty.

Now consider further. Apparently the entire universe had been created also at the time of the earth's creation. There is no evidence either in God's revealed Word, nor in science, that any of the planets in endless outer space had been inhabited with any form of life. But God does nothing in vain. He always has a purpose.

Apparently all such planets in the entire universe NOW are waste and empty—decayed (tohu and bohu)—like the earth was, as described in Genesis 1:2. But God did not create them in such conditions of decay—like our moon. Decay is not an original created condition—it is a condition resulting from a process of deterioration. Evidently if the now fallen angels had maintained the earth in its original beautiful condition, improved it, carried out God's instructions, and obeyed His government, they would have been offered the awesome potential of populating and carrying out a tremendous creative program throughout the entire universe. When they turned traitor on earth, their sin must have also brought simultaneously physical destruction to the other planets throughout the universe, which were potentially and conditionally put in subjection to them.

As God surveyed this cataclysmic tragedy, He must have realized that since the highest, most perfect being within His almighty power to create, had turned to rebellion, it left God Himself as the only being who would not and cannot sin. And God is the father of the Divine God Family. Notice John 1:1-5. The 'Word' who was 'made flesh' (verse 14) has existed always—from eternity—with the Father. God the Father has created all things—the entire universe—by Him who became Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16-17)....

The fourth word in all the Bible is 'God' (Gen. 1:1). And the original Hebrew word is 'Elohim,' a uni-plural noun like the word family, church, or group. The family is God. There is one God—the one Family, but more than one Person.

God saw that no being less than God, in the God Family, could be certainly relied on never to sin—to be like God—who cannot sin. To fulfill His purpose for the entire vast universe, God saw that nothing less than Himself (as the God Family) could be absolutely relied upon to carry out that supreme purpose in the entire universe.

God then purposed to reproduce Himself, through humans, made in His image and likeness, but made first from material flesh and blood, subject to death if there is sin unrepented of—yet with the possibility of being born into the Divine Family begotten by God the Father. God saw how this could be done through Christ, who gave Himself for that purpose.

And that is why God put man on the earth! That is what caused God to do this most colossal, tremendous thing ever undertaken by the supreme, almighty God—to reproduce Himself!" (The Incredible Human Potential, p38-51).

Were We God's Backup Plan?

In 1997 an article appeared in the Journal of the Churches of God (September 25, 1997 issue, p.28) by Bruce Lyon which echoed the feelings that many people in the church, including myself, have had regarding a couple of points of Mr Armstrong's understanding of the plan of God. In that article Bruce Lyon makes these comments:

[Mr Armstrong believes] because of angelic rebellion, God's backup plan (us humans) was put into motion. I have never seen this proven from the Bible, neither by Mr. Armstrong nor any other minister....

God Himself apparently did not possess the ability to foresee that He had designed a plan for the angels that could not succeed. As a result of God's lack of foresight (and of course I am speaking here as a fool), one third of all the angels, along with Satan, must writhe in agony for eternity because of God's inability to prepare a proper plan for them....

Mr. Armstrong simply contends that God realized after the one third failed that He did not have a good plan for these beings. But not to worry. Since the first plan with the angels failed....We (God and the Word) have a better plan on the shelf in case the first plan proved faulty beyond redemption: the reproduction of God Himself through mankind!

Why would not God undertake this backup plan first? Why even bother with the questionable plan with the angels?

We know that the angelic plan was questionable even before God implemented it, because God already had the plan with man prepared in case the angelic plan failed; see pages 61-62.

Further, since the plan through mankind produces a far-superior product—sons of God in God's very own self-replicated family vs. just proven-righteous angels—why would God favor the angelic plan (had it been able to succeed) as the first plan?

According to The Incredible Human Potential, had the angels succeeded then we humans would not have been needed....If a backup plan produces a superior result and is an inherently superior plan, would not an all-wise Creator implement such a plan in the first place?....

[On] Page 85 [of The Incredible Human Potential Mr Armstrong writes]:

"Matter does not remain as it is, unchanged permanently. But it continues changing permanently. Spirit, however, is CHANGELESS except as God instilled in angel beings the power of mind—of thinking, reasoning, making decisions and exercising will to act on decisions or choices. But Spirit substance apart from the mind power of God or spirit beings is CHANGELESS. Once Satan and his demons made the decision they did, being spirit, they cannot change! Man...can REPENT—CHANGE from his sin—turn to God's way."

Again, who failed to think this scenario through? Also, since two thirds of the angels obviously have decided to go God's way, then they succeeded, and they cannot change to unrighteousness now. So, then, the backup plan using us humans is not needed, and we do not exist....(Just kidding)

Bruce Lyon really hits the nail on the head very well showing that the plan for God to reproduce Himself could not have been the backup plan if the angels failed to choose God's way. The two points that prove this are:

1) The supposed "backup" plan produces a far better product than the first plan if it succeeds and those who fail can be destroyed rather than exist eternally in a sinful state.

2) Two-thirds of the angels did succeed so there should not have been any need to create mankind in God's image if it was only the backup plan should the angelic plan fail.

Ellis Stewart in an article which appeared alongside (on page 29) the one that Bruce Lyon wrote in the Journal made these interesting comments about Mr Armstrong's changing views on this point:

An assistant to Mr. Armstrong in the early 1980s had as part of his duties to review all the new correspondence-course lessons before they were published. The original version of one of the lessons included information about angels similar to that that later appeared in Human Potential, that God originally intended the angels to reign over the universe. This assistant felt this teaching was not correct, and he said so. In a meeting to discuss the points, Mr. Armstrong asked him why he felt the information was not right.

This man gave two reasons:

First, God says that He declares the end from the beginning and that His counsel will stand (Isaiah 46). But to think that God started with angels then saw belatedly that His first choice of plans wouldn't work and started over with humans, is the same as saying that God did not see the end from the beginning.

Second, God's Word states in Romans 11 that 'the gift and the calling of God are irrevocable.' If God intended angels to be over the universe, sooner or later angels would be over the universe."

Mr. Armstrong agreed with these points when his assistant brought them up and directed that the lessons be changed accordingly. The Correspondence Course from 1981 on did not include information about angels being placed over the universe.

Unfortunately "The Incredible Human Potential" was obviously not updated to reflect this changed point of view.

Why Did God Create Angels?

It is likely God had purposed all along to reproduce Himself regardless of whether the angels that He had created chose to live God's way or not.

If this is so then why did God create the angels? In Hebrews 1:14 we read: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Based on what has occurred in the pre-Adamic world on this planet, which we will soon go into in detail, they may have assisted God in the creation of various lifeforms on this planet and given the sheer number of angels that God has created (**at least 100 million - Daniel 7:10**) they may assist us in future in the creation of life forms and the beautification of planets all across the universe after the Great White Throne Judgment.

Mr Armstrong gave us a lot of details in Mystery of the Ages of what they are doing now. In chapter 2 entitled "Mystery of Angels and Evil Spirits" he wrote:

God has had angels specifically assigned to supervise and protect his Church throughout all of its history (Rev. 1:4,16, 20; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14).

He has angels who continually walk through the earth to observe and report back to him the overall conditions on earth (Rev. 5:6; Zech. 4:10; II Chron. 16:9). And God has angels specifically assigned to look after his begotten human children (Acts 12:15; Matt. 18:10 [These angels have instant access to God we are told in this verse]). God promises: "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 91:11).

Twelve of God's angels will be the gatekeepers in the new city of Jerusalem (Rev. 21:12), one for each tribe of Israel. These 12 may be assisting the archangel Michael now. Angels are messengers. They appeared to Abraham, Lot, Hagar, Moses, Manoah, Gideon, Elijah and many of the prophets and apostles. When these angels manifest themselves to human beings, they generally do so in the form of men.

The Bible mentions three angels of high rank: Lucifer (Isa. 14:12), now Satan the devil; Gabriel, who appeared to Daniel on two occasions (Dan. 8:16; 9:21), to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:19), and later Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26); and third, Michael, called one of the chief princes (Dan. 10:13), and whom Jude identifies as an archangel (Jude 9). Michael is the archangel specifically assigned to protect and minister to the 12 tribes of Israel (Dan. 12:1; 10:2-13, 21) and to the true Church of God today (Rev. 12:7)" (p.57-58, softbound).

What Is The Fate Of Satan And The Demons?

Bruce Lyon in the earlier quote above stated:

"As a result of God's lack of foresight (and of course I am speaking here as a fool), one third of all the angels, along with Satan, must writhe in agony for eternity because of God's inability to prepare a proper plan for them."

This quote begs a very important question. "Why did God create angels if they could not be destroyed should they choose the way of sin?"

If angels could not be destroyed then this implies God made a huge mistake of not preparing a merciful way of dealing with them should they choose the way of sin.

What will be the fate of Satan and the demons? Will they writhe in agony, mental or otherwise, for all eternity because they cannot be destroyed since they are spirit beings? Or does the Bible say they will be destroyed?

This is one doctrine I believe the church should re-evaluate. I believe the balance of evidence in the Bible does show a better case for Satan and the demons being destroyed than being tormented for eternity.

The case for Satan and the demons not being able to be destroyed is built upon three scriptures - Revelation 20:10, Jude 13 and Luke 20:36. Let's look at each of these verses.

First of all, we have Revelation 20:10 which plainly says, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Does it not say that Satan will be tormented day and night FOREVER? Hold that thought.

Let's go back a few chapters in the same book to Revelation 14:9-11 where we read:

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up FOREVER AND EVER: and they have no rest day nor night, WHO WORSHIP THE BEAST AND HIS IMAGE, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

It says here that the smoke of the torment of those men who worship the beast will go up forever and ever. Do these men writhe in agony for all eternity also along with the demons? We know better than that.

"Forever" should be rendered age-lasting or age-during or while conditions last like in Exodus 21:6 which talks about someone who is a slave 'forever' - that is, only until he dies.

Revelation 19:3 has smoke rising forever, yet it continues only while there are things to burn and finally dissipates, not rising above the atmosphere.

Indeed, Satan and the demons will be tormented "forever" - until they lose consciousness and die! The Greek word "aeonian" can and often means "age-lasting," or "so long as the conditions exist."

This tormenting would go on for many days and nights as there will be many demons over a period of time who will receive their punishment at this time in the future.

Let's now look at Jude 13 which talks about "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." Will these evil angels be roaming the blackness in the universe forever? No, their eventual fate will be "blackness of darkness forever". This means they will have their lives snuffed out in the lake of fire, and to be totally unconscious and dead, forever!"

Blackness of darkness is a term that can mean unconsciousness. The very thought of Satan and the demons being cast into a lake of fire begs the question, "What for if they can't be destroyed by fire since they are spirit?"

Since we know God can die (Revelation 1:18) by being made into flesh and being killed in the person of Jesus Christ, cannot God also convert the demons into physical bodies which will also die? Romans 6:23 says that the wages of sin is death, not continuous punishing. Same law and punishment for men and angels.

In Mark 1:23-24 we read, "And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to **DESTROY** us?"

The demons asked Jesus if He was going to destroy them. **If they couldn't be destroyed why would they ask this question?** Those demons may well be destroyed but not ahead of schedule.

Regarding the last of the three proof-texts for Satan and the demons never dying William Dankenbring in his fine article "Satan's Fate - Will Satan Be Punished Forever?" has this to say:

Some may wonder why Jesus then said that of those in the resurrection, that they 'cannot die any more: for they are equal unto the angels' (Luke 20:36). Does this mean angels cannot 'die' because they are immortal spirit beings? Let's not read into this verse our own pre-determined belief! **All it says is that angels of God IN HEAVEN (see the parallel passage in Matthew 22:30), who did not rebel against God, who proved themselves to be loyal, cannot 'die' a natural death!** This means that since they proved themselves loyal to God, He will ALLOW them to live forever, and they will not die...

God goes on, describing this celestial being (Satan) who turned to sin, saying, "Through your widespread trade you were filled with VIOLENCE, and you SINNED. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O GUARDIAN CHERUB, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became PROUD on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings...

So I made a FIRE come out from you, and it CONSUMED YOU, and I reduced you to ASHES on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a HORRIBLE END and will be NO MORE" (Ezek.28:12-19).

This is a very clear prophecy of the coming FATE of Satan the devil! What could be more clear? He will be turned into ASHES! He will be consumed by a FIRE! He will exist, or "be," "NO MORE"!

Moffatt translates this passage as follows: 'By the greatness of your guilt, by the crimes of your commerce, you have profaned your sacred position; therefore have I made you SET FIRE TO YOURSELF, WITH FLAMES THAT CONSUME YOU,AND REDUCED YOU TO ASHES ON EARTH in the sight of all who behold you. All who know you among the nations shall be APPALLED at you -- YOUR FATE IS AWFUL, there is NO FUTURE for you' (Ezek.28:18-19, Moffatt)."

Scholars believe much of the apocryphal "book of Enoch" which has come down to us, preserved primarily in Ethiopia, dates to the pre-Maccabean period, before 165 B.C. Some parts near the end of it appear to be additions made in the post-Maccabean period. It is a composite book representing numerous periods and writers. Much of it may well go back to the time of Enoch himself, I believe, since Jude directly quoted from it when he wrote, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14-15, Enoch 2).

In reading the Book of Enoch I only found two things which weren't in harmony with the Bible - references to Enoch living much longer than the 365 years that ALL his days were (Gen. 5:23) and a reference to him seeing the birth of Noah. These two errors are towards the end where material has been added to earlier text. Aside from that I found the book of Enoch's teachings remarkably in accord with our understanding of various doctrines which differ from traditional Christianity, unlike the Book of Mormon which is loaded with trinity references and weird understandings of heaven, hell, immortality and the resurrections.

In Enoch 10:15-17 we read, "To Michael likewise the Lord said: Go and announce his crime to Samyaza, and to the others who are with him (evil angels)....bind them for seventy generations underneath the earth, even to the day of judgment, and of consummation, until the judgment, the effect of which will last forever, be completed. Immediately after this shall he, together with them, burn and **PERISH**; they shall be bound until the consummation of many generations." According to the book of Enoch these demons will perish - they will die!

As someone put it, "All are cremated equal." I don't believe that the God of love will permit torment of any being for eternity.

Was the Creation in Genesis 1 the Original Creation or a Re-Creation?

Another controversy in the Church of God amongst a number of members has been the issue of whether the creation account of most of Genesis 1 is referring to an original creation of the earth only 6 000 years ago as taught by most Protestant churches or whether it is referring to a restoration or re-creation after the rebellion of Satan and the demons which caused a global catastrophe as taught by Herbert Armstrong that remains the teaching of most Church of God groups.

The first time that I found myself in a discussion over how old the Earth is according to the Bible was when I was a teenager and a Protestant minister was giving a religious instruction class at the high school that I was attending.

My religious instruction teacher went on to say something about a time dilation theory as a workaround to this problem but, to me, it didn't quite make sense that we were in a some sort of time bubble, outside of which, time was running millions of times faster for the rest of the entire universe. At this stage, I couldn't honestly say that I had studied the Bible to see what it actually said about this subject.

Not long after this I started to read the Plain Truth magazine and was convicted by many of the doctrines that it addressed. When it started talking about Adam and Eve clearly as historical figures the credibility of the Bible came into question for me if the Bible said that the earth and universe was only 6 000 years old.

I then went back over that first Plain Truth I picked up from a newsstand and found an article called "For Evolutionists Only..." which discussed what they felt was a common misinterpretation in the first chapter of Genesis by both creationists and evolutionists. In the article the author wrote:

Where most "creationists" err is that they assume the Bible places the creation of the universe at a point in time about six or so thousand years ago. The Bible, however, says nothing about such an idea. Genesis 1:1 states, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Those words describe a complete episode in the prehistory of the universe. There follows a time lapse of indefinite length between this verse and the verse that follows...

As verse two of Genesis 1 opens, we are confronted with a totally different scene. We now see an earth that had come to be in ruins, in darkness and covered with water. Some great disaster had befallen the earth.

The English word was in this verse is better translated "became" or "came to be." "Now the earth became without form, and void; and darkness came to be upon the face of the deep." (See the New International Version rendering and footnote)...

From verse two the Genesis account goes on to describe a re-creation, how God reshaped and refashioned, nearly 6,000 years ago, the already existing, but now desolate earth (Plain Truth, Nov-Dec 1983, Clayton Steep, p.19).

I read that and thought, "Hey, that makes a whole lot of sense!" It seemed to reconcile what the Bible says and what astronomy and geology says about how old the Earth is. It also raises the question of what caused this destruction between verses 1 and 2.

As I began to study the Bible it was very clear, without any shadow of doubt, from the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 10 and the genealogies of Jesus Christ in the gospels that the Bible says that Adam and Eve were created around 6 000 years ago. Scientists say that mankind is a million or so years old using inexact dating methods which allows for the possibility of error. Recorded verifiable history, though, is no older than what the Bible says.

Jesus Christ quoted the Garden of Eden story in Matthew 19:4-5 when He spoke about marriage and two becoming one flesh. He acknowledged the real existence of Adam's first son, Abel, who was murdered (Matthew 23:35). Adam is included in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Luke 3:38) and the apostle Paul spoke of Adam as a real person (1 Corinthians 15:45). How could I believe Christ was my Saviour if He was lying about Adam and his son Abel being real people?

Let's take a look at the pros and cons of the main verses that are used in the debate between those who believe in a young earth and universe and those who believe in the "gap theory" or gap viewpoint.

Genesis 1:2 in most translations says "And the earth was without form and void and darkness was on the face of the deep". Arthur Custance in his book "Without Form and Void" says the following:

In the Masoretic Text in which the Jewish scholars tried to incorporate enough 'indicators' to guide the reader as to correct punctuation there is one small mark which is technically known as Rebhia, ...In short, this mark indicates a "break" in the text. Such a mark appears at the end of Genesis 1.1....It is one indication among others, that the initial waw which introduces verse 2 should be rendered "but" rather than "and", a dis-junctive rather than a con-junctive (p.5).

According to Custance, verse two should read "**But the earth became without form and void**". If "but" is the way it should begin then clearly something happened in opposition to God's original design in verse one.

Next, we need to find out whether the Hebrew word "hayah" in verse 2 should be translated as "was" or "became". If it should read "the earth was without form and void" neither case for a young earth nor old earth is affected. If, however, it should be translated "the earth became without form and void" this greatly hurts the case for a young earth.

On this point the evidence is divided. According to the KJV Old Testament Lexicon "hayah" means "was, come to pass, came, has been, happened, become, pertained, better for thee". This word is translated "became" in Genesis 2:7 [and man became a living soul], Genesis 9:15 [the waters shall never become a flood to destroy all flesh] and Genesis 19:26 [she became a pillar of salt]. There are also other instances where it is better translated "was" such as Genesis 3:1 [Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field].

This same word "hayah" is also used in God's famous reply to Moses as to what His name is when He said "I AM [Heb: hayah] that I AM [Heb: hayah]".

Genesis 1:16 is one of two pivotal verses used to support the young earth and universe viewpoint. On day four of Creation week it says: "And God **made** two great lights: the greater light to rule the day and the smaller light to rule the night, and the stars also."

Young earth creationists say on day four God created our sun, the moon and all the stars in the universe. Before we look at the Hebrew word translated "made" there are a couple of

other things to question that viewpoint. While God is all-powerful and can do it, doesn't it seem a little unbalanced that God would fashion the earth on 5 of the 6 days of creation but do the infinitely greater universe in just one day? Another point is, if God didn't create our sun until day four then what was the light He used on day one when He said "Let there be light"? The KJV Commentary offers the following possible answer to the dilemma:

"This light is not the sun, which was created on the fourth day according to verse 16, it must have been some fixed light source outside the earth [The one referred to by God's words "Let there be light."] In reference to that light, the rotating earth passed through a day-night cycle."

Now let's look at the Hebrew word translated "made" in Genesis 1:16. The Hebrew "bara" is used for create in Genesis 1:1. A different Hebrew word, "asah", is used in Genesis 1:16.

While it can be correctly translated as "made" in the present tense, it can also be correctly translated as "had made" in the past tense. In Genesis 1:31 we read "And God saw everything that He **had made** [Heb: **asah**], and behold, it was very good."

Strong's Concordance also notes that one possible meaning for "asah" is "**appoint**" or "appointed". This meaning would fit well in Genesis 1:16.

This same Hebrew word "asah" (not "bara" for create) is used for made in the next proof text used by young earth creationists.

In Exodus 20:11 where God gives the Ten Commandments and spells out the fourth commandment, the sabbath, we read "For in six days the LORD made [Heb: **asah**] the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day."

According to the Blue Letter Bible Lexicon this is how the Hebrew "asah" is translated in the King James Version:

"The KJV translates Strong's H6213 in the following manner: do (1,333x), make (653x), wrought (52x), deal (52x), commit (49x), offer (49x), execute (48x), keep (48x), shew (43x), prepare (37x), work (29x), do so (21x), perform (18x), get (14x), dress (13x), maker (13x), maintain (7x), misc (154x)."

Some other synonyms that it can be translated into according to Strong's Concordance include "bring forth", "fashion", "furnish" and "prepare". The Hebrew "bara" used in Genesis 1:1 is used for create as in creating something from scratch. The Hebrew "asah" translated as "made" has a much more broader meaning.

If I say that I have "made my bed" does it mean that I have built it from scratch? We can "fashion" or "prepare" our house for a guest arriving but that does not mean we have just created or built it from scratch.

Our English word "made" doesn't always mean create from scratch just as "asah" doesn't always mean create from scratch either.

The Hebrew "shameh" is translated as "heaven" (NKJV) in Exodus 20:11. While it is translated more often as heaven it also translated as sky or air in Genesis 1:20, 1:26, 1:28 and 1:30 in reference to the birds in the sky. If we paraphrase Exodus 20:11 with what we have learned about the Hebrew words it can just as easily be translated the following way:

“For in six days the LORD prepared (or fashioned) the sky and the earth, the sea and all things in it.”

A major dilemma for those who support a young earth and young universe only 6 000 years old is how we can see stars from galaxies millions of light years from us if the universe is only 6 000 years old?

I mentioned time dilation as one workaround proposed by young earth/universe creationists. Others claim that the speed of light has been decreasing since creation.

If so, the laws of physics would demand that the speed of light be many MILLIONS of times faster in the past than its already incredible speed to account for us seeing those stars.

Young earth / universe supporters point to measurements over time appearing to support a decrease however I have seen the records of these measurements and the last recorded “faster” speed was at least 50 years ago. Since measuring devices became sufficiently accurate for the purpose some 50 years ago there has been absolutely no measurable difference in the speed of light.

Another view is that God has miraculously transported to us the light of all these far off galaxies. This view is based on one of at least a couple of possible interpretations of Psalm 104:2 where it says that God “stretches out the heavens like a curtain.” The idea is that the universe was once very compressed and the light we see is from that time but after that He stretched space and the universe like a curtain.

If we follow this idea to its natural conclusion if the light we see is from the time the universe was compressed when the light source was close enough to reach us then it follows our measurements should reflect this since astronomers use that light to measure the distance of how far away those stars are. The measurements show them to be very distant NOT close from an early time when the universe was compressed.

The other main objection to this idea is that God somehow has miraculously transported the light from stars too far for light to have travelled in 6 000 years is that we are seeing events happening in “real time” with very distant stars. One example is the many nova and supernova explosions that have been observed in “real time”.

The Crab Nebula was created as a result of a supernova witnessed and recorded by Chinese astronomers in the 1300's. The Crab Nebula has been accurately measured by astronomers to be 6 500 light years away. To this figure we have to add 700 since the supernova happened that many years ago. This means that the supernova occurred 7 200 years ago. Another recent supernova witnessed as it happened is that of 1987A which went supernova in 1987. This one is far more distant. It has been measured at 185 000 light years away.

Romans 5:12 is one verse used by young earth creationists to say that there wasn't a world before creation week and that all fossils date from Adam on. The verse is used as a proof text to say that there was no death before Adam, including any animal deaths in the fossil record. The verse says:

“Therefore, even as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men inasmuch as all sinned.”

1 Corinthians 15:21 says a similar thing. Does this rule out all death, BOTH human and animal, prior to Adam?

Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages of sin is death. Animals operate by pre-programmed behaviour and instinct, not choice in the same way that humans choose their behaviour for good or evil (that is, sin).

The death being spoken of is not animal sin but human death EARNED as the punishment for sin.

God never designed animals to live forever. There still would have been animals dying even if Adam had not sinned. Their death is not a result of sin but by design, being only made as temporary creatures.

Job 40:15-24 is another passage used by young earth creationists to support their view that all the dinosaurs lived in the time of man before Noah's flood and not before Adam. They say the behemoth with its massive tree-like tail is a dinosaur.

This is a red herring. Assuming this beast was a dinosaur it only proves that at least one type of dinosaur lived in the time of man. It does not disprove that they existed before Adam.

One passage in the Genesis account is used to add support for the case for the gap viewpoint is Genesis 2:4-5 where we read:

*"These are the **generations** [plural] of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a man to till the ground."*

The use of the plural "generations" indicates, in the opinion of Simeon ben Jochai in the ancient work known as "The Book of Light", that there have been multiple ages in which life has been created and destroyed on earth.

According to scholars Genesis 2:4 begins another version of the creation story just as we have four gospels which tell the story of Christ from different angles. It is believed that the written history of Genesis was handed down the generations of the patriarchs as a series of tablets which kept the records that Moses combined into the book of Genesis.

The first of the two Creation accounts ends with Genesis 2:3 after the sabbath is created and this would have been the right place to put a chapter break before it moves on to the alternate account which focuses more on the story of Adam. There are key words that indicate where each of the series of tablet accounts begin. Some of the places in Genesis where we see these breaks beginning new accounts include:

Genesis 1:1 – "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..."

Genesis 2:4 – "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth..."

Genesis 5:1 – "This is the book of the genealogy of Adam..."

Genesis 6:9 – "This is the book of the genealogy of Noah..."

Genesis 10:1 – "Now this is the genealogy of the sons of Noah..."

Genesis 11:10 – "This is the genealogy of Shem..."

Genesis 11:27 – "This is the genealogy of Terah..."

There are three passages in the Bible that I believe do support Mr Armstrong's view that creation week from Genesis 1:2 on was a restoration or re-creation.

In Psalm 104:30 we read: "You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and **You RENEW the face of the earth.**"

The Hebrew word used for "renew" is "chadash" which means "**rebuild, renew, repair**" according to Strong's Concordance **which definitely fits a restoration rather than original creation.**

Verses 5, 19 and 20 speak of events during the creation week implying that time period for this renewal.

This renewing or repairing when God's spirit was sent forth (as in Genesis 1:2) and things were created CANNOT refer to the Flood of Noah's day because there was no creating of new animals after the Flood like the account in Genesis 1.

The next major support for a restoration of creation in Genesis 1 is found over in Hebrews 11:3. It reads: "By faith we understand that the worlds were **framed** by the word of God".

The word translated here as "framed" is an interesting one. It is the Greek word "katartizo" which Strong's defines this way: "to complete thoroughly, that is, **repair** (literally or figuratively) or adjust: - fit, frame, **mend**, (make) perfect (-ly join together), prepare, **restore.**"

Let's look at two other places where it is used in the New Testament.

In Galatians 6:1 we read: "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual **restore** [**Greek: katartizo**] at such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."

Another place where it is used is Matthew 4:21 where we read: "Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, **mending** [**Greek: katartizo**] their nets."

Now if we paraphrase Hebrews 11:3 with these other possible translations it would read as follows:

"By faith we understand that the world was restored / mended by the word of God".

This, what I feel is a more accurate translation, is in perfect harmony with the gap viewpoint that God restored the earth 6 000 years ago after a great catastrophe before He then created man.

Isaiah 14:12-14 is almost universally understood by Bible scholars, both young earth creationists and those who believe in the gap viewpoint, as referring to the fall of the archangel Lucifer who turned on God being filled with pride and became Satan the Devil, the great adversary of God and inspiration for Darth Vader, only a whole lot nastier.

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, **I will exalt my throne** above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend **above the heights of the clouds**, I will be like the Most High".

There are two key points to note here regarding the rebellion of Lucifer (Hebrew: Heyl-el).

First, he was given a throne and a dominion to rule and second, he was below the clouds before he ascended and tried to unseat God “on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north”.

As an aside, this location of God’s throne is echoed in many pagan religions which have borrowed this concept. Pagan gods such as Ra, Shamash, Kronos and Saturn were also said to dwell there (The Tree at the Navel of the Earth, E.A.S. Butterworth & Paradise Found, William F. Warren). This is also why Santa supposedly comes from the North Pole as many Christmas customs originate from the Roman festival, Saturnalia.

Lucifer was given a throne and dominion. He was below the clouds, which are only found on physical planets, when he rebelled against God. Satan’s rebellion could not have happened before the earth was created because he was on earth when he rebelled.

It makes little sense he was given this throne at the time of Creation week since the same dominion over earth was given to Adam (Genesis 1:26).

Not only that, Adam and Eve’s Creator, was on earth mentoring them prior to their sin in the Garden so what would be the point of giving Satan a throne here on earth after the start of Creation week?

John 8:44 says “He (Satan the Devil) was a murderer from the beginning”. This beginning appears to run counter to what Genesis 1:31 says that God pronounced everything very good after His week of creation. Satan has already rebelled and is evil when he tempts Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Most Bible scholars believe that Lucifer took a third of the angels with him in his great rebellion (Revelation 12:3-9) and there are at least 100 million angels (Daniel 7:9-10, Revelation 5:11).

If the earth was only 6 000 years old we are led to believe that Satan not only became dissatisfied and rebelled but also poisoned the hearts of OVER 30 MILLION angels all within a very short space of time before Adam and Eve’s sin.

This seems highly unlikely to me. It is more logical to believe that God gave him his throne and authority on earth in the time before Adam and that it was Satan’s rebellion and destruction that caused the earth to become “without form (or waste) and void”.

An earth age of undefined length prior to the “re-creation week” would also reconcile with the laws of physics that tell us we shouldn’t even be seeing the light of galaxies millions of light years away if the earth and universe was only 6000 years old.

I believe that there is far more evidence in the scriptural record for an earth age before the week man was created and that this is the time period in which Satan was given his throne and authority and ultimately the age in which he rebelled against God.

His anger against God was manifested in destruction to this planet which God cleaned up and began a new creation 6 000 years ago culminating in creating man “in His own image and likeness” (Genesis 1:26), the start of a marvellous plan to reproduce His own kind.

What Were The Angels Doing Before Adam And Eve?

Now let's move onto the question of what the angels were doing on the earth before God created our first parents, Adam and Eve? The fascinating information I will now present over the next few pages is a compilation of quotes from sermons on the subject that Dr Hoeh gave in 1977 shortly before Mr Armstrong came out with "The Incredible Human Potential". Quoting Dr Hoeh:

We have taught that angels were on earth before Adam, being trained. What was their primary function? To rule trees and rocks and streams? What were they given experience in? More than merely ruling over each other. We should expand our former concepts and see that they were on earth to govern in a small way (as an opportunity to learn and to prove they could be trusted) before being sent out further into the universe. Their role on earth should be seen as equipping or qualifying them to rule in the universe. This means they were governing nature in great detail. As God Himself is concerned for even a sparrow that falls, so God is concerned for the balance of nature. If God knows the hairs of our head, He is concerned over the intimate aspects of life of every creature. If He rules through angels, then they also would be likewise concerned with the minute aspects of nature. This is what they were asked to govern--not a barren world, but a world full of life forms throughout geologic history. The Church has a responsibility to teach the role of angels in the world before Adam....

We do not see a world of which we could say that God was 'experimenting'--that term has overtones that could be misunderstood. I would prefer the concept that God was 'developing' a creation in which angels were being challenged and tested on how they would carry out God's government in guiding that nature, and in ruling over ever more complex forms of life....

The world that we see in the future through the eyes of the prophet Isaiah--the world in which a child can play on the hole of a poisonous snake without being poisoned because it is no longer poisonous, that the lamb and the leopard and the bear and the ox and the lion and the little child shall all be together--and they are not devouring one another. Now you all know how the Millennium has been pictured--the whole of nature will be subject to the government of God. Now this may sound very strange to our ears until it has taken root.

The whole of nature is to be subject to the government of God, and instead of one creature devouring another for survival, we are going to have an entirely different system of nutrition and a different system of birthing because the two are interrelated.

The world today from nature is not a reflection of the kind of government God intended to be exercised by the angels throughout nature. It is in fact a reflection of the Devil's idea of competition, of devouring, and keeping in balance by each thing competing with something else.

Now Mr Armstrong long ago conceived of the idea of competition as being the lifeblood both of our economy and business and society and government. He said this is, as far as he is concerned, the fundamental characteristic of the Devil's philosophy, whatever each individual may have been personally taught....The angels had knowledge and could see the picture clearly as far as what they were going to do

and who they were going to listen to. As God started out He said 'I want to make sure the creation reflects the spirit of love, and it's going to be a beautiful world. We are not going to have competition. Therefore the pattern of nutrition and the pattern of birth will not need to have competition to keep ever thing in that order we see it in.' [We could also add diseases and viruses and so on. - RW]

Can you imagine a World Tomorrow in which mice reproduce at the present rate with no cats to catch the mouse? I just have to question. What would happen in Africa if we took away competition and left the birth rate the same? We see the whole of nature is going to change, both in terms of what an animal eats and in terms of the reproductive systems, because they are all tied together....

You can look at the whole of geology, and you will not find a single period, geologically speaking, that corresponds to a nature such as will be in the Millennium. It is all a nature such as we have it today--creatures were devouring in the Tertiary, they were devouring in the Cretaceous, they were devouring in the Mesozoic, they were devouring in the Archaeozoic and the Paleozoic.

And for all we know, in the earliest forms we can probably assume the same thing. There is this competition because it goes hand in hand with the statement Jesus made that the Devil was a murderer from the beginning. That is, the spirit of competition such as we viewed it reflected itself in the spirit of murder...And indeed murder--the spirit of it--is the consequence of the philosophy of competition.

He (Lucifer) said 'I'll work to take the patterns that God has given and instead of exercising God's government I am going to design it in such a way that nature is in balance by competition, by devouring, by strife--the way of the survival of the fittest--the swiftest mouse getting away most of the time, the slowest cat doesn't survive.'

Now I think when we see that we will have a whole new view - that when we talk about the Devil's government we can in fact extend the Biblical account and we have looked at nature and we have to conclude that the WHOLE of the geologic history that we can uncover reflects a world that had gone astray, and therefore there was no reason anywhere along the line to view that there should not have been some catastrophe--local or of wider range--during this whole period.

The Devil may have gone so far with certain things, and he may have wanted to change certain things, but then God also may have said 'Well look, I want a change. I want certain new life forms to be produced. I will see what you will do with them.' And so there is no reason to discount what you see when you travel down the walls of the Grand Canyon. One period after another that cannot be accounted for by anything we know of except for major periods of time - major only as (we) comprehend time. Now presumably not more than a third of the angels followed the Devil. The other two thirds profited by the experience and took no part in the spirit of competition as developed in the biological world...

It does take some time for some people to poison other peoples minds and it takes time, as Mr Armstrong said, for the Devil to persuade angels, who were greater in knowledge by far than human beings. And the Devil was going back and forth, and he kept arguing with God over the necessity of the creation being patterned after a different philosophy than God's. But God never listened, and the Devil always came back and told the angels that 'God never listened', just as 'Mr Armstrong never listened'--you've heard that. Well God never listened to the Devil either....

Apparently all this time God allowed the Devil the chance to see whether after he had examined the nature that he was governing (or abusing--whatever term you want to use), whether he would change or whether he would not. They finally came to the point, as Mr Armstrong said, where spirits apparently do set their character, and you can go only so far in the realm of spirit until your attitude so poisons you that it can never be altered.

During a taped forum on the subject of "Young Earth vs Old Earth" Stephen Collins makes the point that the progression of dinosaurs in the fossil record supports a gradual degeneration of Lucifer. He tells us:

Palaeontologists divide the dinosaur era into several periods of time, the Triassic, the Jurassic and the Cretaceous. The earliest dinosaur fossil period, the Triassic, is dominated by herbivores. The middle dinosaur period, the Jurassic, had herbivores and smaller predators and the Encyclopedia Americana...states a larger predator, the Allosaurus, first appeared in the strata in the late Jurassic. In the final period, the Cretaceous, we see the emergence of huge dinosaurs equipped for fighting on a grand scale.

According to the Americana 'the Ankylosaurs were a heavy armoured group of dinosaurs that lived during the Cretaceous. The horned dinosaurs, the Triceratopsians also appeared in the Cretaceous. The massive Tyrannosaurus Rex represents the end of the line. It and it's relatives did not appear until the late Cretaceous...It's brief existence along with all other dinosaurs was terminated at the end of that period'...

I believe that we see in the progression of the dinosaurs a gradual testimony to Lucifer's degeneration. It goes from peaceful herbivores then bringing in smaller predators. Then in the Cretaceous you have large, armoured herbivores and predators who could fight each other followed by the dinosaurs extinction."

Stephen Collins believes that many of the dinosaurs like Tyrannosaurus Rex were made by Satan and the other fallen angels as they are serpent-like in appearance which is the image of Satan.

There have been several global catastrophes and mass extinctions of life on this planet over the many geological ages. One of the most well-known is that of the dinosaurs which geologists date to about 65 million years ago. The most likely cause is that of the earth being hit by an extraterrestrial object such as an asteroid. A matching crater was found underwater off the coast of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.

In the June, 1989 issue of National Geographic in article entitled "The March Toward Extinction" we are told about how the dinosaurs might have wiped out. The article tells us:

[An] iridium-rich clay [lies] right at the boundary between the Cretaceous period, when there were dinosaurs, and the Tertiary, when there were none. Because iridium is rare on earth but common in meteorites...

[Three Berkeley scientists] proposed that earth had been hit by an asteroid ten kilometers (six miles) across...the proposal has since been backed up by abundant

and convincing evidence from around the globe. Most scientists now concur that at least one great extraterrestrial object struck the planet around the time the dinosaurs died out.

After the Cretaceous period we see the emergence of a great many more species of mammals begin to flourish on earth. Another major mass extinction of animals occurred during the Pleistocene era dated by geologists to around 11 000 B.C.

Vast numbers of species were wiped out, virtually overnight. After that completely new creatures never seen before appear on the earth bearing very little resemblance to the creatures just previously wiped out, completely confounding the theory of evolution.

The intermediate and transitional links that should be there between living and extinct species if evolution were true is embarrassingly missing according to scientists who are honest enough to admit it.

The many ice ages that this planet has gone through appear to support the point that the pre-Adamic world under Satan did not have the salubrious climate which many people believe God created in the pre-Flood world by means of a water canopy which acted like a greenhouse and evened out the temperature around most of the planet.

Genesis 1:7 talks about how God “divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament”.

There are accurate maps of Antarctica and Greenland dated to around the 16th century that show what Antarctica looks like without the ice which covers it; and that it actually is two islands underneath the ice. Greenland is shown in another map as three islands with topography that reflects what would be the underneath the ice. In the last few decades it has indeed been confirmed that Greenland is three islands under the ice which covers it. How could they have known back then? It appears that knowledge has been passed down from a time when there was no permanent ice covering Antarctica and Greenland.

The last global catastrophe that occurred before man came on the scene appears to have included significant worldwide flooding that left the earth ‘tohu and bohu’ before God renewed the face of the earth during ‘creation’ or more properly ‘re-creation’ week 6 000 years ago. It may have been one and the same as the Pleistocene catastrophe which is usually dated to 11 000 BC but may have been more recent.

It was probably at the time of this destruction that Satan and the fallen angels launched their attack on God in heaven and tried to take over the universe (Isaiah 14:14, Luke 10:18).

At the end of the Pleistocene epoch dated to 11,000 years ago, there were mass extinction events in many different parts of the world, involving at least 200 genera (plural of genus = a group of related species). According to one website:

This [the Pleistocene mass extinction] was different from previous episodes of mass extinction.

It was much more selective, involving mainly the megafauna: the large herbivores (mammoths, mastodons, huge ground sloths, cave bears, woolly rhinoceros, other rhinoceroses, etc.) and the carnivores that fed on them, the dire wolves and saber-tooth cats. There was no accelerated extinction of smaller terrestrial species, plants, or marine organisms.

The following disappeared from America, Europe and Australia: All herbivores > 1000 KG, 75% of herbivores 100-1000 KG, 41% of herbivores 5-100 KG and < 2% of herbivores < 5 KG.

Were these just hunted to extinction, a common theory proposed by many evolutionists? Or on the other hand, do we see great climatic changes and a worldwide catastrophe?

The selectiveness of the extinctions is very interesting. It is very evident that the main animals which die off completely are the very big animals which God would not have re-created 6 000 years ago as their existence would not be compatible with the presence of mankind similar to why we see very little or no evidence at all of the co-existence of man and dinosaurs.

Those animals that were compatible with man's co-existence God re-created and so paleontologists are not aware of them being wiped out. The extreme size of many earlier animals and plants may also be due to different surface gravity or atmospheric pressure.

Some Questions Regarding God's Plan For Angels

In discussing the development of character in angels Mr Armstrong talked about it in terms like the setting of concrete - that they have free moral agency and then after a certain period of time their character is set, either in God's way or sin. Now this idea leads to a few interesting questions.

First of all, how long does it take for angelic character to set? Is this why it's taken so long for God to create man on this planet after placing Lucifer and the angels under him here on earth? Maybe He was waiting until their character was set before doing so. Who knows?

Maybe the extreme length of time it was taking to progress through what God had planned for this planet and not being able to go out to other places in the universe and create new worlds is what Satan used to sour the angels under him against God. There are lots of interesting possibilities. Here's another very interesting one.

Once any of the fallen angels committed their first sin could they turn back to God's way and have their character set in God's way and not the way of sin?

Using the concrete analogy above we know that concrete before it sets can be smoothed out if someone puts a footprint in it. Is this how it works for angels? It's very hard to imagine being doomed to be set in the way of sin once you have committed your very first sin.

Dr Hoeh felt that they could turn around. In the above quotes from his 1977 sermons he said, "Apparently all this time God allowed the Devil the chance to see whether after he had examined the nature that he was governing...**whether he would change or whether he would not.**"

If this is how it is it begs an even more profound question.

Since the wages of sin is death (Rom.6:23) who pays for those few sins committed by those angels who turn back onto the path of righteousness afterward if that is possible? Did Christ die to not only pay for our sins but those of the angels as well?

In Revelation 12:4 it says that Satan drew a third of the stars with him in his rebellion against God. Was this a third of all the angels in the universe there has ever been or could this percentage have been a third of those put under Lucifer on the earth only? The verse, talking about the third, calls them the “stars of heaven” so it leans towards the former rather than the latter but who knows?

Of the two-thirds of the angels who have remained righteous are any of those doing preparation work on planets in other parts of our galaxy or near galaxies at this time? That is certainly a real possibility. Given the amount of time since Project Earth began with the angels assigned here there’s a chance those who succeeded in the project have been given responsibilities elsewhere in this universe.

Mr Armstrong said that there appears to be no life anywhere else in the universe at this time (Incredible Human Potential, p.50).

What did our solar system’s planets look like before they were struck by catastrophes which are clearly evident? Mars is a very interesting planet. There is clear evidence that the planet underwent a global catastrophe within the last 10 000 years because of the lack of erosion in its highly corrosive atmosphere. What did Mars look like before the catastrophe which may have stripped it of some of its atmosphere. Did it previously have any water on it or any plant life on it in the past.

Of all the angels ever created is the character of them all now set or can some of them still go one way or the other?

A rather interesting passage of scripture is found in Daniel 10, verses 12 to 14. Daniel has just been given a lot of prophecies which he intensely desires to know the meaning of, so he has been praying and fasting for understanding. After a period of time an angel comes to answer his request for understanding of those prophecies.

The angel tells him: “Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that you did set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before thy God, your words were heard, and I am come for your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make you understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days (Daniel 10:12-14).

It is assumed by some commentators that this angel was Gabriel who gave him the 70 weeks prophecy in the previous chapter but there is a time break between these chapters (different regnal years) and the angel in chapter 10 is not identified, only that he had some assistance from the angel Michael.

Ron Dart in the booklet he wrote called “The Tracks of the Devil” makes these fascinating comments on this passage:

Now the vision Daniel received in answer to his prolonged prayer is fascinating enough, but in the process of revealing the vision, the messenger of God dropped a small piece of tantalising information. Most of us believe that God is all powerful, that all He has to do is say the word and all powers, human and demonic, fall down before Him. Yet here is an emissary of God who is held up for three weeks by someone called the ‘Prince of Persia.’ Who is this ‘Prince of Persia’ and how was he able to thwart an angel of the Almighty?

Consider the picture. Daniel fasts and prays to God. God hears him and immediately dispatches an answer. The problem is that Daniel is inside the kingdom of Persia, and God's messenger has to fight his way in! It is no small battle—it takes three weeks to make it. Think what this means. There was a spirit being, called the Prince of Persia, who was strong enough to stand off an angel of God for three weeks. In the end, it takes two to one odds to win, and the battle is still not over. Michael, another Prince of God, keeps the Prince of Persia busy while the angel comes to Daniel to deliver the message.

One would have thought that God could have whispered in Daniel's ear, or that the angel could simply have materialised in Daniel's room....What this story reveals to us, almost as an aside, is that there is a spiritual world alongside our world, invisible to us, but real, vibrant, alive and dangerous.

We use the word infrastructure to describe the physical structure underlying our society—water pipes, sewers, utilities—things underground and invisible, but real and necessary, nonetheless. What comes as a shock is the fact that there is also a spiritual infrastructure—unseen, unsensed, invisible, but nonetheless real and powerful. Not only is there a spirit world co-existing with our own, but there are spiritual battles routinely fought around us, and the outcome is by no means automatic” (p.3-4).

Now God is All-Powerful. If the character of the angel sent to Daniel was set in God's way, never to sin again, what is the point of God allowing this angel of His to go through this battle? He was obviously allowing it for some purpose? Was it to test this angel?

Maybe, with some of the angels, they were created at a later juncture of time than those original angels who were there at the beginning of the creation of the earth (Job 38:4,7) and as a result the time when their character sets is later than those original angels.

In addition to the prince of Persia and the kings of Persian we are told in Daniel 10:20 about a demonic spirit called the Prince of Greece. Ephesians 6:12 tells us that we spiritually fight “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” There appears to be demon spirits in Satan's kingdom over certain areas of the earth.

In Australia, our aborigines talk about various spirits that they contact for wisdom. In their religion, which appears, in, part demon-influenced, the most powerful spirit is the Spirit of the Olgas, a group of rocky mountains near Ayers Rock in the central Australian desert.

There appear to be other demons who specialize in working on certain human weaknesses like lust, vanity, drunkenness, etc. The spirit world is a very real world and we should not have anything to do with the evil side of it.

Another good example of spirit forces ready for battle can be found in 2 Kings 6:15-17. In those verses we read, “When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. Oh, my lord, what shall we do? the servant asked. Don't be afraid, the prophet answered. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them. And Elisha prayed, O LORD, open his eyes so he may see. Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills **full of horses and chariots of fire** all around Elisha.”

We find another very interesting passage of scripture in Genesis 18. We read that, "The LORD said, The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know" (Genesis 18:20-21, NIV).

Now we tend to think sometimes of God sitting up in heaven in front of a bank of TV sets seeing and knowing everything that we do. This scripture tells us that the Lord God went down to see if Sodom and Gomorrah was as bad as He had heard, presumably from the angels who observe what's going on around the world and report back to God (Zechariah 4:10). He didn't know automatically.

He chose to have it reported to Him instead and then rather than viewing how bad the cities were on a screen in heaven He chose to make a personal visit without deciding to know ahead of time.

It makes you wonder how often Christ makes these kind of anonymous personal visits to earth to see what's going on here up close and personal.

There is in the Old Testament a record of a time when Christ in vision to Ezekiel made such a visit. The record of this is found in Ezekiel chapter 1 and gives us a fascinating glimpse into what the spirit realm, God's holy angels and the "portable" throne of God looks like. We read the following in Ezekiel 1:

Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.

And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.

As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.

As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies. And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings. And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake (Ezek 1:1-28, KJV)”

The Bible gives us a tremendous glimpse into the majesty of God’s throne room in Revelation 4. Here now is what God tells us of the splendour and magnificence that surrounds Him in heaven:

After this I (John) looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before

and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (Revelation 4:1-11, KJV)".

Pre-Adamic Hominids

The church, following the conclusions of Dr Herman Hoeh, has taught that the man-like creatures called hominids that archaeologists have argued lived prior to the time of Adam were proto-types of man without the spirit in man that God created.

Man, made in God's image, makes proto-types when he designs. Does God do the same thing? This would in no way deny the seven day literal re-creation week 6000 years ago when He created Adam.

Archaeologists believe that prior to 6 000 years ago the hominid culture was very primitive indeed and suddenly makes a dramatic jump very shortly after Adam's creation when the first true civilisation, as archaeologists call it, appears on the scene.

God breathing into man the 'spirit in man' (1 Corinthians 2:11) would make that difference between Adam and the pre-historic hominids IF there were such man-like creatures before the time of Adam.

I'd like to continue with the Dr Hoeh sermon quotes on the subject of the pre-Adamic world. This is what the church has taught with regard to pre-Adamic hominids.

When **Australopithecines** appear in Africa (they have not been discovered elsewhere) 'late' in the history of the world we have a creature that can make tools, but not according to a pre-conceived pattern. An outline of development follows. First, we have a creature who looked somewhat like apes, who tended to walk somewhat upright, who made tools, but not enter a pre-conceived pattern--the form of the tool is after the natural characteristics of the rock.

Then we have a creature who walked upright called "**Homo Erectus**". He had the capacity to make a tool from a pre-conceived pattern, but did not have modern man's brain capacity so he was not classified as 'Homo Sapiens' because he did not think and reason as man reasons. At this level (of Java Man and Peking Man) the term 'homo' may be misleading because it is not 'man' as a son of Adam. It would be better to correct this misconception of modern evolutionary science to conform to the truth of the world we see. There was no developmental progress or advances in culture of these creatures though they existed for maybe hundreds of thousands of years. If you examine geology with radiometric dating you will have to conclude that there were steps in creation, with the presence of new forms of life at each step which continue for a very long time without variation(evolution).

Now after Homo Erectus we come to....**Neanderthal Man**, where 'man' is again a misnomer. He made tools, a bed, a shelter--but so can other animals. He could make rather involved tools, but had no sense of art. Man is an artistic creature, but this doesn't mean all artistic creatures are men. But no art is ever associated with Homo Neanderthalensis. And there is also the question whether he could speak or just made sounds with his voice. Then 35 to 40 thousand years ago angels had the responsibility of governing a world that changed from creatures lead primarily by instinct to creatures less and less so.

There is thus the indication that angels were being trained not just to utilise the natural world of plants and animals and to supervise the climate and all other aspects of nature, but to train creatures who had the capacity to begin to fashion something out of the nature in which they lived, and in more and more complex form....

To our knowledge, 'apemen' do not now exist on earth though there are reports of 'big-foot' and the 'abominable snowman'....

After Homo Neanderthalensis we come to **Cro-Magnon, or Upper Palaeolithic "man"**, who once again should not be called 'man' but it would be better to use a term like 'hominid' for him. At the close of the Ice Age or Arctic Climate this creature could make tools and houses and could communicate better than any former creature. He could draw--perform aesthetic operations. He could hunt, fish, and make weapons to find his food. Upper Palaeolithic hominids are therefore unusual in that they have gone beyond former creatures in many areas such as art and an aesthetic sense, and in the capacity to communicate ideas.

For 20 to 25 thousand years they lived on earth and hunted and fished--but they knew no agriculture, they domesticated no animals, they neither sowed nor reaped the fields. While they were here these ideas never penetrated their minds or brains, though they had the other advancements.

In the Bible, Adam and Eve were put in the Garden of Eden and told to 'dress and keep it'. Adam is therefore of sufficient mentality to be a gardener and able to perceive the fundamentals of agriculture. He could also reason about such things as eternal life and death. Adam's older son Cain built a town and was an agriculturalist and tilled the field or used the plough. Adam's second son Abel kept sheep, and therefore may have kept other domestic animals--at least he was advanced enough of an agriculturalist to tend domesticated stock.

Man has not been on earth more than 6000 years according to the Bible. He starts out capable of thinking of eternal matters, as well as the fundamentals of agriculture and town building. In Isaiah we are told that certain things were engraved with 'the pen of Enoch' or 'the stylus of a man'. There the implication of the Hebrew text is that Enoch, the son of Seth, invented the art of writing, because it was named after him. In Genesis we find 'the book of the Generations of Adam' which implies that in the lifetimes of Seth and Enoch, men had the capacity not only to write, but to convey, preserve, and perpetuate the written word, not necessarily in scroll or codex form.

We should have realized that Homo Erectus did not write, paint, or farm. Likewise Homo Neanderthalensis, Upper Palaeolithic hominids (Cro-Magnon) etc. though they did paint and draw, did not domesticate animals, nor sow and reap, nor build

cities, but only preyed on the environment like other animals. Modern man is just a refined and reduced Cro-Magnon man....

Angels had been given responsibility to rule creatures who could clothe themselves with skins to keep warm in the cold, but could not think out agriculture. They were being introduced to gradually, more and more complex forms of life.

After Cro-Magnon we come to '**Mesolithic man**'....Mesolithic man is even more refined than Cro-Magnon. He used tools different from his predecessors, who used just stone. He used bone and wood and jewellery. He also reaped wild grains, though he did not sow, and he domesticated a few animals, but did not yet have pottery. He did live in groups, or tribes, or clans--whatever term we might like to apply from our perspective. Later we have development of the use of clay.

There was just about 4000 years from the beginning of gathering (like berries, nuts, and wild grains) to the conclusion of the Pottery Neolithic period. This was 4000 years in which hominids made the most rudimentary developments, slowly but surely. Angels were given charge for the first time over creatures that could think out new techniques of domestication, step by step the gradual making of pottery, the invention of a kind of village or community--only this in 4000 years from about 8000 to 4000 B.C. do these stages occur.

Compare this with the progress from Adam to Herod the Great. Humans in only 1700 years progressed to the point where God said 'nothing shall be restrained from man that he has imagined to do'. In the last pre-Adamic phase the hominids lived with little instinct and at a level not unlike the most primitive men live today. Apparently, they were not accountable to sin because God did not reveal certain things to them. Though they could not be distinguished skeletally from modern man, they obviously did not have the 'spirit in man' which gives him the capability to reach the moon in 6000 years of progress. Something was yet missing though they had incipient agriculture and village life.

Even if the angels had not rebelled, presumably the next step would have been the impartation of spirit in man--to create out of matter a form of life which the angels might originally have ruled over. Mr Armstrong has said that God must have always had in mind the possibility of an alternative. If angels would not do what God wanted done, then He would create creatures capable of doing it. And if spirit beings, the angels, would not do it and be obedient, then He would put His Spirit in matter and test that before it is made spirit.

Some one-third of the angels very early on decided to 'do their own thing' and rebelled. Two-thirds apparently remained faithful to God. Following Satan, the disobedient angels abandoned this world as their inheritance. While on earth for a very long period of time, they introduced into nature a world subject to tragedies. But Romans 8 tells of a time when the sons of God in God's government will regulate nature in an entirely different fashion. 'The creation will also be delivered from the bondage of corruption to the glorious liberty of the children of God. The whole creation (not just man) groans and travails together in pain till now.' Mr Armstrong said this is a reflection of the mind (or brain from another point of view) of the Devil. What we are looking for is the 'manifestation of the sons of God'.

In this we will not have a world that devours itself. Today there is no fish, plant or bird that is not subject to the 'law' that reflects the mind of the Devil. We live in the same kind of world as the whole of geologic history. As far as our knowledge goes,

the whole of the history of creation revealed in history shows that same suffering that Romans 8 speaks of, which is unlike the peaceful World Tomorrow. The laws of reproduction have been woven together with the laws of food consumption so that it reflects the Devil's way of how he thinks nature should be controlled. Now if this were the way God intended it, then the description of the Millennium given by Isaiah would be wrong. But the evidence of geology indicates the Devil was already 'doing his thing'. When he appeared before God, He didn't listen to him because God said it was wrong but God let Him go ahead. Then the Devil went back and argued and reasoned with the angels until a third of them agreed with him that 'God doesn't listen'.

The final act of rebellion was a crisis in which the Devil and the angels perceived that the next step God had in mind was to terminate their experiment...and create a creature like the hominids but one step higher, with the capacity to reason like the mind of God - higher than the creatures with a 'brutish mentality' that is not accountable for sin, but one that has capacity to govern himself and decide for himself apart from any instinct which way he shall go.

When the angels perceived that this was likely the case, they decided to abandon this inheritance, to scale the heavens, and dethrone God so they could set up the universe with a nature in accordance with their ideas of competition and strife and keeping in balance by dividing and conquering and devouring--the 'philosophy' of nature today. But they were cast down, held in restraint.

When God created Adam, in whom the 'spirit in man' was added he had the capacity to reason and build without limit. Every former man-like creature had an upper limit beyond which he could not progress. Suddenly a creature was created who had no upper limit to his thinking in the natural world, no limit to his speculation. We can contemplate eternity and be held accountable for law and sin. God tested Adam at this point and you know that our first two parents failed the test in the Garden of Eden, and the world once again passed to the realm of Satan, and human civilization instead of being developed under God's law and nature under God's law--everything passed under a curse.

Notice in Gen. 3:14 addressed to the serpent: 'Because you have done this you are cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field. Upon your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of our life'. This can be symbolic, but it can also be literal. The implication is that the curse was not only on the serpent through whom the Devil spoke, but also on the cattle--one was cursed 'above' the other. The curse fell on all nature. The creature that was at one time 'more subtle than any beast of the field (Gen. 3:1)' was reduced to crawling on the ground. (And there is the symbolism of the Devil himself being cast to the earth in the past and the future.) Nature was cursed with the 'philosophy' of the Devil--this is the way he wants to run the world.

God put man in this world to see what it is like when run by the Devil's philosophy....He said, 'Cursed is the serpent ABOVE the rest of the beasts of the field' with the indication immediately that the rest of nature was cursed because in the Garden of Eden we don't have this experience. Adam saw all these animals and there were no feelings in the Garden of Eden that he had to be careful of the lion who was getting hungry at nightfall. There was no fear that we sense in that account....Also He let a curse fall on man and woman. The ground brought forth thorns and thistles, climatic problems, toil and sweat. This is the world of the last 6000 years.

Man is now responsible for making choices in that world. God then called out a few patriarchs, prophets, apostles and us saints who will be the firstfruits resurrected out of the earth, and assigned (with Christ) the responsibility to restore the government of God on earth, a government which the angels failed to exercise for millions of years.

Describing this profound difference between the pre-Adamic hominids and mankind William Dankenbring in his book "Beyond Star Wars" makes the following comments:

Modern man can think rationally, can progress from the methods of his forebears. He can think up new ideas, new concepts, he can imagine, he can create. True man has the capacity to wonder about and investigate himself. He inquires about his origin, his future. He can appreciate beautiful art, music, humor, satire, creativity.

As Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote: 'Admittedly the animal knows. But it cannot know that it knows ... In consequence it is denied access to a whole domain of reality in which we can move freely. We are separated by a chasm—or a threshold—which it cannot cross. Because we are reflective we are not only different but quite other. It is not a matter of change of degree, but a change of nature, resulting from a change of state.'

The vast gap between animal brain and the mind of true man has never been satisfactorily bridged. We are indeed unique. We have the ability to be self-aware, and our self-awareness is the most compelling of all realities. As individuals, we can experience our own unique self-awareness and individuality. We possess the wonderful divine gift of a conscious existence.

The human mind—the product of the 'spirit in man' which God imparted to Adam and all his descendants—is the great gift which sets modern man apart from all the pre-Adamic races and breeds uncovered by the spade or archaeology and anthropology (p.212).

Fred Meldau in "Why We Believe in Creation Not in Evolution" writes the following about the fossil creatures that have been discovered that appear in appearance and functionality to be between modern apes and man:

Austin H. Clark, Smithsonian Institute biologist, said: "Man is NOT an ape and in spite of the similarity between them there is not the slightest evidence that man is descended from an ape...

While man's bodily structure is most nearly like that of the man-like apes, yet all the early remains of prehistoric man so far discovered are distinctly those of man or are the misinterpreted fragments of apes.

No existing link has ever been found. There is no fossil evidence whatever that the most ancient man was not a man. There are no such things as missing links.

Missing links are misinterpretations. Fossil skulls which have been dug up and advanced as missing links, showing connections between man and monkey, have all been shown as misinterpretations" (p.316).

One very good DVD that I have on this subject of these hominids is called "The Image of God". It notes that examination done on the bone structure of the ears of the skeletons of the various hominids and they showed that only Neanderthals and Cro-Magnon had the balance to be bi-pedal. All the others were just extinct ape species.

Neanderthals and Cro-Magnon were concluded to be pre-historic men since Adam was created and that the dates assigned are faulty. An excellent, simple and clear analysis of the problems with dating methods used for fossils and rocks can be seen in the excellent documentary "Evolution's Achilles Heel."

Cro-Magnon skulls are virtually identical to homo sapien skulls. Neanderthals are slightly different. Early on Neanderthals were illustrated as hairy half-man, half-ape like bi-pedal creatures which suited the push for the evolution of man through the primates. That view has changed significantly as more research has been done on Neanderthal remains. Neanderthal skeletons are a little shorter and more stocky with the characteristic thick brow ridge. It has also been found that the DNA matches homo sapien DNA indicating that they are part of the same species as man.

The characteristic thick brow ridge may be the result of extremely long age as the brow ridge does continue to grow over time according to some. This may indicate the Neanderthals were pre-Flood men.

Those who believe in a young earth believe that the pre-Flood earth contained not only the dinosaurs but all the giant versions of a great many of today's species. Such giantism in the animal world would probably require much less atmospheric pressure and less gravity.

The shorter stature of the Neanderthals seems to fly in the face of a world with giant animals including giant versions of current species.

The shorter stature of the Neanderthals does appear more compatible with a pre-Flood world with a higher atmospheric pressure as a result of a water canopy. I suspect that there was a greater oxygen content which combined with the higher atmospheric pressure would create an atmosphere similar to a hyperbaric chamber which would have boosted man's health and aided the much longer lifespans of that age.

The world of less atmospheric pressure and less gravity and giant creatures appears to have been an age on the earth before man was created.

I personally believe that the pre-Adamic hominds were all extinct apes and that Neanderthals and Cro-Magnon men were pre-historic men since Adam was created and that the dates assigned are faulty.

The Creation Of Man

Genesis 1:1 shows the creation of a perfect earth. Genesis 1:2 appears to show the result of the sin and destruction of the angels. "And the earth became without form and void".

"What had long been a beautiful planet had been turned into a cosmic wreck because Lucifer rebelled against his maker. The atmosphere was filled with smoke and poison gases so thick that nothing could live in it...Little or no physical life could survive through that terrible time...For a time our world stayed buried in a deep blanket of gases, smoke and water. Oceans covered the whole Earth. There was no longer any

dry land. The atmosphere was so clogged with clouds of tiny bits of matter that no light could reach the seas" (The Bible Story, Volume 1, p.5-6).

It's possible this global catastrophe may have been around the time that Lucifer tried to overthrow God's throne in heaven (Isaiah 14:12-14). Maybe he lashed out and destroyed what was on the earth at this time because he knew that God was about to begin the next phase of his great plan. Jealousy may have burned in his heart knowing that the "puny" mortal beings God was about to create in His own image would one day inherit all things and rule over everything that He wanted to control.

In the next six days before He rested and created the Sabbath (Genesis 2:1-3) He renewed the surface of the earth (Psalm 104:30) climaxing in the creation of mankind.

DAY ONE – LIGHT (Genesis 1:3-5). On the first day He separated the light from the darkness and cleared much of the smoke and gases that filled the earth's atmosphere so He could begin His work of renewing the surface of the earth.

DAY TWO – THE SKY AND THE OCEANS (Genesis 1:6-8). On the second day He created a vast layer of fresh air and separated the waters above and below the land (called the firmament).

DAY THREE – DRY LAND AND PLANT LIFE (Genesis 1:9-13). On the third day He raised up dry land out of the water and planted vegetation all over the earth.

DAY FOUR – THE SUN AND MOON NOW VISIBLE (Genesis 1:14-19). On the fourth day He finished clearing the smoke and gases which he began on the first day. Once the atmosphere was finally cleaned up the sun and the moon could be clearly seen from the surface of the planet.

DAY FIVE – SEA LIFE AND BIRD LIFE (Genesis 1:20-23). On the fifth day He created the animals of the sea and the birds of the air.

DAY SIX – LAND ANIMALS AND MAN (Genesis 1:24-31). On the sixth day He created the land animals and then His crowning achievement – MAN! Through man He would begin the process of reproducing Himself (Genesis 1:26).

Notice how the first three days poetically mirror the second three days.

God partially cleared the atmosphere on day one and finished the process on day four.

On day two He prepared the sky and the oceans and then on day five He fills the sky and the oceans with animals.

On day three He raised up dry land and put vegetation on it and then on day six He creates the animals to roam over the land.

Genesis 1 is an absolutely beautiful, poetic description of that week when God re-created a whole myriad of new life forms on this planet, many of which He and possibly the angels may have had a hand in creating prior to this before so many perished. Mr Ron Dart in an article entitled "I'll Make Me a World" presents a beautiful commentary of this wonderful re-creation of God's. He wrote the following:

**And God stepped out on space
And He looked around and said:
I'm lonely—
I'll make me a world** (From "The Creation," James Weldon Johnson).

Once upon a time, there was no world. There was no universe as we know it. There was only space. There was a time when God arrived at a decision to create the world—when the world was born in the mind of God.

Before there could be a man, there had to be a place for man and that place had to be carefully designed. Man would be physical, so his environment had to be physical. He would need food, air, water, a survivable temperature range. He would need companionship, animal and human, and the opportunity to grow and develop. All this took thought and planning.

And so the planning began. A planet would be required— and power....

First of all we will need a star. The star will have to be big enough to be far away and still provide light, warmth and power. Too close, and we might fry our man with radiation. Too far, and he can't grow food. The star needs to be big enough to have sufficient fuel to last over time. We want it to remain stable for as long as we need it.

We must give careful consideration to the quality of the radiation from this star. Part of the radiation will fall in the visible range and will be called light. Light must have certain properties to be useful. Unlike ultraviolet and X-rays, it must not be harmful. X-rays will go right through tissue and cause damage. Light will simply be reflected from the skin and will be harmless. Yet light must penetrate the atmosphere, while X-rays must be absorbed. A nice little problem in physics must be solved.

Since man will be able to see, we want him to like what he sees. For that matter, we want to like it ourselves. If we make different frequencies of light different colors, and vary the qualities of absorption, diffusion, refraction, and reflection, we can get rainbows, red sunsets, green leaves, yellow lemons, blue skies, and blue-green water. What we can do with flowers and birds is only limited by our imagination.

The planet we have in mind will have to be 93 million miles from the selected star—no more, no less. This will give it the optimum climate. Our man will have to grow food, and the food will have to be watered. At 93 million miles, the sun will evaporate and raise about 5,435 tons of water from one square mile of ocean surface every hour. The temperature differential, and the weight of water vapor should serve to get the water to high altitudes and keep it there long enough for the wind to carry it over land. If we cool it at the right time, it should serve as an effective sprinkler system.

The planet will have to be just the right size. If it is too large, gravity will make everything heavier. It will hold more oxygen and more oxygen will mean more water. A much larger planet could have oceans that are 1500 miles deep. If we make it too small, it won't hold the lighter gasses at all. There is, it seems a rather narrow range of size for this planet we want.

We can also see that one side of it will be too hot and the other side too cold. We can handle that by simply turning it on its axis. We must, however, get the speed of rotation right. Our man can get used to days of varying lengths, but if we turn too slow, we burn everything up in the days and freeze it at night.

Even with the planet spinning, there is still a problem. The equator will be too hot, with perpetual summer, and the northern latitudes will be too cold to be useful. What if we tilt the earth a few degrees? This will give us seasons, and much more of the earth can be cultivated. The cycles of heat and cold will help keep the insects under control. A 23 degree tilt should be optimum. If we vary much at all, life won't survive....

By the way, the evaporation we have been talking about will make the oceans saline. What will that do to marine life? And how will our fish breathe? Simple. We make oxygen soluble in water. Plankton, tides, waves, rain, surface absorption will all oxygenate the water. We will equip our fish with gills that will take the oxygen directly from the water.

What are tides? Well, we have to move these huge oceans to keep them from getting stagnant. We will put a satellite around the earth at precisely the right distance, and its gravity will pull the oceans toward it. The tides will move with the moon. The moon will also give man a sense of the passage of time.

Fresh water poses several problems. By all our laws, fluids become more dense as they get colder. Cold water will be heavier than warm water. Lakes and rivers will freeze from the bottom up and will become solid ice. Fish cannot survive that. What if we make an exception to our general law? What if we design the water molecule so it is heaviest a few degrees above freezing—say, four degrees centigrade? Water would sink as it gets colder until it reaches four degrees. Then, as it gets close to freezing, it will start to rise. We will get two things from this. Ice will float and form a barrier between the air above and the water below. Deep water will never freeze. We will also 'turn over' our lakes twice a year moving oxygen to the deeper waters so the deep water fish can survive.

By the way, there is something else we can do with water. When it is in clouds and begins to condense, if we give water crystalline qualities, we can create little flakes of ice crystals—snow. With the right properties of random crystal development, we can make every snowflake different, no matter how close you look. And we can make them pretty. Snow can be used to store water during the cold seasons, and let it run down the mountains forming creeks and springs during the summer—a perpetual supply of cold clear water. Not bad at all. In fact, it is very good!

Now let's give a little thought to the reproductive cycle of pine trees...'

The Bible tells us that God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' I suppose we could assume that was all there was to it—that God only wanted 'light,' and didn't especially care what form it took or what its characteristics might be. But that idea is absurd on the face of it. Are we to believe that God just 'lucked into' gorgeous sunsets?

The entire creation account is presented to us as though God merely spoke the word and it was done. But the evidence of thought and planning leaps at us from every corner of creation. There is attention to every detail. There is artistic beauty worked into what could just as easily have been drab and uninteresting. There is engineering of the highest order. There is even comedy. Creatures seem to have been deliberately designed in ways to confound those who would try to ignore the architect, the engineer, the designer, the creator.

There is no way for the human mind to comprehend the work that went into the planning and execution of this world. No detail was too small to escape attention. No engineering problem could be left unsolved.

There came a point in the planning process, for example, when God decided He would put flying birds in the air around this planet. This required some thought. Principles of aeronautical engineering were involved. Any student pilot knows that nothing flies unless the laws of aerodynamics are obeyed. Lift, thrust, and drag are the basics, and from there, we have to think about weight and balance, the effect of control surfaces, fuel and fuel storage, transition from high speed flight to slow to hover, power to weight ratios, navigation, landing gear, sensory systems, and control systems. If it is a bird instead of a plane, we can add biological systems for reproduction, neuromuscular control, and worm processing.

Everyone knows that God is a 'Creator,' but few seem to consider what that means—that God is an engineer, a scientist, an artist, an architect, a designer, and a builder. No one grasps how much planning and painstaking care was taken with all the little problems of physics, chemistry, electronics, hydraulics, optics, and biology that faced the creator of all this.

Think about the wings of birds. They had to be strong, but very light. Man invented aluminium and titanium to solve this problem. God solved it with hollow bones. Man has covered wings with fabric and metal. Skin was too heavy if used to provide all the lifting area required for the wings of a bird, so God used feathers. And to keep the feathers from flying apart, He invented microscopic hooks to hold them together. With no respect at all for God's patent, we copied it and called it Velcro.

Airlines pay artists to design distinctive paint schemes for their aircraft. It was the artist in the Creator that designed the decorations of birds. Some species of bird would need protective coloring, but not all. Birds can fly, they can roost in trees far from the reach of most predators, so the Artist decided to make them beautiful. It was done a thousand different ways, and given the capacity for random development into a thousand new ways.

Then there were the animals. There were millions of details to consider and no detail was too insignificant to warrant attention. Even the neurological systems of dogs and cats had to include the ability for dogs to shake off water and cats to always land on their feet. Simple stuff, you say? You should see it in slow motion. No serious designer can afford to take these things for granted.

How long did all this thinking and planning go on before the first piece of work was done? It may seem like a meaningless question, because the one about whom we ask it is not limited by time. But the question is not meaningless at all. The work may have been done 'fast' by our reckoning, but the work still had to be done. Every alternative had to be explored. Every potential problem had to be eliminated. Every detail had to be addressed. Nothing could be left to chance, for chance cannot be depended upon to create the best of all possible worlds.

At every turn, a decision was required. Every decision had to be made and made in sequence, because some decisions depended on other decisions. How fast God went from one decision to another makes little difference. But if one decision had to follow another there was sequence. And if there was sequence, there was time—by any human reference, a lot of time.

But time did not matter. God was in no hurry. He worked against no deadline. And He thoroughly enjoyed what He was doing. God the Creator was doing what He did best. He was creating one engineering marvel after another, one work of art after another, and myriads of creatures of staggering beauty and complexity.

It was a joy. It was satisfying beyond belief. And unless you can understand this, you may never fully appreciate God. The words of Genesis seem to say that God took pride in His work, His planning, His craft....

When God had finished all of His work, He looked around with great satisfaction and pronounced it 'very good.' He then crowned the creation with an act of great symbolism. When He was all finished, when He had pronounced it 'very good,' He stopped work and rested.

Was He tired? Not in the traditional sense. But He had worked, not just for six days, but for all the time it took to plan it all before He ever started. He was not tired. He was not exhausted. He was not weary. He was not even finished.

But for God, as for man, there is a time to cease from labor and to savor what has been done. The 'rest' of God was a statement of how He felt about the incredible effort He had put into the creation of His world.

Mr Armstrong did a fantastic job of explaining God's plan for mankind in chapter 3 of "Mystery of the Ages". I'd like to now quote from that chapter entitled "Mystery of Man" in some detail and then ask a few more questions after it. Quoting Mr Armstrong:

Instead of improving, beautifying, completing earth's creation, the sinning angels brought it to desolation and ruin. Come now to Genesis 1:1-2: 'In the beginning God created the heavens [RSV] and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep....' The original Hebrew for 'without form, and void' is *tohu* and *bohu*--meaning 'waste, desolate, deteriorated.' The word was also translated 'became.' Thus possibly after millions of years, all had come to be oceanic surface--and light had been by angelic lawlessness turned into darkness....

To prepare the earth for the creation of man, God renewed the face of the earth. This is explained in Psalm 104:30: 'Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.' Now back to Genesis 1:2: The earth had come to be in a state of ruin. '...And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.' The first thing God did was turn darkness back into LIGHT as originally made. God said, 'Let there be light: and there was light' (Gen. 1:3). (It says in verse 16 that on the fourth day that God made two great lights to rule the day and the night. The Hebrew word for made has many meanings but created is not one of them. God had cleared the atmosphere enough for the sun and moon to now be seen. They were already in existence before that fourth day as there was certain amount of light coming through on the first day and evenings and mornings which are meaningless if there was no sun)

So in six days God RENEWED THE FACE OF THE EARTH (this renewing was not its original creation, but restoring it to the condition of its original creation) preparing it for the creation of MAN! God separated the dry land from the oceans. He created then the plant life on the land, then the sea life in the water, the animal life. In the

Hebrew in which Moses wrote, the vertebrates are called nephesh in verses 20, 21, 24. The translators correctly rendered nephesh in these three verses into the English words 'living creatures.' Yet in Genesis 2:7, speaking of man, the same word nephesh was translated 'soul' because the translators falsely thought that only humans are souls. The word nephesh literally means 'life of animals,' referring to physical life and not spirit.

Once again the earth was a perfect, but as yet unfinished, creation--lacking the finishing touches. As was written earlier, God creates in dual stages. This might be compared to baking a cake. First the basic cake comes from the oven. But it is not complete until the second stage is added--the icing on the cake. This beautifies, enriches and completes the cake. God placed Lucifer and his angels on the earth. But he intended them to complete the creation by putting on, as it were, the finishing touches to beautify, improve and enrich the earth. But the angels sinned, resulting in bringing chaos, confusion and darkness to this planet.

Now God renewed the face of the earth for MAN, made to become in the character image of God and also in the likeness or form and shape of God. And God intended man to complete the finishing touches by improving and beautifying the earth--putting, as it were, the icing on the cake, to have man's part in the final creation of the earth. Instead, man has ruined, polluted, defiled, deteriorated almost every portion of the earth his hands have touched or acted upon.

WHY did the Creator God put MAN on the earth? For God's ultimate supreme purpose of reproducing himself--of recreating himself, as it were, by the supreme objective of creating the righteous divine character ultimately in millions unnumbered begotten and born children who shall become God beings, members of the God family.

Man was to improve the physical earth as God gave it to him, finishing its creation (which sinning angels had deliberately refused to do) and, in so doing, to RESTORE the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, with God's WAY of life; and further, in this very process FINISHING THE CREATION OF MAN by the development of God's holy, righteous CHARACTER, with man's own assent. Once this perfect and righteous character is instilled in man, and man converted from mortal flesh to immortal spirit, then is to come the INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL--man being BORN INTO the divine FAMILY of God, restoring the government of God to the earth, and then participating in the completion of the CREATION over the entire endless expanse of the UNIVERSE! That incredible potential of man will be fully explained in the pages that follow in this volume. God shall have reproduced HIMSELF untold millions of times over!

So, on the sixth day of that re-creation week, God (Elohim) said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness' (Gen. 1:26). Man was made to have (with his assent) a special relationship with his Maker! He was made in the form and shape of God. He was given a spirit (essence in form) to make the relationship possible. Much more of that a little later. But God made MAN of MATTER! This was necessary for the supreme accomplishment God willed.

'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath [air] of life; and man became a living soul' (Gen. 2:7). Man, formed from material dust of the ground, upon breathing air, BECAME a living soul. It does not say man is, or has, an immortal soul. What was formed from material ground BECAME a soul. The word 'soul' is translated from the Hebrew in which

Moses wrote, from the word nephesh. The Hebrew nephesh merely means a breathing animal. Three times in the first chapter of Genesis animals are called nephesh: Gen. 1:20, 'moving creature' (Hebrew, nephesh); Gen. 1:21, 'great whales, and every living creature' (Hebrew, nephesh); The translators in translating into the English language used the English word 'creature,' but in Genesis 2:7 they translated the same nephesh into the English word 'soul'--man became a 'living soul' (nephesh).

Therefore the SOUL is physical, composed of matter, and can die.... Did you ever wonder about the vast difference between human mind and animal brain?.... The physical brain of the higher vertebrates in the animal kingdom is essentially the same in physical form, design, constituency, as human brain. The brains of whales, elephants, dolphins are larger--and chimp almost as large. Yet the output of the human brain is indescribably greater. Few indeed know WHY! Many passages of Scripture show that there is a spirit in man (Job 32:8). Spirit is not matter, and man is matter. To distinguish it from God's Holy Spirit, I designate it as the 'human' spirit. Nevertheless, it is spirit and not matter.

This 'human' spirit imparts the power of intellect, to the human physical brain. The spirit cannot see, hear, taste, smell or feel. The brain sees through the eye, hears through the ear, etc. The 'human' spirit cannot of itself think. The physical brain thinks. What, then, is the function of this 'human' spirit? It is NOT a 'soul.' But, 1) it imparts the power of intellect--of thinking, and of MIND power, to the human brain; and 2) it is the very means God has instilled, making possible a personal relationship between human MAN and divine GOD.(bridging the gap between man and God)....

Man has continued to accept the first lie in human history--Satan's lie to mother Eve that man is immortal and cannot die. The soul is merely the breathing animal. All animals are biblically called 'souls'--in Hebrew, nephesh. Therefore, if man is a soul as in Genesis 2:7, so also are the dumb animals. But there is a human spirit in the human soul. This human spirit does not impart human life. Human life, like that of all vertebrates, comes from blood circulation, oxidized by the breath of air. But God reveals there is a spirit within every human. This spirit is not present in animals. The human spirit empowers the human brain with intellect--with ability to acquire knowledge, to think, reason, make decisions, produce attitudes of good or evil. Human and animal brain are alike. Human mind superiority comes not from superior brain, but from the presence of human spirit within the human brain. Animal brain is supplied with instinct, not intellect....

God formed man of matter, but after his own image and likeness as to form and shape. But the brute animal and man have the same breath, the same source of life. They die the same death. **Human life is animal existence, but in the form and shape of God, and with the human spirit added to the brain.** Man was created to have a relationship with his Maker. Therefore he was made in his Maker's form and shape, with contact and relationship made possible by the presence within him of the human spirit.

But man's creation was not completed. He was made mentally and spiritually only 'half there.' He needed the addition of God's Spirit to unite with his spirit, begetting him as a child of God--uniting him with God--ultimately enabling him to be born into the very GOD FAMILY. Pause here a moment. Notice once again the duality in God's creative process. The first man Adam was a physical creation with the human spirit added. When man's creation is finally complete, he will be a spiritual creation, formed wholly of Spirit.

When man receives the Holy Spirit of God the very Spirit and mind of the immortal God is injected into him. It joins with his human spirit....The human spirit enters the human embryo at conception. It is this spirit that may, upon adult conversion, be united with the Holy Spirit from the great Creator God, impregnating that human with God-life as a child of the living God, in a state of gestation, though as yet unborn. To destroy an embryo or a fetus in a mother's uterus is to MURDER a potential future God Being....

The departed human spirit at death is in fact a spiritual mold, of itself unconscious, yet in the resurrection bringing into the resurrected body all the memory, knowledge and character as well as form and shape of the person before death.

The human spirit of itself cannot see, hear, think or know. The only real LIFE, inherent and self-containing, lies in the Holy Spirit of God, united with the human spirit. The value of a human life lies in the human spirit and its potential of being united with God's Spirit-- which is God-mind and God-life (p.82-91, softbound).

I'd just like to interject in here and from the scriptures show that this spirit component of man is spirit essence and not self-conscious of itself.

God says the following in Ecclesiastes 9:5, "For the living know that they will die but **THE DEAD KNOW NOTHING.**"

Psalms 146:4 tells us, "His (man's) breath goes forth, he returns to his earth, **IN THAT VERY DAY HIS THOUGHTS PERISH.**"

The Bible is clear about the fact the dead have no consciousness and are awaiting the resurrection.

Paul says about the resurrection that "this mortal must **PUT ON IMMORTALITY**"(1 Cor. 15:53). Why do we have to put on immortality if we already have it and the spirit in man part of us is self-conscious and what then is the point of the resurrection?

1 Timothy 6:16 plainly says that of all humans, Jesus Christ **"ONLY HAS IMMORTALITY"**!

Continuing on with Mr Armstrong he writes:

God creates, as previously explained, by the principle of DUALITY. So it is with the creation of MAN. It is accomplished in TWO STAGES: 1) the physical phase, which began with the first man, Adam; and 2) the spiritual state, which begins with the 'second Adam' Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:45-46). So also, man was made from his creation (and birth) with the one 'human' spirit that became an integral part of man. But he is mentally and spiritually INCOMPLETE; he was made to need another Spirit--the HOLY SPIRIT of God--and when that gift of God is received, God's 'Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God' (Rom. 8:16)--in the begotten (or first stage) of man's spiritual creation.

This is most clearly explained in I Corinthians 2. '...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the hearth [mind] of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him' (verse 9)--spiritual knowledge. The natural mind can receive knowledge of material and physical things. Also it can have a sense of morality, ethics, art, culture not possessed by the dumb animals. But in the realm of

good and evil it can know and perform what is good only on the human level, made possible by the human spirit within man. But this sense and performance of good is limited to the human level of the human spirit that is innately selfish. It can possess and express love on the human level, but without the Holy Spirit of God it cannot possess or express love on the God level, nor can it acquire knowledge of that which is spiritual, as revealed in I Corinthians 2.

‘But God hath revealed them [spiritual things] unto us by his Spirit...’ (verse 10). Notice particularly spiritual knowledge is not revealed by a Person called the Holy Spirit. It is revealed by God, and to us today through God’s Spirit, which may be received only as God’s gift through his mercy and grace. God is the revealer. The Holy Spirit is the instrumentality by which we may comprehend that which only God can reveal. ‘For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?...’ (verse 11)....A cow, sheep or dog cannot know the things a MAN knows--and neither could a man, except by the spirit of man that is in him. For example, such knowledge as chemistry, physics and technological and scientific knowledge. Likewise, the natural man with this one spirit is limited--‘even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God’.....

In the gloriously beautiful garden of Eden is which God placed them were two very special symbolic trees. Little has been heard about these trees and their tremendous significance, except what most people have heard about ‘Adam’s apple.’ The forbidden tree, however, probably was not an apple tree. The real significance of these two symbolic trees explains the very foundation of the world. In them is the answer to the great mystery of our time in this modern twentieth century. Today we live in a world of awesome progress and advancement, yet paradoxically of appalling evils. The baffling question today is, Why cannot the minds that can learn to fly to the moon and back, transplant hearts, produce computers and technological marvels, solve their own problems? Why no peace in the world? We cannot understand the mystery of today’s events and conditions unless we go back to the very foundation of the world, and learn what developed from its origin to the pulsating, confused present.

The world began at the time of these two special trees. We hear virtually nothing in the biblical misteaching of today about the tree of life, and almost nothing about the forbidden tree. But now consider. God had created a man out of the dust of the ground. But God creates in dual stages. The man was not yet physically complete. God wanted him to ‘multiply and replenish the earth.’ But the man could not do that because he was not yet physically complete. So God put him into a deep sleep (anaesthesia) and performed an operation, removing a rib and forming a woman from it. They became one family. The physical creation of man was completed. They could reproduce their kind.

But the man God created was mortal. He had only a temporary physiochemical existence kept alive by circulation of blood, oxidized by the breath of air, and fueled by food and water from the ground. He did not have LIFE inherent--self-containing life. But he did have a human spirit that, united with God’s Holy Spirit, could beget him with eternal life. But God offered to him immortal LIFE through this symbolic tree of LIFE. God did not urge or compel him to take it--he merely made it freely accessible. Adam could eat of all the trees of the garden except the one forbidden tree, of ‘the knowledge of good and evil.’

What if Adam had taken of the tree of LIFE? You probably never heard that question answered. That symbolic tree is offered today to those called and drawn by God to

Jesus Christ. There is one difference between the original Adam and the called Christian. Adam had not yet sinned and no repentance was necessary if he had chosen the tree of life. Otherwise the repentant and believing Spirit-begotten Christian is in the same position Adam would have been had he taken of the tree of life. Adam would have received the Holy Spirit of the immortal God to join with his human spirit. Of course, since Adam was required to make a choice, he would have rejected the way of Satan by taking the tree of life.

But again, what would have happened, had Adam taken the tree of life? He would have received the Holy Spirit of God to unite with his human spirit. The man was not mentally or spiritually complete until receiving the Spirit of God. This would have united him, mentally and spiritually, with God. He would have been begotten as a child of God, just as is the converted Spirit-begotten Christian. He would have received the Holy Spirit of God to join with his human spirit, begetting him as a son of God, imparting to him the earnest of immortal life, and making him at one with God.

As in the case of the Spirit-begotten Christian today, where 'Christ in [us is] the hope of glory' (Col. 1:27). And again, the mind of Christ is in us (Phil. 2:5), so the very mind of the Eternal would have been in Adam. But instead the mind and attitude of Satan entered into him and worked in him, even as it has in all his children that have composed this whole world. We read in Ephesians 2:2, that Satan, as prince of the power of the air, does indeed actually work within humans. At this juncture, we explain a point that might be misunderstood. In the temptation by Satan, Eve was deceived, but Adam was not (I Tim. 2:13-14). Adam disobeyed God and sinned deliberately. But even though he was not deceived in this original temptation, his deliberate disobedience of God's explicit command cut him off from God....opening his mind to the deceptions of Satan. From that moment, Adam and all his children after him were receptive to the sway of Satan. Satan began to work in the mind of Adam, even as God would have worked in his mind had he taken of the tree of life.

Thus, from that moment, Satan had spiritually kidnapped Adam, and all his human family has ever since been held captive by Satan. God would have revealed to Adam God's way of life--which is God's spiritual law. That law is the way of outflowing love--but it would have been "the love of God...shed abroad in [human] hearts by the Holy [Spirit]" (Rom. 5:5). Human natural carnal love cannot fulfill God's holy law.

But, even as a human embryo has been begotten by human parents, and just as the embryo must develop through the process of gestation before being born, so is the Spirit-led Christian, and so would have been Adam. But he would have experienced a direct connection and contact with God. I like to compare this to the umbilical cord connecting the newborn baby with its mother. Its human life and physical nourishment has been supplied during gestation from the mother to the child. God's spirit LIFE is imparted to the Christian through the Holy Spirit. Also, spiritual knowledge is imparted by God but through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:10). Full comprehension of God's LAW (his way of life) is imparted by God through the Holy Spirit. But the law of God requires action and performance, and LOVE is the fulfilling of God's law (Rom. 13:10), and it can be fulfilled only by the love of and from God (Rom. 5:5).

So Adam would have had the in-depth spiritual knowledge to live God's way, and also would have been supplied with the divine love that, only, can fulfill that perfect law of love and put it into action. He would also have received by the Spirit of God the very FAITH of God. He would have received knowledge, guidance and help from

God. He would have had reliance on God to intervene in matters beyond his control. In such matters God supernaturally does for us what we are unable to do for ourselves. In other words, God fights our battles for us.....

When God 'drove out the man' from the Garden of Eden, and barred reentrance--lest he go back and receive eternal life in sin (Gen. 3:22-24)--God PRONOUNCED SENTENCE!

God said, in effect: 'You have made the decision for yourself and the world that shall spring from you. You have rejected me as the basic source of knowledge--you have rejected power from me through my Spirit to live the righteous way--you have rebelled against my command and my government--you have chosen the 'GETTING,' 'TAKING' way of Satan. Therefore I sentence you and the world you shall beget to 6,000 years of being cut off from access to me and my Spirit--except for the exceedingly FEW I shall specially call. And that FEW shall be called for special service preparatory for the kingdom of God. They shall be required to do what you have failed to do--reject, resist and overcome Satan and his WAYS, and follow the ways of my spiritual LAW.

Go, therefore, Adam, and all your progeny that shall form the world, produce your own fund of knowledge. Decide for yourself what is good and what is evil. Produce your own educational systems and means of disseminating knowledge, as your god Satan shall mislead you. Form your own concepts of what is god, your own religions, your own governments, your own life-styles and forms of society and civilization. In all this Satan will deceive your world with his attitude of SELF-centeredness--with vanity, lust and greed, jealousy and envy, competition and strife and violence and wars, rebellion against me and my law of LOVE.

After the world of your descendants has written the lesson in 6,000 years of human suffering, anguish, frustration, defeat and death--after the world that shall spring from you shall have been brought to confess the utter hopelessness of the way of life you have chosen--I will supernaturally intervene. By supernatural divine power I shall then take over the government of the whole world. With reeducation, I will produce a happy world of PEACE. And on repentance, I shall then offer eternal salvation to all. After a thousand years of that happy world to come, I will resurrect from death to mortal life all who have died uncalled during this present 6,000 years. Their judgment shall then come. And on repentance and faith, eternal life shall be offered them.

During this 6,000 years, when I myself shall cut them off from me, they shall not be eternally judged. Only, as they sow during their lifetimes, they shall reap. But when I open eternal salvation to them, there shall be no Satan to hinder or deceive them--no Satan for them to overcome. Those few called during this first 6,000 years shall have to reject and resist Satan's pulls and overcome. But those who overcome shall sit with me in my throne, and have power under me to rule all nations under my Supreme Rule (Mystery of the Ages, p.92-100, softbound).

Why was Satan allowed to remain on earth and sway mankind?

God could have judged Satan and removed him before he created Adam. Christ was in greater authority in the universe than Lucifer. There was no need for him to "qualify" to take over the rulership of the earth at that time. He was his boss to begin with and could have assumed control of the earth and removed Satan.

Why didn't God remove him before he created Adam? In his book "The Incredible Human Potential" Herbert W. Armstrong says the following:

"God ordained that 6 000 years of sinning human existence **PROVE FOR ALL TIME** that Satan's way can result only in evils, suffering, frustration, hopelessness, and death. God is allowing Satan to deceive and sway mankind for 6 000 years to PROVE this truth, not only to the human race, but [also] to...the angels" (p.93).

As painful as it would be for mankind, God's decision to allow Satan to stay and tempt mankind for 6 000 years would deepen the contrast between God's way of life and the way of sin. It would allow the worst of humanity to display itself and build up the **FULL** range of sin and wrong experience to prove for the rest of eternity that **sin hurts**. A period of 6 000 years is nothing compared to the rest of eternity.

A similar example of this principle at work is the slavery of Israel in Egypt. God knew it would happen in advance as he told Abraham it would happen (Genesis 15:13). Why didn't God stop it or intervene quicker?

In hindsight we can now see the profound lessons and symbolism that the whole experience produced. The whole experience and the exodus that occurred to free them became the great types and symbols of what God's plan of salvation for all mankind is all about. The deeper the pain, the deeper the impression and lessons that can be taught and this can be used by God for a greater good.

God's 7000 Year Master Plan

Why did God choose 6000 years as the time frame that He would cut off mankind from Himself. Mr Armstrong explains this in his book "The Wonderful World Tomorrow - What It Will Be Like":

God Almighty had great purpose in creating the human family and placing us here on this earth. And He has a perfect master plan for accomplishing that Purpose.

That Master Plan involves a duration of 7000 years. The seven literal days of Creation were a type.

They set the pattern. The first six were days of physical creation. The seventh day of that first week began the spiritual creation, still going on. On that day God created His Sabbath, setting it apart as holy, for spiritual use. On that day God instructed the first man and woman in His spiritual truth. On that day He preached the Gospel to them, explaining about and offering them, freely, His wonderful gift of eternal life - symbolized by the 'tree of life' in the Garden. He also explained that the wages of sin - rebellion against His Government - was death.

With God, 'one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day' (II Peter 3:8). So God allotted the first six thousand years to physical man, to live his own way (deceived and swayed by Satan), to prove by 6,000 years of suffering mountainous evils, that only God's Way can bring desired blessings. That 6,000 years we may call 'The Day of Man.'

So, in other words, the first 6,000 years were allotted to allow Satan to labor at his work of deceiving the world, followed by 1,000 years (one millennial day) when Satan shall not be allowed to do any of his 'work' of deception. Put another way, God marked out six millennial days to allow man to indulge in the spiritual labor of sin, followed by a millennium of spiritual rest, under the enforced Government of God (p.45-46).

The apostle Paul also drew upon the analogy of the seven day week in explaining God's plan when in Hebrews 4:1-10 he clearly shows how the Sabbath, the last day of the week, represents the rest at the end of man's rule - the millennium.

To show clearly from secular history that the early apostolic church believed in the 7000 year plan of God notice this **AMAZING** quote from Edward Gibbon's famous work "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" in chapter 15:

The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ.

As the works of the creation had been finished in six days, their duration in their present state...was fixed to six thousand years.

By the same analogy it was inferred that this long period of labour and contention...would be succeeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thousand years; and that Christ, with the triumphant band of the saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the last and general resurrection.

Hippolytus of Rome like so many others during the early centuries after Jesus Christ's ministry on earth also believed God would intervene after 6000 years of human history. He wrote:

And 6 000 years must needs be accomplished, in order that the Sabbath may come...For the Sabbath is the type and emblem of the future kingdom of the saints, when they shall reign with Christ, when He comes from heaven, as John says in his Apocalypse"(4.23).

Victorinus in the late 3rd century in his commentary of the Book of Revelation wrote:

Wherefore, as I have narrated, that true Sabbath will be in the seventh millenary of years, when Christ with his elect shall reign (De fab. mun.).

Methodius, a Catholic, before the doctrine was finally quashed by opponents, at about the same time wrote:

For I also, taking my journey and going forth from the Egypt of this life, came first to the resurrection which is the true Feast of Tabernacles, and there having set up my tabernacle, adorned with the fruits of virtue, on the first day of the resurrection,

which is the day of judgment, **celebrate the Millennium of rest, which is called the seventh day, even the true Sabbath** (253-4).

Iraeneus, a disciple of Polycarp, in his work "Against All Heresies" also wrote:

For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded (5.28.3).

In Halley's Handbook on page 33 we also read:

The epistle of Barnabas in the beginning of the Christian era mentioned in a belief then held that as there had been 2000 years from Adam to Abraham and 2000 years from Abraham to Christ so there would be 2000 years for the Christian era and **then would come the millennium even as the six days of creation were followed by a day of rest, a seventh day of rest**. Inasmuch as we are now drawing toward the close of 2000 years of the Christian era it will now be known for sure what there is to this belief.

Now God could have still used the analogy of creation week for His master plan and only cut mankind off for 600 years instead and had 100 years, a century, for the last "day" of His master plan.

Why did He choose a 7000 year plan instead of a 700 year plan? I suspect the answer to that question has to do with how many children that He wants born into His family in this dispensation and to drive home the lesson very deeply into mankind that SIN HURTS!

What If Adam Had Taken Of The Tree Of Life?

Mr Armstrong asked a very intriguing question when he said, "What if Adam had taken of the Tree of Life?" In chapter 4 of Mystery of the Ages he answered that question by saying:

Had Adam taken of the proffered tree of life the whole course of civilization would have been entirely different. Peace, happiness, joy, health and abundance would have spread over the earth (p.116-117).

If Adam had taken of the tree of life he could have founded a godly community with his children dwelling together in unity. God gave him the most beautiful environment that has been created to this time, the Garden of Eden. He gave him tame animals and fruitful fields with no thistles or weeds and a beautiful wife who was a perfect match.

I sometimes wonder what Eve must have looked. She must have been one of the most beautiful women ever being the only woman that God has directly, rather than indirectly, created.

God wanted Adam to start off that family with access to God's spirit. Adam would have grown spiritually and, in time, God would have changed him to a spirit being and he could

have watched his children's children, all nations, have access to the great Teacher Jesus Christ and His spirit and they could have created a Utopia.

If Adam had taken of the tree of life and not the forbidden tree the government of God would have been ruling the earth under Christ with Satan being banished.

What would have happened if Adam had not sinned but some of his children did after Adam took of the tree of life? Would Christ have still died to pay for their sins and what about the payment of any sins of any angels who potentially may have turned back to the path of righteousness after committing sin?

How would Christ's sacrifice have been brought about in such a utopian world? Would there have been a division of the earth between an enlarged Garden of Eden where those who are without sin would live and another area that would be cut off from God?

If Adam had been told about the tree of life it sort of makes you wonder why Adam didn't go straight over and take a bite from it. There's one thing about the Garden of Eden account that is easily overlooked that may shed some light on that question. We know God told Adam about the tree that was forbidden to them but if you look carefully there is no specific mention at all of God telling Adam and Eve about the tree of life.

Mr Armstrong made these comments regarding why God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden:

When God drove Adam and Eve out from the Garden of Eden, He set angels to bar mankind from reentering. Suppose the Eternal had left the gate into Eden open. Man had already taken of the forbidden tree. Man had already turned to sin. What would have happened? Probably the whole of sinning mankind would have surged back in to take of that tree of LIFE! Without any repentance--without even FAITH in God or in Christ--mankind would have helped himself to RECEIVING ETERNAL LIFE (Mystery of the Ages, p.107, softbound)"

Is that last statement true? Would anyone in an unrepentant state who ate of the tree of life automatically receive eternal life as a result. We read in Acts 5:32, "We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey him." It says that God gives His spirit to those who obey Him and are repentant (Acts 2:38).

If Adam or anyone else would only receive a small portion of God's spirit if they ate from the tree of life and they would spiritually miscarry if they didn't grow spiritually then why was there any danger of them living forever in an unrepentant, sinful state?

What exactly did God mean when He said about Adam, "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Genesis 3:22)? I still don't have a good answer for that one.

Is there historical evidence aside from the Bible to back up the biblical story of Adam and Eve? William Dankenbring gives us some fascinating information about this. In his book "Beyond Star Wars" he writes:

As if to corroborate the Biblical account, in 1932 Dr. E. A. Speiser of the University Museum of Pennsylvania, was excavating 12 miles north of Nineveh.

Near the bottom of the Tepe Gawra Mound he found a seal, which he dated at about 3500 B.C. and called 'strongly suggestive of the Adam and Eve story'—it was of a naked man and a naked woman, walking as if utterly downcast and broken-hearted, followed by a serpent!

The seal is about an inch in diameter, engraved on stone, and is called the 'Adam and Eve' Seal. Another seal found among ancient Babylonian tablets, now in the British Museum, seems definitely to refer to the Garden of Eden story. In the center is a Tree; on the right, a Man; on the left, a Woman, plucking Fruit; behind the Woman, a Serpent, standing erect, as if whispering to her. 'These old records, carved on stone and clay, at the very dawn of history in the original home of man, preserved under the dust of the ages, and now at last brought to light by the spade of the archaeologist, are evidence that the main features of the Biblical story of Adam became deeply fixed in the thought of primitive man.' (Halley's Bible Handbook, p.72)

Where Was The Garden of Eden?

Where was the Garden of Eden? John Keyser wrote a very fine article entitled "Newly Discovered - The First River of Eden" on the discovery of what certainly appears to be the dried riverbed of the once mighty Pishon River mentioned in the account of the Garden of Eden that gives us many clear clues as to where the Garden was located. John Keyser writes:

In Genesis 2:10-14 we read: 'Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became FOUR RIVERHEADS. The name of the first is PISHON; it is the one which encompasses the whole land of HAVILAH? where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good. Bdellium and the onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is GIHON; it is the one which encompasses the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is HIDDEKEL [TIGRIS]; it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the EUPHRATES.'

While two of the four rivers mentioned in this passage are recognizable today and flow in the same general location as they did before the Flood, the other two have apparently disappeared from the face of the earth. Great changes occurred in the topography of the earth during the Noachian flood and also at other times in the earth's history since; so it is not that remarkable that some of the pre-Flood geographical features changed or disappeared altogether....

Since the Tigris and the Euphrates have their sources in the mountainous region of Armenia, it is usually assumed by theologians today that the Garden of Eden was located in that same area. Therefore, they claim, the Gihon could be the Araxes which flows into the Caspian Sea and the Pishon could be the Cyrus which joins with the Araxes....

Notes Ernest L. Martin: 'From what place and what manner did the one major river that supposedly fed the four other rivers have its source? Also, how can one river flowing downstream in a single riverbed (and in a mountainous area) logically be explained as branching off into four main rivers? Only in a delta region near the mouth of a river can one river become four (or more), but the sources of the

Euphrates and Tigris today are in the mountains (separated by a mountain ridge) and so most commentators dismiss the idea of most biblical traditionalists as impossible in a geographical sense' (Solving the Riddle of Noah's Flood, pages 7-8)....

The main reason the account of the rivers of Eden is so difficult to understand is because the interpreters of the Bible have completely missed the point of what Moses was saying. Explains Ernest Martin, 'In actual fact, they have been reading Moses COMPLETELY BACKWARDS from what he intended. If one looks closely at the matter, Moses was NOT speaking about a major river flowing downstream from some unknown source in the Land of Eden and then dividing into the rivers Euphrates, Tigris, Pishon and the Gihon when it reached the region of the Garden. IN NO WAY! The geographical intention of Moses was directly OPPOSITE from what most people have thought. And this is where the problem has emerged.

Moses actually commenced his geographical account of the river system STARTING AT THE PERSIAN GULF and proceeding northward. His direction of interest was UPSTREAM, not downstream!' (Ibid., page 8)....

Now let us take note of what Moses said in the Book of Genesis about the river system associated with the Land of Eden and the Garden. He said that 'a river went out of Eden to water the Garden, and from there [from the garden] it divided and became into four heads' (Gen.2:10). The use of the word 'heads' (Hebrew: rosh) in relation to the four rivers gives the impression to us in the western world that Moses is talking about the HEADstreams or HEADwaters of the four rivers - their sources!

However, this is NOT what Moses meant! In M'Clintock and Strong's Cyclopaedia (Vol. III, p. 53) we read: 'In no instance is rosh (literally, 'head') applied as the SOURCE of a river.'.....We must realize that in the first ages of the world in Middle Eastern society, THE HEAD OF A RIVER WAS AT ITS MOUTH -- NOT ITS SOURCE! Let Ernest Martin explain: 'Where rivers came together, or a river intersected with a larger river, this juncture was called the HEAD of the river that joined the other. The word 'HEAD' did not describe the source (the beginning) of a river, but it signified a place where it intersected with another river or flowed into the ocean. And so it was with Moses. In his description of this river system, he was simply giving a geographical description of the HEAD (that is, the central 'hub') where the four rivers branched out from one another' (Solving the Riddle of Noah's Flood, pp. 10-11). In other words, MOSES' DIRECTION OF THINKING WAS UPSTREAM -- NOT DOWNSTREAM!

A number of scholars, including Professor R.K. Harrison, have understood this. He noted that 'probably the most suitable answer concerning the actual location of the Garden of Eden is to think of the river that watered the garden and thereafter became four 'branches' as actually comprising the beginning or juncture GOING UPSTREAM from a point in southern Mesopotamia' (ISBE, new edition, vol. II, p. 17).

The bottom line is that Moses understood the four rivers of Eden as coming together to form one river at the Garden - NOT that one river separated to become four rivers! When we understand this concept clearly, then Moses' account becomes sensible.

Moses is showing that the Land of Eden had its southern border at the HEAD OF THE PERSIAN GULF and that the Garden itself was located a few miles UPRIVER at the place where the four rivers came together.

Explains Ernest Martin: "The actual river that 'went out of Eden' was the one that left the Garden (where the four rivers became the SOURCE of one major river) and then that one large river ENTERED THE PERSIAN GULF....

"This shows that Moses was describing his river system going UPSTREAM and the HEAD of the four rivers was where they separated from the one river to provide a vast watershed system that reached to their sources. What we of modern times call the MOUTH of a river, Moses called its HEAD" (Solving the Riddle of Noah's Flood, p.11)....

Boston University scientist Farouk El-Baz had long wondered about the pebbles of granite and basalt that are abundant throughout Kuwait. The problem was that these pebbles are not indigenous to the area. The nearest source for these rocks lies in the Hijaz Mountains -- 650 miles to the west in Saudi Arabia! How did the pebbles reach Kuwait? Intrigued by this puzzle El-Baz examined photos of the region taken by satellites orbiting the earth, and to his amazement easily detected a dried riverbed (known today as Wadi Al-Batin) cutting through the limestone of north-central Saudi Arabia. He noticed that the riverbed petered out as it reached the sand dunes of central Saudi Arabia.

The Biblical Archaeology Review (July/August 1996) relates that 'when he extended the line of the river across the sand dunes...El-Baz noticed that the patterns of the desert's sand dunes changed precisely when they crossed this line. To the right (southeast), the dunes appear pockmarked, to the left (northeast) they are striated. Sand patterns like these are created by the circulation of the air in the desert, which in turn is influenced by the topography. Thus, El-Baz realized that something beneath the sand was the source of the variations in the sand. He determined that the river ran underground here, along a fault line' (p. 55).

For a long period of time after the recreation of Genesis 1, the river (in places 3 miles wide) dragged granite and basalt from the Hijaz mountains and dumped the pebbles along its fan-shaped delta, which covered two-thirds of modern Kuwait and part of southern Iraq. In memory of the pebblestrewn region that led him to the river-bed, El-Baz christened his discovery the Kuwait River. Now the interesting thing is that this ancient river (which gradually dried up sometime after 3,500-2000 B.C.E.) fulfills all the requirements for one of the rivers of Eden! Notice what Genesis 2:11-12 says: 'The name of the first [river] is Pishon; it is the one which ENCOMPASSES THE WHOLE LAND OF HAVILAH, WHERE THERE IS GOLD. And the gold of that land is good. BDELLIUM [FRAGRANT RESINS] and the onyx stone are there' (NKJV).

An important key to determine WHERE the river Pishon ran is the phrase 'the gold of that land is good.' There is only one place in the area that has such a deposit -- the famous site of Mahdedh-Dhahab, the famous 'Cradle of Gold.' Located about 125 miles south of Medina in Saudi Arabia...Another clue in Genesis 2:11-12 is the phrase 'Bdellium and the onyx stone are there.' The Arabian peninsula is RICH with bdellium and precious stones.

In the Bible dictionary Insight On the Scriptures we find the following: 'It [Bdellium gum] is obtained from a tree (commiphora africana) found in NW Africa and ARABIA...' (Page 264)....With the location of Havilah clearly delineated by the scriptural references and extra Biblical sources, there can be no doubt that the ancient river bed discovered by Farouk El-Baz from the satellite photographs is

none other than that once used by the waters of the River Pishon that flowed through the Garden of Eden to the Persian Gulf.

The other river mentioned by Moses in Genesis 2:13 was the Gihon. Moses mentioned that it was also 'circuitous' and encompassed all the LAND OF CUSH.

Where did this river flow from? While most people and most references to "Cush" in the Bible equate Cush with Ethiopia, this is not always the case....

Notice what the Insight On the Scriptures has to say about the land of Cush:

"Following the breakup at Babel because of the confusion of language, the main body of Cush's descendants appear to have migrated southward. Whether they reached Africa by first CROSSING INTO THE ARABIAN PENINSULA and then crossing over the Bab al-Mandate or whether they settled initially in Africa AND THEN CROSSED OVER INTO ARABIA is uncertain....The name of Cush's son Seba is associated with E. Africa, WHILE THOSE OF HAVILAH, SABTAH, RAAMAH, AND SABTECA ARE GENERALLY ASSOCIATED WITH REGIONS ON THE ARABIAN PENINSULA.'

"Under the heading 'Cushan' this same dictionary relates the following information: "Cushan appears at Habakkuk 3:7 as paralleling 'the land of Midian' and hence evidently is another name for Midian or relates to a neighboring country. As shown in the article CUSH (No. 2), SOME DESCENDANTS OF CUSH APPEAR TO HAVE SETTLED ON THE ARABIAN PENINSULA; AND THE NAME KUSI OR KUSHIM WAS ANCIENTLY USED TO DESCRIBE CERTAIN ARABIC PEOPLES OF THAT REGION" (pp. 560-561)....

While Ernest Martin's location of Cush 'to the north and east of Babylon' and that 'the mountains of the Cassites' represent the Cushites is a possibility, all the evidence points to the 'Cush' mentioned in Genesis 2:13 as being somewhere on the Arabian Peninsula. I have no doubt that sometime in the future an astute scientist like Farouk El-Baz or the probing eye of another orbiting satellite will uncover the course of the ancient River Gihon in the land of modern-day Saudi Arabia.

One website I ran across (<http://www.israel-a-history-of.com/biblical-garden-of-eden.html>) had this to say about the Wadi Al-Batin confirming what is mentioned in the last article:

The Wadi al Batin has enticed scholars for decades as being a possible candidate for the Pishon River, thus connecting Eden with Havilah. The Wadi al Batin breaks to the southwest of the Persian Gulf, along the borders of Kuwait, and into Saudi Arabia. Once in Saudi Arabia, the Wadi is swallowed by vast and massive sand dunes. It was here the Wadi al Batin was thought to have ceased to exist.

However, satellite images have recently produced photographs of a stunning nature. The Wadi al Batin actually continues to the southwest. Pictures revealed dried up river beds buried beneath the massive expanse of sand dunes running through the entire length of Saudi Arabia! The Wadi al Batin emerges as the Wadi Rimah. The Wadi Rimah continues up stream about 80 miles before it splits in two. One branch verges to the northwest, the other to the southwest. These were all once part of the same river system.

The southwest branch of the Wadi Rimah actually continues to the area of the Mahd adh Dhahab gold mine! This is in exact agreement with Scripture.

In a History Channel documentary called "The Garden of Eden" that I have one theory shown on it suggests that sea level was much lower before Noah's Flood and that the Persian Gulf was dry and above sea level. This theory places Eden where the Persian Gulf is today with the major river that went through the Garden exiting into ocean where the Straits of Hormuz are today.

The Persian Gulf is relatively shallow averaging 150 feet in depth so this theory is quite plausible. This theory identifies Eden being where the Persian Gulf is today.

There are some legends that speak of Eden being located on the island of Bahrain half way down the Persian Gulf.

The Garden, Moses wrote, was planted "**eastward** in Eden" (Genesis 2:8). Is Moses here telling us that the Garden was due east of where he was writing his account from? The top of the Persian Gulf is due east of Mount Sinai.

Even given major topographical changes following the Flood, Josephus' idea of the Nile being the Gihon and the Ganges in India being the Pishon is rather far-fetched due to the enormous distances between these two rivers and the different directions of the Nile and the other rivers.

There is some legendary evidence in favour of the viewpoint put forth by some that the Garden was located near Jerusalem. The Gihon spring in Jerusalem was named after one of the rivers of Eden. There is also a legend that speaks of the skull of Adam being buried on the Mount of Olives and the children of Israel crossed the Jordan near the "city of Adam" (Joshua 3:16) which is east of Jerusalem.

I like the idea of the Garden of Eden being in the area of Jerusalem as it would add to why Jerusalem is so special to God but I do not find any convincing evidence for this. Neither the sources nor the end of the Tigris and Euphrates are anywhere near the land of Israel.

One thing to bear in mind, though, is that the scriptures do not tell us how big Eden was and so it is possible that Israel could be within Eden, even if the Garden in its east is located near the top or middle of the Persian Gulf.

David Rohl, like many Bible scholars put the Garden in Armenia near the source of the Tigris and Euphrates and identifies the Araxes and Kezel Uzun as the other two rivers.

Look at any river system in the world and you find rivers come together near the end of the tributary river, not near their source. The only real exception to this is in a delta and deltas are near the mouth of the rivers that flow through them to the sea. Most rivers connect when they empty into another river at their end not near their source. Today there is no river that connects the Tigris, Euphrates and the other two rivers identified by David Rohl.

Such a river through Eden would have to be a special exception to natural law to split into four rivers near their source and go off and become four great major rivers.

While that is possible, it is more likely the word head as used by Moses here means the major junction where tributaries empty into a greater river. The Garden of Eden, where God

created our first parents, Adam and Eve, was, in my humble opinion, located somewhere near the top or middle of the Persian Gulf.

How High-Tech was the Pre-Flood World?

Now though it's only indirectly related to God's plan for mankind I'd like to cover some information regarding what the pre-Flood world may have been like which may enhance our understanding of why God brought about the Flood where He virtually started all over again with mankind and why soon after the Flood He found it imperative to slow down mankind's progress in such a dramatic way as He did at the Tower of Babel.

The following material over the next few pages is from a booklet written by Stephen Collins entitled "As It Was In The Days of Noah". Stephen Collins writes:

"As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (KJV)

[Many have interpreted]....this prophecy....that even as preflood mankind gave little credence to Noah's warnings about the imminence of the Flood, latter day mankind will pay little heed to warnings that the return of Jesus Christ is imminent.

While that message is certainly in this prophecy, is that all that Jesus Christ meant?....Since these similarities are given as unique identifiers of the time of Jesus Christ's return, it is apparent that Jesus is telling us there will be unique parallels between Noah's preflood period and the latter days....

Since the Bible directs us to parallel between the preflood period and the latter days, let us begin with some easy ones. There are several biblical comments about preflood society. The most familiar is in Genesis 6:1-13, which states:

"...men began to multiply on the face of the earth... And God saw that the wickedness of man was great... that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually...But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord...and Noah walked with God. The earth also was corrupt...and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and...it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."

The record that 'men began to multiply on the face of the earth' indicates Noah's generation was experiencing a global population explosion. This condition is present in our own generation, and scientific questions are being asked about the earth's capacity to support its population....Genesis also tells us that mankind had become 'wicked,' 'violent,' and (with the exception of Noah) 'corrupt.'.... Like Noah's generation, our generation is plagued by violence, crime and wickedness. Grisly wars have been fought with advanced weapons that have greatly escalated the violence of warfare. Civilian society (particularly in urban areas) is becoming increasingly violent with murders, drug wars and senseless violence becoming commonplace.....

There is a third factor in the Genesis account which is easily overlooked. Genesis 6:11-12 states that the earth also was 'corrupt.' How is this possible?... The earth becomes 'corrupted' (marred, spoiled) as a result of man's actions upon it! The results of man's shortsighted actions upon the earth are called 'environmental pollution,' the despoiling and corruption of the earth's atmosphere, water, soil, etc. The earth is polluted as mankind thoughtlessly dumps the wastes of industrial and chemical processes into the environment. Pollution has 'corrupted' our earth today. Could the same thing have happened in Noah's generation?...

There is considerable evidence that there was, indeed; a 'hightech' society in earth's distant past. This evidence has baffled mankind for some time. However, because an open comparison of this ancient evidence could: (A) convey great credibility on the Bible and its account of creation, and (B) debunk evolution, these facts are censored from 'official' texts....We will now examine some biblical evidence that an ancient 'hightech' society existed on our planet.

Genesis 4:16-24 provides us with a genealogical history of a few of Adam's descendants through Cain. Verses 19-22 makes some important statements regarding three sons of a man named Lamech. These three sons were named Jabal, Jubal, and Tubalcain. This text provides the following information about them:

"Jabal... was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle...Jubal...was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. And...Tubalcain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron..." (KJV with marginal references)...

The Bible...tells us that Jabal, Jubal and Tubalcain were remembered as the first teachers in the fields of animal husbandry, musical instrumentation, and metallurgy. Obviously, successive generations and practitioners would advance these skills to increased levels of sophistication, just as mankind's generations do today in all fields of scientific development. How sophisticated and advanced did these skills become prior to the Flood? If enough time existed, how long would it take for mankind to advance from animal cross-breeding to an understanding of Mendelian genetics? How long did it take for the musicians to assemble symphony orchestras? How long did it take for the metallurgists to develop alloys for specialised purposes, and build machines for man's convenience and scientific exploration? Since modern mankind has an insatiable appetite to learn more about the earth and universe, why do we assume that they, our ancestors, lacked the same curiosity? The fact that mankind had sufficient time for an entertainment industry (music) implies the existence of labor-saving devices (the natural result of a metallurgical industry)!

We will examine how far ancient mankind developed these skills by examining some lesser-known artifacts from ancient societies, but first let us consider several factors which permitted preflood mankind to develop at a far more rapid pace than postflood mankind.

The first factor is the existence of a common language. The Bible gives no indication of any language barriers on earth until God created them several generations after the Flood (for purposes to be examined later). With Adam and Eve having the same God-given language, there was only one language which mankind could pass on to successive generations. **With no language barriers, all mankind could have pooled its knowledge with ease!**

Another factor causing an accelerated accumulation of knowledge in preflood society was the unusually long lifespans extant at the time. When people could live for almost a millennium in one life span, it was possible to pool knowledge with dozens of overlapping generations. In our modern society where an average person lives approximately 75 years...one can productively pool knowledge with only a few generations.

Visualize what technological achievements could now be on the earth if Galileo, Da Vinci, Copernicus, Newton, Edison, Einstein, Van Braun, and others could have worked together for centuries!

If they had preflood lifespans, they would have been able to pool their knowledge and develop joint inventions over centuries! If, in addition to shared longevity, these scientists, scholars and thinkers had a common language as well, the growth in knowledge and scientific applications would develop at a logarithmic pace!....

Let us now examine some remarkable 'ancient mysteries' to determine just how advanced very ancient civilizations were. Erich von Daniken documented a number of these 'ancient mysteries' in his books 'Chariots of the Gods' and 'In Search of Ancient Gods'. He lists the following 'mysteries' from the ancient world in 'Chariots of the Gods'.

"In Lebanon there are grasslike bits of rock, called tektites, in which radioactive aluminium isotopes have been discovered. In Egypt and Iraq there were finds of cut crystal lenses which today can only be made using cesium oxide, in other words an oxide that has to be produced by electrochemical processes. In Helwan there is a piece of cloth, a fabric so fine that today it could be woven only in a special factory with great technical know-how and experience. Electric dry batteries, which work on the galvanic principle, are on display in the Baghdad Museum. In the same place the visitor can see electric elements with copper electrodes and an unknown electrolyte)...

"Ornaments of smelted platinum were found on the Peruvian plateau. Parts of a belt made of aluminium lay in a grave at Yungjen, China. At Delhi there is an ancient pillar made of iron that is not destroyed by phosphorus, sulphur, or the effects of the weather (Chariots of the Gods,p.44)"....

Von Daniken observes that to smelt and mold platinum, it is necessary to achieve contained temperatures of 1,800 degrees centigrade, and that aluminium can only be extracted from bauxite 'under very great chemico-technical difficulties'....

There are many more 'ancient mysteries' indicating 'high-tech' capacities in the earth's ancient past (photographs of many of them appear in van Daniken's 'Chariots of the Gods', and 'In Search of Ancient Gods'). Von Daniken states that the ancient galvanic battery on display in Baghdad could still generate a current of 1.5 volts! He adds that an ancient crystal lens was 'mechanically ground and...no one disputes this,' and that an ancient bison's skull on display in a Moscow Museum shows the entry wound of a bullet.

Ancient 'model airplanes' have been found in Egypt and Colombia, with expert examinations confirming the airworthiness of their designs. A photograph of one of these ancient model airplanes (made of gold) from South America includes delta wings, and a unibody construction of fuselage and wing surfaces (a feature of 'stealth' technology)!

Indeed, so many ancient model aircraft were found in Egypt that in 1972, an exhibition of 'fourteen Ancient Egyptian model aircraft' was made public in the Hall of the Egyptian Museum for Antiquities, with the event being officially opened by a representative of the Egyptian prime minister and the nation's air minister!

An ancient 11 and 1/2 pound skull made out of pure rock-crystal was found in Mayan ruins in British Honduras. Von Daniken comments that "nowhere on the skull is there a clue showing that a tool known to us was used!" The existence of a finely ground ancient lens demonstrates that ancient man once had the ability to construct machine tools capable of operating with great precision. Ancient airplane models indicate that mankind once understood the principles of aerodynamics and manned flight.

The ancient rock crystal skull with no evidence of any tool markings shows some ancient society had an incredibly 'high-tech' manufacturing capacity. **The likely way such a product would be made today is via laser sculpting.**

One must conclude that: (A) laser technology was used by the ancient civilisation which manufactured this object, or (B) it was manufactured by a technique even more advanced than we can understand! Also, the fact that it is a human skull indicates it was made by humans (not by 'little green men' from space)!

The factual existence of ancient aircraft models (including one with 'stealth' technology) and the apparent existence of a bullet wound in an ancient bison skull indicates that Genesis 6:11's comment that preflood society was "filled with violence" meant a lot more than bludgeons and knives were being used as weapons.

Besides prophesying that Noah's age would parallel the end time ushering in his second coming, Jesus also prophesied (Matthew 24:22) that end-time mankind would be in danger of destroying 'all flesh' on earth. The destruction of all flesh is now possible via mankind's stockpiles of nuclear weapons; are we to infer from Jesus' prophecy that Noah's very violent, preflood world was in danger of doing the same thing?....

A question needs to be asked. If this ancient 'high-tech' society existed, why didn't it leave more artifacts? The answer is found in the Deluge itself....Genesis 7:19-23 states:

"And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered...the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast...and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land died...every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground...Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark"....

"Widespread seismic activity and global wave action would scour the surface of the earth, destroying virtually everything that mankind had built. Modern man knows what destruction a tsunami (tidal wave) can do to a coastal city in mere seconds or minutes! Visualize the destruction of multiple tsunamis, and surging wave actions which went on for months!....

If you were Noah and were told by God that all life on earth was going to be obliterated except for your family and a group of animals and that you would have to

rebuild civilisation with only the materials that you could carry on an ark, what would you have loaded on the Ark? Wouldn't you bring tools, art objects, durable clothing, educational materials, toys for children, valuables, etc. with you? Noah and his family certainly thought the same thoughts, and loaded as much as possible with which to 'start over' after the Flood.

The Ark became a huge 'time capsule,' preserving a variety of preflood artifacts and materials which represented a sampling of preflood society....

The Ark was a very large vessel! Its very construction would have been a witness to that generation of God's impending judgement; however, no one repented and believed a deluge would actually occur (Matthew 24:37-39). Indeed, Noah was surely jeered for believing in a Creator God who could intervene on the earth in whatever way he pleased. Nevertheless, Noah and his family lived; his mockers all died.

Since it would have taken years to build and provision such a vessel, Noah had much time to collect and preserve whatever preflood items he wished, and to stockpile whatever he needed to start life anew after the Flood.

Such items would include clothing (sturdy fabrics and an aluminium belt?), works of art and/or examples of current technology (a rock-crystal head and ornaments of platinum?), toys for eventual grandchildren (model airplanes?), and certainly portable sources of heat and light (batteries?). The ancient 'high-tech' artifacts documented by Von Daniken likely were all part of the Ark's cargo. That is why they survived in such undamaged condition.

After the Flood the Bible tells us that mankind was scattered abroad on the earth after their languages were confused (Genesis 11:8). Undoubtedly the contents of the Ark were coveted by all the nascent nations of mankind, and each carried with them a portion of the Ark's contents as they scattered in all directions. This accounts for the wide distribution of ancient 'high-tech' items across the earth's surface. Many 'hightech' artifacts would have become prized national possessions which were, as mankind lost its preflood skills, regarded as mystical or religious objects from a time when 'gods' ruled the earth.

Surely, many such artifacts were destroyed or lost during the millennia since the Deluge, but some have survived to be ancient 'mysteries' in modern Museums. Scarcely anything on the surface of preflood society would have survived the ravages of the worldwide Flood and destruction. Only in the highest regions (the last areas to be flooded would receive the least wave-action) would some well-constructed items survive. It is in the high altitudes of the Andean Plateau that von Daniken's concrete ancient airfield, airfield markings and radar dish are located. It may very well be the remnants of an international airport of preflood society. What else can it be?

If the idea of manned flight in ancient history still sounds impossible, consider the following. Von Daniken cites the shocking result of a translation of an ancient manuscript by the International Academy of Sanskrit Research at Mysore, India. The ancient text, attributed to a 'Maharashi Bharadwaja, a seer in the remote past,' describes 'the secret of making planes invisible, of the uncanny possibility of hearing conversations inside enemy planes and taking them down '....

Its translation includes the following:

"In this book are described...the art of manufacturing various types of Aeroplanes of smooth and comfortable travel in the sky...That which can travel in the sky, from place to place, land to land, or GLOBE TO GLOBE...

"The secret of constructing aeroplanes, which will not break...which cannot catch fire, and cannot be destroyed. The secret of making planes motionless. The secret of making planes invisible. The secret of learning conversations and other sounds in enemy planes. The secret of receiving photographs of the interior of enemy planes."

This 'prehistoric' document discusses such 'high-tech' subjects as constructing aircraft of fire-retardant material, making aircraft 'hover' in place (like helicopters or the 'Harrier' fighter), stealth technology, air-to-air surveillance and in-flight image transmission.

The fact that ancient airplane models incorporate (and the ancient Sanskrit document implies) 'stealth technology' indicates that radar was commonly used in preflood times since the whole purpose of stealth technology is to evade radar detection (making planes 'invisible'). This ancient document referencing ultra-modern 'high-tech' concepts further indicates that von Daniken's ancient 'airport' and 'radar dish' are, indeed, relics of a 'high-tech' preflood society. That an ancient 'Maharashi' knew technical data on advanced aeronautical information implies that one of the survivors on the Ark had firsthand experience with preflood aeronautics and could describe it to postflood generations (who, in turn, preserved and recopied the information for their posterity).

Now I'd like to interject here and quote some material from another excellent book on the pre-Flood world called "Secrets of the Lost Races" by Rene Noorbergen which presents strong evidence for the shocking possibility that pre-Flood man had nuclear power at that time. Noorbergen tells us:

Evidence of (a nuclear) holocaust is found in the most notable of the Hindu literary works, the Mahabharata, an epic poem of 200,000 lines, dating back in its present form to 500 B.C. Textual evidence, however, indicates that the events depicted in the Mahabharata took place 1,000 to 2,000 years earlier. Repeated references are made to great god-kings riding about in Vimanas or 'celestial cars,' described as 'aerial chariots with sides of iron clad with wings.'

Used for transportation in peaceful times, the Vimanas were also employed during battle. The Mahabharata describes an 18-day war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, who inhabited the upper regions of the Ganges. Not long after this war, a second battle was waged against the Vrishnis and Andhakas in the same region. In both battles Vimanas were used to launch a weapon of terrible destructive power.

The Mahabharata relates:

"The valiant Adwattan, remaining steadfast in his Vimana, landed upon the water and from there unleashed the Agneya weapon, incapable of being resisted by the very gods. Taking careful aim against his foes, the preceptor's son let loose the blazing missile of smokeless fire with tremendous force. Dense arrows of flame, like a great shower, issued forth upon creation, encompassing the enemy. Meteors

flashed down from the sky. A thick gloom swiftly settled upon the Pandava hosts. All points of the compass were lost in darkness. Fierce winds began to blow. Clouds roared upward, showering dust and gravel.

"Birds croaked madly, and beasts shuddered from the destruction. The very elements seemed disturbed. The sun seemed to waver in the heavens. The earth shook, scorched by the terrible violent heat of this weapon. Elephants burst into flame and ran to and fro in a frenzy, seeking protection from the terror. Over a vast area, other animals crumpled to the ground and died. The waters boiled, and the creatures residing therein also died. From all points of the compass the arrows of flame rained continuously and fiercely. The missile of Adwattan burst with the power of thunder, and the hostile warriors collapsed like trees burnt in a raging fire. Thousands of war vehicles fell down on all sides."

The description of the second battle is as frightening as that of the first:

"Gurkha, flying in his swift and powerful Vimana, hurled against the three cities of the Vrishnis and Andhakas a single projectile charged with all the power of the Universe.

"An incandescent column of smoke and fire, as brilliant as ten thousand suns, rose in all its splendor. It was the unknown weapon, the iron thunderbolt, a gigantic messenger of death which reduced to ashes the entire race of the Vrishnis and Andhakas.

"The corpses were so burnt that they were no longer recognisable. Hair and nails fell out. Pottery broke without cause. Birds, disturbed, circled in the air and were turned white. Foodstuffs were poisoned. To escape, the warriors threw themselves in streams to wash themselves and their equipment. With the destruction ended, the Kuru king, Yudisthira, was informed of the power of the iron thunderbolt and the slaughter of the Vrishnis."

We could attribute these descriptions to the overactive imagination of some unknown Hindu sage of long ago, but there are too many details that make this unnervingly similar to an eyewitness report of an atomic bomb explosion: the brightness of the blast; the column of rising smoke and fire; the fallout, intense heat and shock waves; the appearance of the victims; and the effects of radiation poisoning.

Hindu scholars believe the ancient atomic explosion occurred in either 3102 or 2449 B.C., with the latter as the more probable date, because of the detailed astronomical configuration given in connection with the battles in the Mahabharata....

Russian researcher A. Gorbovsky reported, in his Riddles of the Ancient Past, the discovery of a human skeleton the radioactivity of which was fifty times above the normal level. Outside India, similar remains of a nuclear holocaust have been found. Researcher Erich von Fange describes the melted ruins of a ziggurat structure situated not far from ancient Babylon:

"It appeared that fire had struck the tower and split it down to the very foundation.... In different parts of the ruins, immense brown and black masses of brickwork had [been] changed to a vitrified state....subjected to some kind of fierce heat, and completely molten. The whole ruin has the appearance of a burnt mountain."

In 1952 archaeologists excavating in Israel unearthed at the 16-foot level a layer of fused green glass a quarter of an inch thick and covering an area of several hundred square feet. It is made of fused quartz sand with green discolorations, similar in appearance to the layers of vitrified sand that were left after the atomic tests in Nevada in the 1950s.

Another such sheet of glass was uncovered five years earlier in southern Iraq, near Babylon, spread in a thin layer some distance below Babylonian, Sumerian and Neolithic cultural levels. To the south, the western Arabian desert is strewn with black rocks which show evidence of having been subjected to intense radiation. There are 28 fields of these scorched stones, called harras, covering an area of 7,000 square miles.

In the southern Sahara Desert, engineer Albion W. Hart discovered another expanse of green glass and noted that the fused silica there was similar in appearance to that found at the White Sands atomic test site. Still other examples of vitrified soil have been discovered among remains in the most desolate areas of the Gobi Desert of Mongolia.

Most surprising of all are layers at Lop Nor in Sinkiang, near the present Chinese atomic test site, where it is reported that there is little difference between the patches of fused quartz left after the modern nuclear detonations and those that had been there ages before the Chinese became a nuclear power (p.137-140).

Wallace Thornhill is one of the leading scholars behind the Electric Universe movement which attempts to restore the role of electricity into cosmology and astronomy whose models of how sun operates and the universe works is based on almost purely gravitational only theories. The documentary, he co-presents with David Talbott, called "Thunderbolts of the Gods" is available on youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AUA7XS0TvA>) and probably the best video for the layman to understand the key points of the Electric Universe branch of science.

One universally acknowledged electrical phenomenon in space is the solar wind and its manifestation in the earth's atmosphere as the earth's magnetic field pulls it into the polar regions called the aurora borealis (northern lights) or aurora australis (southern lights). The electricity from the solar wind heats up the gases of nitrogen (green) and oxygen (red) to produce the dazzling auroras, the same basic principle behind neon lights.

All around the world have been found similar pictographs or rock art from ancient times with one of the more prevalent being that of the stick man figure often with dots on either side of him. Anthony Peratt's laboratory experiments with electrically charged plasma have been able to replicate these shapes. Based on these things and other mythology and legends there is good evidence that the Earth experienced auroras on a far, far greater scale in the past.

Another of Wallace Thornhill and David Talbott's videos "The Lightning Scarred Planet Mars" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRV1e5_tB6Y) shows how the bulk of the features on Mars such as the great carved valleys and shield mountains and craters often with a raised point in the middle and a smaller crater on their rim are far better explained as electrical phenomena.

To create these features requires the presence of another large heavenly body passing in close proximity with a different electrical charge. Most people are familiar with the principle of

diffusion with wind and air particles where air from places of higher pressure moves in a way to balance out the pressure with areas of lower air pressure. This same principle works with electricity and is called charge equalisation.

If two bodies of different electrical charge (Earth is known to have a negative electrical charge on its surface) come close enough then nature will try and balance out the electrical charge and the manifestation of this will be lightning bolts crossing from one body to the other to transfer electrons as a means to level out the charge between the two bodies.

This is likely what happened to Mars with another different charged body passing close enough and, like an arc welder, a continuous discharge bolt will cut through the surface creating channels.

There does appear to be evidence of such an encounter between the Earth and Mars in the past. The Earth has a number of formations that bear the tell-tale shapes of electrically created phenomena. The Grand Canyon appears to be one of these (<http://rogerswebsite.com/ah/MarsandtheGrandCanyon.pdf>). Additionally, rocks bearing the same chemical composition as rocks on Mars but different to any here on Earth have been found in the polar regions. These meteorites were determined to be from Mars in the 1990's. This theory was initially resisted by the academic community but the chemical tests won over the scientific community.

IF the Earth has had such a close encounter in the ancient past these interplanetary lightning bolts would explain many of the massive sheets of ancient fused green glass found in different locations around the world.

The Tower of Babel

Quoting again from Stephen Collins' booklet "As It Was In The Days of Noah" we pick up the story soon after the Flood:

Immediately after the Flood, Noah's sons and daughters-in-law began having children which became the forebears of all modern races and nations (Genesis 10). Genesis 11:1 confirms that everyone spoke the same language, so knowledge could be pooled just as easily as in pre-flood days....Genesis 11:4 shows that mankind was determined to 'stick together,' pool their efforts, and not be 'spread abroad upon the face of the earth.' Genesis 11:3-4 also shows that mankind began a major urbanization/construction project soon after the Flood. Post-flood mankind had no intention of being 'hunter-gatherers!'....

Genesis 11:4 records that mankind had two post-flood projects: (A) to build a city, and (B) to construct a tower (since called 'the tower of Babel'). The 'tower of Babel' project was so advanced that God observed in Genesis 11:6-8: "This they have begun to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do...Let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth."....

The standard interpretation of this verse is that mankind attempted to make bricks 'out of slime and mortar,' and tried to build a massive 'skyscraper' which would reach into the clouds ('toward heaven'). However, there is a major problem with this. Unless they were reinforcing this building with steel girders, this brick building

would collapse of its own weight before it got too many stories high. Also, God looked at this 'tower' project, and was so impressed with their accomplishment that he said 'this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.'

Would the construction of a mudbrick building so impress God that he would essentially say: 'If they can do this already, then they will be able to implement even their wildest imaginations.' Of course not! No brick building would be that impressive to God....

God stopped the project because mankind's technical skills were advancing far too fast for His allotted timetable for mankind! They were developing technologies which would enable them to implement whatever they imagined, and God intervened to stop it....

There is another aspect of this account which is easily missed. God has myriads of angels who keep him informed regarding events on the earth, and they can easily convey their reports to Him in His heavenly domain. Yet Genesis 12:5 states that 'the Lord came down to see the...tower, which the children of men builded.'

One gets the sense that the angels told God about what was occurring on earth, but God felt it was imperative for Him personally to inspect this tower being built by mankind. Do you think God would feel it necessary to leave heaven, and personally come to earth to inspect a mud-brick building a few stories high?

Absurd, isn't it? Would a mud-brick building threaten God's overall timetable for mankind? Of course not! Modern mankind is probably comfortable with the concept of a mudbrick tower because it can feel superior to ancient 'dummies' who thought they could reach 'heaven' via a high tower.

So what was this tower which provoked God's personal inspection and intervention? It had to constitute a technological breakthrough so advanced that even God acknowledged that mankind was developing the skills and 'know-how' to literally bring any imagined project into reality! Consider again that Genesis 11:4 states it was a 'tower whose top may reach unto heaven.' The account does not say the whole tower would reach unto heaven...only its top was intended to reach into the heavens!....

Remember the ancient Sanskrit document about air travel which mentioned the existence of 'aeroplanes...which can travel...globe to globe.' The word 'globe' shows that the spherical nature of the planets was known to very ancient mankind, and this ancient document asserts that manned vehicles existed in ancient times which could fly between the 'globes' (i.e. 'planets').

Was mankind's 'Tower of Babel' a launching pad or missile complex, being constructed in an effort to rebuild a space program?

Before you dismiss this possibility, there is evidence to support such a contention! Read on if you dare to have your concepts of ancient history severely challenged.

Von Daniken claims to have found numerous references to space travel and astronauts in the artifacts and pictographs of the ancient world....In the 1980's a new development in the heavens was discovered which shocked modern mankind! This development has been the subject of media coverage in both the established media

and the nonestablishment tabloids. This development was the discovery of a gigantic sculpted human face, encased in a helmet. This sculpted face was not discovered on the earth, but on Mars!

This Martian face was examined on the NBC television network program 'Unsolved Mysteries,' on January 11, 1989. It showed remarkable photographs of the Mars face, as well as other images created by photo enhancement techniques which gave the Martian face greater detail....These 'intriguing features' on Mars were described as:

"Symmetrically formed mounds...seem to resemble the Pyramids in Egypt. Their near-perfect proportions have roused the curiosity of many scientists. But even more curious than the Pyramids is a Sphinx-like formation ten miles away, the face on Mars...The symmetry of the face, the detail of its features, argue that its existence is not simply a caprice of nature...after the Viking missions, two computer engineers under contract to NASA noticed the face in a journal, and began to dig through the original Viking photographs...**Comparisons of the two photographs (of the face) 'seemed to verify that the face looked exactly the same, regardless of the light or camera angle'....**

The evidence presented in van Daniken's book combined with the new perspective on Genesis found in this booklet indicates that mankind's prelood society had not only developed a space program, but that it was far more advanced than the space programs of our modern nations!

Consider the engineering feat of transporting a work crew and sophisticated tools to Mars to construct huge faces and pyramids! The fact that the face on Mars is a human face indicates that its makers were humans, and that it was meant to be seen from earth by other humans!....The most likely source of the civilisation that sculpted this face on Mars is the prelood world of Noah....

The Bible clearly shows that Noah's prelood generation had an industrial capacity. Jesus Christ prophesied that there would be only one other 'generation' (the latter-day generation) which would mirror the prelood generation of Noah before he returned to the earth. This indicates that there will be only two 'high-tech' civilisations on earth before the return of Jesus Christ to judge and rule the earth, and both precipitate God's direct intervention!

The prelood, 'high-tech' society was eliminated by God in a worldwide deluge, the second 'high-tech' society (our own) will trigger the return of Jesus Christ to save mankind from extinction (Matthew 24:22, 37-39).

The presence of 'high-tech' societies in both Noah's generation and our own constitutes the most striking parallel between Noah's time and ours.

Who Fathered the Giants?

There is another great Bible mystery around the time of the Flood and that is who produced the giants of Genesis 6:1-4. We read in Genesis 6:

"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not

always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

"There were GIANTS in the earth in those days; and also, after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children unto them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown" (verses 1-4).

In the May-June 1997 issue of the World Ahead the traditional church of God explanation of this passage is given on page 21 in the Questions and Answers section. It gives the following explanation:

According to Halley's Bible Handbook, "the "sons of God" (6:2) are thought to have been either fallen angels...or leaders in Sethite families who intermarried with godless descendants of Cain" (24th ed., p. 72).

The first possibility here cannot be correct, even though angels are sometimes called "sons of God" (cf. Job 38:7). Angels are created spirits (Heb. 1:14), not physical, fleshly beings. They neither marry nor sexually reproduce (cf. Luke 20:34-36). And this would violate the principle God established in Genesis 1 of each kind reproducing only "according to its kind." Moreover, there are no scriptural examples of "fallen angels" or demons manifesting themselves materially like holy angels do. Rather, we only see them as possessing individuals or appearing as ghostly apparitions.

"The second explanation in Halley's makes much more sense and better fits the context here. Genesis 4 records the story of Cain killing Abel and follows with the genealogy of Cain. Genesis 5 is 'the book of the genealogy of Adam' and begins with God creating Adam and how his line continued through Seth. Just as the angels, Adam was a 'son of God' by creation (cf. Luke 3:38). Next, Genesis 6 shows 'the sons of God' (men of Seth's line) intermarrying with 'the daughters of men' (women of Cain's line).

Furthermore, human beings were clearly the problem here—not angels. In verse 3, God says, "My Spirit shall not strive with MAN forever." And verse 7: "I will destroy MAN whom I have created from the face of the earth." So the "giants" mentioned here must have been human also—descended from Adam and Eve (cf. Acts 17:26)

These very tall people were destroyed in the Flood. But later there would be more like them, who were descended, as everyone else in the post-Flood world, from Noah—not angels! (cf. Deut. 2:20-21; 3:11). Remember Goliath, whom David slew? He was more than nine feet tall (1 Sam. 17:4) but was still just a man (vv. 24-25, 33)—not some half-human, half-angelic creature!

This explanation overlooks two important things. First of all, it overlooks what all the ancient writers wrote about who produced the giants of which they were in universal agreement on. The second point is that it does not explain how in the world such intermarriage amongst the human race could produce giants of such incredible stature.

I'd like to quote now from an article by William Dankenbring called "Did Angels Marry Women Before The Flood?" Dankenbring writes:

Who were these "sons of God"? What is this strange passage referring to? Adam, who was created by God, is called the "son of God" in Luke 3:38....

We also read in Job, of the heavenly court: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them" (Job 1:6). And again: 'Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD' (Job 2:1). It is plain that in these Scriptures the term 'sons of God' refers to angels....Clearly, angels of God are also called 'sons of God.' The Scriptures also tell us that angels of God have the ability or capacity to appear in the flesh, as human beings

But can angels mate with women? Is it possible? If they can appear in human form, and look just like a human being, in all respects, then it would seem a small thing to me that they would also be able to perform as a human being, while in the flesh! And the seed of their copulation would be able to join with the ovum of a woman, and produce a child! This is in fact what many ancient sources tell us happened! Notice!

Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century, tells us of this ancient time:

"Now this posterity of Seth continued to esteem God as the Lord of the universe, and to have an entire regard to virtue, for seven generations; but in process of time they were perverted, and forsook the practices of their forefathers, and did neither pay those honors to God which were appointed them, nor had they any concern to do justice towards men.

"But for what degree of zeal they had formerly shewn for virtue, they now shewed by their actions a double degree of wickedness, whereby they made God to be their enemy; for MANY ANGELS OF GOD ACCOMPANIED WITH WOMEN AND BEGAT SONS THAT PROVED UNJUST, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength, for the tradition is that these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians call giants.

"But Noah was very uneasy at what they did; and, being displeased at their conduct, persuaded them to change their dispositions and their acts for the better; -- but, seeing that they did not yield to him, but were slaves to their wicked pleasures, he was afraid they would kill him, together with his wife and children, and those they had married; so he departed out of that land" (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, I,3,1)....

The Jewish rabbis and sages invariably interpreted the 'sons of God' expression in Genesis 6:1-4 as referring to angels.

Says archaeologist William F. Albright, dean of Biblical archaeology, "The Israelites who heard this section (Genesis 6:2) recited unquestionably thought of intercourse between angels and women" (Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, p.226).

Peter in the New Testament strongly intimates that it was sinful angels who were the ones who, by their sinful actions, produced the giants. Notice the time period Peter refers to in this verse. Peter tells us:

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: **By which also he went**

and preached to the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient [in the generation or so before the Flood, when they married with women], WHEN once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, where in few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (1 Pet.3:18-20).

When it says that the angels don't marry or are given in marriage in Luke 20:35-36 is it referring to sinful angels or just the angels in heaven? Continuing on with William Dankenbring's article:

Further testimony of this fact is recorded in the book of Jubilees, written by a priest about 150 years before the present or common era, in which much very interesting information is given. The author, concerned about apostasy in general among the people of God, gives a history of the human race, back to the time of Adam and Eve, evaluating history from the viewpoint of a priest of the Levitical priesthood. His book is very instructive. Notice what he says concerning the time of God's servant Enoch, who was a great writer, historian and chronicler of the events of his time, who witnessed against the transgressions and apostasy he saw all around him.

"And he [Enoch] wrote everything, and bore witness to the Watchers, the ones who sinned with the daughters of men because they began to mingle themselves with the daughters of men so that they might be polluted. And Enoch bore witness against all of them" (Jubilees 4:22).

In a parallel commentary to the account of the angels sin in Genesis, the author of Jubilees writes:

"And when the children of men began to multiply on the surface of the earth and daughters were born to them, that the angels of the LORD saw in a certain year of that Jubilee that they were good to look at. And they took wives for themselves from all of those whom they chose. And they bore children for them, and they were the giants. And injustice increased upon the earth, and all flesh corrupted its way; man and cattle and beasts and birds and everything which walks on the earth. And they all corrupted their way and their ordinances, and they began to eat one another. And injustice grew upon the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of all mankind was thus continually evil.

"And the LORD saw the earth, and behold it was corrupted and all flesh had corrupted its order and all who were on the earth had done every sort of evil in his sight.... And against his angels whom he had sent to the earth he was very angry. He commanded that they be uprooted from all their dominion. And he told us to bind them in the depths of the earth, and behold, they are bound in the midst of them, and they are isolated. And against their children a word went forth from before his presence so that he might smite them with the sword and remove them from under heaven. . . .

"And he sent his sword among them so that each one might kill his fellow and they began to kill one another until they all fell on the sword and they were wiped out from the earth. And their parents also watched. And subsequently they were bound in the depths of the earth forever, until the day of great judgment in order for judgment to be executed upon all of those who corrupted their ways and their deeds before the LORD. And he wiped out every one from their places and not one of them remained whom he did not judge according to all his wickedness"(Jubilees 5:1-11)....

The earliest church fathers also believed in the literal truth of the fact that angels cohabited with women before the Flood. Among those who believed in the truth of this historical fact, and Biblical reference, were such early church leaders as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Athenagorus, Tertullian, Lactantius, Eusebius the church historian during the time of Constantine, and Ambrose.

According to these ante-Nicene fathers, the angels fell "into impure love of virgins, and were subjugated by the flesh." They wrote, "Of those lovers of virgins therefore, were begotten those who are called giants" (Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol.8, p.85, 273). According to them, "The angels transgressed, and were captivated by love of women and begat children" (ibid., p.190).

In fact, this opinion was universal in the ancient world. Nowhere before the 5th century A.D. do we find any other interpretation for 'sons of God' in Genesis 6:2 other than that of 'angels' -- nowhere....

The book of Enoch gives us these fascinating details:

"In those days, when the children of man had multiplied, it happened that there were born unto them handsome and beautiful daughters. And the angels, the children of heaven, saw them and desired them; and they said to one another, 'Come, let us choose wives for ourselves from among the daughters of man and beget us children.' And Semyaz, being their leader, said unto them, 'I fear that perhaps you will not consent that this deed should be done, and I alone will become(responsible) for this great sin.'

"But they all responded to him, 'Let us all swear an oath and bind everyone among us by a curse not to abandon this suggestion but to do the deed.' Then they all swore together and bound one another by (the curse). And they were altogether two hundred..."(Bk. of Enoch 6:1-6).

"And they took wives unto themselves, and everyone(respectively) chose one woman for himself, and they began to go unto them. And they taught them magical medicine, incantations, the cutting of roots, and taught them (about)plants. And the women became pregnant, and gave birth to great giants whose heights were three hundred cubits [evidently a textual error; more probable, 30 cubits, based on other evidence].

"These giants consumed the produce of all the people until the people detested feeding them. So the giants turned against the people in order to eat them. And they began to sin against birds, wild beasts, reptiles and fish. And their flesh was devoured the one by the other, and they drank blood. And then the earth brought an accusation against the oppressors' (Enoch 7:1-6).

These evil angels taught women in the ways of witchcraft! They taught them to forget God, and His ways, and to worship the forces of nature -- which is witchcraft. The size of these giants, we are told, was humongous. The figure of 300 cubits is probably an error, however, as other evidence indicates a maximum height of about 30 cubits, or about 45 feet. Is this where the ancient legends of huge giants in the earth originated? What about the child's fable about Jack and the Beanstalk?

Obviously, these huge giants completely disrupted the ecosphere, and became a curse to habitat earth. Fear, dread and terror would have been rampant, as their appetites turned from fleshly animals to cannibalism -- human flesh and blood itself!

As the giant in the nursery rhyme said: 'Fee fie foe fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman!'

The book of Enoch goes on: "And Azaz-el....taught the people (the art of) making swords and knives, and shields and breastplates; and he showed to their chosen ones bracelets, decorations, (shadowing of the eye) with antimony, ornamentation, the beautifying of the eyelids, all kinds of precious stones, and all coloring tinctures and alchemy. And there were many wicked ones and they committed adultery and erred, and all their conduct became corrupt" (Enoch 8:1-2).

The people of the earth groaned under the oppression which resulted from the tyranny and brutality of the new 'overlords' of the earth....According to the story, God then sent an angel to warn Noah:

"Hide yourself!' He told him of the coming deluge to destroy all life that had corrupted its way upon the earth. God instructed Noah what he needed to do to preserve his life, and his progeny....

"And to Michael, God said, 'Make known to Semyaz and the others who are with him, who fornicated with the women, that they will die together with them in their defilement. **And when they and all their children will have battled with each other, and when they have seen the destruction of their beloved ones, bind them for seventy generations underneath the rocks of the ground until the day of judgment and of their consummation, until the eternal judgment is concluded.** In those days they will lead them into the bottom of the fire--and in torment -- in the prison (where) they will be locked up forever.

"And at that time when they will BURN AND DIE, those who collaborated with them will be bound together with them henceforth unto the end of (all) generations. And destroy all the souls of pleasure and the children of the Watchers, for they have done injustice to man. Destroy injustice from the face of the earth. And every iniquitous deed will end, and the plant of righteousness and truth will appear forever and he will plant joy" (Enoch 10:7-16)."

Seventy generations, if we take three score and ten years as a generation, is about 4900 years. If we take 3100 A.D. as an approximate time for the time of the final judgment on the sinful angels and go back 4900 years, we go back to 1800 B.C. which is shortly after the Flood when the second lot of giants were produced. Dankenbring continues:

God told Enoch according to the book of Enoch, "Do not fear, Enoch, righteous man, scribe of righteousness; come near to me and hear my voice. And tell the Watchers of heaven ... 'It is meet (for you) that you intercede on behalf of man, and not man on your behalf. For what reason have you abandoned the high, holy and eternal heaven; and slept with women and defiled yourselves with the daughters of the people, taking wives, acting like the children of the earth, and begetting giant sons? Surely you, you [used to be] holy, spiritual, the living ones, [possessing] eternal life; but (now) you have defiled yourselves with women, and with the blood of the flesh begotten children, you have lusted with the blood of the people, like them producing blood and flesh, (which) die and perish. On that account, I have given you wives in order that (seeds) might be sown upon them and children born by them... Indeed you, formerly you were spiritual, (having) eternal life, and immortal in all the

generations of the world. That is why (formerly) I did not make wives for you, for the dwelling of the spiritual beings of heaven is heaven" (Enoch 15:1-7)....

But what happens when a spirit being appears as flesh, and unites with a mortal woman, and their two seeds join -- the sperm of the male and the egg of the female? This was a union which God had forbidden -- for good reason. The offspring which resulted, were not only proud, insolent, arrogant, and self-centered -- they were also extremely cunning in some cases-- and they were sometimes GIGANTIC in stature! They disrupted the entire ecology and balance of life of the world before the Flood. Admits the Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary: 'Who, or what, then, were the Nephilim? In the only other passage where the word occurs (Num.13:32-33), it clearly means giants, being derived... from the mutually related roots of three verbs, yielding the fundamental idea of HUGE, EXTRAORDINARY SIZE"....

These mighty 'giants' of old were the source and origin of the Greek legends of gods coming down from heaven and marrying women, having all kinds of incestuous and adulterous relationships, and of 'Cyclops', and other 'Titans' and giants. They may also explain the difficulties engineers have had in explaining the construction of the great pyramid and the movement of the massive blocks of stone weighing hundreds of tons!"

Warren Smith in "The Secret Forces of the Pyramids" wrote:

It was 1833 when a crew of grumbling soldiers were ordered to dig a foundation for a powder magazine on Lampock Ranchero, in California. The soldiers had barely started on their task when the entire detachment dashed excitedly into their commanding officer's headquarters. Gesturing wildly, they babbled about a giant.

"Attention!" yelled the captain. "Now, quit acting like a bunch of silly women and tell me what happened. George, you tell me."

Excitement edged the soldier's voice. "We started digging like you ordered, captain," he said. "But our shovels struck a bunch of funny-looking gravel and stones. We got some bars and broke through that. There's a man's skeleton out there." He pointed toward the site.

"Don't be alarmed," the captain said, solemnly. "An Indian was probably buried there in the past."

The soldiers shook their heads. "It ain't no Injun," George declared. "Captain, we measured that skeleton twice to make certain. The thing is twelve feet tall!"

"And it has a double row of teeth," added another soldier.

"Both uppers and lowers," snapped a third soldier.

The mystified captain accompanied his soldiers to the burial site. He shook his head in disbelief as he stared down into the ancient grave. The skeleton was indeed twelve feet tall, lying in his stone casket, and surrounded by carved shells, a massive stone axe, and two enormous spears.

A soldier crossed himself and then looked toward the captain. "Wow! I would sure hate to go up against something like that."

Further investigation of the grave yielded several thin sheets of porphyry, a purple colored rock with crystals. These tablets were engraved with unintelligible symbols. A padre, summoned from a neighboring mission and asked to decipher the strange plaques was unable to solve the puzzle.

"Giants are mentioned in the Bible," he informed the bewildered soldiers. "The Lord moves in a mysterious way. He has chosen this grave to prove the truth of his holy words."(p.140-141)

A twelve foot giant with a double set of teeth! When I walked passed the horror section at our local video store there was a made-up picture of a man with two rows of teeth on top and bottom on the cover of a video. It looked positively demonic. That was the only word that came to my mind. Dankenbring continues:

The Encyclopedia Britannica, eleventh edition, provides more insight into the giants of old. Although the editors of the Britannica did not endorse the idea of real 'giants' as having lived in the past, they put together a very interesting description of a theme which runs throughout ancient times - that of real living giants. Notice:

"When reading in Homer of 'the Cyclopes and the wild tribes of the Giants,' or of Odysseus in the cave of Polyphemus (Homer, *Odyss.* vii, 206;ix), we seem to come into view of dim traditions, exaggerated [sic] through the mist of ages, of Pre-Hellenic barbarians, godless, cannibal, skin-clothed, hurling huge stones in their rude warfare.

"Giant-legends of this class are common in Europe and Asia, where the big and stupid giants would seem to have been barbaric tribes exaggerated[sic] into monsters in the legends of those who dispossessed and slew them. In early times it was usual for cities to have their legends of giants. Thus London had Gog and Magog, whose effigies (14 ft. high) still stand in the Guildhall; Antwerp had her Antigonus, 40 ft. high; Douai had Gayant, 22 ft. high, and so on" (v.11, p.926).

The Roman historian Pliny relates that an Arabian, Gabbarus, was about 9 and one half feet tall, and he also mentions a Posio and Secundila who were half a foot taller. Why should this seem so strange or unbelievable to moderns? The Scriptures tell us that David slew Goliath (whose name means 'an exile'), a famous giant of the city of Gath, who was probably descended from the ancient Rephaim, of whom a remnant took refuge among the Philistines (Deut.2:20-21; II Sam.21:22).

Goliath's height was "six cubits and a span," making him 9 feet and 9 inches tall!...Giants in the streets of Basel, supporting the arms of Lucerne, seem to have originated from fossil bones found in 1577. Examined by the physician Felix Plater, they were pronounced as having belonged to a giant some 16 or 19 feet high....

The Jewish historian Josephus, writing of the time of the Exodus and conquest of Canaan, tells us further:

"There were till then left the RACE OF GIANTS, who had bodies so large, and countenances so entirely different from other men, that they were surprising to the

sight, and terrible to the hearing. The bones of these men are still shown to this very day, unlike to any credible relations of other men" (Ant., V,ii,3)....

Ancient Sumerian records tell of gods descending from the stars and fertilizing their ancestors. Such interbreeding is supposed to have produced the first men on the earth.... In the Epic of Gilgamesh, from the Middle East, we learn that 'watchers' -- the same expression as used in the book of Enoch came to planet earth and produced giants as offspring!

In India ancient Sanskrit texts tell of "gods" begetting children with women of earth, and how these children inherited the "supernatural" skills and learning of their "fathers." An early Persian myth tells of the earth becoming corrupted by demons who allied themselves with women.

The Sumerian legends of alien beings called Ananaki (popularised by Zechariah Stinchin's books) refers to them as watchers – the same term used for some types of angels in the Bible and also used in the book of Enoch for the fallen angels. It would appear that the legends of these alien Ananaki were a false corruption of other stories of the fallen angels' evil deeds in marrying women who begat the giants of old.

The church has had the mistaken idea Noah's three sons were all white and the races were preserved by Japheth marrying an Oriental woman and Ham marrying a black woman. This would by no means preserve ALL the various races of the world. A white man marrying a negro woman today could never produce an Aboriginal child or an Indian child. To preserve the races required miraculous intervention on God's part.

Just as God supernaturally put genetic material in Adam and Eve so their descendants would produce all the various races of the world (Acts 17:26), so too must he have done with Noah and his wife.

We know one of Noah's sons was black. The name "Ham" means burnt or black and we know the black races sprung from Ham. The Book of Enoch tells us that one of Noah's sons was black and another (Japheth) was reddish in colour (Enoch 88:12-13).

Now if God intervened genetically with Noah and his wife He naturally would have purified their genes if these giantism genes were there. If that is the case we have to ask the question of how those giantism genes resurfaced in the time after the Flood.

Dankenbring continues:

We read of the Nephilim again in Num.13:33: "there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, which come of the Nephilim."

How, it may be asked, could this be, if they were all destroyed in the Flood? The answer is contained in Gen.6:4, where we read: 'There were Nephilim in the earth in those days (i.e., in the days of Noah); and also AFTER THAT, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children unto them, the same became the mighty men (Heb. gibbor, the heroes) which were of old, men of renown' (lit. men of the name, i.e. who got a name and were renowned for their ungodliness).

So that "after that," i.e. after the Flood, there was a second irruption of these fallen angels, evidently smaller in number and more limited in area, for they were for the

most part confined in Canaan, and were in fact known as the “nations of Canaan.” It was for the destruction of these, that the sword of Israel was necessary, as the Flood had been before.

As to the date of this second irruption, it was evidently soon after it became known that the seed was to come through Abraham; for, when he came out from Haran (Gen.12:6) and entered Canaan, the significant fact is stated: “The Canaanite was then (i.e.already) in the land.” And in Gen.14:5 they were already known as “Rephaim” and “Emim,” and had established themselves at Ashteroth Karnaim and Shaveh Kiriathaim (The Companion Bible, Appendix 25).

Satan knew that the promised Messiah would come through the descendants of Abraham. Satan adopted a pre-emptive strategy and bred more “giants” to occupy the Promised Land to prevent the Israelites from being able to occupy it. His plan aborted, however, when the Israelites under Moses and later Joshua conquered the inhabitants of the land, and destroyed the remaining Anakim and Rephaim.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses writes of the land of Moab, “The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims” (Deut.2:10-11).

The word for “giant here is Raphah, which means ‘giant.’ Interestingly, the same word also means “ghost, dead, deceased.” The Rephaim were another of the lines of giants which existed after the Flood.

Moses tells us of the land of Moab, “That also was accounted a land of giants; GIANTS dwelt therein in old time; and the Ammonites call them Zamzummims; a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; but the LORD destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead” (v.20-21).

Og, the king of Bashan, conquered by Moses and the Israelites on their entrance into the Promised Land, was one of the giants.

“For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits [approximately 14 feet!] was the length thereof, and four cubits [6 feet] the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man [i.e., a normal man - the normal cubit measured 18 inches]’ (Deut.3:11).

Bashan, the land of Og, was called “the land of giants” (v.13; see also Josh.12:4,13:12....Joshua 17:15 mentions the “Rephaim” another branch of the “giants.” These dwelt in the region near Sodom and Gomorrah in the time of Abraham (Gen.14:5; 15:20; see also II Sam.5:18,22;23:13)....

This truth that angels did cohabit with women before the Flood may seem incredible -- almost unbelievable. But the plain record of Scriptures, together with apocalyptic sources, the history and traditions of the Jews, Josephus the Jewish historian of the first century, and even the very existence of perverted Greek legends of gods" marrying women, all together combine to prove the unassailable fact that it did happen!

Why has Satan the devil hidden this truth from the world? Why do all the professing Christian churches, including the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant Churches, deny it?

Satan's plot, of course, is to deceive all mankind (Rev.12:9). He doesn't want mankind to know how he has attempted to "tamper" with the genealogical blood-line of the human race. He doesn't want mankind to know or realize that he and his fallen angels have attempted to THWART the plan of God, to prevent the birth of the Messiah.

Also, in his own diabolical, devious way, he seeks that which God is doing through the human race: He and his demons planned to reproduce themselves by the only means available to them -- through sexual relations with human beings -- thus producing their own "children", and "family" and "offspring"!....

Interestingly, these 'half-breeds' of angels and women -- these offspring of the union of wicked angels who sexually related to human women, seducing them, and having 'children' by them - since they are not truly 'human' in the full sense of the word, have no place in the plan of God, and will not be in the resurrection.

They will not be resurrected from the grave in the time to come of the great Judgment. The very name, Rephaim, in the Hebrew comes from the root rapha which means not only "giant", but also "lax", that is, "ghost", "as dead", "dead, deceased." Says Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, "flaccid, feeble, weak, only in plural." This authority states, "According to the opinions of the ancient Hebrews, void of blood and animal life, therefore weak and languid like a sick person."

Isaiah 26:14 speaks of them [verse 13 refers to them as those who have previously had dominion over the Israelites], but their name is translated 'deceased.' Notice! **"They are dead, they are deceased [Rephaim], they shall not rise:** therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish."

The Jewish interpretation is that these were a group of fallen angels who "left their own habitation" in the angelic realm, manifested themselves as men and had sexual relations with women who begat the giants or men of renown. The Church of God position is that these were human tyrants who took women and were not fallen angels.

Men of renown is the correct translation at the end of Genesis 6:4 and doesn't have to be translated giants.

The nephilim (Hebrew for giant or tyrant) at the beginning of the Genesis 6:4 who were in the earth both before and after the Flood is more likely to be actual giants rather than tyrant because of the many references to the Rephaim and Anakaim (sons of Anak) after the flood who were literal physical giants beyond today's tallest men. Goliath was one of the last of these before they were wiped out (perhaps a judgment from God).

"Sons of god" is a strange term to be used for unconverted men here if that is what is meant. The term when applied to men is almost exclusively used for spiritually begotten (converted) sons of God in the New Testament. The only exception to this is a directly created son of God – Adam. As angels are directly created by God they are also referred to as sons of God in Job 38:7.

Going against the Jewish view is the giants' emotional self-awareness (eg. Goliath had a human mind and wasn't like an animal) if they were the offspring of fallen angels who manifested as men. Humans have this emotional self-awareness through the "spirit in man" (1 Corinthians 2:11) which comes from God and one would presume that God would not give the "spirit in man" to the offspring of such a union.

That said, the Bible can be quite surprising in what it says that God allows Satan and the demons to do (eg. the story in Job 1 when Satan spoke with God about Job). Perhaps God did allow some equivalent of the spirit in man to be imparted to these offspring.

In the New Testament, we have two curious passages that, on the surface of it, seem to refer to the event in Genesis 6:4.

In 1 Peter 3:18-20 Peter speaks of Christ speaking to the fallen spirits in prison and he specifies WHEN this happened – at the time of Noah's flood.

Jude 6 says: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness until the judgment of the great day."

They left their first estate and they are in chains, unlike Satan who is free to roam around the earth along with other demons. If Satan is free to roam around this begs the question: "What did they do that was so bad they had to be locked up while Satan is free to roam around?"

A tough question for those who support the orthodox position. This is another of those minor curiosities / ancient mysteries we'll just have wait until Christ's return for the answers to. Interesting, but definitely not something which should distract us from FAR more important things that God wants us focused on.

Why Did God Make Israel His Chosen People?

One of the next steps in the plan for mankind that He undertook a few centuries after the Flood was raising up His chosen nation of Israel. What was the purpose for such an undertaking.

Mr Armstrong does a most wonderful job of explaining this great mystery of Israel in "Mystery of the Ages" so I will now quote a few of the high points from chapter 5 of this wonderful book. Quoting Mr Armstrong:

Did it ever strike you as most unusual that the Great God should have raised up the ancient nation Israel to be his chosen people?

Consider these seemingly paradoxical facts:

God says he is not a respecter of persons. Is he, then, a respecter of nations? Does he have a favorite?

Did you ever realize that God denied his chosen people salvation--save only their prophets? That the chosen nation was given only material and national promises--that God's Holy Spirit was inaccessible to them?

Did it ever occur to you that the Holy Bible is the book of and concerning only that one people Israel? And that other nations are mentioned only if and as they came into contact with Israel?....

In due time the Israelites pitched tents at the foot of Mount Sinai. God did not make them his nation, under his theocratic rule, without their consent. Through Moses, God put to them his proposition. If they would obey his laws of HIS GOVERNMENT, he would prosper them, and make them the wealthiest and most powerful of

nations. Yet God's birthright PROMISES were of a national and material nature--no spiritual salvation. The people agreed. Thus they became God's chosen nation. BUT WHY?

This we know: God's purpose for them had a definite relation to preparing for the ultimate KINGDOM OF GOD--when the GOVERNMENT OF GOD would be reestablished over all the earth, and spiritual salvation would be offered to ALL!....Nations had developed knowledge. Mankind was limited, after Adam's rebellion, to the acquisition of physical and material knowledge. But, like educated men and scientists today, they were saying, 'Give us sufficient knowledge, and we will solve all problems and eradicate all evils--we will create utopia!'

Up to that time, mankind(for the most part) had been denied spiritual knowledge and fulfillment from God. God now decided to give them knowledge of his law--his kind of government--his way of life! He was going to prove to the world that without His Holy Spirit their minds were incapable of receiving and utilizing such knowledge of the TRUE WAYS OF LIFE.

He was going to demonstrate to them that the mind of MAN, with its one spirit, and without the addition of God's Holy Spirit, could not have spiritual discernment--could not solve human problems, could not cure the evils that were besetting humanity. The nation Israel would be his guinea pig to demonstrate that fact.

God had chosen a nation of almost perfect original strain in its generations--its ancestry. Also they had the quality heredity of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (in terms of intelligence and character tendencies - not that they were superior than any other race in terms of human worth as all nations have different strengths and weaknesses)....

So God entered into a covenant with them(known as the old covenant which they eventually broke), making them HIS NATION. It also represented a MARRIAGE covenant, with Israel the wife, promising obedience to her husband--GOD. It was the physical type of the yet-to-come spiritual NEW COVENANT. And what did it prove?

Here was a people of almost clear racial strain, and the God believing heredity of Abraham, Isaac and Israel. Two requisites make a human whatever he becomes in life: heredity and environment. Heredity involves what has been inherited by birth in such areas as health, intelligence and character tendencies. Environment includes all external influences and self-determined motivations--whether good or evil. Heredity--if of good and high quality--may start one off at an advantage. An inspiring environment, uplifting influences and right self-motivation may further improvement. Such environment may turn one of inferior heredity into a real success in life. But a discouraging environment, evil influences and misguided self-motivation may turn one of excellent heredity into failure and an evil nature.

God started his chosen nation off--even though brought out of slavery--with all the natural advantages of a (quality) heredity. God pulled them out of slavery and gave them a new and fresh start. One might say they had everything God-given going for them. But now WHY? Why did God so prepare and raise up this nation Israel?

Consider WHY God created mankind in the first place! GOD IS REPRODUCING HIMSELF THROUGH MAN! He is creating in MAN God's own perfect holy and righteous spiritual CHARACTER! And that, in turn, is purposed to restore the GOVERNMENT OF GOD over all the earth. And, further, to create BILLIONS OF GOD

BEINGS TO FINISH THE CREATION OF THE VAST UNFINISHED UNIVERSE! And, beyond that? Ah! God has not as yet revealed what he purposes beyond that! Everything God has done, since the creation of the first humans, has been another progressive step in God's overall supreme PURPOSE!....

What of the nation Israel as a whole? They, despite their favorable heredity, failed utterly to qualify. When God put the proposal of their formation as his nation before them, they replied, 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do' (Ex. 19:8). But they utterly broke their word and rebelled. They were in a 'husband-and-wife' relation with the Lord God. But the Lord said later of them: 'Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord' (Jer. 3:20).

The nation Israel under Moses was ONE RACE--very little interracial marriage had marred their racial nationality....But in what manner did the ancient nation Israel play a part in preparation for the KINGDOM OF GOD? I have already mentioned how the intellectuals and scholarly of this world feel that, given sufficient KNOWLEDGE, human carnal MAN could solve all problems.

God let many generations of ancient Israel and Judah PROVE by hundreds of years of human experience, that the best of humanity, without God's Holy Spirit CANNOT SOLVE HUMAN PROBLEMS AND EVILS!....The many decades and centuries of ancient Israel PROVED THAT! Until Israel, God withheld knowledge of the right ways of human living from mankind. To Israel God gave his statutes and judgments, as well as his spiritual law. But these perfect laws did not, without God's Holy Spirit, solve the nation's problems!

God could say: 'I am GOD. Take my word for it.' But God gave PROOF, through Israel, that WITHOUT the Holy Spirit, MAN IS HELPLESS! They even had GOD to appeal to. But they did not have his Spirit within them.

Let this point be emphasized. When the first man, Adam, rejected the tree of life, and took to himself the knowledge of good and evil, he limited his power and ability to do good to the level of his human spirit. There is good as well as evil in human nature. Good is a spiritual attribute, not a physical or material action. Had Adam taken of the tree of life, the Holy Spirit of God would have entered him and joined with his spirit, uniting him with God as a son of God. The Holy Spirit meant more than spiritual knowledge of good. Not the hearers of the law (good) but the doers of the law are justified (Rom. 2:43). Love is the fulfilling of the law, but not human love. It requires the 'love OF GOD...shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy [Spirit]' (Rom. 5:5).

God revealed his law to the nation Israel. One of the purposes of this nation was to prove by human experience (written in pain, agony and blood and also in the pages of the Bible for us to learn from [1 Cor.10:11]) that man without the Spirit of God within him cannot be righteous (p.132-133, 140-146, softbound).

How does God calling the nation of Israel fit into the plan of God to build His God family? What purpose does it serve that couldn't be done through the church which He called later?

Our first reason for why God chose the nation of Israel, something that could not be done through the church who have His spirit is:

[1] To prove that even with the knowledge of God's laws which He gave them through Moses and every other advantage such as the quality heredity of Abraham and the patriarchs which included many valuable talents that man still needs the Holy Spirit to live by God's way of life.

What proof is there that Israel was denied the indwelling of the Holy Spirit with the exception of their prophets as claimed by Mr Armstrong?

In 1 Peter 1:10-11 Peter said of the Old Testament prophets that "the Spirit of Christ...was **IN** them."

David in Psalm 51:11 in his famous prayer of repentance asked that God not take His Holy Spirit from him.

These men, however, were the exception not the rule.

In Numbers 11 we read: "So the LORD said to Moses: 'Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel ... **Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them;** and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone'...Then Moses said to him [Joshua], 'Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!'" (Numbers 11:16-17, 29).

Moses wished that God would give His Holy Spirit to all of the people but he realized God had decreed that only a select few would be given the Holy Spirit to help them fulfill special jobs that God had in mind for them. An example was the 70 men who God gave the spirit to in the verse quote above in Numbers 11.

In John 14:17 we read: "the Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot receive because it does not see it nor knows it. But you know it, for it dwells with you and **SHALL** be in you."

Prior to a person receiving the indwelling of the God's spirit at baptism and the laying on hands the Holy Spirit can work with a person and help them to obey God.

During Christ's ministry the apostles had the Holy Spirit working with them but it wasn't **IN** them until after Christ was resurrected.

Such would have been the case with the minority of Israel who did strive to faithfully obey God as best as they could in Old Testament Israel. They would have been in much the same situation as young people in the church today who strive to obey God but haven't been baptised yet.

If the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was offered to the faithful minority of Israel then why didn't the disciples of Jesus receive it before His resurrection.

Another example that highlights this point is found over in Acts 19. In verses 1 to 6 we read:

"And it happened in the time Apollos was at Corinth, Paul was passing through the higher parts to Ephesus.

"And finding certain disciples, he said to them, Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? And they said to him, We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit is.

“And he said to them, Then to what were you baptized? And they said, To John's baptism. And Paul said, John truly baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe into Him coming after him, that is, into Jesus Christ. And hearing, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And as Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them”.

These men had been faithful since the time of John the Baptist before Christ's crucifixion and resurrection yet they neither knew about the Holy Spirit nor had they received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

If the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was generally available to faithful Israelites in the Old Testament they WHY didn't Christ's disciples receive it during His earthly ministry before His resurrection and why didn't these disciples of John the Baptist not receive it?

If you don't understand the difference between God's Spirit being with you and God's spirit being in you, you can easily become confused, especially when you see zealous people in mainstream christian churches who seem to genuinely get help and assistance from God and have a certain degree of biblical understanding.

God's spirit may work with them and they may do well with the half of God's truth they have access to but there's a bunch of doctrines – the other half of God's truth – that understanding of appears to be reserved for those that God specially chooses to call into the church of God. The mysteries of the Kingdom are available only to those who it has been GIVEN (Matthew 13:11)

Even though the Holy Spirit can work externally with people to better obey God as they respond, only the indwelling of the Holy Spirit makes us eligible for the first resurrection and a part of His true church (Romans 8:9-11).

Christ said in “I WILL (future tense) build my church” (Matthew 16:18). In Old Testament times only a few scattered individuals were given the indwelling of the Holy Spirit but in the New Testament He opened that up much further so that there would be a whole church community that would have His spirit.

Even with the knowledge of God's laws which He gave Israel through Moses and every other advantage such as the quality heredity of Abraham and the patriarchs which included many valuable talents Israel failed and God KNEW in advance that they would FAIL.

God knew that Israel would break the covenant because they didn't have a heart to obey Him (Deut. 5:28-29) since they were never promised His Holy Spirit.

In Deuteronomy 31:20-21 we read: “For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore to their fathers, the land that flows with milk and honey, and they shall have eaten and have become satisfied, and become fat, then turn to other gods and serve them, and **provoke Me and break My covenant.**”

“And it shall be when many evils and troubles have found them, this song shall testify against them as a witness. For it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed. **For I know their imagination which they do, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swore.**”

This old covenant was made at Mount Sinai. Before that covenant with the people of Israel God had made a previous covenant with the patriarch Abraham.

The purpose of this Abrahamic covenant is outlined three times in the book of Genesis:

Genesis 12:3: "And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. **And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.**"

Genesis 22:18: "**And in your Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed**, because you have obeyed My voice."

Genesis 28:14: "And your seed shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. **And in you and in your Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.**"

God was going to use the nation of Israel to bless all the nations of the world. Jesus Christ was a descendant of Abraham and, in part, He was a Seed of Abraham who's sacrifice would open up salvation and entrance into God's kingdom and family at the resurrection (Galatians 3:16).

God divorced ancient Israel and the old covenant was broken when He sent them away into captivity. Jeremiah 3:8 says: "And I saw, when for all the causes for which backsliding Israel committed adultery, I sent her away and gave **a bill of divorce to her.**"

The old covenant was broken and finished by God divorcing them yet God will still remember the previous covenant He had made with Abraham:

In Leviticus 26:43-45 we read: "The land also shall be forsaken by them, and shall enjoy its sabbaths, while it lies waste without them. And they shall accept the punishment of their iniquities; because, even because they despised My judgments, and because their soul hated My statutes.

"And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I hate them, to destroy them utterly and to break My covenant with them. For I am the LORD their God. **But for their sakes, I will remember the covenant of their ancestors**, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, so that I might be their God. I am the LORD."

The PURPOSE of the Abrahamic covenant was to use Israel to bless all nations and lead them as a model nation of His way of life and towards the path of salvation and entry into the Kingdom and Family of God!

God knew they would break the old covenant because it didn't include the promise of the Holy Spirit where the people would truly want to obey Him.

He knew ahead of time that in order to fulfill the purpose of the Abrahamic covenant of using Israel as a model nation to bless all nations that a NEW covenant would eventually be required for them to have the heart to obey Him and eventually fulfill their destiny as the model nation by which He will bless all nations.

This is prophesied in the book of Jeremiah:

"Behold, the days come, says the LORD that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which covenant of Mine they broke, although I was a husband to them, says the LORD; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel:

“After those days, says the LORD, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

This end time prophecy takes place after Christ's second coming and the Kingdom of God is brought to this earth.

They will be offered the new covenant and the chance to become a part of spiritual Israel – the church (Galatians 6:16).

The Old Covenant failed because of the people and their disobedience (Hebrews 8:8) but in order to keep the purpose of the Abrahamic covenant (bless all peoples by your seed) God will bring them out of a coming future captivity and make the New Covenant with them at His second coming.

The new covenant, as like the old, has been sealed with blood - that of the death of Jesus Christ. When we partake of the Passover we partake of the wine which symbolises the blood of the new covenant (Matthew 26:28) and the cup represents the new covenant in His blood (Luke 22:20).

The new covenant is based on better promises (Hebrews 8:6) including the giving of the Holy Spirit to help us overcome and live by the spirit of the law (writing the law of God in our hearts) and that of eternal life born into the very family of God!

The new covenant will not be made with those who remain spiritual Gentiles. The covenants and the promises pertain to Israel (Romans 9:4). The Gentiles were cut off from the covenants (Ephesians 2:12 - plural) and from God but now God, through Jesus Christ's sacrifice and calling them into the church and receiving the Holy Spirit, has granted access to physical Gentiles by grafting them into spiritual Israel - the church (Romans 11:17).

Just like a branch grafted onto a tree, God replaced the disobedient and unbelieving "branches" of the Israel of God (the natural olive tree, Romans 11:17) with "wild olive branches" - those not directly descended from Abraham, but who have been called of God and become spiritual Israelites (Romans 2:29).

When physical Israel does repent in the millennium and Great White Throne Judgment they will be able to be grafted back into the true Israel of God who are the true people of God (Rom. 11:23). Christ's testament or will did not have any force until His death (Hebrews 9:17). When Christ died then His heirs (Galatians 3:29) had the right to the promise of eternal life made possible through the Holy Spirit. God truly has a wonderful plan for all mankind!

The House of Israel and the House of Judah in Jeremiah's new covenant prophecy refers to the two political kingdoms of the physical descendants of Israel so even after the Kingdom of God is set up on earth He is still working with the physical descendants of Israel and wanting them to be His people.

God is preparing the Kingdom of God in dual stages. He is working both through physical Israel AND spiritual Israel - the church. After Christ returns physical Israel will become God's model millennial nation!

After a far greater exodus back from slavery than that out of Egypt (Jeremiah 16:14-15) they will turn to God and be an outstanding example of obedience (Isaiah 61:9, 62:1-2) to the Gentiles who will eagerly from that time on seek to follow (Zechariah 8:23)!

They will become leading nations on the earth because of their example to the Gentiles and be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation as God originally intended (Exodus 19:6).

Our second reason for why God chose the nation of Israel is:

[2] To write through the painful lessons of experience that only living God's way leads to happiness and breaking God's laws only brings misery.

Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them. That's why God has had the history of Israel recorded for us. Their lessons of experience showed time and time again that only living God's way leads to happiness and breaking God's laws will only bring misery.

The apostle Paul wrote the following in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 to show how their examples have been recorded for our benefit so we don't repeat their mistakes:

"Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea... For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them... Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did ... Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."

On this point Raymond McNair writes: "They were divinely chosen to serve as an example for the rest of humanity of what happens to those who obey or disobey the Creator God. As one Jewish man painfully remarked in the aftermath of World War II, 'Why doesn't He choose someone else for a while?'" (America and Britain in Prophecy, p.4).

God called them not because they deserved it but for a service which would ultimately benefit all mankind. God wasn't playing favourites. He said that He didn't call them because they were more numerous or any greater in influence than other nations (Deuteronomy 7:6-8). He said that they were the least of nations when He called them out of Egypt and that He was going to remain faithful to His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to make of them a group of influential nations.

Our third reason for why God chose the nation of Israel is:

[3] To be a model nation that would encourage other nations to want to come under God's rule.

In Deuteronomy 4:6-8. God told the nation of Israel: "Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?"

God wanted Israel was to be a model nation so that other nations would see the benefits of living by God's way so they might want to come under His rule and live by His way.

In Exodus 19:5-6 we read: "And now if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to Me above all the nations; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

God's grand purpose - anciently, today and tomorrow - for Abraham's descendants has never varied. He selected them to be a blessing to 'all the families of the earth' (Genesis 12:3). To make this possible He promised them every material advantage they would ever need (The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy, p.34).

These material blessings would make it possible for them to help and benefit many other nations all around the world. These birthright promises were passed down through Isaac and Jacob. The descendants of all of Jacob's 12 sons would share in the blessings promised to Abraham but the double portion of this birthright was passed onto Joseph sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

While a portion of the Jews migrated back from Babylon to the land of Israel, the other tribes of Israel eventually migrated into NW Europe and the birthright tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh would eventually become the "great" nation and "company of nations" known as the United States and the British Commonwealth.

Israel, both ancient and modern, have been very much a mixed bag of good and evil. Relatively there were times when they have been much better morally than other nations and, to a degree, have been a blessing to other nations but compared to God's standards they fell way short.

God wanted a free, obedient and happy people free of the many burdens governments put on people. Other peoples would look at them thinking, "How can we be free from the burdens our governments put on us" and from that could spread the idea, "Hey, let's worship Israel's God. Let Israel's God be our king." It was God's intent that the whole world be blessed and come to God through the example of the descendants of Jacob.

Did this happen? No, it never did but there will come a time after Christ's second coming when they will fulfill their destiny as God's model nation when they are converted and become a part of spiritual Israel - the church.

A Synopsis of the History of Israel

Stephen before he was martyred gave his accusers a wonderful synopsis of the history of Israel up to the time of Solomon that we read about in Acts 7. He said:

Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.

And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, moved

with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.

But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not. And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?

Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

But Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?"

We know that after the Israelites wandered 40 years in the wilderness God finally brought them into the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua and after several years they conquered the land driving the Gentiles out of it. For the next 400 years their spiritual condition waxed and waned during the period of the Judges who God raised up from time to time to deliver them out of the hands of various peoples around them.

Finally in the time of the prophet Samuel they rejected God as their king and asked for a human king. Samuel anointed Saul, a tall Benjamite, who was humble to begin with but had a weakness in following God's instructions and was later rejected as king by God. David was then anointed and after many years of fleeing from Saul, who rapidly turned away from God's way, finally actively ruled the country.

After David, who ruled righteously and was called by God "a man after my own heart", his son Solomon reigned. Solomon asked God for wisdom to rule the people when God offered him anything, including riches. God gave him fantastic wisdom and great wealth. The Solomon era was the greatest era in the history of ancient Israel ruling from the Euphrates to the Sinai and a relatively peaceful era after the many wars during his father's time of expanding the area of the kingdom.

Solomon's weakness was taking wives of the peoples around him to the ridiculous point where he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. These foreign women turned his heart away from God to other pagan gods. There is an indication that he did turn back to God at the end of his life though God may not have given him the indwelling of the Holy Spirit like his father David and the various prophets. Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes towards the end of his life which covers many of the bitter lessons that he learned during his life such as the folly of his polygamy (Ecclesiastes 7:26). He concluded that the duty of man was to fear God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

The wealthy Solomon era came at a cost - heavy taxation on the people. They demanded the taxes be lightened by his son Rehoboam. Rehoboam got bad counsel and raised them higher resulting in a secession of ten tribes under the leadership of Jeroboam. Had he trusted God who offered His support if they would obey Him, the Kingdom of Israel would have flourished. Instead, controlled by leadership insecurity, he barred the peoples of the new ten-tribed kingdom from going to Jerusalem for the Feast days and moved their Feast of Tabernacles to

the eighth month in case they might be moved by emotion to want to reunite with the Kingdom of Judah.

The books of Kings records that not one of the Kingdom of Israel's kings ruled righteously but did evil instead and did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam. Could the sins of Jeroboam have been those changes to the religious calendar? As they no longer had the correct form of religion they had little chance of having the true substance of God's true religion. Judah, on the other hand, had fluctuations. Some kings did evil while other kings like Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, Josiah and Asa were loyal to God.

The northern kingdom's evils became so bad that God finally had them taken away captive by the Assyrians in 721-718 B.C. The northern kingdom included the birthright tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh who were promised promises of future national wealth and greatness on a unprecedented scale (Gen. 12:1, 22:17, 48:19-20). They were prophesied to be a great nation and a company or commonwealth of nations. Because of their sins those promises were withheld seven prophetic times which using the day for a year principle comes to 2520 years. They were carried away to the southern shores of the Caspian Sea. After the fall of Assyria they migrated up through the Caucasus Mountains to the area around the northern coast of the Black Sea to be identified in history as the Scythians.

In time they migrated to Scandinavia, North-West Europe and the British Isles. Ephraim migrated to Britain while most Manassehites migrated to America in time.

Stephen Collins in an article he wrote as a rebuttal to a "Worldwide News" article by Ralph Orr attempting to discredit the teaching that the United States and Britain are descended from Israel tells us these fascinating little known facts that the ten tribes for a brief time did go back to the land of Palestine after Assyria fell before leaving of their own accord back to Scythia. He writes:

Secular historians record that (circa 625-605 B.C.) the Scythians poured out of the Black Sea/Caucasus region to invade the regions to the south. Their armies marched in the direction of Assyria and Palestine. The Scythian armies who marched to Assyria devastated Assyria's homeland. The Encyclopaedia Britannica states simply: 'Nineveh was captured and destroyed by the Scythian army...and the Assyrian empire was at an end.' However, the Scythian army that marched into Palestine was peaceful as they continued to Egypt (which avoided an invasion by paying tribute to the Scythians). Herodotus notes that while the Scythians also conquered Media and 'took possession of all Asia,' they marched into Palestine 'doing no harm to anyone.'

Harper's Bible Dictionary records that this massive Scythian presence in Palestine occurred in the reign of King Josiah (639-608 B.C.), and during the ministry of the prophet Jeremiah (who had sent God's message to the ten tribes which said 'return'). The Scythian invasions clearly exhibit motives that confirm their Israelite origin.

By conquering Media they liberated the Israelites held captive in 'the cities of the Medes,' and by destroying the Assyrian Empire they exacted revenge for the Assyrian destruction of the old kingdom of Israel.

[Interestingly, while the Assyrians drove the ten tribes out of Palestine, we can now know that the ten tribes of Israel ultimately destroyed Assyria and its empire.]

If the Scythians had been marauding nomads from the steppes (a common assumption of history books), they would have looted Palestine and Judah as well.

However, Herodotus' account of their presence in Palestine indicates a friendly/protective occupation. This makes sense when we understand the Sacae Scythians recognized the Jews as a brother tribe. Even the Bible acknowledges the Scythian presence in Palestine during Josiah's reign...in the very passage that Mr. Orr points to as a Bible contradiction! The Greeks called the Black Sea Israelites 'Sacae' or 'Scythian;' however, the Bible called them by their Israelite tribal names because the Jews still recognized the Scythians as Israelite tribes! That is why II Chronicles 34-35 records King Josiah issuing donation and Passover invitations to people of Manasseh, Ephraim, Naphtali, Simeon, and 'Israel.' King Josiah was, in fact, interacting with the Sacae Scythians who had just recently reoccupied their old tribal lands! These passages are powerful biblical proof that the Sacae Scythians were the ten tribes of Israel! Precisely when Greek history records that the Sacae Scythians had poured into Palestine, the Bible states many of the ten tribes of Israel were again present in the land.

II Chronicles 34:6 records that the ten tribes of Israel had reoccupied their old homelands 'with mattocks.'

While the Scythians attacked Assyria with swords, they occupied Palestine with agricultural tools! The ten tribes apparently intended to reclaim and resettle the old kingdom of Israel. However, history records they decided to return to their new Black Sea homelands within a few decades. Werner Keller states the Scythians returned to the Black Sea region within ten years while Herodotus records they remained in the Mideast 28 years before returning.

The events of King Josiah's reign take on new meaning when it is realized that the more devout ten tribes of Israel had reoccupied Palestine during his reign! King Josiah's spiritual reform of Judah began in the eighth year of his reign (II Chronicles 34:1-3). What motivated him to do this? The eighth year of his reign was 623 B.C., about when the Sacae Scythians (the ten tribes of Israel) reoccupied Palestine. He began to destroy pagan idols and images even though he did not recover the 'book of the law' until at least ten years later (verses 3-15). Who taught him how to please the God of Israel? The Scythian Israelites! Jeremiah records the Israelites were closer to God at that time, and Herodotus wrote the Scythians avoided unclean meat and forbid the use of idolatrous images.

After 10-28 years, the Israelites mostly returned to 'the north' after discovering that Palestine was no more a 'land of milk and honey.' It had been occupied by foreigners (brought by Assyrians) for a century, and was now undesirable compared to the Israelites' Black Sea region. However, a few Israelites likely stayed in Palestine, accounting for limited contingents of Israelites being present in future generations. After the Scythian Israelites left Palestine, a city in the old tribal territory of Manasseh (Beth-Shan) was renamed 'Scythopolis' in honor of the Scythians who had liberated Palestine from Assyrian domination. The city was still named Scythopolis when it was one of the cities of the Decapolis in which Jesus walked (Mark 7:31).

The Kingdom of Judah lasted just over a century longer than the Kingdom of Israel. Finally in 604-585 B.C. the Babylonians carried them away captive. After 70 years a number of Jews returned and rebuilt the Temple which the Babylonians had destroyed.

Most of the Jews however never did not return, migrating predominantly westward with the Israelite tribes. The descendants of the Jews who returned from captivity to Palestine became the people who Christ was born into, preached to and died at the hands of 1900 years ago.

What Biblical proof is there that the lost tribes of Israel exist today and didn't assimilate into other nations?

There are prophecies of end-time Israel and even tribes as recognisable entities in end-time: In Genesis 49:1 we read: "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days." Genesis 49 goes on to give us a description of each of the tribes in the end-time.

In Matthew 19:28 Jesus promised at His return that the 12 apostles would rule each of the 12 tribes. While some intermingling with other tribes and nations has taken place there would be enough of a recognisable homogenous core of each of these tribes.

Nehemiah 11 shows that those who volunteered to return and rebuild a Jewish presence in the Promised Land came almost exclusively from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi. No significant numbers from the northern tribes after this ever returned their homeland so they are to be found elsewhere. Many Jews claim that they migrated back with the formation of the nation of Israel in 1948 but this does not match the birthright promise of a great nation and a company of nations.

Along with the way that He has been working with His church, the way God has worked with modern physical Israel in giving them the birthright blessings shows that He is still working with physical Israel. In addition to national prosperity there has been evidence of miraculous protection at times as well as times such as during World War II.

In the famous blessings and cursings chapter of Leviticus 26 in verses 17 & 18 we read: "And I will set My face against you, and you shall be slain before your enemies. They that hate you shall reign over you. And you shall flee when none pursues you. And if you will not yet listen to Me for all this, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins."

While it is very obscure, some people see here a prophecy about how long God would withhold the birthright promises from Ephraim and Manasseh. Times can also refer to years. Seven years = around 2500 days. Using the day for a year principle they see the birthright promises as being withheld for 2500 years following the captivity of Ephraim and Manasseh around 700 BC. 2500 years after their captivity brings us to the years around 1800 AD. At this time Britain followed by America burst onto the world scene as a great nation and a company of nations.

The Jewish Encyclopaedia says the following:

The identification of the Sacae, or the Scythians [recognised by most historians as the ancestors of the British peoples] with the Ten Tribes because they appear in history at the SAME TIME and very nearly in the SAME PLACE, as the Israelites removed by Shalmaneser, is one of the chief supports of the theory which identifies the English people, and indeed the whole Teutonic race, with the Ten Tribes. Dan is identified sometimes with Denmark and sometimes with the Tuatha da Danaan of Irish Tradition (p.250).

The term 'Caucasian' is a traditional, historic name commonly applied to the white race. It gets its origin from the major Caucasian migration into Europe mostly via the Caucasian Mountains that occurred after the fall of Parthia in 226 AD. At this same time pushed out by the religious intolerance of the conquering Arabs a whole host of so-called barbarian tribes pour into central and eastern Europe and into the Roman empire itself and contributed to the

fall of the Roman Empire. The Israelites migrated to NW Europe and behind them were the Assyrians who migrated to Germany.

Hundreds of years earlier many Israelites in a smaller wave of immigration via the Phoenician fleets migrated to Carthage and then onto Spain and then onto Northern France and the British Isles known to us as Celts. Armenian historian Ortellius notes

the kingdom of Arsareth, where the ten tribes retiring...took the name of 'Gauthai' because, he says, they were very jealous of the glory of God.

It is from Gauthai that the term Goths comes from.

In the United Church of God booklet "The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy" we read:

In Genesis 49 Jacob gave this prophecy about the descendants of Joseph in the end time. He said: "Joseph is like a grapevine that produces much fruit, a healthy vine watered by a spring, whose branches grow over the wall. Archers attack him violently and shoot at him angrily, but he aims his bow well. His arms are made strong. He gets his power from the Mighty God of Jacob (Genesis 49:22-26, New Century Version)."

This prophetic passage tells us that Joseph's descendants 'in the last days' will live in a productive, well-watered and fruitful land. They will be a people who have greatly expanded their territory and influence - politically, militarily, economically and culturally - a people 'whose branches grow over the wall,' or beyond their natural borders. They will be a people that, on occasion, will be attacked by other nations but will generally be victorious. Their triumphs will sometimes seem 'miraculous' or 'providential' because the Almighty God is their helper and source of blessings. They will be a people who live in an unusually favourable climate that easily supports their steadily expanding population (p. 26-27).

British historian James Morris wrote the following about the British Empire:

It was the largest empire in the history of the world, comprising nearly a quarter of the land mass of the earth, and a quarter of the population...In fact...it continued to grow until 1933 when its area was 13.9 million square miles and its population 493 million...The Roman Empire in its prime comprised perhaps 120 million people in an area of 2.5 million square miles (Pax Britannica, p.21, 27, 42).

At its height the British Empire was over 5 times the size of the Roman Empire and ruled over 4 times as many people as the Roman Empire.

America's rise to greatness was just as incredible. There was this pivotal 40 year period between 1775 when the American Revolution began to 1815 when Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo and the War of 1812 concluded which boosted America's pride. America doubled in size with the Louisiana Purchase at a bargain price, the greatest land deal in history. Never before in history had any nation received land to remotely compare

with those newly-acquired American territories - either in sheer size, richness of soil and having such a favourable climate. Abraham Lincoln said in 1863:

We find ourselves in the peaceful possession of the fairest portion of the earth, as regards fertility of soil, extent of territory, and salubrity of climate... We...find ourselves the legal inheritors of these fundamental blessings. We toiled not in the acquirement or establishment of them.

Britain and America also possessed "the gates of their enemies" (Genesis 22:17) including sea gates such as the Suez and Panama canals and Gibraltar. No other brother nations in the history of the world have dominated the world so much in terms of military power, natural resources and control of fertile land in the best parts of the world. No other brother nations fit so well the prophecy of a great nation and a company of nations.

The British proved to be able administrators who dramatically improved the infrastructure and standard of living in the countries they governed. The descendants of Joseph led the world into an era of unprecedented knowledge, prosperity and technological advancement. The Bible, plus biblically oriented reference works and publications, began to be distributed globally, thanks to the English speaking nations who have shown great talent for administration and technical invention (The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy, p.90).

Britain received many requests from various peoples to come under British rule. This was motivated by the kinder rule of the British compared to the more aggressive European powers and other native peoples as well as the opposition by the British to slavery. The slave trade where new slaves were sold was abolished in 1807 with the British Navy policing it and then existing slaves were all freed in 1833. Many of these native peoples who asked Britain to annex them wanted to be protected from those who still continued the slave trade.

In modern times both the United States and Britain have given many billions in foreign aid to other countries including rebuilding Europe and Japan after World War II. And, of course, the English invented cricket which the Indians are forever grateful for. These are some of the ways Britain and the United States have been a blessing to the nations of the world.

Along with the positives there have also been great sins and injustices perpetuated by the descendants of Joseph because they have not fully obeyed the God who blessed them. The British ramped up the hideous slave trade in the Caribbean and got rich off it in the 1700's before they abolished it in 1833, the first of the Western nations to do so.

The southern United States some 30 years after that tenaciously, out of economic greed, held onto slavery and fought a bloody Civil War over it that cost more lives than any other war America has fought in.

The British fought China in the Opium wars supporting the British drug lords who were getting the Chinese hooked on heroin, a war fought out of economic greed. It was the British who invented and promoted the theory of evolution.

In modern times we have seen an explosion of sexual immorality, pornography and homosexuality as well as millions of abortions since it was legalised. Only partially they have been the righteous model nations God had intended for them.

The biblically based values on which the founding fathers built the United States of America have given way to evolution and the denial of God and the same kind of self-serving materialism that led to the collapse of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah” (The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy, p.36, 41).

Since the sexual and moral revolution of the 1960's, America and Britain, along with Australia, New Zealand and Canada, have suffered a terrible moral degeneration with crime and sexual immorality and other sins rapidly escalating as they drift further and further away from God and His way of life.

During the 1960's when the sexual revolution began Britain's empire rapidly shrunk with decolonization and signs of decay in America's power and political will began to show with their defeat in the Vietnam War. The birthright blessings were beginning to be taken away and replaced with the terrible curses for disobedience mentioned in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

Jeremiah wrote of a time of national trouble that is yet ahead for the modern descendants of Israel. In Jeremiah 30:3-8 we read: "For behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel AND Judah ... And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it...Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day," says the LORD of hosts, "that I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds; foreigners shall no more enslave them"

It is out of this foreign domination and enslavement that Christ will deliver them at His second coming. This will be the time when King David and Christ's 12 apostles - along with all the rest of God's saints - will be resurrected to begin ruling with Christ over a restored Israel in the Kingdom of God (Ezekiel 37:24; Matthew 19:28).

When Christ returns He will bring the remaining Israelites of all the tribes back to the land of Palestine in an exodus that will be even bigger than that of Moses' day.

We read about this in Isaiah 11:11-16, "It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria [Germany] and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush [Ethiopia], from Elam [Eastern Europe] and Shinar [Iraq], from Hamath and the islands of the sea...

"The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; with His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, and strike it in the seven streams, and make men cross over dry-shod. There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt."

An interesting verse that also speaks of this return from captivity is in Deuteronomy 30 where God says: "If you are driven out into the outermost parts of the heavens, the LORD your God will gather you from there, and He will bring you from there." So there may be some on the International Space Station or visiting Mars as NASA hopes to do around 2030. They'll do well to survive the meteor showers of the Day of the Lord.

How God's Festivals Teach God's Plan

God gave to Israel His Feast days in Leviticus 23 which not only had types for Israel (national deliverance at the time of the Exodus by God's hand and showing gratitude to God for the

various seasonal harvests) they also have deeper meanings and teach us tremendous lessons about the great master plan God is working out here on earth through mankind.

The Jews kept these days in memory of special national events such as their deliverance from Egypt and as harvest festivals in gratitude for the food that God provided for them each year. Notice what The Encyclopaedia Britannica says about the early New Testament church:

The sanctity of special times [referring to festivals such as Easter and Christmas] was an idea absent from the minds of the first Christians... [who] continued to observe the Jewish festivals, though in a new spirit, as commemorations of events which those festivals had foreshadowed (vol. 8, p. 828, 11th edition).

This idea of a new spiritual meaning for these festivals is best demonstrated by the apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church which had a large number of non-Jewish Greeks. To these Gentiles, along with the Jews, he wrote: "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

Most people are familiar with the story in the book of Exodus of Israel killing a lamb and putting blood on the lintel and doorposts so their house would be protected and "passed over" by the death angel. Paul here says that this looked forward to Jesus Christ's blood covering our sins so we can be "passed over" from the penalty of death.

Paul then speaks of the second festival in Leviticus 23 straight after Passover – the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In the plainest words possible to both Jews and Gentiles in this church he says "Let us keep the feast."

The Feasts, including the going through the physical rituals of unleavened bread and atonement, have tremendous lessons and meanings for us in the church.

Some of us in the church have learned the basic meanings of each of the feasts as Mr Armstrong taught us in the Holy Days booklet he wrote and not realises that there may be many more lessons and layers of meanings for each of the feasts. Let's look at some of the meanings and lessons of the feasts.

The Passover, of course, pictures Christ's sacrifice to cover our sins (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

In Ancient Israel it symbolized Israel's deliverance from the death angel as it passed over their houses at the time of the Exodus (Exod. 12:26-27). Passover involved purification and preparation. Today, we are told not to take it unworthily but to examine ourselves beforehand (1 Cor. 11:27-28). We are to examine ourselves - not judge others (1 Cor. 11:28-31).

The bread pictures 4 things:

- 1) the literal body of Christ which was broken for us.
- 2) The Word of God which is the bread of life (Matt. 4:4, John 6:48) and which we need to use to grow in grace and knowledge.
- 3) The church - "we, being many, are one bread and one body, for we all partake of that one bread" (1 Cor. 10:17). We should be thankful for the body of the church - our brethren who we called together with and have a renewed sense of dedication to serve them and be unified with them which is also pictured by the footwashing ceremony.

4) The mind of Christ and having the same love and concern that Christ showed in His time on earth.

The wine is called the cup of blessing in 1 Corinthians 10:16. It also pictures the many blessings we are to be thankful to God for in this life and the loyalty He has shown us in blessing us with all we have, including His forgiveness, reminding us of our need to show that loyalty in return to Him in heartfelt obedience. The wine pictures, most of all, Christ's shed blood which covers all those horrible past sins and giving us a fresh start, innocent of the past, though mindful we have to change our life from here on.

We are told that "by His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). It reminds us of the blessing of healing and the forgiveness of our breaking His physical laws which cause sickness and disease. Following on from that we should examine ourselves and how we treat our bodies and be determined to glorify God in our bodies (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

Christ said that He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom comes (Matt. 26:29). This is a type of the High Priest, which Christ now is for us, not drinking wine when he is serving in the Temple of God (Lev. 10:8-11). Wine is also a symbol of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

The shed blood of our Saviour, the cup which we drink, symbolizes our sharing of His suffering (Matt. 20:23) and sacrifice. We are to be living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2) poured out like a drink offering for service and sacrifice (Phil. 2:17) for God and others as Christ has done for us. As God has forgiven us through Christ we need to forgive others and even ourselves for theirs and our own faults.

By symbolically ingesting Christ we focus our minds also on allowing Him to live His life in us and that takes self-discipline to submit to God's will and not live our way but through the power of God's spirit live His way. Ultimately the meaning of Christ's sacrifice to us should be to "purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread anciently symbolized the Exodus of the Israelites and their deliverance by God out of Egypt (Exod. 12:17). Today it pictures for us in the church putting sin out of lives and not only that but putting on the very character of God - the fruits of the spirit (1 Cor. 5:7-8).

Too often all we think of is just the first part but we have to remember that it is not called the Feast of not eating Leavened Bread but the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In 1 Corinthians 5:8 it's called the unleavened bread of sincerity of truth and sincerity. Here are two specific qualities we should meditate on and build in our lives at this time. Do we really speak and live the truth and with sincerity and not hypocrisy?

The reason Israel ate unleavened bread and abstained from leaven was twofold. Firstly we are told in Deuteronomy 16:3 that they didn't have leaven because they left in haste and secondly, it was called the bread of affliction in the same verse reminding them of the bitter affliction of slavery that God had delivered them from. What are the lessons for us today?

Just as Israel left in haste from Egypt which is a type of sin we have to put sin out of lives with urgency. We can't fool around with sin. If we stay in a sinful environment too long it will overtake us and enslave us.

There are three lessons we can learn from the meaning of the bread of affliction. Firstly, it pictures our trials and afflictions that we have to suffer in this life to have eternal life and reminds us that to have anything worthwhile, such as eternal life, we have to work hard for it and even suffer for it.

Secondly, it pictures what Christ had to suffer for us and thirdly, the profound lesson that we have to believe not just in our minds but deep in our hearts as well, which manifests itself in our choices we make and the way we want to go, and that is, that sin hurts!

There are lessons that we learn from de-leavening our homes and the rituals of abstaining from leaven and eating unleavened bread. Do we think about them as we go through them? Obviously de-leavening our homes shows we have to thoroughly put sin out in every nook and cranny we can get to. It teaches us that God's way of life is not a smorgasbord. We can't pick and choose. We can ask ourselves, "What areas am I still holding back from God?"

Sometimes it's hard to tell whether certain things contain leaven or not. This can teach us the lesson of avoiding the grey areas. Sometimes we accidentally eat something leavened. This shows us how easy it is to sin and how much we need God's help to avoid sin. Sometimes we find leaven during the feast we missed when de-leavening just like we find hidden sins in our life which have to be put away immediately.

We have to eat unleavened bread every day - seven days shall you eat it. This teaches us our need to come to God seeking His help and power every day and be renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16). Seven is the number of completeness teaching us that we need to put sin out of our lives completely.

A little leaven leavens the whole lump (1 Cor. 5:6-8) Paul tells us. If we let Satan and sin to get a foot in the door they will push open the whole door. That's why we cannot afford to compromise even a little. We are also told to beware of the spiritual leaven of false teachers (Matt. 16:6-12).

During the Feast the Israelites commemorated the wavesheaf offering. The Sabbath before is the memorial of the resurrection of Jesus Christ who rose near the end of the Sabbath and rose to heaven and was accepted as the true wavesheaf offering - the first of the firstfruits - on the day after. On that weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread we should take time to remember the resurrection of Christ which occurred on that day and all it symbolizes.

Pentecost was a celebration and thanksgiving for the first small harvest for Israel. In the plan of God we, in the church, are the first small harvest of souls of all humanity.

Pentecost was the birthday of the church (Acts 2) when the Holy Spirit was given. We focus on how much we need God's spirit and what it does for us as the earnest or deposit of eternal life (Eph. 1:14).

Israel is called His firstfruits in Jeremiah 2:3 and it is also a time to think of how God is going to use the physical nation of Israel first as the model nation of the World Tomorrow to teach the rest of the world God's ways (Zech. 8:23). It is also a reminder of the giving of the Law which traditionally is believed to have occurred on the day of Pentecost. The Jews traditionally read the book of Ruth on this day, a book that is a type of the future marriage of the church and Christ.

It is time to think of how we can contribute to unity in the church and be of one accord (Acts 2:1) just like the church was at Pentecost and how we can each support the church and its Work of reaching the world with the good news of salvation and the World Tomorrow. Just as the apostles had to tarry or wait for the day it teaches us that we have to wait on God to help us and deliver us from the trials of sin and the world.

The Feast of Trumpets pictures the Day of the Lord and the return of Christ - the most momentous event of all time to happen.

It is the Feast of Trumpets - plural - picturing the whole of the Day of the Lord and how God is going to spank this world and bring this world to repentance. The trumpet is a symbol of war (Jer. 4:19) and a symbol of warning reminding us of our job to warn this world of the impending tribulation (Amos 3:6, Isa. 58:1).

Trumpets were also blown as a sound of peace or end of strife (2 Sam. 2:28). When Christ comes back there will finally be peace on earth and not only that an end to strife and struggle in our lives against sin when we will be resurrected to immortality (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

Trumpets were also blown signifying the crowning of a king (1 Kings 1:34). This day pictures the crowning of Christ as king over all the earth (Rev. 11:15). Israel will also be re-gathered at the sound of the trumpet (Isa. 27:12-13).

The message of the Feast of Trumpets is that we should repent and rend our hearts to God (Joel 2:1-13). We should on this day reflect on all that this world is going through and what it will go through and sigh and cry over all these terrible things our world is bringing upon itself (Ezek. 9:4).

According to Jewish tradition the re-creation of the earth culminating with Adam also occurred on this day. The day reminds us of man's utter hopelessness to live in peace and harmony without God and our utter need of Christ's intervention in world affairs.

The Day of Atonement pictures the putting away of Satan and being made at one with God through the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

The High Priest we read in Leviticus 16 had to cast lots to decide which goat would represent Christ and which would represent Satan. This teaches us that we need God's help to tell what is of God and what is of the devil in our lives. The high priest killed one goat which represented Christ. Sin separates us from God so that is why we need an atonement (Isa. 59:2).

The high priest entering the Holy of holies with the blood of the goat offering represents the risen Messiah entering God's tabernacle beseeching God to apply His precious blood for our sins. The sins were symbolically laid upon the Azazel goat's head picturing Satan. The goat was then driven by a fit man representing the angel binding Satan in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-2) after Christ returns.

It pictures the wonderful time when all mankind will be atoned to God when Satan will be bound. It's a day that reminds us of God's mercy which is always available upon genuine repentance though we cannot use mercy as an excuse to break God's law (Heb. 10:26-31).

The Jubilee Year began on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 25:8-17). The Jubilee is a year of freedom - freedom from debts and a return to one's inheritance - a fresh start. Atonement pictures our freedom from sin.

The day also reminds us of the incredible gap between man and God and that we need Christ to bridge that gap, who was both man and God. Fasting pictures drawing close to God as we seek to put away those sins that distance us from God. Atonement drives home that sin is a real offence to God, God is merciful to pardon our sins and that we have to do something to receive the gift of pardoning - rending our heart with fasting.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the greater harvest picturing the millennium (Isa. 25:6-8) when Christ will set His hand to save all of mankind.

The reason it is called the Feast of Tabernacles is that it is also a reminder of when Israel dwelt in booths or tabernacles in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land (Lev. 23:42-43). It

pictures also for us the bodies that we have now as we look forward to the spiritual bodies we will have in the World Tomorrow (2 Cor. 5:1-4).

It reminds us of the stark contrast between us and God and our ultimate destiny. Just as Abraham dwelt in tabernacles and looked forward to the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb.11:9) we look forward to that city and the Kingdom of God.

The Feast of Tabernacles is called the Feast of Ingathering twice in the Bible. The first is in Exodus 23:16 and the other is in Exodus 34:22 where we read: "And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end."

The Feast of Ingathering represented the great ingathering at the end of the agricultural year – the second and greater of the two harvests. The obvious spiritual meaning of the second harvest is the great harvest of souls that begins with the millennium.

The reason it is called the Feast of Ingathering is because the fruit at this time was gathered in. In the millennium God will first spiritually gather in Israel. He will extend the new covenant to the House of Judah and the House of Israel at Christ's return spoken of in Hebrews 8:7-12. Then He will set His hand to gather in all nations.

God's joy at gathering in all nations is expressed over in Isaiah 19:24-25 where we read: "In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria— a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, 'Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.'" After the millennium, of course, is another extension of this great gathering which we celebrate on the Last Great Day.

The Feast of Ingathering celebrated the fruit harvest. In ancient Israel this feast was all about the fruit and being thankful for the fruit. From a christian point of view the term fruit has much symbolism. We talk about the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and Christ in John 15:2 and 5 asks us to bear more and much fruit.

This feast was also time that the fruit of the vine was harvested and wine was made. Jesus said that He is the vine and we are the branches and we must draw our spiritual sustenance from Him (John 15:5).

One thing that was vital to make this fruit harvest possible was the latter rain. James speaks of this over in James 5:7 where we read: "Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain." The water of the Holy Spirit will help produce this great spiritual harvest in the World Tomorrow. One website has this to say about the meaning of the Feast:

The literal meaning of the name 'Hag Sukkot' (Feast of Shelters) for the nation of Israel was that of a memorial to their being brought out of Egypt under the protective hand of God. The making of shelters and dwelling in them was symbolic of the need for God's care and protection and the futility of human efforts to care for and protect themselves...

Dwelling in shelters is prophetic of the future, after the return of Christ when Israel will again be established as a nation under the care and protection of God. Dwelling in shelters points to the eternal reward, which will be given for righteous and

diligent service to God: eternal life and a dwelling place within the Family and Kingdom of God under the care and protection of God the Father.

It's interesting to note in Isaiah 4:4-5 it speaks of God sheltering Israel in the millennium with a covering that will be a cloud of smoke by day and a flaming fire by night.

In Isaiah 25:6-8 God compares the millennium with a great fruit harvest festival which in Israel is known as the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering: "And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces. The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken."

We have a seven day feast which is a type of the seven day wedding feasts of ancient Israel when there will be great joy after the marriage of Christ and the church when together we will bring joy to this world and many more sons and daughters will be brought to glory (Heb. 2:10).

According to the Apocryphal book of Jubilees Abraham kept the Feast of Tabernacles.

And Abraham built Succoth for himself and his servants in the seventh month and he was the first to celebrate the festival of Succoth in the Holy Land (Jubilees 16:26).

Will God dwell with men? Ever since Christ tabernacled with Israel and tabernacled with mankind (John 1:14) when he became flesh He always has desired to. The Father can hardly wait until He can tabernacle and live with man for all time (Rev. 21, 22) when the heavenly Jerusalem will come to earth.

The Father has remained separate from mankind for all this time and after the millennium and Great White Throne Judgment the earth will be cleansed by fire. The great meaning behind this is to teach mankind that God cannot live with sin and that it is utterly repugnant to Him. Living in tabernacles is a type of being under God's protection in time of trouble and eventually living in God's house - His temple.

Finally, two big lessons of the Feast we are told in the Book of Deuteronomy are that we learn to fear God always (Deut. 14:22-27) and to rejoice in the wonderful world tomorrow (Deut. 16:13-15).

The Last Great Day or "the eighth day" as is called in Leviticus 23 pictures the Great White Throne Judgment which we read of in Ezekiel 37 and Revelation 20 when all the unsaved dead will be resurrected to be given their first real chance at salvation.

Christ spoke about this time when rivers of living water will flow to all humanity as all of mankind will receive God's spirit (John 7:37-39).

The number 8 is the number of new beginnings. The "eighth day" may indicate indicate that this period could perhaps last 1 000 years as it will be a massive logistical task to raise and convert the vast billions of people who have lived from Adam to the Christ's second coming.

There is an interesting parallel between the first 3 and the last 3 feasts. Passover and Atonement both focus on the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and coming as close to God as possible. We fast before Passover so we can take it worthily just as we fast before atonement.

The two seven-day festivals of Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles both picture our life of tabernacling in this life and focus our attention on the gap between us and God and what we have to do to bridge that gap with God's help - put sin out of our lives and learn to fear God always.

Finally Pentecost and The Last Great Day picture the two great harvest of souls - the church now and then the rest of the world when God's spirit is poured out to all mankind (Acts 2:17). The Holy Days are so rich in meaning and teach us so many things about God's plan.

The Coming of Christ

The next steps in God's plan after working with His chosen nation Israel was the first coming of Christ to pay for our sins and the start of the church. Mr Armstrong writes the following about this part of God's plan in Mystery of the Ages:

Christ, in the eternity before the world came into being, was the 'Logos' who also was God, and as Jesus, was born as the Son of God. Now as the Son of God just what was Jesus? He was called the second Adam (I Cor. 15:45). Why should he be called the second Adam? The first Adam had the opportunity of taking of the tree of life, which meant God-life-- obeying God and thereby replacing Satan on the throne of the earth. Jesus came to do just that, to qualify to replace Satan on that throne and to start the government of God on the earth through those called out from Satan's world. He came also with a message from God called the gospel.

The word gospel means good news. And actually, his gospel--the message sent by him from God--was the good news of the kingdom of God. And the kingdom of God, as we shall see, is to be the restoration of the government of God over the earth and the ousting of Satan from that throne. Jesus came also to build the Church. And he came to pay the ransom price for a kidnapped world and by that price--his death--to pay the penalty incurred by all humans for their sins.

Next, what nearly all 'Christians,' including theologians, did not realize: Jesus was born to become a KING! On trial for his life before Pilate, Jesus was asked, 'Art thou a king then?' And Jesus answered: 'Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world...' (John 18:37). Jesus also said (verse 36), 'My kingdom is not of this world...[else] would my servants fight'--showing that this is Satan's world. Jesus came to call people out of this world to be prepared to teach and rule under him when he becomes King and takes over the throne of the earth.

Prior to the begetting and birth of Jesus, God had said to his mother-to-be, Mary, by his angel: 'And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his KINGDOM there shall be no end' (Luke 1:31-33).

His gospel was the good news of that kingdom--the kingdom of God. It is vital that we understand, at this point, that Jesus, during his human life, was both God and man. In Isaiah 7:14, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was prophesied as the virgin who was going to bear a son. That Son's name, in this prophecy, was to be called Immanuel, which means 'God with us.' In other words, Jesus was God as well as human man. He

had no human father. God Almighty was his father who begat him by means of the Holy Spirit.

But though Jesus was actually 'God with us,' he was also human like all other humans. He was subject to being tempted just as all other humans are tempted. Although he was actually God in the human flesh, yet in his ministry he functioned as a human. Remember, he was the second Adam. It was necessary for him that he, as a human, reject the 'forbidden tree' and accept the tree of life. It was necessary that he, as the first Adam might have done, choose to rely completely on God the Father. In fact, God was actually in Christ and Jesus obeyed the Father completely. He qualified to wrest the throne of the earth from Satan.

Why was it necessary that Jesus be actually God in the human flesh? Why was it necessary that he be God? Why was it necessary that he be human? As God, he was the Maker of all mankind. In Ephesians 3:9 it is revealed that God created all things by Jesus Christ. When Jesus was born as a human, his life as our Maker was greater than the sum total of all human lives. Since it is humans who have sinned and come under the death penalty, God's law required human death as the penalty for human sin. But, as our Maker Jesus was the only human whose death could pay the penalty for the sins of all humans. In no other way could the Creator God have redeemed a vast humanity condemned to the penalty of death.

We need to bear in mind that though Jesus was God in the human flesh, he was also human even as you and I. He could suffer the same physical pains. He had been condemned to death by the Roman governor Pilate on clamorous demand of shouting Jews. He was a strong, vigorous, young man of about 33 years of age, in the peak of health. Because he had never broken even a law of health, he suffered the process of dying as no other human ever did. He had been up all night without sleep during the trial before Pilate. Pilate, later that morning, delivered him to be scourged before being put to death.

Scourging consisted of being stripped to the waist, bound over in a bent position, tied to a post. He was beaten by whips made of leather thongs weighted down by pieces of lead, broken shards of bone and sharp jagged pieces of metal attached at intervals of four to five inches, along the leather thongs. They were designed to imbed themselves deeply into the flesh as the thongs wrapped themselves around the body. He was whipped until his flesh was torn open and even his ribs appeared. Scourging was intended to weaken the victims so they would die quickly on the stake of crucifixion.

As foretold in Isaiah 52:14: 'His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.' This indescribable scourging was endured that believers might be healed from physical transgression, sicknesses or disease (Isa. 53:5; I Pet. 2:24). What a terrible price our own very Maker paid that we might, by believing, be healed. Yet nearly all professing believers totally ignore what their Savior provided for them, and instead of relying on him, put their faith in human doctors, drugs, medicines and knives. Jesus was so weakened by this terrible chastisement that he was unable to carry his cross, as he was required to do, but for a short distance. Another was appointed to carry it for him.

Outside the city walls, at the Place of the Skull (Golgotha), Jesus was nailed to the cross. He was humiliated, spat upon, ridiculed, and jeered at. More than that, because at that moment he had taken on himself our sins, in order to pay the penalty in our stead, he was forsaken by even his Father, God. As he hung on the cross,

helpless, a soldier stabbed him with a spear, he screamed in pain (Matt. 27:50, Moffatt) and then died. He did this because you and I have transgressed the law of God. He paid the supreme possible sacrifice for you and for me.

One more supremely vital truth. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead was that of a human being and the only one that could make possible the resurrection of humans, once dead, to immortal life. Now another vital prophecy. In Isaiah 9:6-7: 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.'

Notice the government would be on his shoulder. Jesus is going to be King over all the earth. And one of the purposes of his coming was to announce that kingdom. Jesus' gospel was not only good news--it was an announcement, or good news proclamation of the coming kingdom of God.

What a tragedy that a "traditional Christianity" has forsaken and lost that vital and glorious gospel message and substituted their own gospel about the person of Christ.

Why the Church?

Jesus was born as a human, to become a KING, ultimately to establish the KINGDOM OF GOD, ruling the whole earth with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD! But that RULE required more than the individual JESUS. The king, president, prime minister or ruler over every nation governs with and through a more or less vast organization of others who rule various phases and departments under him. Likewise, Christ must have an organized government with numerous others trained and qualified to rule under him. Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18).

The Church was to consist of many to be called out of Satan's world to be taught and trained for numerous governmental positions under Christ when he comes to rule over all the nations.

Jesus came also as spiritual Savior, to save God's people in their due time from their sins, that they might be BORN into the very divine FAMILY OF GOD (Matt. 1:21). Remember, the tree of life, symbolizing the Holy Spirit, had been cut off from mankind at the foundation of the world after the sin of Adam. What the world does not understand is that the Spirit of God was cut off from humanity as a whole UNTIL the second Adam actually removes Satan and restores the government of God on the earth. As for humanity as a whole, it was appointed at the time of Adam's sin for humans once to die and after death, by resurrection, shall come the judgment (Heb. 9:27).

The Holy Spirit was not given to the people of ancient Israel. Since God called and raised up prophets for a specific purpose preparatory to the salvation of humanity, it was necessary, in order for them to perform their called function, that an exception be made and they be empowered by the Holy Spirit. In the same manner since God through Jesus was now calling out his Church for a specific function preparatory to the establishment of his kingdom and government over all nations, it was now

necessary that the same exception be made for the Church and that they be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

God emphatically did not empower the prophets with his Spirit merely for the purpose of giving them salvation. Likewise, God did not call saints out of this world merely for their salvation and entrance into his kingdom. Otherwise God would be a respecter of persons to have called the few of his Church at this time, while refusing to call others to salvation....

God's master plan calls for offering salvation and eternal life to every person ever born, but his plan calls for doing that in a time-order. Those called out of the world and into the Church at this time are called for a specific purpose and a specific work. This specific work was to make possible the spiritual training to aid in the conversion of humanity as a whole. They are called at a time when they are persecuted and fought against by Satan and by the rest of the world. The rest of the world will be called at a time when Satan is removed and they are aided and helped by Christ and the saints then made immortal in the kingdom of God.

Through being the church those of us who have been called are in training to be kings and priests in the World Tomorrow. We are also to support the great commission of preaching to the world the good news of God's soon-coming Kingdom as the church makes disciples in all nations amongst those God chooses to call at this time.

The preaching of God's truth and way of life in the church by the ministry is the visible part of the feeding the flock commission that the church also has. Did you realize that all of us have a part in that commission? Our encouragement, kindly advice, the good times that we give to others and our friendship play a vital role in that commission. Our positive, friendly influence and giving others the spiritual and emotional needs that they have are all a part what others need to reach "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph.4 :13). Sometimes our friendship may be all that keeps someone in the church. The way we make it into God's kingdom is to help others make it too!

Some of the reasons why God has called out a people to become a part of His church in this age include the following:

- 1) To train a group of converted people who will assist Christ in setting up His government over the world in the millennium (Rev. 2:26, 5:10).
- 2) To proclaim God's truth and announce the coming Kingdom of God as a witness to the world (Matthew 28:18-20).
- 3) To provide a group of people in which those who God calls can learn the lessons of teamwork (1 Corinthians 12:14-26).
- 4) To teach and assist in the character development those who God calls in this age (Ephesians 4:11-15).
- 5) To provide a support group for those who God would choose in this age (1 Corinthians 12:14-26, Romans 15:1).

The Great Tribulation

Now we come down to the consummation of all the prophecies and the great master plan of God. Before God ushers in the “Sabbath” rest of the millennium mankind will go through its darkest and the most frightening time of history. In *Mystery of the Ages* Mr Armstrong wrote the following:

Mankind is nearing the end of his rope. But even now, God will not intervene to save this defiant humanity from itself until man is finally brought to the point where if God delayed longer in intervention, man would annihilate himself. God will not intervene and usher in the next world under the kingdom of God until the remnant of mankind has been brought to fully realize human inability to solve problems or bring worldwide peace in happiness and joy. Man must be brought to realize his helplessness and futility without God....

Jesus foretold the great tribulation--a time of trouble so great that, unless God does intervene, no human being would be saved alive. But, for the sake of his Church, God will intervene supernaturally before total destruction of humanity. Mankind will be brought to acknowledge human insufficiency without God....These are the very last days of Satan's evil world. God's utopian civilization will be started with the present generation (p.130-131).

The glorious and wonderful World Tomorrow - the Sabbath “rest” of God’s great master plan will soon be ushered in on this earth but not before mankind reaches the end of his rope and God has to save him from himself.

In the excellent television brochure “Where Are We Now In Prophecy?” produced around 1988 there appeared an updated article by Mr Armstrong which he originally wrote in 1957 entitled “What Lies Ahead Now in Prophecy?”. This article covers virtually the whole panorama of end time prophecies about the tribulation and return of Jesus Christ. I’d like to now quote at length from this article showing what happens in the leadup to the ushering in of the Kingdom of God. Quoting Mr Armstrong:

Today this world is changing—fast! Unprecedented events are shaking the world already. Yet what we have seen is mild compared to the catastrophic happenings that will rock this world in the near future!....

Many Europeans are becoming distrustful of the bungling capitalist superpower, United States. Also, many Europeans are thinking more and more about the coming United States of Europe! Americans, with the British, gave Europe the idea. They tried to organize the European nations together against Russia.

Bible prophecy, however, reveals that the Europeans are going to unite and compete against the English-speaking peoples. The stage is being set! What is lacking now is the strong leader! Germany is the economic and military heart of Europe. Probably Germany will dominate the coming United States of Europe, even if a neutral Austrian becomes the dominant political figure. But Britain will have no part in it in its final stage.

This astounding resurrection in Europe of the Roman Empire is the next prophesied major political event. The world will be dumbfounded when this military colossus actually emerges to solve economic and political problems the United States has been unable to solve in decades of leadership....

You think all this fantastic? All this was known to God Almighty and recorded by Him in His prophecies 2,500 years ago! You'll find this prophesied in Daniel 2 and 7 and more specifically in the 17th chapter of Revelation—a United States of Europe—a flash in-the-pan final resurrection of the ancient Roman Empire! It will possess greater military might by far than the Rome of old, but it will also inherit fatal weaknesses. Prophecy symbolizes this admixture of never-equalled military and economic might and unprecedented weakness with the apt phrase, "iron mixed with miry clay." The European nations will unite economically and militarily— but they are suspicious and envious of each other....

When this United States of Europe emerges, Europe will have the hydrogen bomb now in French and English possession only, and the guided missiles to defend themselves and to project their power worldwide. Today the stage is gradually being set! At a certain moment, the new leader of this European combine will appear in the public eye.

He's already behind the scenes—in action! But the world does not yet recognize him! Perhaps even this coming military-political leader does not yet know himself who will finally be chosen to lead Europe and also does not yet know how many, or precisely which nations from Western and Eastern Europe will join in this United States of Europe, the final restoration of the Roman Empire. But you and I can know the number—for God Almighty wrote it down 2,500 years ago in Daniel 2 and 1,900 years ago in Revelation 17! There will be ten European nations or groups of nations. These ten will give all their military power to the central over-all leader—pictured under the prophetic symbol, 'the beast.'

The prophecy does not reveal exactly which ten nations will be included—but this resurrected Roman Empire will bind together some 350 million people! That is more man-power than (Russia) or the United States has....

While this coming European Colossus is developing an alarming revolution is beginning to occur in the weather. Hurricanes, floods, sectional drought worldwide are increasing. And now, the next prophesied event—to strike in the full fury of its climax before the democratic nations are brought low by the resurrected Roman Empire—is a famine, caused by unprecedented drought and/or floods and affecting Africa first, then other areas of the Third World and finally the United States, Britain, and northwestern Europe. And immediately in its wake will come the most frightful epidemic of contagious and degenerative diseases! The disease AIDS is only the forerunner.

Jesus Christ foretold it in his great Olivet prophecy: 'For', he said, 'nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom'—that's war!—and we are now in the recess between the 2nd and 3rd rounds of it. 'Then there shall be famines,'—that's the next major world-event now prophesied, 'and pestilences'—disease epidemics, 'and earthquakes in different places' (Matt. 24:7). Already there is an increase in frequency of major earthquakes, all over the world. 'All these,' Jesus continued, verse 8, 'are the beginning of sorrows'(marginal reading, 'travail').

This will be the very beginning, as Jesus said, of what the Bible calls the Great Tribulation! Jeremiah's prophecy is more specific. God revealed to the prophet that it is the beginning of the national trouble to come on the United States, the British nations, and the democracies of northwestern Europe! And, as both Jeremiah and Jesus Christ were inspired to record—and also the prophet Daniel—it will be the most catastrophic time of national religious trouble that has ever struck any nation, or ever will!

Still more specific is the prophecy of Ezekiel. Here is exactly how catastrophic it will be: one third of the American and the British population will die in this famine and disease epidemic! Read it, in Ezekiel 5:12: 'A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with the famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee.'....

The details of the Great Drought coming upon us are described in the first chapter of Joel. It's a frightful, desolate picture of starvation and disease! But all these things, as Jesus explained, are to be only the beginning of national trouble."

I'd like to interject here and cover the very first of the many military battles that occurs in the great tribulation which Mr Armstrong bypassed in his article. I'd like to now quote from Mr Raymond McNair's article "The Coming War for the City of Peace" which appeared in the September-October issue of the World Ahead. Mr McNair writes:

Notice from Daniel 11 what will happen to a German-led European union, the final 'kingdom of the North': 'At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him...' (v. 40). What might provoke this? We can better understand by considering the nature of the Hitlerian leader of the coming European "Beast.'

As we will later see more clearly, Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria (vv. 21-31) was in fact a type of this end-time dictator. And Antiochus was a 'silver-tongued devil' who used his oily manner to extend his power at every opportunity. He even made a 'covenant' or 'league' with elements of Jewish leadership and at first entered 'peaceably' into the Holy Land (vv. 22-23). Of course, he acted deceitfully and ended up severely persecuting and even slaughtering the Jews. From this and other scriptural indications, it appears that the end-time king of the North may make similar initial overtures of peace with Israel.

'Israel' in this context probably not only means the modern Jewish state, but the nations that comprise the present-day descendants of the 'Ten Lost Tribes' of Israel as well, including the United States and Britain. If the new Hitlerian leader proclaims 'peace' with modern Israelites, Islamic fundamentalists at the forefront of the Arab confederation—who hate Israel and label America the 'Great Satan'—would no doubt see this as an enormous betrayal. Would we not expect them to lash out at some point against their ally-turned-enemy?

Whatever the cause, the king of the South will strike against the Beast, thereby provoking Europe to retaliate with a blitzkrieg (lightning war) of air, ground and sea forces (v. 40). And 'he shall also enter the Glorious Land...' (v. 41).

We will delve further into the European occupation of the Holy Land shortly. But let's first see how the Beast's counterstrike will affect other Mideast nations: '...many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab and the prominent people of Ammon' —i.e. modern Jordan.

Others will not fare so well: 'He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels' (vv. 42-43).

Note that modern Sudan may be among those nations swallowed up by the Beast, since its territory was part of ancient Ethiopia. Interestingly, Libya and Ethiopia were both part of Egypt at various times in antiquity. So the kingdom of the South will again be absorbed by the kingdom of the North.

Keith Stump in the television brochure "The Middle East in Prophecy" gives us a little bit more of an insight into what might happen in this conquest of the Middle East. He writes:

This European power—led by a coming military superdictator also referred to in prophecy as the 'Beast' (Rev. 17:12-13)—will be the final, end-time revival of the ancient Roman Empire. Working hand-in-hand with the beast will be a great miracle-working religious figure the Bible calls the 'false prophet' and 'man of sin' (Rev. 13:13-14; 16:13; 19:20; II Thes. 2:3-4). This charismatic figure will preside over a great, centuries-old false religious system, an apostate Christendom labelled as 'MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT' (Rev. 17:5).

The prophet Daniel refers to this European confederacy—this coming 'United States of Europe'—as 'the king of the north.' All Bible scholars acknowledge that in Old Testament times, Syria was the 'king of the north.' But Rome conquered Syria and made it a Roman province in 64 B.C. Thereupon, the ancient Roman emperors assumed the role of 'king of the north' (Dan. 11:36-39). The coming end-time revival of the Roman Empire in Europe will thus be the 'king of the north' referred to in the latter prophecies of Daniel! Now notice what the Bible reveals about this power:

In verse 40 of Daniel 11, we find that 'at the time of the end,' the 'king of the north'—this powerful union of European nations—will move southward into the Middle East 'like a whirlwind'—with dire consequences for Jew and Arab alike! Read Daniel 11:40-41: '... and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind. . . and he shall enter into the countries . . . He shall enter also into the glorious land [the Holy Land], and many countries [including certain Arab countries of the Middle East] shall be overthrown' Notice, however, that the kingdom of Jordan will escape occupation by the Beast power—see end of verse 41. In this prophecy, the geographic areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon refer unmistakably to modern-day Jordan, which has close ties with Europe. Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia—not mentioned as part of the confederacy in Psalm 83—will be subject to or occupied by European forces (Dan. 11:42-43).

Why will Europe feel compelled to intervene in the Middle East? Here prophecy is silent. Europe's ire might well be precipitated by a sudden cutoff of vital oil supplies—the industrial lifeblood of the Continent. Or it might be triggered by some sort of jihad—'holy war'—waged against the West by Muslim fundamentalists. Or possibly European forces will intervene in the Middle East under the pretext of 'peacekeeping'—in an attempt to end escalating regional hostilities before they spiral out of control. Whatever the provocation, prophecy reveals that Europe will act swiftly to protect its interests—dispatching troops into the Middle East!

The European power—this king of the north or Beast—will occupy both the state of Israel and some of her Arab neighbors, according to this clear prophecy of Daniel. Europe will attempt to impose peace on the war-torn Middle East—by force of arms! The Beast will seek to do what diplomats and statesmen have failed to do. In some quarters, the Beast might even be welcomed as a kind of savior!”(p.33).

Continuing on with Mr McNair’s aforementioned article:

To learn more about the coming invasion of Israel, we must turn to the New Testament. Christ's disciples asked Him when the temple would be destroyed and what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). He answered by giving them an outline of events culminating with His return.

Notice Luke 21: ‘But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains.... For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.... For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled’ (w. 20-24).

[Matthew adds ‘When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place... Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.’ Matt. 24:15-16]

This has already happened in certain respects. For in A.D. 70, less than 40 years after Christ spoke these words, Roman armies under Emperor Vespasian's son Titus quelled a Jewish uprising, conquered Judea, destroyed Jerusalem and its temple, and carried the inhabitants away as slaves. From then until modern times, Jerusalem was held by Gentiles. In fact, even present-day Israel has never reassumed complete rule over the entire city—for it still allows Muslims to control the Temple Mount....

Yet, though the Romans destroyed the Jewish temple, no ‘abomination’ was set up by them in A.D. 70. So what is the time frame here? Matthew 24 explains what immediately follows: ‘For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved [alive]; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened’ (v.21-22).

This too hearkens back to Daniel's prophecy, which says that at the time of the end, ‘there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered.... And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake’ (12:1-2; cf. 11:40). So this horrific Tribulation occurs at the end of the age, just before the resurrection of the dead at Christ's return (1 Cor. 15:21-23).

In fact, Daniel writes that ‘from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination is set up,’ there will be 1,290 days or 43 months until the resurrection (12:11).....

Consider that Christ said the abomination will be 'standing in the holy place' and that it is prophetically and historically attached to the removal of the daily sacrifices. It appears, then, that some form of temple worship will first be reinstituted by the Jews. Otherwise, how could the sacrifices be 'cut off'?

However, whether there will be an actual temple—or just a sacrificial altar as in the days of Ezra—is not certain. Yet a strong argument can be made for the former since the Apostle Paul says that the final 'man of sin'—the false religious leader known as the Antichrist, who will be in partnership with the Beast dictator—will enthrone himself 'as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God' (2 Thess. 2:4). In fact, this in itself seems closely tied to the end-time abomination."

I would be bold enough to say that there will be more than just a sacrificial altar where this abomination of desolation will occur. There will have to be at least a tabernacle or a Temple for the "man of sin" **enters into** this House of God.

Now back to Mr Armstrong's article "What Lies Ahead in Prophecy?":

Once we are weakened by starvation, disease, and the resulting calamitous economic depression, the ten-nation European Colossus will suddenly meet the stubborn and foolish United States in a confrontation over the future of Jerusalem. Politics, religion and the life-blood of economics—oil— will be involved. The result will be the destruction of our cities and our centers of industrial and military production!

The very next words of Jesus' prophecy (Matt. 24:9,21-22) are 'Then'—not five years or a generation later, but 'then' shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations; . . . and then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days [of mass death and destruction] should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved alive, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.' Yes, by the supernatural intervention of God, before all human life is blasted from the earth!

Jesus was there speaking of our peoples nationally, as well as of real Spirit-begotten Christians individually. But Ezekiel's prophecy adds this specific and terrifying fact: 'And a third part'—half our remaining population 'shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them."

This is foretold in many prophecies, but here is one that shows the effect that only weapons like the hydrogen bomb can produce—the very next chapter of Ezekiel: 'In all your dwelling places, the cities shall be laid waste' (Ezek. 6:6). A few cities were laid waste in World War II. But not until the production of the hydrogen bomb has it ever been possible to totally destroy all major cities!

Yes, wake up! American and Britain! You have grown calloused and indifferent to world revolution, wars and the threat of hydrogen bomb war. You Americans and British! You smug, proud, stiff-necked complacent people! Many of you enjoy a prosperity God never lavished on any other people—you heedlessly permit yourselves to become soft and decadent, setting your foolish hearts on push-button prosperity and leisure, while others among you are poor and go hungry. You ignore

that entire prophetic third of God's Word, warning you of impending disaster and offering you divine protection from it!....

God Almighty now reveals, in time to prevent it, that one third of all our people will die of starvation and disease—that our day of reckoning is upon us—that we are to be stripped of our wealth and prosperity on which we set our hearts—that a second third of our people—of your personal friends, relatives, acquaintances— will be killed by awesome nuclear forces—that the proud United States and Britain are now destined to be suddenly crushed in defeat—that the remaining third left alive are to be carried as captives, scattered as abject slaves—and that even millions of them shall then be tortured inhumanly in organized religious persecution, until their breath expires in martyrdom as traditional Christianity attempts to bring about unity in a time of growing secularism and atheism....

Jeremiah was inspired by the Almighty to picture this invasion, defeat and captivity and to explain why it's coming!

In the 30th chapter, God reveals to Jeremiah that the time of the prophecy is the time of world war the most terrible time of trouble and war of all history (verses 3-4), the time of our national trouble(verse 5) climaxing in the coming exodus of both our peoples—descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel—and the Jews of the tribe of Judah and Levi—back to the Holy Land at the Second Coming of Christ. We are to get into it—the most terrible national trouble ever to befall any nation—but God will deliver us out of it, and will finally break the yoke of slavery from off our necks (verses 5-6)....

And so now God is about to punish! First, he will punish our nations—professing Christians—His own chosen people, chosen for a service they have refused to perform! Then, after we have learned our lesson and turned to our God, He will punish the nations he shall have used in punishing us. God says, "The Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh..."—How? 'He will give them that are wicked to the sword . . . evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind [of war] shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth' (Jer. 25:31-33)....We're going the way of ancient Rome—to a greater fall, because we're bigger and more prosperous and have farther to fall!....

During this hellish brief period, there will be no religious freedom. The entire Western world will be under the resurrected Roman Empire—Church and State united— the religion and all schools under a Religious Hierarchy, enforced by the civil police....

But at that juncture the God who rules the universe will suddenly step in, and supernaturally intervene. He will do this in two stages: first, by terrifying warning signs; finally, by actual plagues in physical punishment. Yet, even then, God will first give warning! Once again, an all merciful and loving God will give humans opportunity to repent—to turn from this world's ways that have cursed mankind, and to receive divine protection from Godsent plagues.

Suddenly something terrifying in appearance will happen in the sky. Just how God will bring this about is not revealed. But, to human eyes, the sun suddenly will go dark; there will be no light from the moon: the only light will come in the form of thousands of stars— meteors—falling to the earth in such frightful display that men

will faint or run screaming in stark terror. Astronomers will be caught offguard, baffled. Science will be unable to explain these happenings....

The horrifying world war that will climax in the return of Jesus Christ is referred to as the Great Tribulation in the Bible. It will be 3 ½ years in length (Revelation 12:6). This will primarily be the time of Satan's wrath stirring the nations up to do battle knowing his time left before his banishment is very short (Revelation 12:12). The last year of this 3 ½ year period will be a time of God's wrath on mankind when he corrects the nations in order to bring them to repentance.

The heavenly signs of the sixth seal will herald the beginning of this time followed by the seventh seal which opens up the seven trumpet plagues. Isaiah 34:8 says, "For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, the YEAR of recompense in the controversy of Zion." Using the day for a year prophetic principle (Ezekiel 4:4-6) we understand that the Day of the Lord will last approximately one year in length.

Blockbuster movies such as Deep Impact and Armageddon have made popular the concept of cosmic catastrophism - the belief that heavenly objects such as meteors, asteroids and comets could hit our planet and the devastating impact that they might have on planet earth.

Certain verses in the Book of Revelation give the impression that God may use a similar method to punish the nations during the Day of the Lord such as two verses in Revelation 8 which talk about a great star from heaven and a great mountain burning with fire hitting the earth.

Leading into the Day of the Lord is the sixth seal which we read of in Revelation 6: "I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs, when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island was moved out of its place" (verses 12-14).

The stars of heaven falling to the earth appear to be a reference to a great meteor shower. The sun and moon become dark (possibly from some cosmic dust) and these events are accompanied by an enormous earthquake such that islands and mountains are moved out of their place.

The last plague at the very end of the Day of the Lord is identical to the sixth seal - a worldwide earthquake such that every mountain and island is moved out of its place accompanied by a great shower of hailstones (Revelation 16:17-21). Might those hailstones also be meteorites?

In light of these two similar plagues, what could cause seismic stress on such an incredible worldwide scale that mountains and islands are moved out of their place? Whatever causes it, it appears to happen twice - once at the beginning of the Day of the Lord and another time at the end of the Day of the Lord.

Following on the heels of the sixth seal are the first four trumpet plagues. The first trumpet describes hail mingled with fire and blood hitting the earth and causing fires which destroy a third of the earth's vegetation (Revelation 8:7).

Hail mingled with fire appears to be a reference to a great meteor shower. Hail mingled with fire was also one of the ten plagues which fell on Egypt. The Book of Revelation describes quite a number of plagues that are similar to those which fell on Egypt - waters turning to blood, plagues of darkness and boils appearing on man and beast.

The second and third trumpet plagues describe two much larger objects hitting the earth. One is described as "a great mountain burning with fire" which hits one of the oceans causing destruction to a third of the ships and a third of the creatures in the sea. Such destruction would probably be caused by a massive tsunami like that seen in the movie Deep Impact.

Revelation 8:8 says that it also causes a third of the sea to become blood. This object appears to have a reddish cosmic dust that comes off it to cause the sea to take on the appearance of blood. Perhaps this might be a rusty red iron dust like that found on Mars. This kind of red dust may be why the first trumpet plague is referred to as hail mingled with fire and blood and why the moon takes on the appearance of blood at the time of the sixth seal.

The third trumpet plague describes "a great star from heaven" hitting the earth poisoning a third of the rivers (Revelation 8:10-11). The fourth plague is a plague of darkness so that a third part of the sun, moon and stars' light does not shine (Revelation 8:12).

The fifth and sixth trumpet plagues describe two massive war offensives. The first one appears to be a bio-chemical assault on Russia and Asia by the Beast power which lasts for 5 months (Revelation 9:1-11, Daniel 11:44). The second is a massive counterattack by the Asiatics that sweeps across and destroys most of Europe with an army of 200 million (Revelation. 9:13-19, 18:1-8).

The first four trumpet plagues follow the massive earthquake and meteor shower of the sixth seal. The plagues released by the seventh trumpet, on the other hand, don't follow, but instead lead up to the climaxing worldwide earthquake and possible meteor shower of the last of the seven last plagues.

Could this, hypothetically, be a comet coming from one direction and then coming back the other way with the effects of its tail in reverse order due to the fact that the tail of comets always point away from the Sun? Only time will tell how God brings these terrifying events to pass.

The last seven plagues which are released by the seventh trumpet (Revelation 16) are described as boils appearing on man and beast, seas again becoming as blood, rivers becoming as blood, men being scorched by the heat of the sun, great darkness, the Euphrates River being dried up to allow the eastern armies to cross on their way to Armageddon and finally climaxing in an almighty worldwide earthquake at which time Jesus Christ will return in power and glory to usher in the Kingdom of God on earth.

If the seas and rivers becoming like blood at the end of the Day of the Lord are due to red meteor or cometary dust it may also play a part in the darkness plagues and the boils which affect man and beast.

However these events are brought upon the earth by God they will be terrifying events. Coupled with the horrific world war that will come upon the whole world these heavenly plagues will ensure that this will be the greatest period of trouble "since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21).

Thankfully God will cut it short and send Jesus Christ to finally bring peace and happiness to this world which so desperately needs it!

Continuing on with the article by Mr Armstrong:

In terrified panic, a God-ignoring, God-rejecting, pleasure-seeking mankind suddenly will become very much aware that God is real—aware of His mighty power and closeness!

At that mighty moment of earth's history, hundreds of thousands will remember the true message from God that they had heard going out freely to the world at this time, on the World Tomorrow program. [They will also respond to the warning given out by God's two witnesses – Revelation 11].

As Satan will give the false prophet power to perform miracles to deceive the world God will give power to the two witnesses to also perform miracles which will be used to encourage the peoples of the earth to turn from their evil ways. They will be hated by the beast, false prophet and their legions of followers who will finally kill them in the city of Jerusalem 3 1/2 days before they will be resurrected at Christ's coming) Yes, hundreds of thousands who take it lightly today, or put it out of mind because it's different from the teachings of their worldly churches, will then remember— and cry out to God for mercy!

And these hundreds of thousands shall learn that God's mercy, truly, is greater toward us than the heavens are high above the earth! For God will hear their repentant cries, and place them under his divine protection from the indescribable terrible plagues which are then yet to come! For these are the plagues that God shall send—plagues sent in divine punishment on those that shall have yielded themselves as the chief political-religious agencies of Satan in his defiant war against God!

At this precise juncture—again for the elect's sake God will hold back the punishing winds of war and of plagues (Rev. 7:1-3). The actual physical punishment of this great and mighty Day of the Lord will not fall until God has sealed, with his protection, those who have now suffered through the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:14), and have now at last learned their lesson, and turned repentantly to God. There shall be an innumerable multitude out of all nations, who shall in total surrender cry out to God. These all shall have received God's Holy Spirit—and be then begotten as children of God.

They shall then, at last—having endured the Great Tribulation—having seen God's terrifying warning signs—repent and put their lives in God's hands, shall come under God's divine protection. No plague will touch them (Ps. 91:1-11). But others, still the vast majority, will not repent. And all who will not repent at this time, after this final supernatural warning, will have so hardened their hearts in resentment and bitterness against God that they will not repent, even during the plagues that shall then immediately follow (Rev. 9:20; 16:9,11).

Now after these mighty events will come the time of God's wrath against sinful men who have refused to depart from the ways that are cursing their own souls. Now God, at last, after every possible warning and pleading short of physical punishment, will let the divine punishment fall! Now comes, in full divine fury, the period foretold in more than 30 prophecies as 'The day of the Lord'—the time of God's wrath!

"Vengeance is mine," says the Almighty God. Now he shall pour out the vials of his vengeance on those who have voluntarily chosen Satan. Plagues, terrible beyond description, shall fall upon the restored Roman Empire. God will now take vengeance for their tortures of his peoples during the Great Tribulation.

I'd like to interject here again and quote again from Mr McNair's aforementioned article "The Coming War for the City of Peace" covering what the fifth trumpet plague will be which Mr Armstrong didn't mention in his article. Mr McNair writes:

The book of Revelation mentions the Great Tribulation (7: 14; cf. 6:9) and, in the next few chapters, describes seven trumpets being blown successively. Evidently, they sound over the course of the next year— the Day of the Lord. The fifth trumpet signals 'locusts' and 'scorpions' rising out of the 'bottomless pit' and tormenting men for five months (9:1-12). This may be describing modern helicopters and tanks of the Beast (cf. 17:8), perhaps using chemical or biological weapons (cf. 9:5-6). But against whom?

For the answer, we must return to Daniel 11. Look at what the European dictator will do after his Mideast occupation is well established: 'But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many' (v. 44).

It seems, then, that rumors of hostility toward him from Eastern capitals and 'the north' (Moscow is almost due north of the Holy Land) will cause the Europeans to launch a preemptive strike against the powers of the East, which will be successful for a time.

Now back to Mr Armstrong's article again:

The sixth of these punishing plagues will be a military invasion of Europe by...forces from (Russia) and the Orient. By that time, the Red Armies and their allies will number two hundred million! Think of it. A vast army of two hundred million soldiers! These vast hordes will then sweep across Europe, utterly destroying all this resurrected Roman Empire, spoken of prophetically as the modern 'Babylon'—the daughter of the ancient Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar.

It is a 'Babylon' led by the symbolic harlot 'woman'—a great apostate paganized religion falsely calling herself 'Christian.'

Meanwhile, the leader of this restored Roman Empire (prophecy symbolizes him under the name 'the beast'), together with the 'false prophet'—religious leader associated with the military leader—will have moved their capital to the environs of Jerusalem, which they will have surrounded and occupied at the outset of World War III—the beginning of the Tribulation. They will, by the time of the invasion from the East, have large military forces in the Middle East, as well as on other fronts of the world war....

Now we come to the climax. At this precise juncture, Jesus Christ glorified, to whom has been given all power in heaven and in earth, who upholds the energies and forces of the entire universe by the Word of His Power—yes, the same Jesus Christ who trod this unhappy earth more than 1,900 years ago—will return in clouds to earth, visibly, personally, bodily!

This time he is coming in all his Power and Glory, to put down all opposition, to rule all the nations of earth with supernatural force and justice. He is coming not only as King of kings, but also as Lord of lords. This time he is coming to restore the laws

and the rule of God! He is coming to enforce those spiritual, inexorable laws—the very laws set in motion to bring humanity peace, happiness, joy, health, prosperity!

But those who shall have refused to repent and turn to God at the end of the Great Tribulation and during the ensuing Day of the Lord still will refuse to submit. As the glorified omnipotent Christ is descending toward earth in a cloud—with all the holy angels of heaven escorting him, the dead in Christ—all who truly had repented, been begotten by the Holy Spirit, and who had overcome their own natures through God's power, who had grown in spiritual grace, knowledge and character, and had endured persecution and opposition to the end—shall be resurrected from their graves, immortal, divine, now born of God at last.

The living in Christ shall at the same instant be changed from mortal to immortal—from material flesh to spiritual—from human to divine. And they shall be caught up, with the resurrected saints, to meet the descending, glorified Christ in the air. Many have wondered why this meeting up in the air. These saints, born again at the resurrection, will rise from all parts of a round earth. They shall be taken through the air at the speed of lightning (Matt. 24:27). They shall all descend together to the Mount of Olives, one-half mile east of Jerusalem, from which Jesus ascended over 1,950 years ago!

And now ... Armageddon!...At the very presence, or coming, of Christ and all the holy angels, the seven last plagues of God's terrible day of wrath shall be poured out on the remnants of this restored Roman Empire centered in Europe.

They will be covered with boils from head to foot. The sea, the lakes, and the rivers will become as human blood—all drinking-water will be polluted. This 'beast' power shall have shed the blood of innocent Christian martyrs—now God will give them blood to drink!

Next, the sun's rays will become so intense men will be scorched with the heat. But these God-defying embittered spiritual sons of Satan will only scream out agonizing curses, blaspheming the very name of the God who is punishing them to save them from themselves, just as they once tortured others in an attempt to convert them to their religion. They will still refuse to repent. Next, Christ will pour out the fifth plague on the very seat of this 'beast' and the 'false prophet' at Jerusalem—the light of the sun shall now be withdrawn, and in the resulting darkness they will gnaw their tongues in pain— but they will not yet surrender to God. Instead, they will scream out curses against the name of Christ.

It is at this very stage in these plagues that the demons, possessing these rebel leaders (Rev. 16:13-14), will mobilize military forces of 'all nations' in the valley of Megiddo, 70 miles northeast of Jerusalem, to fight against the returning beings from outer space—Christ and His angels.

They will yet try to overthrow the divine power and continue to rule the world themselves. They will resist to the end! But these human leaders shall be fighting supernatural power! Their fate will be awful! Their flesh will consume away off their bones even while they yet stand on their feet!

Then the last of these plagues of divine judgment shall fall. There will be a bedlam of thunder accompanying unprecedented, frightening flashes of lightning. The most tremendous series of major earthquakes of all human

history will climax. Then will fall out of heaven a devastating hailstorm, with huge hailstones weighing as much as a hundred pounds!

But again these hardened men will blaspheme God because of this plague! They still will refuse to learn their lesson, and find the way to peace and happiness for all!

As the battle of this great Day of the Lord comes to its fateful end, with the armies that assembled at Armageddon destroyed in the environs of Jerusalem, and as the final plague of the seven last plagues is poured out, the military 'beast' and the 'false prophet' (who during these closing days shall have deceived the world by faked miracles) will be taken together, and cast alive into a 'lake of fire burning with brimstone.'

And now, his military and religious legions destroyed, his devil-controlled human leaders dead, Satan himself shall be cast into the abyss or symbolic bottomless pit—a condition of total restraint, inactivity and negation—so that he cannot influence, sway or deceive humanity any further for a duration of 1000 years.

Now interjecting one final time in Mr Armstrong's prophecy article I'd like to quote from Mr Raymond McNair's excellent book "America and Britain in Prophecy" which discusses the great second exodus of Israel back to the land of Palestine. Mr McNair writes:

Notice what Isaiah prophesied: 'It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria [Greater Germany] and Egypt... and the islands of the sea [British Isles, New Zealand, etc.] He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth' (Is. 11:11-12). **Isaiah is describing a SECOND EXODUS!** Also note that, at the time of the end, Israel and Judah will still be two separately identifiable peoples.

The prophet continues, 'For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land [the Promised Land]' (14:1).

"Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD lives, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, the LORD lives, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land"[Jer 23:7-8]

Who will lead this return and restore the Twelve Tribes to God's favor? Through Isaiah, the Messiah states, 'And now the LORD says, who formed Me [Christ] from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel is gathered to Him.... 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth"' (49:5-7).

In the wonderful World Ahead, when the Jews and continental Northwest Europeans have finally learned their own true identities, they will at last recognize the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples of America and Britain as their long lost brother Joseph. With great tears of joy, they will again shout, 'Joseph is alive!' - just as the sons of Israel did almost 3,700 years ago. What a great and marvellous family reunion that will be!

Then, God Almighty will again unite the Anglo-Saxon-Celts with the Jews as one people (Ezek. 37:15-17).

He says, 'Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.... Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone [into captivity], and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land.... They shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again' (vv. 19, 21-22).

Ezekiel 48 reveals that all the Twelve Tribes will then be reassigned their own tribal allotments in the Promised Land - which will be much bigger in area than in biblical days.

[The original area promised by God to Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates forms a triangular area, 800 miles each side. That area is the equivalent of a section of the Eastern United States that has New York, Chicago and Northern Florida as the three points of a triangle]

This will, at first, accommodate the millions of Israelites returning from captivity.

But remember what God told Israel would soon happen at that time: 'The children you will have, after you have lost the others [in the Great Tribulation], will say again in your ears [as they did in Great Britain before], 'The place is too small for me; give me a place where I may dwell' (Is. 49:20). So what will God do? 'Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit' (Is. 27:6).

At the time when God gathers the remnant of Jacob, He will make a 'perpetual covenant' with both Israel and Judah: 'Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah.... I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.... For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more' (Jer. 31:31, 33-34). After being converted by God's Spirit, Israel will finally stop rebelling against Him!.... Israel will yet be the wonderful model nation God meant her to be all along (p.63).

Before we finish off Mr Armstrong's article "What Lies Ahead in Prophecy?" I'd like to quote from another excellent article he wrote called "Why Russia Will Not Attack America" which goes through in order the prophecies of the whole of the book of Ezekiel. I'd like to quote a few extracts that describe the very last battle which occurs before peace finally becomes a reality in the millennium. This war from armies of the East will occur soon after the Israelite slaves are brought back to Palestine after Christ has returned and Satan is already put away. Mr Armstrong writes:

Many have blindly assumed that when Christ comes, there will be no opposition. Every person and power on earth, some have thought, will simply submit meekly and instantly to him and his power. But that is not true! Some gentile nations understandably shall not submit until forced to.

The final restoration of the Roman Empire shall be subdued and conquered at a battle commonly called 'Armageddon.' But the populous nations of Eurasia that the Almighty God up to this point has not dealt with shall still have to be brought to submission.

"Gog" in the land of "Magog" is the vast regions of the U.S.S.R. in northern Eurasia extending from the Baltic to the Pacific. 'Meshech' is Moscow, 'Tubal' is Tobol'sk. Notice the allies who come with them in this future battle. You will find 'Gomer,' 'Togarmah,' 'Magog,' 'Meshech,' 'Tubal' identified in Genesis 10 as the sons of Japheth, father of the Eurasians. Ethiopia and Phut (mistranslated Libya) are descended from Ham.

Therefore, this prophecy of Ezekiel 38 shows who shall finally succeed in marshalling peoples of each major race into a gigantic invasion upon the modern descendants of ancient Israel regathered in their land. When God begins to rule the world, through Christ— with His chosen people restored to prosperity in the land of Israel, the very center of the land surface of the earth (verse 12, Moffatt translation)—this great Eurasian union of nations shall...use their mighty air force (against them).

'Thou shalt ascend,' the Eternal says, 'and come like a storm [in the air], thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land...' (verse 9). There shall be so many planes then that they will hide the sun from the ground below, like a huge dark shadow!

The House of Israel at that time shall not be armed or prepared'... In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?' asks the Eternal. 'And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts [due north of the land of ancient Israel], thou, and many people [allies] with thee...a mighty army: and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me [note the purpose], when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes' (verses 14-16).

But the Israelites shall not have to fight in that battle. They shall have learned by then that God fights their battles for them! 'And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face' (verse 18). 'So that ... all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence ...' (verse 20). It is after Christ's coming! 'I will summon an utter panic against him [Gog], says the Lord the Eternal, till every man in his host shall draw the sword against his fellow; I will punish him with pestilence and bloodshed, I will rain on him and his hordes and all the nations in his train an overpowering flood, with hail-stones, fire, and brimstone. I will let all the nations see my might and dread divinity—to teach them that I am the Eternal' (verses 21-23, Moffatt translation).

Notice, these nations do not see and recognise the dread divinity, the might and power of the Eternal Christ, even after he has returned. He has to teach them that HE IS THE ETERNAL! The 39th chapter shows in more detail the result of this great battle, in which Christ, with supernatural power, causes five sixths of these armies to be slain."

To conclude this section on the Great Tribulation I'd like to quote some of the last paragraphs from Mr Armstrong's article "What Lies Ahead in Prophecy?" one final time. Mr Armstrong writes:

Those overcoming saints of Christ, now born of God—now glorified, even as Christ has been glorified—form and constitute, under Christ, the kingdom of God. It shall be at once the divine spiritborn family of God, and the government of God, which shall bear rule over all the earth! And now what of the remainder of mankind? With Satan removed, their political and religious leaders dead, their armies totally destroyed—no one to lead them any further into human ways against God's rule, all who remain alive after these catastrophic wars and plagues will at last, submit to the rule of Christ and the kingdom of God.

Only one religion will then be taught—that of the truth of the Creator God. Those who have been converted down through the ages, now made immortal in the kingdom of God, will rule over and teach those humans who remain alive. A fraction of today's population will still survive. Still human and mortal they will continue to live and reproduce, even as they now do. But they will be ruled over by the immortal saints, under Christ, with the rule of God....

Gradually, a stubborn, stiffnecked, hostile and rebellious mankind will become obedient to the ways and the laws of God. Soon they will begin to see that they have health instead of sickness; interesting, abundant, happy lives, instead of emptiness, boredom and unhappiness; alert, comprehending minds, instead of dullness, inefficiency, stupidity; prosperity, instead of poverty; joy, instead of depression, fear and worry, heartache and frustration. They will look back over the 6,000-year period of human experience during which God allowed mankind to decide the wrong way, and set up a man-built civilisation contrary to the laws of God. They will compare.

Do you think anybody will then want to go back to the ways of our world today? No! In those days (Mic. 4:1-3), the kingdom of God shall be established above all nations.

The people finally will say: 'Come, and let us go up to the kingdom of God; and Christ will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths.' For God's law, which even most preachers and churches hate today, shall then go forth from God's glorious kingdom, and the Word of God from Jerusalem.

The earth will at last be full of the knowledge of God—the truth! (Isa. 11:9). And Christ shall rule over and judge all nations, until they beat their swords into plowshares, their weapons of destruction into implements of peaceful production. We shall have world peace! Yes, Utopia at last!

There are reasons for today's ills! What we sow, we reap! When, at last, God takes over— puts down Satan, and the ways of Satan's world which have made the nations so unhappy—when, at last, mankind is ruled and taught religiously by God through Christ and through his saints made immortal, then the New World—the world tomorrow shall reap what it then sows—peace, happiness, prosperity, health, abundant, interesting living, overflowing joy! It will be a Utopia beyond man's fondest or wildest dreams!"

The Millennium

What will the Millennium be like? Ron Kelly in the 50th anniversary issue of the Plain Truth (Feb. 1984) wrote a most wonderful article called "Yes: A Brighter Tomorrow Is Coming!" that discussed this subject. That article means a lot to me personally because it was the good news covered in that article which got me hooked onto the Plain Truth and to the church. It played an instrumental part in my own calling. I'd like to now quote at length from that article about what the Wonderful World Tomorrow will be like. Ron Kelly wrote:

Sooner than many expect, a world of peace and happiness will be right here—on planet Earth. FOR 50 YEARS, on radio and television, a voice has rung out, "Well greetings, friends around the world. This is Herbert W. Armstrong bringing you the GOOD NEWS of the WORLD TOMORROW!"

Good news? Is there any? The world tomorrow? What's that? For 50 years the news of the world today has seldom been good. Wars, rumors of war, earthquakes, volcanos, hurricanes, tornados, political upheaval, coups and rebellions, drought and hunger have dominated the headlines.

Yet for 50 years Mr. Armstrong and the Plain Truth magazine have constantly reported there is GOOD NEWS. The good news is that humanity at long last will be shown the way to peace, prosperity and happiness. But how? Too good to be true? Many simply cannot imagine a world without strife, upset weather, war. But that's the world prophesied for tomorrow in the book we call the Bible.

Can you imagine a world where nations live at peace? Where not one dollar is budgeted for defence? Where no family has to worry about sons and daughters being sacrificed on a battlefield? Where words like tank, battleship, bomb, warhead and holocaust are only in the vocabulary of historians?

Can you further imagine a world where hurricanes never blow ashore? Where tornados never touch down? Where all volcanos are extinct? Where earthquakes never occur? This is prophesied for nations that will choose to follow God's way of life. And can you believe a world where drought need never affect a crop? Where hunger is unheard of? Where floods never destroy homes? Where rain falls in due season? Where food supplies are more than adequate to support the population of the entire world?

This is also prophesied. But for a few nations who will have to learn lessons the hard way, God will withhold such blessings till they learn how to live. Read Zechariah 14:17 as an example: 'If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, they will have no rain'(NIV).

In the day of God's kingdom, upset weather or other less than desirable conditions will only be used to teach that following God's laws leads to all the good anyone could possibly want. And can you imagine a world where people learn to respect the music, dance, art, looks, abilities and talents of each other?

Too good to be true? No—that's what has been prophesied in the pages of the Bible for thousands of years. And that has been the message of this magazine for 50 years.

But How Can This Be? This utopian world of which we speak is not going to be brought about by the efforts of men. It will not come from peace conferences, unilateral discussions and summit meetings. For nearly 6,000 years mankind has proved incapable of living at peace.

No form of human government has brought universal peace and happiness. And scientists have certainly proved they are incapable of controlling the powerful forces of nature—though they can unleash the secrets of the atom!

No, the fantastic world tomorrow will not be a result of politics, science or technology. It will not be by blind chance either. Man will not just accidentally stumble on the way of peace. It will come from one source, and one source only. The Eternal God will intervene in the affairs of men. He will send Jesus Christ to bring world peace.

In the first days of the New Testament Church the apostle Peter boldly proclaimed, 'Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets' (Acts 3:19-21).

But what needs restoring? Frankly—EVERYTHING!

Mankind has managed to pollute the entire planet. The air is filled with smoke. The streams, rivers and lakes are filled with chemicals. The land has been sprayed with pesticides, herbicides, insecticides and so many other 'cides' that food has minimal nutritional value. And we've already discussed man's total inability to live at peace.

But what needs restoring more than anything else? The GOVERNMENT OF GOD! Yes, the government of God. When God sends the Messiah to bring about the utopian world tomorrow, the first order of business is government.

When the Messiah appears the Bible says: 'Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations [which had been rebelling]. He will rule them with an iron scepter.... On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS' (Rev. 19:15-16). Call the event what you will, the appearance of the Messiah, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the end of the age. It all spells the end of this society and the dawning of a new age—the world tomorrow. And it begins by God sending Jesus Christ to rule over all nations on earth.

Probably one of the most astounding disappointments of all history occurred in the trying years before World War II. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in 1939 had been to the Continent for discussions with German Chancellor Adolf Hitler. Upon his return to England the world press recorded his hopes for 'peace in our time.' Within months Nazi troops had invaded Czechoslovakia. Six months later Hitler's forces attacked Poland and the most catastrophic war in all history was under way.

Some 2,700 years ago God inspired the prophet Isaiah to write, 'The way of peace they do not know'(Isa. 59:8). It was true then. It is still true today. The testimony of recorded history bears that out. But in the world tomorrow war will not be taught. In the world today war is a way of life. Vast sums are devoted to defense and military. Schools of war train men and women in the skills of killing other human

beings. That kind of financial allocation and teaching will soon be a part of the ancient past.

Notice what the prophet Micah wrote about the world soon to come: 'Many nations will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.' The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore'(Mic. 4:2-3).

Can you imagine what kind of economy could exist if not one penny was spent on defence? And the greatest minds were devoted to efforts of peace, not war? The kind of buildings, transportation, communications and conveniences we would have! That is exactly what is going to happen.

God's government and worldwide peace are only the beginnings of the fantastic world tomorrow. One of the most beautiful scriptures in the Bible describes just how total the restoration of God's way will be.

Describing conditions after the Messiah appears, Isaiah wrote: 'The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea' (Isa. 11:6-9).

So meaningful is that scripture that the seal of Ambassador College depicts it. When God created Adam and Eve, He placed them in the beautiful garden of Eden. There they could enjoy the beauty of flowers, pristine air and water, and all the food they would need. But as a result of their sin—the decision to pursue their own course—to decide for themselves what is good and what is evil—God drove them from the garden. They would then work midst thorns and thistles, weeds and briars. The nature of many animals was changed, becoming hostile to man. So it has been ever since. In the world to come, as Isaiah wrote, even ferocious beasts and poisonous vipers will be changed to domesticated, tame creatures.

Also of that time Isaiah wrote: 'The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus [or rose], it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God' (Isa. 35:1-2).

Not only that, sickness and disease will be healed. 'Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb [mute] shout for joy' (Isa. 35:5-6). Good health, peace, great weather and abundant crops will make the world tomorrow a wonderful place to live.

Without a doubt one of the most needed aspects of human relationships that needs restoring is family life. Virtually no society in all history has truly practiced the God-inspired, biblical instructions on marriage and childrearing. We can at least get a

glimpse of the happy family life from a few scriptures that look to the future when God's government is set up.

Jeremiah wrote about the restoration of God's way, 'The sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord, saying, 'Give thanks to the Lord Almighty, for the Lord is good; his love endures forever' (Jer. 33:11). For most of human history the joy of brides and bridegrooms has only turned to sorrow. Sickness, poverty and war have epitomised vast segments of human history. But in that world to come, the joy of the wedding will live on and on. Husbands and wives growing in love as each year goes by.

They will have healthy and happy children. And they will know how to rear them. Notice what Zechariah saw as God revealed the future to him: 'The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there'(Zech. 8:5). Without fear of serious accident kidnapping, mugging, abduction and the host of modern atrocities that plague our societies, children will play openly—free from harm from man or beast. And verse 4 tells us, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with cane in hand because of his [and her] age.'

War will not consume the strength of young men. Mothers will not die in childbirth. Sickness, disease, hunger and malnutrition will not consume thousands daily as in our 'enlightened' 20th century. In that world everything good will be the norm. God will prove his way is the only way by giving mankind 1,000 years of his government and instruction.

[The prophet Zephaniah was inspired to tell us that God will provide a language which will be the language for the whole world in the millennium! He wrote: 'For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.' (Zeph 3:9)]

This utopian world that Herbert W. Armstrong and the Plain Truth magazine have proclaimed now for 50 years is just as certain as the rising of tomorrow's sun. The apostle Peter said: 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.... For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy [Spirit]' (11 Pet. 1:19, 21, AV).

No one knows exactly when the kingdom of God is going to be established. But world events are rushing toward that inevitable day. And it could happen a lot faster than many would humanly predict....You will find there is a world soon coming that (will) exceed all you have ever hoped the world could be.

Christ will rule from Jerusalem with fairness and equity we are told in Isaiah 11. It also says that He will judge the poor. The indication is there will also be poor people, relatively speaking at that time. God will not take away their free moral agency. It will be a Utopian world but people will still sow what they reap.

There is an indication that some people will make financial mistakes to the point where they default on loans and have to pay off the debt with physical servitude. We read in Isaiah 2:28-29, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your

sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon **the servants and upon the handmaids** in those days will I pour out my spirit."

It talks about physical servants and handmaids in this millennial scripture. There is even an indication of violence being allowed to occur (Ps. 72:14). It will only be allowed to occur when it's in the best interests of those involved to teach the lesson of why such behaviour is wrong. We will be their teachers (Isa. 30:20-21) teaching right from wrong and ruling as kings and priests (Rev. 5:10).

Do you look forward to and dream about the World Tomorrow or has the world and it's affairs dulled you so much that the World Tomorrow to you is just another church cliché? In Proverbs 29:18 we read, "Where there is no vision the people perish" and that holds very true for the World Tomorrow. So with that in mind let's jump in our time machine and into the future now and visualize the Wonderful World Tomorrow.

As we hover over the surface of the earth we notice that it's been dramatically changed. Many mountains have been brought low. Many areas now covered by oceans are dry land. Deserts and polar ice caps have become fertile and habitable. The surface of the planet has received an incredible face-lift. And then God will need thousands to be pioneers.

Have you ever envied the pioneers of yesteryear like Christopher Columbus, Marco Polo and Captain Cook just to name a few? Well, the achievements of the pioneers of tomorrow, you and me, who are being trained today will pale into insignificance anything accomplished in past ages.

Farmland will have to be opened in new areas where no man has set foot. With Christ's guidance beautiful cities are going to be built that will boggle the mind of today's architects and town planners. In the World Tomorrow there will be no war. The war machines of Russia, America, the Arabs and all nations will be dismantled. Millions of starving people in Africa and Asia will now have abundance and the know-how and beautiful farmland and beautiful weather to feed themselves well.

Sicknesses and diseases will be no more. I don't know about you but there are times when I see people on the street who are suffering with things like a completely hunched over back, who are blind or deaf or whatever where I desperately wish I could touch them and heal them like the apostles could. In the World Tomorrow we will have that power to completely change their lives by healing them of those sort of terrible afflictions.

Natural disasters, pollution and crime will all be a thing of the past. You'll no longer hear about all these horror stories of child molestation and brutal rapes and murders.

Satan for the first time in man's history will be banished and God's wonderful way of life will fill the earth like the waters fill the seas because of our teaching. Imagine the wonderful community spirit with God's help we'll be able to help produce. No generation gaps with everyone in your neighbourhood being a part of the church. Can you imagine being able to strike up a conversation with people on the morning bus or train as easily as you would at church?

Imagine the rich, tasty food, the juicy succulent fruits and the beautiful sweet wine the Bible talks about when the goodness will be restored to our farmland and farmers live God's way. Life will be challenging and exciting where you won't be stuck to a 40 hour a week routine. With most people working on the land there'll be exciting opportunities to work or study during the land Sabbath each seven years.

The economy and standard of living will be fantastic. Imagine full employment and paying only your tithes and no tax. In this world newly married couples have to go up to their eyeballs in debt when they buy a home. Imagine being given a couple of acres from the government as a wedding gift.

What kind of wild animal would you like to have as a pet in the World Tomorrow - a lion, polar bear or a bengal tiger or what? I love cats so I'm looking forward to having a beautiful white siberian tiger or a panther.

Can you imagine watching God's videos of the great events of the Bible history like creation, the parting of the Red Sea and Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Better still He'll probably have something better than virtual reality like the holodeck in Star Trek where it feels like you're actually there. What about meeting and having over for dinner some of the famous people of history such as the great explorers or musicians or King David, Abraham or the apostles.

What would your social life be like in the World Tomorrow if distance was no problem and you could instantly transport and catch up with friends on the other side of the world? Can you imagine point-to-point transport like in Star Trek?

Imagine finding out the answers to some of the great mysteries of the universe such as who built the pyramids and how they did it, the Colonel's 11 secret herbs and spices. And, of course, the greatest mystery of them all - what do women really want?

There is so much to look forward to in the World Tomorrow. God has given us imaginations and His encouraging prophecies in books like Isaiah and so on to help us visualize that wonderful time soon to come to this earth. As life's pressures build we need all the encouragement we can to get through life and dreaming about the wonderful things God has prepared for us helps us keep our mind on the big picture and gives us that encouragement. For the sufferings of this world are nothing compared to the glory and the wonderful future God has prepared for us (Rom. 8:21).

What does the Bible mean when it speaks of new heavens and a new earth in Revelation 21:1? There are again multiple possibilities of how this might come about but one possibility comes from understanding some of the clues of past history. Acts 3:21 says that there will be a restoration of all things.

There is some evidence to suggest both from ancient texts and the Bible that there was anciently a change from a year of 360 days to the current year of 365 ¼ days. Many Bible students are aware of the 360 day prophetic year and Genesis tells us that Noah reckoned 5 exact months as 150 days during the Flood rather than alternating between 29 and 30 days each for the months with the calendar we use to work out the Holy Days today.

Is it possible that we might see a restoration of a much simpler year of 12 months of 30 days? One verse that hints at this possibility is Isaiah 24:20 where it says that the earth will fall and not rise again perhaps implying its orbit will be shifted closer to the sun and there will be less days in the year.

Many ancient texts suggest that there were changes in the planetary orbits including the Earth at the times of catastrophes recorded in the Bible. Could future changes possibly occur during the Day of the Lord and be the new heavenly order being referred to? We do know that the earth will be renewed and turned into a paradise during the millennium and will be, in a sense, a new earth. Hebrews 12:26 says: "Now He has promised, saying, 'Yet once more I will not only shake the earth, but **also** the heavens.'"

One of my very favourite writers when the Good News was still published in the WCG was George Kackos. He wrote a most magnificent article entitled "What Your Life In God's Kingdom Will Be Like" in the September 1982 Good News. I'd like to now quote a few extracts from that wonderful article. George Kackos writes:

Your body is a marvellously designed mechanism, its complicated systems providing you the gift of physical life. But your body is subject to disease, injury and aging and these conditions can greatly reduce the joy of living. And death, inevitably, ends everyone's life altogether. In the resurrection, you will be given eternal life in a spirit-composed body, and that life will be far more fulfilling!

Try to imagine being transformed from physical to spiritual. All illnesses, injuries and effects of aging will disappear. No more will you fear these conditions. Your body will be like God's body (I Cor. 15:49).

God has given us a sneak preview of what our resurrected bodies will be like, in the description of Jesus Christ's present body. You can read about it in Revelation 1:13-16. Christ's body never grows old, weary or unattractive (Isa. 40:28, Heb. 13:8).

God, the Creator and Master of all the invisible laws of physics, can journey throughout the universe at will (Ps. 68:32-33) and pass through solid objects and manifest Himself in the flesh (John 20:26). You will share these same powers.

Right now, you are stimulated through the five senses of sight, smell, taste, touch or hearing. You love to see beautiful sights, smell pleasing aromas, taste delicious foods, touch exquisite things, listen to pleasurable sounds. So does God! The finest things in the universe surround Him at all times. Imagine having your spiritual senses function on the God plane. For now, you simply aren't capable of drinking in all the pleasures God can!

Your mind is a masterpiece of God's creation. God has imparted to you, through the human spirit (Job 32:8), the ability to think, reason and understand. No animal has that—you are unique. But your mind is imperfect. Satan constantly, relentlessly, bombards it with the elements of his perverted nature (Gal. 5:19-21).

The pulls of the flesh lead you to suffer the anguish of sin. Wouldn't you like to exercise perfect character all the time— never sin'? As a spirit-being you will be perfect (I John 3:9). Your mind will be filled with knowledge as God unveils the secrets of the universe to you.

Life's unanswered questions will be answered. Why did such and such happen in my life? What are the explanations to the questions asked by science?

Do you have a problem remembering things? God doesn't. He can name the billions of stars (Ps. 147:4). Your mind will become extremely efficient. Beyond that, you'll not miss a thing. A sparrow cannot fall on the ground without God knowing (Matt. 10:29), and your mind will be like God's. Your mind will be filled with wisdom — the ability to make right decisions at the right time in harmony with the right laws. You will be like Jesus Christ, who properly evaluates situations and applies the right principles to produce righteous judgments (Isa. 11:1-4)....

Much of your happiness or sorrow as a human being depends on the quality of your relationships with other people. Sin is the enemy of happy relationships. It causes

strife, backbiting, distrust and separation. And man, under Satan's influence, sins — constantly (Rom. 3:23). As a Spirit-filled child of God in God's Kingdom, you will not be under this curse. With sin eliminated, relationships will flourish (I John 3:9). Ideal human relationships will become reality in God's Kingdom (John 17:20-21). Oneness. Unity. Truth, not deception. Respect, not ridicule. Concern, not neglect. Happiness will permeate all our associations. We'll be able to rise above selfishness to express love in all our actions. This is the way God conducts Himself (I John 4:8).

Eternity is forever. What will you be doing? How will you stay happy? God keeps Himself happy. He surrounds Himself with enjoyable activities. 'Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore' (Ps. 16:11). God's desire is to share this pleasure with you (Matt. 25:21).

What does God enjoy? Family life, for one thing. God is expanding His Family (I Thess. 4:13-17). Together, as family members, you will worship God, rule, talk and, yes, even play. What satisfaction this will bring when you are filled with love.

Your work will be exciting as you help direct the rebuilding of cities and the revitalisation of farming. You will enjoy teaching people God's law (Isa. 30:21) and the words you offer will bring them real life (John 6:63). Their success will be your success. There will be opportunities to learn, create and invent. Recreational games and some form of athletics will probably be played. Remember, this physical world is patterned after the spiritual.

Travel will not be a burden. Christ ascended to heaven and returned to the earth on the same day (John 20:17, Luke 24:39). Imagine being able to travel at the speed of thought. The emphasis throughout eternity will be on constantly producing greater accomplishments and achievements, and positive achievement is the key to happiness (Ps. 16:11). God is a doer!....

With this capacity to travel, we will not be limited to a small geographical area. We will eventually be able to travel to the far reaches of the universe, since we are to inherit all things (Rev. 21:7). And we will be able to quickly return to our place of departure. Thus the Family of God need not be separated by distance. We will be able to enjoy each other's company and the vastness of the universe at will (This paragraph only from same writer's article 'Coming - Your Birth Into God's Family', GN, Aug.1981)....

You are awaiting the greatest event that could ever take place in the life of a human being—birth into God's Family. That knowledge should strengthen and motivate you. It should cause you to rejoice during the Feast of Tabernacles and throughout your life (Rom. 8:18-19)! Ponder this: 'But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him' (I Cor. 2:9, Isa. 64:4)."

Imagine the rush of those very first few seconds as we are transformed to spirit when Christ comes back. All of a sudden we will have ALL of the emotions, ALL of the sensory powers, ALL of the knowledge and ALL of the power of God!

Suddenly we will see all the angels that encompass us and the earth. We will be able to hear the awesome angelic choirs and literally see Satan and the demons put into the abyss.

In nature hawks could read a newspaper 200 feet in the air, bats have hearing that far surpasses our own and we know of the incredible sense of smell of animals like bloodhounds and so on. How much more greater will our sights and senses be? And imagine your character is finally set so you never sin again. How often do we ache to be free from the pulls of sin.

Mr Roy Holliday at the 1998 Feast in Noosa Heads gave an excellent explanation of 2 Peter 3:8 where it says that with God a thousand years is as a day and a day is as a thousand years. We've often explained the first half of that in describing how the 7000 year plan of God is based on the 7 day week but haven't looked at the other half of it. **He explained how God can do in a day what it would take us a thousand years to do because His mind and power is so fast.**

He went into a very detailed analogy, based on a computer's ability to do multi-tasking through the method of time slicing, to show how God can hear and answer so many people's prayers at the same time. Many computers these days can do some 300 million instructions a second making thousands of passes of thousands of users and still have time to spare. If our computers can do that how much more can the God, who knows all the 400 billion billion plus stars by name, do? And to think, not long from now, we'll have that same ability.

He also explained it another way. When someone is in danger and need God to speedily intervene there could be a whole involved discussion between the Father, the Son and the 24 elders about whether or not to intervene and have someone dispatched to intervene in the situation, all in a mere fraction of a second!

IT'S JUST ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO COMPREHEND WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE TO ONE DAY BE ON THE GOD PLANE OF EXISTENCE!

While we are the topic of our birth into God's family I'd just like to show a few more proofs from the Bible that we will indeed be God beings in the very family of God.

The Bible's definition of a God being from the first commandment is a being who can rightfully receive worship in the Father's eyes because no other being or kind of being can be worshipped except for God. In Revelation 22:8-9 it says, "Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel... Then he said to me, See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets and of them which keep the words of this book. Worship God." God **ONLY** can be worshipped. Not even angels can be worshipped (Col. 2:18). The Greek word used here for worship is "proskuneo". John was **FORBIDDEN** to "proskuneo" the angel.

We read in Revelation 3:9 where Christ speaking to the church says: "I will make them (false Christians) come and **WORSHIP** before your feet and know that I have loved you." The NIV Bible waters this verse down and substitutes it with fall down. Does it mean fall down or worship? The Greek word used in Revelation 3:9 is **EXACTLY THE SAME GREEK WORD, "PROSKUNEO"**, used in Revelation 22 - the worship which could only be directed to God and not to angels.

In Revelation 22 it says "I fell (Gr. *pipto*) down (Gr. *katabaino*) to worship (Gr. *proskuneo*) before the feet of the angel." Both words, fall down and worship, are used here and are differentiated from each other so we can clearly know what Greek word John uses for worship. If John wanted to say fall down in Revelation 3:9 he would have used "*pipto*" not "*proskuneo*".

In John 10:33-35 we read, "you (Christ) being a man make yourself a God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, **YOU ARE GODS** (meaning potential God beings). If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (the children of Israel) **(AND THE**

SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN) do you say...you are blaspheming because I said, 'I am the Son of God'".

When Christ said they were gods did He mean God or judges as the Hebrew for Elohim can also be translated in rare instances? First, let's look at the context of Psalm 82:6-7 from which Christ was quoting. It says, "You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High. But you shall die like men". God is **contrasting** their potential to what they are now - mere mortals. Notice after saying you are gods He calls them children of the Most High - the children He wants to beget into His very own family.

In Psalm 82:6 the word "gods" is the Hebrew "Elohim". Elohim can be translated into both God or judges. When John wrote down what Christ said in his gospel he wrote those words in Greek, not Hebrew. John did not translate it as "you are kritikos", the Greek word for judges, from which we get our English word critical. He said "you are theos", the Greek word for God. John knew what Christ meant when He said you are gods.

Also, when John makes the **extraordinary statement** "and the scripture cannot be broken" He's obviously emphasising and underlining what He's saying and draw **major** attention to it. What He's really saying in effect is "I know this is utterly **FANTASTIC** and you'll have a hard time believing it, **BUT I TELL YOU THAT IT'S TRUE THAT YOU ARE POTENTIAL GOD BEINGS!**

If we won't be on the angelic plane and if we're not supposed to be on the God plane are we supposed to be on a half-way plane? If we won't be God beings what's so special about us that gives us the right to rule over angels in the World Tomorrow (1 Cor. 6:2-3)? Hebrews 1:5 shows we are going to be **LITERAL** sons of God because though the angels are called sons of God (Job 38:7) they were never begotten or born like we will be.

The Bible frequently uses the terms born and begotten of God when it talks about our destiny.

Now think about that for a moment. If you had an adopted son could you say that he was born or begotten of you? The same applies with God. The terms begotten and born of God which are never applied to angels as Hebrews 1:5 shows proves that God really is reproducing Himself with LITERAL, NOT ADOPTED, SONS OF GOD (Rev. 21:7)!

In the United Church of God booklet "What is Your Destiny?" we read:

As this booklet makes clear, Scripture reveals that man's destiny is to be fathered by God in an actual sense, with His Holy Spirit implanted into our minds to engender us as His literal begotten children. Yet a few verses from the apostle Paul have been interpreted to say that God adopts us rather than directly begets us as His children. What difference does it make? And what is the truth of the matter?

As typically rendered, Romans 8:15 says that Christians "have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (KJV). Verse 23 says that we "who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." The next chapter says that Israel, God's nation, was given the promise of, according to most English translations, "adoption" (9:4).

Similarly, Galatians 4:5 and Ephesians 1:5 in the New King James Version both use the phrase "adoption as sons" for the standing God gives us. A number of versions, however, instead use the term "sonship" or something like it, as the New

International Version does in Romans 8:15. In its entry on “adoption,” Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (1985) explains that the original Greek word here is “huiiothesia ... from huios, ‘a son,’ and thesis, ‘a placing,’ akin to tithemi, ‘to place’”—so the placing as a son...

So what was Paul talking about? While huiiothesia (placing or setting as a son) was certainly applicable to adoption, Paul obviously meant it in a different sense. We can start to see what he means in Galatians 4:1-5, where the NIV translates the word as “full rights of sons.”

Notice why from the context: “What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons” (verses 1-5, NIV).

Note that in the parallel the one receiving the huiiothesia (the setting as a son) was already the child of his father who was setting him as such. So this circumstance was not adoption.

Paul’s imagery fit well with the Roman world of the time. Historian Will Durant tells us: “The child found itself absorbed into the most basic and characteristic of Roman institutions—the patriarchal family. The power of the father was nearly absolute ... He alone of the family had any rights before the law in the early Republic ... Over his children he had the power of life, death, and sale into slavery” (The Story of Civilization, Vol. 3: Caesar and Christ, 1972, p. 57). By Paul’s day this had softened somewhat, but it was still generally the case.

During a boy’s teen years, his father would determine when it was time for him to pass from childhood to adulthood—typically around 14 or a little later. In a formal public ceremony, having put aside his childhood toga, he would appear in the toga virilis (toga of manhood), mark of citizenship and his right to now vote in the assembly:

“When the boy was ready, the procession to the Forum began. The father had gathered his slaves, freedmen, clients, relatives and friends, using all his influence to make his son’s escort numerous and imposing. Here the boy’s name was added to the list of citizens, and formal congratulations were extended...Finally they all returned to the house, where the day ended with a dinner party given by the father in honour of the new Roman citizen” (Roman Children,” ClassicsUnveiled.com).

A son’s status was elevated at this point. He was now legally invested with all the rights, powers and privileges of a son and heir of his father—and of a citizen.

This coming of age at maturity must be what Paul is referring to. God has begotten us as His children.

And in one sense He reckons us as already having reached a certain maturity—considering us beyond the status of being as slaves to being set as sons with certain privileges (even though we are as mere babes!). Yet the fullness of our coming of age is yet future—at the time of “the revealing of the sons of God” in the resurrection (Romans 8:19) (p.16-17).

In the millennium "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree and none shall make them afraid for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. For all the peoples will walk **in the name of his god** and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever" (Micah 4:4-5, RAV).

The verse implies that in that time they will follow our lead as God beings as we follow God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Paul prayed that we "may be FILLED with ALL of the FULLNESS OF GOD"(Eph.3:19) How can we be filled with ALL of the fullness of God and not be God - part of the God Family?

There are 2 God beings now. There will be millions of God beings later in the resurrection as opposed to two or more Gods, for God is only **ONE** - a family, just like there are many members but only ONE church. Two God beings now. They produce millions more God beings like themselves later on. That is called reproduction. You have a Father who reproduces Himself to make many sons and daughters (Rev.21:7). When I used to go to school we called that a family, which is how the Chambers Dictionary defines it - "A group of related people".

"For this cause," said the apostle Paul, "I bow my knees unto the Father... of whom the **WHOLE FAMILY** in heaven and earth is named" (Eph.3:14-15). This scripture reveals that this divine family with members both in heaven and on earth, is named after God - for that is the biblical family name that both the Father and the Son are called (John 1:1-2). Clearly God **IS** a family!

Now what of those who live in the millennium? When we they be changed to spirit beings? Iraneus, who had contact with the apostle John and Polycarp, said the first resurrection will be the beginning of a gradual process of incorruption. During the millennium people will be resurrected to incorruption during their lifetimes when they've overcome sufficiently.

That certainly raises the question of how much do we have to live before our character can be set by a resurrection to spirit. We have record of some christians in the Smyrna era living only a matter of weeks after their baptism. What does it take in our lives for God to be certain our character will be set forever when He converts us to spirit. It's a huge gulf between our christian life now with the many sins we still often make and the perfection of God. What is the nature of how our character is perfect by God (Heb. 12:23)?

After the Millennium, the Kingdom and the Universe Beyond

What happens at the end of the millennium? The last generation of the millennium will live over into a time which may actually last for many years before the Great White Throne Judgment period occurs when Satan will have been let loose and can invisibly broadcast his moods and feelings of selfishness and rebellion around the world.

Mr Armstrong speculated that the reason Satan is given this short period of time is because God cuts his 6 000 years to deceive man short by a year or more before Christ returns. There's nothing in the Bible to indicate that God is limited to giving Satan a grand total of 6 000 years to deceive man.

He may give him an indefinite number of years on top of 6 000 years after the millennium to give the people of the world, who have known nothing of Satan's deceptive power and are somewhat spiritually lukewarm, a taste of what it takes to fight those sinful urges to shake them out of their spiritual complacency.

A great multitude of people will be wiped out by God in the rebellion which ensues. What of their spiritual salvation? They should know better with the living Christ literally right there in Jerusalem but they are weak under the influence of a being who they have never had to fight spiritually like those of us who battle his impulses constantly. I would hazard a guess that they will come up in the Great White Throne Judgment to be corrected and learn their lesson with the rest of mankind who rises at that time.

There has been the belief in the church that those who willingly walk away from the calling we have at this time in the church after having being baptized and receiving God's spirit will come straight up in the third resurrection. They make such a decision under the pressure of the influence of the world and Satan, a disadvantage which those in the world tomorrow won't have to contend with. Without that influence they may never have made that decision. Someone in the world tomorrow who overcomes his nature and becomes a member of God's family may have made the same decision if he had to contend with the influence of Satan and the world.

God would be a respecter of persons if He didn't give those who give up in the church now a chance to overcome without the influence of Satan and today's sinful world in the Great White Throne Judgment. If He didn't a whole lot of our friends who have fallen away with the current apostasy in the church look set for the lake of fire without a real chance in the Great White Throne Judgment.

I'd like to now to quote from the television brochure "Inside the Book of Revelation" by Paul Kroll which discusses what happens at the end of the millennium just prior to the Great White Throne Judgment Period. Paul Kroll writes:

God's government will rule this earth for 1,000 years. The sorrows of this world today will soon seem like a dead and distant past. Then God will allow Satan to be loosed. Once again, the devil will be permitted to delude humans into rejecting God. The devil 'will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle whose number is as the sand of the sea' (Rev. 20:8). The expression, 'four corners of the earth,' points out the universal nature of this deception (Isaiah 11:12; Ezekiel 7:2; Rev. 7:1). It would take a little time for Satan to do his evil work of persuasion. Revelation does not explain either how he accomplishes his nefarious task or the exact circumstances of this worldwide rebellion.

Revelation does tell us that Satan will collect a vast army called 'Gog and Magog.' They symbolise the population centers of the world that unite for an assault on God's government. They eventually sweep across the earth and surround 'the camp of the saints and the beloved city' (Rev. 20:9). This would refer to Jerusalem and God's people living at peace in the Holy Land. Satan fails again. His human soldiers who failed to grasp the meaning of salvation, are vaporised. The Apocalypse tells us, 'Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them' (Rev. 20:9). The devil's gathering of 'Gog and Magog' is an eerie replay—1,000 years later—of the final battles at Christ's return.

The original war during the Messiah's coming is described in Zechariah 14. Christ then exterminated the vast army besieging Jerusalem. Satan's human army is likewise destroyed at the end of the Millennium. Immediately after God annihilates this enormous horde, 'The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone' (Rev. 20:10). [As discussed earlier Satan and the demons will likely be burnt up and destroyed over a period of many days as God finally judges them for their evil deeds.]

Satan's last rebellion also sets the stage for one of the great dramatic events of the ages— 'The Great White Throne Judgment.' God's ultimate aim and design for the majority of the human race is about to be fulfilled. John writes: 'I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it.... And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books' [Rev. 20:11-12] (p.31-32).

Now to describe for us the Great White Throne Judgment Period I'd like to quote Mr Armstrong again from "Mystery of the Ages". He writes:

The dead IN Christ at the time of Jesus' Second Coming shall be resurrected to immortal God-life if they shall have died, and those still living who are IN Christ at his coming and led by his Holy Spirit shall be changed instantly into immortal God-life. They shall rule and teach with and under Christ during the thousand years. But all others who have died shall not live again until the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:5).

The 37th chapter of Ezekiel also shows the resurrection at the time of the judgment. This 37th chapter is the prophecy of the 'dry bones.' The Bible itself interprets these dry bones in verse 11 where it says these dry bones are the House of Israel: '...behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost....' Like the prophecy says: "Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord' (verses 4-6).

Next this prophecy tells of the Great White Throne Judgment when this whole house of Israel, who sinned so greatly against God, shall be resurrected. The prophecy continues: 'So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army' (verses 7-10).

This shows being brought back to mortal life, sustained by breathing of air, just as in their original life. That is, mortal life--still unconverted. Then God says, 'Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.' This is the resurrection in the Great White Throne Judgment. All the ancient Israelites are resurrected mortal, precisely as in their first life. Then what? 'And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord' (verses 13, 14).

In other words, in the Great White Throne Judgment after the millennium, Old Testament Israel will be resurrected; then they shall come to 'know the Lord.' God's knowledge will come to them. The resurrected then will read this: 'And there shall

ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God' (Ezek. 20:43-44).

Then upon this repentance, notice again in Ezek. 37:14: 'And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.' Thus, in the Great White Throne Judgment, they will come to know that Christ the Savior had come and died for them. And upon their repentance they shall receive the Holy Spirit and with it salvation and eternal life. All who had lived, previously unjudged, not only Israel, but of all nations, will be resurrected MORTAL, physical, as they were in their first life up to the time of death. Those in this judgment will be mortals. They will then give account and be judged.

Concerning this Great White Throne Judgment Jesus said: 'The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here' (Matt. 12:41-42; also in Luke 11:31-32). Also: 'But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.... But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you' (Luke 10:12, 14). There will be punishments. Those who have sinned little will be beaten with few stripes, but those who have sinned greatly, knowing God's will, with many stripes (Luke 12:47-48).

But the penalty for sin is DEATH in the final last judgment. Since all have sinned, all shall be judged guilty and sentenced. But they shall learn that Jesus Christ paid their penalty in their stead. And in repentance, demonstrated by performance, they will be given an opportunity yet at that time to choose LIFE, and be made immortal. What a merciful God is the Creator, whose mercy is as great toward us as the heavens are high above the earth. And he is able to remove our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west (Ps. 103:12).

How long will this period of judging be? Isaiah 66:20 indicates each person will live at least a full 100 years. Will all the unsaved dead be resurrected simultaneously? We don't know for sure. Christ said that the men of Nineveh will rise up at the same time as the Jews of His day but that doesn't automatically mean all the unsaved dead be resurrected simultaneously.

It is an assumption to say that all generations of people up to Christ's return shall be resurrected in the Great White Throne Judgment at the same time. While scripture does not give us any specific details it is possible that there might be multiple resurrections over a longer period than 100 years so dealing with all these people will be more manageable.

It would be interesting if that is so what order the generations will be raised up in. Would we start with Adam and Eve's generation and work through to this generation or start with this generation more used to the technology of this day and age and work back to Adam and Eve? Imagine raising up Adam and Eve and explaining to them everything that has happened over the previous 6000 years. Imagine explaining the technology of this age to someone of medieval times. It will certainly blow their minds.

In Matthew 10 and 11 this time is referred to as the “day of judgment”. 2 Peter 3:8 speaks of a principle that with God “one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” so one possibility is that this day of judgment may be a thousand years long.

The number 8 in the Bible is symbolic of new beginnings. If you include the Great White Throne Judgment period, an 8000 year plan for mankind sounds like a more rounder number than a 7100 years. The Last Great Day is, when combined with the Feast of Tabernacles, referred to as the eighth day and represents this Great White Throne Judgment period.

Will the earth fit everybody. If God makes 60% of the earth’s surface land in the World Tomorrow and there are approximately 60 billion people that means there would be, on average, a spacious 5 acres for every family of four.

In the aforementioned booklet by Paul Kroll he tells us about those relatively very few who, in the Great White Judgment period, still refuse to repent of their sins. Paul Kroll writes:

The last two verses of Revelation 20 summarize their fate. John sees in vision all the dead in the sea, in death and hades (the grave) coming forth to life. ‘And they were judged, each one according to his works’ (Rev. 20:13). Their end is both sad and horrifying: ‘Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire’ (verses 14-15).

Such antagonistic humans are burnt up and cease to exist (Malachi 4:3). Jesus said: ‘Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell’ (Matthew 10:28). This ‘hell’ is the fire of Revelation 20:15—the soul-destroying lake of fire

[The Greek word hell used here is ‘Gehenna’. Gehenna is the name for the Valley of Hinnom on the west side of Mt Zion. In this valley in Jerusalem will the lake of fire be where the punishment for the unrepentant takes place.]

God's purpose with man is now complete.

If we look carefully at John 5:29 we notice that it speaks of a resurrection to life for those who are good and a resurrection of judgment to the rest. In some translations it says damnation rather than judgment but there is nothing in the Greek to confirm that. The resurrection to life is the first resurrection. The resurrection to judgment could refer to either the second or a potential third resurrection.

The term used for the incorrigibly wicked being thrown into the lake of fire is the second death. This raises a bit of a quandry. Most of these will be evil people who have seared their conscience in this age of man before Christ's return.

If they live and die in this age and then live and die in the Great White Throne Judgment if they are then raised up another time and cast into the lake of fire then this would have been the third time that they have died. So is the Bible by this term referring to a second actual death or a second type of death?

The church has often talked about the third resurrection but is a third resurrection really needed. If someone has lived 100 or more years in the Great White Throne Judgment period why not just cast him into the lake of fire right then rather than him die and then raise him and then throw him in?

While there may be a third resurrection there is nothing definite in the scriptures to say that there is a third resurrection.

2 Peter 3:10 has been interpreted to say that after this time following the casting of the demons and incorrigibly wicked into the lake of fire that this fire will then expand and completely burn up the surface of the planet purifying it before the new heavens and new earth come about and the New Jerusalem comes to the earth. Verse 7 speaks about it occurring at the time of the day of judgment for ungodly men which could refer to the time the wicked were cast into the lake of fire or it could refer to the Day of the Lord leading up to Christ's return.

In verse 10 the time frame is the Day of the Lord. In most cases in scripture this term refers to the final year of global plagues and catastrophe that climaxes in the return of Jesus Christ. It can also refer to a general frame of time of visitation by God.

All the things referred to in this verse do occur in the Day of the Lord leading up to Christ's return according to other scriptures. There are plagues where at least a third of the earth's surface and trees are burned, there are disturbances in the heavens and Micah and Nahum tells us that the mountains will melt at Christ's return due to the fires and volcanic activity that occur at this time.

While something like this could also happen just before the New Jerusalem comes to earth it might seem very strange and odd that after somewhere 1 000 and 2 000 years of the earth being transformed into a paradise that it would all then be burnt up and started all over again.

I believed that 2 Peter 3:10 is referring to the Day of the Lord before Christ's second coming.

After the millennium and Great White Throne Judgment period we will not then go up to heaven for all eternity - heaven will come down to the earth. God the Father will bring His throne down to the earth and make the earth the headquarters of the universe. We read of the throne of God descending to the earth after the millennium and Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation 22:2-3, "Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God."

George Kackos wrote another wonderful article about God's Kingdom in the January 1981 Good News that focused on what the New Jerusalem will be like entitled "After the Millennium - New Heavens and a New Earth". I'd like to quote a few extracts from that article. George Kackos writes:

For many Christians, New Jerusalem is a vague concept and they don't anticipate it eagerly. This incredible city is coming to the new earth and can be a powerful source of inspiration for us now. The study of the new heaven and new earth is fascinating. Sometimes in our limited thinking we see no further than the Millennium. But to God the Millennium is only a day— a mere fraction of eternity (Ps. 90:4, 11 Pet. 3:8). We are going to spend a 'day' in the Millennium, but we will spend forever inhabiting the new heaven and the new earth!

To get a better understanding of New Jerusalem we must go to Revelation 21 and 22. Laid out for us are the details that provided such inspiration for God's people before us— and that will provide the ultimate joy for us when this city is established. When will we see New Jerusalem? The context of Revelation 20, preceding Revelation 21,

reveals the answer. In Revelation 20 we are told about the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ and the saints. After this comes the Great White Throne Judgment, during which the multitudes of people who died without knowledge of the true God will be given a chance for salvation....

After the Millennium and the judgment period the new heaven (or heavens, as it is rendered in scriptures such as Isaiah 65:17, 66:22 and II Peter 3:13) and the new earth will be established. With the establishment of the new earth comes the holy city, New Jerusalem. It is pictured as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2). Whose Bride will she be? The Bride of the Lamb, Jesus Christ (verses 9-10, John 1:29). The Bride of Christ—New Jerusalem — is pictured as the saints resurrected at His Second Coming (Rev. 19:6-9). During the Millennium and judgment phase of God's plan of salvation, other saints will be added to God's Family. They will either have access to or live in New Jerusalem. Therefore, New Jerusalem is called the Bride of Christ since its inhabitants will include the Bride.

This is God the Father's gift to His Son, Jesus. He will join Jesus Christ in ruling the universe from this location (Rev. 21:3). The 'men' mentioned in this verse will already have been made members of the God Family. What a wonderful picture—God the Father, Jesus Christ the resurrected saints and other spirit beings such as the 24 elders, the beasts before the throne of God and the angels, all united in harmony, peace and love in a beautiful environment beyond human imagination!

One of the Bible's most inspiring scriptures describes a time of 'no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away' (verse 4). How wonderful is the plan of God! No wonder Paul said, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways finding out.' (Rom. 11:33). We can look at this aspect of New Jerusalem and rejoice greatly. Christ Himself promised that all things will be new. He is the Alpha and the Omega (Rev. 1:8) and promises this inheritance of new life and new opportunity to those who overcome (Rev. 21:7)....

What does this great city look like? It defies human imagination. Containing the glory of God and illuminated like a jasper stone, it glows in deep, rich, blue-green tones with the transparency of crystal. The walls have 12 gates, with the names of the tribes of Israel written upon them and 12 angels present. There are three gates in each of the four walls. The 12 foundations of the city wall contain the names of the 12 apostles (verses 11-14).

The angel who measures the city gives its dimensions in terms of the reed (12 1/2 feet). **New Jerusalem is 1,500 miles in length, breadth and height (verse 16)!** ...(One) possibility is that the city is shaped like a pyramid, with God the Father and Christ appearing in the apex. The pyramidal structure is unique architecturally—the design may have originally come from God Himself. Other spirit beings may occupy areas at lower heights, depending on their status. Whatever the shape, New Jerusalem is a huge city. A spectacular example of God's handiwork is that the city is made of gold that appears as clear glass (Rev. 21:18).

The walls encompassing New Jerusalem are 216 feet high (assuming a cubit measures 18 inches - that means the walls are about 20 stories high). Supporting the walls are an array of beautiful stones. Visiting a gem dealer would help you appreciate the beauty of the jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth and

amethyst that are used (Rev. 21:17-20). Though hard to imagine, each gate is made from a single pearl. That's quite a contrast to the small pearls we see today. A street is described as being made of pure gold having the transparency of glass.

Since there are 12 gates, it seems logical that there are other unmentioned streets leading from the gates. The presence of God the Father and Christ are the temple, providing the light for New Jerusalem. This is a departure from the heavenly Jerusalem, which has a temple (Rev. 7:15), and seems to indicate that New Jerusalem will undergo changes before it arrives on the new earth.

This is not surprising in light of Christ's statement in John 14:1-3. He told His disciples that His Father's house contained many mansions. He was referring to the temple on earth —the Father's earthly house (John 2:16)—as a type of New Jerusalem. Christ is now preparing different offices for us to hold and places for us to inhabit once the 7,000-year plan for man is completed. God is preparing a home for His future Family!....

A pure river of water will come forth from the throne of God. A street runs by this river, with the tree of life bearing 12 manner of fruits, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of this tree are used to heal the nations (Rev. 22:1-2)....

Thus far in history no one has had the opportunity to see God face to face (John 1:18). But God promises to eliminate this curse that has plagued man's relationship with God. We who are His servants will serve Him and see Him. What a wonderful privilege! Our rulership with God the Father and Jesus Christ will be for eternity (Rev. 22:5). God has promised us all things (Heb. 2:8).

These incredible promises will come to pass (Rev. 22:6), though the details may not all be clear now. As Paul said, 'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known' (I Cor. 13:12). From God's point of view these prophecies will come to pass quickly. As the end-time generation awaiting the Second Coming, we will soon see Christ our King. Then it will be only a short period of time until we see the New Jerusalem!

What a fabulous description of the New Jerusalem. I sort of wonder though why God calls it His tabernacle (Rev. 21:3) which seems to indicate a temporary dwelling. Maybe it's because He might wish to mingle so much with all of us wherever we might be on earth or out there in the universe. The Bible seems to indicate that the earth will always exist (Ecc.1:4).

Scientists speak of our sun eventually burning itself but this is based on the faulty nuclear fusion model of the sun which the previously mentioned documentary "Thunderbolts of the Gods" fairly easily refutes.

God the Father has separated himself from mankind for so long, though Jesus Christ has had a very hands-on relationship with mankind as God's spokesman. His separation from us probably emphasizes the point that God abhors sin and that sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:2).

We are told in the Book of Revelation that the New Jerusalem is 1500 miles by 1500 miles in area and soars to a height of 1500 miles!

That is absolutely incredible. To give you some idea of how big an area that would cover that is a square area from Ankara, Turkey in the top left corner down through Cyprus and the Mediterranean Sea, Cairo, down through to the middle of Sudan in the bottom left corner and then across Northern Ethiopia and the bottom of the Red Sea and out into the Indian Ocean and then up to through the whole eastern border of Iran.

That's an area that takes in the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, southern Turkey, the Sinai and everything east of the Nile River. That is an incredible area! Or to put it in American terms that is the area covered by the western half of the United States west of the Mississippi River!

In Australian terms that area is two thirds of the area of Australia! And it's also 1500 miles high. That height would put its peak some five times higher than the standard orbit of the space shuttle which orbits in space about 300 miles above the earth!

Some people think that the New Jerusalem will be like a cube given that the length, breadth and height are all the same but I have difficulty imagining the New Jerusalem looking like the Borg cube in Star Trek. Given that the height is 1500 miles high yet we are given a much lower and different measurement for the walls indicate that it is not cube shaped.

Maybe it looks more like the flying city of Atlantis in Stargate Atlantis only bigger and with more parkland. Maybe it is pyramid shaped.

The streets have the colour of gold yet are translucent or see through which makes it look that much more spectacular. This type of translucent colouring is becoming more and more of a trend in graphical art in science fiction and computer software such as the look of Windows 7 and 10.

A question that sometimes gets asked is whether God may have created other beings like us in some other part of the universe who He is also working His plan through. There are a few reasons why I don't believe that is the case. Everything in the Bible indicates that what He is doing through man is the prototype of any family expansion in the future beyond. We are told that only Christ has immortality (1 Tim. 6:15-16). If there was another plan and some had already become immortal the Bible wouldn't be that dogmatic that only Christ has immortality.

We are also told that Christ has died for sin "once for all" time (Heb.10:10,12). If there were other mortal beings elsewhere who had sinned then Christ would have died on their planet and not ours.

Lastly, if this isn't the first time God has done this thing why would He make earth and not some other planet He's working on the headquarters of the universe where He will dwell with mankind forever?

What is our ultimate destiny? What will we be doing for all eternity? Let's let Mr Armstrong tell us how the story ends. He used to have a wonderful saying that I find very encouraging. He used to say, "I've read the end of the book and in the end we win." The following is from the last chapter of "Mystery of the Ages" entitled "Mystery of the Kingdom of God". Mr Armstrong writes:

In the book of Hebrews we read: 'For unto the angels hath he [God] not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak' (Heb. 2:5). The theme of the context here is 'the world to come.' There is but one earth, but the Bible speaks of

three worlds, ages or civilizations on the earth--the 'world that then was" (the antediluvian world from Adam to Noah); this 'present evil world' (from the Flood until Christ's return, yet future); and 'the world to come' (which will start when Christ comes and sets up the kingdom of God).

This verse speaks of angels as if the world had been put in subjection to angels; in fact, in the very beginning of this book of Hebrews, the first chapter, it is speaking of Christ and angels and the relation of angels to humans. This was explained in Chapter 2 of this book. But bear in mind the general theme here, or context, is 'the world to come, whereof we speak'--not this present age, now coming rapidly to its end! Continue on in verse 6: 'But one in a certain place testified, saying....' Then follows a quotation from the first six verses only of the eighth Psalm.

In this psalm, David continued showing specifically that God has now placed in subjection under man the solid earth, the earth's atmosphere or air, and the sea. But now the writer of the book of Hebrews is inspired to expand David's prophecy to add something radically different--something to happen in the world to come!....

Let's see what is said in this passage in Hebrews, beginning where Hebrews leaves off quoting the eighth Psalm: 'Thou hast put all things in subjection under his [man's] feet. For in that he [God] put all in subjection under him [man], he [God] left NOTHING that is not put under him' (Heb. 2:8).

Is it possible God could mean what he says 'all things'? Nothing excluded? In the first chapter, the Moffatt translation of the Bible renders the Greek word translated 'all things' as 'the universe' (verse 8). In other words, for those willing to believe what God says, he says that he has decreed the entire universe--with all its galaxies, its countless suns and planets--everything--will be put under man's subjection.

But wait a moment! Before you disbelieve, read the next words in the same eighth verse: 'But now we see not yet all things [the endless universe] put under him [man].' Remember (verse 5), this is speaking of the 'world to come'--not today's world. But what do we see now, today? 'But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels [or, "for a little while lower"] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.' Man, other than Christ, is NOT YET 'crowned with glory and honour.' But see how Christ is already crowned with glory and honor.

Continue: 'For it became him, for whom are all things [the entire universe] and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings....for which cause he [Christ] is not ashamed to call them brethren' (verses 10-11).

In other words, Christians having God's Spirit are joint heirs with Christ to INHERIT all that Christ already has inherited. He is now in glory! He has already inherited the entire universe. He sustains it by his power. Man, if he is converted, having God's Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9), is now only and HEIR--not yet a possessor. But see now how Christ already has been crowned with glory and honor--and is already in possession--has already inherited.

Begin with Hebrews, chapter 1: 'God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things [the entire universe], by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding [sustaining] all things [the entire universe] by the word of

his power...' (Heb. 1:1-3). The living Christ already sustains the entire universe by his limitless divine power.

The passage continues to show his superiority over the angels--he is the begotten and born Son of God--angels are merely individually created beings. Angels are now administering spirits (invisible to us), ministering to us--to us who are now in lower status than angels--but who are heirs of salvation, when we, like Christ, shall become born sons of God (Heb. 1:4-14).

Now put this together with what is revealed in the eighth chapter of Romans. Here it speaks of Christ as God's Son: '...that he might be the firstborn among many brethren' (Rom. 8:29). Humans, having God's Holy Spirit, are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ-- who, alone of all humans, has already been born as God's Son by a resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4).

He is the FIRST of the human family to be born into the family of God--the kingdom of God. He is our pioneer who has gone on before. We shall follow at the resurrection of the just at Christ's return to earth in supreme power and glory.....'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God....The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us...' (Rom. 8:14-18).

Continue, Revised Standard Version: 'For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation [all the suns, planets, stars, moons] was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation [stars, suns and moons now in decay and futility] has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves [we Spirit- begotten humans], who have the first fruits of the Spirit [the very FEW now being called to salvation--the "firstfruits"], groan inwardly as we wait for the [birth] as sons' (verses 19-23).

What an amazing marvellous revelation of knowledge! No more amazing, awesome, eye-opening passage could be written! It is so astonishingly revealing, one doesn't fully grasp it just reading quickly through. First I quoted from verse 29 of Romans 8 stating Christ WAS the firstborn of MANY BRETHREN.

In Hebrews 1, we see that Christ, the first human to be born by a resurrection from the dead, has been glorified and now sustains the entire universe. He is our Pioneer who has gone on ahead. At his return to earth in power and glory, those who have been converted and received God's Holy Spirit shall be born into the God family by a resurrection.

Then the entire universe will be put into subjection UNDER them! Then, from Romans 8, if we have and are led by the Holy Spirit of God, we shall be raised to Spirit composition and immortality in the God family even as Christ was in A.D. 31 upon His resurrection. Now once again from verse 19: 'For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God' (RSV). This shall happen after the time of the resurrection, when those who are human actually become--by a resurrection or instantaneous change from mortal flesh to Spirit immortality--sons of God.

Now understand please. Why should the whole universe--the creation- -be waiting with eager longing for the actual birth and appearing of all these sons of God to be born into the family of God? The following verses portray a universe filled with planets in decay and futility--yet as if subjected now to this dead state in hope! 'Because the creation itself [the universe not now capable of sustaining life] will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God.'

How did all the planets fall into the bondage of decay? Surely God did not so create them! Decay signifies a state or condition caused by degeneration and decomposition from a previous undecayed state. God, then, created these planets in a state of NONdecay. But something caused deterioration to set in. What could have caused all this 'bondage to decay'?....We (have seen) that angels inhabited the earth prior to the creation of man. Angels, who were perfect from the creation until iniquity or lawlessness was found in them, caused the whole surface of the earth to turn into a state of decay, confusion and emptiness, as shown in chapter 2.

Could the whole universe with its myriad of other planets have been created for the eventual purpose of sustaining life? (God always does what He does for a purpose. He created the universe for a reason. He built it to be inhabited)....Continue this passage in Romans 8:22: 'We know that the whole creation [universe] has been groaning in travail together until now.' Consider that the creation is compared to a mother about to be delivered of her child. The creation is pictured as groaning in travail in hope (verse 20), awaiting the birth by resurrection to immortality, of the children of God. It is as if the creation is the mother and God is the father.

Anyway the whole thrust of the passage is that when we (converted humans) are born of God--then having the power and glory of God--we are going to do as God did when this earth had been laid 'waste and empty'--Hebrew, *tohu and bohu* (Gen. 1:2). Christ, who renewed 'the face of the earth'(Ps. 104:30), was renewing what had been destroyed by the rebellion of the sinning angels.

What these wonderful passages imply and indicate goes far beyond the amount specifically revealed. This passage indicates precisely what all astronomers and scientific evidence indicate--the suns are as balls of fire, giving out light and heat; but the planets, except for this earth, are in a state of death, decay and futility--but not forever--waiting until converted humans are BORN the children of God; born into the very divine family of God, forming the kingdom of God. Jesus' gospel was the kingdom of God.

What I am showing you here is that Christ's gospel of the kingdom actually included all this knowledge here revealed--even the whole universe is to be ruled by us, who, with God the Father and Christ, become the kingdom of God.

God is first of all Creator, but God is also Ruler. And he is Educator, who reveals knowledge beyond and outside the scope of human mind of itself to comprehend! Put together all these scriptures I have used in this chapter, and you begin to grasp the incredible human potential.

Our potential is to be born into the God family, receiving total power! We are to be given jurisdiction over the entire universe!

"What are we going to do then? These scriptures indicate we shall impart life to billions and billions of dead planets, as life has been imparted to this earth. We shall

create, as God directs and instructs. We shall rule through all eternity! Revelation 21 and 22 show there will then be no pain, no suffering, no evil, because we shall have learned to choose God's way of good.

It will be an eternal life of accomplishment, constantly looking forward in super-joyous anticipation to new creative projects, and still looking back also on accomplishments with happiness and joy over what shall have been already accomplished. We shall never grow tired and weary. Always alive--full of joyous energy, vitality, exuberant life and strength and power!....

How wonderful beyond the ability of words to express is the glory of God and his wonderful purpose actually now in progress. Praise, honor and glory be to God and to Jesus Christ forever and forever. With God's great master plan of seven thousand years finally completed--the mystery of the ages finally revealed, and with the re-creating of the vast universe and eternity lying ahead, we come finally to **THE BEGINNING!!!** (p.291-297, softbound)"

In a sermon Dr Albert in the late 1980's gave on man's destiny he made these fascinating comments:

Man doesn't rule the universe at the moment and frankly there are a good many things on this planet that man does not rule. Man does not make or control the weather. He can't stop floods or the incredible forces of earthquakes or hurricanes and more importantly man doesn't even rule his nature and can't stop wars, crime and unhappy relationships. He can't stop disease and starvation all over the world.

There are a good many things that he can't control on this earth but once man's nature is changed by God's power God will make man ruler over all things - over the universe and its laws and forces including the power to make life which he is utterly incapable of doing now. He can't even create a single living blade of grass out of non living matter but man will be given power and rulership with God over the vast, limitless universe when God's perfect character is placed in him.

We don't have that power YET but now we have a prototype in Jesus Christ who now has that power crowned with glory and honour. We are co-heirs with Christ as Romans 8:17 says. What He has now we are going to inherit. We are to be glorified like Christ.

The glory is going to be revealed IN US, not to us and someday you and I are going to be glorious spirit beings with great power that goes so far beyond our wildest dreams that our minds can't even grasp it.

It's going to take power to bring about the vast changes on this earth and then this universe that God has planned. Power can be used as God intends for magnificent reasons. This earth when God beautifies it in the millennium will be, like Christ is for our salvation, the prototype for what God plans for this universe. It's (going to be) more fantastic than any science-fiction show like Star Wars or Star Trek.

Once we're finished with beautifying the earth we come to the ultimate - creating our own **CUSTOM-MADE PLANETS!** Can you imagine that? Have a think of what you would like on your own custom-made planet. Maybe beautiful islands like Hawaii, Tahiti or beautiful

coastlines like the Gold Coast or Norway's fjords or spectacular snow-capped Alpine mountains and gorgeous landscapes with sparkling rivers, magnificent waterfalls and superb lakes.

A friend of mine wants to have his own party planet with a couple of moons as gigantic speakers where you can actually surf along the sound waves. On my party planet I want a steep waterslide that takes an hour to get to the bottom.

In a typical two trees sermon that Mr Armstrong gave near the end of his life he got to the end of the sermon explaining God's plan and then he dropped what to me, at least, was a bombshell by saying after we've finished with this world we will go out and create new worlds and raise up new people out in the universe for all eternity. How much truth is there in this statement?

There are three schools of thought regarding what happens after the New Jerusalem comes to earth.

The first is that the universe will remain physical and there will be no future expansion of the Family of God.

The next school of thought is that the universe will be transformed from physical to spiritual and be that new heavens and new earth and we won't see any future expansion of the Family of God.

The final school of thought is that the universe will remain physical (at least for a fair amount of time) and that there will be new people born on new worlds out there in the universe and there will be further expansion to God's family.

Each of these have their strengths and weaknesses. There is no direct mention of any future expansion in scripture to God's family beyond the New Jerusalem coming to earth.

One verse that seems to support the idea of a transformation of everything from a physical to a spiritual universe is found in Hebrews 1:10-12 which talks about a change in the heavens and earth. I know it would be handy to have a spirit pet cat that never dies on you.

The final school of thought is a physical universe where new people will be raised up on new worlds is what Herbert Armstrong believed according to a sermon I listened to and the view I personally favour tentatively. There are a couple of verses that favour this possibility.

Revelation 22:2 also tells us that the leaves of the tree of life will be for the healing of the nations. For people to be healed they must be sick. Sick people after the New Jerusalem comes to earth? This can only be if we create more people who will be mortal before becoming immortal.

The other verse is Isaiah 9:7 which says that there will be no end of not just the government but the increase of his government. How could the government continue to increase into eternity if there is no future expansion of the Family of God?

There is one very interesting scripture in the Book of Revelation that I ran across that seems to indicate Christians inheriting one other specific planet in our solar system.

Speaking to the church of Thyatira Christ says, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations....And I will give him **THE MORNING STAR** (Rev 2:26-28)"

Now we know the morning star is a symbol that usually refers to Jesus Christ but it doesn't seem to fit in this case. Why would Christ effectively say I give him myself? Could Christ mean He would give them the morning star as in the planet Venus? If it does and Venus is the first world that we start to remake into a planet of beauty then it will be a fitting reward to the christians of the Thyratiran era in the Middle Ages who had to endure nightmarish religious persecution at the hands of the Catholic Church.

By the end of the Great White Throne Judgment period there may be approximately 200 billion members in God's family. If you think that's a lot, scientists estimate there are about 400 billion billion stars in the universe. Divide the number of stars by the number of God members and you have a galaxy or two for everyone on average. God has created all these solar systems with planets on to one day be inhabited. We will be the ones to help populate those solar systems way out there.

Hypothetically, can you imagine tens of thousands of years from now if there have been several generations of new people who have subsequently created people on other worlds and they meet those of us in the church now? They will think its an incredible privilege to meet someone who was the firstfruits on earth, the very first world!

What a destiny! I truly hope that you've enjoyed this look at God's plan for both the angels and mankind. It has been sort of a history, not only of the earth, but the whole universe from past eternity to the future eternity that awaits us in the Kingdom of God.

Our ultimate destiny as fully-fledged sons of God is to help rule and beautify the **ENTIRE UNIVERSE** under the direction of the Father and our elder brother, Jesus Christ. Then we'll have glorified spirit bodies that will not be subject to physical laws as we know them. We'll be able to hurtle throughout the universe far faster than the speed of light - at the speed of thought!

Our bodies will be far superior to Superman's for we will be faster than a beam of light, more powerful than a million nuclear warheads and able to leap across the galaxy in a single bound!

Our ultimate destiny could be summed up in the following words. "Space - the final frontier! These are the voyages of the family Elohim. It's bold eternal mission - to create new worlds and new life forms and to boldly go where no man has gone before!"