

Royal Vision

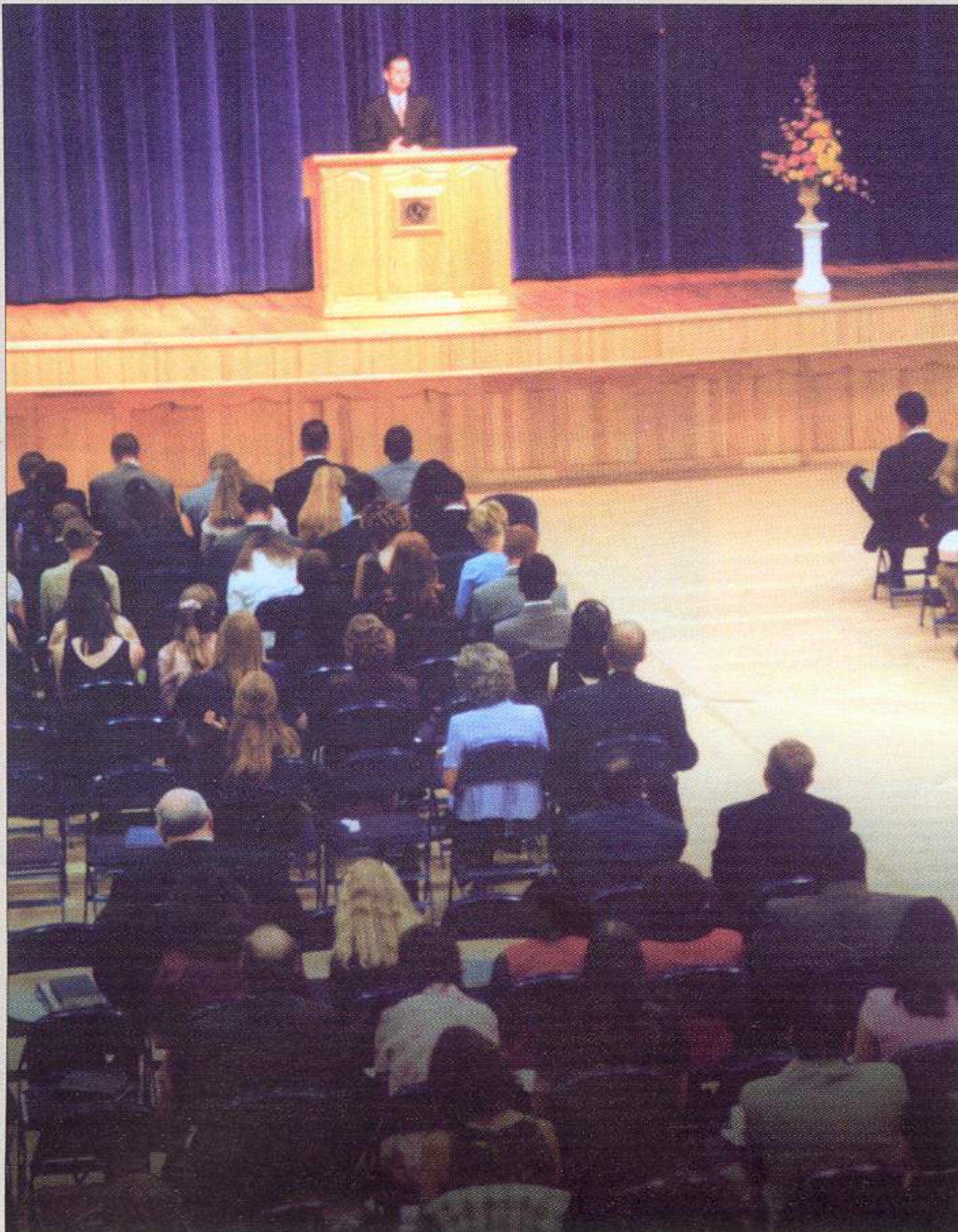
September-October 2003

FALL
HOLY
DAYS

EDUCATING ALL OF MANKIND

ROYAL VISION

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2003 • VOLUME 6, NUMBER 5



About the cover The fall holy days remind us that God's plan is about educating all of mankind (photo by Aubrey Mercado).

Editor in chief Gerald Flurry

Senior editors Stephen Flurry, Dennis Leap

Managing editor Wik Heerma

Associate editors Joel Hilliker, Ryan Malone

Contributing editors Eric Anderson, Mark Jenkins

Contributors Gareth Fraser, Ron Fraser, Andrew Locher, Wilbur Malone, Gary Rethford, Wayne Turgeon

Proofreaders Donna Grieves, Jason Hensley

Prepress production manager Ryan Malone

Circulation manager Jason Hensley

Royal Vision (ISSN10979808) is published bimonthly by the Philadelphia Church of God, 1019 Waterwood Parkway, Suite F, Edmond, OK 73034. Periodicals postage paid at Edmond, OK, and additional mailing offices. © 2003 Philadelphia Church of God. All rights reserved.

Subscriptions: Subscriptions are sent free to all members and co-workers of the Philadelphia Church of God. Address all communications to the Philadelphia Church of God, P.O. Box 3700, Edmond, OK 73083.

Notice: *Royal Vision* cannot be responsible for the return of unsolicited articles and photographs.

U.S. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Royal Vision*, P.O. Box 3700, Edmond, OK 73083.

ARTICLES

- 2 Jude: The Most Urgent Prophecy Yet for This End Time**
by Gerald Flurry

The Day of Trumpets

- 9 God's Attitude Toward Sin**
by Joel Hilliker

- 15 Fight On and Build In Faith!**
by David Fraser and Ron Fraser

- 16 Character and Your Incredible Human Potential**
by Brian Davis and Wik Heerma

The Feast of Tabernacles

- 20 God's Millennial Rest**
by Gareth Fraser

- 22 S.T.E.P. Forward at the Feast**
by Fred Dattolo

The Last Great Day

- 25 The Hope of All Mankind**
by Mark Jenkins

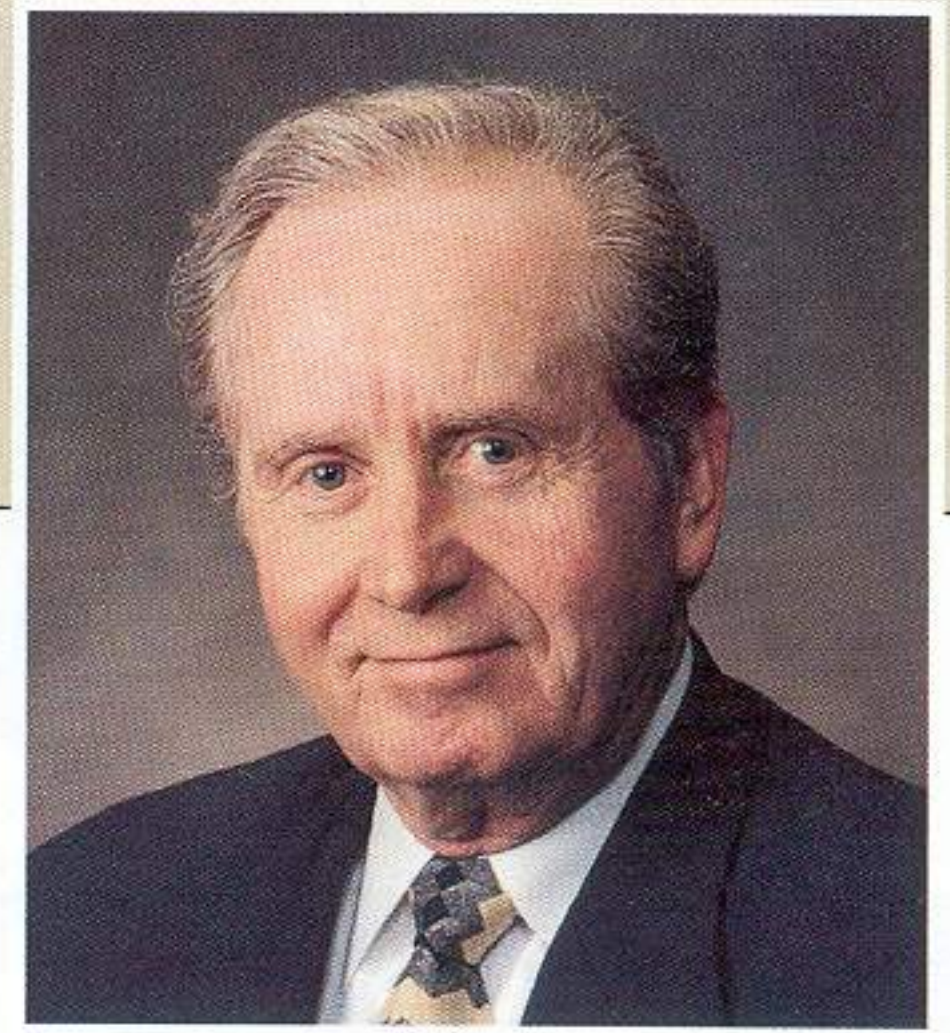
DEPARTMENTS

- 1 Greetings, Brethren and Co-Workers!**

- 28 Q&A**

- 29 From Our Readers**

GREETINGS, BRETHREN AND CO-WORKERS! ...



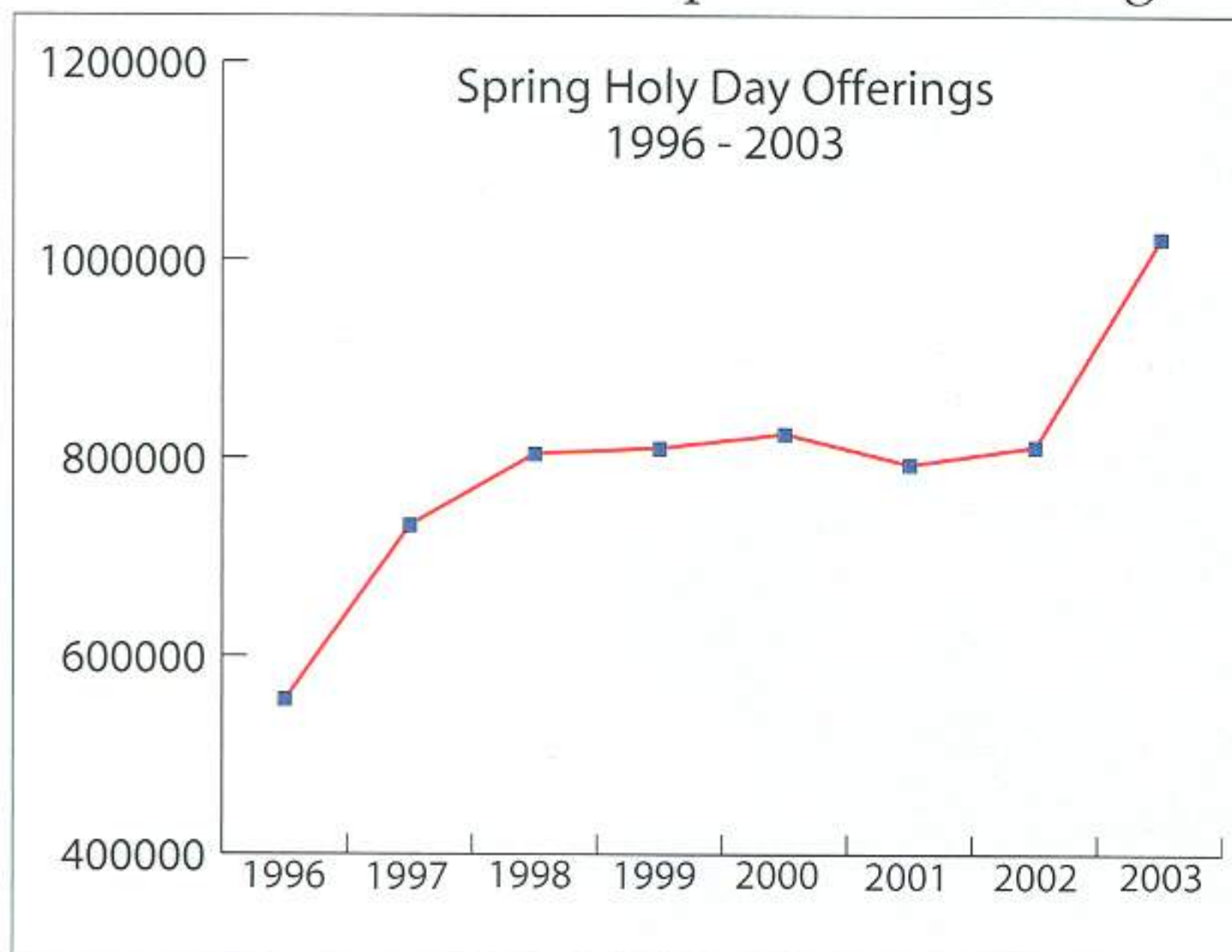
Excluding bequests, donation income for the first 7 months of this year is up 4.5 percent over last year. This increase is due in large part, to OUR LARGEST SPRING HOLY DAY SEASON EVER! Spring holy day offerings were up 26 percent when compared to the previous year. Thank you!

Our cash reserves have also been boosted in recent months with several special substantial offerings from both co-workers and members.

The generous support of members and co-workers in the first half of this year has enabled us to fully repay the one million dollar loan drawn down to purchase the copyrights to the 19 works of Mr. Armstrong, as well as build a small balance in anticipation of the costs facing the work over the next few months.

As we enter the last half of this year, the demand on the financial resources of the work will be at an all time high, so please pray about the Feast of Tabernacles offerings.

Some of the expenditures facing the work in the coming months are outlined below.



With the acquisition of the right to print and distribute the 19 works of Mr. Armstrong several months ago, the work is currently negotiating printing contracts to produce thousands of volumes to be offered during the coming television season. Starting with Mr. Armstrong's flagship publication, *Mystery of the Ages*, the work plans to print these 19 works as fast as financial and human resources allow.

In addition to printing the newly obtained works, we need to restock many of our existing books and booklets.

Work has already begun on the construction of a new mail processing facility in anticipation of a surge in literature request volume as we commence the distribution of the newly obtained works.

This 17,400 square feet literature fulfillment center is expected to cost approximately \$600,000 and will be paid in cash as construction progresses.

The Key of David television program will be re-launched this fall. It is intended that the program will again be aired in several of the major television markets across the United States, including New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Washington D.C. as well as many international regions including, Canada, Britain and Europe, the Carribean, Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

Co-workers have contributed 25 percent of our income so far this year and the total number of active co-workers has increased by 72 percent over the period from 1998 to 2002. An active co-worker is defined as someone with a status code "C" AND who made a financial contribution during the respective year.



Gerald Flurry

Editor in Chief

JUDE

The Most Urgent Prophecy Yet for This End Time!

BY GERALD FLURRY



LIQUID LIBRARY

Jude wrote his epistle during dangerous, urgent times, much like our own. God has now revealed how Jude's message of warning and of encouragement applies prophetically to us today!

JUDE WAS WRITTEN ABOUT A.D. 68-69—just before the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. That destruction was only a *type* of a far greater calamity in this end time.

Jude discusses the “last time” (v. 18) for good reason. The Greek word for *last* means “*extreme, most remote,*” in reference to “time generally that which *concludes everything*” (*Hebrew-Greek Key Bible Study*).

The Greek word translated *time* means “measure of moments” and “time of opportunities.”

As the Apostle John wrote, we are in “the last hour.” But here, Jude refers

to *moments*—or a time frame of LESS than an *hour*—a time of minutes, or moments.

It is the worst time ever. But it is perhaps the best time ever for *opportunities*—just prior to the Second Coming of Christ. There are spiritual and physical opportunities galore in this end time. However, there is only a very short span of time to exploit those opportunities.

The greatest danger is in forgetting what we have learned. So Jude admonishes us to *remember* (vv. 5, 17).

Ninety-five percent of God's people have forgotten what they were taught in this end time. What sets the 5 percent apart is their remembering. God

puts their name in a book of remembrance (Mal. 3:16).

OUR SINGLE GREATEST ACT OF REMEMBERING WAS A SIX-YEAR COURT CASE! We fought in court for the writings of Herbert W. Armstrong and won. We had to show God the depth of our remembering! These fruits show how profoundly we remembered and loved God's truth.

God is teaching us to remember forever. We must reach the point where we will *never* forget!

If you look at the history of God's Church and national Israel, this was their big sin. They didn't love God's truth enough to remember it.

The end-time Laodiceans don't love God's truth (II Thes. 2:10). God tested our love for Mr. Armstrong's writings in court. Because of our love for that truth, we prevailed.

How much do you love *Mystery of the Ages? The United States and Britain in Prophecy? The Missing Dimension in Sex? The Wonderful World Tomorrow? The Incredible Human Potential* book and the booklets?

GOD WANTS TO KNOW!—because all of those books were revealed to Mr. Armstrong by God.

I believe Jude 3 applies directly to our court case today, more than to any other battle we will face. Christ's wife contends for the truth. SHE REFLECTS THE CHARACTER OF HER HUSBAND! Without that spirit we would not have Mr. Armstrong's writings, and therefore could *not* deliver God's message to the world!

If we had failed, we too would have been Laodicean. It was our faith in Mr. Armstrong's God-inspired writings that caused us to fight, or contend.

Also, Jude discusses the 10,000 saints (v. 14). This too is an end-time phenomenon, which we'll discuss later. It all happens at Christ's Second Coming.

The commentaries discuss Jude's "harsh view." He wrote more forcefully than other biblical writers. However, there was a good reason why. Jude's work and our work today have the goal of snatching Church members out of the fire—physically and spiritually! (v. 23). The Jews were facing the worst suffering ever up to that time—the A.D. 70 catastrophe. But it was only a type of the worst suffering ever, to come upon the nations of Israel in this end time (Matt. 24:21-22; Dan. 12:1; Jer. 30:1-9).

Jude, like the other apostles, thought he was living in the end time—the time we are now living in.

Even in Jude's time, it was getting frighteningly bad. The Romans were closing in on the Jews, which was to lead to widespread human cannibalism!

The unparalleled catastrophe of A.D. 70 was almost upon them. God's true Church was about to be taken to a place of safety, called Pella (located in Jordan today).

And today it is getting close to a worse calamity, where God's people will once again be taken to a place of safety (Rev. 12:14). Jude's tribulation was only a *type* of what is coming upon the American and British peoples, and the little nation of Jews in the Middle

East. (If you don't know who the nations of Israel are, request our free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.)

But the physical is only a small part of the problem. FIFTY PERCENT OF GOD'S OWN PEOPLE ARE GOING TO LOSE THEIR ETERNAL LIVES. THAT IS THE WORST CATASTROPHE IN THIS END TIME—BY FAR! And perhaps the worst catastrophe ever in God's Church in terms of numbers.

Are we spiritual enough to even comprehend the magnitude of that disaster?

Thankfully, 50 percent of God's people will repent in the nuclear Great Tribulation. That time is dangerously close. We are giving our people *the final warning!*

This is why Jude's prophecy is so "harsh." Time is running out. And we are facing the worst crisis ever.

God's people are in a war in this last hour. We live in a dangerous time, physically and spiritually.

Spiritually, it's a wonderful war—if we follow Jesus Christ, our Commander in Chief, and attain the victory He wants us to have. What spectacular rewards will come to those who win this war! But it's also a terrifying war, because not everyone is going to win—even though each one of us *should*.

Jude has a message primarily for us today—at this specific time! This mes-

sage reveals how we will get through the trials ahead to finish this work.

sage reveals how we will get through the trials ahead to finish this work. Jude was going to give a message concerning "the common salvation," or show that what most people think salvation is, really is not. But an extreme crisis developed within the Church which made him realize that he needed to give a different message. "It was needful" for him to write on this more serious subject. That could be translated, "I felt constrained, or compelled, to do something I wasn't planning on doing." He too was living in dangerous times, having to deal with shocks and crises, just like we do.

False teachers were proclaiming a shocking heresy. It was like a jarring alarm in the night. Then Jude delivered a stirring call to arms!

Jude used the word *beloved* three times. He loved those people and wasn't crying wolf.

After the Apostle Paul was killed, the Apostle John began tending to his area, which took him up into what is now Turkey. Based on my study I would speculate that Jude stayed in the area where John was and took care of God's people in and around Jerusalem. Jude

The RSV reads, "contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (v. 3). That means, win the court case or lose everything!

sage reveals how we will get through the trials ahead to finish this work.

This is *new revelation* from the book of Jude. Herbert W. Armstrong did not understand this epistle the way we now understand it.

Saving People From the Fire

"Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied" (Jude 2). God's mercy, peace and love are always to be *multiplied*. We are given God's wonderful revelation to give to others as He gave it to us. We must give it to the world as a *witness*.

We must always be thinking *multiply* when it comes to God's revealed truth.

Next comes the shocker. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto

you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (v. 3).

It was at this same time, however, that false teachers were rising up *inside* the Church of God! Does that sound familiar? Those of us in the PCG have lived through an even worse nightmare.

The indication is that Jude wrote this epistle just before the holocaust of A.D. 70. "And others save with fear, *pulling them out of the fire*; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (v. 23). The Revised Standard Version (RSV) translates this, "*snatching them out of the fire*." There is a dual meaning here. This "fire" refers to the A.D. 70 holocaust, when some thought the world would end (it was so bad that the Church had to flee to Pella). It also refers to a *coming* holocaust just ahead

of us that will be much worse than A.D. 70! God's Church again will have to be delivered to a place of safety.

The coming holocaust will not be pleasant. The first-century holocaust was something that caused Jude to do everything he could to try to snatch people out of the fire, physically and spiritually, just like we are doing today. If people don't wake up and repent, the fire will consume them!

A still deeper meaning is that these people are also being snatched out of the lake of fire.

The best evidence that Jude wrote this epistle just before A.D. 70, I believe,

again? No—Jude says they were delivered "once for all." They are all of the foundational doctrines that we are to receive in the end time! And now it is up to us to **CONTEND** for that faith!

Can we see that there is no other faith on Earth that matters? Do we have deep faith in those restored basic doctrines of God? Christ told us an Elijah would "restore all things," but that man would not *author* those things—it was really **CHRIST** who did the restoring! He did that *through a man*, before His Second Coming. Christ restored the faith once delivered in the end time—through Mr. Armstrong.

You were invited into God's family after careful calculation! That must mean God knows and loves you in depth!

is that God is revealing this truth to us **NOW**—in the last hour, just before *our* holocaust! This is prophecy for *us*. Jude's experience probably had everything to do with making his book so intensely powerful and urgent for us today!

We are getting very close to the time when we will be taken to a place of safety, as was the Church in A.D. 70. Jude knew it was close. And, amazingly enough, the closer it got, the more people rebelled against God's truth—just like today!

Jude had a harsh message for those people—and our people today.

Contend for the Faith

Jude 3 in the RSV reads, "Beloved, being very eager to write to you of our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to *contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*"

What is Jude talking about? Think about this: He says to contend for the faith that was *delivered*. He is not talking about something ethereal or intangible. He's talking about faith *in a body of beliefs*, or authoritative teachings, that were *delivered* to them!

God had delivered and restored His truth to that era. He did the same in our day, through the end-time Elijah (Matt. 17:10-11). Mr. Armstrong gave us 18 restored truths. Do you think someone else will come and restore those truths

Now we have to *contend* for that truth. *Contend* is a military word! That word means *war*! It means *fighting* for the truth. The RSV reads, "contend for the faith which was **ONCE FOR ALL** delivered to the saints" (v. 3). **THAT MEANS, WIN THE COURT CASE OR LOSE EVERYTHING!** If we had failed, then we would have lacked the strength to do God's work. These are the only restored truths we will receive in this end time (summed up in the 19 works of the copyright victory). *Lange's Commentary* reads, "No other faith will be given."

Mr. Armstrong established "the faith which was once ... delivered unto the saints." This too happened in what is described as the end time (Matt. 24:14; 17:10-11). The Laodiceans today are now failing to get that message to the world.

They stopped *contending* for much of what God established through Mr. Armstrong. Does anybody really think God will accept people into His Kingdom who allowed all that restored truth to just be buried? No—we get it one time around, and that's it. There is one fundamental body of beliefs; Christ restored them, and He won't do it again.

Satan wants us to have faith in something fuzzy and hazy. His version of faith is similar to his version of *love*—something confusing and meaningless. God's faith is specific and exact: something you would even go to court over—not some vague spiritual blob!

Can we see how specific Jude's message is for us?

Here is an interesting quote from the *Hebrew-Greek Key Bible Study* (emphasis mine): "Jude is thought to have written this book *after* Peter's death, but before the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70)." Peter discussed his own future death in his epistles (II Pet. 1:13-15). He knew his death was imminent—that he was about to be put to death for preaching Christ's message!

When Mr. Armstrong died, the preaching of heresy almost immediately destroyed that church. Is it possible the same thing happened when Peter was put to death? I believe so, and here's why. Jude is comprised of only one chapter, and it quotes II Peter 2 very heavily. Compare II Peter 2 with Jude. There is no greater case of plagiarism in the Bible, and I think for good reason.

Peter was the chief apostle. Peter's being killed would have made his prophetic words ring in the ears of God's people. His death would have stirred God's Church more than anything—except substituting what he taught for heresy!

If that happened—and the time frame has to be close to right—God may not have wanted Peter's name mentioned in Jude's book. The main focus is on our time—not Peter's.

We must remember that Jude is *specifically* about a Church takeover from the inside, in the Laodicean era of the "last time."

Imagine how Peter's being killed would have shocked God's Church. But even more, Peter's prophecy (especially in chapter 2) was now being fulfilled in Jude's time (and even more so in this end time). It would have had a sledgehammer impact!

James was killed about A.D. 62, Paul about A.D. 66-67, Mark and Peter around A.D. 68-69. The book of Peter was written from Babylon on the Euphrates (Iraq today) in the period A.D. 67-69. He prophesied about the "last days" (II Pet. 3:3). His book also focuses on the end time.

Did the death of the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Armstrong both lead to a U-turn in God's true Church? After the death of both, evil men crept into the ministerial offices (Jude 4). Then the churches were destroyed—spiritually and physically.

Who was and is responsible for rejecting the false teachings? First, the ministry, and secondly, the members.

Many observed the preaching of heresy today and did little or nothing. They often said, "This is God's Church, and we can't leave." But God's Church can become Satan's before our eyes, if we don't contend for the truth! That is exactly what happened in five of the seven Church eras (Rev. 2 and 3).

Each one of us is responsible. God judges each one of us in this area.

First Peter prophesied of what was coming. Then he was killed. He told the members exactly what was coming, and it all happened precisely as he prophesied. Mr. Armstrong prophesied that if we didn't learn from the Church's rebellion in 1978-79, history would repeat itself! Overall, the Church did *not* remember, and history did repeat itself!

Sanctified, Preserved, Invited!

Before we get into more of the sober aspects of Jude, let's look at something that is very encouraging.

In the RSV, Jude addresses his letter "to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ" (v. 1). That is the way it reads in most commentaries: something like *called, beloved and kept*, in that order.

But that is wrong. In the King James, which really is a better translation, this letter is addressed "to them that are *sanctified* by God the Father, and *preserved* in Jesus Christ, and *called*." Notice the difference! Most Bibles switch the order around, but if you look at the original Greek, the word *called* is listed third. This is the inspired order. Why?

This verse confirms something that God's people have believed for many years, but never had a scripture to reinforce the idea.

This "calling" is not some casual thing like just happening to turn on the Church television broadcast. This word *called* has a deeper meaning. Jude says that first of all we are *sanctified* by God the Father, then *preserved* in Jesus Christ, and then finally we are *called*. Quite a different sequence of events! But that's the way it reads in the Greek.

In verse 1, the word *called* would better read *invited*—that is the first definition of the word, and the one the translators should have used. This is talking about something different from the verse that says "many are *called*, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14), where we preach God's message to the world. This verse teaches us God's CAREFUL SELECTION PROCESS. First a person is sanctified, or set apart, by the

Father, then he or she is preserved by Christ, then *invited into God's family*!

If God the Father sets us apart, certainly Christ would then have to preserve us, or Satan would destroy us spiritually!

SO BEFORE GOD INVITED YOU, YOU HAD A HISTORY WITH GOD. Every one of us had *some* history with God before we were invited.

We were under the closest scrutiny by the Father, probably for years, before we were invited. During that period of time, Christ had to preserve and protect us from Satan. Then, when, and if, we are ready, the Father invites us into His family! GOD EVEN HAS TO PREPARE US FOR THE INVITATION.

If God invites us, at this point He knows that our chances of being *born* into His family are excellent.

How special is it to be invited into the very family of God? If some king on this Earth invited you over, you would probably think, *Wow, that's really something!* But what about God the Father and Jesus Christ inviting you to be part of the BRIDE OF CHRIST? Inviting you right into His family? This is the greatest invitation you could ever have!

Doesn't it make sense that the Father would take a good look at these people before they were actually invited, and see how they responded to trial and test, or how they responded to some of His truth or correction? What father wouldn't do that before saying, "I'd like you to marry my son"?

That is just what is happening: God the Father is setting people apart to see who will be His Son's bride! Of course He would assess our chances of succeeding before extending the invitation. Eternal life is at stake!

EVER! No divorce! The most exalted marriage ever!

God is going to expand His family. But first He needs a bride—a helpmeet—who can help work with the rest of that family who will be invited during the Millennium and Great White Throne Judgment. This invitation is given to only a tiny few—THE MOST SELECTIVE INVITATION THERE EVER WILL BE! Though we are the lowly of the world, we are the elite of God—and will be so for eternity!

When I think back on my experiences as a young man, it is easy for me to see how God must have been behind some of them. At one point, I moved into a building with six other guys, one of whom was a deep thinker. He got me interested in reading some fairly challenging material. I don't believe God could have ever worked with me, with my ignorance and temperament, before I got to know this young man. That experience conditioned my mind in some ways to receive God's truth.

Sanctified—preserved—invited! This is not a sloppy, hastily put together plan. You were invited into God's family after careful calculation. That must mean God knows and loves you in depth! Imagine how profoundly He knows you if He invited you in that way.

AND SURELY THAT MEANS THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE HE DECIDES *NOT* TO INVITE. Why go through the process, if that is not so?

You are a super-special son. You were invited. THIS IS THE GREATEST INVITATION GOD WILL EVER GIVE FOR ALL ETERNITY!

This brings up an interesting question: Why would God have waited until now to reveal this inspiring truth to us?

I think we can understand why, if we realize that we are in the last hour—

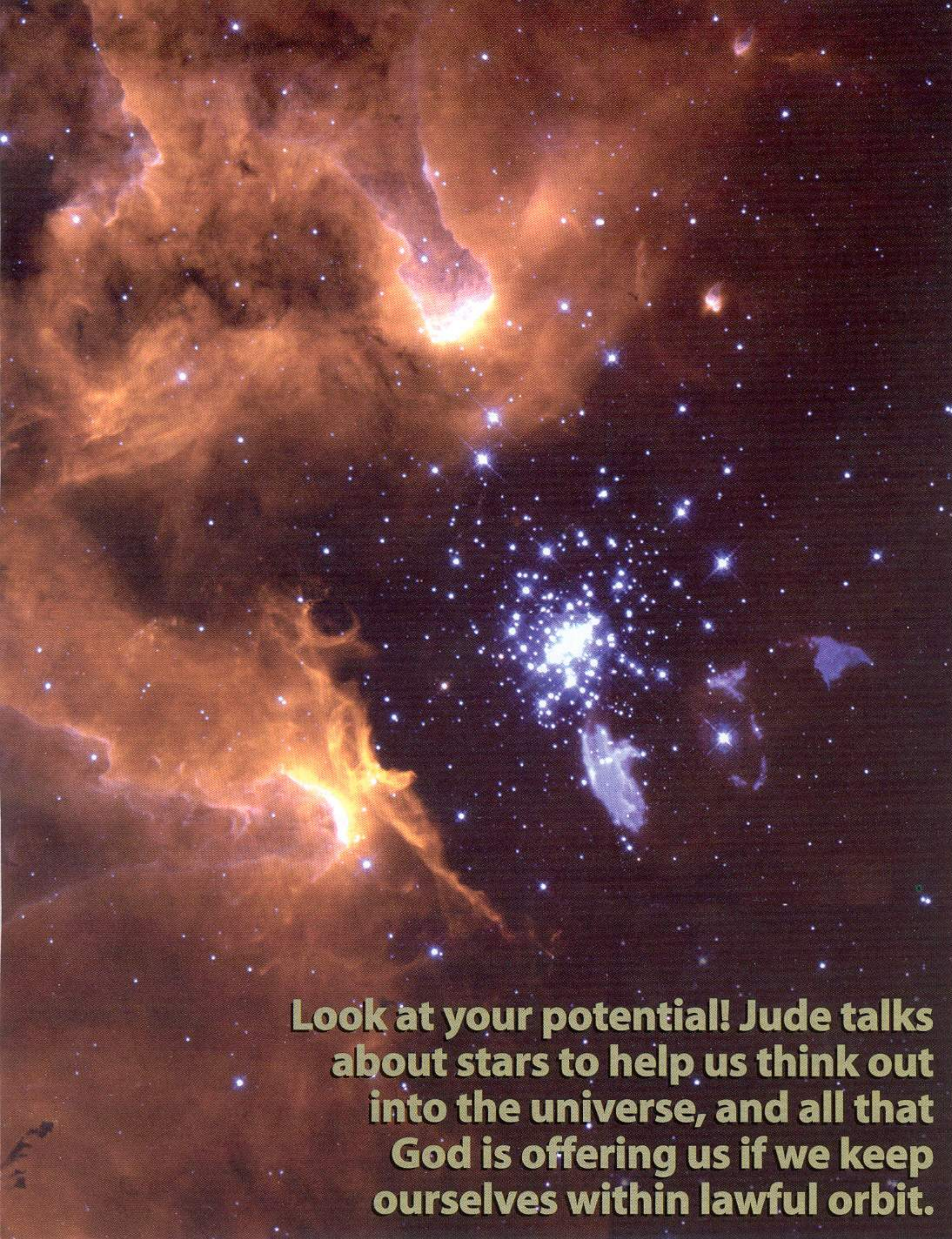
Being Christ's slave is the ultimate freedom! Then you are free from the bondage of the world, Satan and human nature.

We're either going to live forever or die forever! He would have to get very scientific about it. Can you imagine anything else being more important to Him?

What an inspiring truth!

This is the best the Father could ever give us. We will be that bride FOR-

the time of Satan's worst attack on the world, on the nations of Israel, and on God's people. He has never been so angry, and a terrible, satanic storm is coming upon us—the worst ever. In these times, I believe we are going to *need to know all about our spiritual roots*: why we are here and how we got here.



Look at your potential! Jude talks about stars to help us think out into the universe, and all that God is offering us if we keep ourselves within lawful orbit.

You didn't just stumble into God's Church! You were invited by God! There are no accidental sons in God's family—like an accidental pregnancy. God calculates it to the most minute detail!

This is exactly what God wants us to understand in this last hour.

AFTER THIS INVITATION INTO GOD'S FAMILY, YOUR STATURE SKYROCKETED! God is offering His firstfruits transcendent glory, beyond anything ever known to carnal men! We must be thankful—we were invited to be Christ's only bride forever! Eternal majesty is at stake. It defies common sense to think that God would do this in a haphazard way. We are the bride to be married to the Father's Son forever—unequalled stature for all eternity!

We are going to be a *helpmeet* to our Husband and rule the Earth and universe forever. We are the Father's sons and the bride of Christ. If we comprehend this reward, we will understand *why* fiery trials and intense tests are necessary. WE ARE BEING PREPARED FOR THE MOST EXALTED OFFICES GOD WILL EVER OFFER TO MANKIND!

The Slave of Christ

Jude's letter begins, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James" The word *servant* should actually be translated *slave*. Jude called himself a SLAVE of Jesus Christ.

He didn't call himself the *brother* of Christ (or an apostle). He only called himself the brother of James, who also

was Christ's brother. (James also did not discuss Christ as his physical brother.)

Of course, anyone who does the Father's will, Christ considers a spiritual brother (Matt. 12:49-50).

But why did Jude make this omission, calling himself a slave, not a brother?

John 7:3-5 shows that Christ's physical brothers didn't believe Him for quite a long time. I'm sure Jude would have been in that category. Perhaps he was remaining humble, thinking, *I waited so long before responding to my brother, I'm not even worthy to be called the brother of Christ.*

Also, Jude was trying to impart a far more profound understanding of the eternal family of God, and make us see *why* physical family. This is the ultimate vision that we all must have.

Realize, Jude grew up with the Logos. He was a normal human being who just happened to be reared and who grew up right alongside a man from outer space! And to make it even more difficult, He was perfect! I think you can see why Jude would have had difficulty with that. *His brother was the Logos—the Spokesman for God the Father!*

But by this time, Jude was a different man—a deeply repentant man. He knew who his brother really was.

Do *you* call yourself a slave of Jesus Christ? Do *you* act like a slave of Jesus Christ? Jude let the members and world know he was the slave of Jesus Christ by *teaching* and *example*.

Do people see you as a slave of Jesus Christ? He died for us. We were bought and paid for with a mind-boggling price. BEING CHRIST'S SLAVE IS THE ULTIMATE FREEDOM! Then you are free from the bondage of the world, Satan and human nature.

Lawless Men

In verse 4 of his epistle, we learn what Jude was so alarmed about: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

As Mr. Armstrong always taught, *lasciviousness* is the absence of restraint. In other words, people were turning the grace of God into lawlessness. They didn't like to be restrained. They despised God's law—His government.

These enemies of God "crept in"—into God's own Church! This is a

prophecy in this end time specifically for the Philadelphians in the Laodicean era!

Our ministers must be very careful about who they allow to attend services with the PCG. At the same time, we have to be careful who we ordain into the PCG ministry. Obviously, we don't want to go too far, but in both cases we must be careful of spiritual terrorist attacks!

The people Jude described "crept in unawares," or, as the *Vincent Word Study* describes, they slipped in by the side door. THEY WERE NOT INVITED BY GOD INTO HIS FAMILY.

This shows us how important it is to ensure that GOD is doing the inviting! He wants to set prospective members apart and let Christ preserve them until He invites them. We have *no right* to invite people into God's Church! If we do it ourselves, people will creep in who will cause tremendous problems. Look at what happened in the Worldwide Church of God.

Study this one verse, and you will see why God's Church does not have an open-door policy!

We often get criticized for that. But that criticism just shows a lack of understanding about God and His truth. No one would think it's alright to invite just anyone to be a doctor or lawyer, but when it comes to religion, a "come as you are" attitude is common in mainstream Christianity. But look at the problems Jude faced from *within the Church!*

These rebels were "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness," or lawlessness. They had the grace of God and perverted it—turned it into lawlessness! They had the government of God and turned it into a form of Satan's government—a government that no longer clings to God's law. This is specifically aimed at the Laodicean era today.

We must contend for what God gave us. NOTHING WAS EVER WORTH FIGHTING FOR MORE THAN THIS!

Satan is the one who proclaims grace without law. So these "ungodly men" follow his deceitful lawlessness. They reason that grace gives them a license to sin—when just the opposite is true.

A true minister of God is a gift from God (Eph. 4:11-12). He doesn't deny our "only Master and Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4; proper translation). False ministers don't want Christ to rule them and be their Master. True

ministers say, with David, "Oh how I love your law" and government (Ps. 119:97). God *invited* them into His ministry.

There is a second part to this equation. Jude was undoubtedly also referring to men already in the Church, whether invited or not. Then they crept into the ministry, where a person can be most effective in teaching heresy!

Satan knows how to exploit such a spiritual disaster. That is how he was most effective in destroying the WCG (II Thes. 2:1-4). And that is the focus of *Malachi's Message to God's Church Today* (request a free copy if you don't have one).

Saved From Egypt

Now let's see how Jude deals with this problem. We have experienced these same problems in this end time. Even today, there are still people falling away, from God's remnant. Jude has a powerful warning for us.

Notice the theme that Jude begins to focus on in verse 5: "I will therefore put you in *remembrance, though ye once knew this*, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not." "Ye once knew this" is better translated in the RSV: "You were *once for all* fully informed," as opposed to two, three or several times. The Laodiceans still know about coming out of Egypt, which means coming out of the world for us today. There are some things the Laodiceans today *cannot* forget.

Jude reminds them that God DESTROYED those who believed not. He brings people out of the world, and afterward He is going to have to *destroy* some of them! Prophecy shows that 50 percent of those invited in this end time will have to be destroyed forever—even after being brought out of Egypt with the *power of God!*

This is why the Philadelphia Church of God agitates the Laodiceans so much. They even recommend each other's Laodicean groups, but at the same time, warn people to avoid the PCG. Why? We remind them of what they were taught by God, and they know it and can't refute it! In their heart, they know we are right. That is why 50 percent of them will repent so quickly and so profoundly in the Great Tribulation.

Have the Laodiceans forgotten that all the adults who came out of Egypt

died in the wilderness? No. Have they forgotten that this is a type of our being called out of the world today, and a strong warning? No. Have they forgotten the government and law that God ruled them with for many years? No. Have they forgotten that God teaches there is only one true Church? No. But they have *refused* to understand what God is doing today. They have *chosen* not to remember, as far as that is possible. And here God illustrates the terrible penalty for not remembering.

Jude is reminding the first-century Christians of their own history, and prophetically he is doing the same for the end-time Laodiceans, with the PCG's help. Yes, God did bring them out of the world. That is true. But He is about to destroy them physically in the Great Tribulation, as He destroyed ancient Israel in the wilderness. Thankfully, 50 percent of the Laodiceans will repent in the Tribulation. But 50 percent will not repent and, but rather will be destroyed forever—by the God of love AND JUDGMENT!

This is dangerous knowledge! We either change and grow, or lose it all forever!

God performed *many miracles* to free us from Satan's bondage. We were "saved" from this evil world. And now God wants to save us forever. This also requires many miracles. But we have to repent and seek our transcendent future, which surpasses all human imagination!

Israel was destroyed in the wilderness because they lacked faith. We must *believe* God's Bible and have faith in God's miraculous, saving power.

Do we yearn for the world's ways? We must realize that IF WE GO BACK TO THE WORLD, WE WILL DIE FOR ETERNITY—unless we repent.

It's true that keeping your distance from the world is hard. But sometimes people say, *I just can't do it*. God thunders back, YES YOU CAN! You used my power to come OUT of Egypt—you can certainly use my power to STAY out of Egypt! We MUST do so! That is what Jude is prophesying for us.

Verse 5 shows that we were "saved" from Egypt—from suffering in this world. God worked miracles to SAVE us from that evil way of life. It took God's power. That history is evidence against us forever, if we turn our backs on Him. We have the power to conquer our problems!

Wandering Stars

The theme continues in verse 6: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

Mr. Armstrong taught us all about this history of Lucifer and the angels. The angels are called stars in the Bible (Rev. 1:20). In verse 13, Jude calls them "wandering stars"—stars out of orbit. Their "first estate" was Earth, where they were sent to administer the government of God. They failed, and that is why we are here today—to complete the monumental job they left unfinished. We are going to help restore God's government on this Earth.

Look at your potential! Jude talks about *stars* to help us think in universe terms, and all that God is offering us if we keep ourselves within a lawful orbit. We'll be given the authority to rule over those angelic stars!

The majority of God's own people are out of orbit—a worse tragedy, in some respects, than what happened to the rebellious angels! When a begotten son of God, a member of Christ's bride, wanders out of orbit, we are talking about eternal life and death. There is nothing worse. Jude applied that history of the angels to the people of his day, and he prophesied about the people of our day.

Jude says those fallen angels are "reserved in everlasting chains"—as if they are chained, mad dogs—and "under darkness," a blackness that broods over them. They live under an oppressive pall of gloom. It is always there, weighing on them! And, to one degree or another, that is true of the rebellious Laodiceans. They know about the Great Tribulation and the lake of fire. They try to forget these significant truths—but it broods over them. They also can't escape this oppressive, black cloud of doom hanging over their rebellious lives.

These angelic beings cannot die, and they know their future. That is why they are in such a rage! All they can think about is the black abyss they will enter very soon, and they know they have nothing to lose. These wandering stars have caused many of God's people to wander after them.

Jude puts it all into perspective with this history. Look at what the angels LOST! They had the opportunity to beautify the Earth and to administer

God's law—and then do the same to the whole universe! When you implement God's law, you always create beauty, because GOD is doing it through you. First the world, then the universe—that is why we are here! Imagine what the angels would have done to the Earth if they had listened to God! And imagine what we will do when we administer the law and government of God.

You can see why it is so important that we develop the character of God. We must build *more* character than even the righteous angels have—we must become perfect as our Father is perfect (Matt. 5:48). God wants to know whether we truly love His law and government, whether we really *want* His rule over us, whether we truly yearn to help Him build His beauty in the universe!

The fallen angels left their first estate of ruling this Earth with God's law, and their potential to rule the universe. Jude shows us that this is exactly what has happened to the Laodiceans today. The stakes are enormous. We have so much to gain and so much to lose. Oh, the magnificence of our estate!

The angels are dazzling in their appearance. They have such brilliance that it has struck fear in men and caused some to faint, when they were allowed to see some of the angels' brightness. But *we* are to look like the God of Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 1. This estate is fabulous beyond words to illustrate. But we can go out of orbit like the "wandering stars." And our *potential* is so much greater. We must submit to God's law and government to keep us in our spiritual orbit. If we fail, it is a far worse tragedy than that of the fallen angels! If we succeed, we are destined to rule over them as incorruptable, immortal members of the God family forever.

Jude sees all this in terms of fallen angels, stars and the universe. We are Christ's bride and must not leave this magnificent estate. Now is the time to comprehend our universe-shaking future!

The Hubble space telescope has been orbiting the Earth for over a decade. It is the size of a Greyhound bus, and so far the cost has been \$7 billion. It is the most perfect telescope ever—now we can see at least 1,500 different galaxies! It has been called the most important scientific discovery in history. The Hubble images are the most spectacular ever.

What is the purpose of this telescope? "So we can understand our ori-

gins," we are told. Of course, these scientists scorn the Bible—at least in this respect—because *only* the Bible gives us understanding of our origins. Jude discusses our origins. (For more information on your origins, request our free book *The Incredible Human Potential*.)

Scientists think they see the beginning of the universe. But they don't. Scientists also remark that Hubble "has given us the universe." But only in pictures. GOD WANTS TO LITERALLY GIVE US THE UNIVERSE TO RULE! THAT UNIVERSE IS TIED DIRECTLY TO OUR PURPOSE FOR BEING HERE.

We are not called to marry Christ just to help rule the Earth. We are destined to rule the universe too!

Why can't our scientists get excited about their true origins and transcendent potential?

The Lawful Orbit

Why did one third of the angels experience such a mega-disaster? For one very simple reason: They stopped keeping and administering God's law. Their government became corrupt.

They broke the law, and the law broke them, as it has broken the Laodiceans today.

Jude puts heavy emphasis on God's law and government. God saw that the angels lacked the character to rule the universe because they couldn't administer the law of God on this Earth. That is when God knew He had to recreate Himself through men (Gen. 1:26). It was a big turning point in the history of the universe. One third of the angels turned away from the only way the Earth and universe could be ruled. Now God knew it had to be done through His family. So men were created to be born into the family of God. The universe can only be ruled by the very character of God! That is the character required to administer God's government.

What is the *gospel*, or good news? It is the family of God administering the government of God. And that government is what rules the PCG—the same government that was rejected by the rebellious angels and Laodiceans. Satan rebelled, and mankind has followed and worshiped him instead of God (II Cor. 4:4).

Those saints who submit to God's law today will rule as Christ's bride for all eternity. ♦

TO BE CONTINUED