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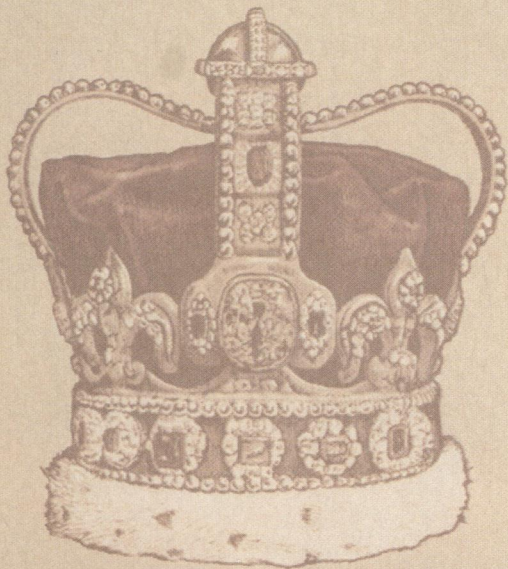
ROYAL VISION

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2006

Living Water

Christ's profound lesson
for the world from
a well in Samaria





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IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURES

The Gospel of John—Part 2

1 Christ Declared the Father

14 *Parents!* Save Your Teens from the Technology Trap

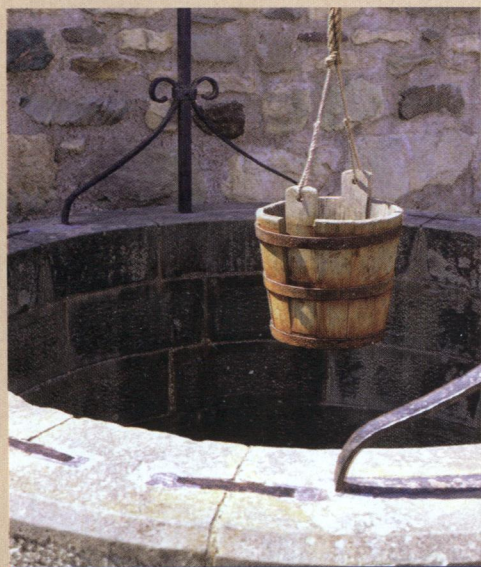
16 How to Build Good Habits in Your Child

20 The Cure for Shopping Addiction

Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Chapters 5-6

22 Pioneering in Public Opinion Polls

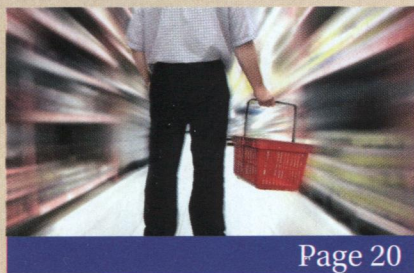
26 Discovering Rules of Success



COVER STORY | Page 1



Page 14



Page 20

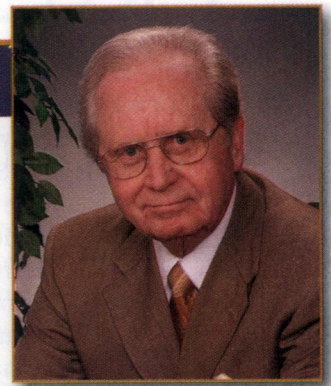
ABOUT OUR COVER Jesus Christ taught a deep lesson when He skipped a meal to speak with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. (Dreamstime)

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Christ Declared the Father

By Gerald Flurry

The Gospel of John part 2

IT IS INTERESTING THAT JOHN DOESN'T DISCUSS the angels and demons much. He is showing us a new kind of thinking—a thinking that is the polar opposite of Lucifer when he rebelled against God. I believe that Christ prepared John to focus on His Father as no other biblical writer did. John concentrates on the thinking of the Father and the Son.

The Apostle John is the only Gospel writer to include Jesus Christ's prayer the night before He was crucified. That prayer is recorded in John 17. John also discusses many of Christ's thoughts and deeds that the other Gospel writers did not. Peter was the leading apostle and John was the chief writer among the apostles.

Jesus Christ asked that God would protect His disciples—not only in that age, but every age—from the evil one (verse 15). He was quite concerned about the evil one. The King James Version just reads "the evil," which makes it sound like a hazy, impersonal force. But Christ was referring to a *very specific being*—a being who has greatly damaged God's end-time Church. God's people have witnessed that. We must know the fierce nature of the enemy we face.

Satan stirred *religious* translators to water down this verse taken from one of Christ's most heartfelt prayers, which He uttered THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS CRUCIFIXION!

No wonder the whole world is deceived! (Revelation 12:9). They don't believe Christ, therefore THEY DON'T KNOW THE EVIL BEING CALLED SATAN THE DEVIL.

This world worships the most evil being in the universe and thinks it is worshiping God! Satan is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4).

We know that Satan the devil is very capable of getting inside God's Church. He has done that in this end time—destroying the Work and turning 95 percent of the members away from God. Why is he able to do that? How can Satan have such a monstrously high success rate within God's own Church?

Christ was keenly aware of the devil on the last night of His life on this Earth. We also need Christ's

vigilance concerning Satan. GOD'S PEOPLE MUST THINK VERY SERIOUSLY ABOUT THIS ETERNAL LIFE-AND-DEATH SUBJECT!

A COMPLETE CHANGE

The Prophet Ezekiel gives us some critical background information about this evil spirit being. God, through Ezekiel, said this to Satan: "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" (Ezekiel 28:14).

Lucifer was one of the most splendid angels that God created—one of three archangels listed in the Bible. He was created to do a mighty work. This very impressive being was right there with God and the *Logos*—a covering cherub over the throne of God. He could learn how God thought—he could watch how God operated. God trained him for a significant job on Earth, and later in the universe. God wanted to use him in a magnificent way.

Lucifer was called the light bringer. He had a lot of the light of God to bring to this Earth. But he became the prince of darkness! Now, Satan is the ugliest, most unhappy, miserable being in the universe. He is totally opposite of God.

That is a shocking and horrifying nightmare! Something went dreadfully wrong. NOTHING LIKE THAT HAD EVER HAPPENED IN THE UNIVERSE BEFORE.

What happened? When you see something like that, there is always a giant lesson to learn from it.

OBSESSED WITH HIS OWN BRIGHTNESS

God continues: "Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created [God created him perfect], till iniquity [lawlessness] was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:15). Translators always seem to want to soften the word *lawlessness* by calling it *iniquity*.

Lucifer reached a point when he simply would no

LONGER KEEP THE LAW OF GOD, which is the love of God.

LUCIFER STOPPED LOVING GOD. That is where lawlessness leads. If you are breaking God's law, that is the end result. Satan began traveling down the wrong path, and he didn't stop—he just kept going.

God had a plan for this being—but instead of thinking about that vast universe and all eternity, Lucifer began to think about his own beauty!

Here we see how *the evil one* thinks. He is totally lawless. Anybody who keeps God's law becomes his primary enemy. Satan is lawless, which means he hates the government of God that teaches and implements God's law.

"By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire" (verse 16). Here is God's response to this violent being.

"THINE HEART WAS LIFTED UP BECAUSE OF THY BEAUTY, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee" (verse 17).

Lucifer had beauty and brightness. He became vain and proud about that, and it corrupted his wisdom! Because of that vanity, he became a massive failure. He became absorbed in his own brightness and beauty—which *God Himself* made!

Lucifer was like a speck in all of God's creation, but he selfishly focused on himself. In his own eyes, he became more important than God and all His creation.

Can we become that vain about beauty? Or about things? Can vanity corrupt our wisdom? It certainly can. Oftentimes, human beings get wrapped up in their own beauty or looks or things. We can become self-absorbed.

This is an amazing development! God had a plan for this being—but instead of thinking about that VAST UNIVERSE and ALL ETERNITY, Lucifer began to think about *his own beauty*! He became OBSESSED with his own form and shape, which God Himself made and created!

Even though Lucifer was brilliant, you have to say he became terribly shallow—spiritually.

Yes, he was a mind-dazzling creation—YET HE WAS NOTHING LIKE THE *Logos* OR GOD! He didn't have Revelation 1 brilliance and brightness! His beauty didn't approach God's own beauty. Still, he grew self-obsessed!

Have you witnessed that happen to human beings? I have even seen members of God's own Church, who possess the Holy Spirit, orient their minds so much on themselves—or their *things* or *some kind of beauty*

they like—that IT HAS TAKEN THEM AWAY FROM THE GOD WHO CREATED THEM!

GOD CREATED US ALL—and yes, He did create us with a certain beauty and brightness. But it is madness to get our minds focused on THAT, rather than the FAR MORE beautiful, far more dazzlingly bright, Creator God and His plan!

THE OPPOSITE OF LUCIFER

Consider again the Gospel of John. The Apostle John describes the *Logos* as being so much brighter than Lucifer ever was—so much more beautiful in form and shape. And yet, when He became a man, what did Jesus Christ focus on? GOD THE FATHER! In verse after verse after verse, Christ said, *This truth originated with my Father—My Father is greater than I—I do nothing but what I see my Father do.*

Except for the Father, Christ possessed unparalleled beauty and unmatched brightness. But Jesus Christ NEVER thought about Himself to the extent that it was unlawful. Study that in John's Gospel—it is one of the most exciting studies you will ever have! What love and what humility that God in the flesh demonstrated when He was on Earth.

That was the same love and humility He possessed as the *Logos* for eternity! *Why couldn't Lucifer have learned from that majestic example?*

In his Gospel, John virtually SKIPS OVER what happened with the angels! That is a stern warning to us. Satan and one third of the angels are to be plunged into the blackness of darkness forever. God saw then only He could be trusted to rule the universe. So John focuses on how God is recreating Himself in man.

BEAUTY IS VAIN

God says in Proverbs 31:30 that beauty is vain. I don't think most people who are beautiful believe that.

A young man may set his sights on a very physically beautiful woman. What is that beauty going to accomplish? God wants us to passionately give our lives to His Work the way Jesus Christ did. Will that woman's beauty help that young man in the Work? I know of no way it would help the Work. It hasn't done anything for us here at headquarters that I know of.

God is trying to teach us that there is a DEEPER KIND OF BEAUTY you had better make your priority, or you will get in serious trouble.

How many times have we seen *spiritual beauty* overlooked in human beings?

Even in God's Church, this is a danger, because we can follow the world's example, where beauty is almost EVERYTHING! Yet God says it is NOTHING, if you look at it spiritually.

Lucifer had tremendous beauty, and he got his mind on *that*, of all things. That is stunning to me.

Obviously, a man who is going to get married wants a woman that is appealing to him—but you had better beware of the danger there. If your heart is in God's Work—if you are giving your whole life to God and this work like Christ did—you must be extremely careful.

Haven't we all seen a few outstanding gals—who possessed truly dazzling spiritual beauty—overlooked because maybe they didn't have the physical beauty that some other women have? The same can be true the other way, too—men being overlooked for purely *physical* reasons.

We don't want to get our minds on that! That is the way Satan was thinking, if you can imagine that. This great created being actually got his mind on *his own beauty*! That took precedence over everything, and it fouled up his mind. He began to corrupt his wisdom and just became obsessed with *himself*!

Lucifer introduced a new kind of thinking in the universe that was never there before. How ugly he became, LOSING SIGHT OF THE REAL BEAUTY THAT GOD WAS CREATING IN HIM. That became the worst disaster ever, before mankind was created.

Lucifer hated God's law. He rebelled and became lawless. That is the spirit and way of life that fills this Earth. Now mankind follows its lawless god! And that thinking is destroying God's Earth as it did much of the universe. It will also destroy your eternal life.

The Apostle John shows us how to think like God and avoid Lucifer's crushing disaster.

What struck me most about John's Gospel was how the Almighty Logos kept *exalting His Father*. What an obedient Son He was and is.

Lucifer failed utterly because he *exalted himself*—not his Creator.

John's Gospel is probably the most wonderful book in the Bible to illustrate how Christ focused on His Father. Christ always directed us to His Father—never to Himself.

His purpose for coming to Earth was to declare His Father (John 1:18). The good news is about how we can be born into His Family!

Satan is still the god of this world. He has sold his self-oriented line of reasoning to the world—and that is exactly the way the world thinks. John was doing everything he could to discourage people from thinking that way.

Certainly beauty is a wonderful thing. I'm not against beauty. God created it. But it is still vain. It's not of real value to God, or I suppose He would have made all of us extremely beautiful and handsome physically.

Let's not forget that we are all made in the likeness of God. But that's only the beginning. God is now creating His own mind and character in His first-fruits. In the resurrection we shall be born into God's Family with unparalleled beauty that lasts forever!

That is where our focus must be. Because that

Let's not fall in love with the creation—let's fall in love with the Creator!

God is trying to teach us that there is a deeper kind of beauty you had better make your priority, or you will get in serious trouble.

is what should excite us mightily. We are going to have the magnificent beauty of that God pictured in Ezekiel chapter 1 and Revelation chapter 1—forever!

We must think about this more deeply—maybe far more deeply than what we have in the past.

There is nothing more exciting than the thinking of God. If you really want to bring excitement into your life, study God's thinking, and emulate God's thinking!

LET'S NOT FALL IN LOVE WITH THE CREATION—LET'S FALL IN LOVE WITH THE CREATOR!

What is He like? What is God like, who can create human beings and angels, who can design and manufacture the magnificent universe? Think about GOD! Because THAT IS WHAT WE CAN BECOME—if we can get our minds off ourselves, our own beauty or something physical that dazzles us, and get our minds on the CREATOR!

IT MAKES SENSE to fixate on God—to be dazzled by God. But it isn't logical to a selfish mind.

It's *lawless* to focus on beauty the way Lucifer did. We must anchor our minds in GOD'S LAW. The FIRST COMMANDMENT is, *You shall have no other gods before the true God!*

We are to become perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect—in mind and character (Matthew 5:48). THAT IS UNPARALLELED AND UNSURPASSED BY ANY OTHER KIND OF BEAUTY.

Think about it: Is beauty in this world more a blessing than a curse? I don't think so. I would say *beauty is more of a curse*. Look where it leads the men and women who have it! Look at the kinds of lifestyles it leads them into. It can be very dangerous.

If you're a man who is committed to and whose passion is God's Work, as it was with Jesus Christ, and you marry a woman who is only partially committed to God's Work, what will happen in your marriage? You will obviously have difficulties, conflicts and serious problems. And I submit to you that you will have some serious regrets.

There are examples of beautiful women in the Bible who were truly committed to God. There are also examples of beautiful women who weren't so committed, and husbands who had real problems with them. If you're a young man and you want a physically beautiful woman, you had better be careful in choosing her.

Nothing is better than a good marriage, and nothing is worse than a bad marriage.

Let's make sure we put God first and let God direct us to that beautiful woman or handsome guy. Let Him do the directing, and then the marriage will be right and good and beautiful and productive.

We must keep our minds focused on the Creator. The Apostle John tells us how to do that.

THINK LIKE GOD

As much as any writer in the Bible, John really ANALYZED GOD'S MIND. He was in love with the way God thinks.

LIKE JOHN, WE SHOULD ALL SEEK TO GROW IN THE MIND OF GOD.

John's focus on God's mind helped Him recognize just how much Jesus Christ focused on God the Father.

"[T]he only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, *he hath declared him*," John wrote (John 1:18). Christ truly DECLARED THE FATHER—and that's what you and I must do! IT'S ALL ABOUT FAMILY! We want to be in the Family of God! The Father is the Head—He will always be the Head. Christ knew that more deeply than any being ever will, and He is *totally* committed to this Family that His Father is bringing into being. No example in the Bible comes close to exalting the Father as Christ does.

John is the only biblical writer to even mention the *Logos*. Only John gave us the *Logos* perspective and the *Logos* thinking. The Word was the Spokesman for the God Family even before He became God's Son. When He came to this Earth, He was speaking for the Family, but He was not the Head and He wanted everybody to know that! So He kept pounding the lesson home.

But if you look at Christianity today, you see all of the focus on Jesus Christ! THAT OFFENDS CHRIST! Those religious people DON'T KNOW CHRIST if they teach it that way! Christ didn't teach it that way at all!

THERE IS NOTHING MORE EXCITING THAN THE THINKING OF GOD. IF YOU REALLY WANT TO BRING EXCITEMENT INTO YOUR LIFE, STUDY GOD'S THINKING, AND EMULATE GOD'S THINKING!

BRIDE OF CHRIST

Does Satan have excitement in his life? If he were physical, I'm sure he would have already killed himself. He is miserable and full of hate—the polar opposite of how God thinks.

The irony is, Lucifer was the light bringer, and had the opportunity to bring light to the whole world, and God wanted to give him *everything*. Instead, he became obsessed with himself. He had the unparalleled honor to be a covering cherub over the throne of God, watching God do everything. And he must have done such a good job that God sent him to rule Earth with a third of the angels to bring light—with the potential to fill the whole *universe* with light and godly beauty.

Had he succeeded on Earth, Lucifer would have undoubtedly ruled over all the universe under God. But he lost sight of that mind-staggering vision and became obsessed by his own beauty!

TO GOD, THAT IS LAWLESSNESS OF THE WORST KIND! What a universe-rattling failure.

This is real. It's not a Hollywood movie. It happened. Now Satan is out there, and he HATES everything about the God Family.

God's own Laodicean people are facing a catastrophe of even greater magnitude. However, 50 percent of them will die forever! How could they turn away from God the Father so easily if they really loved Him? How could they rebel against the One who has given them everything? What's wrong with their thinking? Well—God says they are “rich, and increased with goods” (Revelation 3:17). THEY ARE INTO BEAUTY—PHYSICAL BEAUTY. They have exalted their own *physical desires*.

The tragedy is, Jesus Christ was transforming them into THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BRIDE THERE EVER WILL BE THROUGHOUT ALL ETERNITY! There will be only one bride of Christ to rule the universe with Him forever! The fact that they chose their own kind of physical beauty is INSULTING, LAWLESS, OBSCENE! But we have seen it happen.

Besides God the Father and Jesus Christ, NOTHING WILL EVER BE MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN CHRIST'S BRIDE! God is making His bride beautiful! We have the opportunity to be part of that! He is building the most gloriously beautiful character in us. Physical beauty and things have *nothing* to do with it.

WE WILL BE THE BRIDE OF JESUS CHRIST FOR ALL ETERNITY. I wonder if that truth still grips us and shakes us and fills us with the kind of zeal that Jesus Christ has!

Who are WE to be given an opportunity like this? There will never be another opportunity like it.

God calls the lowly of the world for a reason: because the rest of the world is so caught up in the physical. God chooses lowly people in order to confound the wise and the beautiful of this world.

But still—we can get wrapped up in ourselves. All we are is just *a little speck of dirt on this Earth* in the vast universe. Yet we can become enamored by this little speck of mud. When we get excited about ourselves, WE FORGET ALL ABOUT THE VAST UNIVERSE AND THE FAMILY OF GOD AND EVERYTHING OF VALUE.

John does a marvelous job of helping us get our minds on the Creator so we don't end up like the god of this world. HE PROVIDES THE SOLUTION TO LUCIFER'S REBELLION! HE GETS US INTO THE THINKING OF GOD HIMSELF.

THE BRIDE'S GREATEST BEAUTY IS THAT SHE THINKS LIKE HER HUSBAND. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*

A LESSON IN LOVE

One commentary calls the last chapter of John, the 21st chapter, an *appendix* to the Gospel. Chapter 20 provides a strong conclusion about faith, so, this

commentary reasons, chapter 21 is tacked on and really shouldn't conclude the book.

The authors of that commentary are presumptuous and wrong. Chapter 21 is the *perfect* conclusion. If you understand it, you can see why the world would miss the point. People don't understand anything about the love of God! At one time, Peter didn't understand it either, so God had to straighten him out. Only John's account includes this incident.

John 21 begins by describing a scene after Christ had been crucified and resurrected, when His time on Earth was just about over. The Word had been made flesh, persecuted, brutally beaten and killed. He had risked losing His eternal life. This was the greatest act of love ever by the Father and the Son. Yet it appears Peter was discouraged and just wanted to fish. Other disciples joined him at sea, but they weren't catching any fish. Christ appeared to them, on the shore, though they didn't recognize Him at first. When He instructed them to cast their net on the other side of the ship, suddenly they began catching *all kinds* of fish! This miracle caused John to recognize who they were talking to. “Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord” (verse 7). At once, recognizing that this was the resurrected Word, Peter became so emotional that he dove into the sea.

Notice the exchange that followed.

“So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs” (verse 15). Christ had carried out the ultimate act of love, and now He wanted to discuss the disciples' love. Remember, the bride must think like her Husband. This is a deep lesson in God's love.

I believe Jesus Christ called him “Simon” because he was acting like Simon. He wasn't acting like the PETER that Jesus Christ wanted him to be—the stone—the leader of the disciples and of the Church!

“Peter,” He asked, “do you love me more than all these?”

Remember what Peter had said not long before: “Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended” (Matthew 26:33). In other words, *These other guys may reject you, but I won't*. Christ then prophesied that Peter would deny him three times that very night. When the prophecy proved true, Peter *wept bitterly*! There is no indication in Scripture that he was even present at Christ's crucifixion. Peter was a very depressed man. He didn't live up to his own expectations of himself; he didn't do what he knew God wanted him to do.

But Jesus Christ wasn't finished with him. And of course, those men didn't have God's Holy Spirit in them at that time.

Nevertheless, Christ's question made Peter feel uneasy. *Peter, DO YOU LOVE ME? Do you AGAPE me—have the LOVE OF GOD for me?*

In the end, Judas didn't love Christ. Lucifer didn't. The Laodiceans do not love Christ today. But there is

Peter lacked the love of God, and Christ was showing that to him. He wants us to learn this lesson too. If we love Christ, we remain loyal to Him—even if we have to die!

a love that will endure. To withstand crises, we must have this *agape* love—a love that is not in human beings. We must love Jesus Christ through everything in order to enter the Family of God, and that means *keeping the law of God* (1 John 5:3). That is what Christ was talking to Peter about.

Like many millions in this world, Peter thought he loved God—but he did not.

Jesus Christ had just set a marvelous example of lawkeeping and love for the disciples. They witnessed that, and they knew something was terribly wrong with themselves. They could contrast what their Savior had just done with the

fact that they had all run away when trouble came.

So John concluded his Gospel with this lesson. He is the only Gospel writer who did this. The world doesn't recognize this, because it doesn't have that love. Lacking this love, most people betray Christ when pressure comes. They don't know anything about the sacrificial love of God. They don't understand that you and I could lay down our lives for a friend, or for our mate, or for God simply because we have something in us called *agape*—the love of God.

PETER LACKED THE LOVE OF GOD, AND CHRIST WAS SHOWING THAT TO HIM. He wants us to learn this lesson too. If we love Christ, we remain loyal to Him—even if we have to die!

CHRIST'S TWO-PART COMMISSION

At the end of John 21:15, Christ told Peter, "Feed my lambs."

I have never understood this verse quite this way before: When Christ talks about *lambs*, He is discussing people who are not yet sheep. They have that potential, but have not yet been converted. He is referring to prospective members, co-workers and others God sends His message to.

In other words, Christ instructed Peter to GET HIS MESSAGE OUT TO THE WORLD! This is God's number-one commission for His Church.

The word *lambs* also helps us see how deeply God loves the people of this world—in spite of their rebellion. They were created to become members of God's Family, but first they must be converted and become God's sheep. God's plan is to save the world—not just those of us called today! Those billions of people in

this world are potential sheep in God's flock. Christ died for *the world* (John 3:16).

Can you sacrifice your life for the world as Christ did? Are *you* that committed to doing and finishing God's Work, as Christ was? (John 4:34). Are you that dedicated to getting God's message to the world?

IS GOD'S LOVE IN YOU?

Then there was something else Christ wanted Peter to do. "He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, *Feed my sheep*" (John 21:16).

Sheep refers to the *second part* of the Church's two-fold commission—feeding the Spirit-begotten members of the Church. They must be fed to grow and be born into God's Family.

Jesus Christ was talking about the Work of God.

FULFILLING THIS TWO-FOLD COMMISSION REQUIRES THE LOVE OF GOD!

The only way we will fulfill the Great Commission of going to the world is if WE LOVE THE WORLD. Christ told Peter, *If you don't have this love in you, you're not going to love the world by getting out there and doing everything possible to feed those people! I want you to love them, and help them understand God's purpose.* God's Church is a witness to the world in that way. Even if unconverted people understand only a part of God's purpose today, that's a start.

We are also responsible for distributing God's message to His Laodicean people. That requires tremendous *love*! My late wife referred to *Malachi's Message* as "a book of love," because it was a warning to God's precious Family. It really *is* a book of love! God rebukes and even scourges people He loves (Hebrews 12:6). We send this message to the Family because we love them, and we want to see them make it into the eternal Family of God! They have turned from God, but He hasn't stopped loving them.

If you love people, you help distribute God's message to them—whether they are lambs or sheep. You are active in doing the Work and getting the message out. All of our pieces of literature are books of God's *agape* love. That is what we are all about!

This is a work of love. We must have God's love in us, or we won't help give this message to the world and to God's people. That is what Christ was trying to get across to His disciples in the final chapter of the book of John, just before He returned to God the Father—after He finished the Father's Work.

Peter learned the lesson and was martyred because of doing God's Work, as Christ was. Would *you* be a martyr for God's Work?

OFFICES IN GOD'S HOUSE

Jesus Christ said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye

believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many [offices]: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1-2).

JESUS CHRIST IS TELLING US THE WAY TO KEEP OUR HEARTS FROM BEING TROUBLED. That doesn't mean we won't ever have negative, depressing thoughts—we have to battle there. But these verses give us the ultimate way to keep ourselves untroubled, and that is by putting our focus on the "Father's house."

Where is the FATHER'S HOUSE? In the Millennium, it will be the temple in Jerusalem. But Christ was talking about a time beyond the Millennium, because the office we hold in the Millennium will carry over into eternity! Revelation 3:12 says we will "go no more out" of that temple. We will work from the Father's house forever!

The temples that men of God have built were patterned after the heavenly temple. Ezra 8:29 talks about "the chambers of the house of the LORD." Jeremiah 35:2 talks about chambers, or offices, in that house. Jeremiah 36:10 talks about "the chamber of Gemariah," which shows that he had a certain rank and an office in God's house equal to that rank. 1 Kings 6:5 refers to those chambers in Solomon's temple—offices all around the temple.

The Father's house is being built in heaven. It will be brought to Earth with new Jerusalem after there is no more flesh on Earth. That will be a time when there are only spirit beings, after the Last Great Day.

The new Jerusalem will be filled with REAL OFFICES! We will live and work in that beautiful, fabulous, magnificent house forever with our Father and our Husband!

Christ said He would go and "prepare a place for you"—YOU, INDIVIDUALLY! (John 14:3). You need to take this *personally*! God will ensure we each have a place—an appropriate office. GOD'S HOUSE IS BEING BUILT AROUND THE PERSONNEL JESUS CHRIST HAS! The place each of us occupies will depend on WHAT WE DO. We will be REWARDED ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, AND WHAT WE HAVE DONE TO HELP GOD'S WORK. It really is that practical. Think about this carefully as you help God's Work.

Revelation 21:1-4 describe that future temple: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them [on this Earth], and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;

and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

This is the kind of office God is preparing for us *now* as we work! He has been preparing offices for all of the firstfruits throughout the ages. YOUR OFFICE WILL MATCH YOUR OVERCOMING AND CONQUERING, and God holds you accountable according to what talents you have. That is a very fair deal.

As 1 Corinthians 15:41 says, THE STARS DIFFER IN GLORY. So will our future glory differ according to our works. Our glory will match how much our heart was in God's Work.

Your eternal glory is far more important than anything in this world. Don't get caught up in physical beauty or things. The beauty you want to devote your passion to is this ETERNAL BEAUTY! This is what Jesus Christ wrapped His mind in. It was *everything* to Him!

Christ also said in John 14:3, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He will receive *you*—each one of you.

The whole creation plan was reorganized after Lucifer rebelled. The entire universe plan then focused on the creation of man! God's sons are now on center stage.

THE WHOLE CREATION—EVERYTHING YOU SEE—WILL BE REORGANIZED AROUND GOD'S HOUSE! It will extend out into the universe. Never again will we witness the depravity we see on Earth today. Earth will be headquarters for all eternity.

THE GREATEST TRAGEDY EVER IS TO TURN YOUR BACK ON THIS FUTURE!

Christ is talking about THE FATHER'S HOUSE. YOU ARE A SON, AND GOD HAS GIVEN YOU THE *RIGHT* TO BE BORN INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD AND RESIDE RIGHT THERE IN YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE!

We must keep this focus the way the *Logos* had it. The Word was made flesh, and throughout His time on Earth He continually pointed to the Father, and how the Father was opening up His Family to humankind. This is a message about the Family of God! This is a message about your Father! We have to get beyond Jesus Christ in that sense and realize we are sons of God! And we're going to be in our Father's house for eternity.

To be called in this age is the most dazzling, wonderful opportunity a human being could ever have! If people who have known the Father fail to recognize that, that is a horrible tragedy.

Jesus Christ is trying to hammer this truth into our minds so we will never lose it! He is trying to build His love into us so we will root out our vanity and rebellion, devote ourselves to His Work, and STAY WITH HIM TO THE END!

Our offices in God's house are more real than the

rooms in our physical houses. A weather disaster could destroy your physical house—but your office in God's house can never be destroyed if you remain loyal to God.

THANK GOD EVERY DAY FOR BEING A SON OF GOD AND THE BRIDE OF CHRIST! There is absolutely nothing to compare with that.

GREATER WORKS THAN CHRIST'S

Christ also said this: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall

he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

Christ went to the Father and left us down here, and said we would do greater works than He did. Certainly that is the case in this end time, with the technology we have. We have greater means to reach around the world—through television, satellite, publications and mail distribution, and the Internet. That enables us to do greater works than Christ could do! Despite our small numbers, Christ continues to bless our work with significant growth.

**Christ loved
John in a
special way
to show how
He loves and
comforts each
one of us
spiritually—
with the Holy
Spirit. You are
the one whom
Jesus loves!**

THE COMFORTER

"If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and *he shall give you another Comforter*, that he [God the Father] may abide with you for ever" (John 14:14-16).

Remember, John was the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John 20:2; 21:7, 20). He spent time leaning on Christ's bosom (John 13:23). At that time, John didn't have the Holy Spirit *in* him, but it was with him. And he was certainly comforted by Christ's presence. Christ was very comforting to His disciples.

Here Christ told them that, though He would be going away, the Father would supply them *another* Comforter so their heart would not have to be troubled. God the Father Himself would abide with them!

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you," Christ continued (John 14:18). John is the *only* Gospel writer who related this conversation, because it ties in so perfectly with the central message of his Gospel.

By the time he wrote this, John had had God's Spirit for a number of years, and he really knew what it was to be comforted by Christ! He had been *personally comforted* by this "other Comforter."

God is no respecter of persons. I am absolutely convinced that John was saying, *I was called the*

disciple whom Jesus loved, and I leaned on Christ's bosom. But with this other Comforter, every single one of you can figuratively lie on Christ's bosom, and have that close relationship with Him! He is right there with you, and that's why your heart need not be troubled.

John was given this special revelation to show us how we can enter into Christ's bosom and be comforted by the Holy Spirit.

We face tribulation in this world. As we fight to enter God's Family, we must be *comforted* to continue the struggle.

Repeatedly John was called the "disciple whom Jesus loved." But John didn't have the Holy Spirit *in* him at that time—it was only *with* him. Now the Holy Spirit is available to each one of us so you and I can become *the one whom Jesus loves!*

The subject is the Holy Spirit. God is teaching us spiritually. God's Spirit truly is a *Comforter!* That word could be translated *Consoler* or *Encourager*. When you're having a problem, JUST GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES AND PRAY AND PRAY UNTIL YOU STIR UP GOD'S SPIRIT AND ARE CONSOLED! That is the *only* way to truly be consoled.

John is looking at this spiritually. To lean on Jesus's bosom physically is not the ultimate lesson. To have God's Spirit *within* us is TRUE COMFORT! Jesus Christ knows how to look after His wife! He is a loving Husband and knows how to comfort. He comforts and encourages her because He loves her. *John gave us a physical picture of what our Husband does spiritually.* Every human being can have that kind of a relationship with Jesus Christ. You can lie on Christ's bosom spiritually—as John did physically. The physical was only a *type* of what happens to each one of us spiritually. Christ loved John in a special way to show how He loves and comforts each one of us spiritually—with the Holy Spirit.

YOU ARE THE ONE WHOM JESUS LOVES!

If you are a widow or a single parent, God will give you all kinds of help and guidance. He is your Husband, and that's what husbands should do! God will ensure that you are not comfortless.

If anybody has ever illustrated His love, Jesus Christ has. And now He is coming to every one of us—like He came to Peter—and asking: *Do you really love me? Then do the Father's Work.* That is what He did when He was on this Earth. This was His passion and delight.

That's the kind of *agape* love that comes into our lives with God's Holy Spirit. Then we can become encouragers like Christ is.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. ... If a man love me, he

will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (verses 21, 23). What a change that makes in our lives when the Father and the Son come to make their abode with us!

We show our love to the Father by keeping His commandments. And the Father loves us in the most supreme, fatherly way when we obey His law. He and the Son come and live in us. We are then the Kingdom, or Family, of God in embryo.

Look how Christ continually exalts the Father above Himself—unlike false Christianity today. Christians in this world don't follow Christ. That is why they don't understand God's Word.

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy [Spirit], whom the Father will send in my name, [it] shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (verses 25-26). The Holy Spirit will teach you all things and bring to remembrance what you have been taught. WE NO LONGER LOOK TO MEN!

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (verse 27). Christ repeats this point to strongly emphasize it: *Don't let your heart be troubled! Don't be afraid! You have a Comforter. I am right there with you!* Christ is right there! But we have to *know* that, and we have to *use that power*. If we don't deeply understand what Christ was explaining here, many problems in this world will deeply trouble us.

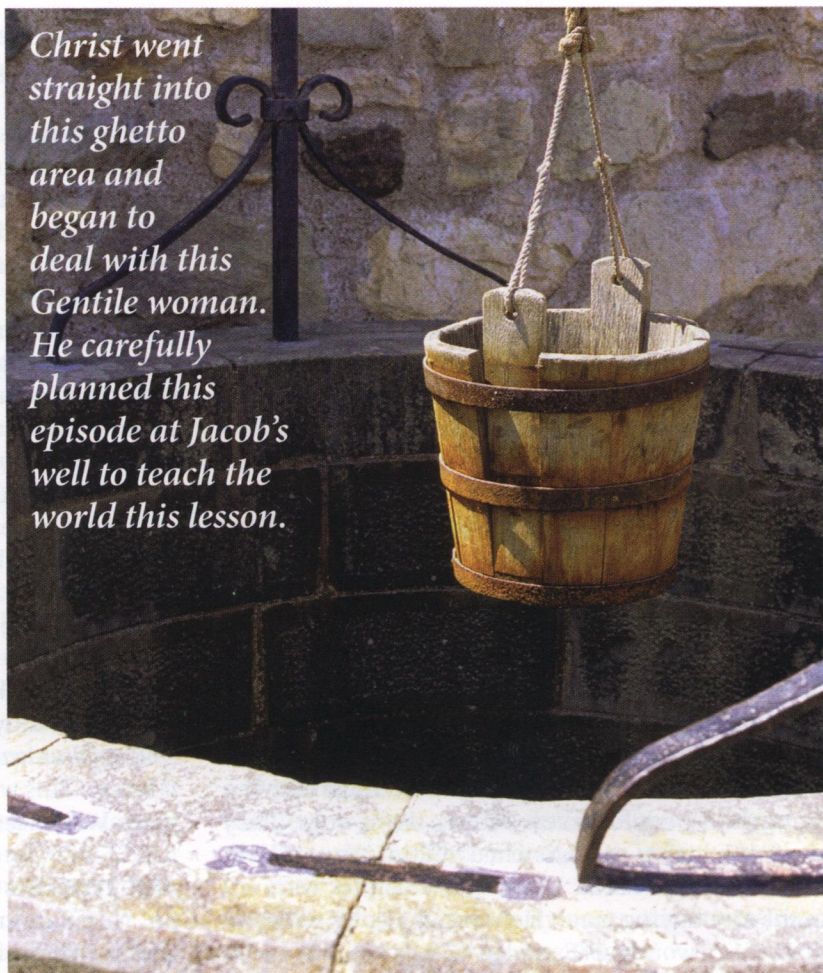
Christ repeats the words of John 14:1 with a new and stronger force! Is your heart troubled? Are you afraid? God's Holy Spirit will conquer those fears.

Christ is there to console you—to comfort and encourage you—to give you real peace. He's not just *saying* that. This is real. He offers *real peace* in the midst of times when you would normally be afraid. Don't let your heart be troubled.

THE FATHER IS GREATER

"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you [through the Spirit]. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the

Christ went straight into this ghetto area and began to deal with this Gentile woman. He carefully planned this episode at Jacob's well to teach the world this lesson.



Father: for *my Father is greater than I*" (John 14:28).

Again we see how Christ exalted the Father every step of the way. If only Lucifer had thought that way! If only the Laodiceans would be humble like that! If only they would listen to their Father as Christ listened! Human beings are just *worms* (Psalm 22:6) made of dust (Genesis 3:19). What is it about the Laodiceans that they won't *listen* to their Father, who only wants to bring them into His Family and let them marry His Son? How could mankind be so IGNORANT AND REBELLIOUS that they would let their calling slip away so easily?

The Laodiceans do not honor their Father. They have lost the Family message. They don't even know who they are! All because they don't honor the Father.

"Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD COMETH, AND HATH NOTHING IN ME" (John 14:30).

Again Christ reminds us that we must overcome Satan as Christ did if we are to be the bride of Christ and share our Husband's throne (Revelation 3:21). With God's Holy Spirit we can overcome the devil and qualify for the most prestigious calling ever given to any group of people.

The prince of this world has nothing in God. God

and Satan are polar opposites. Satan has *nothing* good in him—nothing of God. He was a beautiful creation and a light bringer at one time, with a tremendous future ahead of him. But he went dreadfully wrong and became the arch-rebel of all time.

What is so exciting about the self? Why can't we overcome the pull toward the self?

Well, WE CAN if we are comforted by the Holy Spirit and have the peace of God come into our lives. "Peace I leave with you," Christ said. No matter how serious your trials are, that is an *absolute promise* to God's people. All the material *things* the Laodiceans have are *worthless* without that peace of God. Life isn't even worth living if you lose the purpose God has for your life.

"But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. ..." (John 14:31). Was Christ trying to put down His Father, or direct attention to Himself? That is absurd.

LIVING WATER

John 4 records some important events that contain a mind-stretching lesson.

The Jews were terribly prejudiced against the Samaritan people—even calling them *dogs*. They viewed that area as a wretched ghetto. Nevertheless, Christ traveled there. While His disciples were off in the city buying meat, He went to Jacob's well and there met a woman of Samaria.

Jesus *dared* to ask this woman for a drink of water from the well. If His disciples had been there, surely they would have tried to stop Him. So how did John know about this, in writing his Gospel? He probably learned about it later, maybe during one of those evenings when he was lying on Christ's bosom, and Christ was teaching him and correcting him. This event really does have some strong correction for John and the disciples—and for all of us if we fail to reflect the WORLD-ENCOMPASSING LOVE that Christ demonstrated here.

The woman was taken aback that Christ would talk to her, since the Jews were so contemptuous of Samaritans. She said, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for *the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans*" (John 4:9). What despicable self-righteousness! What a horrifying *misunderstanding* of God's holy and righteous Word.

Jesus Christ took this opportunity to begin teaching this woman—a human being who was made in the likeness of God.

Christ answered her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and *he would have given thee LIVING WATER*" (verse 10).

This was the Word—God in the flesh—talking to her, and telling her that He would give her LIVING WATER.

The Jews treated the Samaritans like they were a plague. Christ, on the other hand, went straight into this ghetto area and began to deal with this Gentile woman. Why? Because JESUS CHRIST CAME TO DIE FOR THE WORLD! *That's what this is all about!*

Christ didn't die for a particular race or ethnic group. HE CAME TO DIE FOR THE WORLD! And to ANYONE who repents, comes to Him and asks to drink, HE WILL GIVE LIVING WATER! TO ANYONE AND EVERYONE!

JESUS CHRIST CAREFULLY PLANNED THIS EPISODE AT JACOB'S WELL TO TEACH THE WORLD THIS LESSON. It is a lesson that every person must learn before he or she can enter God's Family. Water is a type of the Holy Spirit, and it GIVES LIFE. In a dry desolate place without water, you have no life. That's the way this world is: There is no real LIFE, because there is no LIVING WATER. People don't know what life *is*. This woman didn't know. Our temporary, chemical existence isn't really life.

But *what water that living water is, and what LIFE it brings!* This water leads to everlasting life—endless glory. What a lesson at the well!

ASK THE BIG QUESTIONS

So, this Samaritan woman asked for water from Christ. When she did so, He revealed that He knew a great deal about her and her very sordid past. She responded, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet" (John 4:19).

This woman must have been very sobered by Christ's statements. He knew all of her sins. He knows about ours. But, of course, no matter how dark our history, when we repent God removes those sins from us as far as east is from west! He no longer remembers them, and He doesn't want us to think about them either.

Now Christ really had this woman's attention. She must have been quite a humble, lowly woman, to accept what He had to say to her. But He really began to teach her. (If only the "religious" Pharisees and Sadducees had been so teachable!)

"Ye worship ye know not what," Christ said (verse 22). Telling people that today could get you killed! In fact, it *did* eventually get Christ killed. But this woman accepted it. "[W]e know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews," Christ continued. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the *true worshippers shall worship the Father* in Spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (verses 22-23).

Again Christ pointed to His Father as the Head of the God Family—unlike Christians in this world.

We must worship the Father in Spirit and in truth.

We obey in the letter of the law, but we also take it to the spiritual level. With God's Spirit, we can worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

We not only don't murder, we now know it is a sin to *hate* our brother. We not only don't commit adultery, we don't *lust* for another person *in our minds*.

The Father is looking for people who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth! Christ was giving this woman some strong spiritual meat.

"The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I THAT SPEAK UNTO THEE AM HE" (verses 25-26). This woman had heard all the prophecies about the coming Messiah—and here He was standing right before her! This moved her deeply.

But then the disciples came along, and they were apparently upset at what was going on, though they didn't say anything. John records, "[Y]et no man said, What seekest thou? Or, Why talkest thou with her?" (verse 27).

John wrote this—these were *not* the words of Christ. John knew what he and the other disciples were thinking.

There is tremendous depth in this verse. Today, we always need to be trying to understand *what* Christ is doing and *why*. The bride needs to understand her Husband's mind.

They were obviously confused—and, truthfully, THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN ASKING THESE BIG QUESTIONS! Christ wasn't speaking with this Samaritan woman in vain. He had a lot to teach the disciples about what He was doing, and they had a lot to learn!

I'm sure that later Christ told John and the rest of them how their attitude was wrong. *There is something important you don't understand!* He surely told them. *I'm not here on Earth in vain. This is very important, and you all must learn it: You are here learning to teach the WHOLE WORLD!*

We *all* have to learn to think about and ask the big questions: *What is Christ doing? Why would God give me this trial? Why must I go through this? Why does God command tithes and offerings?* We may never know *all* the reasons, but at times God can reveal quite a lot of them to you. But we are hard-headed, and there is a lot we don't get because of that. We all have carnal nature, and we must continually ask God to bring His Spirit into our lives and show us where we are wrong. We all need to open ourselves up to God's correction and humble ourselves before the Father the way our Savior does. If He can do it, surely we can do it. There has never been humility on this Earth like Christ had—not even *close*! And He was the Word—God made flesh! The disciples had to learn that, and we do too.

WE ARE SUPPOSED TO THINK LIKE CHRIST! That means we need to begin to ask the big questions: *What is Christ doing? What does this mean?* He does NOTHING in vain!

This example is taught *only* in the Gospel of John. That is because John's purpose was to help us understand the mind of Christ.

We are to let His mind be in us (Philippians 2:5). That means we must constantly be seeking how He thinks and *WHY*. Then we can think more deeply the way He does.

John carries this lesson on in the following verses.

CHRIST'S MEAT—GOD'S WORK

After the episode at the well, the disciples tried to get Christ to eat something. He responded, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" (John 4:32).

This confused the disciples. They were so concerned about Him *eating*. Jesus Christ told them something here that we *all* need to learn deeply.

"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (verse 34). *That's my food*, Christ said. *My way of life is just to do the Work of God with all of the passion I possess. That is all I'm here for! That is my main delight—to finish the work the Father has given me to do!*

THIS IS THE KEY TO HAVING PASSION AND HIGH SPIRITS! THE WORK OF GOD HAS A BUILT-IN VISION OF JOY! It always keeps us looking beyond the difficulties of the present and seeing where this is all leading! What difference does it make to miss a meal? Christ wasn't even thinking about physical food. His mind was on why He—the Word—was made flesh.

IF YOU GET YOUR HEART INTO GOD'S WORK AND GIVE IT EVERYTHING YOU HAVE, IT WILL GIVE YOU ALL THE EXUBERANCE AND JOY GOD HAS TO GIVE US ON EARTH! Of course there will be trials. The very fact that you're doing the Work will bring trials.

Jesus Christ knew that in a short while, He would be savagely beaten, crucified and killed! There had to be a strong nagging pull toward self-pity. Yet here He was missing meals to serve a Samaritan woman! That made no sense to the Jews, but it made a lot of sense to Jesus Christ, because He saw how it all fit in with His wonderful, beautiful master plan! He was energized and in high spirits by doing God's Work.

Whenever Mr. Armstrong spoke about a project that would help the Work, he conveyed tremendous excitement about it. He was thrilled, because his heart was in the Work. That was his life. Every time something good happened, he rejoiced in that—and he had a lot to get excited about. Of course, he had

Christ repeatedly points to His Father as the Head of the God Family—unlike Christians in this world.

some heartaches too; some things went wrong. That's the way it is if you love—you can get hurt. BUT YOU KNOW HOW TO REALLY LIVE.

Every member in the Philadelphia Church of God can be energized that way. Whatever you are able to

contribute, do so. If you can only pray and fast, just do it. **THIS IS THE WORK OF GOD!** We are part of the Work of the Word, who came to Earth to declare His Father!

Jesus Christ just wanted to finish His Father's Work. That was His great passion. We ought to think as He does. **WE HAVE ONE SPLENDID GOAL: TO FINISH GOD'S WORK. THAT IS WHY WE WERE CALLED TODAY!** "Let this mind be in you."

Christ continued: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (verse 35). The same is *oh, so true* today! The work is there—it is **READY FOR MORE GROWTH!** The fields are already white to harvest! We *must not* fail to harvest the crop. Times are urgent!

Prospective members and co-workers and Laodiceans are waiting to hear this message, and then for ministers to help them *while* there is time! People we don't even know about urgently need to hear what God is saying! If you are like Christ and you miss some meals to do the Work of God—that's not bad! Christ had enough passion and excitement that He didn't mind those kinds of inconveniences. His mind was teeming with the vision of God! He was thinking about the World Tomorrow, not the world today. If you are really doing the Work, **YOU HAVE VISION!**

As we have heard so many times, we are not here to save ourselves—but to **SAVE THE WORLD!** You don't attend Church services just to socialize and maybe pick up a nice idea or two. You are here to learn to teach the world! We are preparing to educate the world in a different way of life! Christ is preparing an office for you according to how well you are going to do as a teacher, and how hard you have worked to prepare for that! If you miss a meal to achieve an office like that, to secure a greater office in God's Kingdom, that is wonderful!

THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

After Christ's conversation with that Samaritan woman, she went out and told a lot of people. Samaritans came running after Christ and begged Him to stay there and teach them!

This is extraordinary! Here was **THE MESSIAH**—spending time in this undesirable area—responding to the enthusiasm of these underprivileged people. They were excited about the truth of God, so He stayed. He stayed with those poor and persecuted people for *two days*, doing everything He could to help them. **THE MESSIAH** gave His time to those "DOGS."

That whole area was filled with excitement and joy. And they only received a tiny fraction of what Christ gives us today.

In truth, **NO PEOPLE ARE DOGS.** God **DETESTS** the prejudice, hatred, evil and ugliness in this world! **Jesus Christ DIED FOR THE WORLD!** He died to save **EVERY SINGLE HUMAN BEING ON EARTH!**

That magnificent truth gives inspiring potential to each one of us—if we want it.

These Samaritans were so excited about the truth that Christ was willing to miss meals and alter His schedule in order to stay with them and teach them. Surely people would have asked, what *possible* interest could Christ have in that ghetto? But He was clearly excited about it.

THIS GIVES US A SMALL TASTE OF WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO DO FOR THE WHOLE WORLD!

Jesus Christ and God the Father are passionate about this. They are working slavishly to bring this Family about—they are going to work with **EVERY INDIVIDUAL ON EARTH** to bring them into that Family! When Christ experienced *just a taste* of that future among these Samaritans, He really came to life! And it should do the same for us!

Christ set this *example* for us to follow. How much more each one of us can do if we deeply look to His example!

Notice what the Samaritans said: "And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that *this is indeed the Christ*, **THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD**" (verse 42).

Men cannot save the world—they only destroy it. *Only* God can save the world! This is *why* the Word was made flesh. Christ did not come just to save Jews. He stayed two days with the Gentiles to drive that lesson home. He is the Savior of **THE WORLD!** And He is incredibly excited about that! Are you?

These Samaritans were talking to the Son of the living God. That same Christ is the Head of this Church. Are we stirred and rejoicing as these Samaritans were?

WHEN YOU SEE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THE WORK, DO YOU ACT LIKE JESUS CHRIST? DO YOU ACT THE WAY THE HEAD OF THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD ACTS? IF WE ARE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, WE ACT LIKE OUR HUSBAND! THAT IS WHAT HE IS TELLING US TO DO.

Of all the Gospel writers, only John brings this

incident out. This is the subject he focused on. Jesus Christ came from God the Father TO SAVE THE WORLD.

DREAMTIME

Do you realize deeply with every cell in your brain that **THIS IS WHY YOU ARE HERE?** God's Church is a teachers' college—training people to help teach and save the world!

In the end, I suspect that none of these Samaritans were part of the 120 disciples who remained at the time of Christ's death. I suppose they went as far as Christ could take them at that time.

In our work, we take people as far as we can. In many cases, it won't work out until the Tribulation, or the World Tomorrow, or the second resurrection. God has the big overview. If they respond vigorously to that opportunity today, even if they don't become converted, He will probably give them some kind of a leadership role, even as physical beings, in the World Tomorrow. God is doing all He can to try to bring this world to its senses. Our real harvest is in the Great Tribulation. That is when the great multitude of people will turn to God.

We don't have much time left to do this work. As God views it, we have only minutes left, and then the moment will be gone! If you have an opportunity to do the Work, SEIZE IT! IF WE DON'T GIVE UP OUR OWN HOPES AND DREAMS, SO WE CAN FULFILL GOD'S DREAMS, WE WILL MISS THE MOMENT!

HOW MANY MEALS HAVE WE MISSED IN DOING GOD'S WORK? We are called now to help Christ save the world.

GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS

John 6 relates the story of Christ feeding 5,000 people with five barley loaves and two fishes. Only John recorded this event, and it certainly fits his theme.

After all the people had gotten their fill, Christ said this to His disciples: "*Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost*" (John 6:12).

Certainly you can take the simple lesson from this that we should not be wasteful. But what was Christ really talking about spiritually? Later in this chapter He makes it very clear.

"Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled" (verse 26). That is pretty blunt: Christ accused the people of being interested only in getting a free meal. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed" (verse 27).

They believed that Christ was a prophet from



Gather up all the fragments! Gain all you can from the royal education God is offering you!

heaven. But did they stay with Christ? No! How hard and selfish mankind is.

Notice what Christ is saying: YOU MUST LABOR FOR SPIRITUAL FOOD. Even in your personal Bible study, you must *labor* to study as you should. Spiritual food requires genuine *labor and effort*! After all, God came from beyond the stars—and the spiritual manna comes from there as well. Doesn't it make sense that we ought to labor for it? That is the manna that will give eternal life (verse 33).

You can see throughout this chapter that Christ is speaking spiritually. *Labor* for that spiritual food. *Work! Gather up all the fragments! Gain all you can from the royal education God is offering you! God is giving you spiritual manna! Gather all the fragments you can. Don't lose anything! Gain everything you can from it!*

It is *our responsibility* to gather all the fragments we possibly can. God is serving His people. The Logos—the Head of the Church—and the Father are feeding their Family. THEN GOD IS GOING TO LET HIS FAMILY FEED THE WORLD! That is why we are here!

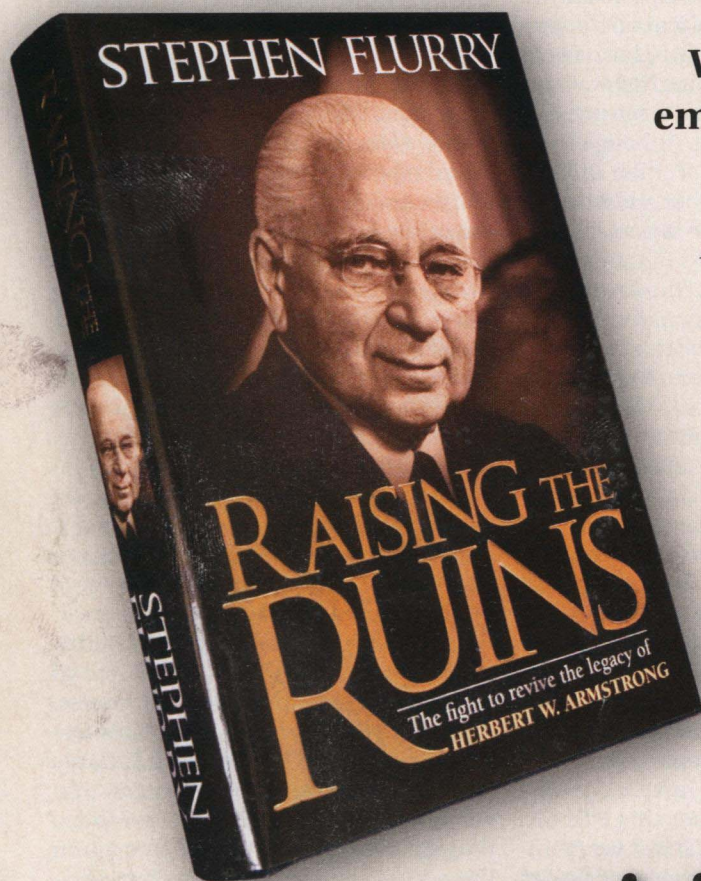
The disciples gathered all the fragments, and they ended up with more food than they started with! But they had to *labor* for it.

God is telling us to LABOR for this bread. It is from another world! IT REALLY IS BREAD COMING FROM THE COSMOS—FROM THE TRUE GOD! It is worth all the effort we can muster to gather it up!

Do we attend all the Bible studies we can? Do we really hunger and thirst for God's truth? This is how we build our faith, hope and love.

This work is going to grow, and it will astound this world. But we are going to have to LABOR—LABOR—LABOR to gather all the spiritual food God wants to give us! ■

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