

# **The Language of God**

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## **The Purpose of This Book**

The Bible is the most widely published book on earth. It can be read in nearly any language and in a number of different translations. It does not matter what language you speak or which is your favorite Bible translation (King James Version, New King James Version, New International Version), there is a language that you must be conversant in, in order to maximize your understanding. It is a spiritual and prophetic language. The reason is that there is a hidden language in the Bible that is spiritual and prophetic. It transcends and supersedes any language devised by humans. This language is the one God uses to convey His thoughts directly into the human mind via divine inspiration.

The spiritual language of God literally is the pathway that connects His mind to any human mind capable of hearing His voice. Many times Christ said, “He who has an ear, let him hear.” This book is designed to give you the spiritual meanings of key words, so you will have the capacity to hear if you so desire. With the capacity and the desire, pray for God’s divine inspiration, and the Bible will open up to your understanding in a most beautiful and marvelous way!

This book in essence is a spiritual reference of words and phrases for use in your personal Bible study. I suggest the first word you look up in this reference is “language.”

May His peace be yours.

*John*

## INTRODUCTION

### Why Creation

Creation serves a marvelous purpose. Of course, it is the environment that sustains mankind which Genesis 1:26 says was created in the image and likeness of God. Needless to say, the environment mankind dwells in was carefully crafted to be of benefit to mankind both physically and spiritually. Roman 1:20 explains a great deal about why creation is the way it is. “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead...” Many of us look at the natural wonders around us and appreciate God’s handiwork. This Scripture goes much beyond mere appreciation. We are told that His invisible attributes can be understood—His thoughts, His desires, His purposes, even His eternal power and Godhead, which is to say His nature and character. But we may still ask why.

There is a very good reason why, such a good reason that Satan, the arch deceiver (Revelation 12:9), influenced mankind to worship the creation rather than the Creator as explained in Romans 1:21-25. “Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” By co-opting God’s purpose for creation, Satan confused religious beliefs the world over. Many well-meaning people worship animals, rocks, trees, mountains, or manmade objects which came from them.

Most of us believe what we believe because we were born and raised into our belief system. This has been utilized by Satan to divide and suppress, to spawn hatred, division and racism, culminating in a history of wars, death and destruction for mankind.

Let's get back to God's good reason for physical creation. Isaiah 55:8-9 spells it out for us. "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'"

God takes higher order thinking skills to a level far beyond the reach of the smartest people. The Hebrew word for "thought," *machashabah* (#4284, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995 edition), and its root word *chashab* (#2803, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995 edition) means to plait, weave and fabricate plans and intentions. Both how God thinks and how He carries out His intentions, His ways, are incomprehensible to mortals. In large part, it is because He is spirit as well as being infinitely more intelligent. God thinks in spiritual terms with eternal consequences. He gave us two physical means of grasping some of His thoughts: His word, the Bible, and creation.

God's thoughts form the fabric of a plan that is billions of years old. His plan is similar to a set of blue prints in which every detail is perfect. Science has proven that the universe is 13 to 15 billion years old. In Titus 1:1-2 paraphrasing, "I, Paul, am a bondservant of Christ in accordance with the truth in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began." So before time began for the universe, God made promises to us and thought of a plan that would not fail.

Remember Romans 1:20 said God gave us creation to help us understand Him and His purposes. This is more true

than we have ever realized. Let's go back to Isaiah 55:10-11 in order to begin seeing just how true this concept is.

“For as rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” God's word is compared to rain and snow which falls upon the earth and sustains and increases life. As we cannot stop rain and snow from nourishing the seeds of the earth, God's word cannot be stopped from falling on mankind and bearing fruit. Physical creation helps us comprehend a spiritual thought concept from the mind of God. By reading the words in a physical book and then looking out at physical creation, we begin to grasp a thought from God that would otherwise be too “high” for us to comprehend!

It is our desire to help you comprehend as many of GOD'S BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS as possible. To help you get to know our awesome Creator and His awesome purpose for mankind, dwell on this passage from Psalm 85:8-13, and one begins to feel comfortable and at peace with God. “I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace to His people and to His saints; but let them not turn back to folly. Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yes, the Lord will give what is good; and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before Him, and shall make His footsteps our pathway.” Yes, when mercy and truth meet, righteousness and peace have kissed. The truth of it all can be seen around us on the earth God created and indeed the heavens we reside under. Note these words from King David.

Psalm 19, verses 1-4: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun...”

Now you have the answer to why creation, and how we can help you come to know God and have the hope and assurance that soon all will be well. God’s plan will not fail. Together we will search the thoughts of God and prepare for a wonderful future!

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## Armageddon

Armageddon is not a horrible physical battle leading to World War III, but rather a great spiritual battle for the hearts and minds of humanity. Revelation 16:16 is the only reference to Armageddon in the entire Bible. “And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”

The word Armageddon is a symbol or a name composed of two Hebrew words—*Har* and *Megiddow*. *Har* (#2022, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) means a mountain or range of hills which is sometimes used in the figurative sense. *Megiddow* (#4023, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) means rendezvous. Therefore Armageddon actually means Mount Megiddow or the mountain of rendezvous. It can also correctly be interpreted as the point of rendezvous at which the range of hills gather. These definitions are important to keep in mind when thinking about the battle of Armageddon.

In actual fact there is no Mount Megiddow on earth! Any good geographical map of the Middle East can be examined to verify this fact. All that can be found is the ancient town of Megiddow which sits on a tel, sometimes referred to as Tel-Megiddow. Tel is a word used in the Middle East to signify a mound of ancient ruins—very old towns and villages upon which subsequent towns and villages were built on. A tel is in no way a naturally-occurring mountain.

We must focus on the significance of the rendezvous. The rendezvous of what? By letting the Bible interpret itself we can easily ascertain that mountains represent kingdoms and hills represent principalities. Moreover mountains and hills on earth are physical representations of the spiritual realm

surrounding earth from which Satan and his demons influence events below.

It is easy to see the spiritual connections to the Battle of Armageddon by reading the four verses that immediately precede Revelation 16:16. “Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

The dragon (Satan) and the two evil spirit beings, the beast and false prophet, have many demonic underlings at their command. In this case they are portrayed as frogs. Frogs capture and kill their prey with their tongues. Interestingly, when God was mocking the gods of ancient Egypt in Exodus chapter 8, He sent a plague of frogs! This was not by accident but was a very real slap at Satan’s demonic realm.

Armageddon is the end time spiritual battle between Jesus Christ and His truth against Satan and his lies and deceptions. The battle is joined when the river of life is at a low ebb having been severely dried up at the end of the age. This spiritual river is mentioned in John 4:5-14 and John 7:37-39. In Genesis 2:14 it is called the “Euphrates,” for it pictures the joy and euphoria of the fruits of God’s Holy Spirit. At the end of the age Satan is enticed to make one final attempt to beat God by leading the people of God astray with lies, deception, and false signs and wonders. Prophecy tells us that Satan will fail miserably.

It is very comforting to know that Armageddon is a great spiritual battle over what is truth. As humanity begins to learn the truth of God and the immense power inherent in forgiveness, Satan's power will diminish. Ultimately, the war that mankind is engaged in is spiritual. Ephesians 6:10-20 tells us to use the armor of God in order to fight the wiles of the devil, for he and the wicked spirits aligned with him are our real enemies. This is not a war that can be fought and won with guns, rockets, and bombs. They have no power to change men's hearts and minds. Only God's truth and the work of His Holy Spirit can do that by once again causing the Euphrates to flow powerfully through the human race. Our rendezvous with destiny will result in the casting down of Satan's spiritual mountains and hills and the raising up of God's mountain to form the kingdom of God.

See:

- Mountains
- End of the World
- Signs and Wonders
- Stars Represent Angels

Request:

- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 8 Signs and Wonders*
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 9 What Do You Mean Tribulation?*
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 10 Clearing God's Name*
- *CD Armageddon: Rendezvous With Destiny (#308)*
- *DVD International Day of Peace 2014*

## Birds



Birds are some of the most beautiful and majestic creatures on earth. The strength and majesty of the bald eagle have inspired peoples and cultures for centuries. The white dove is a recognized symbol of peace. Owls have come to represent wisdom. In America each state has selected a bird as a symbol of their regional identity.

In the Bible God has chosen birds to represent angels. Some angels are described as beings that “fly” between heaven and earth bringing messages and aid to human beings. Physical birds fly in the heavens above us and nest in the trees around us. Migratory birds follow the sun in the spring and fall. By carefully observing birds we can have a greater understanding of angelic behaviors, both good and bad. One-third of God’s angels have gone bad and became demons (see Stars). This may be why God has divided birds into clean and unclean for food, Deuteronomy 14:11-20 (compare Revelation 18:2).

Many Scriptures describe angels with wings. Some examples are: Isaiah 6:2-3, Ezekiel 1:4-9, and Revelation

4:8. Other Scriptures explain that God offers miraculous help and protection beneath the wings He provides.

- Psalm 17:7-9
- Psalm 36:7
- Psalm 57:1
- Psalm 91:1-4
- Matthew 23:37

A beautiful example of how God harmonizes creation and Scripture are the texts about the behavior of birds. Examples:

- 1.) Birds sing most in the spring as new life begins, just as God's holy days begin each year.
- 2.) Song birds are loudest at sunrise because the sun pictures the rise of Jesus Christ.
- 3.) Angels (birds) sang together when earth was created (Job 38:4-7).
- 4.) Birds have nests in the trees (see Trees).

So much can be learned by observing birds in the light of Scripture.

## **Calendar God's Calendar**

Physical calendars were invented when people noticed that the seasons repeat themselves annually. Let us look at a quotation from the 1983 edition of the *World Book Encyclopedia* on the subject of the calendar:

Calendar is a system of measuring and recording the passage of time. A major scientific advance was made when people realized that nature furnishes a regular sequence of seasons. The seasons governed their lives, determined their needs, and controlled the supply of their natural foods. They needed a calendar so they could prepare for winter before it came.

Before the invention of the clock, people had to rely on nature's time keepers—the sun, the moon, and the stars. The daily apparent rotation of the sun provided the simplest and most obvious unit, the solar day. The seasons roughly indicated the length of another simple unit, the solar year. Early people were not aware of the fundamental cause of the seasons, the earth's revolution around the sun. But it was easy to see the changing position and shape of the moon. As a result, most ancient calendars used the interval between successive full moons, the lunar month, as an intermediate measure of time. The moon bridged the gap between the solar day and the solar year.

The lunar month, we now know, is about 29 ½ days long. Twelve such months amount to about 354 days. This interval is almost 11 days shorter than the true solar year, which has 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds.

The solar system provides the ideal mechanism for keeping track of time here on earth. The earth's rotation, the



moon's monthly cycle, and their revolutions around the sun are like the movements of a fine timepiece. They accurately keep track of days, weeks, and years. They form the basis for calendars that hang on walls around the world. Mankind long ago discovered that the yearly cycle is broken up into four seasons. Human survival depends upon the recurring seasons because they determine when to work the soil, plant, and harvest. Both sun and moon can be accurately used to keep time.

In Genesis 1:14-16, God tells us that the sun and moon can be used as effective time keepers for days and years: "Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth'; and it was so. Then God made [Hebrew *asah*, "advance; appoint; bestow"] [see the article below \*How Old Is the Earth?] two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night..." There is much more to these Scriptures than merely keeping track of physical times and seasons. Within these verses, God reveals a third calendar—a spiritual and prophetic timing mechanism.

Knowing how to use this amazing spiritual calendar is very important if we want to understand God's plan for the human race. In essence, God gave the gospel of the kingdom its own calendar! We need to examine Genesis 1:14 more closely in order for this awe-inspiring calendar to manifest itself: "Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years...'" *Days* and *years* are self-explanatory, since mankind constantly utilizes either solar or lunar calendars around the world. However, the words *signs* and *seasons*

have much deeper meaning than is readily apparent. We will use *Strong's Concordance* to define these two ancient Hebrew words.

**Signs** = *owth*: “Signals to appear literally or figuratively as a flag, beacon, monument, omen, prodigy, or evidence: miracle or mark.”

**Seasons** = *mowed*: “An appointment, fixed time or season; specifically, a festival; conventionally, a year; by implication, an assembly for a specific purpose. Technically, the congregation and the place of meeting; also, as a predetermined signal.”

Now we are getting somewhere! *Mowed* means much more than spring, summer, fall, and winter. Taken together, *owth* (signs) and *mowed* (seasons) means that the sun and moon can be used as the evidence of miracles and markers to determine spiritual and prophetic events. These events would take the form of fixed times predetermined by God. These fixed times would require God's congregations to assemble at specific festivals during the course of the year. These festivals were designed by God to make scheduled appointments between Him and His people and, eventually, the whole human race. God had determined in Scripture that the sun would represent Jesus Christ and the moon would represent His congregation. We need to find out what appointments He is talking about and how to keep track of them.

A strong clue as to God's gospel calendar is found in the very next book of the Bible Exodus. Exodus 12 is where God instituted the first festival or holy day of the conventional year. Just before Israel was to escape from Egypt, God told the people through Moses and Aaron, “Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of

Egypt, saying, ‘This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: “On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.”’” This was to be each family’s Passover lamb to be slaughtered four days later, just before fleeing Egypt. You may want to read the whole episode recorded in Exodus 12, but I want to focus on verse 14: “So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.”

The first thing we learn is that, according to the gospel calendar, this is the beginning of the year! Prophetically and spiritually speaking, the year did not begin at the stroke of midnight January 1, in the middle of the northern hemisphere’s winter!

By going to I Corinthians 5:7-8 in the New Testament, we can establish the real significance of the Passover lamb in Exodus 12: “Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Christ, as our Passover Lamb, has freed us from sin, which is the main miracle of the gospel. The first festival of the year corresponds with the first step we must take in our Christian lives: accepting the blood of Christ’s sacrifice. That first step must be followed up with the commitment to walk with Him, conquering and overcoming our sinful nature, which is characterized as the “old leaven of malice and wickedness.” Instead, we are told to keep the feast “with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Let us go back to Exodus 12:15-20 to read about this next festival on the gospel calendar: “Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.” These days picture putting sin out of our lives. This “season” lasts seven days, beginning and ending with high holy days to be observed as memorials forever.

#### \*How Old Is the Earth?

Science has proven the earth to be between 13 and 15 billion years old. This does not conflict with Genesis. Genesis 1:1-2 demonstrates clearly that this very beginning was far in advance of the rest of the Genesis saga, because the scene opens with God’s Spirit hovering over the earth. The earth, sun, and moon were already existing, but Genesis 1:14-16 was designed to appoint them for new significance. For more information on this, request the CD, *The Genesis Project* (#97).

See:

- *The Times and Seasons Digest No. 2 In The Beginning*
- *The Times and Seasons Digest No. 3 The Great Lights*

## Dirt, Water, and Air

Most of us are familiar with the idea that we are “the dust of the earth.” A common refrain at funerals is the content of Genesis 3:19: “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” What we do with that dirt while it lives and breathes and what we allow God to do with it is what we should consider.

Genesis 2:7-10 is the best place for us to begin. “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden...”

We can picture God scraping together the dirt into the form of Adam. Then, leaning over him, He breathed the breath of life into the pile of dead earth. With Adam’s chest now rising and falling, God carefully placed him in the Garden of Eden, where there was food and water. Science confirms that mankind is merely dirt, water, and air. The figures most often cited are that we are 90% water and 10% solids in the form of minerals of the earth. To these minerals, God added air and water, and *voila!* Humanity exists. We are all essentially living, breathing stone and clay. Our existence must be for more than just living and breathing or else all life is meaningless. That is the reason we all, sooner or later, ask, “Why? What for?” The answer lies with the garden.

While mankind lives, his life depends on working the soil. Most of us now live in urban centers, far removed from our agrarian roots and heritage. Whether we make a living in manufacturing, technology, or a service industry, we all need to eat, breathe, and drink water. However, we lose that intimate connection to the soil that would help us understand the Word of God. The Bible is an agrarian handbook to spiritual life lessons that guide us to bearing fruit for God. In the not-too-distant future, God wants this earth to become a garden paradise with Him as the farmer and us as the soil. God is essentially a spiritual farmer looking to produce beings in His image and likeness—that is to say, His character. They will be people with kindness, mercy, love, compassion, patience, and gentleness in their character. Galatians 5:22-26 calls these the “fruits” of the Spirit. It is from our dirt that God seeks to reap these crops.

James 5:7-11 clearly shows God to be a patient farmer: “Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! My brethren, take the prophets, [the early or former rain,] who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.” Obviously, God is patiently waiting for us to establish our hearts to become compassionate and merciful as He is. This He calls the “fruit of the earth.” God is working with mankind toward making this earth a beautiful garden.

We have come to the time of rapid and dramatic change for the better on earth. God's knowledge can spread around the world with a rapidity unparalleled in history. Technology and free and open communication now make it possible to disseminate God's rain as never before. Each and every one of us can have a part to play.

Jeremiah 4:3 says to "break up your fallow ground and do not sow among thorns." In the parables, Christ is the sower who sows the seed of truth in our hearts, but we must make our ground fertile and receptive to His truth. Let us read the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:1-9. "On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: 'Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'"

It is up to each one of us, as a little patch of ground, to make good ground. Till it, remove rocks and thorns, and make it hospitable and fertile for the seed that God dispenses. His rain will water it; the sunlight of His inspiration will nourish it; but what kind of soil we are is our responsibility. How we conduct our daily lives determines the fertility of our soil. Earlier we mentioned Galatians 5 to see the fruits of God's Spirit that He wants to grow in us. Galatians 5:19-21 shows us the thorns, rocks, and weeds that we must actively pull from our soil in order



to bear fruit. The Apostle Paul teaches, “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like...” So many of these behaviors are encouraged today. Modern influences provide much fertilizer for the growth of attitudes and deeds in direct opposition to God’s purposes. There is much we can do to prevent these influences from entering our minds and hearts. God is bringing to an end the time of influence emanating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Jesus Christ, the Tree of Life, is even now beginning to pour His Spirit out on all willing to receive His good seed and help this earth become a huge fruitful garden. Though it happens one person at a time, it can happen very quickly. Why would you not want to help this vale of tears become a joyful, peaceful earth? The great spiritual Farmer has the seed, water, and breath of life. All He needs is your dirt.

See:

- Soil
- Wind
- 

Request:

- CD *Dirt, Water, and Air* (#195)

## Eagles and Where They Gather



Photo by John Blanchard

God uses birds to represent angels. (See article on *Birds*). The case of the eagle is very interesting in that it can be a large powerful and majestic bird, soaring in the heavens, caring for its offspring in large protected nests hidden in the forest treetops or mountains. Eagles often swoop out of the sky over a body of water and snatch a fish that they bring back to the nest to nourish little eaglets. It can also be like a carrion-eating vulture consuming the carcass of a dead animal. God uses eagles to represent powerful angels, some of which work for Him doing His bidding and some of which are among Satan's fallen angels known as demons.

Twice in Scripture God executes a dramatic rescue of His people on eagles' wings—once in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament. In the Old Testament in Exodus 19:4 just before giving ancient Israel the Ten Commandments



Photo by John Blanchard

God says to His people, “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.” Having rescued Israel from the bondage of pharaoh’s Egypt, He gave them the Ten Commandments—the basic foundation upon which they could build a relationship with God. Ancient Israel promised to obey, securing His nurturing care and blessings. This became the foundation of the old covenant making Israel God’s bride—the woman He would work through on earth.

Skipping ahead 1,500 years to Revelation 12, we find the woman and the eagle mentioned again. Revelation 12:1-6 draws a vivid picture of the Christ Child being born on earth then attacked by Satan and his demons. When His life’s mission was over and He was caught up to heaven, the “woman” now in the form of Christ’s Christian bride once again is delivered on eagles’ wings. We can read the account in Revelation 12:13-17. “Now when the dragon saw that he

had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Satan spews a flood. Since a soft, gentle rain (see article on *Rain*) pictures God’s word, His truth embodied in the Old Testament and the New Testament, a flood is none other than a torrential downpour of false doctrine. The serpent is at war with those who keep the Ten Commandments (Revelation 12:17).

Christ warns of the devastating effects of the storm of wind, rain, and flood in Matthew 7:24-25. “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.” Matthew 7:15-23 reveals that the flood comes in the form of false doctrine leading to lawlessness. Lawlessness in God’s eyes is the twisting, perversion, or disregard for the Ten Commandments.

In Matthew 5:17-19 Christ is very clear that He did not come to earth to change or do away with the Ten Commandments. One does not have to examine Christianity to realize the vast majority have accepted changes to the law or believe it was totally done away, sometimes referred to as “nailed to the cross.” Nothing could literally be further from the truth.

In Matthew 7:26 Christ said that all who would listen to His words (read the Bible or its expounding by others) would be hit by the flood. But those not building on the

solid foundation of His law would lose their moorings and “swallow” the flood of false doctrine. See Ephesians 4:11-16 and II Timothy 4:1-5.

In Matthew 24:11-12 Christ warns of false teachers bringing lawlessness to the church, leading the love of many to wax cold. The history of Christianity is replete with the love of many waxing so cold they literally killed, maimed, destroyed, and persecuted millions in His name. Matthew 24:28 can now be understood that wherever the carcass (*ptoma* in Greek, #4430, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) is—the bodies of Christians gone cold—the carrion eagles would gather.

The parallel account in Luke 17:33-37 speaks of one taken and one left to be with Him, to be cared for. When the apostles ask, “Where Lord?” He responds, “Wherever the body is, the eagles will be gathered.” In this case the body refers to a sound, healthy body of Christ. The word for body is *soma* in the Greek (#4983, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995).

So we can see that angels, represented by eagles, focus on the Church as the body of Christ. Good angels nourish and assist the body, while bad angels attack and try to devour the body by encouraging it to “wax cold.” In the end, it is wonderful to know that God and His angels will be victorious.

If you are interested in more information on this subject, please contact us.

## **Elements Melt and Dissolve**

Around the world many expect the world to end in a tremendous ball of fire that literally melts the elements the earth is composed of. Various scenarios have been concocted to explain how this may occur. A sampling is all-out nuclear war, a large asteroid colliding with the earth, a close encounter with the sun, or a huge solar flare from the sun. Hollywood loves to capitalize on such themes. The question is where did the idea come from? It doesn't take much research to determine that religion is the source.

Many religious denominations and sects have incorporated their anticipated version of events into their doctrine and dogma. It is understandable that horrific end-time dogma can cause a great deal of anxiety for people. To be sure, virtually every religion or sect also has doctrine or dogma that offers protection to their faithful, provided they remain in the good graces of that sect or denomination. This can aptly be termed "fear religion."

When a Christian sect or denomination holds certain doctrines, by rights these doctrines should be supported by the Bible as the word of God. There is a passage of Scripture that is usually central to the prophetic teaching that the earth will melt with extreme heat at the end of the world. The passage is II Peter 3:10-13. This passage has been grossly misunderstood. First we will quote the Scriptures, then analyze what we have read. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the

elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”

Now we will define the key words in the original language and cross reference this passage with other Scriptures, letting the language of God reveal His beautiful thoughts regarding the marvelous future in store for the world.

Definitions:

Heaven – *ouranos* (#3772) which is from the same as *oros* (#3735) through the idea of elevation.

- *Oros* – a mountain, as lifted above the plain.
- *Ouranos* – the sky, by extension heaven.

Pass Away – *parerchomai* (#3928) to pass away, come to an end, disappear, be taken away.

Elements – *stoicheion* (#4747) something orderly in arrangement, a fundamental constituent. From *stoicheo* (#4748) (to range in regular line) to march in military rank, to walk in step.

Melt – *luo* (#3089) to loosen, literally or figuratively break up, destroy, dissolve, compare to *rhesso* (#4486) to break, wreck, crack, to sunder.

Works – *ergon* (#2041) to work, toil, (as an effort or occupation) by implication, act or deed.

By analyzing the words in II Peter 3:10-13 it becomes very clear that it is not the earth and the physical elements that dissolve, but some insidious force organized to fight God’s way of life. Ephesians 6:10-17 states that Satan and the way he has organized his demonic forces are our real enemies. They form the “host” of the heavens that surround the earth organized in military fashion as the



forces of darkness. As such this evil kingdom is elevated above the earth we occupy. This dark kingdom form is arranged as a hierarchical spiritual mountain over the earth (refer to Mountains).

This is the same mountain Satan took Christ up to the top of when he tempted Christ to worship him in Matthew 4:8-11. “Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.”’ Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.”

The light and refining power of God’s Holy Spirit will melt and dissolve Satan’s kingdom, just as surely as the sun will come up tomorrow. For a more complete explanation of this subject, request the CD *When the Elements Dissolve* (#310/G62) or click on that title on our website [www.TheBeautifulThoughtsOfGod.com](http://www.TheBeautifulThoughtsOfGod.com).

See:

- Mountains
- Light: The Bible as Light
- End of the World
- Armageddon

Request:

- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 11 Mountains Shall Rise and Mountains Shall Fall*
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 7 Battleground Earth*
- CD *When the Elements Dissolve* (#310-G62)



## End of the World

The “end of the world” has been in the back of people’s minds for thousands of years. From time to time, doomsday thinking comes out of the shadows into the open, becoming a dominant feature of the time. In turn certain events, dates, and astronomical occurrences have fomented talk of doomsday. The fall of Rome—the eternal city—to barbarians in the year 1000 A.D., the plague, the Spanish Armada, 1844, the Civil War, World War II, and the Cuban Missile Crisis all loomed large as portents of the end, only to disappear into the past. Lately something seems to have changed. Doomsday omens used to appear over long spans of time, sometimes hundreds of years apart. In the twentieth century they seemed to recur with each decade, and since the year 2000 (remember Y2K?), it seems that every couple of months a portent of doom rears its ugly head. What’s going on?



Photo: Yaymicro.com

The main reason doomsday is on the minds of so many is religion. Religious beliefs have convinced billions of people worldwide that we are living in “the last days.” This conviction is widespread in both Christianity and Islam. This means that a majority of the human race is conditioned to constantly look for signs and omens of the end of the world. Every natural disaster, war, national calamity, or economic distress becomes a sign of the end in the minds of the faithful. Modern media and telecommunications feed us a steady stream of these omens. Even our leisure time is consumed by movies, TV programs, and various games with end-time themes. All these come together synergistically to compound and exacerbate our feelings of dread. Though most of us realize the doomsayers have always been wrong before, our gut tells us it is different this time. Everything seems to be spinning out of control. However, if we are indeed wrong once again, there must be a reason we never get it right.

### Fundamental Errors

There is a fundamental principle that is essential to sound human reasoning. Sound reasoning springs from a correct premise. A false premise will result in wrong conclusions every time. In the modern vernacular, “Garbage in, garbage out.” What if we have been conditioned to look for the wrong signs and omens in order to substantiate a wrong conclusion based on a false premise?

For both Christians and Muslims, the words of Christ carry tremendous weight. To both religions Christ is considered a prophet, and to Christians He is also the Messiah. Let’s go back to the words of Christ and see if somewhere we got on the wrong track in our thinking.

### The Disciples Ask the Big Question

Christians turn to Matthew chapter 24 as a key set of Scriptures regarding “the end of the world.” Let’s start

reading in verses 1 and 2: “Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’” Knowing how important the buildings were, the disciples were very intrigued and confused by Christ’s words. Verse 3 records two very important questions they asked Christ: “Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’” (“End of the age” is translated “end of the world” in the King James Version and Catholic Bibles.)

The two questions are:

1. When will the temple be thrown down?
2. What will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age?

Christ’s answer to the first question is given in Matthew 24 verses 15 and 16: “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” Luke 21:20-21 speaks of that time in this way: “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...” Notice that Christ told the disciples that they would personally see these things, and when they did, they were to flee Jerusalem. This all occurred when the armies of Rome surrounded Jerusalem in 67 A.D. and destroyed the temple in 70 A.D. The Romans also abominated the temple with a statue of a false god, fulfilling Christ’s words. This ferocious battle marked the end of the Old Testament age. This was a very important prophetic sign for the Jewish people of the time,

but only the disciples and Christians understood its full import. They lived to see Christ's answer to their first question fulfilled. The answer to their second question would take approximately 2,000 more years to fulfill.

Christ's answer to the disciples' second question bears directly on us today. Remember the second question was, "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" I want to address three aspects of this question in order to establish the false premise that has dogged Christianity for so long.

First let's note that the New King James Version refers to the end of the age, so why do so many people say, "end of the world?" The phrase "end of the world" is how this verse is rendered in some very widely used translations that precede the updated and revised New King James. The most widely used translation in the English-speaking world is the King James, sometimes called the Authorized Version. It has been in constant use since its release in 1611 A.D. In this version Matthew 24:3 is quoted "...end of the world." Possibly the second most printed Bible is the Catholic Douay Version, first published in its entirety in Douay, France in 1609 and 1610. According to the *World Book Encyclopedia Edition 1983*, this Bible also renders Matthew 24:3 "...the end of the world." Therefore multiple millions of people have mistaken "end of the age" as "end of the world." But that is exactly what happened.

All one needs to do to verify what I am saying is to look into the definition of the word in the original Greek and verify its meaning. In the original Greek, the word used was *aion* (#165, *Strong's*, 1995), which means properly an age, specifically to Jews a Messianic period (present or future). Armed with the actual definition, we can see Christ was answering their question by speaking of the end of two separate epochs of time. He clearly showed that one

Messianic epoch, which we refer to as the Old Testament epoch, would end with the destruction of the temple. Another epoch of time, the New Testament epoch, would end with Christ's second coming. Can we be certain that Christ in no way meant "the end of the world?" Yes, we can, because the word "world" appears a second time in Matthew 24:14. Christ gives a sign of His return to watch for by saying, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the *world* as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." Here the word "world" comes from the Greek word *oikoumene*, which means land or the terrene part of the globe (#3625, *Strong's*, 1995). Christ definitely knew how to differentiate between an epoch of time and the planet we call Earth.

We have now established the false premise that got Christians to take a wrong turn doctrinally. But Christ cautions us in two more very explicit ways in the next few verses of Matthew 24. His first warning came in verses 4-5: "And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will deceive many.'" Christ warns that many would come representing Him, preaching about Him, and would deceive many, clearly indicating a large number of Christians would be deceived. Looking back on history, we now can determine that it would turn out to be the vast majority of Christians! How can I say that, you might ask. Because of Christ's very next words in Matthew 24:6, in which Christ emphatically states the deceptions that would be voiced, "in His name": "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end [of the age] is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places." Now you know why we keep getting it all wrong! For the past 2,000 years, people have been pointing out all the "wrong" signs

to accompany Christ's return. The concept of the "end of the world" has predisposed us to look for disaster and calamity and follow preachers of doom, rather than listen to the real good news of the gospel of the kingdom.

See:

- Signs and wonders

## **Farmer**

### **God as a Farmer**

In John 5:17 Christ says, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.” God the Father and Jesus Christ have unlimited talents and abilities. They use Their talents and abilities in very productive ways. They are passionate about Their work.

One pursuit that God loves to engage in is farming. In one sense the Bible is tied together from beginning to end by the agricultural endeavors of God. As early as Genesis 2, God is found placing Adam in His special garden environment called Eden. In the Book of Revelation, the very last book of the Bible, God sends His angels out to gather in the harvest. Revelation 14:14-16 cover this remarkable event. In many passages of Scripture between Genesis and Revelation, God speaks of His people as His vineyard, His garden, His orchard, and His field of grain.

God wants the earth to produce abundantly. God is raising spiritual crops of righteous character that He calls the fruit of the Spirit. He summarizes them in Galatians 5:22-23. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

I Corinthians 13, often called The Love Chapter, describes true love for our fellow man. Quoting verses 4-8, 13 says, “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

Human beings, formed of the dust of the ground, are the soil God needs in His agricultural pursuits. The Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13 puts the responsibility on us to present God with good ground to work with. Christ will provide the sunlight (see Sun), the water (see Rain), and even the seed as the parable shows.

Isaiah 55:6-13 states that God will succeed in turning the whole earth into a beautiful, productive garden. Each of us is an individual small garden for Him to work with. Isaiah 58 is all about using fasting and prayer to work our soil for God. If we allow Him to work with us, we will become a verdant and productive garden. God has the patience of a master farmer who loves His land. However, it is up to us to give Him something to work with. James 5:7-8 puts the responsibility on us to use God's spiritual rain to produce lasting fruit of the earth. "Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." Our personal growing season is just so long. We need to use our time wisely.

See:

- Trees
- Rain
- Sun
- God's Garden

Request:

- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 4 Two Trees in the Garden*
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 5 God's Harvests*
- *CD Let Your Garden Grow (#16)*



## **Fish**

### **The Fish of the Sea**

You may have heard the expression “the sea of mankind” referring to the masses of human beings in the world. From the Biblical prospective it would help to rephrase this expression and say “the masses of humanity who dwell in the sea.” From God’s view point humanity lives in a particular type of environment that can be characterized by fish living in the sea.

The world we dwell in is constantly influenced by “currents,” “winds,” and “waves” that push and pull the human race in many harmful directions. It is common for a person to be caught up in war or various political or societal situations that conflict with one’s personal beliefs. Speaking of beliefs, we find humanity severely challenged by deeply held convictions based upon religion, cultural tradition, nationalism, or political ideology. These pressures have resulted in unquantifiable human suffering and anguish. Humans, like fish in the sea, live and exist in an atmosphere over which they have very little control.

Dark spiritual forces have a powerful, and for the most part, hidden impact upon humanity. Ephesians 2:2-3 calls Satan the “prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.” He and his demons have the power to influence humanity bombarding our minds with wrong thoughts and attitudes and pushing us by his “wind” in directions we don’t want to go. The four “winds of heaven” are mentioned several times in Scripture. In Daniel 7:2-3 Daniel speaks of a vision given to him, “Daniel spoke saying, ‘I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.’” The rest of the chapter

reveals the havoc upon the earth stirred up from the sea. (Look up Winds and Sea) With this in mind let's refer to some Scriptures to help us visualize mankind as fish dwelling in the sea.

- Matthew 4:19 The apostles were called to be "fishers of men."
- Matthew 13:47-49 The kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet to capture fish and bring them to solid ground where good and bad can be sorted out.
- Habakkuk 1:14 God made men like the fish of the sea.
- Isaiah 60:4-5 At Christ's second coming the abundance of the sea will be converted.
- Isaiah 11:9 During the Millennium of peace which is soon to come, knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as waters cover the sea.
- Revelation 21:1 Eventually there will be no more of Satan's sea.

When all mankind dwells on the solid ground of God's truth, the sea will have lost its power to push men to do harm to one another, and the earth will dwell in peace.

## **Garden God's Garden**

God made man from the dust of the ground. The next thing God did after infusing him with the breath of life, was to place him in the Garden of Eden. In Hebrew Eden means the garden of pleasure and happiness. The garden was watered by a river that divided into four river heads (see Euphrates). In the garden was every good thing to eat and sustain life. In Genesis 2:15 God instructed Adam to tend and keep it. Tend and keep in Hebrew means to work, till, guard, and protect the garden of happiness. God thus created the first farmer to produce something more than just physical food. God had created Adam and Eve to be like Him. Genesis 1:27 “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”



God is a Being whose character is perfect, full of love, joy, peace, patience, mercy, and truth. He wanted to instill these qualities in man. God wanted mankind to have the same sterling character He has, but in His great wisdom He knew this could only be done if mankind possessed free will. Man had to have the right to make choices. He had to have the freedom to choose good over evil.

Within the garden was every good thing to sustain physical life, emotional well-being, and spiritual health and vitality.

As long as Adam chose only to eat and produce good fruit, he would be blessed. He had to avoid making the one bad choice that would let Satan have access to his mind with the evil thoughts and temptations. Succumbing to temptation would result in sin, and sin would separate man from God as stated in Romans 6:23. “The wages of sin is death...” Satan knew this well.

With the fall of Adam and Eve into sin God had to cast them out of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:22-24). This is an outcome that God fully anticipated and planned for as revealed in Titus 1:1-2. “Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.”

Therefore before physical time began God knew what Satan would do in Eden, and He knew how He would beat Satan. God the Father would send His only begotten Son as His own seed to plant in man. That seed would grow and multiply within the human race eventually turning the whole world into a beautiful and bountiful garden. The entire earth is destined to become a peaceful, joyful, truth-filled paradise. Satan will eventually be rendered an irrelevant cast off.

Comprehending God’s plan shows us He is a master farmer. No wonder Christ portrayed Himself as the sower of seed in Matthew 13. We are the soil He is working in—dust of the earth in which He is fashioning human beings into His image and likeness. Through freedom of choice it is up to us to become fertile, teachable soil that can produce thirty-, sixty-, one-hundred fold.

Christ portrays converted Christians as His field, His vineyard, His orchard, and His garden. James 5:7-8 eloquently portrays God as a patient master farmer. “Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. [see Rain] You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” God is a master farmer, and we are His garden.

See:

- Rain
- Sun
- God as a Farmer

Request:

- CD *Let Your Garden Grow* (#16)
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 4 Two Trees in the Garden*
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 5 God's Harvests*

## God's Name

When people first meet each other, introductions always include their names. From that first impression onward, one's name will take on the qualities and the characteristics of the owner's personality. One literally becomes one's own name to other people. It is one of those interesting things about memory—about cognizance—that when we think of a name, we think of all the qualities that go behind that name.

We get a name built on the character that we develop. The name reflects, in essence, that character. Those who care work hard on their character, making it better and better as long as they live, because they realize that their name (their character) is the legacy that they leave behind, just like the legacies of Abraham Lincoln and Mother Theresa. They also realize that the only thing you do take with you in death is your name, that is, the character that you have built up. That is why it is very important to maintain good character and not to ruin other people's character with slander or libel. There are laws against that because most of us really do care about the name that we have developed. If we feel that way, being made in the image and likeness of God, we can just imagine how much God cares about His name.

### The Third Commandment

Exodus 20:7 reads, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain." We cannot casually or loosely use the name of God. Today, most of us have reduced this commandment to the use of simple epithets employing the name of God or, perhaps, using God's name to curse someone or using His name when angry. Sometimes God's name is used when we are hurt—for instance, if we hit our thumb with a hammer. It is common

to hear people use God's name in vain. Sometimes we reduce the commandment to simply taking God's name in vain in a situation like that. However, that merely scratches the surface of what is meant by not taking God's name in vain.

We need to understand what is meant by *vain* in the Hebrew. The word *vain* in Exodus 20 is *shav* (#7723, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995), which means "to destroy to the point of desolation; evil as destructive; literally, ruin; and figuratively, useless deception." When we apply that kind of definition to the word *vain*, it takes on a whole lot more meaning than just using God's name in anger.

### **God's Name**

God's name reflects His many good qualities. Isaiah 9:6 says, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." There are many other names associated with God in the Bible. There are many names that He uses and many descriptive terms. I want to look at just a few: *El Shaddai* (meaning "God Almighty; Almighty Blessed"), *Father of Lights* (meaning "to shine and make manifest"), *Yahweh-Rapha* (meaning "the God of healings"), *Emmanuel* (meaning "God with us"). We also see Him referred to as our Savior, our Redeemer, and the Rock. Of course, there is *Yahweh*, meaning "I am and will continue to be that which I am." All God's names are beautiful, powerful, and meaningful. That is because God's character encompasses the meaning behind all of these words, names, and adjectives. He is all of those things.

God's name stands behind all that He does. It is as if all creation has God's fingerprints on it. Romans 1:20 says, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes

are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead..." The things that God made literally help us see into His mind, into His thoughts. It is as if He wrote something of Himself into everything that He created. John 1:1-5 tells us that Jesus Christ was the active Creator, following the wishes of God the Father, and that He created everything that we see: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

At the time, except for the twelve disciples and a few more on the first Pentecost, people did not realize just what was meant by the life of Christ. Indeed, He was the living Word, and we now have the written word, in the form of the Bible. Through Him, all things that are made were made. God is literally a builder and producer of all things good.



## Grass

No plants on earth are more ubiquitous than grasses. Grass in one form or another can be found in every nation, on every continent. Typically, when we think of grasses, we think of turf grasses that can be found in people's lawns, parks, and golf courses. However, there are many types and varieties of grass on earth.



Forage grasses sustain much wildlife, as well as domestic farm animals. Bison, cattle, horses, sheep, and deer all feed on grass. Orchard grass, timothy, and brome, among many others, are critical parts of the food chain. Grasses of this sort are also cut and dried during the summer to feed livestock over the winter. Grasses are one crop that can be harvested during the early, middle, and late parts of the agricultural seasons.

Cereal grasses are another major type of grass. Wheat, rye, oats, corn, and rice are all types of grass grown for human consumption. Each is distinct and unique, just like people.

They originated in various and diverse places on earth, often associated with specific cultures and peoples.

It is no wonder that Christ so often spoke of the “wheat” of the field and of Himself as the sower. Isaiah 40:6-7 ties physical grass to spiritual understanding: “The voice said, ‘Cry out!’ And he said, ‘What shall I cry?’ ‘All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field...Surely the people are grass.’” Yes, God considers people to be similar to grass that needs good soil to bear good fruit. Each type of grass, in a way, represents every culture and race on earth, because the good news of the gospel is for all humanity. Therefore, we cry out that the gospel is for everyone, so that we all learn to live in peace, preparing for a wonderful future.

Isaiah 40:6-9 (Bring good tidings to the grass of the earth.)

Zechariah 10:1 (God’s rain is for the grass.)

Matthew 13:1-9 (Parable of the Sower.)

John 4:34-35 (Fields are ripe for harvest.)

## **Harvest**

### **Fall Harvest**

At the conclusion of the growing season every year, farmers around the world gather in the harvest. Combines cut and thresh the grain. Trucks, trains, and barges move billions of bushels of wheat, corn, rice, potatoes, tomatoes, soybeans, and all manner of crops. The crops are taken from field to storehouse to market.



Picture this bounteous harvest as people, diverse people from every nation on earth. John tells us in Revelation 7:9-10, “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” This Scripture is about an enormous throng of people at the end of the age who have accepted Christ’s sacrifice and are now clean, people who have answered the call to conversion. They are alive at Christ’s return; they are not going to be killed in the tribulation. The palm

branches signify that they are enjoying the Millennium of peace (Leviticus 23:40).

There is a misconception drawn from Revelation 7:14 which says "...These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The great tribulation is often misunderstood as a time of physical death and destruction. Actually, what that Scripture is conveying is a fantastic time of overwhelming conversion, of people of all nations and cultures answering the call to lay aside erroneous beliefs, repent, and be baptized into the blood of Christ.

This process builds all during the spiritual summer season so that when Christ returns at the beginning of fall with His resurrected first fruits, many will be ready and waiting for Him. The day of Christ's return is pictured by the Feast of Trumpets. From that point until the Day of Atonement, the whole world will have a clear choice to make. The vast majority will accept the blood of Christ and prepare for the Millennium just ahead. The Day of Atonement (or Yom Kippur) is the day that Satan and His demons are locked away so that the earth can finally enjoy peace. Gone will be the evil influences that have plagued the hearts and minds of man for so long! Join the happy throngs who keep God's holy days now, preparing for and anticipating the bright future ahead!

Read:

- Leviticus 23:23-43 (commandment given to keep the fall holy days)
- Revelation 7:9-17 (the converted multitudes)
- Amos 9:13 (God's seed rapidly bearing fruit at the end of the age and during the Millennium)

- Isaiah 11:6-9 (description of the Millennium with one religion on earth)

## **Hearing Spiritual Hearing**

The subject of hearing the voice of God is a fascinating one. The history of hearing God speak can be divided into three distinct periods of time or epochs: from the Garden of Eden until Moses and Mount Sinai, from Mount Sinai until Christ, and from Christ until the present. Each epoch covers approximately two thousand years. During the first epoch, God's words had not been written yet. The only way to hear His thoughts was for Him or one of His angel representatives to communicate directly with a person, who then passed on the message as oral history. Those God chose to speak with are those we call the patriarchs: Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, etc. They were the only ones privileged to hear God.

The second epoch was from Moses until Christ. This is the period in which God's words were recorded on scrolls that later became the books of the Old Testament. God inspired the highlights of history to be recorded, so they are both accurate and authentic. Moses, under inspiration, wrote the history and prophecy of the first epoch when he wrote the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

The first epoch transitioned into the second when Moses heard God's voice at the burning bush in Exodus 3. This humble man was commissioned to lead ancient Israel out of its bondage in Egypt. From this point forward, God's thoughts were to be conveyed to a whole nation, not just to one patriarch at a time. At the time of Moses, it is estimated that the descendants of the patriarchs had grown to about 3.5 million people, divided into the twelve tribes of Israel. After being set free from Egypt, this nation made an agreement with God to be His own special people at a

mountain called Sinai. The rest of the world was oblivious to what occurred at Mount Sinai, but the course of history was altered in a profound way.

Moses recorded how an entire nation heard God's voice in Exodus 19 and 20. The following verses give us a feel for what it must have been like. Exodus 19 verses 4-8: "'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you shall speak to the children of Israel.' So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him. Then all the people answered together and said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do.'"

Three days later the agreement was ratified and the law given. Verses 16-21: "Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. And the Lord said to Moses, 'Go down and warn the people, lest they break

through to gaze at the Lord, and many of them perish.” Exodus 20 verses 18-19: “Now all the people witnessed the thunders, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’”

From that day forward for over 1500 years, God spoke to the people through the prophets. During that epoch, many achievements set the stage for the final epoch. Four of which to take note are: 1. The entire Old Testament was recorded at the hand of the prophets. 2. The direct lineage continued that would result in the birth of Christ. 3. The Ten Commandments and accompanying statutes were given so the people would have a way to recognize sin and disobedience. 4. A system of sacrifices was given in order to have sins and offenses forgiven.

The work and experiences of ancient Israel, particularly the tribe of Judah, bring us to the final epoch before the deliverance of mankind. The third epoch of time that the Bible calls the latter days began with John the Baptist’s life. He marked the transition from the second to the third epoch. The world once again has been oblivious to what has occurred in the last two thousand years, but that is about to change. This final epoch began with only a few who had ears to hear. That tiny number was comprised of John the Baptist, Christ’s twelve disciples, and a small group of believers. Christ specifically limited the ability to hear, as is made clear in Matthew 13:10-17. Most people assume that Christ often spoke in parables in order to make things clearer. In actuality, parables were more like riddles that could only be unlocked with the right kind of hearing.



This becomes obvious when we read the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:3-9 and the exchange between Christ and the disciples which followed: “Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: ‘Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!’” Here is the exchange that followed. “And the disciples came and said to Him, ‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’ He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says, “Hearing you will hear and not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed”’” (Isaiah 6:9-10). Verses 16-17 conclude, “But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” At the very beginning, Christ told us that this hearing is something we are given. It is therefore supernatural, something beyond normal physical hearing.

Christ was not being unfair, but rather careful and kind. To hear and understand the truth comes with responsibility and sacrifice. Things are being done in an order that will ensure that all will be well in the end for the maximum number of people. For those who are able to see and hear first, it is indeed a very difficult course. With the passing of time it is getting easier and easier.

Using the principles of former and latter fulfillment, just think for a moment about all that ancient Israel, and specifically the Jewish people, endured. Because they heard the voice of God first, they have suffered the most for the longest period of time. The world indeed owes them a huge debt of gratitude, for without them we would not have the Old Testament Scriptures, Jesus Christ the Messiah, or His disciples who penned the New Testament. They were all Jewish. The early Church until Paul was one hundred percent Jewish, and through them the foundation was built that all who followed might have firm ground to stand on. Ancient Israel, including Judah, was the first nation to have a special relationship with God.

Abraham, the father of the Israelite people and the spiritual father of all the faithful in Christ (Hebrews 11), was given a promise by God in Genesis 22:10-18 for being willing to offer up his only son Isaac as a sacrifice. This act made the former and latter fulfillments as well as the duality principles apply to God the Father offering up His only Son, thus fulfilling prophecy. “By myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son – blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” (Genesis

22:16-18) The revelation reveals the mysterious path God chose to take on the way to worldwide deliverance and the time just ahead when all mankind will hear God's voice. In the Book of Revelation Christ says eight times, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." Twelve times in the gospels He mentions ears to hear. Obviously spiritual hearing is a blessing from God. He is now offering it to all who care to listen to Him and act upon what He says.

See:

- Wind

Request:

- CD *Winds of War* (#95)

## Holy Days

Exodus 12 is where God instituted the first festival or Holy Day of the year. Just before Israel was to escape from Egypt, God told the people through Moses and Aaron, “Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ‘This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: “On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.”’” This was to be each family’s Passover lamb to be slaughtered four days later, just before fleeing Egypt. You may want to read the whole episode recorded in Exodus 12, but I want to focus on verse 14: “So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.”

By going to I Corinthians 5:7-8, in the New Testament, we can establish the real significance of the Passover lamb in Exodus 12: “Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Christ, as our Passover Lamb, has freed us from sin. The first festival of the year corresponds with the first step we must take in our Christian lives: accepting the blood of Christ’s sacrifice. That first step must be followed up with the commitment to walk with Him, conquering and overcoming our sinful nature, which is characterized as the “old leaven of malice and wickedness.” Instead, we are told to keep the feast “with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Let us go back to Exodus 12:15-17 to read about this next festival on the gospel calendar: “Seven days you shall eat

unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance.” These days picture putting sin out of our lives. This “season” lasts seven days, beginning and ending with high Holy Days to be observed as memorials forever.

At the end of spring, God placed the Feast of Pentecost, picturing the harvest of firstfruits. These firstfruits have died and are sealed with the Holy Spirit, awaiting the Resurrection at Christ’s return. This process of “springtime” planting and harvesting has taken nearly 2,000 years. We are now into summer, which is very exciting for the whole world, since God’s seeds are being blown by the wind of His Spirit and landing in receptive soil everywhere. During the summer, crops grow rapidly toward the fall harvest.

The next Holy Day to be fulfilled is the Feast of Trumpets, which is the feast that pictures Christ’s triumphant return and the resurrection of His saints. From that day forward, the news will rapidly improve, because people will see Satan for what he is: the archenemy of God and of all things good. At this particular point in time, the good news is spreading that Christ’s return does not coincide with death and destruction across planet Earth. Satan wants us to believe that Christ’s return will be accompanied by death and destruction, even to the point of hastening it by our

own devices! Yes, Earth is doomed without God's intervention. However, God has been intervening for thousands of years with a step-by-step plan to deliver the human race and bring us into a beautiful millennium of peace.

Shortly after the Feast of Trumpets comes the Day of Atonement. This is the day that the Jewish people call Yom Kippur. It is the day that depicts the final capture of Satan and his demons, the day upon which they will be locked in spiritual chains and imprisoned for having held the world captive to their evil influences. Revelation 20:1-2 clearly speaks of this remarkable day: "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years..."

With Satan's influence gone from the earth, mankind will not feel the downward pull of Satan on its mind. The influence of Satan and his forces of darkness will be replaced by Christ's influence, with the assistance of His resurrected saints and the good angels. Isaiah 30:21 says, "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left." In other words, our decisions will be guided by God's truth, whispered in our minds. Instead of a little voice saying, "Don't get mad; get even," we will hear, "Just forgive and let it go." Instead of urges of greed, such as, "Beat that other guy," or "Take care of number one," a voice will say, "Play fair. Pursue what is 'win-win.'" Satan's tyrannical, evil, spiritual government will be replaced by Christ's government, based on the sweet influences of all things good. Picture, if you can, the reality of Isaiah 11:6-10, and then perhaps you will decide to begin experiencing a foretaste of that time by keeping God's Holy Days now! "The wolf also shall dwell

with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious."

At the conclusion of the growing season every year, farmers around the world gather in the harvest. Combines cut and thresh the grain. Trucks, trains, and barges move billions of bushels of wheat, corn, rice, potatoes, tomatoes, soybeans, and all manner of crops. The crops are taken from field to storehouse to market. Picture this bounteous harvest as people, diverse people from every nation on earth. John tells us in Revelation 7:9-10, "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" This Scripture is about an enormous throng of people at the end of the age who have accepted Christ's sacrifice and are now clean, people who have answered the call to conversion. They are alive at Christ's return; they are not going to be killed in the tribulation. The palm branches signify that they are enjoying the Millennium of peace (Leviticus 23:40). There is a misconception drawn from Revelation 7:14, which says, "...These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The great tribulation is

often misunderstood as a time of physical death and destruction. Actually, what that Scripture is conveying is a fantastic time of overwhelming conversion, of people of all nations and cultures answering the call to lay aside erroneous beliefs, repent, and be baptized into the blood of Christ.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures that 1000-year period, the Millennium. The last festival, the Last Great Day, represents the resurrection of all who never experienced God's way of life. They will learn to get along and respect one another as the family of man.

See:

- Calendar
- End of the World
- Harvest
- Pentecost



## Language

### Language: Physical, Spiritual, and Prophetic

Language is the repository of human thought and the chief mechanism for conveying thought. Imagine for a moment trying to think without using words. Imagine trying to communicate with other people without using words. This little exercise quickly establishes the importance of language and a good vocabulary for expressing and receiving thought. Words and language link mind to mind, forming the pathways of thought. Written language records those thoughts for future reference, for teaching, guidance, and wisdom.

One of Christ's most important attributes is His complete mastery and perfect use of language. Various words and phrases are used in the Bible to express the character and persona of Jesus Christ. Examples are King of kings, Emmanuel, Son of God, etc. One of Christ's descriptive names is *Logos* in the Greek. You will find it translated as "the Word" in the gospel of John 1:1-3. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

The Greek definition of *Logos* is something said, (including the thought); by implication a topic (subject of discourse), also reasoning, or motive; by extension a computation, the Divine Expression. (#3056, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995 edition) Therefore one of Christ's names literally is divine language for expressing divine thought. These Scriptures tie divinely expressed thought to all of creation. Therefore God communicates His thoughts to us through His word, the Bible, as well as through the creation. In order to grasp His thoughts, His reasonings, His motives, and plans we

must be conversant in the language of divine expression. This is a spiritual language so perfect, so extensive in vocabulary, and so rich and deep in meanings that it is beyond mortal man to comprehend without utilizing God's prescribed method and system for comprehension. Here are the key ingredients as revealed in Scripture.

- I Corinthians chapter 2 – the guidance of God's Holy Spirit
- Romans 1:20 – recognizing God uses creation to reveal His thoughts
- Psalm 19:1-6 – God's spiritual language reaches all the earth
- Psalm 19:7-14 – God's language incorporates the Ten Commandments to teach humanity how to live, love, and learn about God.
- Isaiah 55:8-11 – God's perfect language originates in heaven and has descended upon the earth like rain and will in time accomplish all of God's plans for mankind. [see Rain]
- Isaiah 28:9-12 – God's knowledge is conveyed in the Bible by learning how to follow His line of reasoning by stringing together "Scripture with Scripture, precept with precept, here a little there a little, line upon line."

Learning God's spiritual language and vocabulary is an essential part of having ears to hear Christ's voice in His word, in His inspiration, and in His creation.

## Light The Bible as Light

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.”

Prior to God saying, “Let there be light,” His Spirit was moving over the face of the waters. Obviously the earth was already in existence. This is important to note because it resolves a long-simmering debate between Creationists and science—the age of the earth. God said, “Let there be light” about 6,000 years ago. Yet science can prove the earth is billions of years old.

The answer is simple—billions of years elapsed between verses 1 and 2. The question remains, why was God’s Spirit hovering over the waters? An examination of the Hebrew meanings of key words in verse 2 clears up the mystery.

The four key terms to understand are “without form,” “void,” “darkness,” and “hovering.”

- Without form: *tohuw* (#8414, *Strong’s*, 1995) - to lie waste, a desolation of the surface, a desert, a worthless thing.
- Void: *bohuw* (#922, *Strong’s*, 1995) - a vacuum or indistinguishable ruin.
- Darkness: *chosek* (#2822, *Strong’s*, 1995) - misery, destruction, death, ignorance, sorrow, and wickedness.
- Hovering: *rachaph* (#7363, *Strong’s*, 1995) - to brood.

God was moving over an earth destroyed by evil. God's Spirit was brooding over what to do about a planet that had become a desolation, an indistinguishable ruin, a place full of misery, ignorance, sorrow, and wickedness. This changes the theme of Genesis from that of an absolute beginning from nothing into one of refurbishing, re-creation, and renewal. We are going to focus on the part that light played and continues to play in God's plan to refurbish and renew the earth and humanity.

When God said the light was "good," He was saying it was *towb* (#2896, *Strong's*, 1995) in the Hebrew. *Towb* means good, good thing, good man, good woman, to make good, better, or cheerful. *Towb* is translated elsewhere in the Bible as beautiful, best, bountiful, cheerful, gracious, and joyful. Essentially God said, let's shed light on the world in order to reverse the death, destruction, misery, sorrow, and wickedness, and replace it with good people who live beautiful, bountiful lives full of joy, cheer, and grace. Thus God re-created man in the form of Adam. God made man from the elements in common dirt.

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a human being" (Genesis 2:7). With Adam God did something unique according to Genesis 1:26-27: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion...So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.'" Of all living things only man was created in the image and likeness of God. Man has the ability to think, reason, and be creative like God. Most remarkably, the mind of man was designed to be able to communicate with God on the spiritual level. The most amazing and important point for us to know is

that God communicates with a spiritual form of light!

## Locusts

Locusts, especially when they swarm, have been the bane of farmers for thousands of years. A swarm of locusts literally eats every green thing in its path. Verdant pastures, row crops, and orchards can be left totally denuded.

A number of prophetic passages in God's word mention the devastating impact of locusts. We'll examine a couple of instances in which God says they have done terrible damage to His people.

What must be understood in order to comprehend prophecy is that there is a spiritual locust off which the physical version is patterned. Both ancient Israel and Christianity have suffered the effects of locust swarms that are spiritual and therefore cannot be seen. Their effects however can be clearly apparent to the spiritually astute, just as if that person had witnessed a physical locust swarm attack a garden or orchard. Now we'll use the Bible and our physical powers of observation to gain insight into the spirit realm of locusts.

The heavily prophetic Book of Joel opens with the description of the devastating impact of a locust swarm on the tribe of Judah in approximately 800 B.C. Joel 1:2-4 "Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has anything liked this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; what the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten."

Verses 10-12 describe the magnitude of the damage. “The field is wasted, the land mourns; for the grain is ruined, the new wine is dried up, the oil fails. Be ashamed, you farmers, wail, you vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley; because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine has dried up, and the fig tree has withered; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree—all the trees of the field are withered; surely joy has withered away from the suns of men.”

This physical locust swarm is the first in a series of corrective punishments on Judah designed to help them return to God. By reading Joel 1 verses 6 and 7 we see the locust swarm is then compared to an enemy nation that is preparing to attack. “For a nation has come up against My land, strong, and without number; his teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he has the fangs of a fierce lion. He has laid waste My vine, and ruined My fig tree; he has stripped it bare and thrown it away; its branches are made white.”

It is Satan who inspires nations to go to war. Satan is a roaring lion as described in I Peter 5:8. When God removes His divine protection from His people, Satan is more than willing to apply corrective punishment. However, it is Satan’s intent to destroy.

The Book of Joel contains a lot of prophetic duality. As with many prophetic warnings in the Old Testament, the Book of Joel applies to both Old Testament Judah and New Testament Christianity. The Book of Joel also incorporates a tool God often uses to help us comprehend and even “envision” what goes on beyond the veil that separates the physical from the spiritual. For lack of a better description we can call this concept physical-spiritual concurrency.

In Joel chapter 1 God is using a physical locust swarm and a physical enemy nation to show His people that they are

actually undergoing similar spiritual assaults that have led the people to sin and to turn away from Him. It is important for the people to understand this because in order to get physical relief and protection, they must repent of sin and return to God. This connection is made when you read Joel 2:12-27. Interestingly Joel 2:28-32 is what Peter quotes as being fulfilled at the first Feast of Pentecost after Christ's death and resurrection.

During Christ's ministry on earth He often used His concept of physical-spiritual concurrency when preaching to the people. Christ often referred to His people in agricultural terms such as vine, fig tree, wheat, or a garden with a variety of crops as in the parable of the mustard seed. Christ spoke of His people as these various plants needing to bear fruit. The fruit Christ wants people to bear is spiritual in nature and can best be summed up as righteous character. This is called the fruit of the Spirit. This fruit cannot be attacked and devoured by physical locusts. Christ wants us aware of the danger of spiritual locusts, a certain type of demon who does want to strip us bear of the fruit of the Spirit.

The Book of Revelation literally means "the book of revealing," so in Revelation 9 when Christ mentions locusts He is purposefully helping us understand that our most dangerous enemies are spiritual. By quoting a few key Scriptures in Revelation 9, we'll see beyond the veil that separates the physical and spiritual realms. We'll actually be able to visualize a spiritual locust swarm whose sole purpose is to harm mankind. Revelation 9:1-3 "Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. [see Stars] To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the



earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.”

Revelation 9:7-11 “The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. They had hair like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ teeth. And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.”

These locusts are obviously demons under Satan’s command. They hurt mankind by piercing mankind with sorrows, deceiving mankind, and tempting mankind to leave the safety and protection of God by leading them into sin. They hurt the “green grass and trees of the earth” that are not protected by the seal of God on their foreheads (Revelation 9:4).

The converted of the earth who have God’s Holy Spirit and who thoughtfully and purposefully live God’s way are the only ones safe from these harmful locusts. This is a glimpse into spiritual warfare with the wicked spiritual rulers of this earth as we read in Ephesians 6:10-12. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

The spirit locusts of Revelation 9 are the same as those who swarmed Israel in Joel chapter 1 who had lions' teeth. They were the spiritual principality in heavenly places that tempted Judah into sin, resulting in God removing His blessing and protection. The physical correction brought to bear on the people took the form of physical locusts and an enemy nation. There is much more to this subject, but for now let's close with the Hebrew definition for the word "nation" in Joel 1:6 as it contains the physical-spiritual concurrent meaning.

Nation (#1471, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995): *gowy* or *goy*—"a foreign nation; hence, a Gentile; also (fig.) a troop of animals, or a flight of locusts."

See:

- Trees
- Trees: The Fig Tree
- Trees: The Olive Tree
- God's Garden
- Mountains

Request:

- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 7 Battleground Earth*
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 11 Mountains Shall Rise and Mountains Shall Fall*

## **Moon**

### **The Moon Represents Christ's Church**

On its own the physical moon can shed no light, because it generates no light. The moon reflects the light of the sun. Each month it “waxes” and “wanes” in the amount of reflected light. The phases of the moon take it from totally dark to full-moon brightness. The sun and the moon are the two greatest sources of light on earth, with the moon being totally dependent on the sun. The relationship of these two heavenly bodies represents the same relationship as Jesus Christ has with His Church. Most of the time the Church does not reflect as much light from Christ as it should.

The Church is composed of imperfect people who struggle with sin characterized by darkness. Ideally the Church should be “the light of the world” who by example lead men to God and His truth (Matthew 5:14-16).



Photo: Yaymicro.com

Often when the moon is full, it appears to reflect the image

of “the man in the moon.” In fact the moon more accurately reflects the image of a woman, for the Church is called “the bride of Christ” (Ephesians 5 and Revelation 19:7-9). At baptism a person accepts the blood of Christ to expiate their sins and makes an agreement to do their best to reflect the light of Christ.

Conversion is a process requiring much “washing of the water of the word” (Ephesians 5:26-27) to remove the spots and blemishes that diminish the light.

Understanding that the Church is represented in Scripture by the moon is an important key in comprehending prophecy. Scriptures that refer to the moon going dark or turning red, like blood, take on new meaning, opening up whole passages to our understanding.

- Acts 2:14-24 – The crucifixion of Christ put out the light of the sun and covered the moon with His blood.
- Revelation 12:1-2 – The Church, both Old Testament and New, as a woman standing on the moon
- Matthew 24:29 and Mark 13:24 – moon gone dark
- Luke 21:25 – signs from God in the sun and the moon
- Revelation 6:12 – The moon became as blood.
- Revelation 8:12 – A third part of the moon becomes dark.
- Isaiah 30:26 – During the Millennium the moon will fully reflect the light of the sun.

The moon also plays an important part in keeping prophetic time.

See:

- Light
- Stars
- God’s Calendar

## Moths that Corrupt



Photo by pond5.com

More than likely you have made some interesting observations peculiar to moths. On warm summer nights you probably have seen them fluttering around your porch light, or tapping on your bedroom window until you turn the lights out. You have probably also had the frustration of having a favorite woolen coat, blanket, fine garment, or cloth become “moth eaten.”

A couple of times Christ included moths in His teachings. Matthew 6:19-21 is such an example: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Can

we really have a heavenly clothes closet that is impervious to moths? The answer is yes, and Christ's carefully chosen words are designed to explain this to those with ears to hear.

Many Scriptures refer to Christ's saints receiving white garments, so they can be clothed like Christ whose garments are whiter than snow. Revelation 6:11 tells us that the saints of old receive a white robe. Ephesians 5:25-27 tells us Christ is working toward having a bride arrayed beautifully without spot, wrinkle, or blemish, and that bride is composed of the saints within His Church. Revelation 7:13-14 speaks of an eventual innumerable multitude having received white robes washed in the blood of Christ. You see, Christ cleans our garments by His sacrifice, and He puts these garments on us, but we actually provide Him the raw material for the garments. Revelation 19:7-8 tells us how: "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

Year by year our righteous acts provide the fibers to weave our garments for us. Essentially, our righteous acts are the outward expressions of who we are and what we are trying to become, or in other words, our character, which should be reflecting the image and the likeness of God more and more each year. The character traits God wants us to develop are the fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." I Corinthians 13, known as the love chapter, gives us an expansive definition of love which includes not envying, not being rude, loving the truth, and being humble. I Corinthians 13 concludes, "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Just like a garment or fine cloth, our character is composed of fiber, moral fiber. If these fibers are no good or non-existent, we find ourselves spiritually “naked,” or having clothes full of spots, wrinkles, blemishes, and holes.

We are beginning to see why Christ spoke of moths corrupting our garments. Just as lights in your house at night attract moths that want to get in and feed on our garments, Christ warns that something similar can happen to us spiritually. You see, we live in a dark world. In Matthew 5:14-16 Christ calls His followers “the light of the world” because once we repent, are baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit, the light of the Holy Spirit turns on in our “house.” This attracts lower level evil spirits bent on destroying the good fibers the Holy Spirit is working in us to produce. Those evil spirits tempt us to lose our patience, argue and fight, and basically hold on to any bad habit we may have had. They do not want us to overcome and grow to be like Christ. Those “moths” cannot enter heaven and destroy fibers we have stored in heaven. How do we get our good fibers stored there, so that when Christ returns we can have a beautiful white garment?

The answer to this question lies in God’s holy days which take place in three seasons of the year. Deuteronomy 16:16-17 explains that on the holy days that fall during the spring, summer, and autumn we are to come before God with an offering to Him based upon the produce of our land and farms. All wealth directly or indirectly springs from the earth combined with the work of our hands. More importantly, we bring to God an offering of the “crops” we have produced in the garden of our life. When He accepts our offering, He stores the fiber of our lives safely in the treasury of heaven where moth cannot corrupt or destroy. The moths will work hard to prevent us from producing more good fiber, but they cannot take away or ruin what God holds in safe keeping!

See:

- Farmer: God as a Farmer
- Soil
- Rain
- Harvest
- Dirt, Water, and Air
- Garden

Request:

- *The Times and Seasons Digest No. 5 God's Harvest*
- *CD Let Your Garden Grow (#16)*



## **Mountains**

The earth's surface has many amazing features. Perhaps the most majestic, awe inspiring, and in some cases fearsome are mountains. A tall snow-capped mountain, looming far above its surroundings, can literally take one's breath away. Without saying a word such a mountain inspires us to think of power, greatness, and majesty. To the contrary, a dark sulfurous volcano with its caldera inspires fear and dread. For thousands of years people have both revered and feared mountains. They have worshipped them as sacred and in some cases sacrificed to them. God tells us in Romans 1:25 not to worship physical creation but rather its Creator. However, Romans 1:20 tells us that God teaches us about Himself through all that He has created. Some of God's thoughts and plans can be understood by careful observation combined with Scripture. Many, if not all, created things have a counterpart in the spirit realm. Mountains loom large physically and even more so spiritually.



In the Bible mountains represent kingdoms and nations and their governmental structure. In the broadest terms the kingdom of God and Satan's kingdom are both represented

by mountains in God's word. Mountains are composed of stone. Knowing this helps us to understand one of the key passages in the Bible that speaks of God's kingdom as His mountain. We will break into the story of king Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image in Daniel chapter 2. Let's start with verses 31-35. "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

In verses 36-45 Daniel tells the divine interpretation to the king. We will quote Daniel 2 verses 37 and 44. "You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory." Verse 44: "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone of the kingdom. (Ephesians 2:20 and Matthew 21:42) He was "cut" from the heavenly kingdom of God and sent to the earth to become man, and He did so without human hands. From this one stone will grow a great kingdom which will engulf the whole earth. Each human being who repents, converts, is baptized, and receives God's Holy Spirit becomes

another “stone” in the mountain of this kingdom. This kingdom will replace Satan’s spiritual mountain which until now rules in the affairs of men. God’s kingdom builds upward like a majestic mountain. Satan’s kingdom does the opposite—like a volcano.

Volcanoes rise above the earth, but their power comes from below. Satan’s kingdom is full of darkness, dread, and death. Interestingly, volcanoes are cauldrons of molten rock and sulfur gas discharged from deep within the earth. Satan’s mountain kingdom wreaks havoc upon the earth and is referenced in the Bible several times. Jeremiah 51:25-26 says of Satan’s kingdom, “‘Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroys all the earth,’ says the Lord. ‘And I will stretch out My hand against you, roll you down from the rocks, and make you a burnt mountain. They shall not take from you a stone for a corner nor a stone for a foundation, but you shall be desolate forever,’ says the Lord.”

God is not angry with the physical mountains of the world, but He is very angry with Satan and his demonic mountain. Satan’s mountain is called Mount Seir in Ezekiel 35:1-9. It is a mountain God will destroy by converting mankind and offering humanity eternal life by Christ’s shed blood. Mount Seir in Hebrew means “the mountain of the rough shaggy he-goat, a devil, which causes mankind to shiver in fear.” This is the mountain that Satan took Christ up to tempt Him in Matthew 4:8. Christ was unafraid and rebuked Satan.

Satan’s mountain and his hills will be destroyed. Soon all mankind will have the opportunity to live in the safety and security of the mountain of the Lord’s house (Isaiah 2:1-4).

Request:

- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 11, Mountains Shall Rise and Mountains Shall Fall*

## Pentecost

June brings us to the end of spring and the beginning of the summer. As we transition from the first season to the second, it is good to observe what is happening in the natural world. Buds have given way to flowers and leaves. Hay fields are growing tall. Seed grains have sprouted, with little green shoots poking up through the soil. Farmers have put away plows, discs, and seeders. With anticipation and some concern, they hope for a good crop in the fall.

In the meantime, the land is bearing the firstfruits of the year. Asparagus, leeks, and winter wheat, as well as other cultivated and wild edibles are ripe for harvest. It is a small foretaste of the bountiful harvest that the end of summer will bring.

It is against this backdrop that God has placed the last spring holy day of Pentecost. The name means “count 50.” Leviticus 23:16 tells us to count 50 days from the day after the Sabbath that fell during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Every year, Pentecost lands on a Sunday very near the end of spring.

Ancient Israel was told by God that Pentecost would be a holy day forever (Leviticus 23:21). On this day, they were instructed to make an offering to God from the new spring grain harvest. We read these instructions in Leviticus 23:16-17: “Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the Lord.” The Israelites kept this holy day with the prescribed rituals and statutes without realizing that it looked forward to a future event in what would be the New Testament era! The first Pentecost after Christ’s

death and resurrection was a monumental event in human history. Before we read the account of that Pentecost, it is important to grasp that the Old Testament is what connects Pentecost to the *harvest* of first fruits.

About 2,000 years ago, the followers of Christ were gathered together in Jerusalem on Pentecost, as per His instructions recorded in Acts 1:4-8: “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’” Notice that what was to take place had to do with times and seasons.

Now let us read about the amazing events of that first Pentecost when 120 followers of Christ were gathered together: “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4). Thus, the first Pentecost of the New Testament era was marked by the 120 followers receiving the Spirit of Christ. Receiving wind and fire within them gave each of them the breath of Christ, as the living Word, and the fire to kindle and purify them.

Immediately, they had the power to be effective witnesses for Christ. Look up Acts 1:5-15 to read how the apostles, speaking in the language of the Galileans, could be understood in any language by a large crowd of foreign-born Jews gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost. Three thousand people were baptized that day (verse 41), because they not only witnessed a miracle but also could understand a prophecy from the Old Testament prophet Joel. Let us read Peter's words in verses 16 through 24: "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it." Until that very day, nobody had ever been able to explain this mysterious prophecy. Now they knew. Christ was the Son of God, pictured by the sun above, and the moon represented the Church, whose sins could be removed by His blood through baptism. A huge riddle was now made plain.

The events also made plain the parable of the sower. Christ

the sower had now sown seed into the 120, who in turn became sowers of seed into the 3,000. The process would continue for an entire period of time, represented by the season we call springtime! Much can be said about the firstfruits, but that would only lead to unnecessary speculation. God and Christ know who they are, for not all who received the Word of God are firstfruits. Reading the parable of the sower as explained by Christ make this clear: “Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matthew 13:18-23).

The main point of this article is that spring must end sometime, so summer can come. Summer must run its course for Christ to return at the time of the huge fall harvest. Signs are all about us that spring is coming to a close and the whole world is about to receive the seed of God’s word upon which the rain will fall and the sun (Son) will enlighten. God’s plan inexorably moves forward for the benefit of the whole human race.

Request:

- *CD Let Your Garden Grow (#16)*
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 5, God’s Harvests*



## **Rain**

### **Rain: A Necessary Element of Life**

The Bible is the written repository of God's communicated thoughts for mankind. It is divided into two major parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. Together they form "the word of God." II Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." In other words, all Scripture is divinely inspired teaching, instruction, and guidance in how to lead a good life.

One of the main ways God helps us understand the origin, purpose, and effect of Scripture on humanity is to observe rain's effect upon the earth. Rain is necessary to sprout seeds in the soil, so it can grow to its full potential. Rain is essential for any plant to survive and thrive. Rain, combined with good soil and sunshine, make vast portions of the earth lush, verdant, and green. Without rain crops fail, forests die, and the earth becomes barren, a process called desertification.



The spiritual lesson to be drawn from physical rain is that God calls His word, the Bible, rain. He divides His rain into two parts, the former and the latter rain, the Old and

New Testament which have “fallen” from heaven to nourish human soil.

The Hebrew word for former rain is *mowreh* (#4175, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) which means a teaching rain. This rain forms the Old Testament which had to come first, so Christ could come to fulfill the word. Latter rain is the term for the New Testament and is in Hebrew *malqowsh* (#4456, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) meaning spring rain. The figurative definition literally means “eloquence.” The parable of the sower portrays Christ as a farmer sowing seed. Properly understanding the spiritual meaning of rain, we can see that His word is the rain which causes the seed to sprout and grow if we provide good soil for Him to work with.

Texts for verification:

- James 5:1-8
- Isaiah 55:6-13
- Hebrews 6:7-8
- Deuteronomy 32:2

## Satan's Name

Now let us examine the name of Satan. In the Hebrew, Satan (#7854, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) means opponent; arch-enemy of good; adversary; to attack; or to accuse. In the Greek, Satan (#4567, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) means "the accuser." The word devil in the Greek (#1228, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) means a slanderer; a false accuser. Belial (#1100, *Strong's Concordance* 1995), which is another Hebrew word for the devil, means worthless; destruction; and wickedness. Revelation 9:11 calls him Apollyon (#623, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995), which literally means "destroyer."

Contrasting Satan's names, which reflect his character, with God's beautiful names, which reflect His character, allows us to see two beings who are in diametric opposition to each other. They are opposing forces. They have opposing and opposite character traits. That is where we have to keep it straight. Who is who?



Revelation 12:9 says that Satan has deceived the whole world. He has used the power of his evil influence to trick humanity into behaving like him. This has resulted in continual misery for the human race: war, violence, corruption, greed. Much of the human condition reflects what Satan has “created” in us. We too often reflect his image rather than God’s. The absolute saddest thing is people exhibiting, fomenting, and preaching destructive and violent behavior while invoking the name of God. This includes the teaching and belief that God intends to destroy the world in some end-time cataclysm. This is what Satan has tricked us into believing. It is important to remember that God is a builder and creator; Satan is a deceiver and destroyer. Satan wants us to apply his character traits to God’s name, knowing that when we do, we take God’s name in vain without realizing it.

It is God’s intention to utterly defeat His arch-rival, Satan. In fact, Satan’s fate is already sealed because of Christ’s perfect life and precious shed blood. Satan’s banishment was pictured by the Azazel goat on the Day of Atonement. Christ is well on the way to His goal of bringing about the beautiful creation that He and the Father have always intended. A Millennium of peace and prosperity is just around the corner.

## The Sea

Seventy-one percent of the earth's surface is covered by the sea. This huge contiguous body comprises 97% of all the earth's water. Earth's water is fundamentally divided into two types: fresh water found in springs, rivers, ponds, and lakes, and the great ocean of salt water. The sea, being the largest feature on the earth's surface, is not surprising to find has a significant place in Scripture. We need to know what the sea means and represents in the Bible.



The Bible begins and ends with references to the sea. Genesis 1:2 “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” Here we find the Spirit of God hovering over the seas. Spirit is *ruwach* in Hebrew (#7307, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) meaning wind, breath, and life. The Spirit of Jesus Christ, the source of inherent life and breath, was hovering over the earth's surface which was in a state of ruin. Without form, which is *tohuw* in Hebrew (#8414, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) means to lie waste, a desolation of the surface, a worthless thing. Void is *bohuw* (#922, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) meaning a vacuum or indistinguishable ruin. A vacuum of course means without

air and thus dead. Spiritually the earth was without the breath of Christ.

The phrase “darkness was on the face of the deep” explains it most fully. Darkness in the Hebrew is *choshek* (#2822, *Strong’s Concordance*, 1995) meaning the earth was covered in “misery, destruction, death, ignorance, sorrow, wickedness.” To put it bluntly, the earth was covered in sin with no living thing possessing the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the breath of eternal life. Into this sad state of affairs Christ said, “Let there be light” representing His eternal truth.

In chapter 2 of Genesis God formed man of the “dust of the ground,” breathed into his nostrils, and man was reborn as Adam. He became a living being, possessing the very breath of God. Adam was taken, as it were, from that sea where Satan’s attitude held total control and placed on solid fertile ground in the Garden of Eden.

With the fall of Adam and Eve, Satan once again brought all creation under his dominion of death and destruction and forced God to expel Adam and Eve back into “the sea” where his attitudes and temptations reigned supreme. God will not be defeated by the likes of Satan. Titus 1:1-3, in the words of Paul, says “...Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgement of the truth which accords with godliness, IN HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, but has in due time manifested His word through preaching...”

As mentioned earlier, the Bible ends with the defeat of Satan and the conquering of “the sea.” Revelation 20:12-15 “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were

judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

The sea will give up her dead, past and present, and every human being will have had an opportunity to receive “the breath of life.” Revelation 7 informs us that the vast majority of mankind will choose life, an innumerable multitude no man can number. The raging sea will have gone calm, becoming a sea of glass. Mankind will at that point no longer have to endure Satan’s howling winds, raging waves, temptations, or false doctrines. Revelation 21:1 concludes that there will be “no more sea.”

Scriptures to look up:

- Matthew 8:23-27 Christ exercised power over the sea.
- John 6:15-21 Christ walked on the sea.
- Revelation 5:13-14 The contents of the sea will praise Christ.
- Isaiah 60:5 The contents of the sea will be converted.
- Luke 21:25-26 Men’s hearts fail at the roaring of the sea.
- Matthew 18:6 It is better to be cast into the sea than to cause offense.
- Matthew 21:20-22 With faith mountains can be cast into the sea (look up Mountains).
- Psalm 65:5-8 With the calming of the sea humanity will have peace.

See:

- Winds
- Fish of the Sea

Request:

- CD *Calming the Sea* (#130)
- CD *The Sea of Mankind* (#210)
- CD *Winds of War* (#95)
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 11 Mountains Shall Rise and Mountains Shall Fall*



## Seeds: A Physical-Spiritual Connection



*l-r; Sunflower, Wheat and Squash*  
Photo by John Blanchard

Seeds are arguably the most amazing things in all creation. Seeds have the power to impart life to another generation. This is so remarkable because in the universe all physical things are moving toward a state called entropy. According to the *American Heritage Diction of the English Language*, entropy is “the tendency for all matter and energy in the universe to evolve toward a state of inert uniformity.” When living things die, they have moved into a state of entropy, the cessation of life’s energy. When no more electrical impulses can be detected, we use the term “flatlined.” Seeds defy the law of entropy!

Seeds, whether plant, animal, or human fertilized embryo, have within them the mechanisms and energy to impart life to succeeding generations. Life is therefore inherent within the seed to beget life. Genesis 1:11-12 tells us that God’s

design provides for living things to have the ability to beget life after their own kind. “Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth’; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.”

Physical seed can beget only physical life. We can learn about the potential for eternal life through careful observation of physical seed. Eternal life permanently overcomes the obstacle of entropy. Satan tried to thwart God’s plan for mankind to have eternal life. Satan brought death and eventual entropy to the human race by causing sin to enter Adamic man. Let’s read portions of Genesis 3 regarding the fall of Adamic man and what God promised in order to reverse death and the resulting entropy.

Genesis 3:1-5 “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, “You shall not eat of every tree of the garden”?’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, “You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.”’ Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’”

God responded to the situation in verse 14 and 15. “So the Lord God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed;

He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”  
The Seed that would eventually proceed from the succeeding generations was Jesus Christ.

The miracle is that Jesus Christ was the first seed from a human being that had eternal life within itself and the ability to impart this life to succeeding and eventually preceding generations of human beings! Christ’s remarkable seed can live in us leading eventually to the resurrection to eternal life. I Peter 1:22-23 explains the power and promise of how God will defeat death and entropy. “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.”

Thus through the miracle of life inherent within physical seed, we learn how Jesus Christ truly is the sower of the seed with the power to convey eternal life!

See:

- Trees
- Serpents
- Rain
- Springs and Fountains

Request in-depth studies:

- CD *Natural Springs and Fountains* (#381)
- CD *Watering the Seed* (#382)

## Serpents



Most people are aware that the Bible calls Satan a serpent. Genesis 3:1-4 explains how Satan, in the guise of a serpent, deceived Eve then Adam into sinning by eating forbidden fruit. “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, “You shall not eat of every tree of the garden”?’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, “You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.”’ Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die.’”

Obviously the fruit they consumed was much more than a physical apple or other tree-borne fruit, for it had negative impact on their hearts and minds. Adam and Eve had swallowed the lie that there was a different way of life that would make them wise and knowledgeable as God. Swallowing this lie has had a profound negative effect on mankind. This way of life is actually the way of suffering and death. The curse of suffering and death entered Adamic man by way of Satan’s mouth. The serpent beguiled Eve by

uttering smooth words that literally separated man from God, just as dark is the opposite of light, evil is the opposite of good, and lies are the opposite of truth.

God turned the tables on Satan by pronouncing His own curse on the serpent in Genesis 3:14-15. “So the Lord God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.’” Satan’s curse was that he would have to devour through deception every human being for the next 6,000 years. Failure to do so would result in the destruction of his empire and his permanent banishment into the outer darkness beyond the universe. The enmity between Satan and the woman was that she, through her descendants would bear a Son who was incorruptible—the one we know as Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The synopsis of this saga is contained in Revelation 12:1-5. “Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

Since that notorious event in the garden, Satan has never quit lying to the human race. His goal was to lie his way into every human heart to deny God the family of man and keep his own evil empire in existence forever. He even tried to get Christ to agree to this evil idea by avoiding death on the cross in exchange for a place within the kingdom of God, in effect making himself a member of the Godhead. Matthew 4:1-11 contains the account. “Then Jesus was led up by the

Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' But He answered and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."' Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: "He shall give His angels charge over you," and "In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, 'It is written again, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God."' Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, 'All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve."' Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him."

This is confirmed in Isaiah 14:12-15. "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit."

Satan's bag of tricks has always been the same: Feed men evil ideas by poisoning their minds with his inspiration. Then use those who swallow his lies as his serpents to infect others with his evil thoughts. The following sequence of Scriptures reveals his diabolical plot, and how God is well aware of what he is doing and is countering him with His own servants armed with the truth.

Isaiah 59:4-5 Hatch viper's eggs

Matthew 23:33 Brood of vipers

Malachi 4:1-3 Crush serpents under the soles of feet

## Signs and Wonders

By Christ's own words, we can establish the correct premise upon which to answer the disciples' questions regarding "the end of the age." He clearly said that talk of wars, rumors of wars, and natural disasters are not to be viewed as signs of the end of the age. In Matthew 24:24, He emphasizes how difficult it would be to not get caught up in these deceptions. In verses 24-25 He said, "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand." In spite of this clear warning, this is exactly what has happened for most of the last 2,000 years. Some of the most vocal doomsayers have been ministers, prophets, and those who claim to understand prophecy. By and large they themselves have been deceived and would not listen to any other point of view, which guaranteed that they would stay deceived. It is truly a shame that generation after generation has lived and died with the fear and anxiety spawned and fed by error.

### Christ's True Signs

Jesus Christ was not hesitant to answer the disciples' questions, which have echoed down through time to this very day. Matthew 24 lays this groundwork for the true signs and wonders for which to watch. These signs and wonders are corroborated and expanded upon throughout Scripture. Now that we have arrived at the end of the age, He wants all mankind to understand what they are.

Before we examine a few of these remarkable signs and wonders, we must understand what Christ meant by these two words. Let's define them from the original Greek:

- Signs: *Semeion* (#4592, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995): an indication, especially ceremonial or supernatural, taken from the word



- *Semeino* (#4591, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995): a mark to indicate.
- Wonders: *Teras* (#5059, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995): a prodigy or omen.

Taken together, signs and wonders mean indicators, whether ceremonial or supernatural, that mark or indicate where we are in time or how God is interacting with humanity. Therefore, the correct signs and wonders are like a window, allowing us to view God's actions and thus contemplate His great plan and where we are in its chronology. In other words, signs and wonders are way-markers along the road of history.

If we are not to look at wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, or natural disasters (or the Mayan calendar, for that matter), what are we to look for? We need to state where and what those signs are and prove these things from Scripture.

### True Signs and Wonders

*True signs and wonders are evidenced by Christ working through His people.* In the Old Testament, He worked through His prophets. During Christ's ministry on earth, He performed signs and wonders directly. His very life and the truths He taught were for signs and wonders. His death and resurrection in itself was a powerful sign for the body of Christ. However, just as He warned, many have come in His name and deceived many with talk of war, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, and other disasters as signs of His coming!

Keep in mind that signs, *semeion*, are indicators that are ceremonial or supernatural. Therefore the signs and wonders are divided into two basic areas:

1. Miracles (supernatural)
2. Ceremony (what believers do)



We can verify this in Scripture by turning to Isaiah 8:12-22. These verses clearly show the contrast between those preaching a harsh message of doom and gloom, and those preaching the real good news of the gospel like Christ did. For the sake of space, let's look at some of these verses, but you may want to read the whole passage later.

Isaiah 8:12: "Do not say, 'A conspiracy,' concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." Verse 16: "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." Verse 18: "Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells in Mount Zion." Verses 20-22: "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. They will pass through it hard pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward. Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness."

This amazing set of Scriptures clearly shows that God's people who keep the law (Ten Commandments) and hold the testimony (Bible precepts) are for signs and wonders. The surest way to end up in a state of darkness and confusion is not to keep God's Ten Commandments and to twist Scripture by misrepresenting the good news of the Bible.

### Divine Guidance

The two methods God uses to communicate with mankind are through miracles and prescribed ceremony instituted by God Himself. Many Scriptures confirm what we read in Isaiah 8. A powerful corroboration for keeping the law and the testimony is in Exodus 31:12-18: "And the Lord spoke

to Moses, saying, ‘Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: “Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.”’ And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.”

When a person honors and keeps God’s weekly Sabbath from Friday sundown until Saturday sundown and His annual holy days, they bring themselves in concert with God’s will. They also put themselves in the right place at the right time to understand and sometimes even become active participants in God performing signs and wonders.

The first annual holy day to follow Christ’s death and resurrection was Pentecost. Amazing signs and wonders took place on that high Sabbath. One hundred and twenty of Christ’s followers, including His disciples, were present for interaction with Christ’s Holy Spirit. That extraordinary event has reverberated to this very day! Let’s read about the powerful signs and wonders that took place on that holy day when both ceremony and miracle changed the course of history. Acts 2:1-4, 14-22: “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in

one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance... But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, ‘Men of Judah and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in Your midst, as you yourselves also know.”

The rest of the New Testament records time and again how Christ’s disciples were used for signs and wonders. Here are a few:

- Acts 2:43: “Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.”
- Acts 4:23-31: “And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they

raised their voice to God with one accord and said, 'Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: "Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ." For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.' And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."

- Acts 5:12-16: "And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed."
- Romans 15:14-21: "Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able to admonish

one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, but as it is written: 'To whom He was not announced, they shall see; and those who have not heard shall understand.'"

These Scriptures provide incontrovertible proof that Christ will provide the true signs and wonders to guide mankind along the path toward a good relationship with Him. With this knowledge, you can avoid the fear and anxiety that has plagued mankind for so long, the feeling of doom provoked by false signs and wonders.

There is an extremely bright future just ahead, and we can provide many study aids to help you prepare it.

Request:

- CD *Searching for Signs and Wonders* (#253/G27)

## Snow

There is nothing on earth as clean and bright as freshly fallen snow. The light of the sun becomes dazzling as its rays bounce off each flake. A full moon on a blanket of snow turns the darkness into virtual day. Though the number is incalculable, it is amazing that no two of the tiny snowflakes are exactly the same. God's word has much to say about snow and what it means for each of us.



The calendar on your wall says that a new year began at midnight January 1, in the dead of winter. In actual fact, the way God calculates time, winter is the conclusion of the annual seasonal rhythms. Indeed, we humans recognize that the winter of life corresponds to the end of our natural lifespan. God says to honor the elderly, symbolized by the white hair that comes with age. White hair is a symbol of wisdom and purity. God Himself is described as having hair as white as snow (Revelation 1:13-14) and pure, clean wool. There is a connection between white hair, pure woolen garments, and snow.

Pure snow symbolizes the absence of sin. Christ has always been pure, and He is working to cleanse the human race. King David acknowledged this in Psalm 51:7: “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” Ephesians 5:26 tells us that Christ sanctifies and cleanses believers by washing them with the “water of the word.” Christ’s sacrifice cleanses us from committed sin, but the teachings from His word help us understand the concepts of repentance and forgiveness. God’s word helps us wash our character clean if we listen, learn, and apply. Good character is choosing right over wrong, good over evil. This produces white hair and garments like Christ’s. Indeed, forgiveness without growth makes us unfruitful servants. During our lives we are to produce “thirty-, sixty-, or a hundredfold” (Matthew 13:23) by bearing fruit during the seasons of our lives.

Revelation 19:8 tells us that Christ will return to a church “arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” Matthew 6:20 tells us to store our treasures (righteous acts) in heaven “where moth and rust cannot destroy...” This forms the material that God uses to fashion a white garment unique to each person. No two people are exactly the same. Each life is unique, lived its own way. Life’s choices eventually become the record of our character. Each act in the story of our lives has our fingerprints on it. Just as no two fingerprints are identical, so it is that no two snowflakes are the same.

Snowflakes fall from the sky, each uniquely formed from frozen, clean water. If we live our lives wisely, the fresh water of God’s word helps us form a beautiful white garment held for us in God’s storehouse. At the resurrection, billions of white garments will descend from God’s storehouse to make the earth beautifully white and clean. God asks Job, “Have you entered the treasury of

snow, or have you seen the treasury of hail...?” (Job 38:22). Of course, the answer is that no man has seen them, but they exist. Treasury comes from the Hebrew words *owtsar* and *atsar*, meaning “to store up in a depository.” The word *snow* comes from the Hebrew words *sheleg* and *shalag*, literally meaning “to be white as snow, and, figuratively, with white linen garments.” The innumerable multitude of Revelation 7:9-11 represent the time just ahead when the whole world is as white as snow.



## Soil

We are composed of the dust of the ground, mere dirt with which God seeks to work and grow bountiful crops of wonderful character traits. He wants to develop qualities of love, mercy, compassion, honesty, and integrity. However, we are in control of the soil of which we are composed.



Physically, we are the dust of the earth, but with our God-given gift of free will and the ability to think and reason, we can use our time on earth to produce bounteous fruit for God.

Genesis 2:7; 3:19 (Man is composed of dirt to which God adds breath.)

Genesis 3:17-18 (Man must overcome the thorns and thistles of life.)

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 (Man must also overcome the cares of the world and pulls of Satan.)

James 5:7-11 (God, as a spiritual farmer, intends to make the world fruitful.)

Jeremiah 4:3-4 (We must work our soil by softening our hearts.)

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 (We are God's field.)

1 Peter 2:1-4 (We are living stones.)

Isaiah 64:8 (God is the potter and our dirt the clay.)

See:

- Dirt, Water, and Air

## Springs and Fountains



A natural spring fountain in Alanson, MI  
Photo by John Blanchard

Literally every physical thing in existence can help us learn about God and teach us lessons from God. This physical-spiritual connection was designed by God to help us know Him, have a relationship with Him, and understand the spiritual realm. The spiritual realm would be impossible to understand without the physical realm in which we exist. The water flowing from natural springs and fountains is a classic and very important example of this.

The *World Book Encyclopedia 2006 Edition* describes a spring as “A natural source of water that flows from the ground. Water from rain and melting snow seeps into the ground. It filters through the pores and cracks in the soil into the layers of rock. The water finally reaches a layer through which it cannot pass. This water held underground is called ground water. Gravity may force the water to rise until it finds a

way out to the surface to form a spring.” Streams feed into streams, rivers, and bodies of water which are essential to all life.

Natural springs and fountains are water that has fallen, in the form of rain and snow, from the heavens above and eventually gush forth from the earth where they can be beautiful, refreshing, healthful water for man and beast.

From the beginning to the end of the Bible, water sources figure very prominently in Scripture. Genesis 2:8-10 tells us, “The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads.” We see that out of the ground grew every tree that was pleasant and good for food as well as a water source, originating in Eden, going forth from the garden to form four riverheads.

God reveals in the seventh chapter of the last book of the Bible, Revelation, verses 9-10 and 16-17 that in the last days an enormous multitude of people would be led to fountains of living water. “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’ ...They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Let's learn more about these living fountains. Christ Himself has much to say about them.

We'll break into the story of the Samaritan woman who met Christ at Jacob's well. John 4:5-14 "So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give Me a drink.' For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, 'How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?' For the Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?' Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.'"

In this exchange Christ demonstrates to us that just as physical water is understood to be essential for physical life, there is a form of water He called "living water" which is essential for eternal life. Water that imparts eternal life must indeed be spiritual. A few chapters later in John 7:37-39 Christ explains more about this water and its source. "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke

concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

It is clear that Christ Himself is the source of living water in the form of His Holy Spirit. If we believe in Him and accept the truth of His word, He becomes a spring within us which literally bubbles forth from our heart in the form of a river of living water! In these verses Christ was building on an Old Testament Scripture in Isaiah 12:3. “Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” It is a miracle that the earth (which human beings are) can become a spring of water and a fountain of life for other people.

Isaiah 55:1, 8-13 “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price...‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out with joy, and be let out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

This demonstrates how God uses our physical surroundings to teach us His deep spiritual concepts. Just as the *World Book Encyclopedia* explained how springs form from the

rain and snow that falls from the physical heavens above and percolate through the soil of the earth to form springs, so it is with God's word, the Bible, which percolates through the soil, human beings, as God's marvelous thoughts. That's why John 1:1-4 calls Jesus Christ "the Word," and in Him is the source of eternal life!

See:

- Rain
- Seeds: A Physical-Spiritual Connection

## **Stars**

### **Stars Represent Angels**

Almost nothing focuses the mind on the grandeur of God more than looking up at the stars on a clear night. Star gazing is almost synonymous with soul searching and asking the big questions. What is life? Why do I exist? What does creation mean? We somehow expect the answers to lie within the canopy of the stars. Scientists peer into the universe with telescopes, satellites, space probes, and sophisticated listening devices. They have learned much about the origins of the universe, how our solar system works, and what makes earth so unique. Physical stars can teach us a lot, but compared to the angels they represent, they are very limited in explaining the meaning of life.

Angels are the spiritual messengers God uses to send points of light to mankind. Students of the Bible know that God has sent mankind many important messages and prophecies, as well as a lot of help in time of need. Archangels like Gabriel and Michael are mentioned several times in Scripture. Good angels such as them bring enlightenment.

There are bad angels, of course, who bring evil influences into the world. Therefore they are angels whose light has gone out. They spawn much sin, sorrow, and anguish in humanity.

Scripture indicates that Satan has influenced one-third of the angels to become demons. The name Satan means arch enemy of good. His name previously was Lucifer meaning star or light bringer.



The following Scriptures prove that stars represent angels in the Bible, some good and some evil.

- Revelation 1:18-20 – A star represents the angel over each of the seven churches in Revelation.
- Psalm 148:3 – The sun (Jesus Christ), the moon (the Church), and the stars (angels), all praise God the Father.
- Job 38:4-7 – Stars (angels) sang at creation.
- Revelation 12:1-4 – Satan has authority over one-third of the angels.
- Revelation 6:12-13 – Satan’s angels “fell” to earth at Christ’s death and resurrection. (see Sun and Moon)
- Isaiah 14:12-15 – Lucifer became Satan when he tried to usurp God’s authority.
- Ezekiel 28:14-17 – Lucifer went from perfect at his creation to the embodiment of evil.

Knowing that stars represent angels in Scripture helps us understand both history and prophecy, and the roles angels play in human affairs.

# Sun

## The Sun as Representing Jesus Christ



Photo by Stephanie Ricker

Without the sun life on earth would be impossible. It provides the light and heat to sustain life. The fact that all creation reveals the invisible attributes and thoughts of God (Romans 1:20), the sun must be of particular significance. Scripture clearly indicates all that exists was created by Christ, that life originated with Him, and that He is the light that spiritually sustains mankind. John 1:1-4, 9 sums this up perfectly. “In the beginning was the Word, and the

Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men....That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.”

The following Scriptures establish the fact that the physical sun which shines light upon the earth has been designated by God to represent Jesus Christ, Son of God, the source of true light and eternal life.

- Malachi 4:2 – Sun of Righteousness
- Psalm 19:1-6 – Sun as a bridegroom
  - Christ as bridegroom: John 3:28-31
  - Matthew 9:14-15
- Revelation 1:16 – Christ shines like the sun
- Psalm 84:11 – the Lord is a sun and a shield

See:

Moon  
Lights  
Rain

Realizing Christ is represented as “the Sun” opens up a greater understanding of many prophetic Scriptures involving the sun.

## **Sun and Moon**

### **The Sun and Moon: God's Miraculous Timing Devices**

The interaction of the sun, moon, and earth create the seasonal rhythms that literally regulate all life on our planet. The annual migrations of birds, animals, fish, and even some insects depend upon the seasons demarked by the sun and moon. The life cycle of plants depends upon the changing seasons. Mankind's agricultural pursuits rely on the seasons for the harvests that make survival possible. The natural rhythms of sun, moon, and seasons work in such clock-like precision that we utilize them for keeping time. The calendar hanging on your wall is based on either the solar or lunar year, depending on your cultural heritage. The 24-hour day, seven-day week, and the duration of months, seasons, and years are all calculated by the interaction of the sun and moon with the earth.

God says in Romans 1:20 "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead..." In some way every single thing in creation has God's thoughts behind it. By careful Biblical study and physical observation we can discern God's thoughts and thereby piece together His plans and intentions.

Let's go back to the beginning of the Bible to learn more about time keeping by the heavens. Genesis 1:1-3 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light...'" Here we find the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the deep. That tells us the earth was already in existence. Logically the sun and the moon were as well.

That means there was elapsed time between verses 1 and 2. This interesting fact explains how “creation week” and the formation of Adamic man took place approximately 6,000 years ago, and the scientific discoveries regarding the age of the earth, the solar system, and the universe. God’s Spirit was hovering over an earth that had been ruined for His intents and purposes (refer to *Times and Seasons Digest No. 2 In the Beginning*).

For fascinating insights into God’s heavenly timing devices we must read Genesis 1:14-17. “Then God said ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth’; and it was so. Then God made [made: *asah* in Hebrew which in this case means to accomplish, advance, appoint, or bestow (#6213, *Strong’s Concordance*, 1995)] two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made [appointed] the stars also. God set [set: *nathan* in Hebrew meaning to assign or appoint (#5414, *Strong’s Concordance*, 1995)] them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth.” These Scriptures actually reveal that God was assigning new significance to the sun and the moon. Henceforth they would have both physical and spiritual significance. Physically they continue to track time in the form of days and years. We use them now in the form of our various calendars and time-keeping devices.

In order to grasp the spiritual significance of the great lights we need to define signs and seasons in the ancient Hebrew.

- Signs – *owth*: “A signal (lit. or fig.), as a flag, beacon, monument, omen, prodigy, evidence.” Other Scriptures translate *owth* as mark, miracle, or sign. (#226, *Strong’s Concordance*, 1995)

- Seasons – *mowed*: An appointment, a fixed time or season, specifically a festival, assembly of a congregation, a place of meeting beforehand. Conventionally a year. Other Scriptures translate *mowed* as feast, feasts, or congregation. (#4150, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995)

When we understand the meaning of signs and seasons, God's thoughts as conveyed by the sun and moon become apparent. They become the divinely-inspired method for observing God's annual holy days. God's holy days are delineated each year on physical calendars through astronomical observation. However, each of God's holy days has spiritual significance in His plan to save the human race. It helps to think in terms of "prophetic time." Since Genesis is the first book of the Bible, it precedes in chronology other Scripture references to God's holy days. God gives the complete list of holy days in Leviticus 23 after the exodus from Egypt, which took place about 2,500 years after "creation week" in Genesis.

A clear example of God's use of prophetic time is Passover. The Exodus event began with Passover when the congregation of ancient Israel observed the *mowed* with the slaughter of a lamb per household, thereby being protected from the last plague to hit Egypt (Exodus 12:1-14). Exodus 12:13 tells us that the Passover blood on the lintels and doorposts was a significant sign of the holy day. The word for sign is the Hebrew word *owth* used in Genesis 1:14. Serious Bible students also know that the Passover of Exodus was a prophetic forerunner of Christ's death on the cross providing humanity with His shed blood for remission of sin (I Corinthians 5:7).

In summary, the sun and moon keep track of God's holy days which in turn delineate the passage of the fulfillment

of prophecy.

See:

- Light

Request:

- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 1 Why Creation*
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 2 In the Beginning*
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 3 The Great Lights*

## Thorns, Thistles, and Briars



Photo by pond5.com

If you have ever found yourself walking through a patch of prickly, stinging, and clinging weeds, you know how uncomfortable and painful they can be. Unfortunately thorns, thistles, or briars have the capacity to cling and penetrate. It is difficult to remove burrs in our hair and clothes, barbed spines in our hands, and sand spurs from our feet. Until we extract them, the pain and discomfort dogs us and can worsen if they become infected. Wouldn't it be terrible if they could lodge in our flesh and actually grow causing permanent disability or even death? There is a type of thorn, thistle, and briar that can actually do that!

Physical weeds are the bane of every farmer and gardener. Seeds of thorns, thistles, briars and other weeds lodge in the soil, sprout, grow, and reproduce. A garden or farm field left unattended can become a gnarled mass of awful weeds, very difficult to deal with. A good steward of the land is always on the look out for noxious weeds that would rob the good seed of the sunlight, water, and nutrients it needs



to produce a bountiful harvest. Physical weeds, especially thorns, thistles, and briars have their spiritual counterparts. Genesis 2:7 says, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” It is interesting that later on in the same chapter God put Adam in a garden. Verses 15-17: “Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”

The crop God was most concerned about was obviously not the plant life growing in the garden, but rather the character God wanted to grow in Adam. Good character would truly make Adam in the image and likeness of God as stated in Genesis 1:26-27. The development of good character requires the correct exercise of free moral agency—free will. Therefore Adam had to continually refuse to imbibe of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3:17-19 records the results of Adam making the wrong choice when he knowingly imbibed of evil fruit after having seen Eve do it. “Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat of it”; cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you shall return.’”

Romans 6:23 tells us that, “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” God made it clear that the difficulty producing food from

ground bearing thorns, thistles, and briars would be a constant reminder of the difficulties humanity would face with the effects of sin. The human race is composed of the dust of the ground, but his mind and heart are the garden of God that we must tend and keep. The gift of eternal life is from God, the master farmer. We must willingly accept His seed and do our utmost to provide Him good soil.

With the understanding of our part to play in tending to the soil of our minds and hearts we can better understand the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:1-9. “On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying; ‘Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!’”

Thorns, thistles, briars, and weeds can rob our garden of the sunlight of God’s truth, the water of His word, and the nutrients in our soil. They actually choke the life out of spiritual sprouts in our minds and hearts. These are the sprouts that are meant to produce the fruits of the Spirit in our lives. Fruits of the Spirit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...”

Thorns, thistles, and briars pierce and hurt. They are the sin in our lives that cause so much pain and sorrow. Greed is an example of a thorn with many negative consequences as illustrated in I Timothy 6:9-10. "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." There are a number of Hebrew words that are translated as thorns, thistles, and briars in the Old Testament. The common theme they share is that they prick, pierce, sting. The fruit of unrepented sin is always bad and pierces us with many sorrows. By allowing God, the master farmer, to help remove the thorns, thistles, and briars in our life we can become a beautiful garden for God producing thirty, sixty, or one hundredfold.

See:

- God's Garden
- Soil
- Light: The Bible as Light

Request:

- CD *Thorns, Thistles, and Briars* (#302/G56 )
- CD *Let Your Garden Grow* (#16)
- CD *Dirt, Water, and Air* (#195)
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 1 Why Creation?*
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 2 In the Beginning*
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 4 Two Trees in the Garden*
- *Times and Seasons Digest No. 5 God's Harvests*

## Trees

Trees in the Bible represent teachers and rulers. They are divided into different types, just as there are different species of trees. Each species has its own distinct characteristics and is suitable for different purposes. For example, hardwoods are used for strength and can represent conviction. Softwoods are often used in construction; many conifer trees will resist rot; and fruit trees are used for fruit. The fruit or usefulness of a tree is equivalent to character in a human being. “Character is like a tree; and reputation, its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it: The tree is the real thing.” Abraham Lincoln.

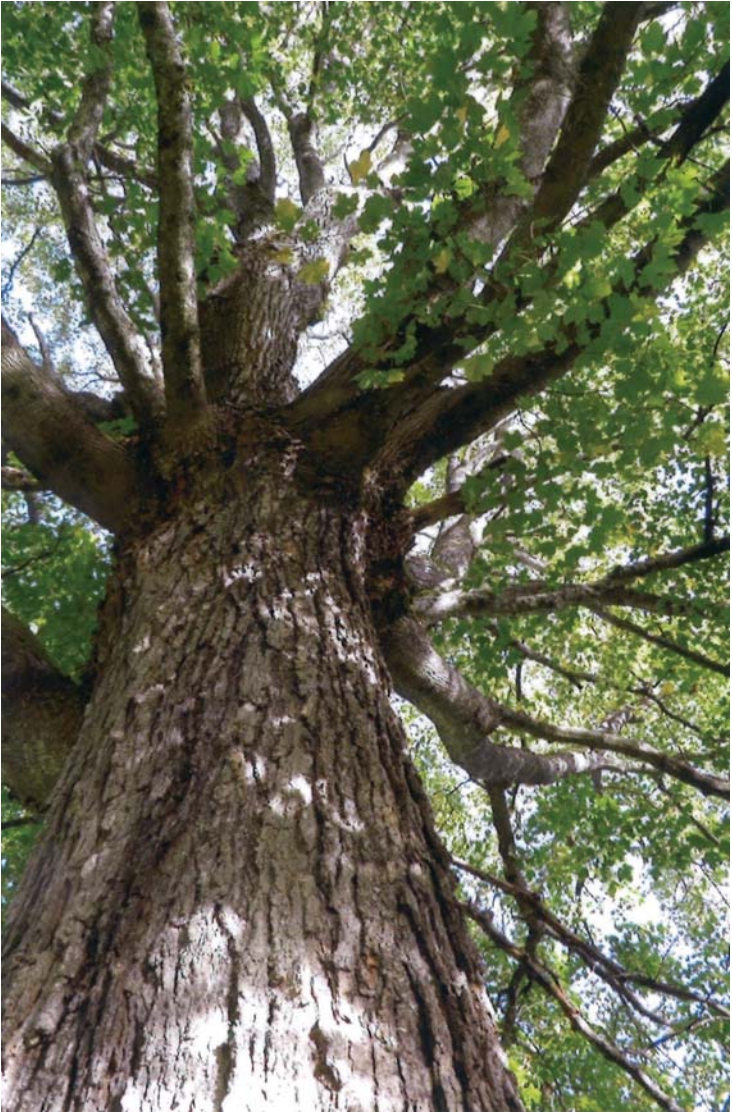


Scriptural references for men represented as trees:

- Mark 8:22-26 (the blind man from Bethsaida). There are two types of sight demonstrated by this incident: spiritual and physical. It takes spiritual vision to observe creation in light of Scripture and learn God's thoughts.
- Judges 9:8-11 (prophecy of trees)
- Psalm 1:1-3 (how to be a good tree)
- Matthew 3:1-10 (most teachers in Christ's day were bad trees)
- Proverbs 11:30
- Proverbs 15:4

Scriptural references stating that Christ is the Tree of Life:

- Luke 23:31 (King James Version)
- Genesis 2:9
- Revelation 2:7



An old Maple Tree  
Photo by John Blanchard



## **Trees**

### **The Fig Tree**

In the Bible the fig tree represents two forms of hierarchical governmental structures. One is spiritual and the other physical but in an ecclesiastical sense. Let's establish the spiritual first, letting Scripture speak to us.

- Revelation 6:12-13 "I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

Explanation: At Christ's death there was a great earthquake (Matthew 27:50-51). When Christ died, the light of the Son of God was put out (see Sun), and the moon (see Moon) turned to blood as humanity now had access to forgiveness through Christ's shed blood. The demon stars as the "host of heaven" were cast to the earth (Revelation 12:9) like rotten figs (see Stars).

Cross referencing these Scriptures with Ephesians 6:12 brings clarity to the idea that Satan has a hierarchical spiritual government stationed above the earth. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." God compares this evil spiritual kingdom to a fig tree full of rotten figs which were cast down from heaven and now surround the earth. Their temptations, divisions, and hatreds are "fed" to unsuspecting human beings. The human suffering they have spawned is unquantifiable. The fruit of their influence is truly rotten. The apex of this system is Satan himself pictured as the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil"

mentioned in Genesis 2:17. The good news is that God is diligently working toward the dissolution of this evil spiritual kingdom, with the kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ is forming a government to replace Satan. At the apex of this government is Jesus Christ Himself, characterized in one sense as “the tree of life.” The Book of Hebrews also refers to Him as the High Priest at the head of a spiritual hierarchy called the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews chapters 5-7). This priestly order will be composed of resurrected saints that will form a spiritual priesthood to replace Satan’s demonic structure with a benevolent, fair, and just system. These resurrected “first fruits” will form a new “fig tree,” as it were. The branches of this benevolent government will provide a canopy over the earth sending good influences to mankind during a 1,000 year period called the Millennium.

Mankind, being physical, needs to see, hear, feel, and experience with his senses in order to understand anything. This is true of the spiritual realm also. Perhaps that is why God gave us the ecclesiastical structure of the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament. The hierarchical structure, the many duties, and sacrifices performed by this physical forerunner of the kingdom of God have made it possible for us to understand God’s plan to replace an evil fig tree with a good one. Unfortunately the physical ecclesiastical fig tree became corrupted. God of course knew this would happen. God’s plan was to use it as a vehicle through which His prophets would work providing us with the Old Testament upon which He would build His New Testament Church. Satan’s spiritual fig tree managed to corrupt Christ’s ecclesiastical fig tree by the time of the Pharisees and Sadducees, causing it to wither and die. However not before Christ’s tree could sprout again and begin to form the spiritual fig tree called the kingdom of



God which ultimately will replace Satan's. The following Scriptures will help reveal this beautiful concept from the mind of God.

Genesis 3:7 Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves to cover themselves.

- 1.) Satan's foliage
- 2.) Eventually God's foliage when God's fig tree replaces Satan's

Fig tree represents government

- I Kings 4:21, 24-25
- Judges 9:10-11
- Proverbs 27:18

Satan's evil fig tree over the earth

- Revelation 6:13
- Revelation 12:9
- Isaiah 34:4

Ecclesiastical fig tree of the Old Testament became corrupted, and so it withered.

- Matthew 21:18-24, coupled with verses 12-13
- Joel 1:6-7

God's fig tree revived and invigorated after Christ's death and resurrection as the beginning of the first fruits to replace Satan's realm.

- I Corinthians 15:23
- Matthew 24:32-35
- James 1:18
- Hosea 9:10
- Micah 4:4

## Trees

### The Olive Tree

Olive trees and olive oil are mentioned extensively in Scripture. We might ask ourselves why. Some have postulated that olive oil represents the Holy Spirit, but a careful examination of Scripture reveals this explanation to be inadequate. Acts 8:14-18 tells us the Holy Spirit cannot be bought, and in Matthew 25:9 the foolish virgins are told to go and buy olive oil for their lamps. Perhaps Jesus Christ's most favorable venue for preaching was the Mount of Olives. It was on the Mount of Olives in the Garden of Gethsemane that He prayed so hard that He sweat blood and shortly thereafter was betrayed to the mob by Judas. Interestingly, Garden of Gethsemane means garden of the olive press. It is from the Mount of Olives that He ascended to heaven when He left this earth and where His feet will touch down when He returns (Acts 1:9-11). Olive trees and olive oil must represent something very important to God.

Let's start in Zechariah 4:1-3 with a supernatural vision that Zechariah experienced. "Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, 'What do you see?' So I said, 'I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left.'" Discussion of these two trees continues in verses 11-14. "Then I answered and said to him, 'What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?' And I further answered and said to him, 'What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?' Then he answered me and said, 'Do you not know what these are?'

And I said, ‘No, my lord.’ So he said, ‘These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.’”

The phrase “two anointed ones” is translated from the Hebrew words *ben yitshar*. *Ben* means “a son (as a builder of the family name)” #1121 in the *Strong’s Concordance*, 1995 edition. *Yitshar* means “oil (as producing light), figuratively anointing” (#3323, *Strong’s Concordance*, 1995). *Yitshar* is derived from the word *tsahar* meaning to glisten, to press out oil (#6671, *Strong’s Concordance*, 1995). Olive oil was the fuel prescribed by God to light the lamps of His tabernacle according to Exodus 27:20. The fruit of the olive tree (olives) are pressed in order to produce the oil. The most prized oil is that which is “first pressed” making it the purest and freshest oil. That is touted on the labels of the best olive oils to this day.

Before an olive tree can produce fruit for oil it must receive light from the sun, water through its roots, and air for respiration. These three ingredients of life are all symbolic of God’s Holy Spirit. (see Sun, see Wind) Therefore the Holy Spirit is involved in the production of the spiritual fruit that results in the oil that fuels the lamps of Christians. Fruit grows on the leafy branches of trees from which it can be harvested and pressed into oil, or in other trees’ juice. It takes pressure to produce the most valuable commodity from any fruit bearing tree.

Zechariah 4:14 said that there is one olive tree on either side of the Lord of the whole earth. Jesus Christ is “Lord of the whole earth.” The sons of oil stand on either side of Him. When Christ came to this earth 2,000 years ago, the prophets of the Old Testament labored under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The writings of the Old Testament were the result of God’s light (truth), His water (rain), and His

air (breath), working in His prophets. The prophets were Christ's sons building the family tree of the Old Testament. Christ's word dwelled in them making them His witness on earth prior to His coming. At His coming the apostles became His second olive tree in the exact same way giving us one tree on either side of Him.

Jesus Christ, God made man, became the first human being pressed to bear fruit and be resurrected to eternal life because He was the only one to live a perfect life, truly the tree of life. He literally was the first pressed oil, and the prophets and apostles were the sons of His first pressed oil. Together they gave us the Bible which is our lamp to guide us. The word of God and His commandments are called the lamp in Psalm 119:105, Psalm 132:17, and Proverbs 6:23. In order for the lamp of God to burn brightly in our lives we must provide fruit to be pressed into oil, just as Christ did with His life and death. The Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 shows the difference between being wise with God's word and being foolish. The wise produce oil through lives guided by the godly principles of love, self-sacrifice, mercy, and compassion. They also accurately preach and teach from the word of God. This keeps their vessels full of oil, so they can fulfill Christ's commission to be "the light of the world" in Matthew 5:4-16. To the contrary the foolish have empty vessels, for though they may carry a Bible, they misuse the Scriptures for selfish gain and have not produced the fruit of the olive tree.

See:

- Light
- Trees
- Fig Tree
- Sun
- Rain

Request:

- CD *The Two Witnesses* (#88)

## War and Peace



Photo by Marguerite Ricker

Warfare is the most brutish physical endeavor that mankind engages in. Mankind is forever fighting one, recovering from one, or preparing for the next one. Why can't we have lasting peace? The reason is that war begins within the human being. The first three verses of James chapter 4 clearly explain where war comes from. "Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures." Before a physical war is fought, there is a war that is fought on the inside, inside the mind and heart. When the internal

war is lost, the external wars and fights are not far behind. We need to come to grips with the wars that rage within us.

Ephesians 6:12-13 explains the source of the war within. “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” The first battle we fight is against the evil spirits that try to influence our minds and hearts. They tempt, they cajole, they whisper in our thoughts always promoting lust, jealousy, division, and hatred. If physical war is ever to cease, it must be fought on the battleground of mind and heart. Ephesians 6:14-18 continues by showing how to engage our spiritual enemies. “Stand therefore, having girded your waist with the truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”

The fiery darts Satan sends into our minds are extinguished by the shield of faith. Satan’s lies and deceits are fought with the word of God, the sword of the Holy Spirit which is the Bible. Our minds, hearts, and emotions are protected by the truth and breastplate of righteousness. Everywhere we walk in life we should travel with the gospel of peace, for blessed are the peacemakers (Matthew 5:9). This world desperately needs peacemakers. Sadly, there are so many leaders and people of influence who spread hatred and call for war. There is nothing sadder than to see someone who has lost their inner war, who then goes on to influence others

to follow them. So often, tyrants and poor leaders are charismatic, eloquent, and very persuasive.

Mankind has been deceived into thinking that physical warfare can solve our problems. In actual fact, history proves that physical warfare does not promote lasting peace nor enduring good. Both victors and the vanquished lick their wounds and try to recover while harboring the same hatreds and animosities in their minds and hearts. These inner hurts and smoldering anger provide the fertile ground for future conflict. Only the armor of God can fight off our spiritual foes, and only mercy and forgiveness can break the cycle of war. Matthew 5:7 says to us, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” We really do reap what we sow.

The toiling masses of the earth desire peace, so they can build a better life for themselves and their families. Over and over again the toiling masses are the cannon fodder of tyrants who have lost their inner war. They satisfy their personal lusts by allowing evil to work in them by sowing the seeds of hatred and violence in humanity. They divide us against us and force us into that most brutish endeavor—war.

Pray for the wisdom to identify the dividers among us. We must use God’s principles and common sense to blunt violent rhetoric and inflammatory dogma. When tyrants lose the backing of the people, they lose their power, and so do the forces of darkness. James 4:7 says to, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

More of us need to win our internal wars. More of us need to use the armor of God, so we can help others now to win their internal wars. Christ is returning soon, and war will be banished. But until that time, God wants to see which side we are on and how much we desire peace!



## Wind

All it takes is the rustle of leaves, whispering pines, amber waves of grain, or a caress on your face, and you know the wind blows as a gentle breeze. Twisted trees, a flattened home, and piles of debris are the telltale signs of a passing whirlwind such as a tornado or hurricane. The winds we experience in life provide a physical means to understand spiritual truths when we examine them in the light of God's word. Just as spiritual essence cannot be seen, neither can the wind. The effects of both however can be observed and felt.

Though physical wind is inanimate we tend to characterize moving air in animate terms. The meaning is clear when we say gentle breeze, stiff wind, or howling storm. We get the picture. Various forms of wind help us get the "spiritual picture" if we listen carefully to God's word. Let's start by defining some key words in Hebrew and Greek that are translated as wind or winds in the Bible.

- *Ruwach* (#7307, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995), Hebrew: wind, by resemblance breath, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation, figuratively life, anger, by extension a region of the sky, by resemblance spirit, from #7306 (*Strong's Concordance*, 1995).
- *Ruwach* (#7306, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) Hebrew: to blow, i.e. breath.
- *Neshamah* (#5397, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995), Hebrew: "a puff, i.e. wind, angry or vital breath, divine inspiration, intellect."

Notice how these words can mean either physical wind or breath and also spirit or divine inspiration or intellect. This spiritual animation of wind opens many Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments to much greater understanding. In many Old Testament Scriptures the word *ruwach* is also translated as spirit. *Ruwach* can be used to

reference God's Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:2, Psalm 51:11, Psalm 104:30), an angel (Ezekiel 1:20, Ezekiel 3:12, Psalm 104:4), or a demon (Isaiah 19:14, Hosea 4:12), or the spirit in man (Psalm 51:10, 17, Proverbs 18:14, Proverbs 15:13, Job 32:8).

When a spirit speaks, it exhales breath which can be termed "wind," such as when a runner gets his second wind or is winded. Man speaks and indeed breathes for life itself by inhaling and exhaling. Speech is possible when exhaled air passes over the vocal cords. The concept of physical speech is fascinating in its own right, but spiritual communication is truly awesome to comprehend. God speaks through humans such as the apostles and prophets by injecting His Holy Spirit, His wind, and His breath into their heart and soul. The following Scriptures support this idea.

- John 20:21-22 "So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"
- Acts 2:1-2, 4 "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting...And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

This was truly a great miracle! God's holy breath entered the disciples in the form of wind, so they could speak spiritual things to physical people. The term Holy Spirit is *pneuma* (#4151, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) in the ancient Greek meaning a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze, fig. a spirit.

The definition of *pneuma* also can mean figuratively a spirit, an angel, a demon, or God. This brings us to something crucial to understand. Just as the Holy Spirit and angels have breath to inspire and guide us, the devil and demons have their own form of malevolent breath. They inspire hatred, division, violence, lust, and greed. Their wind can pass through human beings to convey lies, deceit, slander, and the twisting of God's Scriptures. These evil winds are also mentioned regularly in the Bible. These are some examples:

- Daniel 7:1-14
- Proverbs 11:29
- Hosea 8:7
- Matthew 10:1
- Luke 11:26

Many Scriptures warn us to beware of wicked spirits whose breath is used to seduce, deceive, and harm us.

- I Timothy 4:1
- Ephesians 2:2
- Hebrews 13:9

The study of wind, breath, and spirit is very deep and is a thread woven through the whole Bible. II Timothy 3:16 tells us "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Inspiration in the Greek is *theopneustos* (#2315, *Strong's Concordance*, 1995) meaning "divinely breathed in."

See:

- Hearing (Spiritual Hearing)
- Language

Request:

- CD *Winds of War* (#95)