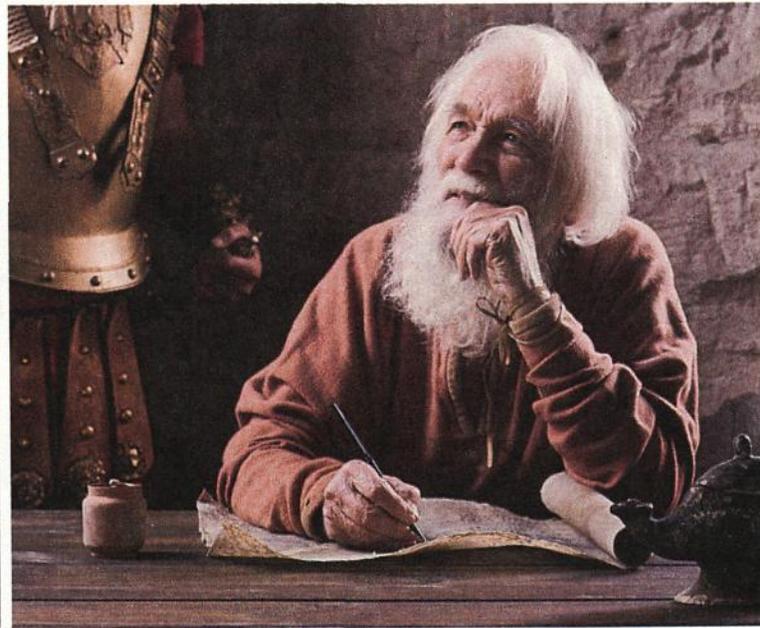
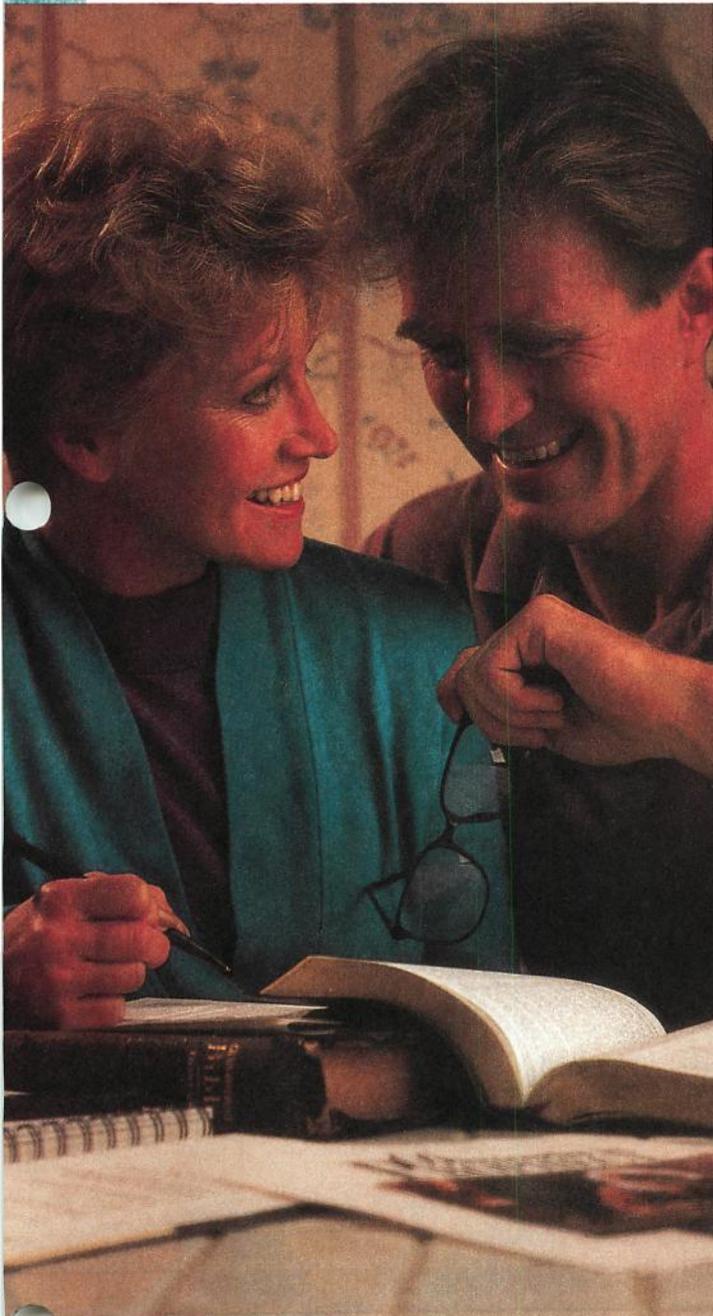


P Discoveries in **PROPHECY**

WITH
**MARK
FINLEY**



How to Successfully Bury the Past

Discoveries in Prophecy

by Mark A. Finley
Speaker-Director, *The It Is Written* Telecast

Discoveries in Prophecy is a series of 26 evangelistic presentations in magazine format by Evangelist and *It Is Written* Speaker-Director Mark A. Finley. These presentations have been reproduced here just as delivered; therefore, the reader will encounter occasional references to slides shown during the actual delivery of the topic as originally preached, and other references characteristic of a live presentation.

See the inside back cover for a complete list of the *Discoveries in Prophecy* evangelistic magazines—keyed to chapter in Mark Finley's book entitled *Beyond Orion's Gates*—and information on how to order additional evangelistic magazines and other Hart Research Center outreach materials.

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Discoveries in Prophecy

How to Successfully Bury the Past

Final words are extremely important. When I leave on a trip, I often give my wife a list of things and say, "Honey, I'm going to be gone for a while. Here's a list of things that need to be done. Could you do this and this?" Jesus' final words are extremely important, too. In fact, here in Matthew 28:19 are the *last words* Jesus uttered to his disciples in Galilee: "Go ye therefore, and *teach* all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Jesus' final words there were, "Go . . . and teach . . . and baptize."

Yet there are many who wonder, How important is Bible baptism? Is baptism just something we do because we *desire* to do it, or is baptism one of the essential Bible doctrines in the heart of Scripture?

IS BAPTISM NECESSARY?

Well, it certainly must be important, because the Bible mentions it 80 times! In fact, when you study the New Testament, baptism is mentioned repeatedly. Jesus Himself, in Mark 16:16 (NIV), said, "Whoever believes *and is baptized* will be saved." Jesus listed baptism as an essential requirement for the kingdom of God. Jesus Himself said, "Whoever believes . . ." Belief is an inner commitment to Christ—it is faith in Jesus and His Word. Baptism is the external manifestation of that faith. Baptism is a public statement that I am Christ's. According to the New Testament, baptism is indeed essential for salvation. In John 3:5 (NIV) Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of *water* and the Spirit, he *cannot* enter the kingdom of God"—pretty straightforward words!

What does it mean to be "born of the Spirit"? It means to be transformed from within. It means to come to Jesus, to say, "Lord, my heart and mind are Yours. I have

faith in You. I believe in You." And it means to allow the Holy Spirit to change us.

When we are changed, we then *witness* to that inner change by an outer baptism. Someone says, "Wait a minute, pastor, I'm a little confused. Wasn't the thief on the cross guaranteed to be in paradise by Christ, but the thief was *never baptized*?" Yes, that's true. But what kind of God would we serve if He withheld His kingdom from people who weren't physically capable of being baptized? Where do you think that repentant thief would have gone first if he could've gotten down off the cross? Certainly, to be baptized.

AN OUTWARD SIGN OF AN INNER COMMITMENT

The Bible says, "*Unless* a man is born of water and the Spirit, he *cannot* enter the kingdom of God." In other words, when you come to Jesus, there's a burning within your heart and the desire to *witness publicly* to that inner

commitment to Christ through baptism. Just as when a man and woman love each other, they want to be married in a public ceremony to show others their commitment to each other. Jesus says, "Whosoever therefore shall *confess Me before men*, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven."

When a person is baptized, Jesus responds, "This is my son. This is my daughter. These are my children." Baptism is a welcome into the family of God. Just as a woman with a new baby wants to show it off, so the family of God on earth—the

church—praises God for the person who is baptized.

Yet many are quite confused about *how* a person should be baptized. Some say, "Well, we *sprinkle*—that's baptism." Some say, "We *pour*—that's baptism." Believe it or not, I even heard about a *rose-petal* baptism where the minister took picked rose petals and poured them

Is baptism just something we do because we desire to do it, or is baptism one of the essential Bible doctrines in the heart of Scripture?

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over a person's head. I heard about another baptism where the pastor said that it didn't make any difference if the water were a solid or a liquid, so he did a *snow baptism*. He took some young people out and put them

If Jesus was baptized, I want to be baptized the same way He was. If it was good enough for Him, indeed, I want to follow in His footsteps!

under the snow, then picked them up and told them they were baptized! Someone else said their church baptized a person *three times*: once for the Father, once for the Son, and once for the Holy Spirit. Another person said their church performs *oil* baptisms by just putting oil on the person's forehead.

But what does the Bible say? One thing's for certain—the Bible is clear that there are *NOT* 14 ways to be baptized, as the world says there are! Ephesians 4:5 says, “One Lord [that's Jesus Christ], one faith [that's Bible religion], one baptism [not 15 or 18].” Error can take many forms, but truth takes only one. “*One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*” That doesn't mean you can be baptized only one time. It means there's only one true *method* of baptism.

Which method of baptism is the true one? Let's go back to Bible times. In the Bible did they *sprinkle babies*—was that considered legitimate baptism? In the Bible did they *pour* water over children's heads—was that accepted as legitimate baptism? The Bible says, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” Go back to John the Baptist. The Bible makes it clear in Matthew 3:5, NIV, “People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.” The Bible says that in the days of Christ, men and women were baptized *IN* the Jordan River. John led the candidates into the river, raised his hand and said, “I now baptize you,” and they were baptized for the forgiveness of sin.

IMMERSION IS THE BIBLE METHOD

When Jesus was baptized—and I think it's safe to follow Jesus' example and be baptized just the way He was—Jesus came to the Jordan River and there John the Baptist saw Him. Jesus had this glow of righteousness and purity about him, and John told Him, “I can't baptize

you, Jesus.” But Jesus answered, in Matthew 3:15, NIV, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Jesus was baptized not because He had *sinned*—He was baptized because *we* had sinned! Jesus was baptized as an *example* to you and to me.

We say, “I'm not ready for baptism, because I have this and that little problem.” But baptism is not a symbol of your perfection—it's a symbol of your commitment. Baptism doesn't say you're perfect, because if you're perfect, you don't need to be baptized. The only Perfect One ever baptized was Jesus. When I went into the baptismal pool, I wasn't perfect, but Christ's perfect baptism atones for my imperfect baptism. Even in baptism, Christ is my Saviour. No, baptism doesn't mean you're perfect—it means you are committed, it means you've accepted Christ, it means you understand what the Bible teaches, it means you want to follow God, it means you want to unite with His commandment-keeping people.

If Jesus was baptized, I want to be baptized the same way He was. If it was good enough for Him, indeed, I want to follow in His footsteps! But notice that Jesus went down *into* the baptismal water so He was fully immersed by John, and the water covered him. Matthew 3:17 (NIV) says, “As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went

The Bible teaches that baptism is not by sprinkling, not by pouring, not by rose petals, not by snow—but always and only by immersion.

up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.”

When *you* are baptized, Jesus says, “This is My beloved *son* in whom I am well pleased.” “This is My beloved *daughter* in whom I am well pleased.” When you're baptized, you have peace in your heart—you feel so clean, so good—because God is saying, “This is My beloved son or daughter in whom I am well pleased.” God in heaven speaks to you in a private, personal way. You may not hear His audible voice, but in your heart you feel that you're *pleasing* God and fulfilling the object of your creation.

And the Bible says the Holy Spirit came down like a

dove on Christ. Christ's greatest temptations occurred right after His baptism. If *Jesus* needed the Holy Spirit's power to face those temptations, *you* need it! Don't hesitate or postpone your decision to be baptized, because if you do, the month you wait may be the month you get the worst temptations in your life. You need to go through that watery burial and seal your decision to be committed to Christ. Then allow the Holy Spirit to come into your life in a powerful way to give you victory over those temptations Satan wants to use to trip you up.

The Holy Spirit came down like a dove upon Jesus. When you're baptized, you may not feel electrical impulses up and down your back, but by faith you can believe in your heart that the Holy Spirit is given to you as a gift, and whatever strength you need to overcome sin and Satan, God will give you that strength.

AM I TRULY BAPTIZED?

The Bible teaches that baptism is not by sprinkling, not by pouring, not by rose petals, not by snow—but always and only by *immersion* in a full baptismal pool, lake, or river. All the people in the Bible were baptized that way. We read before that John the Baptist immersed people in the River Jordan. John 3:23 says, "John also was baptizing in [or at] Aenon near Salim, because there was *much water* there." Not just a little stream, ankle-deep, but "much water" is needed if an adult is to be fully immersed.

Think about that Ethiopian eunuch, a very influential, brilliant man from Ethiopia—the treasurer for the Queen of Ethiopia. In Acts 8:26-39 we read that as he traveled back home from Jerusalem in his chariot, he stopped to rest. He was reading the Book of Isaiah, studying the scrolls, and Philip met him on that road. It was *no accident* that Philip met the Ethiopian: God *led* Philip to that Ethiopian, and He led the Ethiopian to Philip. It's no accident when God puts it into *your* heart to be baptized. God calls many, but few are chosen, as it says in Matthew 22:14. God wants *you* to make the all-important decision to follow Christ. After Philip taught him about Jesus, the Ethiopian said, "See, here is water! What is to prevent my being baptized?" Acts 8:36 (RSV). Notice what Philip said to the Ethiopian, "If you believe with all your heart, you may. . . . And *they both went down into the water.*"

You see, a chalice is too small for the pastor and the candidate to get into! In true Bible baptism, both the pastor and the candidate go into the water. The pastor walks in with the candidate and lifts up his hand and says, "Because you love Jesus, I now baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit," and the candidate goes under the water. In the Bible, sprinkling is not baptism. I myself was sprinkled as a baby, but that wasn't really baptism—it was just sprin-

gling a few drops. Baptism is submerging. Later in life when I really understood, I said, "Jesus, I want to follow You. I want to walk into the water like that Ethiopian eunuch. I believe in You with all my heart." The greatest day of my life was when I made that public testimony to follow Jesus Christ. Sure, there've been temptations. Sure, I've fallen and sinned. But I've not turned my back on that commitment. Baptism doesn't mean you're perfect—it means you're committed. It means your face is toward the kingdom of God and you're walking ahead with Christ.

Now, what about baptism in the ancient churches? It's an amazing fact that ancient churches in the first, second, and third centuries, had baptistries. Rome has really great old, large churches. Interestingly enough,

Baptism doesn't mean you're perfect—it means you're committed. It means your face is toward the kingdom of God and you're walking ahead with Christ.

right behind St. John of Lateran—the most famous church in Rome after St. Peter's Cathedral—there's a baptistry made of tiles, that our Roman Catholic friends used for 1,300 years. They didn't sprinkle babies. They baptized by immersion! In the ancient ruins of many other Roman churches, like the church at Ephesus, you can find churches with baptistries where they baptized by immersion. The Leaning Tower of Pisa is a very famous building, but behind it is another building not so famous—it's a baptistry. Friends, the Roman Catholics baptized grown-ups in baptistries by *immersion* for centuries! Baptism of babies and sprinkling did not come into the church till much later.

Inside the door of the World Council of Churches headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, is an amazing tile fresco which dates back to the third century. It's one of the oldest frescoes of Christ in existence, and it shows Jesus being *immersed*. You see, immersion—total immersion—was the only method of baptism the Bible ever knew.

In a magnificent Orthodox cathedral there's a painting of Vladimir the Great, the one who brought Christianity to Russia in A.D. 1000, being baptized by immersion. So, looking at the church buildings themselves and

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at the history of Christianity over long centuries, we discover there was no sprinkling of babies. Baptism was performed *only after* a person believed in Christ, accepted the teachings of the Bible, and repented of sin. And there was no pouring of water over a person's head—baptism was *always* done by immersion. The Bible is explicit on that point.

INFANT BAPTISM NOT SCRIPTURAL

But wait a minute—where did baptism of *babies* come from? Baptism of babies came into the church in an unusual way. The Roman Catholic Church began teaching that every baby born into the world was *guilty*—not because of its sin but because of Adam's sin. They taught that if a baby was not baptized, it would be forever lost and damned not because of its own guilt, but because of Adam's guilt. Now I have a question for you: Look at a lovely, innocent baby, and let's say the mother did not have the baby baptized. Do you think God would condemn that baby to burn in hell because of something that *Adam* or its *mother* did or did not do? *Is that fair* to the baby?

After all, friends, what is the *meaning* of baptism? Is baptism some kind of magic, some mystical hocus-pocus that a little water sprinkled on its head will save a baby? And if they *don't* put a little water on its head, is that baby lost? *Baptism is not mystical magic.* There's nothing holy about the water. It's the transformed heart that becomes holy. When you walk into a baptismal pool, you believe in Jesus, you intend to follow His commandments, and you've repented of sin. Then your baptism is your public demonstration that you've committed your whole being to Christ. I was *sprinkled* as a baby, but I was not *baptized* as a baby.

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of His truth.

We all know that Adam's fall into sin had devastating consequences—death passed upon all his posterity, and Adam's children were liable to inherit whatever sinful tendencies he had, a sinful nature. But we must distinguish between the *results* of Adam's sin and

the *guilt* of Adam's sin. The results and consequences of sin were universal and inescapable for all of us. But Adam's *guilt* was his *own*—as is true for everyone else. Holding a baby born today guilty for Adam's sin is Scripturally and theologically unsound, as Deuteronomy 24:16 proves: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put

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to death for the fathers: *every man shall be put to death for his OWN sin.*" Ezekiel 18:20 (NIV) reinforces that thought: "The soul [person] who sins is the one who will die. The son will *not* share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son." The God we serve is a just and righteous Judge.

But man's unsanctified decision to "baptize" babies necessitated a new method of performing that ritual. The Bible-approved method of immersion was ruled out, for an infant wouldn't know how to hold his breath, and the ensuing coughing, spluttering, and choking would do anything but add to the *dignity* and *solemnity* of the ceremony!

It wasn't until the Council of Ravenna in A.D. 1311—thirteen centuries after Christ—that sprinkling and pouring were officially accepted as equally valid as immersion in the rite of baptism. Many other man-made beliefs and practices crept into the church through pagan sources. *Sunday sacredness* replaced the Sabbath of the Lord. The pagan idea of the *immortal soul* was slowly accepted, though the Bible states 53 times that death is but an unconscious sleep. *Sprinkling of infants* came into the church, replacing Bible baptism of instructed adults by immersion.

Do you see why God has to have a church that goes all the way back to the Bible—a church that turns its back on man's corruptions of His truth? Do you see why God has to have a people on earth teaching truth according to His Word? Because a great many things have *changed* over the centuries! But the Bible has remained the same. God's Law remained the same. Jesus' commandments have remained the same. Thank goodness, the Holy Spirit keeps leading us to truth, and today God

is leading us back to the Bible, back to following Him, back to do what His Word teaches.

BAPTISM SYMBOLIZES THREE GREAT GOSPEL FACTS

What must *happen* in a person's heart and mind before baptism? What must *take place* in the inner soul? How can a person know if, indeed, he's *ready* to be baptized the Bible way? The Bible makes it very plain—there's no question when you turn to Scripture. The Bible says that *baptism is a symbolic act by each Christian representing three things:*

- **dying** to his *old* sinful way of life—just as Christ died on the cross,
- **burying** his sins in the *watery grave* of baptism—as Christ was buried in the tomb,
- **rising again** out of the water to walk a *new life*—as Christ rose again in His triumphant resurrection. In Romans 6:3, 4 (NIV) the apostle Paul asks: “Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead . . . , we too may live a new life?”

When you're baptized and go under the water, you

Baptism, through the grace of Christ, gives us a second chance, a fresh start, a clean slate—and what can equal the excitement of a new life?

symbolically *die*—the old person dies, the old sins die—the old selfishness, lusts, and greed—they die. Symbolically, those sins go into the baptismal pool and when we drain the water out, they're gone “into the depths of the sea” Micah 7:19. The devil tries his best to condemn you three weeks or five weeks after baptism, six months after baptism, and says, “Look what you did two years ago.” You say, “Sorry, Mr. Satan, but that person is dead and buried! I'm a new person living a new life in Christ.” Baptism, through the grace of Christ, gives us a second chance, a fresh start, a clean slate—and what can equal the excitement of a *new life*?

Baptism symbolizes not only a death but a *burial* of the old life of sin. When we come to Christ, we should be “buried with Him [Christ] in baptism” Colossians 2:12. And Romans 6:5 says, “If we have been *planted* together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.” Here again we see the inadequacy of man-made substitutes for Bible baptism, for to represent *burying* a body, we need the watery grave of *total immersion*—not *pouring a cupful* or *sprinkling a few drops* of water!

How do I know if I'm ready to be baptized? We sometimes read of people being buried alive. It must be an

To represent burying a body, we need the watery grave of total immersion—not pouring a cupful or sprinkling a few drops of water!

awful fate, but that's what happens if someone, a hypocrite, joins a church without giving up his old life. He's baptized, but he was *buried alive*—self did not die. But if in my heart I say sincerely, “Lord, I'm so sorry. Lord, I have sinned. There are things I've done that I want to bury in the baptismal pool. I have faith in Christ—I believe in Him. With His help, I want to live that new life.”

If in your heart *you* want to live that new life, if there's a yearning within yourself to have the resurrected Christ live in your heart, if you really have that longing to put the past away, to walk into that baptismal pool and go under the water, to be totally cleansed and to start a new life, then indeed, you are ready to walk into that pool. You've taken that first step.

Some missionaries went out to preach the gospel to the American Indians, and a large group of those Indians started to read the Bible translated into their own tribal language. They said, “We want to follow Christ; we want to be baptized.”

So the bishop came with a chalice to baptize the Indians who had just started reading the Bible. The Indian chief looked at him and said, “Bishop, *cup too small* for Indian and bishop.”

And the bishop said, “Well, it's not the amount of water that matters, Chief—it's what's in your heart.” And the Indian chief replied, “Then Indian has read wrong Book.” I want to read the *right* Book, don't you? I want

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to give my whole life to Jesus and walk into that baptismal pool and follow Him, because when you walk into the baptismal pool you're saying, "Christ, I believe. I want to follow You. I love You, Jesus. I'm fleeing into Your arms. My ugly past is past, but I want to live all my to-

Step into that pool of water with your commitment to Christ and wash away those sins. Get that new life in Jesus, and you can be the person you want to be.

tomorrows with You."

The words *baptism* and *baptize* are essentially untranslated in English from the Greek word *bap-tiz-o*, meaning to *dip*, to *immerse*, to *plunge into water*. It's as if a clay tablet, thrown into the depths of the sea, sinks fully under the water. You go fully under so that every one of your sins is drowned, absolutely obliterated, completely washed away. You're clean and new in Christ! When Christ whispers in your ear, "This is My beloved son—or daughter—in whom I am well pleased," there's a smile on your face, a new brightness in your eyes, and you just *sparkle* with the love, grace, and power of the Lord Jesus Christ in your life.

THREE PREREQUISITES TO BAPTISM

There are *three steps to take before Bible baptism*:

Step one: In Bible days, when God's Spirit disturbed guilty consciences, people asked in Acts 2:37, "Men and brethren, *what shall we do?*" The answer comes echoing down the centuries: "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*" So the first step is **repent**. You say to God, "Lord, I'm so sorry for everything I've done to hurt You. I don't want to live this way anymore. I'm coming home, Lord. I hear You calling me. I'm repenting and coming back to You."

I was on the Mount of Olives coming down a narrow trail in Jerusalem, and I rounded a corner just at the site where Jesus beheld Jerusalem and wept over it. I came upon a rock with an inscribed plaque on it:

*Here rings anew the love of God's lament,
Mankind, made for Himself,
So far from Him has strayed;*

*Here, now, the Savior calleth thee in love,
God calleth, calleth, calleth,
"Repent, and come back home."*

Jesus gazed upon Jerusalem. I can just imagine Him there looking at the city He loved. He knew Titus and his Roman armies were going to come. He knew that city would be burned and destroyed. I can imagine Christ sobbing as He says, "God calleth, calleth, calleth, 'Repent, and come back home.'" And I can imagine Jesus saying to you, "My child, turn around. Don't keep going that way in sin. I love you, My child. Come home."

You don't realize the joy that can be yours. You don't have to go through those sleepless nights. You don't have to toss in that bed tormented by guilt. You don't have to keep doing those things you don't really want to do. Step into that pool of water with your commitment to Christ and wash away those sins. Get that new life in Jesus, and you can be the person you want to be. You don't need to be a tool of the enemy. Your life can be changed and transformed by the grace of God. Acts 3:19 says, "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blot-*

Before a person is baptized, he should have an intelligent understanding of the essential teachings of the Bible.

ted out" of God's book forever. First step, repentance.

Step two: When the Ethiopian asked Philip if he could be baptized, the answer in Acts 8:37 says, "If thou *believest* with all thine heart, thou mayest." So the second step is **BELIEVE**. Do you believe in Christ? Have you accepted Jesus as your Saviour? If you've found Christ, then you *must* be baptized, just like a man and woman who are totally in love *can't rest* until they're married. They have that drive, that compulsion to unite their lives.

I didn't have to drag my wife down the marriage aisle; she didn't have to drag me there either. When I saw her coming down the aisle, I couldn't wait—my heart was going pitter-patter, my hands were shaking—and when she came to the altar, I felt like saying, "Let's hurry! Let's not even go through the service. Let's just say, 'I do,' and be gone." When you're in love, no one can hold you back—right? When you love God, I don't have to drag you to the baptismal pool, because when you really love

God and His power is upon you, you have such a burning desire in your heart to be baptized that you want that yourself. Certainly, sometimes I have to answer questions for people, and I have to help them. But they have within them that new drive of *wanting* to do this, the feeling that it's my turn, my time, that I need to come to God *now*. We must *repent*; we must also *believe*.

Step Three: Jesus said in Matthew 28:19, 20, "Go ye

Some people say they just want to be baptized into Jesus but not into the church. What do they want to do, cut off the Head from the body?

therefore, and *teach* all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: *teaching* them to observe *all things* whatsoever I have commanded." So the third step is LEARN—be taught, be instructed in—Bible truth.

Jesus specifies that "teaching" accompanies and precedes baptism. Here is another reason why the sprinkling of uninstructed infants is contrary to Scripture. A tiny baby cannot *repent*—and in its innocence has no personal sins to repent of and confess. Also, it cannot *believe* much about Christ or anything else. Finally, it cannot be *taught* the basics of salvation. An infant has *no understanding* of Bible teaching or even what sprinkling drops of water on its head means! Before a person is baptized, he should have an intelligent understanding of the essential teachings of the Bible. We should know that Jesus is our Saviour, that Christ will return in the clouds of heaven, that the seventh day of the week is the Bible Sabbath, that when we die we're asleep waiting for Jesus to come—basic Bible teachings.

So the Bible gives three steps to take before baptism: It says that if you've *repented* of your sins, if you *believe* in Jesus Christ, if you have a basic *understanding* of Bible truth and feel that God is calling you, then it's appropriate for you to be baptized.

CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Someone asked if baptism was into *Christ* or into the church. It's *both*. Baptism in the New Testament is into Jesus—your first allegiance is to Jesus. But the Bible says in Colossians 1:18 that Christ "is the *Head* of the *body*, the church." Some people say they just want to be bap-

tized into Jesus but *not* into the church. What do they want to do, cut off the Head from the body? Jesus is the Head, the church is the body, so we're baptized into Christ's visible body, which is the visible church, His commandment-keeping church.

So when you find a fellowship, a community of believers who teach "all things whatsoever [Christ has] commanded," you're baptized into that body. In that body you are nurtured. In that body you worship each Sabbath with other brothers and sisters. In that body you join a little prayer group. Don't we need one another to pray for us? When I'm down, I need some brother or sister to call me on the phone. When I'm down, I need someone to counsel me.

My dad was a real truth-seeker. He went to seventeen different churches looking for the truth before he found a church that taught about Jesus, the second coming, the Sabbath—then he was baptized. My mother was a Roman Catholic, so for 15 years my dad went to church all by himself. And then, there came that day when Mom said, "It's time for me. I just *have* to make my decision." My dad, after looking at seventeen churches—my mom, after being a Roman Catholic Christian—were baptized together and had a united family in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Friend, God is calling people today. In Budapest, Hungary, I held a large lecture series at a downtown university. The Communist government has fallen—but I was there *during* Communism, yet they allowed me to hold the meetings. The meetings were to go from about 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., and the first night of the meetings they had scheduled in the same auditorium a big *rock concert* by one of Hungary's famous rock bands to begin after

This is no small movement—this is no Johnny-come-lately cult kind of a church. Here is a world-wide movement.

my meeting was over. Before my meeting—by about 6:30 p.m.—there were thousands of young people lining up to go into the rock concert. Four young ladies who were atheists going to Karl Marx University lined up for the rock concert, but there were also people lining up for

my meetings, and those girls got into the wrong line and ended up in my meeting instead of the rock concert. They sat on the front row as I preached about Jesus. Every night when I gave a call, they came forward, and they gave their hearts to Jesus. They were part of that large group who came to my meeting that night *thinking* they were going to a rock concert! Hundreds of people were baptized in Hungary.

We went from Hungary to the Kremlin, to the Communist Party Congress building, with 6,000 seats—all

No one should be baptized if he's not ready—but if you feel the Holy Spirit tugging at your heart, please don't delay your decision.
Come home, now.

filled—and we preached the Word of God right in the Kremlin in the Communist Party building. From those meetings, 1,300 were baptized. In the Olympic Stadium more than 2,000 were baptized. We baptized the people in a big swimming pool with 28 pastors in the pool baptizing hundreds at one time. Once we had 26 *bus loads of people* baptized at one time. God is at work, my friends. He's revealing His truth to people everywhere and leading them to the cross. This is no small movement—this is no johnny-come-lately cult kind of a church. Here is a world-wide movement. The message of God is going around the world, for this is "closing time."

Sometimes people ask why I talk so fast. I have to talk fast because we don't have much time left. That's right, friends. These are the last days. This is "closing time," and we must get serious about our salvation.

Young men and women—and older ones—are coming to Jesus. They came in Hungary. They come all throughout the United States. In Poland I met Peter. Peter was a young Polish Nazi who believed in Neo-Nazism. He also believed in Satanism, and he was actually worshipping Satan. His mother was a Christian, but he wanted nothing to do with Christianity. Then Peter got cancer, and his head was shaved because he had to have a brain operation. They opened his skull but didn't get all the cancer. Then they cut it another way but didn't get all the cancer. He had three brain surgeries. He began losing weight so he was skinny and emaciated. His skin turned yellow.

We began our lectures, and his mother took home the tapes so he could listen to the lectures by tape. After a while he said, "I want to give my heart to Jesus." He took all his rock records and broke them. He took all his satanic signs and threw them away. He called me and asked me to come and see him. I began to study the Bible with him. One day I was at the church when the phone rang, and his mother was at the other end. She said, "The doctor is here and said that Peter is dying. You have to come to the house. Peter is dying. He'll only live about two hours."

I went to the house and found Peter had not eaten in about three weeks, and he was vomiting all over, and the house stunk. I got a basin and held him in my arms while he kept vomiting into the basin, and I kept holding him. His vomit was yellow and smelled terrible. I kept holding him and cradling him, and he looked me in the eyes and said, "Pastor, I'm going to die, but you have to baptize me before I die. Pastor, you've got to baptize me before I die." I said, "Peter, I can't baptize you. I can't take you to church—you're too weak." And he said again, "Pastor, you have got to baptize me before I die." I said, "Peter, Jesus accepts you. You're like the thief on the cross." He said, "Jesus may accept me, but Pastor, it's my dying wish. Don't you give a dying man his wish? Baptize me."

I said to his mother, "Fill the bathtub as high as you can, to the top." And I told Peter to strip down to his waist. I took Peter in my arms and went into the bathroom and knelt on the floor. And I'll tell you something: Sometime in your life when you bow your head to pray, the room feels so holy that you don't want to open your eyes because you think you'll see God. And the mother knelt on that floor in their simple three-room apartment in Poland and Peter's wife knelt on the floor of that bathroom with her baby in her arms, and I had Peter in my arms with his hands around my neck. I knelt over the bathtub and lowered him under the water—and that place was so holy, I felt the very presence of God there! I took Peter out of the bathtub and we got towels to dry him off. For the first time in three weeks, he asked for tea.

NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME . . .

Peter didn't die that day. He didn't die the next day. He didn't die the next. For one month his mother had the most wonderful experience in her life with Peter. After a month he closed his eyes and died. But before he died, I asked him, "Peter, do you have any message?" And Peter said, "I do. Pastor, as you go every place, tell my story and show my picture—and tell them, pastor, *not to wait too long*. Tell them, Pastor, to move ahead, and to accept Jesus and follow Him and be baptized because He's calling them."

Jesus Christ is calling *you*, friend. It's time to come home. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; *now* is the day of salvation." In fact, we read some pretty straight words in Acts 22:16, NIV, "And *now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away*, calling on His name." If you've never been baptized by immersion, it's time to walk into that water and go under it and be baptized. It's time to come home. Don't you like that song, "Lord, I'm Coming Home!"? It's time to have your sins forgiven, time to unite your life to Christ, time to flee into the arms of Jesus. Let the past be gone. Let the past be behind you. It's time to go home with Christ. If you have been baptized by immersion, but you've drifted away, and your sins have separated you from Christ, you may want to be re-baptized.

Re-baptism is not performed every time we sin because, if it were, we'd always be being re-baptized over and over again. But there are people who have turned their backs on Christ. They've gone away from Him and flagrantly broken their baptismal vows—in that situation they need to be re-baptized.

Jesus' loving voice is calling you just now. If you've never before been baptized by immersion, but maybe by sprinkling, or maybe you've received pouring, and now you want to flee into Jesus' arms, you want to go under the water, you want your sins cleansed, you want to follow Jesus and keep His commandments, you want to hear Christ say to you: "This is My beloved son in whom I am well pleased," or "This is My beloved daughter in whom I am well pleased," then I invite you to *heed* the Spirit's tugging at your heart. *Satan* is the one who says to wait. *Satan* is the one who says you're not ready. No one should be baptized if he's not ready—but if you feel the Holy Spirit tugging at your heart, *please don't delay* your decision. Come home, now. ▲

Discoveries in Prophecy Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

How to Successfully Bury the Past

Numbers in parentheses below refer to page numbers in special-edition Seminar Bibles—the first number for the King James Version, the second for the New King James Version. For example: (709 / 681).

1. To those who *wonder* whether baptism is *important* or even *necessary*, the Master declares: “Except a man be born of _____ and the Spirit, he _____ enter into the kingdom of God.” **To check your answer, see John 3:5 (1051 / 1046).**
2. Christians know it’s vitally important to our salvation to *believe* in Christ, but Jesus Himself adds a *second* vital requirement when He says, “He that *believeth* and is _____ shall be *saved*.” **To check your answer, see Mark 16:16 (1007 / 1002).**
3. When people would come to John the Baptist from all surrounding regions, he baptized them “IN” the Jordan River, at a place called “Aenon near to Salim, *because* there was _____ there.” **To check your answer, see Matthew 3:5-6 (949 / 945) and John 3:23 (1051 / 1047).**
4. When John the Baptist baptized the Lord Jesus, it was by *immersion* in the Jordan River. And the Bible says that Jesus, after He was baptized, “went _____ straightway _____ of the water.” **To check your answer, see Matthew 3:16 (949 / 945).**
5. When Philip baptized the Treasurer of Ethiopia, the Bible says: “They went _____ both _____ the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come _____ of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip,” so he disappeared. **To check your answer, see Acts 8:38-39 (1088 / 1083).**
6. **T** It’s really not possible to *choose between* being baptized “into *Christ*” and being baptized **F** “into the *church*,” since Christ is the Head of the “body” we call the church. **To check your answer, see Colossians 1:18 (1171 / 1163) and Ephesians 1:22-23 (1163 / 1154).**
7. Man’s unsanctified mind has departed from the Bible and devised *many methods* of performing the ritual of baptism—such as *sprinkling*, *pouring*, and anointing the forehead with a drop of *oil*! But the Word of God speaks of “_____ Lord, _____ faith, _____ baptism.” **To check your answer, see Ephesians 4:5 (1164 / 1156).**

Quick Quiz

8. One step that should *precede* baptism is found in the words of Peter when he told the people on the Day of Pentecost: “ _____ , and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” To *check your answer*, see Acts 2:38 (1080 / 1075).
9. Another step that should *precede* baptism is found in the reply of Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch’s request for baptism, when Philip said: “If thou _____ with all thine heart, thou mayest.” To *check your answer*, see Acts 8:37 (1088 / 1083).
10. A *third* step that should *precede* baptism is *instruction* in and *understanding* of Bible truth, for Jesus said: “Go ye therefore, and _____ all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: _____ them to observe *all* things whatsoever I have commanded you.” To *check your answer*, see Matthew 28:19-20 (984 / 979).
11. The words of Ananias urge us to avoid *spiritual procrastination* and to fight the *danger of delay* when he says: “And now _____ tarriest thou? Arise, and be _____ , and _____ thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” To *check your answer*, see Acts 22:16 (1108 / 1101).
12. The *sprinkling* of an *unenlightened infant* falls far short of the Bible method of baptism, which is *immersion* of an *instructed adult*. For the *MEANING* of baptism is to symbolize Christ’s **death, burial, and resurrection**—and you can’t have the *meaning* without the *method*. Comment below on how Bible baptism is *a fitting symbol* of those three great acts of Christ—and how sprinkling a baby falls short. To *check your answer*, see Romans 6:3-6 (1122 / 1114) and Colossians 2:12 (1172 / 1164).



Words to the Wise:

On the day you’re baptized—the day you say “I do” and give yourself to God—your *heart* finds a *home*! Baptism is a decision that can live forever, and it proves that our eternal destiny depends on **CHOICE**, not **CHANCE**. You step up out of the water to *begin a bright new chapter in life* and enter “the Land of Beginning Again.”

Discoveries in Prophecy

Complete list of evangelistic magazines, cross-referenced
to the book *Beyond Orion's Gates*, by Mark A. Finley

Magazine Title

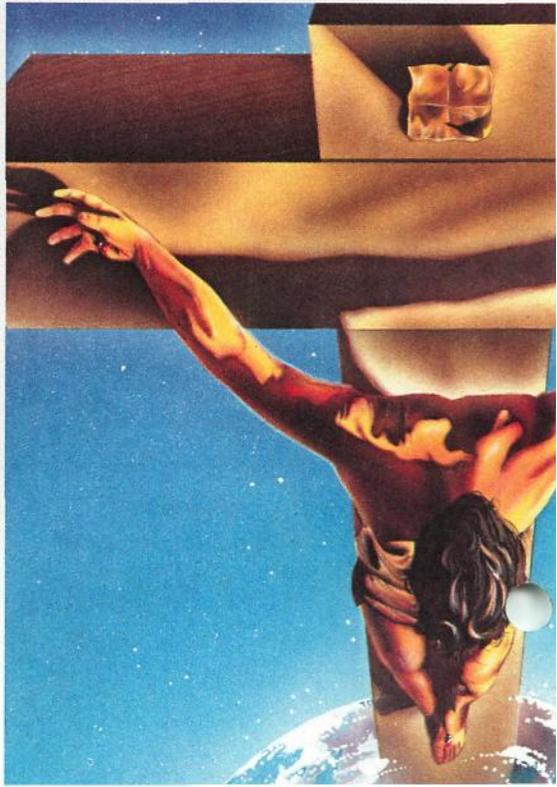
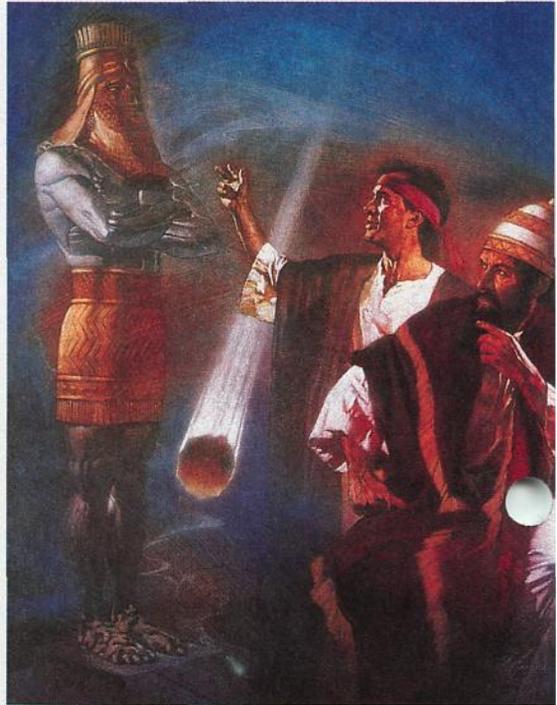
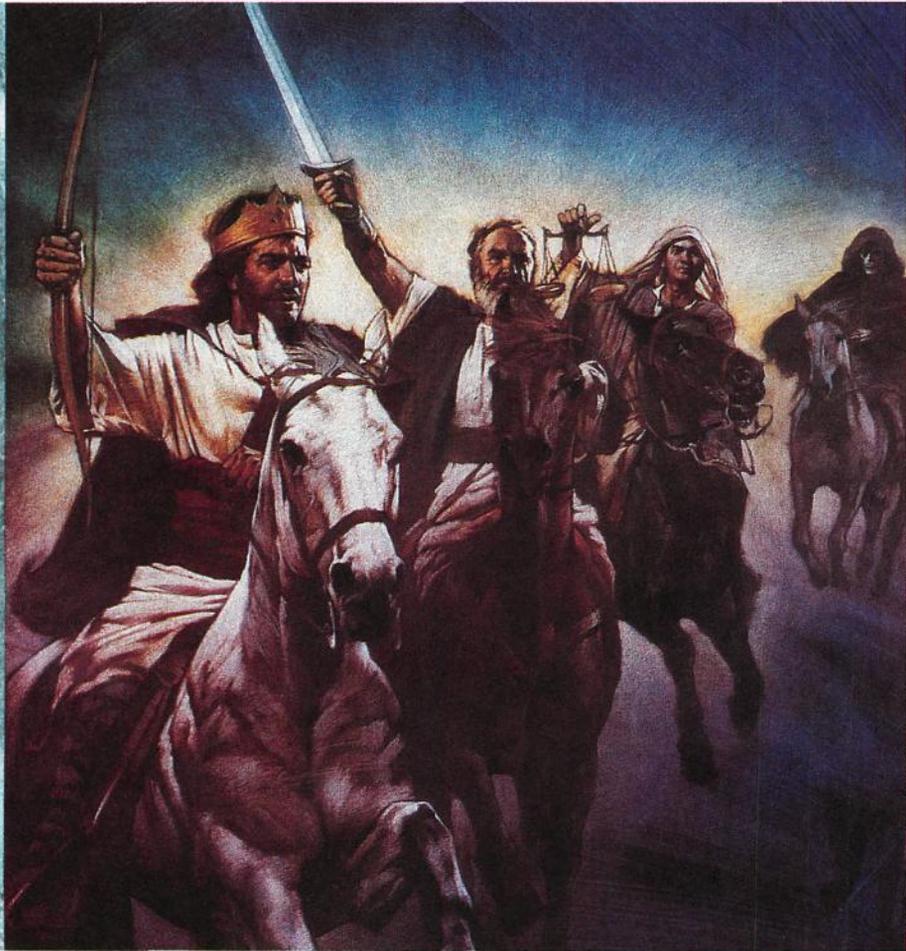
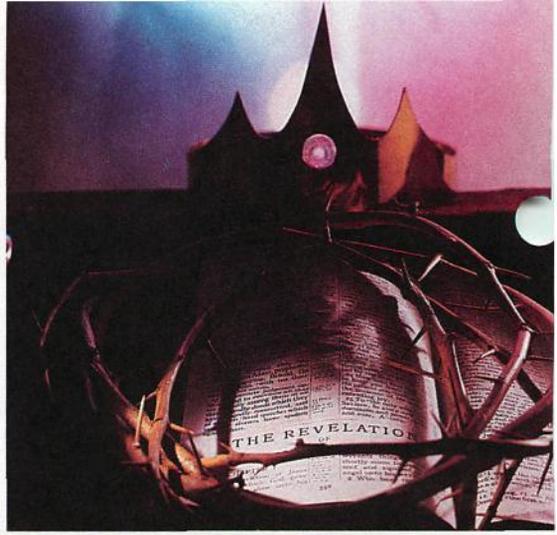
Beyond Orion's Gates

1. Living Beyond 2000	Ch. 2: Lonely No Longer
2. Countdown to Eternity: Why Communism Failed	Ch. 5: A Man of Mud and Metal
3. A World in Turmoil	Ch. 6: Snoozing Through the Sirens
4. Angel 911: Revelation's Angelic Conflict	Ch. 8: Why Insurance Companies Are Wrong
5. 2000 and Beyond: How to Find Personal Peace	Ch. 4: The Highest Ransom Ever Paid
6. Alive at End Time: The Secret of Personal Power	Ch. 3: The Heart Specialist
7. New Age Conspiracy	Ch. 7: Beyond Virtual Reality
8. The Beginning of the End	Ch. 10: Adding Up Daniel's Numbers
9. Facing Revelation's Judgment	Ch. 9: When Your Case Comes to Court
10. Why Our Streets Have Become Unsafe	Ch. 11: Whatever Happened to Right and Wrong?
11. A 6,000-year-old Remedy for Tension	Ch. 12: The Memory Lapse That Spawned Evolution
12. The Greatest Religious Cover-up in History	Ch. 13: Assault on Heaven's Constitution
13. How to Identify a Cult	
14. The Coming Thousand Years: The Golden Age—or World Disaster?	Ch. 24: A Workaholic's Long Vacation
15. The Real Truth About Near-Death Experiences	Ch. 14: Where Do We Go When We Die?
16. How to Successfully Bury the Past	Ch. 22: How to Start Life Over Again
17. Will a Loving God Burn Sinners in Hell Forever?	Ch. 25: Who Framed God?
18. The Bible's Ancient Health Secrets Revealed	Ch. 15: It Pays to Read the Owner's Manual
19. Why So Many Denominations?	
20. The Mystery of Revelation's Babylon Revealed	Ch. 20: A City Called Confusion
21. The Search for Certainty	Ch. 19: Survivors of the War Behind All Wars
22. A Financial Secret the World Doesn't Know	Ch. 16: Secrets Wall Street Doesn't Know
23. The Mark of the Beast	Ch. 17: Far More Than a Bar Code
24. The United States in Bible Prophecy	Ch. 18: The Clock Runs Out on America's Freedom
25. The Holy Spirit and the Unpardonable Sin	
26. Revelation's Glorious Climax	Ch. 23: A Preview of Earth's Final Headlines

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