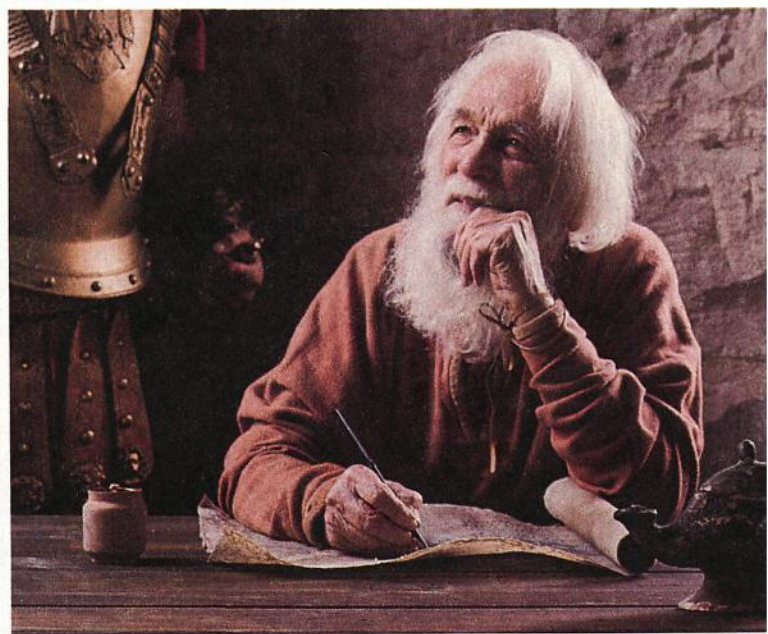
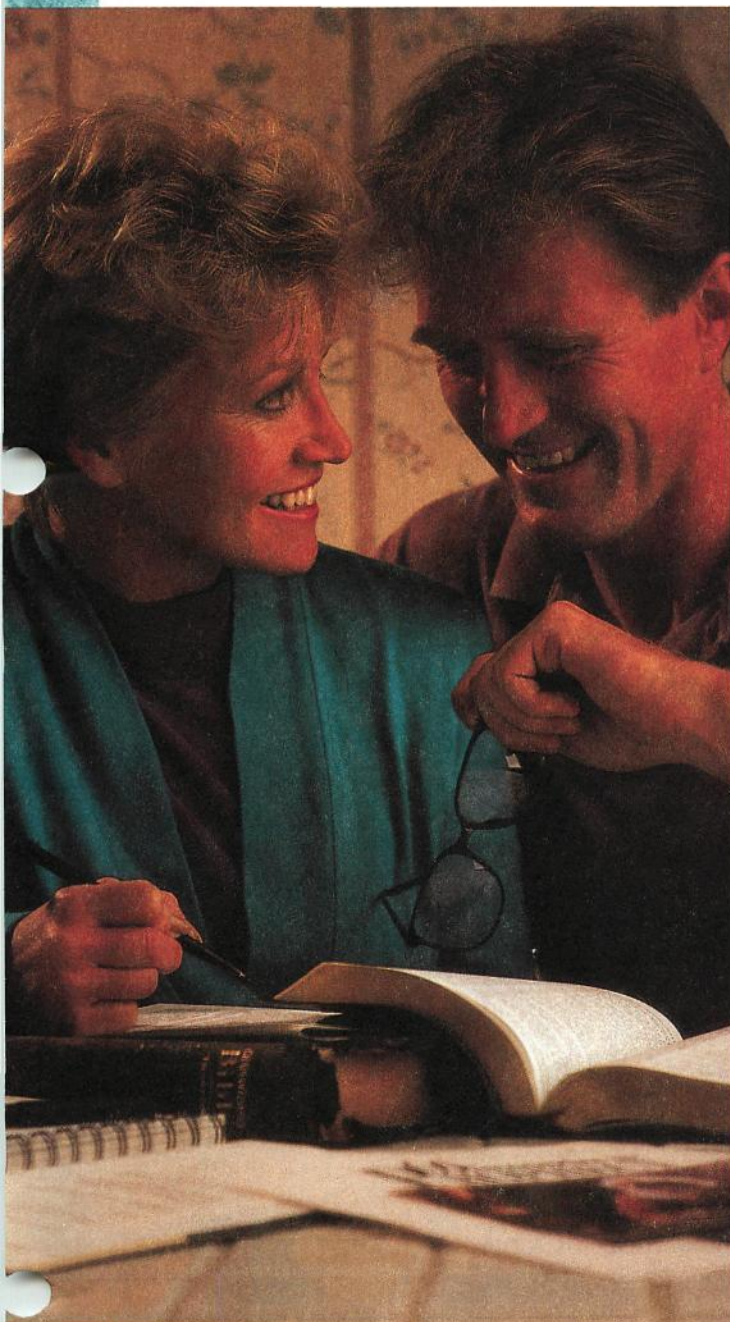


Discoveries in PROPHECY

WITH
MARK
FINLEY



2000 and Beyond:
How to Find Personal Peace

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

2000 and Beyond: How to Find Personal Peace

Have you ever asked yourself the question, “Why is it that something seems *missing* in my life? How can I find meaning and purpose—how can I find peace of mind?” Have you ever felt that, though you had a great deal, something was missing deep down inside? Have you ever asked yourself, “Is there anything more to life than getting up in the morning and going to work every day and coming home and eating supper and watching television and getting up and going to work the next day and coming home and watching television and getting up the next day looking forward to the weekend and then going to the beach?”

Is there anything more? Is life merely being born and working and dying? First we’re so young, then we grow into children and teenagers, then we’re twenty-something, and middle aged, and later senior citizens. Then we head for that place called the grave. I saw a depressing T-shirt that said: “Life is hard—and then we die.”

How can I have peace of mind and purpose? How can I really enjoy life if every place I look there’s death and sorrow and disappointment? How can I really have peace of mind and be really happy if I know that one day I’ll simply get old and head for the grave? Is life only 70 years—three-score and ten? Or could

there be *millions* of years filled with joy and happiness, filled with meaning and purpose in a place called Eternity? Is the grave all there is? Is it all we have to look forward to?

Where did death come from? Was that really God’s design for Planet Earth when He created it? Did He create human beings with “built-in obsolescence,” with a biological time-clock programmed so they’d live for 60 - 70 - 80 years and then *die*? Were the grave and the cemetery part of God’s ultimate plan? What does the Bible really teach about how to have peace of mind, how to

find eternal life, how to have the assurance that there is life beyond the grave? In moments of thoughtful reflection, we ask that question. We say to ourselves, “There *must* be *something* beyond the tomb.” Some try to drown out that question and avoid it in various ways. They look for pleasure, peace, and happiness in a variety of ways.

THE FRANTIC SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

I think of King Ludwig II of Germany. King Ludwig lived back in the 1800s and tried to find happiness in building castles. He built *fantastic* castles—magnificent monuments in stone. Six or seven of these castles are extravagantly luxurious, costing multimillions of dollars. King Ludwig built one on the border of Germany and Austria in one of the most beautiful spots in the world, called Neuschwanstein. This particular castle has

lavish chandeliers, fantastic gold ornate mirrors, gold-leafed furniture, carpets woven by the world’s greatest carpet weavers in Belgium. Though it took more than 12 years to build, King Ludwig lived in it only 11 days, and he said “They were the most miserable 11 days of my life.” He wanted to live alone with just his servants. In fact, he didn’t want to see anybody. In the magnificent dining hall, he arranged for an elevator to be operated by a push of his foot. Then it would bring his meals up

right before him. He would eat in silence, not wanting to see even his servants—he was so miserable. He built his castles, but he ended up a tragic suicide because the castles didn’t satisfy him.

We build our castles, too. Our cars, our homes, our stereo and video systems become our gods. Even our jobs become gods. We build our castles. Some people’s castles give them as little pleasure as the magnificent palaces of Ludwig. We drown our lives in “pleasure,” trying to answer that fundamental question, “How can I have peace of mind and real happiness? How can I really

If you don't satisfy the inner needs of your soul, whatever else you do won't bring peace of mind and happiness. Unless there's life beyond the grave, all life is futile.

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know I have eternal life? Why do I sense I can live forever?" Oh, yes, we build our castles.

Some even try to *inject* pleasure into their *veins* because they sense their life is going all too fast toward the grave. Others follow a different path to chemical pleasure and sniff cocaine or take pills. How can we find life's true meaning, true purpose? It's certainly not contained in controlled substances. It's certainly not found in the material values of silver and gold—the filthy lucre we call money. There must be something beyond, and if you don't satisfy the inner needs of your soul, whatever else you do won't bring peace of mind and happiness. Unless there's life beyond the grave, all life is futile.

When I was in the fifth grade, I began wrestling with this question of eternal life. I raised my hand and asked the teacher, "Teacher, how long is eternity?" I was brought up on the East Coast of America with the sand coming up through my toes on those Atlantic coast beaches. So I asked the teacher, "How long is eternity?" And she said, "Picture the ocean." So my little mind pictured the vastness of it—I'd been out in boats with my grandpa and uncle, so far out we couldn't even see land.

Then she said, "Picture a seagull coming and taking a *drop* out of the ocean, and then that seagull flies away and doesn't come back for a thousand years. But a thousand years later he comes back and takes one more drop of water in his beak and flies away. And he repeats that over and over. Once every thousand years he comes back, takes another drop of water, and flies away." Then the teacher said, "Mark, by the time the ocean runs *dry* from the seagull taking a drop once every thousand years, that's the first *second* of eternity."

Eternity is long, long time. As a fifth-grade student, I began to think, "God, if there is an eternity, if we can live forever, that will give meaning even to suffering. Because if we go through suffering—cancer, heartache, sorrow—and we know it's just for a short time, even 70 years, but there's eternity, that gives meaning to life. We can endure suffering and sickness and pain, we can endure hardship and difficulty and divorce, we can endure famine, we can endure war—we can endure *every kind* of anguish, if we know it's only for a short time, and we know that one day we'll live with Christ through all eternity." That makes all the difference!

Well, how did the world get into the mess it's in? Why did God create us? How can I have peace of mind in this society? Why is there death? Let's go back to the Bible to find answers to these questions: why we're here, and how to find purpose in life, and where we're going ultimately. The Bible teaches in the Book of Genesis that when God created Adam and Eve, He created them to live forever. It was never God's plan that sickness, and suffering, and death should come to Planet Earth. It was God's plan that Adam and Eve be connected to Him, plugged-in to

Him, that they follow His Commandments and live in harmony with His will and find the greatest possible purpose, meaning, and happiness in life. Our Creator made Adam and Eve with a God-shaped vacuum in their hearts, a vacuum that could be filled only by a relationship with Him. Years ago St. Augustine wrote: "Lord, our hearts will never find peace unless they find it in You."

THE INDISPENSABLE GOD

Just as human beings need air, we need God. Just as we have physical needs for food, we need God. Just as we have the emotional need to be loved and cared for, we have the emotional need for God. We can run from

In the very fabric of our being, we need God. That's the way God programmed Adam and Eve in Genesis. That's the way God made us, and we can't deny it.

it and think sex will fill it, think alcohol will fill it, think money will fill it, we can think prestige and a good job will fill it, but if we don't know God and have a close relationship with Him, something will be missing from our life. There'll be a longing and emptiness in our heart—a void that nothing else can fill—because that's the way we're made!

Any psychiatrist who tries to deny our need for God is denying reality, because even if you tell me I don't need air, that won't help when I'm gasping for air. Telling me I don't need food won't help when I'm starving. People need God. I've been in jungles—the far-reaching jungles in Brazil, lost with natives and savages way up on the Amazon River, and those people had a need for God. In the former Soviet Union, I've lectured to 3,000 scientists at a time, including some of the greatest biologists in the world. And those professionals had a need for God. They told me after the meeting, "Mark, we no longer believe in atheism because it didn't satisfy our hearts."

The average Russian woman has had seven abortions by the time she's 45 years old. Alcoholism rates there are the highest in the world. In Moscow, suicide was rampant. Denying God sends people toward alcohol, sends them toward sexual promiscuity—but those things don't satisfy people, and pretty soon they commit suicide. We're built that way. We're made that way. In the very

fabric of our being, we need God. That's the way God programmed Adam and Eve in Genesis. That's the way God made us, and we can't deny it. We can try to deny it, but that leads to disaster in our lives. To admit we need God is both basic common sense and high human wisdom.

Satan came to Eve there in the Garden of Eden and asked, "Eve, has God really said you can't eat of this fruit? You know, Eve, you're not made to be connected to God and so restricted. You're made to do your own thing, to have your own pleasure, to go your own way. God certainly doesn't have your happiness in view." So Eve reached out and took the fruit. Romans 6:16, NIV, says, "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey . . . ?" Living a life of loving obedience filled Adam and Eve with joy and warm satisfaction. But listening to Lucifer's voice put them under another master, another leader. Believing Satan's seductive lie separated them from God.

THE BROKEN CONNECTION

Adam and Eve's separation from God filled them with anguish and robbed them of peace. Separation from the Source of life sowed the seeds of death in their bodies. Shadows hung over a planet called Earth and a garden called Eden. Depressed and discouraged, they began to argue with each other. Guilt filled their lives, and they felt condemned by their sins. Isaiah 59:2, NIV, says, "Your iniquities [your sins] have separated you from your God." God created Adam and Eve to be at one with Him, but when they sinned, they separated themselves from God.

The same fate can befall us, my friends. Separated from God, we're separated from the Source of *joy*—so sorrow fills our lives. Separated from God, we're separated from the Source of *peace*—so conflict and anguish enter our souls. Separated from God, we're separated from the Source of *health*—and seeds of sickness fill our bodies. Separated from God, we're separated from the Source of *life*—so death follows. That's why the Bible says, "The wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23, "The wages of *sin* is death"!

When God created Adam and Eve, they were not mere puppets or robots—He created them with the power of choice. Because if you take away the power of choice, you take away the ability, the freedom, to love. If you take away the freedom to love, you take away the opportunity to be really happy. It was because God wanted creatures who'd serve Him freely, lovingly, finding life's true happiness, that He gave them the power of choice. Adam and Eve were free moral agents—but they *chose* to listen to Lucifer's voice and drifted away from God. Seeds of death were sown in their body when they sinned, for "the wages of sin is death." So their offspring, which

comprise the whole human race, are part of a planet in rebellion.

Every single one of us has personally sinned. After all, who can say that he's been honest all his life, that he hasn't lied, that he's never gotten angry and said or done things he shouldn't? Who can say that? All of us have sinned and followed in the footsteps of Adam and Eve. So we deserve death. And all of us are destined for the grave—to go into the grave and never, ever come out—to be eternally separated from God. That's why, inside at times, we're uneasy and don't feel good. It's because we're alienated from God, separated from the Source of life and health and peace. We were made for God, but sin separates us from Him—and we're filled with guilt and fear and condemnation. We're filled with worry over the very thought of death.

What would God do when Adam and Eve sinned? Would God say, "Adam and Eve, you *sinned* after I told you not to! So I'm going to push Earth out into the far reaches of space. I'll destroy you, Adam and Eve. I'm going to crush you out. I'll swat you like a fly. I'll kill you like a mosquito. Then I'll start all over again with people who will really love and serve Me!"

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

No, God's love wouldn't allow Him to destroy Adam and Eve, whom He had created. But God's justice demanded that sin be paid with the wages of death. Death is the natural result of sin. So God's *love* wouldn't allow Him to destroy Adam and Eve, but God's *justice* demanded that sin's consequence of death be carried out. What would a loving God do? How could God save this

Inside at times, we're uneasy and don't feel good. It's because we're alienated from God, separated from the Source of life and health and peace. We were made for God, but sin separates us from Him.

world He loved? How could He be both *just* and *merciful* at the same time? With infinite wisdom, Heaven devised a plan.

The Bible says in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord . . . is longsuffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 1 John 4:8, 16

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assures us that “God is love.” A loving God looked upon this planet in rebellion, looked upon those creatures who had turned their backs on Him. A loving God, who was both just and merciful, did *not* push Planet Earth into the far reaches of space and destroy it. Rather He, Himself, came into that garden calling out to Adam and Eve, “Adam, Eve, I love you! Adam, Eve, where are you?” But Genesis 3:8 says the guilty couple ran and “*hid themselves* from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.” When we sin, we feel guilt and condemnation, so we try to run.

They “hid themselves,” so God tried to assure them of His undiminished love. Our Lord gave the first promise of the Messiah in Genesis 3:15 (NIV) when He told the serpent, “I will put *enmity* between you [Satan] and the woman [Eve], and between your offspring and hers; He [the Messiah] will crush your head, and you [the evil serpent] will strike His heel.” Back there in the Garden of Eden, God promised that the Messiah would come, that God would send heaven’s best, that Christ would leave the praise and adoration of angels and take upon Himself human flesh. Jesus would live the life that Adam and Eve should have lived—that you and I should live. He would face all the devil’s temptations but still live a sinless life. He would die a death that He didn’t deserve. If I believe in Him and trust Him, Christ’s perfect life would be credited to my account in heaven. His death would take the place of my death. He’d offer me—and you—salvation full and free. Christ would walk in our footsteps and live the life we should have lived. The Bible promised, right there in Genesis, that the Messiah would come. As the ages rolled on, believers in every century and millennium would look forward to and anticipate with hope the coming Messiah.

God gave His people in Old Testament times many reminders that the Messiah was coming. For example, in Genesis 22:2 (NIV) God said to Abraham, “Take your son, your *only* son Isaac, whom you *love*, and go to the region of Moriah. *Sacrifice him* there as a *burnt offering* on one of the mountains I will tell you about.” Abraham’s heart was broken, but he nevertheless obeyed God. Moving through a living nightmare, Abraham brought Isaac up onto Mt. Moriah. “He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood” to be a burnt offering. Though Abraham didn’t understand any of this, by faith he took the knife and was ready to plunge it into Isaac.

GOD PROVIDED A SACRIFICE

But just as he lifted the knife to slay his beloved son, a voice from heaven stopped him and told him not to harm the lad, for “Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from Me your son, your only son.” Even through this dark hour, faithful Abraham had felt that

“God will provide.” And now he saw a ram caught in the thicket. He took that ram, put it on the altar, and sacrificed it instead of his son. Providing that sacrifice was God’s way of telling Abraham, “When death seems certain, when there’s no way out or around or through, I will provide the ram”—the ram representing Jesus Christ.

Death for you and me *is* certain. The seeds of death planted by sin flow through our bodies, and we need a Substitute. In the Old Testament, God reminded Israel of that coming Substitute by telling them that if they sinned, they’d need to bring a sacrificial lamb. Those lambs, of course, pointed forward to the coming Messiah and His sacrificial death.

In imagination, let’s go back to ancient Israel and suppose a man got really angry with his neighbor in a dispute over land rights. This man reaches out and hits his neighbor in the face. The neighbor retaliates, and they scuffle. After the fight, this Jewish believer realizes that he’s gotten angry and sinned. God had instructed His people in that situation to bring a lamb, a male, without spot or blemish of any kind.

So that repentant sinner would bring a lamb to God’s holy sanctuary. There, in the outer aspect of the sanctuary called the court, the sinner reached out his hands over the lamb’s head and confessed his sin. He prayed a prayer something like this: “Dear Lord, I’ve sinned. Be-

Whoever you are, you need Jesus.
Whoever you are, you need a
sacrificial Lamb. You need
Someone you can kneel before and
say, “Lord, I have sinned.”

cause I’ve sinned, I deserve to die. The wages of sin is death. But Lord, You’ve said that if I confess my sin, the guilt of that sin would be symbolically transferred to this lamb.”

When the sinner came to the sanctuary, he was filled with guilt. But when he confessed his sin, the guilt was transferred to the lamb. Yet the Bible says, “The wages of sin are death.” So as the lamb’s head is balanced on the man’s knee, that man himself must take the knife and plunge it through the lamb’s throat! The lamb squeals and shakes and quivers. Blood runs down the man’s knee, and the lamb dies. Because the man’s sin was transferred to the lamb, the lamb had to die. See, in God’s plan, either the sinner dies for his sin, or some other life must be sacrificed.

“BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD”!

You say, “It’s terrible, just terrible, that that lamb had to die! In fact, many innocent lambs have had to die!” John 1:29 (RSV) records that when Jesus came to be baptized, John the Baptist said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” Though it’s terrible for a lamb to die, it was much more terrible for Jesus to die. Jesus is God’s Lamb. When Christ hung on that cross, He had lived a perfect, spotless, sinless life. As I confess my sins in the same way that Old Testament sinner confessed his sins, saying, “Lord, I’ve lied, I’ve cheated, I’ve stolen,” that sin, as I confess it—and the guilt of that sin—is taken off my back and wiped from my record. It’s put on God’s Lamb, Jesus Christ, the Lamb without spot and blemish, who shed His blood in my behalf.

Look friend, when you and I kneel before that cross as thousands have before us, we may come filled with sin, having committed adultery, having stolen something, having problems with alcohol or drugs. Or we may come with none of those overt problems, but with selfishness, greed, or lust in our hearts. Maybe we’ve lived a good moral life, but look, friends, we may have lived the most perfect moral life, and everyone in our neighborhood thinks we’re upright—but our *motives* may have been prompted by selfishness.

You may say “This sermon is not for me, ’cause I’m not out there in the honky tonks! I’m not drinking booze or taking drugs.” Look friend, have you committed even *one* sin in all your life? The Bible says, “The wages of sin is death.” You see, in heaven, it’s not how many good deeds you’ve done that weigh against your bad deeds. Sin is selfishness. Sin is separation from God. Even so-called “acceptable” sins mean that we’re separated from God, and the seeds of death are planted in our body. Whoever you are, you need Jesus. Whoever you are, you need a sacrificial Lamb. You need Someone you can kneel before and say, “Lord, I have sinned. There’s something missing in my life. Lord, I’m confessing my sins to You. Lord, I believe they’re being transferred from me to You and that, Lord, when You hung on that cross, my sins were transferred there.” If you accept Jesus’ sacrifice, His death becomes your death. When Jesus was nailed to the cross, your sins were nailed to the cross. When the spear was thrust into His side, it was because of your sins.

BEWARE OF COUNTERFEIT RELIGIONS

Friend of mine, many people desperately want to find peace of mind. Some try to find it in ancient religions that say “If you’ve sinned, you have to do something. If you’ll only do something, you can make your life right with God. Let your body that has sinned *suffer*.” So they

put hooks like fishhooks through their bodies, and their chests are covered with blood, and they think that if they only do that, they’ll be saved.

Others say, “Oh, God, I have to appease You, so I’ll walk on nails, and my bloody feet will show You I’m serious. Please, Lord, let me appease You.” Others say, “I’ll walk on fire.” Look, friend of mine, Christ has already *had* the nails driven through His hands. Jesus has already *had* the blood run down His feet and His face. Salvation is the supreme *gift* that Jesus Christ, who lived

Come to Jesus first! As you come to Jesus, He not only forgives and pardons you for past sins, but He also gives you power to deal with present problems.

the perfect life, freely offers.

Look at how *simple* salvation is: Acts 16:31 says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Do you want to be saved? Do you want to live forever in a land called Eternity? The Bible says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Salvation in the Bible is a gift. You can receive it right now. “For by *grace* are you saved through *faith*, and that not of yourselves: it is the *gift* of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8, 9.

But some people say, “Pastor, I need to straighten out my life before I come to Jesus. I’ve got to take care of my alcohol problem. I need to pay back all that money I got dishonestly. You know, I need to deal with these problems in my life before I come to Jesus.” No, friend, come to Jesus *first!* As you come to Jesus, He not only forgives and pardons you for past sins, but He also gives you *power* to deal with present problems. All human efforts to deal with your problems won’t help you unless you first come to Jesus.

The Bible says, in John 3:16, “Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Again I ask, Do you want to live forever? Believe in Him, and you will not perish. It doesn’t say, if a *rich* man believes in Him. It doesn’t say, if a *poor* man believes in Him. It doesn’t say, if a *man* believes in Him or a *woman* believes in Him. It doesn’t say, if an American or a Swede or a Jew believes in Him. It doesn’t say, if a Russian or a Japanese believes in Him. It doesn’t say that. It says, “*Whosoever*.” I’m glad for that “whosoever,” for it includes

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you, friend—it includes *me!* Whoever you are, whatever problems you've faced in life, you can be saved. You can live in God's kingdom with your sins forgiven and your guilt gone. You can have a new peace in your life. You can wake up tomorrow a different man, a different woman.

CALVARY: GROUND ZERO

Come with me to a garden called Gethsemane and a hill called Calvary. Come with me as Jesus prays in that garden. The world trembles in the balance. Before Him lies Pilate's judgment hall. Before Him are the crown of thorns, the whip, and the nails. Before Him is the climb up Calvary's hill. Before Him lie agony and death and the tomb. Come with me as the world trembles in the

To save me and to save you Christ
was willing to go into the grave
and never come out if that's what
sin cost, so we could be in heaven!

balance and listen while Jesus cries out, "Father, if it's possible, let this cup pass from me. But not My will, Father, Your will be done. Let this cup—the cross—pass from me."

Come with me and watch as He sweats great drops of blood. A world trembles in the balance. He'll go through the farce of the trial. A needle-sharp crown of thorns will be jammed upon His head. He'll be crushed down by the heavy load of the cross. Nails will rip through His hands and feet, ripping flesh and grinding sensitive nerves. He'll go alone into the darkness of the tomb.

But He cannot let you go. He loves you too much. If He does not die in our behalf, you must go into the grave, I must go into the grave—and we will never, *ever* come out. Without His death, we're lost—lost for all eternity. Friend of mine, come with me and watch as the crown of thorns is jammed upon His head. Watch as those prickly, sharp thorns pierce His brow and the blood runs down His face.

Come with me to Pilate's courtyard and watch as He's stripped to the waist and His arms are tied with rawhide above His head. Listen to the snap of the whip and watch as the jagged metal embedded in its leather thongs rips large chunks of flesh out of His back. Listen to His ago-

nizing cries as the soldiers jest. Look into His loving eyes. Who is this whose back is bloodied? Who is this who is spun around in the crowd as Roman soldiers beat His face? Who is this whose beard is ripped out by the handful and whose face is spat upon? Who is this bloodied, bruised, crushed form in Pilate's judgment hall? Who is this who suffers so?

It is Jesus—the One at whose very name the angels sing a note higher. It is Jesus—the One at whose very command angels wing their way to worlds afar. It is Christ—who participated with the Father in the creation of the world. It is Christ—who carpeted this world with living green and sent babbling brooks through the landscape and caused the birds to sing. It is Jesus—the One existing with the Father from all eternity.

It is He who suffers so, who has such a bruised and bloody form. He took *your* whipping. For sin brings pain, suffering, agony. And sin brings death. He went through what you and I should have gone through. He carried *my* cross up Calvary's hill. He was nailed to my cross. When He was condemned at Pilate's judgment hall, an *innocent* Man was condemned to be crucified so that I, a *condemned* man, would go free. I deserve what He took. He took not only my crown of thorns, my whipping, my nails. He even suffered my death.

WHAT MADE HIM DO IT?

Mark it, and mark it well: When Christ hung on the cross, He screamed out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Matthew 27:46, NIV. Have you ever wondered why Jesus made that statement? You see, the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "He who knew no sin became sin for us." He became our sin-bearer. Jesus, who never sinned, took the guilt of my sin upon Himself. When Christ died on the cross, He did not merely die the first physical death common to all mankind. We know "The wages of sin is death." The first death is physical, but the second death is spiritual. The wages of sin is spiritual death—eternal separation from the Father. When Christ hung on the cross, He accepted the guilt of the sins of *every* human being who ever lived! The weight of those sins was so heavy, the guilt of those sins was so great, the darkness of those sins was so intense, that Christ actually thought He'd be separated from His Father forever. But to save me and to save you, He was *willing* to go into the grave and never come out if that's what sin cost, so *we* could be in heaven!

Jesus on the cross said in effect, "If I'm going to be in heaven with the Father, but John and Mary or Tom or Helen or Mark Finley are not going to be there, I don't want to be there, because heaven would be a lonely place without them. I am willing to die and go into the grave and never come out. I'm willing to give them my throne and take the cross. I'm willing to wear the soiled, bloody

robe so they can wear robes of righteousness. I'm willing to have the nails pierce My hands so they can hold the scepter in theirs. I'm willing to wear the crown of thorns so they can wear the crown of glory."

In my work I travel a great deal. I remember when my son, Mark, was just a little boy three or four years old. I'd travel to different places in the world, and when we were living in Chicago, I'd come home and fly in to O'Hare International Airport. My lovely wife and my girls and my son would be at the airport to welcome me home. I like to travel, but boy, there's something about coming home, isn't there? Isn't home a special place? When I'd come home, I could just kick back and relax. I'd come home after six weeks in Europe or traveling in evangelism, and my little four-year-old boy would be there and see me in the crowd. Maybe I was still not through passport control, but that little kid would tell my wife, "Mama, Mama, Daddy's home, Daddy's home!" He'd run and jump up into my arms and throw his arms around my neck and kiss me, and say "Daddy, Daddy, you're home!"

My separation from him brought me pain, even though I was separated from him for only a few weeks. Jesus had lived with His heavenly Father from all eternity. Their love was much stronger and deeper than my love can possibly be for my young son. But Christ, who'd been separated from the Father for 33 years, hung on that cross with torn hands as blood ran down His face

I don't know the black catalog of sins in your life, I don't know what you've done, what condemnation fills your life, but I do know that the thief was saved that day.

and said, "Father, I'm willing to bear the guilt of sin, I'm willing to bear the condemnation of sin, I'm willing to go into the grave, I'm willing to be separated, Father, from You forever, if You'll save Mark Finley, if You'll save Tom and Jane and Mary, if what it takes for them to be saved is for Me to be lost because of their sin, Father, if You're going to forsake Me because of their sin, that's OK, Father, because I love them enough to go into the grave."

No earthly love is like that! All I can do is kneel at His feet and worship Him. If He loves me so much as to be willing, if necessary, to be separated from the Father for

all eternity, the *least* I can do is give my life to Him. A dying thief that day sensed that love. This thief, in the last moment of his life, looked over at Jesus. He saw His dying, bloody, bruised form and sensed that this was more than just a man dying. He looked into the eyes of Christ.

Oh, friend of my mine, do you feel guilty like that thief? Look into the eyes of Jesus. That thief was forgiven, and *you* can be forgiven. I don't know the black catalog of sins in your life, I don't know what you've done, what condemnation fills your life, but I do know that the thief was saved that day. Romans 5:10, NIV, says, "When we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him by the death of His Son." You may have been an enemy of God, you may have turned your back on God and had no interest in the things of God, but right now you can say, "Lord, I'm coming to You. Lord, I want to serve You."

Now notice these facts about salvation: First, God created Adam and Eve perfect, Genesis 1:31. They were created to be happy, healthy, and holy—and to live forever! Through their own deliberate choice, they sinned against God, Genesis 3:1-6. Sin separates us from God, Isaiah 59:2. Because Adam and Eve were separated from God through sin, and because they could pass on to their offspring only what they themselves possessed, death came upon the whole human race. The wages of sin is death. But according to Roman 6:23, "The gift of God is eternal life." We receive this life "through faith," Ephesians 2:8. In receiving Jesus, we receive eternal life.

So how can you be saved? What does it mean to accept Jesus? It means to make an intelligent commitment of your will. It means to do as that thief did who confessed his sin, looked at Christ, and said in Luke 23:40-42, "*Lord, remember me* when you come into your kingdom." Would you like to say that right now? "Oh, Lord, I'm coming to You just now. Lord, *remember me* when You come into Your kingdom. Lord, I'm making an intelligent decision with my mind to accept Jesus, to believe that Christ is my Savior. I want to confess my sin, Lord. I want the guilt and condemnation to be gone so I can know the peace only Christ can give."

THE ABC'S OF SALVATION

The Bible says in Acts 3:19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted." Repentance means a change of attitude. It is seen in the life of a sinner who says, "Lord, I'm sorry for what I've done. Lord, I want Your forgiveness, I want Your peace, I want a new life." *Notice the few simple Steps to Salvation:* The first is **A** for Acceptance. *Accept* the fact that you cannot save yourself. *Accept* the fact that without Jesus Christ you're lost. *Accept* the fact that all your good works won't save you. The second is **B** for Believe. *Believe* that when Christ died, He died for you. Believe

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that your sins were nailed to that cross. The third is C for Confess. The Bible says in 1 John 1:9 that if we *confess* our sins, He'll forgive them. Come to Jesus and confess your sins. Tell him, "Lord, I'm *confessing* my sins to You." The fourth is D for Decide. *Decide* that you want

You need not be separated from God forever. The gift of eternal life is freely offered to you. But God will never force you to take it.

to be a Christian, and settle it in your heart. Consciously, intelligently decide that you want to commit your life to God. The Lord will never force the will—He's given you that power of choice, so it's yours and yours alone to exercise.

Martin made that choice. You see, Martin was looking for peace of mind. One day as he walked down a road in Germany's Black Forest, the sky got dark, and thunder began to crash, and lightning began to flash, and it began to rain. It poured so hard the rain came down in torrents. It seemed as if the lightning was crashing all around Martin, and he said, "I know I'm going to die. I know I'll never get back home." He made a vow to God. He said, "God, if You'll save me, I want to go into the monastery and become a priest." Well, surprisingly, as he made that prayer, "I want to go into the monastery and become a priest," the sky seemed to clear up.

So later, rather than pursuing a career in law, he went into the monastery. He said, "Certainly here in the monastery of God, I'll find peace, I'll find eternal life." He fasted for days and prayed for hours, but he found no peace. Fasted—no peace. Prayed—no peace. He decided then that maybe he must punish his flesh, so he whipped himself. No peace. Whatever he did, he could not find peace. He even traveled to Rome and climbed Pilate's Staircase, which was supposedly brought by angels to Rome, but of course it's a myth. Tradition says that Jesus supposedly climbed Pilate's Staircase on His knees. So Martin climbed it on his knees and said to himself, "I'll find peace." But still no peace came—just inner turmoil and conflict.

He wondered, "How can I find peace? How can I find salvation?" He was so depressed. He began to read the Bible late at night. There he learned that the only way to

find peace is to find Jesus. He read texts like John 3:16: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He read texts like 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Martin confessed his sins. He had the clear sense that Christ was his Savior. He found joy and peace. He had read in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." He said, "I deserve to die, but God will give me life."

That night when he went to bed, he had a dream. In that dream Satan appeared before him. He saw the hideous, terrible form of Satan. Satan had a scroll in his hand, and Satan unrolled that scroll. As Martin looked at the scroll, he saw that it was a list of his sins—cheating, lying, lust, dishonesty, anger. Satan said, "Martin, are these your sins?" "Yes, they are" "Does the Bible say the wages of sin is death?" "Yes, it does." "Then you will die. You're condemned to death."

THE DEVIL'S HAND

Martin was filled with guilt and anguish and fear. He could only say, "Yes, those are my sins." It was as if he were at the judgment bar of God, and he couldn't deny his guilt—all his sins were on that scroll. Then he saw Satan's hand pressed to the scroll. He said to Satan, "Move your hand." And Satan said, "No, I will not." And he said, "Move your hand." "No, I will not." And Martin said, "In the name of Jesus Christ, move your hand!" And Satan moved his hand, and under his hand it said, "The

Would you like to receive eternal life? Receive Jesus. No matter how good you are, if you don't have Jesus, you don't have life.

blood of Jesus Christ cleanses Martin Luther from all his sins."

Friend of mine, whatever you've done, your sins can be cleansed, and you can find peace and salvation. Jesus, right now, is reaching out to you. Will you accept the fact that you can never be saved without Jesus? Will you come to Him just now and say, "Jesus, I believe that You'll forgive me"? Maybe you've been a Christian but have drifted away. It's time to come back to Jesus. Or maybe

you've never made a full decision to follow Christ. Just now you can open your heart. You can receive His mercy, His forgiveness, His peace. You need not die eternally. You need not go into the grave and never come out. You need not be separated from God forever. The gift of eternal life is freely offered to you. But God will never force you to take it. All God can do is show us His love, show how much He cares, and move upon our hearts with His Holy Spirit. We must make the choice to accept Jesus. We must make the choice, guided and led by the Holy Spirit, to follow Him.

Not long ago, I was sharing with an audience this passage, 1 John 5:12, NIV, "He who *has* the Son *has* life; he who does *not* have the Son of God does *not* have life." Would you like to receive eternal life? Receive Jesus. No matter how good you are, Sir, if you don't have Jesus, you don't have life. If you die, you're going into the grave and not coming out. Verse 13 says, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life." Can you know that you have eternal life? Note that the Bible doesn't say "that you may *think*" or "*guess*." It says, "that you may **KNOW** that you have eternal life"! Can you go to bed tonight knowing you have eternal life? If you have Jesus in your heart, you have eternal life. If you come to Christ and confess you sins, He'll forgive them. If you come to Christ and ask for mercy, He'll give it to you.

A QUESTION RESOLVED

Some time ago I was visiting in the home of a travel agent in Stockholm, Sweden. As we sat there visiting, she said, "You're a pastor, aren't you?" I said "Yes, I am." She said, "I've always wanted to ask a pastor a certain question. Pastor, here's my question: Is abortion murder? Now, pastor, I want a simple 'Yes' or 'No' answer." Before proceeding to answer, I inquired, "Are you asking me that question because you're pregnant and thinking about an abortion?" "No, pastor." "Are you asking me that question because you had an abortion and you feel really guilty about it?" She put her head in her hands and began to weep and sob. Then she said, "Pastor, let me tell you my story. I was married once to a man who left me for another woman. I gave him everything. I loved him. I prepared his meals. I was the best wife I knew how to be, but he left me. I said I could never trust again—I could never trust a man again.

"A few years after that, I met a second man. We weren't married. He was from a different country but was living here. We began to live together. We weren't married, and I got pregnant by him. I was so excited—I was two months pregnant. Then he told me that he was married and had three children in another country, and he was going back. Pastor, I couldn't think of bearing his child, because it was the second man who had let me down. So

I had an abortion. Pastor, that was 17 years ago, yet I feel guilty every day of my life. I feel as if I've committed murder. Pastor, I don't know what to do. I'm so filled with guilt and condemnation."

I asked, "May I share something with you?" We talked and shared. As the moments passed, at the right time, I opened the Bible to 1 John 1:9. I began reading, "If we confess our sins . . ." Then *I misread the text on purpose*, ". . . *except abortion*, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." She said, "Pastor, it doesn't say that." I told her, "I know it doesn't, but I read it that way to get your attention. If we confess our sins—whether it's adultery, whether it's dishonesty, whether it's drunkenness—'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive them.'"

And then I asked, "Tonight would you like to kneel and accept the fact that when Jesus died, He died for

You don't need to carry a load of
guilt. Jesus paid it all. You need
not feel an emptiness in your life.
Jesus has given you the gift of
eternal life and salvation.

your sins. When Jesus had nails driven through His hands, and when the blood ran down His wrists, that blood was shed to cover your sins. Jesus has already paid the price. You can see that little baby in heaven. You can live forever with Christ." She said, "Oh, Pastor, I'd like to kneel and come to Jesus!"

You know, the old song says,

*I hear Thy welcome voice that calls me,
Lord, to Thee.*

*For cleansing in Thy precious blood
that flowed on Calvary.*

I'm coming Lord—coming now to Thee.

*Wash me, cleanse me, in the blood
that flowed from Calvary.*

Do you feel there are sins in your life? Do you have a guilty conscience over things you've done? Do you feel condemned? Do you feel you need God's mercy and forgiveness just now? Maybe you've never known Christ before, but I'm going to invite you to accept Him right now. I'm going to invite you to give your life to Him right now.

Or maybe you've known Christ and you've drifted away. I'm going to invite you to come back to Him right

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now and drop your sins at His feet. Look, friends, you don't need to carry a load of guilt. Jesus paid it all. You need not feel an emptiness in your life. Jesus has given you the gift of eternal life and salvation. Why not open your heart right now and say, "Jesus, I accept You as my Savior"? If you've never done it before, you can do it right now. Why not say, "Jesus, I believe in You"? Lift your hand of faith and reach out for Christ's outstretched hand. Say, "Jesus, I'm coming to confess my sins. I want to be Yours. Jesus, grant me just now the gift of eternal life—and by faith I believe I have it. Amen." Jesus is going to lift that guilt off your shoulders right now. Our loving Lord is going to take that burden away right now and give you peace. ▲

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!**

2000 and Beyond: How to Find Personal Peace

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. Material possessions, sensual pleasure, even worldly fame **can’t fill** empty, aimless lives. But Jesus says, “ _____ I leave with you, My _____ I give unto you: not as the _____ giveth, give I unto you. Let **not** your heart be _____, neither let it be _____.” **To check your answer, see John 14:27 (1069 / 1064).**
2. People are “lookin’ for love in all the **wrong places**”—as the song says—but they can *fill the void* in their lives, for the Lord promises: “Ye shall _____ Me, and _____ Me, when ye shall search for Me with _____ your heart.”
To check your answer, see Jeremiah 29:13 (781 / 761).
3. We **drift** through life hanging onto **denial**, putting on a **bold front**, saying, “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” *not knowing* that we are “ _____, and _____, and _____, and _____.” **To check your answer, see Revelation 3:17 (1220 / 1216).**
4. **T** In order to sustain mankind with hope, God gave the *first* promise of the coming **Messiah**
 F quite *early*, even to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.
To check your answer, see Genesis 3:15 (3 / 3).
5. **Perfect balance** is seen in the Scripture that says, “The wages of _____ is _____ : but the _____ of God is eternal _____ *through Jesus Christ our Lord.*”
To check your answer, see Romans 6:23 (1122 / 1115).
6. **T** God vividly impressed on people in Old Testament times the **cause-and-effect relationship**
 F between **sin** and **death**, when any sinner—from king to commoner—would have to confess his sin on the head of the sacrificial animal, then *take the knife* and *slay* the animal **himself**.
To check your answer, see Leviticus 4:22-30 (112 / 102).

Quick Quiz

7. Those who fear coming to Christ will “cramp their lifestyle” overlook Christ’s promise: “I am come that they might have _____ , and that they might have it more _____ .”

To check your answer, see John 10:10 (1062 / 1057).

8. T God loves us all so much that He’s not willing for **any** to perish but wants each and
 F every one of us to come to repentance and be saved in His kingdom.

To check your answer, see 2 Peter 3:9 (1210 / 1205).

9. After Adam and Eve sinned, they felt a sense not only of *shame* and *guilt* and *condemnation*, but also a sense of **alienation**, a sense of being **cut-off** from their Maker, for the Bible tells us,

“Your iniquities have _____ between you and your God.”

To check your answer, see Isaiah 59:2 (743 / 719).

10. Today’s lifespan of “ _____ score and _____ years” seem *puny* and *meager* indeed when measured against the immensity of God’s gift: the **endless ages of Eternity!**

To check your answer, see Psalm 90:10 (627 / 587).

11. Men sometimes make salvation unnecessarily complicated, but the Bible makes it **simplicity itself**, reducing it to its *lowest common denominator* as an *either-or proposition* in saying: “He that hath the

_____ **hath** life; and he that hath **not** the Son of God hath _____ life.”

To check your answer, see 1 John 5:12 (1214 / 1209).

12. In your own words, list below the “B” and “C” of the simple “Steps to Salvation” outlined in the lesson/lecture.

To check your answer, see Acts 16:31 (1100 / 1094), John 3:16 (1051 / 1046), 1 John 1:9 (1211 / 1206).

A = **Accept** the fact you cannot save yourself and that without Jesus Christ you’re lost.

B = _____

C = _____

D = **Decide** that you want to be a Christian, and settle it in your heart.



Words to the Wise:

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

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

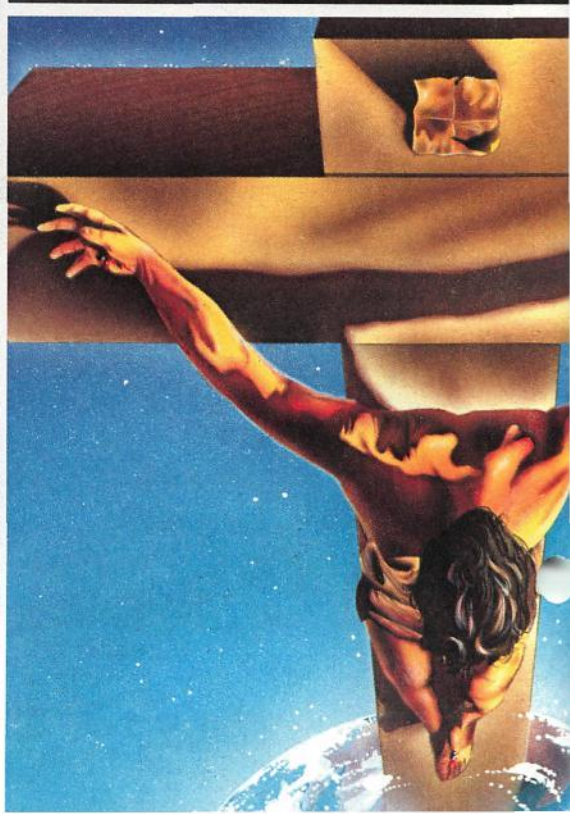
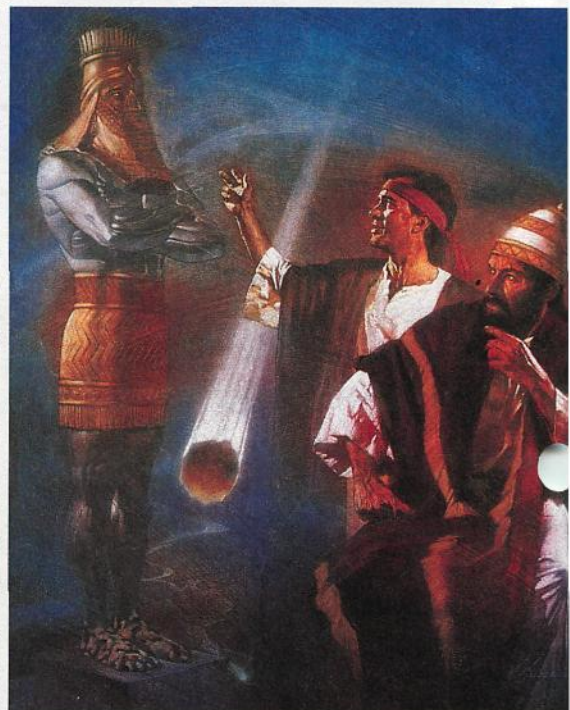
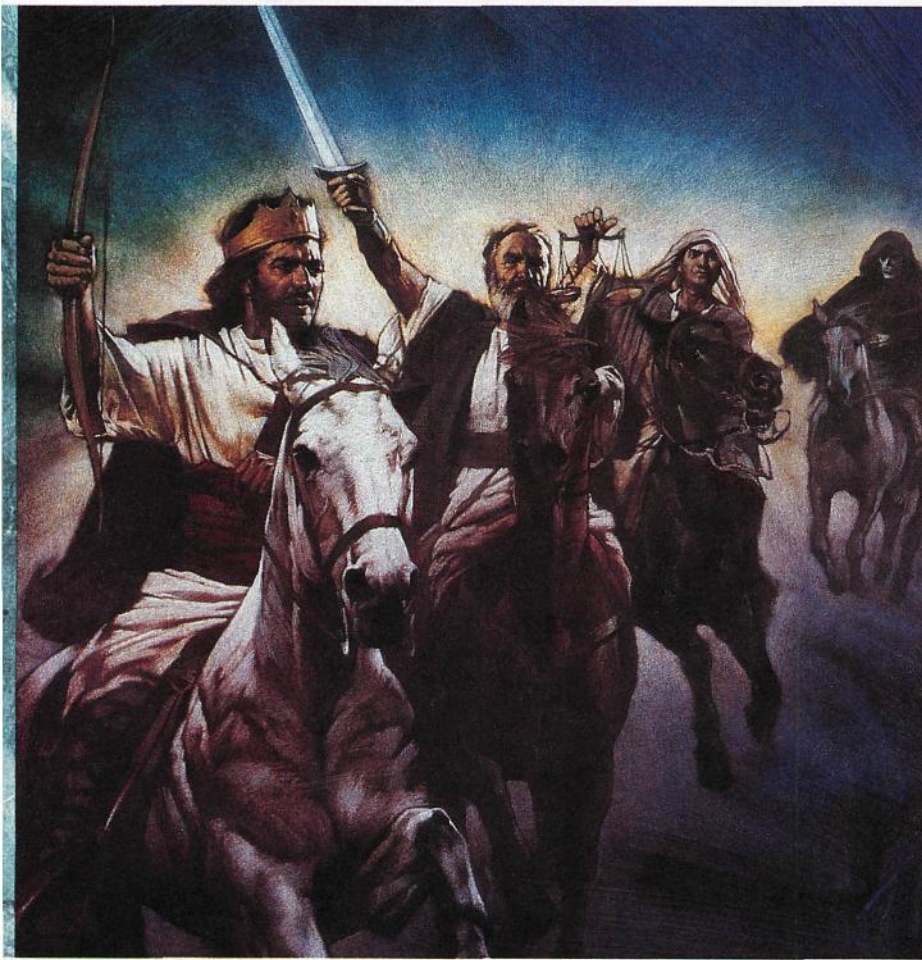
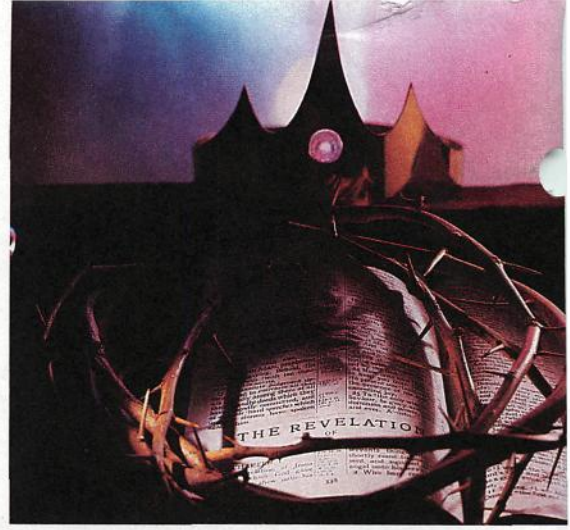
1. Living Beyond 2000	Ch. 2: Lonely No Longer
2. Countdown to Eternity: Why Communism Failed	Ch. 5: A Man of Mud and Metal
3. A World in Turmoil	Ch. 6: Snoozing Through the Sirens
4. Angel 911: Revelation's Angelic Conflict	Ch. 8: Why Insurance Companies Are Wrong
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6. 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
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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
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20. The Mystery of Revelation's Babylon Revealed	Ch. 20: A City Called Confusion
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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
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