

The background of the cover is a painting. It depicts a person sitting on the ground in a dark, wooded area at night. To the right, there is a simple tent or shelter. The scene is dimly lit, with some light coming from the tent and possibly a fire. The overall mood is contemplative and quiet.

IS GOD CALLING YOU?

Predestination, Election and Selection?

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Predestination, Election, and Selection?

Bob Thiel, Ph.D.

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Could God be calling you?

Do you realize the value of God's calling?

Is God's calling the "pearl of great price"?

Were you 'predestined' to be saved or lost?

What is your role in that calling?

Some of the information here was originally published in Tomorrow's World magazine, May 1971, in an article titled "Is God Calling You?" as well as a booklet published in 1973 titled "Predestination - Does The Bible Teach It?"

Photos: Front cover is from the 1557 painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, titled "Landscape with the Parable of the Sower." Back cover of "The Pearl of Great Price" is from the 17th century painting of that name by Dominico Fetti. Photographs of both which have been released into the public domain per Wikipedia.

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1. Is God Calling You?

Could God be calling you?

Right now, God IS calling a people out of this sin-sick and dying world. It is a wonderful calling for a fantastic purpose. It is so awe-inspiring that many have difficulty believing it. Perhaps YOU are being called right now. You need to know, lest you ignore a real call from the great God of all the universe. Read this booklet to find out whether God is calling YOU!

A common idea of today's Greco-Roman-Protestant world is that a battle is taking place between God and Satan. The idea teaches that God is trying to get everyone saved, and Satan is trying to get everyone lost. If that be true, then every honest person would have to admit GOD IS LOSING, because even the total of ALL the "nominal Christians" in the world have always been a minority on this earth.

Nowadays, the vast majority of all people do not even profess Christianity.

Yet, as far as salvation goes, your Bible says there is only one name under heaven by which we can be saved:

¹⁰ let it be known to you all, ... the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth ... ¹¹ This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' ¹² Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:10-12, NKJV throughout unless otherwise noted)

Billions of people have lived and died without ever hearing the name of Jesus Christ, let alone the real truths of the Bible. What about those people?

What about little babies that live only a few hours? Has God caused them to be doomed? Are they lost forever?

ABSOLUTELY NOT!

EVERYONE will have a chance!

Specific Calling Necessary

The shocking fact is, God is not trying to get everyone saved now!

It is a lack of understanding of God's plan that causes Protestant evangelists to shout in this age: "Give your heart to the Lord before it's too late!"

The inspired Word of God reveals that NO ONE can come to Jesus Christ UNLESS THE FATHER SPECIFICALLY CALLS HIM:

⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:44)

Similarly in John 6:65, Jesus taught:

⁶⁵ "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

God the Father must call for any to come to Jesus. But God has not called all now.

In other words, God must call one to be saved in this age.

Jesus explained to His intimate followers that they had been called. He said:

¹⁹ "... I chose you out of the world." (John 15:19)

The Bible is filled with positive PROOF that all Christians must receive a divine call from God. And there is a much more positive story. The plain truth is that God is not trying to save the whole world now, but has a plan for all.

Another truth to grasp is that if God is calling you, while that includes your salvation (Philippians 2:12), you are called for more than just your own salvation.

And those who are called are called to a calling, and what is it?

First, a calling to a changed life -- a life of overcoming sin and self, growing grace and in knowledge (2 Peter 3:18), building character while enduring to the end for salvation (Matthew 10:22). God sent His son Jesus (John 3:16-17) so you can have a new life in Christ (Romans 6:4,23).

Christians are to be a NEW creation:

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

You have sinned. Yet, no matter what you did, you can be forgiven and given a fresh start in life in the truth with God:

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:6-10)

How valuable is your calling to the Kingdom of God? Jesus told the following parable:

⁴⁴ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Matthew 13:44-46)

The Christian calling is the pearl of great price.

It provides hope to those who would not have otherwise had it:

¹² ... at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:12-13)

Furthermore, it is a calling to support the work (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20).

The great purpose of being called now is to be trained to rule with Christ, and to teach, under Him, when He comes in His Kingdom (Revelation 20:4-6) – and when all Israel shall be saved (cf. Romans 11). We are being trained, prepared, fitted, through trial and test, through hardship, through persecution, through tribulation, with continual Bible study and prayer, growing in grace and in knowledge, to be able, then, to fill the high office of a king and/or a priest (Revelation 1:6; 5:10) -- either to rule in the civil sense, or to preach God's truth when the time comes that all may be privileged to understand, and to be called. Furthermore, we are to make eternity better for ourselves and all other who will one day accept the call.

What a glorious mission is the true Christian life! The elect have the opportunity to support God's loving plan now! The uncalled do not.

When asked why He spoke in parables, Jesus said to His disciples:

¹¹ "... it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given." (Matthew 13:11)

This statement by Jesus goes against the common misconception ('fake news') that He spoke in parables so that more would understand. Most were not to understand in this age:

⁷ What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. (Romans 11:7)

Only the elect can attain salvation in this age, the rest have been blinded. Jesus said that blindness is to be excused (John 15:22).

Paul in Romans 11 shows that salvation has come to the few, the elect in Israel, and to some of the Gentiles. And why? He explains it in verses 31-32:

³¹ even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. ³² For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. (Romans 11:31-32)

Most people are blinded, now, that through mercy shown to those who are now called they may obtain mercy and salvation after Jesus comes as the great Deliverer. How plain, and how wonderful!

Now, it should be pointed out that more Gentiles are to be called before Jesus returns.

²⁵ For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. (Romans 11:25)

The late Pastor General of the old Worldwide Church of God, Herbert W. Armstrong, wrote the following about Romans 11:25:

Now study carefully beginning verse 25: “Blindness in part is happened to Israel [HOW LONG? Forever? No -- note it], UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” -- the end of this age during which God is calling a people from among the gentiles to bear His name (Acts 15:14). And so, says Romans 11:26, “all Israel SHALL BE SAVED [how?]: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” The Deliverer, Jesus Christ, is coming again! ...

Notice verse 31. These blinded Israelites have not now, in this age, received mercy, that through the mercy of the gentiles saved in this age, they MAY, THEN, obtain mercy and salvation. How? Because these saved gentiles will then be kings and priests, assisting in this wonderful Work! (Armstrong HW. Where Will The MILLENNIUM Be Spent? Tomorrow’s Word magazine, September 1971)

Clearly, we are much closer to the time when all the Gentiles are to come in to later be kings and priests! More of the Gentiles had to be called -- and that is happening in the *Continuing* Church of God.

The end does NOT come until the ‘Gospel of the Kingdom of God’ reaches enough nations (Matthew 24:14) and “the full number” (as the NIV, NLT, BSB, CEV, GNT, HCSV, ISV, and NET Bible, put Romans 11:25) of Gentiles God wants in this age come in.

And for those who do what Jesus wants, including Gentiles, scripture teaches:

²⁶ And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations — ²⁷ He shall rule them with a rod of iron ... (Revelation 2:26-27).

¹⁴ For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. ¹⁵ Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received the Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. ¹⁷ Now if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him. (Romans 8:14-17, AFV)

Christians called in this age are to become joint heirs with Jesus in the Kingdom of God!

Predestination & Election

Were YOU predestined to be called?

Perhaps.

Does this mean that your ultimate fate was decided for you in advance?

No.

Very few understand what "predestination" is.

First, consider what it is not. There is no teaching in the Bible that says the decision you are to make — your final fate of becoming either saved or lost — is already pre-determined, and that you are destined finally to arrive at that fate.

Predestination is not about being predestined to be lost.

But doesn't the Bible say anything about predestination?

Certainly.

But it does not say what people seem to think. People seem to think it says we are predestined to be either saved or lost. Some to be saved -- others to be lost.

Let's look at where the Bible mentions predestination directly.

The Apostle Paul taught:

⁴ ...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, (Ephesians 1:4-5).

While some are predestined to be called in this age, most of humanity has NOT been predestined to be lost.

Notice also:

¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:11-12)

Christians were predestined to be called, but must choose whether or not to be faithful. You do have a choice—a choice to be part of the elect or a choice not to be.

Those predestined are predestined, not to be lost, but to be *the praise of His glory*.

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. (Romans 8:28-30)

Again, predestination has to do with being predestined to be a child of God. None of the places in the Bible where predestination is mentioned does it say anything about anyone being predestined to be LOST -- predestined to reject Christ. No one is predestined to make a certain decision -- to accept or reject Christ -- to be saved or lost. But some have been predestined to be called to salvation, now!

If you have been predestined, your “selection” and election was by God:

¹ Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James, to those of God's selection who have been made holy by God the Father and are kept safe for Jesus Christ: (Jude 1:1, BBE)

¹ ... Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ... ⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. (1 Thessalonians 1:1,4)

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the ... ² elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied. (1 Peter 1:1-2)

God's beloved are called to be holy, obedient, and kept safe for Jesus.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Don't misunderstand — God's grace is free and unmerited, but if we refuse to change our lives — to obey God — He is under no obligation to bestow His grace upon us.

God's Spirit gives us the power we need to develop character. But we must work at it.

The Apostle Paul wrote:

¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. (1 Corinthians 15:10)

God will not allow Christ's sacrifice and His grace to be taken lightly.

At least partially because of this, Luke 12:32 shows that the number of the faithful, until God's kingdom is given, will be small:

³² Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Notice that only a few will find Christ now, as in Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus teaches:

¹³ Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

This is the same Jesus who came to save more than a few (Luke 13:29-30).

Paul shows that while God has not cast away His people forever, He only has called a remnant now—and this election is because of grace:

¹ I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! ... ⁵ Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. (Romans 11:1,5)

Zechariah 10:6 shows:

⁶ "I will strengthen the house of Judah, And I will save the house of Joseph. I will bring them back, Because I have mercy on them. They shall be as though I had not cast them aside;

How can people be as though they were not cast aside if they will not have an opportunity for salvation?

But not all have an opportunity in this age, the church age.

There is no partiality with God:

¹¹ For there is no partiality with God. (Romans 2:11)

⁹ ... there is no partiality with Him. (Ephesians 6:9)

³⁴ In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. (Acts 10:34)

Hence, there must be a plan for the rest. A plan for those NOT called and chosen in this age as God is NOT partial, nor does He love them any less. They are not being called and chosen in this age to reduce the chance they will blaspheme the Holy Spirit and commit the unpardonable sin (Mark 3:29). Yet, they will have their opportunity in the age to come (Matthew 11:22-24; 12:32).

The firstfruits are called now, they are part of an earlier rain, but a latter rain will come per Hosea 6:3:

³ Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter and former rain to the earth.

This rain that will come in the future represents a harvest according to James 5:7:

⁷ Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

Those not called now will be called later. More on those to be called later, including hundreds of scriptures, is in the free online book: *Universal Offer of Salvation: How can God save the lost?*

When We Were Called

Of those called now, in this age, notice when we were called!

⁸ ... God, ⁹ who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began; (2 Timothy 1:8-9)

God had a plan for YOU, if you are being called, BEFORE TIME BEGAN!

And, as in Ephesians 1, quoted earlier, notice carefully what it says: God chose us in Him, when? "Before the foundation of the world"! "Having predestined us" — what for? To be lost?

No, "to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself" "being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:11).

Were any predestined, then, to be lost? Is it God's will that any be lost?

No (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

So, can we see that "predestination" has nothing to do with whether we shall be lost or saved -- with our decision -- with our ultimate fate?

Notice carefully, now! Being predestined "that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:12).

Those predestined are the first to trust in Christ -- merely the first preliminary harvest. And now do you begin to see the glorious truth -- that predestination has nothing to do with your making a decision or your fate -- it has only to do with the time of your calling -- whether you are called now, in this age, or called later.

Notice it in the passage in Romans 8:28-30 (KJV): "For whom he did foreknow" How great is God! If you are one now called, God "foreknew" you. And "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestine" -- to be lost?

No, "to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called" (Romans 8:29-30, KJV).

Not will call them in the future — called, now, in this age.

There it is. Note it. "Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called" (Romans 8:30).

Predestination has to do with being called. Not with being saved or lost. Those now being called, in this age, were foreknown, and PRE-destined to be called now -- to be the first to put their hope in Christ. To be deified and glorified with Him (Romans 8:17; Ephesians 3:14-19), when Christians are changed at the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

All others have their call later.

God does not decide for you, in advance, whether you shall be saved or lost. He did decide far in advance which ones He would call in this first calling, to be a priest or a king in His Kingdom -- to have part in the saving of others. How wonderful are God's ways, when He opens our understanding to reveal them to us. Let us make our calling and final election sure.

Many Do Not Understand

THE very fact of wartime casualties, deaths of children, and accidental deaths has caused a great deal of added sorrow and grief that is entirely unnecessary — if we understand God's plan! Many have grieved in the belief that loved ones died eternally "lost" — when, if they understood the truth, these probably were not lost at all.

But all this perplexity and worry has arisen from another general assumption — one of the greatest errors of this time, yet almost universally taken for granted without so much as a thought to inquire into it. That is the assumption that there are only two classes, living or dead — the saved, and the lost. You probably heard the theory "there is no middle ground. If you die right now, either you are saved, or you're a permanently lost soul!"

This teaching has led to untold suffering and unnecessary grief.

Many are grieving over departed loved ones who had never made a profession of Christ. Perhaps over one who really lived wickedly; perhaps over one who lived a "good" life in the worldly sense, but still had never accepted Christ or been converted.

Still others grieve because of a doubt — they are not sure whether some loved one died saved.

Supposing this universal assumption were true of those two classes, see where it leads us. This teaching comes from the supposition, also generally taken for granted without question, that this is the one and only age and time when God is trying desperately to save the world — that the mission of the Church is to save the world — that this is the only day of salvation, and it is now about over.

This IS NOT THE ONLY DAY OF SALVATION!! This is an absolute fact of your Bible.

But you may be thinking, doesn't the Bible teach that this is the only day of salvation?

No.

There are two verses that people sometimes point to related to that. However, both verses, when literally translated do not teach that. They teach about a, not the only, day of salvation.

⁸ Thus saith the Lord, In time acceptable have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: (Isaiah 49:8, ITB)

² for He says, "In an acceptable time I heard you, and in a day of salvation I helped you, behold, now [is] a well-accepted time; behold, now, a day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6:2, LSV)

Now, the passages shown above are literal as the Interlinear Transliterated Bible and Literal Standard Version show. Consider also that since the Greek language uses the definite article "the" much more than English, it is noteworthy that the term "the" was not associated with any "day of salvation" in the New Testament.

Now, is AN accepted time, and now can be a/the day of salvation for those that have been called.

Ultimately, God will offer salvation to each and every person who has ever lived. Part of His plan includes the first resurrection which is for those called, chosen and faithful in this age.

All those who are not now called, or given a chance for salvation, which are the billions who have lived and died from Adam until the close of this age, will come up in the second resurrection (Revelation 20:5). They will come up as physical human beings and be judged. Then they will be given their one and only true chance for salvation. This resurrection takes place one thousand years later after the first one, after what tends to be called "the millennium." In the millennium God will call everybody then living.

Notice what the Bible teaches:

¹⁴ I will again do a marvelous work among this people ...²⁴ These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, And those who complained will learn doctrine. (Isaiah 29:14,24)

Most professing Christians are in ignorance of this basic truth. Essentially, this is because of non-biblical traditions often being taught as Christian doctrine.

The Bible teaches that Satan “deceives the whole world” (Revelation 12:9) and that he “is a liar” and the father of lies (John 8:44).

You may be pleased to realize that God says He still has a plan for those misled by Satan-influenced human tradition in this age:

¹⁹ O Lord, my strength and my fortress, My refuge in the day of affliction, The Gentiles shall come to You From the ends of the earth and say, "Surely our fathers have inherited lies, Worthlessness and unprofitable things." ²⁰ Will a man make gods for himself, Which are not gods? ²¹ "Therefore behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know My hand and My might; And they shall know that My name is the Lord. (Jeremiah 16:19-21)

All were not expected to know the truth in this age, and many have inherited lies. But as both Isaiah and Jeremiah wrote, they will have their opportunity.

Let us not grieve over departed loved ones who probably were not called, in this life. God is able to raise them up again. The chances are they were simply not then called -- it was not given to them to understand -- their chance had not yet come. But they shall be resurrected, their spiritual blindness removed. In the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-12; Isaiah 65:20), if you are one of the called, and if you are faithful and finally chosen, you may be used then to minister to them, and to lead them into salvation and life eternal.

During this age now, judgment is upon the true Church of God -- those now called (1 Peter 4:17). Yet, we are later to judge the world (1 Corinthians 6:2) as well as arise in the first resurrection!

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ **Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.** (Revelation 20:4-6).

Oh, what a glorious hope! Those called now are blessed and holy if they will remain truly faithful. What truly good news, is the true gospel of the kingdom, which most people today simply have never heard or properly understood.

Therefore, the “classes” are not the saved or unsaved, the “classes” are basically the called and uncalled.

There is no injustice with God (cf. Genesis 18:25; Galatians 6:7).

He wants all to be saved:

³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:3-4)

He denies no one an opportunity of salvation.

The majority of humans are simply not called now -- at this time -- in this, Satan's age. This is simply not the time when God is trying to save everyone. If He were, then Satan surely would seem to be getting the better of the contest.

Now, did Jesus say the purpose of preaching the gospel was to CONVERT all nations?

No, it was to be preached as a witness:

¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:14)

After the end comes (Daniel 11:44) and the seventh trump sounds, the new age when the reign of Christ shall replace that of Satan will come.

While, during the present age, many in number are called, yet that number is a minority.

More on those to be called later, including hundreds of scriptures, is in the free online book: *Universal Offer of Salvation: How can God save the lost?*

2. TULIP Predestination?

John Calvin was a famous early Protestant Reformer. His view of predestination developed into what is now called "five-point" TULIP Calvinism.

Let's look at each of the five points:

The fifteenth century Protestant theologian John Calvin stressed the divine side of this mysterious equation. The acrostic TULIP was later applied to his teachings:

T - Total depravity: All men fell in Adam, leaving them dead in sins and incapable of responding positively to God. (Bible Advocate. May-June 2010, p. 7)

Yet, the Bible teaches:

²⁹ That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes. (Ecclesiastes 7:29)

Teaching "total depravity" doesn't seem to take that in consideration.

Now it is true that the Bible teaches that in Adam all die (1 Corinthians 15:22), but it also teaches that men are capable of responding positively to God's calling (Acts 2:38-41; John 6:44; Revelation 17:14; Matthew 20:16).

1 Corinthians 15:22, Paul states:

²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

All died in Adam, all will be made alive in Christ. **All will have an opportunity for salvation**, not just a few.

Notice what Abraham declared in Genesis 18:25:

²⁵ Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Certainly properly offering salvation to everyone, either in this age or the age to come, is the right thing a loving God would do.

There would be no point in fulfilling the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 24:14 and 28:19-20 if humans could not respond.

Although God must call, humans can respond.

Here is the second point of TULIP:

U - Unconditional election: From eternity past, God chose certain men to be saved by His grace, without regard to any merit foreseen in them.

Now, God did predestine that an elect would be saved (Ephesians 1:3-12). And this is by His grace (Ephesians 2:8), which is the gift of God.

But some faith has to be exercised (Ephesians 2:8) and it would appear that God, who wants none to perish (2 Peter 3:9), would be careful to call only those who could be saved in this age.

Jesus made it clear that, "many are called, but few chosen" (Matthew 20:16; 22:14). This indicates that salvation in this age has some conditions or all called in this age would be chosen.

Since God is all knowing and just (Isaiah 45:21), there was logically some type of reason that the elect are selected by God; not that the elect are of themselves better, but there are probably several reasons (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

Here is the third point of TULIP:

L - Limited atonement: God sent His Son to make full and effective payment only for the sins of the elect, those He had predestined for salvation.

The above is absolute blasphemy as it is in clear contradiction to scripture. God sent His Son so that all might be saved (1 Timothy 2:4).

Consider also the following, scriptures:

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:16-17).

⁸ ... God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another...¹⁶ God is love... (1 John 4:8-11, 16)

There is not one verse in the entire Bible that teaches that the atonement was meant to be limited to the elect who are now being called.

Furthermore, notice:

² And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

Notice that John is teaching that Jesus was not just a propitiation (an atonement offering) for the elected Christians, but for the entire world. Jesus was not an offering for the others in order for none of them to be saved!

Luke 19:9-10 shows that Jesus came to save the lost:

⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; ¹⁰ for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Notice that Jesus came to save the lost, not just a small amount of elect people.

In John 12:47, Jesus stated,

⁴⁷ And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world...

The idea of Jesus coming to save more than a few is clearly being taught.

Is Jesus intending to draw all to Him in order to eternally punish most or to save them?

Jesus came to bear the sins of many (Hebrews 9:28).

Salvation will be offered to all who ever lived, with a few understanding the offer in this age, and everyone else in the age to come. The Bible simply does not teach that there is a limited atonement only for the elect.

More on those to be called later, including hundreds of scriptures, is in the free online book: *Universal Offer of Salvation: How can God save the lost?*

Here is the fourth point of TULIP:

I - Irresistible grace: Those God elected to salvation and for whom Christ died He effectively calls by regeneration from spiritual death, thus rendering them capable of expressing saving faith.

The Bible is clear that only those God calls can be saved (John 6:44; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29), but also that one can "turn from" it (2 Peter 2:21). Calvinists fail to accept that the grace is resistible.

Calvinists also fail to realize that while some (the predestined elect) are to be called now, all who were not called into this life will have an opportunity for such calling later, in the age to come.

Notice Paul wrote:

²⁰ But Isaiah is very bold and says:

"I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me." (Romans 10:20)

While Calvinists may wish to imply that this means unconditional election, it actually means that those that did not seek God in this age will find Him in the age to come. And one of the problems with "Calvinism" is that it ignores that there is an age to come.

Christians are a type of firstfruit:

¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. (James 1:18)

²³ Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit. (Romans 8:23)

Does not the concept of a firstfruits specifically imply that there will be later fruits? Also, the Day of Pentecost is also called, "the feast of firstfruits" in the Bible (Exodus 34:22). And even today, it pictures that God is only calling some now, but will call all others later (more information is in the free online booklet: *Should You Keep God's Holy Days or Demonic Holidays?*).

³ ... God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified **in due time...** (1 Timothy 2:3-6)

Notice that God desires that all are to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Can not God make His desire, His will, come to pass? Also notice that Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for all--not just the relatively few elect--and His testimony will come to pass in due time. Are some improperly judging before due time?

In Ephesians 1:10, Paul states:

¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.

Notice when He will gather all: *in the dispensation of the fullness of the times*. TULIP does not understand that.

Here is the fifth point of TULIP:

P - Perseverance of saints: Those God elected in Christ, called in regeneration, and justified by faith He continually quickens so they will never fall from His grace but only enter eternal glory.

The above is a clear contradiction to scripture.

The whole idea of the unpardonable sin is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Two portions of scripture basically explain what the unpardonable sin is:

³¹ Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. ³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come (Matthew 12:31-32)

⁴ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6).

Thus, salvation can be lost. You have free will.

Peter would have no reason to encourage people to make their elections sure (2 Peter 1:10-11) if they could not stumble and lose it. The Apostle Paul wrote:

⁵ Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified. (2 Corinthians 13:5)

The fact that one can be "disqualified" is proof that salvation is not guaranteed under any and all circumstances.

Jesus was clear that many people would not respond to the message and some would not make it for various reasons. Notice what two different parables teach:

¹⁴ The sower sows the word. ¹⁵ And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. ¹⁶ These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; ¹⁷ and **they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time**. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. ¹⁸ Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, ¹⁹ and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (Mark 4:14-19)

¹⁶ Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, ¹⁷ and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'
¹⁸ But they all with one accord began to make excuses...²⁴ For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper. (Luke 14:16-18,24)

Also notice Jesus admonished the necessity of enduring to the end to be saved:

²² And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. (Matthew 10:22)

¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. (Matthew 24:13)

¹³ And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. (Mark 13:13)

The grammatical implications of the above are that they that do NOT endure to the end will NOT be saved. Furthermore, the Book of Revelation records 7 statements that it will be those who overcome who will make it (Revelation 2:7,11,17,26;3:5,21;21:7).

Additionally, it is only those who do His commandments who have the right to the tree of life:

¹⁴ Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. (Revelation 22:14-15)

Notice that those that violate them, and are not repentive of that violation, do not make it. The saints have patience and keep His commandments (Revelation 14:12) (see our free online book: *The Ten Commandments: The Decalogue, Christianity, and the Beast*).

Perhaps it should be pointed out, that TULIP basically indicates that about 2% of people will be saved because of God's love and the remaining 98% will fry in torment for all eternity. As it turns out, most of those who heard of Jesus were of European stock, so I have long considered this doctrine to be somewhat racist. It condemns all who never heard the truth about Jesus, which would include many of the masses in Asia, various islands, the early Americas, and much of Africa. But contrary to the views of Calvinists, God has a plan for all.

Clearly TULIP is not biblical.

3. How God Calls and Chooses

How can you know if God is calling you?

Many misunderstand how God calls. Some feel God calls by means of an audible voice. Others feel it is done by drastic intervention, such as accidents or fires. Still others desire a “good feeling all over” to be assured of a calling.

What is the truth? How does God call? Have you been called and chosen of God? The answer is really very easy to understand. Simply stated, God calls by His Gospel and through the Power of His Holy Spirit.

The Gospel is the good news of the coming government, kingdom, of God. This gospel is recorded in the Bible — God’s Word to humankind. Through the power of His Holy Spirit, God opens the minds of those He is calling so they can understand the plain truths of His Gospel message. God’s Spirit begins to work in a special way with those whom He is calling.

God’s Spirit will lead you into the truth (John 14:15-17) if you will truly trust in God as you should (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Once you are granted the Holy Spirit after baptism, you are the temple of God:

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

¹⁷ If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

God calls those He can use in this age, and those He knows can make it if they obey Him (Hebrews 5:9). God only grants His Holy Spirit to those “who obey Him” (Acts 5:32).

The Apostle Peter wrote:

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:2-11)

We who are called need to live a real Christian life. Some details are found in our free online book, *Christians: Ambassadors for the Kingdom of God, Biblical instructions on living as a Christian*.

The late Herbert W. Armstrong explained some of the calling as follows:

Jesus said, " No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him;" (John 6:44).

You have to be chosen as one that God has chosen to call and God has to call you, or draw you through the Holy Spirit toward Him. Now, how does He do that? The Holy Spirit from outside of you, not in you, will begin to convict you of sin. It takes a little bit of knowledge to start with. You have to come to realize how wrong you have been. And God then begins to grant you repentance. ...

Then you have to believe -- not only believing in Christ but believe the message that God sent by Christ. Believe, He said, the Gospel, the Good News, the message. Now then, if you do, we find that in the Bible, you are to be baptized and after baptism, we find that they did laying on of hands -- the apostles or the elders would lay on hands {and pray} for the receiving of the Holy Spirit {from God}. Now that is the way it happens. ... there is an instant in which you do receive the Holy Spirit of God. ... You only receive the Holy Spirit in a very small degree to start. (Bible Study on 1 Corinthians 3. Pasadena, July 25, 1980).

God has His Spirit work with those who are being called and grants it to those converted and baptized.

What God's Spirit Will Do

How is the Spirit of God manifested in those whom He is calling? How does the Spirit of God work upon and through the human mind?

Initially, the Spirit of God will lead the one being called to believe He exists! In this age of skepticism and doubt, it is chic to deny the existence of God. But if God's Spirit is working with you, it will be impossible for you to deny God's existence. It is a sign that God may be calling you!

Also, God's Spirit will guide you to prove and profoundly believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God — God's Instruction Book to humankind. God's Spirit will lead you to know:

¹⁶"All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16.)

How can anyone really believe the Bible if one feels portions are uninspired? Yet, this is exactly what many called "Christians," believe today! Some regard the Old Testament purely as historical literature.

Some believe the 10 Commandments have been done away and are not applicable today (for proof that they are still for Christians, see Revelation 12:17 & 14:12, as well as the free online book at www.ccog.org: *The Ten Commandments: The Decalogue, Christianity, and the Beast*).

Some follow the practices of Gnostic leaders and accept allegory instead of what the Bible actually teaches.

All this doctrinal confusion is a direct result of choosing certain portions of the Bible to believe — refusing to accept all Scripture as given by inspiration of God.

We either believe ALL the Bible, or none of it. It's as simple as that. Jesus said:

³⁵"... the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

Jesus said the Scriptures make a complete chain — they do not contradict one another. Yet, books have been written to expose assumed Bible contradictions. But Jesus said Scripture does not contradict itself.

Every supposed contradiction is the result of either a mistranslation, scribal error, or misinterpretation. Unless you approach the Scriptures with this truth, you cannot hope to grasp the full meaning of God's Word. You will fool yourself into believing the Bible is full of contradictions and cannot be depended upon.

If you really believe the Bible is God's Word — that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God — and that "the scripture cannot be broken," God may be calling you!

Another way God's Spirit guides those whom He is calling is to inspire them to take God at His word — believe He says what He means and means what He says. Those whom God is calling through His Holy Spirit will believe the simple statements recorded in the Bible without coloring them with a myriad of preconceived ideas.

If God is calling you, His Spirit will lead you to believe Christ did not come to do away with God's Law but to fulfill and perform it:

¹⁷"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill (Matthew 5:17).

You will believe the Kingdom of Heaven is going to be on this earth. You will believe the plain statement that the meek shall inherit the earth — not heaven:

³Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁵ Blessed *are* the meek, For they shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:3, 5).

If God's Spirit is working with you and calling you, you will reject the pagan idea of an immortal soul. You will believe the statement in Ezekiel that the soul is not immortal but can die:

⁴"Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father
As well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die.

²⁰The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself (Ezekiel 18:4, 20).

You will begin to understand that much of what you have been taught about the Bible is probably the antithesis of the actual truth. Space will permit only the above few examples, but there are many dozens and scores of misunderstandings about what God actually says which could be pointed out.

If the Spirit of God is leading you, it will direct you to understand the plain truths of His Word.

In addition, God's Spirit will help you understand:

²⁰ "... no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20).

Many cannot understand Scripture because they have not learned that the Bible interprets itself!

Many supposed contradictions occur because men have not learned to let the Bible interpret itself. Through diligent and earnest study, we can understand perplexing verses only in the light of other scriptures.

For example, Revelation 12:3 states:

³And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

We see the above verse mentions a “great red dragon” with seven heads and ten horns. There have been many interpretations of this verse. Some say the dragon is the false prophet. Others claim the red dragon is mysterious symbolism picturing Russia (or perhaps China). But those interpretations are not right.

God doesn’t tell us in verse three what the great red dragon is. Reading verse three alone we would have to conclude we just don’t know. Or we would have to come up with an interpretation. Or we could LET THE BIBLE INTERPRET ITSELF!

If we choose to let the Bible interpret itself, all we need do to KNOW what the red dragon represents is to read verse nine. In verse nine God reveals that the dragon is “that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan.”

If God is calling you, His Spirit will eventually lead you to believe every statement of the Bible, and you will let the Bible interpret itself! But this isn’t all.

God’s Spirit will lead those whom He is calling to strive to LIVE BY EVERY WORD OF GOD!

⁴But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:4)

To really understand the Bible, it is paramount to live by every word of God, not just some portions or pet doctrines. Most professing Christians accept some Bible truths, but for the most part, they misunderstand. How can they live by the Word of God when they don’t realize what it says?

Candidly speaking, nearly ALL professing Christians are NOT WILLING to live by every Word of God. Some deliberately reject all but a relatively small portion which has no bearing on their personal lives. God gives understanding only to those who are willing to live by all of His Word!

Another way God uses His Spirit to call His people is by convicting and convincing them of His way. If God is calling you, you will begin to fully understand the Bible for the first time. You may begin to read and study the Bible with the appetite of a starving giant. And you will come to see:

¹²There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death. (Proverbs 14:12)

Humankind’s way is the grasping, greedy, selfish way of “getting.” It is often a “do to others before they have a chance to do it to you” philosophy. It is the way of lust, envy, strife, murder, jealousy, wrath, drunkenness and the like. It is the cause of all of humanity’s troubles, heartaches and sorrows. It is the reason for the wretched conditions we see on earth today.

If God is calling you, His Spirit will convince you to begin to candidly, honestly, wholeheartedly admit you have been going the way of the world, the way that leads to death. You will begin to dedicate your whole life to God and His way. You will say, and mean it, “Your will be done.” You will repent!

Through Bible study and close contact with God, you will begin to see the whole world really is on the brink of cosmocide because of humankind’s way. You will come to know assuredly humanity is reaching the end of its rope. Humanity desperately needs help. And God is the only one who really has the answers to all this world’s problems.

The answer to humanity’s problems is simply to follow God’s way of love — the way of outgoing concern — the way of giving, sharing, helping — the way of doing to others as you would have them do to you. It is the way to real happiness, joy, peace, contentment — the way of gentleness, goodness, meekness and self-control. It is based on the principle Christ gave to His disciples that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

If God is calling, convicting and convincing you of His way, you will begin to have inner peace. You will begin to fully trust God to solve the world’s problems through His way of love. You will know and realize God truly has the answers. You will rejoice in the fact that God is giving the answers to those He is calling.

And then you will begin to comprehend that God is calling some now for a specific purpose. You will realize it is a specific calling for a specific Work. It is a special commission.

It is a commission to preach the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God to all the world as a witness before the end of this age. It is a commission to teach all nations to believe everything Jesus Christ has commanded His true followers (Matthew 28:19-20). It is a commission and a Work designed to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers to keep humankind from destroying itself!

¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. ... ²¹For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²²And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:14, 21, 22)

⁶And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” (Malachi 4:6)

If God is calling you, you will begin to wholeheartedly have a part in doing His Work. You will realize this tremendous knowledge of God’s way is desperately needed by all the world. You will come to fully understand and know God’s own physical people are actually being destroyed for a lack of this knowledge:

⁶My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children (Hosea 4:6).

You will see the urgent need to have a part in the very Work that is disseminating this vital knowledge — this Gospel message of God’s way to all the world. You will zealously take part in the Work that is teaching all nations the way of peace, happiness and joy, brimful and running over.

You are unique. Your life experiences, etc. make you one who can give love in a unique way. Jesus has a place specially prepared for you (John 14:2-3). But you also have talents now so:

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

¹⁰ Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

³¹ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³² Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, ³³ just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. (1 Corinthians 10:31-33)

As a Philadelphian Christian, despite struggles, you will have the desire to GIVE, to share with and to help this wretched world. You will want to put your whole heart into God's Work. You will want to completely dedicate yourself to having a part in warning the world of the dramatic events to occur just before the close of this age. You will realize that this physical world will not continue as it has been.

This world is lost in a hopeless morass of confusion (cf. Ephesians 2:12), wretchedness and depravity. Any thinking person will admit it can't go on much longer. You can have a part in telling the world today about the wonderful coming millennial Kingdom of God. If God is calling you, you can rejoice in the fact that you can help spread the knowledge to all the world that God Himself is going to intervene in the affairs of humankind and save the world. You will be thrilled to have a part in telling the world there is a better tomorrow — that God does care — that God will act.

And when you think how upside down marriages can be put right-side up, how you can have a part in turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, to bridge the generation gap, cement the family unit, you will rejoice.

If you have a part in God's Work, you can take great satisfaction in the knowledge that you are helping teach the world how to have happy homes, happy children, happy marriages and everything good in a full and abundant, happy life. You will even be willing to sacrifice to have a part in helping this world understand God's way.

If God is calling you, please understand it is a fantastic, almost overwhelming calling to help save humanity by sacrificing to give this world what it needs most — God's way, that leads to life. And that way of life could lead to martyrdom (Mark 8:35).

God is calling some today, for a special purpose. And He reveals Himself and His truth to those He calls.

How?

Notice what the Apostle Paul said:

⁹ But as it is written:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:9-10a).

God opens a person's mind with the power of His Holy Spirit. When one answers God's call through repentance and baptism, God actually places His Spirit within the person's mind. God's Spirit gives a human being the mind and will of God, along with the power to obey God. The person can then, for the first time, really understand spiritual knowledge. Those called are completely different from any person without God's Spirit, and functions differently.

Those called and baptized become actual begotten children of God:

¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God (Romans 8:14).

Notice another statement from Paul:

⁷ ... the carnal mind [the mind without God's Spirit] is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His (Romans 8:7-9).

Get that last sentence. It is what separates true Christians from those who are not Christians at all:

⁹ "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His"!

Unless God personally, directly, miraculously intervenes in a person's life and opens that person's mind — unless that person submits his life to God and receives God's Holy Spirit — unless that person has God's Spirit leading, motivating, guiding one's thoughts and actions, that person is not a true Christian! To know God and be a true Christian now — to be qualifying for salvation — God must call you and make you part of His Work. It's not something you can choose to do, no matter how much you may want to. God must make the choice to call you and begin working with you.

There is a Special Category

There is one group that is able to be called now that is, in certain ways, a bit different than the others.

Those are they that are children of one or more converted parents.

Notice that the Apostle Paul wrote:

¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. (1 Corinthians 7:14)

If one or more of your parents is truly a Christian, God is giving you an opportunity to accept His calling now.

The old Worldwide Church of God taught:

You need to know whether your child has access to God — when Jesus said, "No MAN CAN come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44) — and God draws

only the VERY FEW He is specially calling to a commission preparing for the KINGDOM OF GOD!

But if you — a husband and wife — are in God's Church, have you realized that places your children in a DIFFERENT CATEGORY WITH GOD?

God has revealed exciting, IMPORTANT NEW KNOWLEDGE! It will take several articles to cover it and reveal this wonderful new knowledge to YOU! ...

YOUR CHILDREN — IF YOU ARE A TRULY CONVERTED MEMBER OF GOD'S CHURCH — can believe in Christ — are not cut off from God — and much of God's truth, even though as yet too young to be converted. But they are a SPECIAL TREASURE to God! (Armstrong HW. Your Children FUTURE GODS? Good News, October-November 1980)

Now, if you are a true Christian, consider that God is allowing your children to be called now. Teach them properly and do not live a hypocrite, but as an example of how God wants you to live.

The Plan for Now is to be Strangers and Ambassadors

Christians need to live as Jesus did:

⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:6)

Though Jesus came to be King, He did not live as a King as His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36).

What about those predestined in this age?

While we are to be kings and priests and reign with Him (Revelation 5:10), we do not see that now:

⁶ But one testified in a certain place, saying:

"What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?
⁷ You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. ⁸ You have put all things in subjection under his feet."

For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. ⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰ For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹² saying:

"I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."

¹³ And again:

"I will put My trust in Him."

And again:

"Here am I and the children whom God has given Me." (Hebrews 2:6-13)

Did you know what, according to Protestant sources, the second most looked up verse in the Bible is? The first is John 3:16, but the second is found in Jeremiah.

Certain Protestants tend to quote the first verse as proof that God has a plan. And while God does, many do not seem to consider that verse in context.

Notice what Jeremiah was told to record:

¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive. (Jeremiah 29:11-14)

Notice that the plan was exile. To be a sojourner, a stranger, with hope. That is still the plan for Christians in this age.

Does that mean that we do not do anything and just wait?

No. God did not call us to be hermits:

²⁴ "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'

²⁶ "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ²⁷ So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. (Matthew 25:24-28)

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵ But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

²⁶ If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. ²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (James 1:22-27)

Christians are to do good and support the work.

Christians are to live as ambassadors of Jesus Christ and the gospel of God's coming kingdom:

²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ ... (2 Corinthians 5:20)

¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints — ¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth **boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,** ²⁰ **for which I am an ambassador** in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:17-20)

This means we live differently than the world:

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

²...Babylon...⁴...Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. (Revelation 18:4)

⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

As ambassadors, Christians are to be God's examples and witnesses. Ambassadors do not just hide and take care of themselves—they support the work of their government. The coming government of the Kingdom of God.

Getting back to Jeremiah's writings:

²⁸ For he has sent to us in Babylon, saying, 'This captivity is long; build houses and dwell in them, and plant gardens and eat their fruit. (Jeremiah 29:28)

Notice that those in exile were to plant and build and produce fruit. Planting takes faith. Translating materials into multiple languages, including many that the church does not have supporters who understand them takes faith—but that is part of the work that we in the *Continuing* Church of God are part of. And just like the exiles, we are to produce fruit.

Jesus said:

¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit (John 15:16)

⁴² Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? ⁴³ Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. ⁴⁴ Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. ⁴⁵ But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,'

and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, ⁴⁶ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. ⁴⁷ And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. ⁴⁸ But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. (Luke 12:42-48)

The plan God has for you is to live as strangers in this world, yet produce fruit, so that you can be rewarded after He returns.

Christians are called in order to individually help make eternity better (see also the free book, available online at www.ccog.org, *The MYSTERY of GOD's PLAN Why Did God Create Anything? Why did God make you?*).

God's begotten children are to be preparing to be married to Christ at His return (Revelation 19:7). God's Church is actually being judged by God now (1 Peter 4:17), in preparation for birth into God's very Family (Ephesians 3:14-19) at Christ's return (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

Is it any wonder that Paul says true Christians are called with a "holy calling" (2 Timothy 1:9), or that he tells God's called people to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1, KJV)?

How does a called and converted person "walk worthy of the vocation"? Peter says:

¹⁵ as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct" (1 Peter 1:15).

Peter later noted that true Christians should live as Jesus Christ lived:

²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

²² "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:21-22).

If you are being called, you need to live like Jesus did.

More on Christian living can be found in the free online book: *Christians: Ambassadors for the Kingdom of God: Biblical instructions for living as a Christian*.

4. Maybe It's Not Your Time

Not everyone will hear enough of the truth to respond to it in this age, as the following helps demonstrate:

¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? (Romans 10:14-15)

Those who do not hear/see the truth are not being called in this age.

Of course, others are hearing/seeing the truth and are being called now.

People are in the process of being refined. Those not called in this age are refined one way (Isaiah 48:10; Jeremiah 9:7), whereas those called are to be refined and purified more like silver and/or gold (Zechariah 13:9; Psalm 66:10; Daniel 11:35, 12:10; cf. Revelation 13:8).

What could be some clues that God is not calling you at this time?

Well, if you do not feel that you need to repent and change, you are not really hearing God's calling.

If you cannot accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, you are not really hearing God's calling.

If you believe that humanity can solve its problems apart from God and the Word of God, you are not really hearing God's calling.

If you believe that human traditions are more important to how you live your life than the Word of God, you are not really hearing God's calling.

If you've started to count the cost and concluded it is too high, you are not really hearing God's calling.

None of those prove that God is not calling you. Remember that even Moses and Saul resisted.

God may be calling you, but you may not be in the mindset to respond. Perhaps, your real calling will come later.

But if it is now, realize that God does hold us individually responsible for what we do with what we know.

You have a choice:

¹⁹ I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰ that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

¹⁶ Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. (Romans 6:16, NLT)

Will you choose to obey God or a life of sin, a life of vain rebellion against God?

The Apostle James wrote:

¹⁷ Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. (James 4:17)

Jesus taught:

³¹ If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:31-32)

If you know the truth, you should act upon it.

5. Don't Give Up!

If you think God may be calling you, don't give up!

"Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22).

Consider the following:

²⁸ Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. (Romans 11:28-29)

In addition to the above showing that God still loves the descendants of Israel, Paul is telling us that God's calling to us is irrevocable. God DOES NOT revoke your calling.

You need to choose, select, whether you will accept it.

God will finish the work He started in you:

³ I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, ⁵ for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; ⁷ just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. ⁸ For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:3-11)

³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:30-31)

If you continue in love (cf. Hebrews 13:1) God will continue with you. Of yourself, it is impossible to be saved. But with GOD it is certain — IF you yield to Him and TRUST Him. We shall be saved, NOT by our own power to overcome and develop perfect character, but through FAITH in GOD'S POWER! GOD WON'T LET YOU FAIL if you endure to the end in the conditions which He has set for salvation!

You are to live the "give way of life," not the "get way" that the world, under Satan's sway (Revelation 12:9) has accepted. You are to support the end time work of God and reach people with the good news of the coming kingdom of God (see also the free online booklet: *The Gospel of the Kingdom of God*).

If God is Calling You, How will You Respond?

God is in charge of everything that goes on in this physical realm.

Do you really believe God?

⁶ he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10-11)

What is this all about “calling” and “choosing” and “election”? Why were God’s people exhorted to be “diligent” as well as to make their calling and election “sure” – certain?

Because not all who hear and agree with the message, will heed Jesus’ instructions to endure to the end to be saved (Matthew 10:22).

This is part of why the subtitle for this booklet has the term “selection.” You have a choice. You have to select whether to make your call and election sure. This involves not just the acceptance of Jesus as your Saviour, but also being diligent to endure to the end.

Since the 1930s when the Philadelphian era of God’s Church began, multiple millions have been reached with the true Gospel through media such as radio, television, the internet, publications, and also personal evangelism. In the 21st century, the Philadelphian remnant of the Church of God during this Laodicean era has reached millions of people over 200 countries via the internet, radio, publications, and in person.

From the large numbers of people reached or witnessed to with the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God and who have actually been called by God, only a relatively small percentage have ever fully accepted and responded to that call. The vast majority seem to pay little or no attention--and then there are those who are into tangents (e.g. 1 Timothy 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:16-18), which could be considered as religious hobbyists who never really will accept and act on the truth (2 Timothy 3:1-7).

We can better understand the meaning of Christ’s statement that “Many are called, but few are chosen,” by diligently studying the parable of the king who made a marriage for his son in Matthew 22:2-14:

²“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, ³ and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. ⁴ Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle *are* killed, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding.”’ ⁵ But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. ⁶ And the rest seized his servants, treated *them* spitefully, and killed *them*. ⁷ But when the king heard *about it*, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. ⁸ Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ ¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests.

¹¹“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. ¹² So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and

foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

¹⁴"For many are called, but few *are* chosen."

In this parable, the king "sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come." (verse 3).

God calls us by the proclamation of His Gospel. But the majority who hear it reject that call. They pay little or no attention to God's royal invitation. Even many who make some effort, prefer to do it THEIR WAY, not God's way, so they drop out.

Only a few from the multiple millions who hear God's Word preached, pay serious attention to that message and truly repent.

Those who give sincere attention to God's message are mainly the "poor" of this world, they are discontented with the circumstances of their life, they are ready to open themselves to God's influence:

⁵"Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?" (James 2:5).

Most of the rich, the noble, the powerful and the wise – those who are complacent with their life are not willing to heed God's call. They don't need God – so they think! Many who are oppressed or in situations where the truth is too hard to find, also do not respond.

Now, is God calling you because you are smarter than others?

No.

If God is calling you, this is most likely because you are among the weak that God has called to "confound the mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:26-31) and He will do this through His spirit (Zechariah 4:6-10).

²⁶For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. (1 Corinthians 1:26)

Everyone then, is clearly not be called now! Nor has everybody heard now, but efforts need to be made (Romans 10:14-16).

Furthermore, consider:

Not the Best Nor the Brightest

One crucial reason you were called is recorded in I Corinthians 1:26-29: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

Why has God called the weak rather than the strong and mighty? Because their chances of becoming self-righteous and haughty of mind are significantly diminished. Human vanity and pride are obstacles to God's Spirit. God can only work with someone who is humble and aware of his limitations (see II Corinthians 12:9, 10).

If you remember how little you are, instead of how great you may think you are, then you can help get the Work done by God's great Spirit power. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). (Royer PS. You See Your Calling – But Why You? Good News, September 1974.)

Pride is a major problem. Lucifer's pride caused him to reject God (cf. Ezekiel 28:11-17). Satanically-influenced human pride (and personal selfishness/lusts) are reasons that people reject God in this age (cf. 1 John 2:15-16).

Parable of the sower

Jesus Christ commissioned His apostles to preach the truth to all the world:

¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen. (Matthew 28:19-20)

The apostles were to "shake off the dust" from their feet when they left any house or city whose inhabitants would not heed their message or receive them (Matthew 10:14).

The New Testament shows some were interested (e.g. Acts 14:7), some were interested temporarily (Acts 19:10,26; 2 Timothy 1:15), and some were affected by opposers of the truth (Acts 13:49-50; 1 Corinthians 16:9).

Jesus knew this would be the case. That is one of the reasons He gave the parable of the sower:

⁴ And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: ⁵ "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. ⁶ Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. ⁸ But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

⁹ Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?"

¹⁰ And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is given* in parables, that

'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.'

¹¹ "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. ¹² Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. ¹³ But the ones on the rock *are those* who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall

away. ¹⁴ Now the ones *that* fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. ¹⁵ But the ones *that* fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep *it* and bear fruit with patience. (Luke 8:4-15)

The parable of the sower reveals that when the “seed” (God’s Word, verse 11) is sown, some seeds fall by the “way side” (verse 5). The vast majority who hear the Gospel do not let the Word of God take root in them. They hear God’s Word, but they do not act on it (verse 12).

Satan does not want any to be truly converted and is a factor for those to who do not completely respond to the word.

The “seed” that fell on “rock” (verse 6) represents the Word of God being actually received by certain careless ones. They seem to have been called, but did not put down deep roots. In a time of temptation/pressure they fall away (verse 13).

The “seed” that fell among the “thorns” (verse 7) represents those individuals who actually receive the Word of God and begin acting on it — even let it take root — but then allow various things to “choke” the Word so that it does not bring any fruit to full maturity or perfection (verse 14).

Only some of the “seed” falls on “good ground” (verse 8), representing “those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep *it* and bear fruit with patience.” (verse 15). These are those who made their calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10).

In which of these four categories — the seed by the wayside, the seed on a rock, the seed among the thorns or the seed on the good ground — are you? If we are in God’s Church — if we are part of God’s elect — then we have been both called and chosen to be faithful (Revelation 17:14).

The seed along the wayside represents those who were called, but were not chosen. It appears, however, that the seed on the stony places and among the thorns were both called and chosen by God but did not endure—their “selection” was not long-lasting enough.

The seeds that fell on good ground represent those who hear the Word of God, receive it, are faithful to their call and endure until the end, finally bringing forth good fruit as Jesus said:

²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (Matthew 13:23)

The called and faithful are to bring forth fruit. Fruits in their own lives (Galatians 5:22-23) and the fruits to support the church to reach others (cf. Romans 10:14-16).

Sadly, many find reasons not to endure and support the work.

Notice something else that Jesus taught:

²⁶ If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not bear his cross {Greek: stake} and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it — ²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it

begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' ³¹ Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:26-33)

Many of the seeds from the sower do not produce fruit as many think that the cost is too high. It is not that we are to hate our relatives, we are to love God more per Jesus' words in Matthew 10:37.

Many will not obey God, because of family (Matthew 10:34-39; Luke 14:26-33), particularly, it seems, regarding God's Holy Days (to learn more about them, check out the free online book, *Should you keep God's Holy Days or pagan holidays?*, available at www.ccog.org)

Hopefully, you are one who will be "called, chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14). Accept the Bible and do not fall for the arguments of the disobedient (cf. Hebrews 4:9-12).

Furthermore, notice the following:

⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked (1 John 2:5-6)

⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:9-11).

We are to love and receive love.

Those who are depressed about the suffering in today's world need to understand that the Bible teaches:

³ ... God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. ⁴ There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:3-4).

And the happiness we will experience will be beyond that which humans can imagine (1 Corinthians 2:9).

God's plan for you is to show you love through the forgiveness of sins, to ultimately reveal His loving plan of salvation to all, to give you more than you can even imagine, and for you to be able to show love to others throughout eternity.

End time Philadelphia Christians (Revelation 3:7-13) strive to reach the world with Christ's gospel of the kingdom and teach all things that Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). This is a great opportunity in this age as we try to help all.

The biblical reality is that the overwhelming majority on earth today are neither saved nor lost. Their chance has not yet come. This is not their time--though God wants a proper witness to them (Matthew

24:14). But the opportunity for them to have salvation (Luke 3:6; Isaiah 52:10) is coming as certainly as God's Word is true.

This is not the age when Christ is desperately contesting Satan as to whether all humanity shall be saved or lost. If it were, as most seem to believe, then Satan surely is winning the contest. But Satan is not more powerful than God, and Satan is not winning.

Those called now are invited to “obtain a better resurrection” (Hebrews 11:35).

If you will accept God’s calling and live His Way in this age, God has predestined you to greatness. To build character in this life, as you help the church reach others as Jesus commanded.

A true Christian builds character now through the tests, opportunities, and trials in life (cf. Romans 5:1-4) which will help the Christian be able to personally contribute to the “better tomorrow.”

By being obedient, having faith, practicing love, and enduring to the end, Christians will not only build character but make their own eternity better.

God made you to give love in your own unique way (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:20-13:10).

But how?

Essentially, by now living by faith and obedience to God in this life.

Christians, themselves, later will be changed and perfected at the first resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:50-54) in order to help give love and actually make eternity better for themselves and others.

Scattered Brethren

In the *Continuing Church of God*, we have scattered brethren throughout the USA and Canada, as well as in the Caribbean (like Trinidad & Tobago), South Asia, North Africa, South Africa, South America, and elsewhere. We have supporters on all the inhabited continents of the earth as well as dozens of US states.

But for most parts of the world, we do not have congregations close by (to see our list of congregations go to www.ccog.org).

In time, we expect to have more congregations in more places, as we keep getting growth in membership every year. So, if there is no group or congregation in your area, do not give up—hang in there, faithfully of course, and perhaps in time, we will have a group/congregation near you. Maybe even one you might help form!

As mentioned before, Jesus taught, “For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14). Do not be one called who gives up because there is no group geographically close to you.

The Bible teaches:

⁴ Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. ⁵ Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. ⁶ He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday. ⁷ Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him (Psalm 37:4-7)

Sometimes Christians have to wait and trust God to establish congregations near them.

Remember, Jesus promised Philadelphian Christians that they would be “pillars” in the Temple of God (Revelation 3:12). Therefore in this age, sometimes being a foundational part of a new group, or standing alone in a separated area, could be part of your training for that reward.

Of course, we should fellowship on the Sabbaths when we can (Hebrews 10:24-25). God’s Holy Days, like the Feast of Tabernacles, are another opportunity for that (cf. Leviticus 23:2; Romans 12:1).

In the *Continuing Church of God*, we hold the Feast of Tabernacles in multiple places around the world. This festival is a time that God expects those that can to travel (cf. Psalm 42:4); far away if need be (cf. Deuteronomy 14:22-27). This festival also gives Philadelphian Christians an opportunity to fellowship together.

In the 20th century, particularly in the early days of the old Radio Church of God, people often had to wait years for an opportunity to hear sermons or have contact with other like-minded Christians. To better serve our scattered brethren in the 21st century, we put out a weekly email titled Letter to the Brethren. It has a suggested Sabbath service, as well as, when appropriate, Holy Day information. So, regular sermons, etc. are available for those who are willing.

Additionally, the weekly Letter has news of what is going on in the *Continuing Church of God* around the world. If you wish to receive it, simply contact Dr. Bob Thiel, email cogwriter@aol.com

Pray and be patient, and trust that God (Proverbs 3:5-7) will call others that you can fellowship with.

As a pillar, you can be an ambassador for Philadelphian Christianity.

Not all will endure—but hopefully you will. And with God’s help you can:

¹³ God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able (1 Corinthians 10:13)

¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

You can too. God’s plan for you will work out if you truly trust Him:

⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; (Philippians 1:6)

Remember “that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

6. God’s Elect

There are several scriptures in the Bible that refer to God’s “elect.” Who are these “elect”? The English word elect is derived from the Greek term *eklektos* (G1588), meaning “picked out, chosen, chosen by God.” The “elect” are God’s chosen ones. Recall in John 15:16 Christ told His disciples, God is the one who chooses us.

God's elect are the ones He calls out of this world. He opens their minds to grasp and understand His Word, His plan and His will.

Those whom He calls out of this darkened world and into "4 the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:4) collectively form the Church of God. The English word Church is derived from the Greek term *ekklesia* and means "the called out ones."

Here are crucial events/steps before we can actually be born into the Kingdom of God as God's very children at the first resurrection:

- 1) We must be called by God.
- 2) We must respond in faith to God's call.
- 3) Then God chooses us and grants us repentance.
- 4) We need to be baptized and have hands laid upon us.
- 5) God then provides forgiveness, His Holy Spirit and His grace.
- 6) We need to strive to walk as Jesus walked.
- 7) As Christians, we must endure as: "he who endures to the end shall be saved." (Matthew 24:13)

We must persevere, don't give up – must be faithful until death, or we will never be born, as glorified, spirit-composed beings, into the very Kingdom of God:

³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption (1 Corinthians 15:50).

When the glorified, crowned Jesus Christ returns to this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, He will immediately gather to Himself His elect:

³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:31)

Who will be united with Jesus Christ at that momentous event? It will be those in the Church who are clothed in "fine linen, clean and bright" (Revelation 19:8) — those who are without "spot or wrinkle or any such thing," those who are "holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27).

Jesus Does Not Want Christians to be Lukewarm

If you are willing to respond to God's calling, truly respond.

Strive to be a Philadelphian Christian (Revelation 3:7-13) and truly support the work in these end times.

Sadly, that was not prophesied to be the case for the majority in the end times.

Otherwise Jesus would not have rhetorically asked:

⁸ Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8)

Furthermore, notice what Jesus said related to the bulk of the Christians in the end times:

¹⁴ "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,

'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵ "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, **because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.** ¹⁷ **Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' — and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked** — ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (Revelation 3:14-20)

Make your selection to strive to be a Philadelphian, not Laodicean, Christian. Do not be lukewarm about your calling.

“Called, and chosen, and faithful”

At Jesus’ second coming to this earth as global ruler — as King of kings and Lord of lords — He will be joined by those who have been truly faithful:

¹⁴ and those *who are* with Him {when He returns} *are* called, chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:14).

Yes, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Few ever become part of God’s Church — part of God’s elect, His specially chosen ones. And even less, in this time of the Laodiceans (Revelation 3:14-22) are willing to live as Philadelphian Christians (Revelation 3:7-13). Laodicea is made up of two Greek words which essentially mean “people decide” or “judgment of the people”. They lack the humility to totally commit to God’s ways and His work. Their works are not “cold” (those who are un-Christian) or “hot” (like the Philadelphians), but instead are “lukewarm.” Jesus says He will vomit them out of His mouth (Revelation 3:14-16).

Even if we are chosen by God, placed into His Church, and start off as Philadelphian, if we do not remain faithful until the very end we will not be with Jesus Christ at His return:

¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)

Sadly, there have been many God has called and chosen, placed in His Church who have not remained faithful. We have seen tens of thousands fall away in recent decades, and more will in the future (Daniel 11:32-34).

The individuals who have not endured this life’s tests and trials will not make it into the Kingdom of God at Christ’s return unless they repent deeply of their faithlessness, turn to God for forgiveness, surrender to God’s mercy and receive the grace and strength from God to be counted faithful at Christ’s Second Coming.

When contemplating the parable of the sower, which group do you think describes you? Do you relate to those seeds that fell on the stony places? Or do you fit in with those that fell among the thorns?

Or will you be counted among the seeds that fell on the good ground and produced good fruit — 30-fold, 60-fold or 100-fold? Will you live as a Philadelphian Christian?

Is God Calling You?

If you, through the Bible, the ContinuingCoG sermon video channels, the BibleNewsProphecy video channels, the COGwriter.com website, the CCOG websites, the *Bible News Prophecy* magazine, etc., and the pages of this booklet, are starting to believe the Bible means exactly what it says — if the Gospel of the Kingdom message is perceived by you to be God's personal message to you — if you see your way is wrong — if you desire to give, share and help this world — then YOU ARE LIKELY BEING CALLED OF GOD!

If you truly hear, understand, and believe, you are being called by God.

Hopefully, you should be at least partially being called right now through the pages of this booklet. Will you pay serious attention to God's call? Will you respond to God's Holy Spirit and accept the truths you have been learning?

Are you ready to live by God's every word — believe Christ's Gospel, the good news of the Kingdom of God and act on the call from the all-powerful God to be one of the firstfruits in His Kingdom?

Keep in mind, those whom God is calling will help save this confused and disordered world. They will be involved in proclaiming this final warning message to the world before the close of this age. They will have a part in visualising the amazing world beyond this age. They will help in turning "... The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers" (Malachi 4:6).

Finally, they will be kings and priests (Revelation 1:6) in the Kingdom of God under Jesus Christ who will be here on this earth governing all nations as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Christians shall rule the nations -- ordinary mortals of all races, on earth:

²⁶ And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations —

²⁷ 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' —

as I also have received from My Father; ²⁸ and I will give him the morning star. (Revelation 2:26-28)

They shall thus rule, and teach, for one thousand years -- Christ's millennial "Sabbath" (Revelation 20:4).

Those now called, during this time, are called to a life of training -- spiritual character training, -- to fit them for positions of high responsibility in the Kingdom.

The one, for example, who multiplies ten times over in spiritual character what God gives him at conversion shall be qualified to rule ten cities.

¹¹ Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. ¹² Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. ¹³ So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

¹⁵ "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. ¹⁶ Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' ¹⁷ And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' ¹⁸ And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' ¹⁹ Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

²⁰ "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. ²¹ For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' ²² And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. ²³ Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

²⁴ "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' ²⁵ (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')

²⁶ 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ²⁷ But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.'" (Luke 19:11-27)

The one who overcomes, and grows in grace and knowledge only five times shall be qualified to rule over five cities. Those who think they "got saved" merely by "accepting Christ" and, were deceived by the "no works" teaching, did not grow or develop in their Christian life at all, and like the one in the parable, will have taken from them even the salvation they thought they had (see also Matthew 7:21-23). God's is not a "just-in-case" religion, but a tremendous opportunity that will last for eternity for those who exercise their faith by always striving to live God's way.

Consider that in the light of the following:

¹ Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. ² For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation. (Hebrews 2:1-3)

The call is out! It is a wonderful calling! You have heard, and read, and seen. The next move is yours!

Counsel available

If, after careful evaluation, you feel that God is calling you, what should you do? Notice the following:

⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:8-13)

Jesus was, and is, the prophesied Savior (more information on why is in our free online book, *Proof Jesus is the Messiah*, available at www.ccog.org).

Those whom God calls (John 6:44) are given the chance to repent and accept Jesus Christ's sacrifice. Then, upon being baptized, they are given God's Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Repent and really accept Him as Lord and Savior.

Notice what the Apostle Peter taught:

³⁸ "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38-39)

Before you can fully do that, you may request ministerial counsel from a representative of the *Continuing Church of God*. We have ministers, deacons, and hosts in some areas around the world who are available to answer questions you may have about God, the Bible, Christianity, conversion or personal problems in your life. Counselling will help you, "count the cost" as Jesus told potential followers to do (Matthew 10:34-39; Luke 14:26-33).

That being said, it is also exciting to learn more of the truth as you journey towards God's kingdom. That "pearl of great price."

Consider also the following:

² It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter. (Proverbs 25:2)

God is calling His people to be kings and priests (Revelation 5:10). As future kings, it is exciting to learn the truths that God has concealed from the world (cf. Matthew 11:25) though they are in His word (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17).

But please understand something that the Apostle Peter said:

³¹ Him has God exalted by His right hand to be a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. ³² And we are His witnesses of these things, as is also **the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him.** (Acts 5:31-32, AFV)

Are you willing to obey God? Would you then like to be given God's Holy Spirit?

Reading and understanding this booklet is a positive indication that God may be calling you! Maybe you have been perusing this Work's publications for a while yet have hesitated to look further into the knowledge we offer.

Perhaps you have been puzzled or concerned about what accepting this knowledge might require in your life. But you should know: God holds you accountable for what you know. As James wrote:

¹⁷Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

If you have come to this point in the booklet and understand its message, maybe it is a good time to do something about it. Our ministers would be pleased to address any questions you may have about repentance, baptism or other subjects.

Ministerial counsel is free and there is no obligation on your part. If you would like to speak to one of our men, please contact us: contact information is available at the Congregations page at www.ccoq.org.

God has a glorious calling.

If God is calling you, will you properly heed that call?

Continuing Church of God

The USA office of the *Continuing Church of God* is located at: 1036 W. Grand Avenue, Grover Beach, California, 93433 USA.

Continuing Church of God (CCOG) Websites

CCOG.AFRICA This site is targeted towards those in Africa.

CCOG.ASIA This site has focus on Asia and has various articles in multiple Asian languages, as well as some items in English.

CCOG.IN This site is targeted towards those of Indian heritage. It has materials in the English language and various Indian languages.

CCOG.EU This site is targeted toward Europe. It has materials in multiple European languages.

CCOG.NZ This site is targeted towards New Zealand and others with a British-descended background.

CCOG.ORG This is the main website of the *Continuing Church of God*. It serves people on all continents with literature and sermon videos.

CCOGCANADA.CA This site is targeted towards those in Canada.

CDLIDD.ES La Continuación de la Iglesia de Dios. This is the Spanish language website for the *Continuing Church of God*.

CG7.ORG This is a website for those interested in the Sabbath and churches that observe the seventh day Sabbath.

PNIND.PH Patuloy na Iglesia ng Diyos. This is the Philippines website with information in English and Tagalog.

News and History Websites

COGWRITER.COM This website is a major proclamation tool and has news, doctrine, historical articles, videos, and prophetic updates.

CHURCHHISTORYBOOK.COM Has articles and books on church history.

BIBLENEWSPROPHECY.NET This is an online radio website which covers news and biblical topics.

STUDYTHEBIBLECOURSE.ORG An online course covering parts of the Bible.

YouTube Video Channels for Sermons & Sermonettes

BibleNewsProphecy channel. CCOG sermonette videos.

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Is God calling YOU?

Jesus taught:

⁶⁵ "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." (John 6:65)

If God is calling you, do you realize the value of that calling?

Is it the "pearl of great price" where you would give everything up for it?



"Pearl of Great Price" (Matthew 13:46)

Could you have been predestined to be elected and selected in this age?

Are others predestined to be lost?

If God is calling you, will you choose to accept that calling and bear fruit?