

LETTERS

Tape Saved My Life

The tape entitled "Loving Them to Death" saved my life. I heard things I'd never thought of before.

MW

West Virginia

Continue the Good Work

I've been listening to your *Bible Answers Live* archive. I think your website is great! Please continue the good work. It's extremely helpful for people who

were raised in the church, have stepped away for a while, and are now trying to retrieve their salvation.



SW Missouri

One of My Weekly Highlights

I really enjoy watching your TV show Amazing Facts. It's truly a blessing from God and one of my weekly highlights!

WB Washington

Series Helped Both of Us

I want to thank you for all of the literature you provide. It has helped my wife and me. A year and a half ago I accepted the Lord back into my life and was rebaptized. My wife, who had never attended church

until a year ago, was enlightened by Doug Batchelor during NET New York '99. She also accepted Jesus and was baptized. This series has really helped both of us come to a deeper understanding of God.



MM via e-mail

Family Get-Togethers Are Bible Studies

We want to say how much we have appreciated Amazing Facts and to let you know how much your materials have meant to our family. When we moved to Millton-Freewater, Ore., four years ago, I came across Doug Batchelor's Revelation seminars on Blue Mountain Television and began recording them. I sent them to my brother and sister-in-law and to both sets of my parents.

Your preaching style has touched my family and helped to bring them home to the Lord. After many years of prayer, my sister-in-law was baptized three years ago and my brother a few months ago. My mother and her husband have started attending church again, and my father and his wife are viewing

the tapes in their home. Our family get-togethers have turned into Bible studies. We stayed up until 3 o'clock in the morning on Christmas night answering questions and studying with my father and my other brother and his wife.

is wife. AB Oregon



We have a small satellite dish and would like your program on a regular basis. We love your special touch. It is not hard to see that the Lord has raised you up for such a time as this.

L&LM

Saskatchewan, Canada

Corrected Our Thinking

We are blessed to receive your television broadcast on Trinity Broadcasting's MiracleNet. Your messages

are excellent, brief, and to the point. You have corrected our thinking by bringing us God's Word. We would be very grateful if you would send us a copy of Study Guide 15, entitled *Antichrist Is Alive Today*.

AM India

What I Need

I am writing to request your Bible Reading Plan as referenced in the December 2000 issue of Amazing

Facts Inside Report. I have started and stopped numerous times in my attempts to read the Bible through, but have never used a plan for this purpose. "A Plan That Worked" is what I need.

JW Kansas

Editor's Note: We mailed hundreds of copies of the Bible Reading Plan during the month of December, and the requests keep coming! If you have Internet access, you may download a printable file of the plan from our www.bibleuniverse.com website, available under the "What's New" section.



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BY EDITOR

DEBRA J. HICKS

Clean—Inside and Out

n a witnessing class I took recently, our instructor asked us to write down a three-minute presentation of our personal testimonies. A look of panic filled the eyes of several saints, and a soft but audible groan escaped more than a few lips.

As if expecting this reaction, the teacher immediately set out to squelch one of the most widely held misconceptions among Christians: namely, that in order to have a testimony, a person must have at one time been really, really wild.

"I was raised a Christian and never got into sex or drugs or crime," explained one bewildered man. "When I try to pinpoint a single Damascus Road experience, I draw a blank."

About half of us in the room could readily sympathize with his dilemma. The Christian walk is a continuous journey, so it is often easier to identify significant milestones along the way than to recall a specific starting point.

Although I could relate at least a dozen amazing experiences in which God has revealed Himself to me, I soon learned that the first testimony I share with people should accomplish one primary goal. It must uplift Jesus Christ as a sin-pardoning Savior, for that is the very foundation of the gospel. With my objective now clearly in mind, I sat down to write my personal tribute to God's goodness and mercy.

I grew up knowing quite a bit about God and about the Bible. I didn't understand some of what I heard and read about Him, but I never questioned the basic concepts that God is good and God is right.

My mom tells me that I was very sensitive and compliant from an early age. If someone told me I was doing something wrong, I would cry my little heart out even before Mom had a chance to reach for the paddle. Because I was always careful to obey the rules, I rarely received a spanking.

Based on what people could see from the outside, I was a very good little Christian girl. In fact, so many adults said this about me that I figured it must be true. Soon it became very important to me for people to think highly of me. Obtaining the approval of others motivated me to be kind, work hard, lead out in church activities, and be a straight-A student all the way through 12th grade.

Jesus once compared a group of religious leaders to a cup that looked spotless and beautiful on the outside, yet was filthy dirty on the inside. That condition describes my life before I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior. Most people couldn't see it, but my heart was often filled with anger, selfishness, jealousy, deceit, fear, and a number of other destructive sins. I knew

they were there, but I didn't understand how to get rid of them so I just worked hard to keep them covered up. I couldn't cope with being a "bad" person, so gradually I started believing the lie that I was a good girl with no problems, no defects.

About three years after I was married, I attended a week of prayer during which the speaker talked about being honest with God in our prayers. I hadn't done that in years, and the man's stories motivated me to give it a try.

Only after I started being honest enough to admit that I needed Jesus as my Savior, and that I couldn't be a good girl myself, did I start becoming the type of person I'd pretended to be for so long.

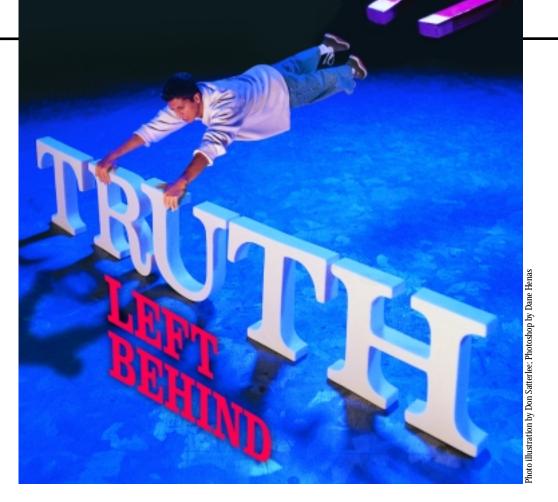
I started admitting to God my true feelings, my specific sins, my character defects—things that had been bottled up inside for a long, long time. For several months I felt swallowed up by sadness at the realization that I was a terrible person. I was just as wretched and miserable as the worst person who ever lived! For the first time in my life I was applying Scripture to my own life, including verses like Jeremiah 17:9, which says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," and Romans 3:23: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." I was a sinner, and I hated it.

It was a difficult time in my life, but I wouldn't trade it for the world. That's because it was only after I started being honest enough to admit that I needed Jesus as *my* Savior and that I couldn't be a good girl myself—that my only redeeming qualities came as a result of having God in control of my life—that I started becoming the type of person I'd pretended to be for so long.

If you've never made an effort to see yourself clearly or to know God wholly, then I encourage you to make that step. Maybe God was once King and Lord of your life, but lately you've been putting yourself on the throne in order to feel in control. Whichever the case, begin today to be 100 percent honest with God and to invite Him to be your Savior. Then you too can start becoming the truly good and happy person God wants you to be.



BY PASTOR
STEVE WOHLBERG





An Amazing Fact:

The nation was shocked by a tragedy in late March 1997 when 39 members of the Heaven's Gate cult took their own lives. The cult members committed suicide by downing fatal doses of a lethal cocktail mixture of phenobarbital and vodka. Heaven's Gate members sincerely believed that Hale-Bopp, an unusually bright comet, was a sign that they were supposed to leave their earthly bodies (or "containers") and be raptured up to a spacecraft traveling behind the comet that would take them to a higher plane of existence. A message posted on their website stated that "Hale-Bopp's approach is the 'marker' we've been waiting for—the time for the arrival of the spacecraft from the Level Above Human to take us home to 'Their World' in the literal Heavens." They sincerely believed the comet marked their "graduation" from the Human Evolutionary Level. "We are happily prepared to leave 'this world'," wrote cult leader Marshall Applewhite (alias "Do"), who quoted selectively from the Bible and various episodes of Star Trek to support his teachings that they would be raptured to this invisible spacecraft.

All around the world, people are struggling to understand the Bible's end-time prophecies. Christians everywhere sense that Jesus Christ will soon return to planet Earth.

In the 1990s, Bible scholar Tim LaHaye and story-teller Jerry Jenkins teamed up to create a fascinating series of novels designed to make the book of Revelation more real to Christians today. Their first book, published in 1995, was simply called *Left Behind*. This single book sold so many copies that Barnes & Noble Bookstores voted it "One of the top ten best-selling books of the 20th century." *USA Today* has labeled it "Wildly popular—and highly controversial."

Because of this incredible response, LaHaye and Jenkins decided to expand their project into a sequence of 12 books. *The Indwelling—The Beast Takes Possession*, was listed as a New York Times Bestseller. *The Mark—The Beast Rules the World*, became an immediate runaway hit. Amazingly, the entire project is now being called "The best-selling series of all time." On February 2, 2001, *Left Behind: The Movie*, produced by Cloud Ten Pictures, is scheduled to open in theaters across America.

A Gripping Saga

The story begins with the sudden vanishing of Christians into thin air, which is commonly called the rapture. The rest of mankind, having been left behind, suddenly wake up to the nightmare of a world gone mad. Mass confusion hits as unmanned cars veer out of control, pilotless planes crash, fires erupt, and total hysteria sweeps over the globe. "The disappearances" will usher the world into "a sevenyear period called the Tribulation" (Tribulation Force, inside cover). In the midst of this universal panic, a mysterious and yet secretly evil Romanian man named Nicolae Carpathia (the Antichrist) rises to bring order out of chaos. "One of the most powerful and charismatic personalities ever" (Ibid., ix), Carpathia takes control of the United Nations. Discerning his inner wickedness is a brave host of new believers (a.k.a. the Tribulation Force) who are determined to resist his hypnotic power. Finally, this sinister world leader unveils his ultimate test of loyalty: the insertion of a high-tech biochip into the foreheads and hands of all people.

The *Left Behind* series follows the lives of certain fictitious characters who, having missed the rapture, are forced to struggle against the Antichrist, his global community, and ultimately against the enforcement of the mark of the beast.

Just as millions of Americans daily follow the lives of their favorite soap opera actors, even so millions of Christians are now following the lives of these imaginary *Left Behind* personalities as the saga continues to unfold. Even young people are being affected through a special version of *Left Behind* books just for kids, which includes a Tribulation Force Underground Kit.

Underneath the excitement and drama of this incredibly popular story, is it possible that something is just not quite right? Could it be that in the midst of *Left Behind's* focus on missing people, important Bible truths are also missing? If so, which ones? Paul wrote, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Accepted vs. Accurate

The Bible certainly does teach the exciting truth that Jesus Christ will return for His people. Jesus Himself said, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3). The clearest text in the Bible about the rapture is 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Countless Christians know it by heart, and it is cited in *Left Behind: The Movie*. Paul wrote that believers in Jesus Christ will someday be "caught up ... in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). What we must do is to carefully examine the timing of the rapture, for this is a crucial issue.

According to *Left Behind*, the return of Jesus Christ actually takes place in two distinct phases. First, Jesus returns silently and secretly to catch away true believers. This begins the "seven-year period called the Tribulation." During the Tribulation, this diabolical man known as the Antichrist rises to enforce the mark of the beast. At the end of the Tribulation, our Lord returns visibly, which is called Christ's "glorious appearing."

Therefore, according to *Left Behind*, the rapture comes first, and then, seven years later, is the second coming of Jesus Christ at the end of the world. With minor variations, this scenario is now accepted by millions of Bible-believing Christians around the globe as an accurate picture of end-time events.

There are three mighty pillars that stand out in this teaching, and it is safe to say that the entire *Left Behind* project rests firmly atop each one of them.

- **Pillar 1** The rapture does not take place at the visible second coming of Jesus Christ, but seven years before it.
- **Pillar 2** Those who miss the rapture will have a second chance to accept Jesus and be saved.
- **Pillar 3** True believers today will not have to face the Antichrist or the mark of the beast.

We wish to follow Paul's counsel to "Prove all things" by carefully examining these pillars, in the light of Scripture, while watching out for any signs of structural cracks.

Perfect Timing

Pillar 1 says that the rapture and the second coming do not occur simultaneously. Paul clearly states in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 that "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up." Although the exact word "rapture" doesn't appear anywhere in the Bible, the idea comes from those two words "caught up." A simple comparison of verse 17 with verse 15, which says, "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," makes it very clear that believers will be "caught up" at "the coming of the Lord."

At this point, we must carefully examine what the Bible says about His coming. Will believers be caught up at a silent and invisible coming of the Lord before the Tribulation, as taught in *Left Behind*? Or will believers be caught up at the deafening "glorious appearing" of Jesus Christ at the end of the world?

Right in between verses 15 and 17, Paul wrote, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump [or trumpet] of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). *Left Behind* describes this as a silent and secret event, yet doesn't it sound rather loud and noisy? There is a shout, a voice, and a trumpet.



An Amazing Fact:

It is a mistake to read the book of Revelation in purely chronological order, as if the events in chapter 12 occur on earth right after those of chapter 11. Revelation follows the pattern of "repeat and enlarge" that was previously laid in the book of Daniel.

For example, Daniel 2 reveals an entire timeline from the days of Babylon until the very end of the world, then Daniel 7 repeats the timeline while injecting new symbols and details. Daniel 8 begins during the time of Persia and concludes with "the time of the end" (verse 17), while Daniel 9 goes back to the time of Jesus Christ.

The book of Revelation follows in the same vein, using different "repeat and enlarge" timelines, with the end of the world being repeated in chapters 1, 6, 8, 11, 14, 16, 18, and 19. The Church is not removed from this earth after Chapter 3, but is seen again in chapters 12, 13, 14, and 18.

A long time ago, Jeremiah recorded a prophecy regarding the coming of the Lord that clearly parallels 1 Thessalonians 4:16. He wrote: "The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground" (Jeremiah 25:30-33).

Both Jeremiah and Paul describe a coming of the Lord during which there is a loud "voice" and "a shout." Jeremiah provides additional information by saying that the Lord will "mightily roar," and then he says that a "noise" shall be heard worldwide. None of this sounds like a silent and secret return of Jesus prior to the Tribulation.

A Thief in the Night

Paul said this tremendous "day of the Lord" will finally arrive like "a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2). Many interpret this to mean that Jesus will come like a silent thief to steal believers out of this world. Then cars will crash, planes will collide, sacked quarterbacks at football games will vanish, and babies will be missing from their cribs. The popular Christian film *A Thief in the Night*, which is similar to *Left Behind: The Movie*, also presents this perspective. Yet is this really what Paul is saying?

Again, let's take a closer look at Scripture. Paul wrote: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh

upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3).

Do you see what Paul is saying? Jesus' coming as a "thief in the night" does not mean He will come quietly and invisibly to steal believers out of this world, as is taught in *Left Behind*. Rather, it means He will come *unexpectedly*, bringing "sudden destruction"

upon the unsaved. It is not secret, only sudden. Notice again what Paul said: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (verses 4-5). Did you catch that? Jesus does not come as a thief in the night to believers, but only to those who are of the night. Will those who are "of the night"—that is, the unprepared—be given a second chance to be saved? Paul wrote, "They shall not escape" (verse 3).

The apostle Peter also wrote about this same return of Jesus Christ as a thief in the night: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10). According to Peter, this coming of Jesus Christ as a thief in the night is definitely not a silent and secret event that precedes a seven-year period of Tribulation. Rather, this day arrives suddenly, with "a great noise" (as also described by Jeremiah), and is clearly associated with the end of the world! A crack is forming in Pillar 1.

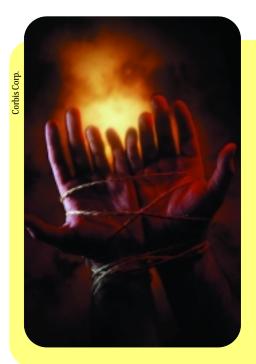
What about the rapture taking place "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"? This is probably the second greatest text in the Bible now being used to support the idea of Christians vanishing prior to the Tribulation. Paul wrote, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

Is Paul saying that believers will mysteriously vanish from the earth prior to the Tribulation, while their loved ones blink? Not at all! He is saying that the dead will be raised and their bodies will be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." But when will this "moment" take place? Paul's answer is clear. It will occur "at the last trump," when "the trumpet shall sound," at the end of the world. This is that very same "great sound of a trumpet" Jesus said would be heard at His second coming (Matthew 24:31)!

Pillar 1 is disintegrating.

Waiting Until It's Too Late

As previously noted, Pillar 2 supporting the *Left Behind* project is the theory that those who miss the rapture will have during the Tribulation a second chance to be saved. This idea is dangerous because it leads some people to rationalize that "If the Bible is really true and if the rapture does take place, then I'll know for sure God is real. It may be tough, but I can still join the Tribulation Force during the seven



An Amazing Fact:

If you look up the word "tribulation" in a Strong's or Young's concordance, you may be shocked to discover that almost every reference describes the suffering of believers. Jesus told His followers: "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33). Paul told his early Christian converts: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica: "We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure" (2 Thessalonians 1:4). On the lonely isle of Patmos, John was our "brother, and companion in tribulation" (Revelation 1:9). Jesus told His church in Smyrna: "I know thy works, and tribulation" (Revelation 2:9). In the light of these Scriptures, the idea of Christians not going through the Tribulation seems like fantasy and illusion.

years. Even if that Antichrist guy tries to kill me, I will resist the mark!"

While fostering this foolish attitude is certainly not the intent of the *Left Behind* authors, nevertheless, the secret rapture theory can easily lead people to adopt a "wait and see" philosophy, and thus put off making a decision to follow Jesus. Paul wrote that all who are not fully on the Lord's side when believers are "caught up" (1 Thessalonians 4:17) "shall not escape" (1 Thessalonians 5:3). As you can see, Pillar 2 has very serious problems.

Left Behind also teaches that the Church will not be here on earth for Armageddon. Is this true?

The word "Armageddon" appears only once in the Bible. It is found in Revelation 16, the great chapter describing the falling of the seven last plagues. Between the sixth and seventh last plagues, Jesus Christ thunders: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Revelation 16:15-16).

Did you catch that? Jesus is talking to the Church! While the seven plagues are falling, and right before the battle of Armageddon, Jesus Christ has not yet come as a thief! Therefore He must come like a thief at Armageddon, and that must be the time when He comes to gather His Church.

Paul used the language of the military when, like a commanding officer, he urged the soldiers of the cross to "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13). How can

we stand in "the evil day" if we have previously disappeared? Jesus Christ also said to the believers, "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. . . . But he who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 24:9, 13, NKJV). Paul also advised the church that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

Jesus will save His church—not from tribulation, but rather through it! Our Lord loves us and will strengthen us in the final times. That's why He promised: "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). We can trust Him in this.

What About the Seven Years?

The Bible text that serves as the foundation for the entire seven-year Tribulation theory is Daniel 9:27, which is the very first verse quoted in *Left Behind: The Movie.* It says: "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice ... to cease."

A day in prophecy represents a year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6), thus the period of "one week" actually represents seven years. Millions are now applying this to a future seven-year period of Tribulation. "He" is interpreted to be the Antichrist, who will make a covenant with the Jews during the Tribulation.

What many don't realize is that there is a more logical interpretation that has far more biblical support. It has been taught by many credible Bible scholars who have written respected commentaries that are

now in the libraries of pastors across America. One example is the world-famous Matthew Henry's Bible commentary. It doesn't apply Daniel 9:27 to the Antichrist at all, nor does it apply the "one week" to a seven-year period of Tribulation after the rapture. Rather, it applies the prophecy to Jesus Christ, who, after three and a half years of loving ministry, died "in the midst of the week," which ultimately caused all animal sacrifices to cease!

Here's the quotation from Matthew Henry's famous commentary: "By offering himself a sacrifice once and for all he [Jesus] shall put an end to all Levitical sacrifices." Another excellent Bible commentary written by Adam Clarke says that during the "term of seven years" (Daniel 9:27), Jesus Christ would "confirm or ratify the new covenant with mankind." Here's one more from the much-respected Jamieson, Fausset and Brown commentary: "He shall confirm the covenant—Christ. The confirmation of the covenant is assigned to Him."

Take a careful look at Daniel 9:27 itself. God's Word says, "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." Notice that Jesus Christ Himself said, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many" (Matthew 26:28, NKJV). A perfect fit! Both use the words "covenant" and "many."

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom "the covenant ... was confirmed" (Galatians 3:17; see also Romans 15:8, NKJV). In the midst of the week, after three and a half years, Jesus gave His life for us, "causing the sacrifice to cease." He was the final Sacrifice. No more sacrifices are to be offered (Hebrews 10:12). Period.

In my earlier book, *Exploding the Israel Deception*, Chapter 5 is called "The 70th Week of Daniel

Delusion." There I give many more solid reasons why Daniel 9:27 doesn't apply to the Antichrist at all, but to Jesus Christ alone.

The entire *Left Behind* idea of a seven-year period of Tribulation after the rapture may go down in history as the greatest evangelical misinterpretation of all time. The whole concept is like a gigantic bubble. Once Daniel 9:27 is correctly understood and the pointed pin of truth is inserted, "Pop goes the seven years!"

A Life-or-Death Matter

I want to conclude by talking about Pillar 3, which states that true believers today will not have to face the Antichrist and the mark of the beast. It is right here that emotions fly and reason vanishes just as instantaneously as those disappearing Christians in *Left Behind: The Movie.* That's because the mysterious mark of the beast is a life-or-death matter. It concerns the destiny of the human soul. Admitting that the Church will still be on earth during the final great Tribulation means that Christians must someday face the Antichrist and the mark of the beast—issues over which they could lose their souls. Many people are deeply afraid of this, so they conclude there must be a secret rapture before the Tribulation. There just has to be!

A deep-seated fear of the mark plagues many people, though it need not be so. True Christians can learn a lesson from popular bumper stickers that say "Fear No Evil." We don't need to be afraid. We can trust in Jesus Christ, for He has promised, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). If the fictitious Tribulation Force in the *Left Behind* novels can overcome the Antichrist and the mark of the beast with God's help, then so can we!

For those who are unwilling to even reasonably consider this issue, no amount of Bible evidence will convince them. Like a triple-bolted door in downtown New York, they are closed to the facts.

The result? Truth is left behind.





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¹ Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Vol. IV—Isaiah to Malachi, Complete Edition. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co. 1712, notes on Daniel 9:27, p. 1095.

² The Holy Bible with a commentary and critical notes by Adam Clarke, Vol. IV—Isaiah to Malachi. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, notes on Daniel 9:27, p. 602.

³ Rev. Robert Jamieson, Rev. A. R. Fausset, and Rev. David Brown, *A Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, Complete Edition. Hartford, Conn.: S.S. Scranton Co., notes on Daniel 9:27, p. 641.

The Gift Goes On...

Colorado Couple Volunteers for One Year in India

oger Stone was one of 12 men who conducted follow-up seminars after Doug Batchelor's January 1999 meetings in the city of Chennai (formerly Madras). Following his successful crusade in the village of Madipakkum, Roger prayed for an opportunity to return to India. That prayer was answered when a member of his church offered to pay for Roger and his wife, Barbara, to spend a year there.

In January 2000 the Stones flew together to Chennai to work closely with Richard and Michelle Calderon, who coordinate the Amazing Facts evangelism projects in India. For nearly a year Roger and Barbara helped mentor 30 newly baptized pastors in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. These men had joined God's remnant church on Oct. 16, 1999, as a result of cooperative efforts between Amazing Facts and the church headquarters in central India. By observing and taking classes from Roger, these 30 formerly independent pastors gained new insights for sharing God's truth.

The following report gives, in Roger's own words, highlights from the couple's experiences in India.

February 2000

When we arrived at the airport last month, a crowd of friends met us and made us feel very welcome. They put garlands around our necks and gave Barbara a bouquet of flowers.

Pastor Nominee, whom I left in charge of the church we started last year, has initiated a very active visitation program. From the third day after our arrival, he has kept us busy visiting and giving Bible studies. One day I gave 10 studies!

So far the Lord has answered several prayers for us. Recently I prayed for a young man who was required to attend classes on Sabbath. The problem was soon resolved when the school announced that it would stop holding Saturday classes!

We will be going north to the state of Andhra Pradesh this week.

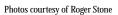
March 2000

Now 800 kilometers north of Chennai, we live in the village of Prathipadu in the district of East Godavari. We have a small, private second-floor room. Our tiny bathroom has just a hole in the floor for a toilet, and we have only a few shelves instead of a closet. However, the Lord has provided for all of our needs, and we feel greatly blessed.

The first village church we visited gave us a royal

welcome. As we came into the village, several powerful firecrackers 4 feet long started going off. The villagers threw confetti and flowers over us and put giant garlands around our necks. We were directed to walk up a path of cloth runners. Finally we reached the church amid drums beating and music playing, then more garlands were put around our necks. After we were seated, they gave us coconuts complete with straws. Then the people gave speeches welcoming us to their village. They told us this kind of welcome is reserved for very important guests!





BY EDITOR
DEBRA J. HICKS

Roger and Barbara Stone had many unique opportunities to grow close to the people they served. While in India, they made a personal donation of \$341 to sponsor eye surgeries for 38 people in Prathipadu. Several people asked their translator how they had saved such a large sum of money, and the translator suggested that it was because they ate only two meals a day!

Almost every night we have a meeting in a different village. Sometimes we visit two villages in the same afternoon. We usually speak at least 10 times a week. Barbara tells a Bible story with her felts, and I give a sermon. At least 90 percent of the people we teach are illiterate, but the Lord has helped us to keep the talks simple.

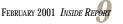
I frequently tell the villagers that we are all God's children and that God loves them as much as He loves us. I explain that with God, there is no caste system. After I have told them all about the great God of heaven who created us, I tell them how to accept Jesus, have their sins forgiven, and receive the wedding garment. I also describe heaven, which the villagers have never before heard about in detail.

We hold Sabbath School at one orphanage each Sabbath morning, and on Sunday morning we go to a Catholic orphanage and hold Sunday School.

April 2000

On April 7 we started a 21-day series of evangelistic meetings in the village of Ptmoperum, which is about 20 kilometers from Prathipadu.

Between 50 and 80 people a night attended. The meetings began at 8:30 p.m. with singing for about





The Stones conducted prophecy seminars everywhere they stayed, and often they worked in two villages at once. At their last meeting in Keelkattalai, 18 people were baptized into God's remnant church.

30 to 45 minutes, then Barbara told a Bible story with her felt set. The villagers really loved her stories! Sometime between 9:30 and 10:15 p.m., I started my sermon.

We would have liked to begin the meetings earlier, but most of the people work long days in the rice fields. After work ends around 6 p.m. or 7 p.m., they go home, take a bath, and fix supper. After working so hard all day, I don't know how they have the energy left to go anywhere, but they are always faithful in coming to the meetings. By the time we sang, Barbara told her story, I spoke, and we prayed for the people who

came forward, we usually didn't get home until after midnight.

We had very good meetings and got close to the people. They accepted each teaching as we presented it. The hardest thing for them to accept is the issue of jewelry. I shared the verses in 1 Timothy 2:9, 1 Peter 3:1-4, and Isaiah 3:18-21 to show them what the Bible says about wearing jewelry. I also told them that by taking their jewelry off, they are making a public statement that they have become Christians. In the end, we baptized 33. Eleven were from another village, and 22 were from the village of Ptmoperum.

The weather is very hot and muggy. Now that the meetings are over, we go to bed between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m. Even by that time, it is still 98 or 100 degrees in our room. After about 6 a.m., it gets too hot to sleep, even with a fan blowing on us. The weather has made for very short nights!

May 2000

A couple of days ago I was invited to hold a few meetings in a Hindu village. Our meeting place is quite unique! We are using the porch of the Hindu temple as the rostrum and the temple's electricity for our loudspeaker. Every church here puts up very large loudspeakers that point in several different directions, so the people who don't come to church hear the gospel too.

Recently I was in another village to talk to those interested in baptism, and several individuals came who had never attended the meetings. When I talked to them through my translator, I found that they knew what they needed to know to be ready for baptism! I asked them how they understood everything so well, and they told me that they had not missed a meeting because of the loudspeakers. Later I had people from a village 3 kilometers away say that they could hear me preaching every night, and some of them were baptized!

June and July 2000

We stay so busy that there never seems to be a dull moment! The evangelistic seminars we have been conducting in two separate villages don't leave us with much free time. In addition to these meetings, we have been teaching two classes for pastors each Wednesday. Several pastors have said that they have learned more from our Bible classes than they did from two years of Bible college!

We never get to bed until after 1 a.m., and at 4:23 a.m. every morning the Christian church across the street starts playing music and preaching. In India the public-address systems are always turned up as loudly as possible, and in this case the speakers are not more than 100 feet from our room and are aimed right toward us! This was very annoying, to put it mildly, but I do hope someone got a blessing from it.

During these meetings we have also had a very difficult time getting adequate food. We can always get potatoes and eggs, but obtaining good fruits and vegetables is very difficult and sometimes impossible.

Every week I must turn down requests from pastors who are asking us to come to their villages to hold crusades in their churches. How I wish we had others here to help us! We can't begin to fill all of the requests that come to us.

August and September 2000

Not long ago we became acquainted with a chief health officer. He introduced us to an ophthalmologist who works for the government and does dozens of cataract surgeries every month. The government is willing to pay for these surgeries, but the patients must find a way to pay for the incidental expenses such as transportation, food for three days, and post-surgical care. Most of these people are so poor that there is no way in their wildest dreams they could come up with 1,000 rupees to pay for their incidental expenses.

Barbara and I decided to sponsor a blind camp that provided operations for 38 people at a cost of about 30,000 rupees, or \$682. We paid half, and sev-



Jessie, Sarah, Lois, Timothy, and Paul are five of the six orphaned children who are now learning to be Christians under the care of Emmanuel Masa, one of the pastors Roger trained while in India.

eral Lion's Clubs paid the other half. To the people here, even \$341 seems like a tremendous amount of money, and many people asked our translator how we came up with so much money. Since we eat only two meals a day, they concluded that this was a sacrifice we made in order to save the necessary funds!

In two weeks we will hold a large crusade in a suburb about 20 kilometers south of Chennai.

October and November 2000

The average attendance for our crusade in Keelkattalai was between 40 and 60 non-believers each night. We encountered much opposition to these meetings. Many pastors, spouses, and Hindu family members tried to discourage the people from attending, so we saw fluctuation in attendance nightly. However, our Bible workers and pastors continued to visit and encourage the people to keep attending. At the end of this series, 18 people were baptized!

We had a difficult time trying to secure a place of worship in this area. Just before we left, Pastor Emanassa told me he had finalized a deal to rent the roof of a widow woman who had attended some of our meetings. The pastor will erect a shed so the new members can start using it.

December 2000

One of the profound needs we have seen in India is the need for orphanages. We recently started a small orphanage for six precious children in Prathipadu. They are truly appreciative of everything we do for them. None of them had ever before had new clothes. We bought each one a bar of soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, a book bag for school, and a cot for sleeping. Most of the children have never slept on anything but the floor, with no pillow or covering.

Our faithful friend Emmanuel Masa is the caregiver in charge of the orphanage. He is a pastor we personally trained for eight months, and he will teach the children all about Jesus and His love.

Pastor Masa has already conducted two evangelistic crusades with the help of his father and another pastor. In the six weeks we were away from Prathipadu, 39 people were converted. They removed their jewelry, started keeping the Sabbath and returning tithe, and then were baptized. It is very encouraging to see those we have trained become active, Bible-teaching soul-winners! Pastor Masa is a recognized leader among the other pastors and their churches. We feel sure he will become one of the leading gospel workers in Andhra Pradesh.

On Dec. 7 we returned home. By living like we did in the Indian villages, rubbing elbows very closely with all types of people, we've had missionary opportunities that few people experience. We know that if it is the Lord's will for us to return to India in the future, He will provide the way.



Since October 2000, Amazing Facts has been operating a training program for the lay leaders of new congregations in southern India. Fifty men meet two Sundays a month for more than five hours to receive practical instruction from ordained pastors. The classes are small, the training is practical, and the desperately needed materials are also provided in written form.

50 Lay Leaders Enroll in Training

Fifty men are now more than halfway through an Amazing Facts training program designed for the lay leaders of new congregations in southern India. The six-month program teaches these laymen how to meet the spiritual needs of the hundreds of people being baptized in this region and how to provide them with a meaningful worship experience.

Richard Calderon, who coordinates our work in India, says: "Three of the most important components of our program are that our classes are small, the instruction is practical, and we provide much-needed materials."

The 50 men meet every other Sunday for a 45-minute Bible study, then they divide into three groups and rotate through three classes, each of which meets for an hour and a half.

Calderon insists that every class must be practical. "How to organize and conduct an interesting Sabbath School program and how to prepare and present Christ-centered, Spirit-filled messages is what these men need to know!" he emphasizes.

To give the training lasting value, each teacher puts everything he presents in his lecture into written form for the men. Additional materials to help these men do their work more effectively are also being provided.

—Debra J. Hicks

Amazing Facts Is on TV in India!

Since July 1999, Amazing Facts has been airing regular broadcasts of its *A New Revelation* program on MiracleNet in India. Fourteen people are now taking Bible studies as a result of this television ministry, three of whom are Protestant pastors.

For example, a pastor in Mumbai (Bombay) writes: "I often listen to your messages. I thank my Lord for making the good news available to this country. What you teach is appropriate and relevant, and I pray that our God will inspire you more and more to bring out the message that is needed in this country."

To help these viewers ground their faith solidly on God's Word, Amazing Facts started a small branch Bible correspondence school in Southern India using the 27 Amazing Facts Study Guides that go with the TV programs.

We praise God for the ability to reach people like Bastian, who writes: "We have been watching Amazing Facts at my house each time it airs. We thank God for revealing many biblical truths to us. After watching your telecast, our eyes have been opened."

—Brina Pittman

From the Inside

Amazing Facts Seminars Benefit Longtime Church Members, Too!

Goldie Oblander, a retired schoolteacher, attended Amazing Facts Evangelist John Quade's recent



prophecy seminar in Enid, Okla. In the letter that follows, she describes how her life has changed as a result.

She says: "One morning as I opened my daily newspaper, something dropped on the floor. I picked it up and saw an adver-

tisement for a Bible prophecy seminar, so I decided to attend.

"I belong to a church 25 miles away from where I live," Goldie continues, "and this seminar was 25 miles in the other direction. Nonetheless, I decided to go the first evening and was really impressed by the way John Quade presented the message. I attended every meeting except one that was held on an evening when stormy weather was predicted for our area.

"Two of my friends attended some of the meetings with me—one a Methodist lady and the other a Baptist lady. The Baptist lady bought all of the tapes.

"I would like to say that these seminars are not just for people who have never heard the Bible prophecies, but for all of us who have been in the truth for some time or perhaps even all of our lives. Some of us have become careless in certain things.

"After hearing John Quade's presentations, I realized I was addicted to the soap opera *The Bold and the Beautiful* that airs on ABC after the 12 o'clock news. As I would hear it, I would often think. "That's

crazy" or "That's devilish; I shouldn't listen to that," yet I didn't stop until I heard John mention little things that would keep us out of the kingdom of heaven. I have never watched the soap opera since, and I haven't missed it. It's much better to turn on some of John's tapes and listen to them. I have also given up caffeinated Dr. Pepper.

"John Quade certainly lives the truth and has touched many hearts. God is richly blessing him wherever he presents the message."

Amazing Facts Seminar Sermons Now Being Published in Hungarian

Amazing Facts Evangelist Lowell Hargreaves just received word that a church member from the



Sashalom church in Budapest, Hungary, has translated his crusade sermons into Hungarian. She typed and translated them from audio cassette tapes of a prophecy seminar he held there three years ago.

Zoltan Mohacsi, a lay leader in the Sashalom church, plans to print these translated messages in a Hungarian magazine he edits. This magazine, called *Lamp*, also published a report on the work the Hargreaves family did in the Sashalom and Rakoscsaba churches.

"I can gladly say," wrote Mohacsi, "that from among those sheep who recognized the call of the Good Shepherd through your message, the majority are still members, serving Him." Only three individuals have left the church or returned to a worldly lifestyle, he said.



Donor's Gift of \$100,000 Covers Cost of Our College of Evangelism Building

A \$100,000 gift from a generous supporter of the ministry paid for the new home of the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism.

The 2,000-square-foot building contains three faculty offices, a large classroom to seat 75 students, plus restroom facilities. The building, which occupies a corner of the Amazing Facts property in Rocklin, Calif., is expected to be in use year-round.

Individuals attending the College's intensive twoweek mini-session in January were the first to enjoy the new facility.

Bible Answers With Pastor Doug Batchelor



Is it OK to get angry with someone who sins against God (for example, someone who curses)?

When we hear those kinds of things, it's all right to disagree and to be upset with what was said. At the same time, we shouldn't be angry with the person who sinned. Many times people don't realize the seriousness of what they are doing. Even if someone does do it purposefully, we should follow Jesus' example. When Jesus was dying on the cross and people were blaspheming Him, He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Jesus' attitude is the same one we should have toward people who curse Him.

Which day is the Sabbath? Has it been changed, and does it still matter today?

The Bible is very clear that the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," God wrote in the Ten Commandments. "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God. ... For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11).

Many spiritual people worship Jesus on the first day of the week, believing that the Sabbath was meant for the Jews only. But is this true? In Genesis 2:1-2, the Bible says that after the Lord created the world. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." The Sabbath is a memorial of Creation, and Christ sanctified it in the very beginning. No Jews existed at the beginning of the world! God chose a day to remind not only the Jews, but all of humanity that He is both our sustainer and our Creator. God desires for all His children to rest and worship on the seventh day.

How do we know that the seventh day is what we call "Saturday"? First of all, Jews today still worship

on Saturday. For a whole nation to forget which day is the Sabbath would be hard to believe! Second, astronomers who have studied changes in the calendar affirm that while many changes to the calendar have been made, they in no way affected the weekly cycle. Third, the Bible tells us that even in His death, Jesus rested on the Sabbath. He was crucified on what was called "Good Friday," the preparation day, and He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath and rose the first day of the week (Luke 23:50-56, 24:1-3). Fourth, dictionaries define "Sunday" as the first day of the week and "Saturday" as the seventh day. Indeed, if one looks at a calendar, the weeks begin with Sunday and end with Saturday. Fifth, in 145 languages of the world, the word for the seventh day of the week means "Sabbath day"!

The importance of the Sabbath has nothing to do with legalism; it has to do with love. All love relationships require time, and God knew we needed a special day on which to nurture our relationship with Him. The devil wants us to forget about that time of rest so that our relationship with God will be destroyed. However, God still calls us to "Remember the Sabbath day" (Exodus 20:8) and honor Him as Creator by setting it apart for Him each week.

If you'd like additional material on this subject, visit our online store at www.amazingfacts.org.

What's the best way to conduct a Bible study for a small group?

I think you can conduct Bible studies in numerous ways, depending on your personality and the desires and needs of the group.

A lot of people like to pick a specific chapter or book of the Bible and have the group read the passages. Then they can go back and read the verses again, pausing after each verse to discuss what it means to the group. If you run into something that you don't understand, look it up in the concordance and read cross-reference texts that shine light on it.

You could also take various characters from the Bible and study their traits, their habits, and their lives. This always makes for a fascinating study.

Another approach is to use prepared Bible study materials, such as those available from Amazing Facts.

I definitely believe that God's people should meet in houses around the world to study the Bible. Tune in to
Pastor Batchelor's live
nationwide call-in
radio program, *Bible Answers Live*, on
Sunday evenings.
Send for a free
program guide or visit
the Amazing Facts
website to get detailed
information about the
station(s) nearest you.

Meet Amazing Facts

You are invited to meet the members of our Amazing Facts team at any one of the following locations. This schedule is subject to change without notice, so please call Amazing Facts to confirm appointments or get more information.



Doug Batchelor



Rich Cavaness



Steve DeLong



Lowell Hargreaves



Kim Kjaer



Jack Peflev



John Quade



John Bradshaw



Byron Corbett



Gary Gibbs



Jaime Jorge



Brian McMahon



Dennis Priebe



John Silvestri



Verne Snow

Doug Batchelor

February 2-10

"Living Above the Crowd While at Jesus' Feet" Revival series at Southwestern Adventist University 100 W. Hillcrest Keene. Texas

February 24 at 11 a.m.

North American ABC Managers' Convention Hilton Hotel Costa Mesa, California

John Bradshaw

January 12-February 17 Metro North Church 1201 W. Beltline Road Richardson, Texas

Rich Cavaness

January 12-February 10Gridley Church

Gridley Church 360 Indiana Street Gridley, California

February 23-March 24

Grub Box Conference Room 201 North 8th Street St. Maries. Idaho

Byron Corbett

January 12-February 17

Burien Church 14237 De Moines Memorial Drive South Seattle, Washington

Steve DeLong

January 6-February 5

Carlsbad Convention Center and Visitors Bureau 711 Muscatel Avenue Carlsbad, New Mexico

Lowell Hargreaves

January 12-February 17

Maryvale Church 6445 W. Encanto Boulevard Phoenix, Arizona

February 24-March 31

Boltz Junior High School 720 Boltz Drive Fort Collins, Colorado

Jaime Jorge

January 27

Peoria-Sun City Church 13450 N. Plaza del Rio Boulevard Peoria, Arizona

January 28

Prescott Church 2980 Willow Creek Road Prescott, Arizona

Brian McMahon

January 13-February 17

Auburn City Church 402 29th Street SE Auburn, Washington

Jack Pefley

January 19-February 24

West Sacramento Church 2860 Jefferson Boulevard West Sacramento, California

Verne Snow

January 12-February 17

North Battleford Church 1611 93rd Street North Battleford, Saskatchewan



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A.H. Bos by Harriet Bos, his wife

Glen Brown by Gordon & Jackie Tall Rosalia Brown by Evelyn Downey

Barbara Beasley by Matthew Beasley, her husband

Christian Binder by Aaron & Ellen Harder

Bill Brayshaw by Violet Brayshaw, his wife

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of five names

will be printed per

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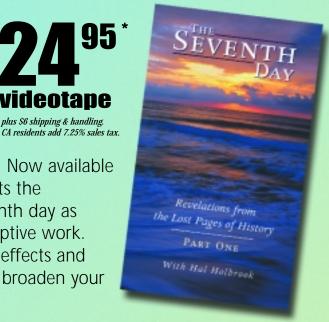
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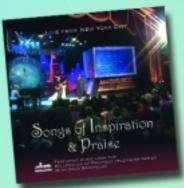
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