

The SEVEN KEYS to understanding the Bible

Because of the requests of so many of our readers,
we are again publishing this eye-opening article

by Herbert W. Armstrong

DO YOU realize God has purposely closed much of the Holy Bible from human understanding, *until now?*

Look at the pitiful spectacle!—hundreds of different sects and denominations, all confused and mixed up, each with its *own* different ideas, beliefs and practices—all disagreeing as to what the Bible says—none understanding its full true Message!

WHY?

Because none of them possesses the keys needed to open the doors to understanding, and therefore this spiritual Treasurehouse is closed to them.

Locked Up Until Now!

Even the prophets inspired in writing the Word of God did not understand much of what they wrote. Daniel records, in his last chapter:

"I heard this, but I did not understand it." When he asked the meaning of what he was inspired to write, he was told: "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end"—or, as Moffatt translates it, "*till the crisis at the close*" (Daniel 12:8-9).

The whole world is now in chaos—we have now entered the world-crisis, at the CLOSE of this age! But even now, Daniel was told, "the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (verse 10).

Since this very Word of God reveals that "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4), those who encourage the breaking of God's law, teaching that it is done away—as nearly all sects and denominations do—are, in Bible terminology, "the wicked." And who

are "the wise," who shall now understand?

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a GOOD UNDERSTANDING have all they that *do* His Commandments" (Psalm 111:10).

Again God's angel caused Daniel to record: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." *Yes, much of the Word of God especially the prophecies, were shut up and sealed until now. Today people run to and fro, all over the world, in automobiles, trains, and planes. Today knowledge has been increased. We have reached the world-CRISIS AT THE CLOSE of this Age! The wise—those who fear God and keep His Commandments, can now UNDERSTAND!*

Even forty years ago this true understanding *was still closed and sealed!* None of the established church denominations has been willing, in these forty years, to admit error, correct false teachings or accept new light now suddenly revealed! No wonder they all disagree! They are in "BABYLON"—CONFUSION!

In the first place, none can understand by himself. The carnal mind cannot "see" spiritual things. These Truths are *revealed* thru the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—and God gives His Spirit *only* to them that OBEY Him and keep His commandments! Only the truly converted can even *begin* to understand.

But even having that beginning, there are SEVEN KEYS needed to unlock these closed doors of Truth! And just as one key alone will not unlock your safety deposit box at the bank, so no one, no two, or even six of these

keys will open the scriptural doors to full UNDERSTANDING. It requires ALL SEVEN KEYS.

Church Leaders Threw Away the Seven Vital Keys

Christ gave His apostles *the keys* of true UNDERSTANDING, which unlock the Door to the KINGDOM OF GOD.

To Peter and the others, He said: "And I will give unto thee *the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*" (Mat. 16:19).

But He prophesied apostacy. "Many false prophets shall rise," He said, "and shall deceive many." Paul foretold the great "falling away" from God's Truth and Christ's Gospel, turning unto FABLES (II Thes. 2:1-9; II Tim. 4:1-4). It had even begun in Paul's day (II Thes. 2:7). Church leaders only used *the keys* to lock up the Door of the Kingdom, and then threw the keys away, even as the Pharisees and rulers did before them:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" said Jesus to them, "for ye shut up the Kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Mat. 23:13).

And so naturally, today no organized denomination, sect, or church possesses these seven KEYS!

Here they are: How many of these necessary "keys" do *you* have?

1) The True Gospel

Almost no one has this first Key, believe it or not! The Gospel of Christ is the Gospel Christ preached—a particular Message sent from God by Jesus Christ as Messenger. The Gospel of Christ is CHRIST'S OWN GOSPEL—not a story *about* His Person!

Today people are led to believe that

the Gospel is telling the story *about* Jesus—telling people *about* a Saviour; or, they believe it is "the Gospel of salvation," not understanding the true way of salvation themselves! No wonder there is NO POWER in what is falsely preached as "the Gospel" today! The Gospel of Christ "is the POWER OF GOD unto salvation." Today most popular denominations do away with all that is vital in Christ's Gospel, saying He was preaching only to Jews under the Old Covenant! WHAT IGNORANCE!

What is Christ's Gospel? What is the Message God sent to mankind by Jesus Christ? It is the GOOD NEWS of the KINGDOM OF GOD! "Kingdom" means GOVERNMENT! It is the Message of *Divine Government* — government by GOD'S LAWS!

It is the prophetic proclamation of the coming WORLD GOVERNMENT to rule all nations and bring today's confused, chaotic, war-weary earth PEACE, and JOY! It is the vital, dynamic, powerful living Message of GOD'S GOVERNMENT, first in individual hearts now in this world, later over all nations internationally in The WORLD TOMORROW!

Of course that power-filled Message includes the knowledge about the Saviour, High Priest and coming King! Of course it includes the true way of salvation, which the churches seem to have lost! And it includes also knowledge of the location of the TERRITORY to be ruled over by the King of the coming Kingdom—the fact it is *this earth*, and not heaven!

But there can be no GOVERNMENT without LAWS, and so the TRUE GOSPEL also must proclaim the LAW of God, which alone can bring peace to the world and success, happiness and joy to the individual!

The TRUE GOSPEL has to do with the nations of today's world, world conditions today, and Christ's reign over all nations in The WORLD TOMORROW! It is a full, complete, dynamic and POWERFUL Gospel which has been kept by the powers of darkness from the world for 1800 years! *This knowledge is the first KEY!*

2) Salvation IS Creation

The idea preached in this dark, confused world is that salvation is God's

Plan for *repairing the damage* caused by Satan in "the fall of man" in the Garden of Eden.

God, so the world has been taught by church leaders, had *completed* His work of creation—man was a *finished* creation, spiritual, immortal, perfect in character. Then along came Satan, and by cunning he wrecked God's handiwork, thwarted God's purpose, caused man to fall to the low plane of sinful human nature, ruined God's perfect creation! Then God is supposed to have looked down upon this colossal smash-up, and to have thereupon thought out THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION as a means of *repairing the damage*.

Salvation, then, is presented merely as God's effort to *restore* man to a condition *as good as* Adam was in the first place. The picture is that God has been doing His very best for 6,000 long years, but Satan has resisted Him! God has found Himself unable to avoid a CONTEST with Satan—a "GREAT CONTROVERSY" as one writer phrased it—in which God has done His best, but Satan has continued to outsmart Him and now today, with TIME ABOUT UP, the vast majority of people on earth are still unsaved—still on Satan's side! The contest is almost over, and the best God can now do is take revenge, and soon to send Christ to DESTROY ALL THE WICKED whom Satan has kept on his side!

Can you see that *that* picture could only have come from the deceiving false GOD OF THIS WORLD, Satan himself? It presents Satan at every turn as more powerful than God—as succeeding in his rivalry! This entire concept is a damnable LIE!

The TRUTH is the second important KEY—and it explains GOD'S PURPOSE in placing humanity on this earth!

Salvation is *not* a "repairing of the damage" done by Satan in the Garden of Eden. Satan never did alter or change God's Purpose or Plan. The devil has never thwarted God's will. All has gone always, and always will, exactly according to GOD'S PURPOSE!

Salvation is merely the COMPLETING of CREATION! Creation was *not* completed 6,000 years ago, at the time described in Genesis 1! That was merely the *first*, or *material phase* of a Creation

now still going on! What God then created was *physical—material*. The spiritual creation is a process, continuing, according to God's Plan, today!

Man was created PHYSICAL, not spiritual—MORTAL, not immortal—of the dust of the ground—the "clay model" which God the Master Potter is now fashioning and shaping, *spiritually*, into the FINAL image! Man was created purposely, with the same human nature he now has! He was first made in the mere PHYSICAL image of God, a free moral agent, with possibility revealed to him of *receiving* as God's gift the very spiritual nature of God, so that he may by God's power be made into a perfect, righteous, spiritual character, then given immortality as God's gift! *There is no contest!* Satan does nothing except what God *permits!* And God permits it FOR A PURPOSE.

Character is created by experience, and experience requires time, and therefore it is a process! As Christ our example learned by suffering, so do we! The fact that SALVATION IS THE COMPLETING OF CREATION—the *spiritual* phase of Creation—that GOD'S PURPOSE is to create in us, as free moral agents who make our own decisions, the supreme Masterpiece of all His Creative acts—holy, righteous, spiritual, immortal CHARACTERS—resisting the downpull of self-desire, building character by LIVING GOD'S LAWS—that knowledge of GOD'S PURPOSE is the *second vital KEY!*

3) God's Dual Method

A duality runs thru every phase of God's Plan. First, the *material* creation of Genesis 1, completed; second, the *spiritual* creation still in process pictured finally complete in the *prophecy* of Revelation 21 and 22. There was the *first* Adam, material—of the earth; and there is the *second* Adam, Christ Jesus, spiritual, from Heaven. There was the *first* Covenant with Israel, material and national, devoid of salvation, based upon the Birthright promise; and there is the NEW Covenant, spiritual and individual, with a spiritually begotten Israel, based upon the Sceptre promise. God made man mortal, of the dust, in order to convert him into immortality, composed of Spirit.

In this very salvation process is the

DUAL METHOD—the very word "salvation" means, first, rescuing from the penalty of eternal death, and second, the act of preserving, or imparting eternal life as God's gift. And so, in being saved, we first are now *begotten* of God by the indwelling of His Spirit in our mortal bodies as the temple, or house of the Spirit—and are now merely the *beirs* of salvation; and second, we shall finally be fully *born* of God at the Resurrection of the just, when we shall *inherit* the Kingdom.

This same **DUAL PRINCIPLE** runs all thru prophecy! First, a former, or preliminary fulfillment which is merely the type or forerunner of a second, the final climactic fulfillment occurring, usually, during this **CRISIS AT THE CLOSE** we already have entered! And positively *none* can understand the Bible prophecies unless this **DUALITY** of fulfillment is understood. It is a vital key!

4) God's Holy Days

These were given to God's people to picture, and to keep them in the understanding of, God's **PLAN** for bringing about His purpose—His reign over all the earth whose people shall have been converted to righteous immortality!

Every sect, organization or denomination which has lost God's holy days and fastened its eyes upon the pagan Romish holidays instead, has lost the knowledge of **GOD'S PLAN!**

God's holy days picture:

1st, Passover, the crucifixion of Christ;

2nd, Feast of Unleavened Bread, putting sin out of our lives, or, keeping God's Commandments—and during this festival was the "wave-sheaf" picturing the Resurrected Christ accepted of God as our High Priest;

3rd, Feast of Firstfruits, or Pentecost, picturing the coming of the Holy Spirit and the completing of this, the merely *first* and preliminary harvest of souls,

4th, Feast of Trumpets on first day of seventh month, picturing the Second Coming of Christ at the beginning of the seventh millennium, at the *last* Trump.

5th, Day of Atonement, picturing justice done by laying Satan's guilt in our sins upon his own head, removing him and chaining him in the symbolic "bottomless pit," making us finally **AT ONE** with God. Atonement means at-one-ment.

6th, Feast of Tabernacles, for seven days, picturing the **KINGDOM OF GOD** during the seventh millennium, the "great fall harvest" of souls.

And 7th, the Last Great Day, immediately following the Feast of Tabernacles, picturing the final Great White Throne Judgment which almost nobody today understands—and the final **COMPLETING** of God's Plan!

5) The Truth about Israel

The fact that the nation Israel became divided into two nations, the Ten-Tribed Kingdom, called The Kingdom of Israel, possessing the Birthright promises, and The Kingdom of Judah, composed of Judah and Benjamin and a large portion of Levi, possessing the Sceptre; and, secondly, the fact revealed during this "Time of the End" that the Jewish people today are merely a portion of the descendants of the Kingdom of Judah; and the Americans, British, and Democracies of Northwestern Europe are the so-called "Lost Ten Tribes"—or descended from the House of **ISRAEL**—and that Britain is Ephraim, and the United States is Manasseh, co-holders of the Birthright, which is the true explanation of our sudden rise to the greatest national power and wealth ever possessed by any nation.

Prophecies cannot be understood without this vital key.

6) Bible Interpretation of Symbols

God has concealed until now His prophecies of these colossal end-time world events now occurring by means of **SYMBOLS** used to describe these events—as well as by the fact of His dual principle, and that our Israelitish identity has been hidden from men

Symbols, like parables, were used, *not* to make meaning clearer, but to *hide* and *conceal* God's true meaning until the time came for *Him* to reveal the interpretation of the symbols. Just as Jesus' parables were not understood until Jesus Himself explained them in plain language, so with symbols. For generations men have been putting human interpretations upon God's symbols. An important **KEY**, therefore, is that these symbols are interpreted in plain language in the Bible itself, if not in the context, then elsewhere, and we must search for *God's own interpretation*, never apply our own.

7) God's Sabbath

Since this is the *test* commandment—the one most professing Christians refuse to obey—the one which causes the greatest *test of faith* and reliance upon God to be able to keep it, it stands as the final completing *basic key*—for "A GOOD UNDERSTANDING have all they that *do* His Commandments!"

Also it is the basic key to the *identity* of the true God—the **CREATOR OF ALL** (Ex. 31:12-17) and the key to the *identity* of **ISRAEL**. The House of Israel threw away this key to their identity—and thereby became the "lost Ten Tribes!" The great majority of the House of Judah likewise threw it away, and lost their identity—not known even today! The Jews who returned to Palestine under Ezra and Nehemiah became strict Sabbatarians, and have remained so to this day—and therefore the world looks upon them as **ISRAEL** (because they carry Israel's *identifying SIGN*) although they are *not* Israel, but only a small portion of **JUDAH!**

This completes the **KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING**—the **KEYS** to the **KINGDOM OF GOD!**

The churches have lost these **KEYS!** No wonder they are all mixed up, in confusion, each claiming the Bible says something *different*, none understanding **ITS TRUE MESSAGE!**