

**“And this Gospel ,  
shall be preached...”**  
Matthew 24:14

**Sermon Summaries from Ministers of the Worldwide Church of God**

## **HIDDEN TREASURE YOU CAN CLAIM!**

By Richard Ames

The mystery of Oak Island, off the coast of Nova Scotia, has defied solution since 1795. The island is even shaped like a question mark. Supposedly, an enormous treasure is hidden on this island, and treasure-hunters have spent millions of dollars trying to find it. But all their efforts have produced are three lengths of gold chain and a scrap of ancient parchment.

Legends about the treasure abound. Some say it belonged to Captain Kidd, or that it might be Inca treasure stolen by the Spaniards. Others feel that it might be the French crown jewels of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. Some suppose the treasure to be missing manuscripts written by William Shakespeare, or even evidence that Francis Bacon was the author of all of Shakespeare's writings. Others think the "Money Pit" actually contains the Holy Grail, which was the Passover cup.

### **Searching for Riches**

In 1795, 16-year-old Daniel McGuinness went exploring on the island and found a depression about 12 feet deep in the ground. Above the depression was an old oak tree with a block and tackle hanging from one of its limbs. This excited Daniel very much. So he went back with some friends the next day and they began digging. Sure enough, about 10 feet down, they hit a wooden plank. They found another plank 10 feet below the first, and yet

another one 10 feet below that. They tried to elicit the help of others who were stronger and older, but they were unable to get any assistance because of traditions about the island being "haunted."

Ten or 15 years later, when they were older, they went back and began digging in the same spot. Ninety feet below the surface, they found a stone with mysterious markings on it. Cryptologists later translated the markings to mean, "Ten feet below are ten million pounds buried."

This translation was contested in 1971 by a Professor Wilhelm at the University of Michigan. He claimed that this kind of cryptology was written in 1563 by one Giovanni Battista Porta. Using Porta's ciphers disk, the professor translated this message, in Spanish, to read, "At 80, guide maize or millet into the drain, signed 'F'."

The maize or millet, according to Professor Wilhelm, when poured into the flood tunnels under Oak Island, would absorb water, thereby allowing access to the treasure chambers. Wilhelm believes the final "F" stand for Philip II ("Felipe" in Spanish), king of Spain from 1556 to 1598.

Well, McGuinness and his friends died without ever getting the treasure. They sank a steel rod into the ground and hit what they thought was a chest about 95 feet down. When they came back the next day, the shaft was filled with 60 feet of water. It is speculated that it must have taken 200 men about

two years using ingenious engineering techniques to build flood tunnels in the area, so that anyone trying to get to the treasure would be flooded out.

Since then, others have tried to find the treasure. Fred Blair spent 60 years trying to get the gold, or whatever it is, out. Drilling 170 feet down, he found the lengths of gold chain and the parchment, which bore the letters "VI."

In 1970, Dan Blankenship, a construction manager from Florida, gave up his business and went to Oak Island. Using modern mining techniques, he managed to put remote television cameras down about 230 feet. At that depth, he says, "I saw a hand down there, and a treasure chest."

Since 1970, Mr. Blankenship has been working diligently, with all the engineering help he can get, and still is unable to extract the treasure. I called him in 1976 for an update. He hadn't been making much progress. A few weeks later he called and asked if I wanted to invest! I said, "Well, you can send some information, and I'll consider it." He never contacted me again.

### A Neglected Gold Mine

But here was a man who was so inspired by a treasure he thought was available that he is still there after all these years, still digging for it. But I have found other treasure that is much more valuable, and so have you. We have a gold mine that perhaps we've been neglecting. I have been searching the Bible for more than 15 years, and have reaped treasures of far more value than any Dan Blankenship will ever find buried on Oak Island.

God has given us treasures in His promises—golden guarantees that are sure. Let's examine some of these tremendously exciting and encouraging "pearls of great price." We can't possibly cover the hundreds of promises God makes, but the Bible is loaded with these treasures, if we will only claim them.

### God's Wonderful Promises

John 14 contains one of those wonderful promises, and this one happens to be the focal point of this entire Work. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for

you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (verses 1-3).

How many of you grew up with that promise in mind? Not me. It was news to me when I read in the Bible with my own eyes that Jesus said, I will come again! To me, that was good news, and it still is good news! We all need to look forward with hope to the fulfillment of this promise.

Sometimes we don't receive what God promises because we don't fulfill the requirements. God is willing to give us long life, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise" (Eph. 6:1-2). What promise? "That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (verse 3).

For honoring our parents, God says we will receive long life. That certainly is a tremendous blessing in a world where many die young. It points to one cause of many premature deaths!

### Our Needs Provided

God also promises to provide our physical needs. Christ said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). People worry about providing clothing and food for themselves. But Christ said we don't have to (verses 26, 28-29). Notice this guarantee in Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Mr. Armstrong recorded in his autobiography the story of the time he had to ask God for a dime. A baby had just been born in 1930, and when he came home, his wife exclaimed, "Hurry! Go to the store and get a quart of milk! The baby has missed one feeding, and it's a whole hour past his second feeding, and I haven't a bit of milk for him."

"Well, I'm broke," Mr. Armstrong replied. "Give me a dime." Milk was then 10 cents a quart.

"But if I had a dime, I'd have sent Beverly [their daughter] for the milk long ago," she replied. "I've been waiting for you, praying for God to hurry you home. I thought you'd have at least a dime."

The baby howled louder than ever. The Armstrongs' credit was not good at any store. "There's only one thing to do," Mr. Armstrong said. "We're

helpless of ourselves. There's no human to help us. We'll have to rely on God. He has promised to supply all our needs, and this is a need. Jesus said we should enter into our closet or small room and pray to our Father in heaven in secret, and He will reward us openly. The only small room of absolute privacy in our home was the bathroom. I locked the bathroom door and knelt beside the bathtub. God has promised to supply our every need according to His riches and glory by Christ Jesus. I believed Him." How many of us believe God's promises?

"But we had to have the answer immediately," Mr. Armstrong continued. "I had learned that sometimes God does not answer at once. He sometimes tries our faith in order to develop patience in us. But right now it seemed that the baby's milk was more urgently needed than I needed patience. I felt that there was not time or need for a longer prayer.

"Instantly the 70th Psalm flashed into my mind. God, by His Holy Spirit, inspired David to record as part of the very Word of God David's prayer wherein he asked God to 'Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Lord. . . . I am poor and needy: make haste unto me. . . . O Lord, make no tarrying' [verses 1, 5]. I knew that prayer would not be in God's Word unless it was God's will to answer that same prayer for me. So I asked God boldly to make haste.

"I arose, unlocked the door, walked back toward the kitchen. Before I even reached the kitchen one of the girls cried out from the living room window, 'Oh, Mother, here comes the old rag-and-bottle man!' 'Well, quick, Beverly,' called out my wife, 'run and stop him! We have a lot of old things in the basement that we can sell him.' The only entrance to our basement, I remember, was from the outside at the rear of the house. In eager anticipation, we led the rag-and-bottle man down the basement stairs. My wife showed him all kinds of things. We expected to get at least a dollar from him.

"He only shook his head. 'No, nothing here I want,' he said, starting back up the stairs. Our hearts sank. Halfway up the steps, he stopped and glanced at a high stack of old magazines beside the stairs. Slowly he turned and retraced his steps, examining the stack of magazines. 'I'll give you a dime for these,' he said. 'This is all I want.' I had asked God to send us a dime, immediately, in haste.

When God sent it, within the very minute I asked, we tried to increase it to a dollar or more. But the immediate *need* was a dime for milk. God has not promised to supply our wants, only our needs. The need I had asked was a dime, 10 cents. That is what God sent immediately. We had learned another lesson. We gratefully gave God thanks as I ran all the way to the store and back with the milk."

Christ Himself promised that He would be in the midst of any group that met in His name, even if there were only two or three gathered together (Matt. 18:20). So Jesus Christ is, in spirit, in the midst of all the congregations of God, wherever God's people meet. He will also dwell *in* us and give us the power to overcome.

### Divine Help in Trials

I Corinthians 10:13 contains another important promise, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God promises that even though circumstances in our lives may get tough, He will not allow us to be tested more than we can stand. He will give us the power and ability to bear it.

Mr. Armstrong was sorely tried in 1947, when Ambassador College was being started. He wrote about it in his autobiography.

Mr. Armstrong had purchased the building that is now the library and was told it would only need minor improvements to meet the Pasadena building codes. But when the building inspectors came, they ordered major remodelling work to bring the building into line with fire and construction standards. Mr. Armstrong was presented with a \$30,000 bill that he didn't have the money to pay.

He said, "The pressure was almost unbearable. The final week, early October, the contractor came up with a \$10,000 bill and demanded immediate payment. I had planned for only \$4,000 and had gone through a dozen nightmares to raise that. The pressure was almost unbearable. Everyone except my wife and I knew that the college had folded up before it even opened its doors to students.

"But of course, the living Head of His Church, Jesus Christ, knew it hadn't. How I finally raised the additional money within a few day's time, I

don't remember now. I think that it was this week that a \$5,000 loan came in, but somehow God saw us through the lesson of faith. It became almost impossible to sleep nights. I never lost faith really, never doubted the outcome, yet I had not yet learned that total, implicit, trusting faith that can relax and leave it quietly in God's hands.

"I was under terrific strain. It was literally multiple nightmares condensed into a super one. On one occasion I almost snapped. I weakened to the extent that I actually prayed one night that God would let me die through the night, and relieve me from this almost unbearable agony. By the next morning I was deeply repentant for that, and prayed earnestly for God's forgiveness. Twice, I did give up on going to bed at night, but next morning was another day, and I bounded back repentant for having given up, if only momentarily.

"Yet this \$30,000 headache was only the beginning of troubles. Others were yet to come, from within and from without. It was not until early 1949 that things eased up. By then I had come to the place that I had to pray in final desperation for six months' grace from this constant harassment. I humbly asked God to consider that I was human with human weaknesses, and please to give me six months' rest from the terrible ordeal. He did. And during that respite, I finally learned how to relax in faith, and shift the weighty burden of it over onto Christ ["Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you," as I Peter 5:7 says. That takes faith to do.] And at least up to the time of this writing, God has enabled me not only to trust Him for the final outcome, but to let faith remove the strain of anxiety."

When troubles and emergencies arise, we should be concerned. We should be on our toes to do whatever is our part, but trust God in relaxed faith to guide us and do His part, which we cannot do for ourselves. We can be free from destructive strain and worry.

God promises us correction when our lives go off course. He corrects and chastens every son He loves (Heb. 12:6-7). Romans 8:1 promises us freedom from condemnation, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." You can't buy that kind of freedom. Healing is

promised (James 5:14-15). We're promised God's Holy Spirit, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13). We are promised salvation and eternal life. Romans 8:17 says we are joint-heirs, with Christ, of the whole universe. And these all are promises we can stake our lives on.

### How to Claim God's Promises

Now how do we receive all these promises? "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36). God may not immediately answer your prayers, though when Mr. Armstrong desperately needed 10 cents, God responded quickly. But you will receive the promises after you have done the will of God and have had patience.

Hebrews 11 catalogs historical characters who "through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, *obtained promises*" (verse 33). But it also tells of those who "died in faith, not having received the promises" (verse 13). Does this mean that not all of God's promises will be fulfilled? No. These faithful servants of God are going to inherit His Kingdom and eternal life, but not without us, "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (verses 39-40). God has fulfilled His promises and will continue to do so.

God tells us to seek for these treasures—these golden guarantees. Seventy-five years ago a prospector said of the Oak Island mystery, "I saw enough to convince me that there was a treasure buried there, and enough to convince me that no one will ever get it." To this day, men are mining, trying to obtain a treasure they are sure is there.

Yet we can lay claim to much greater treasures. Remember Christ's comforting words, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). God wants to give us the Kingdom, and He will give it to all who overcome (Rev. 21:7). God wants to share the universe with all of us! And all these treasures are ours for the asking!