

# Why The Epistles?

#### **Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament**

### Why did the author write:

Romans	
1 & 2 Corinthians	To reprove moral compromises and bad behavior in the congregation; to instruct regarding proper "body life"; to correct wrong doctrine, particularly regarding the resurrection.
Galatians	To rebuke and correct a legalistic perversion of the Gospel.
Ephesians	
Philippians	
Colossians	



In His divine foresight, God "has given us everything we need for life and godliness" (2Pet. 1.3), in part by the practical instruction and correction of the apostolic epistles.



Is the apostolic instruction regarding "women and ministry" still relevant in a contemporary Western culture?

Why did the author write:						
1 & 2 Thessalonians						
1 & 2 Timothy & Titus	To instruct Timothy and Titus regarding proper practices and behavior in the congregation.					
Philemon						
Hebrews						
James						
1& 2 Peter						
1 John						
2 & 3 John						
Jude						



# Engaging The Living Word In Hebrews

#### **Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament**

#### **KEY PASSAGES**

Heb. 1.1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. 4 So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

Heb. 6.1 Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, 2 instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And God permitting, we will do so.

Heb. 6.4 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, 6 if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

Heb. 6.7 Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. 8 But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.

Heb. 10.19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Please see the related article,
"Hugging the Fire," at http://www.tmin.org/pdfs/fire.pdf



**ANCHOR TRUTHS** 

The Lord pursues an intimate fellowship with each of His people; we can each expect the blessing of His personal counsel and the accountability of His discipline.



FOR DISCUSSION

What behavior in the Jewish-Christian congregation in Italy elicited the dire warnings in the epistle to the Hebrews?

#### **KEY PASSAGES**

Heb. 10.26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. 28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Heb. 10.32 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. 33 Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. 34 You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

Heb. 10.35 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. 36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. 37 For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. 38 But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." 39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

Heb. 12.25 See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? 26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." 27 The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken — that is, created things — so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

Heb. 12.28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29 for our "God is a consuming fire."



### FAITH In James

#### **Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament**

#### **KEY PASSAGES**

James 1.2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

James 2.15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

James 2.18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder.

James 2.20 You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? 21 Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. 23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. 24 You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.



### The purpose of all prayer is to find God's will and to make that will our prayer.

— Catherine Marshall



#### What is fat?

FOR DISCUSSION

#### **KEY PASSAGES**

James 2.25 In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? 26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

James 5.5 You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.

James 5.13 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. 14 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

James 5.17 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

James 5.19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.



### Sojourners In 1 Peter

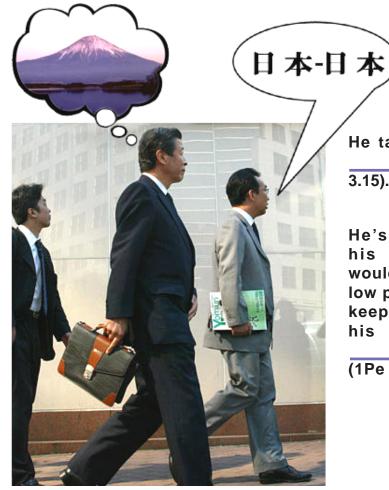
#### **Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament**

The corporate tourist from Japan is a model sojourner (1Pe 1.1,1; 2.11)...

He looks different than the majority of people he meets here, but is not bothered by that. Rather than try to\_\_\_\_\_, he is proud of his heritage (1Pe 4.4; 2.9). American natives notice him and are curious about him.

He knows that his country is the most beautiful of all; he does not expect to find here (1Pe 1.3,4; 5.1-6).

He knows his and is not surprised if he meets with racial prejudice (1Pe 4.12,13; 5.8,9). He delights in meeting fellow Japanese or expatriates who speak his language and he feels a common bond with them (1Pe 3.8; 4.8).



He talks about \_\_\_\_ (1Pe 3.15).

He's enjoying his trip, but would never allow pleasure to keep him from his

(1Pe 1.13; 4.7).

He is here to get a job done, and he doesn't waste company time. If he doesn't like our country, he consoles himself with the fact that he's only here on business: he can go home when \_\_\_\_\_(1Pe 1.3-6).



Our call to discipleship is not for the sake of this life only, but also for the "life to come" (1Tim 4.8).



What changes would make me look more like a sojourner? What changes would make our church look more like a sojourners' church?

FOR DISCUSSION

#### THE MANNERS OF THE CHRISTIANS

or the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all [others]; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners, and are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred.

—Epistle to Diognetus, ch. 5 (Early 3rd Century)



# Eternal Life In 1 John

#### **Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament**

#### The Test

#### **How To Pass The Test**

- 1. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 1John 5.1
- 2. We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. 1John 5.18
- 3. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him. 1John 2.29

To believe that Jesus is the Messiah, is to agree that He fulfills the messianic promises, to trust in Him as our atoning sacrifice and to submit to Him as Lord.



John wrote his first epistle, not to tell people how to be saved, but to tell them how to know that they already had eternal life (1 John 5.12, 13).



If God loves the world (John 3.16), why does He command us not to (1 John 2.15)?

The Test

#### **How To Pass The Test**

4. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.

1John 3.14

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

1John 4.7

5. ... for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 1John 5.4

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

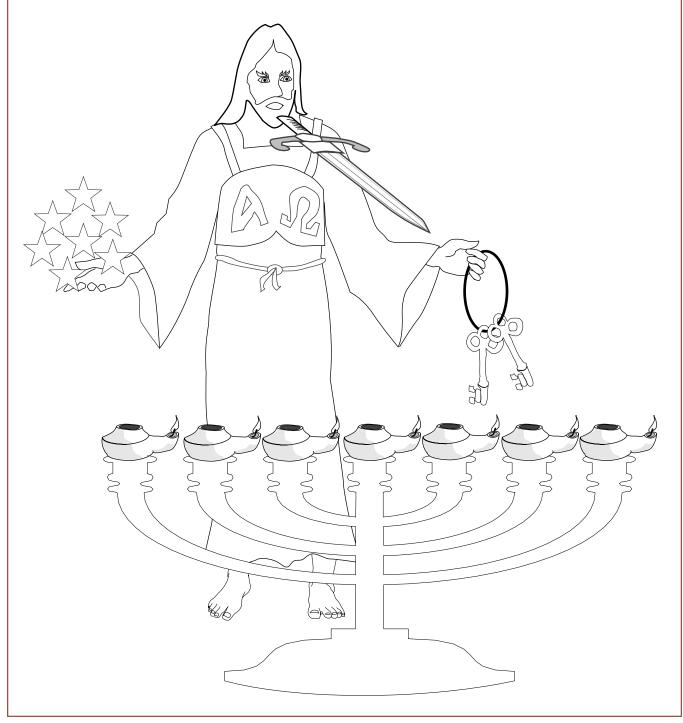
1John 2.15



## The Revealed Christ

#### **Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament**

What is the Revelation, and how is it an answer to prayer? (Rev. 19.10; Eph. 1.17)



## Western Turkey Region of the Seven Churches



#### The Churches of Revelation Mentioned in the NT:

- Thyatira: Acts 16.14
- Ephesus: Ephesians; Acts 18.20; 1 Corinthians 15.32; 1 Timothy 1.3
- Laodicea: Colossians 4.16

How does the book of Revelation illustrate that the early church understood itself as a spiritual family?



## The Divine Christ

#### **Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament**

#### Revelation Identities & Syllogisms

The Revelation is a strongly Trinitarian book, dramatically setting forth the identity and essential unity of Jesus with the Almighty God. The deity of Jesus is revealed in the following equations:

"The Alpha & Omega"

=
"The First & The Last"

=
"The Beginning & The End."

(Revelation 22.13)

#### Please complete the following syllogisms:

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"The First & Last" = "The One Who was dead and came to life" (1.17,18; 2.8)
"The One Who was dead and came to life" = Jesus Christ

Therefore, Jesus Christ = "______"

Jesus Christ = "The First & Last"
"The First & Last" = "The Alpha & Omega" (22.13)

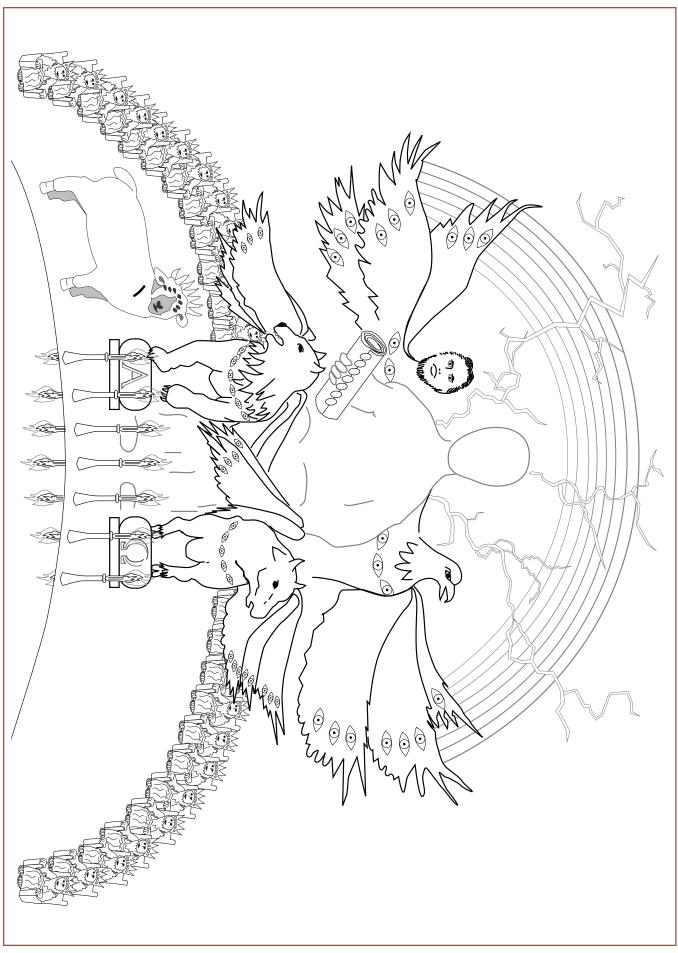
Therefore, Jesus Christ = "______"

Jesus Christ = "The Alpha & Omega"
"The Alpha & Omega" = "Lord God...Almighty" (1.8)

Therefore, Jesus Christ = "______"

Jesus Christ = The Pierced Coming One (1.5-7)
The Pierced Coming One = YHWH, the LORD (Zech. 12.1,10)

Therefore, Jesus Christ = ______
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# The Olivet Outline

#### **Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament**

1.	Read Matthew, chapter 24. What is the odd thing about the disciples' question in Mat. 24.3, and what is its explanation?
a.	They ask about the "coming" of one already
ь.	They did not expect Jesus to leave, but to of (cf. Mat. 3.11) and manifest himself in glory (Mat. 16.27).
2.	What will constitute the "beginning of birth pangs"?
3.	What will constitute the "hard labor"?
TH	he unprecedented(Mat. 24.21) that begins with the appearance of the(Mat. 24.15).
4.	What will constitute the birth?
a.	The sudden dawn of thewith its destruction of the ungodly (1 Thessalonians 5.2,3).
<i>6.</i>	The spiritual awakening (rebirth) of(Isaiah 54.1; and Isaiah ch. 66).
5.	What will immediately precede the end (Mat. 24.14)?
_ ar	in the Roman world (cf. Luke 2.1)



Just as all of human history before Christ led up to His incarnation and redemptive work, now all of human history is leading up to His return and revelation to the world.



How important is it for Christians to understand eschatology?

Please download *The Olivet Apocalypse* at:

http://www.tmin.org/pdfs/olivet.pdf

In the	i.e., in the first room of the
	, ergo, a temple must be standing at
the time of Chri	st's coming.
7. Who are the "elect"	of Mat. 24.22?
Those who are	justified by God through the death of Christ,
i.e.,	(Romans 8.33,34).
8. When did Jesus say	y He would come and gather His elect? (Mat. 24.29-31)  the unprecedented distress associated
with the abomin	nation of desolation.
	nation of desolation.  voke his disciples' interest in his coming?
9. Why did Jesus prov	
9. Why did Jesus prov	oke his disciples' interest in his coming?
9. Why did Jesus prov	woke his disciples' interest in his coming?  m from deception by false messiahs and from



## Olivet & Revelation

#### **Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament**

The Last Days — Joel 2.28-32 (Acts 2.16-21)

		The End Time Dan. 11.35,40; 12.1-	-4
Gestation	Beginning of Birth Pains	Hard Labor Jer. 30.4-7	Birth: Isa. 13.6-9; 26.19; 66.7-16
Witness & Persecution Luke 21.12-18	The First Signs Mat. 24.5-8	Great Tribulation Mat. 24.15-25	Christ's Coming Mat. 24.27-31
Witness to Governors & Kings Betrayal Persecution Martyrdom	<ul> <li>False Christs</li> <li>Wars</li> <li>Famines</li> <li>Pestilence</li> <li>Earthquakes</li> <li>Terrors</li> <li>Signs in Heaven</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Abomination of Desolation</li> <li>Unequalled Distress</li> <li>Flight from Judea</li> <li>False Christs</li> <li>False Signs &amp; Miracles</li> <li>Deception</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Sun &amp; Moon     Darkened</li> <li>Christ     Appears in     Clouds</li> <li>Nations     Mourn</li> <li>Elect     Gathered</li> </ul>
Revelation Cor  Rev 2.10,13: Present Martyrdoms	• The First Four Seals of Rev 6: (1) (2) (3)	• 6 Trumpets of Rev 8 & 9 • Jerusalem trampled, Rev 11.2 • Testimony of Two Witnesses, Rev 11.3 • Nourishment of the Woman, Rev 12.6 • Six Bowls of Rev 16.2-16	• 7th Trumpet of Rev 11 • 7th Bowl of Rev 16.17-21

1. Read Revelation, chapter 6.1 to ch	apter 8.1.	
2. What does the word earth (Gk.:	$\gamma\eta)$ mean in the book of Rev	elation?
a. The reg	ion as opposed to	(6.13).
b. The(9.4	<i>.</i> ).	
c. The	world (7.	1).
3. What are the implications of the m	eaning of <i>earth</i> in the Revelation	on?
The rule of Antichrist (13.3)	) and the phenomena	of the
Great Tribulation will be	on the Mediter	ranean
world. They willall be	e global, but have	impact.
4. Who are the four horsemen of F	Rev. 6?	
Probablygiven	to:	
• Conquer peoples		
• Stir up war		
• Cause economic cha	os & famine	
• Cause death (cf. Eze	k. 5.12)	
5. Which column of the <i>Olivet Esc</i> into on the preceding page?	hatological Outline do the fo	ur horsemen fit
Probably the	under the Beginning	of Travail.
6. Which column of the <i>Olivet Esc.</i> on the preceding page?	hatological Outline does the	5th seal fit into
Probably the	under the Great Tribu	lation since
	- c of the final martyrdor	
7. Which column of the <i>Olivet Esc.</i> on the preceding page?	hatological Outline does the	6th seal fit into
Definitely the	since it involves the	sign of the
sun and the moon, and		



## Revelation 2.17 The White Stone

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Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The	New Testament
1. In the Revelation, Jesus makes precious promises to the "Overcomer." Who is the "Overcomer"? (1 John 5.4)	
2. What is the first connotation of the White Stone? (cf. Acts 26.10).	A custom was of old, and still remains, Which life or death by suffrages ordains:
3. Who were the jurors voting against us when we were on trial for our sins? (James 2.10)	White stones and black within an urn are cast, The first absolve,
All 613	but fate is in the last.
4. What happened to all our black stones? (Isa. 53.4,5)	— Ovid (Metam. lib. xv., ver. 41
5. What is the second connotation of the White Sto	
6. An inscribed white stone would admit a success	ful gladiator to:
The post-combat	
whose name was on the s	stone.

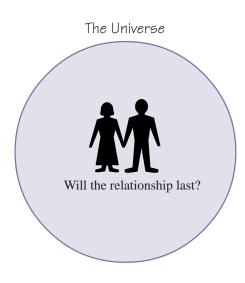
7. How is the believer's exit from the banquet different from the gladiator's?

The believer emerges with a new \_\_\_\_\_

- 8. What is the third connotation of the white stone?
- The Universe

  Who am I?

9. What two things does personal identity derive from?



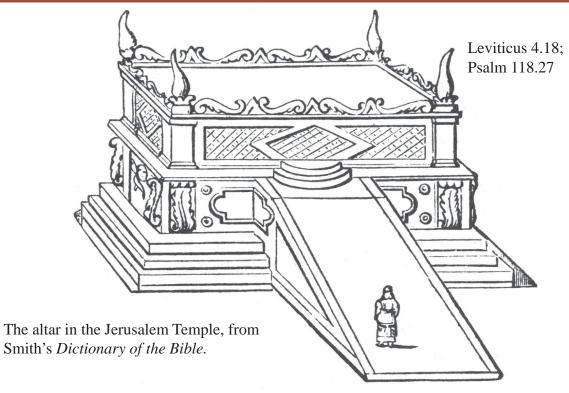
- 10. What does *meaningful* personal identity depend upon?
- 11. What is the fourth connotation of the white stone?
- 12. Who is most often symbolized in Scripture by a rock or stone? (1 Pet. 2.4-7; Song of Solomon 2.14; 1 Corinthians 10.4; Zechariah 3.9; Daniel 2.45; Isaiah 26.4)
- 13. Does Jesus, like the white stone, have our name written on himself?
- 14. Why does Jesus symbolize the giving of Himself by the giving of a stone small enough to hold in our hand?



#### The Revelation's

### **Golden Altar**

#### **Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament**



#### What happens at the altar?

#### It all points to Messiah!

Lev. 4.7; Is. 6.7	John 1.29
Exodus 29.21	Rev. 1.5,6
1 Cor. 9.13,14	John 6.35
1 Cor. 10.18	1 Cor. 10.16,17
Rev. 8.3	Rm. 8.34; Hb. 7.25
Ex. 21.12-14; 1 Ki. 1.50; 2.28	John 6.39
Leviticus 3.16	Hebrews 12.1,2



The symbolism of the Golden Altar assures us that God is faithful and *just* to forgive us when we confess our sins. At the same time it calls us to deeper holiness.



What is the fat in our lives that needs to be burned at the altar?

R DISCUSSION
1. Why do the martyrs crowd under the altar (Rev. 6.9-11)?
2. What is unusual about the altar in Revelation (Rev. 9.13; 16.7)?
3. What then does the altar represent?
4. What is the significance of the angel hurling altar fire down upon the earth (Rev. 8.3-5)?
The judgments that follow:
a. Proceed from as Judge (Acts 17.31),
b. Fall on those who have not availed themselves of the(see 9.4,20),
c. Occur in answer to theof the saints (Luke 18.7)
4. How does the Talking Altar reveal Christ's commitment to justice, and the depth of His love for His bride (Rev. 16.7; 1John 1.9; Psalm 99.8)?
He agrees with God's justice, though it means



# The Harvest of the Earth

#### **Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament**

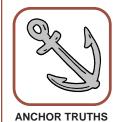
Δ	Who	are	the	144	000	of	Rev	142
Л.	AAIIO	aic	LIIC	1	, UUU	O1	IIC A.	17:

B. In what sense are the 144,000 "virgins" (Rev. 14.4, Gk. text)?

C. In what sense are the 144,000 "firstfruits"?

D. Aren't all unbelievers destroyed when Christ comes?

1.		1Th 4.13-18
2.		1Co 15.51,52
3.		Mat 13.24-30,36-43
4.		Rev 19.20
5.		Rev 14.11; 19.21
6.		Zec 12.10-13.1
7.		Isa 66.19; Zec 14.16-19
8.		Isa 66.20,21; Zec 8.20-23
9.		Rev 20.2
10.		Joh 3.36



God's plan for us is that we become like His Son (Rom 8.29). God's Son is a warrior and a shepherd.



What battles should we be fighting? What sheep should we be shepherding?

E. What do we learn from the gospel being called "eternal" (Rev. 14.6)?

F. Whom does the "son of man" (of Dan. 7.13,14) harvest in Rev. 14.16?

G. Who then does the other angel of Rev. 14.17 harvest?

H. What will be the character of Messiah's future reign?



# Calling, Power & Work

#### **Discovering Our Spiritual Family in The New Testament**

2Th. 1.11 Εἰς ὃ καὶ προσευχόμεθα πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώση τῆς κλήσεως ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ πληρώση πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης καὶ ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει

**NIV:** With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of His **calling**, and that by his **power** [= spiritual gifting, cf. 1Pe 4.11] he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act [= kingdom **work**] prompted by your faith.

### I AM CALLED HEAVENWARD (Phi 3.14) TO:

Belong to Christ: Rom 1.6

Fellowship with Christ: 1Co 1.9

His purpose: Rom 8.28

His kingdom and glory: 1Th 2.12 Be holy: Rom 1.7; 1Th 4.7; 2Ti 1.9

Obedience of faith: Rom 1.5

Be free: Gal 5.13

Hope: Eph 1.18; 4.4

Peace: Col 3.15

Salvation: 2Th 2.14

Take hold of eternal life: 1Ti 6.12

Rom. 11.29 ...God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

#### My Spiritual Gifts Are:

My Kingdom Work Is:



1Pe 4.10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.



What kingdom work are you presently engaged in? What ministry dreams has God placed in your heart? What would you do if you were not afraid?