

BEYOND TODAY

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The paradox of true freedom

It seems that the more society struggles to be free of rules and regulations, the more its people become pawns of sin. We fight for and cherish our freedoms, but just how free are we really?

Throughout history, enslavement has taken on different forms, leaving lasting damage on both individuals and societies. It has affected many from a physical, mental and emotional perspective. However to view the entire picture and understand how it affects us all, we must also consider the impact of slavery from a spiritual perspective.

Some might argue that the more freedom we have, the better off we will be. However, in a society that is becoming increasingly self-centred, intent on self-gratification and intolerant of others' opinions, freedom is defined as being able to do whatever one pleases, often with no consideration for the consequences.

This has been intensified by another societal characteristic – an excessive emphasis on personal feelings. "Follow your heart. Do what feels right." In other words, we should be free to do whatever gladdens our heart.

However, we cannot simply follow the desires of our heart, for that is influenced by our human reasoning, which can be altered, adjusted and modified to justify doing what we want to do. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah wrote: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

A tendency to justify evil actions

Using human reasoning, society advocates that freedom should enable us to live however we please, more often than not contrary to the laws set out in God's commandments.

Over recent years we've seen how declining moral standards have become increasingly acceptable throughout societies around the world, with so-called 'progressive' laws either being introduced or newly crafted to suit man's desires. The apostle Paul observed: "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:6-8).

Of the life-styles and behaviours prevailing at the end of man's age, Paul wrote, "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (2 Timothy 3:1-4). This sums up what we see today. Mankind has rejected God's law, His commandments, and, in so doing, has sown the ills we now suffer as a society. Yes, we have more freedoms than previous generations, but are we actually better off and healthier as a society? Freedom to do whatever we

please, to indulge our lusts of the flesh, is not true freedom. This type of free living will certainly lead to, ungodly behaviours.

When truth is not considered absolute

Concepts that used to define social behaviour, such as truth, honesty and integrity, are slowly unravelling. According to a 2015 poll, Barna Group found that around two-thirds of American adults either believe that moral truth is relative to circumstances, or haven't given it much thought. Only one-third believe moral truth is absolute (www.barna.com/research/the-end-of-absolutes-americas-new-moral-code/).

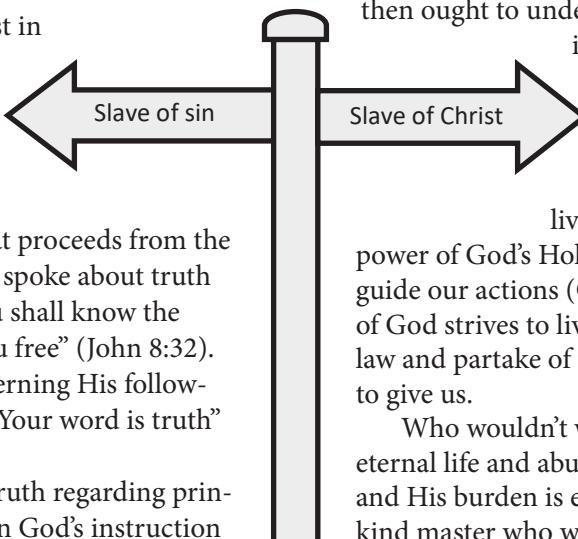
Jesus made the point that “whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34).

Similarly, in a November 2019 beliefs survey of over 3,000 respondents aged 16+, the BBC found that an overwhelming majority (70%) believed that having a moral framework was important. However, having a strong sense of what is right and wrong was considered more important by 68% of those aged 55+ compared to just 48% of those aged 16-34 (comresglobal.com/polls/bbc-beliefs-survey-november-2019).

Without absolute truth, people are left free to gratify their desires according to their own interpretation of moral truth. This can have an adverse effect on spiritual aspects of life. Whatever one undertakes based on personal desires and one's own version of morality, each individual in so doing ultimately becomes a slave of those desires.

Scripture instructs us to: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). Jesus, quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3, said: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). He spoke about truth and freedom, promising, “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). He also prayed to His Father concerning His followers: “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

Christ declared that absolute truth regarding principles and morality is found only in God's instruction book. Having in general rejected that truth, human nature instead claims free



Which master will you serve?

reign to exercise every lust of the flesh (Romans 8:5-8, quoted earlier).

Serving two masters is not an option

Paul understood this paradox, this inner battle. He recognised a confluence of factors: The absolute law of God as opposed to the breaking of that good law which is sin, plus his own desire to keep the law, contrasted with the struggle to refrain from sin (Romans 7:13-20).

He recognised that in this context we are all slaves. Which master we serve is the most important distinction. Are we slaves to sin or to righteousness? (Romans 6:15-23). Are we slaves to our heart's desires? Are we ruled by our feelings? If so, this is a path that leads to spiritual death (James 1:15). Alternatively, do we view ourselves as Paul did, as a bondservant of Jesus Christ? (Romans 1:1).

Jesus made the point that “whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34). Sin becomes a habit, because Satan knows our weaknesses and is subtle in his deception. He desires to lead us away from Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3).

If we rely upon our own interpretation of truth based on human reasoning, Satan is sure to tempt us and influence our thoughts and decisions so that we justify them and our subsequent actions as good and right. The only way to avoid serving Satan, the master of death, is to submit to God and serve the Master of life (James 4:7-8).

Freed from the death penalty our sins incur

Our lives, forfeited because of our sins, can be redeemed by Jesus' sacrifice, which covers our incurred penalty of eternal death upon genuine repentance (Romans 5:8-11). Once we realise that Jesus died on our behalf to pay the spiritual death penalty due to us, we then ought to understand that our reasonable service is to dedicate ourselves to Him as a “living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1).

Serving God means that we consciously seek to do His will in our lives and allow Jesus to live within us as we harness the literal power of God's Holy Spirit to inspire our thoughts and guide our actions (Galatians 2:19-20). A bondservant of God strives to live His way according to His perfect law and partake of the many blessings that He desires to give us.

Who wouldn't wish to serve a master who offers eternal life and abundant blessings? His yoke is light, and His burden is easy (Matthew 11:28-30). He is the kind master who washes our feet. He is the merciful master who forgives a repentant heart. He is the gracious master who lays

down His life for contrite sinners. He releases “those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage,” thus providing peace of mind (Hebrews 2:15). Above all He promises an abundant and fulfilling life with Him and the Father as literal children in the Family of God forever.

True freedom requires the perfect law of God as a boundary for our self-destructive desires. Freedom from sin requires accepting Jesus as our Lord and Master. True freedom is serving God as a bondservant and being a liv-

ing sacrifice unto Jesus Christ, thereby avoiding spiritual slavery and the fruit thereof – eternal death.

Freedom is a paradox. If we are free to do whatever we please, we become a slave of our desires. However, if we choose to serve God as a bondservant, then we are no longer a slave of sin and can know true freedom.

For further study on how to become a true bondservant of Christ, please request or download our Bible study aid *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*.

Mark Mirigian

Are all Israelites Jews?

There is often misunderstanding regarding the biblical tribes of Israel.

Today almost everyone identifies the name Israel with the Jews, assuming that the Jewish people are the sole remaining descendants of the ancient nation of Israel. This assumption, however, is incorrect.

Technically today's Jews are descendants of two of the Israelite tribes: Judah and Benjamin, plus a considerable part of a third, the priestly tribe of Levi. However these are just three of the twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 35:23-26).

Many may be unaware that ten other tribes in ancient Israel were never called Jews. These became historically distinct and politically separate once the kingdom divided in the days of King Rehoboam. 1 Kings 12 explains how this came about. They retained the name Israel, while their brothers to the south became the kingdom of Judah, from which the term “Jew” was derived.

Thus this northern coalition of tribes had already become an independent nation, separate from the house of Judah, by the time the word Jew first appears in the biblical narrative. In fact, the first time the term appears in the King James Version of the Bible, Israel was at war with the Jews (2 Kings 16:5-6).

Are all Israelites Jews? No! Jews – the citizens and descendants of the kingdom of Judah – are indeed Israelites, but not all Israelites are Jews. Since all twelve tribes, including Jews, are descendants of their father Israel (Jacob), the term Israelite applies to all of the tribes. The term Jew, however, is accurate only for the tribes that comprised the kingdom of Judah and for their descendants.

The patriarch Jacob, when blessing his twelve sons just before his death, indicated that all twelve tribes would exist at the time of the end. “And Jacob called his sons and said, ‘Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you *in the last days*’” (Genesis 49:1).

Many prophecies show that at Jesus Christ’s second coming He will gather the descendants of Israel and Judah from the ends of the earth (Isaiah 11:10-12; Jeremiah 23:3-8; Ezekiel 39:25-29). At that time, they will once again become a single nation, never again to be divided, and with one king ruling over them (Ezekiel 37:15-22).

To learn more of the whereabouts of some of the non-Jewish descendants of ancient Israel and their inheritance, please request or download our booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.

Israel – a spiritual dimension

In addition to the promises of physical blessings made to the twelve tribes of Israel, God also made spiritual promises to their forefather Abraham regarding the Christ: “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 22:18; see also Galatians 3:16).

In the New Testament, Christians are linked to Abraham, who is sometimes referred to as the father of the faithful. The apostle Paul wrote to a gentile audience, “And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). This includes those promises concerning Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sin and everlasting life.

Paul also wrote, “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God (Romans 2:28-29). He also referenced “the Israel of God” in Galatians 6:16.

Our booklet *The Church Jesus Built* explains this subject in more detail.

Resurrection: Our only gateway to eternal life

Many religious traditions teach the concept of an “immortal soul” to explain how everlasting life might be attained. The Bible refutes this idea.

Over the past year or so, death has hit many people hard and unexpectedly. Well over 100,000 people in the UK have succumbed to Covid-19. With little regard to age, gender or race, the disease has taken both the frail and the seemingly healthy.

Restrictions aimed at slowing the spread of the virus have resulted in hurried funerals with few in attendance and no chance of a get-together afterwards to share memories and comfort those bereaved.

Religious notions about what happens to the dead are often vague and contradictory. God’s word, the Holy Bible, is the only authoritative source of knowledge on this matter.

No immortal soul

The biblical teaching on how to live forever differs in many respects from popular religious beliefs. It is not based on the concept of an immortal soul. In fact, the phrase “immortal soul” is nowhere to be found in the Bible – neither in the Hebrew Scriptures nor in the Christian New Testament. Instead God’s word asserts that “the soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). There is no immortality associated with the Hebrew word *nephesh* meaning “soul,” “life” or “living being.” The term refers to



Do the dead really go to heaven?

(Shutterstock)

humans and animals equally.

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy about the glorified Christ with these words: “He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see . . . (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

Can anything be clearer? Of all those who have experienced human life, Christ alone has immortality. Nobody apart from Jesus has yet been resurrected to live forever, although the Bible records accounts of a few restored to physical (i.e. not immortal) life by the mercy of God.

The apostle Paul also tells us that the resurrection of the just is still in the future: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his

God’s word declares that “the soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20).

own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming” (1 Corinthians 15:22-23). This shows that none of the dead in Old Testament times, even those with close relationships with God, have not yet been resurrected to everlasting life. This is backed up in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Hebrews 11:13 and 39-40.

The only certain way to live again

The book of Daniel in the Old Testament gives us the end-time prophecy of the righteous dead receiving life everlasting. The time element refers to the return of Jesus Christ. Daniel 12:1-2 clearly says: “And at that time . . . many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Some to everlasting life. Some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

There is no mention here of an immortal soul in heaven being reunited with the body. Instead, the Bible speaks of the saints of God being asleep “in the dust of the earth” at Christ’s return. Jesus Himself referred to Lazarus sleeping after he had died (John 11:11).

There is no transmigration of “immortal” souls, no

entrance into heaven, hell or purgatory when a person dies. Both in the Old and New Testaments the Bible teaches that only by means of a resurrection from the grave is any restoration to life achievable.

More than one resurrection

In this age, God is calling just a few to Himself. Jesus referenced this frequently. For example, He said: “Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are *few* who find it” (Matthew 7:14). He also called His Church a “little flock” (Luke 12:32).

The author of Hebrews mentions that “it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgement” (Hebrews 9:27). However, the apostle Peter notes that for Christ’s disciples, “the time has come for judgement to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17).

Those called in this present age and, therefore, being judged now by the way they live and grow to be like Christ, look forward to being in what the Bible calls the “first resurrection”

(Revelation 20:4-6). The book of Hebrews refers to this as “a better resurrection” (Hebrews 11:35). These comparative terms show that what is called “first” or “better” will be followed by at least one more resurrection. Those in the first resurrection will be kings and priests for a 1000-year period, helping Christ with the survivors of the end-time troubles and teaching them God’s ways. (To study this aspect further, please request or download our booklet *Christ’s Reign on Earth: What It Will Be Like*.)

After the 1000 years, all the dead who have not been called and who were not judged in this age will be raised to physical life. This will be their opportunity to be judged on the understanding which will be made available to them at that time. This is the second resurrection and their time of judgement (Matthew 12:41-42).

During this judgement period, they will also be offered everlasting life. This will be their one and only chance of truly comprehending God’s plan of salvation, and rejection of it will result in the second and final death in the lake of fire. Revelation 20:4-6 and 11-15 compare these two resurrections and those who are raised in each one.

Everlasting life becomes a reality

For those called now, the attaining of immortality is fully explained in 1 Corinthians 15. Referring to those

true followers of Christ, who are alive at His second coming, the apostle Paul wrote: “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). Changed to what though? Verse 53 gives the answer: “For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality.” Thus, it is a question of “putting on” immortality rather than already having an immortal soul residing in us. It is at the time of this first resurrection that the righteous will be clothed with immortality, not before.

Just as God the Father raised Jesus from the dead, so the glorified Christ will raise the saints – those He has called and sanctified – from the dead, as we read in John 6:40: “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up *at the last day*.” Those in this first resurrection will be made like the glorified Christ (1 John 3:1-2; Philippians 3:20-21). Indeed they will be the very children of God – literal brothers and sisters of Christ (Hebrews 2:11).

This is possible because, as the apostle Paul notes in Romans 5:10: “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Road to eternal life

Our salvation is a gift from God made possible because Jesus, the Son of God, atones for our sins when we repent. That gift of everlasting life is certain for those who believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and do the will of the Father. That promise of living again can only come about through a resurrection from the dead.

Most Christians believe they will go to heaven when they die, but this belief is not biblical. Instead, the Bible teaches that the faithful in God will inherit eternal life at Christ’s second coming. Billions who have died, most knowing little or nothing about Jesus Christ, will be resurrected to physical life after the Millennium to be offered their chance for salvation.

God’s plan for humankind is far superior to anything that we can imagine!

To study further please request or download our booklets *Jesus Christ: Saved By His Life, What Happens After Death?* and *The Road to Eternal Life*.

Gerhard Marx

FAQ: Does the New Covenant abolish God's commandments?

Under the Old Covenant, God wrote the law on tablets of stone. It was external to the thinking and motives of the people. It may have been part of their literature, but certainly not in their hearts.

The popular belief that the New Covenant abolishes God's law reflects a misunderstanding of both covenants. Scripture tells us that Christ came as the Mediator of a "better covenant, which was established on better promises" (Hebrews 8:6). However, it was not established on different laws. The laws stayed the same.

The only weakness, or fault, in the original covenant was with the people, not with the law. "Because finding fault *with them*, He says: 'Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah'" (verse 8). It was because the people "did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD" (verse 9).

God's Spirit makes the difference

We are to internalise His law – to love it and obey it willingly. God promises: "I will give you a new heart and put a new *spirit* within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgements and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

God's Spirit enables His people to obey His laws. Those lacking that Spirit are incapable of wholehearted obedience. Why? "For the mind-set of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit itself to God's law, for

it is unable to do so. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7-8, Holman Christian Standard Bible).

This is why the Old Covenant and the New Covenant differ. Paul explains that "what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh" God has accomplished by sending Jesus, who overcame the flesh and "condemned sin [lawlessness] in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:3-4; see also 1 John 3:4).

The International Critical Commentary in reference to Romans 8:4 says: "God's purpose in 'condemning' sin was that His law's requirement might be fulfilled in us, that is, that His law might be established in the sense of at last being truly and sincerely obeyed – the fulfilment of the promises of Jer[emiah] 31:33 and Ezek[iel] 36:26."

In a footnote to Jeremiah 31:33-34 the commentary explains that this passage is "often misunderstood as a promise of a new law to take the place of the old or else as a promise of a religion without law at all. But the new thing promised in v. 33 is, in fact, neither a new law nor freedom from law, but a sincere inward desire and determination on the part of God's people to obey the law already given to them."

The Ten Commandments in the New Testament

These passages in the New Testament confirm, either explicitly or by example, that Jesus and the apostles viewed the Ten Commandments as necessary for true Christian living.

- **First Commandment:** Matthew 4:10; 22:37-38.
- **Second Commandment:** 1 John 5:21; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 10:7, 14; Ephesians 5:5.
- **Third Commandment:** Matthew 5:33-34; 7:21-23; Luke 11:2; 1 Timothy 6:1.
- **Fourth Commandment:** Luke 4:16; Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4; Hebrews 4:4, 9.
- **Fifth Commandment:** Matthew 15:3-6; 19:17-19;

Ephesians 6:2-3.

- **Sixth Commandment:** Matthew 5:21-22; 19:17-18; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:19-21; James 2:10-12.
- **Seventh Commandment:** Matthew 5:27-28; 19:17-18; Romans 13:9; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 10:8; Ephesians 5:5; Galatians 5:19-21; James 2:10-12.
- **Eighth Commandment:** Matthew 19:17-18; Romans 13:9; Ephesians 4:28.
- **Ninth Commandment:** Matthew 19:17-18; Romans 13:9; Colossians 3:9; Ephesians 4:25.
- **Tenth Commandment:** Luke 12:15; Romans 7:7; 13:9; Ephesians 5:3, 5.



Q Who is the “queen of heaven” who is mentioned in Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:17-19, 25?

FAQ

A To identify this individual we need to begin with the word “Easter” which appears once in the King James Version of the Bible in Acts 12:4. Reputable scholars and reference works point out that the Greek word for “Easter” in this verse is actually *pascha*, meaning “Passover.” Modern translations correctly translate this word as “Passover”, as does the King James Version in other verses (see Matthew 26:2, Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

Vine’s *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* refers to the term Easter thus: “*Pascha* . . . mistranslated ‘Easter’ in Acts 12:4, KJV, denotes the Passover . . . The term ‘Easter’ is not of Christian origin. It is another form of Astarte, one of the titles of the Chaldean goddess, the queen of heaven. The festival of Pasch [Passover] held by Christians in post-apostolic times was a continuation of the Jewish feast . . . From this Pasch the pagan festival of ‘Easter’ was quite distinct and was introduced into the apostate Western religion, as part of the attempt to adapt pagan festivals to Christianity” (1985, p. 192, “Easter”).

Let the Bible Answer...

What does the Bible say about fasting?

Christ’s followers should fast:

Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14-15; Acts 13:2-3.

Prayer should accompany fasting:

Mark 9:29 (KJV/NKJV).

Some reasons for fasting are given in:

Ezra 8:21-23; Joel 2:12-13; Isaiah 58:3-7; Acts 10:1-2, 30-31; 13:2-4.

The Chaldean deity Astarte is mentioned in the Bible. She is referred to as “Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians” (2 Kings 23:13) and, as Vine’s mentions, “queen of heaven,” the worship of whom God condemned (Jeremiah 7:18; Jeremiah 44:24-28).

Another link to this pagan goddess appears in Ezekiel 8:14, where the prophet in vision saw women weeping for the god Tammuz. The mother of Tammuz was called Ishtar, an ancient Babylonian fertility goddess and yet another variant of Astarte or Easter. (Please see our booklets *Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Matter Which Days We Observe?* and *Easter: The Rest of the Story*.)

Q What do you teach about immunisations or vaccinations?

FAQ

A What follows is the United Church of God’s official response to this often-asked question:

“Thank you for your question about vaccinations or immunisations.

“As a Church, we are not experts in the practice of medicine. The Bible says nothing about immunisations one way or the other. Therefore, we do not believe it is our responsibility to address this topic. Information on vaccinations and immunisations may be found from a variety of authoritative sources.

“The United Church of God does not judge those who choose to, or who chose not to be, immunised. This must be a personal decision made by the individual, and Christians should respect the personal decisions of others in such matters.”

Q Are masks and vaccines precursors to the mark of the beast mentioned in Revelation 13:16-18?

FAQ

A It is highly unlikely either of these are or will become the mark of the beast. This political power arises after a quarter of the world’s population has died during the opening of the first four seals of Revelation 6:7-8 (see also Matthew 24:4-14). Persecution of God’s people occurs from the fifth seal, with the rise of the beast power and its religious consort, which causes all to worship the beast (Revelation 6:9-11; 13:1-15).

To study this subject further please read page 51 of our booklet *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*. See also our *Beyond Today* TV programme on the mark of the beast at ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-television-program/beware-the-mark-of-the-beast. A transcript of this programme is also available on the web site.



Letters From Our Readers

Subscribers renew, share their thoughts

My sincere thanks go out to all the Beyond Today team for the chance to read well researched articles and Supplement giving the opportunity for people like myself to be inspired and to learn to grow in God's word. Please send me your *Bible Study Course*.

Reader in Devon

I enjoyed every bit of my subscription. It taught me a lot on how to adapt and remain steadfast with the events of our time. I would appreciate more issues.

Reader in Dartford

Excellent read, very enlightening and thought-provoking articles. I look forward to each issue.

Reader in Bedford

Comfort in stressful times

I find the magazine very helpful at a time of all this stress. Thank you all for helping us understand why these things are happening. This situation that mankind has got itself into will only get worse.

Reader in Bolton

Thank you for your continued and untiring work among God's people. You give encouragement, reassurance and hope in the midst of this dark world.

Reader in Nottingham

I've really enjoyed reading *Beyond Today*. In this time of Covid it's hard some days, but it does make you think about God, and evil and doing the right thing.

Reader in Norwich

Your magazines are so informative and such a comfort to me.

Reader in Ireland

Hope for all

What I like about your magazine is that you explain how no human being is discounted from salvation. Some are called now (the "firstfruits") and others will be resurrected to mortal life and given the chance for everlasting life later.

We all have the potential to become spirit beings that will live forever in God's family. When God offers us [everlasting] life has to do with His time sequence.

Reader in Somerset

[The above letter has been edited for space.]

Editor's comment: Further explanation on God's plan for His human creation can be found in the article on pages 4 and 5 of this Supplement and in our booklet God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind.

More to discover

Thank you for all the magazines and booklets you produce. They have led me slowly and carefully into understanding many of the marvellous secrets of God. Through this experience I know that there is much more to discover.

Reader in Ireland

I'm learning so much thanks to your *Bible Study Course* lessons. I've opened my heart to God.

Student in Gloucester

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