

CHAPTER FOUR

The Consummation of Human History

Let us discuss the biblical concept of the *Last Days*. The Bible tells us that in the Last Days the heavens will pass away and the elements will be dissolved by fire (2 Pet 3:10); and it tells us that the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven (Mt 24:29). It further predicts that with the trumpet call of God, Christ will return, and the deceased believers in Christ will rise up to meet him in the air, followed by those believers who are living when Christ returns (1 Thess 4:16,17).

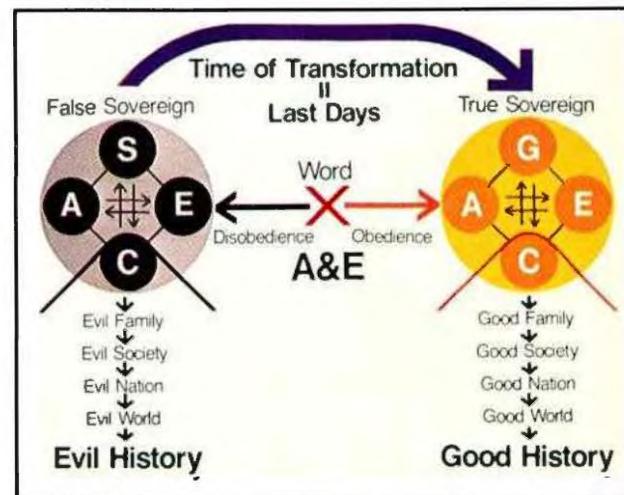
Are these predictions to be taken literally, or are they to be taken symbolically, like many other crucial passages in the Bible? Let us answer these questions through understanding human history. How did it begin? Where is it going? What is its ultimate goal?



I. THE MEANING OF THE LAST DAYS

What kind of world would have come about if Adam and Eve had obeyed the command that God gave them in the Garden of Eden? Adam and Eve would have become perfect as individuals, and on that basis they would have established an ideal family and borne sons and daughters with natures of goodness. Their thoughts and actions would have been centered on God, and they would have thus built a family, society, nation, and world in which God alone is sovereign. Such a world would have been the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. If this had come to pass, their lives would have been lives of goodness, and the histories of their family and the world would also have been histories of goodness. The history that God originally purposed was to be one of only goodness.

However, because the first man and woman fell, they did



not become true persons embodying divine nature, but rather became persons embodying evil nature. Fallen Adam and Eve gave birth to children with original sin and thus formed evil families and societies and an evil world. The thoughts and actions of fallen man have always been dominated by Satan, and this world thus became Hell on earth, full of sin and suffering. Man's individual, family, national, and world histories, without exception, have been histories composed primarily of conflict, sin, and evil.

According to God's original plan, the content of human history was to have been only goodness, but because of the Fall, human history began with evil. Could God simply be indifferent and leave mankind in that state? No. Through His work for salvation, God will definitely fulfill what he originally purposed (Is 46:11). Although human history began as a history of sin and evil, because of God's dispensation to realize the Purpose of the Creation, human history has been the history of the dispensation to "restore" the lost Purpose of the Creation. The ultimate goal of human history has been to supplant the evil history with the good history that God had originally planned. The Last Days is the period when the evil world of Satan's sovereignty is finally transformed into the ideal world of God's sovereignty. The Last Days is the time when the fallen world, or Hell on earth, is transformed into the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, the place where the Purpose of the Creation has been realized.

Many have lived in fear of the Last Days because they thought it would be a time of supernatural calamities. However, contrary to what they have believed, it will not be a time of such calamities. Rather it will be a time of joy, because it is the time when the ideal world which man's original nature has longed for will be established. The Last Days is the time when the evil history will end, but it is also a time of hope because it signals the beginning of the age of goodness. However, God cannot establish goodness and build the Kingdom of Heaven without destroying evil and hell. This judgment will be brought about by the *Word* of God (as explained in Section IIB). So those who live a life of evil should look to the Last Days with dread while those who are obeying the Will of God should look forward to the Last Days with hope and joyous anticipation.

Investing all of his heart and love, God has constantly worked to realize the ideal world; thus, he has constantly worked to bring about the Last Days. But unfortunately, each time that God has tried to bring about the Last Days, man has not fully carried out his responsibility, and God's Will has been left unfulfilled. According to "The Principle of the Creation," God's purpose cannot be fulfilled by God alone; man's

**Fullfillment of the
Dispensation for
the Last Days**



Man's Cooperation



**God's Work to bring about
the Last Days**

cooperation is also absolutely necessary. Then, according to this principle, the dispensation for the Last Days, which is to fulfill the Purpose of the Creation, also cannot be fulfilled by God alone.

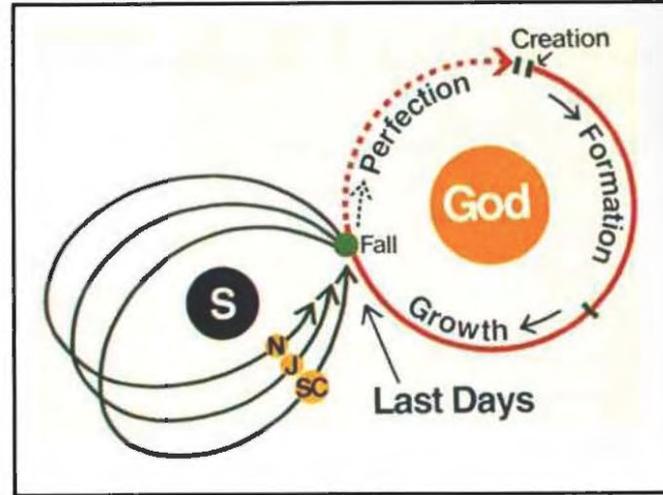
It is for this reason that the Bible indicates there have been a number of attempts to bring about the Last Days. For example, at the time of Noah, God said, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Gen 6:13), indicating that Noah's time was to have been the Last Days. God intended to put an end to the sixteen hundred years (biblical record) of the history of sin and evil by means of the *Flood Judgment*. God intended to destroy evil and then establish the ideal world of his sovereignty and begin a new history of goodness centered on Noah's family. Noah's time was to have been the Last Days, but because of Ham's failure, Noah's family could not fulfill its responsibility (refer to "Noah's Family in the Dispensation for Restoration"), and God's intention to bring about the Last Days could not be fulfilled at that time. Though Noah's family could not accomplish God's Will, since his Will itself is absolute, God continued his dispensation. Centered on the prophets, God has continued the dispensation toward the Last Days—that is, toward the judgment of sin and evil and the preparation for establishing the ideal world.

On this foundation Jesus came to end the history of evil and to realize the *Ideal for the Creation*. Thus, his coming marked another attempt to bring about the Last Days. This is why Jesus referred to himself as coming to judge (Jn 5:22) and why Malachi prophesied, "For behold, the day comes, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, . . . so that it will leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal 4:1).

But by not believing in Jesus, the people of Israel failed in their responsibility. This delayed the fulfillment of God's Will until the Second Coming. Therefore, the Last Days will be at the time of the Second Coming. This is why Jesus said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man" (Lk 17:26). It is also why Matthew 24:29 predicts that at the Second Coming wonders and changes in the heavens similar to those predicted for Noah's time and Jesus' time will take place (Gen 6:6,7,13 and Is 24:19, respectively).

II. PHENOMENA PROPHESED FOR THE LAST DAYS

To understand the Bible passages which describe the various phenomena prophesied for the Last Days, it is necessary to understand the nature of God's will for the Purpose of the



God's Attempts to bring about the Last Days

Noah	Ham's Sin
Jesus	Rejection by the Chosen People
Second Coming	?

Bible Predictions for the Last Days

Destruction of Heaven and Earth	II Pet 3:12 Gen 6:13 Isa 66:22 Rev 22:1
New Heaven and New Earth	
Judgment by Fire	II Pet 3:12
Meeting the Lord in the Air	I Thess 4:17
Sun and Moon Darken	
Stars Fall from Heaven	Matt 24:29



Rev 22:1
II Peter 3:12



Jeremiah 23:29

Fire = Word

II Peter 3:12

Mal 4:1
John 5:22
John 9:39
Luke 12:49

I John 12:48
II Thess 2:8
Isaiah 11:4
John 5:25

Creation, which underlies the dispensation for the Last Days. Since God cannot fulfill the Purpose of the Creation until he ends the world of evil, in the Last Days evil will be destroyed. More importantly, however, the Last Days is the time for the fulfillment of the Purpose of the Creation. Once we understand that the history of mankind is a history of the dispensation to fulfill the Purpose of the Creation, it is easy to see that the passages in the Bible that predict terrifying calamities for the Last Days, such as the destruction of heaven and earth, cannot be taken literally. If these passages are not to be taken literally, what do they signify?

A. The Heavens and the Earth Destroyed and a New Heaven and New Earth Established

(2 Pet 3:12, Gen 6:13, Is 66:22, Rev 21:1)

Though Genesis 6:13 says that God intended to destroy the earth at Noah's time, God did not actually do so. Elsewhere, the Bible assures us that the earth is eternal: "A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains for ever" (Eccles 1:4) and "He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded for ever" (Ps 78:69). God would never have made any plan for the Garden of Eden, the eternal Kingdom of Heaven on earth, if it could not be realized. Since God's Kingdom is to be eternal, and the earth is the place where he will establish his Kingdom, then the earth must also be eternal. By all means God will fulfill the Purpose of the Creation on this earth.

Then what is the meaning of the Bible verses 2 Peter 3:12 and Isaiah 24:19, which refer to the destruction of the heavens and the earth? The destruction of the heavens and the earth that are described in the Bible mean the destruction of the satanic sovereignty that has controlled heaven and earth since man's fall. The appearance of a new heaven and earth means the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven, centered on the Messiah, under the sovereignty of God.

B. Heaven and Earth Judged by Fire

(2 Pet 3:12)

2 Peter 3:12 tells us, "... the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire!" If this were to happen literally, then God's Purpose for the Creation could not be realized. Malachi 4:1 prophesied that Jesus' day would be a day of destruction by fire; in John 5:22 and John 9:39, Jesus is the master of Judgment; and in Luke 12:49, Jesus said he came to cast fire upon the earth. But Jesus never brought about a judgment by literal fire.

So what do these verses mean? They must have a symbo-

lic meaning. In Jeremiah 23:29, God says that His Word may be likened to fire. Judgment by fire is really judgment by the Word, or Truth. In John 12:48, Jesus says, "He who rejects me and does not receive my saying has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day." 2 Thessalonians 2:8 says that "... the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the *breath of his mouth*," which actually means by the Word. Similarly, Isaiah 11:4 says, "... and he shall smite the earth with the *rod of his mouth*, and with the *breath of his lips* [the Word] he shall slay the wicked" (emphases added). John 5:24 says, "... He who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." From these verses, it is clear that judgment by fire means judgment by the Word.

C. Meeting the Lord in the Air

(1 Thess 4:17)

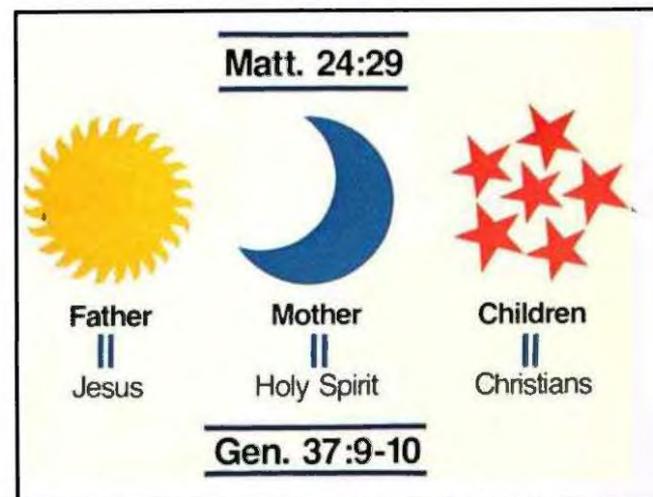
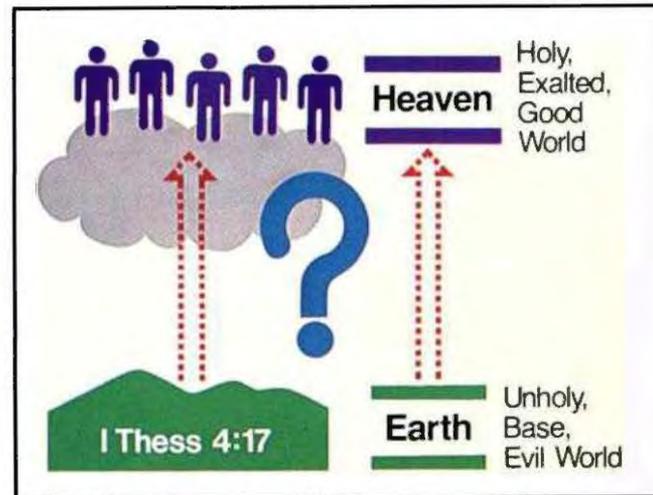
1 Thessalonians 4:17 says, "Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord." The Last Days is the time of the fulfillment of the Purpose of the Creation. Therefore the prophecy that believers will meet the Lord in the air in the Last Days cannot be a literal one, because the air is not the place where the Purpose of the Creation is to be fulfilled.

In the Bible 'heaven' usually means the holy, exalted, and sinless realm which is under the sovereignty of good, while 'earth', its opposite, means the unholy, base, and sinful realm under the sovereignty of evil. For example, when we say, "... Our Father who art in heaven . . ." (Mt 6:9), we do not mean that God is located in the sky, but are referring to the holy and exalted realm of God's existence. Thus, to "meet the Lord in the air" does not mean the physical elevation of Christians to meet Christ in the sky, but rather refers to the development of their inner spiritual qualities and their serving Christ in the world of good sovereignty when he returns and establishes the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

D. Sun and Moon Darkened; the Stars Fall from Heaven

(Mt 24:29)

Matthew 24:29 says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven . . ." Should these calamities come to pass, then the Purpose of the Creation could not be fulfilled. Then, what is the meaning of these



predictions? Genesis 37:9,10 gives us an insight. There we find the interpretation of one of Joseph's dreams, in which the sun symbolizes the father, the moon symbolizes the mother, and the stars, their children. Jesus and the Holy Spirit give rebirth to fallen man and thus stand in the position of father and mother (refer to "Christology"). Therefore, in the New Testament (Mt 24:29), the sun and the moon represent Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who are the source of the light of truth which illuminates the spirit and heart of mankind, and the stars represent the believers (Christians), who are the "children" of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Viewed in this manner, the sunlight symbolizes the light of truth of Jesus' words, and the moonlight symbolizes the light of the Holy Spirit. To say that the sun and the moon will be darkened is to say that the light of a new expression of the truth will outshine that of Jesus and the Holy Spirit (i.e., the New Testament). How is this possible? Just as the Old Testament was outshone when Jesus and the Holy Spirit came with new words that were to fulfill the Old Testament, when Christ comes again with a new expression of the truth, the words of Jesus and the Holy Spirit will be outshone. For truth to lose its light means that the period of its mission has ended with the coming of an age for a new expression of the truth. The "stars" falling from heaven represent those Christians in the Last Days who do not accept the truth from the Lord and thus lose their position as the children of God.

In Luke 18:8 Jesus asked, "... when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?" On another occasion he said that at the Second Coming he would declare to many believers, "... I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers" (Mt 7:23). Though the leaders of Israel had been eagerly waiting for the Messiah, all "fell" by rejecting the new teachings which Jesus brought. Jesus foresaw the possibility that the religious leaders at the time of the Last Days would do the same thing, and so he said these things as a warning.

III. THE PRESENT DAYS ARE THE LAST DAYS

Jesus promised that he would return soon (Rev 22:20; Mt 10:23, 16:28; Jn 21:22). As a result, Christians of every age have believed that their time was the Last Days and the time for Christ's return. Based on an overall view of the history of God's Dispensation for Restoration, we can know that we are now living in the actual age of the Second Coming. This will be explained more fully in the chapter "The Second Coming." However, we can also know that our time is the Last Days by

observing events in the world around us. As Jesus said,

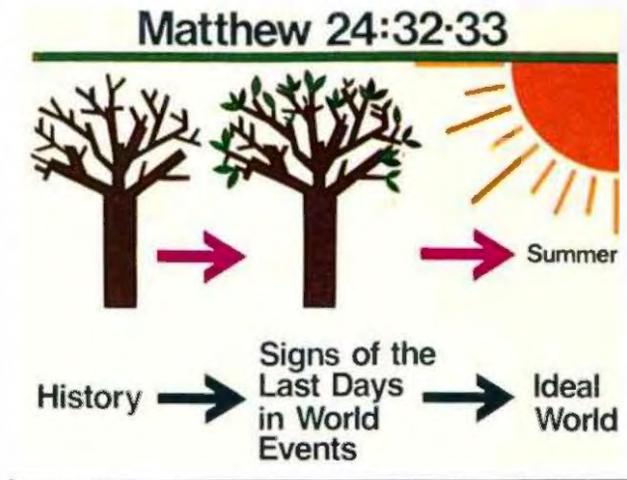
From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. (Mt 24:32,33)

What kinds of signs would indicate that we are in the Last Days? The goal of human history is the establishment of God's ideal world, which is the world based on the realization of the Three Blessings. The Last Days is when the evil world is destroyed, but it is also the time just prior to the establishment of the ideal world. Therefore, if our era is the Last Days, we should be able to see signs in the world that the Three Blessings are being realized. Based on this understanding, we will show that we are now living in the Last Days. Let us examine our era in light of the Three Blessings.

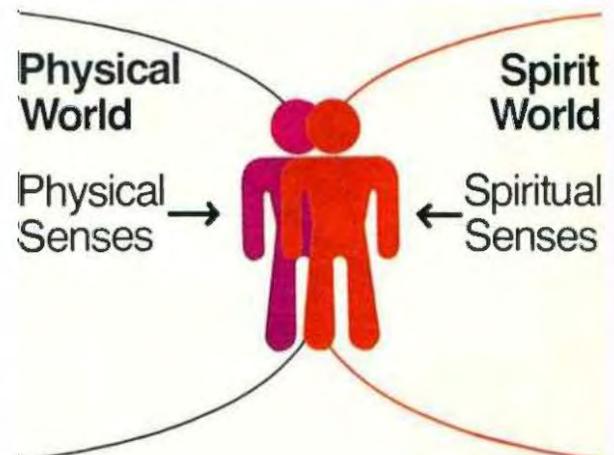
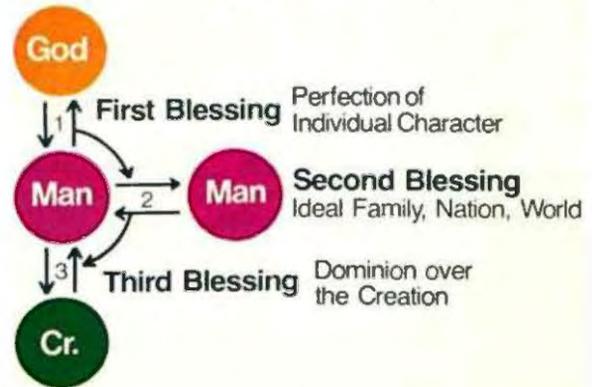
The First Blessing is that each person can perfect his character and become one in heart with God. In God's ideal, such a person is to enjoy complete freedom of thought and action and is to embody original love and have the character and value of a child of God and of a lord of the Creation. Thus he would live the life that is lived in the Kingdom of Heaven. However, because of the Fall, man could not realize the First Blessing. The Last Days is the last stage in God's dispensation to restore each fallen person as a person of perfected character.

In the present era, fallen man is developing a deep inner thirst for restoring the contents of the First Blessing as a reality in his life. This inclination is evident in the recent worldwide interest in new faiths and in movements toward universal love, liberty, equality, and human rights and dignity. The real purpose underlying these trends is not the restoration of man's external and superficial freedoms or values. It is for man to restore the original love, original value, and original freedom which were endowed at his creation, but then lost. The conclusion of God's dispensation in the Last Days will bring about the realization of the First Blessing.

We can also know that the present days are the Last Days when we see the restoration of the First Blessing in the restoration of man's spiritual state. We have already explained that each person is created to become one in heart with God and to be able to fully communicate with the spirit world when he has perfected himself. However, before the Fall, Adam and Eve were able to communicate with God and the spirit world, although their capabilities were not completely developed. Because of the Fall, Adam and Eve and all of their descendants, that is, all of mankind, fell into a state where they are insensitive to the presence of God. But as the Bible indicates,



The Ideal World is Based on the Three Blessings



communication with the spirit world will be restored in the Last Days: “ . . . in the last days . . . I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; . . . on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17,18). Recent increases in spiritual experiences and psychic phenomena worldwide reflect the restoration of man’s heart and spirit to the level that Adam and Eve enjoyed just prior to the Fall and indicate that man is on the verge of restoring the First Blessing.

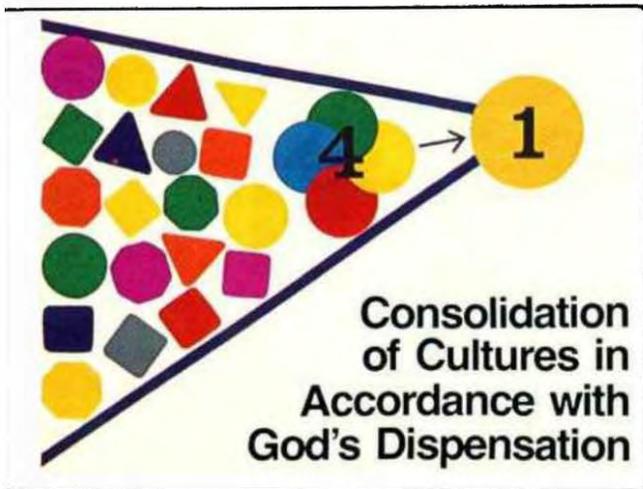
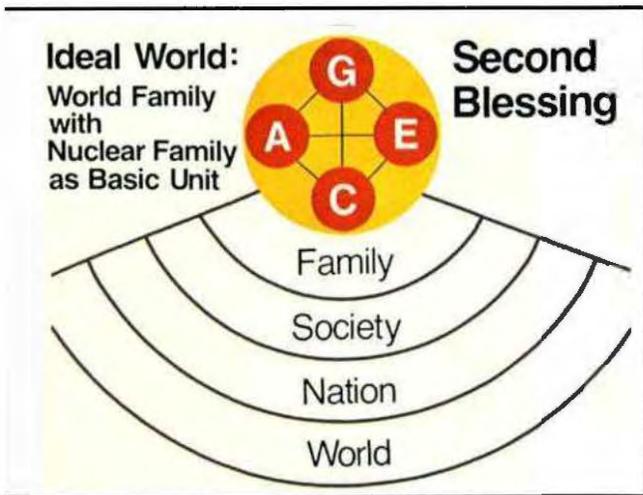
God’s Second Blessing to man was the ability for Adam and Eve to perfect themselves as the True Parents and create an ideal family, and then one society and one world centered on that family—in other words, the ability to create the model family and to make the world one family. The basic unit of that world is the ideal family. Through it God’s dominion of love will transform the world into one of a unified culture centered on true love.

However, Adam and Eve fell and became parents with Original Sin, and thus all of mankind became children with natures of evil and realized a world under an evil sovereignty. Therefore, God has worked through religion and through developing the external aspects of civilization to guide man toward the establishment of this unified culture and one world family.

Historically, many different cultures have come into existence. Through time, however, higher cultures have emerged centered on rising new religions. Through a process of absorption of the varied and numerous lower cultures by the higher and more universal ones, a consolidation of cultures has taken place. As a result, there are only four major cultures remaining: Christian, Moslem, Far Eastern (based on Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism), and Hindu. This convergent flow of history shows the trend toward man’s establishing one world culture—and that God’s Second Blessing is being restored.

The world of one culture centered on God’s true love will be realized when all people become brothers and sisters, with God as their parent. Based on this viewpoint, Christianity is the central religion in the work to fulfill God’s Dispensation for Restoration because Christianity introduced God as the parent of all mankind, because it awaits the Messiah, who comes to establish one culture, and because it has worked to unite the world as one family.

As a result of God’s dispensational work, man since World War II has, to an unprecedented extent, become aware of the need for international cooperation and world government.



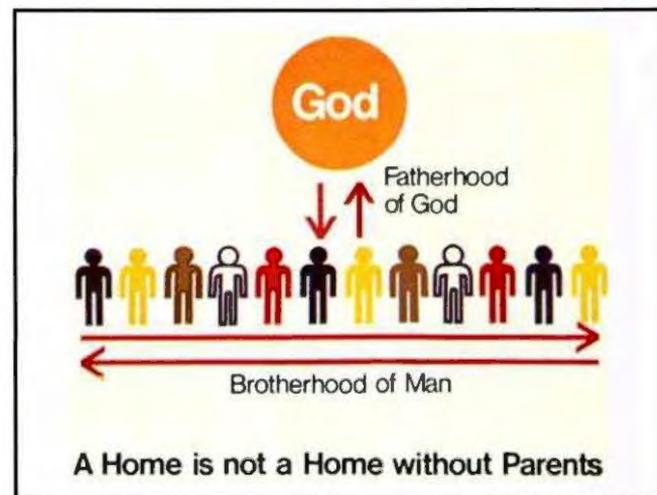
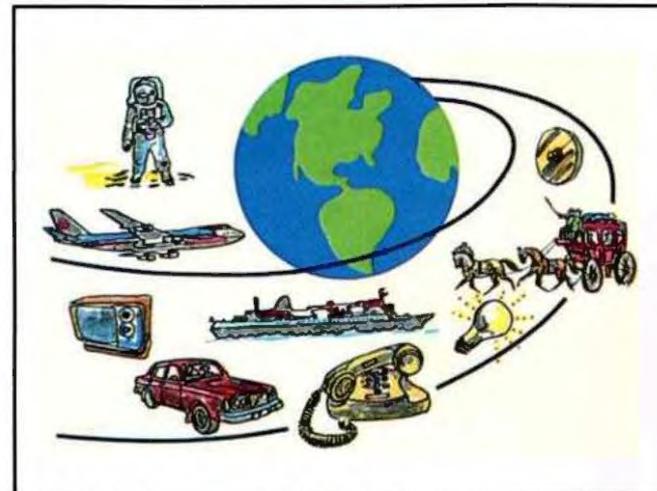
This awareness has given rise to the United Nations and many international commissions and organizations, all concerned with international standards and internal control of everything from nutrition and food resources to the use and resources of the seas, from atomic power and ecology to international law, from concern for the welfare of children (e.g., international adoption agencies and UNICEF) and disaster aid (e.g., International Red Cross) to world health (e.g., the World Health Organization) and world economy (e.g., the International Monetary Fund and World Bank), and a multitude of others. Economic interdependence and cooperation have developed to such an extent that the well-developed nations are to a great degree the marketplaces for the people of the world. Thus we find ourselves living in a world community, where the races, nationalities, languages, customs, cultures, and products of the world intermingle and harmonize as never before.

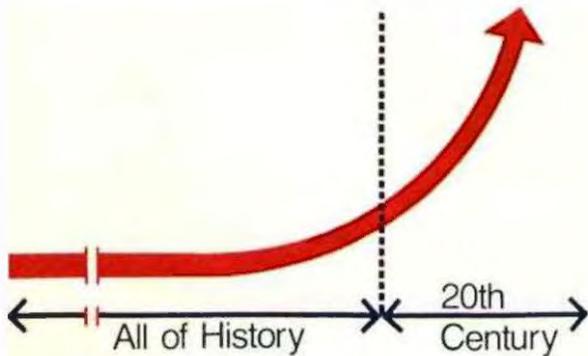
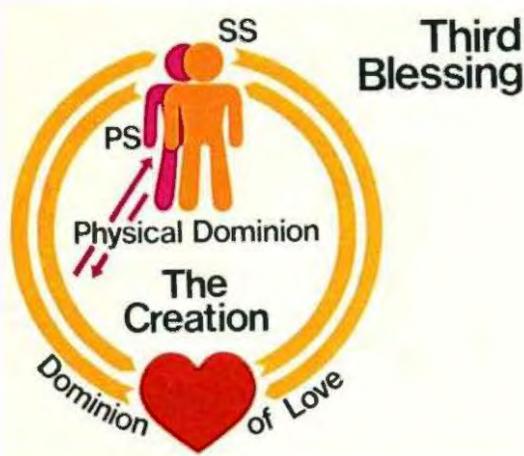
Because of the tremendous advances in transportation and communications, the world has “shrunk” to such an extent that we can travel to almost any part of the world in a few hours. (Just fifty or sixty years earlier, in the scope of that same few hours, our “world” was perhaps a hundred miles in radius.) With this ease of travel, travel to other countries has increased tremendously, bringing about unprecedented interaction and mutual understanding and harmony among different peoples and their customs, bringing us to the threshold of a unified world.

In this century there has been unprecedented development among many peoples worldwide of tolerance and understanding of other people and of a spirit of love. It is God’s dispensation to restore the Second Blessing that has given rise to such attitudes. It also led to the benevolent treatment of the defeated nations by the democratic victors after World War II and the granting of independence to colonies and territories; it has led to foreign aid programs, to increasing ecumenism, to inter-cultural exchange, and to interracial and international marriages and adoption of children. All of these show the trend toward the restoration of God’s Second Blessing to man—the blessing of true love among people and the establishment of one world family.

All of these hopes and trends will reach fruition when the final gifts of history arrive, the Lord of the Second Coming and the new universal ideology that he brings, in other words the gifts of God’s Heart and the God-centered ideology. No home can be truly a home without parents; so man’s desires for harmony and love will only be fulfilled when God and the Messiah can stand in the position of man’s parents.

God’s Third Blessing to man is the right and ability of a





The Amazing Rise of Science and Technology in Recent Times

perfect person to have spiritual and physical dominion over the Creation, that is, both internal and external dominion. Internal dominion over the Creation means dominion through love. External dominion is man's use and development of the Creation for his life through the means of science and technology.

Evidence that the present time is the Last Days, and therefore the stage just prior to the restoration of God's Third Blessing, can be seen in the developing concern and love for nature and also in the tremendous development of science and technology.

Originally, man's appreciation and love for the Creation are proportional to the growth of his spirit. Evidence of the restoration of man's love for the Creation can be seen in the ecology and conservation movements, in societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, in drives to restore polluted areas, and in organizations and clubs formed for the appreciation of nature.

Through science and technology, man is restoring his external dominion over the Creation. Tremendous scientific progress has taken place in this century. Through this man has been gaining control over disease and over the sea, land, air, and even outer space. Man is also on the verge of being able to create an ideal standard of living for all people through such things as mass production, high yield crops, transformation of deserts to farmlands, and environmental control. Use of the ocean floor and even both polar caps are also examples of man's ability to turn the Creation into an ideal home.

We can see that the Three Blessings are in the process of being restored to mankind. Thus we can see that the establishment of God's ideal world is upon us—that we are in the Last Days.

