
THE

GREAT

DECEPTION



A Catholic Publication
By William R Dingas

INTRODUCTION

Wounds of the heart and wounds of the spirit are those far worse than any physical pain. These are the hurts that no medicine can heal; Man's inhumanity toward man has been a stain on our race from the beginning of time. As humans break each other's hearts, betrays a trust, robs another of his dignity or cheats him of his illusions we play into the hands of the Great Deceiver. Our Lord taught us that there are two basic commandments: Love God and love your neighbor. When we violate our neighbors we cannot love God or ourselves. This is the most basic way that Satan robs us of eternal life. All the rest comes easy for Satan when we mistreat each other.

There is, however, something often hard to accept, but during those moments Jesus is going to heal those souls. And beyond that healing, Jesus is going to give us seventy times seventy for accepting the Cross He trusts us with. The Cross, in a special way, leads us to a closer union with the Father, as we pick up the Cross of His only Son Jesus and carry it.

This is a book about the greatest deception ever perpetrated upon man. This is a book about a battle of good against evil. The battle began long ago when Satan rebelled against God. Satan was filled with pride and wanted to be God. We are coming to the end of the fight. Satan, the great deceiver, is fighting a losing battle but wants to take as many of God's precious children with him as he can. He has lost but continues to wage war upon God's children. Our Blessed Mother told the children in Fatima that "In the end My Immaculate Heart will triumph". We must ensure that we go the distance as Saint Paul told us and achieve eternal salvation.

This book is not intended to arouse fear in anyone as much as it is intended to open the eyes of the reader. There are always choices to be made and when the reader sees through the fog those choices can become obvious. The best way that

I can illustrate this is to bring your attention to the book of Mathew. The inspired author exhorts the reader of the Bible to “pluck out his eye” (Matthew 5:29) if it offends him. We should not to try take this literally but to understand what God is telling us. God is not telling us to physically remove an eye as much but to remove ourselves from the potentially damaging environment. For example, in this book I discuss the impact that television has had upon us. A great deal of television transmission is downright trash and should not be watched by anyone. What this bible passage tells us is; to remove ourselves from that environment which offends us and *shut off the television*. That is, we always have choices. Hopefully this book will show the reader where we have been deceived such that more intelligent choices can be made.

Although this book is not intended to be a theological study, all biblical references will be as taken from the New American Bible (NAB). The book is essentially a compilation of my observations during the past few years. As the book began to formulate in my mind the picture that was emerging startled me. These issues and items, if taken alone, did not seem to be terribly important until one looked at the bigger picture. The pieces of the puzzle seemed to come together and it was not as much of a mystery as first imagined. It seemed to me that there was a diabolical plan that was unfolding in the last century which we are living in – literally in front of our eyes. I felt compelled to write this book to awaken us to this plan, perhaps driven by the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER OF PETITION

O most Holy Spirit, enkindle in me thy spirit and inflame my heart. Spirit of truth, shed thy light upon thy servant that I may write the truth and spread it through this humble writing. Grant me the skills that I need to complete this task for the glory of God. Further, grant me thy gifts, fruits and beatitudes but especially grant me wisdom and knowledge. Enlighten me, Holy Spirit, that I may see thy light.

Heavenly Mother of God, Mary most Holy, be at my side and ready my heart and soul to receive these gifts and skills. Grant me the graces I need to complete this task and watch over me. Protect me from harm as I listen to my heart and write this book for all believers. I dedicate this writing to thy Immaculate Heart.

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Chapter One

When did it begin?

A battle of good

Against evil

That Old Serpent

Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals that the Lord God had made. The serpent asked the woman, "***Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in garden?***" (Genesis 3:1) This is one the best known passages found in the bible. The woman (Eve) went on to respond, "***God said, you shall not eat it or touch it, lest you die.***"

The serpent was Satan, the enemy of God. Tradition and the Church fathers teach us that Lucifer, which means "***the bearer of light***", rebelled against God. Lucifer was the most beautiful creation of God. God had revealed to Lucifer His plan for man and that His Son would be born of a human. In that moment, Lucifer rebelled against God and became Satan. He began his deception to man, whom God had made, in His own image. The book of Genesis goes on with the story. "***But the serpent said to the woman: You certainly will not die! No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad.***"

And so it began

Satan, in his hatred for God deceived His children in the garden and has been doing it ever since. Satan's hatred is so perverted that he wants to take as many as

God's special children to hell with him. Satan knows he has lost but carries on his diabolic plan.

The devil does not need to appear to us as ugly as he is. In fact, if he did it would be convincing proof to the unbelievers that there must be a God if there is a Satan. Instead Satan, the Great Deceiver, comes in fluff and presents us with the same empty riches that he tried to tempt Jesus with when he carried Him to the mountain top.

Is that all there is?

Returning to our Genesis account, did this really happen this way? We believe that the foundation of our Christian faith comes from two sources: Scriptures and Tradition. Through these sources, as inspired by the Holy Spirit, our depository of faith has grown since the time of Jesus. We believe that at some point in time mankind was tempted to become more like God by one of His rebellious spirits. When man was created God gave us free will of choice. Tradition tells us that the angels likely had this same free will for some period of time. Satan, as we will discuss in another chapter, was one of these angels who rebelled against God. Indeed he was the leader of the rebellion! After the fall of the angels, the angels who remained no longer had free will. We believe mankind was created such that it would worship God because it really wanted to, not because we had to. By the way, tradition teaches us that one third of the angels created by God fell away at this time. Angels are literally so large in numbers that they are *“uncountable”*. Therefore, this one third of fallen spirits must be an enormous quantity.

This occurrence happened at some distant time in the period of creation that has not been revealed to us as yet. That is, we believe it did occur but the actual time is unknown. In another chapter we will discuss the subject of creation. Scientists have looked for the clues as to when mankind actually appeared on the earth but

have been unsuccessful in doing so. In the book of Genesis, we read that God *breathed into man his spirit*. I like to think that man became fully human with God's spirit at that time in creation. Whether it happened 100,000 years ago or 4.5 million years ago simply does not matter. The important thing is that it did happen and God was the one in control. When you study scriptures you will learn that the Jewish writers did not have our mindset for details such as dates and places. They cared even less about the chronological order of things and we see this often in reading sacred scriptures. It was just not important to them. What was important was the message that God intended for them. Therefore, do not be disappointed when you cannot find such straight facts in scriptures.

As we will see in subsequent chapters, Satan continues the deception began long ago. Man still wants to be like God and we eat of the tree of life every day in trying to do so.

And so it begins...

Chapter Two

Who is Satan?

The Evil One, Satan

The Price of Darkness

Lucifer, Father of lies

A person of many names

Early Jewish traditional writings explain that God created three sorts of beings: material beings, spiritual beings and man. Man is comprised of both spirit and matter. Some of these first spiritual beings revolted against the Creator and became condemned. These first spiritual beings are often called *angels* but this term is best used when one of the spiritual beings acts as a *messenger* for God. Once condemned, they became completely evil and began an attack upon man. The Bible and other writings refer to these evil spirits as Satan, Beelzebub, Lucifer, bad (or fallen) angels, demons, and devils. While the demons are very real creatures they are still but mere creatures.

There is an interesting story about a very young child who was learning about God asked who created the angels. The child's reply was simply that God had created them along with all creatures. Pondering over this information, the child then asked who created the Devil. Without waiting for a response, the child answered his own question showing again the wisdom of children in God's eyes. *"God made him as an angel but he made himself a devil".*

The tools of despair

There is an old story about the Devil. The story takes place in the *end times* when Jesus has come again and the Devil has lost for the last time. The wares or tools

of the Devil are on display for all to see, perhaps in some kind of exhibit. As the people viewed these diabolical tools they noted that most of the tools were unused and showed very little wear. That is, with one exception. The tool called despair was very worn, showing signs of heavy use. The disciples of Satan, some of whom had repented, were on hand to answer questions and they were asked why the tool of *despair* was used so much more often than any of the other tools. They replied that Satan found that when he made men desperate they lost hope and gave in to him quite easily. He did not need to use many of the other tools and this was the easiest of his tools to inflict upon man.

The tool of despair can also be called the ultimate in deception, which is the calling card of Satan. His deception began with our first parents, Adam and Eve and will continue until the end of time.

Good against evil

The idea of good and evil can be found in almost every culture. There is almost no religion in the world that does not have its demons or evil monsters who personify pain, misery and destruction of all that is good. Movies have made a fortune in stories that present the battle of good against evil. We seem to love this battle and revel over the victorious good when it wins. Our world is seemingly one of opposites: Light and dark, Heat and cold, Good and evil, God and the Devil. While God has been given a great deal of attention in those cultures from theologians and philosophers, the Devil has been largely ignored. I believe this plays right into the hands of the Devil. That is, the less we seem to worry about him the more we are apt to sin and turn from God. Apathy about evil is the greatest of all his deceptions and the Devil plays it for all that he can get away with.

Satan does exist

The Devil or the evil one played a very important role in very early Jewish teachings and Christianity. Satan is mentioned repeatedly by the scribes and people of Israel. He can be found in the Gospels and is referenced many times by Saint Paul in the Acts of the Apostles. Saint John uses many metaphors and direct reference to Satan in the Book of Revelations. Jesus is tempted by the Devil, but resists and is illustrative of the evil consequences of sin. Hell, the abode of the evil one is described as an unquenchable fire. Satan is well represented as that which struggles with and counteracts the Kingdom of God on earth. He is often referred to as being ***“lord of the earth”*** or the materialistic world.

And Jesus descended into Hell

That being said, it is well to note that Satan and Hell form an essential part of early Jewish and Christian teachings. The early church fathers taught that Jesus battled with the prince of hell shortly after His death. As will be discussed in the next chapter, we will see that the word hell had more than one meaning for the Jewish people of their times. In this content Jesus is seen to have won this battle and had conquered Satan. Satan was as real to the Jews as Jesus was to the first Christians. Satan is seen as the barrier from heaven. For some of the Jews of this time they were certain that the battle was over with evil and was close to a conclusion with the appearance of the much-anticipated ***Messiah***. They were so convinced that Jesus would return soon and that many of them gave away all of their earthly possessions, took up a communal living and patiently waited for Him to return. As we will learn later, the book of Revelations was written as a solace to those who were beginning to lose their faith in His speedy return.

How does Satan do what he does?

A popular Television comedian of the 60's said, "***The Devil made me do it***". The comedian became quite popular using this phrase as his calling card. I believe it was another trickery to make the idea of an evil entity just a joke while the Devil does indeed exert a presence amongst us. While we do not necessarily understand how he does what he does we do know what he does.

In the story about the fall of man we learn that something precious was lost. Somehow, it is now man's nature to sin against God. However, that sin actually began long before man was created. Tradition tells us that Satan was the first sinner in wanting to be a God himself. His pride rebelled against God. How does it happen that we so often commit evil which does not bring us happiness nor does it bring profit. There seems to be something that ***invites*** us to enter into sin. That something is Satan. And it probably began with the loss of God's special grace. Again, while we do not understand ***how*** it occurs but we indeed know that it does happen in spite of our best intentions at times. That is we know ***why***. His aim is to destroy God's creation. Without the blood of Christ we are doomed. You can resist and overcome the horrific kingdom of Satan with the grace of Jesus in our lives.

Often the power of Satan can be invoked by virtue of a ***contract***. This contract can be both implied and formal. In the implied way, the unsuspecting soul can be invoking Satan by his actions. In the more formal form the soul knows exactly what he is doing and specifically sells his soul for a price. And what a price! In this way the poor soul renounces Our Lord Jesus and paves the way to idolatry. The Devil works in many ways to deceive and confuse us. This can be best illustrated by the following formulae:

Delusion + 10 x Material Goods = No God = Satan Reigns

What this means is that his primary tool is and always has been deception and that our quest for material things figures right into his game plan. Note that while material goods are a distraction, my illustration points out that material goods are not as important as pure delusion in what Satan does. Certainly he deceives us into believing that these material goods are important but please understand that by themselves, material goods are not evil. It is only in the way that we use them that they can become bad or misused. We will discuss this issue more deeply in my chapter on the Industrial Revolution.

Does Satan have a form?

Since the Devil is a spirit, he has no corporal body and therefore no physical form. Only, and only with God's permission, when he communicates with mankind he must have recourse to some kind of visible form such as the angels do. Satan lost his original beauty with his pride that is now moral ugliness. The corporal form is the natural image of the moral state. When the angels appear to us it is always in a majestic and graceful form because it is sent from God. Satan is often viewed in the form of a grotesque goat with horns and cloven feet because it is the symbol of the slavery to sin. In Genesis, Satan appears as a serpent to Adam and Eve. It is interesting to note how repulsive snakes are to mankind. Be careful, however, because one of Satan's greatest deceptions is to appear in an appealing form to us rather than in this traditional grotesque state.

Satan can and does transform himself into an ***angel of light*** making the appearance seem as if it was sent from God. Does this not sound like just another deception? Remember that one of the chief aims of the Devil is to convince mankind that there is no such thing as him. If there is no Devil or no hell, then one can do as he or she pleases. This was a very early heresy that plagued the first Christians. Some of the philosophers were convinced that there would be a final

day of the Lord when all was forgiven and hell was eliminated forever. Deception at its best!

Chapter Three

Purgatory, Hell and Heaven

*This life is but the passage of a day,
This life is but a pang and all is over.
But in the life to come which fades not away
Every love shall abide every lover.
Christine Rossetti, "Saints and Angels"*

Life Eternal

I believe that it is appropriate to begin this chapter with the good news and write about where we all should want to be when we die – heaven! I personally have never met a person who ever said he or she was looking forward to an eternity in hell. When we read the Bible we see heaven mentioned many, many times. Sometimes the word itself is used while in other instances we see it used as a metaphor or as an example. For example heaven is called *life* which means life in its most complete and eternal sense. That is, all life is a total experience, which here on earth is not complete. Sin is the separation from God and as long as we are mortal we cannot attain that fullness that God had originally intended for us.

The sin that began this separation was that associated with the devil when, in his pride thought he could be like God. There is but one God and we know this is not possible but it did not stop Satan from his desires. Since then we have engaged in this battle and here we see one of Satan's foremost shams. Somehow in the past 100 or so years we have not only lost our sense of sin but many of us have been deceived into believing that there is no hell. We might ask ourselves “*If life eternal exists for everyone why bother to live as God wishes us to?*”

There are many religious groups who believe that hell does not exist or that in some fullness of time God will pardon even those who would reside in hell. This was a heresy that the early Christians had to deal with as well as today. Try to remember that those who are in hell are there because they want to be; in spite of what you might think. It has been said that if someone opened the gates of hell to allow the residents to leave that they would be screamed at to ***"close the gates and leave us alone"***.

Does heaven exist?

The cover of the March 24, 1997 issue of "Time" magazine asked the question, ***"Does Heaven Exist?"***. Some years earlier this same magazine was also the same which asked the question ***"Is God Dead?"*** This sounds like good story telling to attract readers but the interest could only be generated if there were some spark to begin with. The question begs an answer for a subject that does not seem to be spoken about much these days. I can remember child hood memories that preachers of my generation always seemed to be telling us we were either going to heaven or hell in their sermons. Sermons have now become homilies and I wonder if perhaps the priests just want to avoid arguments with their apathetic parishioners who do not believe in either category!

What do we know about heaven?

What is most distressing about heaven for many of us is how little we actually know about it. Other than Jesus, no earthly being has ever gone there (that we know about) and returned to tell us about it. However, Jesus taught his Apostles that He had come from there and was returning to heaven to make a place for them (and for everyone else). The Bible, while it abounds in metaphors, leaves us

with very little tangible facts. Our Lord ascended into heaven in full view of his apostles which probably accounts for why we always look up when speaking of heaven. In reality, heaven is neither up nor down nor sideways.

Most assuredly heaven is a *place* but not in the *dimensional* sense that our limited human minds can understand. We know that heaven is without limit, that is, it is infinite. Therefore it cannot be a place above or below us since that would be a contradiction. Time and space do not exist in the way we see them in our world. If so, it would also be finite and it would say that God is not infinite in his vision which also would be a contradiction. Sound confusing?

The dwelling place of God

Who lives in heaven? Heaven is where we do know that God resides. Do we know who else is in heaven right now? Yes we do thanks to the Bible. We know that heaven is filled with spirits singing praise to Him. Many pictures show God as the Father as an old man sitting on a throne with the angels singing ***Glory to God***. Again this is our limited human mind that brings about these pictures. We also know that the departed Saints are with God in heaven. We pray for the intercession of the saints every day and expound a belief in the communion of saints in our creed.

We also know that there are some human beings that are in heaven; body and soul. Of course one of these is Jesus. Jesus ascended into heaven with His body and soul. Until the Last Day, the majority of us separate our souls from the body during the event we refer to as death. Our Christian teachings tell us that the body and the soul will be reunited on the Last Day.

We also know that Elias and Moses and a very select few of the ancient Christians are also in heaven in full body and soul because the Bible tells us so. While

scripture does not tell us this, most Christians believe that the Virgin Mary was assumed into heaven body and soul when she died. We believe this about Jesus and Mary because it makes theological and common sense. Both were special in our redemption and worthy of this special act that we will all share in one day.

A place of purification

The churches teaching on purgatory is quite simple. There exists a state after death that those who die in union with Him but are not completely free of imperfections are purified before they can enter into heaven. Purgatory is sometimes thought of an in-between abode between life and heaven. Nothing impure can exist in heaven, which would be a contradiction to God's design. Most of us do not go straight to heaven when we die and we begin a process of purification. Our limited human minds also think of this as a place but I like to think of it more a state of being. While in this state, we are purified and finally brought to heaven. This also does not fit our concepts of time since time does not exist in the spirit world. That is, in spite of what we think, we do not spend *time* for each and every offense performed during our human lives.

The abode of the dead

Despite rumors to the contrary, Hell is still a doctrine within Catholic theology. The basic definition of hell is the cutting of oneself from God. Hell is another story that Satan would like us to forget. Think about it. If there is no hell why should we do anything except what our carnal desires wishes us to do. Hell is the state of eternal rejection of God.

Prior to the birth of Jesus the early Jews believed that the departed went to a place called the abode of the dead or Abraham's bosom. In Hebrew the word was *Sheol* and in Greek, the word was *Hades*. When Jesus died on the cross, this is the place where he went and released those departed souls after His resurrection.

The notion of hell is not particular to the Jews or Christians since many cultures and religions have come to understand it. The common opinion was that if good was rewarded that bad simply had to be punished! Those who die in original sin or grave sin descend into hell where they are punished by a loss of the vision of God. Jesus often spoke about hell and to negate hell would be to deny the teachings of Jesus. Doesn't that sound like something Satan would like?

While the Church teaches us that there is a hell and that people are punished there for eternity, beyond that we know very little. In fact we know less about hell than we know about heaven. Something we do know is that God wills not the least to be lost. God has given us free will in our human existence. If we are headed for hell it is not God's choice and God, in fact, grieves the loss.

So what do we do?

What we do is not to do is to despair but to listen to what God teaches us in His commandments and not to listen to the carnal and mortal desires of Satan and all of his pomp. In my studies of these issues, I see that Satan has two primary thrusts to steal away God's children. The first is to convince them that there is no heaven or hell. The next step is to place temptation in all forms at our feet as Satan tried to do with Our Lord in the desert. Place your faith in God's love for us and all will be well.

Chapter Four

The Industrial Revolution

*A Century of
Signs, Wonders and Miracles*

It was a very good year

The year was 1872. Young Thomas Edison developed a marvelous new device called the *stock ticker* and was working on dozens of other amazing inventions. He is best known for his invention of the electric light bulb. This same year Louis Pasteur perfected the process named Pasteurization after him. That same year Ulysses S. Grant was elected to the Presidency with the largest majority that had ever occurred to date. Before the turn of the Century the adding machine, *horseless* carriage, gasoline engines, electric lamps, generators and motors, movie machines, phonographs, steam turbines and submarines were also invented just to name a few! What an amazing time this is to be living as mankind seemed to be uncovering these inventions for the first time in all of his previous existence.

Before long, several automobiles were successfully built as America took to the roads and we took on wings with the creation of the first airplane. The Wright brother's historic flight occurred in 1903. As World War I began it took on a new horror with armored tanks and bombs used for warfare never imagined before. The thirties introduced nylon and changed airplanes forever with jet engines. Then came the Atomic Age in the forties, followed by the Space Age in the late fifties. The sixties introduced the laser and solid state electronics that virtually exploded in technology during the next twenty years as microprocessors and computers were invented and man walked on the moon. Knowledge was on roll! Mankind was finally in control of his own destiny.

An Explosion of Knowledge

Have you ever wondered why mankind struggled for so many centuries with such a limited knowledge that changed so dramatically at the end of the 19th century? Whether we acknowledge the 6000 years of creation mentioned in the bible or the many thousands of years that scientists feel that man has existed it is still a very, very long time. For many thousands of years the knowledge of men had grown at a small fraction of the rate that it did in the 19th century.

As discussed earlier, beginning sometime near the end of the 19th century mankind made startling discoveries, advancing the wealth of knowledge in leapfrog, exponential rates. It has been said that the knowledge gained in the first 10 years of the 19th century was 10,000 times more than that total accumulated information for all of the previous time combined! In the next 10 years it increased another tenfold which is an exponential rate and has continued its rate of growth at ever increasing rates ever since. Scientists think that knowledge is now doubling at the rate of every one to two years. Why?

Entering into the 20th century we saw inventions and discoveries unprecedented before this time. When we look back at some of these discoveries which included the automobile and radio we are amused how simple they are compared to what we have today. Our imagination was not powerful enough to conceive the inventions, which developed. I still remember a space movie I saw on Television not too many years ago. It was an old movie made in the early 40's. In that movie the astronaut was making a calculation on a space ship. He pulled out a slide rule and performed the necessary calculations! For those of you too young to know, a slide rule is a mechanical *sliding tool* used for mathematical calculations. The minds of men never conceived electronic hand held calculators when this movie was made. Man's mind has not conceived of all that is possible then or today.

In the early 60's I used one of the very first GE main frame computers in my engineering position. That computer filled half the second floor of our 8 story engineering building. The air conditioning load alone for this room could power a small community due to the heat rejection from the vacuum tubes in that computer. The computer I am using to type this book with has 100,000 times the power and capability of that same room full of computer but fits into my briefcase! And, it requires no cooling since it is so efficient. Now that is progress!

Improvements abound

Think about it! Even if you are not over 40 years of age your study of high school history has shown you these events. Each decade of the 20th century has brought about new and amazing discoveries. Why? What is special about this century and this place in time? Let's review just some of these so-called improvements in our lives.

- Atomic energy
- Electricity
- Aircraft
- Video games
- Medicines of all kinds
- Television and Radio
- Microprocessors
- Telephones
- Computers
- Automobile

While knowledge certainly grew rapidly at the turn of the century, the major dramatic explosion seems to have occurred in the middle of this century. We saw the invention of the theory for an atomic bomb created by Albert Einstein. He also is well known for the theory of relativity and was instrumental in the development

of color Television. The telephone developed by Alexander Graham Bell a few years earlier have now become a household necessity. Henry Ford's earlier achievements in the automobile also literally took off in the 1950's in a way that defies description. The car has become an American dream and love affair. In the fifties Bell Laboratories developed the transistor and began a cycle that lead to the *chip*. The chip is now a household word that runs everything from toasters to computers to space vehicles.

Over the past century man has advanced - literally from the horse and buggy to space travel. It seems that God has chosen this time in history to open up man's intellect. The book of Daniel tells a possibly future story; *"As for you, Daniel, keep secret the message and seal the book until the end time; many shall fall away and evil shall increase"* Daniel 14:4. We have fallen away from what God expects of us, deceived by material possessions which most of the time actually wind up enslaving us.

The invention of Television

Television, absolutely without question, has been the invention that opened the floodgates. Again, why and just what floodgates are we talking about? I can best illustrate the impact of Television with an example of a movie I saw some years ago. The title of the movie was *Avalon* and it was about a Jewish family that had immigrated to the US at the turn of the century. The story evolves through several generations. In the beginning they were a close family sharing their time together, particularity at the dinner table. I also recall as a young boy spending our time before, during and after the dinner hour at the dinner table. The kitchen was the meeting and focal place of the home. When radio became popular we sat together in the kitchen and listened to it.

In the movie, they also show the family in its growth and changes as they become more affluent and achieve the *American Dream*. During the 50's Television was invented. (Refer to the chapter on the media.) The scene unfolds as the proud family gets their first Television. In those days there were only a few hours of Television airtime each day. When the Television was not picking up a signal it showed a test pattern. I have always wondered why this pattern was in the shape of a cross and if there is any significance to that!

Back to my story. The scene shows the family around the dinner table sharing and talking as they did in earlier scenes. Suddenly, the test pattern shifts to airtime. Something has come on the *tube*. The entire family stopped talking to each other, picked up their plates and went into the room with the Television. In those days we watched Television in darkened rooms due to the poor quality of the Television screens. The movie camera now turned towards the people in the darkened room. What you saw was faces mesmerized by this magical box staring at this flickering screen like they were hypnotized. The glowing Television looked like an idol and some of the children were on their knees! Finally, the movie camera returned to the now empty dinner table and panned around it. I don't know if the producer was trying to make that particular point but I have never forgotten the impact of that scene. We will talk more about Television in my chapter on the media but keep in mind where it fits in this amazing explosion of inventions and knowledge.

Satan's Tools?

So what happened? We were deceived. Satan has dangled these luxuries in front of us and we lost sight of God. I remember seeing a Life Magazine cover in the 60's that declared that ***God is Dead***. We no longer had a need for God when we were in control of our own destinies. Satan's failing was his own pride and that he wanted to be god. Our failing is exactly the same; to control. There is nothing inherently evil with any of the inventions; just the way we use them and allow ourselves to be distracted from our God.

In the Bible we learn about some kind of future event when mankind worships the beast. I have often wondered if the Bible was referring to the computer or Television.

Computers and the Y2K bug

During the last few years of this century Y2K was the hot topic of the decade. First, a few words about the Y2K issue may be in order. The acronym stands for Year 2000 and is most often inferred to relate to compliance for computers to the date. Early programmers had to ration computer memory carefully since it was at a premium. Consequently, they rounded off the year, such as 1975 which became "75". That is to say that the "19" part of the date was not used. This practice is fine until we got into a new century. People thought that when many of the computers rolled over the dates on December 31, 1999 the computers would interpret the date as being 1900 and not 2000 and that strange or bizarre things would occur. Well, as we know, not much of anything real happened. Most of the genuine concerns were related to sabotage from fanatics with their own agendas.

The real issues were that we suddenly realized how important these computers had become in our daily lives. So concerned were some people that they hoarded food, water, cash, gasoline and the hardware stores ran out of portable generators. While nothing did happen it should awaken us to how dependent we are on computers in our every day lives. Computers run nearly every aspect of our daily lives whether we know about it or whether we like it. The computer is the ultimate of man's creations and we have become enslaved to them. Many companies could not do the most simple of tasks unless their computer systems were operational, often to control the vast amount of inventions created in this decade. It seems like the greatest deception of all as Satan enslaves us with material possessions.

During 1999 I received a notice from just one of my credit card companies that proudly informed me that they have been working very hard since 1996 to make sure that *the year 2000 comes and goes without a hitch*. They further informed me that this has cost them \$ 150 million to make sure that they were ready and that 100% of their computers were now Y2K compliant. If you accumulate the expenditure from the rest of the world can you imagine how much money has been spent? It seems like a diabolical drain on resources that could have been better spent elsewhere.

An interesting unexpected paradox related to computers and stored information is now coming of light. As we know, much of our files are stored in electronic databases. To access this database requires the software program to read the digital information. During the last ten years many new and improved software programs have been created. In most instances they have made obsolete the older less sophisticated software applications. Most of this data then cannot be recovered as the older software becomes discarded. Many of have had this same experience when we purchased the latest and greatest software.

I can almost hear you asking the question as to why is this a big deal. What this means is that much of our information during the past 10-20 years does not have back up hard copies. Therefore, when the obsolete software does not read the database it becomes useless, and worse yet, lost! The information becomes nothing more than unintelligible zeros and ones (the basis of computer software). While these databases could be converted into another format or language, most of this problem has been ignored or overlooked. So the paradox is that in the middle of the technology information explosion we are losing information! I read a report not to long ago that stated that if this problem is not corrected we might have better and more complete information on the Civil War than in the past 20 years. Think about it!

Chapter Five

Creation - Fact or Fantasy?

*God looked at everything he had made,
And he found it very good. Genesis 1:32*

The most marvelous of all creations

Centuries before Jesus walked on the earth a psalmist wrote, ***“I am fearfully, wonderfully made”*** (Ps 139:14). Even the less sophisticated knowledge than we have managed to acquire, showed them that we were something special as being created by God. They observed the wonder of the human body. We now understand this self-repairing body in a much better way than these people and recognize it to be so highly structured and organized creation that pales the most complicated computer. We, God’s special creation, are made in the image of God. We can only admire this creation in utter awe when we more fully understand how complex, yet human we are. While all of God’s creations are a wonder, man stands out as testimony to His will.

Man lives on the planet earth, which just happens to be the right distance from the sun, and is tilted at just the right axis. It has just the right mixture of air, water and land. All of this just happens to provide the proper temperature and living conditions to sustain life. Scientists have calculated that if the distance from the sun was off by just a few thousand miles or the tilt off by one half of one degree that life as we know it would not exist. Yet, there are those of so little faith that they do not believe. We have all heard the ridiculous theories of probabilities that have said all what our eyes can see could have been created by accident are just as probable as a monkey plunking away at a typewriter and accidentally writing a major book such as the Bible. The believer knows the truth while the agnostic simply ignores the facts, again deceived in grand scale.

Evolution Theory Evolves

In October 1997 the news media made a particularly big issue over Pope John Paul II's comments relative to creation. In a message to the international scientific community John Paul said that the church accepts evolution as a theory well supported by research. John Paul also said that the spiritual nature of man couldn't be explained by scientific means. This is nothing new to our church teachings as Pope Pius XII wrote a 1950 encyclical that declared that there was no conflict between evolution and the doctrine of the faith.

The press greatly exaggerated the statements, making it sound like the church was changing its stand and that creation was an accident. This is the furthest from the truth as it can be. The faithful are encouraged to explore scientific research but to remember that no matter what the process was for the creation of man - God was in the driver's seat. Satan would dearly love for us to believe that creation was a freak accident because it would take us away from our belief in God. If there were no creation by divine means there is no God.

God's handiwork

Anywhere you look you can see the handiwork and the fingerprints of God. If one chooses to ignore the very facts in front of him the greatest deceiver of them all - Satan is deceiving him. Satan would dearly like God's children to believe that creation is not the handiwork of God. This makes it easier to distract us from Him.

And speaking of fingerprints, it is a commonly known fact that no two human beings have the same fingerprints. Like snowflakes, no two are ever alike. I don't know about you, the reader of this book, but when I learn about things like that

bells go off! As I like to think of it, God gives many signs to his people that they are very special. This is an outward and obvious sign and familiar to the biblical statement that God has *counted all of our hairs*. This simply means we are his unique creation.

We often read news articles or see Television stories that try to suggest that creation was an accident. These usually site statistical theories that suggest that given enough time and chance that the basic building blocks of life were created. Then, we are asked to wait another eon of time for these to somehow form life, as we know it. That is the most preposterous scenario I have ever heard!

Often, science is at the center of this study - trying to find that *missing link* that can explain what our eyes can see. Every time scientists try to find evidence that creation just happened they come up empty handed. Not only do they come up empty handed but also they continue to find evidence of the fingerprints of God! The order of nature is so precise, so orderly and so unpredictable that the intervention of a powerful source is the only obvious solution.

That powerful source is God. We often refer to this as *The Laws of Nature*. These laws dictate the design of the atom as well as they describe gravity or the forces that generate electricity. Take careful note that we cannot even see some of these laws which we take for granted. Any good electrical engineer can define electrical flow in textbook terms but we cannot describe why or precisely how it does what it does. The same can be said for gravity and the forces that hold the basic atom together.

The elements of creation

Speaking of the atom - what a wondrous building block it is. By some special design all matter is made up of groups of these atoms that are bound together by atomic forces. While this book is not intended to be a chemistry course it is important to understand just how precise and organized that chemistry is because it shows the handy work of God. Let's spend a few moments reviewing some of the basics in simple terms to bring home this point of God's handiwork.

Matter may be a pure substance or a combination of substances. A pure substance could be copper while a typical mixture is table salt - which is made up of sodium and chlorides. Merely substituting the sodium with hydrogen produces hydrochloric acid. Atomic forces bind together the mixtures of substances in a way that we take for granted but do not understand how or why it works!

Chemists use something called an atomic table to define the known combinations of the know elements. It is interesting to note that there are known to be 103 elements and 15 of these do not occur naturally, having been synthesized in the modern laboratory. As a result only a few elements makes up the complete physical world, as we know it. Beginning with hydrogen each of the higher order elements are created by the addition of protons or electrons. These are so small that they cannot be seen with the naked eye but bind together with forces to produce the matter seen all around us. Note that this atomic table is developed simply by the orderly addition of protons and electrons to the basic hydrogen element.

The space within us

Take note that our world is made up approximately 75% water as also is our physical bodies. Water is the most abundance of all compounds and is made of two parts (atom) hydrogen and one part (atom) of oxygen. To make things even more interesting, even this most abundant of compounds is mainly *space*. Something in this *space* binds the elements together to form water. To calibrate you with the size of this space, imagine a basketball at the center of the Grand Canyon as the center of the hydrogen atom. At the edge of the Grand Canyon are the electrons, which rotate about the center or nucleus of the atom. The so-called weight of the water molecule in relation to its size is a very, very, very, very small fraction. This means that most of our bodies is also *space*. This could explain how our Lord seemed to walk through the walls when He appeared to the Apostles after His death and resurrection. Since the wall is also made up of mostly space one could pass through the wall by avoiding contact with other atoms if you knew how to do it. Think about it!

What we see when we investigate cells is an incredible complexity that defies the imagination. It is this very complexity that calls for a conclusion of a design by an intelligent agent. Darwin tried to explain this by random chance but it cannot explain the complexity of life, especially the intricate machinery of the human cell. And remember that a cell is collection of atoms as we discussed earlier.

His army of Angels

What do you think governs the so-called laws of nature? Well, it is most certainly God who is in charge all creation. If we believe what we see and wonder how it works and how it comes together we can only be marveled. I for one think that God's angels are His agents who are in control of creation now and in the future at God's direction. That is, there is an angel dedicated for every single law or

function in the universe. One angel controls gravity on earth. Perhaps there are similar angels who also control the gravity on other planets. Another angel controls light while yet another angel controls the speed of sound and so on. In the invisible world, there are angels who keep the electrons at just the right distance and speed for every molecule.

Remember that scripture teaches us that God created the spirit beings first. We commonly refer to these spirits as angels. Satan, as discussed earlier, was one of these first spirit beings. Tradition tells us that a third of the angels fell away with Satan. Other angels sing praises to God and keeps His creation in balance. In addition, every human being has at least one angel who watches over him. Tradition also tells us that there are guardian angels for every country in the world. These angels are busy spirit beings indeed!

Saint Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:12 that ***“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers”***. Paul speaks of the fallen angels we have been discussing. The ***principalities*** are the highest ranking of the fallen angels who do the bidding of Satan. They patrol the world making havoc and compete with the angels who are doing God’s work in creation. While they do their dirty work it is most often done in an invisible manner.

The big bang vs. always was theories

Scientists for years have debated over the creation issue related to when and how the first matter was created. Those who subscribe to the ***Big Bang*** theory believe that at some point of time in the past, 4-6 billion years ago, that matter exploded from a concentrated ***nothing***. There is some evidence to this by examination of the stars, which seems to be moving away from us. Those who subscribe to the ***Always Was*** theory believe that no such event took place and that everything we see always was there.

Regardless of which is correct, one thing the scientists don't give much attention to is how or why any of this started. Surely *something intelligent* would have had to trigger the *Big Bang*. Likewise if this existed always then it also points towards a divine creator. It is interesting that when scientists go looking for a reason for creation other than God, they always come up empty handed. Chance simply cannot account for the complexity of life. A well instructed scientist can only find the obvious and often becomes a believer if he has an open mind. And what has happened? We have become deceived and tricked on yet another point.

Alien encounters

It is interesting to note that in the last few decades that man has undergone somewhat of a strange transformation from a materialistic view of the world to one of a supernatural state. The New Age Movement and other similar religious sects that have sprung up in the last 20-30 years best illustrate this. What has caused this dramatic change in attitude? In Chapter 4, we discussed the Industrial Revolution that brought mankind numerous advancements in science and living conditions. Several world wars, nuclear weapons have encouraged man to question whether there was a God. They turned towards a religiosity that was more comfortable and that gave them the freedom to choose and do what they willed. Thus, pride took charge again.

Some of this religious transformation has lead to a powerful belief in extraterrestrial beings that range from angels to visitors from other planets. Further fueling the interest is the multitude of science fiction movies and books, which abound today. We learn more about this in my chapter on the media but it continues to sway man from a belief that God played the role He did in creation. The development of this type of media has been a very strong cultural force. When the movie *2001, A Space Odyssey* swept the movie screens in the 60's it

formulated the possibilities of space travel and was bold enough to ask the question whether other forces could give mankind the immortality it craved. Extraterrestrial beings were the answer to this question as Satan further deceived man. This movie was just the beginning of a series of movies such as *Star Wars* and a host of similar plots that emphasized extraterrestrial beings. I have also noted a recent proliferation of Television series that deal with the afterlife, immortality, strange powers and other New Age phenomenon.

Systematic Desensitization

This generation has been brainwashed to the extent that what was fantasy 30 years ago is now fact in the minds of many. It is noteworthy that many teachers say that some of their students have lost the sense of reality in what they see in the media verses actual life. During this period of time, encounters with extraterrestrial beings have become even more bizarre. These encounters range from fictional movies and books to reported sighting virtually all over the world. In the 60's there was a Television show called *My Favorite Martian* that captivated the audiences and was just the beginning of what we see today. It set the stage for even more outlandish movies and Television series. Visitors from other planets become lovable and cute such as *ET* and other robots or monsters. Do you remember Robbie the Robot of *Lost in Space*? Over the years, they took on a personality that made the role even more believable. And what was the goal? The plan was to convince us that the real was unreal and that God had no part in any of it. We know who was behind this fraud.

One cannot help wondering what the next step in this desensitization process. In scriptures we see consistent reference to an *Anti-Christ* that convinces the world that he is God. Whether this *Anti-Christ* is a person, movement or society does not matter because it leads us away from God as one of the grandest of all delusions. For example New Age people believe that at some point in time, there

will be a quantum leap where the ascended masters take over the world which has now passed away. This creates a utopian society free of all of the present worlds' imperfections. Science fiction seems to have a common theme of good vs. evil where a messiah-like character saves humanity. As discussed earlier, it is also noteworthy that the messiah is not always a human being, sometimes taking on the form of a visitor from outer space or mechanical robot. And remember, that this all started with some seemingly harmless science fiction books and movies!

This being said, creation and fantasy take on such a continuum that makes it hard to see where reality starts and fiction takes over!

The quest for immortality

The front page of the February 28, 1999 issue of the Houston Chronicle proclaimed an article ***“Immortality quest holds enduring allure”***. The piece also had a graphic entitled ***“The New 2000 Millennium”***. The article was about man's quest for youth and stated that scientists predict that within 20 years the aging process will be stopped and possibly reversed. Death, they said would be optional. What an awful thought! This means we would never see God in all of His glory if we do not die. This time on earth is but a wink as compared to eternity. It certainly sounds like another ***who needs God*** plot to me that would deny that He has made a special place for us.

The front page of USA Today, April 27, 1999 contained a feature story about cloning goats to ***“milk”*** them for human protein. The story called it a key milestone in the cloning of goats that produce human protein in the goat's milk. The justification for this was that human protein is highly prized for potential drugs all in the interest of saving mankind from ills or pain. The story concluded stating that ***“Goats join cows, mice and sheep in the menagerie of cloned animals”***. This same issue of USA Today had another article about a new drug

designed to block fat-obesity which has been approved by the FDA. This would let us eat any thing we wanted without the consequences. Somehow all of this seems contrary to God's plan. How often do we need to be deceived that immortality is within our grasp?

Chapter Six

What happened to the family?

*The family that prays together
Stays together*

The disintegration of the family

What has happened to the American family has also occurred in different degrees to nearly every nation of the world. In a previous chapter we discussed the effects of material objects upon humanity. The ultimate effect of the Industrial Revolution was to disintegrate the family rather than to bring freedom from drudgery as was promised. What started in the US soon spread all over the world. Acquiring the material things became the goal of nearly every family. Those outside of the US watched with jealousy as the Americans grew in wealth. What we gained in wealth we lost in family stability.

In the 19th century it was unusual to have the wife working outside of the home. Those new cars, toasters and electric refrigerators cost more money than the typical husband could make. A side issue developed in that we found that we could borrow money when we did not have enough to pay cash for the toasters. In the age of my parents they paid cash by saving the money before they could buy something. What this means is that the spiral just increased as both marriage partners went to work to afford the toasters, charged what they did not have and worked overtime for the rest. Do you get the picture?

God's plan for mankind

In the family God intended for a special and defined function for each partner. I do not mean this section to sound chauvinistic but God intended man and woman to have both unique and special duties. The latter statement is not intended to

down play the important responsibility of women. Rather, God Himself showed how important this family function was by allowing a woman to bear His Son. There is no vocation more important than that one which bears God's children.

It is interesting to learn from scriptures that God did not intend for man to be mortal and experience pain. In Genesis we hear God telling Eve that the consequences of their actions were that she would experience pain during childbirth and that she would soon forget the pain.

At the turn of the century the family was the center of everything and their lives also revolved around their church affiliation. They ate together, played together and prayed together. It was not unusual to have several generations living under the same roof and all took part in the daily operation and chores required to keep it clean and nourished. When the woman started working to afford to pay for the new Television she could not spend as much time in the role of mother and wife. The Television became the baby-sitter and many children came home from school to empty houses.

It was not long before the family structure became splintered and headed for self-destruction. Those toasters cost too much money. They cost too much in more than one way. Mommy was tired. Daddy was tired. Both parents are so wrapped up in the quest for the good life that they have neglected each other and their family unit. I read once that the average father talks to his wife 10 minutes out of every day and to his children 30 seconds out of every day. We have raised an entire generation of children that are accustomed to coming home after school to an empty house. We call these children *latchkey*. Growing up as a young child my mother did not work and was generally home when I came home from school. I would have been surprised and frightened if she were not there when I arrived home. These *latchkey* children do not know anything else. Home life today is splintered at best and very often in conflict. Have you ever wondered why we have such a shortage of priests and religious people in this generation? Before

Television and other modern inventions became popular, families played and prayed together.

Another strange and unnatural phenomenon of this generation is the activity cycle for children of working parents. Children are often enrolled in a myriad of activities intended to either keep them busy, out of trouble or to make up for parental insecurities. These children are driven to participate in sports and other activities that literally absorb their time and energies. It is no wonder they come home and crash in front of the Television. They are physically and mentally tired. Instead of playing like children did several years ago their activities are organized for them. They have been robbed of their childhood. It is interesting to note that psychologists today will tell you that the formative time for children is when they are playing together and especially if they are making up the rules themselves. This is how they should learn to react and survive in the adult world but they have not learned the skills. Satan continues his fraudulent deception at the sacrifice of the children. In scriptures, Jesus tells us *woe to those who harm the little ones*.

The sanctity of the family

There was a popular saying in the 50-60's. The family that prays together stays together. I have not heard that saying in many years and I have to wonder what has happened. It is hard to generate enthusiasm in the religious life when the children do not have a Christian home life and do not pray at home. There was a time when we praised a child who was interested in the religious life and the family was very proud of this choice in vocation. Today a child with the same calling would be told he was wasting his life and the parents would be very disappointed that a more profitable enterprise was not chosen. I firmly believe that when we return the family life to the sanctity that God intended for it that the shortage of religious vocations would disappear as families' experience the joy of a special togetherness with God.

What has happened to marriage?

New marriages in most of the world are running a close second with divorces. Somehow we have lost the spiritual health to maintain good relationships. I am convinced that the family that puts Jesus in his rightful place at the center of their family will be healthy and be able to weather the storms that are certain to come. We ought to imitate the Holy Family of Joseph, Mary and Jesus as a role model. When I hear Pastors today speak of marriage preparation they express concern that the new couples have their priorities in the wrong places. They seem to be more concerned with wedding color coordination and the music for the mass than they are with the event itself. When the reception is over, no matter how gala it was, they are eventually left only with each other.

It is interesting to note that young girls today almost seem to have been conditioned to desire the material things of a wedding and forget the things that count the most. Perhaps it is the Television and other advertising media but the emphasis certainly is not where it belongs. If they are ill prepared, as many are, it will not be long before troubles will arise that they cannot cope with.

A loss of Catholic schools

Another interesting change in our family culture is the demise of Catholic and other Christian schools. We must remember that as human beings we must be taught everything we know. Very little of our needs are supported by instinct as in the animal kingdom. This means we have to be careful *who* is teaching our children. At one time it was a rule in a Catholic Diocese to have a Catholic school in every parish. The intent was to have available good education that also was

God centered. Many centuries ago the *only* schools were those sponsored by the Catholic Church.

As society changed and more parents were both working somehow the Christian schools became the casualty. Loss of our Christian schools could not have occurred at a worst time, since the family unit badly needs this spiritual sustenance.

Father knows best

Respect for both parents by their children has dwindled dramatically if the past several years. I have read many stories where the parent's very own children challenged parental authority in our courts (and won). Recently I read about a young sports super star that filed papers to become declared an adult. Apparently, her complaint was that her parents were mismanaging her financial affairs. I guess I wonder how she managed to be raised and get as far as she did on her own! Then there is the story about the Michigan mother who was arrested for slapping her teenage daughter. In the course of an argument about her whereabouts, the mother slapped her daughter who later told her school counselor about the incident. The mother was arrested and faced up to a year in jail. However, a wise judge who refused to become an arbitrator for household difficulties acquitted her. Are these isolated events? No!

Some years ago there was a Television program called ***Father Knows Best***. This was a family hour where the sanctity of the family was well portrayed. While it was indeed an exaggeration of most real family life, it did serve as a role model for families. As were most of the Television shows in those days they presented the family in a very positive manner. I have noted that family time slots on Television now nearly always degrade the family unit, especially the father. One or both parents are ridiculed by their children or made sport of. One of the more

popular ones portrayed the father as not able to support the family as an inept shoe salesman and the mother was depicted as a trollop. Both children were ill behaved and treated each other as trash and sex was the usual theme. Are these isolated events? No!

Some time ago I read a newspaper account about a Fox Television episode called *Ally McBeal* where there was more than one spouse in this family situation. Fortunately I missed this gem but the writer was quite upset about this episode since everyone concerned on the show seemed quite happy with the arrangement. Apparently the threesome was presented as being perfectly acceptable and totally ignored the traditional family unit.

We will treat the Television issue more completely in the next chapter but the family and Television are entwined in a way that cannot be separated. Very often Television is the source of schooling or education for young children. That is, when they watch such poor role models how do they know the difference? We used to say “*Monkey see – monkey do*” when we described the visual learning process. Statistics show that children watch Television up to 4-6 hours per day. When they see the family shown in the poor way it is displayed on Television they learn from it and assume that this is the right and normal way to act. Normal is merely a matter of ones perspective.

Chapter Seven

The Media

*It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God,
Blaspheming His name and His dwelling
And those who dwell in heaven. Rev 13:6*

The medium is the issue

The dictionary defines a medium as something through which a force is transmitted. The word is also used in conjunction with radio and Television communications. It is also interesting to note that the dictionary also defines media as an environment and also gives another definition for medium. It says that medium(s) are persons credited with special powers for communication with the living and the dead. Is a coincidence that these words have such similar meanings? No!

In this book we are going to use the term media or medium for many types of communications. It was not too long ago that radio came upon us with the verbal word. A few years later Television was invented followed in recent years by the Internet to present both the verbal and visual word. There are some even more bizarre inventions being brought into the marketplace such as virtual reality that makes the imaginary seem real. Who knows what else is on the horizon?

From the radio to today

Again, note how we have built ourselves up to accept the simple radio to the media available today. Satan works in devious ways and has conditioned us to accept things today that would have been unpardonable only 50 years ago.

Conditioning can be illustrated by the story of the *Boiled Frog*. If you throw a frog in boiling water it will quickly jump right out. However, if you put the frog in room temperature water and raise the temperature very, very gradually the frog will not notice the difference. Soon the frog will be boiled to death and will not have suspected the potential threat to its life.

In this same way, the media starting with radio has conditioned people of this generation. The way that Television works is different from other mediums. Even when we listened to radio (before Television) our brains were at work with our imagination. Similar to reading a book, the words caused us to imagine the image or picture that the words represented. We still had to think! Television does not require thinking since the complete picture is in front of you. It is not possible for you to create your own image of what you hear since the visual image is before your very eyes.

The decline of creativity

So why is this a big deal! Your minds become less creative when you don't have to develop the visual images yourself. Also, it requires virtually no intelligence to watch Television. And it probably creates illiteracy since our brains are not doing what God planned for them to do. To think! Is it possible that Satan puts something like Television below their noses to seduce them - especially if they are illiterate or slow?

Television is unlike all types of communications since it is instantaneous and as we have seen before, requires limited intelligence and interaction. We have an entire generation today that treats Television like a friend. They turn it on when arriving home like a hypnotized person. Television is not real. It is not even a real picture since the image is created by a series of dots. I wonder if the dots

contribute to the hypnotic effect that Television seems to have on us, especially the young generation.

Did you ever notice that Television also mesmerizes even your household pets (cats and dogs)? That does not say much for the content of Television! Remember my story about the Jewish family in the chapter on the family? How quickly they were hypnotized and seduced by this black box. Research has shown that Television does have an effect upon the brain. It is a biological fact that we humans have two sides of our brains that provide different attributes. We often hear that so and so is so creative that the left side of his brain must be dominant. It is a disturbing fact that research has shown that the left side of the brain seems to shut down when watching Television. It is almost like the Television has taken control. The Television somehow puts the left side of our brain into a comatose level and sneaks up on the right side to impress a thought or image. I do not mean to infer that Television by itself is evil or possessed. It is just that the Television does it all for you and all we have to do is sit back, drink a beer and watch.

What is the issue?

So why is this so important? When Television first came upon the scene in the late 40's we were still morally competent. There was very little on Television initially. What was shown on Television was very family oriented and fit with the virtues and morals of the people at the time. Remember the story about the boiled frog? While Television started out very clean and virtuous it can only be described as a cesspool today. The scenes that come across the screen today would have shocked and insulted the 50's generation.

I still remember when Elvis Presley first appeared on the family show, the ***Ed Sullivan Show*** in the late 50's. Ed's show was a Sunday night favorite with the American family. He had singers, circus acts and comedians - all of who were

squeaky, clean by comparison with today's Television shows. Lady singers on Ed's show had to cover up their exposed bosoms with a lace *doily* if they wore a low cut dress. So what about Elvis? Rock and roll music was taking the media by storm and Elvis was on his way to becoming *King*. Elvis was first in the new group of singers to use what has to be called body language when he sang. You have to understand that singers before then wore suits, were clean cut, sang with words you could understand and stood still when singing. Elvis not only did not stand still but also became the prototype of the *hip gyrating* rock singer. His actions were considered as lewd and Elvis was filmed from the waist up on his first time on the Ed Sullivan show.

Today that same scene on Television would be considered, as so tame that most of the American public would be bored to tears. Today you can view any and all types of sexual acts or worse on Television. Today human beings are killed or mutilated on so called prime time in front of millions of impressionable young people. In the early days of Television, the Lone Ranger never killed any one and always shot the gun out of the hands of the bad guy. You could tell who he was because he had the black hat on. The good guys wore white hats. It has been said that by the time a young boy or girl reaches the age of 15 they will have witnessed 100,000 acts of violence or deprivation on Television. How do they know what is real?

The V-chip is a fraud!

Not too long ago President Clinton, with leaders of the major Television network, went to work out a rating system (see comments in the following sections) for Television and the Internet. He also claimed that use of the *V-chip* would help parents discern and control the violence their children view on Television. What about the sex and outright nudity that seems to be on most Television

transmissions? The *V-chip* would have the Television off line most of the time if it were functioning properly.

Do not be deceived by Satan! Think about this. If parents have the so-called ability to screen what their children watch this gives the networks a dirty blank check right into your home. It lets them off the hook. The Television networks claim that they have a right to put anything on the air they wish since parents can exclude pornography from their young children. Do you really think they are supporting your rights? No! It is all about money. Those movies cost money to make and profits seem to drive everything.

And who controls the *V-chip* in your home? Computer and software manufacturers have been trying (unsuccessfully) for years to provide security systems to protect your computers. There is not an electronic or digital system built today that cannot eventually be broken into by the most persistent hacker. Do you know what age group adapts most easily to the computer? It is not the over 40 age group. Clearly, those who seem to be drawn to the computer (and video games) are in the age group from 5-10. I can assure you that the *V-chip* is a false sense of security. And a major deception!

Does Television have any redemption qualities?

I have plenty of friends who claim that Television is educating their children and that they are learning faster from it. We are in the *MTV* generation and some of us like to think that we need action and glitter to be able to keep the attention of children. This is another delusion of Satan and is the furthest from the real truth. Studies have shown that children who are taught more with Television visual aids actually learned less and retained less of what they saw. Notice I did not say what they learned since it is highly questionable. Creativity is also stifled with constant use of Television since we do not have to do anything but watch.

In itself Television is neither evil nor dangerous. Television does not possess any special powers and is not animate. What becomes dangerous, like any thing, is the way in which it is used. A gun is just a few ounces of metal until put into the wrong hands. We can point to the many Christian shows, which are on the Television airwaves along with nature shows, and public broadcasting. These types of shows have not and are not likely to change for the worst. The problem is two-fold. Firstly, these types of shows are in the very small minority. Secondly, it that old trickery of the Devil again. We have Television in our homes because we want to watch these better shows. Somehow, while the good comes in, the trash is also being watched.

Where does the media go from here?

If radio was the precursor to Television what is next? Very simply, it is the Internet and Virtual Reality. In the ***Book of Revelations***, John speaks of a future generation that worships the beast. While I do not promote strict literal interpretation of the Bible, there are clearly passages that speak to all generations. There have been many books written about this book and any in depth discussion is beyond the intent of this book. Nevertheless, God had a message for mankind, which I believe, is recounted in this prophetic book. This beast is everywhere and can communicate with its subjects. Up until a few years ago, Television was one way communication. It received signals from a transmitter. We listened and we watched. As I write this book, we are on the threshold of a new generation of medium. The Internet is growing so fast that it is beyond comprehension or control. Interesting is the word used in conjunction with Internet communication called the Web. Is this a spider's web, ready to catch its unsuspecting prey?

The beast that John might have seen as reported in ***Revelations*** could have been Television and/or the Internet since the same black box is used for both mediums.

Two-way communications in chat rooms is already widely in use on the Internet. The chatters cannot see each other yet but this will change very soon as the Internet expands again. It is already possible to have Television conference calls and this author has experienced it. You can purchase the software and hardware today for less than \$ 500 to set up your own Television for video conference calls. John saw a future generation worshipping and in directs communication with the Beast or Antichrist. We could be that future generation. Never before in the history of man have we possessed the tools to do what the Apostle John may have witnessed. John saw a generation that the Beast (Television?) had control over the lives of mankind. Have you ever watched the faces of children who are watching Television? Perhaps you should.

The Internet

The Internet should be looked upon as being dangerous in light of its widespread use and content. We have not seen the full impact of the Internet yet and it currently is an unmanaged tool growing faster than any other media in history has. There are no guidelines or regulations and the only thing one needs to use it is a computer and telephone line. There seems to be no one in charge. Or is there? I have not been able to understand why using the Internet and other features such as e-mail are so inexpensive. Have you ever wondered why Television quickly became so cheap and available to all? It is almost as if something or someone is subsidizing it in a special way that defies description.

Soon the Television itself will be the Internet media itself and it may replace the personal computer. The Internet already is under fire due to the sexual content, especially with young children. What good is the so-called *V-chip* here where our current president vows that the Internet will be in every home! Again, we see the deception that Satan perpetrates upon us as we think that the Internet is the source of happiness and the salvation for our problems. The tone is that using the

Internet for shopping and communication makes our lives easier. It probably does, but remember the story about the boiled frog! We have not yet seen the full impact of the Internet upon our society as we approach the third millennium.

Cyber-Smut

It is interesting that as the Internet grows that the pornographic web sites are among the fastest growing ones. Remember that the Internet is virtually without any controls at all. If we think that Television is corrupt, it is palled by comparison to the impact of the Internet. The sinister part about the Internet is that it is becoming a two-way communication street. With Television, one is the receiver and one is the sender of information. The Internet has spawned *chat rooms* that allows on line communication in both directions. Sounds like some of what John may have prophesied in Revelation!

Smut, which was previously limited to shops in the dark side of town, is now available at the touch of a key by anyone who knows how to boot up a computer and *surf the web*. Spiders use their webs quite nicely to catch their unsuspecting prey. The key operative word here is unsuspecting. The stories of children caught by someone they trusted from the web are too numerous to count. Our administration answers this threat with empty promises of controls. There is no controls possible!

The presidential rhetoric claims prosecution for offenders. The so-called Communication Decency Act (CDA) was passed making it illegal for anyone to use the Internet to send *indecent* materials to children. The *free-speech* activists quickly jumped into the act and challenged the law and the United States Supreme Court unanimously ruled in their favor. It is interesting that our government is more anxious to preserve the rights of adults to wallow in pornography than it is to protect innocent and helpless children!

Virtual reality, the new danger?

So what about Virtual Reality and why is it so harmful? This media takes Television one step further in putting the viewer into a fake environment that seems so real that he imagines he is a part of it. This media was actually predicted several years ago and shown on the popular Television series Star Trek. In this Television series they ultimately developed something called the *Holo-Deck*. The *Holo-Deck* alluded to using holography to project images, which were enhanced by computer programs. People, places and things became *virtually real* to the person using the *Holo-Deck*.

What is harmful and evil about Virtual Reality is that the user soon does not need to interact with real people. Eventually he loses touch with reality. I can see people becoming totally immersed in this media without the need of other humans. God did not intend for this to happen and it can only be the work of the Devil.

The Television ratings game

In March 1996, Television executives and President Clinton met in a highly publicized meeting between the industry and a chief executive. Both parties appeared to be trying to play the moral savior of our children and other impressionable people. What prompted this meeting was the increasingly heavy fire that the industry was getting from parents due to the on screen sex and violence. Bear in mind the famous and so-called V-chip (discussed above) a device that would enable parents to block out certain Television shows was also introduced.

All of this is superficial fluff, the calling card of the devil. That is, it was intended to deceive the parents into thinking that something useful and positive was happening. What was the result of these meetings? You may as well know that nothing occurred. In spite of overwhelming demand by parents to provide them with a guide as to the content of the Television show, they mimicked the movie rating system developed by Jack Valenti over 30 years ago.

This antiquated rating system was conceived during a period of time when Television and movies had some moral qualities. It is totally inadequate for the decline in moral values as clearly seen through the eyes of the media of today. It was intended to make the parents feel that the industry was actually doing something, when in reality, nothing useful was done. The industry proposed a system with age categories such as the movie industry developed 30 years ago but it still did not provide parents with information relative to the content. More deception if I ever saw it!

Why is the industry so reluctant to provide information that defines the content of the movie? The plain and simple facts are the industry does not want to hint that it impugns upon your creativity. Remember we discussed creativity and the affect

that Television seems to have in reducing it? The industry does not want to come out and simply tell you that this show or that show is consistently high in sexual content or violence or using inappropriate language.

Think of this way. The stores that sell pornographic materials generally have large signs announcing that it is an adult bookstore. There is no misunderstanding that those using this store are after the smut sold inside. Television producers do not want their shows pre assigned by going into the embarrassing introductions. The bottom line is the bottom line. We are talking about revenue here. A sponsor may not be as concerned about a rating, say Television-M, as it might be if it were very clear that it was high in sexual content. Even if the show called Television-M contained the same sexual content, the sponsors are less likely to complain because the implication is not made. The deception leads to the bottom line!

Family friendly Television time slots

Using the above-described Television rating system Columbia Magazine in its May 1997 issue viewed and rated the shows that appeared on February 20th. Each show was rated Television-PG in the new system. This would infer that some level of sexual or violent content was possible. Columbia reported that in reality, each of the shows were filled with episodes that ranged from homosexual lovers, ethnic slurs, character assassinations, jokes about the male anatomy, use of marijuana (an illegal drug at this writing) and insults by a Television comedian noted for this type of so-called comedy.

The so-called family friendly time slots have deteriorated from something one could watch with their young children not too many years ago. This is not so today. The deception and change in moral values and ethics have allowed the Television to portray situations and episodes that would have been watched with horror only 25 years ago. I have always maintained that these types of shows are

on the air because someone must be watching them. Surely sponsors would not support a Television show that people would not tune into. We are our own worst enemy and the Devil is enjoying every minute of it.

Boredom - the end product

"I'm bored" screams the teenage boy. He has a room full of video games, action figures (dolls), two Televisions, cable Television with 200 channels and a space age computer with CD-ROM, multimedia and full Internet access. He is also tired of his own personal phone number and the battery in his cellular phone is dead! Doesn't your heart go out to that neglected child? He has nothing to do.

Boredom is a chronic symptom of this age, which is obsessed with pleasure. It is a known human facility that what was wonderful today is inadequate tomorrow. Each time we reach a new high we are looking for the next high. The pursuit of pleasure leads to moral degradation and to boredom and eventually to spiritual death. Drug addicts have to take more and more of their drugs each time just to stay even with the feeling from the last experience.

Teenage suicide is a national shame. More teenagers take their lives in this generation than ever recorded in history. Suicide is the ultimate of giving up with coping with life. Life is too complex. Too hard. Too boring. Having too much is a contradiction in life but compliments the law of diminishing returns. We all encounter this law when we try to work a ***little*** longer to finish the task than we should. It seems to take significantly more time than if we rested and started fresh. The more pleasure we seek, the more we need. At some point some people (typically children) cannot get enough and give up.

Chapter Eight

What about the USA?

*We the People of the United States
In order to form a more perfect union...
Do ordain and establish the Constitution of
The United States of America*

In God We Trust

The USA was founded under duress from political and religious persecution. Our very first country fathers recognized the importance of God in the everyday scheme of things when they penned the Declaration of Independence. Our currency still has the following statement ***In God We Trust*** boldly printed on it. Just look at the coins in your pocket for this inscription. America is known for being a Christian country. If you were to ask the average American what his or her religious affiliation were, they would respond as being Christian. In using the term ***Christian*** we infer all those who have a belief in Jesus Christ including Roman and Orthodox Catholics and all of the Protestant sects. It is a sad thing to say but the average American also does not practice his faith as was done less than one century ago.

As will be discussed in another chapter, the early American family was very God centered. God was given His rightful place in every day life and in many early small communities the town life revolved around the Christian parish. Christians of all denominations immigrated to the United States settling first on the East Coast. The New England states still have large populations of people with Italian, Irish, Dutch and German heritages. It is said that there are more Irish people living in just the state of Massachusetts than do so in Ireland! Soon many other countries joined this group and settled in virtually every part of the United States.

They were of strong faith, which gave them their strength during the difficult years as America grew into the most powerful and influential country in the world.

Biblical Babylon

Biblical accounts refer to the country of Babylon as the epitome of all that is immoral and lacking in the fear of God. In Jewish teachings the word was used as an adjective to describe this lowly way of life. Babylonians lived as they were gods and surrounded themselves with riches, often at the expenses of others. Therefore, using the word Babylon has been associated with evil rulers or countries since that time. Since the USA has become one of the richest and most powerful countries in the world it is natural to place it in the category of Babylon, especially in the age we now live. Is the USA the new Babylon? This writer does not think so – just yet. We must be careful that we do not achieve this title but many of the things we are doing are leading us in that direction. We shall discuss some of these critical issues later in this book.

There is a familiar old story about the Devil regarding the USA. The story takes place in the late 20th Century. The Devil is seen by his disciples hovering over the USA seemingly unconcerned and bored. His disciples come to his side asking him why he is not down on earth in the USA doing his most dirty work. The story goes on that Satan replies to this query with a yawn stating ***"I don't need to do anything. They are doing just fine without my interference."***

Sad as it may be seen, the story is more truth than fiction. There was a time when the USA was looked upon by the rest of the world as the example for them to follow and as the watchdog for them. The USA was also seen as the protector of other countries. President Roosevelt was asked why the USA was so successful in creating an atmosphere of democracy with industrial and personal growth.

President Roosevelt responded that we were great because we were good people. Our virtues were high and we cared for each other. He added, that we would cease to be great when we were no longer good.

The grandeur of the USA

The Book of Revelations speaks of a new Babylon to come in the last days. As discussed earlier, the United States was founded from our ancestors running away from religious persecution and a tyrannical foreign ruler. We all know the history and the stories behind our beginnings. But few of us living in this century understand the impact that Christians had in the formation of this country. Some of the great names we study such as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin were deeply committed to their faith in God to preserve and to guide them.

I remember reading some years ago about George Washington's view of the future. He may not have been a prophet in the sense that we think of the bible but George Washington did try to warn us. During a recent auction the handwritten, but not delivered, inauguration speech of George Washington was discovered and sold. It was to be delivered on April 30, 1789 but George Washington changed his mind and delivered a different (shorter) address. The interesting part about this speech was that George Washington was telling us we would never be submitted to any foreign rule until we had lost all of our virtues. This appears to be the case today and the USA has lost most of its prestige as a world leader.

There is a *New World Order* in the making sponsored by the United Nations and the European coalitions. And we are not a part of it. As an engineer I saw the signs of this in the late 70's as the European community started to impose their industry standards on the rest of the world. Some years later the European community had gained enough strength that they began a certification process. Today we know it as ISO 9000 certification that is tied to the CE Mark. Without

this *certification stamp* other producers including the USA simply cannot sell their products into Europe. I should add that this has a similar ring to the warnings in the Bible about accepting the mark of the beast. No one would be allowed to buy or sell without this *mark*. The USA is now on the outside looking in as the European community has taken the lead in this arena. In early 1999 we saw the implementation of a common European currency called the Euro-Dollar.

We are number one!

This sounds like a compliment but it is not intended to be. We are Number One in the divorce rate. We are Number One in voluntary abortions. We are Number One in teenage pregnancies. We are Number One in illegal drug use. We are Number One in alcohol abuse. We are Number One in illiteracy. I bet the last one was a real surprise to the reader. Yes, in spite of our exterior wealth and apparent opulence, our children are learning less every year.

In 1940, the teacher's chief complaint about our children was that they chewed gum in class, talked out of turn and occasionally skipped class. Today our teacher's chief complaints are children killing children, drugs, gangs, teen pregnancy and teen suicide. That is a remarkable difference in less than 60 years. Why? Because we have been deceived time and time again in virtues that take us away from the basic family structure and from God. The USA cannot claim to be the leader that it used to be although even our foreign leaders still seem to think we have this leadership, especially when they want aid!

Earlier we learned about the views of President Roosevelt with regard the greatness of the US. It seems as if we are no longer good - ***or God fearing*** - and we are traveling down the wide road to destruction. The ironic reality of this situation is that after almost 70 years of atheistic rule in countries like Russia, Poland and Eastern Europe they are returning to their Catholic heritages.

Christian communities cannot get bibles fast enough to cover the demand in Russia. While this is going on, America is working hard to remove any semblance of religion in their facade of separation *of church and state*. The sham in this need for separation is so bizarre as to wonder why we have been so gullible.

What have been the consequences?

For the first time in American history we were defeated in the war in Vietnam. Our so-called success in Korea was almost as good. Not only was the Vietnam war a humiliation to us but it also began the internal split of this great country. Jesus told us in the Gospels that *a house divided falls*.

The Engle v. Vitale case in June 1962 began the downslide, as Bible reading in public schools became illegal. In June of 1963 the famous Murray v. Curless case made it a crime for children to pray in public schools. What has happened since then? A few months later President Kennedy was assassinated and America began to escalate a war with Vietnam that we did not win. Do you think this insult to God went unnoticed? The sixties were to be tumultuous as Americans burned flags (and bras) and went on a frenzy of rebellion.

February of 1973 gave America more *freedom* with the conclusion of the Roe v. Wade case that made abortion upon demand legal. Since then almost 30 million babies have been killed in their mother's wombs, with a new baby killed every 20 seconds. This holocaust far exceeds the travesties of Hitler in the sheer numbers of innocent lives snuffed out like an unwanted tumor. The devil has deceived too many into thinking that these were not human lives - children of God. Take careful notice that the OPEC oil crisis began the same year that America legalized killing of babies. It is estimated that crisis escalated the drain of American trade dollars to the tune of more than half of its wealth. This drain contributed to trade

deficits that devalued our currencies and drained our resources. Is this timing just a coincidence?

Chapter Nine

Have we lost our Innocence and Virtues?

*Do not take me away with sinners,
Nor my life with the violent.
Their hands carry out their schemes,
Their right hands are full of bribes. Psalm 25:9-10*

Like a thief in the night

Not too long ago I was sitting in mass and reading meditations from my daily missal while waiting for mass to begin. The author wrote about values in a way better than I have ever heard it said before. He said the modern world is like a department store where some mischievous person slipped in during the night changed all the price tags. He made the cheap and tawdry items have the highest prices enticing us to give so much of our energy and time to get them. These are the material items. The items that were the most precious of all were marked with the lowest prices. These are the spiritual and cultural values and we let ourselves be deceived that they are not important. The person with a good spiritual and religious outlook is not deceived and readily recognizes that the things that count the most are not material ones. Our Lord repeatedly told us that we run the risk of losing our souls when we seek gain of the worldly things more than to seek Him.

Signs of the times

The signs of the times could be seen from a magazine story that was discussing a Television show called **Ellen**. In this Television episode the star of the show let it be known that she was gay. For weeks Television, radio and newspaper news hyped the possibility that she would let this be known on one of the Television

episodes. Prior to this, the Television ratings for this show were at the bottom of the polls. It was obvious to this writer that the reason for this episode was the ratings game discussed in an earlier chapter. Finally, the actress declared herself to be a real life homosexual and appeared on several day-time talk shows. The end result was that over 30 million people watched this much-hyped episode. I can guarantee to you that 30 years ago not only would this type of affair never surfaced on Television but that the advertisers, producers and actors would have rebelled in horror at the prospects of this Television show. It is interesting that at this writing, this much-hyped Television show is already now off the air. One can only be concerned that something worse may be on the horizon.

So what is the difference? Today, it seems that our moral values and virtues have encountered a meltdown. We have truly lost our innocence when a morally degrading Television show can get so much attention. This country was founded on common sense, good sound moral values and a sense of fair play. Somehow we have lost our way.

Eat, drink and be merry

We are bombarded with advertisements to buy, to borrow to pay for it, to use it up, to toss it away into the garbage and finally to replace it with a newer model and start the cycle over again. At one time our purchases lasted us a lifetime. Today, they are made for a finite (and short) life as if intended to keep us in slavery over material things. At one time Americans made quality products that were recognized the world over as such. Today many things are imported and are poorly manufactured. Even those made in our own country have lost their reputation for quality.

One often hears of corporate programs to improve quality but this writer believes that the real intent is to create a throwaway society. Everything, including people,

are disposable. This is the reason euthanasia can gain the grounds that it has. The fear we should have is for our elderly people. When so-called mercy killing is accepted, when does it stop? How soon before the elderly or disadvantaged become an inconvenience?

Public schools vs. private schools

I believe that a significant event occurred some years ago, which has had a profound effect upon America. I am referring to the loss of prayer in our public schools. This seemingly innocent incident in the time scales of history broke the cycle of teacher-family-faith. We must first understand how impressionable we are when we are children. Without good role models and proper instructions in faith, morals and fair play, we become lost. Our children are being robbed of their youth and innocence. While we cannot pray in public schools or learn about Jesus, the children are being taught how to use condoms! It is interesting to note that in most public school systems it is not permitted to honor the birthday of Jesus but they can and do permit honors for American Indian medicine men, Santa Claus and other secular leaders.

The picture clouds up

Something is wrong with the picture. The picture is so distorted to some families that they have removed their children from public schools to place them in private schools. This writer did just this in the late 1970's with both of my children. I chose to send my children to Catholic schools for these and many other related reasons. The public schools were just not providing the care and learning I wanted for my children.

In less than 30 years

What is so amazing to me is how this decline could have occurred in 30 short years. In less than one half of one generation we managed to undo almost 2000 years of heritage. We have abandoned our roots. We have said that God is dead while evil is OK (as long it is done in the privacy of your home). In less than 30 years we have killed over 30 million innocent babies. We have allowed hard core pornography to enter our homes into our living rooms via the Television or Internet.

In the last 30 years our society has legitimized welfare and has encouraged an entire generation of recipients to live off the state. At the same time we have accepted every type of life style imaginable including the misery which always goes along with it. How did it happen? The answer is plain and simple for two reasons: *apathy* and *bit-by-bit*. Remember my story about the frog. First we did not care, Then, it happened so gradually (*bit-by-bit*) that no one noticed.

We are a frightened people and have come to accept the terror which we see every day. Have you noticed that most of your food or medicine purchases these days come in tamper proof containers? Do you even remember when this started? Some years ago a demented mind put poison in a container of pain relief medicine. When this became news it spawned a series of “*me-too’s*” that created terror and panic. The backlash was an entire new industry selling tamper proof containers.

A faceless society

Man has been reduced to a series of numbers and has lost his value and function. Entire functions or jobs have disappeared, being replaced by machines or computers. As an example, do you remember the man who used to operate those new elevators invented in the early 1900's? Do you remember the kind face of the man that used to open the door of the bank, the department store or the taxicab? They are gone. Machines have replaced their function. So what happened to them? They lost their jobs and likely their dignity along with it. Some companies have encouraged their employees to do their work at home and they do not go into an office every day. All of their activities are spent on the telephone or at their computers. They do not see anyone's face. I have this awful vision of a future society of faceless people going about their daily business in a zombie state without seeing people or caring for anyone.

Be like God

Everyday we read about new breakthroughs in medicine and science. The world was recently shocked with the cloning of animals and I have to believe that it is also being done covertly with humans. DNA research is aimed at control. What happened to the conscience and innocence of man? At one time he put all of his faith in God. Sadly now he wants to be like god. Why would we need God if we can create our own destiny? Satan has deceived us in the worst way possible in this manner. The more we think we can control our world the less we need God. That is the ultimate deception!

Innocent no more

One cannot help wondering what happened in the past short 30-40 years. Growing up as a young boy in the 40's we seemed to have different values, almost like innocence. I remember that we did not publicly discuss such things as morals and sex. In fact our culture avoided it. My mother was born in 1909 of Italian immigrants. They literally came over on the boat with only the clothing on their backs when they arrived in America. They were, of course, Roman Catholics and carried their faith with them. While I do not remember much about my grandparents I know they worked very hard and managed to build up a small fortune which they passed on to their children.

Parents of those days did not talk about sex and avoided the truth because they were embarrassed by such a discussion. Most of us did not really care anyhow. I have a favorite story about my mother to illustrate this issue. I was probably about 8-9 years old when either we asked the question or she felt compelled to tell us about ***where babies come from***. I believe it may have come about because one of the mothers in our neighborhood suddenly (suddenly to us) proudly showed us her new infant. Well, my Italian mother told me that babies came about from kissing and that we were to be very careful and also that we must be married (to have babies). Remember that this is the late 1940's! Of course we accepted this tale until one day not too long after I was with my mother and sister in the movies. There was an actor and actress on the screen kissing and somehow we knew that they were not married. When I presented this moral dilemma to my mother she did not bat an eye as she told us: ***"That's all right children they can kiss because they have scotch tape on their lips"***. So much for my elaborate knowledge of sex and my mother got out of the telling us the truth!

The point of my story is to point out the innocence we had not so long ago. In my chapter on the Media I discussed how Television started out as squeaky clean and

in a few short years has become a purveyor of filth. Today, in some schools, children are taught how to use a condom before they spell it. While I have to admit that my mother could have done a better job in explaining this very important thing, somehow we have transferred this task to schoolteachers. I read stories every day about irate parents that have found out that their children are being shown graphic videos in schools to teach them planned parenthood and other sexually explicit facts. To the dismay of God we have indeed lost our innocence.

Chapter Ten

When does it end?

I shall wipe away every tear.

There shall be no death.

A New Jerusalem

Mankind has struggled for centuries with the knowledge that while life seems to be finite that there is something eternal to strive for. Consider this most important scriptural reading from the book of Revelations, which I will repeat in full as follows:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a New Jerusalem, coming down from out of the heaven from God, prepared as bride for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they shall be his people and God himself will always be with them (as their God). He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or wailing or pain, (for) the old order has passed away". The one who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new". He said to me, "They are accomplished, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water. The victor shall inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son".

(Revelation 21:1-7)

We are all on the road to Jerusalem, that is, our own road to heaven. As Christians we believe that Jesus will return someday to finally establish the Kingdom of

God. He told us before He ascended into heaven that He would return at the *end of times*. It gives us hope for the future. Whether Jesus returns to take us home in the next day or ten years from now it matters not because we have our own end of time.

God's Plan

When we read the Book of Genesis we see that God had a plan for us that was thrown out of kilter by the first of His creation. As we further follow the teachings of the Bible it takes us finally to one of the very last books (if not the last) which were written. The Book of Revelation gives us promise. In fact, the purpose that the author had in writing this book was just that - hope and fortitude.

The Triumph of Our Lady

Our Blessed Mother appeared in Fatima, Portugal in 1917 to three young children. While she gave the children several messages for the world Our Lady also told them that *"In the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph"*. Mary warned the world about an impending war and the threats of communism. Every thing that Our Lady prophesied has come true and she also revealed one special secret to Lucia, one of the three children. Lucia is now Sister Lucia and at this writing is still alive. The issues and debates about the last secret has been the subject of many books since it has never been revealed to the world. Several Popes have read the message that Lucia revealed but have never considered it necessary to announce its contents to the world at large.

The apparition of Our Lady at Fatima is one of the few which has been declared as valid by the Church, although tradition tells us her apparitions began as early as the first century. Mary gives hope to her children in these troubled times. She

also told Saint Catherine in 1830 that she could not promise happiness in this life - only in the next. That is, the real hope is not with earthly things but only in what God has prepared for us.

The Women clothed in the sun

Let's go back to the Book of Genesis. This book said the woman would crush the head of the serpent, the Devil who started this whole mess. It is also interesting to note that the Book of Revelation (Chapter 12) also refers to a woman clothed with the sun with twelve stars around her head. Most Bible scholars refer to the woman as either the Church or Our Lady or both. This chapter tells of a battle with the woman and the "**dragon**" that is thrown down to earth. The final outcome of this battle- yet to come- is that the Church will prevail and be victorious.

The most interesting thing about this chapter in the Book of Revelation is how strikingly it matches one of Our Lady's most important apparitions. Our Blessed Mother appeared to a poor peasant by the name of Juan Diego several times in the year 1531 in the place that is now called Mexico City. We now know this entire area to be a part of what is commonly called the "Americas". During her last apparition with the local Bishop, his assistant and Juan Diego, the image of Our Lady miraculously appeared on the tilma of Juan Diego. The image matches the description in chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation to a "T". Tilmas were made of a cactus cloth material with a maximum life expectancy of 30-40 years. Not only have scientists never been able to figure out how the material has survived or how the image was impressed on this cloth but also it is still intact to this day. The image is encased in a glass frame in the Basilica in Mexico City.

The Battle Ends

So what does this all mean to us? Hope! In the end Mary's Immaculate Heart will triumph. Satan is losing and he knows it but will not give up the battle. When that special day does come and we see the return of Our Lord Jesus we will truly see God's plan for us. In spite of some of the prophecy you may hear about, the world will not come to an end. Jesus spoke to apostles of the end of *time* not the end of the *world*. Think about it. It is inconceivable that God made man as an experiment for some finite time period only to completely destroy it at some later time. That would make God imperfect and is a contradiction. It does not make sense!

The fullness of time

So, when does it end? We do not have an answer for this question and you will take note that a study of scriptures does not possess the answer. When Jesus was asked this question, He told them several things. First He told them that even He did not know the time. I believe that Jesus, as God, surely knew this answer but chose to avoid the issue because the apostles and the rest of mankind were not supposed to know neither the time nor the place. Secondly, Jesus told them to watch for the signs of the times and gave them examples of planting seeds for the new season and so on.

The coming of Jesus and the promises of scriptures will occur when some *fullness of time* as established by God has occurred. Exactly what this fullness encompasses we do not know. Some would say that this would occur when God has had enough of our actions and decides to punish the evils of mankind. If this were the case He should have done so many years ago since we are not going to get any better! I heard a priest some years ago give his idea of what this fullness of time might mean. The heavens are filled with the spirits (angels) which were

created when time began. As discussed earlier, about one third of these angels fell away with Satan, again in the beginnings of creation. This priest's theory is that when we are born and then die we go to heaven as newly created spirits. When those of us who go to heaven and replace the number of angels that were lost, time will be finally *full*. I don't know about you but this certainly sounds more like an action of God than His getting tired of what we have been doing.

There are prophets who claim that the end of times is near. Catholics pray for this at Mass every day. During Mass we say "*As we wait in joyful anticipation of the second coming of our Lord*". And it truly will be joyful. There will be no more tears and the old order has passed away. This is time to rejoice, not to be sad.

May God bless you and keep you until we meet at the Lord's Home – heaven!

Maranatha!

