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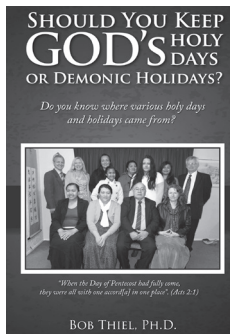
CALLS for an ARAB NATO or the KING of the SOUTH

Valentine's, Carnaval,
Mardi Gras, Lent

Increase YOUR Part
in God's Work!



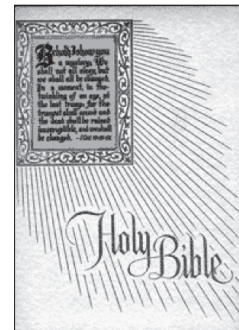
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Calls for an Arab NATO or the King of the South?

For the past several years, various ones have called for a type of pan-Arabic military alliance patterned after the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, commonly referred to as NATO.

In 2022, Jordan's King Abdullah called for a "Middle East NATO." Others have called for one in the past. Plus, such has been pushed for by both American and European leaders.

The German publication Deutsche Welle has published in the Summer of 2022 that though many have wanted a type of an 'Arab NATO,' stretching from Morocco to the Arab peninsula, that the nations in the region have had differing priorities which have prevented this from happening.

Yet, there have long been Islamic organizations that have wanted something along those lines.

Notice something from the large Sunni Muslim organization called the Muslim Brotherhood:

What is the Muslim Brotherhood?

The world's largest and most influential Islamist movement. Founded in Egypt in 1928, the group was originally focused on ridding the country of corrupting secular influences brought by British colonial rule. Over the years, it established branches and affiliates in many countries to promote traditional Sunni Islamic morals, social justice, and the eradication of poverty and corruption. "The Islamic nation," its charter states, "must be fully prepared to fight the tyrants and the enemies of Allah as a prelude to establishing an Islamic state"—ideally a re-established caliphate, stretching from Spain across the Middle East and Central Asia to Indonesia, to be governed according to Islamic sharia law. (Understanding the Muslim Brotherhood. February 14, 2011. © The Muslim

Brotherhood. <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=28019> viewed 07/19/22)

The Muslim Brotherhood wants as its top priority a pan-national Islamic caliphate ruled by an Imam.

The Bible prophesies about a leader it calls the King of the South in the 11th chapter of the Book of Daniel. He rules over places in the Middle East and North Africa, but not places like Spain. In many ways he sounds similar to the type of leader groups like the Muslim Brotherhood are looking forward to.

Prophecies and Identities of the Coming Confederation

In 1966 and 1979, the old Radio/Worldwide Church of God taught that the King of the South of Daniel 11 would arise and make a deal with the King of the North as shown in Psalm 83. Some modern identities have been added in brackets []:

But who is the "king of the south"? ... in {Daniel 11} verse 40 we skip to "the time of the end" ... Just as there is yet to be a final "king of the north" ... there may very well emerge in the same manner **a final "king of the south"-- an overall leader of an Arab-Moslem confederation, possibly bearing the very title Mahdi** ... a prophetic psalm (Psalm 83) provides additional insight into the Mideast picture. Germany (Assyria in Bible prophecy) and perhaps the rest of Europe will be in league in the future with a union of Arab nations ... But in the end, this European-Arab alliance will prove short-lived ... (Stump K. The Arab World in Prophecy. Plain Truth, December 1979, pp. 11-12)

They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they

are confederate against thee: The tabernacles of Edom [Esau or modern-day Turkey, a non-Arab but Islamic nation] and the Ishmaelites [Saudi Arabia]; of Moab [part of Jordan] and the Hagarenes [anciently these people dwelt in the land known as Syria today]; Gebal [Lebanon], and Ammon [modern Jordan], and Amalek [part of the Turks]; the Philistines [the modern Palestinian Arabs] with the inhabitants of Tyre [Lebanon]; Assur [whose descendants, the Assyrians, migrated to Germany] also is joined with them: (Stump K. The Arab World in Prophecy. Plain Truth, December 1979)

Turn to the astounding prophecy found in Psalm 83:1-8. David, inspired of God, predicted the coming time when ALL of Israel's enemies would join together in an effort to crush out even the name "Israel" from the face of the earth! (Verse 4) "For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee ..." (verse 5). Notice the nations making up this confederation. "Edom [Turkey], and the Ishmaelites [Saudi Arabia]; Moab [Jordan], and the Hagarenes [they anciently dwelt in the land known as Syria today]; Gebal [Lebanon], and Ammon [Jordan] and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur [whose descendants migrated to Germany] is joined with them; they have helped the children of Lot" {Moab and Ammon in modern Jordan}. Here we see that the Arab nations mentioned are allied with Germany (Assur) which we know from other prophecies will be the military leader — naturally so — of a United States of Europe ... Egypt ... will provoke the prophesied United Europe (Daniel 11:40). This European power — called the "king of the north" in Daniel 11 — shall invade and occupy the "glorious land" of Palestine (verse 41). "And the land of Egypt shall not escape." (Boraker R. SYRIA RAIDS ISRAEL — Where Is It Leading? Plain Truth. November 1966)

The above quotes shows that the WCG under the late Herbert Armstrong's leadership taught that there would be a future fulfillment of Daniel 11:40 involving an end-time King of the South and North and that WCG believed it would involve some type of Arab-Islamic confederation.

Some have indicated that Edom will include some in Central Asia (like Afghanistan), Moab also includes some in Syria and Iraq, that Tyre could include Italians, and that Ezekiel 30:5 includes North Africa.

Psalm 83 is very likely to involve terrorism — taking "crafty counsel" sounds like plotting terrorism. The Bible is showing that the Europeans will make a destructive deal with those of the Middle East and North Africa.

It would seem that the King of the South will employ some type of warfare and terrorism against the descendants of Israel. The Bible specifically warns about "terror" as a curse for the descendants of Jacob (Leviticus 26:16; Jeremiah 15:8; Deuteronomy 32:25) and since terrorism has often been used by Islamists, this may be part of how they will contribute to the destruction of the nation of Israel and the Anglo-descended peoples that Psalm 83 and Daniel 11:39 alludes to.

Some Muslims want a leader called the Imam Mahdi, while others call for a Caliph, to lead them and create some type of Islamic empire in the 21st century. This deal in the 83rd Psalm will affect the USA, Canada, UK, and possibly Australia and even New Zealand.

Though not all Muslims expect the Imam Mahdi, many still seem to long for a leader to unify the Arab World. Some Muslims are looking for a political-spiritual leader, sometimes called the Caliph in English, to rise up (Caliph is a shortened version of "Khalifah rasul Allah" meaning "Successor to the Messenger of God"). The title caliph has been given to the head of state in Muslim-governed countries in the past,

Here is how the Literal Standard Version renders several verses related to the King of the South with the modern identities, per the old Worldwide Church of God shown in []:

40 And at the time of the end, a king of the south pushes himself forward with him, and a king of the north storms against him, with chariot, and with horsemen, and with many ships; 41 and he has come into the lands, and has overflowed, and passed over, and has come into the desirable land, and many stumble, and these escape from his hand: Edom [Turkey], and Moab [Jordan], and the chief of the sons of

Ammon [Arab emirates and Saudi Arabia]. 42 And he sends forth his hand on the lands, and the land of Egypt [Egypt] is not for an escape; 43 and he has ruled over treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the desirable things of Egypt, and Lubim and Cushim [are] at his steps. (Daniel 11:40-43, LSV)

As far as “Lubim” goes, Matthew Poole’s Commentary states:

The parts westward from Egypt along the Barbary coast;

So, that would look to include Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. It may also include Western Sahara and Mauritania.

As far as “Cushim” goes, Barnes’ Notes on the Bible states:

Hebrew, Cushites – מִיִּשְׁכּ kushîym ... The reference here, undoubtedly, is to the African Cush ...

The Cushites would be Sudanese as well as potential support from other black Africans.

Basically, the King of the South looks to be comprised of nations in the Middle East and North Africa.

If the King of the South will be Egyptian (and that is consistent with writings from the old Radio Church of God, Plain Truth, July 1963, p. 22) the same basic geographic supporters are also listed in Ezekiel 30:2-6.

The Alliance Will Be Defeated

Both Daniel 11:40-43 and Ezekiel 30:2-8 show that Egypt and its supporters will be defeated.

Before that happens, the Bible shows that the Kings of the North and South will make at least two deals (which could be related). The destructive plan of Psalm 83 as well as the following:

27 Both these kings’ hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end will still be at the appointed time. (Daniel 11:27)

Furthermore, the Bible shows that some close supporters of the King of the South will betray him:

26 Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. (Daniel 11:26)

The above is consistent with the prophecy that the King of the North will also “Edom [Turkey], and Moab [Jordan], and the chief of the sons of Ammon [Arab emirates and Saudi Arabia]” (Daniel 11:41) to escape his wrath.

Key Points

Many secular leaders have called for some type of a pan-Arabic military organization. Groups like the Muslim Brotherhood want to help make that happen.

The Bible shows that such a confederation will happen under a leader it refers to as the King of the South. The Bible points to that leader being dishonest and seemingly with Egyptian heritage.

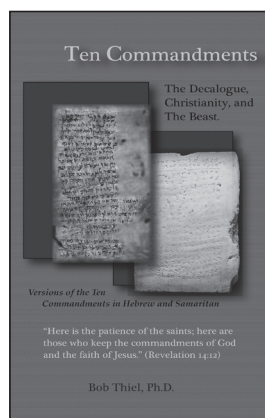
The Bible teaches that the King of the South will be involved in a destructive deal against the end-time descendants of Israel. This may involve terrorism.

The Bible also says that some associated with the King of the South will betray him and his confederation will be destroyed.

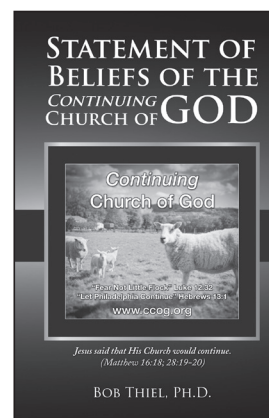
So, while there looks to be something coming like an ‘Arab NATO,’ it will not end well for many who support it.

We are getting closer, however, to the time that such a confederation will be put together.

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Ten Commandments



Statement of Beliefs of the Continuing Church of God

Valentine's, Carnaval/Mardi Gras, & Lent

By Bob Thiel

Many who profess Christianity keep a variety of non-biblical holidays in the late winter and early spring of the year.

But should Christians participate in the celebration of Valentine's Day, Carnaval/Mardi Gras, or Lent?

None of them are enjoined in the Bible.

This article will give some information about their origins.

Valentine's Day

What is now called Valentine's Day originally honored Faunus/Pan (god of herds and fertility).

The Bible, itself, does not have a holiday like Valentine's Day, but many people observe it.

Over a decade ago, Christianity Today, reported:

Civilizations have celebrated Valentine's Day for millennia, but even so, on February 14, we seem ready to celebrate love once again. Here are some articles on the holiday's Christian history, thoughts on love, and ways to show your Valentine how much you care.

"Civilizations" of the world certainly "have celebrated Valentine's Day for millennia," but real Christians have not.

The Apostle John was inspired to write:

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17, NKJV)

Valentine's Day is a worldly holiday, essentially built upon lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. It will pass away; it is not a true Christian holiday.

Valentine's Day has its origins in paganism and

SHOULD YOU KEEP GOD'S HOLY DAYS OR DEMONIC HOLIDAYS?

*Do you know where various holy days
and holidays came from?*



*"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come,
they were all with one accord[a] in one place". (Acts 2:1)*

BOB THIEL, PH.D.

basically is a holdover of a Spring fertility/fornication holiday.

Even the old World Book Encyclopedia (Valentine's Day. Volume 19. 1966, pp.205-206) states:

... the customs of the day have nothing to do with the lives of the saints. They probably come from an ancient Roman festival called Lupercalia which took place every February 15. The festival honored Juno, the Roman goddess of women and marriage, and Pan, the god of nature ... The Romans celebrated their feast of Lupercalia as a lovers' festival for young people. Young men and women chose partners for the festival by drawing names from a box ... **After the spread of Christianity, churchmen tried to give Christian meaning to the pagan festival.** In 496, Pope Gelasius changed the Lupercalia

festival of February 15 to Saint Valentine's Day February 14. **But the sentimental meaning of the old festival has remained to the present time.**

Furthermore, it also states:

"LUPERCALIA ... was celebrated on February 15 in honor of Faunus, a rural Italian god. Faunus was later identified with Pan, the god of herds and fertility ... Priests ...r an around striking all the women they met. (Lupercalia. Volume 12. 1966, p.456)

The pagan being named Cupid (a supposed son of Venus) was also involved. According to pagan mythology, anyone being hit by Cupid's arrow falls in love with the first person he/she sees. One source was bold enough to state:

The church replaced elements of various love-gods (Juno Februata, Eros, Cupid, Kama, Priapus) with St. Valentine, an imaginary Christian. A number of contradictory biographies were created for him ... By taking over some of the features of the Pagan gods and goddesses, St. Valentine became the patron saint of lovers ... St. Valentine's Day can be traced back to Lupercalia, the Roman "festival of sexual license." (ST. VALENTINE AND VALENTINE'S DAY, <http://www.religioustolerance.org/valentine1.htm>, February 6, 2004)

The Apostle Jude warned that people claiming to be Christian leaders would turn towards behaviors like sexual license:

4 For there have been some intruders, who long ago were designated for this condemnation, godless persons, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and who deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (Jude 4, New American Bible of the United States Conference Catholic Bishops)

Here is what a Roman Catholic source has written about it:

The roots of St. Valentine's Day lie in the ancient Roman festival of Lupercalia, which was celebrated on Feb. 15. For 800 years the Romans had dedicated this day to the god Lupercus. On Lupercalia, a young man would draw the name

of a young woman in a lottery and would then keep the woman as a sexual companion for the year ...

The Catholic Church no longer officially honors St. Valentine, but the holiday has both Roman and Catholic roots. (The Origins of St. Valentine's Day. <http://www.american catholic.org>)

A day of pagan roots and sexual license is certainly not a day for Christians to observe. This type of behavior was warned against in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 6:18; Jude 4).

Notice some Islamic comments about Valentine's Day:

Celebrating the Valentine Day is not permissible because: Firstly, it is an innovated holiday ... Christians were aware of the Pagan roots of Valentine's Day. **The way the Christians adopted St. Valentine's Day should be a lesson for Muslims ... We should avoid anything associated with pagan immoral practices ...** Love between families, friends and married people does not need to be celebrated on a day with such origins. (Ruling on Celebrating Valentine's Day. <http://www.contactpakistan.com>)

Notice that Muslims associate Valentine's Day with Christianity (obviously the false compromising kind) and sin.

In other words, Valentine's Day causes the name of Christ (through the term 'Christianity') to be blasphemed among the Gentiles (Romans 2:24; Isaiah 52:5). Do not have "the name of God blasphemed because of you" (Romans 2:24) by keeping pagan holidays.

Real Christians do not keep repackaged demonic holidays (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:21).

Mardi Gras: Devil's Carnival

Carnivals like Carnaval/Mardi Gras and Valentine's Day (called Lupercalia below) came from paganism:

One of the first recorded instances of an annual spring festival is the festival of Osiris in Egypt; it commemorated the renewal of life brought about by the yearly flooding of

the Nile. In Athens, during the 6th cent. BC, a yearly celebration in honor of the god Dionysus was the first recorded instance of the use of a float. It was during the Roman Empire that carnivals reached an unparalleled peak of civil disorder and licentiousness. The major Roman carnivals were the Bacchanalia, the Saturnalia, and the Lupercalia. In Europe the tradition of spring fertility celebrations persisted well into Christian times ... Because carnivals are deeply rooted in pagan superstitions and the folklore of Europe, the Roman Catholic Church was unable to stamp them out and finally accepted many of them as part of church activity. (Carnival. The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed. 2015)

The Bacchanalia was to the god Bacchus, also called Dionysus. He was the god of the grape harvest, winemaking and wine, of ritual madness, fertility, theatre, and religious ecstasy in Greek mythology. Sexual lewdness was part of the Bacchanalia celebration. His worship was condemned by the Greco-Roman leader Commodianus in the third century. (Commodianus. On Christian Discipline. From Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 4)

Alcohol, especially wine, played an important role in Greek culture with Dionysus being an important reason for a raucous life style (Gately I. Drink. Gotham Books, 2008, p. 11). Mardi Gras and Carnaval seem to be related to this.

In the late second century, Roman Catholic Bishop and Eastern Orthodox saint Irenaeus condemned the followers of the heretic Valentinus for participating in meat eating heathen festivals as he wrote:

Wherefore also it comes to pass, that the "most perfect" among them addict themselves without fear to all those kinds of forbidden deeds of which the Scriptures assure us that "they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." For instance, they make no scruple about eating meats offered in sacrifice to idols, imagining that they can in this way contract no defilement. Then, again, at every heathen festival celebrated in honour of the idols, ... Others of them yield themselves up to the lusts of the flesh with the utmost greediness, maintaining that carnal things should be allowed

to the carnal nature, while spiritual things are provided for the spiritual. Some of them, moreover, are in the habit of defiling those women to whom they have taught the above doctrine, as has frequently been confessed by those women who have been led astray by certain of them, on their returning to the Church of God, and acknowledging this along with the rest of their errors. (Irenaeus. Against Heresies. Book 1, Chapter 6, Verse 3)

Later, the Orthodox Catholic apologist Arnobius (died 330) warned against the type of fasts that pagans had:

What say you, O wise sons of Erectheus? what, you citizens of Minerva? The mind is eager to know with what words you will defend what it is so dangerous to maintain, or what arts you have by which to give safety to personages and causes wounded so mortally. This is no false mistrust, nor are you assailed with lying accusations: the infamy of your Eleusinia is declared both by their base beginnings and by the records of ancient literature, by the very signs, in fine, which you use when questioned in receiving the sacred things,—“I have fasted, and drunk the draught; I have taken out of the mystic cist, and put into the wicker-basket; I have received again, and transferred to the little chest. (Arnobius. Against the Heathen, Book V, Chapter 26)

Arnobius even seemed to warn about a ‘Mardi Gras’ banquet followed by a fast:

The feast of Jupiter is tomorrow. Jupiter, I suppose, dines, and must be satiated with great banquets, and long filled with eager cravings for food by fasting, and hungry after the usual interval. (Arnobius, Against the Heathen, Book VII, Chapter 32)

Thus, early writers condemned holidays that sound a lot like Carnaval/Mardi Gras because of its ties to pagan idolatry. But, many who claim Christianity keep them anyway.

The Bible teaches:

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and

lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. (Romans 13:13-14)

While the Bible does not condemn rejoicing, Mardi Gras and related observances are contrary to scripture.

In Bolivia they call it the “Devil’s Carnival” and openly worship Satan as their god!

Devil’s Carnival (La Diablada) - Every spring, Oruro goes into carnival mode ... One of the highlights are the devil dancers, the tradition of which derives from a peculiar kind of devil worship. Oruro is a mining town and the locals, spending so much time underground, decided to adopt a god of the underworld. Christian tradition dictates that this must be the devil and the Oruro faithful thus adopted Satan, or Supay, as their god. (Frommes. <http://events.frommers.com/sisp/>

index.htm?fx=event&event_id=5769)

Carnaval/Mardis Gras is a demonic holiday and certainly not a Christian one.

It was not kept by Jesus nor any of His early faithful followers.

Lent: A Perversion of the Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost?

Carnaval/Mardis Gras proceed something called Lent.

What about Lent?

Although the word ‘Lent’ means Spring season, it is now mainly observed in the Winter right after Mardi Gras.

The World Book Encyclopedia states:

Lent is a religious season observed in the spring ... It begins on Ash Wednesday, 40 days before Easter, excluding Sundays, and ends on Easter Sunday. (Ramm B. Lent. World Book Encyclopedia, 50th ed. 1966)

What about Ash Wednesday?

Well, it is not an original Christian nor biblical Holy Day.

The Catholic Encyclopedia reports:

Ash Wednesday The name dies cinerum (day of ashes) which it bears in the Roman Missal is found in the earliest existing copies of the Gregorian Sacramentary and probably dates from at least the eighth century.

On this day all the faithful according to ancient custom are exhorted to approach the altar before the beginning of Mass, and there the priest, dipping his thumb into ashes previously blessed, marks the forehead. (Thurston H. Ash Wednesday. The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907)

So, the Church of Rome adopted it officially in the 8th century.

It should also be noted that the idea of placing a cross of ashes on the forehead came from sun god worship and other forms of paganism:

Mithratic ... initiates ... would henceforth have the Sun Cross on their foreheads. The similarity to the cross of ashes made on the forehead on the Christian Ash Wednesday is striking. Some have suggested this to be an example of the early Christians borrowing from the Mithratic cult; others suggest that both cults were drawing upon the same prototype. (Nabarz P. The mysteries of Mithras: the pagan belief that shaped the Christian world. Inner Traditions/Bear & Company, 2005, p. 36)

Ash Wednesday ... This allegedly Christian festival came from Roman paganism, which in turn took it from Vedic India. Ashes were considered the seed of the fire god Agni, with the power to absolve all sins ... At Rome’s New Year Feast of Atonement in March, people wore sackcloth and bathed in ashes to atone for their sins. Then as now, New Year’s Eve was a festival for eating, drinking, and sinning, on the theory that all sins would be wiped out the following day. As the dying god of March, Mars took his worshippers’ sins in with him into death. Therefore the carnival fell on dies martis, the Day of Mars. In English, this was Tuesday, because Mars was associated with the Saxon god Tiw. In French the carnival day was called Mardis Gras, “Fat Tuesday,” the merrymaking day before Ash Wednesday. (Walker B. The

woman's encyclopedia of myths and secrets.
HarperCollins, 1983, pp. 66-67)

The Bible tells of a 50 day period to count, which is where we get the name Pentecost. Around the fourth-sixth centuries, the Greco-Romans were keeping some type of a 50 day fast that had resemblance to the Islamic fast of Ramadan (Pines, p.32). In time, this changed to a forty-day abstinence of one or more (normally food) items.

Early Christians, of course, did not keep Lent as even the Catholic saint Abbot John Cassian in the fifth century realized:

Howbeit you should know that **as long as the primitive church retained its perfection unbroken, this observance of Lent did not exist.** (Cassian John. Conference 21, THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF ABBOT THEONAS. ON THE RELAXATION DURING THE FIFTY DAYS. Chapter 30)

Thus, he admitted that Lent was added and that the original faithful did not keep it.

The Apostle Paul invoked keeping Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). Yet he did not do so for something called Lent. However, because the Days of Unleavened Bread involve a seven-day "fast" from leaven, around the time many call Easter, it may be that some associated with Rome and Egypt felt that an abstinence period would be appropriate, but the amount of time, as well as what they abstained from, varied.

Socrates Scholasticus wrote in the 5th century:

The fasts before Easter will be found to be differently observed among different people. Those at Rome fast three successive weeks before Easter, excepting Saturdays and Sundays. Those in Illyrica and all over Greece and Alexandria observe a fast of six weeks, which they term 'The forty days' fast.' Others commencing their fast from the seventh week before Easter, and fasting three-five days only, and that at intervals, yet call that time 'The forty days' fast.' ... some assign one reason for it, and others another, according to their several fancies. One can see also a disagreement about the manner of abstinence from food, as well as about the number of days. Some wholly abstain

from things that have life: others feed on fish only of all living creatures: many together with fish, eat fowl also, saying that according to Moses, these were likewise made out of the waters. Some abstain from eggs, and all kinds of fruits: others partake of dry bread only; still others eat not even this: while others having fasted till the ninth hour, afterwards take any sort of food without distinction ... Since however no one can produce a written command as an authority ... (Socrates Scholasticus. Ecclesiastical History, Volume V, Chapter 22)

The apostles most certainly did not have differing fasts with differing requirements (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:10; 11:11). The forty-day Lenten fasts are not like the forty-day fasts mentioned in the Bible which involved absence from all food and water (Exodus 34:28; Luke 4:2).

Concerning Lent's origins, notice what one scholar wrote:

A Lent of forty days was observed by worshipers of the Babylonian Ishtar and by the worshipers of the great Egyptian meditorial god Adonis or Osiris ... Among the pagans, this Lent period seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual (usually spring) festivals. (Bacchiocchi S. God's Festivals in Scripture and History, Part 1. Biblical Perspectives, Berrian Springs (MI), 1995, p. 108)

It is likely that the idea of a forty-day fast came from Alexandria in Egypt or from Greece and is related to the pagan goddess Ishtar. Since the Babylonians took over the Greeks and the Egyptians, that may have been when they started this practice.

Since early Christians did observe the Days of Unleavened Bread, repackaged pagan fasts were apparently substituted in various ways by the Greco-Romans.

Notice that the Apostle Paul warns against being involved in pagan observances:

14 Do not harness yourselves in an uneven team with unbelievers; how can uprightness and law-breaking be partners, or what can light and darkness have in common? 15 How can Christ come to an agreement with Beliar and what sharing can there be between a believer and

an unbeliever? 16 The temple of God cannot compromise with false gods, and that is what we are -- the temple of the living God. (2 Corinthians 6:14-16, NJB)

19 What does this mean? That the dedication of food to false gods amounts to anything? Or that false gods themselves amount to anything? 20 No, it does not; simply that when pagans sacrifice, what is sacrificed by them is sacrificed to demons who are not God. **I do not want you to share with demons.** 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons as well; you cannot have a share at the Lord's table and the demons' table as well. 22 Do we really want to arouse the Lord's jealousy; are we stronger than he is? (1 Corinthians 10:19-22, NJB)

Whether from Egypt, Roman paganism, or other demonic sources, the one place Lent did not come from was the Bible. Nor did it come from early traditions of the first followers of Jesus.

Some think they are strong enough spiritually so they can mix paganism, but they are really arousing God's wrath according to the Apostle Paul.

Biblical Holy Days

In the 23rd chapter of the Book of Leviticus, God lists the days and festivals He wants people to observe.

Nothing like Valentine's Day, Carnival/Mardi Gras, or Lent are enjoined.

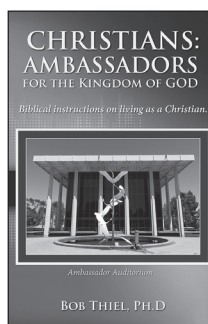
Keeping repackaged pagan holidays obscures the meaning of God's plan.

Sadly, instead of observing God's Holy Days, most who claim Christianity celebrate pagan times that the Bible is opposed to.

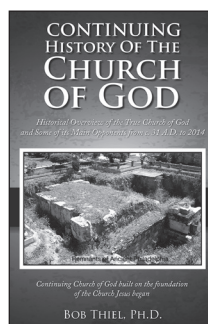
For more on the biblical Holy Days, check out the free booklet, online at ccog.org, *Should You Keep God's Holy Days or Demonic Holidays?*

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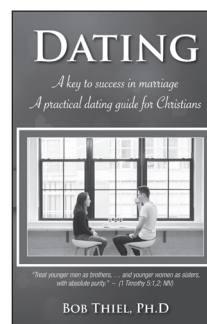
at www.ccog.org/books



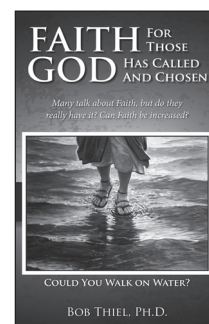
Christians: AMBASSADORS



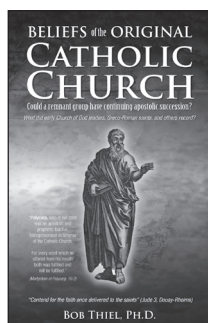
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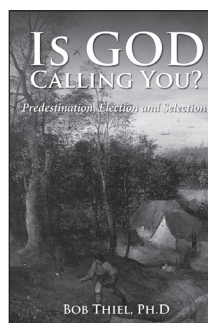
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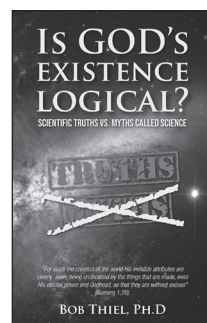
Faith for Those God has Called and Chosen



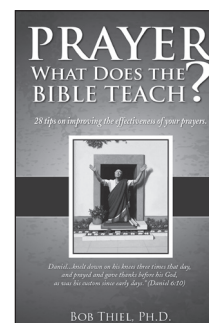
Beliefs of the Original Catholic Church



Is God Calling You?



Is God's Existence Logical?



Prayer: What Does the Bible Teach?

THE BIBLE AND HISTORY PROVE The Jews DON'T Observe Passover!



Table Prepared for Jewish Seder (datafox)

By Ernest Martin

Article originally published in the Good News magazine, April 1963, by the old Radio Church of God (and hence, is no longer copyrighted but now is in the public domain).

Why do the Jews hold THEIR Passover a day later than the Passover observed by Moses, Nehemiah and Jesus? How and when did this change come about?

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Why do the Jews hold THEIR Passover a day later than the Passover observed by Moses, Nehemiah and

Jesus? How and when did this change come about?

WHY DO THE JEWS have double Holy Days — keep Passover one day late — then Pentecost on Sivan 6? Why do they {in 1963} reckon only 5723 years from creation? What is correct? Are the Jews right?

Many in God's Church have been puzzled over the Jewish interpretation behind the Holy Calendar and the Festivals. Since the Jews have been responsible for the preservation of God's Calendar, why could they not also lead us in the interpretation of the Holy Days? Why is it that God's Church does not follow the Jews in every point?

The Jews Responsible for the Oracles of God

In Romans 3:2 the Apostle Paul acknowledged, under God's inspiration, that the Jews were responsible for the oracles of God. The expression "oracles of God" was a common Jewish term of the first century which designated "The Holy Scriptures" — our Old Testament. (Interpreters Commentary, article "Oracles")

These Scriptures enumerated the seven annual Holy Days which Israel was to keep (Leviticus 23). These Holy Days, with the exception of Pentecost, were to be observed on set calendar dates each year. Without an official calendar, there could be 120 Holy Day observances! Correct calendar computations must as well have been given to the custodians of the Scriptures in order that all the oracles of God could be kept.

So the Jews (specifically the priests) were responsible for preserving the Old Testament Scriptures — plus the calendar — which was necessary in correctly performing the Festivals. The certainty of this is found in the New Testament. Christ and the Apostles always utilized the official Jewish day, week, month and year. The early Church also acknowledged the Jewish custodianship over the calendar as well as the Scriptures.

The Differences

While the Jews had the responsibility for preserving the correct calendar, the interpretation behind the calendar days was not to be determined by them. The reason for this is plain. Only God retains the right to tell us what date on the calendar to keep His Festivals. No man has that right! In regard to the Passover, it is God. Who tells us to observe it on the evening of Nisan 14 (Leviticus 23:5).

This is the time Christ kept it. But some of the Jews in the first century observed the evening of the 15th. Even though the correct calendar was utilized by the Jews, different DATES on that calendar were used for Passover. It will be noticed that Christ and His disciples kept the Passover on the evening before the crucifixion (Luke 22:13-15), but the next day, some of the Jews refused to come into the judgment hall lest they be disqualified from observing the Pharisee Passover which occurred on the following evening (John 18:28). This shows that Christ observed Nisan 14 (as the Old Testament commanded) but the Pharisees observed Nisan 15. The same practice of keeping Nisan 15 instead of the date commanded by God is still done by all Jews today.

Why Nisan 15?

You would think that the Jews need to learn to read their own Scriptures, for they seem to be illiterate in regard to the Passover. God tells us, in the clearest of language, that the Passover is to be held on the evening of Nisan 14. Nowhere in the Bible does it state otherwise. But they keep Nisan 15. Where did such a practice come from?

The answer to this is found in the history of the Jews in the third century before Christ. From 301 B.C. to 198 B.C., the Palestinian Jews came under the control of Egyptians. These Gentiles imposed their philosophies and religious beliefs upon the Jews in profusion. Dr. Lanterbach, one of Judaism's greatest historians, admits that this period was one of religious anarchy among the Jews of Palestine (Rabbinic Essays, p. 200). They accepted, on a very large scale, many outright Egyptian customs. For example, Herodotus who visited Egypt in the fifth century before Christ, reported that the Egyptians would only drink out of pots and pans which had been scoured every day. They would religiously bathe themselves twice each

day — they shunned all foreigners, especially Greeks, and would destroy any vessel or utensil which had been touched by a Greek. Such silly laws were inaugurated by the thousands by the Egyptians, said Herodotus (Book 11, pp. 37-41).

Prior to the Egyptian domination of Palestine, the Jews possessed none of these absurd customs, but after that period of religious anarchy, the Jews began practicing, with utmost vigor, those same EGYPTIAN laws. See Matthew 15:2 and Mark 7:3-8. There can be no question of this.

But what about the Passover? It can be shown that prior to this Egyptian domination, the Jews always kept the Passover on Nisan 14. Notice especially Ezra 6:19-22. Here it shows Nisan 14 as Passover and Nisan 15 as the first day of Unleavened Bread (which it is), not as the Passover day. But, after the Egyptian period, the Jews began to observe Nisan 15 for Passover. Why?

Corruption From Egypt!

The answer again is found in Egyptian customs. The Egyptian day customarily commenced with sunrise (Wilkinson, Vol. 11, p. 368). God's day, however, begins at sunset (Leviticus 23:32). This is where the trouble lay with the Passover reckoning after this period of Egyptian influence on the Jews.

While the Egyptians allowed the Jews to retain their ancient calendar, there was a change made in the beginning of the day — it became common to begin the day at sunrise. This custom was adopted, and persisted among the Jews even down to New Testament times (see The Jewish Quarterly Review, April, 1946). We (God's, ministry) have had personal information from the Hebrew Union College admitting this fact. (The proof of this is also given in The Expositor Times, June 1948, pp. 250, 251).

With the 14th of Nisan supposedly beginning at sunrise, that puts what God calls the evening of Nisan 15 as still being on Nisan 14. This is where the problem arises. Even later on, when the Jews finally got back to an evening-to-evening reckoning for the day, they refused to abandon what had become the traditional way of observing Passover. The principle, "What was good for my fathers, is good enough for me," was too strong for the Jews to leave it. So, today, they are still one day out of phase with God.

The Jews' Pentecost

The Jews' error concerning this Festival has been fully treated in our booklet on the Holy Days. What is the Jews' reason for having it on a set calendar date (always Sivan 6) instead of a set day of the week?

Their general answer is that all other Holy Days are on calendar dates so they make Pentecost follow suit. The only problem with this is that God says differently! It must be on a set day of the week, not a day of the month.

The Double Holy Days of the Jews

Attention should now be called to, what have become known as, the Jewish "Second Holidays." It is today customary for many Jews to reckon the first two days of Unleavened Bread as Holyday Sabbaths. This is followed by the next annual Sabbath — the last day of Unleavened Bread — on which they tack another Sabbath, making, again, two annual Sabbaths. This is repeated with Pentecost when two days are celebrated, not one. Trumpets is the same way. So is the first day of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. The Day of Atonement, on the other hand, is reckoned as only one day.

Where do the Jews get authority for doing such things? There is certainly nothing in the Word of God to support these additions. Perhaps it will be best to let the Jews give their own explanation:

At the time of the Second Temple [the time of Christ], when the Sanhedrin announced the beginnings of the months on the basis of observation, the communities living far from the seat of the court could not be reached in time by its messengers (that is, they might not know when the New Year would begin). Those communities, in doubt about the day of the New Moon and the Festivals, established the custom of celebrating an additional day for each of the major holidays. Thus they were certain to observe the Festivals at the same time as their brethren in Israel, on the days sanctified by the Sanhedrin. Whenever the Bible had prescribed one day of holy convocation and prohibition of work, they celebrated two days except the Day of Atonement to avoid two successive days of fasting.

The second holidays were adopted by the entire Dispersed Jews, the communities living beyond the confines of Israel. Their observance was continued by succeeding generations for more than 2000 years, and became a generally accepted law.

In the land of Israel, then as well as today, the 'Second Holidays' are ordinary days." (Spier, Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, p. 11)

There you have it! Because the calendar computations were not then made public for all the Jewish communities, those outside of Palestine depended upon the direction of the Palestine Sanhedrin for the beginning of years. And even though the far-flung Jews (99 times out of 100) would have known the right day for the beginning of the New Year, they nevertheless put in the safeguard of an extra day. There is no need of these "safeguards." The Jews plainly recognize that the "Second Holidays" are now non-essential. And in the nation of Israel they are not observed. Away from Israel they simply keep them for traditional reasons. They are NOT to be kept by God's Church for they represent an addition to God's law and this is prohibited (Deuteronomy 12:32).

The Jewish Creation Date

Another point of apparent difficulty relative to the Holy Calendar, is the Jewish date for creation. They say that our present year 1963 is 5723 years after creation {year 5783 is what the Jews claim in 2023} — they say creation was 3761 B.C. This date is given in all Jewish calendars. But Bible chronology shows almost 6000 years have passed from that time. Is there a discrepancy in the Bible and the calendar on this matter? The answer is NO!

Let us first understand what the calendar is not! It is not an instrument for measuring historical time! The calendar simply furnishes us with the length of any given year and the positions of the various days and months within that year. The computations nowhere tell us how many years have passed since creation. They just tell us how to figure each year. If we want the full number of years which have passed from creation to the present, we must go to the document which is intended to reveal that information — the Holy Bible, not the calendar.

The creation date which the Jews have set on their

calendar year is of their own manufacture and has nothing to do with the calendar itself. It is an arbitrary date. It can be explained in this way.

Suppose Americans wanted to call attention to the founding-year of the Republic. This was 1776. All American calendars could be altered from A.D. dates to "Founding-Year" dates. Thus, 1963 would be reckoned on American calendars as year 188. However, the British may want to honor the Norman Invasion as their "Founding-Year," i.e. 1066. This present year on their calendar would be 898. Now, we would all have the SAME CALENDAR without any changes, but different years on them according to what nation we lived in. So it is with the Jewish year from, what they call, "creation." It is clearly an arbitrary date chosen by them. The Bible does not support it.

Why a Late Creation Date?

We are told that the acceptance of 3761 B.C. as the creation date by the Jews goes back no further than the 10th or 11th century (Spier, *ibid.*, p. 218). But traces of this fictitious date can be traced back to the fourth century. But why this late date? ... The answer is simple.

The Jews in the time of Christ had a strong tradition that this present world would last for 6000 years while the Messiah would reign for the last 1000. This teaching was true for the apostles tell us about it (2 Peter 3:8; Hebrews 4:1-10). But coupled with this belief, they felt that for the first 2000 years the world would be without the codified law, then would be 2000 years under the law, and finally 2000 years when the Messiah would be known and worshiped (Schurer, *History of the Jewish people*, Div. 11, vol. 11, p. 163). In other words, shortly after the year 4000 from real creation, the Messiah would appear. And He did!

This tradition in the first century put the Jewish rabbis on the spot, for they were saying the Messiah would come after 4000 years. Christ did come but they were also rejecting Him. This led them to a novel invention.

They arbitrarily lowered the creation date, disregarding the Bible ... By doing this, they said that Jesus could not be the Messiah for He appeared too early. This was a plain LIE! Of course, no Messiah came at the end of their NEW 4000 years, but the

Jews answered this by saying that the people were too sinful for Him to appear (Schurer, *ibid.*).

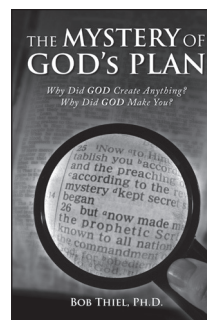
Thus, the Jewish late date for creation was invented as a counteraction to the claims of Christ. By accepting it, they completely disregarded the chronology of the Bible. This Jewish date has nothing to do with the accuracy of God's Calendar. We can be thankful for that!

We can clearly see that it is God's Church which is right after all — not the Jews!

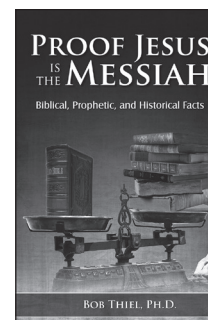
Editor's notes: As far as the date for Passover in 2023, it is after sunset on April 4th.

As far as what year the Jews should be using from the time Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, that looks to be somewhere between 5990 – 5993 (though it could be several years less). Using our modern Roman calendar that points to 2030-2033. Therefore, end of the 6,000 years looks to be much closer than the Jews teach. And yes, even according to modern Jewish scholars, the Jews year 5783 is off over 200 years!

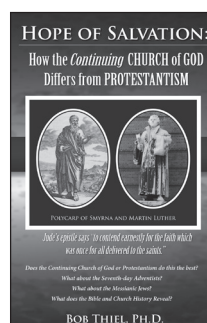
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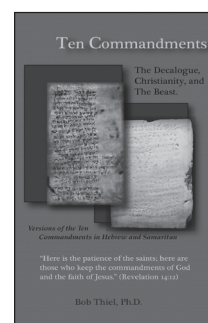
The MYSTERY of GOD'S PLAN



Proof JESUS is the MESSIAH



HOPE of SALVATION



TEN COMMANDMENTS
The Decalogue,
Christianity, and the Beast

STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE

Preface: This course is highly based upon the personal correspondence course developed in 1954 that began under the direction of the late C. Paul Meredith in the old Radio Church of God. Various portions have been updated for the 21st century (though much of the original writing has been retained). It also has more scriptural references, as well as information and questions not in the original course. Unless otherwise noted, scriptural references are to the NKJV, copyright Thomas Nelson Publishing, used by permission. The KJV, sometimes referred to as the Authorized Version is also often used. Additionally, Catholic - Approved translations such as the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) are sometimes used as are other translations.

LESSON 22B: REPENTANCE

Bob Thiel, Editor-in-Chief

Published 2023 by the *Continuing* Church of God

This lesson is intended to direct you to the BIBLE – to help you learn the truth of God’s Word. Here is the method of study.

Is your Bible in front of you? If not, GET your Bible – or Bibles, if you have more than one translation – BEFORE YOU CONTINUE WITH THIS LESSON! Have a good dictionary, a concordance if you own one, and your notepaper all placed in front of you on a desk or table.

Remember – you are to open your Bible to EVERY passage. Never say to yourself, “Oh, I think I know what the lesson is referring to” – and then pass over the scripture. You need to “KEEP YOUR NOSE IN THE BIBLE,” SO to speak. You must read and reread and think out each passage.

Then, during your leisure time, MEDITATE on the new knowledge you will learn – especially within the following twenty-four hours, and in your time of prayer – SO YOU WON’T FORGET IT! Make God’s Word a PART of you! Don’t forget that this is a BIBLE study course – not just a study of the lessons we send you.

Here is how to make effective notes: Write down neatly on your paper the title of this lesson and underscore it. Next write down the lesson number. Then as you come to each question section, write down its heading. Then, underneath, number each

question as you come to it. For each question write down the answer from your Bible, together with any pertinent ideas that come to your mind.

Be SURE to WRITE OUT the scripture which answers each question. Writing down every word of each Bible passage, and any comments you wish to make as you go along, will help you in REVIEWING and remembering later on.

This lesson, like all others, is extremely important to you. Have you PRAYED to God for understanding? If not, go now to a private place, kneel down, and ask Him for SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING and wisdom. Ask God to HELP YOU GRASP AND APPLY the knowledge this lesson will reveal to you in the Bible!

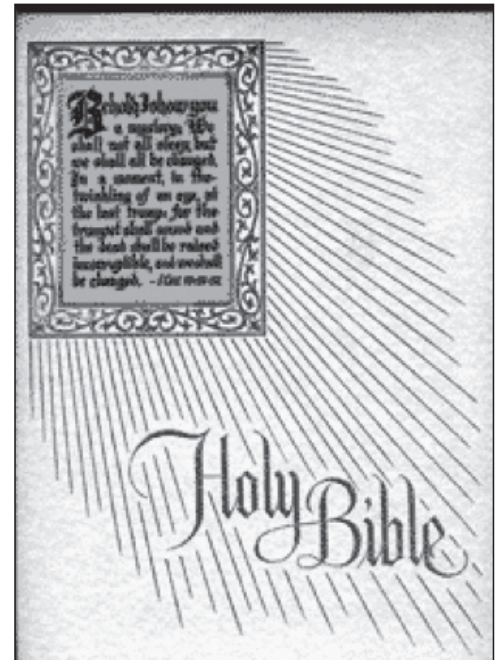
And now for the lesson itself.

LESSON 22

Repentance Always Commanded

1. We have learned from the previous lesson that this present world is extremely EVIL in God’s sight. But has it been evil from the very BEGINNING? Genesis 2:17 and 3:6.

COMMENT: The POSSIBILITY for this becoming an “evil world” through an act of disobedience to God,



existed at the time of Adam's creation. Adam could have PREVENTED it from becoming a reality, but didn't. Instead, he and his wife succumbed to the downward pulls of human nature and disobeyed their only parent – God – by taking and eating of the FORBIDDEN fruit!

Yes, this world has been evil from the time Adam and Eve first sinned. The downward pulls of selfishness have made it so!

2. What was the result of man's sin in the Garden of Eden? READ all of Genesis 3. Did sin and violence rapidly increase after Adam and Eve were ejected from the Garden? Genesis 4:8, 23; 6:5.
3. Isn't IDOLATRY one of the downward pulls of the flesh? Galatians 5:19-20. And isn't idolatry – having some other "god" before the True God – a violation of one of God's commandments? Exodus 20:3-5.
4. Remember in Lesson 21 we found that idolatry can be ANYTHING – one's possessions or whatever – which one places AHEAD of God in one's affections, as well as LITERAL idol worship. Isn't this one of the downward pulls to which the ancient Israelites were succumbing? Ezekiel 14:4-5. Notice the words "sets up his idols in his HEART" in verse 4. Did God COMMAND them to repent of this? Notice especially the command "REPENT" in verse 6.

COMMENT: Yes, humanity has been the same and God has always desired that humans REPENT of yielding to their own vanity and rebelling against our Maker.

5. WHOSE way are people to TURN FROM in repentance? Ezekiel 33:9 and Proverbs 14:12.

COMMENT: Many do not understand what "repentance" really means. But here we see plainly it is turning from our OWN way – the way of living which by nature seems NATURALLY right to us.

The Old Covenant Israelites often could not think straight. They had disobedient CARNAL minds. They did not yet have God's spiritual mind within them. They were "not all there"!

God has been allowing humans to learn the hard way by letting them experience the "fruits" of their own

ways. Israel's terrible example is a lesson to us who can have the Holy Spirit, and need NOT learn the HARD way.

The Book of Proverbs has wise advice regarding taking correction. Here is how the 29th chapter starts:

1 He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck,
Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without
remedy.

The Bible, in general, and Book of Proverbs in particular, says that it is a good idea to change when you are rebuked for something you should not do.

Instead, many are too defensive.

That also happens when it comes to repentance, The word of God is clear people need to change, but most will not do that, despite how it will end up.

Notice Proverbs 14:12:

There is a way that seems right to a man, But its
end is the way of death.

6. Does Zechariah 1:4 also verify the fact that repentance is a TURNING FROM the ways long adopted by humanity?
7. Does God want us to forsake even our unrighteous THOUGHTS? Isaiah 55:7. Since God commands us to "turn FROM" something, what are we to "turn TO," or KEEP, in place of these sinful ways? Ezekiel 18:21.

The command to repent is also directed to all other people of the earth since salvation can come only through repentance and faith in Christ.

Repentance Commanded Today

1. Did Jesus – knowing that the Holy Spirit of POWER was to be made available to all mankind immediately after His ascension into heaven – command EVERYONE TO repent? Matthew 4:17.
2. And did the Holy Spirit come on the Day of Pentecost, just as Christ said it would? Acts 1:4-9, 2:2, 4. And didn't Peter immediately proclaim how people could receive the POWER of the Holy Spirit with which to overcome their carnal natures? Acts 2:38. Is the condition of repentance again mentioned here? Notice the

word REPENT.

COMMENT: YOU won't find repentance an EASY thing to do. Repentance is difficult! It goes AGAINST YOUR NATURE. It must and will completely "upset" your life – until your life has been made RIGHT SIDE UP.

Yet, you need to repent to be a Christian.

Jesus taught repentance:

14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:14-15, NKJV throughout unless otherwise indicated)

Jesus was telling people to change and devote their lives to the Kingdom of God.

After Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:4-10), the Apostle Peter taught repentance:

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38-39)

19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:19-21)

To repent means to change from living our way to living God's way. Repentance comes when we see our sins, are deeply remorseful of them, stop sinning, resolve to obey God and, with His help, actually do obey Him.

Crying about sins is not repentance (though that can be appropriate) – repentance is about change.

Most people hold impressions about repentance that are far away from the simple Bible truth. Some see no need for repentance because they feel they have not

sinned. Or if they feel they did sin, they do not seem to believe that God needs to be involved.

Some do not repent because they think all one must do is believe or accept the truth academically. Clearly, such false beliefs cannot fulfill God's command.

Prior to the temptation by Satan, we have only the revelation that Adam's NATURE, as God created him, was not evil, hostile and diabolical. The account in Genesis says that His creation, including human beings, was "very good" (Genesis 1:31).

There may have been the physical and mental nature of self-preservation and such things. But NOT the evil nature of SELF-centeredness.

We need to realize that God created Adam and the human race for a PURPOSE. We need to have clearly in mind, at this point, WHAT that purpose is. (Armstrong HW. Human Nature, Did God Create It? 1976)

Humans were not made inherently evil.

Did God make humans upright? Ecclesiastes 7:29.

Yes, but humans have strayed and accepted influence from Satan.

As a baby grows, one of the first things he or she starts to believe is that its little world revolves around IT. Mother and Daddy literally RUN to serve it. The whole family adjusts its schedule to suit the demands of the little one. And so, success in gaining attention confirm it in its selfish ways. As the baby grows it becomes more and more habit-bound towards selfishness.

Now, narrow it down to you. As you grew up, you continued to be wrapped up in self. As a teenager, you were probably still greedy, selfish, subject to every whim that sprang from the desires of your physical flesh.

But now an interesting thing has happened! You learned it was frowned upon. Though still totally selfish and carnal, you have learned to COVER UP. You no longer screamed out at hunger pangs or SHOWED every emotion.

But you were still mainly wrapped up in self.

A fleshly body IS all self. It has very little real love or

concern for anyone else. It is almost totally oblivious to, and ignorant of, the pains, sufferings – or rights of others. But it vehemently demands that its own wants and needs be fulfilled. It is in dead earnest about that. And its very LIFE depends upon it, because the fleshly mind's very existence is dependent on the continued existence of the fleshly body. Therefore the BODY seeks to CONTROL and enforce ITS WILL on the mind.

The psychologists mix-label this the “instinct of self-preservation.” But it is not an instinct. It is a DOWNWARD PULL, solidified in LEARNED behavior.

But a spirit body, as we are destined to become, is different. It doesn't demand preoccupation with self. There are no needs, nothing lacking in a spirit body. Instead, it has eternal life inherent within itself. To prepare for this kind of life, we must UNLEARN the whole basic pattern of HUMAN thinking.

We must literally be willing even to give up our lives (Luke 14:26).

Does repentance requires putting Christ above all else in one's life?

Jesus said:

26 “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it — 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:26-33)

Now, Luke 14:26 has an unfortunate translation of the Greek word *miseo*, Strong's #3404, as “hate”, when

it should be rendered “love less by comparison.” We are not to hate our parents and family! But we are to put God's ways above contradictory pulls from our human flesh and human families.

Does repentance require, in a symbolic sense, sacrificing your own life? The Apostle Paul wrote:

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

If you will do that, Jesus promises you will have what you really need:

31 Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:31-34)

We need to seek God's kingdom first every day.

Without true Christian repentance, we would be just so many “little devils” – lusting, lying and murdering. Jesus plainly told certain unconverted men of His day, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning ...” (John 8:44, KJV). Jesus clearly shows that the evil motivations we have are basically the same as those of the Devil's PERVERTED nature that he has pushed us to accept. 2 Timothy 3:1-4 is a TRUE picture of humanity in these end times:

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2 Timothy 3:1-6)

We are to “turn away” from the ways of the world, particularly in these last days.

EVERYONE Commanded to Repent!

But don't some really love others? – “put themselves out” – spending their time serving? Perhaps, on occasion. But all need repentance.

Sin – the transgression of God's Law (1 John 3:4, KJV) – is the outworking of the basic nature of selfishness which CANNOT fulfill the Law. And the Bible says, “ALL have SINNED” (Romans 3:23).

1. Does the Bible continue to show there are no exceptions – that ALL have plenty to repent of? 1 John 1:8, 10.
2. Have all sinned and come short of God's righteousness and glory because of disobedience to His LAW? Romans 3:23, 1 John 3:4.
3. Are ALL people filthy by God's standard? Psalm 14:2-3. Is there a single one that is REALLY good of him/her self? Verse 3.

COMMENT: Many feel they are poor GOOD humble folk who have not done anything really WRONG in their lives and so have little, if anything, to repent of. But your Bible says ALL have SINNED!

Christ commanded, “Be” – BECOME – “Ye therefore PERFECT even as your Father which is in heaven is PERFECT” (Matthew 5:48, KJV). We must all REPENT SO we CAN receive God's Holy Spirit and BECOME perfect. It's a PROCESS IMPOSSIBLE without God's Spirit! For your Bible says, “those who are in the FLESH cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the SPIRIT [spiritually minded], IF INDEED the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does NOT have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” (Romans 8:8-9) See also verses 4-7.

You need to EXAMINE YOURSELF! Are you SURE YOU are converted? Remember it is the FEW who have found the REAL WAY to salvation at this time!

Passover is after sunset on April 4th of 2023. All who claim to be Christian need to examine themselves at least annually to properly take the Passover per 1 Corinthians 11:28-29.

4. Did Christ say REPENTANCE would be preached

among ALL nations? Luke 24:47. And does God specifically command ALL people to repent? Acts 17:30.

COMMENT: God commands every person in this world to repent – to turn from their present evil ways!

5. What, specifically, are the repentant to turn from? Acts 2:38 and 1 Peter 2:11.

COMMENT: The “fleshly lusts” spoken of here are the DOWNWARD PULLS of human nature (Galatians 5:19-21). We must resist them and REPENT of all sins and ask God to help us keep His commandments through the POWER of His Holy Spirit. Peter here commands that we ABSTAIN from giving in to downward pulls. We now know this is impossible except we first REPENT!

6. If anyone REMAINS unrepentant – impenitent – what does he lay up for himself? Romans 2:5. And what will be his ultimate fate? Ezekiel 18:20.

COMMENT: EVERYONE must ULTIMATELY repent to be saved! There is no other way. If a person does not repent, he/she will be destroyed forever.

Yet, many who are interested in the truth hesitate. They are afraid to do what they should. Jesus condemned the one who hid his talent (Matthew 25:25-30). And the New Testament foretells that the cowardly will face elimination in the second death (Revelation 21:8).

Is God Fair?

Is God fair in commanding us to repent of sin?

Honest persons are admitting that this present world is on the road to destruction. The reason? SIN and the rejection of God in ACTION!

Now, what is sin? Is it fun? Is it everything that is good and pleasurable and enjoyable? Is that what sin is? Or is it the breaking of GOD'S LAWS which results in wretchedness, poverty, misery, sickness and death?

There are two basic definitions of sin – the world's definition, and God's definition. The world's definition is often that sin is the way to act and live that gives those who dare to do so increased pleasure, fun, good times, enjoyment. It's the “forbidden fruit” that is sweeter, more desirable.

THIS concept, though unrealized, is that God is

unjust and UNFAIR, forbidding US to really enjoy life. Consequently, sin is the desirable way which is forbidden, or at least frowned on, by respectable society under religious influence. If sin is to be “enjoyed,” it must therefore be in secret unless one is to defy society or be branded with disgrace – or so it used to be, though society today is becoming “broadminded,” more tolerant of sin, permitting more and more what previous generations forbade.

This concept was aptly illustrated by the deathbed confession of an atheist. His daughter came to his bedside and asked:

“Father, now that you know that you are going to die, which do you now think is best – your atheism or Mother’s Christianity?”

“Well, daughter,” the dying man replied, “I still believe my way is the best to live by, but I’ll have to confess at last that your mother’s religion is the best to die in.”

That’s the common conception. People unthinkingly have a picture of a god who is unfair – who expects people to give up the worthwhile things of life, deny one’s self enjoying life, and live a life of unhappiness in order to be “saved.” And according to this view the way to cheat God is to live in sin and enjoy life, and then squeeze through at the last minute by a deathbed confession!

This concept is a satanic masterpiece of delusion, fastened on an unthinking world! It pictures the god of a distorted imagination – a monster, who “saves” people through fear of penalties unless they forsake “more desirable ways” for His “narrow and unhappy way.” It hides God’s love, turns God’s Law of Love into an evil, cheats human beings of happiness, peace, success and joy that could be theirs through a discernment of the true values.

That is often the world’s definition of sin. But what does the Textbook for really joyous living – the Bible – whose All-wise Author is the Eternal God, define as sin?

Why We Need to Repent

“Sin,” defines the Bible, “is the transgression of the Law” (1 John 3:4, KJV).

God says “the law is spiritual” (Romans 7:14). And “the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and GOOD.” (Romans 7:12) And “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10, KJV). Is there anything wrong with that? Of course not!

And what is righteousness? “All Your COMMANDMENTS are RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Psalm 119:172). Righteousness is obedience to the living laws God has set IN MOTION. These Laws are ALIVE. They are eternal, immutable, inexorable! (Psalm 111:7-8).

When we transgress them, there is a PENALTY. There is no escape from the penalty, unless we accept Christ’s sacrifice as payment of that penalty in OUR STEAD. The Law has been set in motion, and it is the most powerful, irresistible thing in all the universe! Relentlessly, it moves on, always aiming its penalty without fail!

That Law is SO STRONG – SO IRRESISTIBLE – so IMMUTABLE – that it took even the life of God-in-the-flesh, Jesus Christ, the very Son of God! It was stronger than HE! It claimed His life, when He voluntarily took your sins and mine upon Himself!

The Apostle Paul wrote:

14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross {Greek sauros}. (Colossians 2:14)

Now, let us look at the Greek term exaleipho translated as “wiped out” in Colossians 2:14:

NT:1813
exaleipho (ex-al-i’-fo); from NT:1537 and NT:218; to smear out, i.e. obliterate (erase tears, figuratively, pardon sin). (Biblesoft’s New Exhaustive Strong’s Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

In other words, exaleipho has to do with wiping out sin. This is also confirmed in Acts 3:19 where Peter also uses the term exaleipho, which is translated as “blotted out” below:

19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of

refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

Hence, it is sin and the related penalties that are to be blotted or wiped out. And the penalties could vary from “being unclean to the evening” (Leviticus 11:24-28) to making an offering (Leviticus 5:5-6) to being “cut off from his people” (Leviticus 7:27) to the death penalty (Exodus 31:14).

This is also confirmed elsewhere in the New Testament:

13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. (Galatians 3:13)

The curse of the law is related to the penalty. And Jesus paid it.

But what about the law of God? Was the law of God to be wiped out? No:

17 Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill (Matthew 5:17)

God’s laws are the ways of showing love: love to God and love to others.

The death is not the ONLY penalty of breaking God’s Law. Not by any means! The penalty of broken law, HERE and NOW, is broken, frustrated lives, shattered hopes and hopeless dreams, unending misery, wretchedness, unhappiness and want!

Yes, the Law of God is GOOD! It is love! It is the way to peace, to happiness, to joy! Keep it, and you will be HAPPY. Break it, and you will suffer! THE LAW IS GOD’S GREATEST GIFT TO MANKIND – given to make man happy, to lead him into the full abundant life, to PROTECT his happiness and lead him into eternal life!

1. Is God’s Law the Law of LIBERTY? James 1:25. Does keeping the Law result in blessings? Same verse.
2. Does obedience to God’s Law result in genuine freedom – freedom from fears, from misery, from penalties of every kind, and freedom from the bondage of the Devil and his demons? Romans 6:14,16, 18.
3. Does God’s Law also free us from slavery to

the foolish and hurtful customs of society? Colossians 2:20-22.

Repentance Is Positive!

Repentance is NOT a matter of “giving up” everything good! Repentance is POSITIVE!

Not only do you escape the penalties of sin, but it is the way to uncountable positive benefits. Let’s consider this for a moment.

The blood of Jesus pays the penalty of our sins – takes away our past sins, reconciles us to God. Then God gives us His free HOLY SPIRIT – the Spirit of LOVE – “THE love of God” – God’s kind of love – “ has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 5:5). And this spiritual love, in us, ALONE can fulfill, or keep God’s Law!

It is ONLY those thus keeping the Law who know real peace, happiness and joy!

We are to change to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

And only those having the Holy Spirit within them can inherit eternal life!

The commands, precepts and other teachings of the BIBLE pull the glossy, attractive coloring off of sin and reveal it for what it is! Remember THAT! Don’t forget it! They stand for THE WAY which will bring true happiness! And they point out to us that living any other way than by God’s Laws is a snare and delusion!

Humans seek “fun,” pleasure, enjoyment. Sin usually gives a TEMPORARY sensation of pleasure, or exhilaration. But there’s always a KICK-BACK! Sometimes it’s the headache of the “morning after.” It exacts an EXORBITANT PRICE always collected later – but it’s a RELENTLESS COLLECTOR! And its final price is death! It’s a mighty poor bargain! God help us to discern the true values from the false!

Bible Our GUIDE to Repentance

God tells us that His Word is to be our GUIDE to daily living. The BIBLE shows exactly what we must TURN FROM and TURN TO! Let’s understand.

1. Can we trust our own understanding? Can we rely on our own minds to tell us what to do and

what not to do? Proverbs 3:5.

COMMENT: How can we possibly trust our own minds since we were born with minds that are only “half there”? None of us has the Holy Spirit of God unless and until we repent of our past sins, are baptized and begin obeying God. We CAN’T think straight, as far as spiritual matters of salvation are concerned, without God’s Spirit. For the downward pulls of our selfishness DISTORT our thinking towards disobedience to God.

2. When one who does not have the Holy Spirit within him/her depends upon their unconverted mind to tell them what is RIGHT and what is wrong, where will they END UP? Proverbs 14:12. Does God repeat this again, for EMPHASIS, in Proverbs 16:25?
3. When people follow their own vain reasonings, do they miss out on the whole purpose of why God put them here on the earth – that He intends them to learn to do the righteousness of God? Romans 10:3.
4. Then isn’t it the Law of God which must point out to us what wrongdoing – SIN – really is? 1 John 3:4.

COMMENT: It is the Law of God, and NOT OUR CONSCIENCE, that explains what sin is!

5. Since God’s laws and precepts which lead to SALVATION are not found within OUR OWN MINDS, then just where ARE they to be found? 2 Timothy 3:15.

COMMENT: The overall Law of God is the Law of Love (1 John 5:3; Exodus 20). And the spiritual ramifications of this great law are given THROUGHOUT the BIBLE!

6. Does obedience to God’s commandments contained in His Word result in blessings? 1 John 3:22.
7. Is the Bible profitable for reproofing and correcting and instructing us in God’s way of life? 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
8. Are the reproofs and instructions of God a way of life? Proverbs 6:23.

COMMENT: The commandments, reproofs, and instructions found in your Bible lead one into a new WAY of life – GOD’S way. They lead to a joyous and

abundant way of life here and now, and life ETERNAL hereafter!

We need to quit following humans who have appointed themselves as “authorities” on the Bible, yet teach against its teachings. Let’s follow CHRIST’S command in Matthew 4:4 to “live by every word of GOD.” Let’s get back to the TRUE teachings of the Bible!

9. What happens when people do not obey the scriptures implicitly? Matthew 15:14.

COMMENT: People fall into error when they follow the teachings of misguided men, instead of God’s Word – the Bible.

10. By what standard will all people be judged by God? John 12:48-50.

COMMENT: Christ preached the way to salvation when He lived in the human form here on this earth (Matthew 1:14-15; Mark 6:33; Luke 12:31-32). But remember also that it was He, in spirit form, as God of Old Covenant Israel (John 8:58; John 1:1-4), who inspired the Word of God to be written then for US TODAY. And after His death it was He who inspired His servants to both preach His words for us (Matthew 28:19-20).

11. Is it just enough to praise God in thought and word, or are we commanded to put God’s instructions into actual USE in our daily lives? Matthew 7:21. This is important to remember!
12. When something new comes up in our daily lives and we are undecided just what God would want us to DO about it, what does God command? 1 Thessalonians 5:21, KJV.

COMMENT: God commands us to prove all things by His Word. We are to STUDY all the scriptures relating to any proposed course of action before making a final decision.

The only infallible guide is God’s BIBLE! And God’s Word commands us to repent of disobeying His laws and begin OBEYING them NOW. This is the ONLY WAY TO all the tremendous blessings God offers you and me and all humankind!

Increase YOUR Part In God's Work!

Article originally published in the Good News magazine, June 1963, by the old Radio Church of God (and hence, is no longer copyrighted but now is in the public domain).

By Richard Sedliacik

MANY MEMBERS in God's Church say regretfully: "If I only had MORE money, I'd give more FINANCIAL SUPPORT to God's Work." But there is something you – as an individual – CAN DO to increase YOUR support. Read this article carefully to learn what you can do!

Support Through Tithes

First of all, let's review what God says about His tithing law in Malachi 3.

"Bring ye ALL the TITHES into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a BLESSING, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3:10)

Notice. We're to bring all – not a part, but ALL the tithes into God's "storehouse" – His Work on earth.

Have you been faithfully sending the entire first tenth of your income to God's Work! Have you been saving ALL of your second tithe which enables you and your family to attend the Feast of Tabernacles and God's other Festivals? Or have you been spending a part of it? And have you been obediently saving the third tithe every third year?

If your conscience is clear before God in saving these three tithes, this is good and pleasing in God's sight. But there is still something MORE which God commands concerning His financial law.

God Also Commands Offerings

Besides bringing all the tithes into the storehouse, God commands us to give OFFERINGS. Malachi 3:8-9

shows that this nation has robbed God in OFFERINGS, as well as tithes!



"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."

Yes, God also expects us to give OFFERINGS to His Work – but only as we are financially able. God allows

US to determine the amount of our offering.

"Every man according as HE purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

But also remember what God inspired the Apostle Paul to write in the preceding verse:

"He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

In other words, the more you give, the more God will bless you in return! God holds you responsible for giving a generous and equitable offering to His Work – according to your ability.

So, if you have been faithful in obeying God's tithing law respecting the three separate tithes (Deuteronomy 14:22-29), and giving OFFERINGS as well, then you can

hold God to His promise:

“PROVE ME NOW HEREWITH . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and POUR YOU OUT A BLESSING, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” (Malachi 3:10)

God blesses the faithful tithe-payer, enabling him not only to have more money for himself, but also to have MORE tithes and offerings for God’s Work!

Special Holy Day Offering

God also commands His people to give a special offering OVER and ABOVE their regular tithes and offerings. But notice. This special offering is to be given only at certain specific “times” of the year.

“Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord EMPTY: Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.” (Deuteronomy 16:16-17)

These “three times,” or seasons obviously include all seven of God’s annual Festivals. It is during each of the seven annual Holy Sabbath convocations that God’s Church takes up this special offering for the furtherance of the Gospel.

Holy Day offerings to be an additional source of income to help further His Work.

Begin To Save Now!

Many of God’s people have begun LAYING ASIDE a certain amount of money each week-according to their ability. They want to be sure to have a generous offering ready and waiting for the special Holy Day collections.

If you have not been putting aside a special savings, then begin to do so AT ONCE – as God has prospered you. You will then have a generous offering to give the next time it is taken up at one of God’s annual Holy Days.

PRAY that God will cause others who are able, to give VERY GENEROUSLY!

Not Blessed Very Much?

Some few in God’s Church are not being blessed very much financially if, seemingly at all – even after having faithfully tithed and given offerings to God’s Work for some time.

There definitely is a REASON why they are not receiving as great a blessing as God would like to give them. Perhaps He is just testing them for a while to see if they will continue to faithfully tithe and give offerings. Or, perhaps their ATTITUDE in tithing is not quite right – perhaps they are just selfishly desiring God’s blessings so they can heap up more material wealth for themselves. You must search your own heart in this matter.

But it is also possible you are not fully DOING YOUR PART! Perhaps you are not applying other laws of God which operate hand in hand with tithing. Stop for a moment and ask yourself these questions.

“What kind of a worker am I on my job? Am I like the ordinary run-of-the-mill ... employee who is out to GET all he can for as LITTLE EFFORT as possible?”

Frankly, brethren, some of you still have remnants of this modern worldly attitude toward working today! We have all been brought up completely under the sway of this world’s God – rejecting ways. But God commands us to come OUT of this world in EVERY WAY! (Revelation 18:4).

How can anyone expect God to bless him financially if he doesn’t deserve it in the first place? No, he can’t! God says,

“Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also REAP.” (Galatians 6:7)

If you still have tendencies toward being lazy on the job, uninterested in your work, not THINKING about what you are doing – not striving to improve the QUALITY of your work constantly – then you certainly cannot expect God to cause your employer to suddenly raise your salary just because you are tithing – can you? Of course not!

Notice what God says is the inevitable reward of the slothful, as contrasted with the diligent:

“He becometh POOR that dealeth with a SLACK

HAND: but the hand of the diligent MAKETH RICH!" (Proverbs 10:4)

An Example of Industry

I know of a widow in God's Church who supports herself. She has been faithfully tithing and giving generous offerings to the Work ever since she was converted. Just recently, she joyfully told me she received a RAISE in pay!

Besides being faithfully obedient to God's tithing law, she has been obeying another very important principle revealed in God's Word. She is **INDUSTRIOUS!** She spends ALL 8 hours of her workday **WORKING** for her employer – not **DAYDREAMING** – but keeping **BUSY ALL OF THE TIME!** Her employer showed his appreciation by giving her a **RAISE!**

This lady believes and applies the scripture which says,

"WHATSOEVER thy hand findeth to do, DO IT WITH THY MIGHT ..." (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

She doesn't do a job half-way – she does it with all the strength and ability she can muster, **THINKING** about what she is doing all the time!

Working for Jesus Christ

This particular widow understands that working for her earthly employer is just the same as if she were working for Jesus Christ Himself!

"Servants [employees], obey in all things your masters [employers] according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers [not only when the boss is looking]; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for YE SERVE THE LORD CHRIST." (Colossians 3:22-24)

By working hard for your employer as if he were Jesus Christ, you are building the kind of righteous character God desires. By being faithful to your earthly employer, being diligent, using your mind and becoming a trustworthy employee, God knows that when you begin serving Him for ALL ETERNITY, you will also be a reliable, trustworthy, **HARD-WORKING**

SON OR DAUGHTER OF GOD!

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much ... if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own [eternal life with riches, glory, and honor]?" (Luke 16:10, 12)

God knows that if we are lazy, and daydream on the job – if we won't serve our earthly employer with **ALL OUR MIGHT** – then we wouldn't serve God in His Kingdom with all our might either!

The way we serve our earthly employer **NOW** will determine, to a very great extent, the future position (or the lack of it) to be given us by our heavenly Employer for **ALL ETERNITY!** That is why we are **COMMANDED** to serve our present employer as if he were Jesus Christ.

Because so many people who have money are sinful – money itself is considered evil. This is the world's way ... Your **USE** of money is very important to **GOD!**

"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon [if you have not **USED MONEY RIGHTLY**], who will commit to your trust the true riches [how can God give you the **WEALTH** of His Kingdom]?" (Luke 16: 11)

As God's servants, we are not to worship money, nor to waste it! We must **USE IT WISELY** – and how more wisely can money be used than in God's own Work!

The Diligent Rewarded

Now In Titus 2:9-10 we read:

"Exhort servants [this certainly applies to **HIRED** as well as bond servants] to be obedient unto their own masters [employers], and **TO PLEASE THEM WELL IN ALL THINGS**; not answering again [not talking back]; Not purloining [to delay or to **STEAL**], but shewing all good fidelity [loyalty]; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

If you obey this scripture by really **PLEASING** your employer in **ALL** things – if you don't argue with him,

if you don't **STEAL** from him by not keeping your mind on what he has hired you to do and by not arriving

to work on time – if you prove to him that you are FAITHFUL, that you can be trusted to do what he has instructed you to do EXACTLY THE WAY HE SAID TO DO IT – then you will be a VERY VALUABLE EMPLOYEE indeed!

Your employer will notice you are different from his other employees who are out to give as little as possible for all they can GET! He may see to it that your wages are INCREASED sooner or later – thus enabling you to have more money to better help support God's Work. ...

Another way to serve your employer well is to be willing to work overtime if he asks you – and even offer to work overtime if it is necessary to get a particular job done on time. Your employer will really appreciate your willingness to co-operate in this way. Remember Christ said if we only do that

which is expected of us, we're unprofitable servants! (Luke 17:10).

In order to be truly profitable servants and work for our employer as we would for Christ, then here is something else we should be doing.

Study To Increase Job Knowledge

The widow, whose example I mentioned previously, is setting another fine example which all of us would do well to follow. She is taking a home study correspondence course dealing with her particular line of work. Her employer was very pleased to hear she was so interested in her work – that she was willing to spend extra time increasing her knowledge of the job.

Whatever your occupation is, you should continually strive to increase your knowledge of your job. For example, if you are a gardener, read books on gardening and related specialized fields. You can always learn more.

I know of a man who never went to high school, yet he studied on his own and applied himself until he is now one of the leading floriculturists in the country. He even lectures to college and television audiences!

So, no matter what your present occupation is, STUDY to increase your knowledge of your job – whether you take a correspondence course, or just read books on

your occupation from the library and take periodicals dealing with your line of work.

Your employer may soon recognize your earnest desire to do your job well and will hold you in high esteem, considering you to be one of his most valuable employees! If a layoff should occur, your chances of remaining on the job will be greatly increased. You will still have a job and be able to

continue supporting God's Work financially, as well as yourself and family. And besides, you will sooner or later receive an increase in pay which will mean more money for you and more tithes and offerings for God's Work.

Make Extra Money, Too

There are many ways in which you can earn some extra money for God's Work. For example, I know of a single girl who makes money selling homemade leathercraft and paintings. Some older women and widows, and some younger ones, too, can make a few extra dollars sewing.

The children will also enjoy earning extra money for themselves, and will experience the great satisfaction and JOY of saving their tithes and offerings for the Work. Boys can do odd jobs such as mowing lawns, delivering papers, etc. Girls can earn EXTRA MONEY, and learn responsibility at the same time, by baby-sitting.

Perhaps you would prefer to faithfully save EVERY nickel or dime you find in your change. You'll never miss it, and just think how much money you can save for additional offerings.

These are only a FEW of the myriad ideas to be thought of for making EXTRA money. Look over your own situation, and determine how you can best save something MORE for the Work.

Your Part Is Great!

The dollars you are sending to God's Work are having a tremendous IMPACT upon the world!

As a direct result of your support, thousands are being converted to God's joyous, prosperous, and ABUNDANT way of life.

The Miracles of Jesus - Part 6

The Paralysed Man

By S. Perry

Wherever Jesus went, crowds followed. One evening when he was staying in a friend's home, so many people came over to listen to him speaking and teaching, that they were jam-packed in every corner of each room. Outside there were four men who had carried their friend to see Jesus. Their friend could not walk, he could hardly do anything for himself. They knew that Jesus had the power to heal him but there were so many people it was impossible to get through the front door – or the back door – or even the window!

There was no other way, but to climb up on the roof, carrying him right up there too! This could be the only chance for their friend to be healed, before Jesus went off travelling to another town again! They climbed up the steep steps at the side of the house and started to take the sticks apart on the roof. When the hole was big enough, they carefully lowered their paralysed friend down on ropes. Jesus looked up and smiled at the faces peeking through the opening. These men had a lot of faith and they were putting it into action. Jesus looked at the man on the mat in front of Him.



"Your sins are forgiven." Jesus said.

Well, the pharisees and other teachers of the law were shocked! Only God can forgive sins; is this man saying that he is God? They thought. Jesus knew what they were thinking, and to show them that He really was the son of God, He said to the man. "Pick up your mat and go home." Immediately the man felt strength in his legs and his whole body. He jumped up, grabbed his mat, pushed through the crowd and ran all the way home!

Continued on next page --->>>

Change each letter to the next letter of the alphabet to reveal a message from this story!

I	D	R	T	R	B	Z	M	E	N	Q	F	H	U	D	R	H	M

If you begin to earnestly apply the principles from God's Word that have been set forth in this article, then you can look forward to a wonderful experience – the great satisfaction of knowing that the extra money you will be sending to God's church will be used to convert move precious lives for His Kingdom – to live and reign with Christ forever and ever!

Notice the **MAGNITUDE** of the infinite glory God promises to give those who have a part in this great

Work of turning **MANY** to righteousness:

"And they that be wise shall shine as the

brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the **STARS FOR EVER AND EVER.**" (Daniel 12:3)

Yes, **YOUR PART** in God's Work is **VITAL!** Never underestimate it!

Editor's note: Your part in giving helps build loving character in you and helps us assist people around the world. And, of course, print and send out literature, such as this magazine. And, by saving second tithe, you and your family can better observe the biblical Holy Days, go away for the Feast of Tabernacles, and better keep your focus on the coming Kingdom of God.

Further Study

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? 10 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" (Mark 2:1-12)

We are going to look at the words that Jesus spoke in this healing account and consider the reasons behind them.

Jesus first of all commented on the faith of the men who brought the paralytic to be healed. We know that Jesus can see into the heart, so knew what they were feeling and thinking. But what does faith require? The simple answer is action! Faith needs to be lived; it is not just a feeling. It would have been no good, if they had given up when they saw the crowds, said, "Oh well, I believe Jesus can do this, but we can't get to Him, so we won't bother." They had to persist, they had to endure. They could have even got into trouble for damaging the house; they would certainly have to spend time fixing it again! We don't know if this

was the first chance that they had to see Jesus, or whether they had tried on other occasions, but they were not giving up now! That is what our faith must be like. Unshakeable, unstoppable and unwavering. Not only did they believe that Jesus could heal their friend, but that He would do it! The four men would have looked pretty stupid if Jesus had not healed him after they had made such a dramatic entrance!

6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:6-8)

Why did Jesus say your sins are forgiven instead of you are healed? His words teach us a few things! The state of our physical health can be affected by our spiritual health. Sin can have a physical damaging effect on our body. Just as stress can make us sick, being sick in sin — bitterness, anger or resentment — can physically manifest in our bodies. Sin could have been responsible for his condition. James indicates that prayer, healing and forgiveness are connected.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

Note that even when Jesus was challenged on this statement, He did not then say you are healed, but instead proved that He had the power to forgive sins, and that by forgiving the man's sin, the man would be restored. Forgiveness following repentance gives us a whole new life. We are a different person if it is true repentance. The physical change in this man was obvious for all to see!

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. (Acts 3:19)

In telling the man to 'Arise', the man would have to be healed to follow this instruction! And follow it he did, to the astonishment of all around. He was forgiven and he was healed. The physical manifestation as



Q. “Since the soul is not immortal and since the body remains in the grave until the resurrection — how do you explain the APPEARING OF SAMUEL TO SAUL — AFTER SAMUEL’S DEATH?” (1 Samuel 28).

A. The old Radio Church of God answered this as follows:

This scripture has puzzled many — and it was written to do exactly that! We read in Isaiah 28:11 that God would speak, “With stammering lips and another tongue ... precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.” Many portions of the Bible are purposely written to be OBSCURE!

But we — in God’s Church — can understand these apparently confusing scriptures. God has revealed to us the keys of knowledge.

One scripture does not contradict another. Christ said in John 10:35, “The scripture cannot be broken.” Many times one scripture seems to contradict another — seems to say

the opposite to another, but in reality it does NOT!

Turn then to 1 Samuel 28:6. Notice carefully, that Saul had inquired of the Lord — as to how the outcome of the battle would go. But in this particular verse God did not answer Saul. He gave him no answer, neither by any dream nor by any prophet.

In the context, we see Saul went to the witch at Endor — who had contact with familiar spirits or DEMONS! This was the immediate conversation between Saul and the woman: “Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, bring me up Samuel” (1 Samuel 28:11). We see that Saul wanted to speak to Samuel — to find out how the battle the next day would go for him. He was very desperate — and frightened.

The woman — having contact with the demon — complied with Saul’s request for the “raising of Samuel.” We read in Verse 12: “And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice. ... And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw a GOD-LIKE BEING coming up out of the earth”

proof of the internal change through forgiveness.

The pharisees constantly judged and criticized Jesus’ actions and words. This miracle was clearly a demonstration of not only His power, but of who He was. The Son of Man, was the Son of The Living God, with power to heal and to forgive. The pharisees unspoken question was answered. Yes, the Living God is the only one with power to forgive sins — and this man, Jesus, full of wisdom and understanding, full of compassion and love was the very same as the Living God! They witnessed it with their own eyes, but their hearts were hardened that they did not believe.

Even Jesus’ own disciples found it hard to see who Jesus truly was — and they knew, loved and respected

Him!

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” (John 14:9)

Jesus asked his disciples ‘Who do you say that I am?’ Only one of them answers.

Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16)

Do you know who Jesus really is? Will you repent and accept his forgiveness? Will your life be changed as

(Jewish translation).

Notice carefully, what we have — Saul believing that the woman could raise Samuel from the grave. The woman also believing that she could raise Samuel from the earth. But when Saul asked the woman WHAT SHE SAW — she merely recorded that she saw a “god-like being” ascending out of the earth.

The account continues in Verse 14. Saul then asked the woman, “What form is be of? And she said, AN OLD MAN cometh up; and he is COVERED WITH A MANTLE. And Saul perceived (or thought) that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.”

Again, notice very carefully. When Saul asked the woman what she saw — these are the words she used to describe the vision : “a god-like being” (Jewish translation), “an old man,” “he is covered with a mantle.”

NOT ONE WORD THAT IT WAS SAMUEL!!

Of course, Saul wanted to see Samuel — the woman thought she could raise Samuel — Saul reasoned in his mind (perceived) that it was Samuel. But it wasn't really. What did Saul see?

It was a demon!

Satan is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2) — he is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4) — he can TRANSFORM HIMSELF into an ANGEL OF LIGHT (2 Corinthians 11:14). Satan — and his demons — have the power to produce visions — seemingly to appear in other human forms, in other animal forms — in various shapes and sizes. 1 Samuel 28, describes a demon bringing forth an apparition in the form of an old man covered over with a huge blanket or mantle.

The next question in this chapter is in Verse 15: “And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?” Why does the account read as though Samuel were speaking to Saul if it was a demon?

It is merely a matter of what Saul thought it was.

We read in Genesis 3:4 that Satan deceived Eve — “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.” But we know this was NOT A SERPENT SPEAKING — but Satan the Devil himself! Yet the account says, “the serpent said.” In like manner in 1 Samuel 28 where it records “Samuel” speaking — it was actually SATAN OR A DEMON speaking through the form that he had produced in vision to Saul and the woman.

It is quite evident that this was merely a demon appearing to the witch of Endor and Saul. This scripture in no way

contradicts the multitude of CLEAR SCRIPTURES proving that the soul is not immortal. This does not contradict the scriptures which prove we remain in the grave until the resurrection. (Good News, September 1963)

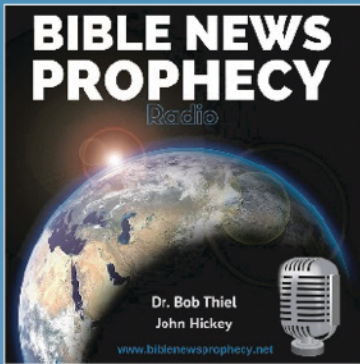
Editor's note, this was also consistent with how Church of God leader, Pionius of Smyrna explained it in the 3rd century:

For my part, this lie that is repeated now as though it were recent, I have heard uttered by Jewish people since I was a child. It is written that Saul inquired of a diviner, and that he said to the woman who was performing the necromancy, bring up for me Samuel, the prophet. And the woman saw a man rising up wrapped in a robe, and Saul recognized that it was Samuel, and put to him the questions that he wanted.

Well, then, was the diviner able to bring up Samuel or not? If they say she was, then they admit that wickedness has more power than righteousness, and then they are accursed. If they say that she did not, then they should not assert it of Christ the Lord. But the explanation of this story is as follows. How was this wicked diviner, herself a demon, able to bring up the soul of the holy prophet that was resting in the bosom of Abraham? For the lesser is commanded by the greater. Surely then Samuel was not brought back, as these suppose? Of course not.

The truth is somewhat as follows. Whenever anyone revolts from God he is followed by the rebel angels, and demonic ministers assist him with every sort of drug, magician, priest, and wizard. And no wonder: for the Apostle says: Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness? Indeed, even the Antichrist will appear as Christ. So then Samuel was not brought up from the grave; but rather demons from Hades disguised themselves as Samuel and thus appeared to the diviner and to the faithless Saul. The Scriptures themselves will show you this. For Samuel in the apparition says to Saul: You too shall be with me today. How is it possible that the idolatrous Saul is found together with Samuel? Rather is it clear that he is with the wicked demons who have deceived him and have become his masters. Hence it cannot have been Samuel. But if it is impossible to bring back the soul of the holy prophet, how is it possible to see rising from the earth Jesus Christ who is in heaven, whom the disciples saw being taken up, and they died because they would not deny him.

We in the Continuing Church of God continue with the same basic teachings on this. The demons lied to Saul and, while Saul was killed, he also was not conscious with the demons in the grave.



Fulfilling Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:19-20



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The Continuing Church of God also uses books, personal visits, daily electronic newsletters, and weekly letters to the brethren to support Matthew 24:14, Romans 11:25, and Matthew 28:19-20.