

April - June 2023

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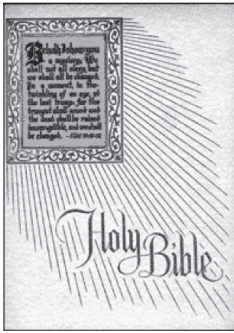
# BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY

Does DNA disprove the  
Identities of the 'Lost Tribes'?

Pentecost, God's Spirit,  
Firstfruits, and God's Plan

What is the Solution  
to **POLLUTION** and  
the Solution to  
**CLIMATE CHANGE** .

# BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY



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## COP27: What is the Solution to Pollution and the Solution to Climate Change?

Between November 6th and 18th, 2022, the United Nation's climate conference called COP27 took place on the Sinai Peninsula, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. COP stands for 'Conference of the Parties', and in this case is related to climate and environmental issues.

Many high-ranking world leaders attended this conference.

Additionally, during the time of the conference, the Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development and the Elijah Interfaith Institute held a 'Climate Repentance Ceremony.' This was attended by high-ranking leaders of many of the world's religious faiths.

The interfaith groups also put out 'Ten Principles' at the base of the Egyptian Mt. Sinai that were supposed to somewhat mimic the Ten Commandments. They also smashed two tablets, attempting to mimic what Moses did when he saw the sins of the children of Israel (cf. Exodus 32:19).

The "Climate Repentance" was not towards the God of the Bible and did not include statements to obey God's commandments.

Neither this mockery nor the COP27 itself conference fixed the climate. The European Union, itself, declared that the COP27 agreement was "not enough" for the planet. A United Nation's report concluded that even if all the pledges made so far are delivered — and that is a big IF as the follow through for these matters usually has not been as agreed — the Earth is still on track for an average rise of 2.7C this century. The UN says this would cause widespread drought, water scarcity, hunger, and coastal flooding (Source: Deutsche Welle, November 20, 2022).

Many are promoting a worldly view that without true repentance, but through international cooperation of unconverted leaders, the world will be able to improve

itself and solve its problems.

The Bible says that will not work.

As it turns out, the Bible points to even higher heat coming (Revelation 16:8-9), flooding beyond what the UN points to (e.g., Revelation 16:20), that human efforts to fix the Earth will fail (Matthew 24:21-22), but that God will intervene to stop the complete destruction of the Earth (Revelation 11:18; Matthew 24:22).

Consider that twice the Bible warns:

There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. (Proverbs 14:12, 16:25)

The Bible teaches:

I Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; (Psalm 127:1)

While the WORLD'S religious leaders and many politicians are involved in "Climate Action," they, most often, have not sought to go about it God's way. They are laboring in vain. This does not mean that humans should waste resources or pollute, and some steps should be taken, but the thrust of the agenda is not to be proper biblical stewards of the earth.

Instead, the details tend to focus on various controlling methods that are often not consistent with biblical morals. And many openly advocate sins that the Bible condemns.

There is a Solution to Pollution

If the world's religious leaders want to actually succeed with the climate, they need to repent and obey the true God. Notice the words of Moses:

19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life,

that both you and your descendants may live; 20 that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

Yes, for life we need to OBEY the God of the Bible.

It will take God to truly fix the polluting and warring disasters that humans are causing through sin. Having the true God's involvement is something that those leading the UN, interfaith movement, and many other secular and religious organizations will not accept.

Jesus' kingdom will be the solution to pollution. Notice what will happen:

3 For the Lord will comfort Zion,  
He will comfort all her waste places;  
He will make her wilderness like Eden,  
And her desert like the garden of the Lord;  
Joy and gladness will be found in it,  
Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

4 "Listen to Me, My people;  
And give ear to Me, O My nation:  
For law will proceed from Me,  
And I will make My justice rest  
As a light of the peoples.

5 My righteousness is near,  
My salvation has gone forth,  
And My arms will judge the peoples;  
The coastlands will wait upon Me,  
And on My arm they will trust. (Isaiah 51:3-5)

Yes, a better world is coming. The gospel of the kingdom of God brings hope.

The Bible shows that God uses weather matters, including high heat (Revelation 16:8-9) and what is often called climate change today (Amos 4:4-9) to encourage repentance and obedience to Him (Haggai 2:17).

Furthermore, the Bible shows how to resolve climate change:

3 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, 4 then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 5 Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. 6 I will give peace in the

land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land. (Leviticus 26:3-6)

Yes, there is a biblical solution to climate change, but COP27 and the associated religious ceremonies have overlooked that.

But the good news is that people will heed God and His ways during the millennial Kingdom of God.

Until the arrival of that Kingdom, all human beings should strive to obey God while being careful about waste and pollution. And all should also pray for God's kingdom to come (Matthew 6:10).

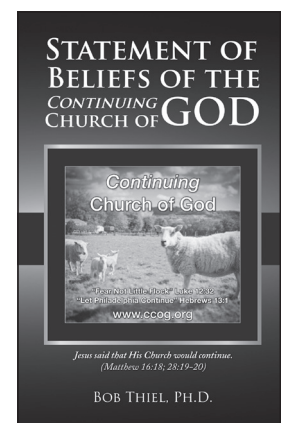
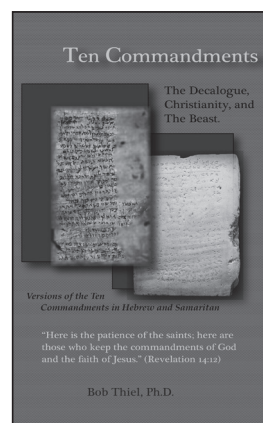
Sadly, world climate advocates dismiss that and many openly advocate sins that the Bible denounces (cf. Romans 1:18-32).

The world will not accept the true solution to pollution — unconverted humans will not accept living in obedience to God — but you can if you will respond to God's calling.

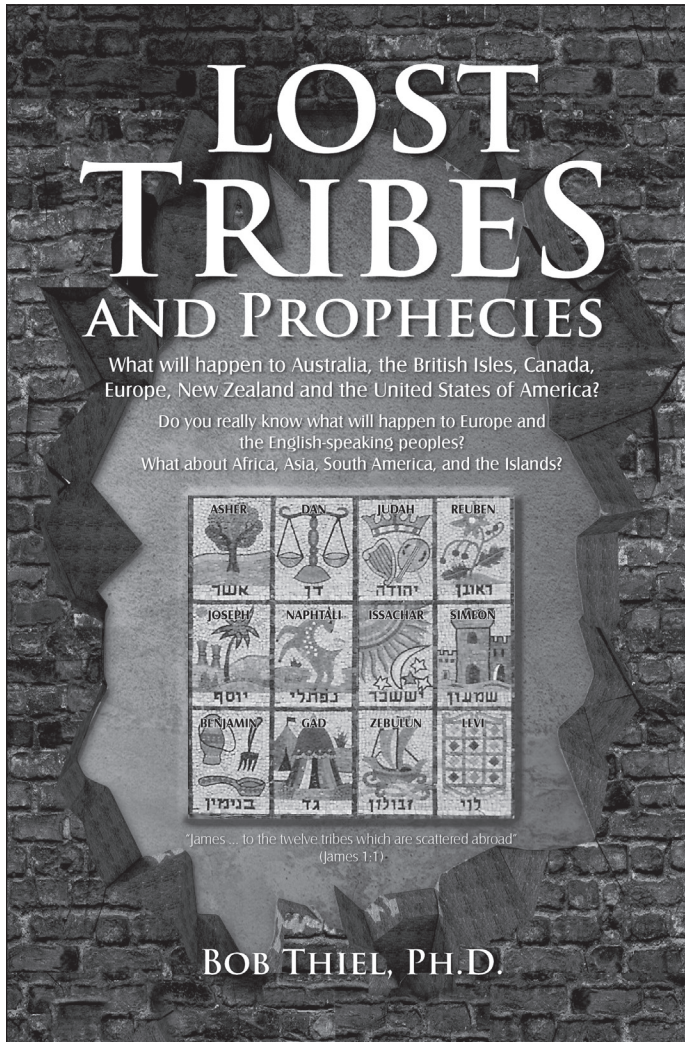
For more on God's ways, check out three free booklets, available online at [ccog.org](http://ccog.org) titled The Ten Commandments: The Decalogue, Christianity, and the Beast + Christians: Ambassadors for the Kingdom of God, Biblical instructions on living as a Christian + Is God Calling You?

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# Does DNA disprove the Identities of the ‘Lost Tribes’?



By Bob Thiel

*Some claim that deoxynucleic acid (DNA) evidence disproves that the ‘lost tribes’ of Israel ended up in parts of Europe and the British Isles. Is that assertion true? Well, here is something from our free book, online at [ccog.org](http://ccog.org), titled ‘Lost Tribes and Prophecies: What will happen to Australia, the British Isles, Canada, Europe, New Zealand and the United States of America?’*

**T**he tribes went to faraway lands as certain historical accounts support. ...

The reality is that the bulk of those descended from the “lost tribes” tribes went away, but did not return, to Judea.

## Scientific Controversies: DNA

Dr. James Tabor wrote:

Clearly the populations of Britain, the United States, and northwestern Europe are very mixed. What we maintain is that significant portions of the ancient Israelites ended up in these areas. Identifying them, at this time, is not scientifically possible. (Tabor J. WERE THE “LOST TRIBES” EVER REALLY LOST? in *The Lost Tribes of Israel – Selected Writings*. Freetoshare Publications, 2011, p. 13)

If there are enough advances in science, it may one day be possible to have scientific certainty of the modern identifications. Yet, now, we have biblical certainty that there must be descendants of Jacob who received the promised blessings (Genesis 48). And that biblical certainty, along with various facts, helps us to be able to identify them.

One scientific controversy related to the “lost tribes” has to do with Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) testing.

Some say lack of DNA evidence disproves Israelite connections to many lands, including in Europe.

However when, “dealing with European population palaeogenetics, no one can evade question of the limitations that are intrinsic to the field of aDNA” (Deguilloux MF, Mendisco F. *Ancient DNA: A Window to the Past of Europe*. *Human Heredity*, Vol. 76, No. 3/4, 2013, p. 122). “The peopling of Europe by modern humans is a widely debated topic in the field of modern and ancient genomics” (Feldman M, et al. *Where Asia meets Europe – recent insights from ancient human genomics*, *Annals of Human Biology*, 2021, 48:3: 191-202). So, the scientific reality is that there are limits of usefulness of DNA. Dominant and recessive genes, mutations, interbreeding, other factors, and likely unknown factors impact the usefulness of DNA — scientists do realize there are DNA limitations related to descent.

The science associated with DNA is changing and, in time, there may be more specific markers or sub-markers that will prove to be totally useful in this endeavor.

That being said, most of the DNA in Europeans came from the Fertile Crescent (Krause J, Trappe J. *A Short History of Humanity – A New History of Old Europe*. Originally published in German. Random House 2021, p. 18), and are which includes the Levant. Scientific research once confirmed that “a demic diffusion spanning the entire European continent from the Levant” with differences between “Eastern Europe” and “the West” (Malaspina P, et al. *Human Y-chromosomal Networks and Pattern of Gene Flow in Europe, West Asia and North Africa*. In: *Archaeogenetics: DNA and the population prehistory of Europe*. Cambridge, 2000, p.165).

A “demic diffusion” refers to populations spreading out. “The Levant” is a geographical term historically referring to a large area in the Eastern Mediterranean region of Western Asia. Western Asia is also known as the Near East.

Notice also:

DNAs ... to haploid group H, the most frequent in Europe and one that is common in the Near East ...

MtDNA lineages cluster into distinct groups ... cluster H ... This cluster ... is the most frequent in Europe and is also common in the Near East. (Rickards O, et al. *MtDNA Variability in Extinct and Extant Populations of Sicily and Southern Italy*. In: *Archaeogenetics: DNA and the population prehistory of Europe*. Cambridge, 2000, pp. 175, 179)

So, it is not surprising with “haploidytype” that “Middle Eastern populations generally connect much closer to typical northwestern European samples such as the Irish and Danes” (Kidd KK, et al. *Nuclear Genetic Variation of European Populations in a Global Context*. In: *Archaeogenetics: DNA and the population prehistory of Europe*. Cambridge, 2000, p. 109). (MtDNA stands for mitochondrial DNA).

DNA experts realize that DNA is not sufficient to be considered the disqualifying determinant in ancestry. Note the following related to Jews:

In recent decades ever-increasing efforts and ingenuity were invested in identifying Biblical Israelite genotypic common denominators by analysing an assortment of phenotypes, like facial patterns, blood types, diseases, DNA-sequences, and more. It becomes overwhelmingly clear that although Jews maintained detectable vertical

genetic continuity along generations of socio-religious-cultural relationship, also intensive horizontal genetic relations were maintained both between Jewish communities and with the gentile surrounding. Thus, in spite of considerable consanguinity, **there is no Jewish genotype to identify**. (Falk R. Genetic markers cannot determine Jewish descent. *Frontiers in Genetics* 5(462) 2014:462)

A 2022 DNA study found that while there are genetic connections of modern Jews to those of the Middle Ages, there was considerable genetic diversity in some (Waldman S, et al. *Genome-wide data from medieval German Jews show that the Ashkenazi founder event pre-dated the 14th century*. *Cell*, November 30, 2022).

Furthermore, related to “**demographic history**,” “**large surveys of mtDNA variation in Europe have thus far failed to reveal any such patterns**” (Helgason A, et al. *Sampling Saturation and the European MtDNA Pool: Implications for Detecting Genetic Relationships Among Populations*. In: *Archaeogenetics: DNA and the population prehistory of Europe*. Cambridge, 2000, p. 285).

*Scientific American* reported:

Genetics is a probabilistic science, and there are no genes “for” anything in particular. ... When it comes to ancestry, DNA is very good at determining close family relations such as siblings or parents, and dozens of stories are emerging that reunite or identify lost close family members (or indeed criminals). For deeper family roots, these tests do not really tell you where your ancestors came from. (Rutherford A. *How Accurate Are Online DNA Tests?* *Scientific American*, October 15, 2018)

Hence, scientists tend to realize that DNA is not as reliable of an ethnic marker as many people believe. Even some who have reported DNA connections for the tribes of Israel, have found significant variations (e.g., Ostrer H. *Legacy: A Genetic History of the Jewish People*. United States, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 111-113). The reality of descent, and not DNA, is consistent with the assertions in this book on the identity of the tribes of Israel.

Therefore, those who say current DNA knowledge disproves British Israelism or disproves that the bulk of the lost tribes made it into Europe are in scientific error.

Furthermore, however, there are some DNA clues. In 2010 it was reported:

... that when teams of geneticists led by Professor Bryan Sykes took DNA samples in the Celtic regions of Britain they discovered ancestries in the Caucasus, which lay within ancient Scythia, and Mediterranean Europe. (Hutchinson R. Book review: *The Highland Clans*, by Alistair Moffat. *The Scotsman* – April 26, 2010. *The DNA of Western European Nations*. Canadian British-Israel Association. <http://www.british-israel.com/dna-and-british-israel.html> accessed 06/20/22)

Thus, the travels of these descendants, including through Scythia, seems to have some modern support. Plus, there are a lot of mixes of peoples that have happened throughout history.

We also need to understand that the two houses of Israel themselves had differing DNA profiles. Genesis 38:1-2 shows that Judah had a child from a Canaanite, therefore the House of Judah had early Canaanite infusion. The House of Israel, in contrast to Judah, had more of an Aramaic infusion. In the Book of Genesis, we see that Isaac and Jacob took wives of their own ethnic heritage from the region of Padan Aram (cf. Genesis 24:1-10; 27:46-28:1-2). For this reason, although both Israel and Judah were Semitic (Shemitic/Semitic tends to refer to the white descendants of Shem), there would have been a different DNA element in each national heritage. “Therefore, Europeans descended from the House of Israel would be expected to have a DNA that differed from the House of Judah” (*The DNA of Western European Nations*. Canadian British-Israel Association. <http://www.british-israel.com/dna-and-british-israel.html> accessed 06/20/22).

Furthermore, keep in mind that that Joseph married a woman in Egypt (Genesis 41:45) and his descendants would tend to have different DNA markers than those of his brothers who tended to marry Hebrew or Aramaic women.

Science has shown that mitochondrial (mt) haploid DNA, the type which is considered best used for ancient DNA assessments, passes from the mother (Sykes B, Renfrew C. *Concepts in Molecular Genetics*. In: *Archaeogenetics: DNA and the population prehistory of Europe*. Cambridge, 2000, p. 14). Yet, “mt DNA is totally inappropriate as a means of proving a close relationship with anybody” (Krause, p. 18). So, caution is advised.

It should be noted that sometimes the Y-chromosome is used for DNA analysis, which comes from the male (Ibid, p. 14-15).

Notice also the following:

**Atlantic Modal Haplotype #3** The most common variant of the Atlantic Modal Haplotype in the YHRD database has *DYS389i,ii* values of 13 and 29, and *DYS385a,b* values of 11 and 14. This haplotype differs by one step upward on the most quickly mutating marker. This haplotype is very interesting, from the perspective of the YHRD database, because most of the top frequencies are not in Europe but in the United States. Of the top twenty, twelve are among U.S. populations. Two are Hispanic samples, three are African-American (most likely of Anglo-American origin), and the rest are European American. These samples seem to congregate in areas of the U.S. settled by French, Scottish, English, Irish and German immigrants. That accords with the Western European origin of AMH. Southern Ireland and London, England appear among the top ten European frequencies, along with four separate locales in The Netherlands. Although “Border Reiver” descendants would most likely have acquired this haplotype through British “Celtic” ancestry, the multiple hits in The Netherlands suggest that an Anglo-Saxon origin is also quite possible. (Haplogroup R1b (Atlantic Modal Haplotype). [http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gallgaedhil/haplo\\_r1b\\_amh\\_13\\_29.htm](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gallgaedhil/haplo_r1b_amh_13_29.htm) viewed 12/08/12)

The above tends to confirm observations made some that many those who migrated to the area of the USA were ethnically different than other Europeans that they lived near, but who stayed in Europe.

Raymond McNair pointed to cranial shape differences as well as geographic ones for those who migrated away from Germany as opposed to those who remained — essentially concluding that most earlier German immigrants were actually Manassites (McNair R. *America and Britain in Prophecy*. Global Church of God, 1996, pp. 31-32). Yair Davidiy has also written that the Germans who ended up in America came from areas of Germany dominated by Manasseh (Davidiy Y. *The Tribes*, 4th edition. Russell-David Publishers, 2011, p. 403) — he further reported that several DNA tests have tended to confirm the view that the scattered tribes in Europe and elsewhere descended from Israel

was correct (Davidiy, p. 495).

Though controversial, based upon the information above on Atlantic Modal Haplotype #3, travels, and other data, Raymond G. Helmer concluded related to Manasseh, the USA, and Y-chromosome DNA:

In short – haplotype R1b came to the United States from exactly the immigrants that we would expect to carry it. (Helmer RG. THE BLOOD OF MANKIND – PART III THE BLOOD OF AMERICA. ([http://www.helmerspoint.com/uploads/4/0/0/2/4002281/the\\_blood\\_of\\_mankind\\_iii.pdf](http://www.helmerspoint.com/uploads/4/0/0/2/4002281/the_blood_of_mankind_iii.pdf) accessed pre-2016)

Thus, there is some physical DNA evidence.

Let it also be pointed out that certain ancient Jewish sages and others have recognized that the British peoples descended from the tribe of Ephraim (Davidiy Y. The Tribes, 4th edition. Russell-David Publishers, 2011, p. 384; Spencer MW. THE MISSING LINKS OR THE ANGLO-SAXONS, THE TEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL, Volume I. Holliswood Press, 1901). Some also felt that by the time the U.S.A. formed, a high amount of the people who went to the land that the U.S.A. dominates had descended from the ancient tribe of Manasseh (Davidiy, p. 424-426).

At this time, DNA does not fully prove nor disprove all distant ethnic ancestors.

## **The Foundation is the Word of God**

An important reason to look into the tribes of Israel is that there were prophecies given to them by their father Jacob in the 48th and 49th chapters of the Book of Genesis. The foundation of the prophesied fate of them and various other peoples is in the word of God.

Those who truly believe the Bible accept the following:

9 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' 11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it. (Isaiah 46:9-11)

4 ... Let God be true but every man a liar. (Romans 3:4)

17 ... Your word is truth. (John 17:17)

18 it is impossible for God to lie, (Hebrews 6:18)

God will make what He said come to pass. It does not matter what evidence humans may think they have to the contrary. The history of human 'science' is that many supposed facts over the years, including ones that supposedly contradict scripture, have been proven to be false. This was also known in ancient times as the Apostle Paul warned:

20 ... keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. (1 Timothy 6:20-21, KJV)

God's existence and His Word is backed by true science (for numerous scientific details, see also the booklet, free online at [ccog.org](http://ccog.org), Is God's Existence Logical?). Do not let claims that real science contradicts the Bible veer you off from the faith.

Remember that prophetic promises that God inspired to be recorded in the word of God have come to pass and the others will come to pass.

So, while some DNA evidence does support the idea of the 'lost tribes' of Israel going into Europe and the British Isle, we know from the Bible that God's word and prophecies are true. In future editions of this magazine, we intend to provide additional articles that will further back up the identities of the tribes of Israel.

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**YOU** ARE now beginning to really UNDERSTAND Bible prophecies, and the great PURPOSE being worked out here below – if, that is, you are diligently studying the Bible with the Study the Bible Course.

A new way OF LIFE has been opened up before you. But why were you in almost total IGNORANCE of the real meaning of life, of Bible prophecy and of world affairs all the years before you began this study? Let's understand the reason.

The little word MY is a precious one to most people. They lovingly speak of MY opinion, MY job, MY house,



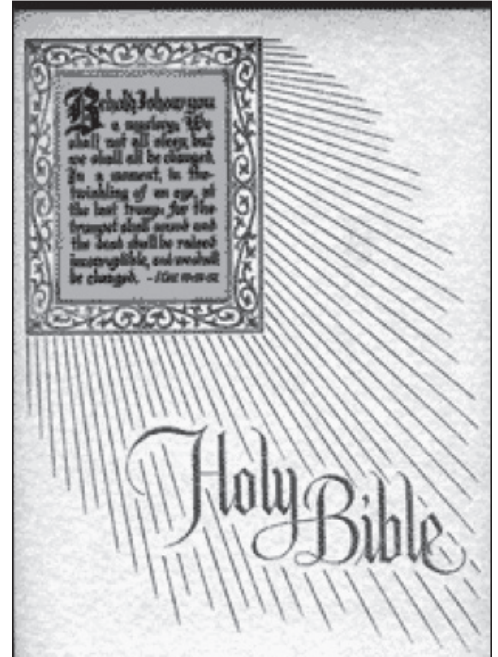
# STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE

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 23

**Bob Thiel, Editor-in-Chief**

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MY country, MY religion and MY God.

We RESENT being told that our opinion, OUR faith, or our religion is wrong. We like to continue to believe what we have been accustomed to accept as true. People hate to admit if they have been wrong.

Yet, in all this maze of societal and religious ‘Babylon,’ SOMEBODY HAS to be wrong!

One of the LEAST UNDERSTOOD principles in all the Bible is that God has purposely allowed this world to be blinded and is letting it go its own way to LEARN VITAL LESSONS during the last six thousand years of human history. In Revelation 12:9, God describes Satan as, “that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD.”

Hard to believe, isn’t it?

Yet – IN MANY PLACES – your Bible shows that this WHOLE WORLD has been completely DECEIVED in spiritual things (John 12:40; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). Remember that a deceived person DOESN’T KNOW that they are deceived. Many believe that they are sincere. But many are SINCERELY WRONG!

Thus, there are two distinct women, representing two differing churches, in the Book of Revelation. One whose offspring keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:17;19:7). While

the other is a false one which commits fornications with the kings of the earth and rides a dragon-like beast (Revelation 17:1-7).

God describes the false church as a fallen woman – a GREAT HARLOT – and MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT.

Because of false teachings and false concepts assumed since childhood and/or learned later in this world, most people are SPIRITUALLY DRUNK – having a distorted outlook – so that they are UNABLE TO SEE SPIRITUAL TRUTHS. Like a DRUNKEN PERSON, they are stupidly SATISFIED in the foggy, hazy, confused spiritual state in which they find themselves.

MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT masquerades around under Christian-sounding names, yet, despite claiming some ties to the Bible, prefers its ways and traditions over scripture.

In the Bible, God warns His people against being affiliated with the future system of Babylon:

2 Babylon ... 4 Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. (Revelation 18:2,4)

Spiritual adultery includes beliefs to what should be compromising and adding pagan practices and the true faith. This was shown in the New Testament and is also

prophesied to be a major problem in the end times (Revelation 17).

The Bible also warns about end times:

13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 Timothy 3:13)

Of course, those involved in false religion, THINK they are all right – on the surface at least. But deep down inside is the haunting realization that SOMETHING IS MISSING – their religion seems EMPTY – God seems UNREAL somehow, and so very, very far away.

Unknowingly, and in most cases sincerely, most of YOU have in the past been deceived by false preaching – which originated and proceeded forth from Satan the Devil through his demon spirits, which inspire and influence the religious system and false ministers of our day!

It is time to WAKE UP to this REALITY!

In these last days, before the second coming of Jesus Christ, you need to KNOW whether or not you are PREPARED TO MEET YOUR GOD! With an open mind, you should be willing to PROVE whether or not you have ever been REALLY CONVERTED.

MISPLACED CONFIDENCE in a FALSE CONVERSION is a GREAT and MORTAL DECEPTION which could very easily cause one to forfeit ETERNAL LIFE! It is such DANGEROUS deception because one's own personal VANITY will, in many cases, prevent one from admitting that HE OR SHE HAS NEVER BEEN CONVERTED!

Are you willing to FACE this possibility? Are you willing to CHANGE if God shows you THROUGH HIS WORD that you have never really been converted before?

God's Word says: "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:9). In plain language, you must have Christ's SPIRIT in you or you are not a Christian – you have NEVER been converted!

A truly converted person is FILLED WITH and LED BY the Holy Spirit of God. God places and lives His very LIFE within us through His Holy Spirit. By this means, we are BEGOTTEN OF HIM as children and thus partake of HIS VERY NATURE! "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, THESE ARE SONS OF

GOD" (Romans 8:14).

Frankly, before conversion, most didn't even know WHAT the Holy Spirit was, what it was supposed to do in your life, and WHAT IS to be the real result of being led by God's Holy Spirit.

In Romans 5:5, God tells us: "the LOVE OF GOD has been poured out in our hearts BY THE HOLY SPIRIT who was given to us." Through His Spirit, God gives us HIS love. Thus we partake of HIS nature – HIS character. And God's character is expressed in the SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES contained in the Ten Commandments – OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAW. "For THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, that we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. And His commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3)

God's Spirit helps us to OBEY Him as our Maker and Ruler.

Furthermore, the apostle Peter was inspired to write of "the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who OBEY Him" (Acts 5:32). It is not given to those who refuse to surrender to God and strive to completely obey.

Real conversion, then, involves a real SURRENDER TO OBEY GOD AND HIS LAWS. In Acts 2:38, Peter was inspired to tell HOW TO BE CONVERTED. He said: 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."

Frankly, most people attending the churches of this world and having been "baptized" by them, never really knew WHAT TO REPENT OF! They didn't know WHAT sin really is.

At the time of baptism in most churches, most non-infant people sincerely intend to "do better" or to "make their peace with God." But since they have not been taught the Bible definition of sin, they completely fail to realize how ROTTEN and SINFUL they have really been!

They don't REALLY REPENT! They aren't broken up about the wretched state of their lives and their own human VANITY and SELFISHNESS, which expresses itself in all of us.

And such people don't immediately begin to STUDY and UNDERSTAND the Bible. They just continue to go along with the customs, the ways and the traditions

of this world. Their lives are not actually CHANGED. They don't come to PERSONALLY KNOW GOD!

Speaking of CONVERTED people, Jesus said:

13 However, when that one has come, even the Spirit of the truth, it will lead you into all truth because it shall not speak from itself, but whatever it shall hear, it shall speak. And it shall disclose to you the things to come. (John 16:13, AFV)

A truly converted person, then, will be guided into NEW TRUTH by God's Spirit. He will come to UNDERSTAND and GRASP Bible prophecy – or THINGS TO COME!

Genuine CONVERSION actually REVOLUTIONIZES a human being's life! It is A RENEWING of one's MIND – one's ATTITUDE – one's CHARACTER!

The converted individual comes to really KNOW God – to constantly STUDY and UNDERSTAND more and more of God's Word – and then is able to PRAY and talk to God in a personal way. The converted, being led by the Spirit, receives constant ANSWERS and is BLESSED, while growing more like Christ every month and year of his/her life!

THE TRUTH IS THAT MOST PROFESSING CHRISTIANS HAVEN'T EVEN BEGUN TO GET READY TO START TO BEGIN ON THE ROAD TO THIS KIND OF CHRISTIAN LIFE!

The Almighty God, Who created our minds and our human nature, repeats twice a warning for us in the book of Proverbs. He warns: "There is a way that SEEMS right to a man, But its end is the WAY OF DEATH" (Proverbs 16:25; 14:12).

It is only human nature to believe that YOUR WAY is right. But God says that the way that SEEMS right to a man ends up in DEATH! Remember that the wages of sin is DEATH (Romans 6:23).

## **Jesus Taught that Many Would Not Understand**

Contrary to the views of a lot of ministers, Jesus said He spoke in parables so that many would not understand what He was saying:

11 And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, 12 so that

'Seeing they may see and not perceive,  
And hearing they may hear and not understand;  
Lest they should turn,  
And their sins be forgiven them.'" (Mark 4:11-12)

Jesus said many would not see. So, notice also the following:

23 Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?"

And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' 26 then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' 27 But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. 29 They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last." (Luke 13:23-30)

So, notice that Jesus was saying that very few would go the right way.

Jesus pictured this same condition when He said:

13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)

That isn't what the world believes, is it?

Probably that isn't what you have always heard and come to assume.

But it's what JESUS SAID!

Now, although God has a plan for all (e.g., Luke 3:6; Isaiah 52:10), God knew that most in this age would be deceived.

When Jesus was asked about the future, the very first event He foretold would come on the world would be – GREAT DECEPTION – climaxing, in our day now just ahead, in GREAT TRIBULATION in Matthew 24:21!

Notice that Jesus warned:

5 “for many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ, and they shall lead many astray,” (Matthew 24:5, Young’s Literal Translation)

How deceived this world has become!

Satan is pictured in the Bible as the god of this world:

3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

Satan has blinded people’s minds so they really do not understand the truth. Instead nearly all people reason around it!

Satan appears, not as a devil, but as a GOD – an angel of LIGHT:

14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)

Satan’s ministers look like GOD’S MINISTERS to most of the world. That is part of the mystery of iniquity – many are deceived and have convinced themselves that they are NOT following Satan, but God when they follow Satan’s ministers. The idea that leaders who often sound nice and have certain public works actually being led by Satan is something most dismiss as absurd.

Although the Bible says, “all Your commandments are righteousness” (Psalms 119:172). Satan’s ministers try to appear righteous, but they really do not obey all that God’s commands!

God has allowed humanity to follow its own way, but does have a plan to deal with sin.

### **Vain Self-Righteousness**

The greatest stumbling block that prevents most

people from accepting the TRUTH and being TRULY CONVERTED is their own VANITY and LUSTS. Many people have grown up in and attended some church or another. And they hate to admit that they have NEVER BEEN CONVERTED! Human nature makes them want to maintain their OWN righteousness.

God has inspired an ENTIRE BOOK in His Word to deal with this common problem of human beings. It is the book of Job – one of the least understood books in all the Bible. One lesson in that book is that God HATES our own human self-righteousness.

Notice Job’s attitude throughout this book! “Far be it from me That I should say you are right; Till I die I will not put away MY INTEGRITY from me. MY RIGHTEOUSNESS I hold fast, and will not let it go. MY HEART SHALL NOT REPROACH ME as long as I live” (Job 27:5-6).

Job again voices his real attitude in Job 31:6: “Let me be weighed on honest scales, THAT GOD MAY KNOW MY INTEGRITY.” Even Job’s carnal friends could sense his own self-righteousness and vanity. “So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous IN HIS OWN EYES” (Job 32:1).

Finally, after dealing PERSONALLY with God and learning about his own INSIGNIFICANCE and utter WEAKNESS and WRETCHEDNESS, Job at last REPENTED. “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But NOW MY EYE SEES YOU. Therefore I ABHOR myself, AND REPENT in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5-6).

But the real question remains: Have you ever come to really ABHOR YOURSELF? Have you truly REPENTED as Job did? Have you TOTALLY SURRENDERED yourself to God and given your very LIFE to Him to use AS HE SEES FIT?

God COMMANDS US to quit justifying the SELF! “Let the wicked forsake HIS WAY, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:7). But perhaps you don’t think you’ve been wicked?

The Almighty God declares: “There is NONE righteous, no, NOT ONE” (Romans 3:10). Again, He states: “for ALL HAVE SINNED and fall short of the glory of God” (verse 23).

Yes, we have ALL BROKEN GOD'S LAW. And professing Christianity is STILL breaking His Law and TRYING TO JUSTIFY DOING SO!

God thunders: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

This means YOU and ME! DON'T apply this to someone else – apply it to YOURSELF!

Some of you reading this lesson think you are already "saved" – when the truth of the matter is that you NEVER have come to the place of TOTAL SURRENDER to God and His ABSOLUTE RULE over your lives! If this includes you, then you have NEVER received of God's Holy Spirit and been begotten as His spiritual son or daughter.

That is WHY you may not have been able to really understand Bible PROPHECY before! That is WHY you never really UNDERSTOOD the great PURPOSE being worked out here below. And that is why God always seemed so far away – so UNREAL.

This lack of God's Spirit is the reason that you were not continually GROWING in grace and in knowledge – and that you have lacked vital scriptural truths so many years of your life.

It is time to AWAKEN and begin REAL CONVERSION!

You should apply these lessons to your own SELF. And you should strive NOT to get your feelings hurt by the correction and the exhortation which is here given in deep love!

Remember that when Jesus was showing His disciples that they had to literally "eat" of Him and His message (John 6:57-58), many got their feelings hurt and drew back. "Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" (John 6:60, see also verse 61) But Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" (John 6:67).

Then Peter gave an answer which has the SAME SIGNIFICANCE today. He said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE" (John 6:68).

Peter and the faithful apostles were willing to humble themselves, not rely on their personal vanity, in order to follow Jesus.

## **Basis of True Education**

IT'S HARD to believe, but it's true – millions have BELIEVED ON Jesus Christ and are NOT "saved."

Jesus warned:

21 Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Matthew 7:21-23)

The truth is that over a billion people actually worship Christ IN VAIN! Your Bible reveals the WHOLE WORLD has been DECEIVED about the true way to salvation! There's a reason why.

A major cause of all this world's unhappiness, sorrows, sufferings, poverty and RELIGIOUS CONFUSION IS WRONG education, and the LACK of true education!

But why? How can this be true in our "enlightened" age?

Simply because the world has thrown away the BASIC TEXTBOOK of true education – the HOLY BIBLE! The world has gotten all mixed up. The world does not realize just WHAT the Bible really IS!

The Bible is the FOUNDATION OF ALL KNOWLEDGE – and the TRUE APPROACH to the acquisition of all discoverable knowledge.

Do you know what is the very TRUNK of the tree of true knowledge?

It is the PURPOSE for the very existence of human life on earth! It is to know the MEANING of life. It is to discern the TRUE values from the false. It is to know THE WAY to peace, happiness, abundant well-being, and ETERNAL LIFE – THE WAY to salvation.

What IS salvation? Is it a place – a geographical location? Is it a changed CONDITION? Is it a change of COMPOSITION? Exactly HOW do we obtain it?

Nowhere but in the BIBLE can one find THIS BASIC NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE! God inspired the Bible to be the very BASIS of all true education.

## True Knowledge Rejected

Many today believe that it is “not Biblical” to say the Gospel of Christ is an EDUCATIONAL message! This has been the common conception – since the so-called “old-fashioned gospel” of the evangelical fundamentalist Protestant denominations was first introduced as the several hundred years ago.

But this so-called “old-fashioned gospel” is NOT the true Gospel Jesus Christ brought to mankind! It is NOT “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Yet millions have SUPPOSED it is! They have supposed that the “Gospel” is a somewhat sentimental, nebulous, ethereal sort of EMOTION.

They SUPPOSE that this “gospel” came out of the Bible! Therefore many ASSUME that the Bible is an impractical book of maudlin sentimentality, utterly unrelated to rational KNOWLEDGE. Thus, the Bible has come to be regarded as outmoded superstition – a book of fables – the writings of an ancient race of Jews ignorantly searching for a national concept of God.

So “thinkers,” WITHOUT thinking, and WITHOUT checking to SEE what the Bible really is, or what it says, have relegated it to the scrap heap of outworn superstition. The “educated” have thrown it out the window, WITHOUT searching to PROVE their biased assumption.

And as the public acceptance of sexual immorality has spread, many “educated” people do not believe that many parts of it are appropriate for 21st century society.

And many of the followers of evangelical Protestantism have supposed that “the Bible was not written to inform one’s mind, but merely to CHANGE MAN’S HEART.” Actually, it is to change both.

Many have accepted a sanctimonious sentimentalism, in which they get to “feel” that they are spiritual, and that they are “saved,” largely SHUTTING UP THEIR MINDS against the rational teachings of the Bible.

Misinformation and miseducation about the Bible and its teachings have resulted in many educators and scientists not taking scripture seriously. Many in this world have ASSUMED that the Bible contains nothing rational – but only senseless, sentimental superstition, entirely irrational!

## A Change of MIND

If the Bible was written to “CHANGE one’s heart” – and indeed it was – how can what is written there change man’s HEART, if it is never understood by the MIND? OBVIOUSLY IT CAN’T!

Just what does the Bible mean when it speaks of one’s “heart”? The word “heart” is used, in this sense, to imply the ATTITUDE OF MIND! The Bible says: “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked ...” (Jeremiah 17:9). It is not referring to the organ that pumps blood inside man’s chest. It is referring to human nature – an attitude, or spirit, or tendency of MIND.

But HOW does God go about CHANGING this deceitful nature – this “heart” – this attitude of MIND in humans?

WHAT is the Gospel Message for doing that – for giving “salvation”?

Jesus began His Gospel Ministry and teaching, saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. REPENT, and BELIEVE in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). He said there are two conditions WE must perform – REPENTANCE AND BELIEF!

On the great day of Pentecost when Peter had received God’s Holy Spirit, he explained the WAY of salvation: “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” (Acts 2:38).

Here again we find two conditions – REPENTANCE and BELIEF. To “be baptized” is the outward ceremony of the INWARD BELIEVING. Example: the eunuch said to Philip, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “If you BELIEVE with all your heart, you may” (Acts 8:36-37).

Yes, God requires TWO conditions which WE must do. Then GOD does the “saving” – the converting of our minds by His Spirit which He will give us upon fulfilling these conditions. His Holy Spirit will then LEAD US along the way to salvation. It will impart to us the faith, love and power necessary to OVERCOME and CONTROL the downward pulls of our sinful human nature. This is how God changes or converts our MINDS!

## Deceived Teachers and the Bible

Deceived teachers will sometimes cite the Bible.

Satan did so with Jesus (see 4th chapter of Matthew), but he twisted the scriptures to pervert their meaning.

Teachers following his ilk do so today.

For example, some will quote Acts 16:31 which says:

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.

Now that text means what it says. But there are two kinds of BELIEVING - the living faith that brings salvation, and a dead “no works” faith that produces only DEATH!

But WHY do certain Protestant leaders, in their tracts and their sermons, never quote what the Savior himself said in answer to the question about eternal life? WHY?

Jesus was asked: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 18:18.)

Some might try to tell you that the SAVIOR himself did not know, or teach, the way of SALVATION - He was teaching Old Testament religion. Well, He was asked HOW to gain ETERNAL LIFE. Is that salvation? It certainly is! Old Testament religion teaching lasted until John – not until the cross – not until “Pentecost.” Just UNTIL JOHN (Luke 16:16). Jesus preached the SAME gospel he commanded his disciples to teach ALL nations – gentiles included-the same gospel Paul preached to gentiles. He preached only the NEW Testament gospel. He revealed the WAY OF SALVATION.

Here is how Jesus answered that:

“IF thou wilt enter into LIFE, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:17, KJV)

And He then enumerated enough of the Ten Commandments to show it was this particular law that we are to strive to obey AS A CONDITION to receiving eternal life as God’s GIFT. Jesus said “IF” – (THERE WAS A CONDITION) – “IF” we are to be saved, by God’s grace, WE MUST KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS!

God lays down his own terms and conditions. His FREE GIFT is conditional – you get it ONLY if you “keep the commandments.”

You can’t EARN it. God GIVES it – but only to those

who “KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS.” God will not GIVE you eternal life in sin. And what is Sin? “SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW” (I John 3:4, KJV) or as the NKJV says “sin is lawlessness.”

Some who pervert God’s truth insist Jesus did not name ALL of the Ten Commandments in the above scripture. Sin is the transgression of THE LAW. It is a COMPLETE LAW. He named enough of its points to designate WHICH LAW he was talking about. And James says that law has “POINTS” – and, if we break any ONE of the 10 points of the Ten Commandments, We BREAK THE LAW, and are sinners (James 2:8-11).

The very same day the Holy Spirit came – the very day the NEW TESTAMENT Church commenced – thousands, hearing the inspired Peter’s sermon, which struck straight to their heart, asked, “What shall we do?” – yes, WHAT SHALL WE DO TO BE SAVED?

The inspired answer was:

38 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. (Acts. 2:38)

Jesus said, “REPENT and BELIEVE IN THE GOSPEL” (Mark 1:14). We must BELIEVE not only in Jesus as Savior, but we must also believe THE GOSPEL He brought and preached – the Gospel of the Kingdom of God – the AUTHORITY of God and the WORD of God over our lives – a message not properly preached today the world’s churches!

Notice the following regarding Jesus:

9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. (Hebrews 5:9-10)

The New Testament clearly ties salvation in with obedience.

After His resurrection, in His parting instructions to his disciples for preaching the way of salvation, Jesus said:

46 Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:46-48)

This is the gospel for ALL NATIONS!

But what must we repent of? WHAT is SIN? Do you realize that VERY FEW people know? Paul would not have known what was sin, except by the law. But what law? The very law which says: “You shall not covet” (Romans 7:7). That law Paul was referring to was the Ten Commandments.

But how does one come to repent? What does the word “repent” mean?

The dictionary definition of repent is: “To CHANGE one’s MIND.” And the Bible says “godly sorrow produces repentance” (2 Corinthians 7:10). This is done in and by the MIND!

And how does one BELIEVE, in order to be “saved”? Again, one must believe with the MIND.

## Salvation Is Education

The very last words of the apostle Peter’s letters were: “but grow in grace, and in the KNOWLEDGE of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18, KJV).

Now notice the FOUNDATION of knowledge – the STARTING APPROACH to wisdom: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good UNDERSTANDING have all those who do His commandments” (Psalm 111:10).

You can UNDERSTAND and gain KNOWLEDGE only with the MIND!

Now what does STUDY mean? Do we “study” with our minds – or our hearts? We find this instruction and teaching: “STUDY to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV). That is a command! One can STUDY, and RIGHTLY DIVIDE the Word of God ONLY WITH ONE’S MIND WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKING ON THE HEART!

God teaches – yes, COMMANDS! – that the Scriptures are to be studied – with the mind. Otherwise, how could we know God’s will for us? So we find this command: “Therefore do not be unwise, but UNDERSTAND what the WILL of the Lord is.” (Ephesians 5:17)

What a tragedy that MILLIONS have been deceived into a FALSE “salvation” and SHUTTING UP THE MIND to God’s real truth, while accepting the counterfeit of a sentimental “feeling” of piety.

What, then, IS the Holy Bible?

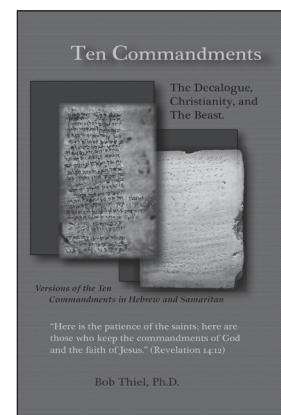
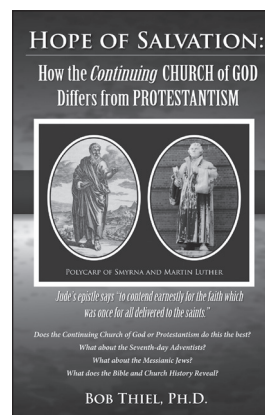
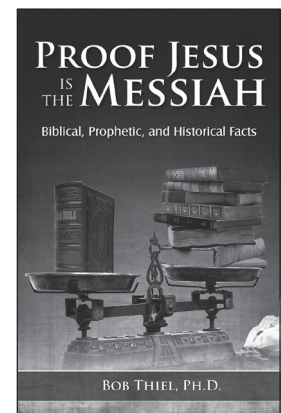
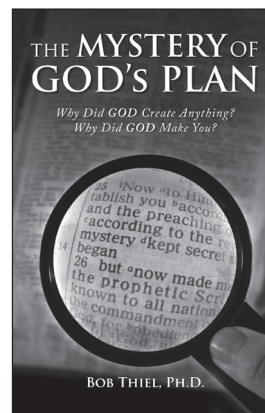
It is the revelation of the BASIC all-important knowledge which is otherwise utterly inaccessible to the MIND of man – the knowledge of WHAT man is; of WHY man is; of the true values; of THE WAY to peace, happiness, abundant wellbeing, success, and to ETERNAL LIFE.

It is the FOUNDATION OF ALL KNOWLEDGE – scientific, physical, and SPIRITUAL. No one can be properly EDUCATED except by and through it. No one can know the way to ETERNAL LIFE, except by what the Bible contains. And that is exactly what we will study with this lesson.

*This lesson is to be continued in the next edition of this magazine.*

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# Pentecost, God's Spirit, Firstfruits, and God's Plan

By Bob Thiel

In 2023, the Day of Pentecost is observed from sunset May 27th through sunset May 28th.

After Jesus' death, the original apostles met and observed Pentecost (Acts 2) and the Holy Spirit was given to them. That is considered by almost all Christian-professing groups to be the beginning of the Christian Church.

This article will look at what the Bible, early and later Greco-Roman Catholic sources, and also Church of God sources to discover what is taught about the Day of Pentecost.

## The Bible

Towards the start of His ministry, Jesus spoke on the "day of the sabbaths" (Luke 4:16), often then called the Feast of Weeks, that we tend to now call Pentecost. That can be confirmed by looking at the actual Greek term, often simply mistranslated there as "Sabbath" singular. The actual word (not the Strong's grouping of like words), σαββάτων, is plural. The passage is literally translated as follows:

16 And He came into Nazareth where He was brought up. And according to His custom, He went in on the days of the sabbaths, into the synagogue, and stood up to read. (Green JP, Sr. Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, third edition. Baker Books, 2002 printing, p. 187)

So, this helps to show that one could keep Pentecost, as Jesus did, in a location other than Jerusalem (He also seemed to keep another holy day in Galilee in Luke 6:1; see Green, p. 194).

Just before Jesus left the earth, He warned His disciples to wait in Jerusalem to receive the power of the Holy



Artist Depiction of Pentecost with Holy Spirit Descending like Tongues of Fire (Photo by Cadetgray)

Spirit:

4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:4-5)

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. 14 These all continued with

one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. (Acts 1:12-14)

26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:26)

Notice what else the Bible teaches:

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

Notice that the emphasis is on "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come." The Bible is making it clear that the events that follow were directly related to the fact that the Day of Pentecost had fully come. And,

it happened to the disciples because they were all observing it together.

Here is what happened next:

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. 7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs — we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." 12 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"

13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. 15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of

the great and awesome day of the Lord. 21 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.'

22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know — 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. 25 For David says concerning Him:

'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'

29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. 34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'"

36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

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.”

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:2-47)

They received some of the power of Holy Spirit. And this is considered to be the start of the Christian church by the Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, most Protestant, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Church of God groups. But, note, that the Holy Spirit was given at a certain time, the same time that many of the Jews observed Pentecost, and that Jesus’ disciples were still observing it.

## **Spiritual Gifts to Do God’s Work are Associated with the Holy Spirit**

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are part of what is needed to do the work of God.

Jesus taught:

17 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” 19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached

everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen. (Mark 16:17-20)

Christians really need to pray fervently for God to help us and teach us the lessons we need to learn, and then God may give more of the “accompanying signs” of which Jesus spoke. The Bible also says that we are told to earnestly desire the gifts of the Holy Spirit:

6 There are different types of work to do, but the same God produces every gift in every person. 7 The evidence of the Spirit’s presence is given to each person for the common good of everyone. 8 The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom. The same Spirit gives another person the ability to speak with knowledge. 9 To another person the same Spirit gives [courageous] faith. To another person the same Spirit gives the ability to heal. 10 Another can work miracles. Another can speak what God has revealed. Another can tell the difference between spirits. Another can speak in different kinds of languages. Another can interpret languages. 11 There is only one Spirit who does all these things by giving what God wants to give to each person.

12 For example, the body is one unit and yet has many parts. As all the parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Whether we are Jewish or Greek, slave or free, God gave all of us one Spirit to drink.

14 As you know, the human body is not made up of only one part, but of many parts. 15 Suppose a foot says, “I’m not a hand, so I’m not part of the body!” Would that mean it’s no longer part of the body? 16 Or suppose an ear says, “I’m not an eye, so I’m not a part of the body!” Would that mean it’s no longer part of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how could it smell? 18 So God put each and every part of the body together as he wanted it...

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets?

Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:6-11,27-31, God's Word Translation)

We in the Continuing Church of God do believe that God will again grant more of the gifts of the Spirit. However, we do not believe that what is commonly reported amongst those in the so-called "Pentecostal movement" are following the pattern set forth in the New Testament.

## The Old Testament

Since the Holy Spirit was given on the Day of Pentecost, based upon the date and practices that God gave the children of Israel in the Old Testament, it is logical to conclude that the Old Testament can give us some insight into its meaning.

First of all, the term Pentecost is a Greek term meaning 50th. That term is derived from the following Hebrew description of calculating the date:

15 And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. 16 Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. (Leviticus 23:15-16)

The Day of Pentecost has several names, and because of that, some have been confused about it. Its other names in the Bible include, the Feast of Harvest, the Feast of Weeks and the day of firstfruits:

The use of the term "firstfruits" suggests a second harvest. And actually, this too is pointed out in the Old Testament:

... the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field. (Exodus 23:16)

And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end. (Exodus 34:22)

Also on the day of the firstfruits, when you bring a new grain offering to the LORD at your Feast of Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation. (Numbers 28:26)

While some Protestant commentators (e.g., Radmacher E.D. ed. The Nelson Study Bible. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1997, p. 213) refer to the wave sheaf offering as the feast of firstfruits, this is a misnomer. While "a sheaf of firstfruits" was offered then (Leviticus 23:10), as shown above, the Bible refers to the Feast of Weeks as the time of firstfruits (not simply one sheaf). And, as shown below, it refers to the time of counting fifty as being associated with firstfruits:

16 Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. 17 You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the LORD. (Leviticus 23:16-17)

How does the term firstfruits help us understand this day?

The Feast of Pentecost or Feast of Firstfruits (Exodus 34:22) reminds us that God is now calling only a small "firstfruits" spiritual harvest, with the Last Great Day picturing a greater harvest later.

This later harvest is pictured by later Holy Days, that most who profess Christ no longer observe.

Those who keep all the Holy Days, including Pentecost, generally have a better understanding of what they mean and what God intended by them, than those that do not.

## The New Testament Helps Explain the Old Testament

The New Testament also does discuss some concepts associated with firstfruits.

Paul also wrote the following:

23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit. (Romans 8:23)

Recall that it was the Holy Spirit that was first given on the Day of Pentecost. And that was a type of the firstfruits of the Spirit.

Who are the firstfruits?

4 These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. 5 These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. (Revelation 14:4-5)

In the Old Testament, God said:

10 "I found Israel Like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers As the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season. But they went to Baal Peor..." (Hosea 9:10)

So originally, physical Israel was like the firstfruits on the branches of a fig tree, but they were unfaithful. In the New Testament, Paul alludes to this and Christians when he wrote:

16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. (Romans 11:16-21)

So while physical Israel was intended to be firstfruits, it was replaced by Christians as the firstfruits. And those firstfruits began on Pentecost.

But what about Jesus? Wasn't He a type of firstfruits?

Yes, He certainly was. Paul notes:

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)

Christ is the fulfillment of the wave sheaf offering in Leviticus 23:10. He is the sheaf of firstfruits. He also fulfilled that role when He ascended into heaven on the Sunday (the wave sheaf offering was on a Sunday) after He was resurrected (John 20:1,17). But neither He nor His true followers observed what is now called Easter.

Also, James notes that Jesus brought us forth to also be a type of firstfruit:

18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. (James 1:18)

So while Jesus was the original firstfruit to represent the wave sheaf offering, true Christians are a kind of firstfruits, represented by the Day of Pentecost. "Firstfruits" mean that only a few will make it in this age – but they also imply that there will be a greater harvest – a time where all who never had an opportunity for salvation will later have an opportunity.

Notice again some of what Peter stated on Pentecost:

29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. (Acts 2:29-33)

Notice that Peter, on Pentecost, referred to Jesus as fruit and that He was raised. Pentecost shows that God blesses this small harvest by granting His Holy Spirit so that we can overcome, do His work and grow spiritually even though living in "this present evil age" (Galatians 1:4).

Now Jesus was not only the first of the firstfruits, He was also the firstborn among many brethren:

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:29).

5 Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead. (Revelation 1:5).

Since Jesus is the firstborn, this certainly implies that there will become others who are to be like Him. Thus, becoming like Jesus Christ is also part of the message of Pentecost. Of course the idea of becoming like Christ is taught throughout the Bible and is not limited to

Pentecost. Notice what John wrote:

32 ...we shall be like Him. (1 John 3:2)

## **Pentecost was Observed Later in the New Testament**

The Feast of Pentecost was kept by Christians after the initial one, but with no mention of “speaking in tongues.”

The Apostle Paul continued to keep Pentecost decades after the Pentecost mentioned in the second chapter of the Book of Acts. Notice what he wrote, about 56 A.D.:

8 For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits. But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. (1 Corinthians 16:8)

This shows that Paul knew when Pentecost was, that he felt that the Corinthians must know when Pentecost was, and that the Ephesians would have known when Pentecost was. Thus, it apparently was being observed by Paul and the Gentiles in Ephesus and Corinth.

In another year, the Apostle Paul also wished to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost, around 60 A.D.:

16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 20:16)

Thus, Christians in Jerusalem were still observing Pentecost and Paul was observing it too. Otherwise, there would be no obvious reason why Paul wanted to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

This was clearly understood by second century writers such as Irenaeus who wrote (circa 180):

Paul taught with simplicity what he knew, not only to those who were [employed] with him, but to those that heard him, he does himself make manifest. For when the bishops and presbyters who came from Ephesus and the other cities adjoining had assembled in Miletus, since he was himself hastening to Jerusalem to observe Pentecost. (Irenaeus. *Adversus haereses*, Book III, Chapter 14, Verse 2). Excerpted from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume I. Edited by Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885)

There is a partially questionable book called *The Life of Polycarp*. This book, which seems to somewhat be based on some historical truths in the second century, was changed – at least slightly – in the fourth century. *The Life of Polycarp* contains some possibly helpful information about Paul, Polycarp, and observing Pentecost:

In the days of unleavened bread Paul, coming down from Galatia, arrived in Asia, considering the repose among the faithful in Smyrna to be a great refreshment in Christ Jesus after his severe toil, and intending afterwards to depart to Jerusalem. So in Smyrna he went to visit Strataeas, who had been his hearer in Pamphylia, being a son of Eunice the daughter of Lois. These are they of whom he makes mention when writing to Timothy, saying; Of the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and in thy mother Eunice; whence we find that Strataeas was a brother of Timothy. Paul then, entering his house and gathering together the faithful there, speaks to them concerning the Passover and the Pentecost, reminding them of the New Covenant, the offering of bread and the cup; how that they ought most assuredly to celebrate it during the days of unleavened bread, but to hold fast the new mystery of the Passion and Resurrection. For here the Apostle plainly teaches that we ought neither to keep it outside the season of unleavened bread, as the heretics do, especially the Phrygians ... but named the days of unleavened bread, the Passover, and the Pentecost, thus ratifying the Gospel. (Pionius. *Life of Polycarp*, Chapter 2. Translated by J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 3.2, 1889, pp. 488-506)

Polycarp, himself, was a faithful church leader who was apparently a Gentile.

## **Greco-Roman Catholic Teachings**

The ancient Greco-Roman Catholic writer Irenaeus knew that Pentecost in the Book of Acts was about firstfruits, as he wrote (circa 180):

This Spirit did David ask for the human race, saying, “And stablish me with Thine all-governing Spirit;” who also, as Luke says, descended at the day of Pentecost upon the disciples after the Lord’s ascension, having power to admit all nations to the entrance of life, and to the opening

of the new covenant; from whence also, with one accord in all languages, they uttered praise to God, the Spirit bringing distant tribes to unity, and offering to the Father the first-fruits of all nations. (Irenaeus. *Adversus haereses*, Book III, Chapter 17, Verse 2. Excerpted from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume I. Edited by Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885. Online Edition Copyright © 2004 by K. Knight)

The Catholic Encyclopedia states this about Pentecost:

Pentecost ...The term, adopted from the Greek-speaking Jews (Tob. 2:1; II Mac. 12:32; Josephus, "Ant.", III, x, 6; etc.) alludes to the fact that the feast, known in the Old Testament as "the feast of harvest of the firstfruits" (Exodus 23:16), "the feast of weeks" (Exodus 24:22; Deuteronomy 16:10; II Paralipomenon 8:13), the "day of firstfruits" (Numbers 28:26), and called by later Jews 'asereth or 'asartha (solemn assembly, and probably "closing festival", Pentecost being the closing festival of the harvest and of the Paschal season). (Souvay C.L. Transcribed by Mark E. Maier. Pentecost (Jewish Feast) The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume XI. Copyright © 1911 by Robert Appleton Company. Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by Kevin Knight. Nihil Obstat, February 1, 1911. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York)

Pentecost (Whitsunday) A feast of the universal Church which commemorates the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ, on the ancient Jewish festival called the "feast of weeks" or Pentecost (Exodus 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:10). Whitsunday is so called from the white garments which were worn by those who were baptised during the vigil; Pentecost ("Pfingsten" in German), is the Greek for "the fiftieth"...

Whitsunday, as a Christian feast, dates back to the first century ... That Whitsunday belongs to the Apostolic times is stated in the seventh of the (interpolated) fragments attributed to St. Irenaeus. In Tertullian (*De bapt.*, xix) the festival appears as already well established. (Holweck F.G. Transcribed by Wm Stuart French, Jr. Pentecost (Whitsunday). The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume XV. Copyright © 1912 by Robert

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The Roman Catholic supporting historian, Tertullian in the late second century/early third century, wrote:

Pentecost is a most joyous space for conferring baptisms; wherein, too, the resurrection of the Lord was repeatedly proved among the disciples, and the hope of the advent of the Lord indirectly pointed to, in that, at that time, when He had been received back into the heavens, the angels told the apostles that "He would so come, as He had withal ascended into the heavens;" at Pentecost, of course. But, moreover, when Jeremiah says, "And I will gather them together from the extremities of the land in the feast-day," he signifies the day of the Passover and of Pentecost, which is properly a "feast-day". (Tertullian. *On Baptism*, Chapter 19. Translated by the S. Thelwall. Excerpted from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 3. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885. Online Edition Copyright © 2004 by K. Knight)

In the early third century, the Greco Catholic theologian Origen listed the following as being celebrated:

If it be objected to us on this subject that we ourselves are accustomed to observe certain days, as for example the Lord's day, the Preparation, the Passover, or Pentecost ... And, finally, he who can truly say, "We are risen with Christ," and "He has exalted us, and made us to sit with Him in heavenly places in Christ," is always living in the season of Pentecost. (Origen. *Contra Celsus*, Book VIII, Chapter XXII. Excerpted from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 4. Edited by Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885)

In the fourth century, Greco-Roman Catholic historian and Bishop Eusebius wrote:

All these events occurred during a most important festival, I mean the august and holy solemnity of Pentecost, which is distinguished by a period of seven weeks, and crowned with that one day on which the holy Scriptures attest the reception of our common Saviour into heaven, and the descent of the Holy Spirit among men.

In the course of this feast the emperor received the privileges I have described; and on the last day of all, which one might justly call the feast of feasts. (Eusebius of Caesaria. The life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine [with the oration of Constantine to the assembly of saints and the oration of Eusebius in praise of Constantine], Chapter LXIV. 1845, p. 227)

Although it was not called Whitsunday then (and should not be now), it is clearly documented that those who professed Christ in the first, second, third, and fourth centuries celebrated the Feast of Pentecost.

Furthermore, notice what the Eastern Orthodox Archbishop of Constantinople John Chrysostom wrote about it in the fourth century:

When, it says, the day of Pentecost was fully come: that is, when at the Pentecost, while about it, in short. For it was essential that the present events likewise should take place during the feast, that those who had witnessed the crucifixion of Christ, might also behold these ... And, it says, there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men. The fact of their dwelling there was a sign of piety: that being of so many nations they should have left country, and home, and relations, and be abiding there...for it was Pentecost. (Chrysostom J. The homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople: on the Acts of the Apostles, Volume I, Homily IV. John Henry Parker, 1851. Original from Harvard University. Digitized, Apr 12, 2008, pp. 53, 55, 56)

So, he admitted that after the resurrection, the faithful needed to be present at what was then considered to be a "Jewish feast."

Notice what else John Chrysostom wrote:

But why did the Holy Ghost come to them, not while Christ was present, nor even immediately after His departure, but, whereas Christ ascended on the fortieth day, the Spirit descended when the day of Pentecost, that is, the fiftieth, was fully come? And how was it, if the Spirit had not yet "" come, that He said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost? In order, to render them capable and meet for the reception of Him. (Chrysostom J. The homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople: on the Acts of the Apostles, Volume I, Homily I. John Henry Parker, 1851.

Original from Harvard University. Digitized, Apr 12, 2008, p. 11)

Well, a better and more obvious answer to why then, is that the Holy Days are part of God's plan of salvation, the apostles followed Jesus' example to keep them, and Pentecost was the time God planned to pour out His Spirit. The disciples obviously did not feel that the Holy Days were done away with after Jesus' resurrection or they would not have been gathered together observing it.

To some degree, the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant churches all celebrate Passover (though most refer to it as Easter and consider it a resurrection holiday) and Pentecost, which were originally Holy Days that the children of Israel observed (and which were still observed by the early true Christian church). But they do not seem to feel that it is a continuation of the Holy Days in Leviticus 23, they seem to act like it has nothing to do with them (other than the date).

Although he does not tie the following statement into a discussion of Pentecost, notice what Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (who is now "Pope Emeritus") wrote:

Man can become God, not by making himself God, but by allowing himself to be made 'Son'.

Since Jesus is the first of the firstfruits, and the Day of Pentecost shows that we are also to become firstfruits, the observance of the biblical Pentecost helps picture that God the Father is calling true Christians to truly be His sons. We are to be in the family of God.

## Observed on Sunday

The reader will notice that the apostles in the New Testament, Roman Catholic Church, and the Continuing Church of God observe Pentecost on a Sunday. This has to do with how the Old Testament says to calculate it--by counting 50:

15 And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. 16 Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. (Leviticus 23:15-16)

By counting starting the day after the Saturday Sabbath, fifty days always ends up on a Sunday.

But what about the Jews? Do they not keep Pentecost



on Sivan 6 no matter what day of the week it falls? Well, there were two schools of thought on this, and some did keep and advocate Sunday as the Jewish Encyclopedia reports:

“The Morrow After Sabbath.” Regarding the Biblical commandment to offer the ‘omer “on the morrow after the Sabbath” = (ib. verse 11), the Rabbis maintained that “Sabbath” here means simply a day of rest and refers to Passover. The Sadducees (Boethusians) disputed this interpretation, contending that “Sabbath” meant “Saturday.” Accordingly they would transfer the count of “seven weeks” from the morrow of the first Saturday in Passover, so that Pentecost would always fall on Sunday. The Boethusians advanced the argument “because Moses, as a friend of the Israelites, wished to give them an extended holy day by annexing Pentecost to the Sabbath.” Johanan then turned to his disciples and pointed out that the Law purposely fixed the interval of fifty days in order to explain that the seven weeks, nominally, do not necessarily begin from Sunday (Men. 65a, b). (Pentecost. The Jewish Encyclopedia of 1906. ©2002-2011, JewishEncyclopedia.com)

Sadly, most now follow improper traditions and not the Hebrew scriptures. Not only did Jesus condemn the Jewish leaders of His day for relying more on tradition than the commands of God, Jesus observed Passover on the evening before most Jews did in His day (and do today).

Perhaps it should be mentioned that throughout history, there have been Jews who have celebrated the biblical Holy Days on the days the Hebrew scriptures specify – he Karaites are one such example (Laying down the (Oral) law. Jerusalem Post. May 22, 2007)

Perhaps that one of the reasons that Acts 2:1 states that the Day of Pentecost had fully come this was because it was observed on the biblically correct counted date and not have the date that Jews who preferred a date from oral tradition used (Jesus also kept Passover on a different date than most Jews do also).

Anyway, notice that even within Judaism, those who rely on oral tradition above scriptures make many errors.

## Conclusion

In the Old Testament, the Feast of Weeks, involving

firstfruits, was kept 50 days after the Sabbath after Passover. Thus, it was kept on a day commonly now referred to as Sunday.

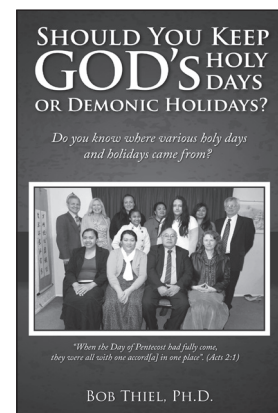
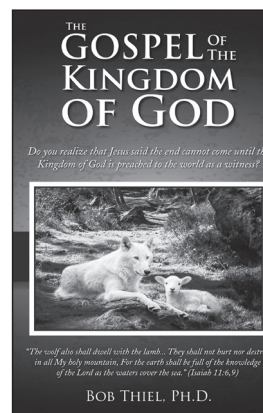
After the death of Christ, the apostles gathered together on that date. And at a precise time on that date, the Holy Spirit was poured out to provide Christians access to God as a kind of firstfruits. Jesus was the first of these firstfruits and Christians who are called in this age are also to be firstfruits as He is (those called later are also to be as Jesus is, but simply will not be firstfruits).

One of the important lessons of Pentecost is the concept of “firstfruits” – that God is only calling out a small number of people – the “firstfruits” – in this age – but that others will be called later. Another is that it takes God’s Spirit to be a real Christian and accomplish what God wants accomplished.

The Day of Pentecost was kept by those in New Testament times, as well as by Christians ever since. But, for those who truly understand the meaning from the Bible, Pentecost pictures more than just the start of the New Testament church. It shows that those now being called are a type of firstfruit, that they are to be like Jesus Christ, that God’s Spirit is needed to do His will, and that this Holy Day shows part of the plan of God to save nearly all of humankind.

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# A KEY TO ABUNDANT LIVING: Husbands – Love Your Wives



The following was written by the late Selmer Hegvold and published in the old Good News magazine by the old Radio Church of God (a group that no longer exists) in March 1963 — the copyright was not renewed and so this article is in the public domain.

*The father of eight children, a husband for twenty-one years, and an Elder in God's Church, Selmer Hegvold writes with both concern and authority!*

**L**OVE not VITAL! So says the chairman of an Irish marriage guidance council, Wilfred Brennan, in a declaration before a Church of Ireland group recently. This "authority" on marriage on the Isle of Eire proceeded to say, "Romantic love is not essential for a good marriage; neither are wealth and education. What counts most are loyalty and having a place of one's own."

However, the absolute AUTHORITY on love, marriage and happiness charged, "Husbands, LOVE your wives!" (Eph. 5:25).

Hollywood and the TV writers say your marriage cannot be happy without the real bond of love. Yet, do they know the way to a full, rich and abundant life? What is the right and the wrong of modern marriage? Should you, the husband, fabricate the movieland type of romantic aura around all of your daily relationship with your wife? Or should you be the strong, silent-type mate who cows your wife into a submissive, slave-like obedience to your every whim?

What is the happy balance for your home life? Do you know?

## **World's Education — Not the Answer!**

A true Christian has proved God exists; that the Bible is the inspired Word of God; that God is working out a purpose here below! He looks to the Bible as the BLUEPRINT for working out that purpose. He yields willingly and wholeheartedly to the will of this SUPREME GOD! Modern educators do not believe in God!!! Hence, modern education is not the answer!

Evolution denies God! Evolution is the basis of the world's educational institutions! It is IMPOSSIBLE for evolutionists to understand marriage! The vast majority of the teachers, doctors, psychiatrists, and marriage counselors are God-denying evolutionists. This is society! You — and the people about you — are the product of such educational doctrines. Your marriage is at stake!

Further than this — and more shockingly realistic is the terrifically unbelievable impact of another medium of false education which has engulfed you! Nearly every billboard, every display window and every paper or magazine plays up — most attractively — the romantic angle in advertising. "This," they say, "is the way to real romance — to ecstatic LOVE!" The universal understanding of romance stems

straight out of the motion picture production centers of the world!!

TV and the movies, in vivid motion — and color — realistically depict romantic love! You live and thrill vicariously in a never-never-land of make-believe! Are these writers wise to the meaning of love?

## Here in God's Church

Details of tragic divorce and remarriage problems and wretched marriages have consumed literally thousands of hours of painful counseling. Innumerable counselings among you brethren have brought to light the serious impact that false indoctrination and satanic deception has had on the very Work of God.

It is heart-rending to have to witness at close hand the desperate struggle many are forced to go through to salvage a union that has degenerated into abject misery. A great part of the ministry is taken up with marriage counseling and family relations and many are the nights that have been spent bringing husband and wife to mutually see their responsibilities and their faults. These are the problems that erupt into the lap of local pastors. Yet how many others lack the nerve to air their grievances, and continue on in a hopeless mire of animosities and disagreements? The evidence in lack of spiritual fruits, the deplorable lack of drive to accomplish prayer and study indicates how widespread this problem really is.

Too often God's ministers are called in only as a LAST RESORT — frequently too late to effect a beneficial reversal of trend. Grief and heartache are tragic in any individual, but the most unfortunate recipients of adult mistakes in marriage are the children. Aside from the dread, and sense of insecurity these little ones suffer, is the long-range result of disrespect for authority and a totally warped personality. These are life-long blights that remain to plague society.

Today many of our own college students are struggling to overcome these scars in their personalities, the product of upside down or strained family relations. With God's merciful help it can be done. But how much better it would be if our homes, our families could recognize early the symptoms of gross misunderstandings? How much more effective servants of God will your children become if they have been reared in an atmosphere of real love and companionship?

Recognition, NOW, of the wrong concepts of love, of marriage, and of basic rights can change enormously your concept of God's purpose for you in the days ahead.

Let's clear our hearts and minds of prejudices and false concepts and understand!

## Is Romance, Love?

Publicity agents splash colorful pictures and articles across the pages of magazines and newspapers with full details of the private lives of filmland celebrities. These, they say, are blissfully happy marriages. Time disproves the fallacy of such high-sounding claims! In time, pictures of these same "happy couples" appear in the same news media together with lurid stories of marital spats — of divorce battles — and in some, not too rare cases — of murder and suicide!!

Does movieland have the answer? Is romance REAL love? What is romance?

Webster defines "romance": "1. A species of tale ... 2. Any fictitious and wonderful tale ... 3. A romantically adventurous act or experience. 4. A dreamy, imaginative habit of mind tending to dwell on the picturesquely unusual as a girl full of romance. 5. A fictitious tale; a falsehood."

Had you realized?

Is this LOVE? "An adventurous act or experience"? "A fictitious tale" or "falsehood"? Is your relationship with your wife to be based on that concept? Most are! Is yours?

## What Is Love?

Here is the question that should be in the minds of all who contemplate marriage. Few really know. Because so few know, trouble lies ahead!

Satan has a false concept of love! He is confused and he has confused and darkened human minds! The present generation is the most confused of any generation that has ever existed!!

Satan, the Deceiver, has been at work! (Revelation 12:9).

One beautiful movie actress, declared to be an authority on marriage and men (after three marriages in twenty years), in effect admitted that "being a movie star has nothing to do with ... knowing how to act or being a happy, fulfilled person!"

She has passionately portrayed, in a totally false light in movie after movie, her version of love! She, and others like her, have tutored you in the art of romance — not LOVE! The result has been false indoctrination! Look at the fruits — three marriages on the rocks!! "By their fruits you shall know them" (Matthew 7:20).

God warns, "They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14).

What is love?

Webster defines "love":

"A feeling of strong personal attachment induced by sympathetic understanding, or by ties of kinship; ardent affection."

Only deep concern and desire to help and protect, to nourish and care for another individual could fulfill that definition.

God says of love, "Perfect love casteth out fear" (I John 4:18) and, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:8) and again, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (I John 5:3).

Paul was a man of God, full of wisdom and authority. He said, "This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience — it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive; it is neither anxious to impress, nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance." Could these be the words your wife would speak to others concerning your love toward her?

"Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy. It does not compile statistics of evil, or gloat over the wickedness of other people" (I Corinthians 13:4-8, Phillips translation).

Can you truthfully say you meet these requirements? Do you have this LOVE — not the pseudo-romantic love — for your wife?

## **Your Responsibility!**

Marriage is a stern responsibility. A famous marriage counselor in New York City has stated, "The greatest need for marriage preparation today is due largely to our changed cultural attitudes."

Yes! Cultural attitudes certainly have undergone a drastic change in just less than one-half century!

Woman suffrage is almost universal. Woman has been elevated by society to the level of equality with man. This has been man's, not God's doing! This is called culture! God has a name for it — ABOMINATION!!

God certainly does hold the women responsible, and they will have to answer for the results — and are presently doing so!

At the same time God holds you responsible! You have failed your office as a husband! Untold suffering, great perversions and inequalities have resulted. Women have supposedly freed themselves from untenable (even sadistic) shackles as a direct result of man's failure. Yet

they have not freed themselves — but only left themselves more vulnerable to heartache and distress than before! All have become confused! "The way that seemeth right" (Proverbs 14:12) is the wrong — the confused — way!

Responsibility lies heavily upon you! Are you a man? Are you helping your wife to be a woman? The masculine, natural leadership from creation — faithfully carrying out God's purpose here below — would have made it unnecessary for womankind to entertain any thought of usurping man's place in their relationship. You as a husband have slipped from that right pattern established by Christ!

The children of God make up the Church of God. Christ loves each of these children more than any human in the Church can. This is not a romantic love! This is all-fulfilling love! — outgoing, cherishing, never selfish. However, Christ's Work has always been far more than just that of providing love and sustenance for His Church. He rules the universe! He has multiple tasks! Nevertheless, He has never forsaken one in favor of the other. He has not forsaken His children! Christ has perfect balance in everything. You need that balance desperately!

## **Christ's Instructions**

Your first requirement in order to qualify for salvation is to care for those of your own house. Many have just not comprehended!

Have you qualified for the office of a bishop? Whether or not you are ever ordained to the office — you should be qualifying now!

Paul, under inspiration, wrote, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (Try substituting the pronoun I for bishop!) "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous." These are only common-sense requirements of basic Christian character.

"One that ruleth well his own house." One who directs, by leading or showing the way. Not a bullying, suppressive iron on those under you! — but in keeping with all of the precepts of God.

"Having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." This requires maturity; it requires LOVE! "Moreover he must have a good report of them which

are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

The deacons too! “Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (1 Timothy 3:1-9).

Bishop, deacon or husband; it ALL applies to YOU!! The principles of these requirements are binding on YOU in order for you to qualify for the Kingdom of God!

If your greatest fault has been failure to qualify for marriage, it is not too late! Paul emphasized the necessity of preparation for an office in God’s Work, “And let these also first be proved; THEN let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless”. He established the basis for my officeholder, be it bishop, deacon, or husband. Paul adds sternly, “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is WORSE THAN AN INFIDEL!” (1 Timothy 5:8).

## **Happiness — Love Are Fruits of TEAMWORK**

With right relationships established, with wife and children well-provided for and happy, you will be basically prepared and grounded for the great Work of God. Only then can God use you fully in His Work! How else can you be proved? The way you direct and manage your home, the way real binding love radiates from your loved ones determines how well-prepared you are for any greater responsibilities beyond your immediate family.

God has said, “It is not good that the man should be alone!” Man is incomplete without the woman. He needs someone particularly fitted to be a companion, to love and cherish, to HELP him — not to usurp authority over him!

How many times have you thought, “It would just be best if we could separate and go our own ways”? Banish that thought! It was not from God. Never lose sight of the over-all purpose of the marriage relationship. Remember, it was God who instituted marriage. Everywhere He illustrates that the way to the happy, the full, the rich and abundant life is strait, it is narrow, and few are able to find it. To be able to love your wife properly, the way God commands you to do, will take hard, but highly rewarding, work.

If your motive has been a wrong, selfish, self-centered desire for self-gratification, you have forgotten, or more probably, never understood the multiple role of your wife.

Your wife is to be your helpmeet, to be your companion, to bear your children, to share your burdens and happiness, as well as the physical pleasures of marriage in sexual enjoyment and fulfillment.

Your wife is extremely important in God’s eyes. He commanded both of you, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it!” (Genesis 1:28) — to master the other creatures of the earth. This requires full co-operation between husband and wife. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be [become] one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). God intended you and your wife should come to become one in everything — a single, efficient, working unit! This is not accomplished overnight! It takes time, and it takes work.

Ideal happiness is reached only when both of you know the other so well there is a mutual sharing of deep love, and a feeling and awareness of thoughts, moods and desires of the other. Threaded through all of this is the mind of God in each through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). Your every thought must be brought under control, “And bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

## **Tongue in Action**

Has your tongue plunged you into a world of woe? God says the tongue is the most offending member of your body! How many times have you wished you had controlled your tongue? How many heartaches has your tongue been responsible for? “The tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature!” (James 3:5, 6). Has this been true in your life? God created your nature. Your nature responds to the tugs of your heart. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh!” (Matthew 12:34). You can say you are sorry, but the damage has already been done.’ “For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body” (James 3:2). Not only can this do irreparable damage to your potential happiness in marriage, but it can also store up condemnation before God — all of which will have to be bitterly, and deeply REPENTED OF! Christ warned, “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:36, 37).

## COMMUNICATE!

Most wives complain about a lack of communication with their husbands. If your wife is to effectively assist you in every phase of your life, she needs the facts. How else can she offer sound counseling advice? How else can she share your anxieties over business and family problems? She wants to share these responsibilities with you, and she should. You retain the authority, to take or reject her advice — but talk things over.

Perhaps many of you are afraid your wives will have better ideas and solutions than you do — so you avoid the responsibility of having to think constructively with your wife by remaining aloof in your “authority”!

You have missed much, and have made many mistakes if you have not confided to your wife your hopes, your desires, your doubts and your problems. It is time to change!

Don't cheat yourself! (I Peter 3:7); become heirs together — give honor to your wife!

A powerful way of communication with your wife is through joint prayer to God in the privacy of your own room. Have you ever heard your wife pray? How can you say you are carefully instructing her if you have never been with her on your knees together in supplication? Her quiet, feminine approach in prayer to her God is an inspiring thing to hear! She will very often bring up matters about which you had never given thought. She will inspire you. At the same time she will hear your masculine approach in prayer, and the bond of love and respect will be greatly strengthened.

## God's Way Is Way of Love

Can you come to really love your wife? It's time to examine yourself! The lack of real love between husbands and wives is too apparent. The truth of the matter is, you have been robbing yourself, your wife, your family! God! Just as withholding tithes is robbing God (Malachi 3:8), just as David's sin against Uriah and Bathsheba was a sin against God Himself (Psalms. 51:4), you also are robbing — sinning against — your Creator!

“If you keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, THAT MY JOY MIGHT REMAIN IN YOU! and that your JOY MIGHT BE FULL!” (John 15:10, 11). The powerful, majestic God of the universe is a God of love! “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for GOD IS LOVE!” (I John 4:8). Yes, you are defrauding Him of His right to share with you your married love!

Examine yourself! Your salvation is at stake!

Christ said, “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS” (John 15:12, 13). Christ gave His life for you! How much should you be willing to overcome that your wife might also have the help she so desperately needs to be ready to enter the very family of God?

Without that help she may well fall by the wayside; God will have one less (your wife) to add to His wonderful family, and you will be responsible! A terrible thought! You may be sacrificing your opportunity to joyously enter God's own family! All because you have been unwilling to lay down your life for your wife — for one who has shared the trials and pleasures of years! In your case it may not be easy — but it will be rewarding!

## Love Is a Growing Thing

Two people in love expect to reach great heights on their wedding day. Marriage to them means the smoothing out of differences miraculously. The emotional pitch is high through the marriage ceremony, and then the reality of marriage responsibilities strikes home hard. The great romantic bubble bursts. Disillusionment rears its ugly head. The expected surge of real love did not materialize! Puzzled, hurt, the great fear grows that a great mistake has been made.

Love, like character, is a growing thing. People are not born with it. Neither does one stumble across it accidentally in the course of daily living. Love needs to be developed. It needs to be nourished. Ignorance of this fact has brought about many separations, many divorces! This is the consequence of ill-advised counseling, and it has reached gigantic proportions in the world today. With proper vision, forethought, consideration, understanding and prayer your marriage need not go the way of the world.

In fact, God commands you to have JOY — not to leave your wife, but to have joy in the wife of your youth! (Ecclesiastes 9:9).

## Don't Be TOO BUSY!

Your time, your effort, your energy, your thoughts are your life. These are what you are to lay down for your wife — “as Christ also loved the Church, and gave HIMSELF FOR IT” (Ephesians 5:25). Become ONE — a life together, MUTUALLY GIVEN TO CHRIST!

Set yourself diligently to show consideration to the wife



In 1981, the Youth magazine of the old Worldwide Church of God (WCG) had some short answers to questions high school and/or college students who attended WCG had.

For this Q&A, we have three updated questions with some updated short answers to help high school/college/university students today.

**Question 1:** Why don't you keep Christmas, Valentine's Day, Halloween, Easter, or many other popular holidays?

*Answer:* Because I have learned that the Bible does not teach keeping them (cf. Leviticus 23), that the Apostle Paul warned about practices associated with some of them (1 Corinthians 10:20-22; cf. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18), and that history books prove they were not originally Christian celebrations anyway.

**Question 2:** Why don't you eat pork or shellfish?

*Answer:* Because in the Bible says we shouldn't eat them

(Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14). Also, it is medically-documented that there are potential health problems associated with eating them.

**Question 3:** Why don't you go to any Friday night or Saturday events like everyone else?

*Answer:* Because I keep the seventh-day Sabbath, which begins Friday at sunset and ends Saturday at sunset. This is something that I see that the Bible teaches (e.g., Exodus 20:8-11).

While the Bible says to "be ready always with an answer" (1 Peter 3:15, KJV), it may be that you may be asked a question you do not know. Don't be afraid to tell someone that you are still learning, but that you will ask someone else (like a parent or minister) for more information if the questioner sincerely wants to know the answer. Everyone who tries to follow the Bible needs to continue to grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).

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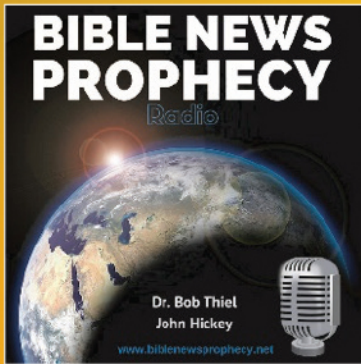
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of your youth. Begin now by going to a private place of prayer — beseech God to forgive you for your callousness and weaknesses. Ask Him to give you His great gift of love — love first of all toward Him, then toward your wife. Give thanks for preserving your marriage, for giving you a wife that has stuck with you through thick and thin in the face of every lack of appreciation and love. Set yourself to learn, belatedly perhaps, HER likes and dislikes in order that you might begin to shower upon her tokens of your growing respect and concern for her welfare. Read the article on "How to Have a Happy Marriage " by Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong, and the other articles concerning marriage that are available. It will take time, but time that brings great rewards. Read together — especially if your wife is converted!

## **LOVE IS VITAL!**

Don't delay to correct the many mistakes you have made which, if continued, could cost you your salvation! Don't continue to blind yourself with the false counselings of pseudo-authorities. Turn to the REAL AUTHORITY — to GOD — Who alone can help you to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. He alone can grant you knowledge, wealth, loyalty to Him and to your wife — and the VITAL INGREDIENT lacking in so many — MARRIED LOVE!!

*Editor's note: We ALL are to love (Matthew 12:30-31)! And yes, wives are to love their husbands (Titus 2:4)!*



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



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*Daily Bible News Prophecy* [www.cogwriter.com](http://www.cogwriter.com)

**BIBLENEWSPROPHECY.NET** Radio messages of biblical and prophetic interest.

**CCOG.ASIA** This website is focused on Asia. It has articles in many Asian languages.

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**CDLIDD.ES** La Continuación de la Iglesia de Dios. This is the CCOG Spanish language website.

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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.